

Introduction to World Literature
Professor Dr Merin Simi Raj
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Lecture 05
Challenges and Possibilities for World Literature

Hello and welcome to today's session of the course introduction of world literature.

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• An essay by Kathleen Shields, 2013 ✓

• Main argument: Goethe's concept of Weltliteratur was grounded in translation practice

• In creating a canon representing the best of each nation, translation occupied centre stage.

Volume 15 Issue 7 (December 2013) Article 7
Kathleen Shields,
"Challenges and Possibilities for World Literature, Global Literature, and Translation"
✓ <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss7/7>>

Contents of *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.7 (2013)
Special Issue *New Work in Comparative Literature in Europe*.
Ed. Marina Grishakova, Lucia Boldrini, and Matthew Reynolds
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss7/>>

In this session we are looking at 2013 essay by Kathleen Shields, its title is challenges and possibilities for world literature, global literature and translation. The crux of this essay is on looking at the practice of translation from an entirely different point of view trying to see how different kind of an approach or more focused approach on the practice of translation may yield a lot of fruitful results for reading world literature itself.

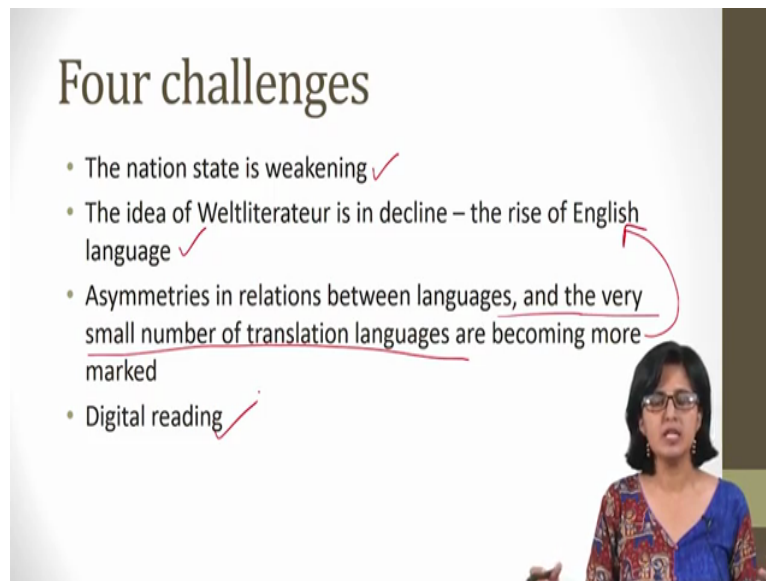
The main argument of Shields' essay is that Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*, as he had used the term originally for world literature, was grounded in translation practice. If you recall some of our early discussions on the term *Weltliteratur* and how a literature invents as a concept in the late 18th to the early 19th century, you may also remember that translation, the circulation in different countries, in different traditions, those with the bases on which the idea of world literature was grounded.

And in Shields' essay she also tries to play with this idea that in creating a canon representing the best of each nation, translation occupied centre stage and Shields is trying to question the

nature of this occupation, the nature of the importance of translation has not had in world literature and she is encouraging us to look at translation as a political act, as something which is not limited to linguistic or philological frameworks but something which has an overarching geopolitical significance.

The essay can be accessed in this link.

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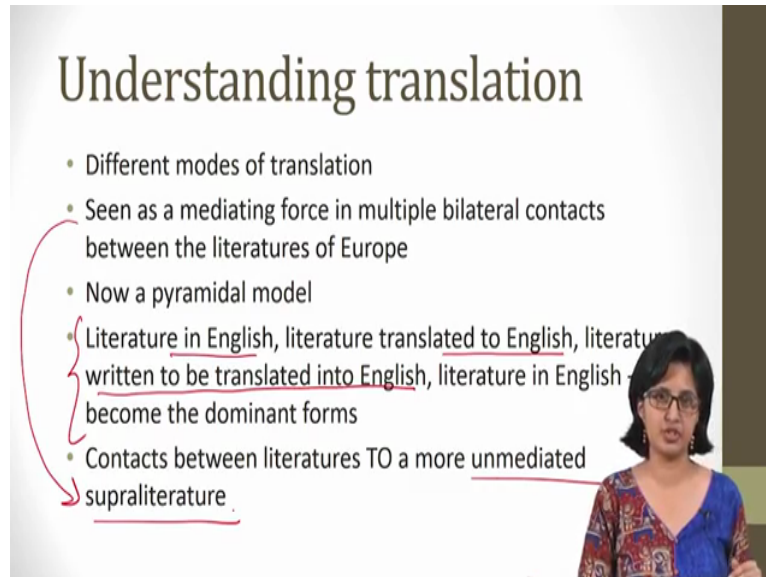


At the outset of the essay, Shields talks about four major challenges in the context of world literature, one the nation state is weakening the kind of significance at nation states had in the 19th century and even in the early 20th century is getting increasingly weakened in the contemporary and the idea of Weltliteratur perhaps as a consequence of this is also in decline and she also tries to link this up with the emergence of with the rise of English language as a supralanguage or as a global language.

And then she draws her attention to the third challenge which is Asymmetries in relations between languages and she draws her attention to the small number of translation languages which are becoming more market, which also means that it is not as if all languages are getting translated in to different languages, literatures aim only particular languages, literatures which occupy only particular kinds of political and social significance are getting translated into certain languages and here again she links this up with the idea of the significance of English language where we find more translations to English language than to any other language and on the contrary we do not find enough translations happening from English language towards other languages either.

And finally as a challenge and at the same time as a possibility she is also introducing us to the idea of Digital reading and how the digitization of the materials, digitization of literatures also brings in new challenges and new prospect for World Literature.

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The slide is titled "Understanding translation" and contains the following bullet points:

- Different modes of translation
- Seen as a mediating force in multiple bilateral contacts between the literatures of Europe
- Now a pyramidal model
- Literature in English, literature translated to English, literature written to be translated into English, literature in English become the dominant forms
- Contacts between literatures TO a more unmediated supraliterature

A red bracket on the left side of the slide groups the last three bullet points. A woman with glasses and a patterned top is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

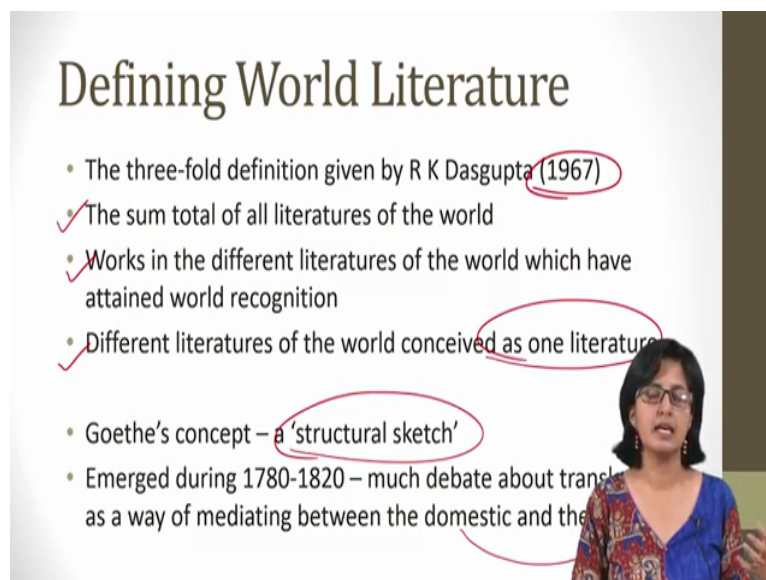
The first half of a shields essay has to do with understanding translation, she tells to support different modes of translation and she also alerts us to the idea, the translation cannot be and need not be seen as a singulam monoethic concept and she reminds us that in the beginning in the first phase translation was perhaps seen as a mediating force in multiple bilateral contacts between the literatures of Europe, and it was in these contacts that get himself had use a term Weltliterateur because he found that he is own words where been translated and they were in circulation different parts of Europe.

So it was seen as a mediating force especially in the context of how 19th century Europe also begin to be divided into different nations states, also how 19th century Europe begin to see a lot a of devise forces at work and translation was one such thing which could perhaps act as a bride across cultures, across nations and across traditions but now when we look at translation, Kathleen Shields reminds us it operates as a pyramidal model, there is a certain pyramid in place where English serves as the base of all kinds of translation, English language serves as a foundational base for all translation practices across the world and this is the phrase that she uses literature in English, literature translated to English, literature written to be translated into English, then literature in English they become the dominant forms.

So that is all about literature which is written either in English or about the kind of literatures which are written to be translated into English, so that they are accessible to a certain geopolitical space, so that they become part of a certain kind of canon which has been designed and devised in particular ways. So there is a very evident shift that we understand translation from being seen as a mediating force across literatures of Europe, we find that today there is a shift towards a more unmediated supraliterature, this is the term that uses for literatures available in English or literatures originally written in English.

So from translation being a mediating force across literatures, across traditions there is a move towards a single language, a single kind of traditional literature which according to Kathleen Shields is also unmediated supraliterature.

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Defining World Literature

- The three-fold definition given by R K Dasgupta (1967)
- ✓ The sum total of all literatures of the world
- ✓ Works in the different literatures of the world which have attained world recognition
- ✓ Different literatures of the world conceived as one literature
- Goethe's concept – a 'structural sketch'
- Emerged during 1780-1820 – much debate about translation as a way of mediating between the domestic and the foreign

Mapping the ways in which world literatures has been defined is a useful trajectory to continue with and shields uses the three-fold definition given by R K Dasgupta in 1967 and the three ways in which the Dasgupta attempted to define world literature one as a sum total of all literatures of the world, secondly as works in the different literatures of the world which have attend world recognition and thirdly has different literatures of the world conceived as one literature.

So we are increasingly using the definition the second and third definition more and more because of a first definition sum total of all literatures of the world it is an almost impractical task to bring together all literatures in the context of the definitions the second one and the

third one, we are also talking about a move from national literatures towards a single world literature.

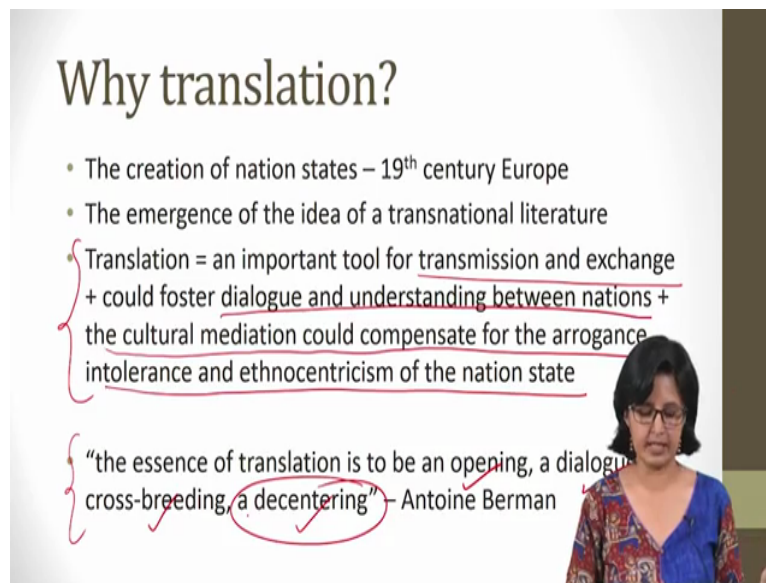
So the question this is a practical question or not? That is perhaps that is something that we need to discuss in other lecture. Given these definitions and the various ways in which this has been working, she also reminds us that translation continues to be one of the foundational practices which continue to be important because to be able to be seen as one there should be some kind of a unity which now can be seen in the way in which English language is increasingly emerging as a supraliterature.

She is also clarifying that Goethe's concept can be seen as best as a structural sketch now, Goethe's idea of Weltliteratur founded in his letters written to air command, this was during the period between 1780 and 1820 from the late 18th century till the early 19th century. It could be said that this was the period during which the idea of world literature itself emerged, if we can take Goethe's use of the term Weltliteratur as one of the starting points.

So it during this phase from the late 18th till the early 19th century, in this phase Europe was going through a number of translations and there was a much debate going on about translation itself as a way of mediating between the domestic and the foreign and this as reminded earlier, this was one of the ways in which conflicts could be resolved and this was also a way in which the domestic and the foreign the inside and the outside could come together with little conflict.

So it was in this context that they need for translation, they need for a single world literature, they need to conceive of a body of literature which is beyond the boundaries of a nation state, which is beyond the boundaries of languages and traditions, it was such a context that this needed self-had emerged.

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Why translation?

- The creation of nation states – 19th century Europe
- The emergence of the idea of a transnational literature
- Translation = an important tool for transmission and exchange + could foster dialogue and understanding between nations + the cultural mediation could compensate for the arrogance, intolerance and ethnocentrism of the nation state

“the essence of translation is to be an opening, a dialogue, cross-breeding, a decentering” – Antoine Berman

So this again brings us back to the significance of the translation and translation practices, so why we are talking about translation, Kathleen Shields take us through this journey and she tells us in details about the ways in which translation practices evolved. In 19th century Europe we find that the nation state are being created and (09:33) there is also the emergence of an idea of trans national literature.

So there is a way in which these two seemingly different movements go parallelly. The nation state of course a cert individuality and the importance of being specific, the importance of the inside but the idea of trans national literature on the other hand celebrates a coming together of these differences and celebrate the importance of this connection this continuing contact between the inside and the outside and there is a way in which shields tries to connect this various disparaging things in a single practice which is translation and translation according to her is an important tool for transmission and exchange there is no doubt about that, that is one of the most basic understanding, that is one of the basic function of translations but at the same time it could foster dialogue and understanding between nations.

Accurate see is to be the owner of the writers or translators, it see is to be the owners of the publishing houses there is a large of political function which translation begins to play rather in inadvertently and at the same time and this cultural mediating she argues could compensate for the arrogance, intolerance and ethnocentrism of the nation state, this also ties up with the various arguments put forward by Goethe is, Marx and Engels where they talk about the need for overcoming national literatures.

They need to move beyond the national literatures and talk about the trans national literature, talk about world literature and if you recall one of the earlier session to god also was hinting towards this when he give a lecture on vishwa sahitya again loosely translated as world literature, when he was asked to talk about comparative literature he was he choose to talk about world literature about comparing and amalgamating different traditions and different literally backgrounds into a seemingly one stand of literature and this was a need of the hour.

Shields again remind us because this was the age, this was the century when different nations state where have been created and this mediation in the form of translation was extremely imperative, it played a literally role, a cultural role and also political role. Kathleen Shields finds Antoine Berman is definition to be a very useful. The essence of translations is to be an opening, a dialogue, a cross breeding, a decentering.

So here at this point we begin to look at translation as a practice which is serving a higher purpose, it is not the just about the words which are being translated, it is not just about a story which is being made available into different language or poem or lyric or an a epic which is being made available into another language, it is also about opening of the worlds, it is about initiating dialogues, it is about cross-breeding and very importantly it is about taking away the center unlike the early modernist period when the lack of center was seen as a catastrophe where it was seen as a disaster in the contemporary there is again and again a need being failed to decenter where the absence of the center is seen as an enabling fact, the absence of a center also means that the distinction between the center and the periphery, the center and the margin so slowly becoming insignificant if not entirely absent.

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Translation as a political act

- Translation is like a one-way bridge → destroyed when it has been crossed over
- “Important for the creation of world literature, but fades into the background once this ambition is achieved”
- Translation can also “prevent dialogue, block contacts, and support ethnocentrism on a global scale in the so-called war on terror” (Mona Baker)

Translations of literature – inevitably connected to politics
World recognition – not without controversy

This leads us to the next segment in Shields's essay where she is looking at translation as a political act. Translation she points out is also now functioning as a one-way bridge and this is a kind of bridge which has to be destroyed or which gets destroyed inadvertently when it has been crossed over and she notes it is important translation as an activity, it is important for the creation of world literature but fades into background once this ambition is achieved.

So it is not seen as a two-way act rather it is seen to be a two-way act it is more like a one-way bridge and here Shields is deliberately drawing her attention to the other flip side of translation that the translation have been facing, she could be Mona Baker to explain this further, Mona Baker argues it is translation can also prevent dialogue, block contacts and support ethnocentrism on a global scale, in the so-called war on terror.

This needs to be contrasted with the point that we just observed Antoine Berman's argument the essence of translation is to be an opening, a dialogue, a cross-breeding and a decentering from that in the contemporary there is also the risk of translation preventing dialogue, blocking contacts and supporting ethnocentrism especially in the context of the war on terror.

Emily Apter's book *The Impossibility of Translation* also talks extensively about the absence of translation or rather the irrelevance of translation in this context of war on terror. We should perhaps take a detail look at in one of the later sessions, while it is a matter of debate whether translation has seen to be an enabling factor in terms of promoting dialogues, in terms of promoting mutual interaction.

It is also important to underscore the main point that Kathleen Shields is trying to drive home here that translation of literature are inevitably connected to politics, translation is essentially a political act and world recognition, though it may be present as many in awkward is a simple straightforward thing, world recognition also to start happen without controversy, these are the two elements which she tries to perceive in the rest of her essay where she introduce to argue that translation needs to be seen as a political act and it needs to be taken away from being slowly a linguistic or philological activity and that world recognition this would given thing or there is a no given formula, there is not given framework for world recognition that it is also fraud within a lot of controversies.

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The selection of Nobel laureates

- 'fairly political' ✓
- Tagore – the first non-European to receive the prize 1913
- 'not giving it to a European as a way of avoiding having to decide between countries on the verge of war'
- Two Tagores – one writing in Bengali, the other translating himself into English
- Yeats promoting Tagore as a universal figure
- "The case of Tagore illustrates the ambivalence of supranational literature toward translation" ✓

The slide features a list of bullet points with red checkmarks and underlines. A red circle highlights the text 'Two Tagores' in the fourth bullet point, with two red arrows pointing to the words 'one writing in Bengali' and 'the other translating himself into English'. A video inset on the right shows a woman with glasses and a blue patterned top speaking.

She give us the example of the selection of Nobel laureates and she points out that this process, the selection of Nobel laureates have always been a fairly political act. 1913 Nobel prize where Rabindranath Tagore the Indian, the first non-European to receive the prize that was 1913 and this happens just before the world war. Shield is very effectively situate this selection, this nomination and this winning by Tagore within this political context and in her own words this act of not giving it to a European as a way of avoiding having to decide between countries on the verge of war.

So this was according to shields a an easy way out, some kind of reconciliation an attempted reconciliation through this announcement of the Nobel prize, one way choose to have a different opinion, one way choose to disagree with the point that shields this is making but what is important here is the way in which she is trying to identify the political elements which are also inherent in the idea of world literature in the conceive in the concept of world

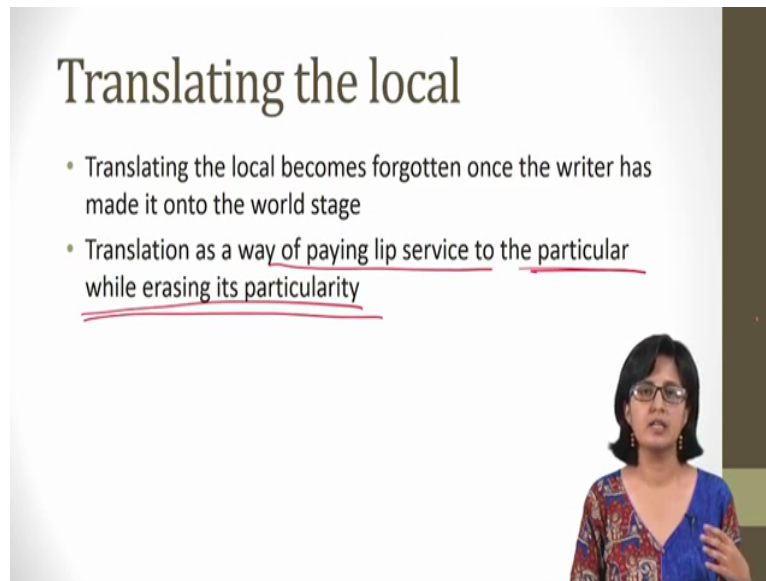
literature and the processes through which world literatures are framed and this sort of responses also extremely important because we cannot completely ignore the many the seemingly natural or the seemingly commonsensical elements which are part of these loaded terms.

Shields continues to perceived this point and she draws her attention to the fact that she can see Two Tagore is one is the Tagore writing in Bengali and the other is this Bengali writer the Indian Bengali writer whose translating himself into English and she of course also reminds as a of the role that W B Yeats played in promoting to god as a universal figure and the way in which she tries to bring together this Two Tagore is the one who is writing in Bengali.

During the high nationalist face exclusively for local regional language readers and the other Tagore is who also translating himself into English notably not any other Indian language but into English and this is a way in which Tagore himself perhaps tries to precession himself as a writer who can be accessed by the world and this world of course is a limited world given that it is world inhabited by the once who can access words in English Language, who can read words in English Language and this word can only be circulated in those areas where English is used as a literary language and shields finds the case of Tagore very pertinent and she continues the state that.

The case of Tagore illustrates the ambivalence of supranational literature toward translation and this happens in the early 20th century and shields also reminding us that translation and the creation of world literature, the creation of world canon they were always political act, it was always, already political that it is now hard to take the political element out of this and see them as pure words of translation, see the mess of pure act is of pure processes which made is certain words into world canon or world literature.

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Translating the local


- Translating the local becomes forgotten once the writer has made it onto the world stage
- Translation as a way of paying lip service to the particular while erasing its particularity

It is in this context that Shields also tell us about the fate of the local, when the local the regional is getting translated it becomes forgotten as soon as writer make is into the world stage. In her words translating the local becomes forgotten one is the writer has made it onto the world stage and here translation nearly becomes a way of paying lip service to the particular while erasing it is particularity, I repeat translation becomes a way of paying lip service to the particular while erasing it is particularity.

If you use the same example that Kathleen Shields has used when Tagore translates he is words from Bengali to English, of course it is a significant act but at the same time the particular, the local the word which is originally there written in Bengali it loses it is significance and it the particularity of the words also get erased to because it becomes more generic, it becomes more global with less local or less original flavor.

Of course this is not to say that translation hence needs to be rated as a practice because it challenges, shields intention here is to draw her attention to the many things which are otherwise overlooked when we are looking at translation practices especially in the context of world literature.

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Changing literary cultures

- Reinforcement of the power of English as a supralanguage
 - The fall of the Berlin wall, the end of the Apartheid
 - World languages (Arabic, Hindi, French, German, Chinese, Russian) are all yielding to English in the hierarchy of translations
 - English as a basis for other translations
- The advent of new media ✓
- The digitization of texts ✓
- The spread of economic modernization to every part of the globe

A woman with glasses and a blue patterned top is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

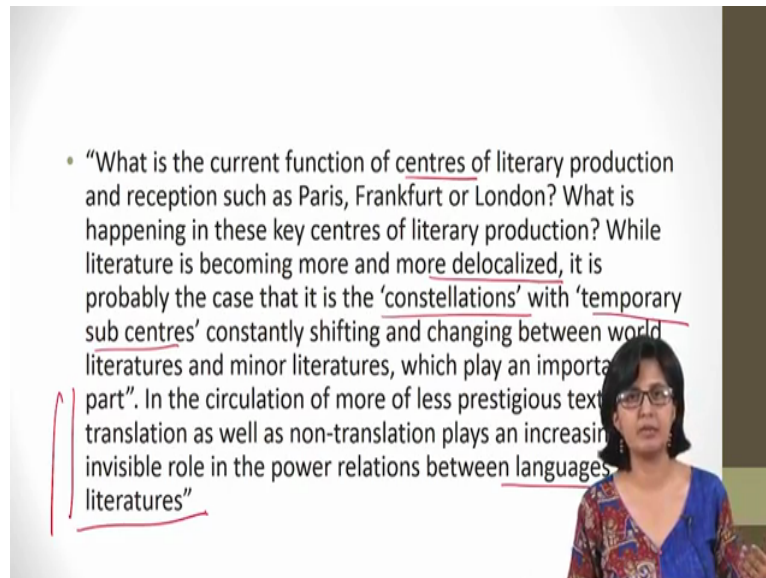
And this process is the very organic it brings in a lot of change while it is at word and shields us telling us about the change in literary cultures when translation as a practice begins to intervene in world literature. There is no other way in which world literature can be made accessible translation, translating word from one language to the other, from one tradition to the other is perhaps the only way in which words can be made accessible and this causes a lot of changes within a literary system, within literary cultures and in the contemporary shields notably points out that what is now happen is a reinforcement of English language as a supralanguage.

And she also say is that a series of worlds even is political and social historical event also had played an important role in affirming and reinforcing the supremacy of English language the fall of the berlin wall and the end of the Apartheid, two significant events that she quotes and she also points out that a number of world languages such as Arabic, Hindi, French, German, Chinese, and Russian they are all yielding to English in the hierarchy of translations.

Remember the pyramidal model that she spoke about at the outset of her essay where she was drawing her attention to the way in which the base, the foundational base in this pyramid had become English Language and there is a way in which the hierarchy was beginning to be a set in different paradigm all together and English language the words being made available in English is now serving as a bases for other translations as well and this is the point that she continues to perceive throughout her essay.

There are couples of other things also which have contributed to the changing literary system and cultures, the advent of the new media, the digitization of text and of course the spread of economic modernization to every part of the globe and this need to be seen these different things which are happening in different segments and different sectors. They need to be seen together to be able to understand the change which is come up about an literary cultures.

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I read out this excerpt from Kathleen Shields' essay, what is a current function of centers of literary production and reception such as Paris, Frankfurt or London? What is happening in these key centers of literary production? While literature is becoming more and more delocalized, it is probably the case that it is the constellations with temporary sub centers, constantly shifting and changing between world literatures and minor literatures, which play an important part.

In the circulation of more or less prestigious texts, translation as well as non-translation plays an increasing but invisible role in the power relations between languages and literatures. She is bringing about a significant difference between language and literatures and the availability of this different words in different spaces and she is also questioning the role played by the centers of literary production in the contemporary.

While there is an increasing move towards the localization there is increasing move towards conceiving the literatures as one as a world canon, they also realize that power relation. There is a hierarchy at words there is a certain kind of a privileging of certain words particularly in this context the one is available in English language which we can see.

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The changing idea of national literature

- "It is certainly not a national literature, but a literature that is composed in order to be translated, most frequently to be translated into English"
- Eg: The Chinese govt project to translate the Five Classics into 8 world languages – an English translation will serve as a base text for all of these translations!
- The translation is always towards English – never in the opposite direction
- "As in any cross-cultural exchange that goes in only one direction, culture that receives influence will always find itself in the second position. It will always appear slightly behind the times" (Derrida)

As a corollary the idea of national literature also undergoes a radical change when Kathleen Shields is drawing her attention to the various challenges that world literature is facing in the contemporary especially in the context of translations practice, she is not entirely underscoring a very pessimistic view of about translation. She is drawing her attention to how one needs to be attentive to the changes which are also being organically build into this process and her take on to changing idea of national literature also needs to be seen in that context.

In shields words it is certainly not a national literature but a literature that is composed in order to be translated, most frequently to be translated into English and here the idea of the local becomes a very problematic, there is local literature which is produced, there is a regional literature which is a produced but that literature in the first place the function of that it has to be translated into English, so that it gets a wider audience.

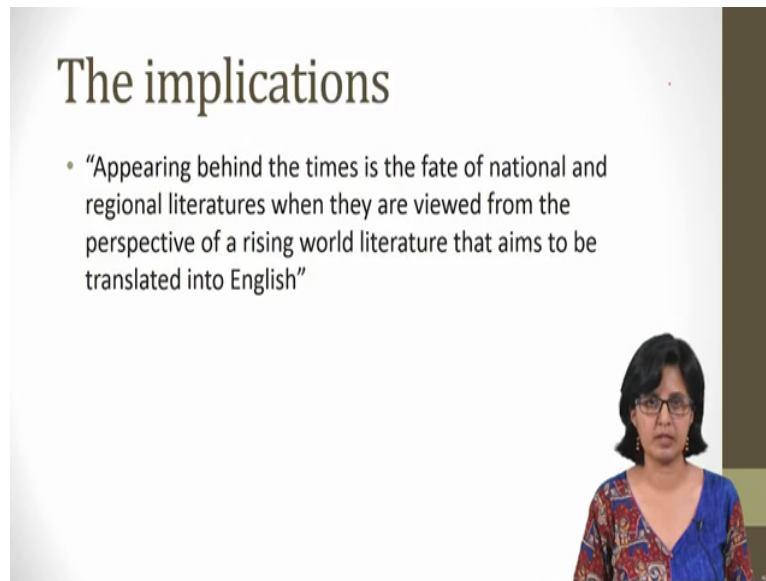
She gives the example of a Chinese government project to translate the five classics which included five important words, important foundational words of Chinese literary cultures and a the project was to translate the five classics into eight different world languages but this decision also made that an English translation mind you not the original Chinese word but the English translation of the Chinese word will serve as a base text for all of these translations.

So we find that this is certainly a way in which hierarchy, (26:23) and privilege operates in within the certain literary systems. The original Chinese word as shields has been trying to point out it fades into insignificance the particular, the peculiar becomes less significant and

less important once the active translations is complete. This what she meant when she spoke about the one-way bridge, one-way bridge is a translation that happens from Chinese language to English language and after this process the Chinese language the words which is written in the original Chinese language that becomes irrelevant.

Now the new base becomes the words which is now translated into English language which then also means that English then becomes the original from which the words get translated into different other languages and she underscores in and reiterate this point that translations is now always towards English and it is never in the opposite direction. In she quotes Owen words as in any cross-cultural exchange that goes in only one direction, the culture that receives influence will always find itself in the secondary position, it will always appear slightly behind the times, that incidentally is the current fate of national literature.

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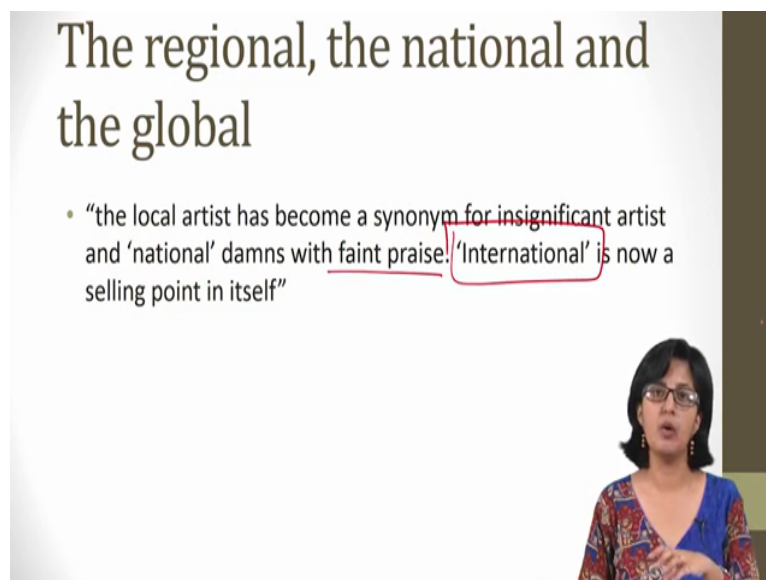
The implications

- “Appearing behind the times is the fate of national and regional literatures when they are viewed from the perspective of a rising world literature that aims to be translated into English”

A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue and red patterned top, is speaking in front of the slide.

It is now slightly behind the times the implications of this is that appearing behind the times is the fate of the national and regional literatures when they are viewed from the perspective of a rising world literature that aims to be translated into English. What the beauty about Kathleen Shields essay is that she is not trying to be judgmental about this fact, she is only trying to make as attentive towards these different challenges and how these challenges could be incorporated towards newer possibilities as far as world literature is concern.

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The regional, the national and the global

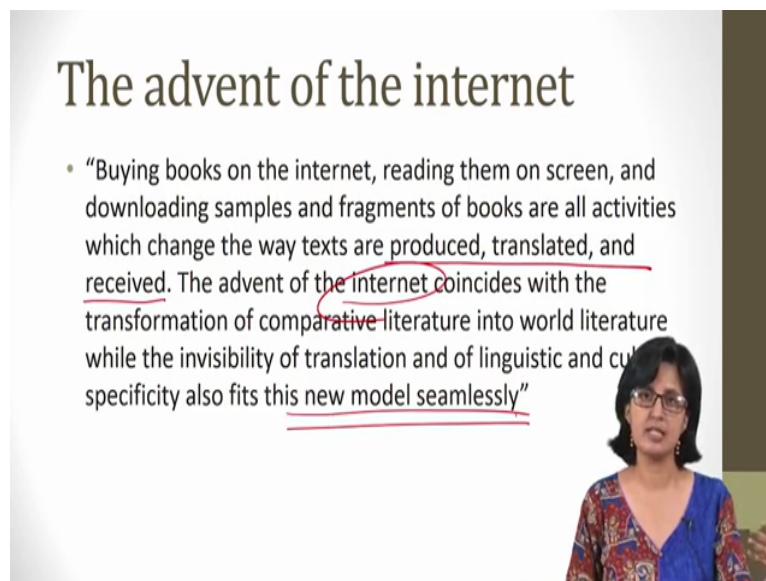
- “the local artist has become a synonym for insignificant artist and ‘national’ damns with faint praise. ‘International’ is now a selling point in itself”

A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue and red patterned top, is speaking in front of the slide.

So here is she talking about this cluster of the regional than national and the global coming together and here again an inevitable things happen where the local artist becomes a synonym for an insignificant artist and the national damns with faint praise, international is now a

selling point itself, she is introducing to us different clusters which need to be seen together in order to understand this complicated affair the world literature is about the regional, the national and the global and how here the significance of an artist, the significance of the words is also seen in the way in which the words sell, the words generates revenue and here she is also placing the regional, the national and the global within a more commercialize globalized context.

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The advent of the internet

- “Buying books on the internet, reading them on screen, and downloading samples and fragments of books are all activities which change the way texts are produced, translated, and received. The advent of the internet coincides with the transformation of comparative literature into world literature while the invisibility of translation and of linguistic and cultural specificity also fits this new model seamlessly”

The slide features a woman in a blue patterned top and glasses in the bottom right corner, appearing to be speaking or presenting.

The advent of the internet of course brings in a lot of other challenges as well as possibilities at the same time to quote Kathleen Shields buying books on the internet which was unthinkable in the previous era, reading them on screen and not as pages on the book and downloading samples and fragments of books are all activities which change the way texts are produced, translated and received.

So the argument here was also that one needs to move beyond the ways in world literature was can seen in the early 19th century from the late 18th to the early 19th century. We need to move beyond the way in which it was seen as well weltliteratur by Goethe is and look at the different change in ways which are text being now produced, translated and received. The advent of the internet coincides with the transformation of comparative literature into world literature while the invisibility of translation and enabling linguistic and culture specificity also fits this new model seamlessly, again as I pointed out shields essay is a calorie and called to be attentive to the new changes which are coming about an also to evaluate or rather devaluate translation and world literature in the context of these changing seats.

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The possibilities ahead

- Even-Zohar's polysystems theory
- Israeli culture researcher – working on developing theoretical tools and research methodology for dealing with the complexity and interdependency of socio-cultural systems
- Polysystem theory – for explaining the complexity of culture within a single community and between communities
- Analyzed sets of relations in literature and language – shifted towards a more complex analysis of socio-cultural systems
- Particularly relevant in Spain and China
- Transformed Translation studies from a marginal philological specialty to a focus of inter-culture research

And when she is talking about the possibilities ahead, she finds Even-Zohar is polysystems theory extremely useful and this is how she asked this question at the outset of the essay. Could polysystems theory help to reexamine the filters and asymmetric relations that exist between a producers and consumer of literary texts? Here she is urging us to reevaluate the relation between producers and consumers of text because a lot of things have changed since Goethe is coin the term weltliterateur in the late 18th or the early 19th century.

So who is Even-Zohar, he is Israeli culture researcher he is been working on developing a theoretical tools and research methodology for dealing with a complexity and inter dependency of social cultural systems.

And polysystems theory, now there are various theories following Zohar is pioneer in words, this is can be seen as a framework for explaining the complexity of culture within a single community and between communities, now you also begin to see how this all fits in well, what Even-Zohar and he is polysystems theory did was to analyze such a relations in literatures and languages and he also in this process as a progress begin to shifts towards a more complex analysis of social cultural systems and again here there is a way in which one could look at this as a single clusters as a literature language and the social cultural systems within which they are embedded and this kind of words polysystems theory it was originally more relevant in Spain and China but the way in which Kathleen Shield is place in the significance of polysystems theory or the different theory is which are now emerging.

She says that this could be used to analyze any kind of translation process which is happening within cultures or across different cultures and traditions and Even-Zohar's polysystem theory from the time that he conceived it and from the time it became more accessible. It said that it transformed translation studies from a marginal philological specialty to a focus of inter-culture research.

The main argument and the underscoring point of this essay is also this shift they need to be attentive, they need to see this shift which is already happening, the shift from seeing translation as a marginal philological specialty towards a focus of inter-culture research, the making of translation, the function of translation and the political act that translation performs will become more visible and more accessible only when we look at this.

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The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem

- Translated literature is not only an integral system within any literary polysystem but a most active system within in
- Translated literature participates actively in shaping the centre of the polysystem

The hypothesis that translated literature may be either a central or peripheral system does not imply that it is always wholly one or the other

For instance, in the Hebrew literary polysystem between the two world wars, literature translated from the Russian assumed an unmistakably central position, while works translated from English, German, Polish, and other languages assumed an obviously peripheral one.

Even-Zohar had published one significant essay, titled 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', you could perhaps take a look at it to get a more significant and more detailed understanding of how polysystem theory works. In his essay on the position of translated literature within the literary polysystem, Even-Zohar attempts to clarify his position in various phases and this work has also been accessed by a lot of practitioners of translation from across the world and here he is also making significant arguments that translated literature is not only an integral system within any literary polysystem but a most active system within it and he placed continuous emphasis on this term 'active', the way in which translation is seen as an active process and he also says that translated literature participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem.

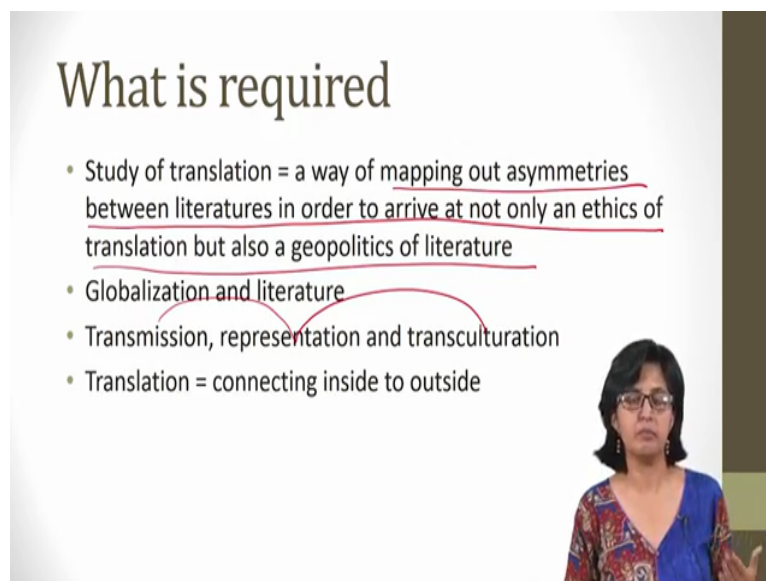
And Even-Zohar's work also challenges the hypothesis that translated literature may be either a central or peripheral system, on the contrary Even-Zohar brings in this new argument that this does not imply that it is always wholly one or the other, there is no way in which a binary can be brought about when one talks about translated literature, it is not that the translated literature in all systems will either be at the center or be at the margins or the periphery.

There is no formula which works like that it depends on the system within which the translation act takes place, which is where he thinks it is important to look at the polysystem, the multiple systems within a literature and translation happens because it is only when you see it as a cluster you begin to see how translation affects the center and how this center also affects the process.

Even-Zohar's work was largely on Hebrew literary polysystem, Hebrew is an example of Hebrew literary polysystem between the world wars and he gives this example that during this period the literature translated from Russian language, it is assumed and unmistakably central position while the works translated from English, German, Polish, and other languages assumed a peripheral one.

So this is how the polysystem works only when one is attentive to this integral system and the multiple moralities within which these works and the multiple realities within which this is embedded only then perhaps a more holistic analysis is possible.

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What is required

- Study of translation = a way of mapping out asymmetries between literatures in order to arrive at not only an ethics of translation but also a geopolitics of literature
- Globalization and literature
- Transmission, representation and transculturation
- Translation = connecting inside to outside

The slide features a list of four bullet points. The first point is underlined in red. The second point is also underlined in red. A red bracket connects the second and third points. A presenter, a woman with glasses wearing a blue patterned top, is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

So what is Kathleen Shield trying to argue out, she says that what is required at this point is a study of translation which moves away significantly from the earlier dated practices and conceptions and she says that this can be achieved by looking at a translation, looking at the study of translation as a way of mapping out asymmetries between a literatures in order to arrive at not only an ethics of translation but also a geopolitics of literature, this is an extremely important point that shields is trying to make that when you at looking translation, when you looking at practices of translation, it is important to move beyond the statics beyond the ethics but what becomes important in perhaps reshaping the whole idea, in reshaping the idea of world literature canon is also in looking at the geopolitics of literature.

Again a set of different clusters that she continues to encourages to take a look at upon globalization and literature how they continue to shape and define and redefine their roles, how they intimated connection is now already there and also to be attentive this link between transmission, representation and transculturation and translation needs to be seen as this one thing which can perhaps take a look at all of these clusters from a single vantage point.

And translation of course gives us this perfect vantage point from which you can access these different concepts which are now embedded within different systems, different literary systems, different cultural systems, different historical systems and even different political systems, so translation then we are coming back to the original point that was a being made that it should be about connecting inside to outside, regardless of the hierarchy of languages which are at place, regardless of the politics which is at word where again a certain kind of hierarchy is operating.

It is important to continue to see as translation as an act that connects the inside to the outside only then the asymmetries which are now prevalent between literatures can be mapped out and even be perhaps leveled out to a certain extent.

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The challenges

How does this map of world literature look? Prose fiction and, to a lesser extent, lyric poetry written in English or translated (and written to be translated) into English are the current dominant forms. Prize-winning best-selling novels in their English translations tend to exemplify a formal blandness, a flattening out, and homogeneity. The tropes of this narrative fiction resemble ethnocentric translation strategies (e.g., ethnographic explanations, lengthy descriptions, local color, and explanatory notes). Imagism predominates in poetry translated into English at the expense of the auditory qualities of language and I include with this poetry the literature of spirituality in translation. Literature composed in English itself starts to read like literature in translation. For example, Adhaf Soueif's *Map of Love* has a protagonist who is a cultural intermediary learning Arabic and reflecting on its grammar while a glossary is provided at the back of the novel (519-28). In the novel Isabel reads out a list of vocabulary from a grammar notebook: "Umm: mother (also the top of the head), ummah: nation, hence ammama: to nationalize ... So, how can they say Arabic is a patriarchal language?"

Kathleen Shields as we become to wrap this essay, she also gives some interesting examples thorough which she talks about the challenges and the prospects, I read this excerpt from a shields essay. How does this map of world literature look? Prose fiction and to a lesser extent, lyric poetry written in English or translated and written to be translated into English are the current dominant forms, prize-winning bestselling novels in their English translations tend to exemplify a formal blandness, a flattening out, a homogeneity.

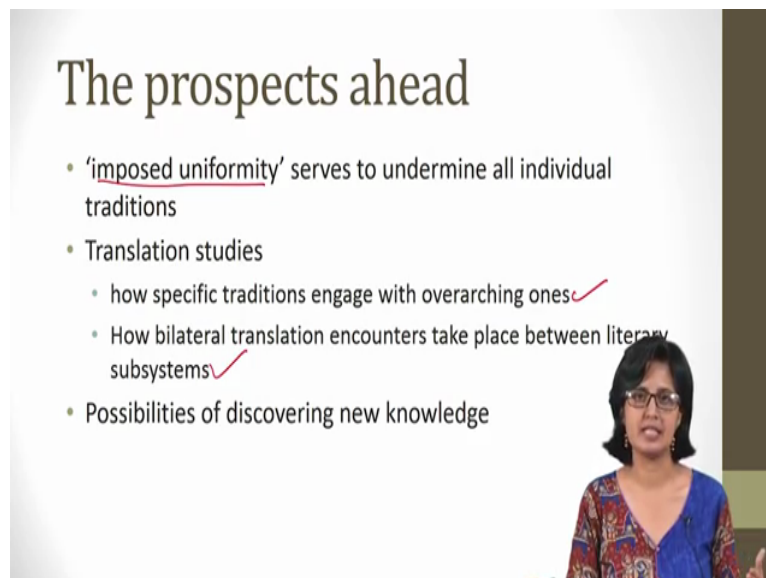
The tropes of this narrative fiction resemble ethnocentric translation strategies for example ethnographic explanations, lengthy descriptions, local color and explanatory notes. Imagism predominates in poetry translated into English at the expense of the auditory qualities of language and I include with this poetry, the literature of spirituality in translation. Literature composed in English itself start to read like literature in translation.

These are the some nuances that shields warn us to be attentive to if be (())(39:28) series reading of the translation practices in the context of world literature and she gives leaves us with this very interesting example, for example Adhaf Soueif in the *Map of Love* has a protagonist who is a cultural intermediary learning Arabic and reflecting on it is grammar while a glossary is provided at the back of novel, in the novel Isabel reads out a list of vocabulary from a grammar notebook, umm: mother also the top of the head, ummah: nation, hence ammama: to nationalize, so how can they say Arabic is a patriarchal language?

So this is a way in which shields has very interestingly brought together challenges and the prospects, she gives us this example to tell us how a perhaps there is still hierarchy at word

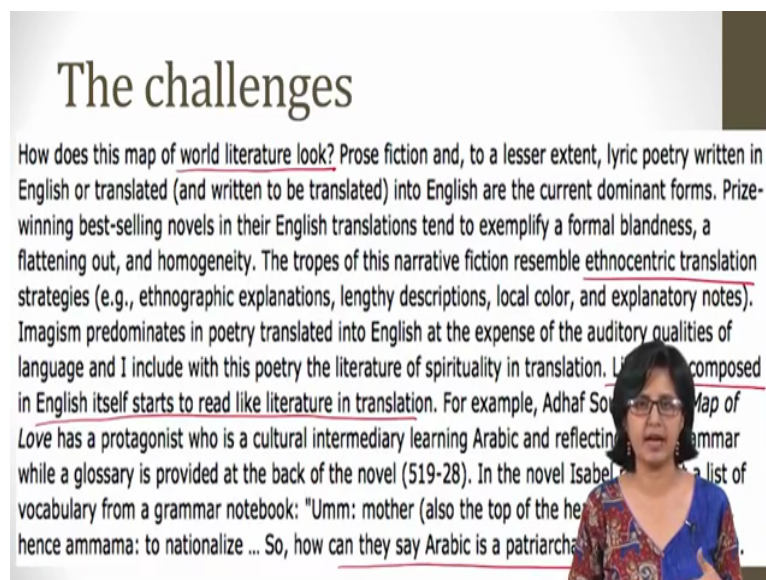
but at the same time a close analysis, a closer reading but also tell us that there is kind of a level plane ground which also get us generated through this process. Of course there is homogeneity which is at work, there is a hierarchy which is at work, there is the local flavor, there is the particularity which is getting erased all together but at the same time this world, this new emerging world is not without prospects.

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The prospects ahead

- 'imposed uniformity' serves to undermine all individual traditions
- Translation studies
 - how specific traditions engage with overarching ones ✓
 - How bilateral translation encounters take place between literary subsystems ✓
- Possibilities of discovering new knowledge



The challenges

How does this map of world literature look? Prose fiction and, to a lesser extent, lyric poetry written in English or translated (and written to be translated) into English are the current dominant forms. Prize-winning best-selling novels in their English translations tend to exemplify a formal blandness, a flattening out, and homogeneity. The tropes of this narrative fiction resemble ethnocentric translation strategies (e.g., ethnographic explanations, lengthy descriptions, local color, and explanatory notes). Imagism predominates in poetry translated into English at the expense of the auditory qualities of language and I include with this poetry the literature of spirituality in translation. Umm composed in English itself starts to read like literature in translation. For example, Adhaf Soueidan's Map of Love has a protagonist who is a cultural intermediary learning Arabic and reflecting on grammar while a glossary is provided at the back of the novel (519-28). In the novel Isabel a list of vocabulary from a grammar notebook: "Umm: mother (also the top of the head) hence ammama: to nationalize ... So, how can they say Arabic is a patriarchal ..."

As shields wraps up this word, she leaves us with some interesting possibilities, she of course agrees that there is an important post uniformity as it was shown in this example of Arabic language, there is of course an imposed uniformity and this also serves to undermine all the individual traditions where are this is a good thing or a bad thing is something that we need to debate at a different point of time.

So what shields leaves us with at the end of this essay that translation studies needs to be seen now from a different paradigm to see how specific traditions engage with overarching ones? And also how bilateral translation encounters take place between literary subsystems. The key is perhaps to look at the systems and look at the clusters within which these practices and this acts and these literary works themselves are embedded and it is in this that shields argues that lies the possibility of discovering new knowledge which she also think is the need of the current need of the hour as far as world literature and it is many discussion are concerned and one cannot entirely disagree with shields.

With this I also wrap up this lecture, I encourage you to take a look at Kathleen Shields essay and looked through the main arguments that she is trying to pause at before us. I am sure that this will be an enriching experience for you which will also old to the way in which you look at world text, world canon and world literature itself. I thank you for listening and look forward to seeing in the next session.