

Language, Public Space and an Educated Imagination

When we try to associate linguistics with educational reform, we need some care about what reform means. Its default reference to the market is hard to unpack. Who should count as education's customer is crucially unclear. If education is an investment in human resources whose beneficiary is the public as a whole, the focus on individual self-interest perceptions becomes too narrow. The public's collective interest is at stake. The state or its advisory bodies cannot learn from linguistics or other rapidly developing fields. Such learning has to be done by active participants in the public debate process. The arena to be reshaped through this debate is the public space itself.

PROBAL DASGUPTA

My starting point is a question formulated in the usual rhetoric: Does the study of language lead to conclusions bearing on the proper direction to take in educational reform? This formulation falls apart when you take a closer look, though. Just ask whose study of language is in question, who does the concluding, or who specifies directions in educational reform. Possible answers to these queries depend on who one can rationally expect to address. To address relevant regulatory agencies is a waste of public time. They have proved impervious to rational argument. Addressing educators directly as individuals gets too personal. One cannot reach them as a community since they are deeply segmented by institutional, sectoral and regional diversity.

Neither education regulation agencies nor teachers! Who then does one talk to? This intervention assembles some pieces of an argument, left open-ended so that its finalisation can occur jointly and publicly. The public can base further action on it. Do agencies accountable to us also inhabit the public space? They too then are presumably potential listeners, to express residual expectations without hope.

I return to the job of sharpening the initial question. The study of Language with a capital L is not the literary study of Marathi or Bangla or Telugu or English, lower-case languages in the plural. Linguistics, the scientific analysis of the panhuman phenomenon of Language, has taken root in India only recently.

When we try to associate linguistics with educational reform, we need some care about what reform means. Its default reference to the market is hard to unpack. Who should count as education's customer is crucially unclear. If education is an investment in human resources whose beneficiary is the public as a whole, the focus on individual self-interest perceptions becomes too narrow. The public's collective interest is at stake.

Quite apart from customer identification, the phrase 'proper direction to take in educational reform' makes little sense if it implies a policy that the state forces down the throats of a non-coalition of the unwilling. Policies seem to get formulated and implemented through a process whereby our best institutions develop models that the state then tells their less excellent sisters to copy. Even if we ignore the elitism underwriting this approach, it remains clear that institutions cannot copy each other's practices when resources, demography, goals and options differ grotesquely. We need to fashion a nuanced approach to the diversity of the public space within which places and institutions learn from each other without creating unhealthy asymmetric long-term dependencies. In this sense, I am against iconising the practices at any specific place. Each institution's academic community must keep debating and evolving its own strategies and conceptualisations.

For this to happen is a crucial precondition for the energies of our public space to be released.

At the same time, there are general lessons to be learnt from the results of linguistic research. It is important to highlight them. The point of my initial cautionary remarks is to preclude a facile leap from these results to any coercive or elite-iconising state policy. The state or its advisory bodies cannot learn from linguistics or other rapidly developing fields. Such learning has to be done by active participants in the public debate process. The arena to be reshaped through this debate is the public space itself. The state is an umbrella-shaped actor there, ill placed to be player. The word Play will be given real teeth later in this argument.

Language Acquisition and Transparency

One particularly relevant finding of linguistic research is best presented through an example. Infants who see no difference yet between saying 'kwa kwa' and saying 'duck duck' alternate between playing with toy words like kwa kwa and recycling adult input like duck/ducks, goose/geese. At that infant stage of language acquisition, geese is as opaque a toy as kwa kwa or duck duck. An infant has no access to the singular-plural mapping from duck, goose to ducks, geese. She does repeat ducks or geese. But this is no harbinger of adultish plurals. All her words are free toys.

The second stage arrives when the child discovers inflection. One duck vs four ducks becomes a distinction the child can hear and instantiates the singular/plural relation. Likewise, something like four ducks are walking introduces the subject/verb agreement relation. This is slow. Not all the pieces fall into place forthwith. But a crucial moment of discovering inflection does precede gathering pieces and learning how to play differently. The child's words are now assembled toys.

The young discoverer of inflection is a language worker no longer handling words as unattached opaque toys. She forms new words herself using regular patterns. Given an experimental word wug in the context look at that wug, the child responds, I can see those wugs. At this transparent pattern-focused stage, the language-acquiring child stops repeating irregular inflections like plural geese for singular goose. Instead, she goes transparent, stubbornly saying geeses, despite adults correcting her.

After the free toy stage and this transparent stage, the child reaches a stable third stage. Society's irregular plurals like geese, now fully understood, reappear in her speech. Personal products like geeses from the transparent stage quietly vanish. The stable but young child settles down and becomes much like older children.

The stable stage does not bring all the opaque or irregular items from the adult world into the child's speech. The verb reach once

had a past tense *raught* similar to the current pattern *teach-taught*. Why does English today use the past form *reached* and not *raught*? Children a few centuries ago started retaining their transparent personal product *reached* well into their stable maturity without registering the adult form *raught*. They set a trend that flooded English. Historical change occurred. *Reached* replaced *raught*. *Gooses* may likewise replace *geese* some day.

This acquisition curve is not peculiar to grammatical inflection. All acquisition follows a sequence of opaque toys, transparent patterns and finally stable balance. These curves start and finish at different ages depending on the material. Difficult words are learnt after age ten. Grasping the traffic of complex sentences takes longer. We have only begun to map which aspect of acquisition is typical of which age, and how the three stages for each aspect correspond to actual human age ranges.

Extrapolating from this established account of language acquisition, one supposes that the idealism widespread among adolescents is a case of transparent pattern mental processes. A student in her late teens, acquiring serious knowledge of social institutions, has reached stage two of that acquisition curve. Mental growth imperatives make her generalise transparent patterns observed.

Expecting ideal judgments and conduct across domains, she grows into maximising truth, equality and justice. She needs to idealise this way to understand anything at all. For this aspect of acquisition the third stage, at which she resigns herself to many (but not all) exceptions imposed by society and settles for conformism, apparently commences only around age thirty, the proverbial age at which many socialists turn conservative.

In other words linguistics offers a specific take on freshness in mental maturation. Without this input, our understanding of the cognitive transition to adulthood remains incomplete. We need to work out how the input from linguistics affects our understanding of individual rationality and of the public space, the site and object of this intervention.

Students and Public Space

The theoretically based suggestion just presented can do business with the obvious fact that university students (a term here used to include college students) find themselves, for the first time, in a public space. This is not a space that they have to know how to inherit, but something their communications and understanding have to constitute afresh.

For it is clear that when student meets student at universities (including colleges), in a group representing a cross-section of society, what occurs is vibrant contact between young adults across category boundaries: boundaries of region, gender, class, caste. As schoolchildren, they were too young to grasp the meaning of cross-category access. After education, most citizens get too caught up in the narrow concerns of their sector to experience that openness directly. Young adults in universities are uniquely placed to access and shape the public space.

Young adults will be able to use this privileged access optimally, though, if they can do some revisualising work with us older adults so that this public space begins to look like something worth such reshaping. Such revisualising will need to coinvent the intellect and the imagination in directions that linguistics, again, can help identify.

One component in this work is the job of releasing the language-literature complex from the grip of the literary canon-making elite that captures the writing space and distributes prizes. Here linguistics is an ally of the unbrowbeaten, uncorrupted young. Contemporary linguistics has shown that universal grammar (the general structure of language) is a single formal reality, a fact about the human mind itself. It is no mere summation of the particular grammars of separately itemisable languages. Human language is a rigorously single phenomenon despite its apparent diversity.

This is not the place to explain just how it has been shown that human language is one but appears diversely clothed in words subject to geographical and historical shape variation. Let me quickly point to the heart of this universality of grammar. First of all, universal grammar pertains to syntax (arranging words in sentences) and phonology (formal properties of pronunciation). The lexicon, the body of words a speech community employs, stages human language as the drama of many tongues. Second, the 'recursiveness' property is the distinctive syntactic fact that makes language an open space defining human beings as the only creatures capable of this openness. A quick explanation may help.

In oversimplified terms, language is 'recursive' in that one sentence can pack another sentence into itself as a subordinate clause, as in: I know/that you think/that she says/that he is coming. Such packing is one way my sentence can pay specific attention to your sentence. The recursion of syntax makes language infinite (think of a recurring decimal). A sentence can be extended without any formal upper limit.

This recursiveness property of syntax is formally understood thanks to the Chomsky revolution. There is something like it in the lexicon that has begun to make theoretical sense only now. Words open on to each other in terms of type relations. You conceptually organise your oranges, apples and guavas around their subtype relation with the superordinate fruit type. The mother tongue acquired at infancy emotionally secures your initial access to these conceptual moves. It is vital that education should ensure continuity between those first emotion-supported steps of your growth and the later supposedly intellectual moves you wish to add on.

This conclusion happily coincides with the independently clear need for a regeneration of education in a period when the public rightly expects the specialised requirements of gainful activity to keep changing. This makes repeated stints of fresh training necessary. Your mind can stay that agile for that long only if early exposures give you a mental openness that survives big transitions. The linguistic theory of openness helps us cope with this new task, emphasising the value of rich and fun-filled exposure to literature and downplaying the usefulness of schematic drills of language material.

The main point of this theory is that the child cannot be taught the basics of language. Universal grammar exists; every child's mind grows specifically and individually. If linguistics had shown that the particular grammars of many compartmentalised languages were the right analysis of the facts, each society's elite would use linguistics to justify authoritarian teaching. For only such teaching enforces a community's provincial norms in the training of all its members. However, what linguistics does in fact show is anti-provincialist. It projects the principles of language as invariant throughout the human species. They lie beyond the purview of training. Parents and teachers only provide the soil. The child does her own growing.

It follows that the entire fund of human wisdom must appear before a fresh child whose mind finds its own way to recreate all relevant earlier creativity. If there is some aspect of a tradition that children cannot understand or relive on the basis of their own growing, then this aspect, whatever its otherwise known value, cannot belong to the inheritance. All adult wisdom is rejudged and reinherited by every generation of young adults. In our day and age, the site of higher education is where this work gets done. Only what real people can concretely inherit will recycle, and therefore will endure.

Now, one will inherit only what one can visualise. We know this capacity has to do with the imagination. But we seldom explore linkages between the way we understand the imagination and the intellectual content of education. This partly reflects the limited picture of language most of us work with. Again, a helping of linguistics seems called for.

Imagination's Verbal Plumbing

Linguistics does say human language is the same despite lexical diversity. This does not mean that a child exposed to any arbitrary sequence of languages, first Dogri and then Hindi and then English, will remain in perfect cognitive health, though. Children who receive all primary and at least some secondary schooling in their mother tongue thrive intellectually. If they are forced to switch over at mid-childhood to formal instruction in a medium not acquired early in a natural setting, then children do badly, especially if the first language disappears from their mental life.

In this respect, modern linguistics says something new and significant. Many of us wrongly believe that linguistics yields conclusions similar to the traditional grammatical pedagogy that schoolchildren rightly detest. Linguistics actually offers a map of what enables individual children's minds to flourish. Crucially, the lexical opening up of the young child's conceptual space enables all later mental growth. This space needs proper nourishment throughout the early years. Its infantile affective basis must receive due respect throughout adult life. If emotion is what keeps a people together as a public, then young adults, as they renegotiate sentiment in their friendships, must have the resources to understand how this renegotiation connects with their childhood.

The mental nourishment of children is not a matter of learning words, but of connecting words as one learns them. These relations snap if well-meaning parents push children into a prosperous environment where the medium of instruction and of peer group formation disconnects the child from the mother tongue.

As long as I speak of connection and disconnection only with reference to lay understanding, I impede access to the syntactic foundation of narrative. This foundation, however, is what makes connections happen and become stronger. Narrative is a rigorous term for telling and listening to stories. Adults often treat imaginative fiction as a counterpoint to access to reality. But in fact narrative is the only access we have to anything. Imagination precedes reality and underwrites it everywhere.

One crucial linguistic pillar of childhood is the narrative imagination's syntactic basis. The relevant milestone arrives around the age of three. The child's early sentences like *sarah ate the apple* closely hug the child's pragmatic attachment to its realities. They give no space to the grammatical structure in the sense of syntactic connections. When the syntactic milestone is crossed, inflection-coded relations like subject and object become available for the child's perception and manipulation. It is then that the child begins to understand and later to say not only a pragmatically valid sentence like *sarah ate the apple* but also a syntactically available but pragmatically perverse one like *the apple ate sarah*.

With that transition comes a burst of interest in fairy tales and other applications of these freshly available sentences that can and therefore sometimes must fly in the face of common sense. This is how the grammatical basis of the imagination is set free and fantasy begins to supplement common sense which, unaided, is a poor visualiser. Through the child's earliest conceptualisations, agreeably clothed in fairy tales, the imagination underwrites the growth of knowledge.

This process shows up also in adult scientific inquiry. A scientist reasoning about physical objects finds it necessary first to distance herself from those things by drawing schematic diagrams where each object becomes a dot. A similar act of fiction underlies the telling of stories. Stories construct the only models that humans understand. Children get attached to the basic schemata of stories. Adults are able to diversify and complicate this initial commitment, but only slightly. The format of any adult theory closely mimics some narrative schema that a child can relate to. Theory-focused research on narrative shows that theories and narratives are discursive sequences of the same type.

This shows that language teachers are right to immerse children in fiction. Education needs to find a way to help the child to

realise that what she learns in intellectualised studies is an enterprise continuous with what she picks up when listening to stories. Understanding grows as the stories grow on you and you step into them. Stories are where models are tried out. You become part of this trying, and you grow into your own modelling.

We are all narrators. This is the place where it becomes crucial that the mother tongue in which you hear your first fairy tales and so on should stay in touch with the medium of your first helpings of conceptual learning in school. If your Marathi infancy gives way to an English schooling, the resulting disconnect deprives your theoretical brain, however caringly nurtured by teachers, from narrative continuity with early conceptualisations. This becomes fatal for your cognitive growth. This is not to say that you will grow up mad. But a crucial spark will be missing in your intellectual life, making you a less than fully thoughtful person however conscientiously you try. This becomes hard to notice this if the country fills up with people like you and if your type is socially branded as a success story. But realisation may dawn, and it will be too late to heal you. All you can do is work to keep other children away from this fate. Of course you will not wish to short-change them only to avoid this risk. The question is how to balance these twin needs. I will return to this issue in the 'Cherishing without Worship' section.

Versatility of Verse

Stories play out the fantasy component of the linguistic underpinning of cognition. But this is only half of the wisdom available in literature. Poetry is the equally vital other half. Contrary to what many believe, communication is a secondary aspect of language use. The study of language and the study of communication need different methods and yield different results. (For instance, the extended projection principle requiring a subject in clausal syntax does not reduce to functional thematisation in pragmatics, a concrete example I am providing for readers who may need one, in the technical terms that become inescapable if evidence is required.) The poetic basis of thought dramatises this polarisation. Poetry, unlike stories in prose, involves a drawing back, a stepping aside from communication, to find space for the thinking that precedes and grounds verbal communication.

As we tell and listen to the stories weaving the fabric of daily exchanges, we learn how to think aloud and present what we have thought. But it is vital that poetry in particular and inner speech in general keep developing. For this is where a child's mental growth underwrites the metaphoric translations that make thought possible.

To speak of inner mental growth is not to demand that every child must become a poet. Schools do not teach mathematics to turn children into prize-winning theorem creators. To worship creativity and to put it on a pedestal away from ordinary mortal abilities is a bad habit. Such worship sidelines the fact that healthy children in their normal growth crucially love nursery rhymes. Their inner poetic sense is what enables this love.

The study of poetry is formally close to the study of dreams. It has long been clear in serious linguistics that the formal study of language is as accountable to the structure of poetry as it is to that of prose. Pioneering work in the related field of psychology has also shown that sound-meaning associations in dreams have properties akin to the relations that become salient in poetry.

Children develop their vision as they grow to appreciate poetry and cultivate a poetic sense. This sense underwrites the capacity to think. Here too the importance of verbal continuity with the mother tongue a particular child starts out with cannot be overstressed for a cognitively healthy childhood to flourish. The role of rhyme, rhythm and other traits of verse is to embed language through poetry in the child's motor and perceptual coordination, in the rhythms of dance, in the phrasal repetitions of music, in the matches and mismatches called painting.

This is not a decorative frill on the main argument. My main

point is that we remain stuck with an abridged and unacceptably positivist enlightenment until we touch base with its renaissance foundations. I know that many readers disagree. I respectfully defy them to answer the following argument. For reality to overtake imagination produces dullness and disables the child's early conceptual growth. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. When Jack comes of age he experiences this as oppression. The forms of apparently non-imperial rule cloak contemporary tyranny. We are invited to see it in terms of a welcome overtaking of the culture by the economy, which, we are told, is alone real. That invitation, renewed by today's liberal mainstream but hardly new, deserves a fresh response. The economy defines work. Work deals with realities. Realities are real for humans only if humans can image them. They can only image them if they remain empowered by their culture. Cultures are imaging systems. Humans who cannot seriously image what they are working on cannot be said to be working. This is why the enlightenment must touch base with the renaissance to finish its work.

Art is the human basis of labour. Poetry is where language reveals itself as the prototypical site of art. Until our period's scientific retelling of the larger stories can connect with this realisation at a level that can encounter the renaissance confidently, our intellectual lives will suffer from the sense of an unfinished task. The project of trying for a unification in educational practice first is one site of the hope that adults will achieve a unified comprehension in the sciences and arts themselves. The dream rephrased in these words can be recognised as the familiar core dream of the enlightenment.

If today's projects are to face the versatility of verse, our young adults finding their intellectual feet need to make sense of the forces at play in poetry. Poetry seeks to capture the natural sound specific to a particular language. Yet this naturalness is sought by artificial devices like rhyme, rhythm, metaphor and other tropes. The childish play dimension puts us in touch with the simple-minded heart of the typical child we imagine. But we do this imagining with an adult intellect that exclaims: Here is the heart of the community. How do reason and passion play out in the allegorical drama of an adult take on poetry?

If the university is the site at which a clutch of young adults shall make sense of their meanings and thus rejuvenate our consciousness, what resources will help newly self-aware citizens to reread both fiction and verse so that their imagination and the rational study tasks shaped by their future professions do not remain disconnected? We have seen so far only that young adults must confer with each other so that their childhoods become fully theirs. But there is a whole set of tangled issues here. We all, including young adults, often conflate the childish, the irrational and the sentimental with popular culture's failure to reach adult standards of civility. This happens especially when you, a young student trying to be cleverer than the masses, paint these others in stereotypical colours of emotion-bound stupidity. You then easily miss the point (unless we give you resources that help you not to) that civility itself, whose absence will make democracy unworkable, is a matter of properly constructed sentiments for serious adults to share. How can such sharing come about if the roots of emotion in one's mother tongue focused childhood do not become fully available to the young adult?

The answer I offer to the question of what resources can help the young adults to effect this retrieval thematises a practice that connects linguistics with another major emergent discipline of our times, translation studies: the self-conscious linguistic mediation between easy and difficult.

Cherishing without Worship

My next task is to address the worry that these ideas and especially this formulation of them might imply a fascist mother tongue idolatry whose adoption would move higher education

into provincial darkness. Can young adults conferring with each other for self-clarification both value the English crucial in their acquisition of technical knowledge and the mother tongues in which their childhoods were rooted?

If we were to insist that mother tongues must be the default languages of higher education in all disciplines, we might overtechnicalise contact with the mother tongue. For such a path would force each region into an unfeasible replication of technical book and journal production levels in metropolitan languages through incessant high volume translation. But in India's current practices, which we take to be realistic because we pretend that they are translation-free, we run the contrary risk of straitjacketing the mother tongue in an emotion management enterprise called culture. This action is masked by symbolically worshipping the mother tongue, a worship parallel to patriarchy's practice of placing the ideal woman on a pedestal.

Before we think about ways to identify and implement a middle path that will enable young adults to cherish a mother tongue they need not worship, we must first note that the appearance of avoiding high volume translation into Indian languages in higher education is produced only by driving the translation into the informal sector.

Most university students understand little written English and even less spoken English. The official system does not deliver in their mother tongues. So they sidestep it and get informal aid. The rare and precious tutorials that help them to learn are the bright side of this picture. The dark side is the systematic cheating apparatus. Between these lie grey area phenomena like study aids and model exam answers. These have elicited comment. But we need to consider the whole spectrum. Students demand, and obtain in any form they can, some translation into forms they can understand. Serious help can compete with the study aid industry if we take the issue on board.

The current crisis reflects our alienating ways of imaging the seriousness of the adult world of work. If we play harder and budget for this by working a bit more softly, we discover that the possibility of brightening up the scene is available in the conceptualisation and lies within our practical reach. 'Working a bit more softly' means taking seriously the aesthetic and affective basis of play as the rigorously co-present background of rationality. To take this basis seriously is to organise our toolkit for facing the task that non-proficient students are coping with in desperate haste with their bare hands.

The fundamental manoeuvre that characterises the coping strategies students have been groping towards is obviously a kind of translation. The para-educational coping enterprise translates between the industriality breathing down the adult's neck and the cognition where the older child or young adult finds herself. This enterprise works in haste because it has fashioned no active awareness of its project. These entrepreneurs, on our behalf, are construing it reactively, as a ferrying job between metropolitan realities and the poor students steeped in the disappointed unsuccess of their province. In other words they think they are translating between histories that they imagine as geographies within a sadly single history.

The way we image this will change when educated society consents to learn from linguistics and from translation studies. This involves resisting the market-driven functionalist systems of language teaching that worship 'communication'. Serious translation works between different geographies whose histories intersect by virtue of being human, of being imbricated in the field constituted by universal grammar. Adults who fully understand that geographies are different because communities imagine differently also see that translation cannot 'facilitate' from high metropolis to low province. One then learns how to invert that standard and ideology-bound image.

What our metropolis-driven mindset calls 'low' is in fact the arena of new minds where alone theories can hope to earn a

renewed life by being reinherited critically. The 'high' of the books and the forces owning them is just so much back-up storage. The high-to-low flow alone is where higher education, on behalf of the working world it represents, can renegotiate the terms of the working agreements and therefore find how sound these are. Notice that any university discipline is an introduction to specific arrangements in one segment of the industrial world.

Once we move into this mindset attentive to the learners' fresh perceptions and make inter-geographic translation central to our work as a teacher, we see that the model of conceptual parsimony that has been driving our sense of the valid generalisations at the core of each discipline is unhealthy. The true generalisations that can constitute a discipline are not principles that hold of some abstract idealised figures in images that the field has chosen for itself. The only ones that can reconstitute and recycle a field in students' lives are principles that teacher and students together find valid for particular idealisations that get proposed in the course of conversations happening here and now. There is no idealised, centralisable classroom for a particular teacher to instantiate well or poorly. There can only be ferrying, translation, between specific rooms and specific rooms.

The theoretical role of translation so understood becomes clear in Sarukkai's (2002) account of the science-translation interface. His work on the semiotic plurality of mathematics, of schematic idealised representations in the sciences, and of the various deployments of natural language is too rich to summarise. I mention it here only to flesh out the theoretical follow-up needed if the present intervention is on the right track.

For practical follow-up, I would refer to the self-conscious facilitation enterprise available in the Esperanto experience [Fettes 2000; Fiedler and Haitao 2001; Janton 1993; Schubert 2003]. The constructed language Esperanto, which originated as a medium of international cooperation and has evolved into a device for freshening the cognitive intercultural air and fashioning durable methods for combating mental pollution, has long been known to be a facilitator of difficult paths. Schoolchildren who learn Esperanto for one year and then take three years of a foreign language like French or German demonstrably do better than schoolchildren who take four straight years of French or German. This is because Esperanto enables children to have fun with Language as such and get unconsciously attuned not only to the diversity of language, but also to the steps up and down the ladder from easy to difficult relative to particular perceivers. The operative point is that fun or play with the materials of language is able to conjure away the mismaged bleakness of work. That Esperanto is for many users a novel point of access to fun underscores the role of freshness in providing this access.

In the context of our argument, Esperanto is not only a linguistic instantiation of the principle of play that helps us fight the stressful effects of intellectually indefensible workaholicism. In addition, Esperanto is the aesthetic embodiment of translation as a transcode. To compress my argument, this fact about it enables it to serve as an antidote to industriality's hijack of cognition, the hijack by English alone of the importance due to our other languages. It is a factor of sadness that for the foreseeable future we will keep breathing the hijack the way we breathe pollution as a concomitant of contemporary industry. But it is a factor of joy that the ecological movement away from disaster can at least be spelled out now. Implementation is of course difficult, as in the case of every bit of our ecological responsibility. This too is part of the landscape we inhabit and need to be aware of.

The use of Esperanto as a translation awareness tool (not as an obligatory toy mindlessly inflicted on all students) gains additional relevance in India's segmented society because this language symbolises antisegmentation. Translation, with Esperanto as its metonym, is a continuity factor to the extent

that we become aware of why pedagogues translate as part of teaching. We must not serve the ideology of translation as a relation between the bureaucracies of two conceptual systems called languages. We have to move into what Chomsky's theme of universal grammar shows us to be the serious task of translation.

This task is to engender reperception, by individuals who without the translator would have no access to the initial perception. As we self-consciously and with increasing confidence emphasise the perceptual nature of our work, we and our students together grow a new, percept-driven ability to tame the concepts where the cultural elite bureaucracies have taken their last stand.

Notice that the culture industries controlled for each provincial language by the elite of that province (masquerading as a tiny metropolis) do not count as a factor that resists the industrial hijack of the cognitive. For they become willing comprador partners of pollution, mafia to mafia. Cultural labour reaches a summation in civilisation only if we are all trying to image how we are doing this summing. As Gandhi said when asked about modern civilisation, "It would have been a good idea." If we are able to avert eco-suicide in this as well as other sectors, perhaps there is still time to grow into the full strength of Gandhi's laughter. He was arguably our greatest educationist.

I end with the warning that you will hear from certain practitioners of the linguistics trade who say they disagree with much of this. I would be glad of a real debate; but what they mean, unfortunately, is that they have not yet chosen to ask how the linguistics discipline changes its foci as it prepares to become as accountable to poetry as it used to be up to the time of Sapir (1921). Scholars who think that the abridged 'linguistics' of certain 'textbooks' is a sustainable enterprise are guilty of a category mistake inspired by a functionalism similar to the communicationist doctrine that language is designed for communication. From Husserl to Derrida, from Vygotsky to Chomsky, serious work on language has always shown that this is a misconception that infects only scholars who refrain from examining the issue. If anyone who has examined these matters in any detail finds arguments to the contrary, they will no doubt publish them; that momentous event is eagerly awaited. Readers need to be warned that many scholars who have not looked at the issue will declare that they have. It is good policy to take all input, including the present intervention, with a big pinch of salt. **EPW**

Address for correspondence:
probal@yahoo.com

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