

## Transliteration- An Extension Of Translation

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### Abstract

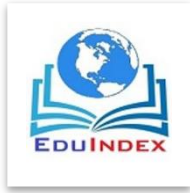
Since time immemorial, we have used the technique of **Translation** to reach out to the people from the other language community. Translation generally aims at expressing their ideas, texts, information or even the emotional state in a written mode. However, the concept of translation is dwindling due to the emergence of **Trans-creation** and **Transliteration**. This paper explores the extensions of Translation. Any **text** written and also being paraphrased into the other languages by the same author or a fellow writer is commonly referred as Translation. But an original text when translated by a different author undergoes a re-creation process which is named as Trans – creation. This entire process of rewriting undertakes several changes as language differs. Since language is culture specific the original text and its essence is lost majorly irrespective of the author. Eventually the whole text is recreated again. In addition, if the original text takes a different form out of the various genres of literature, it's not just the outline or the structure of the text which is varied but also is the themes and focus of the plot gets altered. To posit this idea effectively this paper illustrates the phenomena of transliteration in the text, **Rudali**. Initially written as a short story by Mahasweta Devi, re-written as a play by Usha Ganguli and later made into a movie by Kalpana Lajmi, the plot undergoes significant changes from one form to another. While the short story focuses on the plight of a “lower caste” woman Shanichari, realizing her strength and individuality within the matrix of a hegemonic gender and caste biased society, the play focuses on her economic background and the movie alters the plot significantly to make it commercially successful. The present paper aims to analyse this phenomenon in minute detail.

**Key words: Rudali, Text, Trans-creation, Translation, Transliteration.**

### Introduction

Translation takes text from one language and changes it into a word with an identical meaning in the other language, so any text can be translated into any language. The meaning of the original source is intended to be conveyed accurately and naturally. People who are not translators, for them translation is seen as a text; however the translators see it as an “Activity”. Translation focuses on the translators’ role from taking a source text and turning it into one in another language, but also concentrates on the specific product created by the translator.

In Susan Bassnett’s book, translation is defined as the transfer of meaning. Translation involves the transfer of meaning which contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar that the process involves a whole set of extra



linguistic criteria too. Thus, translation studies is the academic discipline that focuses on the theory and practice of translation.

Although when the phenomena of translation is going on it's the duty of the translator to hand over the same intended meaning based on the set of language signs and linguistic dictums but when this process is been done, unknowingly the translator, if closely observed, is seen to re-create the text. Hence, Trans-creation takes the spirit of a text and recreates it into another language but the text nevertheless carry the same style and meaning in another language. The message Trans-creation conveys or the style, the images and emotion it evokes and its cultural background aims to show origin in relation to the original text. It is here the actual essence is lost and recreation of text occurs. Thus we can settle down to the point that Trans-creation is an emerging and extended field of translation.

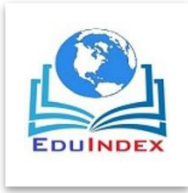
In addition, if a writer takes the same theme from a text and only plays around with the category of the same original text and transcends beyond its genre into some other genre it is said to be Transliteration. So, Transliteration is the process of converting a word in a source language into any source of language but swapping the genre from the original genre. Since a new text is constructed, its definition must be provided by translator, as there is shift in the structure, there is also a shift in the context or the theme or the motifs. Yet, Transliteration has the core of Transcreation as absence of creativity can never be complete for Transliteration. With minimum modifications in the text and a major transformation in the genre and a final shift in the highlights of the text transliteration is also another foremost arena.

Thus this paper posits the idea of how Translation is losing its foot and Trans-creation and Transliteration is more in trend. To support this idea, we have chosen the text *Rudali* created in three different medium by Mahasweta Devi, Usha Ganguli and Kalpana Lajmi - short story, drama and as a film text respectively. Primarily, the outline of the story hearts about the female protagonist, Shanichari facing marginalization based on the caste discrimination in the original story in the backdrop of Rajasthani practice, Rudali. But then, in the next form of Ganguli's drama, the shift focuses on the economic deprivation and puts the Dalit consciousness in the backseat. Then again the same plot is transliterated as a film text is commercialised completely under the direction of Kalpana Lajmi. Thus, we aim at the new emergence of the extended domain of translation .i.e., Trans-creation and Transliteration.

### **The case of *Rudali***

*Rudali*, a famous short story written by Mahaswetha Devi is the best example to elucidate the concept of translation, trans-creation and transliteration. It was originally written as a short story in Bengali by Mahaswetha Devi enumerating the plight of lower caste people who were also from the poor background. The story focuses mainly on caste discrimination and its oppressive structure which enables the upper caste people to harass the lower caste people mercilessly.

The protagonist of the story Shanichari belonged to the Ganju community, a lower caste. She lived in a small village called Tahad in desperate poverty. She had lost her husband at a young age and brought up her son Budhua single handed by toiling in the fields of the zamindar Ramvatar Singh. She was half starved all the time and was accused by her mother-in-law, daughter-in-law and grandson for not feeding them properly. Shanichari was known to have not shed a single drop of tear in her lifetime. Even when her husband and son died and her grandson left her, she had not cried. All the time she was busy making arrangements for the funeral with her meagre finances. She was always in debt and worked twice the amount to clear the debt. But the reality was that they could barely secure one square meal a day through their earnings. Her meeting with her childhood friend Bikhni changes her life completely. She starts leading her life with new vigour. Dulan, her neighbour arranges the job of Rudalis for them which helps the two women to lead their life independently. Both Shanichari and Bikhni become the most demanded



Rudalis at the funeral of the rich. Shanichari's outlook towards society evolves by the influences of Dulan and Bikhni and she gets to know the crux of caste system and learns to manipulate it to earn a living. She sympathises with the women who had turned whores after being used by the rich landlords for they had done that only to fill their stomach. Towards the end of the story, we see Shanichari as a confident and empowered woman in contradiction to her portrayal of a weak and suppressed woman in the beginning of the story.

The story revolves around the caste politics and the ways it is toughened in the society. This is brought out in Dulan's words. Dulan is the voice for the voiceless in the story. He describes the various ways through which the zamindars acquired land and wealth. Though the zamindars had misunderstandings among themselves and jealous of each other, when their status is questioned or shaken, they show their solidarity. This can be seen during Bhairab Singh's funeral when Lachman Singh says

“As long as you were alive, the lower castes never dared raise their heads. For the fear of you, the sons of dushads and ganjus never dared attend government schools! Now who will take care of all these things?”

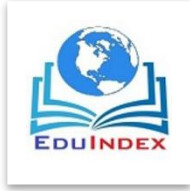
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The above statement clearly indicates the kind of ill-treatment meted out to the lower caste people. Another incident is that of Ramvatar Singh getting all the ganjus and dushads of the village getting arrested over the loss of some wheat. Thus the story pays much attention to the exploitation of young women particularly belonging to lower caste and communities. The rich landlords would sexually exploit these women and later dump them. To these rich men, women are nothing but objects that can be used and thrown anytime.

Mahasweta Devi writes the story through her first-hand knowledge about a particular socio-economic community. She does not write as an urbanite describing the rural life but as an insider who knows the intrigues and nuances of rural life.

Quite the reverse is in the case of Usha Ganguly's play. We see her trying to take the plot to the urban audience. She introduces significant structural changes such as a linear plot to fit to the genre of performance in an urban proscenium theatre. She focuses more on the economic condition of Shanichari and people like her rather than on their castes. The play lays bare the various exploitative methods used by the landlords right from burning the huts of the poor people to lending money at higher interest rates to make the poor people slog in their fields. Their insistence on holding grand funerals for the dead and hire Rudalis to mourn just for the sake of showing off their wealth and status tells us a lot about them lacking humanity.

Like the shift from the dalit consciousness to economic deprivation is observed when there is a transformation of Mahasweta Devi's story to Usha Ganguly's play, similarly we find a lot of texts irrespective of genres undergoing a change in their central themes and ideas. This is least happening in translation but in this case there is no translation happening but transliteration via transcreation i.e. the short story's same old plot is retained but there is an evident shift in latter text. Any text when reframed or redone, it does go through the process of creation again. But the meaning or the idea is transferred hence referred as Transcreation. This can be aptly expressed with the trendy and popular film 'Kabir Singh' which is based on the former movie 'Arjun Reddy'. With same outline, the film is recreated with a different team altogether showing weightages to various themes. There is no translation here like in the dubbing movies as seen in Robot(Hindi Version)/Endhiran (Tamil Version) film texts. There is not just Transliteration happening but also Transcreation happening here too as in Rudali. Moreover language is culture specific and depends on the words of semiotics also.



Hence Usha Ganguly portrays Shanichari as the central character of the play undergoing changes and becoming adaptable to time and circumstances unlike Mahasweta Devi's Shanichari who is a part of larger socio-economic scenario. The names of the castes are mentioned only a few times. Dulan here is more open in his outlook and constantly suggests Shanichari to treat a job as a job and make money for herself and not just quell her hunger. He is more outspoken about the meanness and cruelty of the Thakurs so that the audience get to know the plight of the poor in rural areas. As a theatre artist, she chooses a challenging text, one dealing with women's issues and keeps her audience on the tenterhooks till the end.

Eventually the same story is later adopted by Kalpana Lajmi into a film text. There is a tremendous shift in the genre, one which addresses large sections of the society. Therefore, the plot has been significantly changed where in new emotions are included to suit the audiences' tastes. It is also been commercialized as Lajmi here does not stick to the plot and make a documentary out of it. But she is seen to deliberately introduce a platonic love story between Shanichari and Lachman Singh which appeals youth more. Then she takes out the character of Haroa, Shanichari's grandson and also makes her go to the whores quarters to ask her Parbatia why she aborted her child. Bikhni, who is the friend in the story and play is shown to be as her mother, which she comes to know only after her death. In the play and story Shanichari moves on with her profession of Rudali out of the realization that life has to move on no matter what. In case of the movie Shanichari has got an emotional attachment to the profession as it is her mother's profession and cries out of grief of losing her mother towards the end. There is also no acknowledgement of the plight of the prostitutes in the movie.

This is also observed in the writings of Girish Karnad whose several texts have been made into films where most of the times there is commercialization of the text. As seen in Nagamandala. Not just that even Raj Kumar Hirani's movie '3 Idiots' based on 'Five Point Someone' or '2 States' based on Chethan Bhaghat's novels again show the changes followed to cater the needs of the audience. Thus these are best examples of Transliteration. Not just with film texts but there stories taken from one text and recreated in another as followed by Karnad again; the novella of Thomas Mann, in 1941 "The Transposed Heads" is further re-created with similar adaptation in the text as Hayavadana by Karnad. Thus transliteration is happening in verbal sense here.

Thus, whether it is verbal or visual medium, translation is losing its hold and transliteration via Transcreation is more evolving as a new arena. Through this we can see how the plot and focus shift from genre to genre to suit the interests of the readers or the audience. Each genre has got a different set of audience and their expectations are also different. Thus the writers and translators have to use their creativity to meet the demands of their audience.

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