Chapter-II
The Mechanics of Translation

The aim of this chapter is to find out the procedures and patterns of the working of translation as a practice with particular emphasis on literary translation. This chapter talks about translation in general by focusing on the wide range of implications it calls for. It also attempts an extensive definition of the term ‘translation’- literary and others, and cites its imports. It consists of how various scholars approach this term and also highlights the reasons for undertaking this task. It dwells on the various characteristics of translation in general and literary translation in particular.

I

The term ‘translation’ has been derived from the Latin word *translatus*, “carried over”. *Translatus* is the past participle of *transferre*, *ferre* means “to carry” or to transport” (Genztler 2010: 166). As suggested by the etymological meaning, translation is about some movement, the carrying across of something from one location to another. Since this is so, it has to have two fixed points- a beginning point and an end point. The process involves the journey from the former to the latter. The end result may be- change in form, change in medium and change in many other aspects as well. So we have through translation, the conversion of plan into action, the unfamiliar into familiar, a novel into a movie, a musical composition into a song, a script into play, and even of thoughts into words. This is indeed a very broad way of looking at things but mentioning them is deemed to be necessary as it highlights the wide range of implications translation covers.
When we come to translation, as is generally understood, it is meaning which is carried across and the two fixed points are the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) or receptor language (RL). So the most basic definition of translation proper is the carrying across of meaning from one language to another. Basnett demonstrates:

Translation is a kind of textual journey from one context into another. What distinguishes translation from other kinds of writing is precisely the dual relationship involved in that journeying. There is always a source in translation, an original text, and the act of translating involves the transformation of that source into something other, into a text that can be read by a completely new set of readers, in another time and another place (2010: 78).

At one extreme we find this simple definition while at the other end, we find many developments in this field with contribution from various disciplines—philosophy, ethnography, religion, linguistics, psychology, literature, science, cultural studies etc.—where it has taken many forms. Once regarded as an operation performed on two languages, translation has now grown in leaps and bounds to be discussed in pair with various other fields like hermeneutics, comparative literature, philosophy, cultural studies, postcolonial writings and even feminist writings to mention only a very few.

Even if this is so, and even if it has been practiced by people from different backgrounds: science, philosophy, anthropology etc., reflections on translation have been made mainly by translators who are scholars or poets themselves, and who explain why they translate the way they do. For
example, George Chapman (1559–1634) English poet, dramatist, has defended his chosen mode of translation of *Iliad* in his “The Preface to the Reader” which came out as the preface to his translation of Homer’s *Iliad*. Cowley’s preface to *Pindaric Odes* (1640) is taken to be one of the earliest attempts towards framing a theory of translation wherein he stood tall against faithful rendering or word-for-word translation of poetry. Dryden’s three-tier classification of translation as metaphor (word for word translation), paraphrase (sense for sense translation), and imitation (very free translation) which later on comes to be referred to by successive translation scholars has been done in the preface to his Ovid’s *Epistles* (1680/1992). Wilhelm von Humboldt’s preface to his translation of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* (1816), Edward Fitzgerald’s preface to his *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, (1859), Nicolas Perrot d’Ablancourt’s preface to his translation of Lucian (1709) etc. have been referred to time and again throughout the ages in this field. When the linguistic turn came by mid twentieth century we could see linguists taking interest in the field and they also left behind some determining works on translation. Mention may be made here of J.C. Catford, Roman Jacobson etc.

Very recently some influencing works on machine translation and other types like audiovisual translation etc. have appeared on the scene. But on the whole, scholars and poets who are translators themselves have given expression to their insights into the translation process, leaving behind a glimpse of their experience, the difficulties which they could ultimately overcome and the kind of ecstasy every act of translation brings them. It is very unlikely for science people to be immersed in such kinds of writing even though they master two languages and can take up translation. It is very
rare to get critical measure of contribution from someone who has come from science or technical background to translation. It does not however mean that scientific texts are not translated. Scientific texts are translated, though with unequal magnitude to that of literary texts but those involved in it do not frame theories or, rather they are more into practice. Therefore, no discussion shall be done on its behalf and so for as many times as translation is mentioned throughout the thesis, it will not, in any case, refer to scientific translation or technical translation but either to translation in general or more frequently to literary translation though no particular mention of the type would be done every time. It has also been made sure that linguistic tools and terminologies, jargons and technical lingos are avoided so that they do not pose any kind of problem to the understanding of the subject matter.

Now what actually is translation? Translation, in the real sense of the word, can be said to begin right from our infancy when we used to translate our hunger, want of attention and discomforts into wail, thus communicating our thoughts to our mother who will then take care of our needs. As we grow up, we learn how to speak, how to do proper arrangement of words and this is when we learn to translate too. Even now the process of translation is still carried on in our day-to-day life. Say, for example, when we are asked by a child to explain the meaning of a word, he expects us to translate it into an already familiar word which he can understand at an instance. What is it if not translation? So it is no exaggeration to state that translation begins from the moment human being begins to speak. It is an ongoing process of every communication which has been going on without a pause. In fact, all of us live in translation because we belong to a “multicultural, polyglot, transnational and intertextual universe” (Brodzki 2007: 11). It is quite
understandable in this regard to think of language as the translation of our thoughts. Language then becomes synonymous to the communicable instrument by which we could have our works done, our demands fulfilled and also know what others want of us, by the utterance of certain words, to mention only a few.

It is because of this reason that Dominico Jervolino could declare “To speak is already to translate (even when one is speaking one’s own native language or when one is speaking to oneself)” (Ricoeur 2006: xv). George Steiner also embraces such a wide conjecture by the term ‘translation’ by asserting in his After Babel (1975): “To understand is to translate” (11). According to him, all human communication within and between languages is translation and understanding is also a kind of translation. We agree with Lukits when he says:

Where there is movement, there is translation. Every utterance is translation. Every word that crosses our lips is a daring translation of the thought, the feeling, the rumination behind and inside of it. By speaking we expose our ‘selves’, who we are, to critique, rejection and ultimately, annihilation (2007: 157).

**Why do we translate?**

The next important concern is the reason for taking up translation. Is it only to do away with the differences in language that we translate or are there other reasons for doing it? Why do we translate? This is a very important question, keeping in mind the kind of status translation and its creators, the translators by name, have been known to occupy in the literary
circle- the secondary status. In that case isn’t it better to write our own? Because the translator does not need the translation as he can read the original text without any aid. Lefevere also wrote in his introduction to Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook (1992): “…translations are made by people who do not need them for people who cannot read the originals” (1). Why should he bother then and meddle himself in the slippery zone where he is most likely to be criticized? It is indeed very difficult to rejoin this question because different people have their own reasons.

In the simplest terms, translation exists because men speak a whole lot of different languages. It is quite understandable because if we could communicate with one universal language, there would be no need for translation to assist communication between human beings variously located. Among God’s creations, human beings are considered to be the most gifted ones, capable of rational thinking. We do not know how or if at all other species like birds and bees communicate with each other, if they have some codes which make them understand what others of their species convey. Having learnt how ‘early men’ were in our history classes in high school, we are doubtful of how the first generation of human race must have communicated with each other. They must have been no different from animals. It is a thing of wonder then that men, who would not have understood one another, who had been scattered all over, somehow found out a way to come to terms with the differences. Steiner also observes “Logically considered, there was no guarantee that human beings would understand one another…” (1975: 48). He has a point. But they managed to gather the ruins and then emerged as “the world saviour, restorer of the original linguistic unity that the gods smashed on the plain of Shinar” (Baker
1998: 21). They could once again communicate with each other through that one common language\(^2\), and also was able to keep that communication intact even after that one language has multiplied to millions-all through the aid of translation.

How they could have made it possible is the question worth asking. Had they stayed there without any movement, there would never have come a day when they could understand each other. So they must have travelled from one place to another and interacted with those people residing in other places. In course of time, they must have learnt the new language/s that these people speak. Now with their ability to understand more than one language and also master them to a certain extent with time and learn the culture/s as well, they must have come to know the differences between them, their haves and have-nots, they must then have got a forum where from they could make a transaction between the languages concerned. They must have been the first translators. Even today, when we talk of translation, we also talk of travel, migration, diasporic movement, intercommunity marriage to be some of the causes of translation as they enable one to learn language/s apart from the language of one’s habitual use. It is interesting to note that translation which is about movement and transfer takes its refuge behind such terms which also involve some kind of movement.

One may say that the alternative of translation is to learn the languages in which we want to communicate. Here, the probing question is-

\(^2\) Biblically speaking it is generally believed that there used to be one primordial language which was spoken and could be understood by one and all. Some believe that it was the language which used to be spoken by Adam, the language he used in order to name things. And therefore it is also known as Adamic language.
how many languages will we be capable of learning? Do we, as the native speakers of a particular language, know all the nuances and vocabularies of our own language leave the others? Man, no matter how hard he tries, shall not be able to master the languages spoken today over the globe. Life doesn’t provide all the time in the world to learn even the major languages of the world, leave the others and enjoy their literatures. So, it is here that translation becomes all the more important. We may not have other means.

But how does translation come into being? Is it something which can take place in vacuum and all by itself? By now, we know that translation is that which makes communication possible between speakers of different languages. And like in all kind of communication, where the tri-partite character of the Speaker (or author), Message, and Audience are the most important, translation too requires a translator (who is well acquainted in the language and cultural background in which the text is written and also in which it is going to be translated to), a text, and an intended audience. To be well equipped in this particular act of communication, the translator has also to be acquainted with the original author, the actual message produced by that author, and the original audience. Only then he can accomplish the reason for which the translation is carried out. “Translation is never an innocent activity, since it always involves more than one context, and the relationship between contexts can determine the actual strategies employed by the translator as well as the response of readers” (Bassnett 2010: 88). He has many reasons for undertaking the task. The most common ones are listed below:

i. **For the sake of prestige:** When a text in another language is very popular and is treated as a masterpiece, a unique work in its culture, we
are tempted to link our name with the work by translating it into our own language provided that we know the other language and its culture equally well. In this case, it is far better to translate it than to write something new because if we write our own, the new work may not enjoy the prestige which the other text through translation would. Hence we translate to see our name in association with that of a renowned writer. Not to let the chance go astray, we go for translation instead of writing our own even though we have the credibility to produce something original of our own.

ii. **For enriching one’s own culture:** This is the reason why the Romans translated. They took everything they wanted from the Greek and made them their own and thereby enriching not only their language by addition of new vocabulary to it but also their culture. In this case the source language is the one which is taken to be better known than the target language and also occupying a higher position in the hierarchical relationship that exist between them. Works produced in them are also considered to be representing the expression of prestigious cultures and therefore there is always this temptation to get them intermingled with ours, so that we can rise with them.

iii. **For the sake of earning wider recognition:** This happens when the target language is a better known language like English (e.g. Hindi at the national level) and where the purpose is to make one’s work part of the world’s literature (or national literature), because of the impact it gives and the desire to make it reach out to a wider audience.

iv. **For the love of the work:** Some also simply translate without the fear of criticisms and desire to earn everlasting fame, not because of their
lack of creativity or any other shortcomings, but for one sole reason— for their own interest, for their love of the work. Octavia Paz got into translation for this very reason. He said: “I learned English mainly to read poetry. Then, reading English and French poems, I felt that they should be known in Spanish. You see: it was desire, love—and with love, the desire for participation” (Wechsler 1998: 17-18). We take up to translate when something in the work excites and touches us to such an extent that it would not let us rest until and unless it is shared to those who would not have a chance to know it if not for translation. In fact, “…there can be no greater thrill than to share the enigmas of a foreign culture and language with readers who would otherwise remain oblivious of these treasures” (Orero 1997: 59). Such kind of works are those to which we can connect, which can create in us feelings and responses which are very much like our own.

Renato Poggioli also says:

> What moves the genuine translator is not a mimetic urge, but an elective affinity: the attraction of something so appealing that he can identify it with a content of his own, thus enabling him to control the latter through a form which, though not inborn, is at least congenial to it (1959: 141).

v. **For renewing the original as well as existing translation(s) if any:** Some translates in order that the new translation he produces stands superior to the original as well as previous translation(s) in terms of accessibility, so that it is in accordance with its time. It is done within the same language—from either original texts or old translations to modern language. This is because as languages change, texts in an earlier version of a language may become difficult for more modern readers to understand and
hence every new historical epochs call for new translation. This kind of translation is called modern translation or intralingual translation in Roman Jacobson’s term, and is done either for literature from classical languages or for literature from an earlier stage of the same language. So one reason for why it takes place is when text in an earlier version of a language becomes difficult for more modern readers to understand, for instance, translation of Chaucer’s works written in Middle English into modern English.

vi. **To prove oneself**: One also takes up to translate without waiting for the existing translations to become obsolete. This happens when one feels that one can improve on the previous translations available, can discover some beauty yet undiscovered by those who have already tried their hands and can do more right to the original author, with whom one feels one has a ‘soul congenial’. This feeling of affinity with the author can lead a translator to feel that he is as singular as the author. Hans Erich Nossack has expressed such feeling regarding a book he translated when he said, “My identification with this particular book was so complete, that I imagined myself the only person capable of translating it properly” (Wechsler 1998: 30-31).

vii. **To mediate between cultures**: Yet there are some who translate in the hope of making a contribution to the greater understanding between different cultures. Their sense of dedication makes it pleasurable to introduce to people another person’s thoughts and another nation’s culture,

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3 He talks of three kinds of translation- intralingual – rewording or paraphrasing, summarizing, expanding or commenting within a language, interlingual – the traditional concept of translation from ST to TT or the “shifting of meaning from one language to another” and intersemiotic – the changing of a written text into a different form, such as art or dance.
through their intermediation. That is why the translator is sometimes referred to as cultural mediator. The translator, as the expert communicator, is the means through which the message is successfully passed on from the original initiator to ultimate receiver.

viii. **For the development of a literature:** When D’Alembert suggests that “we do not transfer the classics into our language to familiarize ourselves with their defects, but rather to enrich our literature with the best they have achieved” (Lefevere 1992: 9), he seems to have realized the ways in which translation can do wonders to the development of a literature. In fact, whenever works from another cultural background are introduced in our language through translation, our literature gets enriched with new genres, new patterns which can be adapted to our literature etc.

Translation is one of the most essential labours to any literatures because it paves the way for international influences, introduces new genres found in other languages, widens the capacity, for meaning and expression of the target language, provides a current of new ideas, and promotes a proper understanding among various people of the world by the essential oneness of mankind (Marudanayagam 1994: 125).

E.g. the genre of novel was introduced in Manipuri literature through translation of Bengali novels written by Rabindranath Tagore, Bankimchandra, Saratchandra Chatterjee etc. into Manipuri.

ix. **An ideological weapon in class struggles:** Translation during the Renaissance and Reformation was largely motivated by social movements. It was not an innocent scholarly activity which takes place just
because of mere inspiration but it came loaded with many intentions. For example, Martin Luther (1483-1546) translated both the old and new testaments into East Middle German by diverging from the accepted interpretation, using lots of vernacular proverbs and expressions which according to the church had altered the Holy Scriptures. It served as an ideological tool of the protestant movement against the Roman Clergy.

x. **Power and Manipulation:** Sometimes the act of translation takes place in some social and political situations. In such cases, acts of selection, creation and omission are performed in order to manipulate a literature to function in a given society in a given way and thereby shaping power of one culture upon another. Therefore the issues of cultural dominance, assertion, and resistance cannot escape from the sight because they are constantly at play in such state of affairs. The ones at the higher pedestal are the ones who decide what to translate and what not to. They act as if they have been endowed with some power to settle on which texts to translate and also on the ways to translate them. And as if this is not enough, they still go on further to fulfill their own goals and influence those over whom they have power and thereby constructing the kind of culture they desire and reinforce the asymmetrical power relationships of colonialism.

Translations are, according to Tymoczko and Gentzler, “one of the primary literary tools that larger social institutions—educational systems, arts councils, publishing firms, and even governments—had at their disposal to “manipulate” a given society in order to “construct” the kind of “culture” desired” (2002: xiii). No example would beat the case of Edward Fitzgerald

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4 Protestant movement, also known as Protestantism, was a movement of protest against the domination of the church authorities over all other social class. It was prevalent in the sixteenth century Europe but its influence went crossing the geographical boundary.
who took immense freedom in translating Omar Khyam’s *Rubaiyat* just because he thinks they (the Persians) “are not poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them” (Basnett 1980: 13). Thus a hierarchical relationship can be seen where the translator is absolved from all the responsibility to the marginal culture of the SL text. Bassnett is of the view that:

Translation does not take place on a horizontal axis, because there are distinct power hierarchies operating between cultural and literary systems, and distinct linguistic hierarchies also. Some cultures are perceived as marginal, others as dominant; some are perceived to have long established literary translations, others to have little or none. This view is determined by factors that are essentially political rather than aesthetic, just as perceptions of languages as major and minor are also ideologically determined. Power relationships are at the root of such perceptions and central to any discussion of culture and power is the role of language (2010: 80-81).

When Kalidasa’s Sanskrit play *Sakuntalam* was translated by Sir William Jones into English as *Sakuntala or the Fatal Ring: An India Drama* (1789) he took whatever corpus of freedom he liked and made as many omissions and modifications as he wished, thereby posing its cultural dominance over what he regarded as ‘the other’. It became a spot where from he could exercise his hegemonic superiority and impose capitalist ideology on the orient by domesticating it. The tables would have been turned had India been in Europe’s place, in the higher hierarchy, in the
dominant position of assessing European writing. Aurobindo says, in that case, Indians might have dismissed:

*The Iliad* as a crude and primitive epos, Dante’s *Inferno* as a nightmare of a cruel and superstitious religious fantasy, Shakespeare as a drunken barbarian of considerable genius with an epileptic imagination, the whole dramatic outputs of Greece and Spain and England as a mass of bad ethics and violent horrors, French poetry as a succession of bald and tawdry rhetorical exercises and French fiction as a tainted and immoral thing (*ibid.* 82).

Even creative writers take up to do translation when they, as confessed by Jayanta Mahapatra himself, “come up against a sort of blank wall” in their work, when they face a “no writing” period at times. So translation can be said to have taken place when “they feel creatively deadened at certain stages of their careers” (1998: 138). When we come to self translators, we can cite the example of Tagore. The reason for bringing out an English version of *Geetanjali*, was, wrote Tagore,: “I simply felt an urge to recapture, through the medium of another language, the feeling and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in past days” and that “I was making fresh acquaintance with my own heart by dressing it in other clothes” (Mukherjee 1981: 104).

Having cited the various reasons for undertaking the task of translation, the subsequent part of this chapter that follows shall deal with what is understood by the term ‘translation’ and its various implication.
**What is translation?**

The term ‘translation’ has been variously defined by scholars, theorists and critics as per the issues they pursue. Its definitions are almost as numerous and varied depending upon the persons who undertake to pursue the subject and how they work towards achieving the end. To translate is simply to transform into another language. In its specific sense, translation is the carrying across of meaning from one language to another. It involves a text which when rendered into another language should still make sense and be able to transmit the spirit and manner of the original. But this is not all. It is also the process of conveyance of the customs, traditions, beliefs and ideologies, practices- social, cultural and religious of a particular language user through the medium of a work which gets transplanted in a new soil, in a new language, a new environment for the benefits of its people and its literature which only get enlightened and enriched respectively. We can cite the instance of English literature which has been enriched by works written in as many languages as German, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, to mention a very few. Works like Ovid’s *Epistles* (1680), Homer’s *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* (1611), Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*, Dante’s *Divine Comedia*, the two Indian epics- *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*, Tagore’s *Geetanjali*, Kalidasa’s *Sakuntalam*, Omar Khayyam’s *Rubaiyat* (1858) are a few examples which have made English literature a whole lot richer by their translations into English.

Sometimes we find many translations of a single work. Homer’s *Iliad* has been attempted by George Chapman, Pope and William Cowper. But none of them was similar to the other. “For example George Chapman’s translation of Homer is cast in the Renaissance spirit and Pope’s Homer
breathes in the Augustan air. Likewise Lawrence of Arabia’s Homer appears as a man with wide scholarship, while Samuel Butler translated Homer with a conviction that Homer was a Sicilian woman” (Meitei 2009: 26). In the context of Manipur also, we can cite the example of the translation of *Geetanjali* into Manipuri which has been attempted by Tombi and Krishnamohon. Tombi’s *Geetanjali* seems to recognize its readers and it could strike a balance between the linguistic and cultural materials. This is not found in Krishnamohan’s *Geetanjali* which looks very artificial and not meant for the readers in whose language it has been translated. The reasons for such variations may be due to the influence of the cultural, political and social imperatives which in turn shapes the translator’s decision. His knowledge of the historical facts and the cultural existence that is embedded in the TL too have their parts to play.

It takes so much to make a translator. Not every bilingual or polyglot becomes a translator even if he wants to. He has to be as gifted, creative, inspired and culturally informed (both the SL and TL cultures in his case) as the SL writer himself to be able to do justice to the aesthetic quality of the work. Many have burnt their fingers in the process; have given up in the middle. And some creative writers who enter into this field feel that producing creative works has never been as troublesome as that of translating. Stepping beyond the bounds of one’s own language and culture to understand another language and culture in its entirety, finding equivalences, bringing about a compromise between the two texts, languages, cultures and the two mindsets behind the two writers- the original author and the translator; and above all trying to make sense in the target texts with
almost every elements of the source text intact are not easy. Wechsler says, becoming a first rate translator requires:

…knowledge of a foreign language and a foreign culture, a wide ranging knowledge of life, a wide-ranging knowledge of English and of English-language literature, excellent judgment and interpretive abilities, a good ear for language and thought, the ability to write not only very well but in a range of styles, and a mature view of writing as something more than self-expression. Add to this attention to details, patience and persistence, self-discipline, a dislike of limelight, money, camaraderie, and a willingness to subordinate yourself to another’s creative work, and you have yourself a damn good translator (1998: 26).

This also points to the fact that translation is not a mechanical activity but a creative art, an artistic endeavor just like creative writing which cannot be attempted by anyone until and unless he has the making of a creative writer. Again from the point of view of literary criticism, which is characterized by the indeterminacy of a text, translation becomes even the more difficult. Nothing can be regarded as final in translation and more so if it concerns literature. This is because literature is viewed differently by every age through the prism of its preoccupation. When the significance of the text in its context is dead, the translator’s job gets tougher as he is to reproduce what the author says and creates similar reactions to the target readers- the same reaction caused by the original writer to his SL audience. On top of this gap, lies another which is very difficult to compromise- the cultural gap. Ke Wen-li writes:
When what is to be translated is strongly culturally loaded, it is very difficult, if not impossible, fully to put across the original cultural content and make the translation idiomatic at once. It is most likely that the translator would risk shipwreck on one of two rocks: either at the cost of the original cultural connotations and associations in order to translate idiomatically; or at the cost of idiomaticity in order to convey the cultural context of the flavour (1996: 216).

In such cases, the translator’s expertise and choice are all that make the work breathe new life without looking too artificial on the surface. He has to make it acceptable to the new readers by using natural forms of the receptor language in a way that is appropriate to the kind of text being translated. Through his rendering, the intended audience who is unfamiliar with the source text and its culture readily understands all aspects of the meaning of the source text that has been brought across in the new language—the receptor language.

In the Indian context, translation of the regional literatures into English, can be regarded as “politically, culturally and linguistically more important than Indian writing in English since our regional literatures in their ancient as well as modern works can offer the country and the world much more than our contemporary Indian writers in English can hope to do” (Marudanayagam 1994: 125). We cannot ignore the rich heritage of this country which is embedded in the various writings which had been done in its vernaculars even before English influences came in. In this multilingual, multicultural and pluralistic society, where different cultures and, ethnic and
other diversities make it look like a collage, the role of translation is even the more significant. Mutual understanding which forms the very basis of peace and harmony amidst such differences is made possible by translation. Because it is the most effective means of doing away with prejudices relating to race and religion, caste and creed, class and ethnic group etc. No peace talks can be carried out if the warring parties speak different languages, unintelligible to each other. Here too, translation comes to our rescue. No social cohesion is possible without translation in this multi-everything country.

Translation as a phenomenon is such an incredibly broad idea that it can be understood in many different ways. Therefore, not surprisingly, many different definitions have been offered, each reflecting a particular underlying theoretical model. “Translation has traditionally been described as a comparative linguistic undertaking, whereby translation has been approached primarily from the perspective of the differences in language structures. But this has turned out to be too narrow a view” (Schäffner 1995: 1). It has been defined from the perspective of linguistics by the following theorists:

i. According to Eugene A. Nida, the renowned American theorist on translation, "Translating consists in reproducing the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of language and secondly in terms of style" (1959: 19).

ii. Catford also defined translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (1965: 20).
Some other definitions by scholars in the field are noted to see for ourselves how they differ in their viewpoints:

a. The American theorist Lawrence Venuti defines it as "a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation" (1995: 17).

b. Leonard Forster sees it as “the transference of the content of a text from one language to another bearing in mind that we cannot disassociate the content from the form” (in Bhatnagar 1993: 32).

c. Translating, according to Ana Miranda, “means much more than manipulating words; it means honestly reconstructing the author’s personality as it is revealed in the text, the flow of his feelings registered in the language. It is a labour of the fusion of souls” (in Orero 1997: 89).

d. According to Benjamin, translation is “a redemptive mode that ensures the survival, the living on, of an individual text or cultural narrative, albeit in a revised or altered form” (in Brodzki 2007: 1-2).

e. J.P. Postgate asserts that, “Translation in literature is the art of rendering the writing of one language into another language. The art of translation lies not merely in translating the literal sense of one language into another but of translating also the feeling, thought and character of the work, so that the finished translation is equal in quality to the original” (in Patil, 2008: 11).

It will not be an overstatement to pronounce that the more we learn about this art, the more difficult it is to confine it within some man-made boundary and study it. Considering the wide range of variety it covers, it poses quite an intricacy to point at something and say “This is what we call
translation. This is it”. Because it grows not like a bamboo, straightforward and unbranched, but like a huge banyan tree which spreads its branches wide and wild.

In speaking about translation, it will not be easy to keep things from getting tangled. In particular, it will not be easy to keep the speech itself from getting mixed up with the topic of the speech. It will not be easy to produce a discourse capable of remaining simply distinct, completely apart, from what the discourse is about. In other words, it will not be easy to speak about translation without getting entangled in translation, without getting caught up in translating translation. For even simply to explain what translation is, to interpret the meaning of the word is in a sense—in one of the primary senses of the word—to translate (Sallis 2008: 52).

If we get tangled in this crux, we will not be able to get out of this labyrinth. Therefore it is more appropriate and correct to focus on literary translation as it is the core concern of this thesis. And moreover by going too far off the board, we may lose track. So it would be favorable to continue walking on the destined path. There are many ways of drawing a line between different kinds of translation but for now let’s talk about these two kinds: literary and non-literary translation.

We shall however begin with those characteristics which hold true for both literary translation and translation in general and then narrow down to purely literary translation. So, to begin with, translation plays enormous role not only in the field of literary exchange but also in eradicating all
demarcations whatsoever—be it linguistic domain or national boundaries or cultural differences. An attempt has, therefore, been made to sort out the extent to which it can go to do away with the differences of language, culture, generation etc. and bring about understanding amongst human beings residing in different parts of the world.

Something like that of knowing someone even before meeting him takes place in the field of translation. The reason for stating this is because we start reading the works of different theorists in their English translation from the very instant we step into this field. Even before we can hardly understand its various propositions, we are already soaked in translation or translation of translations. The works which are meant to help the beginners like that of Etienne Dolet’s “How to translate well from one language into another” (1540) which every translators and translation scholars should have gone through to get the basic idea of translating, was originally written in French. Walter Benjamin’s essay “The Task of the Translator” which nobody in this field fails to talk about is also a translation of its German original. Theories travel all around the world because of translation. We can affirm that:

…without the translations of de Saussure from the French for instance, the ideas of structuralism would not have had the impact they have had. Similarly, without the translation of Anglo-American feminist theory into various European languages and, conversely, without the translation of French feminist theory into English, gender studies would not have developed as fast as it did. The rapidity of the spread of critical
theory is therefore largely due to translation (Kuhiwczak 2007: 4).

Translation compensates for the absence of certain terminologies and concepts in one language. Therefore, Newmark and Benjamin believe that it is the filling up of gaps between languages (Newmark 1991: 25). We can mend the cracks and the holes in our language to a certain extent because translation works towards making it whole—through borrowing, foreignisation, lexical creation, circumlocution, neologism etc. We become a whole lot richer whenever great works are translated into our language. And this applies to every language and not only to a selected few. Human beings, by nature, love sharing. We believe that our happiness becomes double and our woes become half less when shared. Translation is also a kind of sharing whereby we pour out the richness of our language and culture on the ground and invite others to carry them home so that their language becomes enriched and their literature a whole lot richer. Lukits contends that:

In translation, powerlessness comes to power. The words that translators were not able to find in their own language and that were therefore expressing their powerlessness in silence, come to speech in translation (2007: 160).

It holds the mirror in which we can see not only ourselves with all our defects, lines and wrinkles but also the faults and good side of others. Ricoeur maintains that, “It is only when we translate our own wounds into the language of strangers and retranslate the wounds of strangers into our own language that healing and reconciliation can take place” (2004: xx). He adds:
The work of translation might thus be said to carry a double duty: to expropriate oneself as one appropriates the other. We are called to make our language put on the stranger’s clothes at the same time as we invite the stranger to step into the fabric of our own speech (ibid. xvi).

Translation can also be regarded as the seamless truth where there is no room for pretensions, as there is always an existing work to which a translation must adhere to. A translator cannot be a free-flying artist. He enjoys no poetic license. In spite of this no consideration is considered. His words are like the shoots of arrow. If they could shoot the target, it is well and good. But they fail to do so, they will not be spared. A translator does not have luxury of a writer, who can write within himself, within his limitations. He isn’t privileged to write within himself, and has to write within somebody else. He has to find a way to express in a new language what somebody else has expressed in another language. Mention may be made of the saying here in regards to the art of translation:

Many critics, No defenders,
translators have but two regrets:
when we hit, no one remembers,
when we miss, no one forgets.
(http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/translation/)

Translators must be aware that there are wolves at every corner who are only ready to attack at the slightest of mistakes. These critics may not praise the translators for the good works they have done but never will they spare them for the one word they have rendered wrongly in the TL. John
Dryden also wrote a few hundred years ago that if a translator has done his work successfully, “we are not thanked; for the proud reader will only say, the poor drudge has done his duty” (in Wechsler 1998: 59). We are all familiar with Etienne Dolet who had been executed for one mistake— that of adding “nothing at all” in the passage about what existed after death in his translation of one of Plato’s Dialogue—and that brought his end. Such is a translator’s path. According to Isaac Bashevis,

Translation undresses a literary work, shows it in its true nakedness. An author can fool himself in his own language, but many of his shortcomings become clear to him in another language. Translation tells the bitter truth. It unveils all masks (Miremadi 1995: 35).

Translation is illumination by which what was invisible or what was not thought to have existed before comes in the limelight when rendered in a language. It is, says Suzanne Jill Levine, “a continuation of the creative process” as well as “a critical act which cannot and does not replace but rather complements the original, illuminating its strategies (Lefevere 1992: 84). It acts as an eye opener for the blind, the voice even the deaf can hear. Such is its impact.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putthet aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water…(ibid. 72).

It is the multiplication of a single work into many by rendering it into many different languages thereby offering “every generation the opportunity to discover its own voice in a new translation. The oft-cited observation is
apt: “the Greeks have only one Homer; we have many” (Landers 2010: 11). Without translation, we would have been bereft of the beauties embedded in world literature.

Translation gives us access to the literature of the world. It allows us to enter the minds of people from other times and places. It is a celebration of otherness, a truly multicultural event without all the balloons and noisemakers. And it enriches not only our personal knowledge and artistic sense, but also our culture’s literature, language, and thought (Wechsler 1998: 8).

Translation is that tunnel passing through which texts transform their robes. Rosemarie Waldrop says, “Translation is more like wrenching a soul from its body and luring it into a different one” (ibid. 7). It is that which makes us compensate for our failure or inability to understand other languages. Its role seems to be even the more important in this globalised world today, where men are expected to stay under one roof but who are pulled apart because of linguistic differences and cultural discrepancies. It makes it possible in one way or the other for globalization to exist. It aids in dealing with the multiplicity of tongues which is thought to be the result of man’s disobedience to Gods at high, as indicated by the Babel myth. Ever since that incident, there has been the constant need of translation so that

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5 The whole earth, as mentioned in the Bible, had one language and everyone could communicate with each other in that medium. Life must not have been complicated at all as far as language, as the means of communication, was concerned. It was a euphoric world, too good to be true. Men, selfish that they always have been, wanted more. They took advantage of the singular speech and revolted against God at high. They went on building a tower (the tower of Babel) for themselves which reached till Heaven. The result of their grievous act – they lost the uniform speech. The linguistic unity of the builders at Babel was conceived as a threat to divine hegemony. Their unification and tie-up by the thread of a common language proved disastrous as they could go to the extent of questioning the authority of the divine power. God, therefore, confused their language so that they may not unite again to revolt against Him.
these people who had been torn apart can come in touch again, so that they can discover their lost brothers. Considering the role translation plays in keeping that lost-and-found understanding intact we can say that it is impossible to think of a life without translation in this multilingual post Babel world.

So translation becomes indispensable today. We cannot think of a world without it. The only way to do without translation is to learn all the languages spoken over the globe. But when one does not know his native tongue too well to be able to account for the number of vocabulary used etc., how is he supposed to cope up with learning all the languages? Translation is a necessity. To do without it would be like keeping our mouth shut and arms crossed and never extending our hands to other people to know them better, to interact with them. But man does not live in isolation. He wants to interact with others and learn about his fellow brothers living in other parts of the world. He does not want to sit still and be pleased with the little that he knows. He is in the quest of unlimited knowledge about things he hasn’t known to have existed before. And to be successful in this mission, only those written in his language will not suffice. He needs to spread his wings and fly about and find out all that he has been thirsting for. The aim of translation is to combine the merits of all different nations, to think with them and create a cosmopolitan centre of mankind. We cannot shut ourselves in the narrow passage of a single language area and tell ourselves that it will suffice. Global circulation and exchange of texts are made possible by translation which results in the “deepening, heightening, and broadening” of intercultural understanding” (Brodzki 2007: 7). Not only
does translation gratify the need of the academic circle, the linguistic framework and of erasing cultural gaps, it also serves …to offer rules for the kings to rule, counselors to counsel, prelates to practice, captains to execute, soldiers to perform, the married to follow, the prosperous to prosecute, and the poor in adversity to be comforted, how to write and talk with all men in all matters at large (Wilson in Miremadi 1995: 37).

In the absence of translation between nations, between one generation and another, there will be darkness– an area of darkness. It will be a deserted road where nothing moves on, where no exchange of ideas, knowledge etc. take place. Everyone would die with the little that he knows because not every country has a Shakespeare, Homer, Einstein, Kalidasa, Goethe etc. in package. The works of these great figures need to cross their language barriers through translation so that they could earn wider recognition from all over the globe, and that everyone is benefited equally. We have world literature today because such works amongst others have succeeded in stepping out of their own linguistic borders.

Translation caters to the need of filling up the cultural gaps and making communication possible between different people all over the globe. We must therefore welcome it, encourage it and never let it die. Multilingualism has become something we cannot beat as language has been multiplying ever since the Babel episode and now there is no going back. We must embrace it instead, which we have already done, and seek refuge in translation so that the link never gets broken, so that we may always understand each other in spite of the differences. So, as long as we keep on
translating, our common bond shall not be sacrificed at the altar of bewildermment because translation is, according to Benjamin, a “life-sustaining act, a life-empowering moment shared between two generations in an ongoing process of carrying over the past into the present” (Brodzki 2007: 4). He believes that translation canonizes the original text and validates its fame by enabling its survival (Venuti 1992: 7). It shall therefore connect us to the past by making it live in the present. It makes a text live beyond its lifetime, beyond its language boundary, beyond its historical moment.

It is also a means of knowing the other, who are pulled apart from us not only by distance but by time as well. Every generation needs to translate the works of the classic as per the taste of their own time because what was once in vogue becomes archaic with the passage of time. It “loses half its vitality, its freshness, its ability to communicate to the reader in a contemporary voice” every thirty years or so. Therefore it is called an “ephemeral art” (ibid. 10-11). Benjamin also writes:

Even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process. The obvious tendency of a writer’s literary style may in time wither away, only to give rise to immanent tendencies in the literary creation. What sounded fresh once may sound hackneyed later; what was once current may someday sound quaint (Venuti 2002: 77).

Translation however doesn’t and cannot aim at the adequate reproduction of the original. If we believe in the general notion that a literary work is a unique creation that cannot be replaced or duplicated, then no
exact equivalent to a work can exist. In this case, a translation of a work of indisputable literary merit is bound to lag behind or exceed the original but it can never be the same or equivalent to the original. Benjamin also contends that, “no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original” (ibid. 77). So translation is at the most an approximation or re-creation at times. It can never be the verbatim representation of a text. That is why we say that total translation is a myth. G.H. Lewes contends that:

In its happiest efforts, translation is but approximation; and its efforts are not often happy. A translation may be good as a translation, but it cannot be adequate reproduction of the original. It may be a good poem; it may be a good imitation of another poem; it may be better than the original; but it cannot be an adequate reproduction; it cannot be the same thing in another language, producing the same effect on the mind… I do not say that a translator cannot produce a fine poem in imitation of an original poem; but I utterly disbelieve in the possibility of his giving us a work which can be to us what the original is to those who read it (Selver 1966: 10-11).

Having drawn light to the vital points which is pertinent not only to literary translation but also to translation in general, it is now time to do justice to the chosen type by detangling it from any generalization and having a look at it from a closer distance.

Literary translation is the rendering of a text or any textual material which is considered literary in the SL to another language (TL) by mediating between cultures, nations, people, eras, literatures. It is the repetition of the
original creative process experienced by the author so as to create the same environment but in a new soil, for a different audience. The resultant work is a “belated reparation, a reconfiguration, and a remembrance of what would otherwise be forever lost” (Brodzki 2007:13).

It is the translation of texts which is written in a literary language, which abounds in ambiguities, homonyms and arbitrarines, as distinct from the language of science or that of administration. Literary language is highly connotative and subjective because each literary author is lexically and stylistically idiosyncratic and through his power of imagination, he uses certain literary techniques for instance figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, irony, paradox and semantic patterns such as rhyming alliteration, versification, proverbs and homonyms through which he weaves literary forms.

Here, the translator makes use of certain culturally bound materials and they pose serious problems as he is required to make certain decisions. On one hand he should be faithful to the original work and retain as much of it as possible while on the other hand he should at times clarify materials that might otherwise be too difficult for his readers and at times leave out trivia that might make the text too cumbersome to read on account of the unnecessary new information they offer. The success of the translation in such cases depends on the translator’s skill to opt for the best way to render the SL text into the TL. Francis R. Jones rightly asserts that translation is about choices- a series of choice and these choices that the translators make may divulge a socio-political deportment (Baker 2009: 157). Starting from which text to choose, translation is a series of choice which are lined up one
after another: whether the translation should convey the ideas in the same form as they are in the original (whether translation of verse should be in verse and prose into prose), whether it should look like an original and not like a translation, whether it should reflect the style of the original writer or of the translator, whether it should give the impression that it was written during the time when the original was actually written or that it has been written for the contemporary time, for the readers of the translator’s time, whether addition or omission must be allowed to retain the sense or not allowed to maintain fidelity to the original, to retain the form or content.

It is distinguished from non-literary translation which includes technical, scientific translation etc. by certain factors. Literary work of a nation or state which turns out to be a classic is the representation of its culture, its rich heritage, its ethnicity, its traditions, and its uniqueness. When such work is translated, the first priority is to retain those aspects of the original which make it stand as a representation of the culture of the speaker of the original language so that it is appreciated for what it is rich in, for what is unique in it. The richness of its language which pours out like a gushing stream, the kinds of idioms and proverbs the speakers use, the folklore of the land, the kind of beliefs, customs and religious practices, the historical facts, the contributions the people make in various fields- art and culture etc. have to be taken into account. Such translation which is deeply rooted in its culture calls for the kind of attention and awareness on the part of the translators which may not be needed from the translators of other kinds. Said El- Shiyab contends that, “When we translate a text we do not translate words or sentences isolated from their situational contexts” but
“within their existing contexts along with other contextual variables” (1994: 237).

A literary translator, according to Peter Newmark generally respects good writing by taking into account the language, structures, and content, whatever the nature of the text. He participates in the author's creative activity and then recreates structures and signs by adapting the target language text to the source language text as closely as possible (1988: 1). He “must be able to transform himself into all manner of wondrous things he must be able to absorb and combine all styles within himself and be more changeable than a chameleon” (Huetius in Lefevere 1992: 89).

Sandra Bermann explicitly states that “the translator’s task is inevitably an ethical one. In attempts to translate, we become most aware of linguistic and cultural differences, of the historical “hauntings” and of experiential responsibilities that make our languages what they are and that directly affect our attitudes toward the world” (2005: 6). Benjamin also holds that translation is “essential to the ‘living on’ of texts…without translation and its close kin, interpretation, the original would die” (ibid. 6). Hence the popular belief that the translation is dependent on the original seems to get blurred against the background when the importance of translation in lengthening the life of a text comes to the limelight. Pushkin is so right when he calls the translator “the courier of human spirit” (Steiner 1975: 248). Renato Poggioli also believes that:

Great translators are rare because of the variety and multiplicity of the gifts required of him. Literature cannot afford to do without good translators. Without translation, a
literature is bound to die of slow exhaustion, or as Goethe said, of self-boredom (1959: 73).

A literary translator is the creator of a new work in the target language, a new pattern in a different language, based on his reading, creativity and research as a result of which the nationalist canon which has been prevailing before the entry of the new text may be shaken. He should be aware of what constitute literature: poetry, drama and prose- as opposed to children literature, science fiction, pulp literature etc. Considering the nature of work he does, he can be said to be operating at the frontier of language and culture where identity is flux.

It is much more than the mere handling of languages but it extends its focus on the content, the emotion, feeling, beauty involved in the original writing. It is not just about the two languages in contact but about the whole race of mankind whose existence depends on sharing, knowing and exchange of ideas, belief systems, etc. Here we do no translate texts but a whole set of ideologies, foreign sensibilities and cultural patterns which are found embedded in the SL text. Even though almost all the definitions revolve around languages and the transfer that takes place between them, translation, as a matter of fact, “involves far more than a working acquaintance with two languages” (Lakshmi 1993: 3). It involves not only the transference of meaning but a host of association charged with the meanings which need to be translated from the SL text into TL text. T. Padma writes, every translation “is a transplant, be it from one cultural frame to another or from one cultural or ethical ethos to another” (1998-99: 25). Gowda maintains that:
(A) translation represents the commerce of ideas between two peoples. Here lies its cultural value. Without translation we should all be living in a dreary provincialism. The life-blood of human culture travels along the veins of translation. It is the foremost device by which our horizons are extended. The importance of civilization is concomitant with that of translation. Today the essence of culture is appraised by the volume of translations assimilated into its literature (1970: 90).

Literary translation focuses on translation as seen through the zoomed lens of culture including its social insinuation and not as a linguistic activity that pays strict adherence to the canons and regulations. It is, in fact, a “part of a country’s literary language, a cultural activity that is part of a country’s cultural heritage” (Gentzler 2010: 191).

Vladimir Ivir too shares the same viewpoints when he recounts Casagrande’s statement:

In effect, one does not translate languages, one translates cultures. […] That it is possible to translate one language into another at all attests to the universalities in culture, to common vicissitudes of human life, and to the like capabilities of men throughout the earth, as well as to the inherent nature of language and the character of the communication process itself: and a cynic might add, to the arrogance of the translator (1987: 35-36).
Of the many things that make a successful literary translator, the most important factor is that he must possess a thorough knowledge of the cultures of both the SL and TL. In short, he must be bilingual as well as bicultural. He must also possess poetic sensibility; and must also command the capabilities like: “tone, style, flexibility, inventiveness, knowledge of the SL culture, the ability to glean meaning from ambiguity, an ear for sonority, and humility” (Landers 2010: 8). It is believed that only a poet can translate a poem well as he can be expected to do justice to the target text and express appropriately the nuances of the ST in the TL. That is why George Steiner could write “literary translation (here in terms of poetry) is “the writing of a poem in which a poem in another language (or in an earlier form of one’s own language) is the vitalizing, shaping presence” (Wechsler 1998: 80). Singh also asserts:

Translation is an extension of creative exercise in the same sense as critical act is extension of creative exercise characterized by almost the same process. Translator is a creative reader-critic and not a failed writer or a disappointed author. He reads, interprets, criticizes and creates, for translation is a way of reading, interpreting, criticizing and in the same process creating a new text for those who have no access to literature in an alien language system. It is ‘carrying over’ into a new reader’s realm (1996: 7-8).

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6 A bicultural person is one who is at the first place a speaker of two languages and who is equally at home in the two cultures in which they are spoken, who is adapted to both, and able to change from one to the other without experiencing “cultural shock or psychological dislocation”. He is able to “perceive in a unique way the signs, symbols, and even taboos of both cultures, to pick up signals even at a subconscious level; and share in the collective unconscious”. In short he is someone who has “internalized certain elements of both cultures to which the merely bilingual are unlikely to ever be exposed” (Landers 2010: 75, 77).
He must also be a good reader. Ilan Stavans also contends that, “The best reader is the translator, and the second best, the critic” (Weshler 1998: 32). Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak’s remark is worth mentioning here. Says she, “translation is the most intimate act of reading” for she surrenders to the text while translating (Weissbort 2006: 490). She cannot read like an ordinary reader does because she must decode the meaning of the SL text in order to encode it again in the TL.

Translation of a literary text demands close reading, the degree of which is more intense than the close reading done for any other literary purpose except for textual emendation. Unlike other kinds of reading, reading for translation may be placed at the highest level because not only must the translator interpret the text reasonably, he must also restructure his interpretation in another language while striving to approximate the original structure (Mukherjee 1994: 139).

That is why it is said that a translator is a reader, a writer and also an interpreter at the same time. He is not favored to go through the text simply but to read it thoroughly and come up with a kind of reading which will be able to stand for everything in the SL text. This is the area where it has a connection with hermeneutics.

Landers argues that “…only literary translation lets one consistently share in the creative process. Here alone does the translator experience the

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7 Hermeneutics is a discipline that deals with mediating processes and human understanding. It can be defined as the science and methodology of interpreting texts. Authors such as Fritz Paepcke and George Steiner have endeavored to establish hermeneutics within translation studies. Translation, from their point of view, is nothing but the interpretative recreation of text.
aesthetic joys of working with great literature, of recreating in a new language a work that would otherwise remain beyond reach” (2010: 4). So it is not about the lack of creativity on the part of the translator. It is about walking at pace with the author and experience the thrill of creation. John Bester is of the view that literary translation is about rendering “faithfully into one language (normally one’s own) the meaning, feeling, and, so far as possible, the style of a piece written in another language”. He continues, “Translation like politics, is an art of the possible; compromise is inevitable and universal” (ibid. 10).

Literary translation covers a wide range of area. Sometimes the definition of it as the translation of literary genres like drama, poem, novel etc. seems to be ambiguous because a literary text can be translated in a non-literary way. Looking at how different translators look at translation and considering its various proposition, if we treat adaptation, recreation, interpretation, imitation etc. as coming under translation, lots of problems may arise. An epic/classic can be adapted as a movie; e.g. Beowulf, the movie cannot be called the literary translation of its original, the epic. The same is the case when it is recreated as a comical short story for children in episodes in the newspaper with pictures of the hero as well as the demon. An imitation of Homer’s *Odyssey* into some local tales for children, with names of the characters changed into some Tom, Dick and Harry to suit the story line, to be narrated by the parents before lulling them to sleep, also cannot be called literary translation just because the name ‘Homer’ is involved. A beautiful poem can also become a nonsensical item in the hands of a bad translator when rendered in another language. Likewise a bestseller might
end up in the publisher’s office if its translation is not able to touch the
hearts of its intended audience. To call it still as literary translation would be
wrong. So the question which arises here is—“to what is it going to be
translated”, meaning we need to look at both ends. Pure literary translation is
when, for example, a poem is translated into a poem, or at least into prose,
keeping the aesthetic values intact. So we need to update the age old
definition of literary translation by adding that the text must retain its
aesthetic values even when its dress has been changed- the aesthetic qualities
of the original work should be maintained without any harm being done to it.

Now having seen its various implications and the different ways of
approaching it, and also the different standpoints and terms of reference
different people/scholars have while pursuing the project, the following
points explain the reasons why such variations occur:

1. The materials to be translated:

The materials to be translated are practically different as for example
when a literary text is translated the same method may not be needed when
non-literary items such as product brochure, manuals, instruction books etc.
are translated. The first one has to adhere to the social, cultural environment
and then to the aesthetic aspects as perceived inherent in such a work.
However, in the latter, it may be just about providing information. The
methods and also the ends are different according to the materials.

2. Varied reasons for bringing out the translation:

As discussed above, translations are produced in a variety of ways in
accordance with purpose for which they are recreated. They may be purely
from the academic point of view, from the point of view of love of the work-
literary or otherwise, to place one’s name below a Nobel laureate on the cover page of a book, for prestige etc. Also translation may be prompted by a desire for wider recognition or/and enhancing knowledge of culture(s), maybe, either to unknown or alien. Skopos theory which centers on the purpose of the translation and the function that the target text will fulfill in the target culture, which may not necessarily be the same as the purpose of the source text in the source culture, which talks about the purpose of producing a particular translation work hails from this insight. Sometimes a text can also be translated for a particular occasion for a particular audience.

3. Needs of the prospective audience:

Translation aims at different kinds of audience whose needs also differ. Therefore translation produced with the laymen in mind as the audience cannot be produced in the same way as the one which is aimed at learned scholars even in case where the original is the same. So, one very important question in translation is: “for whom is the work going to be translated? Lefevere also contends that:

Translation then, is not just a process that happens in the translator’s head. Readers decide to accept or reject translations. Different types of reader will require different types of translation. In Goethe’s words: “if you want to influence the masses, a simple translation is always best. Critical translations vying with the original really are of use only for conversations the learned conduct among themselves” (1992: 5).
4. The variation in the gap between the languages concerned and hence their culture:

Translation poses difficulties as it requires ceaseless negotiation between different cultures and linguistic characters. Not only are the gaps real but also cultures and languages differ causing a more complex thing. The wider the gap, the more difficult does the negotiation become.

5. The different viewpoints of the translators:

Translators hail from different backgrounds—literature, science, philosophy, history, philology, anthropology and so on and so forth and they are not equally informed in every sphere. Their scholarships and the subject matters they deal with mould their outlooks. And hence such differences lead to a number of different viewpoints from the side of the translators. Some believe that translators do not begin on clean slate and they must be informed about certain theories and terminologies. But it is not true. A translator from the mathematical background, who indulges in knowledge text translation, cannot be expected to know the polysystem theory and the like.

6. The different criteria that make a good translation:

How do we produce a good translation? Is it by following the guidelines laid down by different theorists and practicing translators? There are no fixed criteria which are to be followed to produce an accurate translation. If it is so, then there can be as many translations as can be according to the purpose one comes up with. And none can be regarded as better than the other because there is no common ground on which they can
be measured. The basis on which each one of them had been produced are quite different.

Some measures a translation in terms of its accuracy, others sees its accessibility and readability and the ease with which it adapts to the target culture. Tytler, in his “Essay on the Principles of Translation”, writes that a good translation is one “in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work” (Weissbort 2006: 190). Some prefers to have a translation which reads like an original, as a text in its own right while others would argue that the readers should be made aware that he is reading a translation. It is therefore not a thing of wonder that we have many different translations of a single text. Mention may be made here of the Homeric epic and the Bible which have many versions in a varied languages. We agree with Kimon Friar who says:

…no one form of translation that is valid as such or “better” than another, for this depends on intention. Once the translator has stated clearly what he set out to accomplish, and for what purpose, his work should then be judged according to the integrity of his accomplishment and not condemned for what it was never meant to be. All forms of translation are valid and should be judged on their own terms (1971: 200).

But what is a perfection translation? Is there anything called perfect translation or absolute translation. How far can we agree with Savory who
states that a perfect translation is one which “no critic has been able either to improve upon it or to produce the alternative that is preferred by the majority of readers” (Pande 1993: 20)? E. V. Rieu on the other hand feels that a “translation is the best which comes nearest to creating in its audience the same impression as was made by the original on its contemporaries” (Kandaswami 1993: 31). Newmark holds that “The definition of a good translation is equally problematic. Certainly, attributes like 'smooth' 'natural', 'idiomatic', rightly despised by Vladimir Nabokov, are appropriate as criteria for some translations and irrelevant for others” (1991: 39). So, what according to a group of people is perfect may not be acceptable to another. We can cite the example of Pope here. Even he wasn’t free from criticism.

Pope’s translation of the Homeric epic is perhaps the greatest example of elevated style in English literature; he took what he saw as essential liberties, varying the repetitive epithets, suppressing what was considered offensive to contemporary taste…some contemporaries, however, found Pope’s text lacking in precision and too dependent on the requirements of the time. “A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer,’ famously commented by Richard Bentley (Weissbort 2006: 166).

The point to be emphasized here is that there can be nothing called perfect translation. Likewise, no ideal translator exists. Who decides what the best is for the target readers of a translation: the readers themselves, the translators, the critics, linguists, theoricians or anyone else who is left to be added? Now in such case, the problem only becomes magnified. Who do we take as our guide? If there be any, how reliable is he? Matthew Arnold has
given some useful insights in this connection in his essay “On Translating Homer”:

Let not the translator, then, trust to his notions of what the ancient Greeks would have thought of him; he will lose himself in the vague. Let him not trust to what the ordinary English reader thinks of him; he will be taking the blind for his guide. Let him not trust to his own judgment of his own work; he may be misled by individual caprices. Let him ask how his work affects those who both know Greek and can appreciate poetry (Lefevere 1992: 69).

In the light of the above mentioned points, we now know that no two translations can be produced equally, using the same methods and aiming at the same ends. Also with respect to the environment, the purpose and the cultural arena in which one writes and perceives of it, the angle from which one approaches the subject matter are meant to be varied. Another important aspect is the theory of translation which the endless practice has given rise to. The upcoming section is dealing with it.
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