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साहित्य अकादेमी
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संस्कृति मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार की स्वायत्तशासी संस्था
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World Translation Day Celebrations: National Symposium
Translation: A Bridge between Two Cultures

On the occasion of the World Translation Day, Sahitya Akademi organized a One Day National Symposium on Translation, titled, "Translation: A Bridge between Two Cultures," on September 30, 2019 at Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi.

In the Inaugural Address, Professor Anisur Rahman stressed the point that translation is not just of content, but of forms as well. He illustrated his point by citing the case of the translation of Ghalib's ghazals in the United States in connection with his death centenary, which was an utter failure. But 30 years later, Agha Shahid Ali was successful in accomplishing a competent translation of them into English, making Ghalib's ghazals accessible to specialists and common readers alike.

Professor Anamika, in her Keynote Address, began by asserting the main point that there is an untranslatable core in every text, which could be, say, a 'God particle'; we keep seeking it as translators. Dwelling on the translation of poetry, she said that a great deal of liberty is needed for the translation to be effective. She used the metaphor of sisterly informality, citing the example of sisters borrowing garments freely among themselves.

Professor Sumanyu Satpathy, in his Presidential Address, made the point that world literature exists in two domains: (1)Academia: If an author is translated and they get prescribed in the syllabi of five or six US universities, they become part of 'World Literature.'(2)Literature that gets translated and circulated outside it.

Sachin C.Ketkar, chairing the first session made some interesting observations in his paper "Bangla Literature as World Literature: The Bangla Cosmopolis and Modern Marathi Literature." He said that the role of Bangla is important in the modernization of Marathi literature, and not just English, which is the common perception. The Bengal Renaissance was taken as the model for negotiating with modernity in Marathi. It can be described as an extreme case of 'Banglaphelia.' Unless we take into account these cross-cultural currents, we cannot write the histories.

Krishna Dulal Barua, in his paper title, "Translation—A Bridge between Two Cultures," considered how Hindi and English have continued to serve as the main link languages of literary exchange furthering indirect translations, in the national scenario. He lauded Sahitya Akademi's role in building bridges among these languages and cultures.

Kalyanee Rajan presented a paper "Translating Culture, and Culture in Translation: A Brief Analysis of Select Case Studies," in which she analysed two short stories by Ismat Chughtai in the first Section, and in the second Section, drew from her own experience of translating Premchand's short stories, focusing on the complexities faced while translating two culturally rich tales from Hindustani into English; in the third Section she discussed her translation of Kutti Revathy's Tamil poems into English.

Sarabjeet Garcha in his paper "The Zoom Ant.": Arun Kolatkar and Arvind Krishna Mehrotra as Translators," discussed how Pradeep Gopal Deshpande translated the 13th century Marathi saint poet Muktabai's abhangs(published in *Indian Literature* No.189 in 1999, which Arun Kolatkar had translated in 1982, and how both the poets differ in their approach. Kolatkar adopted an imagistic approach, as against the verbose Deshpande. The discussion went on to include Arvind Krishna Mehrotra's translation of Kabir, later on in the paper.

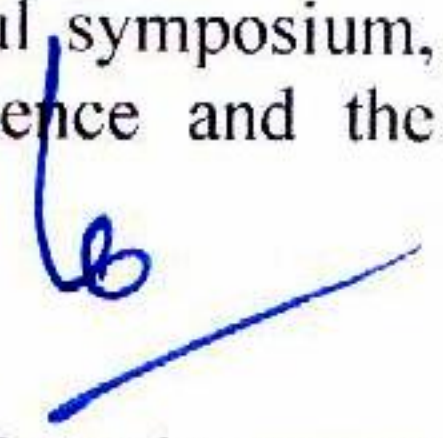
The second session, which was chaired by Dr. J. Devika. Her address from the chair revolved around two main points: One, translation involves gauging the balance between four elements—rhetoric, sonics, logic, meaning—in the source text and using that as a guide to translate it.

Abhirami Girija Sriram, in her paper, “Travelling between Languages and Bridging Cultures,” said that translation is an absolute necessity as is multilingualism—the latter is a creative source of abundance. We have learned to admire free adaptations and free translations. Translation consists in recreating a text in another language.

Asiya Zahoor, in her paper, “Translation-Crossing Over of Languages,” began with the meaning of translation as ‘crossing over.’ She felt that translation is a thankless activity in many ways—you put a great effort in it, but it is still not your work. She said the concern of the translator should not only be about the target language, but the original language as well.

Maaz Bin Bilal discussed his translation of Saadat Hasan Manto’s story “Goli”(Gunshot). It’s about a non-disabled writer writing about disability. The question is whether a non-disabled person can or should speak for a disabled person. Manto underscores the difficulty in translating the experience of the disabled by the non-disabled, and the easy lapse into sympathy.

At the end of all the three sessions, there were involved discussions in the question-answer sessions, and parallel discussions. Each participant and members of the audience enjoyed an intimate camaraderie, in the excitement of sharing ideas and viewpoints. It was a very fruitful symposium, according to the feedbacks obtained immediately from the members of the audience and the participants. Dr.A.J. Thomas proposed a brief vote of thanks at the end.



(K. Sreenivasarao)