

God

BANAFUL
TRANSLATED BY MEHEDI HASSAN

A tiger kept prowling around a village, and naturally, the people became frightened. The cows, the calves and even men were mauled to death by the tiger. Then everyone killed the tiger with sticks, spears, lances, and guns. But when one was gone, another one came. At last, the people prayed to God,

"God, Please, protect us from the tiger."
God replied, "Okay."
A moment later, the tiger made a complaint to God, "Men have inflicted torture on us. We have been running away in terror from one forest to another. The hunter always chases us. Please, save us from them."

God said, "Sure."
Right then, Nera's mother sent a prayer, "Oh father, give my son, Nera, a beautiful bride. Please, Lord! I will make offerings of sirni (sweets) worth five paisa to you."
God said, "All right."

Harihar Bhattacharya was going to court to file a lawsuit against his nephew. He said to God, "My Lord, I have been performing puja all my life. See how frail I've become due to fasting. I want to teach him a good lesson. Please, God, support me."

God Said, "Okay."
Shushil will sit for the exams. Every day he prayed to God, "Lord, make me pass the exams." Today, he confided in God, "If I can get the scholarship too, I will feed the poor."
God said, "Fine."

Haren Purakayastha wished to be the chairman of the District Board. He requested God via Kali and a priest, "I need eleven votes!" Having received an honorarium, the priest irked God by pronouncing erroneous Sanskrit mantra.

God hurriedly said, "Okay, Okay."
Farmers cried, "Make the rain fall."
God said, "Yes, yes."

A mother of a sick child pleaded to God, "He's my only child. Please, Lord, don't take him away from me."
God said, "All right."

An elderly woman, aunt Khenti, from next door complained to God about the same mother, "Hey Creator, she is an arrogant woman. Wearing new Jewelry she swells like a turkey. You have done a great job by making her child suffer. Punish her a little more."
God said, "Oh."

A yogi said, "God, I want to unravel your mystery."

God said, "Indeed!"
The Chinese implored God, "Defend us from the Japanese."
God said, "Sure."

A novice writer from Bangladesh told God, "No editor publishes my write-ups. I long to publish them in the *Probasi*. Tell Ramananda Babu to be kind to me."
God said, "Yes, sure."

When God finally had a chance, he whispered to Brahma who was sitting next to him, "Do you happen to have pure mustard oil?"
Brahma said, "Yes, but why?"
God replied "I need it. Can I borrow some?"

Brahma nodded.

As soon as the mustard oil came from Brahma's abode, God pinched some and poured it into his nostrils and fell into a deep sleep.

He has been sleeping ever since.

Mehedi Hassan writes short stories, poems and articles. He also takes interest in translations.

POETRY HASAN AL ZAYED



Someplace Else

A morning perennially haunted by the memories of lovemaking coils into the warm bed of an old couple

A river wildly drunk with the flute of *Bari Siddiqui* wakes up to the nightmare of mundane life

A string of fake pearls from the distant neck of a beggar girl beacons smiling

(11 February 2019)

Untitled-1

You and I were two splinters of the same grenade
Once triggered, never meant to glue together
Or go back to the same place or time
After carnage
Not mend

(13 February 2019)

Untitled-2

It's busy here
We can't dance on the roof,
Nor loiter
The goli has become too narrow,
Crowded
Sign of fatigue has settled down
Like dust
It's dusty here
We can't chat
Nor sing
A guitar in hand
And a voice loud and full as life itself
Rain soaked
Parched

(13 February 2019)

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HAPPENINGS

An Endeavor to Transgress Borders through Translation: 5th International Conference, Department of English, EWU

SHAZED UL HOQ KHAN ABIR

Translation studies is a newly emerging area of interest among academics and practitioners of English language and literature. Living in a time when diversity in cultures and thought is celebrated, and metanarratives are problematized continuously, people have been embracing translations as a way through which they can achieve variety in ideas and thoughts. Keeping this in mind, The Department of English, East West University, in line with its tradition of arranging successful national and international conferences, organized a two-day international conference under the title – 'Transgressing/Transcending Borders Through Translation' on 25-26 January of 2019.

Friday, 25 January 2019
The conference commenced in the presence of well-known academics as well as nationally and internationally renowned translators. Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Chairperson, Board of Trustees, congratulated the department of English for organizing the conference and pointed out that the conference was the brainchild of Dr. Saidur Rahman Lasker, a member of the Board of Trustees. Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, recapitulated the history of translation studies in his short speech, having adorned the ceremony as its Chief Guest.

Professor Kaiser Haq, former professor of Department of English, University of Dhaka, who is currently a professor and the Dean of ULAB school of Arts and Humanities, delivered the inaugural speech while Professor Fakrul Alam, who also retired from DU recently and as the Pro VC of EWU - chaired the session. In his speech entitled – "On Being a Writer – Translator" Professor Haq threw light on the tripartite classification of translators, - professional, accidental and creative translators and shared his experience of working in all these different domains willingly, and sometimes on request.

Professor Haq's speech was followed by several parallel sessions; among them were sessions on – "Theory, Culture and Postcoloniality of Translation Studies; Poetry in Translation; Textual Interpretation and Translation; and Translation in Adaptations. In addition to all these parallel sessions where translation studies was approached and dissected from various academic, creative and theoretical angles, Dr Jacob Blakesley, University Academic Fellow in World Literatures of University of Leeds, and a renowned translator of poetry, delivered his keynote's address under the title – "The Sociology of Poetry Translation." The day ended with a panel discussion with Rifat Munim, Professor Fakrul Alam and Sohana Manzoor on translating from Bengali to English when the translators exchanged views on translating between these languages and also shared the experiences of translation.

Saturday, 26 January 2019
The second and final day of the two-day International conference began with two parallel sessions, both titled – "Classics in Translation" and "Translation in Popular Bangla Fiction," where old Bengal classics like *Ayeshamangal*, as well as groundbreaking



works of our greatest poets like – Tagore and Nazrul were discussed. In the following session, Professor Niaz Zaman, in her talk entitled – "Father Tongues, Mother Tongues and Other Tongues" noted that to do justice to the original text, a translator should know the source language well, but must have special proficiency in the target language too.

The next parallel sessions were entitled – "Translation in Education, Gender and Development" and "Issues in Machine Translations," where the presenters approached translation studies from its applicability in the fields of Applied Linguistics and ELT. They discussed in their papers the feasibility of machine translation in academia and academic research works. These parallel sessions were followed by a Plenary presentation by Dr. Anisur Rahman,

Professor, Jamia Millia Islamia, in which he delivered his views on his experience of translating Urdu ghazals and through translating literary cultures. The last parallel sessions of the day had "Folk and Indigeneity and its scope in Translation Studies" as well as "Transition in translation" as themes.

There was a very lively student panel as well where young undergraduate students of various universities approached translation studies from their perspectives. They debated on the pros and cons of using code switching in media, of indigenous language learners of Bangladesh, and their impact on learning English; code switching in social media and its impact upon the younger generation of Bangladesh. They also evaluated how the shift from GTM to CLT had marginalized translation for a while. There

were two more students' panel that dealt with fiction in translation and culture in translation.

Among the international presenters, there were two participants from Turkey displaying keen interest in South Asian literature, especially on the works of Amitabh Ghosh and Monica Ali. One of the international participants from India was concerned with theoretical approaches and aspects of translation studies.

The final panel discussion, after which the concluding ceremony took place, had Professor Fakrul Alam as the moderator and Abdus Selim, Khairul Alam Sabuj, Mashrur Arefin, Sajjad Sharif and Kajal Krishna Banerjee as discussants. This lively session focused mostly on translation from English to Bengali. The panel discussions of both days were very fruitful and informative, as the discussants were not only from academia, but also from print.

This EWU conference was successful in stimulating thoughts among participants on this relatively less covered arena in English language and literature called translation studies. In Bangladesh, perhaps, it was the first full-fledged international academic conference on translation studies, where this subject has been approached, dissected and examined from all different point of views. Conference is a place where we all go and thus grow as academics and researchers. This international conference arranged by the Department of English has undoubtedly helped all its participants in that way.

Shazed Ul Hoq Khan Abir is a lecturer at the Department of English, East West University. He is also a creative writer and translator.