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**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE**

III SEMESTER EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2021

(Examination conducted in February-March 2022)

**AE 319 - Additional English**

**Time: 2 ½ hours Max marks: 70**

This paper contains **THREE** printed pages.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. You will lose marks for exceeding word limits and lifting from the question paper.

2. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.

**I. Read this excerpt from a H S Shivaprakash interview:**

So, is there a point in looking at what is a more authentic translation?

H.S.S.: First of all, what is authenticity? Number one, we assume that this is a finite text. Bhakti texts are flowing texts. Look at any edition of vachanas edited by people like L. Basavaraju, R.C. Hiremath and so on. They give you different versions of the same text. In some textual rendering, some lines are the same, which are found in other ones and some words are different. Even about the ankitas or signatures there are controversies. For example, Ramanujan translated Guheshwara as the Lord of Caves. I told him to his face, if you translate like this your name should be translated as the younger brother of the handsome one. So, one has to contend with these different textual variants of the same lines and same words. And as a translator—I am not a textual scholar—I cannot say this is the best, I will guess the overall meaning and I take the languages.

For example, what makes Akkamahadevi’s vachanas intimate in Kannada? Because it is speaking to somebody all the time. In Ramanujan’s translation it is like speaking to oneself; something like Sylvia Plath’s poetry or Anglo-American poetry of the ’70s. It is not done. Because he wants to make it in telegraphic language like in modern poetry, he omits all the addresses like avva (mother), ayya (father), etc. But language of vachanas is dialogic. When I say it is direct speech, it is dialogic and not monologic.

**I.A. Read the following vachana by Akka Mahadevi** called **“**What else you want”?

If hungry, there is food in the town to beg for.  
If thirsty, there are lakes, wells and streams.  
For sleeping, there is discarded buildings.  
Oh Lord chennamallikArjuna, as the company   
for the soul You are there.

**I.B. Answer the following questions in about 5-8 sentences each: [2x5=10]**

1. In the interview you read, H S Shivaprakash suggests that Akka Mahadevi’s vachanas are dialogic (“speaking to somebody all the time”). In the above vachana, does it seem to you like Akka Mahadevi is talking to someone? Give evidence from the vachana.
2. Do you find any need to correct grammar/punctuation in the above translation? If yes, what corrections would you want to make? If not, explain why the above translation works according to you.

**I.C. Read the following vachana by Allama Prabhu:**

On a hill of embers

a pillar of lak

a swan sitting on the pillar

The pillar was burnt and

the swan flew away

Guheshwara

Note: lak is wax

**I.D.** **Answer the following questions in about 5-8 sentences each: [2x5=10]**

1. In the interview you read, H S Shivaprakash refers to A K Ramanujan translating Guheshwara as “Lord of the Caves”. But the above version by another translator leaves “Guheshwara” untranslated. What is your preference as a reader? Give at least one reason.
2. Suggest a title for the above vachana. Provide details about your choice.

**II.** **Carefully consider these two opinions:**

In the interview, H S Shivaprakash says: So, there is a politics of translation. So, I think the translator should listen to the source text with ‘no mind’. As long as your mind is full of this noise created by your own culture, your own ideologies, your own pre-conceptions, you do not listen...

“We believe that translation is a process of understanding and interpreting a text, and each act of translation is a creation of a new and tentative text.”- translators of *The Sign*- an anthology of 12th century Vachanas

**II.A.** 5. After spending a part of this semester reading from A K Ramanujan’s *Speaking of Siva*, do you think the ‘no mind’ approach to translation would be effective as compared to the translation as interpretation approach? Which approach would you follow? Explain why. **Respond in about 200 words. [15 marks]**

**III.** 6**.** Tapti Bose, a reviewer, notes: “…obscenity is frequently an allegation (used) in the literary world to dismiss non-standard modes of expression of the weaker sections”. Do you agree with this argument? In your reading of *Wild Girls, Wicked Words*, what non-standard modes of expression did you notice? Give examples. **Respond in about 200 words. [15 marks]**

**IV. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each: [2x10=20]**

7. “Nabokov begins an article on his experience of translating Pushkin’s Onegin with a vituperate attack on any translation judged as “readable”. His call for “footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers” … is hardly a recipe for great literature. It is thus perhaps hardly surprising and that translation scholar Willis Barnstone describes his translation of Onegin as “unread and hard to read”.

What do you think Nabokov should have done to make his translation more readable? Discuss with special reference to the *Eugene Onegin* selections on your syllabus.

8. “Nabokov describes his translation as “transposal.” “Transposal” can be understood as literal rendering of the meanings of the words from Russian to English. However, translation may become a transposal when it relocates the reader, mentally, of course, to a different place — that of Eugene Onegin’s world as mediated by Nabokov’s translation and annotation.”

When you were reading stanzas from Nabokov’s translation of Eugene Onegin, did you feel like you were being transported to 1800s Russia- the setting of the novel in verse? Corroborate your response with details from your reading.

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