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Abstracts

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**Translating Medieval Sufi Poetry
Shah Hussain's *Sālu*, the Shawl of Love**



Poetry is a condensed form of text-discourse where the poetic ambience and the emotional landscape of the poem play an equally important role. For me, understanding the poetic discourse construes undeniably the core of any translation of a literary text. Poetry, particularly the oral tradition in poetry, has deep roots in Punjabi language and literature, that go back to medieval times and it feeds motifs to Punjabi literature even today. In one of his most beautiful poetic articulations, Shah Hussain (1538–1599), a Punjabi Sufi poet, constitutes the discourse of *Sālu*, a gift of love, which goes beyond the mundane and the profane into the domain of the mystic and *Sālu* becomes a symbol of love and affection, of endearment and longings, of union and separation.

The first part of the presentation begins with some remarks on language/s as such. Shah Hussain composed poetry in a language that today might be described as a “lesser” language (cf. Susan Sontag) and “minor” language (cf. Guattari and Deleuze). These categories may indeed be a deciding factor in terms of global translations and publishing but they do not impact the act of translation itself. A point I would like to highlight in the context of Europe is that studies in and on

religion were relegated to the lumber room (*Rumpelkammer*) of intellectual discourse in the 20th century (cf. W.G. Sebald). Secularization and socialist realism contributed to this academic disinterest but now one notices, particularly after 9/11, a revival of interest in religious studies and metaphysics, which is referred to as a “religious turn” rather “re-turn”. The second part of the presentation describes the various stages of preparation and editing in my rendering of *Sālu* into German and of course the translation itself.

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**Zur Übersetzung von Komödien für die deutsche Bühne.
Theorie und Praxis**

(Translating Comedies for the German Stage)

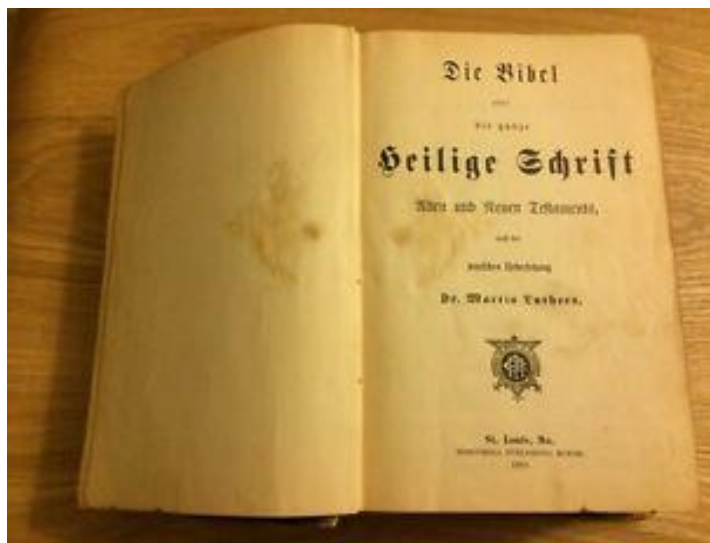


The German-speaking world of professional theatres consists of more than 500 theatres working hand in hand with about 70 publishers specialised in this field („Bühnenverlage“). Unlike other countries (like Great Britain or France) it is rare for German translators to translate / adapt a play directly for a production. Any text chosen for a production gets adapted quite extensively by the dramaturge and/or the producer, independently of the translator. The translator works privately at his desk but mentally he translates for an ‘ideal’ performance. He must be able to ‘see and hear’ the text in the original language and to fill it with new life in his own language. So, a more than average amount of linguistic and cultural knowledge, together with a good amount of empathy, must be mobilised in order

to understand the figures, their way of speaking, their relationships with each other; and, equally obviously, a more than average rhetorical expressiveness must be mobilised in order to create a similar way of speaking etc. in one's native language. Linguistic knowledge must be combined with a certain pleasure of role-taking and role-changing in order to create "written voices" (Novalis) rather than mere text. Like good literary translating, translating for the stage is a mixture of art and scholarship, a tight-rope performance linking creativity with critical self-control. My contribution shall have three parts: First I shall present the implicit theory that has been underlying literary translation in Germany ever since the 18th century; secondly, I shall discuss the specific situation of theatre translation in Germany; thirdly I present some concrete facts I learned from my own experience as a theatre translator.

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Zur Funktionalität nachreformatorischer deutscher Bibelübersetzungen



Seit der klassischen Bibelübersetzung durch Martin Luther, welche nicht die erste in deutscher Sprache war, ist eine Vielzahl anderer Übersetzungen erschienen, insbesondere im 20. Jahrhundert, zuletzt 2017 zum 500-jährigen Reformationsjubiläum. Die Bibel, Altes und Neues Testament, stellt seit 2000 Jahren die Berichte von Menschen über ihre Erfahrungen mit Gott dar. Sie hat als Heilige Schrift ihre Bedeutung im Rahmen der Christenheit und wurde über die Zeiten immer wieder neu übersetzt. Dabei geht es keineswegs nur um bestimmte Zielgruppen der Bibelübersetzung. In meinem Beitrag werden klassische Bibelübersetzungen sowie funktionsorientierte Neuübersetzungen und die Bedingungen der Bibelübersetzung diskutiert.

Die klassische Bibelübersetzung Luthers aus dem frühen 16. Jh. hat regelmäßige Nachbearbeitungen bis ins 20. Jh. gezeitigt, da der Originaltext heute nicht mehr verständlich ist. Die „Elberfelder Bibel“ (von 1855, 1871, 1985) jetzt von 2006 strebt besonders nach Wörtlichkeit, um vom Wort Gottes nichts wegzunehmen. Es gab aber auch Versuche, die hebräischen Schrifttexte, besonders das AT, aus jüdischer Sicht zu übertragen, z.B. von Martin Buber gemeinsam mit Franz Rosenzweig.

Die reformierte Tradition begann mit der „Zürcher Bibel“ 1531, die 2007 in einer präzisen Neuübersetzung vorgelegt wurde. Nicht primär zur persönlichen Erbauung, sondern vielmehr für den Gebrauch in Gottesdienst und Schulen aller deutschsprachigen katholischen Bistümer ist die „Einheitsübersetzung“ von 1980 gedacht. Hierzu erschien 2016 eine Überarbeitung. Die genannten Versionen sind vor allem Ausgangstext-orientiert und um Verständlichkeit, Genauigkeit und Sprachschönheit bemüht. Hier wurde jeweils auch die gesamte Heilige Schrift vorgelegt, was anderenorts nicht immer der Fall ist.

So gibt es auch stärker funktionsorientierte Neuübertragungen. Zunächst 1968 eine missionarische Bibelausgabe: „Die Gute Nachricht“ mit dem Ziel der Evangelisierung in der Jugendarbeit. Diese wurde schon 1971 wieder überarbeitet. Und 1997 erschien dann „Die Gute Nachricht Bibel“ als ökumenisches Gemeinschaftswerk von Theologen aus der evangelischen und der katholischen Kirche.

Ein seelsorgerlicher Ansatz findet sich bei Jörg Zink 1965 (12. Aufl. 1992): „Das Neue Testament“. Er geht von der Erfahrung aus, dass Menschen Verständnisprobleme mit dem älteren Luthertext hätten und möchte vor allem das individuelle Verstehen fördern.

Trotz aller Bemühungen um mehr Verständlichkeit scheint aber immer noch eine große Fremdheit dem biblischen Text gegenüber zu herrschen. Die „Bibelübersetzung als Informationsangebot“ von 1999 ist daher der Versuch von Christiane Nord und Klaus Berger, die Skopos-Theorie von Hans J. Vermeer auf die Bibel anzuwenden. Der Gedanke ist, dass viele der kulturell in Vorderasien verankerten Aussagen in der Bibel heute nicht mehr verständlich seien und erklärt werden müssten.

Inzwischen ist auch ein besonders ambitioniertes Projekt vollendet. 2006 erschien die „Bibel in gerechter Sprache“, die von 52 Einzelübersetzern (davon 10 Männer) in Eigenregie erarbeitet wurde. Patriarchale Strukturen sollen überwunden und Frauen mehr sichtbar gemacht werden. Außerdem gibt es noch ein originelles Projekt: „Die Volxbibel Neues Testament frei übersetzt von Martin Dreyer“. Es richtet sich an Jugendliche und spricht deren Sprache.

Die verschiedenen ausgewählten Bibelübersetzungen, was natürlich nicht exhaustiv ist, werden anhand bestimmter Textstellen in ihrer jeweiligen Sprachform verglichen und mit einem Hinweis auf die allgemeinen Bedingungen der Bibelübersetzung abgerundet.

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Translating Cultures: Issues and Challenges in Translating the Paite Folktale *Lengtonghoih* into English



Keeping the ambience of the original culture is indeed a difficult task while translating a folktale, all the more so because most folktales emerge from oral cultures. The greatest challenge of literary translation is to strike a balance between the original works and remaining truthful to the distinctive feelings and responses as the original. Translation of a folktale involves several challenges such as certain equivalents not existing in the target languages, translating the poetic focus of the folktales or for that matter how to retain the aesthetic functions of the original text. Therefore, literary translations, be it of folktales, poems, novels, ballads, odes, memoirs or any type of text with an aesthetic content different from an informative text, becomes an approximation, interpretation and creative conception of the translator.

In my paper I shall be discussing the various challenges in translating the Paite folktale *Lengtonghoih* (recently published by Seagull publishing House as

Children's illustrated books) into the English language, while trying to keep the essence of the original text. I shall discuss how certain words were chosen and why several omitted. The challenges in translating poetic songs of the folktale from Paite to English while maintaining the aesthetic flow will also be deliberated.

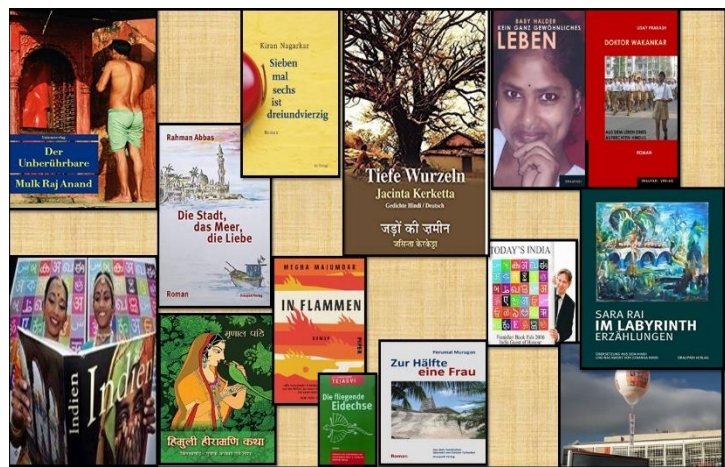
Paite is one of the ethnic groups inhabiting the Indo-Burma border region. Written texts in Paite language exist since 1903, but Paite literature has a long history of orality and oral literature. In India, the Paites are found in large numbers in Manipur, Mizoram and Karbi-Anglong district of Assam. The Paites of Mizoram are the offshoot of the Paites of Chin state of Burma (now Myanmar).

The second part of my paper will focus on some more issues by bringing in the reception of the literary translation. The reviews from the readers (who read, write and speak in English) from the same community well versed with the specific folktale, shall be a part of the discourse analysis. This becomes an important part of the discussion in order to analyze whether and to what extent translations of folktales from the north-eastern parts of India into English are able to preserve the poetic communicative function of a folktale because certain aspects of folktales cannot be captured in written forms.

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Von der Übersetzung zur Rezension: indische Literatur in Deutschland

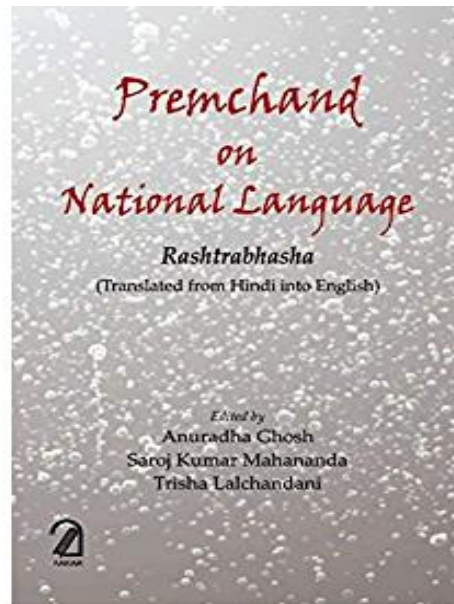


Sucht man auf der Webseite von Litprom, einer »Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Literatur aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika e.V.«, nach "indischer Literatur“, finden sich mehr als fünfhundert Titel. Betrachtet man diese Liste näher, stellt man fest, dass die Mehrheit der Bücher aus dem Englischen übersetzt ist. Das führt zu der Frage, weshalb die Literatur aus anderen indischen Sprachen eine geringere Resonanz erlangt. In einem Aufsatz von 2006 zählt Ira Sharma als Faktoren für die mangelnde Präsenz indischer Literatur auf dem deutschen Buchmarkt u. a. fehlende Professionalität bei Verlag, Covergestaltung und

Übersetzung auf. Eine wichtige Rolle bei der Kaufentscheidung für ein Buch spielt aber auch seine Rezension. Für den ersten Teil unserer Präsentation konzentrieren wir uns daher auf Buchbesprechungen von Übersetzungen indischer Literatur nach 1947. Wir haben uns vorgenommen, Rezensionen indischer Literatur in deutschsprachigen Printmedien darauf zu analysieren, ob Umfang, Publikationsort oder Inhalt einen Hinweis darauf liefern, warum sich indische Literatur, besonders Literatur in Regionalsprachen, bei der deutschen Leserschaft bisher kaum durchsetzen konnte. Der zweite Teil des Vortrags nimmt die mögliche Rezeption – und Rezension - eines literarischen Mustertextes aus dem Hindi in deutscher Übersetzung in den Blick. Das betreffende Werk ist noch nicht veröffentlicht, sodass die Spekulationen über seine Rezeption ein reines Gedankenspiel ist, aber mit dem ausdrücklichen Ziel, die Erkenntnisse über die Veröffentlichung und Rezeption indischer Literatur in Übersetzung an einem konkreten Beispiel zu überprüfen. *Himuli Hiramani Katha* von Mrinal Pande kam im Original 2017 heraus und wird derzeit von einem deutschen Übersetzerteam übersetzt. Es handelt sich um eine politische Satire, die in ein märchenhaftes Setting eingebettet ist und zahlreiche Anspielungen auf alte und mittelalterliche indische Literatur sowie intratextuelle metafiktionale Elemente aufweist. Im Mittelpunkt unseres Beitrags steht die Frage, wie die Erwartungen der Leser und die Erkenntnisse der Rezensenten die Erfolgchancen des Buches auf dem deutschen Buchmarkt beeinflussen könnten.

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A Critical Reflection on the WOR[L]D of Translation Studies...

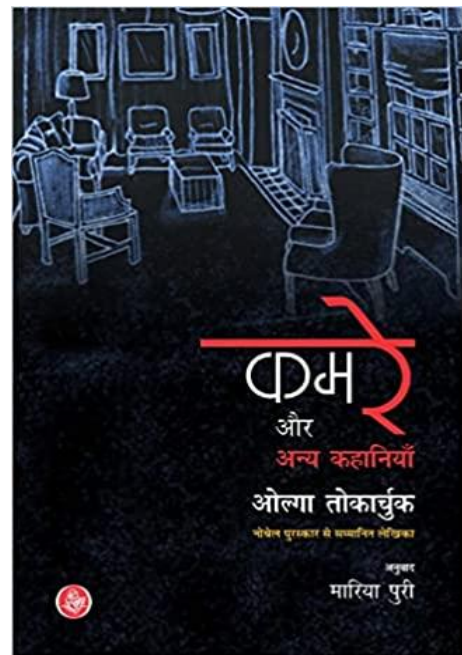


The proposed paper wishes to engage with how the activity of translation has been defined in terms of its theory and practice globally, and propose a comparative linguistic inquiry of the term 'translation' itself, as the etymological genealogies of the term in different literary traditions can perhaps help us construct the much-needed methodological frame through which we can understand the process. It is one's experience as a translator of Premchand and Tagore that compels one to reflect on the process as both minds were seminal forces in changing the direction of literature and language in Hindi and Bangla in more ways than one. The book edited by Susan Basnett and Harish Trivedi *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1998) brings together a host of articles from different national/sub-national traditions to interrogate the neologisms that are in use to describe the field

of translation studies, and while one veers between what Roman Jakobson called “translation proper” in his seminal essay ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’ (1959) to what is termed as “free translation” or “creative translation” today, one is quite lost regarding the semantic significance of the term. Books titled as ‘Translating Caste’, ‘Translating Gender’, etcetera, where the term “translating” simply means fictional narratives that deal with caste or gender issues complicates the matter further, as their claim is to herald ‘the cultural turn’ of the field, as ‘the linguistic turn’ is now obsolete and redundant. Concepts and ideas have histories and the twisted trajectory through which the practice of literary translation as a discipline has gone through, makes it academically aligned with literature and cultural studies. Serious reflections on literary translations and its implications for world literature, national/sub-national as well as regional literatures pushed the domains of the study beyond issues of fidelity to equivalence, and we are looking ahead to polyvalent ‘multi-libra’ rather than ‘equilibrium’. The delicate balance between the word and what it worlds is central to literary translations and in this paper what I wish to engage with is how the process has been understood, the challenges and possibilities for forging a comparative, linguistic approach centring on philological and etymological traces of the word translation in different languages and cultures, what implications it has for its evolution as a concept with special focus on languages of the Indian sub-continent.

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Shifting Frontiers and Expanding Limits: Olga Tokarczuk in Hindi



The focus of this paper will be Olga Tokarczuk, one of the best known and most influential contemporary Polish writers. Though sporadically translated into English, Olga Tokarczuk was virtually unknown to the global reader until 2018 when she won the Man Booker International Prize for her novel *Flights*. A year later, in 2019, she was honoured with the literary Nobel; this consolidated her status as a globally acclaimed author. As luck would have it, a slim volume of Tokarczuk's short stories in Hindi translation had already been published by Rajkamal Prakashan in 2014, while the special issue of *Hans* (August 2018), dedicated to Tokarczuk's writing, carried a chapter from a novel currently being translated into Hindi, *Prowadź swój pług przez kości umarłych* (Drive your Plow over the Bones of Dead).

The idea here would be to discuss the pitfalls of translating an author, originally writing in a minor European language, but now a part of the global literary world, into a language belonging to a different cultural milieu while at the same time

successfully relocating the imaginary world created by her onto a different literary practice. At earlier venues I have already presented certain aspects of my personal translatorial practice. Those included, for example, the issues of gender sensitive translation, cultural praxis and the politics of meat, or the strategies employed to render religious, and more specifically, Christian imagery from a language deeply permeated by it into a language whose cultural milieu belongs to a different religious tradition. While drawing illustrations from all of these, I would like now to address the notion of translator's habitus (Simeoni 1998) and his/her agency in choosing, shaping, and giving final form to the translated work. To this end, I would like to present you with a couple of different Hindi versions of the selected Polish passage/s taken from Olga Tokarczuk's work and compare them with the published English renderings, whenever applicable, while explicating some of the choices a translator is faced with while finalizing her draft for publication (cf. Levy 2000).

Levy, Jiri. 2000 (1st ed. 1967). "Translation as a Decision Process". In: *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by Lawrence Venuti. London and New York: Routledge.

Simeoni, Daniel. 1998. "The Pivotal Status of the Translators Habitus". *Target* 10 (1): 1–39.

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Translation of *Don Quixote* into Hindi: Notes of a translator



Salvador Dali's Illustration of *Don Quixote*

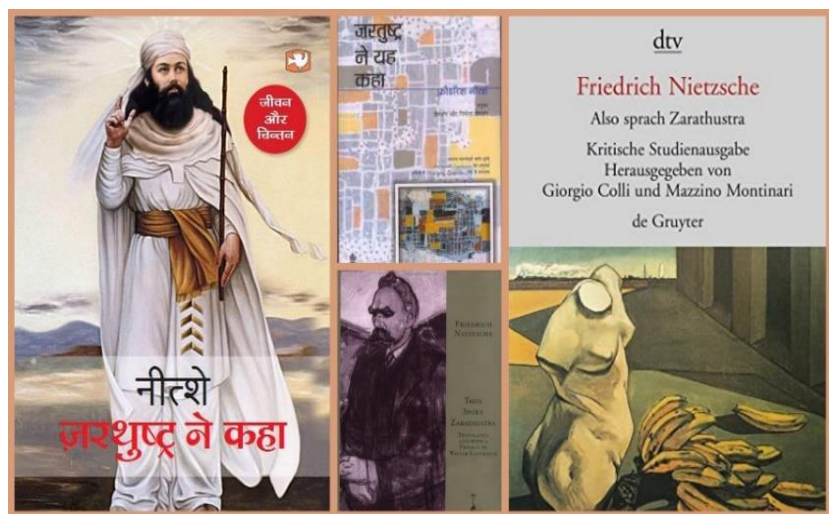
Translating a well-known and well-read (even today considered a best seller) masterpiece like Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (I pt. 1605, II pt.1615) from Spanish into Hindi, a non-European language belonging to a very different

culture, after a gap of four centuries, from a very distant place, looked like a utopian task, therefore, presented a formidable challenge before me.

I had to evolve a specific method to translate Cervantes' innovative narrative technique and a strategy that would help me to deal with more than fifty characters of the novel and their polyphonic voices. Apart from these issues, it was necessary to understand the dense structure, different tone and tenure of the text and the dualism of Quixote and Sancho that was constantly reflected in their languages and attitudes, intelligence, and actions all through the novel. In my paper I will try to point out how from a third space - non-European space - and following a different narrative tradition, the story of don Quixote could be translated into Hindi in such a manner that an Indian reader could enjoy it in the same way as a Spanish reader.

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Zarathustra ne kya kaha: The Dynamics of Translation and Reception of Nietzsche in the Hindi Speaking World



In their book titled *Perspectives on Literature and Translation. Creation, Circulation, Reception*, the editors, Nelson and Maher rightly state that literature, in its broadest sense, is sustained by translation. Given the great complexity of the task of the translator, there is a great deal to be learned from insights into the interpretive and decision-making process of translators. In the late 1960s Hans Robert Jauss emphasized in his book *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* the altering interpretive and evaluative responses of generations of readers to a text. The circumstances of a text's creation and those of its reception play an important role in keeping the text alive. Hence, in the very multiplicity of translations of the original text, i.e., in their perspectivism, lies the truth of translation as an aesthetic practice.

In order to illustrate the vital link between translation and reception, the following paper draws on the example of Friedrich Nietzsche whose work has been predominantly received via English translations in India. The Indian Nationalist Revolutionary, Subhash Chandra Bose, for instance, during his arrest in the Mandalay jail in Burma received in September 1925 the first instalment of Nietzsche's

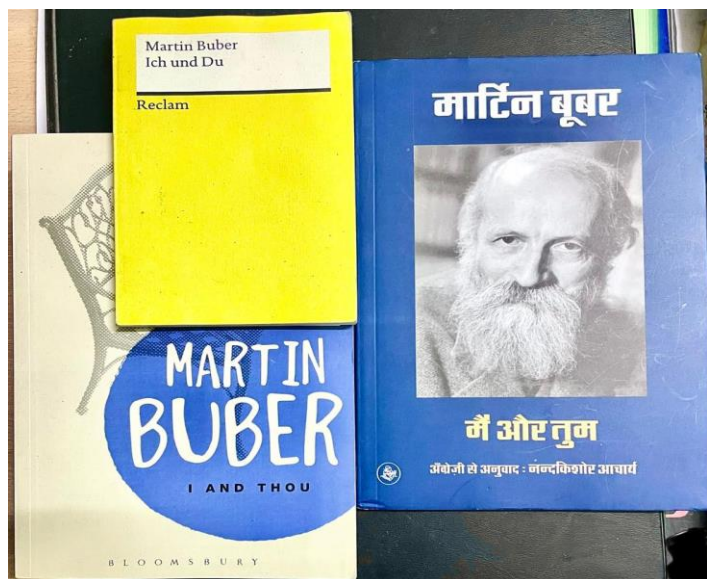
Collected Works – an 18-volume edition edited by Oscar Levy – through the Calcutta Book Company of Girin Mitter. The same can be said about Muhammad Iqbal whose bibliography of the book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* reflects a mention of the Oscar Levy edition. The Marathi thinker, Sankar Ramchandra Rajwade, who translated *Der Antichrist* into Marathi under the title *Nietzschecha Khristantaka ani Khristantaka Nietzsche* also had in his library the Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche edited by Oscar Levy.

The following paper examines two Hindi translations of *Also sprach Zarathustra* – “Nietzsche: Zarathustra ne kaha” by Subhash Chandra Gupta (pseudonym: Mudrarakshas) (1986) and “Zarathustra ne yeh kaha” by Nirmala Sherjung (2005). Whereas Mudrarakshas opts for a selective appropriation of the textual material, Nirmala Sherjung’s text exhibits greater fidelity to the English text and a greater degree of structural coherence. However, her text is translated from the old English translation done by Thomas Common published in the 18 volumes edited by Oscar Levy, which was questioned by Walter Kaufmann, whose English translation of Nietzsche’s oeuvre reigned for many years in the post Second World War era of Nietzsche Studies. Interestingly, even Kaufmann’s credibility and accuracy have been questioned in recent times. This raises many questions regarding the modus operandi of the existing Hindi translations. Are they not doubly distanced from the original German text? Do they not in this way easily lend themselves to distortions? Is there hence not a need to work with the original German text? Does it suffice to translate the text with linguistic accuracy or is the historical situatedness of the text and the recipient equally important?

A comparative analysis of the translations with a few examples from the Hindi, English as well as the German texts, hence undertaken, will not only lend an insight into the different styles opted by the translators, their merits and their flaws, but also incidentally throw light upon the lives of two very important Indian personalities - Mudrarakshas and Nirmala Sherjung, hence provoking an investigation into the possible affinities between their world views and that of Nietzsche’s.

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On the English and Hindi Translation of Martin Buber's *Ich und Du*



In 1923 Martin Buber wrote *Ich und Du*. Ronald Gregor Smith, the English translator comments in 1937 in his introduction to the translation that “this work in its original German form had already exercised on the continent an influence quite out of proportion to its slender size”. After another two decades in 1958, Smith published the second edition of his translation along with the English translation of the postscript written by Buber in October 1957. This English translation by Smith is well known and serves as a standard text.

In both the editions he has mentioned how inadequate a translation feels like particularly when the power of the original is strongly noticeable. The original text does not offer a horizontal line of argument, instead it goes spirally; “it mounts, and gathers within itself the aphoristic and pregnant utterances of the earlier part.” Due to its impact in the original and significant contribution *I and Thou* has a sizable readership in English. That is probably why the original work got translated into English after little more than a decade. But it took almost a century for this work to be translated and published in Hindi. The translator, Nand Kishor

Acharya, who has written several creative works, states in his introduction when he had the first encounter with *I and Thou* and what a profound impact it left on him, yet it took more than five decades for the Hindi translation to finally appear in 2019. This paper intends to discuss the two translations, their readability, uniqueness and impact in a contextualised manner with a particular emphasis on the Hindi translation.