CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1

Translation is instrumental in constructing civilizations which is evident if we take the example of the Elizabethan Age. The literary spurt in this age would not have been possible, if writers like Montaigne, Plutarch, Machiavelli would not have been translated into English. Lewis Galantière is of the opinion, “It was from civilizations more refined than their own that the Elizabethans learned to express ideas and not merely emotions; and for the best part of a hundred years, certainly until Dryden’s maturity, around 1680, no other class of English writers wrote prose that was comparable to the prose of the translators” (436). It shows the role played by translation in the construction of a civilization.

Translation, both as a scholastic exercise and as an art essential to modern civilization, has lately been receiving the attention and respect often denied to it by professional scholars and by writers. Translation has now expanded into an industry and there has been a spate of translations all over the world. There are people who make their living by translating and there are some who are better appreciated as translators rather than as original creative writers. Thomas R. Palfrey reports about a man in his essay Literary Translation – "I might say in passing, that the excellence of one of his translations entitles it to be classed as a piece of creative writing, that his translations in general are superior to his original works, and his own style is patterned... after the language from which he translates" (414). This is a clear indication of the status the act of translation enjoys in our society.
Translation is, apart from the formal transcribing of word/meaning/syntax etc, also an act of transference from one language to another i.e. from one culture to another. Culture is indispensable when we refer to transference or counter transference in terms of psychoanalysis and cultural studies. In psychoanalytic theory the ideas of transference and counter transference relate to the transmission between patient and analyst which is evaluated as emanating from interpersonal relations. It also results in the construction of self-object or self-other in the minds of the patient and analyst. In translation, culturally alien terms which have no equivalents in the target language are transferred and expressions are literally translated to retain and recreate the meanings and nuances of the native culture. Raja Rao, for example, in his path breaking *Kanthapura* boldly translated Kannada expressions as well as transferred certain terms.

Translation ranges from linguistic transcoding to cultural transference. In this sense translation is the media via which cultural elements of the source text are transferred. As Susan Bassnett asserts in her *Translation Studies*: “Translation Studies is indeed a discipline in its own right: not merely a minor branch of comparative literary study, not yet a specific area of linguistics, but a vastly complex field with many far-reaching ramifications” (1). Hence Eugene Nida endows a dynamic dimension to the act of translation. He opines,

Thus we must analyse the transmission of a message in terms of a dynamic dimension. This dimension is especially important for translation, since the production of equivalent messages is a process, not merely of matching parts of utterances, but also of reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication. Without both elements the results can scarcely be regarded, in any realistic sense, as equivalent. (1964:120)
Nida's semiotic\(^3\) analysis of translation takes into account the production and transmission of messages between receiver and sender in translation. This 'dynamic character of communication' includes receiver and sender's socio-cultural background. A critic called Leila Rasouli clearly elaborates this correlation among semiotics and translation by quoting Juri Lotman:

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\text{[...] culture is a gathering of historically formed semiotic systems (languages) [...] The translation of the same texts into other semiotic systems, the assimilation of different texts, the moving of the boundaries between texts belonging to culture and those beyond its boundaries are the mechanisms through which it is possible to culturally incorporate reality. Translating a given section of reality into one of the languages of culture, transforming it into a text, i.e. into an information codified in a given way, introducing this information into collective memory: this is the everyday cultural activity sphere. (32)}
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So the act of translation is very much a cultural activity with the pivotal aim of exchanging cultural material. Translation as an act of exchanging and communicating between different societies evidently existed since ancient times.

The act of translation is as old as bilingualism. It is a result of the attempt of communication between people belonging to two distinct language groups. There is not a very significant temporal difference between the birth of language and that of translation. However, translation as a known practice dates back to 3000 B.C. The Romans are known to be the inventor of the art of translation. Around 2000 B.C. the Romans made translations of many works of Greek literature into Latin. The history of translation in the western countries corresponds with the translation of the Bible. The Greeks were the first to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek\(^4\) around 200 B.C. The practice of translation in England is a relatively late phenomenon beginning with King Alfred (849-899 AD) and continuing till date with much more vigour. During the time of Renaissance in England translation proved
itself as a medium of literary and cultural exchange. Translation and imitation of Greek and Latin classics played a great role in moulding national literature of England during this period. Italian sonnets came to England through the translations of Thomas Wyatt and others in the 16th century.5

In India too the practice of translation is no new enterprise. Translation as an act of communication across cultural barriers has been a part of the history of all major Indian languages. The word for translation in Sanskrit, which persists unchanged in most of the modern Indian languages, is ‘anubād’, which etymologically and primarily means “saying after or again, repeating by way of explanation, explanatory repetition or reiteration with corroboration or illustration, explanatory reference to anything already said...The underlying metaphor in the word anubad is temporal – to say after, to repeat – rather than spatial as in the English/Latin word translation – to carry across” (Bassnett and Trivedi: 9). The meaning of the word ‘anubād’ owes to the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata being worked and reworked by numerous writers in many modern Indian languages.

The rendering of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata into most of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages are not truly 'translations' but 'transcreations'6 in which the original text acted only as a trigger for the language poets to create their own texts suited to regional subcultures and languages. Considering the importance of Indian literature in English translation G.N. Devy divides the Indian history of translation into four phases such as the colonial phase (1776-1910), the revivalist (1876-1956), the nationalist phase (1902-1929) and the formalist phase (1912-continues to the present time) (120). During the first phase translations of books on all subjects were attempted provided they were written in classical languages like
Sanskrit or Persian. Translation at this phase camouflaged certain motives of the colonialists. Edward W. Said in his *Orientalism* exposes how these projects of the western orientalists helped the foreigners consolidate a firm political base in India. Said says, "Anquetil's Oriental labours were succeeded by William Jones's, the second of the Pre-Napoleonic Projects... Whereas Anquetil opened large vistas, Jones closed them down, codifying, tabulating, comparing" (1995:77). These projects ensured the domination of the (so called) Orient through the instrument of western knowledge and power that underpin military power.

The translators of the next phase were mostly Indian who had a thorough knowledge of Indian traditions. Hence the produced texts helped to revive and recover ancient treatises on poetry, drama and language written by classical scholars like Panini, Bhartrhari, Bharata and others. The translators following this period were Indian nationalists like Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and others. The most famous and popular translation of this period is Tagore's own rendering of his verses under the title *Gitanjali* (1912). The works of these translators display an unmistakable awareness of selfhood and native traditions.7

In recent decades, there are plenty of translated fictions and poems though not many dramas. Indian periodicals have played a vital role by publishing many translated works. *Indian Literature* a bimonthly journal of Sahitya Akademi is committed to publishing translations of literature from Indian languages. Sahitya Akademi has instituted an award for translation in every language. Another organization Katha India, has contributed to the art and academic rigour of translation as literature in the past few decades by publishing and launching different translation projects. Started in 1988 Katha's contribution is immense in intra and inter cultural
translation through the application of the projects like Katha Vilasam, Project Kanchi, Anukriti, Indo-Swedish project and others. The languages and literature in today’s world develop because of various external and internal pressures and tensions. These tensions are truly reflected in the creative writings that happen within each community. There is so much to learn from one another in this field. The Sahitya Akademi and the CIIL (Central Institute of Indian Languages) have taken different steps to ensure that translation receives the right focus so that the cross cultural learning and linking of our languages among themselves and also with the world outside actually happen in a meaningful manner. It is with this aim that ‘Katha Bharati’ was taken up by CIIL and Sahitya Akademi so that the best of our writings reach out from all major languages in India to international area – first into English and then into other important languages. National Translation Mission is contributing in this field in a significant manner. In this way translation now has properly been recognised as a discipline of study and a necessary adjust to the study of Comparative Literature. Many institutions and universities in India have introduced ‘Translation Studies’ as a course considering its enormous potentialities to promote literary as well as cultural interaction.

The practice of translation in Assam too began quite early. In the 14th century writers like Madhab Kandali, Sankardeva and Bhattacharya translated Indian classical and regional texts into Assamese. The available translation of the fifth canto of the Rāmāyana by Madhav Kandali is the first example of translation in Assam. Sankardev and Madhavdev too either translated classic Sanskrit and religious texts directly or composed verses and dramas based on those stories and texts. Sankardev’s Bhāgavata Purāṇ is a translation where the aim is to simplify the complex philosophical religious
thoughts giving it a local tone to induce the reader with a feeling of devotion. Madhavdeva’s Nāṃghosā is another type of translation where verses from different religious texts are translated. The individual poetic sense of these poets made their translations, which are more of transcreations, interesting and reader friendly.

In the 19th century Assamese language went through a critical phase with Bengali being imposed as the official language. At this stage the missionaries understood a new religion is not possible in a foreign language. Hence they wrote Assamese grammar and dictionaries and published the periodical Arunodoi in 1846. They translated numerous Christian parables, anecdotes and novels to popularise Christianity. Nonetheless their activities introduced Assamese language and literature to western literature as well as to other Indian literatures. The publication of Arunodoi (1846) which saved Assamese language from the dominance of Bengali under the patronage of the British introduced a new era in Assamese literature. The religious tone of ancient Assamese literature practiced by Madhav Kandali and Sankardeva was no longer the most dominant strand. Inspired by the zeal of Christianism and European modernity writers of that period such as Gunabhiram Barua and Hemchandra Barua expressed a progressive humanism through their works. The idea of translation too went through a change. The translations of religious leaders like Sankardeva are more of adaptation and paraphrasing for the communicative purpose to percolate down to the masses. Translation in the Arunodoi period too started with the translation of the Bible by Dr Miles Bronson; but the period is marked by the translations of some secular texts. Dr. Bronson himself translated Elokesī Beşyär Kathā originally a Bengali novel. Mrs Garny translated into Assamese another
Bengali novel entitled *Fulmani āru Karunā*. These translated works helped in the evolution of modern Assamese literature.

The area of translation actually flourished in the Jonākī period. In this period Assamese literature firmly established itself as a rich tradition in eastern India. Ananda Chandra Agarwala who is also known as ‘bhānani kōvar’, composed translated poems like “Jīvan-Saṅgīt”, “Cahā āru Pandīt” and “Sukhar Thāi”. Jatindranath Duwara’s “Omartirtha” – a translation of Khayyam’s poem is another success. Padmadhar Chaliha’s “Swadeśprem” – a translation of Walter Scott’s “Patriotism” is well known. Durgeswar Sarma is known as the ‘Assamese Wordsworth’ for his successful translations of Wordsworth especially the Lucy poems. Dimbeswar Neog’s adaptation of “The May Queen” entitled “Bihurānī” has received the status of an independent poem. Other successful poet translators in Assamese are Nabakanta Barua, Bireswar Barua, Nilamani Phookan, Ajit Barua etc. Apart from the poems translations of many European novels are available in Assamese. Writers like Ernest Hemingway, Charles Dickens, Tolstoy etc have been translated into Assamese. In the genre of drama too many adaptations and translations are available. Some of them have become very popular and are performed many times such as Ibsen’s *Vikings at Helgiland* (translated as *Runumi* by Suresh Goswami), *A Doll’s House* (*Putalā Ghar* by Padma Barkataky), *The Wild Duck* (*Banahansi* by Satyaprasad Barua), *The Ghosts* (*Bhūt* by Mahendra Bora), Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* (translated as *Preyasī*) etc. European child literature too is translated extensively such as *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Les Miserables*, *Robin Hood* stories, *Huckleberry Finn*, Jules Verne and even the Harry Potter series (Dr. Karabi Deka Hazarika: 85-87).
Translation from English to Assamese continues though not extensively, even as the translations of Assamese literature into English or into other languages are not very encouraging. The number of translated works in Assam is scanty compared to works produced in other regional languages such as Telegu, Malayalam, Bengali, Kannada and Tamil. Hence, writers of great repute in Assamese literature such as Bishnu Rabha, Syed Abdul Malik, even Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya are hardly known outside of Assam.

There has been a complex interrelationship between various social, linguistic, racial and religious cultures in India. Almost eighty languages are spoken and in more than twenty languages people write. Moreover, India has a history of large scale social migrations for over three thousand years. Hence Indians have natural translating consciousness and in G.N. Devy's words, "Indian metaphysics is not haunted by the fear of exile from the absolute right. Indian sociology does provide a multi-lingual context to literary study" (147). The cultural situation in Assam is no different. That is why translation activity can ensure better communication and exchange. On the other hand, there is a great need to create a global platform for Assamese literature. English being the lingua franca of the global world translation of Assamese works into English will give a literary visibility to the whole country as well as to the whole world.

1.2

Considering the necessity as well as relevance of the study of translation I chose to work in this area. The scenario of translation is not very robust in Assam as has been discussed above. Some iconic figures of Assam are not yet translated. Gunabhiram Barua's *Ramnabami* has been translated very recently. A number of Assamese poems have been translated into English but very few Assamese novels
have been translated. Keeping in mind all these issues I have chosen to translate a very recent novel by Mamoni Raisom Goswami *Them Phākhřī Tahcildārār Tāmar Tarovāl*. Mamoni Raisom Goswami is an exception among Assamese writers whose works have been translated rather extensively. This interest in Goswami is to some extent generated by the national and international recognition she received through different awards. Indira Goswami spent some important years of her life in Delhi, the country's capital. Had she been in Assam her fate would not have been remarkably different from some of the Assamese scholars who are still waiting for a national and international recognition. Yet many of her translated works have been criticised by scholars as being far below in quality compared to the original. Hiren Gohain comments on the translated versions of her works: "The English translations give only a feeble indication of the extraordinary force and concrete density of her language" (Satarawala, 2002:14). I have chosen to work on Dr. Goswami because her intense and engaging mode of writing fascinates me.

Professor Indira Goswami (Mamoni Raisom Goswami is her pen-name) is a pioneering prose writer in Modern Assamese Literature. She has almost twenty novels and numerous short stories to her credit besides a great many published research works. She is unarguably a writer of national repute. Her novels have been translated into Hindi, Bangla, English, Kannada, Telegu, Panjabi and Malayalam. Her writing primarily deals with the socio-cultural issues such as exploitation, oppression, women's liberation, oppressive traditional values and so on. Her novel *Māmare Dharā Tarovāl* (1980) won her the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 and she won the prestigious Jnanpith Award for the year 2000, the highest literary Award in India.
Mamoni Raisom Goswami herself was a prolific translator. She has contributed substantially to Indian literature by translating many works from Indian and world literature into English. She has translated the anthology of Munsi Prem Chand's short stories from Hindi into Assamese and the well-known Malayalam novel *Arannazhikaneram* for the National Book Trust of India. She has translated the Japanese book *Sarisripar Sakula*. She has also translated two of her own novels and quite a number of short stories into English.

1.3

Keeping this focus on the writer in my thesis an attempt will be made to generate a theory of translation after a detailed discussion of the recent theoretical trends. The theoretical apparatus of translation is affected by the emerging ideas in Poststructuralism and Postcolonialism under the broader rubric of Cultural Studies. It broadens our view by encompassing a large area by the term translation. Postcolonialism believes that translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems, and in history. Hence Bassnett and Trivedi expose the prejudices and the feeling of superiority of the translators of *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* respectively Edward Lane and Edward Fitzgerald\(^1\). So the postcolonial perspective looks at the source language and target language power relationship throughout the history of translation studies. If Postcolonialism sees translation as part of a larger historical process, Poststructuralism questions the originality of the source text. As Edwin Gentzler puts it: “What if the ‘original’ has no fixed identity that can be aesthetically or scientifically determined but rather changes each time it passes into translation? What exists before the original? An idea? A form? A thing? Nothing? Can we think in terms of pre-original, pre-ontological conditions?”
In this sense instead of representing reality language constructs reality. That is why Derrida says in *The Ear of the Other*:

The original is not a plentitude which would come to be translated by accident. The original is in the situation of demand, that is, of a lack or exile, the original is indebted a priori to the translation. Its survival is a demand and a desire for translation, somewhat like the Babelian demand: Translate me. Babel is a man, or rather a male god, a god that is not full since he is full of resentment, jealousy, and so on. He calls out, he desires, he lacks, he calls for complement or the supplement... (152-153).

The theorists of the present era come forward with different innovative ideas concerning the art of translation. Lawrence Venuti writes: "...foreignizing translation in English can be a form of racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism" (1995: 20). That is why Venuti advocates foregrounding of the foreignness of the source text. Translation far from being unobtrusive or instead of offering an apparently unmediated communication with the 'original', draws attention to itself whether to focus the gap between the source and target text or to throw light on its own creativity.

In the present scenario we can not be assertive about objectivity of language. There is no metalanguage which can talk about the theory of translation or the act of translation and as Lydia Liu puts it in the introduction to *Translingual Practice*, a translingual act, 'it enters, rather than sits above its object” (1995:20). In this context there is an urgent need on the part of the translator to be self-reflective and self-conscious. Hence a translator has to perform the act in full awareness of the world of the 'original' author and that of the reader.

To translate is one thing and to talk about it another. Some critics like Dr. Johnson debate and discuss the retention of sense. But sense or meaning is an intangible idea, something inaudible and invisible, which is there in the psyche of the
writer and to an extent in the convention where the writer belongs. Lawrence Venuti calls those translations which are chimed with the spirit of the times ‘domestic representation’ (1998:70). Mamoni Raisom Goswami is a contemporary writer; yet there is a sharp resonance of localized values and modes of thought in her works. My attempt in the thesis will be to translate the cultural and psychological ethos of the writer as reflected through the selected works. The theoretical analysis of translation in the Assamese literature is pretty new though it has dabbed seriously in the act of translation. Krishna Kanta Handique, published a writing “Anubādar Kathā” in a periodical called Chetana in 1920. That was the first Assamese article on translation. After a long gap now there is a stir in the scholarly field concerning the theory and act of translation and new paradigm are yet to emerge. My discussion of the theoretical aspects will attempt to throw light on the complexities of translation of Assamese literature and the overarching need to dwell on the notion of transference than merely on translation from the original.

This recently written novel of Mamoni Roisom Goswami Them Fākhṛī Tahcildārar Tāmar Tarovāl is of immense interest to me for various reasons. Dr. Goswami writes in the preface to the novel that she was curious and interested in Them Fākhṛī since her childhood and she heard about this character from folksongs and folktales; but her meetings with different people in Bijnī before the writing of the novel confirm that Them Fākhṛī is a historical character, rather a woman who makes history by becoming the rent collecting officer (a tahcildār) under the British regime. The suppressed and thus marginal position of women in our society makes it inconceivable for us to think of a woman who in the early 19th century collected rents riding on a horse through the forests bearing gun and sword in hand. My objective is
to bring to focus the novella’s regionalism, historical importance and the emphasis on an epoch-making woman character as a central subject.

Till the 1970s Dr. Goswami was a short story writer. The popularity of her novels pushed the short stories to the background, but the world of Indira Goswami’s short stories is equally rich with variety. She has written about three hundred short stories. An investigation and expression of reality, intensity of feeling overshadowed by sympathy toward human beings are some of the major characteristics of her short stories. My selection of the three short stories is not random. Each of these stories has a woman character at the centre: Padmapriya in “Devipithar Tej”, Taradai in “Udana Bākac” and Damayanti in “Sanskār”. All these are lone women, deserted by their husbands (dead in the case of Damayanti), victims of the inhumanities of the traditional values and social prejudices. There is also a detailed description of the ceremony of blood sacrifice at Kamakhya Temple in “Devipithar Tej”, a sort of sharp and ironic parallel to the psychological injury inflicted upon the woman herself. These women, however, do not succumb to their vulnerable situations. The writer herself is a strong and courageous woman who overcomes great traumatic events in her own life. These stories which come from the pen of such a writer evoke curiosity about some vital issues by posing questions and playing out the inherent ambiguities like traditionalism and secularism, love and hatred, social prejudice and liberal outlook among many other contradictions. A critical look at the translation of these stories will help appreciate how Goswami exposes women’s predicament and deals with them.

Contemporary metropolitan cultures sometimes do not take cognizance of a large section of regional writing of exceptional order as a result of which most people in India do not know of existing regional literatures other than their own. In this sense
the need for a concerted attempt to examine the variety of contemporary literature available in Bhasa literatures assumes vital importance both to the scholars as well as to the curious lay readers. The thesis will establish the culture specificity of Mamoni Raisom Goswami’s works. Goswami is a deeply rooted Assamese writer. Her works deal with the ‘satra’ culture, the tradition of animal sacrifice and contain culture specific details in terms of language, dress-codes and outlook that even a non-Assamese is compelled to appreciate in terms of the cultural resonance of her works. The story “Devipithar Tej” describes in detail the sacrificial tradition in the Kāmākhya Temple. “Saṁskār” reveals about the Brahminical culture exposing the prejudices inscribed in the cultural practices. It also talks about the conflict suffered by Damayantī who can neither follow the culture nor subvert it totally. However, the focus in the thesis will be to study the selected novel Them Fhākhri Tahcildārar Tāmar Turovāl which talks about the specific culture of an important tribe in Assam, the Bodos, with curious insights into some unknown parts of Assam history.

Mamoni Raisom Goswami wrote many novels of which the settings and context are outside of Assam. For instance Ahiran, Chenābar Srota, Tej Āru Dhubire Dhusarita Prsthā all refer to incidents happening in different parts of India. This exemplifies her dynamism, versatility and cultural mobility as a writer. She has Sikhs, Muslims, Christians as vital characters in her novels and short stories. In addition the strain of humanism that runs through all her works establishes her as a writer of universal appeal. Hence Hiren Gohain says, "Behind them there lies an attitude – the legacy of the profound humanism of the Indian Renaissance and the leaders of the freedom movement, modified by a tenacious modern critical consciousness that
questions every element of received wisdom" (Satarawala, 2002:14). It is one of the objectives of the thesis to look at this multicultural aspect of her writing.

1.4

There is very little research work done on the translated works of Goswami. Baharul Islam Saikia's M. Phil dissertation contains a translation of the well-known novel *Ahiran* with a discussion on the phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical and cultural problems faced by the translator in translating the Assamese novel into English. Except this there is no research work on the translations of Dr. Goswami's works. The translation of her novels and short stories are available. “Devipithar Tej” is translated as “Shadow of Kamakhya” by Apratim Barua. “Yatra” is translated as “The Journey” by the writer herself. “The Empty Chest” is the translated version of “Udark Bakac” by Dr. Pradipta Borgohain. The writer translated “Saṃskār”, a powerful story, a cinematic version of which is also available. *Shadow of Kamakhya* contains some of her English translated short stories in the form of an anthology. Apart from the short stories many of her novels are translated too. *Pages Stained with Blood* is translated by Pradip Acharjya from the origin *Tej Āru Dhulire Dhusarita Prstā. An Unfinished Autobiography* is the translation of her Ādhā Lekhā Dastābej by Prafulla Katakya. *Cenābar Srota* is translated by Nibha Rani Gogoi as *The Course of Chenab. The Blue Necked Braja* translated by Gayatri Bhattacharyya is a Zubaan publication of the novel *Nilkanthī Braja*. The *Man From Chinnamasta* is the English translation of *Chinnamastar Manuhtu* by Prasanta Goswami published by Katha. *The Moth-Eaten Howdah* of a *Tusker* and *Saga of South Kamrup* are the translations of *Datāl Hātir Üye Khovā Hāodā* by the writer herself. “Adāiya” (a film) is based on her novel *Datāl Hātir Üye Khovā Hāodā*. A television serial of the same
book was telecasted on Delhi Doordarshan under the title “Dakshin Kāmrup Ki Gāthā”. Guwahati Doordarshan made a telefilm on her story “Udam Bākac”. Delhi Doordarshan made a serial on her “Bhikshār Pātra Bhāñi”. “Words from the Mist” is a film made on her by Jahnu Barua. Besides these, her works are translated into many other languages like Marathi, Hindi, Nepali, Telegu, Kannada and Bengali. The Marathi version of Adhālekhā Dastābej has been prescribed as a text book in Marathi. While in the most recent translation of Goswami Aruni Kashyap has rendered Them Fhākhri Tahcildārar Tāmar, Tarovāl into English as The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar.

Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (1998) and Critical Readings in Translation Studies (2010), both work as interesting handbooks of translation studies. The latter gives a vivid picture of translation studies in the present era covering from text, discourse, cultural identity, translation and war to new media and technologies. The role of new media and technologies on translation studies brings in new perspectives. If machine translation fixes style, vocabulary, figurative expression and content for the interests of international communication as Rita Raley observes (419-421); computer technology records and display the entire production history of a text and undermines the traditional hierarchical relationship between ‘original’ and versions (Karin Littau: 437-441).

In India too critics started deliberations on translations in Indian contexts almost at the same time. G.N. Devy’s In Another Tongue (1993) looks at translation from an Indian perspective. He is of the opinion that unlike the West, Indian people have a ‘translating consciousness’ (141) owing to the multilingual condition of Indian society. Sujit Mukherjee’s Translation as Discovery (1994) offered comparative textual analysis of canonical Bengali literary works such as Gitanjali, Pather Panchali etc. Mukherjee also stressed the importance of opening up new areas of study paving the way for the study of Indian literature in English translations. Mukherjee’s Translation as Recovery published posthumously highlights many issues related to translations in Indian contexts. Talking about the practical issues related to the study of translation he critically reviews translations of Tagore and Mahasweta Devi. Shantha Ramakrishna’s Translation and Multilingualism Post-Colonial Contexts (2007) provides interesting and detailed information about translation in a post-colonial India talking about the socio-economic, political and multilingual

Placing my work against this large theoretical background I will foreground the basic function of translation as an act of transference. Building up my idea with an analogy to the psychoanalytical idea of transference, I will look at the poetics and politics of translation as an act of transference. As the title ‘Poetics of Transference’ suggests the proposed thesis will focus on the theoretical underpinnings of the act of transference in translation and its actual realization in the selected texts by Mamoni Raisom Goswami. However, transference in the context of the selected writer refers to the translations of her works into different languages as her works have been translated into many Indian and foreign languages. The proposed thesis, on the other hand, will focus on the idea of transference with reference to English translations of the selected texts.

The position of the translator is between the addresser and the addressee as s/he has to perform the role of communicator and interpreter. However, as an interpreter the translator understands that in communicating between two cultures and
two languages s/he needs to build a bridge of sociality for the two to fill in the gap. It is a complex process of decoding and encoding of a cultural material. With shared sociolinguistic and cultural traits, inter-translatability is the highest between any two Indian languages than between an Indian and a western language. There is, admittedly, great difficulty in expressing the cultural and sub-cultural nuances of Indian life in English because they are genetically unrelated and culturally different. In *The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker* the word 'hāodā' cannot be replaced by the word 'saddle'. Just as, for instance, many other words have no equivalents in the translated language and can hardly claim to transcribe fully the word from the source text.

On the other hand, the meaning of a word carries with it the accumulation of its different individual use in several contexts. Meaning is an 'acquired property' (Hass, 1962:213). Our memories or ideas are not extra lingual. An idea is very much ingrained in the language. In this sense language is no receptacle and there is nothing to transfer. This conjecture foregrounds the limitation of the act of translation. Moreover, my study will be limited to the translation of her novel, *Them Fhākhri Tahcildārar Īnāmar Tarovāl* and an analysis of the writer through some of the translated versions of her works. The use of the term 'poetics' in the title will however be confined only to a theoretical discussion of the act of translation in terms of the dynamics of language and the generated meaning.

The distinctiveness of Mamoni Raisom Goswami's fiction may not be known in every part of India and outside India but she does have a number of novels and short stories, which are known internationally. Only translation of them into a lingua franca like English can give them a larger audience. Apart from serving the causes of
the particular writer translation promotes national integration and international understanding by enabling the people of other regions to learn about a particular region. This is no less a mission than building bridges across cultures. Moreover, the work particularly emphasizes the growing shift in translation from simple renderings in another language to the actual business of transferring cultures.

Since this is a work that primarily addresses the subject of translation, the study will use and refer to available translation theories that are current in the genre of Translation Studies. The nature of the work being largely directed towards understanding and interpreting the culture and issues pertaining to the Assamese society that the author examines, the work shall have a broad frame work that can be accommodated under the rubric of cultural studies. Thus my work will necessarily use historical tools such as surveys of translation and available critical and literary interpretative schemas to arrive at a poetics of translation. Both translation and the critical examination of Goswami's works entail a close reading of her engagement with the contemporary writers and thinkers. The work will thus make ample use of critical readings of Goswami and draw from a range of such available commentaries.

1.5

The goal of the act of translation is communication. In translation the content in a text is transferred from one culture to another for cultural exchange, communication and understanding. K. Chellappan opines in the essay “Translation as Synthesis: A Search for a New Gestalt”:

In all communication there is a gap — in fact what is communicated is only the gap, but without the gap there can be no communication. To quote Malcolm Crick, “If it is our particular position which separates ‘us’ from
Essentially, the transference is constitutive of a formal relationship of the ‘original’ with something other than itself which is ultimately dependant on the potential for translatability of the ‘original’. Freud, Lacan, Jung and Benjamin focus on the different ways in which key formal and rhetorical mechanisms can transfer an immanent content only accessible through the translation or transference (Übertragung) of its ‘original’ form. A poetics of transference can in this sense be described as the modes or ways of transferring a material from one to the other. At the same time, and following a definition by the American critic Charles Altieri, a poetics constitutes a logical system configured by a series of relational forms “between mind and nature” as Altieri argues: “Considered thematically, a poetic is a logical system in which the desired relationship between mind and nature determines many of the particular recurrent emphases” (38). Altieri’s definition shows that the individual and the outside world determine the modes. Similarly, the notion of transfer also implicates the relation between self and other in terms of the two worlds where the act of transference occurs. As examined above, especially regarding the use of the term by Freud, Lacan and Jung, the transfer from a latent to a manifest content is articulated through a particular series of mechanisms of substitution and displacement that, as Lacan argued, ultimately constitute the very same tropes that articulate every discourse. Transference functions at the primary level of all discourse. Each meaning is transference for that matter. For instance if someone says lunch, normally we will think about rice; but in reality different people may consume different food items.
Keeping in view this focus of the thesis, the act of translation is a universal phenomenon; yet cultural, historical and social events draw a line among different translation scenarios in the world. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita write in their *Women Writing in India*; “there are always relationships of power involved when one world is represented for another in translations...regional culture for a more powerful national or ‘Indian’ one” and when the target readers are from outside India, the translation should include “representing a national culture for still more powerful international culture which is today... a Western one” (1995: xx). The result is the effacing of the differences of the regional cultures and their own identities. This condition is replicated in all the South Asian countries with different regions and languages which were under the colonial rule at one point of time. The second chapter will discuss the social, political scenario of translation in South Asia with special reference to India. The third chapter will bear upon the interesting similarities between translation and the psychoanalytical experience of transference. Interpretation plays a key role in the Freudian psychoanalysis and interpretation is a precondition for translation. The next chapter will be on interpretation and translation. Interpretation, on the other hand, is largely affected by socio-cultural contexts of the translator as well as the source text. Edward T. Hall says, “There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture” (1976:14). The fourth chapter will dwell on the relation between translation and culture with my experience of translating Mamoni Raisom Goswami’s *Them Fhākhřī Tahcildārə Tāmar Tərovāl*. Them Fhākhṛī is a Bodo woman who became the revenue collecting officer under the British rule. Women’s issues occupy a large space in the fictional world of Mamoni Raisom Goswami; how some of these women are reflected in translation will be the focus of the next chapter. Three
stories— "Devipithar Tej" (translated as "Under the Shadow of Kamakhya"), "Saṁskār" (translated as "The Offspring") and "Udāṁ Bākac" (translated as "The Empty Chest") will be analysed in this chapter. Each of these chapters will actually focus on how these various aspects of transference throw light on the writer Mamoni Raisom Goswami. After this detailed analysis a conclusion will be drawn.

Endnotes:

1. Raja Rao in the foreword to the novel Kanthapura makes it clear that he is giving expressions to Indian thoughts in a foreign language. Readers after reading the novel are really left with an impression that they have read a Kannada novel. The technique used is such that it foregrounds Kannada expressions pushing English language to the background.

2. Nida's idea of dynamic nature of communication is very theoretical. He points out five phases of communication: “a) the subject matter, i.e. the referents which are talked about. b) the participants who engage in communication (in written communication the author and the widely scattered audience – both in space and time). c) the speech act or the process of writing. d) the code used, i.e. the language in question with all its resources as a code, including symbols and arrangements. e) the message, i.e. the particular way in which the subject matter is encoded into specific symbols and arrangements” (1964:120).

3. Stuart Hall defines semiotics in the following way: “This general approach to the study of signs in culture and of culture as a sort of ‘language’, which Saussure foreshadowed, is now generally known by the term semiotics” (36).


5. The ideas discussed are taken from Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies and A Companion to Translation Studies edited by Piotr Kuhlwczak and Karin Littau.

6. A critic called Anjana Tiwari defines transcreation in the following manner: “Transcreation is a cross between straight translation and creative copywriting...” (p. 100 in Mohit K. Ray ed. Studies in Translation).

7. G N. Devy discusses the Indian tradition of translation in detail in the chapter “Indian Literature in English Translation” in his book In Another Tongue. Sujit Mukherjee's dwellings on the history of translation in India in Translation as Recovery reveal the same historical facts, although he does divide them into four phases like Devy.

8. Arunodoi is a monthly journal published under the patronage of Baptist missionaries. Baptist missionaries with some Assamese youth such as Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and Gunabhiram Barua fought for the cause of the Assamese language which lost its status of official language.
in schools and courts. Dr. Maheshwar Neog opines, “The main purpose of Arunodoi is campaigning of Christian religion, yet it expanded the horizons of Assamese readers and remained witness to our many social and political events” (227).

9. Dr Basanta Kumar Bhattacharjya’s Arunodoi Jugar Sahitya gives clear picture of the literary practice during the Arundoi period (5-11).

10. In the introduction of the book Post-colonial Translation Bassnett and Trivedi say that both these translators accused the Arabs and the Persians of gullibility and artistic incompetency which shows that these two translators believed that they belonged to a superior cultural system (6).
Works Cited:


