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Translating Divinity in the Liminal Space. Performative Translations in the Medieval and Early Modern Period in India

**Translation as Event.
Performing and
Staging Translations**

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Translating Divinity in the Liminal Space. Performative Translations in the Medieval and Early Modern Period in India

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Abstract: This essay investigates the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* (1290) of the saint poet Dnyāneshwar and Father Thomas Stephens' *Kristapurān* (1616) in the light of the performative turn in the field of translation studies. The aim of this essay is to explore performativity in these medieval and early modern period Indian translations by culling academic discussion from existing scholarship in translation studies and theatre studies. Attempt will also be made to expand the existing notions of performativity by adding inputs from the Indian discourse on translation. The essay concludes with the finding that the dialogic form of the translations with the use of a quatrain folk meter called the *ovi*, appear to be the common elements which contribute largely to making the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* and the *Kristapurān* performative and eventful translations.

Keywords: *Bhāvārthadeepikā, Kristapurān,* Performativity, Liminality, *Ovi.*

1   An introduction to the works

The two texts, Dnyāneshwar's *Bhāvārthadeepikā* and Father Stephens's *Kristapurān,* emerge from *Bhakti* literature.[1] Hence they both exhibit a good deal of similarity. It is for this reason that the present essay attempts to apply aspects of performativity like unpredictability, emergence, autopoietic feedback-loop from the field of theatre studies and the translator's co-presence from the field of translation studies to both of these Marathi[2] works, one achieved in the medieval period and the other in the early modern period in India. Emergence is "all those phenomena that appear not as a consequence of specific plans and intentions but as unforeseen and, in this sense, contingent events" (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 5). "Unpredictability constitutes a defining feature of emergence" (ibid.). One can speak of an autopoietic feedback-loop when "all participants bring forth the performance together; however, no individual or group of people can completely plan its course and control it. All participants act as co-creators who, to different degrees and in different ways, are engaged in the process of generating and shaping the performance without anyone being able to

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1   "Literally translated as 'participation,' *bhakti* characterizes a form of piety that favors an intimate relationship with a personalized god and, to some extent, constitutes a demotic counter-current to certain aspects of Brahmanical theology and temple religiosity. In the field of literature, *bhakti* religiosity helped to boost regional languages against the claimed exclusivity of Sanskrit in religious writings, stimulating the production of a rich body of devotional literature in the various regional vernaculars. In Maharashtra, *bhakti* literature has especially deep historical roots, going back to famous poet-saints such as Jñāneśvara (c. 1275–96), and experienced a second heyday at the time and in the work of Ekanāth" (1533–1599) (Henn 2015: 15).

2   Marathi is a language spoken in the state of Maharashtra in western India.

determine its course by her- or himself." (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 4). The translator's co-presence is defined as follows:

> Faktoren wie die Persönlichkeit des Übersetzers, seine kognitive und emotionale Beziehung zum übersetzten Text sowie seine Fähigkeit, sich mit der Mitteilung zu identifizieren, erweisen sich als entscheidend für den Ablauf des Übersetzungsprozesses. (Cercel 2015: 118)

> Factors like the personality of the translator, his cognitive and emotional connect to the translated text as well as his ability to identify with the message that the text conveys determines the course of the translation process. (My translation)

This essay also suggests three more aspects for performative translations. They are eventfulness and timelessness suggested by me and the third being, transgression which is defined as "the practice of crossing over or dissolving boundaries, of carnivalization and breaking of codes" (Bachmann-Medick 2016: 90).

To apply the above-mentioned aspects to translation studies, one would need to tweak them which is discussed in detail later. The aspects of eventfulness and timelessness too will be discussed later. The length of the two works does not allow an exhaustive analysis of them, but some key features, which could be considered as their defining and performative aspects, will be discussed at length.

The first work to be investigated here is Dnyāneshwar's *Bhāvārthadeepikā* (1290), popularly called Dnyāneshwari, which he wrote at the tender age of fifteen. Dnyāneshwar is one of the most influential saint poets of Maharashtra. *Bhāvārthadeepikā* is a Marathi translation of the Sanskrit *Bhagwad Gitā*. The second work is the *Discurso sobre a vinda de Jesu Christo* [Discourse on the coming of Jesus Christ]. The work is also known by the title *Discurso sobre a vinda do Salvador ao mundo [Treatise on the coming of the redeemer into the world] em lingiage bramana marastta* [sic.] [in the Brahmanical Maharashtrian language].

This work is popularly called the *Kristapurān*. *Krista* means Christ in Marathi and *purān* is a genre of Hindu religious literature.[3] The *Kristapurān* is a re-telling of biblical stories into the Marathi/Konkani[4] language spoken in Goa, by an English Jesuit named Father Thomas Stephens (1616). It was a work written in the Roman script.

2 Performative translations and the translation landscape in India

In this section, I attempt to elaborate in more detail upon Fischer-Lichte's aspects of performativity, namely unpredictability, emergence, the autopoietic feedback-loop and the translator's co-presence. I will refer to these aspects as textual factors since in translation one deals with texts. This will be followed by a discussion on the extra-textual factors, eventfulness, timelessness, which have been added by me and transgression. These factors provide, in my opinion, the tools and a road-map, to achieve performativity in translation.

2.1 Emergence and unpredictability

At the outset one must admit that it is very difficult to discuss these two aspects separately. They are best described by the Lotmanian concept of 'explosion' as discussed by Ketkar in his article "Of Ravens and Owls: A Methodological Framework

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3   There are traditionally 18 *Purānas* like the *Brahmāndapurān', Kurmapurān, Mākandeyapurān, Matsyapurān, Vāmanpurān, Varāhpurān, Vāyupurān, Vishnupurān*, *Devipurān,* etc.

4   The people living on the western coast of India, which is called *Konkan,* speak *Konkani.* The *Kristapurāṇa* exhibits a mix of both the *Marathi* and the *Konkani* language.

for the Historiography of Translation in Marathi." Ketkar says that when culture and semiotic systems change, they sometimes bring about explosive changes in the language. This means "unanticipated and abrupt changes" (Ketkar 2022: 14). If a translation brings about a sudden change in the practice of its craft, or has an unanticipated impact on society and people then one can say that it fulfils the condition of unpredictability and can be considered to be a performative translation.

The definition of "emergence" in the discipline of theatre studies has been discussed above. If this definition is to be applied to performative translations, however, one will have to modify it a little. Since translations will have already been achieved when one reads them, emergence and unpredictability will have to be defined from the reader's perspective. When the reader picks up a translation, knowing it is the translation of a certain source text, h/she expects the target text to have a register, language style, genre, message, to name but a few features, similar to the source text. On reading, one finds that the translation has metamorphosed into a different text. It has become a "new animal" (Ketkar 2004: 1). This, for me, is emergence in translation. That this property becomes evident "only retrospectively" (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 4) makes its application to translation studies suitable, because the translation arrives in front of the reader as a finished product.

2.2   The autopoietic feedback-loop

According to Erika Fischer-Lichte, when a performer elicits a response from the audience and accordingly modifies his/her performance, one can speak of an autopoietic feedback-loop (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 3). Applied to translation studies, this would mean that the actual reader of the translation responds to it while the translation is being written and his response elic-

its a reaction from the translator whereby the translator, as one of the possible reactions, feels the need to explain his/her decisions, discuss the translation, modify the content etc. This is only possible if one finds evidence of a reader response documented in the translation. If such a joint venture between the translator and his / her readers can be ascertained in the translation, one can say that the translation fulfils this condition and hence is performative.

2.3   The translator's co-presence

The translator and his/ her translation is a product of his/her times. It often happens that while investigating a translation, one finds the translator's personality, identity and life reflected in the translation. It could be the examples cited in the translation, specific words or literary devices etc. that have been used in the translation and which are specific to his/her times. These are some of the many possibilities. In my opinion, the decision to translate a particular book and to modify its contents[5] is also proof of the translator's co-presence, because it is only in light of knowledge about the translator's life that the rationale behind the modifications becomes clear.

Now I will elaborate upon the terms I propose should be added to the foregoing ones. These are: eventfulness, timelessness and transgression. Just as unpredictability is a defining fea-

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5   The Panchatantra translations give a lot of evidence of modifications made by translators. At the time that Abdallah-ibn-al Mouqaffa translated the Sanskrit work "The Panchatantra" from Persian into Arabic he had been unjustly imprisoned. The Panchatantra ends with the victory of the cunning jackal and the death of the simple bull. Mouqaffa's own experience probably led him to change the ending of the first book of the Panchatantra. He added a chapter on the trial of the jackal to the first book which ends with the jackal paying for his misdeeds (cf. Padhye 2024: 118).

ture of emergence, so too is timelessness a defining feature of eventfulness.

2.4   Eventfulness

Performative translations constitute an event in the host culture. Here I borrow Sachin Ketkar's metaphor for translation. For him translation of a text in another language is the birth of a text in a different *yoni*-vagina, it is a different species, it is a "new animal" (Ketkar 2004: 1). By calling the translated text a "new" animal, Ketkar suggests that the source text and the translated text are radically different from each other. A performative translation too, in my opinion, is radically different from its source text, making its birth eventful.

Ganesh N. Devy's definition, which is based on the Indian practice of translation, can also be borrowed for the purpose of defining performative translations. For Devy

> Translation is not a transposition of significance or signs. After the act of translation is over, the original work still remains in its position. Translation is rather a revitalization of the original in another verbal order and temporal space. (Devy 1997: 405)

Indian translators, especially of the Middle Ages, had the freedom to 'revitalize' the originals in a variety of ways, as becomes clear from Paniker's quote:

> All through the Middle Ages, throughout the length and breadth of India, Sanskrit classics like the epics and puranas continued to be retold, adapted, subverted and 'translated' without worrying about the exactness and accuracy of formal equivalence. (Paniker 1994: 129)

A performative translation is thus a 'new text' that re-vitalizes the original, one which metamorphoses it in a different verbal and temporal space and which is radically different from its source text, in terms of its meter, length, message etc. Borrowing from Lotman's view concerning a 'new' text, Ketkar de-

fines a 'new' text as "that translated text that, when retranslated into the matrix code or the language, is not identical to the matrix text" (Ketkar 2022: 21), thus echoing what he himself says about translation being "a different animal altogether" (Ketkar 2004: 1). Agnetta calls this the irreversibility of the translation process (cf. Agnetta 2021: 15). That would mean that if one were to back translate the target to the source text, one would get a source text which is radically different, from the original source text. Hence a translation would have to be radically different from its source text if it has to qualify to be a performative translation.

Yet simply being born again is not sufficient to make the phenomenon of translation eventful. It should also have a long-lasting transformative effect on people, society and literature. As regards the effect on the reader, Agnetta defines eventful texts as those which, when received by the reader, change his state from an uninformed reader to an informed reader. (cf. Agnetta 2021: 23–24). As for Fischer-Lichte, there is a similar emphasis as we can see from the following quote which concerns the transformative power of reading a text, thus adding a temporal aspect to the impact of a text which can be applied for perfomative translations too.

> Der Akt der Lektüre entfaltet so eine transformative Kraft, deren Wirkung auf die Dauer der Lektüre beschränkt sein kann, jedoch durchaus weit über sie hinaus noch längere Zeit anzuhalten vermag. (Fischer-Lichte 2012: 138)

> The act of reading a text can be so transformative that it has a sustained impact on the reader which is not only felt while the text is being read, but also much after it has been read. (My translation)

This sustained impact is what I call timelessness.

2.5   Timelessness

A translation is performative if firstly, its relevance index and value for society, literature, culture and its own craft, the *Kalā*, as it is called in most Indian languages, does not diminish with the passage of time. It is like a collector's item. The translator then is an artist, a *Kalākār*. The word *Kalākār* is a composite noun that can be split into *Kalā* which means 'art' and *ākār* which means 'shape'. The one who shapes the art is a performer. There is another possibility of splitting this composite noun into *kal*, which means tomorrow, and in a broader sense, future, and *ākār*, which is shape. That means a performer is one who shapes the future.[6] Both the meanings of *Kalākār* are relevant to performative translations. The latter has a temporal dimension to it. So, the translator's active involvement in shaping the translation and its impact on people, societal dynamics, literature or culture should be verifiable for any translation to be defined as a performative translation. This brings me to the last aspect of performative translations, namely transgression.

2.6   Transgression

The notion of transgression is best understood by the Lotmanian concept of "semiosphere". Where there are no identical codes, or a common linguistic experience, or an identical cultural memory, a heterogeneous space, the "semiosphere" (cf. Lotman 2005: 205–213) is created, which is important for the emergence of meaning (cf. Ketkar 2022: 21). A performative translation is one that transgresses the boundaries of these heterogeneous spaces to create new meaning in what I call a limi-

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6   This etymology was mentioned by the famous singer *Kailash Kher* in his interview with the renowned journalist Smita Prakash (cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTsWNBshvcc> (02.12.2023).

nal space. To use Chakravarti's terminology, this is the space where meaning between the source and target language systems is shared (cf. Chakravarti 2017: 366). The liminal space in my opinion is the space where translation takes birth. It is the space where the *tertium comparationis* is instrumentalised in order to create meaning, where boundaries of genres are crossed in order to create and re-calibrate new meaning for the target text readers. This re-calibration of meaning is the defining feature of transgression because re-calibrating demands novel ways of looking at something, a way never explored before. This is possible if the text is thought from the points of view of both, the source as well as the target text. That liminal space exists in the mind of the translator. Performative translations are born in such a liminal space. It is here that the translator "severs the material status from the semiotic status, so that the former can claim a life of its own" (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 22f.). This means that the translation process is not source text driven, instead it is reader-oriented.

The category of transgression can be best understood from the following quote:

> The translation process is conceived a performative process, a process that on the basis of social action constitutes meaning, *transcends borders* and creates representation by deliberately exploring differences encountered during the process. (Wolf 2017: 32, my emphasis)

Difference, transcendence and creation of representation are important. A performative translation transgresses boundaries: boundaries of genre, targeted audience, an institutional practice, boundaries of content expression etc.

Transgression is a key property of one type of translation in the Indian practice of the craft, one which helps us understand the notion of transgression better. There are three terms for translation in most Indian languages: *anuvād, bhāshāntar* and *rupāntar*. *Anu,* means 'to follow', and *vād* means 'dis-

course'. Hence *anuvād* means following a discourse. It is 'stating something which is already known' and stands for repetition by way of explanation, illustration or corroboration (cf. Singh 2014: 8f.). In a translation of this type there is no room for the translator to perform. He or she simply follows the source text. He or she is a passive receiver of the message which is passed into another language. The second type of translation is *bhāshāntar*. *Bhāshā* means 'language' and *antar* means 'distance'. *Bhāshāntar* means 'the difference between two languages.' This act of translation operates on the lexical and syntactical level. From the etymology of these two types of translations it is evident that they leave no space for performativity, as defined above. So they do not qualify for performative translations. The third type of translation, which is the *rupāntar*, has the potential of being a performative translation.

> The word *rupāntar*, "literally speaking (formal transference) includes all kinds of various *roops* (forms)-linguistic, thematic (*Ramakathā* from the *Rāmāyana* or elsewhere or narratives from the Mahabharata into the same or different language without adhering strictly to language or bothering about thematic preoccupations), formal (a novel or short story into a film), modal (a poem into a painting or a sculpture into a piece of literature or any other mode of expression) semiotic transference and appropriation including domestication. (Singh 2014: 9)

In a *rupāntar* there is transgression of boundaries which is one of the key elements of performative translations. A *rupāntar* also allows a translator room and freedom to perform by moulding the message of the source text in a way he/she deems fit for the new audience.

To sum up the discussion on performative translations, let me propose that performative translations are eventful, and give birth to what is 'irreversibly' a 'new animal'. They revitalize the original. They transgress boundaries. They are novel in their approach and have an impact upon the people, society, culture and the craft of translation for years to come.

Whether the two translations identified in this essay exhibit all of the above factors of performativity will be investigated under the section "Performativity". In this section, the factors of unpredictability and emergence, transgression and novelty and eventfulness and timelessness will be considered jointly because of their complimentary nature. What I want to suggest for now is that both the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* and the *Kristapurān* are *rupāntars* and that is how they will be referred to in this essay. I now proceed to the third section called "Texts and Contexts" in which I introduce the two works, and situate them in their historical, socio-political and religious contexts in order that we might better understand, as well as justify their performativity.

3   Texts and Contexts

Dnyāneshwar's reception of the *Gitā,* which is how the *Bhagwad Gitā* is often referred to, in the thirteenth century Maharashtra, his own experiences with the orthodoxy of the Brahmins, social inequality and his empathy with the people who were denied spiritual knowledge, are factors reflected in his translatorial decisions. Father Stephens' work too can only be understood in the light of his desire to give a *purāna* to the neoconverts of Goa, something which had been denied to them by a political system of which he was an integral part. In what follows, I will therefore provide the reader with relevant information on the translators and their translations.

3.1   The *Bhāvārthadeepikā*
also known as the *Dnyāneshwari*

In his English translation of the *Bhāvārthadeepikā*, the translator Rāmchandra Keshav Bhāgwat (1954/1979: xviii–xxiv)

gives an overview of the social conditions during the time of Dnyāneshwar. The *Bhāvārthadeepikā* was written in the thirteenth century when Maharashtra was under the *Yādava* kings, champions of art and learning. It was a prosperous and peaceful place. The economic conditions of the people were good, but there was inequality between the rich and the poor and rampant discrimination on the basis of caste. Society was marked by "social degeneration, degradation and moral decadence" (ibid.: 1954/1979: xxviii–xxix). The Brahmins were busy indulging in arcane discussions on spirituality which were of no use to the masses. Moreover, during Dnyāneshwar's time there were many sects and philosophical streams of believers and non-believers. As for believers, there were followers of *Shankara, Mādhava, Mahānubhāv* and *Rāmānuja,* and as for non-believers, there were the *sunyavādins* (one who denies the existence of anything), and the *chārvākas* (one who believes that life is a matter of eat, drink and make merry). Consequently, "the real value of religion in its emotional development was lost sight of and its purpose was defeated" (ibid.: 1954/1979: xxxi). It was during these times of multiple philosophical approaches that Dnyāneshwar tried to find a middle path through *Bhakti*. In that respect, Dnyāneshwar was a "great reformer and a reconciliationist (*Samanvaya vādi*)" (ibid.).

Sanskrit was the preferred language of higher caste learned people and all important works were written in Sanskrit. But Dnyāneshwar decided to write the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* in the language of the people, namely Marathi, which was called *prākrut,* using a novel meter derived from a folk meter called the *Ovi*.[7]

Now, a few words on the source text. The *Gitā* is a part of the epic *Mahābhārat*, which is a story of the war between

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7   An *ovi* is a verse written in four lines of which the last syllable of the first three lines rhyme, while that of the fourth does not.

the *Kauravas* and their five cousins, the *Pāndavas*. The *Gitā* is that part of the *Mahābhārat* which contains the conversation between *Arjun* and his charioteer Lord *Krishna* on the battlefield before the big war begins. *Arjun* does not want to wage a war against his relatives and teachers and Lord *Krishna* explains to him that it is his duty. He tries to convince him by applying the logic of the various branches of philosophy. The *Gitā* is accordingly a highly philosophical text.

3.2 The *Kristapurāṇa*

Now let me turn to the *Kristapurāṇa*. Religion and politics were intertwined in the 17th-century Portuguese colonization of Goa. Father Stephens' missionary work and his re-telling of the *Kristapurāṇa* must therefore be viewed against this background of aggressive and violent Portuguese domination. Stephens' *Kristapurāṇa* exists in two printed reproductions. The original is extant. One of them, in the *Devānāgari* script, is based on a handwritten manuscript found in 1925 in the Marsden Collection of the School of Oriental Studies archives in London. Another reproduction, in Latin script, was compiled and edited by Joseph L. Saldanha in 1907 in Mangalore. Since then, modern editions have appeared in 1956 and 1996 in Pune and Mumbai, respectively. The *Kristapurāṇa* has been considered an early form of "inculturation" by noted researcher Nelson Falcao (cf. Henn 2015: 9). Biblical stories are narrated in the *Kristapurāṇa* using the same quatrain meter *ovi* characteristic of Maharashtrian *bhakti* literature. Hence Stephens' work is associated today with that of famous Hindu *bhakti* saint poets and is believed to have stylistically borrowed above all from the work of the saint poet *Śrī Sant Ekanātha* (1533–1599), a contemporary of Stephens who lived and worked in Maharashtra (cf. ibid.: 3).

The *Kristapurāṇa* has a total of 10,962 strophes *(Ovi)*. It has two sections: the *Paillem Puranna* dealing with the Old Testament, and which has 36 cantos *(Avaswaru)* and the *Dussarem Puranna*, dealing with the New Testament, which has 59 cantos. In order to understand Father Stephen's *rupāntar,* it is necessary to apprehend the church policies and politics existing at that time. Because of the *padroado* system, by which the Portuguese kings got the right and duty to deploy clerics and run the churches in their colonies, the Portuguese authorities controlled the Catholic mission in Asia throughout the early modern period. As a result, religion played second fiddle to the state apparatus. It was subject to the vagaries of administrative policies of the Portuguese. At the time that the *Kristapurāṇa* was written, there existed a Jesuit conversion policy that included a strategy known as *accommodatio*. This strategy allowed the continuation of certain local customs and cultural expressions in the religious culture and practices of Christian converts at the colonial frontier. *Accommodatio* was also practiced in Goa, where the missionaries adopted Hindu ceremonial styles (cf. Henn 2015: 3). An example here is the ceremony of *Jāgar,* an annual all-night ceremony in Hindu temples, which was also allowed in churches, with the difference that, in the songs and plays presented in these ceremonies "names, characters and costumes of Hindu Gods" were replaced by those of Christian saints (ibid.).

The *Kristapurāna* was written at a time when, on the one hand Catholic missionaries engaged with Indian philology, producing numerous Indian-language grammars and composing the Christian *purāna* literature, while on the other, the Portuguese-Catholic regime in Goa and other Portuguese-controlled areas in India launched a ruthless campaign of destruction and oppression against Hindu culture. This campaign destroyed all Hindu temples, shrines and images throughout

Goa, replaced the Hindu monuments with Christian churches, chapels and crosses, and also banned public performance of all Hindu ceremonies. Reading Hindu religious books like the *purāna* was also banned. Hence there was a "coexistence and contiguity of translation and violence, hermeneutics and destruction" (ibid.: 4–5). The church policy of *accommodatio* gave birth to works like the *Kristapurāṇa,* but the contents and the form took shape in the deft hands of Father Stephens. Following a ban on the regional literature, even the *Kristapurāṇa* was banned by the Portuguese in 1684.

Having situated the two translations in their respective historical, religious and socio-political contexts, I now turn my attention to applying the above-discussed aspects of performativity to these two works in the following section.

4   Performativity in the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* and the *Kristapurāna*

4.1   The *Bhāvārthadeepikā*

4.1.1 Unpredictability and emergence

The decision to use the Marathi language for translating the *Gitā* in itself is a novel and revolutionary idea for 13th century Maharashtra. It was so revolutionary that the translator incurred the wrath of the "custodians" of the Hindu religion, the Brahmins. The next decision of Dnyāneshwar which in retrospect is considered as novel is the decision to make the life—negating *Gitā* life-asserting in his translation. Life-asserting means that the *Gitā* which preaches renunciation of worldly life for spiritual progress did not lay emphasis on the daily lives of people. According to the *Gitā* the world is an illusion. Dnyāneshwar changed this message and showed the path of achieving spirituality without renouncing worldly life.

The *Bhāvarthadeepikā* is a metric text, as all texts in those days were. The *Gitā* has the *anushtup* meter. Dnyāneshwar creates a new meter which came to be called the *granthika Ovi* (literary *Ovi*). It is taken from the *ovi* meter which was used by common folk: women, especially, sang songs in this meter while working. This meter is mutated to create the *granthika Ovi* (the literary *Ovi*) It is this mutated meter that works as a "liminal space" to pull the essence from the original for a new audience, which are the common folk. By creating a novel meter which neither belonged to the Sanskrit language nor to the songs of the common folk, his translation became literary and yet accessible to the common people. It is what Chakravarti refers to as "space of shared meaning". It is the space where Dnyāneshwar enters into a dialogue with the *Gitā*, and connects the elite and educated class with the common folk. So, the *Bhāvarthadeepika* not only has a form different from the *Gitā* but also a different content and literary style. It propounds a different *Lebensphilosphie*. If one compares the Sanskrit *Gitā* to the *Bhāvarthadeepika* all these are unexpected modifications. Hence the aspects of emergence and unpredictability of performativity are fulfilled in the *Bhāvarthadeepika*.

4.1.2 The autopoietic feedback loop in the *Bhāvārthadeepikā*

Earlier, I suggested that if the translation is a joint venture between the translator and his or her readers, and it shows signs of the latter shaping the translation as it is being done, one can say that the performative factor of the autopoietic feedback loop has been fulfilled.

It is believed that Dnyāneshwar preached portions 'already composed' (Bhagwat 1954/1979: xxii). This clearly means that the translation was being discussed in its making,

giving scope for the potential reader to suggest comments. His circle of discussants comprised mainly of his brother and Guru Nivruttināth, the '*Maharashtra Mandali*' (the people of Maharashtra) as well as saints. The dialogue in the *Bhāvārthadeepika* is framed around Dnyāneshwar as the addressor and '*Maharashtra Mandali*', saints and his brother Nivruttināth as the addressees. These listeners take an active part in shaping the target text, for instance when Dnyāneshwar digresses from the topic at hand, his brother interrupts him saying "Suffice now: there is hardly any need for you to say all this: hasten up and turn your attention to the composition" (Bhagwat 1954/1979: 6; cf. Ketkar 2019: 12). That the *Bhāvārthadeepika* is a dialogue between Dnyāneshwar and the target readers/listeners is also evident at the beginning of the *Bhāvārthadeepika* itself when Dnyāneshwar welcomes the listeners to participate in the translation at hand, not only as passive listeners but also actively guide him in it, just like a puppeteer guides the puppets' actions by pulling at the strings. The following quote expresses the same:

> It is up to you to make good whatever is defective and to drop out whatever is excessive in my work. Now, therefore attend here. I shall be able to talk only if you could make me talk in the way the puppet's movements depend upon the movements of the strings on which they are worked. (Bhagwat 1954/1979: 6)

The use of the vocative in sentences like Dnyāneshwar telling his listeners "Now hear with calm and patient attention" (ibid.) also brings the performance to life and allows space for the audience to participate.

Apart from the above-mentioned examples, the *Bhāvārthadeepika* is replete with such evidences of listener responses, be they from the Saint Nāmdev, or his Guru Nivrittināth of the people of Maharashtra making this dialogic translation a joint venture.

4.1.3 The Co-presence (*Kopräsenz*) of *Dnyāneshwar* (1275–1293)

Dnyāneshwar's father was an ascetic returning to family life which was considered a sin in those days by the orthodox Brahmins. Due to this reason the family was ostracised and the children were denied the privileges befitting to Brahmin families. The *Bhāvārthadeepikā* is to be viewed as Dnyāneshwar's response to such Brahmanical orthodoxy, of which his family had been a victim. He had experienced what it felt like to be banned from spiritual knowledge. Hence the decision to challenge the supremacy of the Brahmins and their exclusive rights to spiritual knowledge is in itself a decision that takes us back to his life and person.

Dnyāneshwar was a *Vārkari*.[8] The fact that he was a *Vārkari* is reflected in many of his translatorial decisions. The dialogicity in the *Bhāvarthadeepikā* has its roots in the *Vārkari*'s belief in '*adwait*' i.e. non-dualism, which is intimate oneness between God and man, *Guru* and disciple as well as composer and audience (cf. Mancharkar 2000: 311). The decision of Dnyāneshwar to propose the easier path of *Bhakti* or devotion leading to deliverance rather than knowledge and Yoga as suggested in the *Gitā* which would have been well beyond the capacity of the common man (cf. Bhagwat 1959/1974: xxii) is expression of the empathy he felt for the common man. His decision to prefer the use of the poetic form of emotive and subjective expressionism (cf. Ketkar 2019: 22) is an attempt to make the dry knowledge of the *Gitā* more accessible.

As mentioned earlier, Dnyāneshwar was a reconciliationist. This personality trait is also reflected in the way he defines

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8   *Vārkaris* are householders who live a life of devotion. *Kar* means "to do" and *vāri* means a pilgrimage. Hence the one who does a pilgrimage is a *Vārkari*.

his activity of translation and negotiates the Sanskrit–*Bhasha* ('vernacular languages') dichotomy. At a time when Sanskrit enjoyed a high literary status and literary activities in the vernacular languages were condemned to the fringes of the literary polysystem, Dnyāneshwar manages to reconcile the two by comparing his activity of translation to putting ornaments on a beautiful body. The beautiful body is the Sanskrit language and the ornaments are the young Marathi language. He describes it as follows:

> both the Sanskrit text (the beautiful body) and the commentary (the ornament) are beautiful in their own right, independent of each other and yet have come together to bring out the knowledge in the *Gita*. However, when they come together their beauty makes the difference between the original and the translation vanish in some sort of *advaita*. The ornament also brings out the poetic potential in Marathi and boosts its power as a literary language, and, on the other hand, it confers youth upon an aged language like Sanskrit. (Ketkar 2019: 16–17)

The two languages, Sanskrit and Marathi have come together in a beautiful alliance to access 'the meaning' of the Gita. The translation of 700 odd *shlokas*[9] of the Gita is explained in 1000 odd *ovis* in Marathi. The first two-line verse in the 15th chapter of the *Gitā* is explained in 101 *ovis* in Marathi. The Sanskrit text contains the substance of the philosophy, but it is the act of translation into Marathi that has unpacked the complex substance to make it comprehensible. This is the lovely alliance of the two in translation, which explains the source text effectively. The reference to new ornaments probably refers to the updating of the old Sanskrit text for a new generation using a new language, because Marathi was not a very old language in the 13th century.

Hence the decision to select the *Gitā* for translation, the decision to use Marathi for his work, and the decision to bridge

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9   A *shloka* is a verse of two lines.

the life-negating philosophy of the *Gitā* to the life -asserting philosophy of the *Vārkaris* are facts that lead us to the life and personality of Dnyāneshwar.

4.1.4   Eventfulness and timelessness

The writing of the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* is an event because it was the first of its kind in many ways. It was the first translation of a spiritual text in a vernacular language, it was the first ever philosophical text in the folk meter *ovi*, but most importantly it rang in a new era of democratisation of the religion, making religious and spiritual knowledge accessible to all. This translation led to the formation of a tradition of saints emerging from the lower castes like Saint *Sāwatā* who was a gardener, Saint *Gorā* who was a potter, Saint Narahari who was a goldsmith etc.

Though the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* was written a long time ago one sees the impact of its transformative power on the society even today. It is read and discussed in religious sermons which are broadcast on television in the form of a *kirtan* which can be loosely translated as a musical sermon in accompaniment to dance.[10] It is relevant as study material in the academia. It is an integral part of the syllabus of the postgraduation programme in Marathi studies. The *Bhāvārthadeepikā* influenced the practice of translation because it became a model for "the long and seminal tradition of *bhashyakārs* ('translators;' my transl.) or commentators on the *Gitā* like *Dāsopanta* in the sixteenth cen-

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10   These *kirtans* are broadcast daily on cable television in the mornings. The *Kirtankārs* generally select one verse or *ovi* from the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* and elucidate it by explicitating with examples taken from the daily lives of their audience (cf. <https://www.facebook.com/zeetalki esofficial/videos/gajar-kirtanacha-sohala-anandacha-zee-talkies/8164 70395446708/>).

tury, *Wāman Pandit* in the seventeenth century and *Amber Hussein* among others" (Ketkar 2019: 13). It also influenced the composition of the *Kristapurāna* (cf. ibid.), which is seen "as the initiating model and masterpiece of the Christian Purāna literature" (Henn 2015: 3). In short there is evidence of this translator shaping the craft of translation in another temporal space through his innovative model of translation. This is clear from the following quotation: "*Dnyāneshwar* is forging a new language for literary composition in Marathi which becomes a model for later *'bhashya-teeka'* of the *Gitā*" (Ketkar 2019: 13).

Sachin Ketkar, who has worked extensively in the field of translation and Marathi literature, opens new dimensions of looking at the *Bhāvārthadeepikā*. He calls it a "performative *dharma kirtan*:"

> Thus, the Sanskrit *'teeka'* or *'bhashya'* genre, typically involving commentary and gloss of philosophically ambivalent terms and meant primarily for the upper-caste elite reader, is transformed into performative *'dharma kirtan'* using folk metres like *'ovi'* meant for different 'publics'. It is that this process is not a simple adoption of cosmopolitan models (*teeka/bhashya*) in the local languages in 'top-to-bottom' transmission but the creation of new models, genres literary languages, that are *functionally* and *contextually* different. (Ketkar 2019: 12)

So the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* transcended the two semiospheres, one, the upper caste elite reader and two, the general public. New models were 'created' which is proof of a third space, since it is neither the space occupied by the Sanskrit language nor the one occupied by Marathi. Using this concept of heterogeneous spaces Ketkar proposes that the works of the *Vārkaris* of which Dnyāneshwar was considered a founding member, "can be conceptualised as translations across asymmetrical and hierarchic languages and spaces, and creative innovations at the same time." (Ketkar 2022: 24). The *modus operandi* for making these texts performative was to use the folk, oral and

performative meters and genres and "thus shifting the space of the elite texts into non-elite spaces" (ibid.).

Last but not the least, the two texts are irreversible. If one were to back translate the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* one would get a totally different text, meant for a different reader, with a different form as well as content.

4.1.5   Transgression

Everything about the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* is transgressive. The boundary of a philosophical text is breached to allow divine love to creep in, the boundary of a text for elites is breached to allow the common folk to partake and savour the spiritual knowledge in the text. The *granthik Ovi* is neither a meter used in Sanskrit texts nor a meter used in folk songs or folk poetry, but it is culled from both, which is proof of its liminality. The difference between the two meters is explained below:

> While the *'ovi'* was a free-flowing genre (*janapada ovi*) used by women for singing while working at a grinding stone *(jata)* or a water wheel *(rahat)*, *Dnyaneshwar* developed a more 'literary' form of rhythmic prose or '*granthika ovi*' (literally, the *ovi* of the book). (Ketkar 2019: 12–13)

This meter is the factor that creates the space for liminality. It is the one that 'creates' new meaning of the *Gitā* intelligible to the new readers. This act of translation can be read as "Brahmanisation or Sanskritisation of the folk or as a democratisation of the spiritual canon" (Ketkar 2019: 24). This change democratized the *Gitā*. It was innovative and it transformed (cf. ibid.: 73) the Marathi literature.

After having applied the factors of performativity to the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* I will now attempt to do the same with the second work, the *Kristapurān*.

4.2   The *Kristapurān*

4.2.1   Unpredictability and emergence

If one were told that the *Kristapurān* is the Marathi translation of the biblical stories, one would find it difficult to believe because *purāns* are a typical genre of Hindu religious literature. The *Kristapurān* is one of its kind. It is a "different animal" when compared to its original. The title draws from Hindu literature, the language is Kokani/Marathi, but the script is Roman. This kind of combination is rare. The *Kristapurān* is a translation of biblical stories but Lord Jesus is referred to as *Vaikuṁṭharājā* (King of *Vaikumtha,* which is the abode of the Hindu God *Viṣṇu) paramesvara* (cf. Pär 2017: 4). The *Kristapurāna* has mutated most convincingly, staying within the close boundaries of a holy text of one culture to nonetheless become a holy text of another culture. The jaw-dropping title of its translation announces the mutation from the Bible of the Christians to the *Purān* of the Hindus. To use Fillmore's terminology, the frame *'Purān'* evokes the scene of a 'holy book' in the minds of the Hindus. By naming his Marathi/Konkani translation of the Bible as the *'Kristapurān'*, Father Thomas Stephens increases the potential of the target text to perform its function in the host culture, namely to convince the target readers of the faith that they had invested in Christianity. The decision to select a genre of the target culture has been one of the reasons for its success because

> [i]t is neither the linguistic/literary text nor the culture only that is translated, but between these two, there is the category of the genre, which has the ability of passing from one language to another much more easily and becomes the site for cultural translation. (Chatterjee 2010: 158)

This translation, undertaken during the early period of religious conversions in India, exhibits an ingenious streak of appropri-

ation of the textual dynamics of the host culture to achieve its intention by cloaking the title in a partially misleading way. If one were to back-translate the *Kristapurān*, one would not get the biblical stories the translator translated from. The target text is a 'different animal' and the translation process is 'irreversible'.

Father Stephens used two literary devices which were extremely unexpected. One was the genre of a *purāna* and the second was the use of the quatrain meter *ovi*. The *ovi* had been firmly established as the meter of the *Bhakti* tradition by his time and the familiarity of the genre as well as the meter served to make the text of a foreign religion more familiar to the neo-converts. The use of the *ovi* meter in the *Kristapurāṇa* is a reference to the past *Bhakti* literature of the Hindus at the same time as it influenced the later Christian Puranas. By referencing to the past and pointing to the future it fulfilled a performative characteristic (cf. Fischer-Lichte 2009: 7). Father Stephens borrows vocabulary from the Hindu religion and fills it up with Christian references. This unforeseen translation strategy "emerged" (ibid.: 5) through the dialogic nature of the genre.

4.2.2 The autopoietic feedback loop in *Kristapurāṇa*

Annie Rachel Royson writes in her article "Tell Us the Story from the Beginning" that "The neo-converts of Portuguese Goa were rarely passive recipients of the translations created for them by missionaries. They actively "translated back" these texts, bringing out unexplored meanings of the translated work, and in the process, creating a Christian narrative unique to their cultural landscape" (Royson 2019: 21). That the readers are actively involved in the birth of the text is documented in the translation itself. The following proves it.

> In the first chapter, Stephens describes how a priest (probably himself) was teaching children in Salcete the catechism on a Sunday evening, when a Brahmin came to him with a request to give them a Christian *purāna* in Marathi. Now when the old *purānas* are forbidden, he says, people may otherwise resort to gambling for pastime. The priest was pleased with the request and promised to start telling what would become the *Kristapurāṇa* part by part every Sunday. (*Kristapurāṇa* I.1. 126–181; cf. Pär 2017: 73–74)

The relevant verse is being quoted below:

> *Ha motta abhiprauo zi mhanne*
> *Tumĩ tari varilĩ maguilĩ purannẽ*
> *Tari pratipustaquẽ amā Caranne*
> *Caissy nacarity tumĩ*
>
> He said, Sir, this is an important suggestion,
> Have you not refused us
> the old Purānas?
> Then why do you not compose similar books for us?
> (Royson 2019: 24)

The *Kristapurāṇa* comprises of a question answer format, which functions as an autopoietic feedback loop (where the neo-converts ask the *Padre-Guru* i.e. the priest, to justify the biblical stories. Father Stephens wrote the Bible in the Hindu genre *Purāna* which was essentially a dialogic text. "The *Kristapurāṇa* is composed in a dialogic format, as a discussion between the narrator, *Padre-Guru*, who is a priest of the Catholic Church, and the neo-Christians in seventeenth century Goa" (cf. Royson 2019: 24). Christian Puranas were not 'official' Bible translations because of which there was space for dialogue between the convert and missionary (cf. ibid.: 22). According to Annie Royson, the translation process of the *Kristapurān* is "iterative, where the target audience of the translated work mediate and contribute to the way in which the work is finally shaped" (ibid.: 27). This illustrates that there is ambivalence between the active and passive role of the communica-

tion partners. The role played by them in the event of translation and the way the translator lets the translation happen are performative factors. Royson believes that "dialogue" is a critical aspect of the *Kristapurān*. The dialogue in this work is on two levels. One is the conversational tone and development of the narrative through the question-answer format and the second is the dialogic relationship where the tradition from the puranic texts "speak" to the biblical traditions. These dialogues introduced local cultural matters (matters concerning caste, for example) into the conversation. The translator was thereby forced to justify his narrative in the framework of local Goan culture. Since secret Hindu practices among neo-converts was significant for an understanding of the development of various religious identities in the region, they were addressed specifically at moments where the translator used biblical passages. As Royson observes therefore, "Cultural translation in Stephen's work is, thus a two-way process: a) the translated work 'speaks' to the local culture in an attempt to christianize it, while b) the culture speaks to the translation and moulds it into a form unique to the region" (Royson 2019: 30).

4.2.3 The Co-presence (*Kopräsenz*) of Father Stephens (1549–1619)

Stephens, who was already fluent in Portuguese and Latin besides English, set himself to learn Marathi and Konkani, the two languages most commonly used in and around Goa. Stephens became proficient enough in the local languages to preach and hear confessions in them at a small village called Rachol, near Salsette (cf. ibid.: 148–149). Because of his knowledge of the languages Marathi and Konkani he was popular and close to the Indians to which one can attribute his success in proselytizing. Father Stephens was very well versed in the

ways of the Hindus. He knew exactly what appealed to them and how their minds worked. This is reflected in the strategies he uses to name "divine spaces" in the Bible, which is possible only because of his knowledge of languages and the people. He makes use of epithets, for which the Hindu repertoire was large enough to take from. He makes skilful use of it to denote the Christian God. Examples are *Devabāpa* (God the Father), *Devasutā* (God the Son) *Racanārā, Jeju Kristarāja* (Jesus the King) etc.:

> In a similarly creative and poetic way, Stephens is noted for telling the story of Mary, for whose honorific description and devotional praise he used more than eighty different names and titles, such as *Bhāgyevanta Mari* (the Blessed Mary), *Devamātā* (Mother of God), *Vaikunthapatice Māte Ankuvāri* (Virgin Mother of the Lord of Heaven), *Pavitra Mātā* (Holy Mother), *Sadevi Ankuvāri* (Blessed Virgin), *Devadutānci Rānī* (Queen of the Angels). (Henn 2015: 5)

Another example is the translation of baptism as *navā janma* (new life). By avoiding the use of the word *punarjanma*, which means re-birth in Hinduism Father Stephens avoids identifying the new faith with the Hindu idea of re-birth and by equating it with *navā janma* he introduces the Christian concept of baptism. Hence by avoiding one word and creating an alternative, he *kills* two birds with one stone. While appropriating the Hindu religious vocabulary he is careful not to cross the tenets of his faith.

While commonly using terms like *purāṇa, smṛiti,* or *śāstra,* all of which are designations for genres of religious scripture in the Hindu tradition, the English Jesuit, conspicuously, never uses the term *śruti* to designate any of the Christian textual corpora (cf. Falcao 2003: 72), although this term represents textual traditions that enjoy the highest theological appreciation and authority in Hindu understanding. This is because *śruti* translates as 'heard' and specifies among other things the oldest Hindu textual corpora of the Vedas, indicating that these were

directly revealed from divine origins to human sages and thus in contrast with other textual corpora qualified as *smriti*, that is, 'remembered,' or *purāṇa*, that is, 'ancient,' which are considered to be only of human origin. Christianity without the agency of Jesus Christ is unimaginable. Hence Father Stephens avoids a word which will suggest direct divinity without the intervention of a messenger. The translation for God Jesus Christ, heaven, baptism provide us with an insight into Father Stephens's strategy. The absence of the words *"Vishnu"* and "*śruti*" are very telling.

4.2.4 Eventfulness and timelessness

The writing of the *Kristapurāṇa* is an event. It signifies a break from the tradition of Bible translations. That it has rung in a totally new model of Bible translations called the Christian *purāna* is clear from the following quote:

> Stephens did not follow a method of translation adopted by the Protestants a hundred years later. Rather, he chose to retell the story in a form that was familiar and acceptable to the people of the region. As such, it is a symbol of the various levels of translation involved in making Stephens sufficiently Hindu in order to make his Hindu audience sufficiently Christian. (George/Rath 2016: 307)

Father Stephens not only lets his Bible be determined by the target culture's literary norms, but also borrows heavily from the Hindu religious vocabulary to describe Christian concepts. That is the reason why the *Kristapurāṇa* signifies an eventful phenomenon.

By naming his Marathi/Konkani translation of the Bible as the '*Kristapurān'*, Father Thomas Stephens increases the potential of the target text to perform its function in the host culture, which is to convince the target readers of the faith that

they had invested in Christianity. The decision to select a genre of the target culture has been one of the reasons for its success.

According to Ananya Chakravarti (2017: 370), "the continued performance of the text even today is at least partly due to the superior poetry of the *Discurso*, whose allusive depth and skilful versification suggests the deep involvement, if not outright co-authorship of indigenous collaborators." The *Kristapurāṇa,* in her opinion, influenced the tradition of Jesuit writings in Marathi and Konkani throughout the seventeenth century (cf. ibid.). An example of a similar work is the Peter *Purān* composed by the French Jesuit Étienne de la Croix (1579–1643) (cf. Henn 2015: 7ff).

4.2.5 Transgression

As discussed earlier transgression and liminality are inseparable. Due to the violence unleashed by the Portuguese, and their policy of accommodation, missionaries like Father Stephens had to struggle to maintain the middle path between adhering strictly to the source text and modifying it to make the translation function effectively for his conevrts. This middle path is the liminal space where the translation happens. Father Stephens transgresses the genre of the biblical stories to *purāṇa*, makes use of the *ovi* meter, changes the language from Latin to Marathi / Konkani. He continuously re-calibrates the meaning of important biblical concepts. There is ample proof of transgression in Father Stephens' translation. He could do so because there is a *tertium comparationis*, shared meaning, shared concepts between the two religions.

5   Conclusion

This essay began with identifying factors of performativity for translation studies where scholarship was culled from theatre studies as well as translation studies. The factors unpredictability and emergence, the autopoietic feed-back loop, translator's co-presence, eventfulness and timelessness and transgression were identified. Taking from theatre studies one can say that if in a translation 'explosive' changes emerge, if the translation documents reader response and reflects the personality of the translator it is performative. Translating a spiritual text in Sanskrit to a vernacular language is an explosive change. It was unheard of and sudden. All these factors were found in the *Bhāvārthadeepikā*. Changing the life denying philosophy of the *Gitā* to a life asserting text of practical philosophy, advocating the paths of knowledge as well as *bhakti* instead of the difficult paths of the *Gitā* are all explosive changes. Dnyaneshwar's co-presence is reflected in his use of the Marathi language and the *adwait* philosophy of the *Vārkaris* The dialogic format of the *Bhāvārthadeepikā,* with conversations between the translator's listeners and the translator which is well documented in the translation is proof of the autopoietic feed-back loop. The writing of the *Bhāvārthadeepikā* is an eventful phenomenon. The *Bhāvārthadeepikā* is a totally 'different animal'. It has been impacting the religion and society till date. The transformative effect of the *Bhāvarthadeepikā* is seen even today in the form of another *rupāntar* namely the *kirtan* which continues to educate and enlighten people. So it is also timeless. Its relevance for society and religion has not diminished. The use of the *grānthik ovi* in the *Bhāvārthadeepikā,* the use of examples from the daily lives of the people are proof of transgression which shifted the original source text from elite spaces to non-elite spaces.

The *Kristapurāṇa* exhibits unpredictability and emergence. Never before had Biblical translations taken the form of a Hindu religious text. Hence it is a 'different animal'. This decision emerged from the situation in which Father Stephens found himself: convincing the neo-converts of Christianity on the background of the violence they faced at the hands of the Portuguese. If one were to back translate the *Kristapurāṇa* one would get a totally different text. Two personality traits of Father Stephens document the translator's co-presence: one is his excellent knowledge of the language and two is his understanding of the local customs. The different words that he uses to name Jesus Christ, Mother Mary etc. showcase his language skills. The dialogic format of the *Kristapurāṇa* which has many instances of conversations between the *Padre-Guru* and the neo-converts shows that there is evidence of an autopoietic feed-back loop. The writing of the *Kristapurāṇa* is an event because it created a new genre called the Christian *Purān*. It had an impact on Jesuit literature throughout the 17th century. Transgression is also evident in the *Kristapurāṇa*. By using the *ovi* as a meter and naming his text a *purān* Father Stephens locates a Christian text in the Hindu religious tradition. By describing Christian concepts in Hindu vocabulary he skillfully transcends the borders of Christianity and Hinduism to tap into a shared space of Hindu *Bhakti* and Christian devotion.

I conclude that the dialogic nature and the use of the folk meter *ovi* are probably the norm for successful performative translations in the medieval and early modern period in India. Every performer needs a medium to express himself or herself. A painter needs paints, a stage artist needs a stage, a film actor needs the camera. In the same way a translator who wishes to perform, needs a liminal space. It is from this liminal space that the meaning is negotiated and the translation comes to life. Though performative translations, as a theoretical concept in

translation studies, is relatively new, the practice of this type of translation, as proven in this essay, dates back to the medieval and the early modern period. A similar thought is echoed in the following quote:

> From the very beginning of the discipline's establishment process, the various shapes of communication which mould the issues dealt within the realm of Translation Studies call for us to go beyond disciplinary boundaries. This raises the question of whether there has in fact already been a "performative turn" in the discipline of Translation Studies. (Wolf 2017: 29)

The performative turn in translation studies offers the perfect theoretical framework for translation forms like the *rupāntar* It has freed the translator from the role of a decoder of the source text message to take on the role of a creator of a new message, thereby making the activity of translation an impactful and sustained agency bringing about change in society and culture.

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