

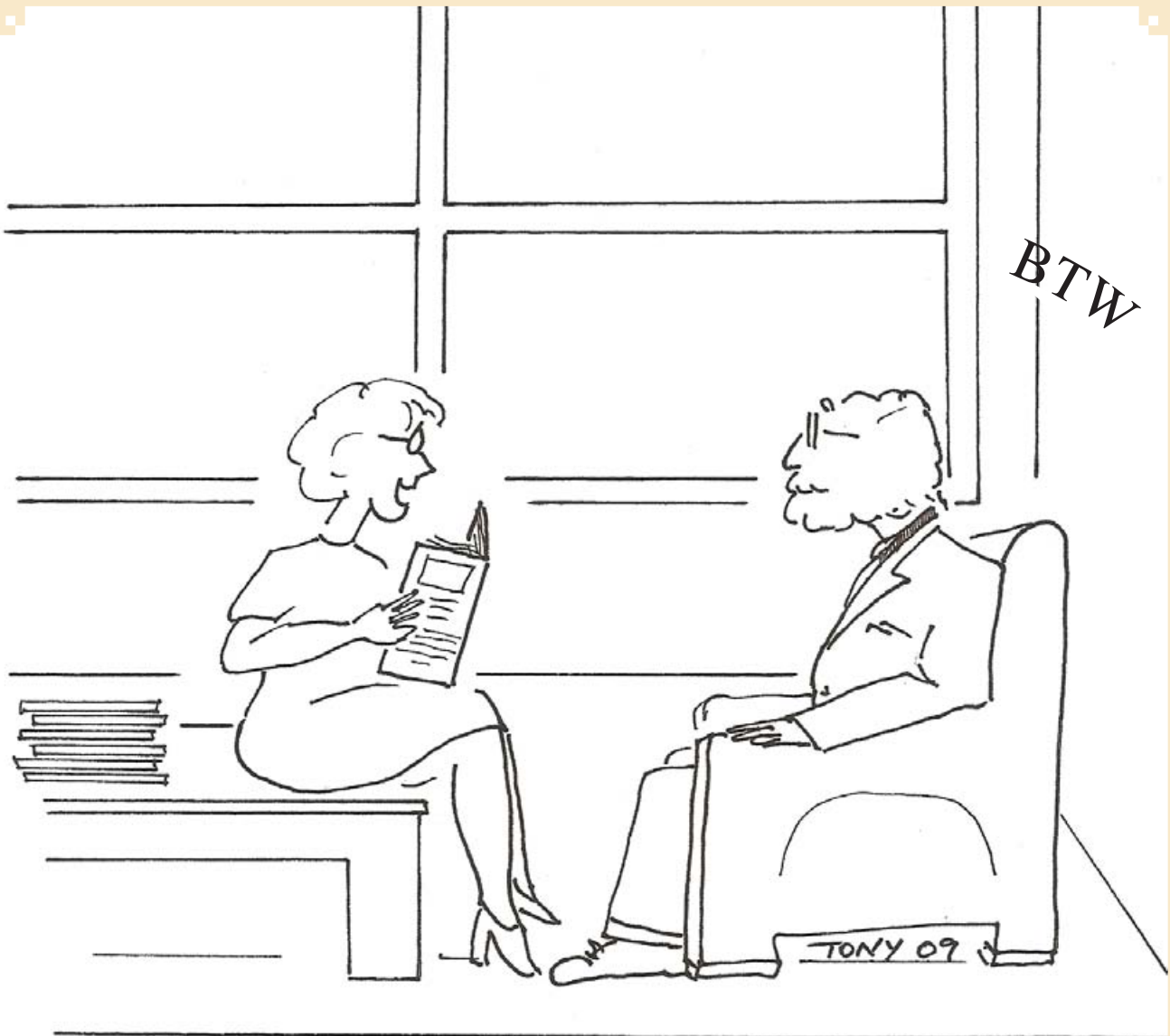
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SOURCE

AN ONLINE PUBLICATION
OF THE LITERARY DIVISION

NO. 47

SPRING 2010



Well, apparently the myth was based on an iffy translation,
and it's actually a pot luck dinner at the end of the rainbow!

Letter from the Editor

The Spring 2010 issue of *Source* features a provocative POINT/COUNTER-POINT forum with Casey Butterfield making the case in favor of the Google Settlement and Liliana Valenzuela making the case against. For those who haven't been following the clash of titans over issues raised by Google's digitization of libraries, the editor has provided a basic introduction on p. 6.

In her Letter from the LD Administrator, Emilia Balke introduces herself to *Source* readers, lays out plans to build the LD community through the Internet, and invites members to “stay connected.” Rashid Hasan, the LD’s new Assistant Administrator, has contributed an in-depth article on the need for the literary world to recognize regional, non-Anglo, writers in India, and the important role translators can play in making it happen.

As always, regular contributor Tony Beckwith shares colorful insights into another corner of linguistic curiosity in his *By-the-Way* column.

Our theme for the next issue will be **Women in Translation**.

Sincerely,

Michele Aynesworth

www.mckayaynesworth.com



ata Source

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Please include a photo
and brief bio of 2 or 3 sentences.

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Michele Aynesworth specializes in translating Argentine and French authors. Her recent translations include *Deir-Zor: Tracing the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, a photographic journal by Franco-Armenian writer Bardig Kouyoumdjian (see the Fall 2009 issue of Source); numerous excerpts from works by Jewish writers for Yale UP's *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization* series; and French economist Charles Rist's *In So Corrupt an Age: A Journal of the War and of the Occupation (1939-1945)*, funded by an NEA grant.

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To receive a printed copy of Source, use your ATA membership number and email address to modify your Division Membership. Go to https://www.atanet.org/divisions/division_modify.php.

Or email Jamie Padula, ATA Chapter and Division Relations Manager, or call (703) 683-6100, extension 3017.

FROM THE LD ADMINISTRATOR

It is a great pleasure to introduce myself as your new Literary Division Administrator. I worked as a freelance translator, along with other full-time jobs, from 1983 until 1994. I hold a Master's degree in English Philology, with specialization in translation and interpreting, from St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Bulgaria, and an MBA with concentration in finance from CSU at Northridge, California. In 1994, I transitioned from being a Marketing Director of a finance company in Northern California to a full-time translator and interpreter. I joined the ATA in 1996. I have translated and interpreted in various fields, but the majority of my most recent translation work involves clinical trials, medical equipment, and legal and business translating and interpreting. I also do linguistic reviews, language testing, and language consulting. When considering running for administrator, I was very concerned about the fact that I have very little experience in the area of literary translation. I have only two published translations of short stories. I am humbled by the achievements of so many of our members. Literary translation has always been something that I really wanted to do, but could not make

it a priority. I ran for division administrator because I would like to serve the Literary Division and the ATA by volunteering my knowledge and skills and by helping other members with their professional careers the way ATA has helped me over the years. This was not possible while my children were young. Now that my youngest son is 12, I feel that it is time for me to give back to the organization that has given so much to me. I am located in Southern California.

Our Assistant Division Administrator, Dr. Rashid Hasan has been a freelance translator since 1999. He holds a PhD in Modern Arabic from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has been associated with linguistic validation and translation of Patient-Reported Outcome reports relating to clinical research for leading pharmaceutical majors. Dr. Hasan has worked on translations and voiceover of video presentations and training module projects for the UN. Dr. Hasan is located in New Delhi, India, and will be performing his duties as Assistant Administrator via the Internet.

Rashid and I are both honored to have the opportunity to serve our division. We will continue to facilitate the development of our division



Emilia Balke is a full-time self-employed Bulgarian translator, interpreter and voiceover talent. She is a contract translator and interpreter with the U.S. Department of State and a Registered Court Interpreter in California.

The Literary Division

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website. We will use the Internet to keep you informed and involved in our division's business. We hope that our online community will be a place for discussions, exchange of ideas, and networking. We would make every effort to expand the content of BEACONS's rubric, "Introducing," with translations from a variety of languages and authors less well known to U.S. readers. We will work toward fostering and facilitating relationships with other organizations with similar interests, seeking networking opportunities with publishers and sponsors, and increasing public awareness of the art of literary translation.

I am committed to investing as much time as I can to accomplish this goal but, needless to say, regardless of what I do, our success as a division will depend on how involved you are in our activities. I will take my lead from your input and feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me at ebalke@language-web.net with your ideas and criticism. Yes, I would like to hear from you when something goes wrong. Only open communication will help us go forward in supporting and inspiring each other and promoting professionalism, excellence, and public awareness of our contribution to the literary art form.

It is my belief that literary translators should play a vital role in a multicultural society, such as ours in the United States. We are the ones who have the knowledge and skills to assist in advancing understanding and appreciation between cultures, and we enjoy the privilege to choose the works of art to be introduced to another culture.

The American Translators Association has been instrumental in providing various forms of support for its divisions. I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to Jamie Padula, the ATA Chapter and Division Relations Manager. Jamie has been extremely supportive in helping me take over the responsibilities of Division Administrator. I would like to thank Enrica Ardemagni for taking the time to talk with me about our division business and answer my questions. I value her advice and willingness to help. I am glad that Michele Aynesworth has agreed to continue to be the editor of SOURCE

and Myriam Young will continue to be our webmaster. It is a pleasure working with Michele and Myriam.

In this first letter to you, I am very pleased to inform you that, as of December 9, 2009, our division is 2264 members strong. We are also on our way to defying physical distance by establishing our online community. Jamie Padula has set up our Literary Division Listserve and you will be receiving invitations to join. Rashid is working on our Linkedin group. Rashid and I intend to use Listserve and the Linkedin group to stay connected with you. In addition to offering a forum for discussion of topics of common interest, posting of group-related events and activities, offering suggestions and feedback, networking, and eventually posting job openings, our Linkedin group will establish our presence among 50 million other professionals throughout the world, thus giving us more visibility. We plan to send you official announcements with instructions for signing up for Linkedin. I encourage you to sign up and stay connected. Please also check our website periodically and send links to anybody you think may benefit from the information on it. We have posted a couple of new useful links and will be adding more. Please send us any useful links you may come across.

I am currently considering possible prospects for the distinguished speaker lectures at the ATA annual conference in Colorado. There are three areas that I find very useful for literary translators: the current literary translation market from the perspective of a publisher, editing of literary translations, and creative writing. For those of you who are planning to attend the ATA conference this year, please let me know if you would attend sessions on these topics. Please stay tuned for an online discussion on this and other organizational topics.

I wish you a very happy and prosperous 2010!

*Sincerely,
Emilia Balke*

GOOGLE BOOKS: ROBBER BARON'S PARADISE OR BOOK UTOPIA?

TO SEND US YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ISSUE, SEND AN E-MAIL TO:

MICHELE@MCKAYAYNESWORTH.COM

As this issue of Source “goes to post,” authors, translators, and publishers remain in suspense as they await Judge Denny Chin’s ruling in the “Google Books Settlement” case. Following this brief introduction, literary translators Casey Butterfield and Liliana Valenzuela present opposing views of the case in a Point/Counterpoint forum.

The clash of titans began on September 20, 2005, with the filing of a class-action lawsuit, *The Author’s Guild et al v. Google Inc.* The issue: Google Books’ digitization of works under copyright.

To read Google’s own account of the November 19, 2009 “preliminary approval of the Amended Settlement” by the Court, see <http://books.google.com/googlebooks/agreement/> which includes a link to its “settlement administration website.” At this site (<http://www.googlebooksettlement.com/>), one is told of “important dates”:

Claim your Books and Inserts: You can do this at any time, but in order to be eligible for Cash Payments for Books and Inserts, you must complete your Claim Form on or before **March 31, 2011** (extended from January 5, 2010).

File an objection to the Amended Settlement: If you wish to object to the provisions amending the Original Settlement, your objection must be postmarked on or before **January 28, 2010**.

The case took a new turn with Google vs. the DOJ (the United States Department of Justice), which went before Judge Denny Chin on February 18th of this year.

US District Court Judge Denny Chin made it clear from the outset of the day-long hearing that he would not immediately rule on Google’s complicated — and controversial — book-

scanning agreement with US authors and publishers.

“To end the suspense, I am not going to rule today. There is just too much to digest,” Chin said, reassuring lawyers in a packed Manhattan courtroom that he has an “open mind.”

Those speaking against the deal outnumbered supporters by about four to one, with the judge allowing each of the more than two dozen individuals and groups five minutes to state their positions. <http://tinyurl.com/yl8bxt7>

Some predict the case “may take years to make its way through the courts” (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/23518>). Other titans weighing in on the case include Sony, Microsoft, Amazon, France, and Germany (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/8523339.stm>).

HELPFUL LINKS

FAQs about the Settlement:
<http://tinyurl.com/yz343jt>

The Public Index (a public service forum on the settlement run by James Grimmelmann of New York Law School):
<http://thepublicindex.org/>

Literary agent Lynn Chu’s March 2009 Wall Street Journal op-ed opposing the original settlement:
<http://tinyurl.com/cp6scr>

GBS: Fairness Hearing Report
<http://tinyurl.com/yg8dbhj>



"The world (which some call the Library) is made up of an unknown, or perhaps unlimited, number of hexagonal galleries, each with a vast central ventilation shaft surrounded by a low railing. From any given hexagon, the higher and lower galleries can be seen stretching away interminably."

-- The Library of Babel, Jorge Luis Borges



On the Shoulders of Giants: The Google Settlement and You

by Casey Butterfield



Like it or not, we are living in a digital age. Our office bookshelves may groan with heavy dictionaries, but for the translators working in more common language pairs, much of the reference material we use is now available online. It was only a matter of time before someone decided to rebuild those neglected bookshelves in cyberspace, and search behemoth Google has taken up the task.

But when a corporation declares that its mission is to “digitise all the world’s books,” as Google’s chief legal officer wrote in the *Guardian* in early February, who benefits? As a translator who makes extensive use of the Google Books website even now, before any consequences of the settlement, I say that we do. What’s more, I say that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks by a factor of at least a million—and that’s still lower than the number of out-of-print books we will gain access to if all elements of the settlement between Google and the class-action plaintiffs are enacted.

Whether you have opted in, opted out, or ignored the settlement, you have probably heard that there will be great consequences for authors and translators once a decision has been made. But you may also have seen that many book results are already popping up in searches.

Here’s the pre-settlement situation: Google Books currently allows users to search some seven million books in the database. Any whole books you can access through Google right now are in the public domain. That means that anyone could scan these

Casey Butterfield is a translator of German, Spanish, and Catalan. She was born in Los Angeles, lives in Austin, worked in Berlin, and studied literary translation in Barcelona on a Fulbright grant. Casey is also an editor and writes about language and politics on her website, <http://belletra.com/>

and post them online; Google just happens to have a more attractive place to display them than most. Books still in copyright that show up in Google searches are part of the “Google Partner Program,” in which books are displayed “only with the permission of one or more rightsholders of the book” (Google Settlement FAQ). These are individual deals between publishers or authors and Google to make available for search results pristine digitized versions of books supplied by the publishers. Results for these books range from the default three-line “snippet view” to multiple-page excerpts. Readers can see up to 70 pages of each book that appears in their search results, but the amount varies by the terms of each agreement: often only the tables of contents and indices can be viewed.

Snippet views were one of the sticking points of the original lawsuit that authors and publishers filed against Google, since the defendant defined these as fair use and the plaintiffs did not. One cannot read a book through snippets, or even a poem; a reader would not be satisfied with what is available for public consumption. If one is translating, however, these snippets are a researcher's dream.

As literary translators, we form an essential link in the chain from author to (global) reader. It is our duty to ensure that the work of the writers and linguists who came before us is not lost in translation. To use some hypothetical examples from my own working languages: when we encounter an epigraph from an out-of-print Mexican author in the Spanish novel we are translating, when the German Karl Marx citation in an economic sociology monograph is intended for a monolingual U.S. audience, or when we find a Robert Graves poem in a Catalan short story, we cannot simply translate these with a dictionary, as though they were so much quotidian narration.

The responsible translator, when confronted with such weighty and widespread prose, attempts to find out whether previous translations already exist in the world. Yet it makes no sense to buy up every book in which we might locate a reference for a project, nor is it financially feasible. This is where Google Books has already become so essential in my own work and that of my colleagues: today's telecommuting possibilities and employment opportunities for translators mean that many of us live miles from the nearest library, and many freelancers have no university affiliation with which they can easily slip into their nearest Google-indexed library (How close are you to Stanford?) and have a peek at the book they need to find. I belong to an e-mail list of 100 German-English translators where there are at least four posts a month requesting help with searches on exactly this sort of source material. One colleague of mine is so adept at finding needed reference citations that she plans to offer a pro bono course to fellow translators on how to search Google Books most effectively.

Right now any book published in the United States after 1923 remains under copyright, unless the author or rightsholder has specifically ceded their work to the public domain. In practice, this means that a large part of the twentieth-century English-language literary canon—along with the not-so-literary—is inaccessible, because one cannot request the rights to reproduce all or part of a book when neither the rightsholder nor the book has been heard of in seventy years. These out-of-print, “orphaned” books comprise the bulk of the positive implications for this settlement. As Authors Guild representatives explained it in the *New York Review of Books* (February 25, 2010), “the current marketplace for these books is, by definition, nil. The great promise of the settlement is to create a resource that would otherwise not exist.” And it is very likely that these millions of rescued orphan books will contain a litany of literary translations.

Of course, the administrative apparatus proposed in the settlement to track down rightsholders and distribute revenue from these orphaned books may have its growing pains. But the translators, authors and publishers who have opted in to the settlement are actively contributing to the dissemination of human knowledge. At the same time, they encourage and enable their colleagues to remain faithful to original sources by generously allowing Google to make their work searchable. Google's indexing system, the very “digitizing” that contemporary rightsholders so fear, is often the same tool that helps us to continue our work as we call on the resources of the past.

What Isaac Newton called “standing on the shoulders of giants” is at the core of our profession: literary translators hold subsidiary rights because the source material is essential to the target product we create. The plan behind Google Books is to make our literary heritage available to us more easily and in greater quantity than it has ever been before. In the words of the Authors Guild, the settlement “will work a great good for readers, while protecting the rights of authors.” Let's hope that such a great good comes to pass.



What does the Google settlement mean to literary translators?

by Liliana Valenzuela



By the time you read this piece, the February 18, 2010 scheduled Fairness Hearing on the Amended Google Book Settlement will have taken place and Judge Chin may have ruled on the massive class action suit, which attempts to resolve without litigation Google's alleged infringement of millions of copyrights, which the giant corporation claims was fair use.

At stake are individual writers' and translators' intellectual property rights.

If you have a copyright interest in a work published before January 5, 2009, you may have already faced the decision to opt in or out of the settlement. If you opted in or did nothing, you're part of the "class" and subject to terms of the settlement, if the court approves it. If you opted out, you retain your right to sue Google for copyright infringement, and Google should have no rights to your covered works, even if it has already digitized them. In either case, it behooves us all to be vigilant about Google's use of our work, whether it is a translation of a book-length work or an "Insert," such as a poem or a story in an anthology or textbook, for which you hold copyright.

The Google settlement itself is lengthy (385 pages of legalese) and convoluted. It's difficult even for many lawyers and literary agents to understand. You can thank Google's big gun lawyers for that. Most people would feel overwhelmed and choose to "ignore" the whole issue, which is partly what I believe Google was hoping for. It's also one of the main arguments against the settlement: upending

Born and raised in Mexico City, Liliana Valenzuela is an adopted tejana. The 2006 recipient of the Alicia Gordon Award for Word Artistry in Translation, she's the Spanish language translator of works by Sandra Cisneros, Julia Alvarez, Denise Chávez, Nina Marie Martínez, Ana Castillo, Dagoberto Gilb, Richard Rodríguez, Rudolfo Anaya, Cristina García, Gloria Anzaldúa, and many other writers. An award-winning poet and essayist, her work has appeared in The Edinburgh Review, Indiana Review, Tigertail, and other journals and publications. She served as an ATA director during 2005-2008. She lives in Austin, Texas, with her family. Her new website: www.lilianavalenzuela.com.

the protections of copyright, the settlement allows Google to do what it wants until the rights holder tells them not to. Didn't it used to be the other way around?

While I personally enjoy many things Google has given us so far—the Google search engine itself, Google Earth, and Google News, to name a few—I also believe that through this latest attempt to gobble up the world's libraries, for a profit, Google, Inc. is overstepping its bounds. Rather than settling

anything, the settlement creates a brand new business model with fixed terms that have not even been finalized, whether you like it or not.

As a literary translator who holds copyright in many of my translations (a derivative right, dependent upon the author's), I stand to lose potential income when Google posts my work in their book search programs.

Whether you have chosen to remain in the class or to opt out, the Google settlement puts the onus on individual authors and translators to provide Google with a comprehensive list of all the books and publications where shorter segments may have appeared, in order to maintain some control over how the work is used online. This places an undue burden both on translators, authors and their agents, as well as creating an ungodly amount of extra paperwork. The settlement is coercive in that even when you opt out, it is still your responsibility to police Google. Participation in the Google digitization project should be voluntary and an "opt in," rather than the way it presently stands.

At present, I derive income from the reprints of my translations in textbooks, anthologies and coursepacks. If even some of those pages are made available through Google Book Search, what is the incentive for textbook companies or the general public to pay the translator for his or her intellectual labor? For translators the burden is doubled because by its very nature, control of our copyrights is shared with another party, either an author who controls underlying rights or a publisher that may control the electronic rights in a work.

Despite Google's lofty claims to be recreating a digital version of the extinct Library of Alexandria, it looks to me like the Google settlement, if accepted, will in fact be violating existing copyright and book contracts, will create a de facto monopoly, and will control the content and accessibility of large chunks of humanity's common knowledge. Google threatens to set the terms of the new digital frontier, more a robber baron's paradise than a book utopia.



INDIAN LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION



Rashid Hasan has a PhD in Modern Arabic from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. He has been a translator for the past ten years. He is passionate about life, literature, and poetry. Mr. Hasan wishes to promote literary and cultural exchange between India and other countries by means of translation. He speaks Arabic, English, Urdu/Hindi, and French. He writes about things he feels for.

Colorful India versus One India

A country where dialect changes every fifteen miles, as do cultures, mores and other trivialities, India is a baffling site for social scientists and linguists alike. The mystery of Indian uniformity remains largely unsolved. Amidst multiple faiths, tongues, costumes, cuisines, and belief systems, it is hard to find a logical answer. Perhaps there is only one plausible explanation - her mind-boggling diversity. To begin with its festivities, the *Diyas* of Deepawali, the festival of lights, brighten Indian households on the dark night of *Amavas* when doors are thrown open for goddess Laxmi to bless the devotees with eternal wealth. There is a serene charm spread through the country when the holy month of Ramadhan ends followed by celebration of *Eid-ul-Fitr*. The Christmas celebrations are spectacularly bright and omnipresent. The tangy flavor of *Sambhar* and *Rasam* rules the palates, cutting across identities. So does the taste of sumptuous *Biryani*.



Indian diversity is the best explanation for its unity.

Namaste, Salaam, Vanakkam

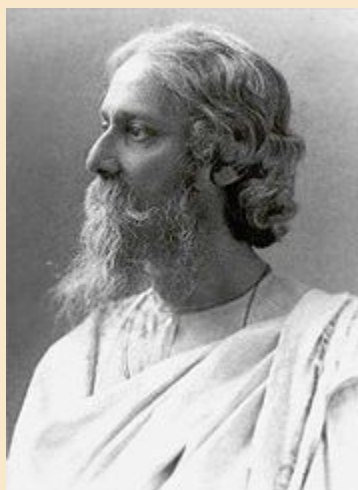
How do you greet people in India? With 18 Scheduled (official regional languages) and 96 Non-Scheduled Languages, this seems to be a vital query. While a smile with a fine gesture would suffice almost everywhere, this could be done in a variety of fashions. The regional languages descend from varied roots, and Indians are multilingual by birth, not by choice, for learning, doing business, and carrying out their shopping. The linguistic reality in India today is confusing at best. While the regional languages have been assigned the status of state languages, English is widely used as a *lingua franca* throughout the country. English remains the only language of higher and professional education. However, the masses relate to their respective regional languages and have a strong attachment to their linguistic identity.

In the Union Territory of Puducherry (erstwhile Pondicherry), French is one among the four official languages. *Bonjour India!*

The Literary Tradition

The literary tradition of India is as diverse as its linguistic plurality. It is rooted in antiquity. The earliest Indian literature was orally transmitted. The beginning of Sanskrit literature with Rig Veda, a collection of sacred hymns, is placed around 1500-1200 BCE. Subsequently, the great epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* appeared, which form the basis of Indian religious and moral identity. Tamil Sangam literature and Pali Canon also appeared around the same time. The medieval period witnessed the emergence of Kannada and Telugu literature, closely followed by Marathi, Bengali, and dialectical varieties of Hindi, Persian, and Urdu. Indian literature came of age with Tagore's *Gitanjali* being awarded the Nobel.

Tagore began writing in Bengali, his native language. His own translations of some of his poems made him known to the West. He became a luminary, and his fame took him across continents on lecture tours and tours of friendship. He became the beacon of India's spiritual heritage to the world. For India, more so for Bengal, he became a great living institution.



Rabindranath Tagore, Asia's First Nobel laureate in 1913

IWE versus Regional

An important part of Indian literature today is Indian writing in English [IWE]. This decade has been remarkably good for India in terms of literary achievements of IWE. Aravind Adiga won the Man Booker prize for *The White Tiger*, in 2008, just two years after Kiran Desai bagged the coveted prize for her second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*. The Arrival of IWE was announced earlier by their predecessors Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy, with their respective masterpieces *The Midnight Children* and *The God of Small Things*. It is certainly a positive development to see Indian writing in English flourishing and making its mark on a larger literary canvas.

However, there has been a raging debate on whether IWE is the genuine representative of Indian literary culture today. Intrinsically, literature of any particular region should portray the essence of that particular culture, the people, and their reality. India, with its myriad cultures and subcultures, which speak in multifarious dialects, is too broad a spectrum to be captured in its true essence by writers producing their work in one particular language. This is particularly true in the case of English, as it is not the language of the common man. The farmers, artisans, regular workers, a majority of Indian households, do not speak or use English. IWE can represent one perspective, but cannot represent the essence of India.

Many of the IWE writers, like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Kiran Desai lead expatriate lives. The major themes in many of their works are those of identity and of globetrotting Indians' place in a world divided between East and West. This definitely translates into a larger readership and broader acceptance. The marketability of their literary output is way ahead of that written in other Indian languages, which appeals only to the speakers of a particular language. The voice of the regional writer is lost. Increasingly, IWE is being seen as the only representative of Indian literature. Vernacular writing is mostly met with condescension, close-mindedness, contempt, ignorance, and even racism by its own countrymen.

The vernacular literary scene has also seen some remarkable writers. Many of the colonial and post-colonial era writers tried their hand at poetry, although they were very heavily influenced by English romantic literature. The self and its complex relationship with nature was a recurrent theme in their writings. What made it doubly appealing was the fact that these articulations could be located in the broader framework of the Indian nationalist movement and could be interpreted as helpful in the visualization and conception of an Indian nationhood as the country fought for its independence and identity.

However, with the second generation of regional writers, the paradigms of regional writing have registered a change. These writers chose the novel as their means of literary expression. Their novels mainly feature protagonists whose struggles reflect the situation of middle-class India. They depict the hopes, fears, insecurities, and uncertainties of an urban middle class consciousness and reveal the contemporary realities of life for the *less privileged*, in terms of gender as well as class.

Ground Realities

The authentic Indian literature is among the oldest bodies of works. The *Vedas* (comprising *Upnishads*, *Samhitas*, *Brahmanas*, and *Aranyakas*) are regarded as cardinal sacred form of knowledge. Hindu epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are deeply ingrained in the Indians ethos and consciousness even after thousands of years. Among its most popular legacies are treatises on architecture and town planning (*Vaastu Shastra*) and on political science by Kautilya (*Arthashastra*). There is almost a continuous tradition of literary productions in each epoch of Indian history. With the arrival of Muslim rulers, a new era of Urdu and Persian literature began, producing geniuses like *Mirza Ghalib* and later *Allama Iqbal*. IWE was a rare phenomenon during these times.

Knowledge of English was restricted to elite class who could afford to study in great centers of learning like Oxford and Cambridge.

Even during the Indian independence movement, regional writers had been chief source of inspiration for Indian masses. Although the frontline of Indian leaders used English to express themselves, along with another Indian language to communicate with the masses, the mass base of party workers and more grassroots leaders spoke their respective mother tongues. Led by the writings of Bengali intellectuals, Indians living in different parts of India mobilized the people to fight the British rule with the help of vernacular popular press and literary writings. Tamil poet *Bharati*, Bengali poets *Tagore* and *Kazi Nazrul Islam* exerted great influence on the minds and hearts of the people. Similarly, *Hindi*, *Marathi*, *Tamil*, *Telugu*, *Urdu* and many other regional languages played a vital role in the awakening of dormant Indian sensibilities.

In post-independence India, English remained as one of the strongest British legacies. Although Hindi was chosen National language, English remained the functional language of the State. As a world language and language of trade and commerce, and as a medium of instruction for higher and professional studies, English strengthened its position in India. For new generation of Indians, English became the first language. An increasing number of Indians chose English for their literary expression. Gradually, owing to its global readership, Indian English literature gained recognition. With time, it began to represent not just Indian English literature, but Indian Literature *per se*. On the other hand, writings in Indian languages, due to their limited readership, began to fade. Despite state patronage and promotional endeavours, they remain far less appealing than the English writing.

Moreover, the regional writings do not offer bright commercial prospect to publishers, whereas IWE is much coveted due to strong revenue generation. Post-globalization, the private publishing houses have progressively promoted IWE, and ignored other languages. Their concern is not to look for new possibilities, but to grab those that exist. English readership is the largest in India and extends to beyond India. It makes great commercial sense.

The Role of Translation

Let us go back to Rabindranath Tagore. He translated his own Bengali writings and received a Nobel. But, not all good writers are good translators. At times, they do not even know English. Translating Indian language literature into English is the first vital step in bringing it to a wider readership. This would also generate a new area of interest for the publishing industry, which should consider investing time and resources in translation activities pertaining to the literary domain.

It is not easy to find competent translators from any regional language into English. Such a translator must be exceptionally good in both the source and the target language. Sometimes a poor translation is worse than no translation, as it creates a negative impression of the writer, even though she may be good in her original language. This explains the poor quality and reception of translated works available on the market today.

International publishing houses have been pumping in big money to publish and promote IWE, effectively smothering regional literature. It is shocking to see regional writers living in penury, while IWE writers claim all the glamour and limelight, simply because the readership of regional writers begins and ends with a miniscule

number who read and understand the particular language – just not enough to woo big publishing houses. But that does not, in any way, imply that regional writers are not on a par with English writers, both in terms of content and presentation. Even though their works are widely read, critical appreciation, especially in the form of some really big awards, have eluded them so far.

This imbalance could be corrected by working on producing quality translations of Indian regional literature by forming a society of translators who are exceptionally good. A mechanism could be devised to reward their efforts. Evaluation of the regional work should be done to consider them for translation. The translated work should be carefully reviewed and discussed with the original author. This may not translate into quick commercial fortune for anyone, but would certainly create an avenue for the growth of an art that merits serious attention.

Ending on a positive note, the success of Indians writing in English has created interest in Indian writers. This has worked towards creating a potentially receptive audience for the translated works of regional writers. Indian National Academy of Letters or *Sahitya Academy* has been working towards promotion of translation of contemporary works from their original language into other Indian languages and into English. Every year *Sahitya Academy* honors outstanding literary efforts in Indian languages in several categories, including translated literature. *Sahitya Academy Award* is known as a benchmark for excellence in contemporary Indian literature. It is just a matter of time that most authentic Indian literary creativity, rooted in deeper Indianness shall be present for the global readers. The discipline of translation and translators have to play a great role towards achieving this noble goal.

Notes from the author:

I am grateful to Chetana Shahin, Assistant Editor with ***The Hindustan Times*** for her help with this article.

For an excellent article on the plight of Indian regional literature see <http://tinyurl.com/yzyow4t>

BY THE WAY

by Tony Beckwith,
<http://www.tonybeckwith.com/>

Cotton Candy



Tony Beckwith was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, spent his formative years in Montevideo, Uruguay, then set off to see the world. He came to Texas in 1980 and now lives in Austin, where he works as a writer, translator, poet, and cartoonist.

Men ever had, and ever will have leave,
To coin new words well suited to the age,
Words are like Leaves, some wither every year,
And every year a younger Race succeeds.
-Horace, poet and satirist (65-8 BCE)

I've been working on a story about the amusement park in the city where I grew up. It was called the *Parque Rodó*, and in the nineteen-fifties it was a special occasion destination for many families living in Montevideo. It had rides and stalls and rifle ranges and vendors of every imaginable kind, and on summer evenings I could barely contain my excitement when my parents took me to mingle with the lively crowds thronging the midway after dark. One of the special treats there was cotton candy — the same pink, sticky fuzz that kids still enjoy all over the world. In my mind's eye I can see the vendor's arm plunging into the swirling tub and wrapping the stuff around a stick.

On my mind's tongue I can taste the sticky sweetness, and in my mind's nose I can smell its hot, sugary fragrance. But I can't remember what it was called.

These days its Spanish name is a literal translation of "cotton candy" but I am convinced that in the fifties we called it something else. It was a local name, not a translation; a real Uruguayan word, or perhaps a variation on a name brought over by migrants from Spain or Italy in the early part of the twentieth century. Maybe it crossed the river from Buenos Aires, which was always a hotbed of spunky new urban slang. But I don't remember that the name we used was a mirror image of "cotton candy," or of its predecessor, the British name "candy floss".

British influence in the River Plate region had been strong ever since the very early nineteenth century and only began to wane

when America's star was on the rise after the Second World War. Uruguayan men-about-town often looked as though they bought their clothes on Oxford Street in London, and their wives patronized an upscale clothing store in Montevideo called the *Tienda Inglesa*. In British Community circles, men were called "chaps," Britain was called "home," and we'd have a cup of tea at 4 o'clock if at all possible, especially on weekends at the Cricket Club. By the time I was going to the *Parque Rodó*, however, American English was the dominant contributor of new words.

It's no use. I can't describe the night at the *Parque Rodó* when my father bought me a huge cone of that sticky, pink fuzz if I'm not sure what I used to call it. I could describe the wild ride on *El Pulpo* (The Octopus) or the more benign *Gusano Loco* (Crazy Worm) that rotated you, flipped you, and spun you round and round until you rather wished you'd saved the pink fuzz for later. I can talk about the *Rueda Gigante* (Ferris Wheel) that swung you up into the night sky, and sometimes stopped when you were right at the top, so that you could look at the lights of the city strung out along the shore of the Río de la Plata, a river so wide that you couldn't see the other side. I loved the *Tren Fantasma* (Ghost Train) because I'd ridden it so frequently that I was no longer scared of the woolen cobwebs and shrieking skeletons in the dark tunnel, and could revel in an unfamiliar and quite delicious state of fearlessness. My all-round favorite was a ride on the *autitos chocadores*; brightly colored bumper cars that whirled and jerked and lurched across the floor, hitting and

being hit constantly and from every angle — slam! bam! bang! It would be many years before I drove a real car, and even though the brightly colored *autitos* never accelerated fast enough, it was a thrill to be behind the wheel of a moving vehicle.

I could also wax operatic about the pizza at the *Rodelú*, where you sat on high stools at a tiled counter right on the sidewalk and ate spongy, deep dish delights smothered in tomato sauce. Or *fainá*, a flat dough made of chickpea flour that was greasy and delicious. They also served an excellent ice-cold draught *cerveza*, but I didn't discover that until many years later. The *panchos calientes* (hot dogs) at the park were of the five star variety (the German mustard was superb!) and there were *parrilladas* where you could get well-seasoned *chorizos* (sausages) and *chivitos* (thinly sliced tenderloin on a soft bun). My mouth is watering as I write, and I'm reminded that, for some people, a trip to the *Parque Rodó* was, above all, a gastronomical excursion. All this was going to be part of the story, which is on hold for now because I'm unable to write about the pink stuff unless I can call it by its real name.

It's not that I'm opposed to the idea of an imported, translated name replacing an earlier one. Not at all. A language shouldn't, in my opinion, be solid. Fluid, yes; gaseous, certainly. But never solid. Only classical languages of antiquity, now victims of rigor mortis, are rigid and do not change and morph and adjust like living languages do.

The languages we speak have morphed and changed in our lifetime, as everyone

knows. In English, “time frame” has replaced “period,” and instead of saying “often” or “frequently” we now say “a lot of the time.” What happens to language as generations come and go is as natural as soil erosion or rivers shifting paths. When words fall out of use they sink to the bottom of our stream of consciousness, where they are gradually buried by the silt of time. This is both a tragedy and a boon. A tragedy in the sense that something is lost, a word that was once part of the sound track of a specific moment

in time and space has vanished, and without it the edifice of the past is incomplete. The boon is that when long-lost words are rediscovered, like shards uncovered by anthropologists, they help a writer or a translator to define a period or an area, and to have a better grasp of a particular etymology.

In this case, I believe that the word I’m searching for is stuck down there in the silt, so I’ll just call this a work-in-progress for now, and let it go at that.



CREDITS

p. 7

Installations by Matej Krén

Book Cell

An installation of books and mirrors

Centro de Arte Moderna - Foundation Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal

http://claudia.weblog.com.pt/arquivo/2007/03/post_65.html

The Borges quotation comes from the translation by Norman Thomas di Giovanni.

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One of the book towers created by Tom Bendtsen

in his *Arguments* series, made of 10,000 books.

<http://www.inkygirl.com/book-tower/>

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Tower of Babel by the Master of the Duke of Bedford - Google Images

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Indian diversity, Ravindranath Tagore - Bing Images

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Cotton Candy - Google Images

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