

Comparative study of various literatures in the West and in India is not quite the same. The fact that Indian Literatures are a product of multicultural, social-historical mélange cannot be overlooked. Also, common socio-cultural and historical bonds bind writers with common linguistic background and from different linguistic background. In the Indian context a two-fold approach has to be taken towards Comparative literature: first, the influence of European writers on our writers and vice versa. Second the influence of Indian writers of one region on the writers of other regions. Comparative literature is a study of intertextuality. For example if we have to compare a novel of English with one of Kannada we have to use either English or Kannada but if we have to compare a Bengali novel (a language which is unknown to us) we have to read first an English version of the Bengali novel and then compare it with the Kannada novel and use either Kannada or English, the two languages we know, as the medium of assessment.



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Comparative Perspectives on Indian Literature

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20-12-2024



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Preface

Larger part of ancient Indian literature was produced in Sanskrit. The influences or affinities between literatures which have been produced in modern Indian languages in order to project India as one nation could not be studied largely due to inaccessibility of the Sanskrit language to the majority in India but its similitude was found with Persian and Arabic, and Greek and Latin. This should have provided historical guidelines for a comparative practice of pluralism in order to understand the inter-literariness of the Indian literary culture.

Studying Indian literature demands a comparative method, and this cannot be substituted by the direct application of any method or theory imported from outside the plural culture in which the literature is located. Hence, the 'mainstream' of Comparative Literature practice may have suggestions to offer the Indian comparatist, but the task of finding the method for Comparative Literature in India – not an 'Indian' Comparative Literature, for often enough we may have to question the very basis of methods laid down by the 'mainstream' - lies with us.

Marathi and Telugu literature, though written in different languages, share a number of similarities in different respects. The relation of these to Sanskrit has influenced them as much as their relations to the local oratures and language-registers. The incident of colonial rule has influenced different groups of the Marathi and Telugu speaking peoples, in different ways.

This situation prompts us to look at our literatures from within and in the context in which they are produced and studied. It also prompts us to turn towards the sources and resources resulting from cultural contact far older than the colonial episode, reflect upon their influences as well as their refiguring in the light of colonial politics and their residual survival in 'post' colonial modernity.

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