Problems of Translating Nabaneeta Dev Sen's Play *Medea*

A dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
in
TRANSLATION STUDIES

by
ANWESHA MAITI

CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD – 500046

JUNE – 2019

CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research embodied in this dissertation titled "Problems of Translating Navaneeta Dev Sen's Play *Medea*" is an original research work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Bhim Rao Bhosale, Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Translation Studies.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of research degree in part or full to this or any other university.

Hyderabad
28 June 2019

Anwesha Maiti
Regd. No. 17HATL02

CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Problems of Translating Nabaneeta Dev Sen's Play *Medea*" submitted by Ms. Anwesha Maiti, as part of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, is original and the work has been carried out under my supervision.

28 June 2019
Hyderabad

Supervisor
Prof. Bhim Rao Bhosale

Head of the Department

Dean

TO MASHIMONI,
for reading out *Pather Paanchali* to a three-year-old every day,
till she could read it on her own

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing acknowledgements is the only place in a research work where I can be subjective – so it's going to be a long one, sit tight.

First, I'd like to express immense gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Prof. Bhim Rao Bhosale, without whom this research project wouldn't have seen the light of day. To Prof. K. Rajyarama, thank you, mam, from the bottom of my heart for the support and courage you lent me, especially during the last legs of submission. My sincere gratitude to Prof. K. Parameshwari, for her valuable inputs and help at minutes notice. I'm greatly indebted to Prof. Shivaraama Paddikal, for taking the time out to give the dissertation a read as well as his suggestions. My thanks to Sriparna Mam, Subramanyam Sir, J.P.R. Sir, for teaching me the basics of research and translation studies during the course work. My sincere thanks to Anuradha Mam, Murthy Sir, and Malesh Sir from CALTS office for always extending their kindness to me.

This research project would have never been possible without the kindness of a lot of strangers that I met in the last two years. My sincere thanks to Ivy Adak mam of Jadavpur University, who went above and beyond to help a complete stranger look for a book that's been out of print for almost two decades. My deepest appreciation for Tolis Papazoglou sir, for taking the time to give me his suggestions and ideas, and names of books regarding the idea of the dissertation.

Now, to my ventilators – I don't really need to take names but I still will: Zeba Tamkanat Moazzam for being my constant lifeline and bringing Haniya in my life, also for all the biryanis and other Hyderabadi delicacies, Evangelene Carene Nangkhlaw for generally being the evilbottom that she is but also for the constant reminder that 'I can', Lavanya Gubbala for being my happiness in the darkest of times and for all the healthy meals and the shared appreciation for Ji Chang Wook, Devina Sarwatay for her wisdom, academic help, and for all the pictures and videos of Buddy that never failed to brighten my day, Sayanty Chatterjee for her unfaltering belief in me, and for always always

helping me even when I didn't know I needed help, Debarati Deb for being the constant friend that she is, I cannot ever thank you females enough, but I'm going to try. So thank you, for especially letting me vent each time I had to (see what I did there?), and telling me stuff without sugarcoating whenever I needed some earful.

My deepest gratitude to my brother Dhitun, for being the best thing in my life, and for also teaching me responsibilities that I didn't know I was capable of handling. To my mother, for being such an exemplary role model, and for teaching me perseverance, and to my father, who never stopped showing me his love even when he didn't quite appreciate my choices, and for teaching me honesty, to both of you for teaching me to keep kindness before anything else, thank you thank you thank you. To Padma mashi, thank you for all your love and for always making sure to have the fridge stocked with chutney whenever I visit home.

My ardent gratefulness to Akshay C.M. for his beautiful soul, and even more beautiful poems, and for all the black teas he made for me while lending me his ears when I needed. Thank you Ajmal Moid, for always being a friend in need. To Ananta Sharma, my heartbeat in another continent, for having such profound faith in me that I was forced to rise up to that faith whenever it demanded so. To Parag, and Shuvro, thank you for always checking in on me. To Alekya, thank you for being an amazing roommate and making my LH09 stay bearable.

Lastly, my utmost thanks to ramen and caffeine, for keeping me alive and awake while those all-nighters. My sincere thanks to Ji Chang Wook for existing and being Ji Chang Wook, and my extreme gratitude to the tumblr HP fanfic writers, for keeping me

Contents

1. Chapter One - Introduction

2. Chapter Two – Context of Research Project

3. Chapter Three – Practical Translation

4. Chapter Four – Translation Strategy and Problems of Translation

5. Chapter Five – Conclusion

Chapter One

Introduction

This dissertation seeks to study the problems that arise during the process of translation, and find coherent ways to overcome those problems, thereby adding to the ever-expanding repertoire of knowledge in the discipline of Translation Studies. The chief aim of this project is to help further the research as well as help the future researchers of this field, and literature in general, by gaining knowledge and understanding.

The main objective of this research project is to translate a Bengali contemporary one-act play while trying to keep the sensibilities of the source culture intact. In addition to that, the intention is to document the process of translation and the problems that will arise during the process. And finally, the aim is to find the solutions of the problems with the help of available theories and studies of Translation Studies, along with other available literary works and theories, and evaluate the target text after applying the solutions.

Noted Translation Studies scholar Gideon Toury had observed in his book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995) -

"translation is basically designed to fulfil (what is assumed to be) the needs of the culture which would eventually host it. It does so by introducing into that culture a version of something which has already been in existence in another culture". (Toury 166)

As a research scholar with a background in, and immense adulation for the world of literature, venturing into the fields of Translation Studies has been quite daunting. Yet this discipline has also offered to open doors to the endless possibility that is literature.

Both the process and the end result of translation yield opportunities that otherwise won't be possible. It is because of translation that the different countries of the world can be a part of a unified global place. Translation Studies, the discipline which studies the phenomena of translation, thus creates a better understanding of the task and the process, while empowering those who study this discipline to become better and well-equipped translators themselves.

Hence, the plan to translate a text first-hand, while documenting the process, seems to be the ideal learning opportunity for the researcher of the discipline. Simultaneously, this project also has the potential to be an enriching addition for the target language and culture, as it introduces a new text, and in turn a new culture to its inventory. The idea to choose a text from the researcher's native language and culture, which is Bengali, and translate it into the language they have been trained in thus appealed greatly.

In addition to that, another factor that led to the choice of this particular project is the lack of reception of Bengali plays in other cultures and languages, despite their expansive merit, but due to the lack of good translations. Hence, the main design behind this research project emerged – which has been executed in the course of this dissertation by studying and translating a play from Bengali to English.

Some of the research questions that this dissertation seeks to explore are -

1. What are the problems of translating a performative text like a play?

2. How can a translator bring the silences of the source text over to the target text, without hampering them, in a text like a play?

3. Is it possible to transmit the cultural subtleties and nuances of a Bengali play in the target text?

4. Who is the target audience that the translation will be catering to? Does the translator need to determine who the target audience would be?

The primary text for this research project, Nabaneeta Dev Sen's one-act play *Medea* (1994), was chosen after much deliberation. This play happens to be in Bengali, which the researcher is a native speaker of, it also presents itself within one single act, and the language and setting of the play is quite contemporary, which helped the researcher relate to it, thus presenting itself as a pragmatic choice. Not to mention that the play is an adaptation of a story from the Greek mythologies from the classical time period, and yet manages to perfectly present itself as a story of a Bengali couple of present times – which shows the adeptness with which the playwright captured the universality of the main themes of the story while staying faithful to the source culture.

Lastly, I grew up reading the works of the playwright, and am an avid admirer of the works of Nabaneeta Dev Sen. Additionally, this particular play by Dev Sen has an existing translation already, which was translated by the noted scholar Tutun Mukherjee in 2005, and presents a unique opportunity of conducting a comparative study between the two translations as well. Therefore, while looking for a suitable text to pursue this project as I came upon this play, it presented itself as a candidate with great potential.

Dev Sen's literary work has been of versatile nature - she is equally renowned as a poet as she is as a novelist. She has also written a bunch of short stories and plays. She is also known for her non-literary works, both academic essays, and non-academic writings like opinion pieces and travelogues. While her academic essays are known for 'charming prose and sense of humour[1]', her non-academic essays are known for their grit and inspiring stance. Her writing shows the subtle use of wit and dry humor,

[1] Author bio was studied from Parabaas.com.

along with often a sense of detachment. Yet her works are steeped in a heart-to-heart sensibility which gives her writings a personal touch that is hard to ignore.

She has won many prestigious awards for her contribution to contemporary Bengali literature – notably the Mahadevi Verma Award in 1992, Celli Award from Rockefeller Foundation, 1993 and so on. She won the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award in 1999. She was awarded Padma Shri, which is one of the highest civilian honours conferred by the Government of India, in 2000.

Dev Sen has been a long-standing advocate for gender equality, especially in the field of writing. Her works such as *Naba-Neeta*, *Bama-Bodhini, Nati-Nabaneeta, Medea*, and so on, are considered as pioneering pieces of feminist writing, that simultaneously deal with a varied range of topics from Naxalite movement to exile and immigration and so on.

Dev Sen's *Medea* is one of the pioneering feminist plays to have been published in contemporary times. The main themes of the play remain as relevant today, as those were in 5th century BC. In spite of its short span, the play tackles a multitude of subjects – the ideas of servitude, identity, exile, abandonment, subjugation and so on, to name a few. The main characters present the age-old battle of power and the politics behind it fantastically. The play's heroine's sacrifice and grit make her one with every woman, irrespective of time and place. Much like the mythological Medea, she became a pawn in someone else's game, yet never lost herself or her determination, and came out stronger than ever. Dev Sen's play, even decades after being published, and regardless of the fact that the play has been out of print for a long time, remains as relevant as it was on the day of publication.

Dev Sen's one-act play *Medea* was first published in the pages of a now forgotten little magazine in 1974. At that time, it was intended to be only an audio drama. Almost twenty years after the first

publication, *Medea* was slightly modified and published along with two more one-act plays in a book named *Medea Ebong* (Medea And) in 1994.

Dev Sen's play expertly deals with many topics, as has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, but what the playwright does with even more ingenuity is create the background of a typical Bengali middle-class life in the play. Dev Sen's *Medea* (1994) is peppered with tropes that were the very markers of classical Greek tragic dramas, and she makes use of these tropes to strengthen the Bengali setting of the play, as well as establishes her characters as typical Bengali middle-class people. The play starts with the background chorus[2] of the sounds typically heard in a railway station – an amalgamation of voices talking, cries of vendors selling their products, sound of trains coming and going, people shouting for porters, and so on.

It can also be seen that all of the three Aristotelian unities of drama have been followed strictly in this play[3] - the play is set in a railway platform and doesn't move from there, focusing on the single plot surrounding the characters representing Jason and Medea, and takes place in one evening. The play also brings in the trope of 'catharsis', and gives Jason a chance to repent for his actions and thereby experiencing catharsis. Or perhaps it is Medea, who finally is able to have a cathartic experience by avenging the wrongdoings done to her and her children by Jason. This play also employs the classical Greek idea of 'hubris' - an idea that was integral to most works of classical Greece and which can roughly be equated with the modern-day idea of pride, through the characters.

[2] As per the website Britannica.com, in Classical Greek dramas, a group of actors played the faceless and nameless chorus, whose job was to describe and comment upon the main action of the play.

[3] Greek philosopher Aristotle prescribed three unities of tragedy - unity of time, place and action, where a play is supposed to take place within one day, in a single physical space without change of stage setting, and have a single plot without any subplots.

Dev Sen's *Medea* portrays a chance encounter between a man and a woman, who represent Jason and Medea from the Greek mythologies respectively, on a small Indian railway station. As their conversation progresses, it shows that the man claims to know the woman, and claims himself to be her husband and the father of her two children – a family that he had abandoned years ago. Contrary to his claims, the woman denies knowing or having any affiliations with him. In spite of the contradiction, it becomes clear that somehow, they are connected, and have apparently lived different versions of the same life.

Dev Sen's play is iconic not just due to the fact that it is a brilliant piece of Bengali literature inspired by Greek mythology, or simply because of the beautiful manner in which Dev Sen managed to create a Bengali play full of Bengali cultural traits and sensibilities, but also in it's defiance against what is historically expected of women, irrespective of time and place. *Medea* (1994) debunks the idea that women's place is that of servitude, or it is a place that is always secondary to men. Perhaps this is why the play remains extremely relevant to this day, despite being out of print for almost twenty years.

Dev Sen's Medea is essentially a retelling of the story of Medea and Jason from the Greek myths, and it is quite obvious that the play has drawn inspiration from a number of sources, most notable among which is the *Medea* by Euripides that he wrote in 431 BC for the festival of Dionysus. The story of Medea has multiple versions and endings written by various ancient Greek playwrights over centuries. As the 1st century BC historian Diodorus Siculus noted, it was "because of the desire of the tragic poets for the marvellous that so varied and inconsistent an account of Medea has been given out" (Diodorus 4.56.1).

Yet, the one thing that has tied all versions of this story together is the fact that this is a story of society, which was and is patriarchal, using women for the purpose, wants and ambitions of men - thus doing

women wrong again and again. There, Dev Sen's Medea is no different than the Medea portrayed by Euripides or the one immortalized by Apollonius of Rhodes.

What is striking about the Medea penned by Dev Sen is that she has no divinity or special powers about her – Dev Sen's Medea is a regular, mortal woman of contemporary times. And yet she somehow establishes a grit of character that is hard to come by – which puts her in the same league with her predecessors. She doesn't resort to scheming or violence to extract her revenge for the sheer betrayal done to her. In fact, in a way she doesn't actively do anything to avenge herself. She simply dismisses the claims made by Jason upon herself and her children, thus cutting him off of her life and her narrative. Her revenge lies in her simple disregard of the claims of someone who abandoned her for the greed of fortune.

Dev Sen's play also sets a precedent by taking an ancient Greek tale, and creating a completely Bengali play out of it while keeping the core sentiments and characteristics of the tale and the characters well alive. This topic has been further discussed in the following chapters.

This dissertation is divided into a total of five chapters, with the main research work being discussed in the three chapters in the middle. Chapter one introduces the subject, the objectives of this research work, as well as the research questions that have been explored in the dissertation, along with the primary text and the writer. Chapter two discusses the background and the context of the research project. Chapter three lists the English translation of Dev Sen's *Medea*, while chapter four discusses the translation strategies employed during practical translation of the primary text as well as explores the research questions. It also discusses the problems encountered during the practical translation of the Bengali play into English, and how the researcher tried to overcome those. The last chapter consists of reflections upon the work done in the dissertation and its relevance, along with a discussion of the further scope of research on the subject.

The second chapter, titled “Context of Research Project” is divided into three segments. In order to better evaluate the context of this research work, this chapter was designed to understand the three primary concerns of this dissertation – translation, drama, and the story of Medea. The first section of this chapter deals with the practice of translation in the Indian context. It talks about the general perception about the activity of translation and how that changed over the course of time. This part also discusses how translation is aiding in spreading vernacular literature across the country as well as bringing world literature closer to home.

The second section of this chapter deals with the discourse of drama and theatre. This section discusses the conception of the art of theatre in India as well as how this art was perceived by the ancient Indian scholars. This section also deals with the relationship between theatre arts and the cultural scenario in Bengal. It focuses on how drama became a part and parcel of the Bengali stage while discussing the notable dramatists and drama-enthusiasts of Bengal. This section also discusses the evolution of Bengali drama from conception to contemporary times, focusing on the kind of subject material that Bengali drama focuses upon.

The third section of this chapter focuses on the story and the character of Medea. The first part of this section discusses the remarkable story of Medea, daughter of Colchian king Aeetes, and granddaughter of the sun god Helios. Medea’s tale survived and resonated with women across countries, centuries, and cultures because it is essentially a story of a passionate woman, who has gone through utmost betrayal after she sacrificed her family for the sake of love, who has persevered despite the many wrongs done to her, and who has made a multitude of sacrifices in search for a place to call home.

The second part of this section deals with the various perceptions about the story of Medea. This part discusses how the character of Medea was shaped through the writings of many playwrights across

centuries in classical Greece. Simultaneously, it also discusses how Medea remained relevant through the centuries in classical Greece. This part also discusses the specificity of Euripides' *Medea* (431 BC), and the discursive path Euripides took in order to shape his Medea.

The last part of this section deals with the primary text selected for this research – the play *Medea* (1994) by Nabaneeta Dev Sen. This part discusses the possible inspirations behind Dev Sen's play, among which the play by Euripides was clearly of paramount importance, as well as presents a small summary of the play. The various features of Dev Sen's play have been studied in this part, along with the deviations from previous versions of the story from different playwrights. Medea's revenge for being betrayed by Jason is of predominant significance in her story – this part discusses Dev Sen's take on that subject, with a focus on power politics and identity. This part also critically evaluates Dev Sen's play.

The third chapter of this dissertation, titled "Practical Translation" exhibits the target text of *Medea* (1994), through practical translation process. The fourth chapter, titled "Translation Strategy and Problems of Translation", discusses the strategies, process and the problems of translating a text from an Indian language, or a Bhasha Language, into a European one has been documented in this chapter. Translating a performative text like a play comes with its own set of problems. As noted scholar Chandrashekhar Patil had shown, "literary translation is transplantation of experience from one linguistic plain to another" (Patil 170). This statement further underlines the notion that if the translation of literary texts itself is based upon transplantation of experience, then the translation of a play which is truly an experience in itself is bound to have larger issues than literary translation.

This chapter also discusses whether it is possible to treat a performative text as a literary text and transform it as such. Identification of a few specific problems that can come up while translating a play has been aimed here, while also trying to find a way to overcome those problems. Moreover, this

chapter also discusses the dual modes of translation, rather an adaptation in this case, that this particular text has undergone – by analysing how a classical Greek mythological story has been treated into morphing into a Bengali contemporary tale of love and loss.

This dissertation has also attempted to see how gender plays a role in the act, as well as the study of translation, given the act of translation itself has often been seen as a secondary, derivative, and therefore inferior, action.

This chapter also observes a comparative study conducted between the target text, translated by myself, and an existing translation of the source text, which was undertaken by a noted scholar. Through this comparative study, it has been found how the reading of a source text can manifest in the target text – based on the differences and effects of the translator's reading.

The theoretical framework and methodology for the research work undertaken in this study have been designed by using a number of theories of Translation Studies. Firstly, the theory of domestication and foreignization, which was propagated by Lawrence Venuti in *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998), has been used while translating the primary text. In this book, Venuti discussed how the translation process should be evaluated by translators. According to Deborah Cao, who studied Venuti's ideas, it should be done "through the prism of culture which refracts the source language cultural norms. It is the translator's task to convey them, preserving their meaning and their foreignness, to the target-language text" (Cao 58).

Especially in the study of the theory and practice of English-language translation, Venuti noted that deliberate attempts at dominating the source text and culture into submission by fluent domestication were prevalent. He was displeased by the kind of translation that minimized the target text's foreignness by reducing cultural norms of the source culture, and making way for cultural values of the target culture. According to Venuti, the strategy of domestication "violently" erases the cultural

values thereby creating texts which follow the norms of the target culture and act like source texts of the target culture. Venuti was a strong advocate of the foreignization strategy, as he considered it to be “an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (Venuti 20). Hence, as per Venuti, an adequate translation is one that highlights the foreignness of the source text, rather than allowing the target culture’s dominance overshadow the source culture’s differences. The length to which a text should be domesticated for the readers of target culture in order to relate to the text, or to what extent one needs to adopt the foreign terms in order to bring new knowledge in terms of cultural and lingual newness is the question which needs to be addressed in the context to domestication and foreignization.

The theory of equivalence, as propagated by Translation Studies scholar Eugene Nida has also been used in the course of the research work. Nida talked about two different translation techniques - dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence, that are used to achieve different levels of literalness between the source text and the target text. The two terms are generally understood as sense-for-sense translation, in which the overall meaning of phrases and sentences gets more importance and gets translated, and word-for-word translation, where the literal meaning of words gets more importance and the translation abides by that literal method, respectively.

Dynamic equivalence normally refrains from strictly adhering to the original text’s grammatical structure and favours a rather organic rendition in the target language. It is at times used when the preservation of the original grammatical structure is perceived to be of less importance than the comprehensibility of the source text.

On the other hand, formal equivalence is more of a goal than a reality, since there is always the possibility that one language may have a word for such a concept that has no equivalent in another

language directly. In such cases, a neologism can be created by borrowing a word from the source language to represent the concept, or a dynamic approach to translation can be taken.

I have also taken into consideration the ideas of equivalence propagated by noted scholar of Translation Studies Anton Popovič, which is broader but similar to that of Nida's equivalence theory. He distinguished translations based on four different types of equivalence – first type is based on linguistic equivalence, where there is a homogeneity between source language and target language, often realized through word for word translation. The second type is based on paradigmatic equivalence, which considers equivalence between the structural frame of grammar between source and target languages. Stylistic equivalence is the basis of the third type, and is based on a functional approach that focuses on the equivalence of intended meaning between source and target language. The last kind of translation is based on textual equivalence, which is also known as syntagmatic equivalence. This type translation focuses on the equivalence of form and structure of the source text and target text (Muzaffar and Behera).

The dissertation has also made use of multiple theoretical essays and works in the course of the research work. In order to understand the background and context of the story of Medea, Euripides' *Medea* (431 BC), *Jason and Medea* (2015) by Apollonius of Rhodes, Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths* (1955), were mainly used, along with *Medea* (2006) by Emma Griffiths, *Theogony* (7th BC) by Hesiod, *Lives of the Necromancers* (1834) by William Godwin and so on. To understand the nuances of theatre in India, M. L. Varadpande's *History of Indian Theatre* (1987) was extensively consulted. Ashutosh Bhattacharya's essay "Bengali Drama" helped greatly to understand and learn about the context and evolution of the theatre scenario in Bengal. Bijay Kumar Das' book *A Handbook of Translation Studies* (2005) provided great insight during the course of the translation and documentation of the process, along with works such as Lori Chamberlain's pathbreaking essay "Gender and the

Metaphorics of Translation", Gideon Toury's "'Translation of Literary Texts' vs. 'Literary Translation'", Walter Benjamin's seminal essay "The Task of the Translator", Paul Ricoeur's essay "A 'Passage': Translating the Untranslatable", Susan Bassnet's book *Translation Studies* (2002) and Gouri Deshpande's essay "Translating Drama: the Experience of Mahanirvan", among others. Edith Grossman's book *Why Translation Matters* (2011) has also been a source of great insight in the course of the research. The research work has also employed the help of a number of websites and essays from the web, which are listed in the bibliography section.

Chapter Two

Context of Research Project

Translation activity has been defined by many scholars in many different ways, but the general overview of the activity of translation has historically been understood in mostly Eurocentric terms. Hence, even the field of translation studies is also mostly governed by laws that are Eurocentric, as "contemporary translation theory formulated primarily in the West" (Tymoczko 30). This limited and narrow point of view, therefore, restricts the vast area that translation otherwise comprises of, which includes a distinct understanding of society, culture, history and the multiplicity of these products in a global world. Despite having ancient traditions of translation in the non-western countries – the Orient, the evaluation and merit of such are always put to test through laws and ideas that do little to try to understand and take into consideration these traditions and cultures. Needless to say, that such terms are not sufficient to evaluate and explore certain non-European cultural aspects and practices of translation. Edwin Gentzler explored this view of Translation Studies in his essay "Macro- and Micro-Turns in Translation Studies", where he discussed the new kinds of translations that are coming up as a reaction as well as rejection to the Eurocentric view of translation (Gentzler 9). Scholars such as Maria Tymoczko are quite critical of this hegemonic stance given Translation Studies is a new and emerging field, the theories and studies of which are still in the developmental stage (Tymoczko 30).

Translation in the Indian Context

The practice of translation has been part of the Indian literary history for centuries. Noted theorist J. C. Catford said about translation that it is a "replacement of textual material in one

language (SL) by equivalent material in another language" (Catford 20). Although Catford's definition of translation was from a linguistic point of view, it stays somewhat true when applied to the Indian context of translation.

In India, translation is popularly known as "rupantar" or "anuvaad" among other terms. Rupantar means 'change in form', and anuvaad means 'coming after or following after'(Das 119). Translation, at least in the Indian context, is about giving a text a new lease of life. The Western anxiety about 'faithfulness' of a translation, or a translator, was quite literally, foreign to Indian translation activities. As R. S. Pathak mentioned -

"There was almost no tradition of translation in ancient India in its modern sense except for 'bhashya' and 'Teeka' which can be considered translation in its very loose sense" (qtd in Das 119).

Before colonization of India by the West, translation in India was considered to be a kind of new writing, with translators of the Sanskrit epics being known as authors themselves; for instance, the first Bengali translation of the *Ramayana* is known as *Krittibasi Ramayana* (15th Century), after the translator Krittibas Ojha, who is generally known as the first Bengali writer to 'write' *Ramayana* in Bengali. Even the poets of the Bhakti tradition were considered as translators as their main aim was to bring forth and spread Indian knowledge and wisdom prevalent in ancient Sanskrit texts in different Bhasha languages (qtd in Das 119). The concept of transcreation was more suited to the notion of translation in India, especially in the ancient times, when texts were often passed through generations by oral narrations.

During medieval period, Persian took the place of Sanskrit in becoming the language of literature, mostly because of its use in the Mughal court. Many ancient Sanskrit epics and treatises were translated from Sanskrit to Persian under the patronage of the Mughals. Mughal

prince Dara Shukoh himself was a noted scholar who translated a number of ancient Sanskrit texts into Persian (Chandran).

It was only during the colonial period that the practice of translation in India became heavily influenced by the British, and subsequently European writers, translators, and their rules. Around this time, while translation activity increased, especially that of translating Indian epics and mythological stories in English and other European languages, it was also in this time period that translation started being viewed as a secondary kind of creation – a derivative of the original.

In the post-colonial era, the practice of translation in India has seen massive shifts. Indian Bhasa languages and Bhasha authors have suddenly come to the forefront, with many local and canonical literary and non-literary Bhasha texts now being translated into other Bhasha languages, not just organised by personal initiatives, but also encouraged by the government. These texts are being translated in English as well, with an aim to reach a larger, if not global, audience. Mahashweta Devi's writings, some of which were translated into English by the famous scholar Gayatri C. Spivak, enjoys a reader base not just across the country, but also around the world.

Simultaneously many texts from non-Indian or foreign languages are also being translated directly into Indian Bhasha languages, like Japanese author Tetsuko Kuroyanagi's memoir *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* (1981), which was translated into multiple Indian languages through an initiative of the National Book Trust, thereby furthering both literary and political relations between India and other countries. In fact, during the Soviet era, many Russian fictional and non-fictional texts were directly translated into Bengali, and an entire

generation grew up reading books like Maxim Gorky's *Mother* (1906) and works of Gogol, and Tolstoy along with those of Tagore, and Sharatchandra.

Drama in India

Drama and theatre have been part of Indian culture since ancient times. As per historian Will Durant, "In one sense drama in India is as old as the Vedas, for at least the germ of the drama lies in the Upanishads" (qtd. in Varadpande 221).

As M.L. Varadpande discussed in his book *History of Indian Theatre* (1987), drama in India has roots in the *Vedas* and Puranas. His book mentions that "the gods, under the leadership of Indra, approached Brahma and requested him to create an entertainment, audible as well as visible – a fifth Veda, accessible to all!", which is why Lord Brahma created the fifth *Veda*, known as the *Natya Veda,* by taking "the text from the *Rig Veda*, music from the *Sama Veda*, acting from the *Yajur Veda* and aesthetic sentiments from the *Atharva Veda"* (Varadpande 1).

The essay extensively discusses how 'According to Indian tradition as reflected in the Natya Shastra entire universe is the theme of the drama. This universe is comprised of two things: man and his environment' (Varadpande 272). 'Man and his environment' are also the universals that can transcend time, place, and culture. These universals bear the marks of human traditions, emotions, follies – thus bringing and assimilating stories that transcend beyond measurable time and place, standing witness to what it is to be human - much like the tale of Medea.

Varadpande discusses the various definitions of drama as had been given by the ancient Indian scholars – Sharadtanaya, in *Bhavaprakashana,* says that the "common characteristic of drama is an imitation of (human states)". On the other hand, the *Vishnudharmottara Purana* says that "Drama is an imitation of the universe, other people (by actors)" (Varadpande 273).

As per Varadpande, “Drama is an imitation ... It is imitation of people, their environment, emotions, feelings, situations they are found in, mental and physical states, actions,” (Varadpande 273) and also that to the dramaturgists of India “drama was the highest form of fine art and scope wise wide enough to cover entire universe. It imitated people, their emotions, feelings, mental and physical states, actions, situations they are found in” (Varadpande 278). By virtue of its status as an imitative art form, the drama becomes similar to the activity of translation.

Review of the theatre scenario in Bengal

The Bengali culture has had a long-standing culture and practice of theatre and dramas. From Tagore to Balaichand Mukhopadhyay (known as Banaphul) to Bratyo Basu of recent times, Bengali playwrights have continued to deliver on stage. Many of the known dramatists such as Utpal Dutt, Bijan Bhattacharya, and Badal Sarkar have had their plays performed in national and international stages, and in multiple languages in translation. English translation of plays like the *Red Oleanders* (2008) (Raktakarabi) by Rabindranath Tagore, or *Evam Indrajit* (1974) by Badal Sarkar, have been critically acclaimed by critics and audiences alike.

As per Asutosh Bhattacharya, “the history of Bengali drama can be conveniently divided into three periods—early, middle and modern. From 1852, the year in which the first Bengali drama appeared, to the establishment of the first Bengali public stage in 1872 is the early period. During this time Bengali drama developed under the patronage of only a few amateur stages. Translations from English and Sanskrit, imitations and experiments were the characteristics of this period, though original talents like those of Ramnarayan Tarkaratna, Michael Madhusudan Dutta and Dinabandhu Mitra were not lacking.” (Bhattacharya 80)

The middle period begins from the date of the establishment of the first public stage in Calcutta in 1872 and extends to the commencement of the ‘Swadeshi’ (independence) Movement in the

first decade of our century. During this time the public stage of Calcutta exercised considerable influence on the development of Bengali drama. Representative dramatists of this period, like Girish Chandra Ghose, Amrita Lai Bose, Raj Krishna Ray, and Amarendra Dutt were all professional actors were connected in some way with one or other public theatre of Calcutta.

The beginning of the modern period of Bengali drama dates from the Swadeshi Movement, the patriotic upheaval in the first decade of the present century provoked by the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905. Girish Chandra Ghose who had hitherto devoted himself to mythological themes, rarely diverting to topical and social problems, immediately turned his attention to political subjects and wrote within a short period three powerful dramas, entitled Sirajuddaulla, Mir Kasim and Chhatrapati Sivaji. All of them were proscribed by the British Government on a charge of spreading seditious ideas.

The course of the Bengali drama has undergone a remarkable change in ideas and technique during the post-Rabindra period. Even the dramas of Dwijendralal and Kshirodprasad, who were highly popular dramatists during the time of Rabindranath, are now out of date and have little appeal today. It is not so much a question of deterioration as of a change of outlook. It is nothing but the transformation of traditional continuity which is inevitable in the face of new situations in the social background. The latest Bengali dramas deal with the clash between individual and social interests and the complicated economic problems of the uprooted society. The main interest of the recent Bengali dramas is confined to urban life with its new and pressing problems. The new dramatists are no longer interested in the undisturbed life of the villages, far away from the madding crowd. With the progress of industrial life at the cost of the agricultural, social and economic structure of village life has crumbled and hence the Bengali drama today reflects the pulsations of city-life with its various problems. Drama is no longer a means of giving us recreation and refreshment but provides serious fare for our cultural and intellectual refinement.

For the most part, the recent Bengali drama is mostly interested in man, or the individual, irrespective of his/her social and religious responsibilities. A present-day Bengali dramatist is concerned not with social or religious reforms but with an individual and the intricate problems and questions that agitate his/her mind in his/her day-to-day struggle for existence.

In recent times, the drama has become the object of genuine interest for a large section of the people of Bengal. A movement for the all-round improvement of the stage and the drama has started and with this end in view, a number of institutions have been established in Calcutta. They are - Indian People's Theatre Association, Jatiya Natya Parishad, Bahurupi, Biswaroopa Natya Unnayan Parikalpana, Children's Little Theatre, etc. The public is also taking a keen interest in the performances which are being held by these institutions from time to time. The establishment of a Sangeet Natak Akadami by the Government of West Bengal is also proving to be a source of encouragement for the people interested in the improvement of the Bengali Stage.

Bengali drama in recent times, is moulding itself and inching towards an era of absurdist plays and dramas, similar to the ones that suddenly came into vogue in post World War II America. These plays are no less in merit and treatment, and therefore deserve to be performed before a larger, global audience, albeit in translation.

Medea in Greek Mythology

The character of Medea from the classical Greek mythologies is, without a doubt, one of the most intriguing female characters ever written. The story of Medea has been adapted and translated many times over the centuries, but it is perhaps in this era that the significance of this particular character, as well as her story, has created the biggest mark - as it has deeply resonated with the strains of feminism, and the earning for an equal society where justice

prevails. Various classical Greek playwrights have either touched upon the story of Medea or devoted their attention extensively to this particular tale of love and loss in the classical dramas[4]. In order to understand the background of Medea and the context of Dev Sen's play, I have referred to mainly the following texts – Euripides's *Medea* (431 BC), *Jason and Medea*[5] by Apollonius of Rhodes, and Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths* (1955), along with *Medea* (2006) by Emma Griffiths.

Medea of the Greek myths was the daughter of King Aeetes of Colchis, the niece of Circe, and the granddaughter of the sun-god Helios. She was a sorceress graced with blessings of the goddess Hecate[6] (Graves 598-599). Medea has always been portrayed as someone who was well-versed in both witchcraft[7] and medicinal sciences, which she practiced as well.

Jason, the rightful heir to the throne of Iolcos, was leading the Argonauts and came to Colchis looking for the 'Golden Fleece' in order to claim his throne and inheritance. Medea fell in love with Jason, and promised to help him acquire the fleece. Although in various depictions of this story, it is shown that Medea fell in love with Jason because of the interference of the Greek gods - due to the involvement of Aphrodite and Eros, who interfered because of goddess Hera's instigation, as Hera worried that Jason might not succeed in securing the 'golden fleece' by himself. Medea helped Jason through all the tasks that her father put him through, as per the custom of the time and contemporary myths, in order to obtain the 'golden fleece', on the condition that he would marry her upon succeeding and always remain faithful to her. She left

[4] The story of Medea has come up in the writings of classical Greek playwrights such as Ovid, Seneca, Herodotus, Apollonius of Rhodes, Neophron, Hyginus, and so on, but mostly as part of other largers tales. But the character of Medea truly got her share of attention when Euripides wrote his tragedy *Medea* in 431 BC.

[5] *Jason and Medea* (2015) – extract taken from Apollonius of Rhodes's *Argonautica* (3rd century BC), and published in a book format by Penguin.

[6] Hecate was the daughter of Perses and Asteria, and was the goddess of magic, witchcraft, the night, moon, ghosts and necromancy

her country and family behind and sailed with Jason while he was fleeing with the golden fleece. She even helped him kill her own brother Absyrtus, who was sent by her father to retrieve the fleece.

Medea accompanied Jason to Iolcos, where she conspired and had the king Pelias killed by his own daughters. This led to Jason and Medea fleeing Iolcos, and they eventually ended up escaping to Corinth, practically as refugees. By this time Medea was married to Jason for almost a decade, and they had two children together.

In Corinth, Jason abandoned Medea and their children for Creusa, daughter of the Corinthian king, and Medea had to leave. She ultimately went to Athens where she bore a son to the king Aegeus, but even there she couldn't make a home for herself. Although the end of her story is disputed, as mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, Medea either went back to Colchis with her son Medeius, or she went to the land of Aryans and ruled there with her son.

Shaping of the character of Medea through the writings of different playwrights

Before Euripides made Medea a person of her own, Medea had had multiple instances of appearance in a number of works, mostly getting a fleeting mention in the story of the 'golden fleece.' Medea first appears in Greek poet Hesiod's *Theogony* (the genealogy or birth of the gods), written in 7th century BC, as part of the myth of Jason and the Argonauts. Medea was also mentioned by Greek poet Eumelus of Corinth in his works, who was active around late 7th or early 6th century BC. Greek epic poet Creophylus, who is thought to be Homer's contemporary, also had mentioned of Medea in his work. Medea also figures extensively in the epic *Argonautica*, written in 3rd century BC by Apollonius of Rhodes.

Yet compared to all its predecessors, Euripides' *Medea* (431 BC) emerged as a completely new depiction of a story about an unfortunate woman. Bernard M.W. Knox noted how "Out of the old stories available to him, Euripides created a new one – a version more shocking, more physically and psychologically violent than anything he found in the tradition" (Knox 273).

The *Medea* of Euripides recounts how a power-hungry Jason had decided to abandon Medea and their children, even though Jason and Medea were married for almost a decade by that time, and decided to marry the daughter of Creon, the king of Corinth, in the hopes of ascending the throne of Corinth one day. Medea, heartbroken and enraged, killed her own children along with Creon and his daughter Glouce, in a manner of revenge against Jason's betrayal as well as to find her own justice. Having already extracted a promise of getting shelter in his country from the king Aegeus of Athens, she then fled Corinth with the help of a chariot sent by her grandfather Helios, the sun god, leaving Jason to mourn his children's death. Euripides's version differs so greatly from the previous versions because almost none of the former tellings of this story showed Medea, in order to avenge herself, plotting and killing her children in cold blood. As per one previous retelling of Medea's story showed that it was the people of Corinth who killed Medea's children, while another depicted Medea killing her children unintentionally, by accident. Euripides presented his Medea 'in heroic terms' - his Medea is almost like a 'Sophoclean hero', and his play is "dominated by a central figure who holds the stage throughout, who initiates and completes – against obstacles, advice, and threats – the action" (Knox 274), which in this case is revenge.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Medea*

Nabaneeta Dev Sen's play *Medea* (1994) seems to have taken inspiration from Euripides's *Medea* extensively, even though traces of influence by other versions of this tale can be found in the play - there are places in the play when a young woman in love, much like the Medea

portrayed by Apollonius of Rhodes, surfaces. Dev Sen's play starts after Medea and her children were deserted by Jason. It doesn't follow the exact storyline of Medea as presented in various versions of the myth but seems to create an alternative origin of its own.

That being said, Dev Sen's version seems to be most influenced by that of Euripedes's. Dev Sen's play adequately echoes the themes of abandonment that are prevalent in Euripides' *Medea.* As mentioned previously in this chapter, Euripides' depicted a distraught Medea being forced to relinquish her rights as the wife of Jason, and subsequently showed her emotional turmoil at being forsaken by the person for whom she had left everything. Similarly, in Dev Sen's play it can be seen through the characters representing Medea and Jason that in the context of this play also Jason abandoned Medea and their children. Dev Sen's play portrayed a Medea who has suffered much and became a stronger version of herself because of that suffering, much like Euripides' Medea who refused to suffer in silence.

Dev Sen's story picks up after Jason's decision to forsake Medea and their two children in favour of Glouce and the crown of Corinth, and not after Medea's revenge. In fact, in this story, Manas/Jason had already executed his decision, and Rupsa/Medea has taken her revenge in the course of the play. This story does not start in medias res, rather it begins quite unexpectedly, after what can be assumed as a rather long break – like a dream sequence, or an epilogue. Dev Sen's Medea even ends in an illusory manner – making the audience (and Manas/Jason) wonder if the events that took place in course of the play were even real.

Euripides' play starts with dialogues from the eponymous character – Medea, after the customary chorus. Thus, the audience is left with no doubt as to whose story it is – it's Medea's story and she is going to tell it. This is one of the arcs where Dev Sen's play subverts greatly from its primary source material. Dev Sen's *Medea* begins with Manas – the Jason of this play. It begins with his mannerisms, gearing up towards having him make the stage, as well as the

play, his own – until he stumbles into Medea, or Rupsa as the audience will know her in this play.

The play starts on a railway platform of a small station. The characters representing Jason and Medea, named Manas and Rupsa respectively, seem to have met accidentally after years, with Rupsa neither being able to recognize Manas, nor having any recollection of him. As the play gradually unfolds we realize that Manas, who had abandoned Rupsa and their two children, is desperately seeking her forgiveness and trying to establish familiarity with her, while trying to stake a claim as the father to their children. While Rupsa somewhat humours him by trying to remember him initially, she is either unable to or simply does not want to recognize him. As Manas' tries get more and more desperate, Rupsa's inability or refusal to recognize him makes him almost pathologically exasperated. Especially as they touch upon the subject of their children, and Rupsa explains how due to her deceased husband's inability to have children they were forced to adopt two children from Mother Teresa's orphanage, it comes as a huge blow to Manas' manhood, and subsequently, his identity.

Here onwards in the play, there run two parallel narratives, respectively Manas and Rupsa's versions of how the events of their lives progressed. It almost becomes a battle between the two of them, to establish any one 'version' as the absolute. Hence, in the end, the audience, along with perhaps the cast and crew of the play, is left to ponder whether this was Medea's story, or Jason's. Despite such dilemma, however, it becomes clear in the course of the play that it is Rupsa's version, and not Manas's, that is clearly preceding, simply because Rupsa doesn't need Manas to believe in her story, while Manas is desperate for her to acknowledge his narrative. In the play we see that according to Rupsa, who is on her way to visit her children in the boarding school where they study, her husband was infertile, because of which they couldn't have any children biologically. So, they adopted two children, Ratna and Tattu, from

an orphanage. She also recalls with great sadness that her husband died in a freak accident while travelling in a train. Contrary to this, Manas maintains that he is the husband and biological father of Rupsa's children, Ratan and Tutu. He also maintains that he was absent from Rupsa and her children's life because he abandoned them to flee the country after he embezzled some funds.

Much like Euripides's Medea, Rupsa gets herself avenged by taking away the essence of fatherhood from Manas (Jason). Although she doesn't kill her children off like the mythical Medea, just by showing that they originated as orphans from the beginning, while labelling her husband as infertile, and eventually establishing them (the children) as 'fatherless' orphans, she gets the upper hand in this powerplay of identity and relationship.

But whereas Euripides's Medea was someone who made a sacrifice in killing her children as can be proven by her self-doubt and desperate attempts at negating the justification behind the killing of her children, Dev Sen's Medea didn't. Eilhard Schlesinger noted in his essay "On Euripides' Medea" that,

> Medea herself realizes that this revenge will result in her own annihilation as a human being ,.. In a sense, Euripides' heroine perishes with the children. (Schlesinger 310)

In stark contrast to this sequence, in the play by Dev Sen, it is Jason/Manas, the father of Medea/Rupsa's children who 'perishes', by getting his identity as the children's father being taken away, and thus getting his manhood questioned and being rendered as a nobody.

Just as Jason did in the classical myth, Manas had taken her (Medea/Rupsa) away from her family and alienated her from them, and brought her to a new place where she was rootless to begin with, only to abandon her and her children for someone and something else, rendering them helpless, and turning them into displaced refugees. But by her sheer refusal to bestow on

Manas the identity of her husband and the father of her children, Rupsa nullifies Manas's existence, and manages to question his very selfhood. Given the fact that impotency has always been considered as one of the biggest dishonours that can befall on a man, by claiming her husband - the person Manas identifies himself as, was impotent, Rupsa successfully evades his claims while castrating him metaphorically.

It should be noted, especially while doing a comparative study of Dev Sen's *Medea,* that the stereotypical marital conflicts are not really of much importance in the story of 'Medea'. It wasn't important in Euripides's story, and neither is it important in Dev Sen's. From what can be gleaned from both the plays, Jason and Medea had a happy marriage – one fulfilled by an equal need for the other from both their sides, until it wasn't. In both situations, infidelity was part of a larger scheme pertaining to Jason's greed for fortune and fame, which led to both men forsaking the family they had built.

B.M.W. Knox, in his essay "The Medea of Euripides", talks about how at the end of the play (Euripides' *Medea*), because of her fierce rage, which is perhaps fiercer than that of other Greek heroes like Achilles or Ajax, Medea is presented "as a *theos*[8] or at least something more than human" (Knox 292), as she made a "triumphant godlike departure through the air" (Knox 282). This is another trope that Nabaneeta Dev Sen makes excellent use of in her play. Although there was no intervention by any deus ex machina, her play does end with Rupsa leaving the stage as well as Manas, in a dreamlike manner.

Dev Sen also employs the trope of hubris, which was a staple feature in classical Greek texts, especially tragedies, in her play. The idea of hubris, as depicted by Aristotle, emerges as a flaw in a character in terms of pride, where the character greatly overestimates his or her abilities.

[8] Theos is a greek rendition of the idea of a primitive god.

Often hubris leads to a character's defiance of the gods, which in turn links the idea of hubris with that of hamartia, which was another device used in Greek tragedies. In this particular play, we see the exhibition of hubris through Manas' character's actions and emotions. In the course of the play it has been revealed that he embezzled money, which is clearly a result of him overestimating his abilities. We also see Manas's pride getting hurt greatly when Rupsa discusses her husband's inability to have children and the eventual adoption of their children.

While Dev Sen expertly shows the marital turmoils and other problems between Medea and Jason through the dialogues of Rupsa and Manas, what she does with even more ingenuity is create the background of a typical Bengali middle-class life. Dev Sen's play is peppered with tropes that were the very markers of classical Greek tragic dramas, and she makes use of these tropes to strengthen the Bengali setting of the play, as well as establishes her characters as typical Bengali middle-class people.

The play starts with an amalgamation of sounds typically heard in a railway station, much like the chorus, a feature atypical to classical Greek dramas - especially tragedies, in the background. Then the main two characters are introduced. Rupsa, clad in a colourful 'taant'[9] saree, and carrying a 'jhola'[10], shows up as a quintessential Bengali woman. Their names, Manas Mullick and Rupsa Mullick, along with the names of the absent children – Ratan, Tutu, Ratna, and Tattu, are all typically Bengali names and nicknames.

Dev Sen also uses some of the archetypal markers of Bengali life, especially that of a non-resident Bengali life which parallels with the storyline of Medea and Jason living away from 'home', to establish and romanticise her characters' Bengali identity. Both Rupsa and Manas

[9] Cotton 'taant' sarees are a specialty of Bengali culture, and it is a staple in almost every Bengali woman's wardrobe.

[10] A particular kind of tote bag.

talk about living in Delhi - a place which a significant number of Bengalis have made their home away from home, especially after the partition. The playwright fleetingly mentions Durga Puja holidays, which is the biggest festival for Bengalis. She mentions 'Mother Teresa' and her orphanage a few times in the play, both of which were integral parts of Bengali culture, especially around the last part of the twentieth century. Dev Sen romances the Bengali romance by meticulously drawing a mental picture for the audience of a green saree-clad Rupsa jumping to avoid dirt on the road and showing her ankle in the process while going to the marriage registrar's office[11]. Thus, through the use of dialogues, by evoking mental imageries, through the mannerisms of her characters on stage as well as through their costumes and props, Dev Sen successfully manages to tell the story of two Bengali characters.

[11] This particular trope is very characteric of Bengali pop culture, especially during 80's and 90's, and has been used in many novels, stories and films.

Chapter Three

Practical Translation

The practical translation of the Bengali play Medea by Nabaneeta Dev Sen has been detailed in this chapter.

Medea

by

Nabaneeta Dev Sen

Translation by – Anwesha Maiti

[A small-town railway station. On the stage there is a gas light.

In the background there are faint sounds of trains coming and going, people calling for porters, hawkers selling paan- bidi-tea-cigarettes etc.

On the stage there a man sitting on a bedding, trying to light a cigarette again and again with matchsticks unsuccessfully.

A lady enters, with a handbag and a suitcase in hand, wearing colourful cotton saree. Both the man and the woman are middle-aged.]

Man: Arreh! Wh-what! [cigarette and match box fall] I- I didn't even think that I'd ever get to see you again like this! Umm- And... how are you? How is everything? [Picks up matchbox]

Woman: Yeah- everything's fine.

Man: And the children?

Woman: (taken aback) Children!?

Man: Yeah...how are they?

Woman: (still surprised) How are they?

Man: Why are you so surprised? I'm talking about Tutu- Ratan.

Woman: Tutu – Ratan? Who are Tutu – Ratan?

Man: Who are Tutu- Ratan? Are you... aren't you Rupsa?

Woman: Yes, my name is Rupsa. And you are..?

Man: Rupa!!! Are you really not able to recognise me? It's me – I'm Manas.

Rupsa: Manas? Which Manas? Majumder? Or Roychoudhury?

Manas: Why are you - are you joking with me?

Rupsa: Excuse me! Why would I joke with you? I knew two people named Manas. It's been so long since I met them...they must have changed with age. In fact, we have all changed. it's not like anybody is still the same. Someone has gone bald, someone is potbellied now. It's not that easy to recognise!

Manas: Two people named Manas? You knew two people named Manas? What are you saying Rupa! Isn't your name Rupa Mullick? Or is it now something else?

Rupsa: My name is Rupsa Mullick.

Manas: You can't remember the name Manas Mullick?

Rupsa: Manas Mullick? It does sound quite familiar. Are you somehow related to Rajen Mullick?

Manas: Rupa! Don't joke with me. (Chiding) There is limit to that!

Rupsa: Look, please don't talk like that to me anymore. I don't even know you – there's no question about joking with you. Neither do I have the intention! Rather you have been saying all sorts of nonsense all this time – Who are these Ratan – tutu?

Manas: Who are these Ratan – Tutu?

Rupsa: Yeah, you yourself just said, who are Ratan and Tutu?

Manas: (Aghast) Who are Ratan and Tutu?

Rupsa: What nonsense! How am I to know who they are?

Manas: How are you to know! Rupsa! Rupu! Do you really not recognise me?

Rupsa: What is the matter exactly? Should I be knowing you? Did we meet somewhere before?

Manas: You don't remember Ratan Tutu either?

Rupsa: Oh! I don't remember that is why I am asking. Who are they? Who are Ratan Tutu?

Manas: They are – they are your...

Rupsa: Am I supposed to know them?

Manas: You are telling me that you know me either.

Rupsa: I don't understand. Can you please explain what all this is about! My train is about to arrive.

Manas: Let it be. There is nothing more to be explained. Where are you going?

Rupsa: I am going to Macluksigunj, to get the kids. You know, for the puja holidays.

Manas: To get the kids? What are their names?

Rupsa: Ratna and Tattu[12]. They stay in a hostel there.

Manas: Ratna and Tattu? They stay in a hostel there?

Rupsa: They are orphans.

Manas: They are orphans? Where did you find them?

Rupsa: All thanks to Mother Teresa. First, I got Ratna, then Tattu.

Manas: Mother Teresa? Rupu! Rupu shona, how can you call Ratan and Tutu orphans? Do you not remember? You suffered from labour for three days when you had Ratan! And Tutu... there was no other option but to do a caesarean when Tutu was born. And you are saying they are orphans!

Rupsa: What kind of nonsense are you uttering! What caesarean? And labour for three days? Ratna and Tattu are my adopted children. We have adopted them.

[12] The difference in Rupsa and Manas' versions of their children's names will eventually make way for bigger differences.

Manas: Rupa, don't you remember! There was such a terrible storm the day Ratan was born! It rained incessantly! You were writhing in pain, and the storm kept on getting worse – so much lightning and thunder! And each time there was a crash of thunder, you kept getting startled and scared! Both of us were at our wits end Rupai – do you really not remember that day? It was the month of Sravan, it rained cats and dogs!

Rupa: (To herself) It was the month of Sravan, it rained cats and dogs! We went to visit Mother Teresa's orphanage one day. Very suddenly i took a liking to Ratna. She was so healthy – what a cute baby, with her headful of curly black hair and those pretty eyes – didn't cry at all. As if she was always smiling. I could't help but ask Mother – Please give this baby to me. That was the first! Our first child!

Manas: Our first child! Ratan! But what rubbish are you saying? Why are you making up such stories! Ratan was in your womb for forty weeks straight. We used to live in Patelnagar then – in front of that park.

Rupsa: I never lived in Patelnagar. I used to live in Chanakyapuri, with my parents.

Manas: Yeah, but that was a long time ago. Then you used to live in Miranda hostel remember? After our marriage you came to Patelnagar with me. Ratan was born there!

Rupsa: I am telling you, I have never lived in Patelnagar!

Manas: You have never lived in Patelnagar? Where did we live then?

Rupsa: How would I know where you lived?

Manas: Why, Rupu, but you were also there with me! You and I. And Ratan. All three of us were together.

Rupsa: Please don't talk such rubbish vulgar things any more. You are wrong. You must be mistaken. I have never been with you. Have some shame! There wasn't any Ratan either!

Manas: Shame? There wasn't any Ratan? And Tutu? What about Tutu? Remember, in that house in Azadnagar? Ratan, Tutu, you and I – we all lived in that house in Azadnagar – you used to love sitting out in the balcony Rupu – there was this small lake nearby, and a tiny island in the middle of it. Every evening flocks of birds used to come back to the island -

Rupsa: Flocks of birds used to take off right before sunrise every dawn. The water used to turn pink...

Manas: Yes, yes, that house – Sonali, your sister-in-law was also there with us. (sound of a train leaving)

Rupsa: Sonali? My sister-in-law? I never had any brother. Where would a sister-in-law come from?

Manas: (After a pregnant pause) Rupu! Are you still angry? It was such a long time back. I don't even know where Sonali is now. Maybe I'll meet her like this at a random railway station one day. Rupu, please let me explain -

Rupsa: You are mistaking me for someone else, I'm sure.

Manas: Rupa, please believe me, I miss Ratan and Tutu terribly! I couldn't even find your address. When I came back from Burma, I found out that your father had passed away, and nobody knew where you went after selling the house. No one had any trace. I searched for you everywhere in Delhi – Rupu, it's been five years since I came back – Five year since I have been looking for you – Please believe me – Ratan-Tutu, I really – I – Is it that hard to forgive me? (Kneels in front of her)

Rupsa: (Helps him get up) (In a disturbed tone) My goodness, what are you saying! This – Believe, you must be mistaking me for someone else. I really have never lived in Azadnagar. And I have never known anyone named Sonali either. Try to understand, there must be some confusion!

Manas: Rupa! Please believe me, love!

Rupsa: (Calmly) Mr. Mullick, please don't get so agitated. I am certain that I am not the Rupsa you know. Can't you see, I have no similarities with her? Tell me, did she have six toes like this on her left foot? (She hitches her saree up a little to show the feet)

Manas: (Rather than looking at the foot, he looks at her face) (Dreamily) Rupa, do you remember that afternoon, the day of the registration? We were in such a hurry – we had to give a backdated notice – remember? That marriage registrar's office in Dariyagunj – it was so dirty right outside the office, oh! Piles of stale fruits and peels, flies everywhere, the air smelled like cheap alcohol – remember? There was a fruit juice shop near the office. You covered your nose with a handkerchief and pulled your saree up to jump of the garbage pile and entered the office. I still clearly remember – the fairness of your heels under the green hemline of your saree – as if it was yesterday.

Rupsa: Look mister, this is too much. I have no idea about any such incident. My father married me off with enough pomp and show – with feras, rituals and everything. My husband -

Manas: What did he your husband do Rupa? Who was your husband?

Rupsa: (With a smile, as if reminiscing) He worked for the railways. We used to live in railway quarters. We used to travel a lot because of his transferable job – Madras, Kharagpore, Baroda. We couldn't settle anywhere. That's why when we went to Kolkata that time, from Mother Teresa's orphanage -

Manas: Rupsa! Which husband are you talking about?

Rupsa: I beg your pardon! What do you mean by which husband! How many husbands does a woman have?

Manas: So where is your husband now? (a low sound of a passing train increases gradually)

Rupsa: (Eyes downcast in sadness) He died in a train accident. (The loud sound of a train passing by can be heard. There is a flicker of flashlight lighting both the characters faces momentarily. The sound

of the train dies down.) Near Dhanbad. A crane fell down on their compartment. It has been so long – seven years. Or perhaps it's ten years.

Manas: That train accident near Dhanbad happened just last week. Rupsa, what is happening with you? Do you have amnesia or something? It's only been seven or eight days and you -

Rupsa: It's been probably seven-eight years. He was just thirty-six. We had been married for about eight years.

Manas: Rupa! It's true, I was thirty-six then. Tutu was just three. He used to call me 'Babuji', copying Dhyan Singh. And you he used to call -

Rupsa: "Maaiji". Just like Dhyan Singh, he used to say - "Babuji, naashta laga diya"!

Manas: Tutu still couldn't speak clearly –

Rupsa: He still could't say 'k' or 't'. He used to love him so much!

Manas: He won't recognise me now anymore, even Ratan, will she recognise me?

Rupsa: He used to love them so much. That day when I brought Ratan from Mother's orphanage...

Manas: off! Rupu! Why are you still uttering this Mother's orphanage nonsense! Speaking like a mad woman! Look at me, Rupu!

Rupsa: He was ecstatic in joy! And grateful. He was so so grateful. It was because of some of his issues that we couldn't get pregnant – that's why I wanted to surprise him -

Manas: Oh, stop! Stop it Rupsa! Whatever are you saying! What do you mean by 'his issues'? Surprise! Yeah surprise indeed – only it came as a shock!

Rupsa: Although it's not like I had planned it, but when I saw the child, when I saw Ratan on that rainy night...

Manas: Ratan - it was because of Ratan that we had to get married! Don't you remember, within seven months of marriage... and you are telling me that I had issues? It would have been better if I did have some issues!

Ratan: (To the audience) He had an issue. Since I got to know about it, I was worried sick for him! In case he gets hurt, I myself would say - 'we don't need kids. This is better, just the two of us!' - I didn't let him know for a minute that I knew about his problem -

Manas: Uff! This is insane!

Rupsa: Initially it was only me who would be taken to the doctors. I used to think at times - why doesn't he go and see a doctor? It could be his fault too, couldn't it?

Manas: (Fuming) What on earth!

Rupsa: Then one day, very abruptly, he stopped taking me to the doctors. I misunderstood him. He went by himself to get him checked, though he didn't let me know anything. After all, can anybody admit something like this about themselves! Nobody! He was also not able to admit.

Manas: Im – po – ssible!

Rupsa: One day, completely out of the blue, I found the torn pathological report in the waste paper basket.

Manas: I SAY SHUT UP! There is a limit to even the amount of lies you can tell, Rupsa!

Rupsa: And I felt so so sad, so bad for him when I saw the report, I can't even begin to tell you!

Manas: You have gone completely mad!

Rupsa: Issh! Imagine how terrible! How unfair it was on him! God robbed him off of the very core of his pride, his masculinity! How could I even be angry at him! How broken he must have felt – he bore all that grief all by himself – couldn't even share with me – how hurt his pride must have been!

Manas: My goodness! She has gone complete nuts! What I didn't share with her, couldn't – that was the issue about the money laundering. God knows Rupu didn't have the strength to bear that. And honestly, it was impossible for me to admit myself to be a thief, to be a gambler. Rupu used to hero worship me!

Rupsa: He hid it from me. I could understand how terribly it hurt his pride as a man was. That's why –

Manas: It was Sonali who really understood me. I could be myself in front her. It was her who gave me the idea to flee the country – and it worked! I would been in jail if I stayed back. Rupu, she couldn't have saved me – she was so gentle, and used to get nervous so easily! She used to get frightened just by roars of thunder... I had no other option but to leave the country. No other option!

Rupsa: No other option – we had no other option to become parents! I think perhaps that's why, when I brought Ratna from the orphanage – he was over the moon! When Ratna was about five, we went to get Tattu, together this time. It was him who chose the blue eyed, fair child. He was always a bit apprehensive of Ratna's dark complexion, though he never said anything –

Manas: Rupu has gotten everything wrong! Rupa! What are you saying love? Ratan has always been such a fair child!

Rupsa: Ratna isn't so dark anymore though. Her complexion has become this beautiful wheatish nowadays. Rather Tattu is becoming so tanned day by day. (To herself) All of us are getting so tanned – in the sun, in the rain, roaming from one place to another – we all ...

Manas: Rupsa! (Holds her hands) My Rupai! My Rupun! My Rupuli! (embraces) I won't let you roam in the sun or rain anymore – My Rupu, my love, see I'm back. I'm here now ...

Rupsa: (Talking to herself) I couldn't take care of them properly; how thin they must have become. I'll go keep them back at Mother's orphanage this time ...

Manas: (Earnestly) You still didn't forgive me, did you? Rupun! Look at me, please, do you see a cheat? Look at me, Rupu (she doesn't look) please – you still don't trust me? Rupsa! (shakes her) Listen to me Rupu, please, don't be like this, please love, Rupu! Believe me, I had no other option – Love? Rupai? Please believe me!

Rupsa: (She comes back to her senses- realises, and removes herself from his embrace. Chiding him) Chhi! You are a complete lunatic. You shouldn't be out and about. Chhi! Chhi! What are you doing? What a nuisance! Disgusting – are there no policemen around!

Manas: Rupsa! It's me, Manas. Ratan-Tutu's father. You are trying to call the police on me?

Rupsa: Didn't I just say that my husband had passed away long back? Anyway, he was not really the father of Ratna and Tattu.

Manas: Please don't be so cruel, Rupsa! You are their mother after all!

Rupsa: Who says so? I am not actually their mother. I'm telling you, you're mistaken.

Manas: Why are you set on ruining everything? Think of Ratan-Tutu once at lease! Rupu, sona, look, I'm back. (kneels in front of her) I was wrong, what I did was wrong – but please don't be so cruel to me – please believe me – I'm only human Rupu! People lose their way...

Rupsa: (Kindly, keeps her hands on his head – as if blessing him) You are mistaking again. It is alright, to err is to human after all. People lose their way! I pray to God that you get back what you have lost. Every person carries their own burden - what do we know!

[The sound of a coming train is gradually increasing. A whistle blows. Rupsa is about to go, gently pushing Manas away.]

Manas: Where are you going? Please don't go, Rupu!

Rupsa: I have to go.

Manas: (Gets up) I'll go with you then.

Rupsa: (Already on her way) Where will you go?

Manas: (Shouts) Why – Mcluskiegunj?

Rupsa: (Shouts back) Mcluskiegunj? Where is that? (she disappears)

Manas: (Running after her – shouts) Didn't you say that's where the kids are in a hostel!

Rupsa: (Shouts from the background) Hostel? What hostel? Whose kids?

[In the background the sound of a train coming and stopping at a platform can be heard]

Manas: (Stops and shouts) Stop, Rupa, stop for a minute – (sprints) Listen, Rupu, please – [lots of mixed sound - 'porter-porter' - 'cigarette- paan' - 'tea- tea'. There's a sudden loud noise in the background, Manas can't be seen anymore. Light comes back on stage.]

[The sound of a train leaving a station gradually decreases. Manas is standing on the stage, as if a statue. Lights pouring out of train windows illuminate his face – gradually the light gives way to darkness. The lights at the stage are also dim. Manas stands alone at the almost dark and empty stage among a deafening silence. Eventually he comes and sits on the bedding. There's a sound of a matchstick lighting. Manas tries to light his cigarette with matchsticks one by one unsuccessfully. The stage gradually gets completely dark, and the curtain falls.]

[Once the light comes back on teh stage, the director comes with the actors and greets the audience, saying- This play can be called Medea or it can be called Jason. You are free to decide what to name it. After all, whose drama is this, Jason's? Or Medea's?]

Chapter Four

Translation Strategy and Problems of Translation

This chapter focuses on the different nuances of translation of a play, and discusses the translation strategy for the practical translation. Along with that, the problems of translation that surfaced during the practical translation of Dev Sen's play has been discussed in this chapter. I have tried to identify and explore the problems through the resultant target text, while looking for the best possible solutions to those problems. I have also discussed the characteristics of my translation through conducting a comparative study with an existing translation of the primary text.

The Greek philosopher-politician Cicero had aptly summarized the translator's predicament,

> ...if I tender word for word, the result will sound uncouth, and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator. (qtd. in Das 37)

This dilemma of a translator, manifests in its full form especially when it comes to translating texts like a play, where the question of where the translator's loyalty should lie becomes a defining factor for the target text. Walter Benjamin noted -

> The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original. (Benjamin 19-20)

The act of translating a literary text is perhaps more difficult than most other kinds of translation activity. Benjamin in his seminal essay "The Task of the Translator" talked about "the unfathomable, the mysterious, the 'poetic'" (Benjamin 15) that is an "essential substance of a literary work"

(Benjamin 15), which goes beyond the realm of mere information to be conveyed. Benjamin talked about the 'afterlife' of a text – 'a continued life' that translation both ensures and ensues from. It is the task of the translator to give that 'afterlife' to a text, convey that "essential substance" along with the information, in the target language. According to Benjamin, works of art, which literary texts are very much part of, do not belong to any particular time period. It is through the translation of a text, especially when it is a literary text, that the text can live on beyond what it's ephemeral nature allows. As Benjamin observed -

> The intention of the poet is spontaneous, primary, graphic; that of the translator is derivative, ultimate, ideational ... translation ... is midway between poetry and doctrine. Its products are less sharply defined, but it leaves no less of a mark on history. (Benjamin 20)

As part of the translation strategy for this research project, the nuances and different arguments regarding the translation of a play was explored first.

Translation of Drama

Before delving into the nuances of translation of a performative text, the dichotomy of drama and play needs to be explored. While the words 'drama' and 'play' are often used interchangeably (even in this dissertation the words have often been used interchangeably), there is a difference in their actual meaning. The word drama refers to a particular form of literature or fiction that is intended to be performed, while the word 'play' refers to the performance of the theatre. A drama is for reading, while we are to see or experience a play. Hence, a drama can be treated as a literary text; a play, however, cannot. The true experience of a play lies in its performance – consequently, any attempts at translating a play has to consider the other aspects of a theatre performance, apart from the text the play is based on. Therefore, it can be understood that attempting to translate a text that is meant to be

performed comes with certain kinds of prerequisites as well as problems of its own. This particular aspect about translation of a play is substantiated by critic Gouri Deshpande, who argued,

> There is a significant difference between translating drama and translating any other genre of literature, for drama depends more on the spoken language, than do poetry or fiction, for example. A translator of drama has to keep in mind the fact that however "literary", a play is potentially a theatrical production meant for a live audience. Therefore, it is necessary for translator of a play also to keep in mind another important fact: the meaning and significance of "dramatic" language must immediately accessible through aural comprehension in the target language. (Deshpande 157)

One very important point that Deshpande raised is that the performance of a play in itself should be sufficient for the audience to understand it, even when it is based on a translation from another source text. Unlike other literary texts or translations of literary texts, a theatrical performance of a play cannot make use of additional explanatory measures such as a footnote or a glossary to illustrate exactly what the text wanted to convey. Susan Bassnett pointed out in her book *Translation Studies* (2002), that “the statements of individual theatre translators often imply that the methodology used in the translation process is the same as that used to approach prose texts” (Bassnett 124). Needless to say, that is not the case.

A dramatic text such as a play, simply cannot be translated in the same way as any other kind of translations can be. The very difference between a play text and other kinds of literary texts stems from the way the texts are read. A play or a drama is read “as something *incomplete,* rather than as a fully rounded unit” (Bassnett 124). While considering theorist Zuber-Skerritt’s definition for drama translation from one source language to a target language that also takes into account the aspect of its theatrical performance, it can be clarified that, “drama translation is defined as the translation of the

dramatic text from one language and culture into another, and the transposition of the original, translated or adapted text onto the stage" (qtd. in Ali and Morad). This definition illuminates the point that for a dramatic text, translation first takes place at a literary level, and then shifts to the stage while taking into consideration the cultural aspects and differences as well as theatrical features the target text. This definition further elaborates that it is only in the performance on stage of that text that the full potential of the text can be realized.

Terming drama translation as ‘science’, Zuber-Skerritt further pointed out that "drama translation science must be concerned both with the text as the basis for the stage production and individual theatrical performance" (qtd. in Ali and Morad). According to her, this particular ‘science’ of drama translation should also provide the directions for the stage production, along with providing the story the performance would be based upon, so as to bring the sensibilities of the source text forward into the target culture.

Susan Bassnett, while discussing the stance of Anne Ubersfeld, noted that “it is impossible to separate text from performance in a play since theatre consists of the dialectical relationship between both” (Bassnett 129). She also mentioned how an artificially created a distinction between the two has led to the literary text acquiring a higher status. One result of the supremacy of the literary text, she feels, has been the perception of performance as merely a ‘translation’ (Bassnett 129). Her argument can be further established when considering Translation Studies scholar Gideon Toury’s statement that “subjugation to ... norms may thus involve the suppression of some of the source text's features, on occasion even those which marked it as literary” (Toury 171). Taking both Bassnett and Toury’s concerns into consideration, it can be argued that while literary translation has been given an artificial superiority, the same superior status often hampers its growth and stops it from realizing its full potential, especially in the course of the translation of a play.

However, it should be noted that in a text like a play, the linguistic system is only an optional component in the set of a bunch of interrelated systems which ultimately create the theatre performance. In the case of a play, a literary text cannot be the equivalent of its performance. In this regard, noted theorist of Theatre Studies Patrice Pavis' proposition seems apt, who while discussing theatrical translation discussed that,

> translation in general and theatre translation, in particular, has changed paradigms: it can no longer be assimilated to a mechanism of production of semantic equivalence copied mechanically from the source text. It is rather to be conceived of as an appropriation of one text by another (qtd. in Che 31).

That being said, it has been established that translation activity for plays varies from other types of translations considerably - it is not translating a mere literary text to be read by people, it also has the dimension of performance attached to it. Susan Bassnett and McGuire stated that "… a theatre text exists in a dialectical relationship with the performance of that text. The two texts -written and performed- are coexistent and inseparable, and it is in this relationship that the paradox for the translator lies" (Bassnett and McGuire 87). This paradox presents itself through the activity of translation of such texts like a play, where it can be argued with certainty that the nuances of translating drama texts are more complicated than those of translating a generic literary text. In case of the translation of a play, the target text is not just read, but also spoken, as well as performed on the stage. This issue brings up a fundamental problem for the translator, and makes him choose between deciding to translate the text as a purely literary text, or to translate it in its function as an element, for instance as a play, in another complex cultural system. Because while attempting the second kind of translation activity, the translator's position and their competence will both come under immense scrutiny. While translating a theatre text and helping it achieve self-actualization, a

translator is faced with the issues of deciding on the equivalence choices as well as the translation strategies more than what they will encounter while undertaking any other kind of literary translation.

Deshpande, while talking about translating drama, stated,

> though literary translation should be done by a person almost bilingual in the two languages, there is still a difference, in however minute a degree, between a first and a second language. In the translation of any other literary genre, this minute degree causes only a minute inconvenience, but in the case of a play, these minute differences loom large. However bilingual one is, one does, after all, live in the linguistic area of one or the other of the languages in question. Which is why another important rule of translation should be adhered to as strictly as possible in the case of drama: the target-language should be the translator's first language. The danger of not grasping perfectly the conventions of the spoken language, colloquialisms, short-forms, references to current events, speech-rhythms or whatever—of any given time or place is very real in the case of a play and will seriously affect its impact and instant comprehensibility. (Deshpande 161)

Deshpande's statement poses itself as highly debatable, because expecting only translators whose mother tongue is the target language can be up to the job not only makes the activity of translation restricted, it also undermines the works of translators whose mother tongue may not be the target language, but they are not any less qualified. It also restricts the number translated works.

Ambrose Phillips, one of the translators of Racine's *Andromaque* (1667), shows that for a translator, to translate a performative text like a drama or a play, the translator should be careful about certain criteria, such as the following -

1) Playability, i.e. overall performative quality,

2) The play's relationship with the contemporary conventions of theatre,

3) Clarity about the characters relationship with each other.

Jiří Veltrusky, a Czech theatre theorist, had shown that certain characterisics of the drama text are quite unique. He had noted that dialogues blossom in time as well as in space, and is always integrated into the extra-linguistic situation. Such extra-linguistic situations comprise of both the set of things that surround the speakers as well as the speakers themselves. Not to mention the fact that the relationship between the dialogue and the extra-linguistic situation, such as the silences, is intense and reciprocal (Veltrusky 128). Thus, it is imperative while undertaking the task of translating a play to consider that "the written text of the drama is just a functional component in the total process that comprises theatre, and is characterized in ways that distinguish it from a written text designed to be read in its own right" (Zhu 57), such as a prose text.

Susan Bassnett, while discussing aspects of translating drama in her book *Translation Studies* (1980), propositioned,

> it would seem more logical, therefore, to proceed on the assumption that a theatre text, written with a view to its performance, contains distinguishable structural features that make it performable, beyond the stage directions themselves. Consequently, the task of the translator must be to determine what those structures are and to translate them into the TL, even though this may lead to major shifts on the linguistic and stylistic planes. (Bassnett 126)

As per this argument, therefore, the aspects of textual equivalence, paradigmatic equivalence, and stylistic equivalence become of less importance while the retention of performability becomes more important in a translation of a play.

Importance of audience

It should be considered that one of the biggest challenges faced by a translator while translating a vernacular Indian (Bhasha) text into English is to decide upon the audience. Whether it is English speaking Indians, or the Western audience or Indians of other languages who do not speak that particular Bhasha is a question that a Bhasha translator ponders upon. Because depending on the audience, even the sensibility of the translated text can and might change. Bijay Kumar Das mentioned that in post-colonial India, Bhasha texts are getting translated in order to reach a larger audience. He further elaborated that often this audience is the Indian English-speaking people (Das 121-122).

In the context of this project, I have employed Indian English while translating the primary text, as opposed to a more canonical form of English. This decision was a conscious choice, given one of the purposes of the practical translation is to be eventually performed on stage for an audience of present time.

Translation and Gender

Translation Studies scholar Lori Chamberlain, in her influential essay "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation" noted that Translation, both the act of it and the product of it, is viewed as something qualitatively different from the original act of writing, especially among the scholars of the West. Recalling the idea of 'les belles infideles' propagated by 17th-century French translators of classical Western texts, Chamberlain aptly depicts how translation has been sexualized (Chamberlain 315) by being dubbed as "the infidel woman".

As Gideon Toury went on to say in his essay "'Translation of Literary Texts' vs. 'Literary Translation'" that "it is mainly European scholars who have had conceptual problems with accepting a target-oriented framework for research in Translation Studies"(Toury 175), given their concerns about

fidelity and faithfulness, especially to the 'original'/source text. While the original (text) is viewed as natural, truthful and lawful, translation is considered as derivative, artificial, and treasonous. This issue of faitfulness, which as discussed previously is a product of the Eurocentric approach to translation, presents itself as a 'marriage' where translation is the 'woman' and is quite capable of being guilty of infidelity in the relationship, and original is the 'man', and incapable of either infidelity or receiving punishment because of constraints of the law. Translation is therefore considered as a secondary, derivative activity, juxtaposed with the idea of the source text as the paternal, authoritative, original work (Chamberlain 315).

Due to the concern's scholars have had about the faithfulness of a translation, the anxiety about regulating or adhering to that fidelity to original has been a fundamental feature of translation activity as dictated by such scholars – which has often been harmful to the target text. In fact, translation has often been seen as a transgression. Often, the only way for a translation to be accepted as viable has been through assuming the role of original [text] (Chamberlain 320). This burden of 'originality' comes with strict laws to maintain fidelity and stops the translation from achieving self-actualization. In the case of translation of a text like a play which is meant to be performed, such strictness can hamper the process and the target text greatly.

The context of translation as a derivative, 'feminine' activity, can be studied in relation with women's writing as well. Just as translation has had to compete with 'original' text, women's writing also had to compete to make a name for itself in a space which has historically been dominated by men. Nabaneeta Dev Sen, in her article "Women Writing in India at the Turn of the Century" (2001) talks about the absence of anything called men's writing, and notes that "Because it came first, it existed as the rule. All writing is male.... Women's writing appeared much later, as an exception to the rule" (Dev Sen 8). The story of Medea, especially in ancient Greece, was almost always depicted by men.

It was the men like Apollonius of Rhodes, Seneca, Euripides and so on, who created the various versions of Medea as per their sympathy or apathy for the character. This is one particular point where Dev Sen's play *Medea* deviates. In Dev Sen's *Medea,* the heroine has a female voice, which was lacking in the aforementioned versions given men were wrote those. By virtue of having a female voice, Dev Sen's Medea also has more agency as a woman. In this context, Helen Cixous' argument in her pioneering article "The Laugh of Medusa" (1976) can be considered where she said,

> Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies … Woman must put herself into the text – as into the World and into history – by her own movement. (875)

In the context of this research project, the process of translation of Dev Sen's play Medea has been greatly influenced by the idea propagated by Chamberlain in her essay. The source text of this research project itself can be considered to be an adaptation of the myth of Medea. It can also be considered as a particular kind of imitation, which as per Aaltonen described as a subcategory of adaptation that creates a new play around a theme or idea borrowed from the source text (qtd. in Braga Riera 124), of Euripides' *Medea.* Hence, the target text in this context is exposed to a unique contradiction – it can be simultaneously read as a double translation of the myth of Medea, as well as a direct translation of a Bhasha text that maintains equivalence.

Historically, 'the literature arising out of the West's encounter with the East' (Figuera 5) has been anything but apolitical. In its articulation of the Western writers' political relation to their own society, their vision of themselves as individuals within that society and their sense of entitlement, such literature has always been heavily political. In fact, it is a 'luxury' to 'find oneself' in a culture that is not one's own, one that the West has delved into since the time of colonialism. But when the Orient decides the make use of the Occident to find 'herself', that power structure becomes unsteady.

The very foundation of the identity of the Occident has been in relation to, rather in contrast with, the Orient – be is philosophical, social, or purely physical. During the colonial era, as Western scholars started translating classical Oriental texts, catering to the audience of the West, this political move of establishing the Western identity in opposition to the Eastern one became strengthened. As observed by G J V Prasad in his essay "Writing Translation: The Strange Case of Indian English Novel", "the act of writing in English is not 'merely' one of translation of an Indian text into the English language, but a quest for a space which is created by translation and assimilation, and hence transformation of all three – the Indian text, context, and the English language" (Prasad 79). Thereby it can be said that translation of a text from an Indian language into English is in a way an act of creating space for itself in an alien environment. Dev Sen's play is iconic in that it decided to make use of the classical Occidental ideologies in order to establish a very contemporary, very modern, and very Oriental identity.

In this particular situation, my reading of the primary text was also influenced by the idea of a woman writing a woman's story, and giving an adequate agency to women's actions and emotions. Hence, while translating the text, that influence coloured my stand as a translator and how I interpreted certain dialogues and character stances in the play, which was reflected in the target text.

Theoretical framework of the practical translation

While discussing the theoretical framework for the practical translation, the two theories that have been considered the most by the researcher are the theory of equivalence, as propagated by Translation Studies scholar Eugene Nida, and the theory of domestication and foreignization propagated by the theorist Lawrence Venuti. Both these theories have been discussed in the first chapter.

As the primary text for this dissertation has been treated as a literary text (albeit while keeping the performative aspects in mind), which is making the leap from one language-culture to another, the concern of maintaining equivalence between the source text and the target text presented itself to be of utmost importance. While executing the practical translation, I was constantly on the lookout for equivalent words, phrases, and social practices, not to mention syntagmatic and structural equivalent in the target language, similar to the source language.

But somewhat debunking the theory of equivalence, Ricoeur put forward the idea that equivalence is presupposed. He said about the "true nature of equivalence" that it "is produced by translation rather than presupposed by it." Considering this idea of Ricoeur, it is understood that equivalence helps to translate within an existing framework – with the presupposed notion that something is translatable. But when a formal equivalence can't be established, especially while translating words for source language to the target language, the translator has to resort to establishing a dynamic equivalence of the same – a task which is easier for longer discourses than for words. This often emerges in the form of a translator's dilemma, as the translator suffers from the "anguish of serving two masters, the foreigner in his strangeness, the reader in his desire for appropriation" (Ricoeur 35).

In his essay "A 'Passage': Translating the Untranslatable" Paul Ricoeur mentioned that "there is no absolute criterion of what would count as good translation" (34). This idea of Ricoeur's goes against a number of initial theorists of Translation Studies, such as Benjamin, who believed with certainty in the distinction between good and bad translation. About the activity of translation, Paul Ricoeur said that "the practice of translation remains a risky operation which is always in search of its theory" (Ricoeur 35). He further elaborated, saying,

> it is through a doing, in pursuit of its theory, that the translator gets over the obstacle – and even the theoretical objection – of the impossibility of mechanically reproducing something in another language. (Ricoeur 32)

Hence, it is through the task of practical translation as well as based on that experience the following problems of translation were encountered, and explored.

The untranslatability of names, nicknames, and the nuances of those names

Almost every culture has a certain kind of nuances when it comes to the names of individuals belonging to that culture. Names are the primary basis for creating people's identity, therefore are of utmost importance. In the source text, the names of the characters are heavily laden with meanings, notions, and indications. The proper nouns are words from the Bengali vocabulary that are part of the Bengali culture and would give certain indications and hints to a Bengali audience. Retaining those names in translation doesn't necessarily retain the sensibility or the subtle hints attached to the words themselves.

For instance, in the play, while referring to their children, Manas calls them Tutu and Ratan, while Rupsa referred to them as Ratna and Tattu. At a glance, it simply looks to be different versions of the same names that they are talking about, just as how near ones often lovingly modify and create nicknames out of proper names. But generally, in Bengali culture, Ratan is a name given to male children, while Ratna is a female name. Similarly, Tutu is a female name, while Tattu is a male name. This discrepancy in the versions of their children's names comes as a premonition of what is going to unfold in the course of the play – how Manas and Rupsa will present the audience with different versions of the same life. This basic difference in the versions of their children's names goes on to represent the fundmental differences between them as two people with differing ideologies,

aspirations and world views, as well as their approach to life which would ultimately turn into two very different yet very similar narratives.

This problem was noted by providing footnote in my translation, explaining the issue. However, during the performance of the play, it would be upto the actors and the audience to recognise this politics.

Manas calls Rupsa by various different names throughout the course of the play – such as ‘Rupa’, ‘Rupu’ and so on, which indicate the intimacy he feels towards her. On the other hand, Rupsa repeatedly calls Manas ‘Mr. Mullick’ which is very formal, and indicative of her detachment towards him. This issue was resolved by means of incorporating foreignization of terms along with retaining formal equivalence of the phrases. The following excerpt from my translation of the primary text can demonstrate this -

“Manas: (Earnestly) You still didn’t forgive me, did you? Rupun! Look at me, please, do you see a cheat? Look at me, Rupu (she doesn’t look) please – you still don’t trust me? Rupsa! (shakes her) Listen to me Rupu, please, don’t be like this, please love, Rupu! Believe me, I had no other option – Love? Rupai? Please believe me!”

And,

“Manas: Rupa! Please believe me, love!

Rupsa: (Calmly) Mr. Mullick, please don’t get so agitated. I am certain that I am not the Rupsa you know. Can’t you see, I have no similarities with her? Tell me, did she have six toes like this on her left foot? (She hitches her saree a little to show the feet)”

These excerpts from the play show that while Manas felt, or tried to establish an intimacy with Rupsa, Rupsa did not reciprocate those feelings, rather she maintained an air of formality with him - like

one would do with a stranger. Thereby the idea that their relationship is not situated on an equal plane gets conveyed. It becomes very clear that while Manas desperately tries to grasp on to an idea of a relationship between them, that matter doesn't warrant any concern from Rupsa.

Constructing comparables

In the source text, during his repeated tries to establish a connection with Rupsa, Manas often uses terms of affection to call her. Such terms of affection are extremely integral to the source language - foreignizing those terms by retaining them in the target text would not have made sense in the target language or to the target audience. Hence those terms were replaced by terms of affection in the target language. In the process, some of the nuances have been lost.

For instance, Manas calls Rupsa 'Shona' multiple times, which is a very common term of affection in Bangla language that elders use for people who are younger than them. Now, 'Shona' in English, which is the target language, does have a literal equivalent, which means 'gold' or 'precious'. However, neither of these two words are used as terms of affection in the target culture, hence the word was replaced with the word 'love', which is a commonly used term of affection in the target language.

The use of other languages in dialogues for emphasis

In Bengali plays, the use of another language to emphasise what is being said is a common trope. Characters use of occasional Hindi or English language, as these are the languages Bengali comes in contact with the most, not only to puts emphasise on what the characters are saying, but playwrights also use this trope to signify social and economic background, and educational background of the characters, among other features. Fortunately, it was possible to translate the sensibility of using the

Hindi language in the dialogues by retaining the sentences in the target text as they were in the source text.

For instance, the following dialogues show the retention of Hindi -

“Manas: Rupa! It’s true, I was thirty-six then. Tutu was just three. She used to call me ‘Babuji’, copying Dhyan Singh. And you she used to call -

Rupsa: “Maaiji”. Just like Dhyan Singh, he used to say - “Babuji, naashta laga diya”!”

However, the use of the English words and phrases in the source-text although was retained in the target text as well, the additional emphasis that such words and phrases brought to the text was lost during the translation.

For instance, the use of words such as ‘nerve’, ‘surprise’, ‘plan’ in the source language has been retained in the target language as well, but the effect of having a foreign word suddenly dropping in a dialogue of a different language wasn’t captured in the target text.

The use of proverbs and adverbial phrases in the source text

Playwrights often make use of occasional proverbs and phrases from Bengali as part of the dialogues. For a translator, translating proverbs is a difficult job because doing a literal or word by word translation, thereby retaining the formal equivalence does not do justice to either the source text or the target text. Neither does employing dynamic equivalence work, because in such a case although the sense of what is said would be retained, the effect of the dialogue would be lost. In such cases, the only feasible option for a translator then is to find a similar proverb in the target language and

make use of that. Although, sometimes certain proverbs may not have an equivalent in the target language, in which case the translator have to forego the use of the proverb in the target text, and replace that part with regular sentences while retaining the dynamic equivalence.

For instance, the following dialogue of Manas in the source text employed a few adverbial phrases, among which the only one could find its equivalence in the English phrase “rained cats and dogs” -

“Manas: Rupa, don’t you remember! There was such a terrible storm the day Ratan was born! It rained incessantly! You were writhing in pain, and the storm kept on getting worse – there was so much lightning and thunder! And each time there was a crash of thunder, you kept getting startled and scared! Both of us were at our wit's end Rupai – do you really not remember that day? It was the month of Sravan, it rained cats and dogs!”

The untranslatability of social practices and cultural references

There are certain social practices that are prevalent in the source culture but are foreign to the target culture. Because of which, the target culture does not provide the translator with enough resources to translate such cultural and social practices. The translator resorts to trying to do a literal translation but often it remains inadequate. Given the words describing such practices are often an integral part of the source language without any equivalent in the target language, it becomes difficult to translate such references. While the meaning gets across, neither formal equivalence nor dynamic equivalence gets justice.

For instance, the following dialogue by Rupsa gives an idea -

“Rupsa: Look, mister, this is too much. I have no idea about any such incident. My father married me off with enough pomp and show – with feras, rituals, and everything. My husband - ”

While the dialogue does retain the idea that Rupsa's father spent a lot of money and married her off with gusto, the social practices of a Bengali wedding as described in the source text doesn't get captured.

Issues of translating pronunciation patterns

In this play, there is one particular instance in the source-text where Rupsa and Manas are referring to the speech-deficiency that one of the children mentioned in the play, Tattu/Tutu, had as an infant. The child couldn't pronounce 'k' sounding words, replacing 'k' with soft 't' in words. While referring to this anecdote, in the source text, Manas has a dialogue where he describes how Tattu/Tutu used to talk – complete with an imitation of the child's speech pattern -

"মানস: বলতো - ' তল থুলে দাও, দল থাবো..." [Manas: Bolto – 'tol thule daao, dol thabo...'] (Dev Sen 14).

This feature has been extremely difficult to bring forward in the target text, which is why while keeping the dynamic equivalence of the anecdote intact, that particular dialogue of Manas was omitted.

Translating extra-linguistic features

Various extra-linguistic factors other than dialogues are intrinsic to the performance of a play. A performative text like a play comes with many extra-linguistic nuances, chief among which are the dramatic silences, style of dialogue throw, phonemic features and so on. Translating those extra-linguistic traits and rendering them successfully in the target text can be a difficult job, considering the linguistic barriers, among other things, between the source text and the target text.

The primary text that is the main consideration of this research mostly consists of dialogues. In fact the entire play is an on-going dialogue between the two characters of the play – which is less of a conversation than a context to establish one's narrative over the other's. Because of which there are places where one character's dialogue acts as link to the other characters dialogue. I have interpreted this to be over-lapping of dialogues. But this particular feature is at the mercy of the reader, or performer/actor in this case. For instance, this excerpt shows Manas' dialogue making way for Rupsa's dialogue -

"Manas: Rupa, don't you remember! There was such a terrible storm the day Ratan was born! [...] It was the month of Sravan, it rained cats and dogs!

Rupa: (To herself) It was the month of Sravan, it rained cats and dogs! We went to visit Mother Teresa's orphanage one day. [...] Our first child!"

There are also instances of silences in the source text that indicate understanding or realization at times. There are also a lot of places where the characters are taken aback, or surprised, or shocked - emotions which are quite easily deciphered from the words in the dialogues of the source text.

In order to retain the same effect in the target text, the translator has made extensive use of punctuation marks, and in certain cases, has mentioned the emotions in parentheses, as can be seen from the following excerpt -

"Man: And the children?

Woman: (taken aback) Children!?

Man: Yeah...how are they?

Woman: (still surprised) How are they?

Man: Why are you so surprised? I'm talking about Tutu- Ratan.

Woman: Tutu – Ratan? Who are Tutu – Ratan?

Man: Who are Tutu- Ratan? Are you... aren't you Rupsa?

Woman: Yes, my name is Rupsa. And you are..?

Man: Rupa!!! Are you really not able to recognise me? It's me – I'm Manas.

Rupsa: Manas? Which Manas? Majumder? Or Roychoudhury?

Manas: Why are you - are you joking with me?

Rupsa: (A little annoyed) Excuse me! Why would I joke with you? I knew two people named Manas. It's been so long since I met them...they must have changed with age. In fact, we have all changed. it's not like anybody is still the same. Somebody has gone bald, somebody is potbellied now, while somebody else has had a complete makeover. It's not that easy to recognise!"

Another important extra-linguistic feature that texts like plays have is the use of utterances – singular or compound, that are mostly indicative of emotions, of what the characters are feeling in that moment. These utterances are almost always culture or language specific. In case of the translation of this play, I have maintained the equivalence of such utterances and foreignized them in the target text. For instance,

"Rupsa: (She comes back to her senses- realises, and removes herself from his embrace. Chiding him) Chhi! You are a complete lunatic. You shouldn't be out and about. Chhi! Chhi! What are you doing? What a nuisance! Disgusting – are there no policemen around!"

In this dialogue, the repeated utterance of "chhi" was retained. It showed the character's disgust, while keeping the source cultural aspect intact, given the use of "chhi" is atypical of Bengali culture.

Use of onomatopoeic words

Given the source language Bengali is a somewhat musical language, the colloquialisms of everyday language are full of onomatopoeic words. The playwright has made ample use of this feature of the source language in her play, as the play essentially manifests in the form of a dialogue between two

people. But onomatopoeic words are extremely difficult to retain in target text through foreignization, as the origin of such words is innately linked in the culture and language of their origin, and therefore do not make sense in another language. Furthermore, rendering the formal equivalence of such words most often is not suitable with the target language and its grammar and syntax. Hence, retaining the dynamic equivalence, such onomatopoeic words have been simply translated into the target language while complying to the target language grammar and syntax.

For example, the following dialogue of Rupsa can be considered -

“Rupsa: Flocks of birds used to take off right before sunrise every dawn. The water used to turn pink...”

In the target text the phrase ‘flocks of’ was used in place of the onomatopoeic phrase ‘ঝাঁকে ঝাঁকে' [jhaanke jhaanke].

Equivalence of the target text

Apart from problems of practical translation, there is also the theoretical aspect of a translation that needs to be considered. In most cases of literary translations rendering formal equivalence becomes problematic, as the story or the emotion in the source text often gets jeopardized in the target text while doing so. Which is why in this research project, the task of translation has adhered to mostly the concept of dynamic equivalence, as propagated by scholar Lawrence Venuti. The following excerpt from the translation of the primary source text can be shown as an instance -

"রূপসা: আমি নই। আপনার ভুল হচ্ছে। আপনি অন্য কেউ ভেবেছেন আমাকে।

মানস: রূপা, বিশ্বাস করো, আমার খু-উ-ব কষ্ট টুটু-রতনের জন্যে। তোমার তো ঠিকানা পর্যন্ত খুঁজে পেলাম না। যখন বর্মা থেকে ফিরলাম তোমার বাবা মারা গেছেন, বাড়ি-টাড়ি বেচে দিয়ে তুমি কোথায়

মিলিয়ে গিয়েছো। কেউ একটা ঠিকানা পর্যন্ত দিতে পারলো না। দিল্লিতে যে কত খোঁজ করেছি - রূপু, শোনো, আমি পাঁচ বছর হলো ফিরেছি - আমি পাঁচটা বছর তোমাদের খুঁজে বেড়াচ্ছি - আমাকে বিশ্বাস করো রূপু, রতন- টুটুকে আমি সত্যিই- আমাকে- ক্ষমা কি এতই শক্ত ? (হাঁটু মুড়ে বসে পড়ে)" (Dev Sen 13).

"Rupsa: You are mistaking me for someone else, I'm sure.

Manas: Rupa, please, believe me, I miss Ratan and Tutu terribly! I couldn't even find your address. When I came back from Burma, I found out that your father had passed away, and nobody knew where you went after selling the house. No one had any trace. I searched for you everywhere in Delhi – Rupu, it's been five years since I came back – Five years since I have been looking for you – Trust me Rupu– Ratan-Tutu, I really – I – Is it that hard to forgive me? (Kneels in front of her)"

However, it should be noted that in a performative text like a play, the effect of dialogues, or even stage settings, is very important as that would eventually influence the performance. A translation of a play, while being performed becomes a primary text for the performance, and the effects rendered in the target text from the source text gets conveyed to the performance. While dynamic equivalence (or the effect of equivalence in general) does indeed render the sensibilities of the source text, it does not necessarily render all the effects intended in the source text.

Comparative study of the translations of Dev Sen's *Medea*

In order to understand the underlying problems of any text, the best course of action is to conduct a comparative study between said text and other texts that are similar to it. As mentioned in the introduction, Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Medea* (1994) was translated in 2005 by the noted scholar Tutun Mukherjee. Hence, the target text translated by the researcher has the unique opportunity to be compared and studied in contrast with Mukherjee's translation of the play.

Upon conducting a close reading of both of the translations, certain differences in the translation strategies employed in the translation of Dev Sen's *Medea* (1994) has surfaced. While making note of the differences, examples will be given from both the translations to illustrate the point. Henceforth, Mukherjee's translation shall be denoted as *Medea*-1 and the researcher's translation shall be denoted as *Medea*-2.

The language and diction of the stage directions in the two translations differ, despite both target texts belonging to English-language. For instance, the stage direction at the beginning of the play can be looked at -

Medea-1

(A railway station in the suburbs. A gas lamp lights the stage.

Offstage: The sound of moving trains, intermittent shouts of 'coolie-coolie', and vendor-calls of 'chai garam', 'paan-bidi-cigarettes', etc.

A middle-aged man is seated on a hold-all[13]. He is striking matches in repeated attempts to light a cigarette.

A woman enters carrying a suitcase and a shoulder bag. She is wearing a cotton print sari. Both are in their forties.)

Medea-2

[A small-town railway station. On the stage, there is a gas light.

In the background, there are faint sounds of trains coming and going, people calling for porters, hawkers selling tea, betel leaf, bidi, cigarette etc.

[13] A hold-all essentially a bedding that people used to carry during long, over-night, train journeys earlier. Due to the incorporation of comfortable berths in trains, this practice of carrying hold-all is gone now.

On the stage there is a man sitting on a bedding, unsuccessfully trying to light a cigarette again and again with matchsticks.

A lady enters, with a bag on her shoulder and a suitcase in hand, wearing a colourful taant saree. Both the man and the woman are middle-aged.]

In the two translations, the primary difference seems to be of foreignization and domestication. While the researcher has domesticated the background sounds of calls for porters and hawkers selling their wares, Mukherjee has foreignized those articulations. On the other hand, the researcher has foreignized the attire of the lady – retaining the taant saree as it is, as the concept of that attire also helped define and understand certain other aspects of this research, while in *Medea*-1, it was mentioned as a 'cotton print sari'.

In *Medea*-1, the man is seen to be seated on a 'hold-all'- a domesticated version of bedding that *Medea*-2 has foreignized. In fact, this particular contrast between the two target-language texts also helps bring forth another major point of bifurcation between the two texts. The use of the concept or the denomination of 'hold-all' is almost obsolete nowadays, something that was a staple for longer train journeys even twenty years ago.

Another point that has come forward during the close reading of the two target-language texts is that of the difference of the kind of language used in the two translations. The following excerpts from the translations will help illustrate this point -

Medea-1

"Rupsa: Then one day all medical examinations stopped. Actually, I have misjudged him. He had got himself examined too. He didn't confide in me, though. I suppose it isn't easy for a man to volunteer such information. No man can. He couldn't either."

Medea-2

“Rupsa: Then one day, very abruptly, he stopped taking me to the doctors. I misunderstood him. He went by himself to get him checked, though he didn’t let me know anything. After all, how can anyone admit something like that about themselves! No one can! He was not able to either.”

After taking into consideration both the excerpts, it can be seen that in *Medea*-1, the translator has used a more formal version of the target language, while in *Medea*-2, the translator has used a more colloquial version of the target language. This can be due to the difference in the translators’ position, as well as familiarity with the target language.

The concern about the two translators’ difference in position also brings up the notion of the difference in their reading of the source text. Further elaboration can be done through the following excerpts -

Medea-1

“Rupsa: Look here, please don’t speak to me like that. When I don’t even know you, where is the question of trying to joke with you? Nor do I wish to be funny. Instead, why don’t you try to explain the strange things you’ve been saying... for example, who are Ratan-Tutu?”

Medea-2

“Rupsa: Look, please don’t talk like that to me anymore. I don’t even know you – there’s no question about joking with you. Neither do I have the intention! Rather you have been saying all sorts of nonsense all this time – Who are Ratan – tutu?”

Medea-1

“Rupsa: Will you kindly explain? Should I know you? Have we met before?”

Medea-2

“Rupsa: What is the matter exactly? Should I be knowing you? Did we meet somewhere before?”

The subject position of Rupsa in the two translations are clearly different, as has been emphasised through the excerpts. As is evident from the dialogues, the character of Rupsa from *Medea*-1 is a kind

stranger, who is paying enough attention to what Manas has to say – she is willing to hear him out and give her time to him. While the Rupsa from *Medea*-2 is a woman who seems cautious of the blathering stranger and does not want anything to do with him.

This difference in the portrayal of the character of Rupsa is the outcome of the difference in the readings of the source text by the translators. The translators' subject positions have an effect on their reading of the source text, and in turn, creates the difference in the way they perceive the source text. The different perceptions of the source text, in turn, leads to the creation of different target texts – despite the source text being the same. As the text in question is a play, it can be said with certainty that the performance of the target texts, therefore, will definitely be influenced by the different conception of the translation.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Why Translation Matters

"Without translation, we would be living in provinces bordering on silence." - George Steiner

In his Preface to World Literature published in 1940, Albert Guerard called translation "the indispensable instrument". Truly, it is with the help of translation (as a tool) that literature from various parts of the world, as well as ages, can and do survive. For German theorist Walter Benjamin, translation is "the most important means for a work of literature to survive its own period and gain a meaningful afterlife." Theorist Moulton said, "the study of literature as a whole is impossible without a free use of translation", and "one who refuses translations by that fact cuts himself off from the major part of the literary field" (4-5).

Author Edith Grossman very rightly points out in the introduction to her book *Why Translation Matters* (2011),

> The very concept of world literature as a discipline fit for academic study depends on the availability of translations. Translation occupies a central and prominent position in the conceptualization of a universal, enlightened civilization. (Grossman 13)

Translation is one of the fundamental elements that keep together as well as expand our society and our world. It is through translation that we inherit the stories of our past, of countries and societies we would otherwise be unaware of; it expands our horizons, both literally and metaphorically. In

Edith Grossman's words, "Translation expands our ability to explore through literature the thoughts and feelings of people from another society or another time" (14).

Summary of Work Done in the Thesis

In the beginning, the sole objective of this thesis was to observe, understand, and overcome the problems of translation, specifically by observing one single text going through the process of translation - while translating the primary text, which is Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Medea.* However, once started with the task, it was simply not possible to ignore the legacy of the tale of Medea, as well as the sources where Dev Sen found her inspiration. Thus, while her *Medea* was the primary text of this research, the researcher was compelled to look at it through a critical lens of adaptation studies and attempt a little to understand the story in its complete magnanimity.

Hence, while studying the background and context for the research, the story of Medea and Jason was considered, especially through the writings of select few Greek playwrights and historians. The evolution of the character of Medea, whose story is told in the primary text of this research, was tracked to better understand the story and the characters.

I have also studied the origin of translation studies and the aspects of translation in the Indian context, comparatively with translation's relation with the West. In addition to that, given the primary text is a play, the aspects of drama in ancient India, and the evolution and aspects of drama and theatre in Bengal was also studied in the course of the research work.

While preparing for the practical translation, I studied aspects and theories of translation to have a better grasp of the task at hand. Theories and ideas propagated by scholars such as Gouri Deshpande, Susan Bassnett, Gideon Toury and so on were studied as part of the preparation.

I translated the primary text from the source language (Bengali) to the target language (English), while making a note of the problems that arose while translating. Using the available theories and studies, the researcher tried finding the solutions to the issues of translation without compromising with the source text too much and tried to create a cohesive as well as coherent target text.

The findings of the Study

Despite being heavily influenced by the Euripides' *Medea,* unlike that or any other versions of Medea's story, this one doesn't start in medias res. Instead, it begins quite suddenly, and unexpectedly, after what can be assumed a rather long break in the storyline – it starts almost like a dream sequence or an epilogue. It even ends in a very dreamlike manner – making the audience, as well as Manas, wonder whether the entire interaction was even real.

The study found that in spite of the influences, the primary text stands on its own merit with its own features and specialties.

The study also found that translation of a text such as a play, which is meant to be performed to reach its full potential, comes with various nuances that are otherwise foreign to the task of translation of literary texts. As opposed to literary texts, a performative text like a play can be studied as both a literary text, as well as a text with features more than that of literary texts.

The research also explored and documented the various problems of translation during the undertaking of practical translation. Many of these problems were successfully overcome, while other some problems baffled the researcher, leaving scope for further research. While studying the target text in comparison with a previous translation of the source text, the effects of the subject position of the the translator were also explored.

Scope of further research

Walter Benjamin observed in his ground-breaking essay, “The Task of the Translator” that “all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines” (Benjamin 23).

This dissertation presents itself with immense scope for further research. In this dissertation, the researcher has only focused on the problems that arose during practical translation. Even among those problems, it is her belief that more ideas and research on the aspects of linguistic and extra-linguistic issues of translation can be explored just based on the primary text, which despite being a small one-act play, can present such opportunities.

In fact, as the primary text is based on an existing mythical story, considering this as an adaptation, further research can be conducted, looking into the ideas of reverse translation as well as adaptation. The aspects of the relation between translation and gender can also be explored through the primary text and its translation. Moreover, similar research work can be done with different texts of the same genre as well as of different genres. Considering the idea of “translation of literary texts” versus “literary translation” produced by scholar Gideon Toury, the translation of the primary text can be further explored.

Bibliography

Apollonius of Rhodes. *Jason and Medea.*Penguin, 2015.

Baker, Mona. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. Routledge, 1998.

Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi, ed. *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice.* Routledge, 1999.

Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies.* Routledge, 2002.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*". Translated by Harry Zohn. pp. 15-25.

Bhattacharya, Asutosh. "Bengali Drama." *Indian Literature.* Vol 1, No. 2. Sahitya Academy. Jstor. Accessed 17 November, 2017.

Cao, Deborah. *Chinese Language in Law: Code Red.* Lexington Books, 2017.

Catford, J.C. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation.*Oxford University Press, 1965.

Cartwright, Mark. "Jason & the Argonauts." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Ancient History Encyclopedia, 21 Jul 2012. Web. Accessed 27 April 2019.

Chamberlain, Lori. "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation." *Signs*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1988, pp. 454–472. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3174168.

Chandran, Mini. "The Practice of Translation in India." *Sahapedia,* 01 September, 2016. www.sahapedia.org/the-practice-of-translation-india. Accessed 12 April, 2019.

Che, J.S. "Translation of the Drama Text as an Incomplete Entity". *Translation Today*, vol. 6. 2009. pp. 30-46.

Das, Bijay Kumar. *A Handbook of Translation Studies.* Atlantic, 2005.

Deshpande, Gouri. "Translating Drama: the Experience of Mahanirvan." *Indian Literature.* Vol. 37, No. 4. Sahitya Academy. Jstor. Accessed 17 November, 2017.

Dev Sen, Nabaneeta. *Medea Ebong*. Ananda Publishers Private Limited. Kolkata, 1994.

Dev Sen, Nabaneeta. *Medea. Staging Resistance: Plays by Women in Translation,* edited by Tutun Mukherjee. Oxford University Press, 2005. pp. 86-95.

Dev Sen, Nabaneeta. "Women Writing in India at the Turn of the Century". *Growing Up as a Woman Writer*. Edited by Jasbir Jain. Sahitya Akademi, 2007. pp. 3-18.

Diodorus Siculus. "Library of History Book". Translated by C. H. Oldfather. Theoi.com. www.theoi.com/Text/DiodorusSiculus4C.

Euripides, and Philip Vellacott. *Medea and Other Plays: Medea, Hecabe, Electra, Heracles*. Penguin, 1963.

Figuiera, Dorothy M. *Translating the Orient: The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-Century Europe.* SUNY Press, 1991.

Gale, Maggie B. and Viv Gardner, ed. *Women, Theatre and Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies.* Manchester University Press, 2000.

Ganguly, Avishek. *The Poetics and Politics of Translation in Contemporary Drama, 1960s-1990s.* 2012. Columbia University.

Gentzler, Edwin. "Macro- and Micro- Turns in Translation Studies". *Eurocentricism in Translation Studies*. John Benjamins Publishing, 2013. pp. 9-28.

Godwin, William. *The Lives of the Necromancers*. 1834. *Project Gutenberg*. www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7082. Accessed 10 March, 2019.

Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths*. Penguin Books, 2011.

Griffiths, Emma. *Medea.*Taylor and Francis, 2006.

Grossman, Edith. *Why Translation Matters*. Orient Blackswan, 2011.

Hesiod. *Theogony*. Center for Hellenic Studies. Harvard University. www.chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5289. Accessed 22 February, 2018.

"Hubris". *Literary Devices: Definition and Examples of Literary Terms.* www.literarydevices.net/hubris. Accessed 16 June, 2019.

Knox, B.M.W. "The Medea of Euripides". Yale Classical Studies, vol. 25. 1977. pp. 272-293.

Lei, Zhu. "Aesthetic Quality in Theatre as a Genre Performance." International Journal of English Linguistics 2.5, 2012. pp. 55-59.

"Medea." The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. *Encyclopedia.com.* www.encyclopedia.com. Accessed 25 February, 2019.

Muzaffar, Sharmin and Behera, Pitambar. "The Concept of Equivalence, Gain and Loss (Divergence) in English-Urdu Web-Based Machine Translation Platforms." Researchgate, 2017. Accessed 11 May, 2019.

Patil, Chandrasekhar. *"*Rhythm in Translation: Between the Words and Beyond Them,*" Literature in Translation*. Ed .. Pramod Talgeri and S.B.Verma. Popular Prakashan, 1988.

Prasad, G.J.V. "Writing Translation: The Strange Case of the Indian English Novel". pp. 41-57.

Riera, Jorge Braga. "The Non-Verbal in Drama Translation: Spanish Classical Theatre in English." Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense, 15. 2007.

Ricoeur, Paul. *On Translation*. Translated by Eileen Brennan. Routledge, 2006.

Schlesinger, Eilhard. "On Euripides' *Medea*". Euripides: *A Collection of Critical Essays.* Translated and abridged by Walter Moskalew. Prentice-Hall, 1968. pp. 293-310.

Snell-Hornby, Mary. "Theatre and Opera Translation". *A Companion to Translation Studies.* Multilingual Matters LTD, 2007. pp. 106-119.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “The Politics of Translation.” *The Translation Studies Reader, edited by Lawrence Venuti.* Routledge, 2000.

Toury, Gideon. “‘Translation of Literary Texts’ vs. ‘Literary Translation’”. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Johns Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995. pp.166-180.

Tymoczko, Maria. *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators.* Routledge, 2007.

Tymoczko, Maria. “Reconceptualizing Translation Theory: Integrating Non-Western Thought About Translation”. *Translating Others*, vol.1. pp. 13-32.

Varadpande, M. L. *History of Indian Theatre*. Abhinav Publications, 1987.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation..* Routledge, 1995.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference.* Routledge, 1999.

Wasson, Donald L. "Medea."*Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Ancient History Encyclopedia, 14 Feb 2018. Accessed 27 April, 2019.

Van Zyl Smit, Betine. “Medea the Feminist.” *Acta Classica*, vol. 45, 2002, pp. 101–122. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24595328.

.

Problems of Translating Nabaneeta Dev Sen's Play Medea

by Anwesha Maiti

Submission date: 27-Jun-2019 12:15PM (UTC+0530)
Submission ID: 1147412686
File name: Thesis_FORMAT_0.2.pdf (509.95K)
Word count: 21170
Character count: 105566

Problems of Translating Nabaneeta Dev Sen's Play Medea

ORIGINALITY REPORT

2%	2%	1%	1%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Seema Malik. "Injustice, Resistance, and Subversion: A Study of Selected Plays by Indian Women Playwrights", South Asian Review, 2017 Publication	<1%
2	www.docme.ru Internet Source	<1%
3	Submitted to Mansoura University Student Paper	<1%
4	etheses.bham.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
5	www.universityofcalicut.info Internet Source	<1%
6	Submitted to Southern New Hampshire University - Distance Education Student Paper	<1%
7	shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in Internet Source	<1%
	Submitted to Anderson University	

AJEENKYA
D Y PATIL UNIVERSITY
THE INNOVATION UNIVERSITY

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that a

Anwesha Maiti

of

Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad

has participated in

International Conference on 'The Future of Storytelling-Global Multidisciplinary Emergence-2019'

held at **Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Pune, India**

held on March 14 & 15, 2019 as a

Delegate & Paper Presenter / Paper Presenter in Absentia

Reversing the Gazing Eyes: A Study of the Tale of Medea & Play Medea

Prof. Hrridaysh Deshpande
Director
Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Pune

Dr Manju Rughwani
Convener