

Translating the Elusive: A Comparative Critique of Three English Renderings of Jibanananda Das's *Kuri Bachar Pare*

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Jibanananda Das, Poetry Translation, Kuri Bachar Pare, Cultural Resonance, Translational Aesthetics

Received : 19 April 2025

Revised : 25 June 2025

Accepted: 5 July 2025

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comparative analysis of three English translations of “Kuri Bachar Pare,” a very evocative poem by Jibanananda Das, who is recognised as one of the most significant modern Bengali poets. The poem contemplates memory, emotional disconnection, and the inexorable flow of time, conveyed through a tapestry of intricate natural imagery and melodic rhythm. Translating this poem presents a distinct problem, as its literary impact is rooted in its nuanced tone, symbolic depth, and cultural particularity – attributes that sometimes elude effective cross-linguistic transfer. The study examines the translations by Clinton B. Seely, Fakrul Alam, and Deepankar Choudhury, assessing how each interprets the poem’s thematic essence, stylistic elements, symbolic intricacies, and rhythmic composition. The approach is based on Roman Jakobson’s theory of equivalence and Lawrence Venuti’s framework of domestication vs foreignization. The findings indicate that Fakrul Alam presents the most equitable method, preserving both emotional tone and cultural context. In contrast, Seely emphasises cultural fidelity through a more foreignising style, and Choudhury prioritises readability, frequently sacrificing symbolic complexity. This study argues that translating Jibanananda Das’s poetry requires linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, poetic insight, and a theoretical understanding of translation as a creative envisioning process.

INTRODUCTION

Jibanananda Das is a prominent figure in modern Bengali poetry, recognised for his surreal imagery, contemplative motifs, and lyrical sensitivity. Among his several acclaimed works, “Kuri Bachar Pare” (“After Twenty Years”) holds a distinctive significance for its deep reflection on memory, yearning, and the inexorable flow of time. The poem explores a hypothetical reunion with a lost sweetheart, intricately blending personal emotion with the rural Bengal landscape, resulting in a surreal tapestry that is both culturally grounded and emotionally universal. Moreover, translating this poetry into English poses numerous linguistic and cultural issues. The endeavour of translating Das’s convoluted wording, atmospheric rhythm, and symbolically laden imagery into another language risks either diminishing its aesthetic integrity or distorting its cultural background. Throughout the years, several distinguished translators- such as Clinton B. Seely, Fakrul Alam, and Deepankar Choudhury- have endeavoured to translate “Kuri Bachar Pare” into English, each employing a unique approach that emphasises different priorities in translation: fidelity, readability, rhythm, and cultural preservation. However, this article provides a comparative analysis of these three translations, emphasising their treatment of the poem’s thematic complexity, stylistic nuance, symbolic depth, and rhythmic composition. This analysis examines the theoretical foundations of translation, namely the dichotomy of domestication and foreignization as articulated by Lawrence Venuti, together with the concept of equivalence as presented by Roman Jakobson. This study seeks to elucidate the complexities of literary translation by analysing the successes and shortcomings of translations, particularly in the realm of poetry rooted in a distinct cultural and linguistic setting.

This study contends that although no translation can completely mimic the immersive emotional and auditory characteristics of Jibanananda Das’s original work, a meticulous comparison analysis demonstrates how varying translational methodologies influence the reader’s experience. It emphasises the necessity of reconciling cultural faithfulness with literary accessibility, particularly in the translation of poetry reliant on rhythm, mood, and metaphor. The study enhances broader dialogues in translation studies and global literature regarding the optimal approach to preserving the essence of a source text while ensuring its clarity and relevance for a new audience.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse how the three English translations interpret the core themes of Jibanananda Das’s poem *Kuri Bachar Pare*, such as memory, time, and longing.
2. To examine the extent to which each translation preserves the symbolic, cultural, and natural imagery of the original Bengali poem.
3. To assess how the rhythmic structure and musicality of the original poem are maintained or modified in the translations.
4. To evaluate the translation strategies (domestication vs. foreignization) used by each translator and their effect on cultural fidelity and reader accessibility.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do the translations differ in their treatment of the poem's major themes, particularly regarding memory and the passage of time?
2. How do the translators handle the cultural and symbolic imagery embedded in the original Bengali text?
3. To what degree are the poem's rhythm, repetition, and sonic qualities preserved or transformed in the English translations?
4. How do the translators' strategic choices between domestication and foreignization affect the authenticity and readability of the translated texts?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This work is based on the convergence of translation theory, poetic analysis, and cultural semiotics, concentrating on the translation of profoundly affective and culturally significant poetry, such as Jibanananda Das's "Kuri Bachar Pare." The framework comprises four interconnected analytical dimensions: topic transference, stylistic faithfulness, cultural strategy, and reader reception. This study, based on Roman Jakobson's idea of "interlingual translation," investigates how meaning, specifically the themes of time, memory, and emotional detachment, is reconstructed rather than simply conveyed. Jakobson's (1959) concept of "equivalence in difference" guides the examination of the preservation or loss of poetic rhythm, repetition (e.g., "Kuri-Kuri Bochorer Par"), and lyrical syntax (e.g., "Norom-Norom") in translation. These characteristics are fundamental to Das's literary voice and serve as a criterion for assessing each translator's capacity to preserve the original's aesthetic and emotional nuances.

Lawrence Venuti's theory of domestication vs foreignization aids in evaluating how each translation addresses culturally distinct imagery, such as Bengali flora (e.g., "shirish," "babla") and time references (e.g., "Kartik"). Foreignization maintains cultural authenticity by keeping uncommon terminology, whereas domestication modifies material for wider accessibility, frequently sacrificing symbolic richness. Venuti (1995) contends that foreignising procedures morally maintain the cultural distinctiveness of the source text, enabling the target reader to encounter its divergence. The study assesses the degree to which each translation maintains or diminishes the symbolic depth and rural Bengali ambience present in the original text. It also examines how these tactics influence reader reception, especially in reconciling poetic faithfulness with accessibility for non-Bengali audiences. Collectively, these theoretical frameworks provide a systematic evaluation of how each translator navigates the complexities of maintaining mood, meaning, and cultural significance in the English translations of "Kuri Bachar Pare."

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive, and comparative textual analysis methodology to investigate three English translations of Jibanananda Das's Bengali poetry "Kuri Bachar Pare," rendered by Clinton B. Seely, Fakrul

Alam, and Deepankar Choudhury. The study examines how each translation interprets the poem's fundamental topics, stylistic elements, symbolic imagery, and cultural context. A qualitative method facilitates nuanced, context-sensitive interpretation due to the intricate interaction of poetic language, cultural specificity, and aesthetic effect in the original poem. Basically, the original Bengali poem and its three English versions are examined through meticulous reading and comparative textual analysis. Each version is analysed line-by-line to evaluate interpretive choices on semantic accuracy, emotional tone, stylistic composition, and cultural significance. The approach is informed by the theoretical frameworks of Roman Jakobson's (1959) interlingual translation theory and Lawrence Venuti's (1995) notions of domestication and foreignization. Jakobson's emphasis on "equivalence in difference" guides the assessment of meaning reconfiguration across linguistic borders, whereas Venuti's framework evaluates translators' techniques in navigating cultural material.

The analysis is structured into four dimensions:

1. Thematic Representation - The effectiveness of each translation in conveying essential concepts such as memory, time, longing, and emotional separation.
2. Imagery and Cultural Specificity- The preservation or adaptation of rural Bengali elements, flora, and seasonal references.
3. Rhythmic and Stylistic Fidelity- The preservation or modification of musicality, repetition, and poetic structure in translation
4. Translation Strategy - How each translation reconciles accessibility and authenticity via domestication or foreignization.

This approach seeks to determine how the linguistic and cultural decisions of each translation influence the reader's experience and comprehension of "Kuri Bachar Pare." The process aims to reveal the aesthetic and ethical intricacies involved in translating a poem that is profoundly anchored in its original linguistic and cultural context, rather than providing a conclusive translation.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Thematic Analysis

The comparative examination of "Kuri Bachar Pare," translated by Seely, Alam, and Choudhury, highlights the inherent problems and creative negotiations required to transfer Jibanananda Das's introspective and timeless lyrical realm into another language. According to Roman Jakobson's idea of interlingual translation—"translation proper"—the objective is not solely semantic conversion but also a transformation of affect, tone, rhythm, and cultural ethos (Jakobson, 1959). The methodology of each translator

demonstrates unique ideological and aesthetic preferences in addressing these components.

Fakrul Alam's interpretation is the most attuned to the original's emotional depth and poetic quality. His interpretation of the line 'What if twenty years hence I encounter her once more!' exemplifies what Lawrence Venuti describes as 'domestication with dignity' – a translation that flows smoothly in English while preserving the original's contemplative melancholy and chronological uncertainty (Venuti, 1995). Alam refrains from excessive intellectualisation or abstraction, while preserving the introspective tone characteristic of Das's voice. He reflects the perspective of Ketaki Kushari Dyson, who contends that Jibanananda's translation must "preserve a mood of gentle estrangement," a characteristic sometimes diminished in excessively rationalised or emotionally barren interpretations.

Clinton B. Seely, a distinguished scholar and translator of Jibanananda Das, emphasises grammatical accuracy and syntactic refinement, exemplified by his phrase "If twenty years from now I should meet her again!" Although precise and artistically polished, Seely's translation occasionally favours structural clarity at the expense of emotional intensity. This corresponds with Peter Newmark's (1988) notion of semantic translation, when adherence to the source's conceptual meaning supersedes poetic spontaneity. In the context of Das's work, which emphasises ambiguity, recollection, and personal reflection, this method sometimes compromises the expressive quality inherent in the original. Seely's choice to exclude the explicit rendering of "tokhon tomare nai mone" creates a thematic void. In poetic translation, omissions of this nature, unless intentional and significant, jeopardise the narrative trajectory of emotional detachment that Das meticulously crafts.

Deepankar Choudhury's translations, while lucid and comprehensible, occasionally shift the speaker's emotional perspective and narrative viewpoint, therefore impacting thematic coherence. For example, his assertion "You don't remember anymore after twenty years" incorrectly assigns the act of forgetting to the lover instead of the speaker, altering the perspective of loss, which in Das's poetry is profoundly introspective. This aligns with Basil Hatim and Ian Mason's (1997) concept of a "pragmatic shift," wherein the interpersonal dynamics of a book are modified during translation, either deliberately or inadvertently. In poetry, such transitions frequently lead to a nuanced yet substantial alteration of emotional connections.

Furthermore, Choudhury's employment of expressions such as "a score time" in the translation of "kuri-kuri bochorer par" indicates a stylistic antiquity absent in the original text. Although it possesses lyrical qualities, it engenders a sense of chronological separation that alienates the reader from the speaker's grief. Susan Bassnett (2014) asserts that poetic translation must elicit an equivalent emotional response in the target reader as in the source, necessitating both grammatical and tonal accuracy. Choudhury's selections, however creative, sometimes diminish the poem's emotional depth.

Alam's phrase "our life having flowed on for twenty long years—" well encapsulates the cyclical progression and melancholic passage of time, mirroring the inherent natural imagery of the original. His translation implies continuity and subdued acceptance, reflecting Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1993) notion of the "ethical responsibility of the translator"—to engage with the text's interiority and communicate its psychological cadence.

All three translators contend with the distinctive temporal poetics of Jibanananda Das, whose oeuvre frequently embodies what Amit Chaudhuri describes as a "Bengali phenomenology of memory"—characterised by the layered, recurrent nature of recollection, imbued with a sense of loss. Only Alam appears to completely assimilate this pattern, reflecting Das's gloomy rhythm and nuanced metaphysical implications.

At length, the discourse confirms that Alam's translation exemplifies a harmonious blend of faithfulness, emotional precision, and lyrical nuance, in contrast to Seely's grammatical refinement and Choudhury's interpretive laxity. The translations collectively demonstrate the intricate process of negotiating form and meaning when converting a culturally embedded poem such as "Kuri Bachar Pare" into English, reaffirming Walter Benjamin's (1923) assertion that the translator's role is to "bring forth the echo of the original"—not to replicate it mechanically, but to enable its essence to persist in another language.

Stylistic and Imagery Nuance

The comparative examination of the three English translations of "Kuri Bachar Pare" demonstrates both stylistic variation and differing degrees of efficacy in preserving the poem's lyrical and cultural richness. Translating Jibanananda Das presents a distinct challenge: as Clinton B. Seely (1990) notes, Das's language functions on "a plane of dream and memory," intertwining pastoral imagery with metaphysical yearning. This combination requires translators to do more than convey information—they must replicate atmosphere, rhythm, and cultural symbolism.

The phrase “Hoyto dhaner chorar pashe kartiker mashe” positions the term “Kartik” as a benchmark for cultural authenticity. Roman Jakobson (1959) asserts that “poetry by definition is untranslatable,” however, he permits “creative transposition” to maintain poetic intent. Seely’s choice to translate “Kartik” as “late October” illustrates a substitute that, although linguistically precise, neglects the cultural and emotional significance the term embodies within Bengali tradition, conjuring feelings of post-harvest melancholy and rural tranquilly.

Fakrul Alam’s preservation of “Kartik,” together with the descriptor “autumnal,” exemplifies what Venuti (1995) describes as a “foreignising” strategy—one that opposes the obliteration of the source culture in favour of proficiency in the target language. By retaining culturally distinct vocabulary, Alam enables the Bengali poetic perspective to infiltrate the English text. Conversely, Choudhury’s “month of winter” illustrates Venuti’s (1995) critique of “domestication,” in which cultural subtleties are simplified for reader comprehension, leading to a reduction in poetic and symbolic significance.

The phrase “Tokhon holud nodi norom-norom hoy shor kash hoglay – math-er vitore” exemplifies Das’s employment of rhythmic repetition (“norom-norom”) to conjure the soothing ambience of a dreamlike setting. Seely’s interpretation—“softens”—condenses the repetition into a one-term, sacrificing the incantatory cadence and emotional nuance of the original. Bassnett (2014) posits that the absence of prosodic elements in translation may lead to a lessened aesthetic impact, thereby lessening the poem’s emotional resonance. Conversely, Alam’s translation—“yellow rivers soften in reeds, weeds, tall grass”—preserves visual intensity and endeavours to replicate the layered softness; however, it somewhat encumbers the rhythm. Choudhury’s expression—“soft & softer”—aligns more closely with musical meaning, however is linguistically awkward and lacks fluidity. Berman (1985) cautions against “rhythmic destruction,” identifying it as a distorting tendency in translation that might disrupt the original’s lyrical harmony.

The phrase “Hasher nurer theke khor, pakhir nurer theke khor chorateche” illustrates Das’s pastoral lyricism and his employment of a visual-repetitive framework to encapsulate rural tranquillity. Seely’s phrase, “Chaff is blowing, scattered from duck nests, from avian nests,” conveys the concept but lacks the auditory resonance produced by the repetition of “khor.” The mundane tone, albeit informative, loses the lyrical quality and rhythmic flow of the original.

Alam's reiteration of "The straw from duck nests / The straw from bird nests" parallels the structure and amplifies the rhythm, corresponding with Dryden's (1680/1992) notion of "metaphrase," wherein the translation embodies both the form and essence of the original. Conversely, Choudhury's "Spreading Everywhere" diminishes the poem's visual finesse. Lefevere (1992) contends that this simplification exemplifies a translator's manipulation of literary texts, frequently influenced by ideological or linguistic standards, so compromising the integrity of Das's vision.

The study indicates that Alam attains the optimal equilibrium between semantic accuracy and lyrical rhythm. Bassnett (2014) contends that a literary translation must aim to replicate the "aesthetic effect" of the original work rather than simply transmit its content. Alam's translations demonstrate a deliberate endeavour to maintain both the emotional ambience and the cultural foundation of Das's poetry although Seely provides refined literary English and an academically respectable perspective, his translations frequently compromise on acoustic and cultural nuances. Choudhury, in his pursuit of enhancing accessibility, often simplifies and generalises, conforming to Venuti's (1995) critique of translator invisibility, wherein the lyrical distinctiveness is supplanted by traditions of the target language.

Rhythm and Musicality

A notable characteristic of Jibanananda Das's poetry is its nuanced rhythm, repetition, and auditory layering, which collectively engender a contemplative, nearly hypnotic atmosphere. In "Kuri Bachar Pare," the musicality of the verses is meticulously crafted through gentle alliteration, rhythmic phrasing, and internal repetition. These poetic methods are not merely decorative; they influence the emotional ambience and impart a contemplative quality to the poem. Bassnett (2014) asserts that in literary translation, maintaining aesthetic and rhythmic aspects is as crucial as conveying semantic material. Translating this musicality into English poses a distinct problem, necessitating a balance between meaning and mood, as well as sound and sense.

An illustration of this issue is evident in the phrase: "Hasher nurer theke khor, pakhir nurer theke khor chorateche." The recurring structure and sound in this line create a regular pulse that mimics the delicate dispersion of straw in a tranquil hamlet setting. Clinton B. Seely interprets this as: "Chaff is dispersing, scattered from duck nests and avian nests." Although Seely conveys the literal meaning, the lyrical cadence is diminished. His rendition resembles descriptive writing rather than poetry, disrupting the flow and diminishing the harmony.

This illustrates what Berman (1985) terms “rhythmic destruction,” a prevalent distortion in poetry translation where auditory patterns are compromised for the sake of fluency.

Conversely, Fakrul Alam’s rendition—“The straw from duck nests / The straw from bird nests / Scattering”—preserves the rhythmic equilibrium of the original. The line breaks impede the rhythm, and the repetition emulates the auditory echo characteristic of Bangla. This corresponds with Dryden’s (1680/1992) concept of “metaphrase,” wherein the translator reflects both form and function. Alam’s perspective demonstrates an awareness that rhythm in Das’s poetry is both stylistic and thematic, embodying tranquillity and the progression of time. In contrast, Choudhury’s rendition—“Hay from duck’s nest / Hay from bird’s nest / Spreading everywhere”—exhibits structural resemblance, although it lacks gentleness. The expression “spreading everywhere” appears abrupt and vague, undermining the contemplative quality. Venuti (1995) may contend that this exemplifies “domestication,” wherein fluency supersedes the foreignness and nuance of the original text.

A further illustration of rhythmic importance is found in the line: “Jibon giyeche chole amader kuri-kuri bochorer par.” The reiteration of “kuri-kuri” (twenty-twenty) establishes an auditory motif that emulates the cyclical and accumulative progression of time. It is not solely a numerical focus but also an emotional and rhythmic mechanism. Choudhury elucidates this by stating: “Our lives have elapsed for twenty years—a score of time.” Although “a score time” is lyrical, the absence of repetition eliminates the cyclical cadence and diminishes the emotional crescendo. Jakobson (1959) emphasises that literary translation entails “creative transposition,” necessitating the transposition of both meaning and stylistic expression. The inventive transposition here is inadequate.

In his rendition, Alam states, “Our life having flowed on for twenty long years,” omitting the exact repetition while employing “flowed on” to evoke a rhythmic fluidity. It encapsulates the continuity and gradual passage of time, harmonising with Das’s contemplative tone. This corroborates Lefevere’s (1992) assertion that translation frequently entails negotiation—form may concede to emotional integrity provided that rhythm and tone are preserved. Seely’s rendition—“Twenty, twenty long years from now when our lives will have been expended”—preserves the repetition, which is praiseworthy. The term “will have been spent” conveys a formal and conclusive tone, contrasting with the calm, contemplative ambiance that Das fosters. Despite the preservation of

formal characteristics, tonal accuracy may be undermined, reflecting Bassnett's (2014) warning that aesthetic impact is as significant as structure.

A further instance of audio layering is apparent in the line: "Norom-norom hoy shor kash hoglay." The recurring phrase "norom-norom" (soft-soft) generates a soothing, sensual gentleness that conjures the gradual warmth of the natural surroundings. Seely interprets this as: "Softens among reeds and grasses." Although the meaning is maintained, the auditory texture is diminished. The redundancy is supplanted by a singular verb, diminishing the emotional and rhythmic effect. Berman (1985) refers to this as a loss of "rhythmicity" – a distortion that deprives the poem of its hypnotic essence.

Alam's translation – "Soften in reeds, weeds, tall grass in fields!" – is vivid in picture and rhythmically complex. The accumulation of nouns disrupts the fluidity of the sentence. The repetition is lost, and the musicality diminishes, while the semantic field stays unchanged. Choudhury strives to preserve the repetition: "The waters yellow becomes soft & softer." This version more accurately reflects the duplication of "norom-norom." Nonetheless, the phrase is clumsy – "the waters yellow becomes" is grammatically stretched, so disrupting the poem's cadence. Venuti (1995) asserts that when translators attempt to replicate sound patterns without maintaining grammatical equilibrium, the outcome may appear strange in the target language. Collectively, these instances illustrate that melody is often one of the most frequently undermined aspects in cross-lingual poetic translation. Fakrul Alam typically maintains poetry rhythm and structure; however, not all auditory aspects are preserved. His translations demonstrate an acute awareness of the emotional cadence inherent in Das's poetry. Seely exhibits a degree of rhythmic coherence but favours literary formality and semantic precision, potentially compromising the overall mood. Choudhury, despite his attempts to convey gentleness and repetition, frequently disrupts the rhythm with clumsy vocabulary and an erratic tone. Ultimately, rhythm in Das's poetry is not ornamental; it is fundamental to the reader's contemplative engagement. Bassnett (2014) and Jakobson (1959) assert that the emotional tone and poetic rhythm are fundamental to literary translation, and any variation from these elements can profoundly impact the reader's perception of the poem.

Symbolic Layering

Jibanananda Das's "Kuri Bachar Pare" is imbued with natural imagery that transcends mere description, serving as a symbolic framework that evokes memory, loss, and the ephemeral aspect of existence. Trees, birds, moonlight, and rural pastures serve as cultural and emotional signifiers intricately woven into

the Bengali psyche. Venuti (1995) observes that culturally ingrained metaphors and symbols present considerable obstacles in translation, especially when they possess nuanced meanings associated with the original culture. These symbols, linked to seasonal cycles and shared memory, necessitate meticulous handling to preserve their emotional depth in the translation process.

One such image is seen in the line “Chad majhrate ekrash patar pichhone” - a bizarre representation of the moon partially obscured by a cluster of leaves. The concealed moon implies unattainable beauty, alluding to the delicacy of memory and the enigmatic aspects of desire. Alam interprets this as: “Perhaps the moon will emerge at midnight behind a cluster of leaves.” Although the image is preserved, the expression- specifically “will appear”- fails to convey the ambiguity and nuanced appeal of the original. Berman (1985) posits that such translation decisions frequently jeopardise “clarification,” a distorting inclination wherein ambiguity and symbolic nuance are supplanted by directness, hence diminishing interpretative depth.

Choudhury’s rendition- “Perhaps the moon manifests at midnight behind a veil of foliage”- demonstrates greater efficacy in expressing metaphorical depth. The expression “a screen of leaves” presents a poetic barrier that emphasises the ideas of concealment and emotional detachment. This corresponds with Bassnett’s (2014) assertion that a translator must interact with the poem’s metaphorical economy, maintaining the interpretive ambiguity that characterises its symbolic potency. Seely states: “The moon may have arrived at midnight, concealed behind a cluster of leaves.” The term “hovering” maintains a surreal ambience, whereas “spray of leaves” brings a levity that fails to reflect the density and coverage suggested by “ekrash pata.” Seely preserves tonal integrity, but, as Lefevere (1992) contends, a translator’s cultural decisions may recontextualise or diminish the symbolic significance of the original.

A moment rich in symbolic significance is encapsulated in the phrase “Shirisher othoba jammer, jhawer-amer.” The trees mentioned- shirish, jam, jhaw, aam- are significant; they serve as poignant symbols of the Bengali rural landscape, conjuring seasonal transitions and childhood reminiscence. Alam’s rendition – “Of shirish or jam, Mango-tamarisk trees” – preserves the indigenous terminology while incorporating comprehensible descriptors. This hybrid tactic reflects Venuti’s (1995) concept of a “foreignising” approach, which eschews total domestication, enabling the target-language reader to engage with cultural specificity without feeling alienated.

Seely adopts a more audacious stance with: "Slender dark branches of the shirish or jam, the jhau – the mango." His employment of unaltered Bengali plant nomenclature underscores cultural authenticity. This enhances symbolic complexity and prevents simplification; however, it may create interpretive challenges for global audiences. Nonetheless, Seely's decision reinforces Berman's (1985) assertion regarding the ethical obligation of translation to honour the foreignness of the original text. Choudhury, conversely, distils the phrase to: "Either raintrees or roseapples, Tamarisks - Mangoes." Choudhury chooses complete domestication by substituting "Shirish" with "raintree" and "jam" with "roseapple." This translation is botanically precise yet emotionally vacuous, eliminating the metaphorical closeness and cultural significance of the original.

A third symbolic emphasis is seen in the line "Sonali-sonali chil-shishir shikar kore niye geche tare." The reiteration of "sonali-sonali" (golden-golden) and the depiction of dew "pursuing" the kite discreetly convey the transience of beauty and recollection. Alam interprets this as: "Golden, golden kite- enticed by the dew!" In this instance, Alam preserves both the recurrence and the subtle tension between existence and absence, encapsulating what Bassnett (2014) refers to as the "emotional cadence" of poetry. His phrase- "lured away" - maintains the subtle obliteration intended in the original.

Seely's translation- "That hawk, a golden gold – stalked by the dew –" maintains poetic structure while modifying the tone. The term "stalked" conveys a predatory connotation, transforming the symbolic meaning from graceful disappearance to active pursuit. Jakobson (1959) contends that poetry translation must respect not only semantic content but also "equivalence in the same function." The equivalency is undermined by tone variation in this instance. Choudhury interprets the passage as: 'Brilliant-golden hawk – the dew has already hunted and removed it'. This rendition is excessively literal and devoid of any poetic nuance. The expression "hunted and taken it away" implies violence, altering the original's ethereal delicacy and contemplative sense of loss.

These examples illustrate that the metaphorical imagery in Das's poetry is intricate and culturally rich, requiring the translator to possess both poetic sensibility and cultural expertise. Fakrul Alam regularly excels in preserving this symbolic intricacy. His translations preserve original Bengali terminology while judiciously incorporating explanatory additions- a technique that embodies Venuti's (1995) equilibrium between foreignization and reader accessibility. Seely, although acknowledging cultural specificity, occasionally over-

intellectualises or inserts tone differences that alter symbolic meanings. Choudhury, in his endeavour to domesticate and simplify, frequently eliminates the emotional and symbolic dimensions, resulting in translations that are more intelligible yet markedly less nuanced.

Translation Theory Application

To thoroughly comprehend the translational decisions of Clinton B. Seely, Fakrul Alam, and Deepankar Choudhury in their interpretations of Jibanananda Das's *Kuri Bachar Pare*, it is crucial to analyse their work through the framework of contemporary translation theory. Two fundamental frameworks- Roman Jakobson's interlingual translation theory and Lawrence Venuti's notions of domestication and foreignization- provide valuable insights into the negotiation of meaning across languages and cultures. These views demonstrate that poetic translation transcends a simple linguistic endeavour, constituting a cultural and ideological act profoundly shaped by the translator's perceptions of the reader and the role of literature.

Roman Jakobson (1959) asserted that interlingual translation entails the transference of meaning between languages, frequently requiring syntactic, lexical, and cultural adjustments. This is particularly evident in poetry, where translators must consider not only semantic meaning but also structure, rhythm, tone, and metaphor. An explicit illustration emerges in the interpretation of the phrase "Norom-norom hoy shor kash hoglay." The original's gentle reiteration elicits a palpable sense of tranquillity and languor. Seely's rendition – "softens in amongst reeds and grasses" – maintains the meaning but forfeits the auditory repeat, prioritising semantic accuracy over musicality. Alam eliminates the repetition of "norom-norom," while maintaining the poem's serene ambience through his selection of fluid diction. Choudhury's phrase "soft & softer" reflects recurrence yet falters grammatically, interrupting the aesthetic continuity. These examples exemplify Jakobson's theory in action: each translator strives for "equivalence in meaning" rather than a mere literal reproduction of form.

Lawrence Venuti's (1995) notion of domestication and foreignization enables an evaluation of how each translation navigates cultural specificity within the poem. Seely distinctly advocates for foreignization – a tactic that preserves the foreign cultural indicators of the source material. His incorporation of unmodified Bengali terminology like "shirish," "jam," "jhau," and "babla" indicates a commitment to maintaining the poem's cultural authenticity. This method forces the reader to interact with the text according to its inherent context, even if it involves confronting strange plant life and seasonal allusions.

Nonetheless, the cost of such integrity frequently results in diminished fluidity of readability or emotional accessibility. Venuti posits that whereas foreignization ethically honours the cultural distinctiveness of the source work, it may lead to reader alienation if not tempered with linguistic subtlety.

In contrast, Fakrul Alam employs a hybrid method that amalgamates aspects of both foreignization and domestication. He frequently preserves Bengali terminology such as “Kartik,” but elaborates on them with descriptive phrasing, for instance, “the late autumnal month of Kartik.” This allows non-Bengali readers to understand the cultural context without diminishing its distinctiveness. In interpreting symbolic phrases – such as “golden, golden kite – lured away by the dew!” – Alam preserves both the poetry cadence and emotional nuance. His style demonstrates a deliberate attempt to conform to Jakobson’s theory of functional equivalence while maintaining Venuti’s ethical equilibrium between clarity and cultural integrity. This equitable methodology renders Alam’s translation approachable while preserving the intricate symbolic landscape of Das’s original work.

Conversely, Choudhury’s work exhibits a distinct inclination towards domestication. He frequently substitutes culturally particular nouns with Anglicised or botanical equivalents – “shirish” is rendered as “raintree,” “jam” as “roseapple,” and “Kartik” is generalised to “a month of winter.” Such alterations may enhance reading but undermine the symbolic and cultural significance of the text. Moreover, Choudhury sometimes modifies narrative perspective and tone, exemplified by his transformation of a contemplative passage into the more imperative “You don’t remember anymore after twenty years.” Venuti (1995) contends that domestication obliterates the distinctiveness of the source text to prioritise fluency, hence prompting ethical issues regarding the translator’s invisibility and the uniformity of cultural expression. In Choudhury’s instance, clarity and simplicity are emphasised, but at the cost of the emotional intricacy and depth fundamental to Das’s poetics.

Analysed via the lenses of Jakobson and Venuti, it is evident that each translator’s endeavour embodies distinct goals in the intricate process of literary translation. Seely strives for cultural preservation and aural fidelity but sometimes sacrifices emotional impact and rhythm. Alam executes a meticulous balancing act, preserving lyrical structure and cultural subtleties while guaranteeing clarity and accessibility. Choudhury predominantly favours domestication, prioritising simplicity and superficial clarity; however frequently undermines the poem’s metaphorical profundity and contemplative tone. These

theoretical models illustrate that translation is not just the basic transfer of words between languages; it also involves a negotiation of ideology, aesthetics, and cultural philosophy (Bassnett, 2014; Lefevere, 1992). In translating “Kuri Bachar Pare,” each translator manifests a distinct interpretation of the essence of literary translation and its requisite preservation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study analysed the translations of Jibanananda Das’s “Kuri Bachar Pare” into English by three translators—Clinton B. Seely, Fakrul Alam, and Deepankar Choudhury—emphasising the intricate challenges of interpreting culturally infused and symbolically dense poetry. The comparative investigation of subject faithfulness, stylistic nuance, rhythmic structure, and translation tactics demonstrated that each translator offers a unique interpretive perspective that alters the poem's emotional and cultural impact. Fakrul Alam provides the most equitable translation, effectively conveying the introspective tone, nostalgic atmosphere, and cultural nuances of Das’s original work with precision and attentiveness. Seely’s rendition, while dedicated to cultural accuracy via foreignization, occasionally compromises the poem’s delicate musicality and emotional cadence, whereas Choudhury’s method—prioritising accessibility—frequently oversimplifies culturally complex aspects, thereby reducing symbolic profundity. This critique emphasises that literary translation is not a mechanical reproduction but a creative effort of reinterpretation, influenced by linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic negotiations. It emphasises that no translation can entirely reproduce the nuanced experience of the original, especially in poetry as regionally and emotionally rich as Das’s. Ultimately, “Kuri Bachar Pare” exemplifies the challenges and opportunities present in cross-cultural literary transmission, demonstrating that effective translation requires not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural sensitivity, poetic intuition, and theoretical insight, highlighting that each translation constitutes both a novel interpretation and a re-creation of the original work.

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