



Translation Reconsidered: Culture, Genre and the 'colonial Encounter' in Nineteenth Century Bengal

Chandrani Chatterjee

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The present work is an interdisciplinary study cutting across the disciplines of Translation Studies, Genre Studies, Literary History and Cultural History. It primarily deals with a phase of transition in the socio-cultural history of Bengal but has implications for the study of Indian literature as a whole. It takes the view that 'translation' does not merely relocate the text in the target language, but negotiates several sets of relationships between the two cultures involved, altering the nature of relations between them. The nineteenth century was a period of massive changes in the cultural landscape of India. New literary genres such as the novel, the short story, the lyric and modern drama came to replace the existing genres such as the epic, ballads and allegorical stories. The centre of gravity shifted from verse-based genres to those of the prose-based genres. The print medium contributed substantially towards this change. It is against this background that the present work studies generic conventions as the site for socio-cultural changes operating at a particular moment in history. The study considers the mediating and shaping agency of 'genre' in this context. Not only are works translated but genres are translated too, and assume striking and unprecedented shapes in the linguistic culture of the target audience.

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