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‘For the Benefit of People’
Bhuvdev Dube’s (Nineteenth-Century) Hindi Translation of Brajvāsīdās’ Braj Bhasha *Prabodhacandrodaya nāṭaka* (1760)

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Abstract The late nineteenth century saw a proliferation of translations of earlier literature into Hindi, Urdu, and Persian, published, among others, by the notable Lucknow publisher Naval Kishore Press. This chapter examines the *Prabodhacandrodaya* drama translated by Bhuvdev Dube (abbreviated below as ‘DPC’) and published in 1893 by the Lucknow house. Bhuvdev Dube did not translate from the Sanskrit *Prabodhacandrodaya*, composed by Kṛṣṇamiśra in the eleventh century, but rather from Brajvāsīdās’ *Prabodhacandrodaya nāṭaka*, written in 1760 in Braj Bhasha. My analysis places the text in the Prabodhacandrodaya tradition; then in the debates concerning Hindi language and script by considering the preface attached to the translation. Subsequently, the chapter investigates the ways Dube reworked his source. It identifies the main translation strategies adopted by the author as selection and abridgement of the subject matter. It shows that Dube’s preoccupations and goals were distinct from those of Bhāratendu Hariścandra, who had also adapted the third act of the *nāṭaka* slightly earlier. These elements demonstrate the multiplicity of ‘modern needs’ (Dalmia 2015) that almost contemporary authors were addressing by retelling the same story in the form of drama.

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The Prabodhacandrodaya Tradition in Hindi

This chapter explores the *Prabodhacandrodaya* drama translated by Bhuvdev Dube and published in 1893 by Naval Kishore Press.[1] I came across this text while researching Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya* and, since it is part of its reception, I decided to investigate the relationship between the two texts. Dube's work retells a story whose better-known version was composed by Kṛṣṇamiśra in the eleventh century in Sanskrit. The latter has long been considered the chief representative of allegorical theatre in India. It was written to celebrate the victory of king Kīrtivarman Candella of Jejākabhukti (1060–1100) over his enemy, the Cedi sovereign Karṇa (r. 1041–1073), and to inspire the emergence of peaceful sentiments *(śāntarasa)* in the ruler after the war (Kapstein 2009: 5–13).

However, the Sanskrit drama was by no means unique, as the tale was retold multiple times from the thirteenth century onwards in Sanskrit and several different Indian languages. The story elicited interest and prompted reflection of a chiefly religious and philosophical nature: the process to *mukti* (liberation) thanks to which an individual recognizes its identity or unity with *brahman*. Although it is generally seen as a story propagating Advaita Vedānta and *bhakti* (Nambiar 1971: 11–35), it also became a vehicle for different religious and philosophical convictions.[2]

In the field of Hindi literature, there are multiple versions in Braj Bhasha, still largely understudied.[3] Notable is the retelling composed by king Jasvant Siṁh of Mārvāḍ (b. 1626 – d. 1678).[4] His *Prabodha nāṭaka* conveys Vedantic ideas, yet it does without *bhakti* personified as goddess and replaces her with Āsatikatā (Skt. *āstikatā*), a significant difference from Kṛṣṇamiśra's telling.[5] Moreover, although the ruler of Jodhpur does not mention Kṛṣṇamiśra, we can glimpse a continuity in

1 I thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions and comments; all remaining errors are mine.

2 For instance, the Śvetāmbara Jaina retelling by Yaśaḥpāla (Leclère 2013).

3 An overview of the Hindi tradition is Agravāl 1962. A more recent reconsideration of the tradition is the PhD thesis by Siṁh (2020).

4 The date of composition is unknown, but the earliest manuscript employed in the critical edition dates to 1715 VS / 1658 CE. See Siṁh (1972: 21).

5 Āsatikatā, seems to personify 'Affirmer-ness', in the sense of orthodoxy . In the story, the āstikas defend the Vedas as the ultimate source of knowledge, believe in an eternal self—distinct from the body—and in the efficacy of sacrifice. For a more extended analysis see Pastore (forthcoming 2025). Jasvant Siṁh's works have been critically edited and published in a volume by Viśvanāthprasād Miśra. For his *Prabodha nāṭaka,* see Siṁh (1972: 81–113).

the circulation of the story – in various versions – in royal contexts. It is useful to remember that the intrigue centres on how Discrimination *(viveka)* sets out to save his father Mind (Skt. *manas*) and, in doing so, fights his half-brother Bewilderment *(moha)*. Mind is subjugated by Bewilderment's party, made up of Kāma (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Greed), and so on. Since Mind is a king and Discrimination and Bewilderment are his princely sons, the Prabodhacandrodaya *kathā* itself puts into question kingship and *dharma*.

As such it is uncontroversial to acknowledge the success of its story as being due to its broad similarity with the *Mahābhārata*. The connection with the *Mahābhārata* is made evident by the case of Keśavdās and his retelling, the *Vijñānagītā* (Praise of Knowledge, 1610 CE). A court-poet of Orchā, Keśavdās composed not only the first *rītigranthas* in Braj Bhasha but also works connected with the historical and political context of the times. As Stefania Cavaliere has shown, the *Vijñānagītā* is both a synthesis of different philosophical strands and a discourse about kingship involving references to the epic attributed to Vyāsa, as well as to Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* (Cavaliere 2020: 66–9).

As with the *Vijñānagītā*, the connections with the Rāma *kathā* are also important for Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya nāṭaka*, source of Bhuvdev Dube's own drama. Brajvāsīdās composed his retelling in Braj Bhasha in eighteenth-century North India, adaptively reusing Tulsīdās' *Rāmcaritmānas*. Brajvāsīdās is a relatively lesser known author who resided in Vrindavan and was initiated in the Vallabha *sampradāy* (McGregor 1984: 159). He composed two works, the allegorical drama and the *Brajvilās* (*c*.1770), a retelling of Kṛṣṇa's life inspired by both the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Sūrdās' pada*s (Brajvāsīdās 1873). His *Prabodhacandrodaya nāṭaka* constitutes a crucial example of how vernacular literary authorities progressively gained importance and were considered on the same level as Sanskrit ones, to the point of becoming references even in the field of Vedānta philosophies (Pastore 2024).

Importantly, the *Vijñānagītā* and Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya nāṭaka* are not literal translations *(anuvāda)* of the play by Kṛṣṇamiśra, but hold complex, multilayered relationships both among themselves and with other texts outside the *paramparā* itself. Cavaliere remarks how the *Vijñānagītā* can be interpreted as an independent text in its own right, as it draws considerably from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, among others, and develops the story, usually divided into six acts, into twenty-one. While the first twelve acts relate the conflict between Discrimination and Bewilderment, the rest explore a larger array of philosophical themes (Cavaliere 2018: 175). In turn, Brajvāsīdās – apart from implicitly reusing the *Rāmcaritmānas* – refers in the opening

of his *Prabodhacandrodaya nāṭaka* to the *Gulzār-ī Ḥal* (The Rose Garden of Ecstasy),[6] the Persian Sufi rendering of the story composed by Banvālīdās (d. 1667/8; see Gandhi 2020). Later on, Ayodhyāprasād Caudharī, probably a younger contemporary of Bhāratendu Hariścandra, composed a reworking in prose inspired in structure and content by the *Vijñānagītā*, published in 1884/5 (Agravāl 1962: 243). Nevertheless, although Bhāratendu Hariścandra was a Vallabhite as was Brajvāsīdās, his *Pākhaṇḍ viḍamban* does not betray any literary connection with Brajvāsī's work but follows rather faithfully Kṛṣṇamiśra's Sanskrit text. We will return to this briefly in the next paragraphs.

With the aim of uncovering another segment of the history of transmission and circulation of the Prabodhacandrodaya *kathā*, the rest of this chapter explores the main features of the relationship between DPC and Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya*. Moreover, I will occasionally refer to Hariścandra's *Pākhaṇḍ viḍamban*. Even if Bhāratendu's drama retells only Act 3 of the story and Acts 1 and 2 of DPC, the comparison is relevant since the influential intellectual from Benares reflected on the necessity and characteristics of Modern Hindi drama. In addition, his play helps us gain a better understanding of DPC in the broader context of its time.

Dube's *Prabodhacandrodaya,* the Naval Kishore Project, and Hindi as National Language

Ulrike Stark has shown that the Naval Kishore Press started its journey in Hindi publishing in the 1860s with titles that could elicit interest from the public. This strategy, based on market demand, meant simultaneously publishing classics and new books. Among the genres published was religious literature in Braj Bhasha and Avadhi, such as Sūrdās' *Sūrsāgar* and Tulsīdās' *Rāmcaritmānas* (Stark 2007: 385–91).

The publication of dramas began somewhat later, for instance Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya*, among the first in the genre of *nāṭaka*, appeared in 1875 (Stark 2007: 421).[7] The printing of DPC was part of this editorial strategy, but unfortunately we know little about Pandit Bhuvdev Dube and what part he could have played in it other than translating the *Prabodhacandrodaya*. The preface to the Naval

6 Cf. Brajvāsīdās 1875: 3, v. 18.

7 It had been published one year earlier (1874) by the Benares Light Press. This ignores the publication of the scripts of folk dramas, that is the *saṁgīt*s of Nauṭaṁkī and Svāṁg in North India. See Hansen 1992: chapter 4.

Kishore lithograph mentions that Dube was a resident of Garhakota, in the district of Sagar in Madhya Pradesh.[8] It is not clear exactly when he composed his *Prabodhacandrodaya* and it appears that it has not otherwise been printed either before or since.

It is worth looking more closely at what the cover page of Dube's drama says:

> For the entertainment of those who possess a taste for dramatic sentiments *(nāṭyaras rasik),* Pandit Bhuvdev Dube, resident of Garhakota, has made [the *Prabodhacandrodaya*] extremely charming in the language of the place (for the first time).[9]

The brief explanation is a hint to the publishing venture's involvement in a revival of local literary traditions and connections with the past through Hindi. Ulrike Stark has demonstrated that Naval Kishore did not show an overt preference for Hindi over Urdu or between the Devanāgarī and Nastaliq / Perso-Arabic scripts. Their publications used Nastaliq / Perso-Arabic script not just for Persian and Islamic texts but for Hindu texts as well.[10] Bilingual and trilingual editions juxtaposing a Sanskrit text with a commentary in Hindi and a transliteration of it in Urdu were also published (Stark 2007: 329–30). At the same time, the preface following the cover page of DPC is slightly more ideological and supports Stark's study which shows how the Naval Kishore Press manifested partiality towards Hindi from around the time of its founder's death in 1895. Stark points out how the introduction to a Hindi translation of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* published in 1896 posthumously represents Naval Kishore as an advocate of Hindi who wanted to elevate his mother tongue by sponsoring the translation (Stark 2007: 437).

Certainly, the preface to DPC does not refer to Hindi as Naval Kishore's mother tongue; however, it does make the point that the head of the press commissioned the translations for the benefit of people *(lok ke upakārārth)* and the uplifting of the Hindi language *(hindī bhāṣā kī unnati ke liye).*[11] Simultaneously, it still portrays him as someone who cared particularly about the *dharma* described in the *śāstra*s and other

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8 Garhakota (Gaṛhākoṭā) is now in the district of Sagar in Madhya Pradesh and part of the Bundelkhand region (see the cover page of Dube 1893).

9 *nāṭyarasarasik puruṣoṁ ke cittavinodārth paṇḍit bhuvdev dube gaṛhākoṭāsāgar nivāsi ne deśbhāṣā meṁ atilalit banāyā hai (pratham bār).*

10 They published at least one version of Brajvāsīdās' *Brajvilās* transliterated into Perso-Arabic script, dated 1886 (Stark 2007: 438).

11 Dube 1893, the three pages of the preface are not numbered.

sacred books,[12] which would be of immense use to those who follow the *sanātana dharma (sanātandharmāvalambin)*.[13] Thus, the preface appears to make Naval Kishore's project a specific Hindu mission, identifying 'the people' *(lok)* with the Hindus as *sanātanadharmin*s. In addition, it ties the publication to Hindi and the Devanāgarī script, stating that since younger people do not know Sanskrit – the language of the *dharm granth*s – he had the idea that translations should be done in the *nāgarī* language, which is a mine of good qualities *(sakal guṇ āgarī nāgarī bhāṣā meṁ)*.[14] In this way, younger people can learn about their *dharma* and other topics linked to it 'only through the knowledge of Devanāgarī syllables full of simplicity'.[15]

From 1874 onwards, Bhāratendu discussed the need of Hindi as a national language and he progressively excluded Urdu in his essays about *deśbhāṣā*. In an elegy to Urdu, seen as the idiom of Islam, he identified the progress of the language with that of the nation (Dalmia 1997: 202). Notwithstanding his own difficulty in defining such a language as Hindi, similar to what was advocated in the preface of the DPC, Hariścandra too wished for a 'pure, simple vernacular understood by the public'.[16] As Dalmia observes, in his vision this was necessary to produce homogenization, and in turn a sense of solidarity, the basis for the political and economic advancement of the *deś* (Dalmia 1997: 217). The issue was of course of wide interest, with several intellectuals maintaining that the tradition holding value and potential for the nation was uniquely that transmitted in the Hindu *śāstra*s, which had suffered the blow of Persian and Urdu (Dalmia 1997: 222–3).

Returning to Bhāratendu's views on language and literature, and specifically theatre, in his essay *Nāṭak*, he critiqued the dramas written in Braj Bhasha and other regional languages since they did not follow the conventions of Sanskrit drama; they were just long poems, *nāṭaka*s

12 *apne dharm ko atyant śocne ke yogya daśā meṁ dekhkar paramakāruṇik dharmdhurīn bhārgavbaṁśāvatams muṁśī naval kiśor ne* […] *yathārth anuvād karākar* […] *mūl sahit mudrit karāyā hai*.

13 On the adoption by Indian reformers and nationalists of the term *sanātana dharma* to indicate Hindu traditions as a uniform whole, as in contrast with other religions like Christianity, see Halbfass 1990: 344–8.

14 The term *'nāgarī'* language could well mean 'Hindi language', since at the beginning of the twentieth century 'Hindi' and 'Nagari' were often employed interchangeably. Cf. Trivedi 2003: 967.

15 *yah log saralatā pūrvak devanāgarī akṣaroṁ ke jānnehī mātra se dharm granthoṁ ko* […] *jān jāyeṅge*. Cf. also the preface authored by Pandit Durgāprasād to his Hindi translation of the *Liṅga purāṇa* in 1881 in Stark 2009: 196.

16 Passage quoted and translated in Dalmia 1997: 209.

only by name.[17] It is in such derogatory terms that he mentions Brajvāsī's *Prabodha* in his essay. Therefore, we can see how the paratext to Bhuvdev Dube's work witnesses that the Prabodhacandrodaya story was made to figure in the controversies around the construction of the national canon of literature and we may hypothesize that the debates of the period may have had implications for how Dube reworked Brajvāsī's drama.

Dube's Selection of the Translated Matter

Bhuvdev Dube adapted Brajvāsī's *Prabodhacandrodaya* in subtle ways. The first element is of course the fact that his retelling consists of only two acts out of six. It is possible that the publishing house was willing to publish translations of other acts if the first two sold well, but we have no evidence of this. The selection seems quite arbitrary as the intrigue is practically cut short without reaching its conclusion, that is, Viveka and Upaniṣad defeating Moha and saving Manas thanks to the birth of Vidyā (Knowledge) and Prabodhacandra (Wisdom Moon).

This choice differs from that of Bhāratendu. The *Pākhaṇḍ viḍamban* can be considered part of his project of unifying Vaiṣṇava traditions. Hariścandra carried out this aim first with the foundation of the Tadīya Samāj in 1873. Through its activities, he intended to assimilate Hinduism with Vaiṣṇava faith and to attribute pan-Indian value to Vaiṣṇava texts and doctrines (Dalmia 1997: 370–1). Moreover, he opposed the monism of Advaita Vedānta and supported *bhakti* for a personal god (Dalmia 2006: 52).[18] Avoiding the strong illusionistic tendencies of Kṛṣṇamiśra's play and reworking its intellectual *bhakti* exclusively dedicated to Viṣṇu would have proved more complicated had he tackled the other acts (Nambiar 1971: 56–7). Maybe one reason why Bhāratendu chose to retell this specific portion of the tale is that he was not trying to differentiate between the *sampradāy*s.[19] We can see that the focus

17 Cf. Hariścandra 1987a: 575: *...nāṭak ke nām se abhihit haiṁ kintu in saboṁ kī racnā kāvya kī bhāṁti hai arthāt nāṭak rītyanusār pātrapraveś ityādi kuch nahiṁ hai.* This judgement has remained influential among the critics of Hindi drama. One of the few scholars trying to go beyond the comparison with Sanskrit dramas and attempting instead to find connections between later *bhāṣā* plays and folk theatre is Tivārī 1959: chapter 3.

18 In his *Vaiṣṇava sarvasva* (1876) he attacked several religious beliefs, including the Buddhists and Jainas, referring to Śaṅkara's Advaita as an evil doctrine *(daitya mata).* See Dalmia 1997: 380.

19 Cf. Dalmia 2006: 52. Buddhists, Jainas, and Kāpālikas are the object of the satire of Act 3 of Kṛṣṇamiśra's play.

on religious and social satire allowed him to privilege the Sanskritic model he sought to adapt to modern needs. The urgency in this case was denouncing 'the pretensions and hypocrisy of the various orders of mendicants and ascetics in the subcontinent' (Dalmia 2006: 50).

In contrast, we can guess that the focus for Dube was distinct, as in reworking Acts I and II of Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya*, he gave ample space to particular philosophical and religious reflections. An instance of this is in Act I, when the First Actor *(naṭa)* explains to the actress that a voice from the sky ordered the performance of the drama for king Kīrtivarman, renamed as Kīratabrahman. The supernatural order came from *brahman* itself, which is praised at length as the cosmic Self *(puruṣa)*. Dube keeps the whole passage, albeit modifying the style from poetry to prose (Dube 1893: 2–3).

Dube's Translation Strategies

Some other instances of translation betray an interest in transmitting philosophical and religious knowledge. A significant example is the presentation of the character of Viṣṇubhakti in Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya* 2.96. The verses, structured as a long *chanda* (Brajvāsīdās 1875: 38–9), are spoken by the Materialist (Cārvāka), who confesses to Moha the danger constituted by Viṣṇubhakti: where the goddess resides, among the four *varṇa*s, even Kaliyuga's power is ineffectual.[20] To paraphrase further, Bewilderment's ally portrays her as an attitude of mental concentration, identified with love felt towards a *saguṇa* form of the god. Then there's a reference to how Parabhraman assumes a personal form and a name, either Kṛṣṇa or Rāma, according to the need of the moment.[21] Subsequently, the *devī* is described as creating an image *(pratimā)* of *brahman* in her mind, paying homage to it, and concentrating on it. She dances in front of it and forgets the condition of the body, tied to the god through the threads of love *(prema dhāge)*.

As mentioned, I understand this statement to refer to Viṣṇubhakti. The grammatical subject is *vai*, which should correspond to Hindi *vah*,

20 Paraphrasing Brajvāsīdās 1875: 38: *abai jā sadana maiṁ biśunabhakti rājai* / *baraṇa cārihū maiṁ nahīṁ jora chājai* //. There is no extended passage on Viṣṇubhakti in Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* (Kapstein 2009: 76–7).

21 Multiple episodes of the *carita*s of the two embodiments are evoked through epithets. Among them, Govinda, Giridhara, Murārī for Kṛṣṇa; while the expressions *cāpa khaṇḍana*, *śilā śāpa mocana* refer respectively to Rāma breaking Śiva's bow at Sītā's *svayaṁvara* and saving Ahalyā who, seduced by Indra, was transformed into a stone due to her husband's curse, the *ṛṣi* Gautama.

the third person singular pronoun (Dās 1965–75: 4614). However, the verbs are conjugated once in the third person plural,[22] while the rest of the verses are in the singular, in keeping with the *vai*.[23] In my interpretation, Viṣṇubhakti is the subject, as the plural verb, indicated only by the nasalization, could be an honorific manner of addressing a crucial figure in its first appearance or even be a scribal misunderstanding.[24] Supporting the fact that the topic in the Braj text is Viṣṇubhakti is the reply by Moha. He declares that the way *(rīta)* – in the sense of behaviour – of Viṣṇubhakti was always inimical to him (Brajvāsīdās 1875: 39, v. 98).

Interestingly, Dube interprets the verbs as referring not to the female character but to the four *varṇa*s *(baraṇa cārihū),* as in Hindi he translates the verbs in the masculine plural: (...) *ve… arcan bandan kar nāmkīrtan karte haiṁ aur … nṛtya karte haiṁ.*[25] This leads us to question his intention. His reading attributes these actions from an individual to a collectivity. It can be considered a narrative strategy to project – and, at the same time, to create – a timeless uniformity among the four traditional social classes, encouraging a *bhakti* progressively centred around Kṛṣṇa and Rāma and explicitly gesturing towards upper-caste Sanskritic traditions grounded in the Purāṇas.[26]

In this context, other translation strategies adopted in DPC may disclose the wish to simplify philosophical and religious knowledge. In the *Prabodhacandrodaya* by Brajvāsīdās, an important philosophical term is *pauruṣa*. Its context of usage is crucial inasmuch as it explains the relationship between king Mind *(mana*; Skt. *manas),* also called Individual Self *(jīvātama puruṣa),* and the Supreme Self *(paramātama*

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22 *rahaiṁ vai sadā mitta soṁ citta joraiṁ* / *liye prema ko saṅga dṛrhatā baṭoraiṁ* // She always stays united with [her] allies, she joins Firmness together with Love.

23 As an example: *karai kīratana nāma antara na rakhai* / *dṛgana mitra kī mādhurī rūpa cākhai* // She sings and does not hold distinction [among *brahman*'s] names; she relishes the form, the beauty of [her] friend [with her] eyes.

24 The manuscripts I consulted did not offer a solution to this issue. They are MS 14008 (dated vs 1908) and MS 17098 (n.d.) kept at the Vrindavan Research Institute in Vrindavan.

25 Moha's response to the Materialist's statement in Dube confirms that when Viṣṇubhakti is referred to, the verbs are in the feminine gender. Therefore the insertion of verbs in the masculine plural seems intentional. (Dube 1893: 38): … *vah sadaiva kāl se aisī śatrutā ham se māntī āī hai* (…). She has always manifested holding such enmity against us.

26 *arcana*, *vandana*, and *kīrtana* are among the practices of *navadhā bhakti* laid out in *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 7.5.23.

puruṣa).[27] The introduction in the plot of Individual Self as Mind's father and the partial overlapping of their identities, as a body and its shadow,[28] is an innovation by the eighteenth-century author. According to Brajvāsī, Jīvātama is the firstborn of Paramātama and Māyā (Illusion / Material Nature) and he is *pauruṣa*; that means that he participates in Paramātama Puruṣa's *saccidānanda* nature or belongs to Puruṣa (Brajvāsīdās 1875: 17, v. 117).[29] This does not appear to be an easy concept to grasp without resorting to its etymological meaning as a derivative of *puruṣa* and being able to connect it to the whole story, where the passages dealing with metaphysics are scattered. In fact, Dube decides to avoid *pauruṣa* and employs *svarūp* or *rūp* ('own / intrinsic form, form'; Dube 1893: 14), terms decidedly more recognizable.

Another attempt to make the philosophical teaching more accessible is found in the description of Viveka's ministers. They are eight, as in his source (Brajvāsī's text), since they are modeled on the limbs of *aṣṭāṅgayoga*: *yama*, *nema* (Skt. *niyama*), *sama*,[30] *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*. The features of each of Viveka's close allies are then described (Brajvāsīdās 1875: 11–12). Dube's drama makes them easier to determine as both the ministers and then their respective qualities are numbered (Dube 1893: 8–9). The evident systematization applied also to spiritual knowledge seems to respond to contemporary preoccupations concerning the association of literature *(sāhitya)* with knowledge *(gyān).* That literature should be the vehicle of knowledge had been considered crucial since the turn of the century and, after Hariścandra, was developed further by another pivotal figure of Modern Hindi, Mahāvīrprasād Dvivedī (1864–1938; Mody 2012: 239). In addition, the accessibility of the texts was a fundamental factor also for publishers like Naval Kishore: the texts could now be read individually, which implied the production of glosses and other structural devices that could facilitate the unmediated comprehension and engagement by non-specialists. (Stark 2009: 200; Orsini 2004: 117).

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27 *Tadbhava*s of Skt. *jīvātman* and *paramātman puruṣa*.

28 For this image, see Brajvāsīdās 1875: 14, v. 96.

29 *Pauruṣa* may mean both *puruṣatva*, 'the state of being Puruṣa', and *puruṣa sambandhī*, 'belonging / connected to Puruṣa' (Dās 1965–75: 3125). *Pauruṣa* as 'manhood, virility' is not relevant in this context, since we are dealing with ontology. Cf. also verse 17 in Act 6, where Paramātama Puruṣa will say that the individual selves *(jīvās)* all 'come / are' from his own self, but they are made unaware of this because of Māyā and her power to bind them to materiality.

30 As the physical balance brought about by posture *(āsana)*, which in turn brings about also mental steadiness.

Accessibility could also take the shape of shorter or abridged versions of earlier texts. Naval Kishore brought out a condensed version of Brajvāsīdās' second work, the *Brajvilās*, published in 1898 in Kanpur and authored by a Govarddhandās.[31] In the field of drama, Hariścandra lamented their wordiness (Dalmia 2006: 39). This can be seen as another reason why he did not draw from Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya*, which expands considerably the subject matter.

Dube, however, tackled his source differently, at the level of structure. Brajvāsīdās' *nāṭaka* possesses a three-level framework: an extradiegetic level, an intradiegetic level, and the diegetic level, that is, the level of narration of the fight between Viveka and Moha. The extradiegetic level opens the drama, with eight *dohā*s (rhyming couplets) in which Brajvāsī praises the community of *sant*s and Hari and later explains to us how he got to know about the story of the Prabodhacandrodaya during *satsaṅga*. He attributes the story to Kṛṣṇadās Bhaṭṭ, probably Kṛṣṇamiśra, who composed it for a disciple in order to teach him Vedānta[32] and consolidate *bhakti*, *jñāna*, and *vairāgya* (Brajvāsīdās 1875: 2). Then comes the intradiegetic level, the frame story, where Kṛṣṇadās tells the story to his disciple; and then the actual story, the diegetic level. The intradiegetic level recurs at the end and the beginning of each of the six acts, while the extradiegetic level reappears only at the end of the drama. In DPC, the first two levels are omitted: there is only a brief indication of the characters appearing in the act (Dube 1893: 2). At the same time, Dube was not following Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* either: the Sanskrit play opens with a *nandī* to the impersonal *brahman* and then to Śiva the yogin (Kapstein 2009: 4–5), then different characters introduce each act. Although we do not know if DPC was ever performed, we may see it again as an adaptation to the practices of the time: the introductory dramatic conventions informing the reader about the circumstances of the play's composition and sponsorship were omitted by Hariścandra as well. They were made

31 Govarddhandās pays obeisance to Vallabha and Viṭṭhālnāth at the beginning of his work (Govarddhandās 1898: 1, v. 1). The cover page of the lithograph mentions Govarddhandās as the son *(ātmaja)* of Īśvarīprasād Siṁh (1822–1889) of the Bhārgava dynasty, that seems to point to the king of Benares. However, Govarddhandās writes that he is the son of Īśvarī Siṁh, but from the village of Bhoyaḍe and belongs to a merchant lineage *(dhūsara)* (Govarddhandās 1898: 2, v. 10). It doesn't seem straightforward, then, to identify Govarddhandās with Īśvarīprasād Siṁh's only (adopted) son, Prabhu Nārāyaṇ Siṁh (1855–1931).

32 Here the meaning of the term *vedānta* is literal, to be understood as the Upaniṣads, which form a central part of the didactic content of the Prabodhacandrodaya story.

known and distributed in programme notes printed separately at the time of performance (Dalmia 2006: 39).

Abridgement was a preoccupation for the author, as he transformed almost all the verses of his source into prose. The initial location of the first act is King Kīratibrahma's *sabhā*, with the entry of the First Actor who takes the floor. In Brajvāsīdās' *Prabodhacandrodaya*, we find here two *dohā*s (Brajvāsīdās 1875: 4):

chinaka nirtta kari naṭa kahyo, bhujā uṭhāi pukāra /
tanaka ḍhola ko thāmbhikai, cupa kījo saba yāra // 1.30

jaba saba gāvana te thāmbhe, rahigo tantrī nāda /
taba bidagdha naṭa naṭī prati, karana lagyo sambāda // 1.31[33]

Dube's rendering is much more concise (Dube 1893: 2):

naṭa – *(bhujā uṭhākar kahtā hai)* aho samast tantrīgaṇ ho kiñcit
samay paryant yantroṁ ko maun karke śravaṇ karo
(phir nij strī se kahtā hai)[34]

Bhuvdev puts stage directions between brackets: *(bhujā uṭhākar kahtā hai)* for the first line of *dohā* 1.30 and *(phir nij strī se kahtā hai)* summarizes the second line of *dohā* 1.31.

To be sure, these verses also point towards Sanskritization. This is visible, on the one hand, by his lexical choices, as he employs Sanskritic adjectives *(maun)* and adverbs *(samast*, *kiñcit*, and *paryant).* On the other hand, we can detect a degree of imitation of Sanskrit dramas. If the verbs in Brajvāsī's scene directions are all in the past tense, in a narrative form,[35] in Dube's text many of them are conjugated in the present tense, like *dohā* 1.31 which is extremely compressed. If we look

33 'After dancing for a moment, raising [his] arm, he called: "Friends, stop the *ḍhola*s a little and all be quiet!"' 1.30; 'When they stopped singing, [only] the sound of the instruments could be heard. Then, the expert [First] Actor started talking with the Actress.'1.31. *te thāmbhe* may be amended to *te thãbe*, as the *dohā* requires a short–long syllable cadence at the half line. At the same time, this cadence is not respected for the second line of 1.31 where the half line terminates with two short syllables *(prati).*

34 'Actor (raising an arm): "O musicians, stop playing for some time, and listen!" (Then he addresses his wife).'

35 This is not unprecedented: in an article about Kavikarṇapūra's Sanskrit *Caitanyacandrodaya* (1572 CE), Gary Tubb notes that stage directions are sometimes in the past tense, signaling a descriptive function rather than a utilitarian one, and the poet often develops them by adding details. See Tubb (2014).

at Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya*, the indications are short and in the gerundive, present, or in an adjectival form: *tataḥ praviśati rāja viveko matiś ca*.[36] We can think of this as a strategy of abridgement with the concurrent aim of recalling the style of Sanskrit dramas. These details, albeit minimal, are not trivial, as they have the potential to disclose the literary, religious, and philosophical paradigms with which the authors were negotiating.

Final Reflections

This exploration has begun to show that the transmission of the story in the Prabodhacandrodaya *paramparā* is a complex phenomenon which often involved more than translating from a Sanskrit precedent: several Hindi authors retold their version of the story by drawing from another Braj Bhasha retelling, or from texts outside the tradition.[37] It has also been observed how the Prabodhacandrodaya story was sometimes connected to a royal or imperial milieu, as a narrative serving to discuss and define the relationship between power and spirituality. During the colonial period actual political power was no longer held by local rulers and religious and philosophical traditions began to be subject to scrutiny. Several Indian intellectuals participated in such debates and held different positions.[38]

The Prabodhacandrodaya provides us with an instance to investigate such tensions. Dube's work was composed possibly 100 years later than Brajvāsī's *Prabodhacandrodaya* then published about twenty years later by the same publisher, Naval Kishore. On the one hand, the analysis of its text confirms that even when the return to Sanskrit models was strongly defended in the domain of theatre, such a process was not univocal but mediated through more familiar languages, such as Braj Bhasha (Dalmia 2015: 318). On the other hand, the practical difference between the two *nāṭaka*s can be considered as signaling a shift in the

36 'Then enter King Intuition with Intelligence', text and translation from Kṛṣṇamiśra 2009: 34–5.

37 Although this needs more careful study (outside the scope of this chapter), Jasvant Siṁh's *Prabodha Nāṭaka* appears to rely significantly on Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya*. Cf. Siṁh (1972: 81–113). On the difficulties surrounding the definition of clearcut typologies of translation (including 'iconic / literal') for the Indian context, specifically based on a Jaina corpus, see Cort (2016).

38 For example, Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) and Hariścandra, whose opinions concerning issues such as iconic worship and Hinduism as a monotheistic faith contrasted sharply (Dalmia 1997: 381–90).

conception of what a Hindi drama should be. The reduced format of Dube's work may be seen as responding to a demand that a text should be short enough to be read quickly yet still be entertaining by retaining a dramatic form.

At the same time, the analysis has demonstrated that adapting the drama to 'modern needs' did not mean the same thing for every cultural actor, as two different retellings could practically coexist, Bhuvdev Dube's and Bhāratendu's. While some features of the two plays overlap, like the omission of the introductory blessings, it is clear that the respective retellings had different intentions. Hariścandra took it as an occasion to critique religious authority through satire, with arguably a parallel aim of creating solidarity among the Vaiṣṇavas by disparaging the Buddhists, Jainas, and Śaivas. In contrast, Dube wanted to provide – for Hindus and in Hindi – actual ethical and moral edification, almost conceived as a separate domain of knowledge among other branches. As hinted by the preface attached to his *Prabodhacandrodaya*, Dube engaged with the project of democratizing religious and philosophical knowledge, in the sense of broadening the basis of the communities reading and interpreting religious and philosophical works (Stark 2009: 201). His simplifications and abridgements – whether successful or not – show us practically what it meant to bring the Prabodhacandrodaya story to the *deś*.

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