Poetic traffic in a multilingual literary culture

Equivalence, parallel aesthetics, and language-stretching in North India

Francesca Orsini (SOAS, University of London)*

1. No translation, we are South Asians?

It is customary, and appropriate, to preface discussions of translation with statements about how, in the broadest sense, everyone translates all the time. And how, in multilingual societies like South Asia, translation across languages is an everyday activity spread across all social strata with a high degree of malleability. Vegetable sellers, rickshaw drivers, religious preachers—all are apt at translating, adapting their pitch or using an interlanguage with their customers or audience without a second thought. This is a society where ideologies of language communities as homogeneous entities have had a limited purchase on reality, whatever hold they have on the imagination. Where a common attribute for a learned poet or patron in the premodern was that they spoke 'six languages' (though which six could vary), and where until recently getting an education meant stacking up language skills.

At the same time, translation studies in South Asia have had to shake off a double prejudice: an Orientalist prejudice against the absence of 'accurate translations', and the lack of local theorisations of translation—though both in fact were not completely absent.[†] A third prejudice concerned the lack of originality because literatures in modern Indian languages typically began as 'translation literatures'. Indian intellectuals have responded to these accusations in two ways. First, in a much-quoted essay, Ganesh Devy decried Western understandings of translation as beholden to biblical and humanistic notions of the fall from an original state of grace and perfect understanding and an obsession with synonymity and fidelity to the 'original'.[‡] To it he opposed the 'translating consciousness' of people living in multilingual society, along the lines of my opening paragraph.[§] Second, Devy and others like A.K. Ramanujan also reversed the negative colonial judgement by pointing to the creative and often subversive moves involved in early modern 'translations' of classical texts such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Viewed from this perspective, translation was in fact a covert way of introducing and legitimising novelty and departures under the disguise of continuity and affiliation. And a whole series of vibrant and sophisticated studies of these often intermedial texts has increasingly rejected the tag of translation (or of

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[†] William Jones: 'my experience justifies me in pronouncing that *Moghols* have no idea of accurate translation, and give that name to a mixture of gloss and text with a flimsy paraphrase of both'; 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus', *The Works of Sir William Jones: With the Life of the Author*, Vol. 4, ed. Lord Teignmouth (London: John Stockdale and John Walker, 1807), p. 181.

[‡] G.N. Devy, 'Translation and literary history: An Indian view', in *Post-Colonial Translation*, ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (Psychology Press, 1999), shorter version of his 'Translation theory: an Indian perspective' (1989).

[§] Devy linked it explicitly to the experience of colonial education, but it can be stretched back and more widely: 'The concept of a 'translating consciousness' and communities of people possessing it are no mere notions. In most Third World countries, where a dominating colonial language has acquired a privileged place, such communities do exist. In India several languages are simultaneously used by language communities as if these languages formed a continuous spectrum of signs and significance. The use of two or more different languages in translation activity cannot be understood properly through studies of foreign-language acquisition'; Devy, 'Translation', 185.

variant versions of a putative original) and instead used the terms telling or retelling.[**]

These critical answers have led to further questioning of translation in the context of South Asia. For people with a 'translating consciousness' living in a multilingual society, are languages distinct sign systems or do they form a continuum, something both Devy and Ramanujan have suggested?

> 'In India several languages are simultaneously used by language communities as if these languages formed a continuous spectrum of signs and significance.'[††]

> 'One may go further and say that the cultural area in which *Ramayanas* are endemic has a pool of signifiers that include plots, characters, geography, incidents, and relationships... These various texts not only relate to prior texts directly, to borrow or refute, but they relate to each other through this common code or common pool. Every author... dips into it and brings out a unique crystallization, a new text with a unique texture and a fresh context.'[‡‡]

This view of Indian languages as a seamless continuum and of a common pool of cultural signifiers stretching across languages has produced particular positions on translation, like Harish Trivedi's bold claim that 'in the long period of recorded literary history in India, from about 1500 BCE to 1800 CE there is, astonishingly, no evidence of any text of any kind having been translated into an Indian language, initially probably because the major Indian languages were all mutually intelligible.'[§§] The 'characteristically Western assumption' that India's linguistic diversity makes it 'one of the

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[**] See e.g. the vast scholarship on 'many Ramayanas', starting with Paula Richman, ed., *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia (*Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1991).

[††] Devy, p. 185.
[‡] A.K. Ramanujan, 'Three Hundred Ramayanas', in *Many Rāmāyaṇas*, p. 46.
[§§] H. Trivedi, 'In Our Own Times: on Our Own Terms', in *Translating Others (Volume* 1), ed. Theo Hermans (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 106.

richest and most productive areas of the world for translation activity', he retorts, overlooks the fact that widespread multilingualism, which does not entail the 'psychologically or cultural barrier' associated with foreign languages, obviate much of the need for translation felt by monolinguals.[***]

Before examining Trivedi's claim it is necessary to pause on what language means in this context/counts as a language in this context. The distinction between spoken and written language is crucial here. Apart from dialectal variations, at the spoken level language contact easily resulted a large number of loanwords, earlier from Persian and more recently from English, not just for specific domains of language use but also in everyday speech. This is where it makes sense to speak of an interlanguage, for mixing was often unmarked. (By contrast, in formal occasions language peformance and language boundaries would be policed.) But, as in Europe or in East Asia, education and written language involved learning one or more High languages. The sense of language as a bounded entity (Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic, etc.) was undoubtedly stronger in this case, for acquiring and displaying competence in that language meant adhering to its protocols. And since the curriculum was largely literary, language learning involved acquiring familiarity with the language's poetic idiom (including grammar of referents, metre, poetics, etc.) and canon. When Brajbhasha (i.e. "the language of the Braj region") became a cosmopolitan literary *koiné* from a regional spoken language and was learnt through tutors and poetic manuals, it acquired the same qualities. In the context of written poetic language, mixing

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[***] The full quote reads: India's linguistic diversity 'often leads to the assumption that India must be one of the richest and most productive areas of the world for translation activity. But this is, it turns out, a characteristically Western assumption, for it is to forget that translation is the need of the monolingual speaker, and that an obvious and efficacious alternative to having to translate from another language is to actually learn it, and if there is something even better than the best of translations, it is bilingualism'; Trivedi, p. 103.

was much more limited and usually marked, as we shall see.[†††] Language naming also reflected this distinction between written and spoken: in North India the vernacular was called by Persian writers 'Hindi', i.e. 'Indian' (the term Urdu was popularised only in the nineteenth century), while others just called it 'language', *bhakha*. Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic are always called by their separate names. Since language, script and community were not as tightly linked as in modern times, I avoid using the terms Hindi and Urdu with their modern connotations and have used Hindavi, and 'courtly Hindi' for the cosmopolitan literary vernacular Brajbhasha; Avadhi is a modern nomenclature for the vernacular used in the eastern region of North India, Avadh; in early modern times it was simply called 'Hindi/Hindavi' or *bhakha*.

To go back to Trivedi, it is first of all important to distinguish spoken multilingualism from written literature (song-poems and other oral-literate texts are a somewhat different case, as we shall see). As to his claim that translation did not happen because the major Indian languages were mutually intelligible, it is both overstated and somewhat misleading. For one thing, it does not seem to take into account the well-documented translation activities by Sufis, Jains, and Persian-knowing Hindu and Brajbhasha-knowing Indo-Muslim literati in the early modern period.[‡‡‡] Translations of

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[†††] Allison Busch explores this aspect nicely in '*Riti* and register: Lexical variation in Courtly Braj Bhasha texts', in *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu literary culture*, ed. Francesca Orsini (Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010), pp. 84-120. Simon Leese reflects on the Arabic, Persian, and Brajbhasha and Urdu as different 'poetic terrains' for Indian literary scholars and poets, and notes that mixing was negatively commented upon; 'Longing for Salmá and Hind: (Re)producing Arabic Literature in 18th and 19th Century North India', PhD dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 2018.

[‡‡‡] Among key works on early modern translations: Carl W. Ernst, 'Muslim studies of Hinduism? A reconsideration of Arabic and Persian translations from Indian languages', *Iranian Studies* 36.2 (2003), 173-195; John D. Cort, 'Making it Vernacular Again: the pratice of translation among seventeenth-century Jains', in *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India*, ed. F. Orsini and K. Schofield (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015), pp. 61-106; Thibaut d'Hubert, *In the Shade of the Golden Palace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Audrey Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Stefano Pellò, 'Black Curls in a Mirror: The Eighteenth-Century Persian Kṛṣṇa of Lāla Amānat Rāy's *Jilwa-yi ẕāt* and the Tongue of

scientific-technical texts (*shastras*) between Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic and Persian, of religious texts between Sanskrit and the vernaculars and Sanskrit and Persian, and of tales and romances between Sanskrit, the vernaculars and Persian were in fact not uncommon.§§§ By contrast, on the whole it seems that to know poetry in order to be an educated person meant reading it in its own language. Yet this was not because Indian languages were mutually intelligible, or because Indians were not interested in literatures from other cultures as Harish Trivedi has also argued.**** Rather, within this multilingual world, poetic translation was possible, but it took specific conditions to activate it, as we shall see. Much more commonly, within the multilingual literary culture of north India poetic tastes were cultivated in parallel, with translations showing up in the margins or as nuggets of language inside a poem. The result was not a formal translation traffic but rather a parallel enjoyment and various kinds of 'language stretching', including poetic equivalences, the insertion of tropes, symbols, key terms and expressions from one poetic idiom into another and, in some cases, mixed-language verses. For this reason we need to look for clues at the level of micro-translations within verses rather than for full-length translations, and we need to think outwards from these nuggets of language to ask what 'communities of taste' they came out of, what interlingual and 'intermedial aesthetics' they produced and were part of, and how to best capture this poetic traffic.††††

Bīdil', *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 22 (2018), 71–103; see also *Indo-Persica* entries on fables, tales, and stories at http://perso-indica.net/section/fables_tales_and_stories.
§§§ See Truschke and Cort.
**** Trivedi, p. 105.
†††† The term 'communities of taste was suggested to me by Ramya Sreenivasan; Katherine Butler Schofield, Molly Aitken, and Allison Busch have spoken of 'intermedial aesthetics' for the common aesthetics shared by courtly Hindi poetry, Rajput painting, and Hindustani music (as codified in Persian and vernacular treatises) across Mughal imperial and Rajput courts in the early modern period in North India.

2. Activating translation

Before I turn to forms of language stretching without translation, it is worth pausing on a few instances in which poetry was actually translated in early modern North India in order to see what specific conditions activated these translations. These include a provincial story-teller writing a prose tale in the cosmopolitan language of Persian that was particularly close to a Hindavi verse romance; a Jain reformer at the centre of an urban circle of lay intellectuals; a Muslim intellectual drawing upon and synthesizing multiple traditions in order to produce text in the regional vernacular of Bengali for courtly performance; an Arabic teacher showing off his poetic as well as scholarly abilities.

Already in the period of the North Indian Sultanates, and even more in the Mughal period, a few romances in the north Indian vernacular (Hindavi/Avadhi) were rendered into Persian. As a rule, these were retellings that entailed limited or extensive transcodification according to the stylemes of Persian romances rather than formal translations, and the original text and author often went unmentioned.[‡‡‡‡] This is why it is not surprising that the heavily illustrated Persian version of Qutban's Hindavi/Avadhi romance *Mirigāvatī,* produced in Allahabad in 1604 at the court of the rebel Mughal prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir, starts without any preamble mentioning the author's name or title and leaves out Qutban's own prologue.[§§§§] But as one continues reading one realises that this was actually a

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[‡‡‡‡] There are seven Persian versions of Jayasi's *Padmāvat,* making it the most 'translated' Hindavi text of the early modern period: see Thomas de Bruijn, *The Ruby in the Dust: Poetry and History of the Indian Padmavat by Sufi Poet Muhammad Jayasi* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2012); see also Ramya Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic pasts in India, c.1500-1900* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007); and Francesca Orsini, 'The Social Life of a Genre', *Medieval History Journal* 20, 1 (2017), 1–37, for different kinds of transcodification.
[§§§§] Anonymous, *Rājkunwar,* MS CBL In 05, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

translation that strove to reproduce the Hindavi verse narrative in simple Persian prose—it transmitted not just a story but a text. Even in places where the Hindavi text slowed down and 'thickened' into dense poetic language, the Persian translator bravely struggled to keep up. And buried in the middle of the text, he actually mentioned the Hindavi author *by name*.[*****] While the absence of paratexts leaves open the question of why the author of this Persian *Mirigāvatī* chose to translate rather than simply retell, we may speculate that he was possibly a local man who was familiar with the Hindavi text, which had been written a century earlier in the region and dedicated to the Sharqi ruler Husain Shah, rather than a Persian cosmopolitan poet who just happened to listen to the story recited.[†††††]

John Cort has written extensively on the remarkable translation activity into the vernacular (simply called *bhasha* or *bhakha*, 'language') by the circle of the Jain lay reformer Banarsidas in the heart of the Mughal capital of Agra in the early seventeenth century. Here, group discussions led to translations of doctrinal and liturgical texts which, in turn, led to new discussions. This vernacularisation of knowledge happened independently of royal initiatives or patronage, and the translations became authoritative texts that are still used in Jain ritual practices today.[‡‡‡‡‡]

Perhaps the most sustained example of poetic translation activity that we come across in this period comes from the outward-facing, commerce-oriented, and highly multilingual kingdom of Mrauk-U in the Bay of Bengal, where the poet Alaol composed for his elite patrons a remarkable set of sophisticated verse narratives (*panchalis*) in Bengali, as illustrated in Thibaut

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[*****] See Francesca Orsini, 'Translation, Circulation, Inflection: a Hindavi Tale in Persian Garb', in *Image, Object, Stories: Simon Digby's historical method,* ed. Francesca Orsini
 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, forthcoming) for a fuller discussion of this text.
[†††††] See Aditya Behl, transl., *The Magic Doe: Quṭban Suhravardī's* Mirigāvatī (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[‡‡‡‡‡] Cort, 'Making it Vernacular'.

d'Hubert's recent book.§§§§§ In fact, all of Alaol's works were translations, of either Hindavi or Persian texts. D'Hubert shows that, pace William Jones, Alaol was a highly conscious author-translator, for whom translation was a 'first degree' literary transposition in a continuum with composition.****** Alaol uses verbs rather than nouns to describe what he does and talks repeatedly of 'breaking the Persian verse/metre (*bayt*)' in order to first understand the meaning and extract the *rasa* (mood), and then recreate it in Bengali verse (*'bhāṅgiyā bayeta chanda racite payāra'*).††††††, In other words, d'Hubert notes, Alaol views his action as primarily prosodic (of 'transmetrification')‡‡‡‡‡‡ and secondly of poetics (i.e. about the *rasa* of the work or passage). d'Hubert also shows that Alaol is closer to the Hindavi or Persian original in the first part of the verse, whereas in the second part metrical exigency (the *payar* verse is longer) forces him to be more inventive, while his choice of a sanskritised register recalls the strategy of Sanskrit commentaries or *chhaya*, 'shadows'. Finally, d'Hubert argues that Alaol has his present audience in the royal assembly in mind all the time: when it comes for example to list-descriptions—a familiar feature of courtly literary composition at the time—he moves away from the original and comes closer to the Sanskrit descriptions his audience would have been familiar with. As a rule, the more familiar the theme, the more Alaol departs from the original to match his audience's expectations; the more unfamiliar the theme, the more mimetic is his translation. The homogeneous high-Bengali diction that Alaol uses for his translations of both Hindavi and Persian texts, d'Hubert shows, actually hides

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§§§§§ d'Hubert, *In the Shade*; also Thibaut d'Hubert, 'Histoire culturelle et poétique de la traduction. Alaol et la tradition littéraire bengali au XVIIe siècle à Mrauk-U, capitale du royaume d'Arakan', PhD dissertation (Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 2010).
****** d'Hubert, 'Histoire, pp. 357-8.
†††††† Ibid., 361.
‡‡‡‡‡‡ This is one of the main differences he makes between his poetic and technical translations (of the Persian verse treatise of Sufi ethics, Yusuf Gada's *Toḥfa-yi naṣāiḥ*); d'Hubert, 'Histoire', p. 357.

complex processes of cultural, aesthetic and and poetic negotiation, across the several languages and models at work—Hindavi, Persian, Sanskrit, Maithili, and Bengali.

The fourth and final example of formal poetic translation comes from Simon Leese's ongoing research on Arabic literary writing in India.§§§§§§ This concerns a commentary on a canonical Arabic poem, *Bānat Suʿād* (by Kaʿb b. Zuhayr in the seventh century CE) by a small-town north Indian teacher and scholar of Arabic in the late eighteenth century, Ilahi Bakhsh, who was a disciple of the celebrated *hadith* scholar and religious reformer Shah ʿAbd al-ʿAziz of Delhi, the son of Shah Waliullah. Ilahi Bakhsh's commentary includes not just the usual grammatical and lexical explanations but also interlinear translations in Persian, Urdu, and an Arabic re-translation by the author. This is a rare multiple poetic instance of a far more common Qur'anic translation and commentarial practice. And while the translations do not stand as individual poems but act as versified glosses, Leese argues, they also implicitly advance a claim for Arabic, Persian, and Urdu as part of a poetic continuum.

What these examples bring home is the fact that within this multilingual world poetic translation was of course possible, but it took specific conditions to activate it, whether they be the particular status of or closeness to the original text or the needs and expectations of the intended audience. More commonly, it seems, poetic tastes were cultivated separately and in parallel. It is intriguing that every time Bhanupratap Tivari, a very ordinary poet lover in late-nineteenth century north India, quotes a Persian

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§§§§§§ Simon Leese, 'Longing for Salmá and Hind: (Re)producing Arabic Literature in 18th and 19th Century North India', PhD dissertation, SOAS, University of London (ongoing).

verse in Persian script in his autobiography, he gives a Brajbhasha poetic translation (*ulthā*) in Nagari script in the margin (Fig. 1).*******
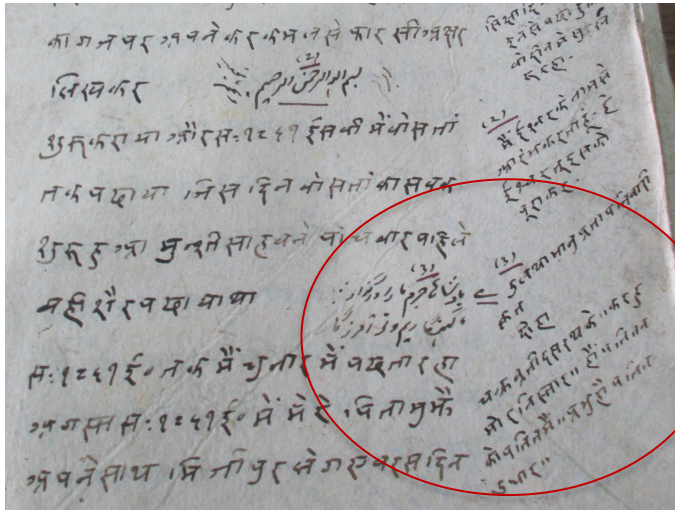

Fig. 1, Manuscript autobiography of Pandit Bhanupratap Tiwari (1890), p. 3. (Courtesy UP State Archive, Manuscript Library)

These are rare traces and material evidence of what I imagine must have been a more common practice, though usually unrecorded in writing. So if the relative absence of formal translations is not to be attributed to the mutual intelligibility between languages, or to a lack of interest—Harish Trivedi's argument—we can formulate the question differently: what happens when one is taught to appreciate and practice multiple poetic idioms in parallel? The answer is that one can: either cultivate them separately;

******* 'Pandit bhanupratap tivari charanadi nivasi ka sanchhep jivancharit va satsang vilas', Ms Hindi 11035, UP State Archive, Manuscript Library: 'The day he began teaching me the lesson on the *Bostān*, Munshi Sahab first recited this couplet five times:
bādshāh jurm-e mā rā dar gu<u>z</u>ār
gunahgār-īm wa tū āfruzgār.'
[Emperor, forgive my offense
I am guilty while you exalt.]
In the margin, Tiwari added: 'translation (*ulthā)* by Bhanupratap Tiwari: *doha* (couplet):
cakravartī dasaratha ke, karahu mora nistāra
hauṃ patitana ko patita maiṃ, prabhu hau patita udhāra.'
[Son of emperor Dasharatha, save me
I am a sinner among sinners
yet you, Lord, are a sinners' saviour.]

attempt poetic equivalences across the poetic idioms; or include tropes, keywords, images inside the other language. The latter two stretch the host poetic language, and it is to them that I now turn.

3. Poetic equivalence as language stretching

It is worth restating that there is evidence from at least the thirteenth century that the recitation and singing of poetry in Sufi musical (*sama'*) sessions and courtly assemblies included song-poems in both Persian and Hindavi. In *sama'* sessions, *qawwal* singers at the instruction of the master of the assembly 'knotted' together lines from different poems, sometimes in different languages, so as to press a particular point, lead the disciples out of themselves, and induce in them a higher state of consciousness.[††††††] It is rarer, however, to have texts commenting explicitly on the equivalences. This is what makes the short treatise on the unity of God (*tawhid*) by the fifteenth-century Chishti Sufi 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi which presents Persian and Hindavi poetic examples so enlightening for our purpose.[‡‡‡‡‡‡] In this treatise, the phrase *dar in ma'ni* ('with the same meaning') sets up a chain of signification that connects Qur'anic verses, *hadiths* (sayings attributed to the Prophet), verses of Persian poets, and Hindavi verses, some anonymous and some by the author himself, whose Hindavi pen-name itself translated his Persian one (both Alakhdas and 'Abdul Quddus mean 'servant of God'). The connection could be an idea, a situation, or a word.

[††††††] Mikko Viitamäki, 'Text and Intensification of Its Impact in Chishti Samā', PhD dissertation, (University of Helsinki, 2008).
[‡‡‡‡‡‡] For a longer discussion, see my 'Traces of a Multilingual World: Hindavi in Persian Texts', in *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-century North India*, ed. by F. Orsini and S. Sheikh (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 403-36.

For example, in order to expound on the familiar theme of why God undertook creation (so that he could be known), 'Abdul Quddus began with the famous *hadith Qudsi* 'I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, and I created creation so that I would be known', reiterated it with another Arabic *hadith,* 'That which God created first was love for me' and followed (*dar in ma'ani*) first by a line by Fariduddin 'Attar that partly translated the *hadith* phrase into Persian:

> Love came as a balm for every heart
>
> Without love no problem was ever solved.
>
> Likewise:
>
> Almighty God wished to reveal
>
> All at once His mysteries to you.§§§§§§§

And then by a line from a Hindavi song in Raga Purbi:

> *Dhana kāran piya āpa saṃvārā   bina dhana sakhī kānta kina hārā*
>
> *Shahu khelai dhana māhī̃ evān   bāsa phūla māha achai jevān.*
>
> For the sake of his bride, the lover adorned himself,
>
> without her, oh friend, is not the husband lost?
>
> The bridegroom plays inside the girl,
>
> Like the fragrance within the flower.

The chain of examples concludes with a Hindavi riddle:

> *kyõ nahī̃ khelũ tujha saṃga mītā mujha kārana taĩ ītā kītā.*
>
> *alakhadāsa akhai suna loī   soī bāka, aratha phuni soī.*

§§§§§§§ 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi, *Rushdnāma,* ed. Ghulam Ahmad Khan (Jhajjhar: Muslim Press, 1898), p. 5, tr. Simon Weightmann; this section draws on Orsini, 'Traces'.

Why should I not play with you, oh friend? For my sake you did so much.

Alakhdas says, 'Listen people, He is the word, He is also the meaning.'

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The song at first appears a typical utterance of the *virahini*, the poetic figure of the woman pining for her absent husband/lover and wondering why she should make herself beautiful. But then we notice a difference: here it is the male lover (*piya*) who adorns himself (*saṃvārā*) for the woman (*dhana*) and feels lost without her. Thus a new semantic situation—God, the lover, takes pains to adorn himself (=to reveal His beauty) for mankind, and it is He who craves (=mourns the absence) of mankind who will know Him—is grafted upon the familiar Hindavi 'structure of feeling'. The second line uses a love metaphor to suggest the extreme closeness of God to his creation. In the riddle, the first line suggests a banter between a woman and her male friend (m. *mītā*, not f. *sakhī*), once again suggesting some kind of erotic banter, while the next line calls the devotees to interpret the lover as God himself.

By setting up equivalences with Qur'anic utterances and Persian verses, then, 'Abdul Quddus bends and 'stretches' the language of Hindavi poetry—with its familiar characters of the pining woman, her female friend, the absent or teasing male lover—in order to 'think new thoughts'.††††††††
The Hindavi terms bring their own set of semantic connotations and acquire new ones in the process. In the next example, revolving around the familiar metaphor of the drop and the sea, 'Abdul Quddus first uses the image to state that God manifests himself in a thousand ways yet always remains Himself, and then exorts the seeker to 'plunge deep' until the self is lost and unity with

******** Gangohi, *Rushdnāma*, p. 2.
†††††††† Tony K. Stewart, 'In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu Encounter Through Translation Theory.' History of Religions, 40 (2001), 273.

God is attained. The Hindavi verse plays on the idea of getting lost but combines plunging with the pathos of the woman looking for her husband, making us read this familiar image in a completely new way:

> Khwaja 'Attar says:
>
> If the drop drowns in the sea, so what?
>
> What is the drop's existence, and what the sea's?

> *Herata herata he sakhī, hā͠u dhan gaī hirāi*
>
> *paryā būd samund māha, kahu kyau herī jāi*[‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡]
>
> Searching, searching, my friend, I got lost.
>
> The drop fell into the ocean, pray how can it be found?

Through these subtle changes and new combinations, the Hindavi poetic idiom is remoulded and pushed in new directions to express new thoughts, and key terms and images became polysemic—a good example of prismatic translation.

The process could also go the opposite way. In the anonymous Persian translation of Qutban's *Mirigāvatī* already mentioned, the dancers' black braids that look like snakes coiled around a sandalwood branch – a common trope in Hindavi – is first explained and then extends the equally familiar image of the Persian poetic idiom. In the Persian verse, the familiar trope of the black curls framing the beloved's face is rhetorically denied because the curls are actually dangerous coiling snakes attracted – and here comes the stretching – to the scent of the sandalwood:

> *cihura gūṃdi bēnī urābāī, cādana rūkha para bisahara chāī*[§§§§§§§§]

[‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡] Gangohi, *Rushdnāma*, p. 8.
[§§§§§§§§] *Mirigāvatī* (251.3), p. 53.

They had braided their hair and let it hang

like black cobras covering sandalwood trees.********

silsila-yi mūband cunān mīnamūd ke gūyā darakht-i ṣandal az bār mī bar āyad.

bayt:

na zulf ast īn ke hardam bar qad-i dildār mī pichad

zi mastī har nafas bar shākh-i ṣandal mār mī pichad.

Their long tresses looked like sandal trees encircled by snakes. Verse*:*

It's not a curl that ever coils around my beloved's body

It is a snake in heat, coiled around a sandal tree branch.††††††††

4. Mixed-language poetry

Mixed-language or macheronic poetry is familiar to European readers.‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡
But whereas in Europe the term macheronic is used mostly for humorous or
parodic/mock-heoric works, in India this is not the case.§§§§§§§§§ Mixed-
language poems cover a much wider range and I would distinguish at least
four categories of mixed-language poems: (a) 'ventriloquism', i.e. when a poet
takes on another idiom, persona, or 'structure of feeling' and 're-accents'
them, in the Bakhtinian sense; (b) poems that embrace a macheronic aesthetic

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******** Behl, *Magic Doe,* p. 133.
†††††††† Anon., *Rājkunwar*, f. 84r.
‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ Claudio Giovanardi, 'Il bilinguismo italiano-latino del medioevo e del Rinascimento',
in *Storia della lingua italiana*, Vol. 2, *Lo Scritto e il parlato* (Torino: Einaudi), pp. 435-467.
§§§§§§§§ For Hindi-Persian, see Imre Bangha, 'Rekhta: Poetry in Mixed Language: The
Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India', in *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu
Literary*
Culture, ed. F. Orsini (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan), pp. 21-83. Stefano Pellò notes that in
combining Persian with Hindavi, poets were in fact following a long tradition of mixed-
language poetry in the Islamic world; 'Local Lexis? Provincializing Persian in Fifteenth-
Century North India', in *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-century North
India*, ed. by F. Orsini and S. Sheikh (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), pp. 166-85.

and in which poetic idioms remain clearly separate and are made to collide rather than blend with each other; (c) 'poetic responses'—in the Perso-Urdu tradition of the *jawab*, in which a poet 'responds' to an earlier poem by using the same metre, rhyme, and terms and/or theme;********* and (d) poems that combine different poetics.

'Ventriloquism' describes particularly well the strategy of devotional saint-poets (called Sants in Hindi) who rewrote practically all the poetic and popular idioms available in north India: seasonal songs and songs of the twelve months (*barahmasas*); women's wedding songs (*mangal*); children's alphabet-learning poems (called *kakhahara* for the Devanagari alphabet and *alif-be* for the Perso-Arabic one); the Perso-Urdu/Sufi poetic idiom of love (*'ishq*) with its emphasis on pain and madness; Islamic sermons and Bhakti practice; hymns and ritual songs (*stotra, sahasranama, arati*); yogic vocabulary and hermetic 'upside-down language', and so on.†††††††††† Rather than choosing one particular idiom, Sant poets stamped and re-accented all these idioms as their own and moved with equal ease between different linguistic registers, from quasi-Persian, Brajbhasha, and Bhojpuri-inflected Hindavi.

Like other Sant poets, the seventeenth-century poet Malukdas from Kara, a Muslim-majority town with several Sufi establishments, has a small number of compositions in what we may call 'spoken Persian''.‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ They

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********* As Riccardo Zipoli explains (*The Technique of the Ǧawāb. Replies by Nawā'ī to Ḥāfiẓ and Ǧāmī*, Venezia: Cafoscarina, 1993, pp. 6-9), this was one in a range of phenomena: *tarjuma*, which consisted in translating lines or part of lines from Persian into Arabic or viceversa; *taẓmīn*, i.e. a quotation of famous lines or parts of lines in a poem; *tawārud*, i.e. chance coincidence in part of or a whole line, and the *jawāb, istiqbāl* or *tatabbu'*, a deliberate 'reply' to the verse of another poet that included using the same metre, rhyme and *radīf* (if present), and reworking some of the words and themes of the original poem, and sometimes entire lines or parts of them.
†††††††††† For 'upside down language' (*ulaṭbāṃsī*), see Linda Hess, 'The cow is sucking at the calf's teat: Kabir's upside-down language', *History of Religions* 22 (1983), 313-337.
‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ See C.S. Shackle [who calls the language Torki], 'Approaches to Persian loans in the *Adi Granth*', BSOAS 41 (1978), 73-96; see also F. Orsini and S. Pellò, 'Bhakti in Persian', unpublished paper.

consist almost exclusively of Persian words and phrases (in the example below, e.g. *pura nūra, hamā jā*) with minimal grammatical elements (only one verb, *osta*; the others are either absent or Hindavi), and the effect is one of 'quasi-Persian'. In other words, these compositions sound like Persian while being ungrammatical. In the process, Sufi technical terms and phrases (like *besabūha, benamūna, becagūna, hamā osta, hamā azosta*) become part of Sant vocabulary, stretch Sant language and become familiar to Hindavi audiences, all through aural communication. In the following example (words **in bold** are non-Persian ones), we cannot help noting that Malukas happily reconciles what in Sufi terms are customarily read as two opposing philosophies—of *waḥdat al-wujūd* or 'unity of existence' and *waḥdat al-shuhūd* or 'unity of witnessing'):

***Hai** hajūra **nahĩ** dūra, hamā-jā **bhara pūra** |*
*zāhirā jahāna, **jā kā** zahūra pura nūra ||1||*
besabūha, benamūna, becagūna osta |
hamā osta hamā azosta, jān-jānāṃ dosta ||2||
*shabo roza zikara fikara**hĩ maĩ** mashgūla |*
***tehĩ** dargāha **bīca, paṛe haĩ** qabūla ||3||*
*sāheba **hai merā** pīra, qudrata **kyā kahiye** |*
***kahatā** Malūka bandā, **taka** panāha **rahiye**.*[§§§§§§§§§§]

The Presence **is not** far, **it fills** everywhere,
manifest in the world, **its** appearance is full of light. 1
Without place, shape or sample, He is ineffable,
He is all, all is from Him, a friend of all creatures. 2
I spend night and day repeating his name, meditating **on** him,

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[§§§§§§§§§§] *Malūkdās kī bānī* (Allahabad: Belvedere Printing Press, 2011), p. 19.

I lie in the middle of **his** court, seeking his favour. 3

My Pir **is my** Lord, **what to say of** his power?

Says Maluk, my friend/the slave, **dwell in his** refuge.

In another song-poem, the warning against indifference, in other cases directed at others but here at himself ('This ignorant slave sins again and again'), is in line with the familiar Sant caution not to waste one's life sleeping but to wake up before death comes. But here it is the angel Jibril or Gabriel who appears with his mace ('My heart fears for the Last Day, when Jibrael will come mace in hand').[**********] We may hypothesise Malukdas would have heard Islamic popular poetry or preaching, but what is worth noting is that he uses an available language and makes it his own without registering it as a translation. While Malukdas could equally produce poems that conformed to a single particular idiom, he chose just as often to mix them within the same composition. And orally, without translation, and without formal education in Persian language and poetry, both Malukdas and his small-town, non-courtly audience were clearly familiar with polyvocal languages of love and devotion—a familiarity that continued later in the modern period as attested by commercial theatre, popular print genres, and cinema.[††††††††††]

That macheronic verses should arise from a multilingual literary culture is not surprising. A small but resilient genre of 'songs of the twelve months' (*barahmasas*) in Hindavi written by Persian-knowing poets set what was already an established popular and literary genre in which a woman abandoned by her lover or husband (the *virahini*) speaks of her suffering against the changing natural and ritual landscape of the months to a Persian metre used for Persian narrative poems or *masnavis*, the *hazaj* (it is the metre

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[**********] *Malūkdās*, p. 27.

[††††††††††] For the polyvocal languages of love, see Francesca Orsini, ed., *Love in South Asia: a cultural history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

of Firdausi's *Shahnāma*). Afzal's Twelve months-poem, later called *Bikaṭ kahānī* or 'Wretched tale' (ca. 1650), begins directly in the first person: 'Listen friends (*sakhi*) about my wretched tale, I have turned mad with the pain of love. I eat not in the day, nor sleep at night, my breast suffers the pangs of separation. The whole world calls me crazy…'[‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡] Here the demotic Hindi switches to Persian and what follows is quite a standard argument in Persian poetry (from the fourteenth-century poet Nizami Ganjavi onwards) about the awesome power of love, which can transform a rich man into a wretch, exalt a poor man, turn a wise man into a dunce or impart wisdom, or make you hate life (Persian words and phrases are italicised here in the text and my translation):

bhaī baurī birah bairāg setī,	jare jyūṛā měrā nit āg setī.
kahẽ ghar ke sabhī log aur lugāī,	*tamāmī sharm-e 'ālam kī gãvāī.*
chi sāzam chūn kunam kis kis pukārū̃,	jatan kyā *'ishq* ke *gham* kā bichārū̃.
ba-jānam be-davā āzār-e 'ishq ast,	*hamūn dānad ki ū bīmār-e 'ishq ast.*
agar shāh ast ham sargashta-e ūst,	*vagar bāshad gadā pā-basta-e ūst*
[15][§§§§§§§§§§§]	

I have gone crazy forced by separation, my life is scorched by endless fire.
Men and women at home say I've lost *all worldly shame*.
What should I do, who should I call on, how can find remedy to the *pain of love*?
The hurt of love is for life, without cure, everyone knows if one is ill with love.
Even a king, when subject to love, becomes a pauper chained to its fetters.

Although an equivalence between the the love of the simple *virahini* and the cosmic *'ishq* of Persian poets and Sufis underwrites this poem, there is

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[‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡] Tanvir Ahmad Alvi, *Urdū men bārahmāson kī rivāyyat* (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 1981), p. 22.
[§§§§§§§§§§§] Alvi, *Urdū*, p. 23.

no attempt to blend the demotic female voice and the lofty Persian one. The suture is on the surface, the stitches are not hidden. This macheronic aesthetic plays on contrast.

While poetic response or *jawab* remained for centuries a common strategy of training, affiliation, and differentiation in Persian and later Urdu poetry, we also find a small number of Hindavi compositions, mostly stemming from courtly and sophisticated settings, written in 'response' to Persian and Urdu poems. They show courtly Hindi poets reacting to the new fashion for Urdu/Rekhta poetry in the eighteenth century, like the poet-prince Savant Singh 'Nagaridas' recently documented by Heidi Pauwels.

Nagaridas, a talented courtly Hindi/Brajbhasha poet who was directly related to the Mughal imperial family and had a mansion in Delhi. enthusiastically 'responded' to the new Persianate Rekhta poetry which had recently reached Delhi from the Deccan in the 1720s and taken its poetic circles by storm.*********** Here is an example from Pauwels' book that shows Nagaridas responding to an admittedly simple Persian poem (the rhyming scheme is underlined):

zindagānī dar jahān be yār kardan <u>mushkil ast</u>

ḥāl-e khud ba har kasi iẓhār kardan <u>mushkil ast</u>

yakī migoī ba khubam āshnā'ī <u>mushkil ast</u>

āshnā'ī mitavān kardan [sic] *judā'ī <u>mushkil ast</u>*

shīsha-ye <u>shikasta</u> paivand kardan <u>mushkil ast</u>

yār-e dil ranjīda rā khushnūd kardan <u>mushkil ast</u>

Spending life in the world without a lover <u>is difficult</u>.

*********** The palace library in Kishangarh has a copy of Vali's *diwan* and Savant Singh's anthology *Pad-muktāvalī* includes a few of Vali's *ghazals;* Heidi C. Pauwels, *Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century India* (Berlin: EB Verlag, 2015), p. 82.

To reveal the state of one's mind before everyone <u>is difficult</u>

The saying goes: 'to befriend the finest <u>is difficult</u>.'

To befriend is doable, but to part *is difficult*.

To glue a <u>broken</u> mirror <u>is difficult</u>.

To mend a lover's broken heart <u>is difficult</u>.

Here is Nagaridas's poem:

ankhiyaũ se maĩ kahā thā, karau mata **<u>husana parastī</u>**

taba tau nahīṃ rahī ye bīca **<u>syokha saramastī</u>**

aba biraha kī āvai, dila para parī hai **<u>tājī</u>**

mujakau **<u>salāha</u>** *kyā hai,* **<u>musakala hai iskabājī</u>**

[…]

merī dasā duhelī yaha kisa kau kahi sunāũ

parī prīta ke samada maĩ kahūṃ pāra bhī na pāũ

nāgara navala piyāre tuma tau hau **<u>khusa-mijājī</u>**

muja kaũ **<u>salāha</u>** *kyā hai* **<u>musakala hai iskabājī</u>**

I beseeched my eyes, 'Don't **<u>worship beauty</u>**!'

They did not stay with me, but left **<u>haughty and intoxicated</u>**.

Now loneliness has come and assaults my heart **afresh**.

What's your **advice**? The **<u>game of love is hard to play</u>**.

[…]

This is my plight, who can I confide to?

I drown in ocean's passion, I cannot reach the other side.

Nagar says, 'My tender love, your are so **<u>happy and carefree</u>**,

What's your **advice**? The **<u>game of love is hard to play</u>**.[††††††††††††]

[††††††††††††] Texts and translations from Pauwels, *Cultural Exchanges,* pp. 100-102.

'While not a direct line-by-line translation' nor sharing the metre or the exact rhyme scheme of the Persian poem, Pauwels notes, the Hindi poem is tighly connected to it and echoes its rhyme scheme *mushkil ast* in the refrain *musakala hai iskabājī*. The 'response poem' stretches the Hindi poetic idiom not just linguistically but also thematically, given that the theme of unrequited love is typical of Persianate poetry but not in Hindi.‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ Lexical choices are also overwhelmingly Persianate (in bold). Here mixing is taking place at the heart of the poetic idiom.

Katherine Schofield has used the term 'Mughal *rasika'* to indicate the convergent and intermedial aesthetics underpinning Mughal courtly understandings and appreciation of music, painting, and Brajbhasha poetry.§§§§§§§§§§§§ Nagaridas's 'response poems' implicitly brought together the poetic personae and structures of feeling of the Perso-Urdu *ghazal*, with its emphasis on self-knowledge and refinement through love suffering, with the catalogues of heroines and love situations of courtly Brajbhasha poetry, which continued Sanskritic models.*********** Evidence shows that at least some other poets and literati in eighteenth-century north India did the same.††††††††††††

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‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ Persianate is a neologism launched by Marshall Hodgson in *The Venture of Islam,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) to denote genres, styles, aesthetics and linguistic registers in languages other than Persian that drew upon Persian models, and is commonly used for Ottoman Turkish and Urdu. Persianised is used more narrowly for a linguistic register abounding in Persian words and constructions. In this case I use Persianate for Nagaridas's language because his spelling of the Persian words conforms to Brajbhasha phonology rather than Persian or Urdu, as would be the case with Persianised Hindi (so *musakila* मुसकिल instead of *mushkil* मुश्किल, *isakabājī* इसकबाजी for *ishqbāzī* इश्क़बाज़ी, to stay with the Nagari script).

§§§§§§§§§§§§ Katherine Butler Schofield, 'Learning to Taste the Emotions: The Mughal *Rasika'*, in *Tellings and Texts*, ed. by F. Orsini and K. Schofield (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015), pp. 407-422.

*********** See Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

†††††††††††† E.g. the comparison between Sanskrit and Arabo-Persian aesthetics in Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami's *Ghazalān-i hind*; see Sunil Sharma, 'Translating Gender: Āzād Bilgrāmī on the

Nagaridas's quasi-contemporary, the bilingual Persian and Brajbhasha poet Ghulam Nabi Raslin (1699-1750) largely kept his poetic production in the two languages quite separate. Yet in a couple of Brajbhasha poems we see him use Persianate vocabulary and a quatrain (*ruba'i*) rhyme-scheme AABA for a typical 'description of the heroine', a stock theme of Hindi courtly poetry. While the vocabulary is much more Persianised than that of his Brajbhasha poems, including a few Persian compound forms (*ḥayā-dost, māya-e nāz, ayām-e shabāb*), Raslin seeks to match this Persianised register with the emotional and poetic language of the 'types of heroines' (*nayika bheda*, here the overly timid wife) – rather than with that of the Persianate lover and beloved (*'ashiq* and *mahbub*):

> *sukiyā/svakiyā* [the heroine as wife]

> *az bas ke ḥayā-dost hai vo māya-e nāz* [for *nayika*]
> *is ṭaraḥ son hai is ke sukhan kā andāz*
> *khāme kī zabān son jyon nikalte hain ḥuruf*
> *par kān talak nahīn pahunchtī āvāz.*‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡
> She's so chaste, that alluring one,
> This is how she speaks:
> Letters spring from the pen of her tongue,
> Yet no sound reaches your/his ears.

These examples show us how, within a multilingual social and poetic environment in which poets had access to several languages either through education or through oral access, poetic idioms could circulate even in the absence of formal translation.

5. Formal translations and modern literature

There is little doubt that with colonialism the emphasis shifted radically in two major ways. First, particularly British translators and critics emphatically stressed 'faithful' formal translations, in line with William Jones's sentiments quoted at the beginnning (see fn 1). Later Orientalists praised Shridhar Pathak's *tour de force* Hindi translation of Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1889) as 'an absolutely line by line rendering of Goldsmith, every idea punctually reproduced', and said: 'similar accuracy of translation and similar melodiousness of verse runs through the entire specimen'.§§§§§§§§§§§§§ They also praised his translation of *The Hermit* as 'a poem in the Hindi language, uniting all the beauties of an original composition with the all the faithfulness of a literal translation'.************ Both texts were part of the English curriculum of colonial education and were much translated into Indian languages throughout the nineteeenth century, and though Pathak translated them "for the sake of Hindia nd English poetry lovers", it may have had the developing

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§§§§§§§§§§§§§ See Valerie Ritter, *Kama's Flowers: Nature in Hindi poetry and criticism, 1885-1925* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), pp. 68-79 for an extensive analysis of this translation.
************ 'It will be a poem of remarkable excellence, the translation being so close as to be in the great part line by line… The exact reproduction of each idea of the original in concise and beautiful Hindi verse is a triumph of skill'; 'very fair specimens of the artistic skill the Pandit has brought to bear on this work, and though the rendering is perfectly verbatim, it is quite free from the monotonous substitution of words which disfigures most of translations.' 'It is rare even in prose that so faithful a rendering is seen in the case of languages so widely different as English and Hindi, but in verse such close adherence to an original, while preserving fluency and poetic sweetness is exceedingly rare indeed'; *Opinions and reviews*, in Shridhar Pathak, *Ūjaṛ Gām* (Benares: Medical Press, 1889), pp. ii-viii.

Hindi school curriculum in mind.[†††††††††††††] In fact, Pathak's translations flow only thanks to alliteration and rhyme, but their artificial language, a mishmash of Sanskrit loanwords and neologisms awkwardly juxtaposed to occasional dialectal terms and expressions, make it difficult to follow the meaning, particularly for *Ūjaṛ Gām,* without the English original. Second, both British and Indian intellectuals came to share an instrumental view of translation as essential to the growth and development of a language, literature, and community, which were now imagined to neatly coalesce, and English poetry as a model. Again, the positive reviewers of Pathak's Goldsmith's translation stress the benefit of 'direct[ing] the Indian mind to the beauties of nature and to the tender feelings of the heart. Extravagance of language and artificiality of sentiment characterize and disfigure Oriental Verse', and added:

> Works such as these will not only make a valuable addition to Hindi Literature but will tell people ignorant of English what stuff English poetry is made of. They will give them insight into that fine imagery, those delicate paintings of scenes and characters which are the peculiar attractions of English poetry, they will lead them from the land of the wild, the fantastic, the supernatural, the impossible with which so much of Oriental poetry and romance abounds into the regions of reason and reality, and lastly they will give them an opportunity of setting a right value upon foreign productions instead of blindly and therefore partially deciding in favour of works of indigenous art.[‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡]

[†††††††††††††] '*The Solitary Yogi: a romance*, which Pandit Shridhar Pathak has translated (*ultha kiya*) from English into Hindi verse for the sake of Hindi and English poetry lovers', cover of Shridhar Pathak, *Ekantvasi Jogi: ek premkahani* (Allahabad: Ram Dayal Agrawal, 1931 5th ed.).
[‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡] Review in *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 6 July 1886, in Pathak, *Ujar Gam*, pp. iv-v.

Pathak was college-educated, and his translations clearly came out of and fed into the didactic context of colonial education.§§§§§§§§§§§§§§ Pathak was also an activist in the Hindi movement for official recognition; but was also trained in Brajbhasha and knew Sanskrit.************** He was conscious and wary of the distance between the 'purely English' poem and Hindi.††††††††††††††

But after the first wave of translations of English poetry, formal translation also became a door to world literature, and English turned from a source to a medium for that. So in the 1930s the truly remarkable Urdu poet, essayist and translator Miraji broke with the colonial mould and undertook a breathtakingly ambitious project of translating world poetry into Urdu.‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ Miraji was already experimenting with stretching Urdu poetry towards song forms with a wider range of registers and vocabulary than traditional Persianate forms like the *ghazal*. His translations were clearly part of this effort, and we see him stretching the Urdu poetic idiom through metrical (end-rhyme, initial rhyme) and free verse translation partly by drawing upon the vernacular poetic idioms we have already encountered, such as that of Brajbhasha, and partly on colloquial language, as in his translation of Walt Whitman's 'To a Stranger':

Passing stranger! you do not know how longingly I look upon you,
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking, (it comes to me as of a

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§§§§§§§§§§§§§§ Indeed, the standard edition of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* was by Arthur Barrett, BA, Pofessor of English literature at Elphinstone College, Bombay, which included a substantial historical introduction and copious notes aimed at Indian students (London: Macmillan & Co, 1888 and many editions).
************** He dedicated *Ūjaṛ Gām* to Frederic Pincott MRAS and 'earnest advocate of the just claims of the Hindi language to official recognition', Pathak, *Ūjaṛ Gām*, n.d.
†††††††††††††† His Hindi Preface is addressed in more traditional Brajbhasha/courtly Hindi terms to the connoisseurs (*rasik*), 'always tasting anew the nectar of the pleasures of verse/ bees drinking the honey of new poetry, lovers of new flowers'; transl. Valerie Ritter, *Kama's Flowers: Nature in Hindi Poetry and Criticism, 1885-1925* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), p. 70.
‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ Miraji, *Maghreb aur mashreq ke naghme* (Lahore: Sang-e Meel Publications, 2009).

dream,)

I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you, […]§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§

Ae 'ajnabī!	O stranger!
tujhko nahīn is kī khabar,	you don't know
dekhā tujhe kin ārzūon se abhī	how longingly I looked upon you,
be shak vahī hai tū	No doubt it's you
mujhe	who I
thī jis kī ab tak justjū;	was seeking;
(ye bāt aise hai ki jaise khwāb ho!)	(this comes to me as of a dream.)
hamrāz-e 'ishrat ho ke tere sāth	As your companion of joy
mainne guzārī hai kahīn,	I have lived somewhere
kuch zindagī. **************	Some part of life…

Miraji breaks up Whitman's long lines to mark the rhythm of the voice and isolate smaller units of language like obejct (e.g. the emphasised "you", *be shak vahī hai tū*), indirect object ("I/to me", *mujhe*), and apposition ("As your companion of joy").

When writing about and translating Baudelaire, Miraji emphasises the novelty of Baudelaire's diction and poetic ideas and tries to keep closer to his dense syntax. He also tells his readers that in recent times France has been leading Europe in cultural and artistic terms.†††††††††††††††† So while Miraji undertook relay translations of non-English poetry through the medium of English, it would be mistaken to read this as as a sign of subjection. Rather, his cosmopolitanism entailed looking *both* East *and* West, and not in a

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§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§ https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/to-a-stranger, accessed on 13 September 2018.
**************** Miraji, *Maghreb*, p. 46.
†††††††††††††††† Miraji, *Maghreb*, p. 133.

peripheral position vis-à-vis Europe or Britain. And while for the early modern cosmopolitans, even if they were aware of the wider world, their literary world was shaped by the reach of their languages, for modern cosmopolitans like Miraji translation through English became a way of continuously extending and expanding one's literary idiom and world.

Conclusions

This journey through the variegated poetic world of early modern North India has aimed to show that the comparative lack of formal poetic translations should not be read in terms of either complete mutual intelligibility between the languages—in a kind of language continuum—, or of mutual indifference. Despite the relative paucity of written examples, we find enough *traces* to conclude that the cultivation of poetic idioms in multiple languages could produce parallel enjoyment but also poetic equivalences and various kinds of combinations—from ventriloquism to macheronic collision, from poetic 'responses' to combined aesthetics. As we have seen, these were common among both courtly, non-courtly, and devotional poets and their audiences. And since most if not all of this poetry was meant to be recited and repeated aloud, script and even literacy did not really act as barriers to comprehension, however much other forms of social exclusion may have done so.

  This plurality and this traffic need not be read as either liberal pluralism or as fierce competition or appropriation. We can equally read them as the byproduct of ordinary multilingual competence and of the familiarity with a range of poetic idioms that formal education as well as aural exposure produced. In re-using poetic idioms, usually in the form of "nuggets of language" rather than metres of rhyme-schemes, each poet could and did re-

accent them.‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ This usefully takes us away from models of belonging, 'borrowing', and strong intentionality to a more everyday understanding of what doing poetry and addressing audiences in a multilingual society and polyvocal literary culture entailed.

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‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981); for other Indian examples, see Francesca Orsini, 'Na Turk na Hindu: Shared Languages, Accents, and Located Meanings', in *A Multilingual Nation: Translation and Language Dynamic in India*, ed. Rita Kothari (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 50-69.

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