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A STUDY OF TRANSLATIONS OF JIBANANANDA DAS'S
'BANALATA SEN'

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Masters of Arts in English Language and Literature.

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A STUDY OF TRANSLATIONS OF JIBANANANDA DAS'S
'BANALATA SEN'

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PREFACE

Jibanananda Das (1899-1954) is the most versatile Bengali poet of all time. Jibanananda was the poet who marks the transition to Bengali Modernist poetry. In his poems he relied largely on images and symbolical means to express a complexity which grapples with the realities of modern life. In case of Das's poetry, almost all of them got proper recognition after his death. The third volume of verse that Das published in his lifetime, 'Banalata Sen' (1942), brought him the reputation of an original and exciting voice in Bengali poetry. Many translations have been done on 'Banalata Sen' by various poets and critics in the two Bengals and also abroad. The life (reputation) and after-life (criticism) of the poem created the urge to produce the best translation possible. Translation Studies shows that exact translation is not possible and equivalence is a dream. The present study examines the translations on 'Banalata Sen' done by various translators and compares them to find out the ones closest to the original. With the help of Translation Studies almost exact translation has been traced that did capture the poem if not exactly but almost exactly. "Translations of 'Banalata Sen'", is a chapter discussing the translations done of the poem. The chapter, "Theory of Translation", states what Translation Studies is all about and how it helps in assessing translations. The fourth chapter is "Criticism of the Translations". The discussion of these translations thus shows that exact translation is not a dream anymore.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Jibanananda Das (1899-1954) is a major modern Bengali poet. Most of his poetry collections and the bulk of his prose works, including short stories and fictions, came out posthumously. Jibanananda Das is regarded as the epitome of post-Rabindranath Tagore Bengali poetry. An American scholar, Clinton B. Seely, described Das as “the acknowledged successor to Rabindranath as Bengal’s poet laureate”, in his biography titled *A Poet Apart*.

Almost all of Jibanananda Das’s poems got proper recognition after his death. Jibanananda Das is the most famous poet in Bengali literature after Tagore. He was in quest of the modernism through its sorrow. This mystic poet was born in a Brahmo family of Barishal. He started his studies at Brojomohan School and passed his I.A from the same college. He settled in Calcutta and passed his B.A in English with honors from Calcutta’s Presidency College. After completion of his Post Graduation in 1921, he started his career as Professor in City College of Calcutta.

Das’s book of verse, *Jharapalak* came out in 1927. First he was not able to overcome the influence of Tagore. Later Jibanananda did overcome the influence of Tagore. Accepting the rebel struck of the Kallol era he then adopted T.S Eliot’s view history as is reflected in his next work *Dhusar Pandulipi* (1936) – “Time present and time past are both perhaps present in the future and time future contained in time past”. His search for history as a way of coming to terms with the present is reflected in – *Banalata Sen* (1942), *Maha Prithbi* (1944), *Satti – Tarar Timir* (1961), *Ruposhi Bangla* (1957), and *Bela Abela Kalbela* (1961).

Jibanananda Das has been termed as a 'lonely poet' and the 'purest poet' by critics and his poems have been variously labeled as nature poems, symbolical or surrealist. Das mentions in the preface of *Shresto Kavita* that these labels are "partially correct" but that they do not describe all of his poetry. *Rupashi Bangla* (1957) describes physical Bengal, *Banalata Sen* (1942) is a great romantic volume and others like *Mahaprithibi* (1944) and *Bela abela kalbela* (1961) are distinctively urban poems. But such a versatile poet, in fact possibly the most famous poet in Bengali after Rabindranath Tagore, has been presented in world literature fully only very recently by poets, critics, and translators.

Among the modern poets of Bengali Literature nature attracted Jibanananda the most. He was able to reach close to nature in a manner not unlike Keats. Most critics feel that his description of nature was like that of the impressionists. Another feature of his poem is his obsession with death. His work *Ruposhi Bangla* mainly deals with the natural scenery of Bengal but is deeply concerned with feelings of death. Jibanananda is the pioneer of surrealism in Bengali literature. Reality and fantasy come alive in his creations such as – 'Banalata Sen', 'Aboshese' or 'Horinera'.

Jibanananda Das was the poet who marks the transition from romantic to Bengali Modernist poetry. In his poems he relied largely on images and symbolical means to express in his poems a complexity which grapples with the realities of modern urban life. Also, his poems often express a deeply tragic sensibility. If nature plays an important role in the imagery of his poems, it is not of the ordinary kind and is accompanied with a separation in his mind between that which he desires and the reality of the world that disappoints.

Sisir Kumar Das states in the introduction to *A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das* that the poetic world of Jibanananda is colorful and sensuous, dark and melancholy, and totally different from the geography celebrated in Bengali poetry both by his predecessors and his contemporaries. Spring and the monsoons, the two favorite seasons of Bengali poets, especially Tagore, are absent in Jibanananda. He chooses 'hemanta', the short-lived interval between 'sarat', known for its bright blue sky, green fields, young paddy and swollen rivers, and 'shit' (winter), a season of tender sunshine and ripe crops (*A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das:1998,vii*).

It is not an overstatement to say that Das's poems have all the ingredients of modern man's anguish: pain, despair and yearning. Many of the verses are set against a familiar landscape of eternal Bengal. Unhappily married with two children, his career included a short period in journalism and long periods of unemployment. His main career revolved round teaching. He taught English at colleges and universities in Calcutta, Delhi and Barishal. After the Partition of India he left his beloved Barishal and never returned to it. During his lifetime, he published five books of poems and a good number of essays on assorted topics. Most of his poetry collections and the bulk of prose works, including short stories and fictions, came out posthumously.

Critics have often commented on the poet's overwhelming sense of longing to return to that which is pure, to that which is the beginning, to that place which cannot be reached. It is a world inhabited with mythical women: Suranjana, Behula, Manasa, Kankabati, Lahana, Maitreye, and that most famous one of them all, Banalata Sen. Some of his rivers are mythical too: Bonjhiri, Jolihjiri, Jalangi, Kalidaha, Kirtinasha, Nildana, Pakhli, but the ultimate manifestation of his mythical world is of course, woman as the

river, and for Jibanananda Das this is the *Dhansiri*, the very real river that runs through his beloved Barishal:

I will come back again to Bengal, to this Dhansiri riverside
 maybe not as a man — but a *shalik*, or white-chest kite;
 or a dawn crow maybe, new-rice-time, in misty flight
 to this jackfruit-tree-shade one *Kartik* day will glide. (qtd. in Jibanananda
 Das, *Naked Lonely Hand: Selected Poems translated from Bengali* by Joe Winter,
 2003:21)

The emergence of Jibanananda as the greatest Bengali poet after Tagore and the most powerful influence on the next generation of poets and poetic movements, took place after his death. Although now a canonized figure in Bengali literature, he did not attain eminence easily. “His unconventional metaphors and uneven diction, the rawness of his language and his sensuous imagery, became the target of untiring lampoons by several critics including a notorious weekly magazine, *Sanibarar chithi*, which consistently misspelt his name with gleeful malice. The Marxist critics did not lag behind, censuring him for his lack of social awareness and his dark pessimism” (*A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das: 1998*, v). But there is hardly any voice today complaining of obscurity and obscenity, the two frequent charges made against him by his contemporaries.

Clinton B. Seely labeled Jibanananda as ‘not merely a respected poet, but one of the most – if not the most – influential poets of Bengal’ and described his world to be a ‘wondrous world of words and images’. Sukanta Choudhuri in *A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das* says ‘his work combines the substance of international modernism with the timeless experience of rural Bengal, and both these with the complex and

disturbing patterns of urban life and the political upheavals of his time'. In *Jibanananda Das: Selected Poems with an Introduction, Chronology, and Glossary*, Fakrul Alam states that 'Jibanananda Das (1899-1954) is arguably the most important Bengali poet after Rabindranath Tagore, without a doubt one of the leading modern poets of Bengal, and certainly one of the greatest Bengali poets of all times'.

The mostly read and translated poem of Jibanananda Das is 'Banalata Sen'. The poet's obsession for Banalata Sen, a fictitious female character, has created a great work of art which is till now undoubtedly the best love poem in Bengali literature. Banalata Sen is synonymous with Jibanananda Das. In fact Banalata Sen made us love Jibanananda Das and created the urge to know him better (*Jibanananda: 200, xii*).

Das's poems are unique in our literature and have been translated into English from his time till now. Translation is governed by a lot of external factors. Walter Benjamin points out in his essay, 'The Task of the Translator' that the life (reputation) and after-life (criticism) of the text is important. 'Banalata Sen' (1942) is still now regarded as the most famous love poem in Bengali literature. Translators throughout the world have attempted to translate this poem. Though there have been translations done on the poem in Das's lifetime those gained little recognition.

'Banalata Sen' is such a great poem that even today people find pleasure in translating it. Some of the translations appear to have been done with the knowledge of translation theory. The present study focuses on some of the translations of 'Banalata Sen' and attempts to find out the ones closest to the original.

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CHAPTER 2: TRANSLATIONS OF 'BANALATA SEN'

'Banalata Sen' is synonymous with Jibanananda Das and is the first poem that comes in everyone's mind while thinking of him. Banalata Sen was also a recurrent theme in Jibanananda's creation and he wove a rich tapestry of imagery around her. There is no evidence of someone by that name in his real life but Das's attempts to represent her can be seen in poem after poem.

"The third volume of verse that Das published in his lifetime 'Banalata Sen' (1942) consolidated his reputation as an original and exciting voice in Bengali poetry. Critics reviewing the poems of this volume saw their creator as also expressing the anguish of an alienated or weary soul. The poet was using poetry to evoke dream-like states or depict enchanting moments, startling comparisons and profound insights into the human condition" (*Jibanananda Das, Selected Poems with an Introduction, Chronology, and Glossary: 2003,6*). The poet brings contrast of realistic and abstract images in the poem. Tagore and Nazrul Islam used comparisons in Bengali poetry but Jibanananda Das used abstract comparisons like "*bird's nest eyes*", which is quite different from the others.

Sisir Kumar Das states in the introduction of *A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das*, the "Natore, a modern place name, jars on the ear after Sravasti and Vidisa, embalmed in the serene beauty of the Buddhist world, as does Banalata Sen, a commoner without any mythical or historical halo, welcoming the hero with a commonplace greeting. The contrast is further intensified by juxtaposing the embellished metaphors of classical association '*Her hair the dark night long ago in Vidisa/ Her face a Sravasti carving*' and the completely baffling image of eyes like bird's nests, rich and suggestive, and yet violating the norms of comparison. The tension caused by such

contrasts continues in following up a flowing crescendo-like sentence with a short staccato question; and, one may add, with the unprecedented use of a common verb *chhilen* (were) to rhyme with the surname *Sen* as well as the highly poetic Sanskrit word *saphen* (foaming)”(*A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das: 1998, X*).

Das himself translated ‘Banalata Sen’ but could not convey the simplicity of the original. With some reservations, Das approved Martin Kirkman’s translation (1945) of ‘Banalata Sen’. After Kirkman, Chidananda Das Gupta translated the poem - *Jibanananda Das* (1972). An American scholar and lover of Jibanananda’s poetry, Clinton B. Seely translated ‘Banalata Sen’ in 1990, *A Poet Apart: A Literary Biography of the Bengali Poet Jibanananda Das (1899-1954)* and gained much appreciation for a long time.

In 1995, a Bangladeshi Jibanananda lover, Faizul Latif Chowdhury brought out a book of collected translations of *I Have Seen the Bengal’s Face: Poems from Jibanananda Das*. A collection of sixty translations by various hands was edited by Sukanta Choudhuri in *A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das* (1998). The translations of Amitabha Mukherjee (1991), Mushtaque Ahmed (2002) and in 2003, Sudeep Sen and Joe Winter also retain the flavor of the original poem. Another important translation of ‘Banalata Sen’ is by Fakrul Alam in a volume brought out in remembrance of the poet’s birth centenary in 1999, and titled *Jibanananda Das: Selected Poems with an Introduction, Chronology, and Glossary* (*Jibanananda Das: 2002, X*).

All these translators have translated Das’s poems out of sheer love for the poems. Their attempt to translate the poetry has not been in vain. Martin Kirkman and Chidananda Das Gupta were the two early translators who took the attempt of translating the poem into English. The early translations apparently proved to be done in a hurry to

translate the poem for the English audience. Later, Clinton B. Seely brought out a researched biography titled *A Poet Apart* along with some of the translations of Das's poems. The previous translations created urge for the new translators to take the poem in hand and as time went on, the translations came closer to the original.

Even today translating Jibanananda's poetry is a challenge for translators. 'Jibanananda's poetry has made a major contribution to Bengali poetic idiom. This makes his work specially challenging for the translators' (*A Certain Sense: Poems by Jibanananda Das: 1998*). While praising Syed Manzoorul Islam's essay on Jibanananda Das, Fakrul Alam writes "Islam's essay is, in fact, a reminder that it is time that we now begin to analyze Jibanananda Das's fiction as well as his verse with the help of insights derived from recent theory since he is the kind of writer whose works can be reinterpreted again and again. To put it somewhat differently, Jibanananda, like all great writers, will always be our contemporary no matter when we read him" (*Still Haunting Us After All These Years: Jibanananda in the New Millennium: Fakrul Alam: 2003*).

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CHAPTER 3: THEORY OF TRANSLATION

We have the practice of translation for a long time as multiplicity of tongues have made translation necessary. Susan Bassnett states in her book that study of translation is a discipline in its own right and is not merely a minor branch of comparative literary study but a vastly complex field with many far-reaching ramifications. This branch of study explores the process by which a text is transmitted from one culture to another. The translator cannot be the author of a Source Language text but as the author of a Target Language text has a clear moral responsibility to Target Language readers (*Translation Studies: 1991, 1*). In Sujit Mukherjee's essay on 'Translation as Discovery' he states that the translator not only interprets the text, he also restructures his interpretation in another language while striving to approximate the original structure.

Earlier, translation had been perceived as a secondary activity, as a 'mechanical' rather than a 'creative' process. But now a translator's task is regarded as a serious and difficult one (*Translation Studies: 1991,*). Translation is still taken into account as a 'low status occupation' in many parts of the world and that is why very few people take it seriously.

In translating a text, translators have to keep their audience in mind. The translator cannot be the author of the Source Language (SL) Text but is the author of the Target Language (TL) Text and has a clear moral responsibility to Target Language readers. Some of the translators of 'Banalata Sen' have been successful in capturing the meaning in their translations for the target audience. The translators must be also careful in restructuring his interpretation in another language while striving to approximate the original structure. (*Translation Studies: 1991, 22*).

There are specific words in cultures that are unique to itself. These words are not translatable and translators have to work accepting these untranslatable aspects. "*Sinhal – Samudra*" is quite difficult to translate for foreign readers who have little knowledge of South Asian seas. Sujit Mukherjee states "No translator has ventured to retain 'Sinhala', out of deference to 'English' geography which changed so many Asian place names. (Today we would have to wonder whether to make it Sri Lanka) (*Translation as Discovery: 143*). But later translators have introduced "*Sinhal-Samudra*" as "Lanka's shores" (Sudeep Sen) or kept the original name boldly as "*Sinhala's Sea*" (Fakrul Alam). This shows that the later translators are not blindly translating for the English audience just to convey the message of the poet, but also introducing our culture to them. If necessary, footnotes can be provided for the English audience. Das was particularly worried about losing the resonance of Bengali names. To quote him in Seely's translation of his letter: "Let the foreign reader learn that *Paush* and *Magh* are winter season; let their ears get accustomed to our rivers, seasons, and various things" (*Jibanananda Das: 2003, 10*).

Reading a text for translation has to be of the highest order. Sujit Mukherjee states in his essay 'Translation as discovery' that "a real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not black its light, but allow the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium to shine upon the original all the more fully" (*Translation Studies: 1991, 139*). I put emphasis to find out the light thrown upon 'Banalata Sen' by the translators according to their readings. The early translators of 'Banalata Sen' took some liberties in reproducing the poetry in English; but the later works emphasized on throwing the light upon the original so that it shines all the more fully.

No reader of a translation who can read the original work should expect to be wholly satisfied with the translation. But in examining the relationship between the

translation and the original; he or she may not only be able to test how 'true' the translation is but also explore areas of literary understanding which the process of translation often enables. Antoine Berman in his essay 'Translation and the Trials of the Foreign' emphasizes the foreignness of the text. He says a translator's task is to keep the mystery and preserve the foreignness and not reveal it. The translator has no right to dignify the original. Berman calls it 'ennoblement' which is only a rewriting, a 'stylistic exercise' based on – and at the expense of – the original.

Chidananda Das Gupta tries to stylize his translation of '*hajar bachar dhorey*' as '*aeons*' which is not the exact word for the Bengali '*hajar*' (Thousand). Also '*aeon*' (an immeasurably or indefinite long period of time) is an uncommon word while '*thousand*' in English and the original Bangla word '*hajar*' belong to the same frequency (*Translation as Discovery: 141*). Translators cannot be too servile or take total freedom but must respect some boundaries and take a middle path. When Kirkman, Das Gupta or the poet himself translated 'Banalata Sen', there were not much study done on the process of translation and so their attempt was to only get the 'invariant core' or the holistic view of the poem.

The main approaches to the study of translation developed during the twentieth century, particularly in the past thirty years. It was during this period that Translation Studies emerged as a new academic field, at once international and interdisciplinary. Discussion of literary translation within the terms now being outlined by Translation Studies may well assist in improving the quality of translations due to an increased awareness of the complexity of translation and a raising of the status of the translator and the translated text (*Translation Studies: 1991, xviii*).

The later translations gained much more recognition since they were produced with much more knowledge of the process of translation. Amitabha Mukherjee's translation retains the meaning of the original and also creates poetry in itself:

“Weary of soul,

I found a moment's respite in her presence –

She: Banalata Sen of Natore”. (qtd. in *Jibanananda Das. Translated from the original Bengali by Amitabha Mukerjee:1990*)

Translation Studies shows the pitfalls in exact translation and says equivalence is a dream. But translators with the help of the theory of translation are heading towards its ultimate goal which is exact translation. This trend shows that exact translation is not a dream anymore. Fakrul Alam's translation is almost like the original as it captures the form and content so far in the best possible way:

“I, a tired soul, around me, life's turbulent, foaming ocean,

Finally found some bliss with Natore's Banalata Sen”. (qtd. in *Jibanananda Das, Selected Poems with an Introduction, Chronology, and Glossary, 1999:61*)

The above lines not only match in terms of meaning but also look like the original:

Ami klanto pran ek, charidikey jiboner shamudro shaphen,

Amarey du dhondo shanti diyechilo Natorer Banalata Sen. (qtd. in *Jibanananda Das's Kabya Grantha,*

As perfect equivalence is difficult to obtain, theorists at times urge translators to go beyond literal translation and point out that exact translation is not desirable. Jorge Luis Borges compares the various translations of 'The Thousand and One Nights' in his essay or the classic to show the differences in translating the same text. All the translators took liberties in producing their version of the text. While discussing the translations,

Borges compares Doctor Mardrus, a French translator with an Englishman, Captain Burton. Borges justifies the infidelity of Doctor Mardrus by saying that it is fun being experimental. “To celebrate Mardrus’s fidelity is to leave out the soul of Mardrus, to ignore Mardrus entirely. It is his infidelity, his happy and creative infidelity, that must matter to us” (*The Translation Studies Reader: 2000, 45*). But if all translators take unlimited liberties, little of the original flavor will be retained in translation. Chidananda Das Gupta has departed from the original work of Jibanananda Das’s ‘Banalata Sen’ as often as he felt necessary. For example he translated ‘*shagorey*’ in a manner as ‘*straits*’ whereas the exact equivalence of the Bengali word is ‘*sea*’. Also the introduction of Sanskrit words like ‘*Bimbisara, Asoke, darker Vidarbha*’ was unnecessary. Rather keeping the word as it is, is a better solution from the translator’s part:

“Far did I roam. In Vimbisar and Asok’s ash-grey world

Was I present; Farther off, in distant Vidarba city’s darkness” (Alam: 1999).

Thus it can be said that translators’ attempt to exact the original is not a dream anymore. Almost exact translation has been achieved by some of the translators of ‘Banalata Sen’. With the help of insight from Translation Studies it will be possible to head towards the ultimate goal which is exact translation.

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CHAPTER 4: CRITICISM OF THE TRANSLATIONS

Translation work is very much open to questioning as there are no set rules in producing a translation. In fact many theories of translation emphasize that if a dozen translators tackle the same poem, they will produce dozen different versions. This is true as we see in the translations of 'Banalata Sen' done by various poets, critics and others from the poet's time till now. Translation Studies also says that that exact translation is not possible. This is where I put my emphasis on as my study shows that even though exact translation is a dream translators have produced almost exact translations of 'Banalata Sen'. So it can be said that translators are heading towards their goal which is exact translation through a process of evolution.

There have been many translations done on 'Banalata Sen'. Six different translations of 'Banalata Sen' have been compared by Sujit Mukherjee in his essay 'Translation as Discovery' (*Translations Studies 1991: 139*). Jibananda Das has left some comments on translating poetry in three of his letters. In one of them "Das expresses his reservations about the celebrated comparison of Banalata Sen's eyes to a bird's nest:

Temni dekhechi tare andhakare; boleche shey, 'Etodin kothay chilen?'

Pakhir nirer moto chokh tule Natorer Banalata Sen.

(qtd. in *Jibananda Das's Kabya Grantha*, 1992:10)

This Kirkman in his translation (1945) rendered thus:

So have I seen her in darkness, who asked me; where
have you been

So long away? This she asked raising her bird's-nest

eyes, Banalata Sen of Natore. (qtd. in *Modern Bengali Poems*, 1945:19)

To Das, the phrase, '*bird's nest eyes*' was too literal; he would have preferred words that conveyed 'the homely qualities of Banalata Sen' rather than the exact image he had used in Bengali (*Jibanananda Das, 2003:9*).

The poet also pointed out the mistakes Kirkman made in his translation but he was himself not able to keep the comparison of Banalata Sen's eyes to a bird's nest in his English version. Das completely omits the '*bird's nest eyes*' from his translation and leaves out the rhyme and rhythm that is so beautifully portrayed in the original. Kirkman tries to be close to the original while translating '*Charidikey jiboner shamudra shafen*' as '*Tired of this life, this foaming sea of life*', whereas Das simplified his version into '*At moments when life was too much a sea of sounds*'. Then again the line '*Amare du-dhondo shanti diyechilo Natorer Banalata Sen*', Kirkman translated as '*I found peace for a while with Banalata Sen of Natore*' finding '*peace*' to be the exact word translated for '*shanti*'. But the translation done by Das himself has completely lost the meaning of the original: '*I had Banalata Sen of Natore and her wisdom*'.

The translation of 'Banalata Sen' by Clinton B. Seely (1990) was regarded as the best for a long time. Seely is certainly closer to the original than previous translators: '*And raised her bird's net-like eyes – Banalata Sen from Natore*'. As Seely translated for an English audience he had to be more careful in translating so that they could get the flavor of the original. He retained the meaning much more closely than the previous two translations. Jibanananda Das ended the Bengali poem with '*Thake shudhu andhakar, mukhomukhi bashibar Banalata Sen*', but he himself changed this line in the English version into '*I am ready with my stock of tales for Banalata Sen of Natore*'. But Clinton B. Seely retains the meaning of the original in translation '*Only darkness remains, as I sit there face to face with Banalata Sen*'. This line is almost exact to the original.

Translation Studies says that exact equivalence in translating text both stylistically and lexically is impossible and this view has been widely accepted. In fact every act of translation is an act of interpretation. So all the above translations are almost as numerous and varied as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject. (*Translation Studies: 1991*, 5). But equivalence has been achieved in the later translations done by various critics, poets and others with better understanding of both the source and target languages and also the theory.

Among the recent translations, perhaps the best translation regarded by different critics is that by Fakrul Alam. In the comparison of *Banalata Sen's* eyes to a bird's nest, for example, he wrote '*Raising her eyes, so bird's-nest like, Natore's Banalata Sen*'. Fakrul Alam's translation has almost reached the height of equivalence in capturing the meaning, mood, rhyme and rhythm. He is even successful in keeping the alliteration in places where Jibanananda Das had in the original. '*Prithibir pothey*' has been translated as '*ways of the world*' that keeps the meaning and creates alliteration too. Fakrul Alam also kept the rhyme flowing throughout his translations.

I found Joe Winter's translation of the same line also to be a close transference: '*raising her bird's-nest-eyes to me said Natore's Banalata Sen*'. And again, the last lines have been captured with full attention to the meaning as well as the line patterning:

All birds make for home – all rivers – ended is all day's regimen;

Darkness is all there is – and face-to-face with Banalata Sen. (qtd. in *Jibanananda Das-Naked Lonely Hand: Selected Poems by Joe Winter*, 2003:59)

This is almost exact to the original:

Shob pakhi ghore ashey – shob nodi – furay ei – jiboner shob lenden;

Thakey shudhu andhokar, mukhomukhi bashibar Banalata Sen.

(qtd. in *Jibanananda Das's Kabya Grantha*, 1992:10)

Jackson Mathews in describing a proper translation of poetry states, “one thing clearly: to translate a poem whole is to compose another poem. A whole translation will be faithful to the original, and it will ‘approximate the form’ of the original and it will have a life of its’ own, which is the voice of the translator” (*The Translator Studies Reader: 2000, 131*). In spite of the fact that translating poetry is such a difficult task, recent translators of Jibanananda Das’s poem allows me to conclude that translators are coming up to almost exact translations.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

With the help of Translation Theory, the present study shows that the translators of 'Banalata Sen' have been overcoming the pitfalls it has had to face through ages. Earlier, translations were considered to be merely an act of transferring a work of art in another language. But Translation Studies has changed this concept into a discipline in itself. Walter Benjamin defines translation thus "a real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not black its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium to shine upon the original all the more fully" (*The Translation Studies Reader:2000, 21*).

Jibanananda Das's 'Banalata Sen' is a work of art that has touched every one's heart in the two Bengals. For ages translators have translated this poem out of love. Translation Studies shows that life and afterlife is important in translating a text. This poem proves to be an excellent example to be used for this dissertation as 'Banalata Sen' is still regarded as the best love poem in Bengali literature. The chapter on the translations of 'Banalata Sen' showed that the poem is being selected for translation by many people even to this day. Though the early translations were produced without any guidance from the translation theory, they played an important role in producing the later translations. Jibanananda Das, Martin Kirkman and Chidananda Das Gupta translated without the benefit of ideas about producing a translation work with the help of theory. Clinton B. Seely tries to capture the mood of the poem as far as possible. But later translators have been producing better translations with the help of the knowledge of theory.

Translation theory says that a translation should be done with proper knowledge of both the source and target language. It also says that translation is not only done to keep the meaning right but also by creating poetry and keeping the rhyme and rhythm in sight. As the study of Translation Theory has developed, the translation work of the later translators have been getting better and closer to the original. The chapter on the criticisms of the various translations found major differences among the many versions. Theory also says that a single text in translation will produce a new version each time it is translated. However, it is important to note that all the different translations share a common ground, that is, to say, the 'invariant core' of the poem remains. The invariant core is that which exists in common between all existing translations of a single work.

This paper shows that a translator's task is much greater than one imagines. In fact Translation Studies has emerged as a branch of study that helps in producing better and better versions of 'Banalata Sen'. Theory helps in reaching the ultimate goal a translator dreams of. The early translations also helped the later ones by acting as signposts for the new ones. This study thus proves that almost exact translation is almost a reality.

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