

Indian Literature in Translation

UNIT I Poetry (Detailed)

Trained dogs

By P Mathiyalagan

Summary

Trained dogs are useful in many ways. Dogs can be disciplined and controlled by giving training to them. They can be trained to have perfect manners. If the dogs are not trained they can take charge of everything which leads to behavioral changes such as barking and other worse behaviours.

If the dogs are fixed with chain then it will be easy for the others to identify whose dog is that. When they go for a walk, the dogs can also recognise other people. Training includes stretching their legs, bow their heads and prostrate. The street dogs and the trained dogs differ in their behaviour.

About the poet

P Mathiyalagan was born in 1950 in Perambalur district. His maternal grandfather had been a writer during the British government. So there were books in the house which help the young Mathiyalagan to read extensively. In 1982-83 he worked with the Progressive Writers' Association that began breaking into what Mathiyalagan terms as the 'pure literature' which was dominant in Tamil letters in the early 1980s. He was influenced by K Daniel's *Panchamar* the first Dalit novel in Tamil. Mathiyalagan began to think about the differences and about casteism in public life, in political organisations and even in the family. This poem 'Trained Dogs' is translated by K SriLata, an Indian poet, fiction writer, translator and a Professor in Humanities and social sciences in IIT Madras.

Essay

Dogs are trained for various purposes. They are given training in many ways. If the dogs are chained then it is easy for the owners to take for a walk. And the others will know whose dogs are those and similarly the dogs too will learn to recognise other people.

The dogs are trained to stretch their four legs, kneel down, to bow their heads and to prostrate themselves. There is a difference between the stray dogs and the trained dogs. The community dogs are specialised in looking shit of the streets. So it is good to train the street dogs. Where as the dogs reared by the masters show their gratitude and they are ever faithful. The dogs use their voice to show its presence and its loyalty to their masters. It is said that one can judge the status of a man from the dogs he has at home. Dogs haunted by loneliness and not knowing what do they howl and trouble their masters and their neighbours. The dogs are praised for their humility, because even from a distance they prostrate themselves and show their obedience. The dogs become active and obedient with just one command and it is necessary they can chase not only the rabbits but also the porcupines. The trained dogs do not need a whip. Just a gesture from the master will be enough for them to make the dogs

to sit in the corner. The dogs are ready to show their gratitude whenever the master returns home. They will rise and lick his or her feet. Sometimes they wander here and there without any work. It can either be a night or day. The trained dogs have no shame and no self respect. Sometimes they might let the masters down. They are casual and at times forget their place and urinate even on the master. The dogs do all this because to have a piece of meat sticking to bone. This kind of waiting for the bone will remain forever. These poem also denote that people who are made slaves are still there in the country waiting for their masters to render their help . The poet also alludes that people belonging to the working class are strong enough with their black bodies and look like lion.

Short questions

1. Distinguish between the stray dogs and trained dogs.
2. How are the trained dogs used?
3. How does a dog express its humility?
4. What does the dog chase with just one command?
5. What includes the training?

Cactus

By K Satchidanandan

Summary

The poet conveys through the poem that Cactus makes its existence known to others through pain and blood. If anyone touches or sympathizes with it, is cursed by a prick from its thorns. Once cactus had flowers but not now. It dislikes the lovers who cheat.

About the poet

K Satchidanandan is a major Indian poet. He writes in Malayalam and English .He is a critic, editor and a translator. He is a pioneer of modern poetry in Malayalam. He is a former editor of Indian literature and the former secretary of Sahitya Akademi. He is the most widely translated of contemporary Indian poets. He has 23 collections of poetry in 19 languages including English, Irish, Arabic, Chinese, French, German and Italian besides all major Indian languages. A fellow of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi and has won 32 literary awards and fellowships.

Essay

The poet K Satchidanandan depicts the pain and suffering of people through the eyes of the Cactus. In this poem the poet talks about the people who are sad, lonely and rejected. The poem throws light on the Cactus being angry and the warning which is given by the Cactus. It reveals its existence to others through pain and blood. It is because whenever people touch they get hurt.

A cactus is not taken into consideration for its beauty. Once it had flowers. It does not like the lovers who cheat. Cactus criticizes the poets who glorify only the external beauty for which they abandoned the deserts in search of the beautiful plants in gardens. But in the hot desert, only camels and merchants travel and they crush the flowers to dust.

Cactus is capable of living with less quantity of water. One thorn for each drop of water. Cactus don't tempt butterflies. No single bird praises the cactus. It doesn't want them to bleed because of its nature. And the cactus doesn't want to yield to drought.

Cactus creates another world of beauty beyond the boundaries of moonlight. It is full of dreams but in the real world Cactus has a sharp and piercing parallel language.

Short questions

1. What according to the Cactus is its language?
2. What is the poet convey in the poem?
3. What is it that the cactus don't tempt?
4. What did the poets abandon?
5. What is the poem cactus imply?

Father returning home

By Dilip Chitre

Summary

Father returning home is an autobiographical poem. The poet picturizes about the loneliness and tiredness of his old father in the modern society.

The poem is all about the poet's father Purushottam Chitre's life in 1957 when they shifted from Baroda to Mumbai. The poem expresses the poet's feeling for his father at a later stage. Though his father was the only breadwinner of the family, he was not cared by the family. He seems to be neglected by them.

The father seems to be disillusioned with life. The tone of the poem is little depressing and bleak. The language of the poem is that of estrangement and detachment.

Apart from the autobiographical note it may be of any father who works hard for the family and who is not taken care of and to converse with him. The poem consists of two stanzas of twelve lines each.

About the poet

Dilip Purushottam Chitre (17th September 1938-10th December 2009), one of the foremost Indian poets and the critics to emerge in the post independence India writing from Britain. He was a very important bilingual writer who wrote in Marathi and English. He was a teacher, painter, filmmaker and magazine columnist. He was one of the most important figures behind the little magazine movement.

Essay

Father returning home begins with the narrator's description of his father's returning home. The father is travelling in an evening train after finishing his work. It is understood that the father works from the morning to the evening.

The father is standing among the silent passengers in the yellow light inside the train compartment. He is returning home standing on the foot board as he doesn't get a seat. The fellow passengers are not friendly enough to talk with him. The yellow light adds gloom to his routine journey.

The father has no idea of looking outside the train. He seems to be not interested by the scenes. Because he has seen it for several times. So it is a kind of monotonous life.

It was a rainy day. His father's dresses are all wet with the rain water and his black raincoat is damaged with mud. The back he was carrying was stuffed with books and he was struggling to carry it. It indicates how difficult it was to travel during the rainy season.

His father's eyesight is dimmed due to his old age. The father looks homeward with his low vision through the humid monsoon night. Even the gloomy atmosphere adds dullness to his life

The father gets down from the train. Here the poet compare his father getting down from the train to a word which drops from a long sentence. After getting off the

train the father hurries towards to his home. He crosses the grey platform and the railway line and finally enters the lane. His chappals are with mud and so he finds difficult to walk quickly.

In the second stanza the poet depicts about the isolation of his father in his own home. The father as usual drinks weak tea and eats stale chapati. The poet hints at how no one cares for him in the family. The father too doesn't complain about anything.

The father goes into the toilet with a thought of how men become isolated from the rest of the world. Toilet is the only place where the father can contemplate.

The father comes out from the toilet and goes to wash his hands. As the water runs down his brown hands he starts to tremble. This may be due to his old age and the fearful thought of his isolation from the man-made world.

The poet also talks about the old man's relationship with others. His bad tempered children refused to share jokes and secrets. The father goes to sleep listening to the radio and thinking of many things like his ancestors, his grandchildren and of the Aryans, the people entered the Indian subcontinent through the narrow pass.

Thus the poem sympathizes with the old neglected people in the society.

Short questions

1. What does the father do?
2. How does the speaker's father spend his time at home?
3. What do weak tea and stale chapati suggest?
4. Where does the father contemplate?
5. Was the father happy with the family?

POETRY (Non-Detailed)

It Is Raining Again By U R Ananthamurthy

Summary

'It is raining again' was published 1966. The poem illustrates about the relationship between the poet and his lover. The speaker wants to find out whether the dark eyed lass remembers everything. The poet repeats the line 'It is raining again' hoping to find out whether the lass has not forgotten the pleasure, the pain, the desire and the fear they experienced at the moment. The poet ends the poem with a nostalgia that everything will return in this world.

About the Poet

Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy (21 Dec 1932-22 August 2014) was an Indian contemporary writer who wrote in Kannada and English. He is considered as one of the pioneers of the Navya movement. His poetry is an extension of his thoughts on culture and society. He is best known and appreciated for his short stories, novels like Samskara, literary criticism and cultural criticism. U R Ananthamurthy's poetry swings between two poles. He returns to mythology whenever his poems became logical. He has a liking W.B. Yeats. He headed National Book Trust (NBT), Sahitya Akademi, Film and Television Institute of India (FTII). He was an important representative of modernist movements in Kannada literature.

Essay

In the poem "It is raining again", the poet describes the rendezvous he had with his lover long time back when it was raining. The poet asks her not to close her ears during their meeting. The poet looks at the girl and addresses her as an innocent who stood behind the door to startle him. The poet reminiscence the moment they shared together. It was pleasure, pain, the desire and the feelings of fear. The poet wants to remind the past experiences and he asks whether she remembers their meeting. The poet describes about the female parrot who cajoled his male which was caught in the woods. The poet describes the intimate details of the lovemaking that happened during their meeting. The poet assures that he will preserve her and also adds that the rains will return, memories too will return, whatever the emotions or feelings it is not just one or two. The poet repeats the line such as "It is raining again", "Do you remember", "Not one or two moments-but the pleasure, the pain and the desire and the fear".

Short questions

1. How was the lass described in the poem?
2. What are the moments mentioned in the poem?
3. Where does the girl stand according to the poet?
4. Mention the lines which are repetitive in the poem?
5. Write a short not about the poet U R Ananthamurthy.

Bonsai

By Biraja Bal

Summary

Biraja Bal's poem 'Bonsai' is a call for suppressed humanity to break free. Bonsai is an art of growing ornamental varieties of trees and shrubs in pots. In this poem the poet tries to bring out the position of the suppressed people in the society. He focuses on how the people can come out of the shackles and set themselves free. The poet illustrates this with a Bonsai tree. Bonsai is a plant where the growth is restricted and it can be grown only in the pots. Here a banyan tree is planted in a cement pot. A banyan tree can be grown into a giant tree but here it is in the miniature form. Similarly, the people who are socially and economically deprived are not able to grow to their own potential.

About the poet

Biraja Bal, a poet from Odisha, is a realist trying to explore the intricacies of contemporary social process. In this poem he has depicted about the banyan tree in Bonsai form which represents the suppressed people. This poem is translated by Durga Prasad Panda, a bilingual poet and critic in English and Odia. His poems have been anthologized thrice in British Council's Poetry India.

Essay

Bonsai is a plant in miniature form planted in the pots. The pale leaves shake in the wind and the hanging boughs, beat their heads on the dusty floors of the terrace. Owing to the heat of the scorching sun, the plant becomes dry and so the gardener takes pity and waters the plants.

Every now and then the gardener cuts the tree's branches with his scissors and doesn't allow the tree to grow any further. As the plant is grown in the cement pot, it is said to be in a different world. In spite of water and air, the tree gasps for breath as it is not able to grow freely and flourish as it can grow normally on the earth.

If the banyan tree is planted somewhere on the earth, it will have grown into a giant tree. Here the growth is minimized and it is helpless. Children enjoy playing and swinging in the boughs but here they are not able to do so. The fully grown tree can give shelter to the traveller or can help the birds perch on its branches with their sweet melodious voice. But not in Bonsai trees.

One day the poet tells the banyan tree in Bonsai form that the whole sky is left to the tree. So that it can stretch from one horizon to another. The whole earth belongs to the tree as it can crack open the rock and why not the cement pot.

That very night a loud bang was heard and the Banyan tree broke the cement pot into pieces. Similarly, the suppressed people revolt against the dominating society and come out free.

Short questions

1. What is a Bonsai?
2. What does the gardener do?
3. Which is the tree mentioned in the poem?
4. What does the poet suggest at the end of the poem?
5. What happened to the tree?

UNIT II

PROSE

Towards an Indian theory of Translation

By Indranath Choudhuri

Summary

India being a polyglot country, people use more than one language while speaking or even thinking. But there is no single text specifying the art or science of translation similar to Panini's Ashtadhyayi or Tolkapiar's Tolkappiyam or Bharata's Natyashastra. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee points out that polyglotism was responsible in the development of 'translating consciousness' among the Indians. Gunadhya, a poet wrote a book of stories in Paishachi language and entitled it Brihatkatha. When he presented the manuscript to the scholars, they rejected as the book was not written in Sanskrit. Later on it was translated into Sanskrit by Somadeva and Kshemendra. They named it that 'Kathasaritsagara' and 'Brihatkatha Manjari' respectively. 'Brihatkatha Manjari' was the first book translated into Sanskrit from any other Indian languages. In Indian context the term for translation is Anuvada. i.e., repetition of what is adopted by a Vedic text with a different wording. The essence of translation lies in the preservation of meaning across two different languages. Ayyappa Paniker has joined together useful concepts in the context of medieval Indian translation of Sanskrit classics which reveals about the translation by Sanskrit theoreticians. The concepts are : I. Anukriti (imitation of the original) II. Arthakriya (emphasis on which meanings are enacted in different texts) III. Vyaktivivekam(rendering of the meaning or invoking interpretation based on anumana or influence) IV. Ullurai (Dravidian term mainly the inner speech, not the heard melody but the one unheard or the speech within)

Indian writers were familiar with verbatim translation called as 'chhaya' (shadow) of prakrit text into to Sanskrit found in Sanskrit plays. But the Indians preferred adaptation to verbatim translation. Tolkapiyam mentions that Vali (ie-adapted work) can be of four kinds I) abridged II) expanded or III) abridged and expanded IV) or translated in accordance with the traditions of Tamil.

Among the post-structuralist thinkers Jacques Derrida questions the position that a literary text occupied in a traditional critical discourse and argues about reading the text in a different occasion to experience the absence of its meaning.

Sri Aurobindo declares that a translator is not bound to the original he chooses, he can make his own poem out of it if he likes. In India Pluri-lingual writers writing in the language of the ex-colonizer or in Indian Bhashas are challenging and redefining many accepted notions in Translation theory. The translational activities move towards shaping an Indian theory of translation has now become a reality.

About the author

Professor Indranath Choudhury is an academic and author on various subjects, such as comparative literature, Aesthetics and religion written in both Hindi and English. He has graced various academic faculties in India, Europe and UK. He has also been a distinguished Cultural Ambassador for India.

Short questions

- 1 Mention the name of the first book translated into Sanskrit?
- 2 What are the four concepts mentioned by the Sanskrit theoreticians?
- 3 What is adaptation?
- 4 Mention the language which Gunadhya wrote the stories?
- 5 What is polyglot?

Modern Indian literature in English translation

Sujit Mukherjee

SUMMARY

Sujit mukherjee in his article states that through the medium of English language it is possible for a person to discuss French, German or Russian literature. But the same is not in the case of Indian literature. Though English is the medium among Indians, there is no sufficient modern literary material translated from the other languages into English. Very few translated materials have been published. Some writers in a few languages have been constantly translated.

The author also adds there should be a plan of translation where every major work in modern Indian literature which will also ensure that an appropriate variety of writers and works is represented. The translator should aim at being recognised not as a translator in general but as as the translator of a particular poet or playwright or novelist. Public and private sectors of Indian publishing industry have engaged in producing English translations of Indian literature. The public sector is concerned about the edification of the nation and the private sector concerned with publishing translated material.

The Sahitya Akademi should aim to serve only those areas that are not being served by the state academies. Competent English translation of Indian literary works is one such large area, and the Sahitya Akademi must obviously pay special attention to it, says Sujit Mukherjee.

Translation may become a sub-discipline of literature study in India. This article aims at all English-reading Indians who read, write and discuss their own literatures.

About the author

Sujit mukherjee (1930-2003) was an Indian writer, translator, literary critic and publisher. He has focused mainly in the area of Indian literary history and translation. Apart from this, as a cricketer Sujit mukherjee has written six books on cricket. The 'Autobiography of an Unknown Cricketer' is the best among them. He has translated books from Bangla in to English including Tagore's Gora and Buddhadev Bose's Mahabharater Katha titled The Book of Yudhister. As a critic his two works 'Translation as Discovery' and 'Translation as Recovery' have a special place in literature. Other notable notable works are: The Tradition of Anglo -Indian Fiction and Towards a Literary History of India.

Short questions

- 1) Why should a translator undertake translation?
- 2) What does the private sector do?
- 3) What is the role of Sahitya Akademi?
- 4) The article aims at two persons. Who are they?
- 5) Why does a person find it difficult if he wishes to acquaint himself with modern Indian literature?

Translating the Millennium: Indian literature in the Global Market

-Vinay darwatkar

SUMMARY

Translation is a representation of a text in one language with a similar verbal composition in another language. Translation involves the representation of large selections of texts in languages other than the original. It is implied in both representation and self-representation. Representation and self-representation are part of the structure of consciousness, self consciousness, the double consciousness.

According to Immanuel Kant translation is not only a process of representation and self-representation but also a way of critique and self-critique and an element of knowledge and self-knowledge.

There are 10 principles of translation. A text has many aspects and various meanings. The Translations should adhere to international standards of translation and publication. A translation should maximize its quality. The proper unit of translation is not based on the word but the phrase. The relation between translation and the original is not equivalence but parallelism. The translator should convey the originals' diction, style, voice and tone exactly as possible. A translator's job is to translate a text and its readers at the same time. A translation is like a mirror. There are several translations for the original. A healthy competition among different translators and translations is essential for self knowledge and self-critique.

The economic and political empowerment under Globalization is necessarily mediated by the culture as the historical examples of England, France and Germany remind the representation of national literature in the public sphere. The immediate task is to invent the ways of translating the past millennium. Literary translation proceeds word by word, sentence by sentence, text by text and author by author.

In classical Sanskrit grammar and poetics, a word has three powers of meaning: abhidha (the literal sense, inherent from the root), lakshana (a figurative sense) and Vyanjana(a suggested sense).

In both the Western and Indian systems, a literary text is open to interpretation and produces many interpretations.

The audience for Indian literary works in Translation is dispersed worldwide and includes Indians diasporic Indians and non Indians of every variety in India.

Indian literary works separately and Indian literature as a whole will not have a lasting impact to that of European and other literatures (such as Chinese and Japanese) in the global market.

John Dryden categorises translation into three types: meta-phrase, a paraphrase and an imitation. Dryden's three types of translation parallel the three categories of translation in Sanskrit such as Bhashantara , is a meta-phrase; a rupantara changes the outward markers, surface structures or sound shape of a text, that preserves its content and meaning along the lines of paraphrase ; anukarana is an imitation or mimicry of original.

Ten guidelines are given as examples for the practice of literary translation.

1. Translations should stick to international standards
2. Translation should be reliable.
3. The unit of translation it is not the word but the phrase.
4. The relation between translation and original is parallelism.
5. The translator should represent the original's diction, style, voice and tone precisely.
6. Translation's main responsibility is to represent the inner logic of the original
7. A poem can only translate a poem
8. A translator's job is to translate a text and its readers at the same time.
9. Translation is not only a door or window but also a mirror.
10. For each and every original there are several valid translations.

About the author

Vinay Dharwadkar was born in Pune in 1954, and was educated at St. Stephen's College, Delhi University and the University of Chicago. He has authored a book of poems 'Sunday at the Lodi gardens' 1994, and the and editor of The Oxford anthology of modern Indian poetry- 1994, a co-editor of the the 'Collected poems of A K Ramanujan' 1995 and the general editor of the collected essays of AK Ramanujan 1999. His other edited books include 'Cosmopolitan geographies: new locations in literature and culture' 2001. He has published translations of modern Hindi, Marathi, Urdu and Punjabi poetry as well as essays on literary theory, translation studies and Indian English literature.

Short questions

- 1 How does Dryden categorise translation?
- 2 what is a translator's job?
- 3 what are the powers of signification in Sanskrit theory
- 4 The the proper unit of translation is based on what?
- 5 What should a translator represent according to the author?