Chapter- V

Translation Method as Experience: Viewpoints

Having done the practical translation of a Manipuri novel *Bir Tikendrajit Road* into English, though in parts, this chapter is confined to the experiences the researcher has had as a translator: the joy and the splendor of making the work live again in another language. Every translation always provides, as Pound also says, an “opportunity to make the target language say something new” (Johnston 1992: 45). While translating a part of the novel mentioned above, many difficulties have been encountered. Ways to overcome them have been suggested.

Translation comes into being only when a text in one language is transferred to another language and culture. In some way, it is the rewriting of an already existing work in another language. This rewriting enables a text to live in a different culture clothed in a different language and also fills in the gap between creations. Translation mediates between cultures. It won’t be wrong to see the process of translation as something unending. Translating a work is one of the various ways of continuing a work for it only adds to this ever continuing state of the very nature of translation. Translation is, in other words, recreation of what the original author has done. Octavia Paz believes that translation not only “overcomes the differences between one language and another” but also “reveals them more fully” (Schulte 1992: 154).

It has not however been an easy job because of the wide gap between the SL (Source Language) and TL (Target Language). The arrangement of
words in an English sentence is done in the recognized pattern of SVO (subject-verb-object) whereas in Manipuri, we have the SOV (subject-object-verb) pattern like in other Indian languages. Not only this, these two languages are non-cognates, which indicate that they belong to different language family and do not share any common ancestral background. Indeed they are rooted in different cultures. With such a wide gap in between, bringing a compromise between this language pair is a wearisome job because it is not just between the languages concerned but also between the temporal framework that exists between them and also their cultures, customs, civilizations, habits etc. that we must negotiate. Also the differences in rules of grammar, syntax, stylistic features and conventions of the two languages pose constraints while trying to reach the characteristic beauty of the original with its spirit, tone and feel. Such problems of cultural and linguistic incommensurability between two such languages make translation very insuperable. But still with the use of various techniques which will be discussed later on, translation has been made possible.

With the aids of these so-called techniques, translations are produced, by drawing inspiration from already existing works. This work too has inspired the researcher, stirred in her and made her restless until she put it down into English for the sake of those who cannot read it in the original. Thousands of decisions have been made in doing this translation: sometimes even the choice between a comma and a semi-colon had been not that easy. We agree with Newmark who asserts that translation is “an exercise of choices and decisions” (1991: 39). Every writer has his own style, personal idiolect as David Crystal calls it. He says:
Probably no two people are identical in the way they use language or react to the usage of others. Minor differences in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary are normal, so that everyone has, to a limited extent, a ‘personal dialect.’ [T]he linguistic system as found in a single speaker…is known as an idiolect (Landers 2010: 90).

Avoiding such personal style — sentiment, inspiration, stance, insight — which is solely ours to adapt to another author is a tricky affair because his style is something which is not at all penetrable. But as translators, it is our task to get through him somehow and become one with him and feel with him and then recreate a whole universe in a different cultural context. It is the losing of the self, the choosing of what might be inappropriate at the cost of what we believe is the most appropriate one. We have no choice of evasion or side-tracking as the course had been laid down by the author. The intricacies of the author’s language too should be taken care of. So while translating this novel, the researcher has to see to it that she is closely following the author and not letting her creativity play mess with the original content. And like Leonardo Bruni advocated, she has transformed herself into the original author with all her mind, will, and soul, and has pondered the problem of how to transform the shape, the stance, the gait, the style, and all the other features of the original text and how to express the transformed form in the translation (Lefevere 1992: 84).

Even self translator who takes up his own work fails sometimes even though he feels that no one knows his work better than he does. We can give the example of Rabindranath Tagore. He thought of having an English
version of *Geetanjali* only after its success in Bengali. He wanted to try to
dress it up in the English cloak and see how it looks like. But due to the
differences, what he ended up with was a small part of the whole text and
also could not earn the kind of praise he expected. In May 1935, W.B. Yeats
wrote to William Rothenstein regarding the English renditions of the
Tagore’s *Geetanjali* songs:

“Damn Tagore! ...he thought it more important to see and
know English than to be a great poet, he brought out
sentimental rubbish and wrecked his reputation, Tagore does
not know English, no Indian knows English. Nobody can write
with music and style in a language not learned in childhood
and ever since the language of his thought” (Mandal,

Hence, translation isn’t simply the transference of meaning but it
involves a host of associations charged with meanings which need to be
translated from the SL text to the TL text. Every language has its own
eccentricities and structures. Making a simple transfer of the structure is not
the way of doing it. Features like literary allusions, culturally specific items,
colloquial expression, polysemy and oligosemy like lexical gaps, dialect and
slang, flowery words not used in everyday conversations; idioms, proverbs,
metaphors etc. stand as obstructions. Even the simplest kind of statement
becomes difficult to translate when its precise meaning depends heavily on
the context in which the text is based. Description of non-verbal
communication like facial expressions, gestures etc. pose problems when the
unspoken is rendered in a new language. Other factors which play their part
in making this task even the more difficult are problems of shifts, equivalence and translatability. Burton Raffle remarks that translator dealing with literary translation is:

…engaged with far more than words, far more than techniques, far more than stories or characters or scenes. He is engaged with world views, and with the passionately held inner conviction of men and women (Biguenet 1989: xvi).

Literary translation also makes use of the cultural items, the rich vocabulary, flowery words not used in everyday conversations, idioms, proverbs; certain metaphors which are suited only in the language the text is produced in etc. Now carrying them into another language would result in losing the original flavor. To make up for the loss, we need to make our creativity at play. The most problematic areas which call for the need of creativity are listed below:

1. **Idioms and proverbs**

Literary texts use them in abundance. The more their numbers, the more difficult it is on the part of the translators to go out looking for their equivalence in the target language. The reason for this is because these items are produced by a particular culture. The difficulty arises in this case because we have to carry across the implication of using such items.

To come to terms with these problems, we must search for equivalent proverbs and idioms if there be any, which can be used in their place and which carry the same sense. If they are not available, we must retain the original forms and explain them in the footnote or endnote. They
must never be rendered literally because their very essence will be lost if we do that. This is how the researcher too has tried to combat with the difference between the two cultures.

So when the expression “huduna huradi leima hu” occurs in the first chapter of the novel, instead of translating it literally we have rendered the inner meaning instead as “if at all you steal, steal the most precious one, the most valued one” and have explained its literal meaning as “steal the princess if at all you are on the look out for a girl” in the endnote to make it clear. So this is the technique used.

2. Jokes and Humour

For the same reason, they can’t be rendered word for word. If translated literally, they cannot make us laugh. This is one of the most challenging areas in translation. Therefore, it needs special attention. What is more important in this case is the underlying meaning which will not show itself until and unless we go deep into it. The concision, force, nuances of meaning are to be compensated to make the translation acceptable and at par with the original. It takes a lot to be able to bring across the feel of the original content and make the target readers laugh out as loud as the readers of the original text. If the target readers just turn over the pages without noticing the ironic elements, then it is total failure on the part of the translator.

In the first chapter the author critiques the behavior of the present day priests and priestesses by saying “it will not be long from now that priest
and priestess will unite under the stamp of marriage”. His statement has an ironical touch. This is just an example. We find many more in the novel.

3. Proper names

They too create a whole lot of problems. The question of whether to retain the proper name or search for another name from the target culture occurs in the translator’s brain very often. This problem occurs right from the moment we see the title of the novel even before flipping its cover. The title of the novel, *Bir Tikendrajit Road* shares the name of a road which is situated at the centre of Imphal city. This road takes the name of the Manipuri patriot, Bir Tikendrajit, and is like M.G. road named after Mahatma Gandhi which is found in almost every state of the country. But since the name doesn’t have any significance except indicating a particular area, the name has been retained. If it was a component of the actual message rather than a marginal nuance, we have to opt for another technique.

4. Words of kinship

Problems also arise when translating family relationship from Manipuri to English. Because one important feature that is seen in Meitei kinship is that the term of reference and term of address are different and also they are in accordance with the sex of the ego in certain terms. For example, the term of referent for father is ipa and the term of address is different and more than one: *baba, paba, pabung, panthou, baaji* etc. Again for the word ‘sister-in-law’ when addressed by female its equivalence in Manipuri is *inamma* and by a male is as *eeteima* and similarly brother-in law
becomes either *ibai* or *ishen* when used by male and the same word becomes *itei* when expressed by a female.

And two problematic words which have troubled translators are *ibemma* and *ibungo*. In this novel also, we find *ibemma* and *ibungo* being used very often. They refer to any female and male respectively provided that the speaker is elder to her and him. In the novel, when Sukumar’s mother calls him *ibungo*, it stands for son and when Sanatombi’s father refers to him as *ibungo*, he uses it as a term of endearment. In the Meitei household, parents usually refer to their son as *ibungo* and daughter as *ibemma* with love. Their love for them would not muster in them the guts to take their name even. And they would say, “because of our unconditional love for you, we have always referred to you as *ibungo* and have never gone beyond that and not called you by name”. So, these particular words have many connotative meanings. We do not have any equivalences for them in English.

5. Culture specific words

There are so many culture-specific elements words, objects or activities with connotations which are specific to a particular culture or community and which do not occur in any other cultures. They are mostly related with religious ceremonies, myths, events, festival, dresses etc. So when we come to the context of Manipur, which is a land of legends and myths - of Gods and Goddesses, heroes and kings, indigenous dances and games and martial arts, exotic handlooms & handicrafts- we find a rich mixture of diverse and varied cultural elements which are not at all translatable.
So when the chanting of “Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare” occurs in the first chapter of the novel, we cannot but keep it as it is as it comes loaded with religious connotations. We do not have any room for alteration.

6. Networks of politeness strategies

In almost all Indian languages, we face the system of address of politeness whereby we refer to elders with respect and do not address them the way we do to younger ones and friends. We can cite the instance in Hindi where we distinguish between *aap* and *tum* to refer to ‘you’. In Manipuri, ‘you’ can be translated as *nang, nahak, som, adom* with reference to the person one is speaking to and also to the context in which it is spoken. In Meitei culture, where the number of joint family is much larger than nuclear family, kinship relations and term of polite address form its part and parcel. So much emphasis is laid on how we address our elders. It is very different from western culture where we can address even elders by name and no one minds.

Terms of politeness used in Manipuri which are also indicative of class like *aiga, sanakhya* are untranslatable and when suffixes like *shi* as in *imashi* and *(i)bemma* as in *imaibemma* to refer to mother against the plain *ima*, the translator is in a fix. We cannot carry the cultural impact in English. Likewise *khuraibungo* which occurs in the third chapter of the novel too has the suffix *ibungo* but has been translated as uncle only and hence the
politeness membrane with which this term of address comes with has to be done away with as if it does not exist.

7. **System of compound word formation**

Manipuri has the readymade mechanism to combine two words to mean just one of them. So in the third chapter of the novel, when kol *lik* (utensil) occurs, *kol* refers to utensil while *lik* refers to neck chain. Though the first word by itself makes the meaning complete, the addition of the second word is also done. In the same chapter, *masam mana* (hair) refers to both hair and ear in the literal sense though it indicates only the former meaning. If such words are translated literally, it will induce laughter in the target readers and here the horror of literal translation will be seen at its best. Care has to be taken while rendering such words to another language.

8. **Terms of colors**

This category is problematic in translation not because different colors exist in different speech communities but because we give different names to it and in some there is distinction between the same color which is not done in one. To describe the color of Kha Sahib’s skin as well as the dress he wears, the author has used the following similes: “*kekruk muk muuraba kuchu mata aduda kurao mapan machu ga higok kumbal machu anina chaona chaona langba furit lit, loyamba machu gi khonggrao arangbi ama set...*” Those set of words in bold indicate colors. The first set refers to black, the second one to red, the third to blue and the fourth to maroon. The author didn’t stop by just mentioning the colors but made use of similes to describe them. Manipuri has also the mechanism to name the color with the name of an object which is of the colour to be indicated. So while referring
to pink, we use the object “rose” and calls it as *atargulapmachu* which literally means the colour of the rose. Likewise yellow is indicated by the mustard flower which is yellow in colour. There are other colours too which are not object dependent like *ashangba* (green), *higok* (blue) etc.

We can cite some more instances from the novel which didn’t lend easy to translation:

In the first page of the novel, the narrator describes his way of life in connection to the kind of works he does for a living by using the metaphor of two food items: *yendem thongba* and *sareng ngaren*. The former is a vegetable curry and can be afforded by everyone because it is very cheap whereas the latter is a fish curry and can be afforded by the rich only and even served in special occasion. He says he works so hard to be able to eat *sareng ngaren* while his salary is too less to be able to afford only *yendem thongba*. In the translation, however, a different metaphor is used to save ourselves from all these explanation: “And what I receive is only a deer’s share though I carry an elephant’s load”.

In the second chapter, the author makes use of a saying, *hui ngaoradi huibu thiba tabani*. It literally means if a dog gets mad then we would obviously search for its owner. This part has however been paraphrased and omitted but the sense has been retained in Modhu’s sister words: ‘don’t take me wrong. I am here with much embarrassment as I just can’t escape from this situation”. Later the narrator says, “*eise mee oidrabani*”. The literal meaning is “I am not a human being anymore”. It has been translated as “I have become a good-for-nothing fellow”. Here we require to transcreate
rather than sticking to the literal meaning as the former is not acceptable to us.

The narrator again uses another metaphor in the expression, *ei udagi tabamuk pangi*. Its literal meaning is “I became so lost as if I had just fallen down from a tree”. It however means “to be unconsciously puzzled”. In the fourth chapter, another proverb has been used: “*Hei hekpa araibani khunba heitradi arembane*”. It has been literally translated as “It is said that plucking fruits is easy but picking them up from the ground after they are thrown down is very difficult”, as the sense can be retained in doing so.

There are many loanwords from Hindi and English like “*munafat*”, “*naukri*”, “company”, “agent”, “accountant”, “lottery”, “good morning” etc. As the project is translation of a Manipuri text into English, the original English words are kept unchanged, while Hindi words are translated into English for all practical reasons.

One of the characters, Kha Sahib, in the novel, uses a dialect different from the normal usage. But in the translation, his use of dialect has not been retained as making him speak in, say for example, cockney English would be ridiculous. He is a Muslim boy and his speech is indicative of his caste. One instance of it can be cited. In the fourth chapter, he says “*eina khanjabanida, tuda, babuna hek noknabasina Allahna khangni*”. The two words in bold letters are indicative of his departure from the normal speech and his caste respectively, being himself a Muslim.
These are the most common hindrances which stand as stumbling blocks. When we come to the novel proper, we have come across words, phrases and even sentences which do not lend themselves to translation. The upcoming section consists of a thorough analysis of the techniques used in order to combat the problems a translator faces to come to terms with the original content and to retain its cultural implications too.

One understands that poetry translation is more troublesome than prose translation. Translation of poetry is a difficult task. It is because, here, both the form and content/meaning and matter are equally important. The form of expression (meter, rhythm, assonance etc.) is as essential as the content in communicating the force of the original. The question of which one to retain and which one to sacrifice: form over content or content over form is the most crucial. When this question is raised, no direct and readymade answer is available. Because sacrificing the meaning at the cost of retaining the style will not be able to communicate the message. While adherence to the content without the consideration of the style/form will destroy the spirit of the original and also the translator’s ability and scholarship will be doubted. In the present translation although the difficulties encountered in poetry translation are not seen, yet it has certain peculiarities which are unique to the nature of translation, because no two works in two different languages have the same lexical and grammatical structure besides there are cultural and linguistic nuances. To retain everything in translation, including the inner structure is not possible. There is always some loss. But we cannot give up and leave the crack unmended. To compensate for this loss, we take up transcreation, whereby we make certain changes to the original, by means of substitution, omission or
addition to come to terms with the target culture. Giovanni Pontiero remarks:

The problem becomes particularly acute when the literary translator is confronted with the expression of inner feelings, tentative definitions, vague descriptions, subtle forms of innuendo or associations alien to one’s own culture; or scaling down of one’s responses to those of small children. Transparent simplicity and creative spontaneity present fiendish problems for even the most astute translator. While veiled satire and bawdy repartee can produce equally tortuous problems at the other end of the spectrum (Orero 1997: 60).

When the above mentioned elements occur in the original, we are confronted with lack of equivalences in the target language which further have created so many problems to the extent of untranslatability. Untranslatability can be best understood as the property of a text, or of any utterance, in one language, for which no equivalent text or utterance, or one to one correspondence can be found in another language. In the absence of such equivalence, the translators resort to a number of translation procedures so that a proper negotiation can be done between the SL and TL culture. But one point which is worth pondering is does the presence of exact equivalences ensure perfect translation? We may add one to this. Does the absence of equivalences mean that translation will not be as good as the original had been to its readers and won’t be able to communicate to the target readers? These are the probing questions every translator should ask himself. And if we are talking about perfection, what kind of translation is taken to be perfect?
Every translator aims towards perfection and in his effort to attain it, he sails against many a storm. But the truth is no matter how skillful a translator might be and no matter how hard he tries to bring his best out, he is bound to be caught in the dilemma noted by Nicolas Perrot d’Ablancourt:

Two things can be held against me in connection with this translation: one concerns the selection of the work, the other the way in which I have translated it. One group of people will say that I should not have translated this particular author, another group that I should not have translated him in this way (Lefevere 1992: v).

Translation, as is known to all by now, is a very complicated and subject to decision-making process. Some of the decisions are very difficult to make. In the process of translating, the translator is faced with various restricting factors, which are beyond his control. The decisions and choices he makes during the translation process are not arbitrary, but conditioned. Gregory Rabassa notes:

This matter of choice in translation always leaves the door open to that other possibility. We cannot be sure of ourselves. Translation is a disturbing craft because there is little certainty about what we are doing, which makes it so difficult in this age of fervent belief and ideology, this age of greed and screed (1989: 12).

He has many restrictions which keep him in a fix, making him feel like walking on a razor’s edge because he is required to do justice to both
the source and target culture. In spite of it, he must somehow bring a negotiation between the nuances, idioms, symbols, syntax etc. of the SL and TL in both the presence and absence of equivalences.

In our hunt for equivalences, we must not ignore other important factors, which play their parts in making a translation acceptable and relevant in the target culture. We cannot come to a conclusion that the finding of exact equivalences will ensure the accuracy of a translation. We must sort out the purpose for which the translation is produced and also never forget the reader. A translation has no reason of existence unless it makes sense to the receptor. Translation must reach its readers, make itself understood, talked about and accepted in their culture. So, with this in mind this translation has been done keeping in view Indian readers who have certain understanding of the commonalities found in Indian languages in spite of their belonging to different families as opposed to a language like English. So dhoti which occurs in the first chapter of the novel needs no further explanation as every Indian is aware of it. So, it does not call for further explanation and therefore has been transliterated.

For some, faithfulness is all that counts while others argue that certain kinds of freedom should be taken for cultural adaptation as translation is a creative activity. Caught in between these two extremes a translator’s task is to do a balancing act of being faithful to the original text and at the same time make his translation read like the original with all its ease to the TL readers. It can never be a verbatim representation of the SL text.

A translation is never quite ‘faithful’ always somewhat ‘free,’ it never establishes an identity, always a lack and a
supplement, and it can never be a transparent representation, only an interpretive transformation that exposes multiple and divided meanings in the foreign text and displaces it with another set of meanings, equally multiple and divided (Venuti 1992: 8).

To ensure free flow and give a natural look to the translation, a number of techniques have been used. To name some, we can cite the examples of addition, omission, transcreation, transliteration, neologism, use of loan words, substitution, paraphrase, definition, explanation, localization, foreignization and domestication etc.

Addition is the technique used when the SL material alone is not enough to bring across the feel in the TL and when there are obscurities which can be erased with the addition of some new ideas. To avoid possible loss, the translator says more than the source text and it is permissible.

Omission in translation is generally considered unfavorable as during the process of omission, some information or effect in the ST will be omitted and therefore lost. But the presence of certain redundant and irrelevant elements in the Source Text whose erasure will not in any way disturb the balance of the original meaning compel the need to omit. It is carried out for the sake of censorship, standardization and improvement. Even if it is so many critics are against it and they prefer to have the original uncensored in another language through translation. Nabokov’s states:

A translator has ‘no right to skip. Having selected a work he has no right to pretend that a word or a phrase that he finds
inelegant does not exist. He has to stick to his author through thick and thin (Delhi Government of India Press 1962: 19).

Also when talking about the translation of poetry, Denham has made the remark that, “poetry is so subtle a spirit that in pouring out of one language into another, it will evaporate”, so he believed that a new spirit should be added in the transformation or else “there will remain nothing but a caput mortuum” (Miremadi 1995: 29).

Borrowing is the technique used when there is no equivalence available and we borrow the foreign term. This technique is the easiest among all translation strategies as it does not require us to go into the hunt further for equivalence. This technique is also used when we want to introduce the flavor of SL Culture in the Target text. Sometimes borrowed words used over a period of time become a part of the respective TL lexicon. English words such as “table”, “ball”, “ceiling” etc. are now used in Manipuri language lexicon.

Neologism is a newly coined term or word that may be in the process of entering common use, but has not yet been accepted in the mainstream language. This technique is used to combat the lack of equivalences in cases where neither addition nor omission can be of any help.

Localization involves taking a material or part of it and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region
Sometimes the denotations of the two words are the same, but the connotations of them are different, sometimes even contradictory. They are called Conflict of Word Meaning. Manipuri is a tonal language and words of this kind constitute a large proportion. We therefore need to understand the context properly before rendering such word into English. A little carelessness may well lead to big blunders. So when handling words or expressions containing cultural conflict of connotative meaning, remedy methods such as footnotes or necessary description can be employed so as to succeed in conveying the cultural connotation.

Another two methods used by translators throughout the world are foreignization and domestication. Foreignization is in line with cultural transplantation and is related to the literal mode of translation and while domestication is the opposite. It is target culture-oriented. Here the translation is produced with the target readers in mind.

Cultural backgrounds of the translator and the author are usually different, sometimes sharply different. In handling cultural information, the translator always has the concern whether the target reader can understand the version if he retains all the cultural flavors. Considering questions from the perspective of the target readers is worth advocating, for the translator’s basic task is to serve the reader. But the requirements of the readers differ: some read translated foreign novels for recreation, and others for study. Whatever their aims are, they must have made preparations that they are to
embark on the appreciation of a foreign book when they pick up a translated book. That is, they are prepared to taste foreign cultures with some sort of eagerness in their mind. If the translator considers cultural communication as the main task of translation, he will not hesitate about cultural transplanting. Obviously, foreignization is the ultimate aim.

Some works are full of cultural information, which may be ubiquitous in the original text. Of course, some information is important and other less important. It is impossible for the translator to completely foreignize all the cultural contents, though he endeavors to speed up cultural communication. The results may turn out to be contrary to his motivation, because over-foreignized versions are unapproachable and unreadable. Therefore, when dealing with unimportant cultural information, the translator either overlooks it or domesticates it.

So care must be taken as to when to domesticate and when to foreignise. The need to domesticate also occurs when one takes up an alien culture and its text and translates it for his own people whereas the necessity of foreignization comes up when one is translating a text from his own culture to make it known to readers of a particular culture.

The use of the above techniques has made translation process realizable. How far and to what extent we can communicate between the two cultures depend on the two languages concerned and the degree of similarities and closeness they share.
We cannot deny the fact that in the act of translation we cannot somehow escape the inclination to impose our alien perspectives on the culture and the language we are trying to come to terms with. We must also resist the blunder of distortion. With all these restrictions we must still bring about a compromise between the two texts, languages, cultures and the two mindsets behind the two writers- the original author and the translator. The differences must be negotiated somehow.

From this it is clear that what makes translation so difficult is because in it we don’t simply transfer the content of a text into another language. Every language has its own eccentricities and structures. Friar too asserts that “There is nothing exactly synonymous between languages or, for that matter, within a language itself (1971: 201). The peculiarities of language which vary from one language to another also pose problems. The context has to be considered. A translator has also to consider how to present ideas contained in the original work in their completeness as far he can. He has to live up to the expectation of his readers and give them the same literary taste that had been enjoyed by the readers of the original text in the SL. Aesthetic experience of the original author is very difficult to render. This difficulty is magnified in case of poetry.

If translated, the very essence of poetry is destroyed. Poetry is only enjoyed by the people to whom it belongs. As a literary manifestation, it is untransferable; it never is universal, because it is always tied up to, and trapped by the language in which it was written. . . Poetry cannot be translated, should not be translated, because, when translated, its music, rhythm and poetic structure disappear, its whole beauty fades away, and
nothing really worth admiring is left; in point of fact, translated poetry ends up by becoming plain prose (Bastin 2006: 27).

There are elements in a poem which have to be carried over to the target language if we want to make the translation a masterpiece in its own rights, if we retain the poetic quality in it. They are sense, sound, emotional quality, mete, rhyme, figure of speech etc. but this is no easy job. Finlay says:

To expect to be able to transfer these as well in a translation, without loss...is a task fraught with virtually insurperable difficulties and, of course, one offering a corresponding challenge to the translator, becoming all the greater the more one approaches the realms of symbolist poetry with its added element of private and esoteric worlds (1971: 71).

The connotation of one word indicates the cultural meaning it is loaded with. Against different cultural backgrounds, connotations of some words are sure to differ. In specific context, the denotative meaning of one word does not agree with its connotative meaning. It is connotation that translation handles. So, translating words of this kind involves cultural transplantation and cultural communication so as to achieve equivalent transfer of pragmatic implications.

The saying in Manipuri “huranba makok ta napi pak ae” which also occurs in the novel, cannot be translated literally as “there is grass on the head of the thief”. If it is done this way the pragmatic implications of the
saying will be lost, though the form of the sentence is well chosen and equivalences are used. To avoid such blunders, the translator should pay special attention to the connotation in specific context rather than the signified. For any form of translation, what is of utmost importance is mastery of the language used for the target audience.

Versions on the part of different translators reflect that translating is also a creative process. If a writer’s style is difficult to change, the same is true of a translator’s style but still he must try his best to conceal his translating style. But it so happens that sometimes his style inevitably steals into his version. We may theoretically require the translator to hide behind the author but we should be tolerant toward the translator’s style because he is a creator too. Every time he transcreates, he handles everything single handedly. According to Borges, a translator can always take the necessary liberties to achieve what any creative writer should strive for: a convincing work of literature (Kristal 2002: 5). Translation, in fact, is an enterprise as serious as creativity because the translator is not a passive participator. Looked at from this angle, no work of literature is untranslatable in principle.

The goal of a translation is to ensure that the source text and the target text communicate the same message while taking into account the constraints placed on the translator. Care has therefore been taken to maintain a balance between faithfulness to the original text without intensifying or weakening any part of the original meaning and transparency to the target readers so that it conforms to the language’s grammatical, syntactic and idiomatic conventions. To talk about translation without trying
our hands in it is one thing and to look out from inside the process, knowing how it is done, is a totally different experience. Even after possessing a practical real-world sense of the problems involved, the translator knows that those solutions are limited.

He can never enter into the author’s being and even if he could the difference in languages would preclude any exact reproduction. So he must continue to approach, nearer and nearer, as near as he can (Rabassa 1989: 12).

In conclusion, we can say that it has been both pleasure and pain to work on the translation of this novel. The author’s style has not been at all easy to deal with. Sometimes the occurrence of equivalences thrills the translator while at other times she has to go on hunting for one until she gives up at the end. It has never been realized before this experience that even the simplest of word can be so problematic. We have always assumed that only metaphors, idioms and the like are difficult to translate but it turns out to be wrong. Even the commonest of word like “mother” becomes difficult to render when considered in relation to the context. The presence of ambiguous words makes the translator look out for all kinds of possible meanings, which are deeper than the mere surface meaning of the words. It has been very frustrating to face a chaotic experience of uncertainty, where we think we know but cannot come to a conclusion that this is it. At times like this, the translator really wishes that the original writer had been alive and seated next to her, clarifying all the doubts.

Most important thing we have learnt after the practical translation is that it is more fruitful to learn on our own by getting down the field and
walk again on the footsteps of those who have fared well in the field of translation other than reading what they have advocated.
Works Cited:


