Book Review

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Disability Studies has adopted new dimensions, approaches and theories in its exploration of disablement in literature, culture and society; still, it has vast trajectories of discourse that need greater academic attention. People with disability around the world experience deep roots of stigmatisation, negative metaphors, discriminatory languages and stereotypes. Translation facilitates questioning of such linguistic and socio-cultural reprehensions that undermine the subjectivities of people with disabilities. The intersection of disability studies and translation studies is an emerging discipline, however, the first research article in this area dates back to a publication in 1997, "Disability Issues in Translation/Interpretation" by J.F. Smart and D.W. Smart, which deal with translation, interpretation and cultural differences in disability. Several research works are available in the context of audio-visual translation – subtitling/captioning for the deaf and audio description for the blind. Pérez-González's *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation* (2019) is a notable work in this area. C.B. Roy and J. Napier's edited book, *The Sign Language Interpreting Studies Reader* (2017), suggests that language interpretation is another area closely related to disability and translation.

Someshwar Sati and G.J.V. Prasad join a growing number of scholars in disability studies by focusing on the Indian experiences of disability in translation. Their edited book *Disability in Translation: The Indian Experience* is a recent scholarly intervention in the discourse of disability and translation. It explores how disability is written about and read constructs "a discursive political entity" (p. 2) and unravels the complexities of the identity formation of people with disabilities. It further explores the representation and understanding of disability through literature and translation. As conceived in the book, the field of disability and translation

incorporates the contexts of histories, methods, social and cultural dimensions, pedagogical practices and the roles of language, literature and translation. Hence, the book has a multidisciplinary orientation combining the broader fields like literature, disability and translation in several Indian languages. The editors observe that India's pedagogical and critical practices are "not inclusive of disability" (p. 2) and the translators do not consider disability a factor while translating. Instead, they believe translation is "an enabling act" (p. 13) that can liberate disability from its conventional confinements and interrogate the received conventions of representation and experiences of disability. This ambitious endeavour of *Disability in Translation* fills an essential and meaningful gap between disability and translation. This book offers an invaluable resource for critical and analytical tools, including a theoretical understanding of disability and an outline for new researchers to delve deeper into disability studies.

The book's "Introduction" and 18 chapters are an extensive study that starts by discussing nuances of disability and translation and how they open new vistas of critical thinking. Its chapters follow an independent structure except for the Introduction, which focuses on theoretical aspects of disability. Each chapter includes critical readings of important translated texts that situate disability at the centre of the discussion. In "A Different Idiom", Radha Chakravarty says that translation and disability are constructed on the logic of marginalisation in the hierarchy. Hence, to translate a text on disability is "to confront a double binary and a double hierarchy" (p. 26),[1] and such translations reject the supremacy of originality and norms. Chakravarty confesses that when translating short stories like Rabindranath Tagore's "Mahamaya", Mahasweta Devi's "Sindhubala", Debes Ray's "Ranju's Blood" and Rizia Rahman's "Irina's Picture", her focus was not on disability. After taking up these stories and situating their representation of disability in the social context of caste, class and gender, she finds how the same social context generates prejudice and critique towards disability and its representations. She further notes that translation provides radically disruptive textual practice and centralises the gaps in our consciousness and response toward disability. Chitra Harshvardhan's chapter "Translation as Social Action" examines the ethics of translation, the literary representation of disability and how translation acts as a counter-discourse evolving an alternative aesthetics of disability. She follows Walter Benjamin's concept of the "afterlife" and Paul Ricoeur's "linguistic hospitality" to bridge the contextual and discursive gaps and make the translation a transformative act. Translation enables counter-reading of classic texts and meta-narrative positions in terms of alternative aesthetics of disability. Himani Kapoor further strengthens the quest for alternative aesthetics through a contemporary reading of Indian classics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Her chapter, "Gitopadesha on Wheelchairs and Crutches", explores how translation

induces counter-reading of hegemonic texts and positions on the representations of people with disability. Kapoor discusses Sarala Dasa's version of *Mahabharata*, a performance of puppet theatre based on traditional *Togalu Gombeyaata* created by Katkatha Puppet theatre[2] and the performance of "Bhagavad Gita on Wheels". In "Disabling Normalcy in 'Thakara'", Sanju Thomas discusses the role of writers in the construction of social exclusion and how language creates marginalisation and discrimination toward people with disabilities. It attempts a comparative study of "Thakara", a Malayalam story by P. Padmarajan and its adaptation in a film where the film director, instead of having a disability-conscious approach, shifts the focus from social-marginalisation to commoditisation of the body for the ableist male-gaze. In this way, Chakravarty, Harshvardhan, Kapoor and Thomas emphasise how language, writer and context construct and reconstruct two different perspectives on marginalisation and how translation provides space for transformation, alternative aesthetics and counter-discourse.

The hierarchies and marginalisation are inherent in teaching practices, language use and the translator's position. In "Disability, Translation and Curriculum", Shubhra Dubey discusses Rangeya Raghav's Hindi story "Goongey" to bring the ableist bias in teaching a text on disability. The process of teaching is replete with an ableist perspective and the process of translation confronts "the ableist frame of the story" (p. 85). In "Translation as 'Representation'", Deeba Zafir discusses the lived experiences of disability, "narrative prosthesis" and the "opportunistic use of disability" in such Urdu short stories as Naiyer Masud's "Ganjefa", Anjum Usmani's "The One-Armed Man" and Agha Sohail's "Luminescence". Further, he explores the role of translation in raising people's consciousness and how the translator becomes an activist in uncovering the silences in the texts through subversive readings. He additionally brings awareness to what constitutes an exclusivist world. In "Translating Desires of the *Undesired*", Somrita Ganguly emphasises the significance of the translator in the text on disability, the need for translation in disability and the use of language in such translations (p. 116). She addresses the issues of aesthetics and politics in the area of disability and translation along with the notions of "desirable" and "undesirable" in the ableist cultural imagination from Bangla to English translation of Rabindranath Tagore's "Subha" and "Drishtidaan". In "'Blind' Fate and the Disabled Genius", Rajashree Bargohain explores the social attitudes towards disability and "the power hierarchies inscribed in acts of translation" (p. 120) through an Assamese short story, "Beethoven" by Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, on hearing impairment and the creation of art (music). It discusses how language is exclusive and how one's attitude shapes the approach towards disability by bringing a postcolonial perspective.

Social structures of control and exclusion have deep historical roots in different layers of human institutions and practices. In "Fighting against Multiple Bodies", Subhadeep Ray discusses ideological and technical motives and challenges in translation through three representative modernist disability texts in Bengali: "Nāri O Nāgini" or "Woman and Snake-wife" and "Tamoshā" or "Darkness" by Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay and "Bonjhi Gunjomala" or "Niece Gunjomala" by Jagadish Gupta. He discusses how "the vectors of class, nationality, caste, religion, gender and sexuality" shape the discourse of disability (p. 135). B. Mangalam deals with two Tamil short stories, Bama's "Ottha" and Abilash Chandran's "Maadippadigal", in her chapter "Negotiating Disability in/and Translation". She argues that translators have recognised the salient qualities of different languages and cultures but have failed to consider the lived experiences and subjectivities of people with disability. She focuses on how translation can be an enabling enterprise and strategy in negotiating disability narratives. In "Reading Interrupted", Ananya Ghoshal takes up Rabindranath Tagore's "Subha" to contextualise the social circumstances surrounding people with disability in contemporary India. She argues that "common responses to disability have been patronising, abusive and derogatory" (p. 160); however, translation has the methods and agencies to deconstruct them. In this process, translation becomes a tool that undermines non-disabled anxieties, stereotypical notions and other various structures of control and exclusion.

The concerns of gender, translation and language in disability find further impetus in various other contexts. In this regard, Shilpa Das explores mental retardation and speech impairment in Ishwar Petlikar's "Lohini Sagai", a short story in Gujarati literature, in her chapter, "'Lohini Sagai': Translating Disability, Literature and Culture". The first part of the chapter focuses on oppression, the politics of disability and the feminine experience of disability. The other part brings challenges in the acts of translation in disability texts. In so doing, Das reveals how the original text has medicalised representations. In "Gendering Disability in Dharamvir Bharti's 'Gulki Banno'", Mukul Chaturvedi also discusses the experience of marginalisation. It shows the religious, social and cultural attitudes of Indian society towards disabled women and argues that translating gendered experiences of disability calls for "an attitude of praxis" (p. 186). Ritwick Bhattacharjee's "The Politics of Translation" deals with the English translation of two Hindi short stories: Sailesh Matiyani's "Hara Hua" into "The Loser" and Sunil Kaushik's "Andhere Ka Sailab" into "The Flood of Darkness". Here, Bhattacharjee reveals the role of language in existence and experience and how translation becomes a political tool for dismantling the exclusionary tactics of ableist people. In the chapter titled, "'Viklang': Performing Language and Cripping Modernity through Translation", Shefalee Jain discusses a story translated in Hindi as "Viklang" by

M. Shahbaz originally from Urdu "Apaahij" by Suraj Sanim. It primarily focuses on translation challenges, disability as an "opportunistic metaphorical device" and the eugenic gaze in the story validating metaphorical uses (p. 212). It further shows the gaps in the text that contribute to new configurations of meaning and uses Gayatri Spivak's concept of "reader as a translator" to explore the role and significance of metaphor, gaze and silence in the story. Rohini Mokashi-Punekar's chapter "Translating Stigma in the Postcolonial Context" discusses a Marathi short story, Bharat Sasne's "Mai Dukh Ki Lambi Raat" ("The Dark Night of Sorrow") in the context of stigma and acute deprivation faced by disabled on the margins of society and the problems of translating their experiences in English idioms. It explores the subjectivity, marginal existence and politics of space for the disabled in modern urban India and "challenges the normative" (p. 223) structures.

In the penultimate chapter, Shilpaa Anand's "Translating Rhetoricity and Everyday Experiences of Disablement" deals with Rashid Jahan's Urdu short story "Who" and its three translations into English by M.T. Khan, Rakshanda Jalil and a third by Aneesa Mushtaq and Shilpaa Anand. Anand argues that disability studies "enables an epistemic re-orientation", which appears in history to be "the normal", "the healthy", "the sane" and the like (p. 232). She further argues that translation enables context-specific and culturally sensitive experiences of disability that acquaint us with "other ways of knowing and engaging with corporeal differences that are specific to distinct ways of knowing and going about the world" (p. 232). The different versions of translations, particularly by Mushtaq and Anand, provide "the rhetorical shift" as "desired dissociation" and "special person" (p. 238) in the story. In the concluding chapter, "Disability and the Call for Prayer", Sania Hashmi deals with Khalid Jawed's short story "Koobad", situates disability in the theological framework of Islam and simultaneously explores the idea of disability, guilt and moral relativism. Then it moves to the limitations of the translator and the source language (Urdu in this story) that do "not require an identification of the nature of disability" (p. 243).

Sati and Prasad's primary concern was to invite reflection on language, translation and theoretical positions from the disability perspective. They show that the use of translation in disability texts is not just about "knowledge transfer" or "knowledge dissemination" but also about "knowledge production" from one medium to another and what happens in the process of knowledge transmission. It is a kind of knowledge translation[3] in disability studies that "closes or bridges the gap" through translation in disability studies. However, one must be conscious about translating disability texts from Indian languages to English (a colonial language) as emancipatory. This book succeeds in its endeavours and opens a new discourse in disability studies, but it is not without its limitations. These limitations can be

because of the book's focus on bringing pan-Indian narratives into translation and showing how the subject of disability gets written in the "original" and the "translation". In addition, the chapters in the book could have been thematically structured for the sake of issue-based discussion. Even if the idea of translation is the uniting force, the peculiarities of social, cultural, regional, linguistic and other differences that affect the translation process need special attention. Accordingly, the division of chapters into different parts or sections could have provided more clarity to translation and disability in translation. Disability and translation are vast areas and require specific descriptions. There is also a need to address the discussion of translation theories in some chapters to relate them to disability studies adequately. However, when seen from a different perspective, these limitations are bound to occur when a book tries to incorporate the vast Indian experience of disability in translation. Finally, this book will go down in the history of academics to herald a new dimension and subject matter of research and teaching in academia in terms of an alternative perspective to the Euro-western discourse on disability studies.

Notes

1. This and the rest of the references in this review are from Sati and Prasad's edited book *Disability in Translation: The Indian Experience*.
2. It is a Delhi-based travelling *puppet theatre company* for international and Indian puppets, performing arts and theatre festivals.
3. This term was coined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in 2000, intending "the exchange, synthesis and ethically-sound application of knowledge" and reducing the gap between theory and practice.

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