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Editor  
TARIQ KHAN

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Translation Today (TT) is a double-blind peer-reviewed, indexed and refereed journal of the National Translation Mission (NTM). This has been listed in the UGC approved list of journals. It follows the standard publishing norms and therefore, invites original and unpublished submissions in the following categories:

- Research articles
- Academic interviews
- Translations
- Disciplinary dialogues
- Book reviews
- Annotated bibliography

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- Seeks excellence in the translated word.
- Seeks to further the frontiers of Translation Studies.
- Seeks to raise a strong awareness about translation, its possibilities and potentialities, its undoubted place in the history of ideas, and thus help catalyse a groundswell of well-founded ideas about translation among people.

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## **Editorial**

Academic writings on translation, with their diverse facets, have been contributing to the development of Translation Studies as a vibrant and self-thriving discipline. In these writings, two approaches are easily noticeable; one that accounts for what is there and the other that brings out what is not there. In other words, the revival of existing knowledge and the creation of new knowledge contribute to the advancement of any discipline while Translation Studies may not be an exception. The translatable and untranslatable phenomena within the scope of language and culture are the key issues in this field. Time and again these issues are taken up with new theoretical engagements and interrogation of the existing practices. This issue (Volume 14 Issue 1) of Translation Today amply demonstrates the contemporary topics in translation research, and the editorial team is happy to present it. The contents of the present issue include six research articles, two academic interviews, five book reviews, a translation and an annotated bibliography. Together, they explore, revisit, interrogate and expand the various aspects of translation and meaning-making from the standpoint of Translation Studies.

Translation and Language Pedagogy have been regular concomitants. The focus of numerous conferences and workshops on translation and language pedagogy and vice versa bear the testimony to the symbiotic relationship between the two. The first article titled Assessment of Student Translators' Texts from Nepali into English: Language Quality and Degree of Task Completion by Bal Ram Adhikari presents research from translation pedagogy and language teaching. This paper revisits the importance of teaching the target language in training courses that aim at making the translators competent and skilled in translation. Examining this issue, the author concludes that it is essential to train the translators in the target language.



Cultural issues have been the cynosure of translation research in the last couple of decades. Deepa Kumawat and B. K. Anjana's article *Dialectal Peculiarities of Indian Text and Context in Translation Practice: A Critique* explores into this aspect with the analysis on the translation of Maitreyi Pushpa's short stories. This paper draws from Malinowski's context of the situation. The next article titled *Translating Drama: An Interpretation, an Investigation* by G. Satya Girish and K. Rajyarama tries to prove that research in translation has not been limited to one text-type or one genre of literature. It studies the issues in translating drama with special reference to *Kanyasulkam & Chavakudadu*.

This issue also brings out the discussion of the transformation of legends in Kerala from oral tradition and formation of literary canon, which has been dealt with in detail in the paper titled *From Little Tradition to Great Tradition: Canonising Aithihyamala* by Nivea Thomas K and S. Arulmozi. Revisiting the existing texts, theories and approaches has been the recurring theme of this issue which is further exemplified by Suvash Chandra Dasgupta in his paper titled, *Translation as 'Rewriting': Revisiting Translation Views of Tagore and Lefevere*. Dasgupta analyses Lefevere's concept of rewriting and compares it with how Tagore used this as an equivalent of creative translation. Continuing the common theme of the issue as we have discussed translation issues of drama and short stories, Vasumathi Badrinathan studies the issues in translating classical Tamil poetry into French in the paper, *Challenges of Translating Classical Tamil Poetry into French: The Tiruppavai as Example*.

Interactions between established figures and active scholars can lend useful insights into the intricacies of a formal pursuit of knowledge. Even though such interactions lack the formal structure of a research paper there is no denial to the fact that anyone can benefit from them. Sometimes books and research papers may not provide the insights that a scholar might have experienced in his/her lifetime and reveals in the form of interviews. Therefore, Translation Today initiated a project called

Translation Studies in Dialogue intending to publish academic interviews of learned scholars of Translation Studies. The project may go on for a couple of years. In the meantime, the journal intends to keep publishing the entries coming in. This issue offers two such interviews. In the first, Manjulakshi L. interviews P. P. Giridhar & and in the second, Maya Pandit is interviewed by Umesh Kumar.

Book reviews have been an important constituent of this journal as they keep the readers abreast with the latest scholarly developments in Translation Studies. The present issue of the journal carries five book reviews. I am glad to mention that the participants of NTM's Translation Training Programme have contributed three out of five book-reviews selected. The first book review by Vinay S. M. deals with *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. The Neurocognition of Translation and Interpreting* is reviewed by Obed Ebenezer S. Vivek Kumar reviews the book titled *The Wall and the Arcade: Walter Benjamin's Metaphysics of Translation and its Affiliates*. Next, *Sympathy for the Traitor* has been reviewed by Randheer Kour. The final book review concerns *Kabir, Rahim and Biharilal's Dohas in Translation* and is contributed by Ragini Ramachandra.

The translation section of the issue carries the story *Jugaad* by Prem Kumar Mani translated as A Pot of Rice and Roasted Rats by Bindu Singh.

In the annotated bibliography section Subha Chakraborty presents an annotated bibliography of the Translation Studies books published in 2019. These annotations in this section continue from her earlier contribution published in the last issue of the journal.

The editorial team regrets to inform the unfortunate demise of Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh and Prof. Tutun Mukherjee. This issue features obituaries of both the leading scholars whose contribution to this journal has been tremendous. In the first

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obituary, Pratiapati Matthew pays tribute to Late Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh while in the other second Sayantan Mondal remembers Late Prof. Tutun Mukherjee. Avadhesh Kumar Singh was one of our editorial board members and contributed immensely to the growth of the journal. Tutun Mukherjee was also associated with the journal in several ways. Their demise is a loss for Translation Today as both of them used to support this journal by contributing research papers and reviewing the submissions received. Translation Today will always remain indebted to their contributions.

Translation Today has been giving priority to cutting-edge research in translation. The journal has been initiating new steps aimed at expanding the discourse on translation and adding diversity to it. The journal offers space for challenging the existing research and bringing new insights. It engages with theory and practice so that no form of translation knowledge remains unaddressed and unexplored. This issue adequately exemplifies the focus and objective of the journal. Hope the readers will get new experiences and enjoy the existing taste as well.

We thank all our esteemed reviewers for their time and keen observations that were highly beneficial in selecting the best of the submissions. We acknowledge the support of all the anonymous reviewers and hope to associate with them for future also.

Stay safe and take care of your family and friends!

Tariq Khan

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# Assessment of Student Translators' Texts from Nepali into English: Language Quality and Degree of Task Completion

BAL RAM ADHIKARI

## Abstract

*This study attempts to assess the quality of English translations by English-major M.Ed. students specializing in Translation Studies. The study adopted the combination of error analysis and holistic method to assess the quality of target texts (TTs) elicited through the production task carried out by 30 purposively selected students. Findings show that most of TTs were undermined by grammatical errors and syntactic inaccuracies revealing student translators' substandard English competence. The study thus sees the urgency of incorporating English teaching into the translation course to strengthen student translators' production skill in English.*

**Keywords:** Source Text, Student Translators, Target Text, Translation Assessment, Translation Competence.

## 1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of translation pedagogy is to produce competent translators in the language(s) in question. In principle, a competent translator is expected to possess abilities to interpret the source text (ST) adequately and produce the target text (TT) which, according to Reiss and Vermeer (2013), must be coherent not only with the ST in terms of content and style but also with the target language (TL) system (as cited in Munday 2016). Thus, comprehension of the ST and its composition in the TL can be conceived as the two fundamental components of translation competence (Campbell 1998; Hatim 2014) that any translation course aims to develop in prospective translators. In this respect, Campbell (1998)

observes that composing a coherent TT in a second/foreign language is far more challenging than in one's first language. Studies have also shown that translators are confronted with more challenges in producing linguistically coherent TTs in the second language than in the first language owing to their limited second language proficiency to manipulate linguistic and textual resources productively (see Campbell 1998; Abbasi & Karimnia 2011; Hatim 2014; Wongranu 2017; Mraček 2018). Because of translators' limited access to the second language, the acceptability and feasibility of inverse translation (i.e. translating from one's mother tongue into a second/foreign language) has been the subject of debate and dispute among translation scholars (Mraček 2018: 203).

For the last two decades, translation as a subject has been taught, trained and researched in M.Ed., M.A., and M.Phil. programs under Faculties of Education and Humanities in the universities of Nepal. In terms of directionality, the existing Translation Studies courses are inverse in nature, for their primary aim is to engage students in translation activities from their mother tongue (i.e. Nepali) into the foreign language (i.e. English). The underlying assumption is that after the completion of the courses theoretically equipped students will be able to translate Nepali literary texts of moderate length into English. However, there has been no study so far investigating the performance of these prospective English translators. To address the existing gap, this study poses the following questions with respect to student translators' performance in English:

- a) What is the language quality of the translations produced by student translators?
- b) Are their translations adequate enough to be accepted as English texts?

In my attempt to answer these research questions, I briefly review the literature on different methods of assessing student translators' texts, translation competence in the second language, and present the criteria for the analysis and evaluation of TTs. Then, I outline the methodology adopted to conduct the study before presenting results under four headings and their discussion. Finally, the conclusion subsumes the summary of key findings and a suggestion for future study.

## **2. Assessment of TTs by Student Translators**

The survey of literature on translation assessment suggests that translation teachers and researchers have adopted different methods to assess translated texts in general and student translations in particular (see Waddington 2001; Doyle 2003; Schiaffino & Zearo 2005; Abbasi & Karimnia 2011; Reiss 2014; Wongranu 2017). The choice of one method over another is likely to be affected by a myriad of factors such as the theoretical underpinning of the method, the focus of assessment (such as cultural, textual, and lexico-grammatical aspects of the text), the dimension of assessment (comprehension of the ST, production of the TT or both), and the notion of what is constituted in translation competence. Despite such variations in theoretical orientation and practice, all the methods are predicated on the unvarying assumption that translation as a product can be analyzed systematically and its quality can be assessed by means of certain parameters.

Surveying the methods that university teachers adopted to assess the TTs by Spanish students translating into English as a foreign language, Waddington (2001) identifies three broad methods of assessment: error analysis, a holistic appreciation, and a combination of error analysis and a holistic appreciation. Drawing on Waddington's (2001) survey, we can further identify two methods based on error analysis. The first

involves identification and description of errors in: a) the interpretation of ST such as addition, omission, and loss of meaning; b) the expression of the ST in the TL such as spelling, grammar, lexical items; and c) the transmission of function of the text. Some of the researchers who have used this method to analyse and assess the quality of TTs are Doyle (2003), Schiaffino and Zearo (2005), Abbasi and Karimnia (2011), Koby (2015), and Wongranu (2017). Doyle (2003), for instance, adopted the American Translation Association's (ATA) Framework (2002) for standard error marking. Descriptive in nature, the ATA framework recognizes 22 types of errors, including those committed at grammatical and lexical levels. Likewise, Schiaffino and Zearo (2005) have presented translation quality index to assess the quality of translation based on the number and type of errors detected in the text. This assessment framework categorizes errors as critical, major, or minor, considering their effect on the transfer of content and breaching of the target grammar system. Abbasi and Karimnia's (2011) study also adopted error analysis to study the quality of English translations by Iranian students. The study reported the majority of students committing the grammatical errors. Like Doyle, Koby (2015) adapted the ATA Flowchart for Error Point Decisions and Framework for Standardized Error Marking (2009) to assess the translations carried out by graduate students from German into English in terms of such criteria as misunderstanding, omission, literalness, ambiguity and grammar. The study rated misunderstanding as the most serious error, whereas transfer errors were more frequently marked and noted more severe than grammar or language errors.

The second assessment method is principally built on Pym's (1992) work which distinguishes between language errors and translation errors. The former impairs the transfer of ST content, whereas the latter do not affect the content transfer but

breach the TL system. Translation errors result from deficiency in the translator's ability to interpret the ST and choose the most appropriate TT for it. Language errors, on the other hand, reflect deficiency in the translator's TL competence. Language errors, which typify breaches of the TL morpho-syntactic system, are binary in that they are grammatically either right or wrong (Pym 1992). Such errors can be detected even without comparing them with their source counterparts. Conversely, translation errors are non-binary because there cannot be one right answer. This approach regards translation or transfer errors graver than language errors. Since the theoretical distinction between these two types of errors is not fool proof in practice, the present study treats translation errors and language errors equally grave depending upon their negative impact on the communication of ST content in the TL. Moreover, language errors are not less severe than translation errors with respect to student translators particularly when they are working into a foreign language.

The holistic method involves the overall appreciation of the quality of a TT accompanied by descriptors for the assessment of different aspects of the TT. Descriptive in nature, Waddington's (2001) holistic method counts three areas of translation product: accuracy of content transfer, quality of language of the TT and degree of task completion. This approach is subjective and rather open-ended. Finally, the third approach concerns the combination of error analysis and holistic method. The present study adopts the combination of error analysis and holistic appreciation with the underlying reason that the combination of these two methods leads to more accurate assessment of TTs.

It should, however, be noted that the translation assessment methods discussed so far are product-oriented that treat translation as an end-product. In this respect, Huertas-Barros



and Vine call for the need of integrating other innovative assessment methods such as ‘formative assessment, peer and self-assessment, translation commentaries, reflective diaries, and student portfolios’ (2019: 249) with the product-oriented methods to obtain more valid and reliable information on student translators' performance.

### **3. Translation Assessment and Translation Competence in the Second Language**

The guiding insight of Waddington (2001) is that translation competence underlies as the unvarying component of all methods of translation assessment. The review of some of the representative models such as Bell (1991), Pym (1992), Kiraly (1995), Campbell (1998), PACTE group (2003, 2005), and Göpferich (2009) reveals that there is lack of consensus as to the number and nature of constitutive components of translation competence. Pym's (1992) model, for instance, conceives translation competence as the union of two skills of generating a series of options in the TL and selecting the most appropriate option that fits the ST. The PACTE group (2003), on the other hand, hypothesizes the existence of as many as six components underlying translation competence such as bilingual sub-competence, extralinguistic sub-competence, and instrumental sub-competence. Despite such differences, these models accounting for translation competence share two common features. First, they are almost exclusively concerned with the competence of translators working from a second/foreign language to their mother tongue rather than inverse translation. Second, TL competence is either mentioned peripherally as in the PACTE group (2005) or completely ignored as in Pym (1992) despite the fact that linguistic competence on the TL is a prerequisite component of translation competence. In the composite models of translation competence, TL competence is generally subsumed into

bilingual competence (PACTE group 2003, 2005) or into bilingual communicative competence (Göpferich 2009). Albir (2015) is another glaring example of relegating linguistic competence backstage. Like Pym, she does not include the translator's abilities to interpret the ST and produce the TT in the catalogue of distinguishing features of translation competence.

In this respect, Campbell's (1998) model, however, is an exception, as it is exclusively concerned with inverse translation and centres on the second language translator's ability to produce optimum quality output in the TL. On the linguistic level, Campbell (1998: 59) posits three levels of translation competence: a) substandard competence that reflects translators' poor TL repertoire; b) pretextual competence that concerns translators' inability to free the TT from ST structure; and c) textual competence that mirrors translators' ability to produce the TT conforming to the TL system. Campbell's framework foregrounds the linguistic aspect of translation competence and recognizes TL competence as the pivotal factor that determines the overall quality of TTs. Although proposed two decades ago, this framework still holds true for and is of high relevance to ESL/EFL translation pedagogy in which students struggle simultaneously to acquire translation skills and to get mastery over English as the TL.

#### **4. Criteria for Assessment of TTs by Student Translators**

Drawing on the reviewed literature specifically Waddington's (2001) work, the present study adopted the combination of error analysis and holistic method to assess the TTs produced by student translators. Additionally, the study drew insights from Doyle's (2003) modified ATA's framework, Reiss's (2014) categories and criteria for translation quality assessment, and Wongranu's (2017) evaluation of errors

committed by English major students. Based on these works, the following criteria were developed to analyze and assess the two different aspects of the TTs: a) quality of TTs in English; and b) degree of task completion.

The quality of English texts was assessed in terms of: a) grammatical errors; b) lexical errors; c) syntactic inaccuracies; and d) serious syntactic inaccuracies. Grammatical errors represent the errors committed in the use of grammatical categories such as tense (T), voice (V), article (Art.), preposition (Prep.), possessive determiner (Poss. Det.) and subject-verb agreement (SV). Lexical errors mean the inappropriate word choice (WC). Syntactic inaccuracies refer to such chunks/expressions that on the surface look grammatically well formed but lack semantic clarity. Finally, serious syntactic inaccuracies are those expressions that are unintelligible both syntactically and semantically. Recovering their meanings is impossible without going back to their STs.

Concerning the second aspect of translation performance, Waddington's (2001) five levels of adequacy were adapted to assess students' ability to produce acceptable TTs: a) successful (the translation that reads as if originally written in English); b) almost completely successful (the acceptable translation that can be made publishable after minor revision and editing); c) adequate (the acceptable translation that can be improved and made publishable after major revision and thorough editing); d) inadequate (the TT not acceptable, as almost all sentences are erroneous); and e) totally inadequate (the TT not acceptable at all). However, we should acknowledge the fact that such categorization and descriptors both are to a large extent subjective and intuitive. There are many fuzzy lines between adequate and inadequate, and adequate and almost inadequate translations.

## 5. Methodology

To assess the quality of English translations by student translators, the study combined error analysis and holistic method under the product-oriented research methodology (Saldanha & O'Brien 2014). As a tool, the production task (Nunan 2010) was employed to elicit data from the thirty purposively selected English-major M.Ed. students specializing in Translation Studies, Tribhuvan University Nepal. I purposively selected ten Nepali short stories, each within the limit of 800 to 1000 words, and assigned one story to three students. I requested all the thirty participants to translate the story on their convenient time and return the English translation within a month from the date of receiving the story. From each translated story, I selected the first fifteen sentences which normally exceeded the range of a paragraph. There were about 450 English sentences altogether extracted for the purpose of analysis. I adopted content analysis to investigate frequency and nature of errors and inaccuracies in the selected TTs. The English texts were coded as TT1, TT2...and TT30 to ensure participants' anonymity.

## 6. Analysis and Assessment of TTs

Considering the analysis and assessment criteria outlined above, the overall findings are summarized first. Then, each level of adequacy is presented followed by a close analysis of a representative text to illustrate key findings. The translation cases discussed under different levels of adequacy are the excerpts from the English translations of four Nepali short stories, namely *Ekānta* (Solitude), *Dukhānta* (Tragedy), *Chil* (Eagle), and *Bisesagya* (Specialist) by Brajaki (2003), Sapkota (2003), Regmi (2003), and Gautam (2015) respectively. The erroneous expressions are underlined in each representative case. Since the study uniquely focused on the assessment of the quality of English texts translated from Nepali, the STs are

referred to only occasionally when English TTs need to be compared with their STs.

The analysis revealed the four levels of texts produced by student translators, ranging from the totally inadequate (Level 1) to the almost completely successful (Level 4). Each level of text was tainted with grammatical errors, lexical errors, and syntactic inaccuracies with varying degrees of adverse impact on quality of expressions in English and degree of task completion. Breaches of English grammar were more dominant than errors in the interpretation of STs. Accordingly, most (90%) of the TTs were impaired mainly by the former type of language deficiencies. Table 1 below illustrates the TTs containing different types of errors and inaccuracies and corresponding levels of adequacy or acceptability:

Level	Quality of Expressions in English	Degree of Task Completion	Number of TTs (%)
5	Reads as if originally written in English; acceptable with minor editing	Successful	0
4	A few grammatical and lexical errors with very few syntactic inaccuracies	Almost completely successful	10
3	A considerable number of grammatical errors, a few lexical errors and few or no syntactic or serious syntactic inaccuracies	Adequate	43.33
2	Continual grammatical and lexical errors as well as syntactic and serious syntactic inaccuracies	Inadequate	26.66
1	Continual grammatical and lexical errors, and a total lack of syntactic accuracies	Totally inadequate	20

Table 1. Quality of TL expressions and degree of task completion

Table 1 presents the language quality of thirty paragraph-length English texts produced by thirty students and the extent to which these TTs were linguistically successful in communicating the ST content. As can be seen from Table 1, none of the TTs qualified as successful translations that could be accepted with minor editing. That is to say, no translator was able to produce the text that would read as if originally written in English. Only a very small percentage of TTs were rated as comparatively high in terms of their quality and were categorized as the almost completely successful. Likewise, less than half of the TTs were adequate, whereas a similar number of TTs were either inadequate (26.66%) or totally inadequate (20%). It means the majority of TTs were structurally substandard requiring thorough revision and editing.

### 6.1 Almost Successful TTs

A small portion (10%) of TTs rated as almost successful in conveying ST content were characterized by the presence of a few lexical and grammatical errors reflecting the higher level of structural standard of English. The almost successful texts exhibited high coherence with both STs and English grammar owing to the presence of very few syntactic inaccuracies. These TTs were largely syntactically dense and conformed to English grammar. TT2 in Case 1 below serves to illustrate the quality of language of the TTs in this category:

TT2: Neither he cries nor laughs (Neg. Avbl.). There is nothing to laugh about. His son is in (Prep.) (Poss. det-) deathbed in the room. He has passed away, probably. He is sitting on a 'Pajan's' stool (WC), whereas his wife is lamenting. He once tried to cry, but couldn't. Then he tried to laugh but his skin on cheeks folded (SI). He even felt like reciting the verses from the 'Geeta'. He couldn't do that either. He tried to answer the nature's call thrice (WC) but failed.

Case 1. A representative of almost successful TTs (Brajaki 2003: 168).

Most of the sentences in this representative text (TT2) are coherent with English grammar. Nevertheless, the text does contain a few grammatical errors such as lack of inversion in the first sentence beginning with the negative adverbial (*neither*), the faulty use of the article *in* (instead of *on*), the absence of the possessive determiner (*his*), and the wrong choice of the word *stool* (instead of *log*). Furthermore, the expression *his skin on cheek folded* (instead of *his cheeks creased*) is an instance of syntactic inaccuracy which has marred the meaning of the whole sentence. Despite these errors, this TT can be fine-tuned to make it publishable. The same applies to other TTs in this category that carried significantly low syntactic inaccuracies with optimum content transfer. Moreover, the language errors detected in these TTs could be edited even without referring them to their source counterparts.

## 6.2 Adequate TTs

Nearly half of TTs falling into this category were characterized by the presence of a considerable number of grammatical errors, a few lexical errors and the virtual absence of syntactic inaccuracies. Adequate TTs exhibited weaker coherence with English grammar than with their source counterparts. Despite containing grammatical errors notably large in size, these TTs were rated as adequate mainly because they contained a small number of lexically and syntactically deficient expressions. The representative text (TT4) in Case 2 below serves to illustrate the quality of language and corresponding degree of task completion:

TT4: That's why, deceit characters (WC) of Daulat Bikram Bista (Poss.) are borning (V) in many places inside him. Always (Adv.) after hearing every interview (SI), life smells like armpit sweat, and he remembers Bhupi. Jeevan laughs. Let me tell why he laughs. He is one of them who likes the smell of armpit since his childhood. That habit still exists. That's why he has no any effect of interview

results (SSI). He gave many interviews. In some oral interviews, he was even asked the questions like, 'Why are you born?'(T)

Case 2. A representative of adequate TTs (Gautam 2015: 150).

The sampled TT4 contains a significant number of grammatical errors, including the faulty use of voice, tense, possessive determiner, and misplacement of the frequency adverb, which do not correspond to English grammar. Nevertheless, the number of syntactic inaccuracies is relatively low, not exceeding more than two. Given the low presence of lexical errors and syntactic inaccuracies, the representative TT was categorized as an adequate translation. The key feature shared by the TTs in this category is that the impairment of the ST content was found relatively low, thanks to the low presence of lexical errors and syntactic inaccuracies. In a similar vein, categorical errors lent themselves to revision and editing even without having recourse to the STs. That is to say, the adequate TTs had the potential to be converted into readable texts after substantial revision and editing.

### 6.3 Inadequate TTs

More than one fourth of TTs were considered very weakly adequate, as they were undermined by continual grammatical and lexical errors, and syntactic and serious syntactic inaccuracies. Only a few sentences in each of the inadequate TTs conformed to English grammar, and the rest were marred by repeated grammatical and syntactic inaccuracies. Consequently, the large sections of TTs read oddly and were contextually unintelligible as evidenced by the sampled TT7 in Case 3 below:

TT7: We were staying in a resort very far from... (Art.) city. We came (T) here for the program. We are (T) feeling bored. Staying in a garden we feel natural relaxed (WC).  
-I said that we feel (T) more relaxed to climb down from the hill. (SSI)



-May be, but what to do, doctor advised me that never climb up but climb down as you like (SSI). 'How do you told that, without climbing up it's not possible to climb down.' (SSI)  
He smiles. It's a philosophical question. It needs rational (WC) not scientific analysis. He doesn't like (sub-v-agreement) to play with that reason.

Case 3. A representative of inadequate TTs (Sapkota 2003: 1).

As Case 3 shows, TT7 is riddled with categorical and lexical errors as well as syntactic inaccuracies. The grammatically inaccurate sentences are hopelessly confusing and absolutely unclear. Almost all sentences suffer from wrong word choice, and the faulty use of grammar rules such as lack of articles, incorrect subject-verb agreement and incorrect tense shift. Moreover, syntactic and serious syntactic inaccuracies are positively misleading. The presence of repeated inaccuracies such as *doctor advised me that never climb up but climb down as you like* indicates the translator's failure to express the ST content in English. The same goes for other substandard TTs in this category, which evidenced the severe impairment of ST content as well as gross breaches of English grammar rules. Consequently, such substandard TTs were beyond revision and editing.

#### 6.4 Totally Inadequate TTs

One fifth of the 30 TTs were completely inadequate in that they were severely undermined by continual grammatical and lexical errors, and a total lack of syntactic accuracies. Such inadequate texts exhibited the unacceptable influence of source structures on English texts. As a result, these texts suffered from inadequacy with respect to both content transfer and conformity to English grammar. TT 28 in Case 4 below represents totally inadequate TTs by student translators.

TT28: Eagle looks down bowing its head to the distance (Adj.) ground. In a time of famine (SSI), everywhere is lushy greenery

(Adj.) farm, river, village, cottage, but no-where it looks carriion (SSI), what it is flying for. (-Art.) Eagle's hungry eyes find famine everywhere (SSI). Due to extreme hunger, it gets angered and heated (SSI). Its eyes become (N) red and ferocious.

Case 4. A representative of totally inadequate TTs (Regmi 2003: 40).

Almost all sentences in TT28 are grammatically erroneous and syntactically inaccurate, which have rendered the whole text unintelligible. The text is replete with the faulty use of adjectives, the absence of articles, the lack of subject-verb agreement, and the presence of syntactically uninterpretable chunks. Categorical errors and syntactically inaccurate chunks evidence the translator's failure to compose grammatically acceptable sentences in English. Other TTs in this category were also gravely garbled and failed to demonstrate the minimum standard of English composition. Characterized by gross breaches of English grammar, the totally inadequate TTs were beyond recovery by means of any level of revision and editing.

## 7. Discussion

It was found that English-major M.Ed. students translating from Nepali into English produced different levels of TTs in English ranging from the almost successful to the completely inadequate. Such variations in quality of TTs reflect varying levels of translation competence of these students. All things considered, they demonstrated relative strength in the interpretation of STs in their first language (i.e. Nepali), but their ability to produce TTs in English was severely limited. The latter case exhibits student translators' poor 'global target language competence' (Campbell 1991: 335). This finding echoes Hatim's (2014) conclusion that the real difficulty relates to composition while translating into a foreign language, and is consistent with Mraček's finding that translators tend to perceive inverse translation more

challenging than direct translation on account of ‘inadequate language competence’ (2018: 217). Student translators’ inadequate performance in English as a second language also corroborates the commonly held belief that second language translators often fail to produce optimum quality output (Campbell1998; Mraček 2018). Most of the TTs undermined by a substantial number of grammatical errors and syntactic inaccuracies indicate the majority of student translators’ inability to interpret the STs accurately on the one hand and deploy grammar and lexis to produce readable English texts on the other.

The prevalence of grammatical errors can be attributed mainly to deficiency in student translators’ English language competence in general and grammatical competence in particular. This result supports the findings from previous observations (e.g. Abbasi & Karimnia 2011; Wongranu 2017). In this respect, Wongranu observed that grammatical errors were the most dominant of all types of errors committed by Thai students translating into English. Like Thai students, the majority of translators in this study lacked good control over English grammar to produce grammatically correct sentences, meaning that their English language competence is not mature enough to manipulate linguistic resources productively.

Graver than grammatical errors were syntactic inaccuracies that permeated through almost all levels of TTs. These inaccuracies disrupted the linguistic flow with their detrimental effect on the overall transfer of ST content. A possible explanation for syntactic inaccuracies may be the literal translation of STs that resulted in the inappropriate transposition of Nepali syntactic structures to English texts. These inaccuracies also mirror student translators’ substandard competence in the interpretation of grammatical structures of STs. The translators of these texts thus lacked what

Waddington calls ‘the ability to express (themselves) adequately in English’ (2001: 315).

Serious syntactic inaccuracies were the gravest of all. The presence of such inaccuracies is the indication of student translators' disregard to semantic and structural aspects of STs and failure to generate coherent texts in English. The TTs replete with semantically unintelligible and syntactically unacceptable chunks can be ascribed mainly to their grim English competence. These texts were unacceptable primarily because translators lacked the minimum level of English to express what they had understood from the reading of STs. A complex combination of misinterpretation of syntax of STs, imprudent use of literal translation and defective syntactic competence in English can be postulated as a major cause behind the production of totally inadequate TTs. The misinterpretation of source syntax resulted in the minimum transfer of source content, whereas the inappropriate use of literal translation of source structures imposed ST structures on English texts. Likewise, their defective syntactic competence caused the gross violation of English grammar.

Finally, lexical errors that manifested themselves in wrong word choice were the least observed language deficiencies in these TTs. The low presence of lexical errors is one of the indications that second language translators tend to face less difficulty in the comprehension of STs in their first language than production of TTs in English as a second language (Campbell 1998, Hatim 2014). Nevertheless, lexical errors do indicate their poor ‘lexical transfer competence’ (Campbell 1991: 336), resulting in misinterpretation of ST words and/or the use of inappropriate TL words. These errors can be attributed partly to misinterpretation of source words and partly to translators' inability to choose appropriate words in English.

Since the research participants constituted only English-major M.Ed. students specializing in Translation Studies, it is hard to claim that these findings can be generalized to the translation students from other faculties such as M.A. in English literature or other levels such as M.Phil. However, the findings may provide some clues to the quality of TTs by ESL/EFL translation students and their ability to manipulate linguistic and textual resources in English as the TL. One of the theoretical insights that emerges from these findings is that translating into the second language needs to be treated distinctly from translating into the first language. It is illogical for translation researchers and teachers to assume that student translators have already acquired the adequate level of TL competence on which translation competence can be built. Rather, they should acknowledge the fact that translation competence particularly in the case of translators working into the second language develops as part of their second language competence (Campbell 1998). To such translators, TL competence matters more than other components of translation competence. Furthermore, the efficacy of translation courses depends on students' ability to produce optimum quality output in the TL, which is not possible unless their TL competence is improved and developed 'systematically towards native-speaker authenticity' (Mracek 2018: 219). It is therefore imperative that ESL/EFL translation courses aim at equipping prospective translators with linguistic skills in English while training them in translation methods and techniques. To this end, ESL/EFL translation teaching and training should incorporate English language teaching with a special focus on text production skills.

## **8. Conclusion**

The aim of the present paper was to assess the quality of translations produced by English-major M.Ed. students

specializing in Translation Studies. The study has shown that most of the English texts by these students working into English were undermined by a substantial number of categorical errors and syntactic inaccuracies, which leads to a valid conclusion that their English competence is not adequate enough to express the ST content in grammatically acceptable sentences. Additionally, the TTs riddled with syntactic inaccuracies seem to have their origin in student translators' failure to interpret the syntactic aspect of STs adequately. Finally, the low presence of lexical errors in almost all TTs suggests that student translators tend to face relatively less problems at the lexical level than at the syntactic level while translating into the second language.

This study was limited to the assessment of translations by ESL/EFL students from the perspective of product-oriented research. Further work needs to be done to explore the why-aspect from the process perspective so as to get the comprehensive picture of student translators' performance in English as a second language.

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# Dialectal Peculiarities of Indian Text and Context in Translation Practice: A Critique

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## Abstract

*Translation from one language to another is a continual phenomenon but when translation takes place between regional literary texts and English, it tends to call certain translational choices at two levels. On the first level, to decipher out the nuances of the original, the translator has to delve deep to know more than what is written on linguistic level in the original and then the possible effective expression of it into the TL follows on the other level. The present paper analyses the same exemplifying the short stories of Maitreyi Pushpa, a Hindi author, who writes in dialectal variation of Hindi pertinent to the region where the stories have been set. Maitreyi Pushpa's fondness of using the varieties and derivations of kinship terms, reduplicated forms and compound words, regional cultural rituals and other specific lexical peculiarities etc. have been analysed in the process of translation and it is found that the conflict for finding the closest possible equivalents rather needs some integrated approach to analyse it in the cultural context and situation. Looking at the ideological and thematic details of Indian literary texts, it has also been found that translations bring forth the Indian perspectives and landscape of these widely discussed ideologies viz. the grim face of Indian feminism in Pushpa's writings.*

**Keywords:** Dialectal Variety, Context, Indian Literature, Maitreyi Pushpa, Translation.

## I

Dialectal variations of a language in a literary work, when to be translated, first include its best comprehension in its standard variety and then it possibly paves the way to take translational decision depending upon the culture and context of the particular setting in which the literary world is explored by its original author. In this way, we can safely assume that language is not at all a barrier if one really wants to communicate. Franz Boas, one of the fathers of modern anthropology discusses the link between language, thought and (primitive) culture. He also felt that language was not itself a barrier to thought but there was a dynamic relationship between language, culture and thought (qtd. in David Katan 2004: 99). Boas (2013: 63) in his *Handbook of American Indian Languages* accepts “the form of language will be moulded by the state of that culture.” In the process of translation, an intuitive interpretation of the SL text and its dissemination in the TL text is fundamental. Texts belong to a multilingual society or culture like in Indian regional literature, when translated, double this need. In regional varieties of the same language, there are varieties of contexts where the same culturally significant term might be found in a different form or connotation. At such juncture, the context, culture and situation of the SL text help to find the proper equivalent provided that the bilingual agency is able to comprehend it well. Malinowski, a Polish author coined the term ‘context of situation’ and ‘context of culture’ and noted that a language could only be fully understood, i.e. have meaning, when these two contexts (situation and culture) were implicitly or explicitly clear to the interlocutors (qtd. in Gunter Senft et al. 2009: 111). Concerning the translation from Indian languages, Kashi Prasad (1982: 86) writes, “The translator has to catch the spirit of the original. What does the word spirit mean? The word appears to have become a cliché. It means breath, the

vital force. It is not making contact with an individual writer but with an entire culture, with a value system. It is this spirit which is sought to be conveyed through translation”. All these theoretical assumptions can be best experienced, despite agreements or a few denials, on the practical grounds. Hence, the second part of the paper tries to demonstrate how the presence of context, culture and regional flavours affect the process of translation and the subsequent strategies to follow.

## II

The language of short stories of Maitreyi Pushpa (b. 1944), a Hindi author renowned for her candid depiction of rural women, is culturally engrossed with rural suburb of the particular region, the outskirts of the state of Uttar Pradesh to be precise. Since the stories represent very raw emotions, agonies and sufferings of the village women, they are mostly expressed in the regional and culture-bound diction and dialectal variations. Representing the bitter experiences of Indian rural women under patriarchal system, the themes depict the Indian version of feminism and so translation of the diction of the text remains a challenging and decisive journey throughout. Let us look at the different areas of vocabulary used in the stories and their respective translations. Illustrations are mostly drawn from the story “Lalmaniyan” (Pushpa 2005: 292-306) and some from other stories that have been mentioned in the paper.

### **Kinship Terms and Non-consanguineous References**

What if an unknown to Hindi would be called as *Bahin*, *Bahinji* or as *Dada*, *Dadda* etc.? Certainly, either s/he might misunderstand or might ignore or suspect being called by such kinship terms. In most of the Indian languages, Indian diversity of calling different relations by different connotations is well-known and the bulk of researchers in the field of Cultural studies and Translation Studies have theorized upon the same.

However, one's knowledge of the "structure of kinship relationships are of assistance in the translation of kinship terms" (Abraham Rosman and Paula G. Rubel (2003: 276). The phenomenon becomes more complex when it relates to the villages of India where one might find substantial deviations from the standard dialects but as stated just above, the contextual references of the text often provide clues to comprehend it at source level and that pave the way for their translations. In the story "Lalmaniyan", for example, there are specific words to address elder or younger sister i.e. *Jiji* and the derivative *Jijji* in the story "Chinhar" (Pushpa 2015: 92). While now, in the urban culture, the elder sister is called as *Didi*, in the rural term the same becomes deviant as *Jiji*. Normally, the translation of "sister" (as *bahan* in Hindi) is assumed as one's biological sister but in the story *Muskurati Aurtein* (Pushpa 2015: 390), there are instances where women characters are addressed as *Bahin* or *Bahinji* (Pushpa 2015: 399) irrespective of any direct family or consanguineous relationship amongst them even in the farthest way. To translate these discreet lexical units into English needed a strategy and the best way found was to keep the original term transcription and give the meaning immediately in the parenthesis to get the rhythm of the text. As cultural transference takes place in the process of translation, these cultural nuances should also be carried through translation. Observing Henry Morgan, Abraham Rosman and Paula G. Rubel (2003: 269) analyses, "If people recognize that (kinship system) in their own culture the kin terms that they use form a system, they are better able to recognize such systems in other cultures that they become aware of the fact that these systems differ from their own". This befits in the TLT when readers are able to recognize the differences and mutual equivalency in the TL.

Similarly, the accepted equivalent for “grand-father” in Hindi is *Dada* but in rural India one might call any of the old man of the village as *Dada* out of respect. However, the problem gets doubled when deliberately it remains on the tongues of the villagers to spell out it as *Dadda* or by the mark of paying reverence as *Dadaji* (*Ji* is put after the kinship terms to show reverence to the elders and it has become typical of the culture now as in the case of *Bahinji* mentioned above). There are cultural borrowings also that encroach into the regional languages; for example, though the stories are set in the villages of Bundelkhand (region of the middle India), the typical Sanskrit word *jan-ni* जन्नी (meaning ‘mother’) has been adopted by its far-evolved form as *ja-nee* जनी (Pushpa 2015: 293). In the story, “Lalmaniyan” the word finds expression to refer to any ‘any woman’ as in the sentence:

*"use koi dabang ja-nee naache toh..."* (Pushpa 2015: 293).

"if any strong women would dance, then..."(trans.).

In most of the cases the context of the situation and that particular culture prepare the translator to decide for the equivalent words and in some cases only possessive kinship hierarchies tell us the exact meaning of that relation; for example- sister's husband for *Jija*, husband's sister for *Nanad*, son-in-law for *Damad* etc. If a translator goes with the literal meaning of these dialectically varied kinship term/s, such diverse contexts of culture, situations might pose problems in translation, and so the comprehension of the context of the ST is crucial and inescapable in the process of translation. On the other hand, the semantic system of such kinship terminologies cannot be left without some translational decisions as “each kinship terminology has an internal logic of its own; when one element of the system changes, the rest of the system will

change accordingly” (Abraham Rosman and Paula G. Rubel 2003: 269).

### **Deep-rooted Cultural, Feminine Adornments and Clothing**

In India, being a land of varying cultural festivities, women dress and adore themselves on various occasions with various cosmetics and natural beautifiers. In the story “Lalmaniyan”, there are a number of references to these beautifiers which are deeply culture-rooted and cause difficulties in translation. As Vladimir Ivir (1987: 38) in his essay, “Procedures and Strategies for the Translation of Culture” suggests to fill up these cultural gaps, the translation of these can only be taken into TT by paraphrasing them to maintain the rustic flavour of the SLT and their better comprehension to the readers of different culture/s. In this way, the non-Hindi and other readers can get the idea of the original cultural terms (while we transcribe it) and culture get transmitted through the translation/s.

A few instances from the story “Lalmaniyan” (Pushpa 2015: 292-306)

SL Text Item/s	Possibility/ies of Translation and Paraphrasing
<i>Alta</i> and <i>mahavar</i>	The natural beautifier used by women to adorn their palms, edges of the feet, tip of the finger etc on various auspicious occasions. If it is simply translated as a 'red liquid', it may baffle to the readers in reckoning the meaning and the continuity of story reading may get break.
<i>Bichhiya</i>	An ornament worn by married women in toes and considered auspicious for various cultural reasons. Translating it merely as 'toe ring' may wonder the culturally unaware readers as why to 'wear' it.
<i>Kajal</i> and <i>Soorma</i>	A typical Indian eye make-up worn by women to beautify their eyes. The use of the word is contextual where sometimes it is a sign of getting rid of evil eyes or bad omen for newborn babies. Hence, putting it as 'collyrium' (as the dictionaries

	suggests) may deviate the contextual meaning.
<i>Bindi and Tikuli</i>	When translated as a 'dot', the description will seem rather odd and the readers may not get its relevance.
<i>Seedha-pallu</i>	While <i>Pallu</i> can be simply translated as the corner of the <i>Sari</i> (which is already an Indian attire), there is no exact equivalent for <i>Seedha-pallu</i> and hence paraphrasing remains the option i.e. a particular style of wearing a <i>Sari</i> .
<i>Kurta-Pajama</i>	i.e. 'a shirt and a paint' But it is a culturally significant outfit for which no exact equivalent is available in English. (Pushpa 2005: 292-306 trans.).

Similarly different clothing items such as *salwar-suit*, *lahanga*, *phariya*, *dhoti* (worn by both men and women in different forms), *odhni* (Pushpa 2015: 292-306) etc. can be rendered in English by adopting particular translation strategies in the given context to communicate competently without which these peculiarities would be difficult to find justification in the TT.

### **Compound Words and Reduplicated Forms of SL**

However, compounding and reduplicated forms in the Indian languages follow a systematic and morpho-phonological pattern and make a language richer, but they also remain culture and context specific. When it comes to translation, semantic translation or closest possible equivalents, sometimes, do not suffice the purpose in the TL text. Sapir (1921: 76) in his book *Language* considers the prevalent of such language items a natural phenomenon, and notes that they are “generally employed, with self-evident symbolism, to indicate such concepts as distribution, plurality, repetition, customary activity, increase of size, added intensity, continuance...”. To make it clearer, let us take a simple example of compound from Hindi *chote-mote* which can be



better translated as ‘meager’ than ‘small-big/fat’. In the story “Lalmaniyan” (Pushpa 2015: 292-306) a number of compounds and reduplicated patterns have been used and are contextual and creative too. For example:

SL Text Item/s	Meaning
<i>Daan-dahej</i>	'dowry' instead of donation and dowry
<i>Jaat-biraadari</i>	'fraternity' instead of 'caste and community'
<i>Dvaar-darvaaze</i>	'doorstep' instead of 'door and doors'
<i>Tonay-totkay</i>	'black magic' instead of 'superstitions and sorcery'
<i>Sugadh-salone</i>	'well adorned' instead of 'robust and pretty'
<i>Khaate-peete</i>	'wealthy' instead of 'well eaten and drank'
<i>Dhool-dhankar</i>	'dusty' instead of 'full of dust and soiled'
<i>Dhol-manjeere</i>	Specific music played on certain occasions instead of 'percussion'
<i>Rudhi-rivaaz</i>	'customs' instead of 'traditions and orthodox'
<i>Chouki-peetha</i>	'threshold' (contextual in different situations)
<i>Kushal-khair</i>	'well being' instead of 'fine whereabouts'
<i>Shaan-shoukat</i>	'luxury' instead of 'grandeur and splendour'
<i>Aath-das</i>	'many' instead of eight-ten
<i>Jog-tap</i>	'hard work' (contextual in different situations)
<i>Baap-kaakaon</i>	'elders' instead of 'father and uncle'
<i>Naate-rishtedaar</i>	'relatives' instead of 'relatives and relatives'
<i>Heel-hulas</i>	'gusto' instead of 'move and enthusiasm'
<i>Dho-dhokar</i>	'by washing' instead of 'washed-washing' (Pushpa 2015: 292-306 trans.)
<i>Tap-tap</i> <i>Subakte-subakte</i> <i>Badi-badi aankhe</i> <i>Dare-dare se</i>	Flow of tears sobbing to look at something astonished (total reduplication) frightened (Pushpa 2015: 31-49 trans.). "Tum Kiski Ho Binni"

Such reduplicated and compound words, in translation, may take the influence of the mother tongue. Therefore, the linguistic difference between the ST and TT must not be confused with the direct meaning of these individual reduplicated forms and compound words. They perform certain function in the text and hence contain some concrete meaning that needs to come out of the cultural nuance of ST

and its given context into the target language culture. Abbi (2001: 166) considers the same and explains, “reduplicated structures may be used to convey emphasis, accentuation and distributiveness, iconically. But in some Indian languages it may also be used to convey exclusiveness”.

### **Regional Vocabulary of Local Rituals and Food Items**

In an Indian literary text, dialectal peculiarities to represent local culture and its ritualistic traditions are obvious to take place; they need translational decisions and are crucial as well. In the stories of Maitreyi Pushpa, the regional vocabulary has been used at its best to give the rustic touch to the theme/s. At the lexical level words like, *pathanwara* (Pushpa 2015: 527), *tharkuliya* (Pushpa 2015: 297), *maanikh*, *meda banana* (Pushpa 2015: 301), *bhayte ki garmi* (a place, earthen pot, human being, to infatuate, extreme hot scorching weather respectively (trans.) are deeply contextual, culturally intact and certainly give a regional touch to the story. However, the absence of the exact equivalents does not hinder the translation process rather it needs to work out on additional levels. Firstly, to decode the lexical items in the given context and, then, its correct rendering in the TL culture that can be unambiguously comprehensible on the other level. As R. S. Pathak also considers:

The translator therefore has to bear in mind that there are no exact synonyms even in the same language and its dialects and that a language is not merely a medium through which experience is communicated but is something inseparable from the experience it communicates. Being a unique way of looking at undifferentiated reality, it invests its words with particular nuances (1996: 23).

Food items like *maheri*, *jalebi*, *puri-saag*, *laddu*, *paan ka beeda* (Pushpa 2015: 292-306) cannot be sensibly translated

into English. The task of translation becomes even more troublesome when marriage rituals like *barothi chaar-dwaar*, *Aipen ki ghodi pujna* (Pushpa 2015: 304) and the like ask for translational choices or strategy. At such juncture “foreignization” of L. Venuti can mislead the TL reader and hence what Mona Baker (2011: 80) suggests “paraphrasing” resolves the issue.

*Barothi chaar-dwaar* (A ritual when the groom comes at the bride’s doorstep), *Aipen ki ghodi pujna* (A newly-wedded bride is welcomed by performing the traditional rituals) (trans.).

The translation of dialectally registered terms like *mandap*, *bandanvaar* (Pushpa 2015: 303) in “Lalmaniyan” also resolved by the same approach. Although theorized upon the approaches, behind the text it is the rigorous analysis of a translator that can make these rituals flow naturally in the TT as Steiner (1975) observes in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* that language is a science and translation is an art. The art lies in assessing the type of translation required by the piece, the right kind of strategies to be selected and integrated in the right proportion.

Whatever approach one might follow in translation, when it comes to the regional text that imbibes certain grim realities of the rural vicinity, as in the case of the stories of Maitreyi Pushpa, the stories represent Indian feminism, the cultural barriers in translation opens new moot points and contributes to the field of Translation Studies. At this point the possibilities and correctness should be sought for rather rationalizing the question of appropriateness of being ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. In this regard “On *Auchitya* of Translation and Translational Perspective”, Avadhesh Kumar Singh (1996: xv) rightly points out “translation is an endeavour to solve our obtaining problems and has to begin with the reception and the

then response of the writer when s/he wrote”. He adds to the question of appropriateness, “Propriety of translational act demands that translators should put the source-author’s views in proper perspective to do justice to the source texts dealing with ultra-sensitive issues like religion, language and culture”.

## Conclusion

The practice of translation helps to widespread the dialectal, cultural and regional underpinning of the regional language literature through translations. At the same time, it relieves the socio-cultural concerns out of the notion of untranslatability by allowing to devise new methods both creative as well as critical. Along with, adding to the corpus of the Indian texts into English translation, the ideologies like ‘feminism’ represented through Indian texts find recognition across the globe and an Indian perspective of feminism unfolds through its circulation. The excessive focus on the anxiety of appropriateness, both in the process and in the product of translations, should shift towards the justifying principles for textual as well as contextual situations in hand.

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# Translating Drama: An Interpretation, an Investigation

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## Abstract

*This paper addresses the problems of translating dramatic texts from the viewpoints of the purpose of translation and the strategies involved. Issues like untranslatability of certain social aspects and lexical gaps between English and Telugu are discussed in detail drawing examples from two different texts published in different periods of time.*

**Keywords:** Translation Studies, Telugu Drama, Untranslatability, Modernism, Problems of Translation.

## Introduction

It is quite impossible for any language, which has a script of its own, to distance itself from translation. However, translation has not always been a respected practice for it was seen as a mere reproduction or imitation of the original. In his recent book, translator and author Mark Polizzotti (2018: 13) draws dichotomous perspectives on translation which prevail till date. He opines that for some, translation is the poor cousin of literature, fool's gold or a last resort, a necessary evil if not an outright travesty. For others, it is the royal road to cross-cultural understanding and literary enrichment. Translation skirts the boundaries between art and craft, originality and replication, altruism and commerce, even between genius and hack work. Confirming to the latter part of this statement, this paper places itself at the intersection of culture, literature and translation.

Of all the literary practices, drama is distinct by nature, for the characters in a drama speak for themselves. It is a story in

discourse. The most common perspective about drama is that the text exists for the sole purpose of facilitating performance on stage. At the same time, it is intended for the actors as well, along with the audience. Anne Ubersfeld (1999: XXIV) noted that any work that reflects upon the theatrical text will without fail come up against the problematics of performance. In her book, she conceptualized drama (in terms of watching it on stage and reading it as a text) as the inseparability of text and performance. While semioticians argued about the interrelation between text and the performance, other scholars also proposed translating dramatic texts with respect to performance. In this context, Susan Bassnett (2002: 124) opined that there is very little material on the special problems of translating dramatic texts and the statement of individual theatre translators often imply that the methodology used in the translation process is the same as that used to approach prose texts. Though Bassnett raised the actual problems of translations, much of her arguments were centred on performance, speakability and the rhythm in the text. While translating drama, adaptability, sense of theatre, speakability and target language acceptability stand as necessary prerequisites. Apart from these, figurative language, like simile, metaphor and idiom; language specific usages such as epithets, expletives, taboo and slang words make a text more vulnerable to translation loss. One reason is that epithets are not used with reference to the corresponding dictionary meaning and the other reason is that they are highly culture specific. Against this background, this paper explores the problematics of translation with reference to the value systems, institutional and cultural practices, social stigmas and taboos of a speech community. The paper focuses on morals, ethical and social values associated with women in certain socially stigmatized professions portrayed in different plays and concerns with problematics of translation.

In order to understand the interplay of various facets involved in the process of translation, women characters from two different plays - *Kanyasulkam* and *Chavakudadu* - have been examined in tandem. Though they both differ in the context, period, setting and length, they share a few common traits as these plays address the social aspects in a striking way. Both the plays are separated by a span of six decades, and directly or indirectly discuss social evils such as prostitution. The socio-cultural contexts depicted in both the plays reflect the changed societal values with an emphasis on women.

### **Discussion: The plays – *Kanyasulkam* & *Chavakudadu***

Modern Telugu drama experienced a watershed moment when Gurajada Apparao's seven-act play *Kanyasulkam* was first staged in 1892. It is an interesting fact that this play was staged prior to its publication in 1897. It gained immense popularity and attention immediately. However, it is only much later that it was translated into English. The first English translation by S. N. Jayanthi appeared in 1964. Next, in 1976, an abridged translation was published by S. G. Murthy and K. Ramesh. C. Vijayasree and T. Vijay Kumar translated and published the complete text in 2002. The most recent translation was published in 2007 by Velcheru Narayana Rao. The title of this translation is 'Girls for Sale: A play from colonial India'. *Chavakudadu* (1952) was written by the critically acclaimed playwright and screenwriter Acharya Athreya. His real name is Kilambi Venkata Narasimhacharyulu. He is one of the playwrights who pushed the boundaries of modern Telugu theatre. This play has all female characters and takes place in a hospital ward. This one-act play is translated as 'Shouldn't die'.

### **Problematics**

The very first dialogue uttered by *Madhura-vani* the female protagonist of *Kanyasulkam* draws reader's attention to the



social practices prevalent at the time. The dialogue between *Madhura-Vani* and her paramour reads as follows:

Excerpt 1:

*Ramap-pantulu*: (Takes a cigar, bites off its end.) Give me a light, honey.

*Madhura-vani*: (As she strikes a match and lights the cigar, Pantulu pinches her cheek. *Madhura-vani* drops the match even before the cigar is lit and steps back angrily.) Anyone, man or woman, should have principles. I told you not to touch me, but you wouldn't listen.

*Ramap-pantulu*: Everything has been finalized. I'm keeping you as my woman, and I'm just waiting for an auspicious day to take you to my village. Why do you still act as if you were under some nincompoop's hold? What's this pretense of chastity?

*Madhura-vani*: Just because I'm a pleasure-woman, you can't take me lightly. Even we have our morals. I'll call my master Girisam-garu and tell him, "Sir, I'll go my way and you go your way." I'll cut myself loose from him. But until that time, consider me his woman. You might make fun of him because he was born in a Vaidiki<sup>1</sup> family, he might be Christianized, and maybe he kept that Day-Meal-Woman. Still, for all these days that great man has been my patron. You're a far better lover than he is and you have stolen my heart, but I must have some gratitude for him, right? (Rao 2007: 28)

A brief introduction to the characters in the above excerpt helps in understanding the issues in translating *Madhura-vani's* references to herself. Narayana Rao (2007: 21) noted

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<sup>1</sup> A sub-caste in the Brahmin community

that *Ramap-pantulu* is a Niyogi<sup>2</sup> Brahmin who is the karanam (revenue officer) of Rama-chandra-puram. He thinks he cleverly manages village politics. He enjoys good things in life and keeps *Madhura-vani* as his pleasure-woman. As a Niyogi, he assumes a proud style and demands to be served and respected. *Madhura-vani* is a pleasure-woman in Vizianagaram<sup>3</sup>, probably in her twenties. For most of the duration of the play, she is kept by *Ramap-Pantulu*, and she moves to Rama-chandra-puram with him. In the end she moves to Visakhapatnam, the headquarters of the district.

*Kanyasulkam*, anchored in social, cultural and language specific traditions is a difficult text to translate. In his note, the translator mentions the untranslatability of dialect and social hierarchy as well. This paper focuses on that part of the text which deals with language of social stigma, taboo and abuse used in portrayal of women and the issues of (un)translatability.

In the source text, the language employed by the author (cf. Apparao 1995: 41) as part of *Madhura-vani*'s dialogues is intriguing. First, she calls herself a *vesya*, which is translated as 'pleasure-woman'. Next, she addresses herself as *saane (di)*<sup>4</sup>, which roughly means prostitute<sup>5</sup> in English. Of course, providing an exact translational equivalent is a next to impossible task, as no two languages map social and cultural realities identically. But it is necessary to find out what is lost

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<sup>2</sup> A sub-caste in the Brahmin community

<sup>3</sup> A district in Andhra Pradesh

<sup>4</sup> '-di' is a feminine gender marker.

<sup>5</sup> The Telugu Akademi dictionary (which is widely considered as a standard Telugu dictionary) does not provide a definition for the word *vesya* but provides two other equivalents instead - *velayAlu*, *paNyAngana*. The dictionary entry of the word *vesya* is listed only as a synonym of the word *saani* (root word). The closest equivalent of both these words in English according to the dictionary is 'prostitute'.

in translation. In Telugu, there are nearly four words that refer to the English word 'prostitute': *saani*, *velayAlu*, *panyAngana*, *vesya*. Out of these, the words *vesya* and *saani* are used in the source text. It is quite interesting to note that the translator chose to render these varied expressions into English with a single expression 'pleasure-woman' with less attention to the connotative value of each of the expressions in the source language. In addition to this, the translator chose not to translate certain parts. At places the translator chooses not to translate certain parts of the dialogue, for reasons best known to him, which may eventually result in loss of translation. In the source text, where the above excerpt's original falls, the author used the word *saani* but the translator omitted it. Perhaps, the translator chose to use a less offensive, euphemistic expression in the place of *saani*. At the same time, pleasure-woman seems to be a conscious choice intended to protect and portray the dignity of *Madhura-Vani's* character as intended in the source text. The other equivalent like 'prostitute' may provide referential equivalence but would fail to capture the social and cultural significance of that character.

*Madhura-vani* is portrayed to be a bold and independent woman who can exercise choice in selecting her partner. She is not a regular prostitute. Only men from the upper strata visit her. In pre-independent India, prostitution prevailed as a profession and it was a common practice for men of higher castes, especially of the Brahmin community, to 'keep' a woman.

The original play is social-reformist by nature, written with the sole purpose of denouncing the evil practices like bride-price and prostitution. It is a paradox that *Madhura-vani*, though a prostitute, exhibits a streak of nobility, as in her own words '...just because I'm a pleasure-woman...'. The coinage of the compound expression 'pleasure-woman' may signify the aura

of nobility surrounding *Madhura-vani* but somewhere, the social stigma associated with the Telugu word *vesya* is underplayed in the translation.

The Day-Meal-Woman, a young Brahmin widow who runs a Day-Meal-House for Brahmin men only is another character worth studying. She has no family to take care of her following the death of her husband. So, she cooks for Brahmin men to make a living. She has an affair with Girisam, who plays a pivotal role in the whole play. Girisam is the young and handsome English educated cousin of Lubdha Avadhanulu (who lives in the same village). He has a glib tongue, notes Narayana Rao (2007: 20), and can turn any situation to his advantage. In one instance, enraged at the fact that the Day-Meal-Woman revealed his secrets, Girisam abuses her with an epithet *munda*. It is a term used to refer to a Hindu widow. It is also a term of abuse used to express indignation and disgust. Consider the following excerpt:

Excerpt 2:

Ramapantulu: (To himself:) He'll beat me up. How did I get into this mess?

Madhura-vani: Why should it be a man? Don't women have mouths?

Girisam: (To himself:) That slut, the Day-Meal-Woman, is slandering me. (Openly:) A woman told you? God made women live by her loud mouth. But then, why would a respectable woman come to your house? (Rao 2007: 30).

The translator chose the word 'slut' for *munda*. The word 'slut' has a definite derogatory sense and the modern dictionary meaning for 'slut' is 'a woman who has many sexual partners'. It is to be noted that the Telugu word *munda* refers to a widowed woman in a derogatory sense. The source

text did not intend to portray the Day-Meal-Woman as the English ‘slut’ but the translated text may prompt the English readers to see her not as a widowed Hindu woman but as a casual-sex seeker. The portrayal of the practice of treating young Hindu widows with contempt has disappeared from the translated text with the word ‘slut’. This is a good example of the use of an equivalent with an exaggerated semantic import.

Narayana Rao (2007: 159) expounds the context of this play in detail and opines that the two things that cannot be avoided when writing about Apparao are colonialism and modernity. The period in which *Kanyasulkam* was staged can also be comprehended as the beginning of the end of colonialism and the beginning of modernity. The translator here leaves a cue for the reader in the title of this translated version as ‘Girls for Sale: A play from colonial India’. It is against this background that the colonial-identity of Indian women needs to be compared with that of the post-colonial and modern-identity. Words like *vesya* and *munda* retained their derogatory and offensive sense while the social reality remained unchanged over decades. This can be observed in the play *chavakudadu*, which is loosely based on J. B. Priestley’s ‘An Inspector Call’.

The following excerpt provides a context of play and introduces the characters.

Excerpt 3:

Doctor: *HORRIBLE CASES*. These come just to trouble us. Should we treat them or hang around courts for their life? *NUISANCE!*

(She stood up. The sister came with a basin and a hand towel. The doctor washed her hands. At that moment, a svelte looking woman came in hurriedly. Maybe because she came from outside, she wore sunglasses, which she removed after coming in. Neatly cut hair, high heels;

looking sexy in the way she wore the saree. Watch on the wrist, lipstick, there is something like a Bindi<sup>6</sup> on her face. She looks fair, tall and slender).

Rajini: *HELLO* doctor!

There are three main female characters in this play. One is the doctor, the other is Rajini, a women's rights activist and the other woman is addressed as Patient - a victim of cheating and deception by the men in her life. The plot revolves around this Patient, who kills her child and attempts suicide. She reveals some astonishing facts about the men in her life towards the end. This play is the story of a woman (Patient) who is deceived by her lover and also by a few other men. She bears a child out of wedlock and is abandoned by everyone including a women's association and so she decides to commit suicide. Eventually, she ends up in a hospital where she incidentally meets the women who cheated her in one or the other way. To better understand the characters, let us read another excerpt from the same play.

Excerpt 4:

Doctor: She looks like a streetwalker.

Rajini: A prostitute?

Doctor: Maybe.

Rajini: If so, why would she commit suicide?

Doctor: Just unable to live. That's all.

Rajini: Did she tell you about herself or her life?

Doctor: They have a life! And a past! Of the worst kind...they are the unwanted in the society. Disgrace to the nation.

Rajini: This time, the Mahila Sangham<sup>7</sup> working committee is going to discuss the issues of such women

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<sup>6</sup> A decorative mark (with vermilion, if Hindu) worn in the middle of the forehead by Indian women.

seriously. As long as woman has no financial independence, we will see tragic incidents like these. Here, the 'she' is the Patient that both the Doctor and Rajini talk about. The doctor is a well-educated, hard-working woman and Rajini, an educated and an affluent woman. The author describes her looks, her dress and how attractive she is. Both Rajini and the Doctor refer to the patient as a 'streetwalker' and 'prostitute' - the translational equivalents for *bazaar(di)* and *vesya* - while making wild guesses about her real life. These elite women have no qualms to stoop down to use derogatory language while referring to 'another woman', a poor destitute.

Another excerpt from *Chavakudadu* reads as follows:

Excerpt 5:

Patient: (...) my life is of no use, but I'll tell you the truth and die... we are all responsible and take part in everything that happens in this world. Don't try to wash hands off it saying you are no way related... I sold my chastity. I'm a virtuous woman. Men who talk morals would come for me. (...).

As in the case of 'pleasure woman' the English word 'chastity' also holds some significance concerning translation. When *Ramapantulu* says that *Madhura-vani* is pretending 'chastity' (cf. excerpt 1) the word used in the source text is *pAtivratyam*, which denotes a sense of respect for monogamy and high regard for a woman's husband. It also connotes a loyal, dutiful and an ideal wife. In the context of 'Girls for sale' 'chastity' is used in an ironic sense while referring to *Madhura-vani*. 'Chastity' in the second play is used as an equivalent for the Telugu word *sIlam* (1982: 451). The word *sIlam* carries multiple connotations and attributes such as self-

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<sup>7</sup> A Mahila Sangham is a women's association.

respect, virginity, righteousness, and moral conduct. Though *sIlam* and *pAtivratyam* are different characters of a woman, the English word ‘chastity’ comes as the nearest equivalence. The distinction between the two female-characteristics seems to have been blurred.

With reference to the likes of problems of translation in the excerpt 2, the below excerpt from ‘Shouldn’t die’ demonstrates how translation can exaggerate or flatten a character.

Excerpt 6:

Sister: You (tried recollecting) you are Indira right?

Patient: A (... Yes, I am Indira.

Rajini: *OH MY GOD!* So many names.

Doctor: *SHE SEEMS TO BE A CHEAT.* She actually seems to be a cheat.

Rajini: Also, a *SCOUNDREL!*

2nd patient: She’s a bloody bitch.

Doctor: Yes. So, I see.

Rajini: She’s trying to fool us with her drama and play us.

The above excerpt has a considerable amount of similarity with the one from Dr. Narayana Rao’s translation. An unnamed patient lying in the ward says that the ‘Patient’ is a ‘bloody bitch’ assuming she is a liar. The context aside, the word *dongamunda* was used in the place of ‘bitch’ in the source text (Athreya 1982: 450). This word is a compound with an adjective *donga*. However, it more or less means the same as *munda* and is used mostly with intended offence. This same usage would have brought forward the intended meaning in Narayana Rao’s text too. Comparing these two excerpts, it can be stated that the translation strategy should be centred in the dialogue and the reaction of the other characters more than anything else as it is the only space where the reader can find out how characters perceive each other.



The conclusions drawn from the above two texts is that in addition to culture and language specific epithets, the choice of equivalents is also driven by the genre of the text to be translated. The question which arises now is why drama is different from other literary practices, or art forms for that matter, and how unique is drama translation. Drama certainly poses uniqueness because it progresses only with dialogues. Though brief descriptions about the characters (*dramatis personae*) and the setting are found at places, they do not help in framing the true nature, purpose and the life of a particular character. The only way a character takes birth is through its own dialogue. The only way the complete character of a particular character is revealed to the audience is through the dialogues of other characters. So, when those dialogues fall flat in translation, the source text suffers a loss of identity. We name it 'translation loss'. In situations like these, the potential of the characters like *Madhura-vani* may be thinned down if the translator selectively omits certain parts of the source text which stand as impediments in the process of translation.

While resolving the issue of untranslatability, many compromises have to be made. When the translator tries to attain equivalence, s/he may lose a few shades of a character. Striking a balance between the source text and target text is subject to a number of limitations on the part of the translator and the language and culture involved. So, translation is never complete, or is so only transitionally (Sujit Mukherjee 2004). Ultimately, the purpose of translation needs to be served well. When it comes to drama and theatre, drama is consumed by two different people, readers and audience. Therefore, a translated drama is not always meant to be staged.

## **Conclusion**

To solve the problems of translation, almost all critics, researchers and translators suggest to consider performability

and speakability (of the translated dialogue) as strategic factors. It is understood that apart from linguistic competence, the translator should be equipped with additional qualifications for the task and meet the differing criteria of the medium. The function and purpose of the target language text have determined for many the primary criterion by which the product is appraised - speakability (Kevin Windle 2011: 1). As Walter Benjamin states (2000: 19), The Task of The Translator consists in finding that intended effect upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original, the process of this translation emphasises on language, dialogue and characterization. Having said that, when a translator yields a loss in translation, in regard of performability and/or speakability (of the dialogue), it is advisable to have two different translations, one for the reader and one for the stage. The version for the stage may accommodate translation at the cost of better performance and the version for the reader should try to retain the source language culture as much as possible.

The twin argument is that not all dramatic texts are intended for performance. As a matter of fact, the distinction between a play and a dramatic text has clearly been drawn. Bob Dylan, in his Nobel acceptance lecture (2016) mentioned that, “[...] the words in William Shakespeare’s plays were meant to be acted on stage”. But in reality, we read them today, like the works of many other playwrights. The way we perceive certain literary genres and why we perceive certain literary genres has fundamentally changed in due course of time, in the past 400 years so as to say. Polizzotti’s argument that translation is a royal road to cross-cultural understanding seems rational and logical in this context. Adding to his own observation, Bob Dylan said that he would suggest people listen only to his songs and not read his lyrics, for the song and lyrics were written together. Though he was awarded the prize in the

literature category, he couldn't see his lyrics and music in isolation. Therefore, it is relevant to ask whether the dramatic texts published decades/centuries ago and their respective translations are really inseparable from performance. If it is so, we should watch a play and not read it. Of course, there are theatrical translations of Shakespeare's plays into various Asian languages, for example Vietnamese, which have been staged successfully. However, the vast majority of translated plays is not being performed but is only read.

The translator Velcheru Narayana Rao (2007: 195) said in his introduction to the play that his (the) translation is not suited for performance for its length - and other reasons too - and so if it is not trimmed to a stageable length, it is suitable only for reading. If there is no scope for performance for a translated drama, how different would it stand from the other translated literary genres like novel or short story? Therefore, if the purpose of translation is determined, the purpose of translated literature will be served. Hence, to translate dramatic texts in the lines of speakability and performance is not advisable at all times. New methodologies that lessen the translation loss are to be explored to fill this gap.

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# From Little Tradition to Great Tradition: Canonising *Aithiyamala*

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## Abstract

*In an attempt to reinvent the tradition of Kerala in the light of colonial modernity, Kottarathil Sankunni collected and transcribed the lores and legends of Kerala in his work Aithiyamala in 1909. When the legends were textualised, Sankunni attributed certain literary values to the narratives to legitimise the genre. As it was a folk appropriation by a scholarly elite like Sankunni who had received English education during the colonial period, the legends moved from folk tradition to classical tradition. In their transition from Little Tradition to Great Tradition, the legends underwent huge transformation in terms of form, content, language, context and narrative style. The text became fixed, stable and structured and was eventually subjected to a canon. However, when one perceives Aithiyamala (1909) as the 'authentic' and the 'final' version of the legends in Kerala, one is neglecting and silencing the multiple oral versions and folk tradition that had been existing since the pre-literate period. The current study attempts to trace the transformation undergone by the text when it moved towards the direction of a literary canon.*

**Keywords:** Legends Transcription, Great Tradition, Little Tradition, Literary Canon.

## Introduction

*Aithiyamala*, a collection of lores and legends of Kerala was compiled by Kottarathil Sankunni in *Bhashaposhini* magazine in the beginning of the twentieth century. In his preface to

*Aithiyamala* (1909) which comprises 126 legends, Sankunni (2017: 89) states that the text had been harshly criticised by an anonymous writer on the grounds of its casual nature. He considered such folk materials a matter of negligible importance and asked the editor to encourage grand writings like that of Sheshagiri Prabhu in order to uphold the aesthetic qualities of his magazine. However, eventually, *Aithiyamala* (1909) became one of the primary reference texts for the legends of Kerala for it was the first text in Malayalam to conceptualize the genre called 'aithiyam' (legend). 'Aithiyam' or legend had already existed in the oral tradition of Kerala before Sankunni had transcribed them in *Aithiyamala* (1909). However, these 126 narratives had been collected and categorised as 'aithiyam' for the first time by Sankunni in an attempt to recreate the past of Kerala in the context of colonial modernity. Around 98000 copies of the text were sold between 1974 and 1995 and numerous publishers such as D. C., Mathrubhumi and many more have been engaged with the new editions of the text in the following years. Some of the notable English translations of the text by Sreekumari Ramachandran and Leela James in 2010 and 2015 respectively are also worth mentioning in this context. It has also become an object of academic enquiry when the contemporary folklorists like Raghavan Payyanad and A. B Raghunathan Nair attempted to define the nature and concept of legend in Malayalam in the light of *Aithiyamala* stories. Thus, eventually *Aithiyamala* (1909) was elevated to a canonical status. This high valuation of *Aithiyamala* (1909) and its persistence over time are worth interrogation. It is important to note that *Aithiyamala* (1909) was raised to an esteemed status owing to the fact that it is a (written) literature. In other words, the textualisation of the legends paved the way for the formation of a canonical text. The legends and other folk genres in oral tradition had always been marginalised

from the textual culture of India. It was only when Kottarathil Sankunni transcribed the legends of Kerala; they were attributed literary values and subjected to a canon. The present paper attempts to trace how the transcription of legends paved the way for the creation of certain values- literary, linguistic, political, commercial and educational, and the evolution of a literary canon.

### ***Aithiyamala's Status as a Literary Canon***

In order to explore how *Aithiyamala* (1909) fulfils the criteria of a literary canon, one must make inquiries into the paradigms of a canon. Whenever we talk about a literary canon, the words which come to our mind are 'fame', 'reputation', 'quality', 'value', and so on. However, the actual process of canon formation is much deeper than it looks. It involves complex terms like 'division', 'hierarchy', 'bias', and so on. In other words, there exists a set of norms that determine the inclusion and exclusion of a text in/from the canon. Kummerling-Meibaurer and Anja Miller (2017: 2) point out that canon formation generally follows two approaches- aesthetic and socio-cultural. Yale critics like Harold Bloom were representatives of the aesthetic approach that investigates the literary qualities of a text. Sankunni's transcription of legends in *Aithiyamala* (1909) meets the aesthetic qualities of a literary text owing to his elevated and polished style of narration. However, the socio-cultural approach of canon formation focuses on the power mechanisms involved in the process. Peter Hunt's (2017: 15) statement that "Canons, like canons are about power- about one cultural group imposing its views and values upon another" also stresses upon this power mechanism. It is also applicable to *Aithiyamala* (1909) as a writer who belonged to the generation of the newly English educated upper-class elites and appropriated them to an upper caste discourse took up the legends. Test of time was also

regarded as one of the important criteria for canon formation for a valuable text has the capacity to pass the test of time. *Aithiyamala*'s (1909) endurance over time and the contemporary studies on the text points to this aspect. Yael Darr (2017: 24) states that a literary canon provides a national community with a sense of shared cultural past. *Aithiyamala* (1909) meets this criterion as it is a culturally significant text which attempted to create a sense of shared past for the Keralites through the invention of a tradition. Thus, it became one of the culture's acclaimed objects that play a significant role in constructing the nation-state and its regional culture. It may be observed that it is intimately bound up with the locale and culture of Kerala as it deals with legends related to the temples, kings, upper caste personages, magic, rituals, customs, martial arts, medicine, poets, scholars, and so on in Kerala. Its endurance over time relies a lot on its cultural significance. Furthermore, it attained an academic value, as it was the first text that categorised and conceptualised the genre called 'aithiyam' / legend in the Malayalam tradition. Its entry into the canon also resides in its position as an early modern text that constructs Kerala culture in terms of the daily practices, traditions, rituals, festivals and so on. For instance, the legend of "Kallanthattil Gurukkal" deals with the martial arts of Kerala; the legend of "Thalakupathur Bhattathiriyum Pazhur Padippurayum" deals with astrology; the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" deals with magic and sorcery; the legend of "Kollam Pisharikkavu" deals with festivals; the legend of "Kolathiriyum Samuthiriyum" deals with kings; the legend of "Alathoor Nambi" deals with medicine; the legend of "Aranmula Valiya Balakrishnan" deals with elephant and its cultural significance in Kerala. Hence, as a literary text, *Aithiyamala* (1909) fulfils these aesthetic, socio-cultural and test of time dimensions of the Western canon; however, its journey is much more nuanced and complex than it seems.



## From Little Tradition to Great Tradition

Before the legends in *Aithihyamala* (1909) became a part of the literary text, they were part of a vibrant oral tradition in Kerala. Hence canonisation of *Aithihyamala* (1909) draws our attention to the transition of legends from folk tradition to classical tradition. It is here the concepts of ‘Great Tradition’ and ‘Little Tradition’ by Robert Redfield becomes relevant (These Western concepts were applied to the Indian context by Milton Singer in the 1960s). He states that “‘Great tradition’ said to be carried by Sanskrit, is seen as pan-Indian, prestigious, ancient, and authorized by texts. The ‘Little Tradition’ or really the ‘Little Traditions’ in the plural are seen as local, mostly oral, and carried by the illiterate” (Ramanujan 1991: XVIII). However, later the concepts were highly criticised as they were not adequate to explain specific contexts and because of their overlapping nature. Linda Degh (1972: 53) points out Andre Jolles’ view on oral literary forms as “simple, spontaneous products originating in the spoken language, as opposed to complex, consciously created literary forms”. Owing to their ‘simple’, ‘distorted’ and ‘fantasized’ nature, they used to deviate from the set of values and institutionalised authority of the literary canons. Therefore, they had not been considered worth serious study. This is one of the underlying reasons behind the delay in beginning of folklore studies in Kerala. In fact, the first phase of folkloristic pursuits in Kerala was taken up by the European missionaries during the colonial period. *Centum Adagia Malabarica* (1791) by Paulinus of St. Bartholomeo and *Pazhancholmala* (1845) by Herman Gundert are some of the notable examples. Hence, there was a strong tendency among the academic men of the times to view folklore a part of the Little Tradition and the classical arts and other grand forms under Great Tradition. The literary consciousness of the period favoured Great Tradition as it was perceived as the locus of aesthetic value. This is one

of the main reasons why folklore was neglected by the Malayalam writers of the period for a long time. The harsh criticism received by Sankunni from an anonymous man for including ‘casual materials’ in a magazine that stood for high aesthetic values points to this elitist nature of the period.

The question regarding how these ‘casual materials’ enjoy a canonical status in the contemporary society is worth interrogation. In addition, when these legends were textualised and raised to a canonical status, various oral versions of the legends that circulated in the oral tradition were being neglected. Similarly, many classical texts in India were once part of a lively oral tradition, for instance, classical texts like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* had been retellings and elaborations of folklore and legends around “the Surya, Kuru, Puru and Naga clans;” (Satchidanandan 2012: 279). So is the case with ancient texts such as *Panchatantra*, *Kathasarithsagara* and many more. They were all Sanskritised and attributed authorship. This calls for the question – who acts as the mediator between these Little Tradition and Great Tradition? It is the ruling elite who establishes a set of norms and intellectualises the former and moves them to a sophisticated space (Great Tradition).

When Sankunni textualised the legends through *Aithiyamala* (1909), it was certainly a folk appropriation by the elite. He smoothed out the oral versions of the legend and presented them in a refined language. By adopting an elevated style of writing, Sankunni made them conform to an elite discourse. Scholars like Sankunni were well versed in both Sanskrit and English. It may be observed that *Aithiyamala* (1909) is loaded with Sanskrit words which are indicative of this deep-rooted Sanskrit tradition in Malayalam. It is very apparent in Sankunni’s descriptions about kings and upper caste personages. For instance, he addresses King Swathi Tirunal in

the legend of “Swati Thirunal” as ‘Sangeetha Sahitya Sagaraparagan’ (expert in music, literature and arts) (Sankunni 2011: 440). The concept of Sanskritisation by M. N. Sreenivasan deserves special mention in this context. Indian poet and critic, K. Satchidanandan equates the phenomenon of ‘folk’ becoming ‘classical’ with that of Sanskritisation. Sanskritisation is a process by which the lower caste seeks upward social mobility by emulating the rituals and customs of the upper caste. The English education in the colonial period helped popularise these values to a great extent and as a result, instead of subverting the *varna-jati* (refers to Indian caste system) system, it reinforced it. He adds that folk “Once absorbed into the upper caste/class discourse, their disruptive energy and subversive worldview came to be smoothed out, their contours stylised and fixed for all time and subjected to canon” (Satchidanandan 2012: 282). During this time and before, there was a popular notion that Indian civilization was based on Sanskrit texts due to which written Sanskrit texts were regarded as the basis of Indian religion, philosophy, ethics and aesthetics (2012: 279). Thus, the Sanskritised version of legends in *Aithihyamala* (1909) points to its great dependency on hegemonial power structures. Moreover, when it moves in the direction of Great Tradition, its transition is from a primary oral form to a more Sanskritised form.

As mentioned earlier, *Aithihyamala* (1909) comprises 126 legends that have been collected by Sankunni from different parts of Kerala. It is also indicative of the fact that the form in which we receive these legends (only a few of them still survive in the oral tradition) today is nothing other than literary productions. They underwent huge transformation when they moved from oral tradition to print. These legends attained a fixed identity when they moved from oral to the literary space. Moreover, the textualisation of the legends also made them conform to the dynamics of print. Owing to the rigidity of print

media, it reinforces the fixity of the text. Today, *Aithiyamala* (1909) is perceived as a complete literary piece of work and its authorship is attributed to Kottarathil Sankunni although Sankunni is merely the compiler of the legends. Once Sankunni is attributed its paternity, the original practitioners of the legends are forgotten. Moreover, once it becomes an authoritative text, the author makes his or her own interventions. The specificity in time and space is a good example for this kind of intervention of the author. In order to bring historical coherence in the narratives, the author describes the temporal and spatial elements with precision and accuracy. For example, in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, Sankunni informs the readers that Kathanar had been walking in the forest for 12 ‘nazhika’ ( 1 Nazhika= 24 minutes) and in the legend of ‘Thirunakkara Devanum Aviduthe Kalayum’, he gives an accurate direction of the place in an attempt to describe ‘veloor’ as ‘2 nazhika’ west from Thriunakkara.

Thus, when Sankunni translated the legends from orality to print, they became literary productions and adhered to certain aesthetic values required by the literary canon. The context of the birth of *Aithiyamala* (1909) explains the educational value of the text. *Aithiyamala* (1909) was the result of the concept of ‘united Kerala’ envisioned by Kandathil Varghese Mappillai, (the chief editor of *Malayala Manorama* newspaper) and Kottarathil Sankunni. Sankunni used to work as the editor of the poetry section of *Bhashaposhini* magazine, an allied journal of *Malayala Manorama*. During their leisure time, Sankunni used to narrate the legends that had circulated across Kerala to Varghese Mappilai. He was fascinated by them and suggested Sankunni that he may compile and publish them in the newspaper and magazine as they offer many deep moral and philosophical insights despite their casual nature (Sankunni 2017: 88). Thus, it may be inferred that

*Aithiyamala* (1909) was published with an intention of educating the readers. It had a didactic purpose of instilling certain moral and philosophical values in the minds of the people. At this point, it becomes a consciously created literary form in contradiction to the spontaneity of the oral versions of the legend. In an attempt to instil educational value in the text, Sankunni's translation of the legends from oral to print becomes a value-creating process.

Moreover, Sankunni's version of the legends conformed to the stylistic innovations and linguistic structures of the time period. The form adopted by Sankunni for *Aithiyamala* (1909) was essay which was an early modern form of writing. In the preface to *Aithiyamala* (1909), Sankunni states it clearly that following the suggestion of Varghese; he started transcribing the legends in the form of essays (Sankunni 2017: 89). Hence, his transcription of legends was in such a way as to fit into the structural framework of prose narratives. Thus, the mode of narration of the legends was also subjected to great transformation. Legends in oral tradition do not have definitive structure. They are fragmentary in nature. However, when they adopt the form of prose narrative, they follow a logical sequence and become finalised which is one of the typical characteristics of a literary work. They also attain self-containment in the process. The popular legends such as "Kayamkulam Kochunni", "Kadamattathu Kathanar", "Panayannarkaavile Yakshi" and so on are extremely context sensitive in nature that multiple fragmentary versions of these legends can be found in their local contexts. However, Sankunni's versions of these legends have a proper logical sequence. The translated text offers greater completeness and accuracy compared to the oral versions. Thus, Sankunni's version of legends has also paved the way for establishing prose narratives in Malayalam.

Many scholarly studies on folklore observe that a folk move from Little Tradition to Great Tradition when a society undergoes urbanisation (Allison 1997: 427). The argument proves to be valid as the industrialisation and the invention of printing press had tremendous impact on the folklore traditions across the world. Thus, another important aspect that calls for attention is the effects of the print for print have the ability to transform the effects of orality in a tremendous way. Walter J Ong (1982: 120) states that “Print is consumer oriented, since the individual copies of a work represent a much smaller investment of time: a few hours spent in producing a readable text will immediately improve thousands upon thousands of copies.”. However, this privilege of the printed text is not enjoyed by the legends in oral version. The fact that around 98000 copies of *Aithiyamala* (1909) were sold between 1974 and 1995; and 45000 copies were published in 7 editions between 1991 and 1995 indicates the course of *Aithiyamala* (1909) towards one of the best sellers in Kerala and its mounting popularity. Being a text read by both children and adults, it has entered the canon of both children’s literature as well as adult’s literature. In fact, print serves as a perfect example for demonstrating folk giving way to urban.

A. K. Ramanujan (1991: xix) points out that Great Traditions are Pan-Indian whereas Little Traditions are not. Owing to the greater diversity of narratives in *Aithiyamala* (1909), it is Pan-Indian in nature. The reference of the mythical emperor Vikramaditya (in the legend of “Parayipetta Panthirukulam”) who appears in many Indian legends is a good example to illustrate the plurality and Pan-Indian nature of its narratives.

Not only the form but also the content of the legends were subjected to change in their process of textualisation. For instance, the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” centres on a Christian priest who is believed to have supernatural powers.

In Sankunni's version of the legend, the hero is kidnapped and kept in custody by a group of 'Malayarayans' who form a tribal community in Kerala. However, in many oral versions of the legend, the figure that kidnaps the hero is referred as 'pishachu' (evil spirit). The replacement of the term 'pishachu' with 'Malayarayan' in Sankunni's version can be interpreted as an attempt by Sankunni to legitimise and rationalise the legends in the light of colonial modernity.

As *Aithiyamala* (1909) appeared in the *Bhashaposhini* magazine, an allied journal of one of the leading newspapers, it had to meet the interests of its publishers too. As the editor and the writer had envisioned the concept of 'United Kerala' (as mentioned earlier), the selection of legends was also governed by such special interests. The emerging Malayali consciousness of the period of nationalism also contributed to the inclusion and exclusion of certain legends. For instance, the legend of "Parayipetta Panthirukulam" puts forth the concept of a homogenous society devoid of the strings of untouchability and caste hierarchies. Similarly, the legend of "Oru Europeante Swamibhakthi" (A European's Adoration of Swami), centres on a European's deep veneration for the culture and tradition of Kerala. It is represented in such a way that it justifies our tradition and culture.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, Sankunni's transcription of legends proves to be not only a linguistic activity, but also a process of socio-cultural exchange. When Sankunni's transcription of legends is placed in the larger framework of the socio-cultural environment of the beginning of twentieth century, it may be observed that the value system and historical consciousness of the people of the specific period were also reflected in their representation. Adoption of modern form of writing (essay), Sanskritisation, elevated style, temporal and spatial coherence, intervention of

the author in the narratives and so on were some of the literary and cultural ingredients employed by Sankunni to legitimise the narratives and the genre. When one accepts *Aithiyamala* (1909) a literary canon and part of a Great tradition, one must also understand the fact that it is nothing but a codified and intellectualised Little Tradition. A close scrutiny of the textualised version of the legends exposes the power mechanisms in the process of canon formation. As every kind of re-representation can be viewed as translation in the light of poststructuralist theories, Sankunni's transcription of legends can be perceived as a process of translation in which the conflicting world views, workings of power and changing cultural patterns of a period shape the oral text into a literary canon.

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# Translation as ‘Rewriting’: Revisiting Translation Views of Tagore and Lefevere

SUVASH CHANDRA DASGUPTA

## Abstract

*Translation involves the task of transferring a text from the source language to the target one. During the process of this transfer, the source text is rewritten and eventually gets accepted in the receptor language as the ‘rewriting of the original’. Tagore for the first time applied the word ‘rewriting’ as an equivalent of creative translation but left it unexplained. Translation practices of Tagore and a few other translators confirm his belief that translation creates a new independent work. Lefevere gives the word a new lease of life in the 1980s through his writings and it has since come to be associated with his name. Both Tagore and Lefevere made theoretical contribution to the concept of ‘rewriting’. One needs to revisit their translation views to understand how ‘rewriting’ of the original comes about in the receptor language.*

**Keywords:** Transfer, Source Language, Target Language, Source Text, Receptor Language, Equivalent, Rewriting.

## Introduction

J. C. Catford defines translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Catford 1965: 20)”. Accordingly, translation, whatever be its aim and purpose, involves the task of transferring a particular text from one language to another. What actually transpires during the process of this linguistic transfer is that the source text is rewritten in the target language and that the newly-written text is eventually received in the receptor language as the ‘rewriting’ of the original text.

In his attempt to trace the genealogy of the term ‘rewriting’, André Lefevere takes us back on a historical journey down to the remote past before touching upon its application and significance in translation literature. According to him, St. Augustine is the first to have made one of the finest statements of the “doctrine” of ‘rewriting’ in the Western literature (Lefevere 1992: 5). He used the word ‘rewriting’ regarding the interpretation of the Bible when he came to know that the behaviour of the Church members did not conform to the lesson of a few pages of the Scripture. Hence, he instructed his devoted followers to manipulate the contents of those pages and ‘rewrite’ them in such a way that they corresponded to the ‘teachings’ of the Bible. By the word ‘rewrite’ Augustine seems to have implied re-interpretation of those pages of the Bible rather than their re-translation. But the word ‘rewriting’, as used by Augustine, does not seem to signify what is popularly known as ‘translation’ today. Moreover, the word ‘rewriting’ did not gain currency in the Western world and more particularly in the translation literature until Lefevere’s *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of the Literary Fame* (1992) gave it a new lease of life. Interestingly, long before the appearance of Lefevere’s book, Rabindranath Tagore used the word ‘rewriting’ to imply ‘creative translation’ in 1915 in connection with the translation of his short stories. Surprisingly, neither the word nor the concept found its ‘habitation and name’ in translation literature and with the passage of time somehow it got slipped into oblivion. Consequently, he did not get the due critical recognition from translation scholars and critics for inventing such a word. Shyamal Kumar Sarkar (1977: 66-85) made the maiden attempt on bringing together many of Tagore’s statements and remarks about translation in his essay “Tagore on Translation”. But he throws no light on the word or the concept ‘rewriting’ in his essay. In *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays on*

*Indian Literature in English Translation*, Sujit Mukherjee (1994: 101-124) made the first-ever critical study of Tagore's own translations but the theoretical aspects of his translation thinking found no place in his discussion. In an exhaustive introduction to *the English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Sisir Kumar Das (1994: 9-34) made a detailed discussion on Tagore's own translation of poems but he made no mention of his translation thoughts. In *Kabir Anubad* (1998) Ashru Kumar Sikdarmade no reference to the word 'rewriting' because his main concern in the book was the poet's own translation of his poems. In *Englander Dikprante Rabir Uday Rabir Asta*, Chanchal Kumar Brahma (2000: 17-23) made a brief discussion about Tagore's translation thoughts but he did not take up for discussion Tagore's concept 'rewriting'. Hence there is a research gap involving Tagore's concept of 'rewriting' and nobody has yet taken it up for an in-depth study from the point of view of translation poetics. What made matters worse for Tagore is that unlike Lefevere he did not write any essay or book, nor did he deliver any lecture on translation/'rewriting' as Arnold did in his famous lecture "On Translating Homer" (1861). The objective of this paper will be, in the first place, to interpret 'rewriting' in the light of the translation practices of Tagore and others. Secondly, Lefevere's concept of 'rewriting' will be discussed with special reference to his shift from the term "refraction" to "rewriting". Thirdly, an attempt will be made here to revisit the views of Tagore and Lefevere on 'rewriting' and to examine the application of the word or concept 'rewriting' in translation literature.

### **Tagore and 'Rewriting'**

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) seems to be the first to have conceived translation as 'rewriting' or re-creation of the original or source text. He seems to have formed this

theoretical concept about translation from his first-hand translating experience (Dasgupta 2012: 134) While talking about the translation of his short stories, as proposed by Macmillans, he uses the word ‘rewriting’ for the first time in his letter to Rothenstein (dated 31 Dec. 1915). By ‘rewriting’ he implies creative translation as distinguished from literal rendering or what he calls ‘translating’. Here is the relevant section of Tagore’s letter which contains the word ‘rewriting’:

Macmillans are urging me to send them some translations of my short stories but I am hesitating for the reason that the beauty of the originals can hardly be preserved in translation. *They require rewriting in English, not translating.* That can only be done by the author himself, but I do not have sufficient command of English to venture to do it (emphasis added) (Lago 1972: 216).

This chance remark made by Tagore exclusively for self-translation underscores an important concept of translation, namely ‘rewriting’. He did not explain the term except making a distinction between ‘rewriting’ and ‘translating’, the former being concerned with ‘creative’ translation and the latter with ‘translating’ or literal rendering. He does not seem to have made this distinction as part of theorizing about translation in general but as part of an internal urge for self-translation. One possible misconception about ‘rewriting’ needs to be dispelled here. Though with regard to his self-translation Tagore seems to have considered ‘rewriting’ and creative translation as identical, there is a basic difference between them. What he says about ‘rewriting’ in his letter to Rothenstein does not apply to translation in general. Even many of his post-*Gitanjali* rewritings do not rise to the level of creative translation. Normally ‘rewriting’ cannot be labeled as creative translation unless it is tinged with the imaginative power of the rewriter.

Tagore seems to have dismissed ‘translating’ or literal translation here in favour of ‘rewriting’, for his genius was unsuitable for ‘the humble and laborious task of translation, which involves an act of self-denial’ (Bose 541). The creative self in him, Bose seems to imply, always clamoured for expression while the translating self demanded total self-effacement for rendering a pre-existing text. This explains why he writes to Ajit Chakravorty from Urbana on 13 March 1913, “In fact, one cannot quite translate one’s own works” (Sarkar 2013: 164). Again to Ramananda Chatterji he wrote on 28 October 1917, “This is my difficulty that I cannot translate, I have to write almost anew” (Sarkar 2013: 166). It was the inherent creative urge in him that set Tagore writing anew or ‘rewriting’ the original during the period of his convalescence in March/April 1912 in the idyllic natural ambience East Bengal. It was from his first-hand experience of self-translating that Tagore developed the concept of ‘rewriting’ which later came to be accepted as a seminal concept in the history of modern translation. No one before him had applied the word ‘rewriting’ as an equivalent of translation. It may be mentioned in this context that Roman Jakobson (1959: 114) spoke of three kinds of translation – intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic in his classic essay “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation, ‘interlingual translation’ being one of the three implying translation from one language to another. But he could not anticipate the emergence of ‘rewriting’, as initiated by Tagore, in the history of translation. According to Tagore, the objective of ‘rewriting’ is to take the soul of the original and to ‘reincarnate’ it in the target language. This transmigration of the soul of the original is, in his view, ‘an act of creation’. This transmigration comes about only when a creative writer is engaged in this task. Tagore’s oft-quoted letter to Indira Devi (dated 6 May 1913) seems to give us an insight into ‘rewriting’, as understood by Tagore:

... I took up the poems of Gitanjali and set myself to translate them one by one ... *I simply felt an urge to recapture, through the medium of another language, the feelings and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in past days.* The pages of a small exercise-book came gradually to be filled, and with it in my pocket I boarded the ship (emphasis added) (Chakravarty 2003: 20-21).

Tagore here talks of ‘recapturing’ in his rendering the creative mood or ‘ecstasy’, he has experienced while writing the original *Gitanjali* (1910) poems and he tries to successfully ‘re-enact’ and ‘re-live’ the original ‘creative process’ in order to ‘rewrite’ the poems in English. Though he does not explicitly mention the word ‘rewriting’ here, what he says in the italicized line seems to suggest what he means by ‘rewriting’.

Again, Tagore’s views on ‘rewriting’ find expression in his letter to Kanti Chandra Ghosh praising his excellent translation of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* in Bengali. Both the Bengali and its translated versions are reproduced below for the convenience of the bilingual readers:

বাংলা ছন্দে তুমি ওমর খৈয়ামের যে তর্জমা করেছো তা গ্রন্থ আকারে প্রকাশের পূর্বেই আমি দেখেছি । এ রকম কবিতা এক ভাষার থেকে অন্য ভাষার ছাঁচে ঢেলে দেওয়া কঠিন । কারণ এর প্রধান জিনিসটা বস্তু নয়, গতি । ফ্রিটজ জেরাল্ড ও তাই ঠিকমতো তর্জমা করেননি – মূলের ভাবটা দিয়ে সেটাকে নূতন করে সৃষ্টি করা দরকার ।

I have seen your translation of Omar Khayyam in Bengali rhymed verse much before its publication in a book form. It is difficult to cast the poetry of one language in the mould of

another, for its main focus is on dynamism rather than matter. Even Fitzgerald could not translate Khayyam accurately—*one needs to re-create the whole thing with the feeling of the original* (emphasis added) (my translation) (Ghosh 1921: 2).

Tagore concludes his letter emphasizing the 're-creation' of the text with the emotive feeling of the original. In other words, all he wants is the re-creation or 'rebirth' of the original rather than its lifeless rendering in the receptor language. Ghosh did the creative act of 'rewriting' or 're-creating' Omar Khayyam in Bengali based on his intuitive 'feeling' or imaginative assimilation of the original Persian poems. His *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam in Bengali do not suffer from the strain of translation and stand as independent new poems. Even though Fitzgerald 'manipulated' Khayyam in such a way in his rendering that the culture and poetics of the time are integrally wedded in his English version. Thus, he succeeded in re-creating Khayyam in English as if he were a Victorian poet. Sadly, Tagore could not appreciate the translated Khayyam in English.

### **Lefevere and 'Rewriting'**

Andre' Lefevere is one of the leading Translation Studies scholars of the Anglo-Saxon worlds. He came to be widely known as an authority on translation with the publication of *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992). He considers translation, criticism, editing, and historiography as forms of "refraction" or "rewriting". He propounds the theory of 'rewriting' at a time when Translation Studies was all set to take a 'Cultural Turn' towards the end of the 1980s. The publication of *Translation, History, and Culture* (1990) co-edited by Lefevere and Bassnett is a momentous event in the history of Translation Studies. This anthology contains a remarkable article by Mary Snell-Hornby titled "Linguistic Transcoding or Cultural Transfer? A Critique



of Translation Theory in Germany” in which she proposes a shift from “text” as a translation unit to culture. It was in the introduction to *Translation, History, and Culture* (1990) that Lefevere and Bassnett announced the “cultural turn” (Lefevere and Bassnett 1990: 12). This anthology has been recognized by posterity as marking the beginning of the Cultural Turn in Translation Studies (Gentzler 1993: 188). It is against this changing scenario that Lefevere develops the idea of translation as a form of ‘rewriting’ by which he means that any text produced on the basis of another has the intention of adapting that other text to a certain ideology or to a certain poetics, within the cultural system of the target language. In his article “Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites” (1985), he famously declares: “Translation is probably the most obvious instance of rewriting (Hermans 1985: 234). But for him, ‘rewriting’ was never an ‘innocent’ aesthetic thing, as it was with Tagore. According to Lefevere, translation always requires ‘a context’ in which it takes place, a ‘history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 11)”. Translation or ‘rewriting’, therefore, involves something more than the mere engagement of a translator with an original text or the linguistic transmission of the source text to the target one.

Lefevere’s theory of ‘rewriting’ is believed to have been developed from his concept of ‘refraction’. It would be profitable at this stage to have some idea about it in order to understand his concept of ‘rewriting’. In his article “Translated Literature: Towards an Integrated Theory” (1981) he introduces the concept of the ‘refracted text’ by which he means ‘texts that have been processed for a certain audience (children, for example) or adapted to a certain poetics or certain ideology’ (Gentzler 1993: 140). Abridged or edited versions of classics for children or for general television viewers might be described as the most obvious forms of

refractions. In Germany many texts by diverse writers such as Heine and Schiller were very often refracted to conform to a specific poetics and ideology. In another article called "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature" (1982) he defines the term 'refraction' as "the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work (Venuti 2000: 235). He also shows how Brecht's work has been refracted in the West to suitably conform to the prevailing artistic norms and political ideology of the time. It is from the concept of 'refraction' that he moves on to that of 'rewriting'. In 1985 he adopts the concept of 'rewriting' as an equivalent of the term 'refraction' so as to mean any text produced on the basis of another with the intention of adapting that other text to a certain ideology or to a certain poetics and / or to both (Hermans 127).

The theory of 'rewriting', as enunciated in the general editors' preface to *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, has been famously described as the "rewriting of an original text" (Lefevere 1992: vii). According to the editors, all kinds of 'rewritings', irrespective of their 'intention' and purpose, are governed by some kinds of 'ideology' and 'poetics' and they manipulate literature to function in a particular way. Rewriting is always resorted to in the service of those in power and authority. It can acquaint the writers of a particular country or society with new concepts, new genres and new literary devices prevailing in foreign literatures so that they can enrich their own literature assimilating them.

### **Tagore and Lefevere Contrasted**

Tagore and Lefevere stand poles apart from one another in their views about 'rewriting'. Tagore follows the Romantic notions of "authorial originality" which makes him 'recapture'

or ‘re-create’ the source text, be it his own Bengali writings or those by others. Lefevere, on the other hand, dismisses the Romantic view of “authorial originality” and addresses translated text with the same seriousness a traditionally original work is treated. With Tagore ‘rewriting’ is basically a creative endeavour and there is no manipulative intention about it. On the contrary, Lefevere considers the original or the source text amenable to manipulation according to the choice or intention of the translator. According to him, the translator has the liberty to ‘manipulate’ rewriting to serve the purpose of those in authority. In *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992) Lefevere shows how power, poetics and ideology impact translation to function in a subtle way making it a ‘rewriting’ of the original text. But Tagore does not have any such engagement with the forces of power, poetics, and ideology. That is why he rewrites the *Gitanjali* poems creatively, drawing on the feelings and sentiments of the original. Thus, the poems undergo a creative ‘re-incarnation’ in the English language and seem to have come spontaneously from the poet’s heart (Dasgupta 2012: 138-139).

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing discussion it is now quite evident that the names of both Tagore and Lefevere are closely associated with the genealogy of ‘rewriting’ and its application in the history of translation. Unlike Lefevere Tagore does not get the critical attention that he so justly deserves for using the word ‘rewriting’ for the first time in translation literature. Lefevere’s *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992) has already become a famous book in the history of Translation. Though Tagore articulated most of his translation views even before the publication of Walter Benjamin’s classic essay *The Task of the Translator* (1923), he remains a much-

neglected figure in this new discipline. His translation views remain unrecognized even today in the mainstream translation thinking as does his concept of 'rewriting'.

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# Challenges of Translating Classical Tamil Poetry into French: The *Tiruppavai* as Example

VASUMATHI BADRINATHAN

## Abstract

*This article focuses on classical Tamil poetry, represented by the Tiruppavai of Andal. The article seeks to understand the challenges of translating from Tamil into French, of a poetry that is non-contemporary, and which communicates layered meanings relating to religion, metaphysics, spirituality, nature and simply, the self. While every literary translation poses difficulties, translating classical Tamil poetry comes with a set of challenges by way of being spatially, temporally, contextually and even to an extent, linguistically removed from the present. Which route should the translator take: Faithful reproduction, brave reinvention or a middle path? The corpus for this article is drawn from two translations in French of the Tiruppavai that are studied and compared in this perspective.*

**Keywords:** Poetry, Tiruppavai, Tamil, French, Translation.

## Introduction

The world of translation is replete with contemporary works of literature. Literary works in translation belonging to earlier periods, though not absent, find a negligible place in this scene apart from academic circles. The reasons for this could be many. The difficulties imposed by the cultural ethos and mysticism of India as a whole could be a challenge, coupled with its linguistic complexities. The lack of interest for poetry in readers could be another factor. The religiosity and spiritual element in classical poetry could be yet another reason which publishers fear may not resonate with contemporary readers and which makes publishing such translation difficult. This

article relies on a corpus of two translations from Tamil into French of the Tiruppavai: one by the renowned Indologist and scholar, Jean Filliozat in 1972 and the other by this author in 2019. In the light of what is explained above, it is not surprising that there is a gap of forty-seven years between the two translations with no known translations of this work in French in the interim period to the best of our knowledge.

### **Background of the Tiruppavai: Context and Content**

A chef-d'oeuvre of Tamil literature, the Tiruppavai is a gem in itself. It remains a centrepiece of Sri Vaishnava philosophy propounded by Ramanuja, which rests on devotion to Vishnu as the supreme god. Andal is the only female amongst the twelve Alwars of Tamil Nadu, poet-saint-philosophers of Tamil Nadu. In her incredible life as one passionately in love with Vishnu, she ultimately unites directly with him into the altar. The Alwars lived between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and their collective poetry of four thousand verses is known as the Nalayira Divya Prabandham. Each individual poem or verse is called a Pasuram. The Alwars led the Bhakti movement in Tamil Nadu and their poetry is hailed as Tamil Marai or the Tamil Vedas – representing the esoteric and philosophical values of the Vedas in a tongue commonly understood in the land.

The Tiruppavai is composed of thirty verses of eight lines each. Each octave is replete with a delightful simplicity that belies their profundity; the verses shine with literary and philosophical connotations. There are several commentaries on the philosophical content of the Tiruppavai. Though the Tiruppavai includes thirty different poems, they are gathered together in one single unit which flows cohesively from one poem to the other, like chapters of a novel. Therefore, one could read them individually or chronologically from start to end. In either case, they remain beautifully coherent. The land

is Gokulam, of cowherds, milkmaids and Krishna. The young girls wish to perform the *pavai nombu*, a ritual for the prosperity of the land and their own lives. In every poem, the group of girls travels from house to house, waking up the sleeping damsels and preparing them for the ritualistic bath. Their final goal is to reach Krishna, which they do after appealing to the mansion guardian, his father, his consort and finally to Krishna himself. Acclaimed as poetry of the highest order of the Visistadvaita philosophy, the poems are one of 'awakening' at many levels. Within each poem dwells a world in itself, complete with its multisensorial imagery and poetic elements. The Tiruppavai is a song of the exterior, much like an Impressionist painting. It draws vivid pictures of nature, the countryside, fields, seasons, birds, water, colours, the sun, and of the moon, the planets, cowherds, milk, butter, yoghurt. It could not be more complete in its pastoral description appealing to all senses. It combines a simple language with poetic elegance and depth. There is even one poem in dialogue form.

The Tiruppavai is also characterised by a strong musical element. Coming from an oral tradition, it was meant to be sung, and still continues to hold its position of pride within the Carnatic music repertoire. It remains a much-in-use poetry, recited regularly by the devout of the Sri Vaishnava tradition that especially gains momentum in the month of Margali (the winter month of Margashirsha). While many classical and ancient works have fallen into oblivion, Andal has continued to hold her sway over translators especially in English even in recent times (Chabbria, Shankar 2015; Venkatesan, 2010).

### **The Problematic of the Dual Complexities of Tamil & French**

Having explained the backdrop of the Tiruppavai and its fundamental spiritual and philosophical character, these very



elements do not make it any easier for the translator. The Tiruppavai takes us to the time of divinity, of a time when God walked with man. Hence, we are dealing with poetry of a different level where Andal seeks salvation and leads the reader towards this ultimate objective. Taking a text such as the Tiruppavai into a foreign language, in this case, French, it makes a doubly challenging. How do you maintain a safe balance without much gaping cultural fractures and still keep it acceptable to a Francophone reader of target language? The Tiruppavai as the source text (ST) is a poetic document replete with complexities for the translator. Not just linguistic, but context, time and space-driven challenges too. The Tiruppavai has come down since ages, intact in a fairly homogenized version through the oral tradition. For academic purposes, we refer to a 1988 edition (Krishnaswami Iyengar) of the Tiruppavai as ST. We shall consider some excerpts of translated text (TT) from both the versions in question in this article and analyse the same. All re-translations in English from French in this article are those of this author and are provided to facilitate understanding for readers not familiar with French language.

### **Keeping Close to the Original**

Right from the inaugural poem, Filliozat announces his fidelity to the ST. He remains charmingly close to Tamil culture in his choice of ‘Yacotai’ (Filliozat 1972: 6) for Yashoda, (*Yashodai ilanshingam* - the metaphor of Yashoda’s lion cub) adding the typically Tamil ‘ai’ suffix while referring to Yashoda, the ‘ai’ also communicating ‘belonging to’. This translator has simply chosen ‘Yashoda’ for its universality in her TT, two variations, driven solely by the translators’ choice.

Let us look at some words that occur frequently in the Tiruppavai. It is not impossible to translate words as ‘nai (ghee), ‘*kuttuvilakku*’ (lamp) into French. Filliozat simply uses

‘beurre’ (butter) for ‘nai’ (ghee or clarified butter) (Filliozat 1972: 2) and ‘lampadaire’ (lamp on a stand) (Filliozat 1972: 20) for *kuttuvilakku*. However, this translator maintains the source text word as the translation did not quite reflect the totality of the word in her eyes. Are we simply seeking equivalence of a semantic order or are we looking for communicating the essence of the poem? Some detailed explanation here would be in order. The *kuttuvilakku*, to anyone familiar and raised in Tamil land and culture would associate this lamp to a characteristic shape, design, even a certain grace with feminine tones, coming from Tamil artistry. A *kuttuvilakku* from Tamil Nadu is very different from the Kerala oil lamps for example. Merely translating *kuttuvilakku* into ‘lamp’ for this translator, did not sufficiently evoke the beauty of this lamp or its design which plays an important role in this poem which is by far the most sensuous and intimate of all the thirty poems. The *kuttuvilakku* lights up subtly and sensuously the bed chamber, where the divine couple lies in serenity. So much so, that Andal chooses to start the poem with *kuttuvilakku*. Here are the beginning verses of this poem-Pasuram 19 (Nalayira Divya Prabandham: 84)

குத்து விளக்கெரியக் கோட்டுக் கால் கட்டில் மேல்  
மெத்தென்ற பஞ்ச சயனத்தின் மேல் ஏறி

*Kuttuvilak eriya kottuk kaal kattil mel Mettenra panja sayanathin mel eri*

*A la lueur du kuttuvilakku, allongé sur un lit moelleux aux pieds d'ivoire* (Badrinathan, 2019 : 47).

This translator being of Tamil origin chooses therefore to maintain the source text word as seen above, with a footnote explanation.

Nevertheless, Filliozat is not forgetful of the usefulness of source language words and source text words. He uses source

text words for proper names, for living beings and also for elements of nature, some examples being *Narayana* (Pasuram 1), *Sarnga* (Vishu's bow, Pasuram 4), 'madhavi' (type of creeper, Pasuram 18). This translator however is more liberal with use of source text words as for example *Parai* (drum, Pasuram 1), *Chakra*, *Panchajanya*, *Saranga* (disc, conch, bow – all names of Vishnu's arms, Pasuram 4), *ambal* (type of flower, pasuram 14), *madhavi* (type of creeper, Pasuram 18), *kuttuvilakku* (lamp, Pasuram 19), *pallandu* (chant of praise, Pasuram 26) and source culture words such as *nombu* (the special ritual, Pasuram 2), *kasumalai* (necklace of gold coins, Pasuram 7), *tulsi*<sup>8</sup> (the sacred plant, Pasuram 10). This choice of source language words is justified by their emblematic names and the iconic role they play in Tamil culture even today. A *kasumalai* cannot have any other form – it is necessarily a necklace with gold coins, *nombu* is the traditional feminine ritual in vigour even to this day. Is the *tulsi* translatable or does it fit well in a translated equivalent with all the symbolism it is associated with? That is also why this translator prefers to keep the key word 'parai' instead of 'drum' as the *parai*, is a polysemic leitmotif in the Tiruppavai. It is at once the drum, the object and also symbol of deliverance; it is both the means and the end.

However, code mixing has been a conscious choice in both translations. It does not imply that the translator's despair for lack of words but use the strategy deliberately to enhance the quality of the TT and render it as close to the original texture as possible. A strategy that Venuti (1995) would not be unhappy about, as it sufficiently 'foreignises' translation.

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<sup>8</sup> Although Tulsi is a Tamil word, துழாய் is the ancient Tamil term used in the poem to mean Tulsi.

## Form versus Content

The length of the lines in translating poetry is a question of concern. Each of Andal's poems is an octave. Filliozat remains loyal to the eight lines. This translator has extended it to ten lines, as French language does not comfortably allow ease of translation in brevity. While some poems lend themselves to be fitted into the eight-line sequence, many do not. In order to maintain uniformity, this translator chose to maintain the translation into French in ten-line stanzas. Filliozat, for his part, remains in the eight-line limit and numbers them verses, but his lines double up. For example, in Pasuram 14, this is how he extends line 2 of the poem (Filliozat 1972: 14)

செங்கழுநீர் வாய் நெகிழ்ந்து ஆம்பல் வாய் கூம்பின காண்  
*Senkayuneer vai negindu ambal vai koombinak kaan*  
*Les corolles des lotus rouges se sont ouvertes et les*  
*corolles des lotus blancs se sont fermées. Regarde.*  
*The petals of the red lotus have bloomed and the*  
*petals of the white lotus have closed. Look.*

Or

In Pasuram 2 (Filliozat 1972: 2).

வையத்து வாழ்வீர்கள் நாமும் நம் பாவைக்குச்  
செய்யும் கிரிசைகள் கேளீரோ பாற்கடலுள்

*Vaiyathu vaiveergaal namum nam pavaikku(ch)*

*Seiyyum girisaigal keliro parkadalul*

*Vous qui vivez dans le monde, n'écoutez-vous pas*

*les actions que nous devons accomplir pour notre*

*vœu?- Sur l'océan du lait*

*You who live in this world, won't you listen to*

*the actions that we must accomplish for our  
vow? - Upon the ocean of milk*

### **When Prose Meets Poetry**

In many instances, Filliozat adopts simplicity and straightforwardness. In Pasuram 26, Filliozat (1972: 26) translates thus.

மேலையார் செய்வனகள் வேண்டுவன கேட்டியேல்

*Melayar seivanangal venduvana kettiyel*

*Si tu demandes les choses nécessaires aux actes des  
personnes éminentes*

*If you ask for the things needed for the act from eminent  
persons*

In Pasuram 11, Filliozat (1972: 12) willingly introduces a conjugated verb which lends it a solid prosaic quality.

*Ils partent pour détruire la force des ennemis et combattent  
They set out to destroy the strength of the enemies and fight.*

The ST however eschews this succession of verbs (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 82)

செற்றார் திறலழியச் சென்று செருச்செய்யும்

*Settraar tiralayiya senru serucheyyum*

This translator's version (Badrinathan 2019 : 31)

*Et leur bravoure à vaincre l'ennemi dans d'illustres guerres  
And their valour in triumphing over the enemy in illustrious  
wars*

In this case, this translator remains close to the original text and attempts to retain the poetic value. Another example is Pasuram 5. For the line 'vaayinaal paadi' which conveys 'mouthing praises', Filliozat (1972: 6) once again remains with the literal translation.

வாயினால் பாடி மனத்தினால் சிந்திக்கப்  
*Vaayinaal paadi manathinaal sindhikka(p)*  
*Quand, chantant de la bouche nous pensons à Lui*  
*par l'esprit*  
*When, singing by mouth we think of Him*  
*through our minds.*

Here, the logic is evident, as like Andal, herself, Filliozat insists on the verbal chant and the simultaneous mental devotion that go hand in hand (mouth and mind). While in the other translation, the translator (Badrinathan 2019: 19) decides to forego this element of contrast by using the verb 'sing'.

*Nous Lui chanterons des louanges*  
*Nous graverons dans nos pensées Son souvenir*  
*We shall sing his praises*  
*We shall engrave in our thoughts His memories*

In some instances, Filliozat (1972:12) permits a rupture of sentence which rings an odd tone semantically. Like in Pasuram 11.

*Toutes les amies de l'entourage sont venues, dans ta*  
*Cour elles sont entrées et tandis qu'elles chantent...*  
*All neighbouring friends have come in your*  
*Courtyard they entered and while they sing...*

Is the intention to remain close to Andal who resorts at times to similar constructions? For example, in Pasuram 3, Andal says (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 81).

தேங்காதே புக்கிருந்து சீர்த்த முலை பற்றி  
வாங்கக் குடம் நிறைக்கும் வள்ளல் பெரும் பசுக்கள்  
*Thengaday pukkirandu seerta mulai patri*  
*Vanga kudam niraikkum vallal perum pasukkal*

*Patri vaanga*, refers to the act of milking and both words go together. Filliozat seems to imitate this model in the example mentioned supra.

In Pasuram 16, the girls entreat the door keeper to let them into the mansion of Nandagopa. Here is the literal translation of the ST (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 84).

வாயால் முன்னமுன்னம் மாற்றதே அம்மா நீ  
*Vaayaal munnamunnam maatrade amma nee*  
*With your mouth first, do not refuse, mother*

It is common in Tamil to use the idiomatic phrase ‘with your mouth’ to mean ‘to speak’, ‘to utter’, and to ‘have a tongue’ to mean someone who talks but does not act. Filliozat prefers the literal.

*Ne refuse pas d’abord de la bouche, ô Père*  
*Do not refuse with your mouth, O Father.*

Interestingly, he even replaces ‘Amma’, or mother, with ‘père’ or father. The door keeper being a male, was it that which prompted Filliozat to choose the masculine? His choice he explains is based on the explanation that ‘amma’ is a vocative of ‘amman’ – maternal uncle or father; here the guardian of the door (Filliozat 1972: 48).

Another example would be Pasuram 14 (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 83). Here is first, the literal translation in English.

எங்களை முன்னம் எழுப்புவான் வாய் பேசும்  
நங்காய் எழுந்திராய் நாணாதாய் நாவுடையாய்  
*Engalai munnam ezhuppuvan vai pesum*  
*Nangai ezhundiraai, naanadai naavudayay*  
*Us you wished to first awaken, your mouth said*  
*Girl wake up ! Do you only have a tongue*

Filliozat (1972 : 14)

*Toi qui disait de bouche que tu nous éveillerais la première,*

*O notre sœur, éveille-toi. Tu n'as pas honte ? Toi qui [n'] as [que] la langue*

*You who said with your mouth that you would be the first to awaken us*

*O sister of ours, wake up. Aren't you ashamed? You, who only has a tongue?*

This translator (Badrinathan 2019: 37)

*Toi qui te vantais hier d'être la première à nous réveiller,*

*Lève-toi donc ! Tes promesses sont trompeuses*

*You who boasted yesterday of being the first one to wake us up*

*Wake up yourself, won't you! Your promises are a betrayal*

A scholarly, veteran Indologist and translator, it is evident that Filliozat did not make these choices arbitrarily. Through his detailed notes, commentary and analysis of the Tiruppavai, one can conjecture that Filliozat wished to be clear, concise, and conventional in expression when communicating the intentions of Andal to a typical reader of the French translation who is geographically and culturally distant from the ST. The thrust of the translation is distinctly on the concerns of correct communication and scholarship, rather than a preoccupation with its poetic elegance.

### **Poetic Characteristics of the Tiruppavai**

Andal's construction of her verses is invested with musicality. Let us see how this offers itself to translation. The famous Pasuram 4 (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 81) paints images of rain, thunder and colour. The musicality is further enhanced with the richly alliterative and assonantal verses. This poem, *Aazhi mazhai kannu*, is anaphoric in its use of *ayi*



and assonantal in its use of ya/zha (ழ்) the singular phonetic sound of Tamil.

ஆழி மழைக் கண்ணா ஒன்று நீ கை கரவேல்  
ஆழியுள் புக்கு முகந்துகொடு ஆர்த்தேறி  
ஊழி முதல்வன் உருவம் போல் மெய்கறுத்துப்  
பாழியன் தொளுடைப் பற்பநாபன் கையில்  
ஆழிபோல் மின்னி வலம்புரிபோல் நின்றதிர்ந்து  
தாழாதே சரங்கம் உதைத்த சரமழைபோல்  
வாழ உலகினில் பெய்திடாய் நாங்களும்  
மார்கழி நீராட மகிழ்ந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய்

*Ayimayai kanna onru nee kai kararavel*

*Aiyiyul pukku mugundu kodu aarteri*

*Ooyi mudalvan uruvam pol mei karuttu*

*Payiyan toludaya Padmanabhan kaiyil*

*Ayi pol minni valampuri pol ninradirndu*

*Tayade Sarnga mudaitha sharamayai pol*

*Vaya ulaginil peindidai nangalum*

*Margali neerada magindelor empavai*

To counter the impossibility of maintaining these poetic devices, this translator (Badrinathan 2019: 17) uses verb endings in the TT. The imperative in French, ending with the ‘ez’ (pronounced [e]) gives the translation a semblance of the power that is vested in the ST.

*Plongez dans les profondeurs des océans,*

*Puisez pleinement, résonnez ensuite dans les cieux en tonnerre,*

*Vêtissez-vous de noir, telle la cause première,*

***Resplendissez en nuées d'éclairs***

***Rugissez fermement comme le Panchajanya***

***Déchaînez-vous sur la terre comme une pluie incessante***

*[de flèches décochées de son Saranga,*

*Dive into the depths of the oceans*

*Draw freely only to resonate again as thunder in the skies*

*Dress up in dark hues, like the primordial cause*

*Radiate in lightening streaks*

*Roar firmly like the Panchajanya*

*Unleash yourself upon the earth*

*Like an unstoppable rain of arrows released by his Saranga*

Filliozat (1972: 4) however, goes straight to the point. His use of the second person singular, the familiar 'tu' (you), reveals a disarming familiarity with the main character of the poem and also thereby investing the translation with a rhythmic energy.

*O toi dont les yeux font une pluie d'océan, ne cache  
rien dans ta main*

*Entre dans l'océan, puise, élève-toi en tonnant,*

*Devenu noir de corps à l'image du Premier Etre des  
âges,*

*Oh you whose eyes are an ocean of rain, hide nothing in your  
hand*

*Enter into the ocean, draw from it, arise thundering*

*Having become darkened in body like the Primordial Being of  
all ages*

In Pasuram 11 (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 82), Andal plays on the repetition of the consonne ‘tra’ at the beginning of each verse.

கற்றுக் கறவைக்  
செற்றார் திறல்  
குற்றம் ஒன்றில்லாத  
புற்றரவல்குல்  
சுற்றத்துத் தோழிமார்  
முற்றம் புகுந்து  
சிற்றாதே பேசாதே  
எற்றுக்கு உறங்கும்

*Kattru kkaravai*

*Setrar tiral*

*Kuttram onru illade*

*Puttru aravalgul*

*Sutrattu tozhimar*

*Muttram pugundu*

*Sitraday pesaday*

*Etrukku urangum*

The clever use of ‘t+ra’ (the hard consonant ற) in Tamil gives to the texture of the verses, a ‘crispy’ effect, which corresponds to Andal’s sharp injunctions to the lazy, sleeping girl in the story, exhorting her to rise and accompany her friends to the bathing ritual of the *nombu* ceremony. Neither Filliozat nor this translator has reproduced the effect of the Tamil ‘t+ra’. In Pasuram 19, less alliterations around ‘k’ and ‘t’, suggest the warmth and tenderness of the bed chamber, the

beautiful breasts of Nappinnai, consort of Krishna, lying on the comfortable bed.

The first four verses are given below. Filliozat (1972: 20) translates as follows:

குத்து விளக்கெரியக் கோட்டுக் கால் கட்டில் மேல்  
மெத்தென்ற பஞ்ச சயனத்தின் மேல் ஏறி  
கொத்தலர் பூங்குழல் நப்பின்னை கொங்கை மேல்  
வைத்துக் கிடந்த மலர் மார்பா வாய் திறவாய்

*Kuttuvillak eriya kottukkal kattil mel*

*Meddenra pancha sayanathin mel eri*

*Kothalar poonkuyal Nappinnai kongai mel*

*Vaithuk kidanda malar maarba vai tiravai*

*Tandis que brûle le lampadaire, sur le lit aux pieds  
d'ivoire,*

*Reposant sur une douce couche aux cinq [qualités],*

*Le sein de NappiNNai à la chevelure aux fleurs  
épanouies en bouquets*

*Posé sur ta poitrine largement étendue, ô toi, ouvre  
la bouche !*

*While the lamp burns, on the bed with ivory legs*

*Resting on a soft couch having five qualities*

*The breast of Nappinnai's who wears on her hair blossomed  
flowers*

*Reclining on your large chest spread out, oh you, open your  
mouth!*

Filliozat's play of contrast of the French phonetic sounds- 'oo' [u] and 'u' [y], give the verse the warmth and lilt of the ST.

This translator (Badrinathan 2019: 47) uses the consonant 'l' to achieve the same effect.

*A la lueur du kuttuvilakku, allongé sur un lit moelleux aux pieds d'ivoire*

*Tu te reposes, Ta large poitrine étendue*

*Comme une fleur épanouie sur les seins de Nappinnai*

*Aux cheveux embellis de grappes de fleurs écloses*

*In the glow of the kuttuvilakku, reclining on a soft bed with ivory legs*

*You rest, Your broad chest spread out*

*Like a blossomed flower on Nappinnai's breast*

*She who wears bunches of bloom in her hair*

Neither of the above two translations have however captured Andal's generous juxtaposition of 'k'.

Andal uses an astonishing range of poetic techniques. In Pasuram 24 (Nalayira Divya Prabandham 1988: 85), a panegyric verse, six of the eight verses ends with *Potri* (praise be to) (*adi potri, tiral potri, pugazh potri, kazhal potri, gunam potri, vel potri*) lending it a rich flavour of incantation. Both Filliozat and this translator have used 'toi qui' (you who) in repetition; Filliozat uses 'hommage' (praise) frequently. This translator, in addition to 'gloire' (glory/praise be) in repetition, also uses the past participle of the verbs to maintain the effect of litany.

அன்று இவ் உலகம் அளந்தாய் அடி போற்றி

சென்றங்குத் தென்இலங்கை செற்றாய் திறல் போற்றி

பொன்றச் சகடம் உதைத்தாய் புகழ் போற்றி

*Anru ivvulagam alaindai adi potri*

*Senrengudh tenni Lankai setraai tiral potri*

*Pondra chakatam udaithai pugai potri*

This translator (Badrinathan 2019 : 56)

*Toi qui autrefois as **enjambé** l'univers, gloire à Tes pieds !*

*Toi qui as **trionphé** dans le sud, au Lanka, gloire à Ta valeur !*

*Toi qui as **écrasé** la roue d'un coup de pied, gloire à Ta renommée !*

*You who once measured the universe, glory be to Thy feet!*

*You who triumphed in the south in Lanka, glory be to Thy valour!*

*You who crushed the wheel in one kick, glory be Thy fame!*

While this option was relatively easier, other poems pose some veritable challenges. Note the softness created by the repetitive 'l' in the entire 26<sup>th</sup> pasuram- *Maale, melaiyar, nyalathai, paalanna, polvana, saala, kola, aalinilaya*. Is it even possible to truly reflect this stylistic impact in translation? Neither Filliozat nor this translator could do justice to this element in their translations. The beauty of such syllables can only be perceived, read and felt in the ST. Same is the case of the closing poem which plays on the sound 'nga' in every first word.

### **Orality in Translation**

How does one convey a verse that was never meant to be written but rather sung, recited, communicated as was the Tiruppavai? In order to conserve and emphasise the oral nature of the poetry, this translator opts for inverting the order of the

verses whereas Filliozat maintains the source word itself in the translation as in Pasuram 7.

கீசு கீசென்று எங்கும் ஆனைச் சாத்தன் கலந்து  
பேசின பேச்சரவம் கேட்டிலையோ பேய்ப் பெண்ணே

*Keechu Keechu enru engum anai chathan kalandu*

*Pesina pecharavam kayttilayo pei penney?*

*“Keechu keechu” the anaichathan birds all of them together*

*Their talks don't you hear mad girl?*

This translator (Badrinathan 2019 : 23)

*O toi insensée ! Engourdie comme une fille possédée,*

*N'entends-tu pas le verbiage incohérent des oiseaux en réunion?*

*Oh you, senseless one ! Benumbed like a possessed girl*

*Don't you hear the incoherent chatter of birds that crowd together?*

Filliozat (1972: 8):

*« Kis-kis » font partout les mainates en se réunissant ;*

*N'entends-tu pas le bruit des propos qu'ils se*

*tiennent ? Fille stupide.*

*Keechu-keechu say the birds getting together all over*

*Don't you hear the noise of the discourse they are holding?*

*Foolish girl!*

“Keechu keechu” is an onomatopoeia reflecting the noisy chattering of the birds. In commonly spoken Tamil, it is also used to represent a shrill intonation. Andal's closeness to the spoken word reflects in Filliozat who maintains the

onomatopoeia. However, adhering closely as he always has to the ST, he respects the same order of verses with a loyal translation.

Let us here draw attention to the distinction that Nida (1964) proposes between ‘formal’ and ‘dynamic’ equivalence in translation. The latter by nature is dynamic, allows for freedom of the translator which infers that the translator in his preoccupation of making sense to the receptor, makes suitable alterations to the source text. Formal equivalence, on the other hand can be interpreted as the no-nonsense kind, the logical one. Such a translation naturally by its intent, stresses on fidelity towards the source text. In both the translations in question in this article, the translators blend the formal and the dynamic, though Filliozat tends to lean towards the formal. The choice of ‘formal’ or ‘dynamic’ depends largely on the purpose of the translation. This brings us to the objective of the translation. Filliozat’s translation is of an academic nature. This is evident in the study of examples analysed above. His translation is preceded by a seventeen-page introduction to the Tiruppavai followed by almost sixty pages of detailed notes of the pasurams and plates of temple frescoes of the representation of the Tiruppavai. Every line of each poem is numbered for easy reference. This leaves no doubt about the objective of the translation which is to bring it as faithfully as possible to the reader with a well-researched scholarly publication. The second translation, which is by this author, does not share the same preoccupation. It is meant to help the common reader of French savour the beauty of Bhakti poetry while retaining the ST’s flavour in the most convincing manner possible. With an introduction by the translator and a note on the Tiruppavai by Sri Aurobindo, this translation offers a fresh look at the Tiruppavai after nearly five decades.

### **Translating the Untranslatable**



The surface simplicity of the Tiruppavai belies the difficulties that unfold in translation as we have noted. Let us consider the last line of the octave that closes every poem of the thirty poems. ‘*Elor empavai*’ is the refrain that is systematically preceded by a different prefix in each of the poems, changing subtly its meaning each time and investing it with a different depth each time. Scholars have submitted that this refrain is polysemic in offering many shades of symbolism. In this case, Filliozat settles for ‘*prends en considération notre vœu*’ (consider our vow). This translator chooses ‘*Notre prière unique en sera fructueuse*’ (Our unique prayer will thus be fruitful), achieving an alexandrine verse. It seems virtually impossible to translate this clever line which changes in hue in every poem, depending on its preceding words (*arulelor empavai, maghindélor empavai, kulirndélor empavai* and so on) making it a translator’s riddle.

Translating *Tiruppavai* throws up many questions, often unanswerable. How does one maintain the symbolic value of the Hindu ‘bath’ which is fundamental in the *nombu* ritual of the Tiruppavai- ‘neeradal’, or bath, is layered in many meanings, including sexual bliss? How does one transfer the typical Tamil or pan-Indian expression ‘at the feet of’, to underline blessing, surrender to a higher order and not servitude? Or yet how does one communicate the Hindu symbolism relating to the different parts of the day, like dawn? How does one attribute to ‘little parrot’, ‘idiotic girl’, a connotation of affection? Or hold the lotus as the flower of beauty, of divinity? Or the idiomatic expression ‘you only have a tongue’, alluding to one who speaks a lot but does not act? Or the paronomasia communicated by Andal through the word ‘*oruthi*’ (Pasuram 25) which signifies both ‘she’ and ‘the other’ (referring to Krishna’s biological mother and foster mother) at the same time. What a puzzle Andal conveys gently in a woman-led set of poems! The Tiruppavai is a veritable

cultural conundrum for the translator. The translator has to weave through the verses, much like the cowherd girls themselves, each undertaking their journey towards their final destination.

Both translations herein discussed the Tiruppavai, though very different, share some striking similarities. Neither is very adventurous nor contemporary in its approach. There are no neologisms or out-of-the box interpretations. In this respect, both translations remain loyal to the ST, though in different ways. But gaps as compared to the ST are a given and do appear in both the translations, which Venuti (1995) confirms are the very essence of translation between two languages-looking for similarities where dissimilarities abound. Moreover, to refer to the oft-used expression, *traduttore traditore* - translation is betrayal. But we can once again take recourse to Nida (1964) who clarifies that a complete exactitude cannot be achieved in translation. Mimicking would lead to disastrous results. So, we translate what we feel comes closest, sounds logical and thereby remain “safe”.

## **Conclusion**

It is evident that much as poetry is an individual and solitary activity. Translation is one too. It stems from a subjective interpretation of the poem, of the words, of the universe represented therein. It is by no means a dialectical position between the author on one side and the translator on the other. Translation is as much a work of art for the translator as it is for the author and as Spivak (1993: 183) expresses, “it is the most intimate part of reading”. The original work passes through the filter of the translator’s sensibilities in order to convert itself into another text. In that sense, a translation is an art of creativity, of approximation, of interpretation. Hence, two translations will never be the same, and it would only be the better for it. Moreover, the translator is a mediator. In both

the studied translations of the Tiruppavai in this article, the translators have essayed to build a bridge between the reader and the source text on a subject seemingly simple, but with culturally heavy concepts that on the one hand gives the freedom of interpretation in translation and on the other hand restrain it (Venuti 2013). We could say that the translator occupies the ‘third space’ that Bhabha (1994) envisaged, close to the source text, yet distant as it from one language to the other and creates a new translated text which lies in between, a new text that is retold centuries later to a new audience and still meaningful. It is as much an activity of interculturality as it is a to and fro between two texts in two languages and a world of alterity. This duality of the translated text is its very privilege. Both Filliozat and this translator situate themselves in this intercultural interlingual space. Having argued thus, it can be concluded that literary translation, and especially that of poetry belonging to another era, certainly poses challenges but they are a necessary hurdle to cross in the interest of literature and its wider reach through the medium of translation.

**Note:** All retranslations into English of the French translations are done by the author.

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# INTERVIEW

## An Interview with P. P. Giridhar

MANJULAKSHI L.

P. P. Giridhar (hereafter PPG) is a distinguished linguist, a practicing translator and a translation theoretician. Eight of his English translations are available in print: *Gandethimma* (Macmillan India), *Vaishakha* (Central Sahitya Akademi), *Awadheshwari* (Central Sahitya Akademi), *The Inscrutable Mystery* (Central Sahitya Akademi), *The Bounds* (Partridge, USA) *Life-Breath and the Truth* (Partridge, USA), *The Cradle* (Lincom Europa, Germany), *The Priceless* (Lincom Europa, Germany).

Manjulakshi L. (hereafter ML) is an assistant editor of *Translation Bulletin*, published by National Translation Mission, interviews P. P. Giridhar.

**ML:** You are basically a linguist and served in the field of Linguistics and allied subjects throughout your career. How is that you got attracted towards translation which was one of the several areas of your pursuit?

**PPG:** Yes, that is right. I struck out as a linguist and then forayed into fields like translation and art. Actually, I began as a literature student with the likes of URA, Vishwanath Mirle, Balagopal Verma and Rajeev Taranath as teachers at the Regional College of Education, Mysuru. It was Mirle who kindled my interest in the study of language. An add-on was my feeling that literature was not substantial enough. I recently wrote a paper published in a journal in Singapore (available online in GSTF Journal of Law and Social Sciences (JLSS) Vol.4, No. 2 October 2015) as “Art cannot Own What Reason Disowns: Caste in Kannada Literature”), ripping the much hyped piece *The Death-Rite* (=Samskara) to shreds. Literature, and art in general, has no business to dignify, legitimize, valorise and venerate an intellectual moral and

civilizational horror like caste, which is exactly what The Death-Rite (=Samskara) does. Caste is man's choice-external ontology-external identity badge, one of the biggest scams in human history. I am surprised and amused that The Death-Rite (=Samskara) continues to be hyped and casteist literature churned out by the likes of S. L. Bhyrappa in Kannada continues to be serenaded. Even Shivaram Karant's celebrated Choma's Drum is pro-caste. This is totally unacceptable. Man needs to grow and art needs to be redefined to exclude pieces like The Death-Rite (=Samskara): Art needs to deepen my sense of being and bring in hope where there is none. The way The Death-Rite may be said to perform this mandate of art is fairly shallow to be sure. (Somebody has said Kuvempu is the constitution of Kannada literature. I agree.)

I had to say the above because translation as a human phenomenon is important for much the same reasons as genuine literature is important and art is important. Like art and creative literature, translation is life-giving, life-protecting, life-nourishing, life-enriching, civilization-protecting and civilization-nourishing, bridge-building, bridge-repairing, and being-deepening. Discursive translation and creative literature translation are two different footings, but they have the same broad goal of refreshing deepening, enlarging and expanding man. That is what made me gravitate to this great human act of translation. Translation tells man that while man is delightfully and colourfully diverse like a rainbow, in every one of us is the rest of mankind, something people like Walter Benjamin saw. Culturists, who harp on man's cultural diversity ad nauseam forget that cultures are but subsets of what is humanly possible, that the alleged uniqueness of individual cultures issues right out of what we all share and that the material out of which linguistic meanings are forged are hewn essentially out of the same cognitive rock which all humans are endowed with, and thus without exception, share. To exemplify, every

human on the planet shares, and has, the material out of which the meaning of the Sanskrit word dharma has been forged so that to say that this word is not translatable is unacceptable. Such people also don't have an insider's understanding of natural language: all words including dharma are three-way constructs of the triad of an external phonetic event, an inner mind-dependent cognitive event and an external mind-independent empirical object so that to say the external phonetic event of dharma is the same as the internal cognitive event and the outer empirical event, which is what putatively makes for its alleged untranslatability, sorely and obviously, misses the point. (See my "Against Word-Monism: A Note on CIPHERING OUT THE SOUND-SENSE COMPOSITE"), (to appear in *Indian Linguistics* Vol. 79 (3&4) 2019.)

**ML:** What were your initial experiences when you set out with the translation of a creative work in Kannada? To what extent it was a pleasurable or a challenging experience for you?

**PPG:** My first experience was a creative literary work. It was at the same time pleasurable, exciting and enriching and challenging. 'Piquant' is the word. Literary translation is basically the source sensibility finding its nest in an alien soil. That is what I seek to do in every literary translational endeavor.

**ML:** Noted Kannada writer Srikrishna Alanahalli's *Parasangada Gendethimma* was probably one of the earliest literary translations you brought out. As a general reader and a translator, how did it charm you to translate into a language of a different culture? Why Alanahalli and *Gendethimma* only to begin with?

**PPG:** Yes, Alanahally's novel was my first literary translation. My own theoretical take is anything that is intelligible is translatable. It was a pleasure translating it. The only thing that went wrong with it was that the publisher wanted to make it



smooth and glib. Smooth and glib readability has nothing to do, one can say, with the original life-blood of experience. Alanahally was a good friend and my colleague at the CIIL, Mysuru. That was one of the reasons I took it up besides of course the fact that the novel is a powerful narrative.

**ML:** Do Kannada idioms easily yield to be rendered into English which is culturally a different language? What were your practical experiences with respect to managing with languages during your maiden prominent take off?

**PPG:** My own take on translation is slightly different from the general take. Whatever is cognitively legible is translatable with provisos which also proceed from the nature of natural language. To say something is not translatable because it vectors a different culture is not exactly right. Cultural variability makes for skewness between the two linguistic-cultural cosmoses. I don't quite know what 'cultural translation' as opposed to 'linguistic translation' is. Nobody does! That Kannada idioms or English idioms don't lend themselves to interlinguistic translation doesn't make sense. That the locution 'rain cats and dogs' is not translatable hardly makes sense. All idioms in any language are cognitively legible, aren't they? Certain things are not transferrable (and translatable) yes, which is what makes for the fact that the 'whole quality' of the source text is not admittedly transmitted. But to say as definitively and in as holus-bolus a manner, as people do that a translation is a 'close approximation' and the source text is 'asymptotic' is not quite right. There is also a lot of chaff going around about the translator as a curator of cultural encounters. It is said famously for example that originals get regionalised in their translations. I haven't seen a modern translation having as many avatars as there are regional versions of these translations in response to the narrativisation requirements of local ethoses, analogous to the

much-talked about epics getting regional variants. I haven't read the several translations of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* but my own guess is that they all stick to the original, go by the original, subject of course to the limits and constraints of all interlinguistic translation, which one can do nothing about. Cronin has this book called *Ecotranslation*, but I have no idea of how all that is said there bears on actual interlinguistic translation. Maybe I am being myopic!

Given the validity of adaptation, I do not know why one should foreignise or domesticate. Given the bedrock of some basic precepts underwriting the phenomenon of translation, one needs to rigorise things like adaptation, rewriting and transcreation. We need to delimit and define adaptation studies, rewriting studies and transcreation studies. As I see it, they are not at the moment. A lot of what is not translation finds itself under the rubric of translation. For example, in the latest issue of *Translation Today* (Vol. 12, 1, 2018) the piece on Chemmeen has nothing substantially to do with interlinguistic translation, and yet it finds a place under TS. If one goes by the abstract the paper seeks to talk about 'how their collective memory gets translated into their day-to-day lives and rituals'.

While being possibly real, the bilingual's dissatisfaction with translations is somehow misplaced, it seems to me. To say the greatness of all great poetry is locked up in the original, which litterateurs are fond of saying, is also unjustifiably strong, or too strong, it seems to me. This militates against the undeniable truism that nothing human is alien to humans. The reality and dynamics of anything human that is really alien to humans remains to be sorted and worked out.

**ML:** Alanahalli and Chaduranga employ their own subtlety of local or regional Kannada language and from this point of

view what were your experiences while translating *Vaishaka* as compared to *Gendethimma*?

**PPG:** I think the answer to the previous question is the answer to this question as well. The question is NOT of translating this author and that author, so that locutions like ‘translating Shakespeare or translating Ananthamurthy’ makes no real sense to me. One talks of translating this kind of language and that kind of language. There is no part of natural language that is exclusively one individual’s preserve. Natural language is not an individual act although it originates as an individual act before it gets social through the use it is put to of communication. Natural language is a pan human act with a socially motivated lexicon: there is no room there for deeply individual idiolectal idiosyncrasies. There is on the other hand no such thing as ‘poetic licence’. See Giridhar 1978 Poetic Licence: A Linguist’s Eye view (Linguistics in Literature, 1978, Texas). There is this putative feeling rustic language is more difficult to translate than urban kind of language. Possibly more difficult, but not impossible. Last year i.e. in 2018 Lincom Europa in Germany published *The Cradle*, my English translation of the Dalit Kannada novel called *Tottilu* written by Mogalli Ganesh. The kind of English I forged to reflect Dalit Kannada there has been hailed as apt. See Anuradha Ghosh’s review of my translation in a forthcoming issue of *Translation Today*. A perceived culture-internality could be the issue. I haven’t ciphered this out.

**ML:** *Avadeshwari* was a cultural novel and *Chidambara Rahasya* had its own texture and Tejaswi’s unique touch. How did you manage with the language, style and literary nuances of these works? How did you enjoy your cumulative experience and success as a translator of creative literature?

**PPG:** You say Avadheshwari was a cultural novel. Is there a noncultural novel unless of course you are talking of things like scientific fiction?

Given the theoretical possibility of untranslatability (the magic of untranslatables) of some bits of natural language, translating these novels wasn't difficult. It was of course challenging. And I did a fairly successful job. Avadheshwari ran into further editions. ....

**ML:** To what extent do you feel that non-literary texts are being given priority these days over translation of conventional, popular, or creative literature? What do you feel about the quality of translations of non-literary or knowledge texts - individual as well as institutional - that are emerging out these days?

**PPG:** Literary translation and discursive translation have their own challenges. What makes discursive translation less involute and more straightforward is the quality of self-identity that characterizes it. It is a univocal one-way traffic, a case of dispassionate denotation.

I think both knowledge text translation and human text translation are happening in equal measure, as they indeed should. Knowledge text translation is especially empowering and enabling. It has the power of secularizing and democratising knowledge in delightfully refreshing ways. Statistically small languages must be feeling this once they see English texts in their own languages.

**ML:** You served as an editor of the translation journal *Translation Today*. Were you satisfied with the academic and research inputs of the scholars which could significantly add to the knowledge base of Translation Studies?

**PPG:** Yes, I was satisfied to a considerable extent. We had input from a wide variety of scholars. The only problem is in

fact the problem of the discipline. A lot of talk in the air happens, which I critiqued in a paper I published in *Meta* in Canada in 2005, entitled *Translatology: Interrogative Musings on the Grid*.

**ML:** Incidentally you had the opportunity to work on Mao Naga Grammar, Angami Naga Grammar etc., and thereby get an exposure to tribal languages and culture. Do you think that the tribal cultures have got their own wealth of literature which should be translated into mainstream languages? What are your suggestions in this regard?

**PPG:** Every human group is special, pace the horrible supremacism that is rampant these days. Every human group, like indeed every human, is free and equal. Mainstreaming is a syndrome of this not-so-modern pathology of supremacism that is man's bane, of the take of Sentinelese. Why should one be mainstreamed? Technology is nobody's property and none needs to be anyone's slave. A country like New Zealand has had no problems with a reported 200 ethnicities and 160 languages. I had a wonderfully rich time staying in Mao Naga villages and Angami villages in the late 70s and early 80s. Besides writing grammars and dictionaries of these languages and subsequently publishing on their linguistic structure, I also collected some folk songs and tales, which I should have translated into English but didn't. I did publish a paper on an Angami folktale though. I also saw some wonderful dance and listened to a lot of soulful music there. I have fond memories of those days, which I will cherish to my dying day!

**ML:** You are endowed with an astounding experience in the field of translation - both as a translation administrator and a professional translator. Governments today are coming out with a lot of initiatives for the development of regional languages and obviously translation is an indispensable tool in this direction. A number of organizations and society in

general are engaged in this stupendous task. What do you foresee about the status of translation in the country during the ensuing years?

**PPG:** Well, translation is burgeoning exponentially both as an industry, as a commercial venture and as an academic discipline. With technology helping it out in a big way it is bound to evolve into a far greater enterprise than was envisioned, say, fifty years ago. In India too it is progressing fast. With more and more people diving into the arena, and with private and state sponsorship, both knowledge translation and literary translation are bound to grow into gigantic dimensions. The prospect is really pleasantly exciting. NTM is bound to play its role in this rapidly expanding universe of knowledge translation. My good wishes!

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## An Interview with Maya Pandit

UMESH KUMAR

Maya Pandit (hereafter MP) has been a professor of English Language Teaching (ELT) at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad till recently. A renowned translator from Marathi to English and vice-versa, she has published extensively on gender, caste, alternative Marathi theatre, and teacher's education and so on. Most of her translations have undergone several reprints. Her masterful English translation of Jotirao Phuley's *Slavery* (2002), Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* (2008), Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir* (2008) among others have achieved 'rich afterlife'. As engaged translations, Prof. Pandit's work is often considered an important source material for understanding those of our society who remain on the margins, still.

Umesh Kumar (abbreviated as UK) is an Assistant Professor, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

**UK:** Professor Maya, if one scrolls through your areas of interest and specializations, they are diverse. However, translation seems to be a common thread among them. In fact, I came to know that the title of your doctoral dissertation was "Linguistic Study of Translation in Nineteenth Century Maharashtra." Take us through your formative years in the field of translation/Translation Studies.

**MP:** I did my doctoral work in the nineties and it took almost six-seven years. I came to know that it was the first thesis in Marathi in the domain of cultural history of Marathi translation. Of course, by then, people had written about translated books, educational translation etc. but mine was a comprehensive attempt to decode a certain translation culture

that emerged in colonial Maharashtra between 1824 and 1894 and commented on its politics.

But all this was much later. Before it, I had done M.Phil. in Psycholinguistics from then CIEFL, Hyderabad. My Adviser Professor Nadkarni wanted me to work in sociolinguistics for a Ph.D. for he believed that I had the right temperament for it! However, I had enough of linguistics by then and wanted to cross over to a different field of enquiry. Translation came to me as a natural choice. I had a lot of interest in practical translation. For example, I remember to have translated Mohan Rakesh's *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* during my college days and quite a few other things including poetry.

I did not want to be part of the canonical research of English literary studies, though that could have been an easier option for me. On the contrary, I decided to go back to my own culture, my own language. However, translation studies, as an institutional field of enquiry had not yet taken deep roots in India. Though translations were happening consistently, there was no exclusive space for translation studies *per se*. naturally, then, English and Linguistics departments used to be the 'academic refugee camps' for people like us. I must also mention that my readings of indigenous scholars such as that of Datto Vaman Potdar and others also impacted me a lot. For instance, Potdar's *Marathi Gadyacha Ingraji Avtar* (English Incarnation of Marathi Prose, 1922) raised quite a few questions for me. As a researcher, I was compelled to decode the impact of English on Marathi language. The process and culture of translation activities during the colonial period became the reference point to explore into those questions.

**UK:** Notwithstanding a continuity of practical translations in India, translation studies, as an academic enterprise is an 'import' from the West. However, of late, it is attempting to carve out a position for itself. One can infer it from the way it



defines itself in Indian context such as *Anuvaad*, *Bhashantar*, *Bhavanuvaad*, *Roopantar* etc. –which not only attempts to redefine the historical definitions of the discipline but also gives a ‘new turn’ to it. Scholars like Ganesh Devy have also argued about the possibility of an ‘Indian view’ of translation. How do you understand translation in Indian context? Do you have a specific way of looking at it?

**MP:** I do not have a rigid or fix way of looking at this process. Neither would I advertise that translation should be caged in definitions –either of the East or of West. For me translation is a very synchronic and dynamic enterprise. Language –the basic tool of translation is itself very porous and flexible. In our own context, philosophically, language is understood to be operating at four different stages or degrees namely - *Para*, *Pashyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*. These symbolize the four stages of producing language that is audible or can be read. It is the four stages, comparable to Chomsky’s concepts of the deep structure to surface structure. So, these four stages symbolize the journey of production of speech from what you feel at the deepest level of consciousness to the empirically observable.

These four degrees may not necessarily be operating in isolation and conflict. But what is important is that they connote different sense perceptions in a very subtle way. Firstly, we have *Para* –the untold, beyond all objects and all encompassing at the same time. *Pashyanti* –the second stage of human speech is where sounds get translated into feelings. You see it happening. At this level we acquire the ability of distinction. The next level belongs to *Madhyama* –the mental speech. It is verbalized but remains unspoken unlike *Vaikhari*. When you establish an internal discussion with yourself –your *Madhyama* faculty becomes active. It is a stage of transition from performance to competence. *Madhyama* has qualitative

aspects attached to it too. When something comes to your mind it questions, evaluates, edits and presents itself in words that are true translations of your intentions.

*Vaikhari* is the hyper used, everyday verbal speech –the actualization of language itself. It is called as a device of *kriya Shakti* (power of action). It operates from the domain of conscious/physical mind. One can say that human civilization has banked historically on *Vaikhari* for its social bonding.

I believe in this four-tier structure and that's why for me –even speech is translation. Conceptualizing thus, translation is as fundamental as language. For me it is not a secondary or subservient act. Cognitively, almost everything is translation. Your act of speaking itself is a translation of what is already in your mind. We basically live in/through translation.

**UK:** Taking advantage of knowing your work, I know that you have been an ELT expert, teacher educator and a research guide in the field of critical humanities. At the same time, you have displayed consistent engagements with alternative Marathi theatre, women's movement and so on. How does translation fit into all this? Is translation a complimentary part of your engagements?

**MP:** No, it is not a complimentary part. Not at all! By depositing it as a complimentary element one will be doing gross disservice to the very act of translation. As far as the area(s) of engagement that you have suggested, translation is an integral part of all of them. For example, even as an ELT expert you are dealing with the 'mother tongue' and the 'other tongue.' Learning the other tongue involves translation from the mother at various stages of language use: linguistic, social, cultural so on and so forth. So, a breaking of hierarchy is taking place through translation there. Personally too, I am very uncomfortable with boundaries. How can you confine one in boundaries when one's consciousness does not operate in

boundaries? You tend to naturally flow from one boundary to other, from one perception to the other. You reject one thing and embrace another –precisely the way we do things in our lives and especially in our minds. Disciplinary boundaries, according to me, should be understood in terms of convenience and not in the sense of an all-encompassing rule. Unfortunately, it is the later that prevails. I am all for breaking hierarchical boundaries that are suffocating. And when I talk about hierarchy –I do so in the sense of value-oriented hierarchy and not the descriptive hierarchy. Descriptive hierarchies may be needed for convenience of comprehension.

**UK:** By looking into your theoretical work in translation studies, it is not difficult to infer that with regard to ‘choices for translator’ you are quite categorical. You seem to emphasize on the ‘resistance writing’ as a translator. Is this a deliberate choice and an extension of your quest to break suffocating boundaries?

**MP:** What we popularly call as resistance writing are also cultural dialogues at other level. These cultural dialogues are basic units for challenging and breaking the suffocating boundaries created already in a specific society. While studying, I was part of the students’ movements and thereafter teachers’ and women’s movements. In fact, I was in the struggles all the time. Translations and all other arts forms were political statements for our struggles. Even in theatre, we would consciously do plays that would challenge the status quo. As a generation also, I would say we were angrier than today! In my extended family there were four *baal vidhwas* (child widows) with shaven heads. They were prohibited to wear blouses because the tradition will not allow it. Women like them became widows at the age of seven or nine and died at the age of ninety plus. Their whole life was spent like this. Such a criminal wastage of human life!

Slowly and gradually I became aware of the prevailing injustice in the society especially with reference to caste, class and gender. Most often, the modus operandi of the prevailing injustice is structural. Translation, then, becomes the tool to expose this structural, covert violence around us. For example, I remember to have translated Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Italian: *Morte accidentale di un Anarchico*) into Marathi. Though set in Italy, as a political farce the play is as much relevant to our society as it is to the country of its origin. As a translator, I chose this play for my group Pratyaya to perform because it offers multiple and almost contradictory endings. It is for the spectators to decide which side they would be on. Resistance may not always come directly. It could also be suggestive. When the spectators see it in Marathi, they do so by aligning it with their own social reality. Such an alignment immediately dismantles the geographical boundaries between Marathis and Italians and may lead them towards 'higher concerns. It is only through translations that such cross connections are possible.

**UK:** Your formulations of 'higher concerns' in translation, the way I understand them, must be related with the idea of justice, equality among others? You also talked about translating a play –how difficult or easy for a translator to translate in this genre?

**MP:** With regard to your first question –theoretically yes. As I have already suggested, translation –among many other things could also be an important tool of nurturing resistance. Nurturing resistance in such a way is different, say, from nurturing an armed struggle. On the contrary, by using languages as a bridge –resistance translations attempt to channelize opinions, sometimes by giving twists to those that are already in circulation and continue to search possibilities for a better, equitable future. Let us take some examples. It is

only after the publication of *Poisoned Bread* that our society became aware of the historical injustice, and humiliation meted out to dalits particularly in Maharashtra and generally in India. Moreover, if you see the history of this (translated) book, you will find that it was quite instrumental in the upsurge of (new) dalit writings from other pockets of India and in other Indian languages. Similarly, books like *Golpitha* or plays of Tendulkar humanize us about different aspects and nuances of dalit lives. How would all this be possible without translations?

Secondly, I am not in a position to provide you a qualitative value judgment of *difficult* or *easy* in terms of translating a play. But one can say with considerable degree of certainty that translating a play has to do with ‘translating the performance’ ingrained within it. However, it is altogether a different thing if you are translating it solely for a closet reading. As a translator, one has to negotiate these performance constraints, which are in tune with the performance traditions of that language. In retrospect, I feel that my translations of Fo’s *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, Deshpande’s *Chanakya Vishnugupta*, Datta Bhagat’s *Routes and Escape Routes* or for that matter Pawar’s *Adhantar* and even the other plays that I have translated –remain very close to Marathi performance traditions.

**UK:** You have also translated non-fiction. I am reminded of Jotirao Phule’s *Gulamgiri* (Slavery). Notwithstanding the intellectual capital of the monograph, the book is also a translation success. Share your experiences of translating Phule.

**MP:** Phule is a translator’s nightmare. He has a very ‘direct’ and polemical style. His is a language that is crude yet full of vigour. One does not find a continuous tradition of prose writing in Marathi before Phule. So, he was also attempting to

manufacture and remould the expressions in Marathi prose writing itself. Much of his language basically comes from the colloquial Marathi that is at loggerheads with the ‘standard’ literary Marathi. He was attempting to assemble a social movement for the *streeshudraatishudra* and eventually accommodated the language spoken by them even in his writings. It is not to say that before Phule nobody talked about the problems and injustices within Marathi tradition. In fact, Phule himself borrows from the preceding Marathi saint poets such as Tukaram. However, the major break between Phule and his predecessors is that of form. People before him were operating through orality whereas Phule was negotiating and engaging his politics through print culture. For example, every now and then he uses expressions like: ‘*Sadhe hoke buddheka yeh pahla salaam lev*’ (in any case, accept the greetings of this old man). The Marathi Muslims used the above expression in the nineteenth century. By pushing such phrases into (print) Marathi, he was not only trying to enlarge its semantic boundaries but also claiming that the brahmanical literary Marathi must not claim itself to be the language of the masses.

Further, Phule had immense fascination for the dialogic form – in the Socratic tradition if you like. In *Slavery* too there are two interlocutors –the writer and Dhondiba. They are engaged in debating the contemporary contentious social issue of injustice meted out to shudras, atishudras by the Brahmans. One of the advantages of a dialogic discussion is that it resists the one-sided authorial dominance and we get to understand the views and the counter-views when two persons are speaking. Jotirao plays the role of Platonic Socrates who is more practical, logical and scientific in his approach whereas the other character Dhondiba raises doubts, initiates the discussions and at times presents the prevailing and established ideological perspectives. However, for a translator it is very important to understand the pun intended in the dialogic conversations. If

one misses it, the secondary level of signification is lost. In such a scenario, the translator may end up doing more injustice to the text than doing any justice.

**UK:** Any scholarly attempt of auditing the upsurge of dalit women's autobiographies in India remains incomplete without discussing Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir* – both of which are translated by you. However, in my research I came to know that you changed Kamble's original title drastically in your translation. What were the reasons?

**MP:** These are first person narratives by dalit women and according to me 'strong' books. While translating people from the margins/oppressed sections of a society, the translator is no less than a political agent, pollinating resistance across the similarly oppressed communities. In such a scenario, then, translation fosters resistance by crossing the boundaries through its subversion. Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* can exemplify the same. The original title of the book was *Jina Amucha* which could be translated as *Our Miserable Lives or This Wretched Life of Ours*. However, when I read the book, I found that the title was absolutely misleading. The original title hints it to be a narrative of victimhood. On the contrary, the book actually talks about the combativeness of the entire Mahar community and especially the women of Mahar community under Dr. Ambedkar's leadership. It is not only the story of suffering but courage. With its focus on the women of the community, the undercurrent of Kamble's narrative is to highlight the everyday struggles of dalits to achieve dignity and self-respect. The original title failed to capture the spirit of the narrative. Consequently, after having consulted the author, I changed the title from the literal *This Wretched Life of Ours* to *The Prisons We Broke*. This may be classified as 'compensatory' translation strategy of the translator. With all

its limitations, the new title manages to contextualize the political context of the struggle, self-assertion for individuality and the role of women in emancipatory struggles.

At the same time, the translator needs to be judicious about her 'compensatory' involvements. The original title of Urmila Pawar's autobiography was *Aaydan*. The idea of weaving is central to making an *Aaydan* –a generic term for manufacturing the indigenous utensils from bamboo sticks. Another meaning of *Aaydan* is weapon. Pawar herself understood her mother's act of basket weaving and her own act of writing as similar and organically linked. In her own words, her writing 'is the weave of pain, suffering and agony that links us'. In such a scenario, I was convinced by the working capital of the original title. Eventually, you will find that my English title is a literal translation of the Marathi original.

**UK:** Your recent work has brought to light new and refreshing women writers from Marathi. Pradnya Pawar and Saniya come to mind immediately. Is there a difference between the previous generation and the new? You have the experience of translating both...

**MP:** I translated Pradnya Pawar's fourteen stories that are published in an anthology titled *Let the Rumours Be True* (2017). On the other hand, Saniya's novella *Tyanantar* came out in translation as *Thereafter* (2013). There is a considerable difference between the two generations. This difference is more of a transition that happens from one generation to the other. Pradnya's stories are modern narratives of dalit subjectivities situated in urban geographies –a break from the village setting of her predecessors. Writers like Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar and even Pradnya's father Daya Pawar – took pride in being called dalits. But the new dalits writers call themselves as Ambedkarites and more commonly as neo-Buddhists. In that sense Pradnya represents a new emergent



consciousness among dalits. Translation, again, becomes the vehicle to represent these new emerging trends. I shall give you an example:

In *Let the Rumours Be True*, there is a story about a middle-aged couple Disha and Gautam titled: *Diamonds are Forever*. They represent the next generation of dalits –educated, well settled in personal lives, holding powerful positions in state machinery etc. They are playing a game of telling each other their hidden food secrets. After Gautam’s hatred for potatoes, Disha reveals her fascination for *chunchunya*. There are slight variations in defining *chunchunya*. But it refers to the dried-up intestine of the dead animal. Gautam becomes absolutely furious with his wife because it reminds him the humiliation and agony his ancestors had to face when they were asked to drag dead animals! He calls it a stupid beggar’s food. He feels to have come a long way from that painful past of his community. *Chunchunya*’s disgusting appearance through his wife reminds him that heinous past. However, Disha’s argument is different. She considers *chunchunya* as a mere food item, which has a delicious taste! She considers it beyond reason to discard *chunchunya* –the food. Being followers of Babasaheb, her community is supposed to see reason and rationality into everything. How come they miss it in relation to such a tasty food item called *chunchunya*, she wonders!

Saniya’s *Tyanantar* is slightly alternative kind of feminist narrative, apparently unobtrusive but still manages to raise vital gender issues. She has a ‘new’ kind of language about which I have also discussed in my translator’s note. Her use of colloquial Marathi coupled with monosyllabic words provides this newness. She continuously uses brackets and asides to convey complex tones and covert undercurrents of her narrative. My familiarity with her style as a reader really helped me translating *Tyanantar* into English.

**UK:** As we reach the fag end of our discussion, I request you to reveal the most important quality, according to you, that a potential translator must possess in her armoury.

**MP:** The answer to this question shall always be relative and subjective! But in my opinion, a translator must have empathy. It is only with empathy that you become one with the text which is to be translated. Further, the idea of becoming one must not be understood in terms of complete irrational surrender to the original text but a critical and rational engagement with it. I shall cite a quick example to bring home the point.

A reputed publisher (name is not important here) approached me to translate Bhimsen Joshi's authorized biography written by his son into English. After reading the book, I came to know that Joshi had two wives. The son who has written the biography belongs to the first wife. Almost immediately, I could infer that the narrative of the book portrays the second wife into a very poor light. In fact, she is made responsible for all the negativities within the narrative. How could one individual be responsible all the time? Translating that book would have also meant giving an 'afterlife' to that one-sided biasness. I politely wrote to the publisher and declined the offer to translate the book for ideological reasons.

I am not a professional translator. I have never been. But I am a political translator! By all means.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## **Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives**

LARGE, DUNCAN; MOTOKO AKASHI; WANDA JOZWIKOWSKA and EMILY ROSE. (eds.). 2019. *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies. New York: Routledge.

Reviewed by VINAY S. M.

Split into three parts; part one focuses on the theoretical and philosophical construction of Untranslatability, while part two brings to the readers certain select texts of poetry and prose to testify the understanding of Untranslatability with explicit case studies to mark the usage of concept in literary world and the last part documents the practical implications and conceptions of Untranslatability. There are in-total thirteen papers, authored by thirteen different experts who hold thirteen distinctive interdisciplinary perspectives of Untranslatability. Unlike other books that go on in-depth about a particular aspect of Untranslatability and explore the same old traditional notion of Target Texts with the Source Texts, in various terms and bring similar instances through multiple papers, this volume promises the reader (especially students of Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies) to bear light on various ideas hidden behind the conceptualization of Untranslatability.

Barbara Cassin's paper is more of a dialogue between Humbolt and her ideas, denouncing the myth of Untranslatability. This article provides a picture towards a positive approach for a translator, pronouncing 'translation' as a 'never ending process'. "It is untranslated, so be it, but everything can be said in every language; therefore, we can translate it, only it always remains to be (re)translated."

It is read in Theo Hermans paper that there always is a remedy of the Untraslatable, provided the attitude of a translator should be tireless and he may be blessed with a tremendous

amount of time, and, of a limitless supply of words. The author also opens up dialogues on the tentativeness of cross-cultural understandings in the course of the paper. Further, we come across Kirsten Malmkjaer and Duncan Large, announcing that Untranslatability is never 'vicious' but an interesting concept of investigating and that Translatability as an act of 'resourceful creative responses'.

David Gramling in his paper (6<sup>th</sup> Unit in Part I) gives an intriguing outlook to the whole concept of Untranslatability. His words define a mocking gesture towards those boasting writers (non-translators) and goes on to reveal that the whole construct of Untranslatability has, in fact, been a game of challenge to the practicing translators. He cites numerous examples and develops what he calls ten 'templates' to argue against the popular 1990's notion of 'right to Untranslatability' in his paper and gives a new shape in perceiving Untranslatability as a challenge for most translators, who have often overcome its very definition in their works with triumph and have left gaps for new translation to come in due course.

Philip Wilson in Translation and Mysticism discusses the issue of Indeterminacy in Translation, stating the instability of the meaning and usage of words in a language and the indeterminacy of the philosophical terms like 'logos', which also proves to be a challenging one if the given context in which the term is applied is unclear or is unspecified. The mention of Goethe's *Faust*, and the controversial rendition of 'logos' by Faust is interesting to determine that this instability of meaning and interpretation of 'words' has long been observed, talked, debated and written. Another aspect that the reader will find here is that the indeterminacy in 'mystics' is highly due to the effect of the persuasive use of language on readers that in turn gives rise to multiple meanings. The construct of meaning in target texts are the results of the

translator's attitude to deal the sensitiveness of the use of language in mysticism.

Simon Everett in his paper Remembered Hills brings out the concept of 'Untranslatability' in the context of the Chinese *T'ang* Poetry and displays a variety of interesting aspects and the peculiarities of the Chinese poetry with respect to the unique patterns of tones. He goes on to draw a general conclusion that the major problem in translating *T'ang* Poetry is the immense baggage of material content in the language of *T'ang* that pose as a challenge in translating them into English language. We find a couple of translations of Li Po's poems in this paper where we learn that poet-translators have ventured many techniques in translating Li Po's poems, while one such translation stands unique and, as Everett claims, is a best example of 'cultural resonance'.

In the ninth unit, Helen Gibson paper exposes Ciaron Carson, a Belfast poet and translator's practice of 'substitutability' in translation of Dante's *Inferno* along with several other examples of his works. Using Carson's, *The Inferno*, Gibson attempts to draw an understanding of the shifts between translatability and untranslatability, which, she further sees creating a complex and subtle situation leading to peculiar linguistic world. She also pictures an example in the paper, of the Canto XVIII of Carson's *The Inferno*. The reader is exposed here to the instability of a language across time and region, ultimately viewing translation and re-translation as a practice of weaving inventive webs from the source texts. One such inventive web, as mentioned in the paper is Carson's *The Inferno* that displays his personal linguistic revelation.

In Wanda Jozwikowska's Resistance as Cultural Untranslatability, we come across the nature of effect of the factors other than the properties of a source text have towards the cultural untranslatability that acts as a hindrance in

reaching out to the masses. In doing it, she brings out her six source-factors, and they comprise as the source text's inherent resistance to translation. She also traces out the influence of Polish Jewish writers such as Bruno Schull and others' influences on the American and English audience and maps the difference of the readership among the two. In addition to presenting the inherent textual factors, the paper also attempts at suggesting some of the potential measures to overcome this unique resistance, to give this less touched literature, its deserved readership.

In the eleventh paper, *Translating a Transgender Memoir*, Emily Rose discusses her own encounter in translating an already translated memoir of a 17<sup>th</sup> century Spanish personality by name 'Catalina de Erauso'. Rose also mentions other subsequent translations of this memoir and postulates a planned system of fonts to denote the gender of the word used in translation. These curious fonts appear in her paper in table 11.1. Efforts of this paper are an important gesture towards an inclusive approach in recognizing the identities hidden and more often excluded in traditional translation practices.

The interesting aspect of the twelfth paper in the book, by Andrea Stojilkov is that she has taken an issue that she is hypothetical about, for the issue is surrounded while translating Nele Krajlic, a Bosnian musician's autobiographical work – *Fajront u Sarajevu*. This hypothetical issue appears to be systematically put into key points in the paper such as the 'Linguistic Problem', wherein she discusses the virtue of the texts' potential diversity of dialects and variants of language(s) within the geographical region(s) dealt in the work. This paper acts like an invitation for translators and also is a directive guideline for translation.

Joanna Drugans's paper, the thirteenth paper and but the last one in the book is designated in its third part. It was a wonder

why this paper, alone, was kept apart, and while perusing its contents and its rather pragmatic argument I realised that the paper is on a different level, totally dealing with a real-life scenario where Untranslatability is observed, oftentimes leading to fatalities. The author claims, in an interesting line of argument that most untranslatability occurs due to economic and political reason, that the untranslatables are a result of an improper system of funding, planning and due poor decisions. The scenarios mentioned are all on the ‘maternity’ and maternity related situations. This interesting research work leaves the student with a new point-of-view and opens up new scope and new angles to look at the frequently occurring concept of Untranslatability in this book.

This collection of thirteen papers is a key read for a student of Translation Studies and translators in general. The authors employ language that is comprehensible to all in general. Therefore, it should be a necessary piece of writing one has to keep in reference libraries in schools or colleges.

Having read this book, one must confess its immense load on the reader, for the book is nowhere near to ‘one-sitting’ read. Its load of information, coming in various points of view from the authors engages the reader with unforgiving transaction. It would be apt to call it a herculean task for general students, for they are compelled to refer to other sources to clarify and expose themselves to the matters, concepts, works cited, people quoted very often and the regions and cultures that are most discussed in the course.

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## **The Neurocognition of Translation and Interpreting**

GARCÍA, ADOLFO M. 2019. *The Neurocognition of Translation and Interpreting*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Reviewed by OBED EBENEZER S

The advent of the ‘Cognitive Turn’ in Translation Studies has resulted in shifting the focus away from the text, culture, and the reader (and the multiplicity of issues arising out of such concerns), to the translator, effecting what Halverson terms as the ‘Centrality of the Translator’ (2014:116). Till the late 1900s, translation was viewed purely as an exercise between languages. Later, issues such as the selection of the source text and the target language, the reception of the translated text, the influence of ideology and power relations etc. came to the fore, influenced by perspectives from disciplines such as Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, and Sociology. With the development of Cognitive Science and its foray into Artificial Intelligence, the interest shifted to understanding the human mind and the various functions and processes that take place inside the brain. Even so, perspectives on human cognition have tended towards the view that cognition is situated, embodied, and extended, thereby looking at contextual and environmental factors that influence the translator. However, in this volume, the focus of the author moves to the very centre of the ‘centrality of the translator’ approach, that is, the brain of the translator.

Alves & Albir (2017: 537) state that research on the cognitive aspects of translation has ‘focused primarily on three interrelated fields, namely, the translation process, translation competence, and the acquisition of translation competence’. Translation process research (TPR), which deals with how the process of translation is carried out by the translator, was found to be an area that had received the most attention in the

discipline of Translation Studies since 2010 (Li & Lei 2019: v). This highlights not only the increasing interest in this topic, but also the possibilities that this interface of disciplines holds. Indeed, the present volume also deals with TPR, but goes a step further in presenting scientific studies that explore the changes that take place in the brain during the translation process.

Because the discipline of Translation Studies had long been grounded in Humanities, and primarily handled by language and/or literary practitioners, a rigorous scientific approach towards translation had been missing (or viewed with suspicion) till the recent past. Even though the interest in human cognition arose in the late 1980s, such studies, though empirical, relied mostly on observational and behavioural data. The recent advances in scientific and medical technology have made it possible to observe what occurs inside the brain during different activities using tools such as Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), electroencephalograph (EEG), functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) etc. This has opened up a vast area of hitherto unexplored avenue of interdisciplinary approaches to both understanding what takes place inside the brain during translation, and also to closely observe the effects of such changes. *The Neurocognition of Translation and Interpreting* not only brings together the various methods, studies and findings that delve into what actually happens inside the human brain during the process of translation/interpretation, but also provides a more scientifically grounded platform for further research in this field.

García admits that neuroscientific research is far from being perfect, but also hastens to add that this lack does not nullify the contributions made towards the understanding of the brain, but rather serves to enhance our present (and limited)

knowledge. Within the span of eight chapters, the author manages to introduce the basic concepts of neuroscience to the uninitiated beginner, describe the methodological process and tools used, summarize the major findings on which the present-day investigations are founded upon, and then proceeds to examine the anatomy and functions of the human brain including the cortical and subcortical regions, hemispheres, and the electrophysiological variations which influence the verbal and non-verbal information processing as well as behaviour. Towards the end, the evidence that the training and development of interpreting skills results in anatomical and functional enhancement in the brain, is put forward. The volume also asserts that neurocognitive research holds great potential for Translation and Interpretation Studies.

The author also puts it in no uncertain terms that the scientific evidence presented in this volume is specifically based on interlingual translation, and as the functioning of the brain differs for each process, its findings cannot be assumed to apply to other types of translation (such as intralingual or intersemiotic). At the same time, he also states that the evidences laid forth are only the results of empirical studies and probable inferences, and are not infallible.

The volume opens by giving a brief overview about the various non-neural cognitive approaches, and categorises them as rationalist, observational, introspective, corpus-based, and quantitative. Then, the different ways in which a neurological approach can contribute towards our understanding of cognitive processes are discussed, including impairment of skills, the insight into the inner duration of unobservable processes, the interaction between different neural systems, functional neurological differences in translation competence and expertise as opposed to untrained translation, and the ability to stimulate specific parts of the brain allow for

controlled manipulation to obtain causal evidence for associative patterns. A short history and the various milestones in the neurocognitive research of translation are also laid down.

The various methods and tools used for brain research with respect to Translation Studies are listed out and described in the chapter aptly titled as ‘The toolkit’. Relevant studies, which taken together can provide a substantial framework for research, are classified as single-case where individuals are studied; single-group where multiple participants take up the same tests; between-group where groups differing by a single variable are analysed; and pre/post-studies where groups are assessed before and after a particular training has been imparted. Neuroscientific methods are of two types: non-invasive, such as fMRI, PET imaging, and EEG which analyse brain activity from outside; and invasive, such as direct electro-stimulation and intracranial EEG where tools are physically inserted inside the brain to study it.

The findings from various studies compiled and presented in this book provide insights into how mental processes vary during translation in terms of directionality, the function of unit-specific variables, and the nature of competence and expertise. Translation, as opposed to mono-lingual reading, involves activation of different frontostriatal and temporal regions. The direction of translation causes modulations in the cortical and subcortical hubs. Frontostriatal and temporo-parietal regions are distinctly specialized for processing different word types such as action verbs and concrete nouns respectively. Of significant interest is the evidence that the brain of translators who engage in simultaneous interpretation undergo structural and functional changes with regard to linguistic and executive roles, resulting in superior mental coordination skills.

Cognitive approaches have enabled a deeper understanding of the process of translation which hitherto could not have been imagined using other approaches. It also highlights the importance and need for fostering research across disciplines, as the human mind is too complex and heterogeneous to be viewed from a single perspective. However, the current research is not without fault- low sample sizes result in lesser reliability, only a handful of variables has been described and controlled, most studies have focussed on translation only at the word and sentence level, and the statistical criteria has not been standardized across tests.

The volume ends with a series of questions and answers that serve to sum up the findings discussed in the previous chapters. Adolfo M. García concludes by suggesting that the final words in this book should not be read as ‘The End’, but rather as ‘To be Continued’, thus hoping that it would inspire further work to be taken up on this topic. That this review has been written only serves as a witness to the fact that this wish has come to fruition.

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## **The Wall and the Arcade: Walter Benjamin's Metaphysics of Translation and its Affiliates**

SANDBANK, SHIMON. 2019. *The Wall and the Arcade: Walter Benjamin's Metaphysics of Translation and its Affiliates*. Brighton, Chicago & Toronto: Sussex Academic Press.

Reviewed by VIVEK KUMAR

Walter Benjamin remains a towering figure in the realm of Translation Studies with his unexpected and extremely philosophical insights offered in his seminal essay "The Translator's Task". He bats for a translation which thrives on the idea of translation as a means and not an end in itself in the process of attaining the ultimate "pure language". Benjamin is not at all concerned with the reader and the deliverance of an equivalent meaning through the process of translation. In *The Wall and the Arcade*, Shimon Sandbank delves deeper into Walter Benjamin's theory of translation also due to the disparity she finds in Benjamin's theory and practice in his translations of Baudelaire. The book is divided into twelve chapters out of which the first five chapters deal with the metaphysical aspects of Benjamin's theory. In the rest of the chapters Shimon compares and contrasts Benjamin's theory with other works and thinkers.

In the first chapter titled, "No Reader" Shimon remarks upon the irrelevance of the reader as proclaimed by Walter Benjamin, wherein he says that the work translated is not intended for the reader, but serves a higher purpose. Shimon finds a justification of Benjamin's idea in his faith in the Kabbalistic language mysticism where language is elevated to a divine pedestal, thereby removing it from the concerns of the mortal world. Benjamin is opposed to what he considers the "bourgeois" theory of language which advocated for the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Translation, therefore, for Benjamin, becomes an act of transformation of language from

the realm of the divine to that of the humankind and its return to the divine in its complete pure form. The Task of the Translator therefore is to contribute his bit in the grand scheme of the things in order to unite language with the creator.

The second chapter, “Inessential meaning” further discusses the elevation of language to a divine status which in turn all but removes the reader and hence the need for reproduction of meaning from the original text. His theory of translation appears to originate from the Jewish Kabbala and “the mystical paradigm of the history of language”. The translator’s task, therefore, is the translation of the “inexpressible residue of God’s word’. With the relevance of meaning rendered inessential by the divine origin of language, the idea of equivalence in translation remains moot. Shimon illustrates Benjamin’s advocacy for translation as an instrument to attain the ultimate Adamic language in the next chapter. Benjamin does not intend a translation to be “an equivalent copy of the original’s meaning” but wants the original to transcend into “a linguistic sphere that is both higher and purer”. Here, Shimon quotes Benjamin’s simile for his concept of translation of that of a broken vessel with translation’s not resembling the sense of the original but fashioning themselves in a correspondence of their counterparts in an attempt to see them fit together as fragments of a vessel constituting a higher form of language.

The next radical idea Benjamin propounds, according to Shimon, is the breaking through the structural constraints of the language. Fidelity in translation makes the reader rest instead of providing him encouragement to “complete” it. Benjamin advocates for a translation which “conveys the syntax word-for-word”. He is of the opinion that word with its syntactic position is all what counts and not the entire sentence. Shimon explains the phenomenon of poetry gaining from translations by taking a dip into the historical contexts of



Roman imperialism where translation was considered an instrument in the ultimate colonization of a land.

Shimon explains further that the way out for a translator is to “follow rules other than that of equivalent sense in his quest for advancing towards “Pure Language”. The author tries to explain the idea of Pure Language in translation by quoting Schopenhauer who suggested that the idea from the original text should be dissolved into its most basic components and then reconstructed in the new language. For Benjamin “Pure Language is the meaningless absolute of the divine revelation”. The shift in the attitude of Benjamin for the process of reproduction of art is emphasised by the author, the later Benjamin (after his conversion to Marxism) in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, seems to exempt the process from theological categories. The loss of Aura due to an artwork’s closeness and usefulness rather than distance and uniqueness is considered a virtue of and not a fall into an “abyss of prattle”. Shimon Sandbrook compares and contrasts Rosenzweig’s and Benjamin’s theories of translation. Both of them seem to agree on the idea that language and the world are one and “language constitutes the reality it designates”. Translation, for Benjamin is motivated by a return to the mythic past and to the Adamic language, in which word is identical with thing, not its arbitrary sign, for Rosenzweig it is meant for human beings and his experience of dialogue with God. Rosenzweig is more democratic in his approach as he considers the reader to be the very life of the work of art, which is in sharp contrast with Benjamin’s view that doesn’t deem it necessary to acknowledge the reader. The basic common denominator to both these theorists is the idea of “essential unity of all languages” except that “the commandment of universal human communication based on that unity sets the former radically apart from the latter”. Rosenzweig’s theory deals more with the concrete aspects of

poetry translation than Walter Benjamin, hence it appears to be more useful.

Shimon Sandbrook cites Derrida as a counter viewpoint to that of Benjamin, for Derrida Adamic Language does not exist and “it is a fictitious projection of the desperate need to escape the “text” that is our only home. Derrida is a strident opposer of the idea of pure language and purity itself, as these ideas do not stand their ground to the deconstructive viewpoints. Derrida and Benjamin are similar in the sense that both Derrida’s language-of-one’s-own and Benjamin’s Pure Language theories are utopian and are deemed to be unattainable. In the last chapter -The Practical Dimension, Shimon Sandbank discusses the practical applications of Benjamin’s theories; she discards the myth of pure language categorically. But she regards the syntactic literalness and the idea of “transformation of the target language rather than its imposition on the original” to be Benjamin’s major contribution to the field of Translation Studies. This short book of about hundred pages is aimed at simplifying Walter Benjamin’s highly philosophical theory of translation. The author, a translator herself takes up Walter Benjamin’s theory as she finds Benjamin’s theory to be dissenting and highly unexpected and different from what Benjamin himself practices in his translations of Baudelaire. Though this book is intended to be a simplified and lucid rendering of Walter Benjamin’s theory, the highly philosophical insights however simplified seems to offer very less to someone from a non-academic background. The limited audience garnered by the book remain a few translation studies academics.

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DOI: 10.46623/tt/2020.14.1.br3

## Sympathy for the Traitor

Polizzotti, Mark. 2018. *Sympathy for the Traitor*. Cambridge & Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Reviewed by RANDHEER KOUR

Translation Studies, as a discipline, deals with translation from diverse perspectives. Being a new field of study in the era of cross-culturalism, Translation Studies extends the debate of 'us versus them' to 'original versus translation.' In the process, it is expected to encounter the gaps between theory and practice and reflect upon them. The recent scholarships in the field mostly train their focus on contesting translation theories. This lopsided growth in the discipline has marginalized the translators and translations. The book *Sympathy for The Traitor* by Mark Polizzotti drifts away from adding more theoretical scholarship in the shipping cart of translation. Rather, it moves closer to the translator and the act of translation. *Sympathy for the Traitor* brings the translator and the act of translation at the centre stage of translation discourse. The word traitor in the title is taken from the Italian word "traduttore, traditore" which means a translator and refers to the translator. This reflects how the translator has been denigrated as a traitor but the author designates him as a "creative artist who is at par with the author being translated" (p. xiv). This book does not speak about translation rather performs the different matrices of translation. It does not discuss the theories of translation but the varied practices in translation. The author envisions to sketch "the art and craft of translation" (xii). Published by MIT press in 2018, this is Mark Polizzotti's seventh book as an independent author. The author mentions that some chapters of this book were earlier published in journals like *Parnassus*, *New Ohio Review*, and *Translation Review*. It is divided into nine chapters and there is an introduction. These nine chapters are expanded in 151

pages excluding the paratext. The notes on each chapter are given at the end, which complements the subject under study but breaks the flow of communication. The introduction talks about some ground rules and provides instructions for the reader. The important one is that this book does not present any new theory; rather, it is an anti-theory approach towards the discipline of Translation Studies.

The first chapter explores the fundamental question of the very existence of the translation and gauges the different possibilities of translation. It discusses how the author-translator relationship changes over time and how the fundamental question is linked to the cultural context of the source and target text.

The second chapter traces three roles of the translator through different ages. It elaborates on how they performed the roles of *Saints* of Septuagint in carrying the message in ancient times. In the medieval age, they were charged with heresy, killed, and became *martyrs*. This chapter focuses on different biblical translations and the brunt of heresy faced by many translators such as John Wycliff, William Tyndale, and others. However, in modern times, the translators are treated as spies, "...translation and spying are natural bedfellows: both involve double allegiances, parallel modes of expression..." (33).

The third chapter opens with the debate of im/pure language, started by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Walter Benjamin about which the author is very critical. He strikes hard at the translation theorists, who, according to him, do not contribute to translating better.

The fourth chapter throws light on the age-old debate between faithful and felicity. Looking back at what the doyens of Translation Studies have already said, the author directs for representation rather than reproduction in which 'respect' and

'empathy' for the source text should be the core concerns for the translator.

Chapter five is about what is 'missed' in the translation, especially the voids, the gaps that occur due to miss/less understanding of the cultural contexts of the source text. The author claims and elucidates that these silences and gaps can be bridged.

The title of the book *Sympathy for the Traitor* is the sixth chapter. In this chapter, the author demonstrates with excerpts from French novels, the challenges he faced in translating into English. He mended many things to match the original voice and hence can be labelled as a traitor. This chapter also confronts the question of evaluation such as how to judge a good translation and later defines the parameters for the same. According to him, "a good translation, aims to enhance and refresh, not to denature, not to obscure, not to petrify"(110).

The seventh chapter discusses the different possibilities of the translation of the poetry which is otherwise considered not well-suited for translation. The focus of this chapter is the Nabokov translation of Pushkin poetry and detailed descriptions about what is lost in the English translation.

The eighth chapter brings to centre those areas of translation that are found in the periphery because of their strange nature which makes them untranslatable. In this chapter, the author concentrates on the Georges Perec's lipogrammatic novel *La Disparition* and the challenges of sound-based translation.

In the last chapter, the author throws light on the great mistranslations in translation history like Adam's apple, Moses's head, and Satanic verses, and addresses a fundamental question; does translation matter? In the later part, he convinces us by giving references from the geopolitics of the modern nation-states that, lot much had been saved if the

proper translation had been done. This part of the chapter also discusses the importance of cultural amplitude in translation. He makes his position strong after establishing his argument that the translation does matter.

The acts of translation that are demonstrated and discussed become the most important feature of this book. Most of the examples represent French to English translation. The discussions majorly concern the domain of literary translations. The concise length, lucid language, and coherence of ideas keep the reader's journey quite delightful. The readers may feel as they were attending a live session or a workshop on translation. The discussions are exceedingly relevant for professional translators. They offer insight into various translation-related issues that the theoretical textbooks on Translation Studies do not address adequately. The only perceivable disadvantage for a reader is that if s/he does not know French, the source word or phrase of the illustration may be difficult to follow. This book is a series of questions that are considered highly relevant to the discipline of Translation Studies. The book keeps exploring the possibilities of translation and concludes with the perspective that 'translation' matters and makes a difference. This book convincingly meets the expectations it creates in the introduction. As claimed, it is a successful attempt to remove the misconceptions that surround the discipline of Translation Studies. The author's vast experience of translating over forty books reflects in the language, content, and style of the chapters that keep the readers engaged even if one does not have any theoretical knowledge in the discipline.

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**Cite this work:**

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## **Kabir, Rahim and Biharilal's *Dohas* in Translation**

Ram, K. S. (Trans.). 2019. *Dohavali: Popular Couplets of Kabir and Others*. Chennai: Notion.

Reviewed by RAGINI RAMACHANDRA

First published in 1986 by Writers Workshop, Kolkata, the *Dohas* of Kabir and others re-appear here in a new format augmented by additional features such as a literal rendering of the original text from Hindi into English, brief footnotes and commentary by the translator to make the present version "more reader-friendly".

The book is aptly dedicated to the memory of the author's grandmother, Jambur Mylariah Savitramma (1907-1991), "a village bard, largely self-taught, who wrote songs in Kannada and a longish ballad on Lord Rama recited devoutly in many homes on Saturdays". That she should have composed hundreds of panegyric verses rooted in the philosophy of the *Srimad Bhagawata Purana* and that All India Radio (Akashwani) should have bracketed her with the Women Haridasas of Karnataka in a recent broadcast affirms the vitality of the oral tradition in the Indian context which many others too from small hamlets, like this remarkable lady, have helped keep alive.

That Ram should have felt the urge to re-visit the *Dohas* after over three decades testifies to the irresistible appeal, they must have had for him. In his own words they enjoy a stature comparable to proverbs and have over the centuries become a part of everyday parlance. Quoted in the Hindi-belt countless times every day at home and in the street, they have shaped the popular culture in India, he observes in his incisively written Preface. Part of school curriculum, the subject-matter of the *dohas*, however, goes beyond the school level to impinge upon the consciousness of even the adult reader as some western

classics like *Alice in Wonderland* or *Gulliver's Travels* might do, he concludes.

Ram's Note on Translation at the beginning of the volume most pertinently invokes the great Sanskrit rhetorician Anandavardhana of the 9th century AD to define how, faithful translation happens "when the original art-experience (*dhvani*) is re-created in a different language" (p.12). That the translated version here offers an experience even if it be through a short format such as *dohas* (two-lined rimed couplets) is a measure of the translator's success. His allusions to various other sources such as the *Vedas*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the *Bible* to find echoes and parallelisms are impressive as they broad base the theme and also illustrate the fruitfulness of a comparative approach.

Of the 51 *dohas* included here, a majority of them are by Kabir and the rest by Rahim and Biharilal. What is common to all these three saint-poets is their contemplative nature, a strong predilection for reflecting on the nature of life, universe, humanity, Man-God relationship, etc.etc. While the theme is by and large religious, the language is innocuously simple, the style amazingly terse and pithy. In fact, part of the fascination lies in the epigrammatic style that is reminiscent of *vachana* or *dasa sahitya* in the Indian *bhakti* tradition. Even profound truths are put across through homely images, similes and metaphors. Analogies drawn from every-day life lend an irrevocable authenticity while trenchant logic defies all scepticism. Worldly wisdom is not lacking either but found interspersed with spiritual aspirations.

If Kabir meditates on the power of Ram-naam, the Will of God, true devotion, bonding with sages, unity of Creation, Guru-shishya relationship, etc, Rahim and Biharilal examine the practical aspects of life without of course eschewing the spiritual element. Self-deprecation born of intense humility



coupled with infinite faith in God characterizes the *dohas* of Kabir in particular. Wit, humour and sarcasm are employed most effectively and unobtrusively, while the talking voice of the poet is preserved delightfully even in English translation. To cite a few random examples:

Ablutions, Kabir, are purposeless, if th' mind preserve its mess.  
The fish washes continually; it stinks nonetheless!  
- Kabir (p.77)

Finding something big, Rahim, the small don't disdain.  
Where a needle is needed, think, can a sword step in?  
- Rahim (p.79)

Sage union cannot amend someone foul within.  
Asafoetida is pungent still, stored in a camphor tin.  
- Biharilal (p.85)

Thanks to Ram, what might have been a closed book to non-Hindi readers has been made available in English in an idiom that sounds natural and spontaneous. To partake of the wealth that Kabir's inner eye (*jnana-chakshu*) could behold in the couplet quoted below for instance is one of the chief benefits that the reader ought to be particularly grateful for:

Any eye can see, Kabir, the drop that joins the sea.

The sea intrinsic in the drop; only the blessed see! (p.103)

Finally, Notion Press deserves to be congratulated on bringing out an aesthetically appealing, yet reasonably priced volume that contains such nuggets of wisdom!

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# TRANSLATION

## A Pot of Rice and Roasted Rats

*Jugaad*<sup>1</sup> by Prem Kumar Mani in Hindi  
Translated by BINDU SINGH

### Translator's Note

When I first read the story *Jugaad* by Prem Kumar Mani, it was a poignant and heartrending experience. I read it in the anthology of Hindi short stories by various writers – *Katha Mein Kisan*. All the stories in the collection centred on farmers and landless rural workers struggling to survive amidst the problems of famine, drought, loan sharks, and many who perished in their struggle. I felt an inexplicable sadness while reading these stories. But this particular story was different. Though about poverty, the sheer *joie de vivre* it displayed was very inspiring. My liking for the story was instant, and the decision to translate it was immediate. A story with a happy ending and an evocative rural landscape offering glimpses of the moral economy of the village so different from my urban middle-class world and its inexorable greed that I immediately put my pen to paper. Its language was also infused with a rhythm of joy. And that joy, I thought, must be shared with all.

The act of translation like any other creative endeavour is fraught with anxiety and restlessness. Moreover, if a beginner undertakes this creative journey then the level of challenge of that task is too high. I also toiled with several creative anxieties, not only limited to my skills as a translator but also concerned with the question of fidelity, clarity, and equivalence. I believe that efficiency in transferring the style, tone, and cultural elements of the original story into another language is what makes a good translation. With these tenets in

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<sup>1</sup> *Jugaad* (Hack) was published in Prem Kumar Mani's collection of stories *Upsangar* in 2009 by Rajkamal Prakashan. For the present translation refer to the story from this collection.

mind, I undertook the task of translation. Still a novice in the art of translation, I am dictated by the innocent appeal of my senses. I have valued the evocative aspects of the language more than its semiotic semblance. In the process of translation, I have found myself fumbling for exact equivalent words. At times, I have struggled to preserve as much as possible from the source text, which added to my self-reflexive moments of annoyance and dissatisfaction. On some other occasions, I have tried to take the liberties of free translation, blending my subjective meanings into the textual fabric of the source text. I have realized that literary translations are not mere transliterations but transcreations. Here I have no qualms in acknowledging that there have been some creative omissions in favour of the beauty of language. It is not that I have shunned the idea of faithfulness in my translation. In fact, to the best of my efforts, I have kept the spirit of the original story intact.

*Jugaad* means manoeuvring but to capture the attention of readers I abstained from a literal translation of the title and fashioned it with a new title – *A Pot of Rice and Roasted Rats*. The reason is that I find the title intriguing that will coax the readers to find more about the events in the story. I also realized the complexities of expressing many Indian words in English and discovered that not all the nuances of the regional/provincial culture are possible to express in translation. Several words denoting unique objects, cognition, sensations, and emotions lack equivalent technical terminology. The epistemological predicament of translation is perplexing: if one acknowledges that words are embedded in a cultural context that is not translatable, then one is committing the logical fallacy of suggesting that translation is impossible. So, the job of a translator is to fashion the epistemological conditions for inter-lingual and inter-cultural dialogue. With this hypothesis in my mind, I searched for functional

commonalities between the words, structures of the two languages. Since I could see that there was not any direct compatibility between the languages, I tried using parallel and equivalent words, if not exact. At places where the translation of a word in English from Hindi disrupted the flow and perspicuity, I have retained the original word to express the local flavour in a global language, adding footnotes for the nuanced understanding of the reader in the target language.

Another difficulty that I faced was in the translation of object-words that are extra-linguistic culturally specific like 'kathari', 'raar', 'bhoot', 'chapua', and so on. Further, several verbs like 'sulgana' and 'hudakana' that are exclusive to Bhojpuri cultural expressions (to find equivalents for these words in Hindi too are difficult, if not impossible) posed the biggest challenge. The complexity involved in the translation of these words originated due to particular cultural contexts of their use. To avoid these problems, throughout I have followed the functional approach to translation that values the social experience in the cultural construction and evolution of a language and appreciates this cultural distinctness endeavouring to keep as much as possible of the original without hampering the smooth reception of the text in the target language.

So why did I translate this story, with several language barriers of cross-cultural communication? The only reasonable answer that comes to my mind is that translatability is always guided by—both individual and cultural—necessity/urgency to translate. Jugaad, a story with its distinct regional flavour, conveyed the pure emotions and rural sensibilities in words so distinct to that region that it urged me to undertake the project of its retelling in another language. Its Bhojpuri tenor also motivated me to choose this piece for translation. I felt an emotional connection with the regional linguistic expression as

it happens to be my mother-tongue. But more than anything, it was its epiphanic insight embedded in the narrative that made me a translator: money alone cannot make a man live with happiness. This story tells us that even a family of limited resources can be happy. When Binda's family celebrates the frugal meal that is somehow managed like a festival, it gives us a lesson to find joy in small and simple things. Such a profound philosophical understanding of life was moving enough to create an urgency to translate it for a wider audience.

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### **A Pot of Rice and Roasted Rats**

It is the month of January and the third day of continuous drizzle. It's not cold but chilly. Shivering has beset every soul. On the floor lies a layer of straw covered with a rug made from tattered clothes and from the other corner comes the rising warmth of the burning hearth but still the bitterly cold winds chilled everyone to the bone.

Binda turned over and gathered her courage to get up. For quite some time she was feeling the need to wake up. But she could not find the strength to rise. When her head started throbbing than she got up listlessly. After relieving herself when she was returning, she heard a rattling sound coming from the backyard. Possibly the bitch living near the hut must be making some arrangements for the pups. God only knows how the pups were surviving in this downpour.

Binda wanted to wash the utensils. But she was feeling lazy. She again returned to her bed.

Her entire family, wrapped in an old worn-out rug, was sleeping on the floor on a bed made of straws. Hirwa's father opened his eyes for a moment but quickly pulled the rug above his head again. When his legs were uncovered, he folded them

towards his stomach. Binda came back and sat down. She puts her legs inside the rug. Towards the eastern side of the hut, there was a thick grove of bamboos. On its branches the crows are cawing. But their voice appears very tired as if they are also dozing and preaching mankind to curl up in a rug.

Binda is sitting; she does not lie down. After caressing the forehead of Hirwa, she covered his bare legs with the rug. She felt like singing hymns in praise of *Nirgun*<sup>2</sup> but all sorts of nonsense fill her mind. The thought of singing withered.

It isn't good for Hirwa's father to sleep for so long. Before the masters reach the barn, he must be there. What work can be done in such weather but he had already been paid for ploughing ten *kattha*<sup>3</sup> and one has to honour the payment. Among all the householders, there is nobody like this master. Unnecessarily why to make him angry.

"Hirwa's father, oh Hirwa's father."

She called him. He squirmed, keeping his eyes closed, he assessed the world with his ears and changing the direction of the rug he curled towards the other side. He felt like getting up and giving his wife a hard smack. She is poking even when it's still drizzling outside. She has so much regard for the work of the master as if she is not his but the faithful wife of the landlord. He minced within himself a foul word and fastened himself no matter what not to wake up till an hour later.

Hirwa and Johani fluttered their eyes on the first call. Binda caressed Johani's head. She felt so loved that she put her hand in her mother's lap. Suddenly, Hirwa thought of something and

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<sup>2</sup> Nirgun means without attribute i.e. God is infinite and endless. The believers of Nirgun do not worship idols but the recognizable qualities of God.

<sup>3</sup> Kattha is used as a unit of land measurement in the eastern regions of India and one kattha corresponds to 720 square feet.

quickly threw the rug and stood up. Swiftly he walked towards the hearth in the corner and started digging out the potatoes from the dying ashes.

“Light the fire, Hirwa.” Binda said to him.

She is waiting for his lovely smile which flashed across Hirwa’s face when he is told to light the fire. It has been only a few days since he learned to rub the stick against the matchbox and light it. Hirwa is filled with enthusiasm and searched for the matchbox. Johani stood up and brought a handful of straw.

Hirwa scolded- “So much of straw, take half only, *Mae*<sup>4</sup>, see how much straw she is going to burn.”

“If you waste even one matchstick then I will ask you. Even this much straw will not be sufficient, we will need more, understood.” Johani answered back.

Both fought on this issue. Binda was lost in her thoughts. When the battle amplified, she scolded- “Early morning, don’t start squabbling like dogs. Both of you have already started quarrelling at the break of dawn. If I come there, I will slap both of you.”

Hearing about the slap, the children quieten. Hirwa had lighted the hearth. Johani remembered something. She murmured in Hirwa’s ears. Hirwa listened carefully and then gave a hard stare in the direction of his mother. Mother is still lost in her thoughts. He gave Johani one roasted potato and she accepted it with gratitude. Then he made a gesture to say something. Johani understood his message and quietly walked out of the hut. After some time, Hirwa also stood up and stealthily followed the footsteps of his sister.

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<sup>4</sup> In regional language mother is also addressed as Mae.



Binda is sitting. Hirwa's father lying in bed on the floor realises that the children are not there. He opens his eyes once again to make sure and then he rolls towards Binda as if he was a crocodile. He started rubbing his face against the edge of Binda's lap. He forgets that just a while ago he was babbling curses at her.

Binda is roused. Many a times, in the thickness of night she had wanted him to show his affection in this manner. But his husband kept his distance lying in one corner like an enemy. And in the broad daylight, he is showering her with affections. Had he shown this affection a while before she would not have awakened the children.

The pouring nature outside fills Binda's heart with love. She caresses her husband's head and then softly scolds him- "It's morning now. Don't you have any worry about work? There aren't any rations left. Understand."

"Ten kilos of rice are already finished?"

"You want an account of ten kilos of rice. Have you counted how many days it lasted? It has been drizzling for the last three days. And then your sister's husband had come and ate two times. Won't you take into account that also? I cooked one *ser*<sup>5</sup> of rice only for him. The quantity consumed by our entire family; he ate alone. What a greedy fellow!"

"Be quiet. He eats less than your brother. Now you will count food eaten by guests also? Have our days gone so badly! I also visit them. How much do I eat, you don't know? Who knows your brother's wife may have also called me greedy!"

"The members of my family are not so stingy."

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<sup>5</sup> Ser is an obsolete unit of dry volume which was close to the metric values of volume approx. equal to a litre. But it is still used in colloquial speech.

“Then I am stingy, or you are? Tell me. Why do you make such comments then?”

“Why would I comment? I cooked for him with great care. I mentioned it just like that, without thinking about it. But he is a glutton. If he gets tasty food, he doesn’t even bother to drink water. He kept staring at my face all along when he ate.”

“Oh! Then you mean to say that he ate so much by looking at your face. If somebody so beautiful is sitting in front, who won’t eat twice his diet.” He responded with a clever quip.

“Say nothing. I understand all the praise in my beauty is a lie. I may be beautiful for someone but you find beauty in others. In the house of the master who gives you jaggery, I know all about it.”

Hirwa and Johani entered the hut, each carrying a pup. The mother of the pups is also peeping from the door. The hut fills up with their cooing noises. Binda scolds them but the children don’t pay any heed. They go near the hearth and sit down carrying the pups in their lap. Johani tries to feed a roasted potato to the pup she is holding. But the pup turned away his mouth majestically like a *Sahib*<sup>6</sup>.

“*Arrey* Johaniya, go in the courtyard and bring some firewood. The fire in the hearth is dying down.”

Binda ordered her while sitting there.

Johani goes out and returns with wet sticks. “*Mae*, all the sticks are wet.”

Keeping the wet sticks on one side, she sat down again with the pup. Slowly the smoke billowed from the hearth.

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<sup>6</sup> Sahib is a term used by some people in India to address or refer to a man in a position of authority. It was used especially of white government officials in the period of British rule.

Hirwa's father gets up and sits down. He is thinking about something! Binda who is washing the utensils, is also thinking. They are both manoeuvring about managing the rations. It is not worth going to the master's house. *Scoundrel* will only give a kilo of grain and instruct work for the entire day. Going to him is useless today. He shared his thoughts with Binda and asked- "Not even little rice is left?"

"What will a little amount of rice do? It will not be sufficient to cook two square meals with it."

"Listen, cook something for the children. Make them eat."

"And what about us?"

"I will make some arrangements for us."

He took out the sniffing-box knotted in his loincloth and rubbed tobacco in his palm. In such weather, he felt like doing nothing at all, not even getting up to attend the call of nature. But some arrangement has to be made for the meals. He puts the tobacco in his mouth and then crouches on the floor. The weather is damp. But it hardly bothered Binda who is washing the utensils. Her *pallu*<sup>7</sup> is all wet. Hirwa's father forcibly spat the tobacco and started piling up the wet sticks one above the other in the courtyard. Who knows how long this drizzle will last? The dried roots of bamboo are the only saviour in this cold. Nobody seems to care about it. To dig it out took hard efforts. Spade, axe and hoe and only then you take out these roots of bamboo.

After piling the sticks, he tied his towel around his waist, as if mustering courage to go out in this cold. Then holding the hoe in one hand, he walks away.

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<sup>7</sup> Pallu-- the loose end of a saree—generally draped over shoulders- is integral in saree drape. It starts where the pleats end and gracefully covers the midriff and bosom.

Binda finished washing the utensils. After sweeping the floor, she lights the fire in the hearth. Suddenly she remembers that she had massaged the daughter-in-law of Kisnu landlord for eight days and had still not received the payment for four days.

“After all, when are they going to pay? When we are dead and reduced to ashes? Oh my God! More than three months have passed. In the damp rainy season, I had gone to massage her and she made payments for only four days and kept quiet about the rest. If I forgot about it, should she also forget to pay me? I very well understand the dishonesty that resides in the hearts of the women in the house of landlords. Withhold the payment and if one forgets to ask, you will not receive it.”

“*Aey Johniya*, go to the house of Kisnu landlord. I had massaged his daughter-in-law for eight days. Four days payment remains. Go and ask her if she will pay in this adversity or will keep it?”

“I will not go; the path is slippery. Send brother.”

“Oh! So wise! Behaving as if you are Hirwa's grandmother. Why have you lifted that pup in your lap? Is he your husband? Will you keep it down or not? Oh! The path is slippery, then stuff the rug in your mouth and just sit. And if you ask anything to eat, I will force this ladle in your mouth.”

Hirwa tried to assess the situation from all the sides. Kishnu Landlord's daughter-in-law is very beautiful, like a fairy. She is very lovely to look at; like a statue of Goddess *Durga*<sup>8</sup>. She is also very good by heart. She will surely give jaggery and some puffed rice. The memory of “puffed rice” makes his mouth watery. He said- “*Mae*, I will go and say uncle has

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<sup>8</sup> *Durga*, is the goddess of war, the warrior form of the Hindu Goddess Parvati, whose mythology centres around combating evils and demonic forces that threaten peace, prosperity and Dharma.

come and there aren't any rations. Mother has asked for half kilos of rice."

"Am I begging for half kilos of rice? Tell her that payment of four days of massage is due."

Before leaving, Hirwa said something in the ears of Johani. And then he swiftly walked out. Johani gets agitated. "If brother gets puffed rice, I will also take from that puffed rice."

"Oh ho, the mother of puffed rice. Just now you were thinking about slippery path, and now you are thinking about the puffed rice. I will smack you so hard that you will fall headlong to the floor."

But Binda realizes the reason behind Hirwa's enthusiasm and smiled at her son's intelligence.

"Let Hirwa return. I will make him give you half of the puffed rice. He is not like you who gobbles up everything outside."

Johani knew about her brother's habit and she also believed in her mother's assurance and stopped agitating and asked- "*Mae*, should I sweep the floor?"

"You want to sweep the floor? Isn't it! Till now you were busy in the pup. When I have already done the sweeping, you want to sweep. Are you blind that you did not see when I was sweeping?"

Mother and the daughter sit near the hearth. Mother starts digging the fire. The daughter puts another wet stick to burn. Billows of smoke poured from it.

"*Mae*, should I put some straws also in the fire!" Johani asked frighteningly.

"Yes" Binda also wanted a blazing fire.

Johani brings a large quantity of straw. Mother and the daughter started putting the straw into fire like a *Purohit*<sup>9</sup> performing a *Yajna*<sup>10</sup>.

Hirwa returned with lots of goods. In his bundle, there was rice, potatoes and puffed rice, and also a piece of jaggery. Hirwa said – “New bride gave it when nobody was looking. She asked you to come on this Sunday to massage her.”

Binda looked inside the bundle. Johani said- “*Mae*, the potatoes are not less than *a kilo*.”

Mother scolded- “Unweighted one eats and sings with trumpets. How much is your *kilo*? This is more than two *kilos*. And the quantity of rice is also good.” She took some grains in her palm and tried to recognize its variety. The rice was clean. She said- “Poor thing, her soul is as beautiful as her body.”

Hirwa took out something from the bundle and quietly showed it to Johani. Johani shouted- “*Mae*, look there, look there. Brother is holding black *ladoos*<sup>11</sup>.”

Binda scolded- “What is it? Bring it here. How many times have I told you when you get something from anybody first show it to me? Many in the village can put black magic in it.”

Hearing about black magic, Hirwa gets scared. Last year his friend Bangur died because of black magic within a day of his illness. People said it was brain fever but *Mae* said that somebody had put black magic into something he ate.

Hirwa puts both the *ladoos* in front of his Mother. She broke a bit from each, puts it in her mouth, and said- “*Ladoos* are made

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<sup>9</sup> Purohit, in the Indian religious context, means family priest.

<sup>10</sup> Yajna refers in Hinduism to a ritual sacrifice offered to sacred fire with a specific objective.

<sup>11</sup> Ladoos are a popular Indian sweet made from a mixture of various kinds of flour, sugar and ghee which is shaped into a ball.

of *meethi*<sup>12</sup>. It must have come from the bride's mother's house. Kisnu's daughter-in-law doesn't have the skill to make it."

She gave one *ladoo each* to both of them.

Binda decides what she is going to cook. Boiled rice with a curry of beans and potatoes. When Hirwa's father returns home, he will be so happy. And if he sleeps in one corner tonight, she will not give him anything to eat tomorrow--that's for sure!

She lighted the hearth and then puts the pot of rice to boil. She said to Johani- "Sit and break the beans into pieces."

The rice is cooked and kept on one side and the curry in the pot is boiling when Hirwa's father walks briskly inside the hut as if he too had conquered the world like the Emperor, Alexander the Great. He is very happy. He killed eight mice in the barn. He had knotted it in his towel.

Johani and Hirwa jumped in joy – "Rat-Rat"

The house is filled with the aroma of cooked rice and curry. Seeing the rice and potatoes in the corner, he understands the situation. He is overjoyed. He asks Binda- "How did you make the arrangements? I thought if there won't be anything then we will cook this and eat them." He untied the knot of his towel and dead mice fell on the ground.

Hirwa and Johani started making arrangements to roast the mice. Their heart is already filled with the fragrance of the roasted mice.

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<sup>12</sup> Methi is the traditional Hindi name for a plant; the seeds of this plant are also called Methi and are known as fenugreek seeds in English. The seeds are a common ingredient in dishes from the Indian Subcontinent in South Asia.

Bindu Singh

Binda looks into the eyes of her husband. They reflect love and gratitude. Overjoyed, she smiles at him. And her husband is delighted.

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### **About the Author**

Prem Kumar Mani was born in the year 1953 in Patna, Bihar. He is a journalist and a writer by profession. He has to his credit a novel, four collections of stories, two essay collections and a biography on Jyotirao Govindrao Phule. He has been awarded the Srikant Verma Smriti Puraskar (1993), Sahitya Sewa Samman (1993), Vivekanand Yuva Purashkar (1995), and many more other awards. His narratives focus on the lives of poor and bring to the fore their hardships, but it also celebrates the zest for life these simple rural folks display. For us—the urban educated middle-class Indians, the realities of ways of survival in rural regions of India is hard to believe. Can we imagine that roasted mice can serve as a meal! When greed for more has become a bane for modern society such regional stories like *Jugaad* shows that even a frugal meal is enough to celebrate the day as a festival.

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ANNOTATED  
BIBLIOGRAPHY

## **An Annotated Bibliography of Translation Studies Books Published in 2019 – Part II**

SUBHA CHAKRABURTTY

ALBACHTEN, OZLEM BERK and SEHNAZ TAHIR GURCAGLAR. (eds). 2019. *Perspectives on Retranslation*. New York: Routledge.

*Perspectives on Retranslation* is divided into four broad sections with three, two, four and two chapters respectively. Section one consists of three studies that deal with ideology and censorship in retranslation in various socio-cultural contexts. Andrew Walsh provides a diachronic analysis of ten English translations of Federico Garcia Lorca's poem "Ode to Walt Whitman" and point out the changes that took place in the nature of Lorca's reception in English in context to the changes of the social attitude regarding homosexuality. He studies how these changes have reflected in the translations and especially focusses on the lexical variations. Nathalie Segéral in the second chapter deals with the retranslations of D. H. Lawrence's controversial novel *Women in Love* into French. Segéral compares Maurice Rances and Limbours' translation in 1932 with Pierre Vitoux in 2000 to observe how some of the bold passages have been dealt with keeping in mind the time and the audience. In the third chapter, Ceyda Ozmen discusses the retranslations of H. C. Armstrong's biography of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkish. Issues of censorship and ideology are the topics of interest here. The two studies in Section 2 contribute to the growing field of research of paratexts within the framework of retranslation. Zofia Ziemann analyses the short stories of Polish modernist author, Bruno Shultz. Ziemann's study of various paratextual elements surrounding the different retranslations reveal how extratextual factors overshadow textual factors and determine the perception of the retranslation. The chapters in Section three

focus on a new approach to retranslation, offering new objects, methods and concepts. Finally, the two studies in the last section, Section four revolves around the biographical data and its relevance for mapping the history of retranslation across time and space.

ALBACHTEN, OZLEM BERK and SEHNAZ TAHIR GURCAGLAR. (eds). 2019. *Studies from a Retranslation Culture*. Singapore: Springer.

The volume comprising of eleven chapters revolve around retranslation in a specific culture – the Turkish culture. The contributors have explored various kinds of retranslation as they have surfaced in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkish society. However, the articles should not be seen as confined to only Ottoman-Turkish context as the issues that the volume deals with are varied and have implications for the theories and methodologies of retranslation. Prior to the twentieth century, translation fell under different name and types until a western concept of translation proper strongly established itself in literary discourse starting at the end of the nineteenth century. Now that there is a general agreement on the concept of translation, the same approach needs to be adapted for retranslation as well. The volume revolves around a hybrid literary field that originate from intercultural. In intercultural literary systems, such as that of the Ottoman Empire, the relationship among languages used in literature is fraught with tension, rivalry and innate hierarchies that are not due to so much linguistic but political and cultural processes. Authors engage in different form of intertextuality which has conventionally been defined as mimesis or imitation in the context of Ottoman literature. Recent studies on retranslation in the Turkish context as also demonstrated by the articles in this text position Turkey as an epicentre for retranslation. It is

seen as a retranslation culture with implications not only for Turkey but also far beyond its borders.

ARISS, TAREK EL. 2019. *Leaks, Hacks and Scandal*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

The text by Tarek Ariss is a labour of sustained hard work in the domain of Arab culture in the digital age. He has dedicated the volume to the late Barbara Harlow, his mentor and driving force behind this text. It examines novels that become cropped, marked and circulated online, often used as incriminating evidence against the writers warranting perpetration or death. It investigates the ways in which the notion of online followers who leak, hack and raid transform our understanding of “public” and “readership” and of the effects of reading practices. The viral and fragmented texts and their reading practices online have drastic implications on models of writing and contestation, literary meaning and canon formation, both in the Arab world and beyond. The critical text also examines the meaning of Arab culture as it arises in the breakdown of the canon formation due to lawsuits by readers and due to new prizes and global market trends and the decentralization of cultural production.

BIEL, LUCJA; JAN ENBERG; M. ROSARIO MARTIN RUANO; and VILELMINI SOSONI. 2019. *Research Methods in Legal Translation and Interpreting*. New York: Routledge.

The volume consists of eleven chapters with an introductory chapter by the editors which draw on various perspectives in order to present quintessential methods and construct new, inspiring methodological models for research in legal translation and interpreting. The text looks into the “quantitative method” and how they are represented by various applications of ‘corpora’ that has gained significant popularity in Legal Translation Studies in the last decade. It has also contributed to a major methodological advancement in the

field. The mainstream position of corpus methods is corroborated by the fact that nearly half of the chapters apply corpora, to a varied degree to study some aspects of legal translation. Corpora are typically defined as large representative collections of texts in electronic forms analysable with dedicated software. Their popularity has been triggered by the revival of interest in linguistics related methods in Translation Studies combined with technological progress and improved functionalities of software which have allowed scholars to work with big data and test their hypotheses more systematically and objectively.

BOWKER, LYNNE; and JAIRO BUITRAGO CIRO. 2019. *Machine Translation and Global Research: Towards Improved Machine Translation Literacy in the Scholarly Community*. United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing.

*Machine Translation and Global Research* is divided into five broad areas. The introductory chapter raises the question of scholarly research and thereafter throws light on English as the chosen international language for scientific communication. The chapter also delineates about the hurdles and challenges faced by the non-English speaking researchers who try to publish their work in English. Finally, the chapter also touches upon the emerging need for a new type of digital literacy – the machine translation literacy to be configured. The second chapter provides a detailed visual of the world of machine translation with a brief history of the field. Various approaches to machine translation have been discussed next besides deliberating on the difficulty of translation through machines. By comprehending more about how the machine translation works, the researchers could devise ways of interacting with these systems to improve their output. Chapter three introduces the concept of writing for translation or rather, writing for translation keeping in mind the machine translation. It suggests

strategies and tips for writing abstracts in a way that are machine-translation friendly. The penultimate chapter explores some of the wider implications associated with the use of machine translation in the context of scholarly communication. Chapter five, the last chapter introduces a working definition and a theoretical framework for machine translation literacy that could be used by working professionals to design and promote effective instruction in machine translation literacy.

CHI, LIMIN. 2019. *Modern Selfhood in Translation*. Singapore: Springer.

This volume by Limin Chi is a study of progressive translation practices in China from 1890s to 1920s. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century China, the term “national extinction” was increasingly used by the Chinese scholars who were disturbed by their country’s decline. They were convinced China was doomed unless there were modern Chinese citizens to defend the nation’s interest. The forging of a modern Chinese identity became an important part of Chinese intellectual culture of the period. From then on cultural modernization became tied to the imperative of national survival. Translation was seen by Chinese advocates of modernization as essential for China’s cultural alignment with the modern West. The opening chapter traces the translation activities during 1890s to 1990s. The vast oeuvre of the literary and scientific work was translated during this time. The chapter provides a detailed account of the development of translation as part of modern publishing and education. Chapter two focusses on Yan’s translation of social Darwinism and liberalism and Liang’s translation of political and adventure fiction as key events in the history of modern Chinese translation. The third chapter traces the formative trajectory of the new generation of Chinese intellectuals, who became New Culture leaders in the late 1910s and mid 1920s

and examines the role of translation in shaping their views of China and China's place in the modern world. The fourth chapter explores the field of translation production as an aspect of social mobilization in urban China in the mid-1910s and mid-1920s. Chapters five, six and seven are case studies of New Culture intellectuals' use of translation in their construction of modern individuality.

DAM, HELLE V; MATILDE NISBETH BROGGER; and KAREN KORNING ZETHSEN. 2019. *Moving Boundaries in Translation Studies*. New York: Routledge.

The contributors in this volume were asked to take stock and write about the moving boundaries in translation studies. The chapters in this book therefore look into the recent developments in this field, addressing new translation phenomena, new practices and tools, new forms of organisation, new concepts and names as well as new scholarly approaches and methods. Analyses are offered on the boundaries within the discipline (internal boundaries) as well as those surrounding it (External boundaries). Issues of delimitation and boundary struggles are focal points, as is the relationship between translation practice and translation studies. The chapters also focus on the sub-discipline of translation studies - interpreting. After five decades of research, interpreting has consolidated itself firmly as a distinct, yet integrated discipline of Translation Studies. Interpreting exhibits a trajectory in TS that resembles localisation; going from a splitter to a lumber discipline, from stressing differences to focussing on similarities with respect to translation. One of the chapters (Chapter four) is also concerned with technology-driven innovation and new roles for language professionals. The key movements identified throughout the thirteen chapters are live subtitling (chapter three), post editing (chapter four), expansion of the boundaries

of the field as revealed by the emergence of new empirical phenomena such as machine translation (chapter five), and virtual translator networks (chapter six).

GEAL, ROBERT. 2019. *Anamorphic Authorship in Canonical Film Adaptation: A Case Study of Shakespearean Films*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

The text develops a new approach to study the films adapted from canonical originals such as Shakespeare's plays. The book problematizes adaptation studies' current broad consensus that adaptations are heightened examples of the premise that all texts are in dialogue with other texts, so that all artworks inform and are informed by other artworks. This text instead argues that film adaptations of canonical texts partake in and extend cinema's inherent manipulation and concealment of its own artifice. The book moves from a dialogic to a psychoanalytic poststructuralist account of film adaptation. It uses the Shakespearean film adaptations as their case study because they provide an extensive number of adaptations, so that there is no shortage of data to analyse. The following chapters explore adaptation from authorially "appropriate" settings into those that juxtapose certain revelations of authorial artifice with non-authorially appropriate locations, costumes and characters. For example, the general audience might understand a *Julius Ceasar* set amongst a historical white washed Roman pillars and porticos or a *Hamlet* which begins with a half ruined fortress fitting neatly with a popular conception of where these original narratives occur, and with a shift to a *mise-en-scene* (the setting or surrounding of a film) not usually associated with Shakespeare potentially problematizing a verisimilar synthesis between narrative and location. The volume also examines the films which narrativise the life of the canonical author. It explores the way in which these films, which are technically biopics rather than



adaptation proper foreground the diegetic author's creative acts, and locate moments of that creativity within visually narrated events which unfold according to the logic of seemingly un-authored realist cinema.

GILLIES, ANDREW. 2019. *Consecutive Interpreting*. London and New York: Routledge.

The volume by Andrew Gillies is a short course on Consecutive Interpreting. Consecutive interpreting is one of the three modes that make up conference interpreting. It involves listening to what somebody has to say and then, when they have finished, reproducing the same message in another language. The speech may be anything between a minute and twenty minutes in length and the interpreter will rely on a combination of notes, memory and general knowledge to recreate their version of the original. This form of consecutive is sometimes called "long consecutive" to distinguish it from "short consecutive" which usually involves a speaker stopping after each sentence for an interpreter to translate. The text examines in detail the history, uses and methodologies of Consecutive Interpreting.

HASSAN, BAHAA EDDIN. 2019. *Working with Different Text Types in English and Arabic: Translation in Practice*. United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Divided into six chapters, the first chapter of this text discusses the basic concepts of translation strategies and focuses on the notion of equivalence. It is a key concept in translation process and refers to the relationship between the source text and its translation. In translation theories, the focus is on equivalence on the textual level. The text also discusses different text types. A text type "is a set of heuristics for producing, predicting and processing textual occurrences and hence acts as a prominent determiner of efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness." Because different subjects have language varieties and

different styles, translators also render these texts in different ways and find different translation problems. As a result, there are different translation strategies and text types; for example, Legal texts, Scientific and medical texts, Media and political texts and Technical texts which the rest of the chapters discuss in detail.

LIU, NANCY XIUZH. 2019. *News Framing through English-Chinese Translation*. London and New York: Routledge.

This study focuses on the scrutiny of two unique newspapers, the FT Chinese and Cankao Xiaoxi which publish translated news in the Chinese context. The book's objective is not only to know what news is translated, why is it translated rather, *how* translated news should be interpreted and explained in the globalized world. In this text, Nancy Xiuzhi Liu proposes a new analytical framework in order to analyse and explain news translation, drawing on the research traditions of framing studies and news translation studies. This new framework is called transframing. Transframing refers to translation-mediated framing through translated news. It serves as a bridge between framing studies and news translation studies. The existence or non-existence of transframing will be tested through the analysis of the two newspapers, the FT Chinese and Cankao Xiaoxi by examining influencers of frames manifested in the source text and indicators of mediated frames in the target text by answering such crucial questions as *how* a piece of news is translated into another language. The text's analytical framework is deeply rooted in framing studies in journalism. Proposition of the Transframing framework is aimed at shedding lighter on news translation studies. As translation is an indispensable part of news reporting in the unprecedentedly connected world, journalistic features of news making cannot be overlooked by news translation studies any more.

LI, DEFENG; VICTORIA LAI CHENG LEI; and YUANJIAN HE. 2019. *Researching Cognitive Processes of Translation*. Singapore: Springer.

Translation process research as a research field has come a long way over the last 40 years, from the initial use of think-aloud protocols as the main research instrument to the subsequent adoption of Translog combined with screen recording techniques and technologies, to the ensuing enthusiasm about experimenting with eye trackers, to the application of neurological and neuroimaging tools such as the electroencephalography (EEG), the positron emission tomography (PET), the functional near-infrared spectroscopy (FNIRS), and the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The first part of the collection features three chapters of the theoretical considerations on translation process research as a new research area. The rise of the experiential approach in translation process research has gotten scholars to think whether and how it fits in with the sociocultural approach. The second part of this volume focuses on tools and methods applicable for researching the translation process and presents a few proposals for such applications. Despite that a number of newer technologies have been applied in translation process research, much is yet to be explored and consolidated regarding research methods. For instance, keylogging data can reveal much about the production process of a translation, but they do not tell much about how the translator works on the source text.

MARAIS, KOBUS; and REINE MEYLAERTS. 2019. *Complexity Thinking in Translation Studies: Methodological Considerations*. London and New York: Routledge.

Complexity thinking is usually described as a revolutionary break from reductionism and as a way of seeing the world in terms of instability and fluctuations. Complexity theory

challenges the notions of disjunction, abstraction, and reduction which together constitute the “paradigm of simplification”, also called the paradigm of reductionism. This volume highlights a range of perspectives on the ways in which complexity thinking might be applied in translation studies, focusing in particular on methods to achieve this. The book introduces the topic with a brief overview of the history and conceptualization of complexity thinking. The volume then frames complexity theory through a variety of lenses, including translation and society, interpreting studies, and Bible translation, to feature case studies in which complexity thinking has successfully been or might be applied within translation studies.

MATSUSHITA, KAYO. 2019. *When News Travels East: Translation Practices by Japanese Newspapers*. Belgium: Leuven University Press.

News translation is now a burgeoning field of research that has gained traction among scholars of Translation Studies since the mid-2000s. The rationale behind writing the book is not just academic but personal as well, says Kayo Matsushita. Before joining Rikkyo University’s graduate school, Matsushita had experiences in newspaper reporting. Japanese newspapers are held credible to a large audience and naturally support comparison between Source text and Target text. For this book, articles carried by six of the nation’s largest broadsheets published in Tokyo—namely, the Yomiuri Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun, the Mainichi Shimbun, The Nikkei, the Sankei Shimbun, and the Tokyo Shimbun—were analysed and journalists from all six publications interviewed. The case studies included were carefully selected to ensure that both the ST-TT relationship and the translation strategies used were clearly identifiable. The following chapters outline the historical development of the Japanese mass media and the

current media landscape in Japan; discuss the history of studies on risk leading up to the application of the concept of risk management in translation. It also describes the target chosen for the main case study—the 2012 United States presidential election and its coverage by major Japanese newspapers in detail and presents the results of the text analysis.

VENUTI, LAWRENCE. 2019. *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Instrumentalism originated long before the Renaissance and continues long past it, revealing the operation of changing epistemological conditions. The Classical episteme of representation significantly redefines the clothing metaphor for translation. Venuti's text questions prevailing ideas about translation as an instrument for recovering source meaning while suggesting a Foucauldian version of hermeneutics to account for translation as both a material practice and a dialogue among cultural contexts. In Venuti's strongest case, film subtitles provide an index of the functions performed by specific translations, foregrounding degrees of cultural relevance over straightforward accuracy. He advances a vision of translation as a radically transformative act of interpretation. He proposes that we pursue translation as hermeneutics, episteme, discourse, and artefact; and that we treat receiving contexts with the kind of finesse we tend to reserve for source materials and restore to translation its overdue status as full-fledged conceptual labour in its own right.

YUE, FENG; YOULAN TAO; HUASHU WANG; QILIANG SUI; and BIN XU. 2019. *Restructuring Translation Education*. Singapore: Springer.

This book deals with the problems of translation education in the context of localization and globalization in the era of big data. By delving into the status quo of language service worldwide, the current and future application of big data

technology, and the practice of crowdsourcing, online collaborative translations, speech-to-speech translation, and cloud-based translation, this book highlights the important changes in the market of translation and thereby points out the inadequacies in the teaching philosophy, curriculum design, and faculty development in China's undergraduate and postgraduate translation programs. More importantly, the book proposes solutions that have been successfully tried out in Shandong Normal University, Shanghai Foreign Languages University, Zhejiang University, the China University of Petroleum, Fujian Normal University, Nankai University, and Fudan University, which can be adapted to suit the situation of other colleges and universities. The illustrated cases include the project of translating and typesetting books by students for publishers, the experiment of liberal education among translators and the activity of translating public opinion updates.

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## Obituary

Avadhesh Kumar Singh (20<sup>th</sup> June 1960 - 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019)

PRATTIPATI MATTHEW

Avadhesh Kumar Singh, an eminent intellectual, who grew as a multilingual, self-disciplined, soft-spoken, friendly personality, was philosophically and ideologically a lover of Mahatma Gandhi. Professionally he was a doyen of multidisciplinary fields such as English Language, English, Hindi, and Gujarati Literatures, comparative poetics. His Cultural competence proves that he was an interdisciplinary illuminator, well-versed with the feminist discourse. A visionary for Indian Higher Education especially the University Education System and a restless explorer to find threads of the nativity to intertwine within the pluralistic perceptions encompassed around the antique collections and even West, apply these discoveries to modernity, an Indologist who became a shareholder of the dictionary of Indian Culture, as a critic, reflections poured into Critical Practice, an architect and convener who shaped the Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat. Beyond all, he was a highly accomplished teacher of Translation Studies who's based his arguments and ideas on historical perspectives.

Singh presupposed that translation can be a bridge between the ancient knowledge system and the continuous flow of cultural traditions. He explicitly conversed on St. Jerome, Kumarajiva, Dara Shukoh, and so on. The Indian Literary heritage while contextualizing the western thought "World Literature", he tries to provide a model for the Comparative Literature of India. His exploration ponders over concepts like Vishva Sahitya, Vishva manava, Dharma, Shakti, Chiti, and Siksha-Dharma, etc., and the best efforts he made to understand prominent writers like Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Umashankar Joshi, Shamsheer Bahadur Singh, Ahmed 'Faiz' and others.

Singh's scholarship and intellectual pursuits in its entirety ponder over the core issues academically critical, most of them about the writings of the Indian subcontinent. His explorations on the antiquity of classical texts (Ramayana and Mahabharata) and the quest to know that which would be the source text for these texts in an environment like India, having the pluralistic nature of linguistic society over a while that generated from the existing dissimilar multicultural traditions. He reflected with the cultural-historical facts that lead to the breaking of the established notions of the origin of the bhakti movement and other myths on these texts. He also pronounced the missing threads and substantiated with an appropriate acceptable relationship to bridge the gaps. The dialogue on these texts impacted much on the English readership especially the Indian English scholars.

He also strived with his optimum academic excellence to analyze and generated precious discussions on various domains-classification of translational practices of Hindi and its traditional practices of Indian culture in light of the cross-cultural environment, breaking myths of colonial and post-colonial readings and understanding of Indian scholars on the Indian sub-continent countries and West as well to de construct or to reconstruct, and also to internalize the alien traditions. Singh's investigations from little tradition to the great tradition, imaginary novelistic writings to theatre implementation practices, patriarchal thought process to establishment of fortified-self (voice of women) that helps everyone to know him better. His revisiting of literature and deferent genres proposed expensive considerations of field. The enthusiastic nature and devotedness manifested in his editorial work with which 28 volumes of critical practice (broadly covers the areas such as Indian Poetics, English Novels, Contemporary Women's Writing in India, Drama, and so on) has seen the daylight. An incessant reader, a practicing translator, a



translator's trainer, and a fascinator of the concept of “21st Century” left behind a heritage of fountains academic inquiry to explore and to be continued for the generations by the young scholars of India and the west.

He rendered his services as the Vice Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmadabad from 2006 to 2009, and the Vice-Chancellor of Auro University, Surat (Gujarat). On Monday 12 August 2019 on an invitation, he had travelled to Tezpur University, Assam, where he breathed his last while delivering an academic talk.

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## Obituary

Tutun Mukherjee (17<sup>th</sup> November 1952 – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019)

SAYANTAN MONDAL

Tutun Mukherjee was an awe-inspiring name during my M.A. days. She was a joint professor of Comparative Literature and Communication Studies. We looked at her interdisciplinary works with the departments of History, Media Studies, Sociology and thought, like most of M.A. students; it would have been nice if she was our teacher. She did become my teacher as I joined her centre for M.Phil. and got a chance to work with her.

On a beautiful monsoon day in August 2011, I along with 7 other students who joined the Centre for Comparative Literature for M.Phil. went to our first class. We were all excited for this new journey. We were eager for the HoD to come in and probably dispel some of our worries or make us more worried. It was my first classroom interaction with Prof. Tutun Mukherjee.

That class ended with not only dispelled worries and a confidence in our respective proposals but with a sense of relief that no matter which background we came from, we are all good and worthy. All of us struggled with fine tuning our proposals, reading, interpretations, analysis and of course, writing. But we never ever had hesitation or doubt that we could not. Prof. Tutun Mukherjee was such a force in our lives. As I got to know her more in the coming years, I realised it was not a mere coincidence with us. Prof. Mukherjee made it the first lesson for all her classes to instil that confidence among students. And she would follow it up by encouraging peer-learning, sharing recent journal articles relevant to our research and keeping us updated. She invested a lot of energy in building platforms inside and outside the department for

students to share their work in progress, the annual students' conference- Researchers at Work is one such example. The short-lived department journal e-dhvani was another such platform for senior students to work along with subject experts and know how an academic journal is run. In her latest contribution to digital learning, building of e-resources in epg-pathshala she was no different. As I look back at what all she had been doing, today it seems she dedicated her life and teaching to create confident researchers who are not afraid to push boundaries and venture out of their comfort zones. She set a wonderful precedence in encouraging her students to go for conferences, apply for fellowships and never stopped following it up. In case of rejection, she would always be ready with a new opportunity and that's how she never let a student dwell on rejections but kept opening new windows for them.

Prof. Mukherjee will be remembered, by generations to come, for her contributions in the field of Comparative Literature, Translation Studies, Performance Studies, Gender Studies to name a few. Her academic journey which started from the city of Patna found its first expression in the work *The Chicago Critics: An Evaluation* (1991) and flourished through decades of work in the fields of Comparative literature. It was no coincidence that she was the prime architect of Centre for Comparative Literature in the University of Hyderabad and went on to organise numerous lecture series, conference, literary meet to promote exchanges among literary cultures. Her academic rigor was focussed on core areas of Comparative Literature. While she was proposing *Translation: From Periphery to Center Stage* (1998) as a thesis, she simultaneously kept working in translations of plays, poems and novellas. *Acts of Resistance* (2005), *Five Novellas by Women* (2008) were some of the outcomes. Similarly, performance, particularly theatre, was another area of her interest which found its reflection in her works like - *Girish*

*Karnad's Plays: Performance and Critical Perspectives* (2006), *The Plays of Mahesh Dattani* (2012) and *Androgyny and Female Impersonation in India* (2016). Prof. Mukherjee loved her discipline and had a keen awareness of its changing contours. Her edited work, *Humanities in the Present Context* (2009), *Companion to Comparative Literature* (2013) and creation of numerous popular modules in the digital platform of epg Pathshala are perfect examples of that awareness and love.

Prof. Tutun Mukherjee will be remembered for the love of the subject that made her work so special and her works on theatre, her translations will keep bearing the testimony of that love. But for us, her students, she will always have a special place in our memory because of her tireless contribution in making us what we are today - a researcher, a teacher. And we will keep remembering her as a teacher with a bright smile, with all the time in the world to listen to her students and take away all worries, nervousness and embarrassments.

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