Cultural and Literary Metamorphoses in Nonsense Literature – Journey from Jumblies to *Papangul,* Gramboolia to *Grambhulia*

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Abstract

The degree of untranslatability depends on the lack of equivalence present in the target language. Translation of nonsense literature poses a huge challenge because of its inherent linguistic and cultural specificity. The following paper looks at Satyajit Ray's translation of Edward Lear's nonsense rhymes, in Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim (1986) with particular reference to the 'Jumblies' and 'Dong with a Luminous Nose'. This paper traces the journey of cultural metamorphoses that Lear's poems go through to become presentable to a Bengali reading public for whom Ray writes and discusses the strategies undertaken by Ray for the purpose.

Keywords: Translation, Nonsense Literature, Edward Lear, Satyajit Ray, Adaptation.

Introduction

"The exquisite art of translators has not only created a link with our past but also has perpetuated a closeness and familiarity with most of the great literary events throughout the ages. Most of the translations of these literary classics are an important part of our children's and our own cultural heritage, and we never think of them as not having originated in our own language" (Carus 172)[1].

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[1] Excerpted from Carus, M. Translation and internationalism in children's literature. 1980. *Child Lit Educ* 11. Pp. 171–179. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01130847. The author traces the history of how

Carus in the above article talks about the growing trend of internationalism in children's literature, by which she refers to the increasing exchange of children's literature across nations that rose perceptibly after the Second World War.[2] This has been made possible only by the means of translation, which also focuses on the growing trend of translation of children's literature in the twentieth century. But translation too has its own set of limitations which makes the task challenging. Each language has certain expressions, moods, or experiences which are particular to that language and are not always available in another language; as we can explain this in Sapir's words - "Every language is itself a collective art of expression. There is concealed in it a particular set of aesthetic factors—phonetic, rhythmic, symbolic, morphological—which it does not completely share with any other language" (102).[3] This nature of language becomes more evident during the process of translation, limiting the possibilities of the translator in certain ways and also expanding the scope by presenting alternative possibilities as offered by the Target Language. When a work of literature is more dependent on cultural or linguistic peculiarities or phonetic oddities of a given language, translation becomes more challenging, forcing the translator to seek newer ways of representation.

Nonsense literature, one of the popular genres of children's literature depends on the cultural, linguistic, auditory, and other peculiarities of a language. These make the translation of

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there was a demand for international literature, especially for children, and explores how translation played an important role in it. Pp 172.

[2] "The end of the Second World War brought about a great desire for international sharing, and children's books such as *Babar* and *Pippi,* which have already become classics, began to be translated in unprecedented numbers soon after the first terrible postwar years" (Carus 172). Ibid.

[3] Sapir, Edward, 1949, *Language: An introduction to the study of speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. Pp. 102.

nonsense literature a daunting task for a translator. In this paper, I have attempted to explore the strategies of translation undertaken while translating nonsense verses, by exploring Satyajit Ray's Bangla adaptation of certain nonsense verses originally composed in English by the British poet Edward Lear. The paper will talk about translations of nonsense literature in general with a particular focus on the Jumblies of Lear that become 'Papangul' in Bangla and 'Dong with a Luminous Nose' that remain as 'Dong' in the translated text. The paper will also explore whether the Bangla versions of these rhymes can be classified as adaptation, translation, or transcreation. The Bangla poems by Ray that have been taken under consideration here had been published in the anthology *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim*, in 1986. The title, *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim* means a bouquet of horses' eggs – a title that in itself signifies nonsense. Before proceeding with the argument in this paper, two clarifications are necessary – firstly a brief explanation of the terms adaptation and transcreation in the context of translation, and secondly, a brief understanding of the traditions of nonsense in English and Bangla.

Adaptation and Transcreation Concerning Translation

The term adaptation had been defined in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation* as "a set of translative interventions which result in a text that is not generally accepted as a translation but is nevertheless recognized as representing a source text" (24).[4] The same article mentions the criteria in which 'adaptation; is generally used, two of which are – 'cross-code breakdown' and 'situational or cultural inadequacy' (26).[5] The first refers to the lack of lexical

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[4] From the entry of 'Adaptation' as included in Baker, Mona; Saldanha, Gabriela (Editor). 2008. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge. Pp..24.

[5] Ibid. Pp..26.

equivalence in the Target Language while the second one corresponds to a lack in the Target Culture when it cannot explain or accommodate a situation referred to in the Source Text. They are "decisions or choices that end up becoming techniques or procedures" (Bastin 76).[6] Taking these discussions of adaptation into consideration, in this paper, I have looked at adaptation as a strategy chosen by the translator to come in handy in places where no cultural or linguistic equivalence could be found. As discussed in detail in the paper later, nonsense rhymes depend a lot on certain peculiarities of language and culture which cannot be aptly translated, therefore, adaptation becomes one of the procedures to represent it in the target language text.

Another strategy that needs to be defined here is 'transcreation' which has been defined as "a creative and complex service transgressing translation" (Ointinnen 14).[7] Though this definition of transcreation has been used in the context of advertisement and other kinds of brand-related writings across the world, it can often be used in the case of translating for children as well. Transcreation, for this paper, can be defined as the strategy undertaken by the translator, in places where even adaptations do not suffice. While analysing Ray's translation of Lear in *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim,* we can identify the use of both these strategies. While translation

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[6] In the Essay titled 'Adaptation: The Paramount Communication Strategy', Georges L Bastin elaborates the relationship between Adaptation and Translation in details. Bastin, G. L. "Adaptation, the Paramount Communication Strategy". *Linguaculture*, vol. 5, no. 1, June 2021, doi:10.1515/lincu-2015-0013. Pp.76.

[7] Oittinen, R. 2020 From Translation to Transcreation to Translation: Excerpts from a Translator's and Illustrator's Notebooks. In: Dybiec-Gajer J., Oittinen R., Kodura M. (eds) Negotiating Translation and Transcreation of Children's Literature. New Frontiers in Translation Studies. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2433-2_2. Pp. 14.

along with a certain amount of adaptation is what Ray uses for the longer poems of Dong and the Jumblies, he often takes recourse to transcreation while dealing with Lear's shorter rhymes. The paper, though primarily dealing with 'Papangul' and 'Dong' poems, also briefly mentions the smaller rhymes to highlight another strategy used by Ray in the same anthology, which is different from the adaptation technique that he chooses for the longer ones.

Background to Nonsense Literature

Though the nineteenth century is considered to be the official period from which nonsense literature started existing as a genre, literary nonsense has always fascinated writers. This is evident in Shakespeare's Dogberry and Verges or Sheridan's Mrs. Malapros. But it is in the nineteenth century, with the arrival of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll in the literary arena that nonsense literature became a genre in its own right. There has been much speculation regarding the reasons behind this occurrence and it has often been linked to a psycho-sexual analysis of the two authors that is beyond the purview of this paper. But what remains important is the emergence of a distinctive genre of literature that did not follow the conventional or set pattern of logic, understanding, and even language. In the genre of nonsense literature, the linguistic anomalies, as well as anomalies in terms of appearance and action, became a part of the normativity while the normal was brought under the radar. This was in direct contrast to the spirit of Victorian propriety and challenged the middle-class values of stability and orderliness that were so greatly valued in Victorian society. Therefore, in Lear's poems, there could be a Dong with a luminous nose or an old man with a beard large enough to host a few creatures in it, and, in Carroll's world, a little girl could easily change her size by eating a cake or a

potion. It was these unusual events that added humour to the reading experience.

Nonsense literature occupies a space between the sense in its normative understanding and a lack of it. The humour that such a work evokes is largely due to its existence in that liminal space in which narratives do not follow any set pattern of conventional reason. By not submitting to the diktats of the rational or the reasoned world, nonsense literature reminds the readers of a world beyond their restricted definition of rationality. All nonsense literature then throws a challenge to the majoritarian concept of rationality and creates a space for multiple rationalities. Absurdities, exaggerations, puns and wordplays, identities in flux, and incongruous bodies are some of the tropes common to the genre of nonsense – all these tropes go beyond the normal and question the legitimacy of normalcy itself.

But this grey area between rationality and irrationality is also deeply embedded in the cultural codes. So a work of nonsense literature expresses itself by using the cultural and linguistic specificities, subverting, modifying, or bending them to an extent of evoking humour of the absurd. Wordplays, culture-specific idiosyncrasies, caricatures, and exaggerations, all together create laughter in nonsense. It also acts as a safety valve that channelizes the negative impact of seriousness, as is found in the adult world, and brings relief. So unlike general perception, or what the name itself suggests, nonsense literature does have a significant status as a literary genre. As Edward Strachey shows in his essay, 'Nonsense as a Fine Art'[8], though many stalwarts of literature, including Chaucer, Shakespeare, Pope, Sterne, Lamb, et al, have been presenting

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[8] Strachey, Edward. 1888, Nonsense as a Fine Art, Littel's Living Age. Fifth Series, Volume LXIV, Pp. 515-531. (reprints from Quarterly Review, 167, 1888, Pp. 335-65).

the incongruous in their works, there is still a rational behind such representations. But with Edward Lear, we come to the nonsense that is 'whimsical', it is Lear who "fixed the name of nonsense to the art, while giving a kind of concreteness to the things named… nonsense songs, nonsense botany, nonsense cookery and so on" (526-27).[9]

In the nineteenth century and early twentieth-century Bengal, nonsense flourished particularly with the works of Rabindranath Tagore, and the father-son duo, Sukumar Ray and Satyajit Ray. Though there had been some other attempts at writing nonsense by an author like Troilokyanath Mukhopadhyay and his adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*, nonsense literature as a genre finds a permanent place in Bangla literature only after the composition of *Abol Tabol* by Sukumar Ray. Nonsense literature in Bangla was a genre heavily influenced by the nonsense literature in English in the nineteenth century. Michael Heyman traces the origin of Indian nonsense tradition to many folk writings but adds that "That which we call modern or literary nonsense in India is a hybrid product that arose from colonial contact" (xliv).[10] He says that Bengal was one of the earliest to present this form of nonsense, mentioning that Calcutta was referred to as "Hustlefussabaad" by Lear himself (xliv).[11] The newly educated Bengali middle-class intelligentsia was well versed with the literary traditions of the West. Bengal as well as certain other parts of India was at that time going through a period of paradoxical relationship with the West, while on the one hand there was an admiration for the Western developments in terms of material success, there was also a deep growing critical engagement with its imperial tendencies.

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[9] Ibid. p 526-27
[10] Heyman, M. 2007. *The tenth rasa: An Anthology of Indian Nonsense.* India: Penguin Books. Pp. xliv.
[11] Ibid

So, the West was in a dialectical intellectual relationship with Bengal where despite the admiration, everything was not accepted unequivocally. In such a context then Sukumar Ray's brand of nonsense played an important role. Tracing the reasons behind the origin of this particular genre in Bengal, Ishita Banerjee states in 'Hybridity, Humour, and Alternative Possibility' that

> "The newly emergent Bengali intellectual life has, by now, reframed itself within a versatile multipolarity of thoughts and culture. The contemporary Calcutta with all its intellectual and emotional attributes ushers in a new era of artistic modernism both in the context of political and intergenerational crisis. Inspired by the waves of Renaissance and fostered by the family environment of Upendrakishor Roy Chowdhury, Sukumar Ray establishes an unparalleled genius infusing the genre of children's literature and ideological pattern within a singular thread of nonsense versification" (13).[12]

Nonsense literature by its nature is subversive and anti-establishment. By challenging the very basis of linguistic syntax and meaning it ushers in a certain amount of anarchy within the genre. Nineteenth-century also was such a period for Bengal where linguistic experiments, subversions of traditions, and literary innovations played an important role in their attempt to destabilise the colonial notions of order and subjugation. Though written not as a protest narrative but as a genre of children's writings, Sukumar Ray's nonsense verses, usher in that spirit of *khyepa* or madness as required doing away with the age-old traditions and superstitions and ushering

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[12] Banerjee, Ishita. 2018. Hybridism, Humour and Alternative Possibility: Negotiating Identity In Sukumar Ray's Literary Nonsense. *Postcolonial Interventions: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (ISSN 2455 6564), Vol. III, Issue 2, Pp. 13.

in a spirit of inquisitiveness. Sukumar Ray's rhymes *Abol Tabol* (1923) or his prose *Ha-ja-ba-ra-la* (1921) does not merely adopt the Western concept of nonsense but make them culturally acceptable to his target readers. Therefore his nonsensical world abounds in figures like *kumropatas* or *ahladi* or *Katukutu buro*.[13] All these characters, though in the realm of the incongruous, were still completely relatable by the children as well as adult readers of Ray.

An interesting dialogue of literary nonsense has been existing between Bangla and English since the nineteenth century through translations and transcreations or at times, inspirations. The unchallenged genius of nonsense from Bengal, Sukumar Ray has been largely influenced by both Edward Lear and Lewis Caroll which is very much evident in both *Abol Tabol* and *Ha-ja-ba-ra-la.* The tradition is carried even further by Satyajit Ray when he composes verses based on Lear's rhymes in *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim.* As he says in his short preface to the volume, these are not proper translations but almost transcreations of the original, and in many cases, he had focussed not on the text but the illustrations accompanying the text and created new verses inspired by those. This also brings us to the importance of visuals in nonsense literature. The text

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[13] As an example of Sukumar Ray's brand of nonsense, four lines from his rhyme 'Katukutu Buro' and their English translation by Satyajit Ray is included here –
Ar jekhane jao na re bhai saptasagar par
Katukutu Buror kache jeon a khabardar!
Sorboneshe briddho se bhai jeon a tar bari –
Katukutur kulpi lheye chhinrbe peter nari (Ray, Sukumar. 11)
Translation –
Go East or West, go North or South, by land or sea or air,
But before you go, make sure old Tickler isn't there.
Tickler is a terror and I'll tell you what he's after –
He'll have you stuffing tickle chops until you chole with laughter (Ray, Satyajit 1970: 20)

and the illustrations together complete the meanings of these works, each complimenting the other. This second-generation poet of the nonsense genre in Bangla does not stop only at bringing Lear to Bengal but also translates some of Sukumar Ray's nonsense verses into English opening up a two-way communication of translation of nonsense verses between Bangla and English. Much later there have been several translations of *Abol Tabol, Ha-ja-ba-ra-la,* and other nonsense poems from Bangla to English as well as several translations of *Alice in Wonderland* in Bangla, but Satyajit Ray remains a pioneer in this field. Such steady exchange between these two languages has continued to expand the scope of both these languages. Nonsense rhymes or literature has always been the pressure point that makes a language perform beyond its accepted capability and thereby enrich it. In the case of translation of nonsense literature, these very problems become manifold due to the distinctive cultural and linguistic matrices of source and target languages.

Nonsense Literature and its Translation

'Since every language has its distinctive peculiarities, the innate formal limitations—and possibilities—of one literature are never quite the same as those of another. The literature fashioned out of the form and substance of a language has the colour and the texture of its matrix" Edward Sapir (106).[14]

In the above quotation by Edward Sapir, taken from his work *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*, the author talks of the specific nature of language and how that 'fashions' literature in that language. In such a fashioning it is guided by the 'matrix', the cultural, social, and political environment that leads to the development of language. Sapir focuses on the fact

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[14] Sapir, Edward, 1949, *Language: An introduction to the study of speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. Pp.106.

that it is this 'matrix' that manifests itself during the translation of a work into a different language. Since each language has a different matrix, a different ecology in which it develops, it at times becomes difficult for a certain aspect to be communicated in another tongue. In a genre like Nonsense verses, where linguistic and cultural peculiarities play a crucial role, Sapir's discussion of this matrix of language is very pertinent. A similar thought has been highlighted by Susan Bassnett in her book *Translation Studies* where she mentions that beyond the fact that 'translation involves the transfer of 'meaning' contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also' (Bassnett 1980: 21).[15] These extralinguistic criteria along with the linguistic ones help in the complete transference of meaning from one language to another. Sapir and Bassnett's models of translation are significant here because, nonsense literature, as a genre, depends upon both linguistic and extra-linguistic attributes, for its success. Any translation of such work then requires a different kind of negotiation with language, not required in the translation of other genres of literature. Another important consideration that is required while translating nonsense, particularly the nonsense rhymes, is the form and structure of the work. Much of the effectiveness of the work depends on its form which is comprised of the rhyme, meter, and other structural parameters. In the very short preface to the book, *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim* Satyajit Ray aptly points at the problems of translating nonsense and his way of dealing with them. He says, "to engage in a literal translation of nonsense literature, the humour present in the original work gets lost. So I have

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[15] Bassnett, Susan. 1980. Translation Studies. London: Methuen. Pp.21.

taken some liberties in case of a few translations".[16] The translator is forced to make choices constantly that would not upset the form too much while maintaining the content as well. Too many cultural and linguistic codes embedded within the genre of nonsense make its translatability a problem as well. Each language has its own set of cultural practices and beliefs, that which is set down as tradition, which is difficult to be understood in any other language. A linguistic translation of such words then is rendered meaningless in the target language where it emerges completely out of context. Without the knowledge of the cultural practices, those words or phrases lose their meanings as well as specificity of purpose and thereby fail to evoke humour which is one of the primary concerns of nonsense literature. Similarly onomatopoeic words, puns, syntactic oddities, and other anomalies which are abundantly present in nonsense rhymes add to the difficulty of translation. The chief task of the translator is to communicate in the target language the text of the source language. Since each language has a unique rhythm, syntax, and structure, a composition that bases itself upon such parameters remains largely embedded within that language system. Therefore, translating such a text becomes a linguistic exercise and requires various forms of negotiations between the text, its meaning, and its form.

Translation, like nonsense literature, also exists in the liminal space. Just as nonsense rhymes exist in the area between sense and lack of it, translation too begins and happens at an intersection of two languages and cultures. Due to the nature of nonsense verses as discussed above, the act of translation, in such a case involves adaptation as one of the strategies. The

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[16] My translation from the Bengali original of *Today Bandha Ghorar Dim*. Ray, Satyajit. 1986. *Toray bandha ghorar dim*. Kolkata. Ananda. (Preface)

translator, in this case, has to take certain liberties which are closer to adaptation as defined above, than just translation.

Translation of children's literature has been considered to require a different approach as compared to the translation of other literary forms. These opinions have been based on an idea of social protectiveness as well as a perception regarding children's understanding of the world.

Broadly, three factors determine the translators' strategies in case of children's literature, "(1) children's imperfect linguistic competence, (2) the avoidance of breaking taboos which educationally minded adults might want to uphold, (3) the limited world knowledge of young readers (Tabbert 314).[17] Since translation in this case is for children, the translator is in the role of the 'enabling adult', "helping readers "re-imagine" the original worlds of children's literature" (Dybiec-Gajer and Oittinen 3).[18] Nonsense literature, being a part of the children's literature and *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim* being considered to be one of the popular texts in the genre of Bangla children's literature, it is crucial to keep these perspectives of translation of children's literature in mind as well.

Following O'Sullivan's model of "translation as narrative communication," the translator is the first reader who engages in the task of taking the text to a new set of readers different from the readers of the original.

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[17] Tabbert, R. 2002. Approaches to the translation of children's literature: a review of critical studies since 1960. *Target 14*(2), 303-351. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp.314.

[18] Dybiec-Gajer J., Oittinen R. 2020 Introduction: Travelling Beyond Translation—Transcreating for Young Audiences. In: Dybiec-Gajer J., Oittinen R., Kodura M. (eds) Negotiating Translation and Transcreation of Children's Literature. New Frontiers in Translation Studies. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2433-2_1. Pp.3.

"In translated texts, therefore, a discursive presence is to be found, the presence of the (implied) translator. It can manifest itself in a voice, which is not that of the narrator of the source text. We could say that two voices are present in the narrative discourse of the translated text: the voice of the narrator of the source text and the voice of the translator" (202).[19]

In *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim,* the poems carry the voices of Lear and Ray both, through the 'interventionist' strategies of translation followed by the translator. The degree of intervention is determined by the familiarity of the Target readers with the words or concepts under consideration. A detailed analysis of the craft of translation vis-à-vis adaptation or transcreation, of the rhymes under consideration, will be useful in understanding the necessity and degree of the translator's intervention.

Jumblies as *Papangul*, from Gromboolian to *Ghumbhulia*

The anthology *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim* begins with the translation of Lear's popular rhyme on the Jumblies as *Papangul*. In an anthology that consists of adaptations of nonsense prose and rhymes from English into Bangla, *Papangul* is one of the translations closest to the ST in this anthology. As appears, while translating, the focus of the poet had been on retaining the spirit, meter, rhythm, and tonal quality of the rhymes in the target language and not so much on the exact meaning. Therefore Lear's Jumblies have easily metamorphosed into *Papanguls* for Ray, a name equally meaningless as in the original but auditorily much closer to the Target Language. To keep the meter intact, 'their heads are green, and their hands are blue' gets converted to '*neel mathate sabuj ranger chool*' (green hair on the blue head) in

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[19] O'Sullivan, E. 2003. Narratology meets Translation Studies, or, The Voice of the Translator in Children's Literature. Meta, 48 (1-2). Pp.202.

Bangla – both equally improbable and absurd. A look at the way in which both the English and its Bangla rendering begin will help the readers get a clearer glimpse into the way the metamorphoses across the two languages occur –

Tara chhakni chore sagor pari debe
                                    Debei debe

Tader sabia korte mana,
Bole, 'ar kichute ja na –
Dichche haowa poobe
Ghurnite sab morbi je re doobe. (11)

The original English rhyme of the Jumblies are as follows –
They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
    In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
    In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And everyone cried, 'You'll all be drowned!'

Similarly, in the translation of 'The Dong with a Luminous Nose'[20], the place Gramboolia is translated as '*Ghumbhulia'*, keeping the auditory sense and meter close to the original. The "oblong oysters" in the lines "Where the Oblong Oysters grow,/And the rocks are smooth and gray" become "square-faced, four-legged prawns" in the Bengali translation (*choukomukho chingri jetha char payete hate*). Once again both the original and the translation talk of the unusual in the realm of the usuals – oblong oysters and square-faced prawns. Though the lexical sense differs, the spirit of nonsense remains intact despite such a diversion. But in this anthology of

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[20] The text of the rhyme Dong with a Luminous Nose has been taken here from the given internet source
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44603/the-dong-with-a-luminous-nose

translated nonsense by Satyajit Ray, only Jumblies and Dong can be said to be close to a translation. For other nonsense rhymes that Ray includes in this anthology, in many cases, the only semblance is that of the illustration as it appears in the original. The illustration and the rhymes are an example of intersemiotic translation as explained by Oittinen, (Oittinen: 28)[21] and interpreted in two different language systems by Edward Lear, the original creator and Satyajit Ray, the translator. Therefore those rhymes transcend the boundaries of translation and can be at best considered as inspired adaptations or transcreations of their original counterparts. One such example will be pertinent to understand what Satyajit does.

One of the rhymes included in the Bangla anthology is accompanied by a picture of a fat cow rushing towards a man dressed in Western formals and sitting on a bench. The man can be seen to be jumping up in fright (Ray: 26).[22] It's an image taken from Lear's *A Book of Nonsense* where Lear had followed it with the lines -

> "There was an Old Man who said how/ Shall I flee from this horrible Cow? / I will sit on this stile, and continue to smile/ which may soften the heart of that Cow (72).[23]

A loose translation of the Bangla version by Ray is – "It's such a daunting task to tame a mad cow/but who will listen to me!/when it will approach me/I shall smile and say/good girl, please don't be angry on me' (Ray: 26).[24] The original one is as follows –

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[21] Oittinen R. Pp. 28.

[22] Ray, Satyajit. 1986. *Toray bandha ghorar dim.* Kolkata. Ananda. (26)

[23] Lear, Edward. 1862. A Book of Nonsense. United Kingdom, Routledge, Warne, and Routledge.

[24] My translation. Roy uses the term Lakkhi which can be loosely interpreted as a good girl in this context. (Ray: 26)

Pagla goru samlano ja jhokki,
Amar kotha shunbe kono lok ki?
Kache jokhon porbe ese
Bolbe tare mishit hense,
Amar opor raag koro na lokkhi! (26)[25]

There is a considerable amount of difference between the content of the two rhymes as we can see from the above example. Similar differences and at times, even more, appear in Ray's translation or, better called as transcreation of Lear's short rhymes. As Ray himself says, "Instead of translating Lear directly, I have followed the sketches of Lear to recreate some limericks" (Ray: Preface).[26] Though such wide liberties have not been taken while translating the Jumblies and Dong, there have been considerable alterations at the lexical level making the work occupy a space between translation and adaptation.

From the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a paradigm shift in translation. Hans Vermeer's 'Skopos' theory that prioritised the 'purpose' of the translation and Christian Nord's "loyalty to the initiator of the translation", focus on the "target-orientedness as the order of the day" (Tabbert: 305).[27] Ray's translations or adaptations give importance to the same 'target-orientedness', focussing more on the understanding of the Target Language readers. This breaks through the

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ray, Preface.

[27] Using references from Hans Vermeer's Skopos theory and Christian Nord's concept of 'loyalty' to the initiator of the translation, Tabbert discusses the paradigm shift towards the Target Language and Target readers which is different from the previous theories that prioritized the Source Text, and their relevance in translation of children's literature, in his essay, 'Approaches to the translation of children's literature. Tabbert, R. 2002. Approaches to the translation of children's literature: a review of critical studies since 1960. *Target 14*(2), 303-351. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp. 305.

hegemony of the original text and grants a kind of autonomous existence to the translated text. The goal that Venuti wanted to achieve by foreignization of the target language, particularly in the case of English language translation, is in the case of Ray achieved by its subversion. Venuti's advocacy of foreignization regarding the English translation of the foreign language text was directed towards breaking the linguistic colonialism of English in the postcolonial context (20).[28] By employing 'domestication', Ray's interpretation and adaptation of Western nonsense rhymes do the same. In a post-colonial world of the nineteenth century, skewed heavily in favour of the European languages, Ray's strategy of domestication is certainly a means of the colonies striking back. It prioritises the indigenous readers' pleasure and offers to them a variant of a foreign text to which they can easily relate. The "cultural intervention" that Venuti calls for, to be "pitched against English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others" (20)[29] is achieved here by the domestication strategy in translating these rhymes so steeped in English linguistic, social and cultural traditions. Yet this is also not the domestication that Nida calls for, not that factor "which unites mankind", "the transcendental concept of humanity which remains unchanged over time and space" (22).[30] Instead, it is a way of underlining the variance, pointing at the cultural differences by making suitable and required changes to suit the understanding of a group of readers who may or may not be initiated to the Source Language. The concern here is to recreate the nonsense for the Bangla language readers in the same way as Lear does for his English audience. That can only be attained by a certain

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[28] Venuti, Lawrence. !995. *The Translator's Invisibility.* London, Routledge. Pp.20.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid. Pp. 22.

amount of domestication of the foreign text, keeping the characteristics of the target language in mind.

The Bangla versions of both the rhymes, The Jumblies and Dong retain the plot of the original to a large extent. The Jumblies of Lear and Papanguls of Ray embark on a fantastical voyage on a sieve (*chhakni* in Bangla) and the poem talks about their experiences in general. Similarly, Dong in both languages has a long nose that is illumined at its end. In both versions of the poem, he suffers from heartbreak because the Jumbli/Papangul girl has left him.

And above the wail of the Chimp and Snipe
You may hear the squeak of his plaintive pipe
While ever he seeks but seeks in vain
To meet with his Jumbly Girl again;
Lonely and wild — all night he goes, —
The Dong with a luminous Nose![31]

These lines in the Bangla version by Satyajit Ray are as follows –

Dong er korun banshi
Chhapiye othe bongiboner bandorgulor hanshi,
Banshir sur e dong chole jaye geye –
'kothay gelo, kothay amar papanguler meye?'
Maajh raatete Dong ke jara dekhe
Chhater upor theke
Sabai mile chenchiye tara bole –
'oi dekho Dong! Dong gelo oi chole!
Oi je ghashe, oi o pashe Dong,
Naaker dogay jhilik mara song.' (21)[32]

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[31] The poem has been taken from
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44603/the-dong-with-a-luminous-nose
[32] Ray, Satyajit. 1986. *Toray bandha ghorar dim.* Kolkata. Ananda. Pp.21.

The illustrations, a part of the intersemiotic translation, are left unchanged too. However, several changes take place during the process of translation or transcreation. The places mentioned in Lear's rhymes and limericks are mostly fantastical. They play an important role in adding to the stylistics of the poems as well as to deliberately render them completely in the realm of absurd by not associating them with any place in the real world. Yet the sounds of the words are very important here, their auditory quality adds to the enjoyment of the rhymes. So in Ray's translation, 'Timballo' becomes *Patkeliya* but 'Hills of the Chankly' bore remains *Changly pahar* (Changly hills). In Dong's translation similarly, 'Zemmery Fidd' becomes *Jamjamary ghaat* in Bangla while 'Gromboolian plain' becomes the village of *Ghumbhulia* (*Ghumbhuliar Gram*). The names of the places at times differ completely and at other times resonate with the original. But in both cases, it does not affect the mood, meaning, or tone of the text. One of the reasons is the fantastical origin of such names.

Translation of names of food items is another challenge that Ray faces in his *Papangul* poem. Food, as we know, is an important cultural construct and exact counterparts are often not available in the target language. One of the tools that translators use is to retain the original name of the food with a gloss or a footnote or an endnote. That is one of the standard procedures for prose translation. In verse translation, meter and rhythm play an important role in determining the vocabulary. Since Ray's translation or Jumblies as Papangul has been an attempt to recreate the genre, tone, style, and ambience of the original, cranberry tart of Jumblies can easily become *pauruti* or loaf bread, and 'forty bottles of Ring-bo-ree' is translated as *rang beranga paani* (multi-coloured water). Instead of 'stilton cheese', there is a mention of *dhakai bakkharkhani.* While Stilton cheese is a typically English cheese, easily identifiable by the target readers of Lear, *bakharkhani* too is an indigenous

flatbread that has a popular presence in the cuisine of Bengal, particularly Dhaka. Since cheese was alien to Indian cuisine in a pre-globalisation world, Ray substitutes it by finding another food item that is popular and associated with the name of a place – Stilton, a village now in Cambridgeshire is replaced by Dhaka, the present capital of Bangladesh.

An interesting element that Satyajit Ray inserts in his first two parts of the *Papangul* rhyme, which is absent from the original is the mention of the eastern wind. Eastern wind or the easterlies play an important role in the climate of India and that adds to the cultural embeddedness of the poem, rooting it more in the Target Language culture. Another example of such cultural rootedness is the use of the words '*dhong'* and *'shong'* in association with Dong. While the three words make excellent rhyming lines, they also have a very deep-set cultural association, which any Bengali reader will be able to identify. Both the words are untranslatable in another language. The dictionary meaning of 'shong' is clown, or buffoon or a jester, but the word has a much wider import in the colloquial sphere that goes beyond its lexicographic record. The word *dhong* is more difficult to translate, incorporating a range of meanings from style, manner, diffidence, and much more. It is a word that is also very popularly used in a slightly derogatory manner for an unacceptable or disliked mannerism. None of these is present in the original rhyme by Lear. But what they do, when used in the Bangla adaptation is that they endear the figure of Dong to the Bengali readers. In terms of faithfulness to the original, it can be argued whether such addition was at all required. Ray keeps space for taking such liberties by saying that his poems are based on the originals. He uses the Bengali term *obolombone* which means based on and not *anubaad* which would have meant translation. Yet the poems remain close to the original in their overall narration and meanings.

These discussions of degrees of linguistic faithfulness and diversion as found in the Bangla versions of the considered rhymes steer us towards looking at adaptation as a form of translation in these cases. In absence of an exact counterpart for certain words, phrases, moods, etc in the Target Language, Ray substitutes them with those which his readers would find easy to connect with. He follows the tradition of adaptation as defined by Bastin and also adheres to the tradition of prioritising the Target readers while translating for children, as discussed above. This becomes significant while translating for children as, "the question of the receivers' (supposed) needs gains an even greater significance. The translation and illustration of children's literature are influenced by the creator's way of understanding childhood, the child images prevailing in societies, as well as the translators' and illustrators' individual child images" (Oittinen: 16)[33]. In the postcolonial context of understanding, images of childhood cannot be universal. A plurality of culture means multiple constructions of childhood and "child images". Ray interprets child's understanding and association according to his conception of "child images" and makes the necessary adaptations in his translation for his target readers.

Conclusion

Uday Narayan Singh, in his discussion of the English translation of Sukumar Ray's *Ha-ja-ba-ra-la* mentions both semantic and structural losses because of the inherent difference between the source and the target languages. Among many examples, he talks about the translation of *chandrabindu* (indicative of the nasal sound in Bangla) as a semicolon – a punctuation mark. Both are widely different yet in lack of a proper counterpart for *chandrabindu, the* semicolon is used. He also talks about certain structural

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[33] Oittinen R. Pp. 16.

changes opted for, by the translator. How much of these are required and how much is not remains a question. He says that the translator is caught in a tension between the "acts of over-translation and under-translation" (105-06, 109)[34]. While analysing Satyajit Ray's translation of Lear's rhymes, we face the same concerns regarding the extent to which the changes are required. A reader with access to both languages can easily identify these gaps. But translations are done for that community of target readers who do not have access to the source language. To those readers then, these rhymes stand on their own merit. Yet, somewhere they also bring the foreign authors close to the target language reader, in this case, by introducing them to a set of illustrations and verses that had their origin in the English language and culture. The loss and gain in translation remain a debatable issue as old as the discipline. The extent of alteration or diversion from the original text in the translation also differs from one instance to another. The reason behind the task undertaken determines the extent of faithfulness or lack of it. Though there was the *Abol Tabol* composed by Sukumar Ray already existing before *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim,* Bangla nonsense rhymes, following the tradition of Caroll and Lear in English, were limited to that single anthology till then. Ray's work extended the corpus of this genre. Satyajit Ray intended to give his young readers an experience of the nonsense rhymes. Therefore, he chose to domesticise the foreign elements to make the rhymes fit for his target audience's comprehension and enjoyment. These may not be considered as the best translations of Lear's verses in Bengali, there have been many more later attempts; nonetheless, they are important for continuing the literary and cultural exchanges between two languages. In *Toray Bandha Ghorar Dim*, Satyajit has

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[34] Singh, Uday Narayan. 2010. *Translation as growth: Towards a theory of language development.* Delhi. Pearsons. Pp.105-6, 109.

transcreated a world of possibilities, paving the road for future nonsense rhymes in Bangla as well as in translation.

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Cite this Work: