

Indian Poetry-6
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Length: 15:53

The title of the article from which I am reading is ‘The Changing Face of Translation in Indian Literature’, ‘The Changing Face of Translation in Indian Literature’. This is by Anita Mannur. The surname is M A N N U R, M A N N U R, Anita Mannur. And this was published by the University of Ottawa press 2000 it's slightly dated, but the arguments are still relevant. 2000 University of Ottawa press. ‘Some propose, some propose that all regional literatures should be studied in translation. But this gives rise to another problem- the choice of a suitable target language...’

So, this is where we should pay attention to, ‘...the choice of a suitable target language into which all these regional literatures should be translated. Although the main focus of literary scholarship traditionally centers on translation from regional languages into English, this issue has been hotly contested. On the one hand, there are those who believe the link language in India should be English and on the other hand, there are those who argue in favor of Hindi. The Hindi-English target language debate carries serious ideological implications. If English is the chosen target language, one must keep in mind the social, historical, political circumstances that enabled English to take root in India.’ in other words, post-colonial legacy. ‘But the question that arises is why is there the need for a link language in India? Should Indians blindly attempt to integrate regional language literatures from the various states of India merely because the former colonial regime decided that all the states should be integrated into one nation called India? In the name of promoting a more integrated study of literature that transcends state boundaries, should Indians use English as the link language to unite the literary efforts of a nation that has only existed as a single national unit for fifty years, thereby engaging in an act of double hegemony?’

So, this is what Anita Mannur writes. She's capturing the conflicts in terms of the target language, should it be English should it be Hindi? What are the repercussions of translating regional literatures into English? Why should it be translated into English? What are the repercussions if it is translated into Hindi? And then so on.

The use of Hindi, this is by V.K Gokak. The point is by V. K Gokak, in a seminal work 'The Concept of Indian literature', who suggests that Hindi is 'the most appropriate link language into which to translate Indian regional literatures.' and he says that '...the fact that entire people in the area from Madhya Pradesh to Himachal Pradesh speak Hindi, apart from Punjab and East India, gives Hindi a tremendous advantage even as a regional and national language. Its resources are far greater for the purpose of translation and the production of scientific and technical literature than those of any other Indian language.' This is V. K Gokak. So, this is Anita Mannur's response to that. She says '...although Hindi has the advantage of being a language rooted in India and has been structurally and thematically close to Indian regional languages, it is somewhat naive to suggest that everyone including visual language writers will readily welcome the use of Hindi as the link language into which the writings will be translated. In fact, the cultural proximity of Hindi to the other national regional languages gives rise to problems. Because writers who write in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam, strongly oppose the looming threat of cultural hegemony posed by Hindi.'

So, these are all the complications that surround translation, something which we need to be aware of. As an Indian, it is not possible to be well-versed in all the various languages that are being spoken and written in. So, how do we access the literature of your neighboring state? In which language would you read them? Would you prefer to read them in Hindi, which is becoming a common language? Or would you read it in English, which is already a kind of a link language not only across India, but across the globe? In which language? So that question is coming up too. What is your response to that?

When I read this, I was wondering, you know, why not get these regional literatures translated in your own mother tongue and read them in your mother tongue? How, how would that feel like?

So, if you want to read, if you are a Kannada-speaking person, and if you want to read the classic works from Malayalam, try to see if you have that body of work translated in your own mother tongue. And would it, wouldn't it be better? Would that solve the problem? So that is one way of kind of dealing with it. Of course, they would not be there if they weren't read, then you know, such translation should be encouraged. So that one that is one way of dealing with it. Let's think about the issues in translation in this context. For a while I want to come back to Indian poetry.

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Chill Out




- Busy right now with my precious bamboo flute,
- My delicate fingers on the holes.
- Darling, can't snuggle you now,
- I'm lost fiddling this melodious flute.




Sourav, do you mind? the first one, okay. This is the tribal poem, 'Chill Out'. This is anonymous. And transcreated from Gondi, by- Gondhi is the language spoken by the tribes, Gonds- by Gabriel Rosenstock and Abhay K, so two translators or transcreators, it has been transcreated, sort of adapted. "Busy right now with my precious bamboo flute, my delicate fingers on the holes. Darling. can't snuggle you now, I'm lost fiddling this melodious flute."

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Chill Out




- Chill out—eat some chilli!
- Can't squeeze you right now.
- Busy with my precious little bamboo flute,
- My delicate fingers on the holes.




“Chill Out-eat some chilli! Can't squeeze you right now. Busy with my precious little bamboo flute, my delicate fingers on the holes.” So, I tried to kind of come up with the you know meanings for these terms- translation, transliteration and transcreation. So, there are overlapping senses across these three terms.

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Translation and Transliteration



- Translation: converting a text from the source language to another, capturing the subject as accurately as possible.
- Transliteration: converting a text from the source to the target language in an equivalent set of words.




So, transliteration is going for the equivalent words, right almost word for word. And translation is converting from the source language to another, capturing the subject as accurately as possible.

May not be a word for word translation, you capture the style, the essence. And the next one transcreation.

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Transcreation



- Transcreation basically means recreating a text for the target audience, in other words “translating” and “recreating” the text.
- the target text is the same as the source text in every aspect: the message it conveys, style, the images and emotions it evokes and its cultural background.
- <https://pbtranslations.wordpress.com/2010/07/14/transcreation-translating-and-recreating/>

So, it is recreating the text to capture the message, the style, the emotions and the cultural background. As I said, there are overlapping meanings across the three. The point is to translate as accurately as possible.

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The Spread of the Gonds




- Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka
- “Gondi is the language of an Adivasi community known as the Gonds.”




So, this is the schedule tribes, the Gonds, they have been spread, they are spread across Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka. It is an Adivasi language. So rough statistics.

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Tribes



- According to the 2011 Census of India, **Bhil** is the most populous tribe with a total population of 4,618,068, constituting 37.7 per cent of the total ST population.
- **Gond** is the second largest tribe, with a population of 4,357,918 constituting 35.6 per cent



Gond is the second largest tribe and Bhil is the most populous. I have another poem from the language Bhili. The, the language of the Bhils. So, let's go back to the poem,” Busy right now with my precious bamboo flute.” I have a set of questions that came to my mind when I was reading the poem.

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Chill Out!



- Why is bamboo precious?
- Why are his fingers described as delicate?

Why is the bamboo precious? Why is the bamboo flute precious? The second question that came up in my mind is why are his fingers delicate? Why are his fingers delicate? Any, any possible answers to these questions? Okay, I will ask all the questions then you can come up with the answers.

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Why is she advised to “chill out”?

Why is he asking her to eat chilli?

Why is she advised to ‘chill out’? What does this imply? It's like a dramatic, dramatic monologue, isn't it? Browning fashion, a dramatic monologue which kind of indicates the state of mind or the

context of the address see the audience, right. So, when you read this a monologue you will know something about the audience too. The person who is at the receiving end of such verse.

So, why is she advised to chill out? Why is he asking her to eat chilli? Why not any other dish? Why chilli? Or why not ask her to do, go to do something else? Chill out, go for a walk. Like why doesn't he say that? Chill out darling, go for a walk, take a walk. Go take a walk by the river. I will come back to you. Why not suggest that? Why is he suggesting 'go eat a chilli'? So, all these questions are potentially interesting and disturbing questions in the context of the relationship between the male and the female in the Indian context. Number one, you would know more about the cultural lifestyle of the Adivasis when you try to find out about the answers to these questions. Why is the bamboo flute precious? Maybe bamboo flute is one of the most significant instruments through which the cultures, you know, ethos are passed on from generation to generation. Right? Music, therefore, becomes an important signifier of the transmission of cultural knowledge. That's one possible interpretation. That's why it is precious. So, you might also need a particular kind of fingers, particular shape of fingers, which can be used to play the flute really melodiously. So, your fingers have to be adept, really nimble fingers possibly to produce really soulful melody from the flute. That's one possible interpretation.

She is asked to chill out because she is not in a very harmonious frame of mind. She wants attention that's easily understandable. She wants the attention of the male here. And he says I can't I can't snuggle you. I am busy right now with my music, trying to play music. Chill out, eat some chilli. Chilli, the, the food item chili. It could, it could be a reference to a dish made with chilli. Chilli is associated with hot passion. So, so he is asking her to tone it down to bring it under control, to accommodate it, accommodate it. So, if, if, if that is the case, we are told that individual passions are secondary to the cultural transmission with which, about which this male is focused on. So, passion, romantic relationships, takes a backseat and something else is projected as the most important concern of the male here. And by the male, you kind of talk about the entire community. So, the male becomes a signifier of the entire community here.

I will go back to the question. Why is she not advised to do something else? Why is she not advised to pick up a flute and play the flute? You know, you pick up a flute, you play it, you write poetry, why don't you paint? Why don't you go, you know, sing songs? So, you know that, that suggestion

is a problematic suggestion. The suggestion that comes from the male is a problematic suggestion in my reading. Okay, can we move on to the next one?

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Chill Out!



- Why is the title of the poem, “Chill Out” and not “my precious bamboo”?

Okay, why is the title of the poem ‘Chill Out’, and not my precious bamboo? Why this title once one second why, why not precious bamboo? If bamboo playing is the most important cultural function of the male in this community, why not keep that as the title? So, you know several things come up. So, what is happening, at least according to my interpretation is that, the male-female relationship is brought to the foreground only to fracture it, destroy it and push it to the background. So, this important thing here is the fact that the man is asking her to chill out. Not that he, that he wants to highlight his flute playing capacities, at least that is the, that is the message that this transcreation suggests to us. If bamboo playing is precious, that should be highlighted, not the fact that the female, the lover, the female lover is shushed, you know.

So, that's one of the ways you can interpret this poem and there are other interpretations which are possible and as valid as mine is. The only thing is that you should bring some cultural evidence and argue a case in such a way that it is convincing. Right. Okay, we'll stop here.