This introductory chapter highlights the anatomy of the proposed thesis by dwelling on the purpose of this study. It will be done through the elucidation of the significance of its title by illustrating what ‘matrix’, in this context, covers. It also gives a brief introduction to the thesis whereby the contents of each chapter and how the points to be discussed are built up have been highlighted.

At the outset, some useful thinking about the title of the thesis has been made. It is done so in order to stress the significance of the title, to highlight the area that is covered by it and also to give a justification of why it has been nomenclated as such. The word ‘Matrix’ is derived from the Latin word ‘womb’ and its most common dictionary meaning is that it is a situation, an environment, an enclosure within which something originates, develops or is contained. By dwelling on the matrix of literary translation, this thesis aims to provide an enclosure or a space within which the various perceptions and facets of translation in general and literary translation in particular can be analyzed.

It furnishes us with a roof under which the complex process of translation with all its implications can be studied. Also by highlighting the various theories of translation that have existed from the Roman period till today, the present thesis also attempts to record the changes that have been taking place in the field and how the trend is at present, and how important a role translation plays. It endeavors to rip open those points from where one
can start off one’s voyage into the translation sea, to equip oneself with the tools, which are in the form of the ever growing expansion of knowledge in the discipline. This will enable one to fight against the storm and tides, and defend one’s stand against all criticisms in whatsoever form they come and from whichever direction.

One truth about this art is that it looks so unattractive on the surface because translation as a practice has not enjoyed the respectable status that creative writing has and translators are also regarded as inferior to creative writers. For some critics, translation is a parasitical art. Its practitioners are bound to stamp on thorns the moment they put their first foot forward into this field. There has always been this question at the backdrop: “Why don’t you write your own instead of translating someone else’s work and remain behind the scene: unseen, unknown and unsung of?” Its practitioners therefore are less in number when compared to that of creative writing and those few who do it, do it for their own interest, for their love of the work. Translator performs “out of love, out of sense of sharing what he loves and loving what he does” (Wechsler 1998: 6). Even then translator, at some point of time, is bound to stagger his step at a threshold at which he is likely to halt to ponder if this is a journey worth making. This hesitation needs to be removed. Because translation is a must in this multilingual society as of today and the realization of its importance has come from all angles. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe has remarked:

Whatever you may say about the deficiencies of translation, it is and remains one of the most important and dignified enterprises in the general commerce of the world. The Qur’an says: “God has given every nation a prophet in its own
language.” Every translator is a prophet among his own people (Lefevere 1992: 25).

When we look at translation as an autonomous discipline, it has had a very short career in the academic environment though translation as a practice is as old as men started using language as a tool for communication or perhaps it has, as noted by Kirsten Malmkjaer, been taking place “for as long as languages have been written down” (2005: 2). Like in all new discipline, many things still need to be charted out and organized. It is therefore capable of attracting the interest of scholars working in other fields. The rich research potential it holds and the sheer intellectual energy it is capable of generating pave way for further investigation. As a result of this the interest in this field is widening from linguistics to ethnography, from cultural studies to psychology. R.K. Singh has rightly asserted that:

Translation is no more an activity of literary scholars, freelancers or part-time amateurs; it is distinct autonomous profession, an academic discipline, demanding more respect and recognition (1996: 151).

The multifaceted dimension of this field of study needs to be realized and encouragement should be given. To capture all the core concerns of this growing discipline is not an easy job. So this step that has been made or is being made towards this field is the need of the hour to bring stabilization and so that it receives all the cachet that is its due. We cannot step back because we cannot risk losing the lost-and-found understanding that is made possible by translation. The objective of this thesis is also to make

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1 It refers to the loss of understanding among human beings when the tower of Babel they built to reach Heaven was shattered by God and they were made to speak different languages. They could no longer understand each other. Later on translation came to their aid. The lost understanding could be found again.
some suggestions regarding the directions in which further research can be carried out in the field.

This thesis is not aimed to study all the facets of translation. Perhaps it can be regarded as the first step for all those who are interested in translation as such. Its aim is also to draw the attention of people from various fields wherever translation is practiced and to let them realize its importance today when the world has turned into a global village.

It has indeed surfaced as an invisible yet indispensable bridge that links not only literatures of different countries or ethnic groups but also their socio-cultural traits and even their commercial operations. Translation bridges the delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages and furthers the understanding of human beings across national borders. Vladimir Ivir has gone to the extent of saying that “the exchange of goods of material and spiritual culture is not possible without translation” (1987: 35).

Technological advancement has made life easier, though it has its adverse effects, and it makes it possible for any kind of news to travel from one pole to another within some fractions of a second. Also international seminars and conferences held on any topic at any part of the world consist of participants who speak different tongues and the only way to make communication possible in such a situation is through translation or interpretation. Because of the role it plays in the world today, the importance of translators (and interpreters) is realized like never before. According to Pelletier du Mans, translators “are in part, the reason why France has at last
been able to begin to taste good things” (Lefevere 1992: 46). Milan Kundera has also shared a similar view:

> Common European thought is the fruit of the immense toil of translators. Without translators, Europe would not exist; translators are more important than members of the European Parliament.
>
> (http://pbtranslations.wordpress.com/2007/03/14/quotes-on-translation-2/)

To dwell on every aspects of translation in detail would seem rather unmanageable for the attempt in that direction will be like killing the hen that lays golden eggs or eating more than what is digestible. In short to do justice to all the aspects would be a far cry. Yet the judicious points and aspects shall be discussed in some detail.

Translation Studies involves two things: one, the theoretical aspects, and two, the practical problems. Both these aspects will be exhaustively discussed in this proposed thesis. So besides concentrating on the translation theory as such there is also made an attempt to translate, as the title of the thesis explicitly states, a Manipuri novel entitled *Bir Tikendrajit Road* by one of the noted novelists of Manipur, late Hijam Guno (1926-2010) at least partially. There must be a two way traffic between theory and practice and a good relation between translators and translation theorists. This is because all theoretical points of view must be modified in the light of our findings and experience derived from actual translation work (Verma 1998: 18).
The thesis consists of six chapters which will take account of the theoretical aspects and also the practical work. They are:

I. Introduction
II. The Mechanics of Translation
III. Theories of Translation: Their Uses and Applicability
IV. The Practical Translation of H.Guno’s *Bir Tikendrajit Road* into English
V. Translation Method as Experience: Viewpoints
VI. Conclusion.

The first chapter, as mentioned above, is the introduction to the thesis. It highlights the purpose of the thesis and the objectives it attempts to fulfill. Here, the significance of the title of the thesis is also discussed. It also talks about how translation used to be and what it means now- when its implications get multiplied. We all know that if we had spoken just one language, there would never be the need for translation. Multilingualism fostered the growth of translation as it was the only means available to understand the other. So we can say that the journey in quest of a way to bring about communication among people who speak unintelligible tongues stopped at translation. The impact of translation at present on the world today, when it has turned into a global village, has been emphasized. It gives an introduction to the chapters that shall follow and what the researchers plans to do in course of it.

The second chapter “The Mechanics of Translation” is the most important chapter of this thesis because as the title also suggests, it seeks to find out the procedures and patterns of the working of translation as a
practice, discusses what we understand by translation from various outlooks. It tries to look at translation from the angle of its ever widening area of coverage and also cites the reasons why one undertakes the task of translation.

In the third chapter, namely, “Theories of Translation: Their Uses and Applicability”, an analysis of the different theories as postulated by various scholars in this field has been done. Along with this, an attempt has also been made to find out the uses of such theories in the process of translation and if one can still translate without their aid. In this chapter, we also find the discussion of the most important decisive factors in the field of translation, which are sometimes in the form of debates and which have constituted the configuration of translation studies. So the age-old controversies like whether translation is an art/science/craft, whether something is lost in translation or something can also be gained in it, whether addition and omission should be allowed or not, whether sense for sense or word for word is the correct way of doing it etc. are discussed.

The fourth chapter which is called “The Practical Translation of H.Guno’s Bir Tikendrajit Road into English” serves as the practicing ground for the researcher. Due to the problem of space, only the first five chapters have been taken up. The inclusion of this chapter is justified by the fact that in translation, just the knowledge of what translation is and what its different theories advocate will not help us until and unless we engage ourselves in some translation works. Instead of digesting some bookish knowledge, we must see for ourselves if the solutions given by other translators working on other language pairs are applicable in the case of the two languages we are
working on. Say for instance, we can see if the translator working with Tamil as the TL and Telegu as the SL faces the same kind of problem as faced by the one working on English and Tamil as the TL and SL respectively. We must further check if the techniques used by the first translator can be used by the second one as well. This indicates the importance of practice in Translation Studies.

The fifth chapter, namely, “Translation Method as Experience: Viewpoints” is an elucidation of the experience faced by the translator while translating a part of the novel *Bir Tikendrajit Road* from Manipuri to English. She also dwells on the general difficulties faced by every translator in trying to bring a compromise between the source language (SL) and target language (TL). She draws light on how the existence of wide cultural gap between the SL and TL magnified such problems. They stand as stumbling blocks and make translation look like a Herculean task. To cope up with them, practicing translators and translation theorists have advocated so many techniques and strategies as per their needs and the languages they deal with. The researcher too has laid down some of the ways one can choose from to overcome the problems with examples from the novel. After going through the actual process of translation, she discovers that translation is not just about the problems all the time. Sometimes it can prove to be a rather joyful activity. The importance of practice in translation has been highlighted too.

Chapter Six is the last chapter. It is the conclusion and it talks about the findings of the whole thesis. It is a synthesis of the five chapters discussed so far by narrowing down to the importance of translation in the present globalized world. The roles played by translation, its uses, its
necessity have been discussed. Avadhesh K. Singh rightly points out that, “Along with serving a sort of bridge in a multilingual situation translation helps in preserving ancient literary and cultural heritage” (1996: 10). It also endeavors to assert how translation has become a must today when as many as 6,500 languages are spoken all over the world and what and how it would have been if men had not learnt to translate.

Great translation helps to break down the barrier of time, place, and language, of unique customs and traditions. One has only to consider what gaps of knowledge, sensitivity and national growth would have existed in countries throughout the world had they not known one another’s cultures through translations (Friar 1971: 199).

Today the definition of translation is expanding. It means so much more than what it used to mean. Once regarded as an uncomplicated process of transference, “a mere useful skill, acquired more and less accidentally if one took the trouble to study foreign languages has more and more attracted the classroom as a necessary but rather tedious teaching aid” (Lefevere 1975: 1), has now come to be recognized by George Steiner and other theoreticians “as a metaphor of reading and writing in all its phenomenological complexity” (Orero 1997: 57). The emergence of a new field called translation studies in the 1980s has cleared all doubts revolving around the ambiguity of translation being an offshoot of applied linguistics or of comparative studies. What we have now is no longer the translation from one language to another but from one culture to another. This chapter concludes with translation as an independent field. The literary merits it generates should not be taken as lower than those created by creative work
on any scale. It expands the boundaries of national literature, enriches the social and cultural contacts with other peoples of the world. On the theoretical side it is as engaging as any other modern theory. Hence its re-creative and critical dimensions are both a matter of deep investigation.
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Kundera, Milan. 16 June 2012. (http://pbtranslations.wordpress.com/2007/03/14/quotes-on-translation-2/)


