

# Translation, Culture and the Loss of Meaning in K R Meera's *Aarachar*



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**Abstract:** Translation, as a practice, has existed ever since the birth of civilization even though, its inclusion in the domain of scientific research did not take place until the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ability of translation to transcend the linguistic barriers has always been used to its advantage to promote traditions, practices and even ideologies. However, it is widely accepted that translation is incapable of the complete transference of meaning when the source culture and target culture are significantly divergent. The aim of the paper, therefore, is to analyze this loss of meaning through the comparative reading of K R Meera's *Aarachar* and its translation *Hangwoman* by J Devika. The source text was chosen for its significant contributions to the modern Malayalam literary tradition and the strong presence of cultural elements. Through this article, the researcher intends to trace the difficulties translator had to face during the process of translation and the extent to which the translator has succeeded in achieving an equivalence of meaning bound in a cultural setting. The concept of equivalence in translation defined by Nida and Newmark's and Vermeer's understanding of culture in translation is employed for this comparative reading.

**Keywords:** Translation, Culture, Equivalence, *Aarachar*, *Hangwoman*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In a nation where minorities are the majority, where invisible boundaries define one's identity more than the national border, the idea of nationalism is an ever-changing one. In a nation such as India, the idea of a national identity is an amalgamation of numerous layers of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, economic, religious, political and social diversity and therefore, has to be dealt with a delicate hand. Any attempt to erode this heterogeneity to develop a common Indianness would only result in the loss of this rich, multicultural mosaic.

Language, as we all know, is no mere medium of exchange of ideas but a cornerstone of culture itself and it plays a crucial role in understanding and appreciating a culture. However, in a nation that has more than 22 officially recognized languages with 15 different scripts, 100s of other

languages with 1000s of dialects, language itself becomes a barrier. It is at this point that we acknowledge the responsibility of translations and its effectiveness in confronting the problems of language as a barrier. In a multilingual community like India, translations are most effective due to its larger scope. The colonization, rampant globalization and India's attempt to be a global power in the 19th century has led to English gaining a prominent place among the Indian languages and has therefore resulted in a linguistically ambivalent India.

## II. TRANSLATION IN INDIA

Translations of regional texts into other regional languages and English are one of the most effective ways to promote intercultural communication and thereby develop a sense of togetherness since translations have the unique capability to transcend the language barrier without significant cultural loss. Even though the western theories of translation has had its influence in India, large majority of Indian translators still resort to the traditional methods that focus on maintaining equivalence of rasa than fidelity. Translations often undergo extensive changes due to the translators attempt to achieve this equivalence in translation. Numerous examples of such translations exist in Indian translation tradition. Narayana Menon's translation of the novel *Chemmeen* is such an example. Sujit Mukherjee describes it as an "instance of the translator practically usurping the author" (Mukherjee, 1981). Narayana Menon had edited and abridged the novel to suit the tastes of a western reader without any mention of it in the book.

Even though there has been an encouragement to promote an intercultural communication within India through translation between the regional languages, a considerable majority of the translations takes place between Indian languages and English. This is primarily due to the demands of the marketplace and to ensure the success of the author and the translated work. Besides, there is a decline in the number of translators who are linguistically competent enough to translate between two Indian languages. Therefore, translations between Indian languages are often mediated by English translation. G N Devy make an observation regarding this and points out that "the extent to which bilingual literary production has been accepted in India as a normal literary behaviour, and the historical length of the existence of such practice are indicative of India's 'translating consciousness'" (Devy.136).

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The effectiveness of translation can only be understood by a comparative study of the ST and TT and also through an analysis of the effect of TT and its similarities with that of the ST in the intended readership. The chosen texts for the comparative study are K.R. Meera's *Aarachar* published in Malayalam in 2012 and its English translation *Hangwoman* by the bilingual feminist scholar J. Devika in 2014. I have chosen this text due to the significant cultural load present in the ST.

The novel is also unique due to the fact that even though written in Malayalam, the novel is neither set or has no remote connection with Kerala. Even though the novel has traces of magical realism, it is not set in any fictional land and on the contrary, it is set in Kolkata in Bengal revolving around the family of hangmen with wide references to real incidents. Therefore, the text in itself has helped in an intercultural communication between Bengal and Kerala without the translation and when translated into English, the text expands its scope even to foreign audiences.

### III. MEERA'S AARACHAR AND DEVIKA'S HANGWOMAN

The novel, '*Aarachar*' is written by K.R Meera and initially published in a serialised format in a Malayalam magazine in 53 volumes and later published as a novel by DC Books in 2012. The novel is noted for its contribution to the change in literary trends in the Malayalam novels. It is considered to be a contemporary masterpiece following the footsteps of O.V Vijayan's *Kasakhinte Ithihasam*, another masterpiece in the Malayalam literary tradition. The novel is set in post-independent Bengal revolving around a family of hangmen whose lineage dates back to 420 BC.

Set in Chitpur, Kolkata, it brushes against the burning ghat of Nimtala by the Ganga, and bristles and hisses with the sights, sounds and stench of death around every corner. Indeed, death is the daily lifeline in this urban underbelly for it is only when their streets bustle with hearses, and corpses blaze brightly on pyres, that business is brisk for a family of hereditary hangmen, now sellers of tea to the bereaved.

The novel begins with the announcement of the rejection of Jatindranath Banerjee's mercy petition to stay his death sentence. This news brings great joy to the family of Phanibhushan Mullick, who is assigned the task of being his executioner. Even though he had sent 451 people to their death, he is an 88 year old man and the sole breadwinner of the family. He, therefore demands that his daughter, Chetna be given a government job. However his demand is rejected by the government and Sanjeev Kumar Mitra, an anchor of CNC channel dons the responsibility to assign Chetna as the successor of Phanibhushan Mullick. Chetna, the 22 year old girl is brought into the limelight as a crusader for women rights. Chetna's affinity to nooses were known to everyone even before her birth. The umbilical cord was the first noose around her neck. Soon after, she experimented her craft on the child next door and often during moments of boredom, she finds her fingers fashioning one from the ends of her dupatta. Sanjeev, besides duping Chetna's father, seduces her until she catches him photographing her handicapped brother. Despite her anger and hatred towards him, he tries to buy her and her father's loyalty by proposing to marry her. Chetna is torn between her desire for Sanjeev and repulsed

by his cunning character. This inability of Chetna sets the foundation of the plot. Eventually, Chetna is able to leave her dominating father and her unscrupulous and brutal lover and becomes a mascot for women's empowerment. She overcomes the last hurdle when she becomes a hangwoman and executes Jatindranath Banerjee.

The book heaves with violence, is lush with metaphor and shocks with details. The reader can only gasp at the surgical precision with which Meera describes the act of hanging. The noose, we are told, must be placed between the third and fourth vertebrae, only then does the neck break "as easily as a portia flower from its stem, with a single pull of the cord". The novel, according to the author was an attempt to shatter the reader and she has successfully managed to achieve it as evident from this dark, terrifying yet calm narration of 22-year-old Chetna describing her first kill.

My hand stayed on the lever. I felt nothing special. A man had died. The noose tightened on his neck. The vital blood vessel between the second and third vertebrae snapped and the blood flow to his brain ceased. His blood pressure rose dramatically. His heart stopped beating. The bones of his neck shattered in a way that made it impossible to stretch the spine. His eyes bulged inside the hood and his tongue stuck out. His new white clothes were stained with shit and urine. The blood rushed into his sexual organs and he had had an erection for the very last time. (Devika, 2014)

The novel proves that inquisitive imagination and corporeal adventurous journeys are essential qualities of a good literary work. She deserves a special accolade for her meticulous and impeccable study on the culture, language and geography of Bengal. According to the author, writing a novel that explored the place of women in India was a dream that she nurtured for long and was in search of a satisfactory backdrop until she saw Joseph Joshy's documentary 'One Day from a Hangman's diary'. The novel is an open and vivid writing about death as well as feminine experiences which are unknown to the world of men. Even though Meera focuses on her women characters, it is not a feminist novel in the true sense.

The novel *Aarachar* was translated by the bilingual feminist scholar J. Devika and published by Hamish Hamilton in 2014 under the title '*Hangwoman: Everyone loves a good hanging*'. Jayakumari Devika is a historian, social critic, a feminist and a well-known translator who has translated female writers of the Malayalam literary tradition from late 19th and early 20th centuries and even contemporary authors like Anitha Thampi, Nalini Jameela and Sarah Joseph besides K. R Meera. She is an expert in exploring contemporary political and social issues through a historical lens. She has published books, numerous essays in academic journals and has also delivered several talks around the world. She is also a social and political commentator who writes regularly on [www.kafila.org](http://www.kafila.org).

The novel though spanning only few days from the verdict of execution till the date of execution, it spans across 550 pages riddled with various, historical, cultural, and religious references.

The novel is a mirror towards the value conflicts existing in the law and order system in India as much as it is a feminist novel or a historiographic metafiction. The novel is deeply rooted in the Bengal culture with wide references to real places and incidents. The novel borrows liberally from the history of one of the last hangings in West Bengal where Dhananjay Chatterjee was hanged for the brutal rape and murder of Hetal Parekh by Nata Mullick the hangman. Even though the novelist has never spent enough time in Bengal to understand and appreciate the culture, she manages to write a novel deeply rooted in the culture with great dexterity.

Bengal and Kerala has a lot in common, whether it be the love for fish, communism, football, music or literature. However, Meera's choice of subject in Aarachar is alien to a Malayali reader. She manages to recreate the space and time of Kolkata through the novel, whether it be Chitpur home of the Mullicks, Alipore Jail, Writer's Buildings or Sonagachi the infamous red light district of Kolkata. Since the setting is alien to a Malayali reader, at first reading it feels like a translation of a Bengali novel riddled with some untranslatable Bengali dialogues.

Devika compares the process of translating Aarachar to that of a swimmer challenging the choppy seas and treacherous straights and in her acknowledgement thanks her various supporters and states that the process wasn't the result of an individual effort but rather a collective one. Most educated middleclass Malayali readers are exposed to competent translations of Bengali novels and vice versa, but however the novel Aarachar stands apart due to its representation of Bengal, though not truthful, it is a representation that has sunk deep roots in a Malayali reader and its unusual choice of subject.

#### IV. CULTURE, TRANSLATION AND LOSS OF MEANING

"India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only."

-Mark Twain

The underlying hypothesis of the project is that culture plays an important role in effective translation. This hypothesis takes into consideration the fact that every ST reflects the cultural viewpoints which are encoded in both micro- and macro linguistic structures. From the translation point of view, this is a point which could have serious implications in that the TT might be culturally slanted by the translator. This, of course, can be done intentionally or unintentionally. Some translation strategies could modify the ST author's ideology either unconsciously, because of lack of professional competence, a misunderstanding of the ST message or as a consequence of cultural differences between the ST and the TT, or consciously, in order to adapt the ST ideology to that of the TT readership, or to avoid being offensive towards the TT community, or directly to oppose or challenge the ST language and culture. In order to test this hypothesis it is my intention to do a comparative study whose function is to compare ST and TT from a cultural viewpoint. Nevertheless, it should be noted that general conclusions cannot be drawn from such an analysis since the

corpus selected is too small to allow this study to be exhaustive.

Language, in a broad sense is the product of culture and therefore has its influence on translation. According to Oxford Dictionary, the definition of "culture" varies from descriptions of plant and bacteria cultivation to the 'Arts' and includes a wide range of aspects in-between. Newmark defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (Newmark, 1988)[7]. Though he does not regard language as a component or feature of culture contrary to Vermeer's statement that "language is part of a culture" (Vermeer, 1989)[10]. When Vermeer's statement refers to the untranslatability of culture bound words Newmark only refers to the burden of translator in transcultural communication. Despite such differences, the notion of culture plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of translation. Eugene Nida finds a middle ground between the differences and assigns importance to linguistic as well as cultural differences between SL and TL and concludes that "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (Nida, 1964)[8]. It is further explained that parallels in culture often provide a common understanding despite significant formal shifts in the translation.

Newmark's understanding of culture portrayed in the novel being similar to the language used becomes problematic in this particular setting since the culture presented in the novel and the language used to convey this is not associated with each other barring the cultural similarities between Kerala and Bengal. Nevertheless, Nida's understanding of parallels in culture helps this novel due to the wide similarities between Bengal and Kerala. But to consider this the ST itself should become a TT and the ST then becomes is a non-existent novel written in Bengali set in the Bengal culture and both Aarachar and Hangwoman becomes TTs. This is assumed only to clarify Newmark's definition and relation of culture and translation and the text Aarachar would be referred to as 'ST' throughout the paper. The implications of culture in translation are of considerable importance along with other obvious lexical concerns.

According to Lotman "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language" (Lotman, 1978). [4] Lotman's understanding of the culture in relation to the language when applied to the particular ST fits perfectly. As mentioned earlier, since there is an evident lack of relation between the language and culture in the ST and the focus of the study is on the culture, the lexical impact on the readers will not be taken into much consideration. There are also a group of metalinguistic criteria that refers to the cultural entities present in the text.

Coulthard highlights the importance of defining the ideal reader for whom the author "attributes knowledge of certain facts, memory of certain experiences ... plus certain opinions, preferences and prejudices and a certain level of linguistic competence" (Coulthard, 1992)[1].

The extent to which such aspects influence the author depends on the author's own ability to situate himself or herself within a particular sociocultural group. This notion can be confusing when considered in reference to the particular text *Hangwoman* since the text deals with a culture alien to the author's own socio-cultural group. Nevertheless, the author's dexterity in dealing with the Bengali culture is unmatched as the translator Devika rightly described the novel as Malayalam's ultimate gift to Bengal. Applying these principles to the text, one could conclude that the ideal reader should have historical knowledge as well as cultural familiarity with Bengali customs. Their memory of certain cultural experiences could become their connection with the cultural situations in the text and other cultural elements (slums and markets of Calcutta). It is important at this point to establish that the target reader in this case is not the English speaking Indians but the English speaking foreign community. When these criteria are applied, it is observed that the potential target reader meets few of them. This is an expected result, since it is unlikely that the target reader will be able to fully understand and enjoy certain historical facts and cultural situation in the ST. However, the target reader may be able to find parallels of opinions or prejudices in his/her own culture. The core cultural and social aspects present in the ST becomes a concern when the cultural implications of the translation are taken into consideration. Therefore, it is necessary for the translator to decide how much information should be given to the reader to fill the cultural gap and how much is left for the reader to infer.

Different elements of the text, therefore, are proved to have strong cultural implications and has its subsequent effect on translation. These include the title, gestures and habit, food, history, geographical setting, religion, politics and even the concepts of death and marriage. However, the aim is not to compare but to establish the role of these elements in intercultural communication through the mode of translation.

The title of the Malayalam novel is translated into English as *Hangwoman*, a feminine word, even though in Malayalam it remains a gender-neutral word usually referring to a man, since it was uncommon for a woman to occupy the post of a hangman. The translator refrained from using a gender neutral word like 'Executioner' as an equivalent alternative to refer to the female protagonist of the novel. Unlike the word 'Aarachar' a simple gender-neutral noun, 'Hangwoman' is an endocentric compound word consisting of the verb *hang* + noun *woman* referring to a woman that hangs people. The title in Malayalam evokes an elusive and powerful image of an executioner even though the novel has a most nothing to do with it whereas the title of the translated text though evokes none of those feelings, remain true to the content of the text. This further helps a foreign reader to understand the idea even before reading it. The title can also be considered as having cultural implications for translation. According to Newmark, in literary translation "the title should sound attractive, allusive, suggestive ... and should usually bear some relation to the original" (Newmark, 1988). The aim to portray such culturally bound words is seem to be relevant here and therefore, the title could be seen as the translators attempt at conveying certain other aspects of the narrative.

"Food is for many the most sensitive and important expression of national culture; food terms are subject to the widest variety of translation procedures" (Newmark, 1988). Food, as we all know, is an important part of the culture. It is also an expression of cultural identity with traditional cuisine being passed down from one generation to the next. In this case, food plays an important role in people's lives and influences their culture. Many cultures have different varieties of food and ingredients and this is a fusion of foods and culture. This relationship between food and culture is very evident in the novel whether it be the exotic hilsa fish curry or the rice gruel. The hilsa is no mere fish in the novel, it represents everything pure and feminine and for Chetna, it is her own sister Niharika who was married and sent off to Bardhaman and returned but only to commit suicide.

Bengal's love for the hilsa fish is very famous and throughout the year it attracts thousands of tourists who falls in love with the smoked, dried, fried, baked, and steamed or the curry hilsa. When the author resorted to the use of the words 'Hilsa' which is the common name for the fish as well as 'Ilish' in Bengal to refer to the fish, the translator has only used the word *Ilish* throughout the novel, thereby maintaining her approach to the translation as a formal one, being well aware that it would not help the readers to relate to it. It is very evident that the translator has attempted to retain all the possible cultural references without dynamically changing it to suit the target audience's needs. In this case it seems to correspond to the idea of the original signification, even if it is a more abstract translation of the original, and is therefore more appropriate concerning its function in the TT than a translation of formal equivalence. This corresponds to the Coulthard's description of the new ideal reader with diverging cultural knowledge (Coulthard, 1992:12) since the target reader might not be aware of the name of the fish or its cultural and social associations.

According to Newmark, gestures and habits are "often described in 'non-cultural' language" (Newmark, 1988). Many gestures and habits are not specifically described and only implied, thus making translation difficult. This non-cultural language in fact contribute to a major share in establishing and identifying one's identity whether it be, cultural, ethnic, religious or even national. The problem here however is not the presence of it but the inability to classify or sometimes even translate them as often they represent an untranslatable entity in a cultural context. The novel being deeply rooted in the Bengali culture, the 432 pages are riddled with such gestures and habits and these often overlap with other entities like religion, politics and history and therefore remains elusive to further classifications. The setting too plays a role in this as evident in the first page itself where Chetna describes her domain to the readers.

We have been here for ever so long-long before the Europeans divided Kolkata into White and Black towns, before the Basaks and Seths set up villages besides the Hooghly.

Though cramped, grimy and smothered by moss today, the heart of Chitpur lies in Rabindranath Thakur's family home, JorasankoThakurbari. ...If you start from Lal Bazar and walk along RabindraSaranion which the trams crawl, past the printing presses, the knife sellers and the tabla shops on Madan Chatterjee Lane, you come across Jatrapara, the offices of the drama troupes. Straight ahead are the red-lit streets of Sonagachi and Kumortuli, where idols of gods and goddesses are sold. ...into the lane towards the cremation ground. Night and day, the road in front of our house bustled with mourners,

loaders, barbers, cobblers, ear cleaners, vendors and beggars, pushing and shoving in the flow towards NimtalaGhat. Motor vehicles, pushcarts, horse carts, the bells ringing in wayside shrines and the bleating of sacrificial animals created a din louder than the circular trains. The mingled scents of sweetmeats cooking in ghee and sunflower oil, and corpses burning on pyres enveloped us. (Devika, 2014)

The novel from its first page till its end is littered with historical narratives so much so that it aptly fits into the category of a historiographic metafiction. It is no mere history of few centuries but millenniums spanning from 420 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. History in fact plays a role so crucial throughout the novel that it defines the identities of all the characters in the novel whether it be Chetna with a family lineage of hangmen dating back to 420 years before the Jesus Christ or Sanjeev Kumar Mitra, the son of a thief from Kerala and a prostitute. Even with no executions to fall back on after 1990, Chetna's grandmother, ThakumaBhuvanewari Devi, continues to hold on to the bygone glory (mirrored in a solitary gold coin left over from a purse gifted by a raja of Gwalior) and dins it into her granddaughter that it is the Grddha Mullicks' karma to kill, and kill they will and must, "for the sake of justice".

A better part of the novel is loaded with memory narratives referring to a precolonial, ancient or even a mythical India. These historical references and narratives are loaded with cultural references which are alien to a foreigner and some even to a non-Bengali. The translator however has refrained from placing these references and narratives in a setting for a foreign reader to understand thereby rendering a TT culturally similar to ST. Due to the lack of cultural knowledge of the target reader, the translator has to convey notions in a certain manner that are intelligible to the readers. Nida, while elaborating on the principles of dynamic equivalence, states that "the emotional tone must accurately reflect the point of view of the author" (Nida, 1964). [8] Newmark's understanding of compensation, being "when loss of meaning...in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part" (Newmark, 1988) [7] is relevant here. Through this method of compensation, the culturally implicit translation loss is counterbalanced and this seems to be an appropriate way to convey the cultural implications of the ST. As Sapir claims, "no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality" (Sapir, 1956). [9]

The history of football in India is an interesting one. Brought in India by the British to sow the seeds of

colonialism, it grew on to develop a sense of nationalism in the later century primarily in Bengal. The game of football is often represented as an important part of Bengal's culture and Meera makes ample space for it in her novel. It is the only comfort for the bedridden Ramu who forgets all his pain while watching the football matches by reliving his past days playing football with his friends. The game in a sense implies his longing to be out in the world and in a much broader sense even refers to the traces of colonialism left behind by the British. The translator however remains impartial to the cultural significance the game has on the minds of Bengali people yet is capable of conveying Ramu's love and helplessness to the foreign readers. Malayalam, unlike English is a very complex language capable of conveying very complex emotions and in a sense can be said to be much alive than English and it has indeed made the translators job very difficult. Meera, though impartial in describing the role of football in Bengal, evokes a powerful and emotional image through her choice of words. The Malayalam novel retains its majestic style even while describing the slums of Bengal.

It should be no surprise that in a nation like India with as many as 2000 political parties, politics is as important in determining one's identity as one's language or even culture. With a good majority of these parties limiting themselves within state, language, caste or even religious boundaries, one's political identity is very crucial and a glaring reality even in a modern India. The novel, set in post-independent Bengal, clearly showcases these political realities with almost truthful references from the political history of India. However, as any other culture bound entity, politics too becomes a hurdle for the translator especially when the target audience is unfamiliar with a political setting as complex as in India. India is one of the few countries where communism as a political party still exist. Bengal was under the rule of communist party for 34 long years till 2011 when the party was defeated by TMC-INC alliance headed by Mamata Banerjee. Even so, the state is considered to be one of the strongholds of the party partly owing to the support of the left government towards the immigrants who went on to occupy and become a major population in West Bengal.

As evident from the above paragraph, politics is clearly an identity defining power in India and when dealing with such a powerful subject, any author has to be careful so as not to hurt the sentiments or resort to unverified facts as basis for the fiction and when such fiction are translated into other Indian or foreign languages, it is the burden of the translator to remain aware of the action and its consequences.

Newmark, while translating cultural words and notions, suggests two opposing methods: "transference and componential analysis" (Newmark, 1988). Transference, according to him, gives "local colour," retaining cultural names and concepts. [7] However, when focusing on the culture, comprehension of few communicative aspects become difficult for the readers. This leads Newmark to describe "componential analysis", which he describes as "the most accurate translation procedure, which excludes the culture and highlights the message" (Newmark, 1988).

[7]

The idea of marriage is another culturally bound construct in India. It remains unique to each caste, religion and state in India and it is very different from the western concept and idea of marriage and relationships. Chetna in the novel becomes an object that is exchanged or used for the value that she has by Sanjeev Babu who desires to marry her to elevate his career as a journalist and also by her own father who uses her to earn money taking advantage of her popularity. Even her own feelings for him betrays her when she is unsure of her feelings. She is torn between herself and the novel celebrates her liberation. In the final, terrifying and simultaneously liberating moment Chetna feels "something stir in [her] blood and emerge into the open, shooting out through [her] flesh." [2][5] As any other construct bound in culture, this too requires attention while translation.

The concept of death is another important construct that is culturally bound especially in the east. The death that you find in the novel does not evoke an image of a dead body in a suit lying in a coffin with a smile on its face in a serene but melancholic setting but rather an image of a termite and moth eaten rotting half burnt piece of flesh on the banks of Ganga. This image is capable of churning one's stomach and is almost alien to a foreign reader and it will remain so even after translation. The dynamics of death by hanging are sold in exclusive primetime slots, making overnight celebrities of father and daughter which further alienates this concept.

There are some powerful vignettes that lose the magic when translated such as this one of Chetna's first encounter with the tool of her new vocation:

"I stepped into the room on trembling feet. The awful scent of the air trapped in the room assailed me. I too sneezed four or five times. Father paid no attention; he opened the lid of the box. My hair stood on end. Inside the box, ropes that were a century old lay coiled, like enormous black cobras preparing to lay eggs. 'This will do, Sibdevbabu ... do you know what this is? It is the one with which we hung two fellows together ... the best stuff' (Meera, 2012) [2][5]

This concept of death is present even in the theories of equivalence and its difference in east and west. Translators in the west were often obsessed with the idea of equivalence. The obsession of the west with the authentic and the original and the desire to capture its true meaning has its parallels with the theological concepts of a lost paradise and the attempts to regain it. original and the anxiety of not being able to capture the meaning is in some way connected to the theological concept of a paradise that has been lost and has to be regained. However, according to the Hindu belief systems, life is not a linear progression from birth to death by a cyclic and constant transformation of soul from one body to another. An original state therefore does not exist. Hence, the almost metaphysical obsession about equivalence that haunts translation activity in the west is alien to us.

## V. CONCLUSION

Since the aim of the paper was to assess the role and loss of culture in effective translation, it is necessary to bear in mind that translation loss is inevitable to a certain degree when the text is strongly bound to the cultural aspects. Due to the nature of the text and the lack of similarities between the source and target culture, the translator had to indulge in

certain omissions and additions to preserve certain references to the culture. Formal equivalence therefore was not sought after, as this was not justified when considering the requirements of the ideal TT reader. Complete dynamic equivalence is not desirable either as certain cultural elements need to be preserved in order to convey the aim of the text. Therefore, due to the strong presence of cultural implications, the use of either of these two extremes is not justified.

J. Devika, has clearly managed to create an almost near replica of the masterpiece with her control over the language. Her identity and relationship with the culture of the author could have also helped her to render a faithful translation. However, it is also evident that it has failed to help the foreign reader in understanding the TT due to its strong relationship with the culture in ST, but perhaps that might have been her aim all along; to introduce the Bengali culture to a foreign audience as it is without any dilution, thereby being true to the culture. The ST therefore has been able to promote a transcultural communication not only between Bengal and a foreign English speaking audience but also between Bengal and an English speaking Indian audience.

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