

*Translating Performance Text, from Lyric to Song: A case study of songs of Rabindranath Tagore*

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**Abstract:**

A performance text can be considered as a text intended to be or capable of being performed. It considers the performance as a scale model, in which the production of meaning may be observed. With the texts of performing works, the relationship between the text and the user is quite intense. In this case, the users of texts are generally performers, who influence the performance that an audience sees or hears. The creator must therefore assimilate the text in such a way that something other than the written text is created — the performance. Performing texts facilitate controlled change; the meanings which it incorporates remain unstable, varying from reader to reader, from performer to performer. The ‘performativity’ inherent in a performance text, creates difficulties while translating it into a different form. The research work focuses mainly on ‘lyric’ as a performance text, and brings within its purview the changes and transformation processes; while tracing the journey of how the lyric changes its form to become a song.

The thesis consists of four chapters with a separate introduction and conclusion. The first chapter—“Lyric: definition, genre, mode” looks into the origin of lyric as a genre, its development, journey and moderations. It also focuses on the characteristic traits of lyric, its form and variety. The second chapter—“Poetry, Song, Performance” aims to deal with ‘song’ as a particular form of performance and its nature, as well as the factor of music. By dealing with the notions of ‘translation’, ‘translatability’, ‘function of translation’ etc. the third chapter—“Translating Performance Text” focuses on how the art of translating vocal texts to be sung differs materially from that of translating poetry to be merely read. The fourth and final chapter—“Rabindra Sangeet: Translation and Performance” intends to examine Tagore’s lyrics as performance texts, and their journey of becoming songs. Through close examination of the translated and transcreated versions of the songs, popularly known as Rabindra Sangeet, the chapter tries to trace the changes and transformations that make the translated songs different from their primitive text.