

CHAPTER IV

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: *SELECTED POEMS*

"A translation may be a *re-incarnation* but it cannot be *identical*". – Tagore.

(emphasis added)

In theory, only poets should translate poetry; in practice, poets are rarely good translators. They almost invariably use the foreign poem as a point of departure toward their own. A good translator moves in the opposite direction: his intended destination is a *poem analogous although not identical to the original poem*. (emphasis added)

Octavio Paz. "Translation: Literature and Letters". *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (1992).

The publication of William Radice's *Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Poems* (1985) marks the beginning of a new phase in the history of Tagore translations. This anthology of Tagore poems in translation, originally published in 1985, is reprinted with revisions in 1987, and revised again in 1993. This latest reprint has a new preface and an additional appendix, incorporated in 1994. This volume of poems contains a list of salient dates from Rabindranath's life followed by a fascinating introduction of 20 pages. Radice has selected 48 poems, arranging them in three sections, with 16 poems in each. The first group includes those poems dating from 1882 to 1913, the second consists of those written from 1914 to 1936, and the final section covers poems written during Rabindranath's last years, 1937-1941. Radice explains his 'internal principles of selection', confessing that they are intuitive and hard to define, the most important being 'contrast, balance, novelty and rhythm' (Radice.36). The *Glossary* of Indian words, at the end of the volume, is also detailed and informative for enabling the Western readers to appreciate Tagore's poems. His translation of his own works leads his Western admirers to regard him as 'a purely mystical and religious poet who always looks beyond the world of the senses for communion with the Infinite and the Eternal' (SenGupta 80). But this view presents a one-sided picture of Tagore's genius

rather than his versatility. It has been Radice's endeavour in *Selected Poems* to represent the wide diversity, the incredible range, the extraordinary 'poetic intellect' and the fabulous 'technical virtuosity' of Tagore rather than portray him as a 'mystic' poet (Radice 230). Naturally, this volume has been widely appreciated as a landmark publication in the history of Tagore translation in particular and poetry translation in general.

Radice's *Selected Poems* (1985) seems to have revived once again the controversy about the translation of poetry --- a controversy that is as old as the Tower of Babel. Though poetry has ever been considered untranslatable, the history of world literature is surprisingly replete with examples of excellent translations of poetry done by the poets down the ages. As Octavio Paz says, "[...] many of the best poems in every Western language are translations, and many of those translations were written by great poets" (Schulte and Biguenet 155). Nevertheless, there remains a sharp difference of opinions among the poets, translators and translation critics as to how poetry should be translated from one language to another.

According to Sir John Denham, the business of the translator is not just to "translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie" (Savoury 79). Rossetti's famous dictum -- "a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one"--- only confirms and reinforces what Denham claims (Lefevere 67). The Indian translation theorist A.K.Ramanujan concurs with the views of the Western translation theorists when he says that "nothing less than a poem can translate another" (Ramanujan 121). Goethe favours prose rather than verse rendering when it involves the translation of foreign literatures into the mother tongue: "a plain prose translation is best for this purpose" (Brower 60). Well aware of the limitations of verse translations Victor Hugo emphasizes the impossibility of a verse translation, "a good translation in verse seems to me something absurd, impossible" (Ibid 271). Hilaire Belloc seems to have echoed Hugo when he states that "translation of verse is nearly always better rendered in prose" (Savoury79). Thus, the age-old controversy surrounding the translation of poetry finally gets bogged down to the intractable problem of whether poetry should be translated in verse or in prose. But in *Translation and Translations* Postgate seems to have clinched the issue by declaring dogmatically that 'prose should be translated by prose and verse by verse' (Savoury79).

Disapproving of the verse translation of his poetical works Rabindranath Tagore pleads for their prose translation for the foreigners. Accordingly, he defends prose translations of his poetical works for the West, “My translations are frankly prose, --- my aim is to make them simple with a suggestion of rhythm to give them a touch of the lyric...” (Lago195). Like Matthew Arnold, he believes that prose translation of a poet is more poetical than the poetical renderings of his works (DasGupta 107). His translation of *Gitanjali* (1912) poems in poetic prose wins him universal acclaim leading to the award of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Radice’s translation of his poems into verse in *Selected Poems* (1985) followed by his defence of verse translation in his essay “Ten Rules for Translating Tagore” (1986) --- his “poetry should be translated into poetry”--- whips up the age-old controversy once again in recent times (Rao 35). Explaining why he favours verse translation of Rabindranath’s poems Radice says, “...I never considered anything other than a verse translation of his poems,... no prose translation could begin to approach Tagore” (Radice36). What he seems to imply is that Tagore’s verse is so imaginative and creative that nothing but poetic translation can successfully capture its elusive poetic essence.

Faced with the problem of translating poetry, professional translators, poet- translators and translation critics, down the ages, have evolved diverse strategies for the translation of poetry. Before we make an evaluation of Radice’s translation of Tagore poems, let us consider some of the views including Tagore’s own for rendering poetry from one language to another. Even though Tagore is fully aware that poetry is essentially untranslatable, he has expressed, from time to time, his well-considered views on this contentious issue. One can form an idea about his views by gleaning his utterances scattered here and there, especially in his letters, interviews, introductions or prefaces written by him to others’ books and private conversations with friends or acquaintances. In Tagore alone one finds an exquisite poetic exposition of the intricate problems of poetry translation and their imaginative solutions. In his essay “কবিতার অনুবাদ ও রবীন্দ্রনাথ” (2007) Alokeranjan DasGupta makes some insightful comments on some of those solutions. According to DasGupta, with Tagore poetry translation does not involve mere transmission of ideas, but the creation of an independent poem or what he calls elsewhere the ‘aesthetic transformation’ of the original into a separate poem. Drawing on the essential ideas of the original the translator creates a new poem in the

target language. For Tagore, translation of poetry, thus, becomes a creative act in which the ideas of the original are ‘reincarnated’ in the target language. While expressing his opinion on Surendranath Maitra’s excellent translations of Browning’s poems into Bengali Tagore emphasizes, by implication, that poetry translation is essentially a creative enterprise:

ব্রাউনিঙের কবিতাগুলিকে তুমি যে বাংলা রূপ দিয়েছ তা অপরূপ হয়েছে।
তাতে অনুবাদের ক্লিষ্টতা লেশ^স নেই, তাতে যেন নবজন্মের স্ত্রী প্রকাশ
পেয়েছে। সত্যেন্দ্র দত্তের অনুবাদে ছন্দোপন্যেয় সহজ লীলা দেখা যায়, কিন্তু
তুমি অসাধ্য সাধন করেছ। বিদেশী রসপণ্যের ভার নিয়ে তুমি এক ঘাট
থেকে অন্য ঘাটে খেয়া দিয়েছ দুর্গমতম উজান পথে, দুঃসাহসিক
নাবিকবৃত্তিতে এরকম কৃতিত্ব দেখা যায় না।

Your rendering of Browning’s poems into Bengali has been so marvellous that they have acquired the beauty of a new birth, having no strain of translation about them. Satyendranath Dutta’s translation shows a spontaneous expression of rhythmic excellences, but you have done something impossible having ferried across artistic cargo [read ‘creation’] of an alien origin successfully, negotiating the fiercest stream of the river. And the success you have achieved in such a daring act of navigability is unprecedented (my translation) .

(DasGupta208).

Tagore’s idea of translation as an act of ‘navigability’ is equivalent to the German word *ubersetzen* which means to ‘carry something from one bank of the river to its other bank’? A successful translation, as envisioned by Tagore, creates a new and independent poem in the TL, a poem that is re-incarnated with the ‘beauty’ and ‘glory’ of ‘a new birth’ in the receptor language. In order to bring about this ‘new birth’ the translator needs to have what DasGupta calls *প্রবণতার সাধন*, ‘a kindred temperament’ or ‘a temperamental affinity’ [my translation] with the original poet (Ibid 209).

Again, in connection with Kanti Chandra Ghosh’s translation of Omar Khayyam’s *Rubaiyat* Tagore takes up the problematic issue of poetry translation, underscoring its creative and poetic aspects:

এ-রকম কবিতা এক ভাষা থেকে অন্য ভাষার ছাঁচে ঢেলে দেওয়া কঠিন। কারণ এর প্রধান জিনিসটা বস্তু নয়, গতি। ফিট্জ জেডাল্ড ও তাই ঠিকমত তর্জমা করেননি – মূলের ভাবটা দিয়ে সেটাকে নূতন করে সৃষ্টি করা দরকার।কবিতা লাজুক বধূর মত এক ভাষার অন্তঃপুর থেকে অন্য ভাষার অন্তঃপুরে আসতে গেলে আড়ষ্ট হয়ে যায়। তোমার তর্জমায় তুমি তার লজ্জা ভেঙ্গেছো, তার ঘোমটার ভিতর থেকে হাসি দেখা যাচ্ছে।

It is difficult to cast the poetry of one language into the mould of another, for, its main focus is on dynamism rather than matter. Even Fitzgerald has failed to translate Khayyam accurately – one needs to re-create the whole thing with the feeling of the original...

Poetry, like a shy bride hesitates and falters to enter the inner world of one language from that of another. You have broken her shyness in your translation. The smile from within her veil is being seen.

(Tagore's Foreword to Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat translated
by Kanti Chandra Ghose.)

The poet Tagore here conjures up a vision of the elusive beauty of poetry that can only be captured in translation by a kindred poetic mind. According to him, a translated poem is a re-creation of the original, having a new life of its own. This implies that the translator must be a poet and his translation must also be a poetic interpretation of the original. Tagore's views on translating poetry have been echoed by two modern translation critics like Jackson Mathews and O.F.Babler. According to Mathews, "... to translate a poem whole is to compose another poem.... And it will have a life of its own, which is the voice of the translator" (Brower 67). Regarding poetry translation Babler goes one step further in declaring that, "...the translator ought to be a poet as well as an interpreter, and his interpretation ought to be an act of poetry"(Ibid 195). This raises the inevitable question of whether translation of poetry is identical to the original. The answer to this question may be found in Rabindranath's comment on Nirendranath's translation of Shelley's poem "One Word is too Often Profaned":

মূলের ভাবটাকে বাংলায় যথাসাধ্য বোধগম্য করতে গেলে একেবারে ঠিক তার মাপসই করে আঁট করা চলে না। তাই প্রতিরূপ না হয়ে কতকটা অনুরূপ হয়েছে।

If one attempts to make the translation as far comprehensible as possible, it is really difficult to cast it strictly in the mould of the original. It [your translation] has been somewhat *analogous rather than identical* to the original [emphasis added & translated] (DasGupta & Ghose 1369, 1962).

Thus, translation of a poem can never be identical to the original; it can at best be its interpretation or re-creation according to the poetics of translation. In an interview with *Musical America* Tagore clarifies as to what he has written to Nirendranath earlier: “A translation may be a re-incarnation but it cannot be identical” to the original (Cited in Lal 110).

In “Translating Greek Poetry” (1959) Richmond Lattimore holds almost the same view about translating poetry. Among the many objects which the translator of Greek poetry must strive to achieve, the chief one is “to make from the Greek poem a poem in English which, while giving a high minimum of the meaning of the Greek, is still a new English poem” (Brower 56). In order to compose such a poem in English the translator is required to interpret the original in the light of his subjective impression. Naturally, the ‘new English poem’ is created out of the union of the original “author plus [the] translator” (Ibid 49). Finally, the translator makes no attempt to reproduce original Greek metre and rhyme in his translation; for what he strives to achieve in his translation is a “re-creation’ rather than ‘reproduction’ of the original Greek poetry (Ibid 55).

Robert Frost’s definition of poetry as that which is lost in translation seems to have inspired and impelled Susan Bassnett to devote an entire chapter in defence of poetry translation in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (1998) jointly written by Lefevere and Bassnett herself. In Chapter IV entitled “Transplanting the Seed: Poetry and Translation” Bassnett begins her discussion of the topic referring to Shelley’s famous comment on poetry translation in his “Defence of Poetry”:

it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower – and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel. (Bassnett & Lefevere 58).

According to Bassnett, Shelley here speaks of the difficulties of the translation process rather than the ‘impossibility of translation’ (Ibid 58). Moreover, the imagery he uses is that of ‘change and new growth’ (Ibid 58). What Shelley seems to emphasize here is that though a poem cannot be transfused from one language to another, it can nevertheless be transplanted or created anew in the receptor language. “The task of the translator”, Bassnett continues, “must then be to determine and locate that seed and to set about its transplantation” (Ibid 58). And for this purpose the seed of the poem is to be located and then creatively sown on a new soil to enable a new plant to sprout out in a new ambience. In other words, the translator is required to play a creative role to bring about its ‘transplantation’ in the target language. When he succeeds in transplanting the seed, he emerges as what Jean Paris calls the “co-creator” of the original (Arrowsmith and Shattuck 62). This raises the question about the relation between the creative role of the translator and that of the original poet. In this connection, Bassnett quotes Octavio Paz who makes a vital distinction between the task of the poet and the task of the translator in his essay on translating poetry:

The poet, immersed in the movement of language, in constant verbal pre-occupation, chooses a few words --- or is chosen by them. As he combines them, he constructs his poem : a verbal object made of irreplaceable and immovable characters. The translator’s starting point is not the language in movement that provides the poet’s raw material, but the fixed language of the poem. A language congealed, yet living. His procedure is the inverse of the poet’s : he is not constructing an unalterable text from mobile characters; instead he is dismantling the elements of the text, freeing the signs into circulation, then returning them to language.

(Bassnett and Lefevere 66)

The poet moulds and adapts the language in order to embody his vision and to give it an 'unalterable status' by creating an independent poem. But the translator has a completely different task to perform. The translator starts with the 'unalterable' language of the original poem and sets about 'dismantling' it and 'reassembling' the parts in order to re-create a new poem in the receptor language. Paz argues that this process of freeing the 'signs' and investing them with a new meaning in a different language parallels and, in a sense, 're-enacts' the original creative process 'invertedly'. But that does not mean that a translation is a replica of the original. What the translator strives to create is not an identical text but 'an analogous text' in the target language. This implies that 'the translator is therefore not firstly a writer and then a reader, but firstly a reader who becomes a writer' afterwards (Bassnett 66). What happens as a result, says Paz, is that the original poem undergoes a change and comes to exist 'inside' another poem, being 'less a copy than a transmutation' (Ibid 66).

Theoretically, this liberating process is related to Walter Benjamin's idea of the translation providing the 'afterlife' of a text or to Tagore's idea of the 're-incarnation' of the original text. But this liberating view of translating never enters into the vexed question of whether a 'meta-text' is or is not an inferior copy of the original. The task of the translator is simply a different kind of 'writerly task', a task involving fidelity to the original and to his creative imagination. The translator is required to possess creative sensibility to compensate what the text loses in the process of its transfer from one language to another. According to Bassnett, poetry is, therefore, not what is lost in translation, as claimed by Frost, but what is gained or re-created through the shaping spirit of the translators' creative imagination (Ibid 74). Shelley's views of translation, as elucidated by Bassnett here, confirm and vindicate Tagore's concept of translation as 're-creation' or 'rewriting'.

Translation of poetry, in the light of the aforesaid views, requires that the translator should preferably be a poet in order to translate poetry into poetry. Secondly, the translator should be as much faithful to the spirit of the original as to his creative self that goes on clamouring within him for expression. Thirdly, the translator needs to be an interpreter and his interpretation of the original must be an act of poetry. Fourthly, the translation of a poem must be an independent work having a life of its own. A translated poem should have a

spontaneity of its own and must not look like a translation. Fifthly, the translation of a poem is very likely to be coloured by the time of the translator, for, a translation can never exist in a vacuum, without being shaped by the spirit of the time.

Even though William Radice agrees with most of the arguments of the apologists for the translation of poetry into poetry, he cannot accept Nida's views regarding 'the reproduction of the message rather than the conservation of the form' in a work of translation (Nida¹²). In the Introduction to *Selected Poems* he lays stress on maintaining metre, rhyme and verse-forms in his Tagore translations in order to get as close to the original text as possible. He believes that the greatness of a poet like Rabindranath lies as much in his verse-forms as in his contents. A translation of his poems cannot be 'credible' unless the qualities of Tagore's greatness are "carried across' to the target readers in both form and content. As a creative writer, Tagore has distinguished himself as "a perpetual innovator, constantly creating new forms and styles in poetry" and much of the meaning and power of his poetry, Radice believes, derives from its metre and form. As the translator of his poetry, Radice likewise tries to 'create equivalents for Tagore's wonderful range of verse-forms, metres and structural devices' to represent him in the TL (Rao 35) and to give the target readers an idea of his technical virtuosity. According to Radice, translation of Tagore's poems can never be 'credible' without fusing organically the wonderful range of his technical innovations into the poetic structure of the verses.

Radice's *Selected Poems* (1985) of Tagore marks the beginning of a new kind of Tagore translations. Unlike the renderings of his predecessors including Tagore, his selections turn out to be something more than conventional Tagore translations. It is intended to give a new and credible impression of Tagore's range and power as a poet. It also provides the readers with an extensive introduction and detailed annotation in order to help them understand the poems. Let us now examine the translations of some of the poems from *Selected Poems* of Tagore and see how Radice 'transcreates' them creating 'analogous' verse-forms in English and explores the versatility of his creative power.

Agaman is the only poem that Radice chooses from Tagore's *Gitanjali* (1912) and this is the first Tagore poem translated by him. Captivated by the driving rhythm of *Agaman* Radice intends to 'carry' it across in translation. Since the English language does not have this sort of compelling rhythm, he makes a commendable attempt to transplant this rhythm in his English translation with the help of some 'prop-words'. Let us look at the first verse of *Agaman*, or "Arrival" to drive home the point under discussion:

তখন রাত্রি আঁধার হল, সাজ হল কাজ—
আমরা মনে ভেবেছিলেম আসবে না কেউ আজ।
মোদের গ্রামে দুয়ার যত রুদ্ধ হল রাতের মতো--
দুয়েক জনে বলেছিল, 'আসবে মহারাজ'।
আমরা হেসে বলেছিলেম, 'আসবে না কেউ আজ'।

Our work was over for the day, and now the light was fading;
We did not think that anyone would come before morning.
All the houses round about
Dark and shuttered for the night –
One or two amongst us said, 'The King of Night is coming'.
We just laughed at them and said, 'No one will come till morning'.

Radice uses such additional words as 'dark', 'amongst us', 'of Night', to prop up the rhythm of the original in his translation. His verse achieves a semblance of the original's rhythm retaining its arrangement of lines and verse structure. But the resonance of the original rhythm that strikes a deeper chord in the native speakers eludes Radice's grip and he ends up creating an 'analogous' rather than 'identical' rhythm in his translation. The 'prop-words', used in this poem, seem to have played an interpretative role in bringing out much of the inner significance of the poem.

Radice's use of 'The King of Night' to signify 'রাজাধিরাজ', in the first verse, is definitely more meaningful than Tagore's use of the phrase 'the king' because the person expected to come is more than an ordinary king in dignity and stature. The expression 'The King of Night'

evokes the stature and importance of the would-be visitor more than the monosyllabic word 'king' that Tagore uses in his rendering. In the second verse, expressions like 'outer door' for the mere 'দ্বার' and 'they rattle when it blows' for 'বাতাস' are simply interpretative props for producing the desired effect. But the last verse of the poem seems to have deviated much from the original because of his excessive use of 'prop' or interpretative words. By contrast, Tagore's prose rendering of this verse in his *Gitanjali* (1912) is more faithful to the original than Radice's:

ওরে, দুয়ার খুলে দে রে, বাজা শঙ্খ বাজা—
 গভীর রাতে এসেছে আজ আঁধার ঘরের রাজা ।
 ঝঞ্জ ডাকে শূন্যতলে, বিদ্যুতেরই ঝিলিক ঝলে,
 ছিন্ন শয়ন টেনে এনে আঙিনা তোর সাজা—
 বড়ের সাথে হঠাৎ এল দুঃখরাতের রাজা ॥

Fling wide the doors and let him in to the lowly conch's boom;
 In deepest dark the King of Night has come with wind and storm.
 Thunder crashing across the skies,
 Lightening setting the clouds ablaze –
 Drag your tattered blankets, let the yard be spread with them:
 The King of Grief and Night has come to our land with wind and storm.

[Arrival – *Selected Poems*]

Open the doors, let the conch-shells be sounded! In the depth of the night has come the king of our dark, dreary house. The thunder roars in the sky. The darkness shudders with lightening. Bring out thy tattered piece of mat and spread it in the courtyard. With the storm has come of a sudden our king of the fearful night.

[Poem LI— Tagore's *Gitanjali*]

Radice's rendering of the last line, though interpretative to an excess, seems a bit off the mark whereas Tagore's is more precise and true to the spirit of the poem. But Radice succeeds in investing his translation with a poetic charm and beauty that exercises a hypnotic spell on the readers. On the other hand, Tagore's translation of the last verse has an

undercurrent of poetic grandeur that does not escape the attention of genuine lovers of poetry.

Another magnificent poem from Tagore's মানসী (1890) is মেঘদূত that he composes to commemorate Kalidasa's immortal masterpiece. Although this poem is written in Bengali rhymed couplet, with shifting caesura and constant enjambement, Radice uses quasi blank verse in his translation to capture the imaginative exuberance and majestic sonority of the original. The translation of such a poem poses certain problems for a translator and Radice solves them by adopting an interpretative rather than a word-for-word translation.

With all his great admiration for Kalidasa, Rabindranath cannot but give a creative twist to any theme he takes from him and that makes his treatment relevant to the modern times. For him, মেঘদূত symbolizes a message not from a love-lorn individual of yore to his beloved, but an expression of the yearning of all human lovers of all ages and climes (SenGupta). He begins the poem with a tribute to Kalidasa who has immortalized in his poem the sighs and pangs of the separated lovers down the ages. He then tries to visualize the atmosphere of the hallowed first day of Asadh on which the 'supreme poet' composed his timeless poem. In "The Meghdut" Radice follows the original with as much fidelity as possible for a poet-translator whose translation is no less creative than his own poetry. This seems to explain why Radice calls Kalidasa a 'supreme poet' while rendering Tagore's expression 'কবিবর'. Kalidasa is no ordinary poet for Tagore; he is a 'poets' poet' adored and venerated by the Indian poets of succeeding generations in every language. In order to express Tagore's reverence for Kalidasa and to convey his poetic stature among the Indian poets, Radice's rendering of 'কবিবর' as 'supreme poet' helps him to emphasize Tagore's respect for Kalidasa and his towering stature in Indian literature. The 'মেঘমল্ল গ্লোক' that Kalidasa employs for his poem presents a baffling problem for the translator. Radice tackles it very deftly by rendering the term interpretatively ["stanzas like sonorous clouds"] rather than literally ["cloud-sonorous stanzas"]. In his "মেঘদূত" Rabindranath, with his poetic imagination, conjures up a vision of the first day of আষাঢ় and his verse resounds with the resonance of the clouds, thunders and winds. It is with the sensibility and vision of a poet that Radice re-creates the

atmosphere of the first day of আষাঢ় and his verse reverberates with the sounds of clouds, thunders and stormy winds that normally characterize the first day every year:

সেদিন সে উজ্জয়িনীপ্রাসাদশিখরে
কী না জানি ঘনঘটা, বিদ্যুৎ -উৎসব,
উদ্দাম পবনবেগ, গুরুগুরু রব!
গভীর নির্ঘোষ সেই মেঘসংঘর্ষের
জাগায়ে তুলিয়াছিল সহস্র বর্ষের
অন্তরগূঢ় বাষ্পাকুল বিচ্ছেদক্রন্দন
এক দিনে ।

Who can say what thickness of cloud that day,
What festiveness of lightning, what wildness of wind
Shook with their roar the turrets of Ujjayini?
As the thunderclouds clashed, their booming released
In a single day the heart-held grief of thousands of years
Of pining.

Radice here departs from the original only to re-create it imaginatively and this departure is the prerogative of a creative translator that he is. But the rendering of 'বিচ্ছেদক্রন্দন' as 'grief of ... pining' in the above extract brings into focus the lack of correspondence between the two languages --- English and Bengali. It is because of this lack of correspondence between the two languages that Radice has to interpret some words, as and when necessary, according to their contextual meaning or significance.

The theme of Kalidasa's poem is 'বিরহ' or বিচ্ছেদ and the sending of a message by the 'pinning' lover to his faraway beloved through cloud. Consequently, Rabindranath's poem abounds in words or expressions such as 'বিরহ', বিরহী, 'বিরহিণী', 'বিরহের গাথা', 'প্রবাসী, 'অভিসার ' etc that defy word-for-word rendering. This is why Radice attempts to interpret them following the spirit of the original poem. The idea of 'বিরহ' associated with the love of

Radha-Krishna is one of the key concepts of Vaishnavite culture and literature; but this concept is totally foreign to Western culture and ethos. Since there is no appropriate word in the English language to convey the concept of 'বিরহ', 'বিরহী', 'বিরহিণী' etc. , Radice interprets them in accordance with the contextual meaning of the poem. His translations of 'বিশ্বের বিরহী' as 'separated lovers throughout the world', 'বিরহের গাথা' as 'Song of yearning', 'প্রেম অভিসার' as love 'trysts' and 'বিরহের স্বর্গলোক' as 'heaven of yearning' are interpretative in character. He finds no alternative but to convey the sense of those words in an interpretative manner while carrying them across in the TL.

Sometimes he tries to give his rendering an interpretative twist but fails to produce the desired effect. One may mention here the lines "শ্রাবণে জাহ্নবী যথা যায় প্রবাহিয়া" and "পাষাণের শৃংখলে যথা বন্দী হিমাচল" and Radice's translation thereof " *Compare* the Ganges in full monsoon flood" and "*Compare* the vapour that mountains, / Prisoners of their own stone" respectively. The use of the word in italics as the rendering of the word 'jatha' is far from appropriate. Radice could have used the conjunction "as" in the manner Amalendu Bose has done ["as in the month of শ্রাবণ the river গঙ্গা..." and "as the হিমাচল chained to its rocks ..."] in his translation of the poem included in *101 Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* (Kabir18). Radice's rendering of 'শ্যামবঙ্গদেশে' as 'verdurous Bengal' is reminiscent of Keats's poetry. But he might have owed his translation of 'শ্যামবঙ্গদেশে' ['verdurous Bengal'] to Amalendu Bose who first rendered it as 'verdurous Bengal' way back in 1966.

The highly Sanskritic language of Rabindranath's "মেঘদূত" with all its compound words and mixed metaphors poses a great problem for a translator. Radice solves the problem in a unique way; in some cases, he makes compound words after the original but, in most cases, interprets them for "carrying across" in the target language. Let us consider the following verse from Rabindranath's "মেঘদূত" which abounds in 'compound words' and 'mixed metaphors':

All this time, companionless people have sat in loveless rooms
 Through the long, rain-weary, starless evenings of Asarh.
 In faint lamplight, they have slowly read aloud that verse
 And drowned their own loneliness.
 Their voices come to me from your poem;
 They sound in my ear like waves on the sea-shore.

In the above verse Radice makes use of the following compound words: 'companionless' ('সঙ্গীহীন'), 'loveless' ('প্রিয়াহীন'), 'rain-weary' ('বৃষ্টিক্লান্ত') etc. The first two compound words such as 'companionless' and 'loveless' are very much in use in the English language. But Radice may be credited with coining the word 'rain-weary' after the original. In the case of the remaining compound words and mixed metaphors he simply undertakes the interpretative technique to convey their intended message or meaning in the TL.

সোনার তরী (*The Golden Boat*) is the famous title poem from Rabindranath's সোনার তরী published in 1894. This poem, translated by the poet himself, is included in *The Fugitive* that appeared from London in 1921 (Lago 1972: 150). In his translation Tagore turns a magnificent lyric poem into a lifeless skeleton and the text of *The Golden Boat* rendered by Tagore is given below:

The rain fell past. The river rushed and hissed. It licked up and swallowed the island, while I waited alone on the lessening bank with my sheaves of corn in a heap. From the shadow of the opposite shore the boat crosses with a woman at the helm. I cry to her, 'Come to my island coiled round with hungry water, and take away my year's harvest.' She comes, and takes all that I have to the last grain; I ask her to take me.
 But she says, 'No' – the boat is laden with my gift and no room is left for me.

(Das 252).

In his rendering Radice's endeavour is to make an independent poem on the basis of the original সোনার তরী. In *The Golden Boat* he strives to capture the content, structure and rhyme pattern of the original poem and to infuse poetic life into it with his creative imagination. Consequently, he succeeds in capturing the keynote of the original as well as the atmosphere

of Bengal's riverine landscape during the monsoon and that, too, in a verse form conforming to Tagore's own:

One small paddy-field, no one but me --
Flood-waters twisting and swirling everywhere.
Trees on the far bank smear shadows like ink
On a village painted on deep morning grey,
On this side a paddy-field, no one but me.

It is with the vision of a poet that Radice here re-creates the rural landscape and the loneliness of the reaper on a rainy day. But his re-creation of this landscape is marked by a translation shift-- a shift that is essentially interpretative rather than literal. This translation shift occurs in the following lines --- “পরপারে দেখি আঁকা/ তরুছায়ামসীমাখা/ গ্রামখানি মেঘে ঢাকা প্রভাতবেলা” as “Trees on the far bank / smear shadows like ink / On a village painted on deep morning grew.” Despite his fidelity to the original Radice's rendering of these lines are creative as well as interpretative. By contrast, Tagore's fidelity to the original --- be it in form or content--- is tenuous. He fails to 'carry across' much of the details of the rural landscape and the verse form of the original poem in his translation. As a result, the lyrical cadence and rhythmic movement of his original eludes the non-Bengali readers; and they do not have the faintest idea about the magnificence of the original poem. But in *The Golden Boat* Radice strives to give the target readers an intimation of the original poem which deals with the loneliness and alienation of man against the backdrop of a rural ambience during monsoon. The poem ends on a tragic note for the reaper's failure to get a berth in the boat along with his harvest, “ঠাই নাই, ঠাই নাই, ছোটো সে তরী,/ আমারি সোনার ধানে গিয়েছে ভরি”. The boatwoman proceeds with her boat leaving him sad and 'alone' on the river-bank. Radice re-creates the concluding part of the poem with the passionate feeling and imagination of a poet, in a verse form resembling that of the original:

No room, no room, the boat is too small.
Loaded with my gold paddy, the boat is full.
Across the rain-sky clouds heave to and fro,
On the bare river-bank, I remain alone --
What I had has gone: the golden boat took all.

In his desire to represent the original accurately Radice transplants Tagore's verse form in English with as much dexterity as possible. Rabindranath's সোনার তরী consists of six five-line verses with a distinct gap in the third line of each verse and Radice has preserved this gap in his translation. Interestingly, Tagore himself has not maintained in his translation the verse form of the original, for it is totally alien to his concept of translation.

'The Hero' is the rendering of Rabindranath's বীরপুরুষ from শিশু (1903). It is basically a poem of fantasy that carries the poet away into an imaginary world where the desires and dreams of the children come true. In his rendering Radice tries to capture this world of fantasy in an equivalently tight verse form to make the poem 'credible'. And his translation method is, as usual, interpretative and creative in this poem.

In 'The Hero' Radice captures the imaginary excursion into a world of make-believe ---the mother in a palanquin and the child on the horse-back – in a verse form used by Tagore in the original. But his rendering suffers from translation loss when he interprets 'বিদেশ ঘুরে' as 'Roaming far and wide together'. There is no denying the fact that he fails to convey the sense of 'বিদেশ ঘুরে' through his interpretative line. Both Rabindranath Tagore (Das 149) and J.C. Ghosh (Kabir121) succeed in transmitting this sense of 'বিদেশ' which is an inalienable part of the child- turned- hero's imaginary sojourn. At sunset, the child and his mother seem to have come to a জোড়াদিঘি a pair of ponds believed to be 'a good haunt of bandits in folklore' (Kabir121). Radice's interpretation of the line 'এলাম যেন জোড়াদিঘির মাঠে' ['Suddenly we are blocked by water'] fails to produce the desired effect on the target readers unless they have an idea of what 'জোড়াদিঘি' symbolizes in the poem. In the note to the poem Radice explains the word 'জোড়াদিঘি' as 'an area of open land adjoining a pair of ponds' (Radice140). Tagore prefers to retain the Bengali word 'জোড়াদিঘি' in his rendering whereas Ghosh decides to use 'two large ponds'. In his attempt to 'domesticate' the idea of 'জোড়াদিঘি' in the target language Radice may have used the line, 'Suddenly we are blocked by water', knowing well that the Western people are not acquainted with what is called 'জোড়াদিঘি' in Bengal. But

unless the idea of ‘জোড়াদিঘি’ as a favourite ‘haunt of bandits’ is communicated to the target readers, the mystery of the light by the pond followed by the subsequent storming of its bank by the dacoits remains unresolved. Radice’s interpretation of the last line ‘মরা নদীর সোঁতা’ as ‘dried-up river’ is really excellent. Both Tagore and Ghosh left this part of the last line of the verse untranslated. His rendering of ‘দিঘির ধারে ওই-যে কিসের আলো?’ as ‘Near the water, what’s that lantern?’ is an evidence of his imaginative and re-creative faculty. Then follows his interpretation of Bengali specific expression ‘হাঁরে রে রে রে রে’ [uttered by the dacoits] as ‘shouts and yells’. Ghosh translates it as ‘yo-ho-ho-ho’ (Kabir 122) whereas Tagore rewrites it as ‘there bursts out a fearful yell’ (Das 149).

In the rest of the poem Radice conveys the imaginary exploits of the child, in a unique verse form in which the first line rhymes with the second and both the first two lines with the seventh. He also follows, as far as possible, the arrangement of lines of the original and the total number of words in each line. In order to preserve the tight verse form of the original he has sometimes had to ‘compress or re-order the lines’. Let us look at the description of the dacoits in the following lines of the original:

হাতে লাঠি, মাথায় ঝাঁকড়া ছল—

কানে তাদের গোঁজা জবার ফুল

Radice ‘re-orders’ the above two lines making them three in his translation that follows:

Just imagine, *lathi*-wielding

Long-haired desperate villains wearing

Jaba-flowers behind their ears –

Again, his interpretation and re-ordering of the lines in the last verse of the poem is excellent. The persona of the poem wonders why such a fantasy does not come true instead of umpteen day-to-day happenings: ‘রোজ কত কি ঘটে যাহা তাহা-/ এমন কেন সত্যি হয় না আহা?’ Radice’s rendering of the line is creative and interpretative: “Life is such a boring matter, / Why are the exciting stories never / True?” And because of his re-ordering of the lines, the last eight-

line verse of the original is transformed into a seven-line one which contributes to the interpretative re-structuring of the verse.

The first World War (1914-1918) made a tremendous impact on Tagore's sensitive mind. Ahead of the outbreak of the war Rabindranath seemed to have sounded the 'trumpet of a prophecy' about the shape of things in the coming days. "The Trumpet", he writes to Rothenstein in December 29, 1914, "was written a fortnight before the war broke out" (Lago 175). Radice renders Rabindranath's শঙ্খ as *The Conch* which can well be identified with Panchajanya, Krisna's conch in the Mahabharata. Radice adopts the interpretative mode of translation which helps him to interpret and convey the profound symbolical words or expressions of the original.

Rabindranath's শঙ্খ is a passionate lament over God's conch lying down in the dust that augurs an impending catastrophe for the world. In his translation of the poem Radice tries to capture the sense of this 'catastrophe' in the following line: 'The tragedy of it cuts off air and blocks out light'. But this line cannot convey the catastrophic sense of 'বাতাস আলো গেলো নরে, একি রে দুর্দিন' of the original. Tagore's *Fruit-Gathering* contains a translation of the poem শঙ্খ (The Trumpet) done by the poet himself in which the foreboding of the catastrophe is beautifully captured, 'The wind is weary, the light is dead. / Ah the evil day!' It is the intimation of the impending catastrophe ['evil day'] that leads the poet to embrace the path of action rather than contemplation. Radice's rendering of 'শান্তিস্বর্গ' as 'heavenly quiet' is undoubtedly a shift in translation with an interpretative overtone. Again, the desire to be purified by washing off all dirty stains has been interpreted as 'my ablutions would purge me'. This interpretation brings to our mind the customary আচমন 'or ablution, which, according to *The COD*, is 'the ceremonial washing of parts of the body' before worshipping the deity.

The third verse of the poem that contains culture-specific objects and personal symbols poses a difficult problem for the translator. Radice is in favour of interpretative translation rather than the literal one. "Literal translation", he says in his "Translator's Diary" (1985), "is not

possible here, because the meaning lies between the phrases; and once again there is the problem of alien concepts and objects” (Radice 189). How can Radice convey the full meaning of ‘আরতিদীপ জ্বালা that is basically a culture-specific concept and ritual of the Hindus? How can he ‘carry across’ the symbol রক্তজবার মালা which is again associated with the কালি পূজা(?), Rabindranath makes no specific mention of war in the poem; he speaks only in images and metaphors of the impending dangers threatening the world: “আরতিদীপ এই কি জ্বালা, এই কি আমার সন্ধ্যা? / গাঁথবো রক্তজবার মালা? হয় রজনীগন্ধা!” Literally, the above two lines are almost untranslatable. Radice interprets them creatively in tune with the contextual meaning of the poem, with a direct reference to war, “What am I doing with this prayer-lamp, what do I mean by this prayer? / Must I drop my flowers of peace --- weave scarlet garlands of war?” In the original poem Rabindranath refers to ‘রক্তজবার মালা’ which may symbolize profuse bloodshed and loss of human life associated with war. This is how Radice ‘interprets’ the difficult lines making them clearer than they are in the original.

Then the poet appeals fervently to God to infuse into him youthful vigour so that he might hold aloft and sound God’s conch of victory, “যৌবনেরই পরশমণি করাও তবে স্পর্শ। / দীপক তানে উঠুক ধনি দীপ্ত প্রাণের হর্ষ।” In his interpretation of the lines, Radice seems to have taken too much liberty with the original: “O change me, touch me with youth, alchemize me! Let fiery melody / Blaze and twirl in my breast, life-fire leap into ecstasy!” Tagore’s rendering, by contrast, is better and closer to the original than Radice’s, “Strike my drowsy heart with thy spell of youth! / Let my joy in life blaze up in fire.” Rabindranath’s শঙ্খ sounds a note of hope and courage in the last verse of the poem. In *The Conch* Radice tries to capture this note of hope and courage. But his interpretation of a few lines of this verse is far from satisfactory: “ব্যাঘাত আসুক নব নব—আঘাত খেয়ে অচল রব, বক্ষে আমার দুঃখে তব বাজবে জয়ডঙ্ক” “Let new obstructions chafe and challenge me; / I shall take all blows and hurts unflinchingly; / My heart shall drum redress for your injuries;” The poet is determined to remain unmoved in the face of new blows and new obstructions ; even in the midst of sorrow his heart will reverberate with the drum of God’s victory. Radice fails to convey this sense of the original and its poetic beauty in his translation. In his rendering of the Bengali poem, Tagore

preserves something of the beauty and spontaneity of the original turning the above three lines into two lines, “ Let hard blows of trouble strike fire into my life, / Let my heart beat in pain, the drum of thy victory”. In his rendering Tagore gives the target readers an intimation of the original whereas Radice conveys only a confused impression about it.

Radice makes some alterations in the arrangement of lines, but makes no attempt to preserve the verse form of the original. In শঙ্খ each verse consists of five lines, with a distinct ‘gap’ in the third line; the first line rhyming with the second and the fourth, with the fifth. Radice transforms the five-line verse into the six-line one, altering the arrangement of lines. In his rendering the first line rhymes with the second, the second with the sixth whereas the third and fourth lines are divided into three short lines with end-rhymes. Thus, Radice takes much liberty with the original, transforming it into a new poem in his translation.

Rabindranath’s শা-জাহান from বলাকা is undoubtedly a great poem about Mogul emperor who commemorates his love for his wife by building the Taj Mahal on her grave. This Mogul mausoleum set Rabindranath’s creative imagination afire and he ends up composing this majestic poem of his বলাকা, an epoch-making book of verses. In the first poem of *Lover’s Gift* Tagore gives us a truncated translated version of this poem; but the translation fails to convey the impression of its ‘majestic original’. Radice’s objective in rendering শা-জাহান is to recapture the beauty and majesty of this great poem with the vision of a poet and that too in a verse form resembling the original one.

In শা-জাহান Rabindranath portrays the Taj Mahal as a timeless object of art against the backdrop of evanescence of mortal life and worldly possessions – “[...] এক বিন্দু নয়নের জলা / কালের কপোলতলে শুভ্র সমুজ্জ্বল/ এ তাজমহল ” It is with the imagination of a poet that Radice conveys in his translation the timelessness of the Taj-Mahal --- its lifeless chill and deathless beauty: “...one solitary tear / Would hang on the cheek of time/ In the form / Of this white and gleaming Taj Mahal”. Evidently, Radice here manipulates the original so as to suit it to his poetic imagination in order that he may write a poem of his own. Apparently, he deviates from the original in his arrangement of lines and ordering of thoughts but his fidelity to the

spirit of the poem is beyond question. In his rendering of the poem Radice follows, for the first time, the verse technique of varying line-lengths that came to be regarded as Tagore's characteristic verse-form from বলাকা onwards. This verse form resembling the French '*vers libre*' has been aptly characterized by Radice as 'sari-poems' that have something of 'the asymmetrical grace of a sari'(Radice11). Subsequently, in the Introduction to Rabindranath Tagore :*Selected Poems* (2004) ^{৪৫০৩৩ সর্বস্ব} Sankha Ghosh has excellently described it as 'মুক্তবন্ধ' or 'free-bound' verse-form (Chaudhuri.29) which remains one of Rabindranath's distinguishing technical innovations. The original poem is generally rhymed in couplets and in his translation Radice has tried to convey the effect of the rhymes by using mostly half-rhymes. They do not always form couplets, but every end-word has another one echoing it in sound at the end of some other line.

In his effort to immortalize his beloved through the Taj- Mahal Rabindranath seems to have invested the formless death with deathless form consigning for ever his inconsolable cry to the timeless silence of the white tomb:

কণ্ঠে তার কি মালা দুলায়ে
 করিলে বরণ
 রূপহীন মরণেরে মৃত্যুহীন অপরূপ সাজে !
 রহে না যে
 বিলাপের অবকাশ
 বারো মাস,
 তাই তব অশান্ত ক্রন্দনে
 চিরমৌনজাল দিয়ে বেঁধে দিলে কঠিন বন্ধনে ।
 জ্যোৎস্নারাতে নিভৃত মন্দিরে
 প্রেয়সীরে
 যে নামে ডাকিতে ধীরে ধীরে
 সেই কানে-কানে ডাকা রেখে গেলে এইখানে

অনন্তের কানে।
. প্রেমের করুণ কোমলতা।
ফুটিল তা
সৌন্দর্যের পুষ্পপুঞ্জ প্রশান্ত পাষাণে।।

Radice captures, with the feeling and imagination of a poet, the disconsolate cry that finds a spontaneous expression in exquisite poetry :

How wonderful the deathless clothing
With which you invested
Formless death – how it was garlanded!
You could not maintain
Your grief forever, and so you enmeshed
Your restless weeping
In bonds of silent perpetuity.
The names you softly
Whispered to your love
On moonlit nights in secret chambers live on
Here
As whispers in the ear of eternity.
The poignant gentleness of love
Flowered in the beauty of serene stone.

Thus, the Taj-Mahal, as visualized by the poet Rabindranath, appears to be a sculptural re-incarnation of the new *Meghaduta* journeying on, down the ages, carrying the wordless message of ‘eternal mourning’ --- “ I have not forgotten you, my love, I have not forgotten you” . Literal translation, however faithful, can never convey the lovely poetry that শী-জাহান throbs with from one language to another. It is only through ‘free’ or interpretative translation that one is capable of capturing the imaginative and elusive poetry pervading such a poem as শী-জাহান. Radice tries to re-create some of the beauty and majesty of শী-জাহান imaginatively drawing on the emotion and feeling of the original. It needs to be remembered that so much of the meaning of the original poem is to be found in its art --- music and

structure that the translator needs to convey it through its form, structure, music and art as through its meaning of words. He succeeds in his attempt to transmit some of the language/culture specific words from the Bengali originals to English language. He has no other option but to interpret them in the light of contextual meaning of the text. He translates ‘বিরহিনী’ as ‘loverless beloved’, ‘চিরবিরহীর বাণী’ as ‘continuous message of eternal mourning’ and ‘শান্তিক্রান্তিহীন’ as ‘tireless, incorruptible messenger’. In certain cases, he interprets a particular word or expression to convey its intended meaning; for example, he explains ‘স্মৃতির পিঞ্জরদ্বার’ as the ‘cage that holds memory’ and ‘অতীতের-চির-অস্ত-অন্ধকার’ as the ‘ever-falling darkness of history’. The Anglo-Saxon language which has a reservoir of loan words from many different languages does not have any compound word corresponding to ‘অতীতের-চির-অস্ত-অন্ধকার’. Radice adopts an interpretative mode of translation to bring home to his target readers the intended meaning of such Bengali compound words. So much of the meaning of the original poem is to be found in its art --- music and structure that the translator needs to convey it through its form, structure, music and art as through its meaning of words. Radice succeeds well in this task and the poem is reborn in his translation.

Grandfather's Holiday from পলাতকা (1918) is, in spirit, akin to Tagore's শিশু ভোলানাথ. It is apparently a simple poem but in spite of its simplicity, it is, in Radice's words, ‘the epitome of the untranslatable poem’ (Translator's Diary 194). This poem revolves round a word and concept (ছুটি), repeated in almost every line of the original – for which there is no real equivalent in English(Radice 194). *Samsad Bengali English Dictionary* gives a plethora of probable English words corresponding to the Bengali word ছুটি – “n. leisure, recess; break, break-up; a holiday, a vacation; a leave of absence; retirement; relief; release”(Tagore, however, uses the word ‘holiday’ as an equivalent for the word ‘ছুটি’ in his rendering of the poem which is to be found in *The Fugitive III*. But the connotations of the word ছুটি, as used in this poem, can hardly be covered by the word ‘holiday’ or by the words suggested by the Samsad lexicographer. The Bengali word ছুটি seems to have been used by Rabindranath in this poem in all its probable ramifications. Accordingly, Radice, in his note to the poem, defines ছুটি as ‘a state of mind – of delight, playfulness, freedom from restrictions – in which

there is no difference between work and play'. In this sense, the word 'ছুটি' is also a manifestation of the creative work pervading the universe (Radice149). Accordingly, he has translated this poem 'freely', using different English words for ছুটি so as to capture its multi-layered significance inherent in the poem.

In 'The Future Poetry' Aurobinda speaks of "two ways of translating poetry --- one is to keep strictly to the manner and turn of the original, the other to take its spirit, sense and imagery and reproduce them so as to suit the new language" (Ghose 431). In *Grandfather's Holiday* Radice makes a new poem of his own drawing imaginatively on the 'spirit', 'sense' and 'imagery' of the original. Obviously, his mode of translation here is interpretative rather than literal, for a literal translation cannot capture the varied connotations of this exquisitely elusive poem. In his rendering Radice re-creates the original transforming the favourite haunts of the grandchild --- blue sky, paddy fields, deep ponds, tree shades, barn corners --- into a romantic world of joy and freedom. The poet in Radice invests this world with a new freshness and beauty that is not to be found in the original. He is also at his interpretative best in rendering the predicament of the old grandfather as one 'trapped' in his worldly affairs as 'a spiderwebbed fly' ['বিষয়-কাজের মাকড়সার বিষম জালে বাঁধা']. The original contains no explicit reference to the 'fly' and Radice interpolates this image intuitively in his rendering. The image of the old grandfather as a 'spiderwebbed fly' conjures up in our mind, by contrast, the image of a free bird personified by the grandchild. The grandchild represents for the grandfather a world of freedom and 'proxy holiday'.

According to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "translation is the most intimate act of reading" (Mukherjee 99). Radice reads /'misreads' the original intimately in order to respond to 'the special call of the text' in his rendering. For him, the 'special call of the text' sometimes takes the shape of translation shift resulting in free interpretation of the text --- an interpretation which is the special prerogative of a translator. Here is an excerpt from the original and its translation by Radice:

আমার ছুটি সেজে বেড়ায় তোমার ছুটির সাজে;
তোমার কণ্ঠে আমার ছুটির মধুর বাঁশি বাজে।
আমার ছুটি তোমারই ওই চপল চোখের নাচে,
তোমার ছুটির মাঝখানেতেই আমার ছুটি আছে ॥

Your games are my games, my proxy holiday,
Your laugh the sweetest music I shall ever play.
Your joy is mine, my mischief in your eyes,
Your delight the country where my freedom lies.

(Grandfather's Holiday)

Even though Radice adopts the interpretative mode of translation, he remains faithful to the verse form and arrangement of lines in each verse. The original verse is composed in rhymed couplet (the rhyme pattern being aa bb) and the same rhyme pattern has been followed up in the translation as well.

Rabindranath's তালগাছ (Palm-tree) is an excellent poem from শিশু ভোলানাথ (1922). In the original poem the poet conceives of the palm-tree as a tall single-legged plant that peeps at the sky out-topping other trees. In his rendering Radice takes liberty with the original visualizing the palm-tree as a 'single-legged giant' that towers over other trees. The use of the word 'giant' here conjures up an image of the gigantic height and stature of the tree that the poet seeks to convey. The tree desires to soar higher and higher into the sky to pierce through the black clouds only if it had wings. In Radice's version the 'কালো মেঘ' is interpreted as 'black cloud-ceiling' with the explicit purpose of making it rhyme with 'if only it had wings' (emphasis added). Even though his translation mode is interpretative, he remains faithful to the verse form and the arrangement of lines throughout the poem. He tries to maintain a scrupulous fidelity to the form of the original simply to produce a palpable visual effect and to demonstrate Tagore's technical virtuosity. In the original the round-shaped leaves on the head of the tree appear to be its wings that express the desire to fly away from its nest. In Radice's translation, the tree expresses its desire to fly away through the tossing of its head and the heaving and swishing of its fronds. Finally, its wings take on

their flight and nothing can stop them. If we compare his rendering with the original, what strikes us is the addition of the ‘tossing of head’ and ‘heaving and swishing of its fronds’ that the ST lacks. Again, the idea of flying away leaving behind the nest has been conveyed with a poetic nuance in the last line of the second verse [‘nothing stops me from rising on their flutter’]. Far from being a mere linguistic transfer, Radice’s translation here becomes imaginative and poetic and that too at the cost of the ‘nest’ image of the original. This loss in translation has been compensated creatively by Radice in the TT.

The day-long activities of the palm-tree and its leaves have been conveyed through onomatopoeia in the original: সারাদিন ঝরঝর খড়্‌খড়/ কাঁপে পাতাপতর. But this onomatopoeic effect of poetry seems to be the despair of the translator. With all his poetic craftsmanship and technical skill, Radice fails to convey this onomatopoeic effect in his translation. He tries to interpret in verse what he cannot capture in alliterative sound and metre:

All day the fronds on the windblown tree
 soar and flap and shudder

Nevertheless, Radice succeeds in making Palm-tree an independent poem drawing on the imagination and feelings of the original.

“ঐশ্বর্য” is one of the few poems that were written under the direct impact of volatile social and political events of the time (1931-32). It was during this period that hundreds of Bengali youths were arrested and imprisoned for their alleged revolutionary sympathies. Two Bengali political prisoners were brutally murdered at Hijli jail. Gandhiji was arrested at that time after the failure of the second Round Table Conference in England. These two events made Rabindranath disillusioned with the Christian spirit of forgiveness and the British ideal of justice. The poet wrote this poem against the background of contemporary issues and succeeded in elevating it to the height of ‘genuine poetry’. In *Question* Radice tries to make an independent poem capturing the poetry of the original along with the imaginative vision of the original poet.

In 'প্রশ্ন' Rabindranath complains of how the messages of love and forgiveness propagated by divine messengers down the ages have been reduced to mockery in this world. Radice tries to capture the note of mockery and disillusionment in his translation. Of course his mode of translation is not literal, nor can it be so because the interpretative mode is always jostling with the generally required fidelity to the original. Take, for example, Radice's imperative 'Rid your hearts of evil' ('অস্তর হতে বিদেহ বিষ নাশো') which is definitely interpretative. Supriya Chaudhuri's rendering ('Destroy the poison of hate within') in *Selected Poems of OTT* is wholly literal, and therefore, far from interpretative; and so is Hiren Mukherji's version ('banish hate from all hearts') in *OHPR*. Incidentally, Tagore's own English version ('Cleanse your hearts from the blood-red stains of hatred') is interpolative in nature : we have here the interpolation "blood-red stains" which takes the translation away from the original, but paves the way for the interpretative mode. The interpolation here defines the nature of 'poison' with an oblique hint at the Hijli jail homicide. Radice's rendering – 'Rid your hearts of evil' – tries to tease interpretation out of the Christian / philosophical word 'evil' (The Christian Ghost in *Hamlet* says : "Taint not thy mind"; the Lord's Prayer has it : "... deliver us from evil" (King James Version Matthew 6: 5). Again, he may have in his mind Tagore's famous lecture 'The Problem of Evil' while translating this poem.

This poem is written in such an 'indignant protest' that the poet, in the heat of his anger, questions the value of the philosophy of forgiveness and asks if God has been able to pardon the men who are poisoning His air and blotting His light (SenGupta 116). He discovers 'Evil' so rampant in the world that the creed of non-violence and forgiveness preached by God's messengers seems for the moment to be a great mockery to God Himself. This ambivalent mood of the poem imposes a rather difficult task for its translator. For example, the agonized query of the poet, "তুমি কি তাদের ক্ষমা করিয়াছো, তুমি কি বেসেছো ভালো?" is a complex rhetorical question not unlike the ones we find in Blake's "The Tiger" ("Did He smile His work to see /Did He who made the lamb make thee?"). Now the point is that the Bengali interrogative 'Ki' has been rendered by Radice into 'Can it be' instead of the auxiliary verb['have'] used by the other translators of this great poem . 'Can it be' is a kind of interpretative interpolation which dilutes the ambivalence because the repetitive 'Can it

be' in the long run indicates the negative sense ['It can't be']. But this crucial Bengali phrase 'ki' has been rendered literally by different translators whereas Radice uses the interpretative interrogative 'can it be'.

Radice has taken meticulous care to preserve the verse form of the original in his translation. So far as the arrangement of lines and verse structure are concerned, he has followed the original verse structure and their lines with commendable fidelity. The original poem is written in rhymed couplet and Radice makes a feeble attempt to capture the 'rhymed couplet' in English by using 'half-rhyme'. But he does not seem to have achieved much of a success in this respect.

"Railway Station" (1940), the rendering of ইস্টেশন from নবজাতক, is a great poem in which Rabindranath's poetic imagination is at his best. While translating the poem Radice re-creates the original with the imaginative vision of a poet making an independent poem of his own.

In the first verse of the original the poet loves to watch the coming and going of up and down trains to and from the station. In his rendering Radice uses an interpolative image ---- 'Ebb and flow like an *estuarine river*' --- to interpret the arrival and departure of trains like the ebb and flow of a river (emphasis added). Admittedly, Tagore does not use any such image in the original; he uses only two evocative words 'ভাঁটির ট্রেন' and 'উজান ট্রেন' to describe the 'down-train' and 'up-train' in the poem. Radice seems to equate the station with the river- estuary, taking his cue from the two phrases 'ভাঁটি' and 'উজান' relating to the river, in keeping with the 'communicative intention' of the poet. Apparently, he deviates from the original in order to give his own interpretation of the station. His interpretative deviation from the original here transforms the station into a river-estuary from the symbolical point of view.

Radice's interpretative mode of translation finds its eloquent expression in the third verse of the poem. The spectacle of the station, like 'moving pictures' brings to one's mind the perpetual theatre of coming and going of passengers with their reactions writ large on their

faces. Rabindranath's apparently simple, yet deeply suggestive poetic idioms in this poem defy word-for-word rendering and call for 'interpretative transfer' from SLT to TLT. Both Buddhadeva Bose and William Radice interpret this verse in keeping with its inner spirit. Mr. Bose's rendering of the third verse is as follows:

This scene, like a motion -picture, makes me think of endless meetings and forgettings of ceaseless welcomes and farewells. Crowds gather every minute upon the stage, they wave their flags and disappear leaving no address. And behind all this is the strong pull of pleasure and of grief, of gain, and things gone wrong.

(Kabir 228).

Here is Radice's version of the verse under review:

The essence of all these moving pictures
Brings to my mind the image of language,
Forever forming, forever unforming,
Continuous coming, continuous going.
Crowds can fill the stage in an instant ---
The guard's flag waves the train's departure
And suddenly everyone disappears somewhere.
The hurry disguises their joys and sorrows,
Masks the pressure of gains and losses.

(Radice 114).

Radice's interpretation of 'চলচ্ছবির এই-যে মূর্তিখানি' as the 'essence of all these moving pictures' communicates the spirit of the original at the cost of its poetic effect. His use of the prosaic, interpretative word 'essence' as the equivalent of 'এই যে মূর্তিখানি' fails to convey the visual poetic impression of the original expression. Again, his rendering of the line 'নিত্য-মেলার-নিত্য-ভোলার ভাষা— as 'the image of language / For ever forming, forever unforming' is rather confusing. In the original Tagore seems to have used the word metaphorically whereas Radice complicates the issue by rendering the word 'ভাষা' literally. Buddhadeva Bose, on the other hand, succeeds in conveying the poetic spirit of the verse imaginatively and that too in

a prose translation. Radice tries to preserve the metre and rhyme in order to make his rendering equivalent to the original but sometimes his use of prosaic word produces a jarring effect.

The station is 'like a painting in perpetual making and unmaking'. It unfolds to Tagore an epiphanic vision in which the great world appears to be the work of an artist. Radice's handling of the epiphanic point is superb. The poet in him re-creates the epiphanic vision imaginatively and the ever-moving stream of passengers of the station is poetically transformed into an image or spectacle of life itself. His interpretation of the line, 'আঁকড়ে ধরার জিনিস এ নয়, দেখার জিনিস এটা' into 'Not a thing the hand can grip hold of, / But an insubstantial visual sequence' is excellent. Buddhadev Bose's interpretation of this verse cannot attain this poetic height. Radice's interpretation of the station as an 'insubstantial visual sequence' is, in a sense, the interpretation of life itself which resembles a station. Here the poet Radice surpasses the translator in him and his translation of this apparently simple, yet deeply significant poem is really excellent.

The poem যক্ষ from সানাই (1940) has a great thematic affinity to *The Meghaduta* and should be read in conjunction with Kalidas's famous masterpiece. Rabindranath here seems to have explored in যক্ষ the creative role of 'বিরহ', or yearning in an artist. The যক্ষ, as represented in the poem, seems to have been identified with the creative artist and his yearning with the artist's creative power. This poem is essentially 'paradoxical' and poses a difficult problem for its translator, as Radice confesses in the notes to the poem ---"It is peculiarly difficult to translate". In order to do justice to the 'paradoxical' nature of the poem Radice adopts an interpretative mode to capture its elusive spirit – a spirit that is bound to be the despair for a word-for-word translator.

In 'যক্ষ' Rabindranath's imagination takes wing following Yaksa's flight of yearning towards Aloka uniting a 'deep pain' and sublime beauty. Radice also strives to make a parallel poem exploring the role of yearning in a creative artist. In the original the message of yearning is carried to অলকা by the impatient chariot of the wind (পবনের ধৈর্যহীন রথে) whereas in Radice's

translation it is borne by the *impatient winds*. Here he fails to convey in his translation the *chariot* image from the original and his rendering suffers from a translation loss. This loss is continued in the remaining lines of the stanza such as ইঙ্গিত-আমন্ত্রণে ('beckoning'), গিরি হতে গিরিশীর্ষে ('From mountain to mountain') and সমুভ্ৰুক বলাকার ডানার আনন্দচঞ্চলতা ('A careering crane's – wing-flap of joy'). Radice suffers more often than not from this type of *translation loss* only when he fails to interpret a particular expression or part of a line creatively. But the poet in Radice makes up the above *translation losses* by fusing creatively the 'joy' of the flying crane with the inaudible 'music' of the shadow-cast rains and the yearning of love-lorn Yaksa.

The next stanza begins with a similar *translation loss* when Radice fails to conjure up the image of পথিক কাল in his rendering, through the use of his unimaginative expression 'onward time'. He interprets পথিক কাল as 'onward time' at the cost of a fine image in the original, the phrase 'onward time' being a poor equivalent of the image পথিক কাল. A similar 'loss' is, again, found in the following expressions, such as ভবিষ্যের তোরণে তোরণে ('door after future door') and নব নব জীবনে মরণে ('Life after future life'). Time, so poetically conceived by Tagore as পথিক কাল, is on an endless journey to bridge the wide gulf that exists between the attempt and the achieving of perfection (Do the lines echo the concluding lines of Eliot's "The Hollow Men"?). It is at this point that Tagore has an epiphanic vision in which the world appears to be a poem and the yearning of an artist seems to find its expression in his creative work. Yaksa, the archetypal বিরহী is here the blessed artist whose creative power is ignited by the fire of yearning, বিরহ:

এ বিশ্ব তো তারি কাব্য, মন্দাক্রান্তুরি তারি রচে টীকা -
 বিরাত দুঃখের পটে আনন্দের সুদূর ভূমিকা।
 ধন্য যক্ষ সেই ---
 সৃষ্টির-আগুন-জ্বালা এই বিরহেই ।

Radice recaptures this 'epiphanic vision' in his translation identifying the yearning of Yaksa with the creative imagination of an artist.

The world is its poem, a rolling sonorous poem
In which a remote presage of joy annotates vast sorrow.
O blessed Yaksa –
The fire of creation is in his yearning.

Rabindranath's imagination is at his exuberant best in his portrayal of the love-lorn lady and her mental states. But the impassioned imagination of the original finds a restrained and controlled expression in Radice's rendering, very often resulting in *translation loss*. The agonized mental state of the beloved awaiting at Alaka loses much of her emotional force and nuance in English. Radice's translation fails to produce the spell-binding effect of the line দল পল গণি গণি মনর দিবস তার যায়. The expression 'long days move' cannot convey the impression of *মনুর দিবস* of the original. The rendering of the line --- আগন্তক পান লাগি ক্রান্তিভারে ধূলিশায়ী আশা -- fails to carry across the idea of *আগন্তক পানু* in the target language: 'Her hope, / Worn out by waiting, lies in the dust'. The next line ---কবি তারে দেয় নাই বিরহের- তীর্থগামী ভাষা --- is an example of translation shift: 'The poet has given her pining no language, / Her love no pilgrimage'. Unable to find an adequate equivalent of the expression *তীর্থ-গামী ভাষা* Radice interprets the line through a 'dynamic equivalence' so that the target readers can understand it. Thus, Radice succeeds in capturing something of the exquisite poetic beauty of the original in his rendering. This poem, thus, testifies to some of the intricate problems that a translator faces in translating poetry from one language to another.

Bombshell (1940) is an outstanding poem about war that Rabindranath wrote following the outbreak of the World War II. It is a 'disturbing poem about the war', written against the natural backdrop of a rural landscape in Bengal. The poem breathes an ambience of peace and tranquillity prevailing all around. The harmonious bond between man and nature, as found in this poem indicates that 'All's well with the world'. But this atmosphere of apparent peace and harmony is shattered by the disquieting news of bombardment in Finland by Russia. This unhappy incident exposes the mockery of the so-called harmony existing between man and nature. The Soviet bombardment in Finland deals a rude shock to the peaceful ambience, a shock the nuance of which is conveyed by the word 'Bombshell'.

Radice is perhaps the first to have translated this extraordinary poem অপঘাত calling it 'Injury' in the 1985 and ^{the} 1987 editions of *Selected Poems* of Rabindranath Tagore. The word অপঘাত is indeed hard to translate in English; for there is no English equivalent of this Bengali word. But Radice was not happy with the title of the poem translated by him, and finally chose the title *Bombshell* as the nearest approximation to the original title অপঘাত. He interprets the word 'অপঘাত' in the light of the theme of the original and the word 'Bombshell' seems to be an interpretative equivalent of the word 'অপঘাত'. The very title *Bombshell* speaks of Radice's interpretative mode of translation, a mode that is at once imaginative as well as communicative. The poem is written in rhymed couplet of unequal length and Radice retains the verse form of the original but fails to maintain the arrangement of lines in his rendering.

Like the title, the first two lines of the poem defy literal translation and present a challenge for its translator.

সূর্যার্কে'র পথ হতে বিকালের রৌদ্র এল নেমে।
বাতাস ঝিমিয়ে গেছে থেমে।

Radice interprets imaginatively the first two lines which seem to throb with pure poetry:

The sinking sun extends its late after-noon glow.
The wind has dozed away.

In the rest of the poem he re-creates, with the imagination of a poet, (in the words of Keats) 'the poetry of the earth' that Rabindranath discovers in the midst of the casual and inconsequential objects of nature. Radice's interpretative mode of translation is found when he renders রাজবংশী পাড়া as 'Rajbansi quarter'. The concept of *para* which is ubiquitous in India is something unknown in the West. This explains why Radice domesticates the Indian concept of পাড়া as 'Rajbansi quarter' in order to enable his target readers to understand it.

His rendering of চৈত্রের ছড়ানো নেশাখানি as the 'balm of Caitra' is really interpretative. Finally, his interpretation of এক্ষেপে শ্রলাপের সুরে as 'dull, demented melody' is excellent and also an example of alliteration. Thus, drawing on the essence of the original poem Radice rewrites an independent poem of his own and *Bombshell* shows his poetic talent at its best.

Recovery—10 (elsewhere titled as *They Work*) from আরোগ্য dictated by the poet on 13 February 1941, is a remarkable poem composed by him in the twilight of his life. It is, in fact, a "hymn of life" that re-affirms his unwavering belief in the toiling masses of the world. Radice re-creates the poem imaginatively drawing on Tagore's awareness of the vicissitudes of human civilizations and his deep reverence for the common people. In his rendering of the poem Radice retains the varying line-lengths of the original that became Tagore's characteristic way of writing *verse libre* since the বলাকা phase.

Journeying backward on Time's 'leisurely stream' the poet tries to visualize the panorama of India's past history. What flashes before his mind's eyes is a procession of shadowy pictures from the womb of a remote past. Radice's rendering begins with a translation shift in which drifting on Time's leisurely stream the poet's mind turns indolent as if under the burden of reminiscences. The translation shift, thus, takes an interpretative turn preserving the meditative character of the poem. What the shadowy pictures unfold before his eyes is procession of myriad peoples coming from countless ages of a long distant past. The procession includes the victorious people marching forward proudly, the empire-hungry Pathans followed by the Moghuls, raising storms of dusts and waving flags of triumph. Radice's interpretative rendering of জয়োদ্ধাত প্রবল গতি of victorious peoples as their hurtling forward 'Confident of victory' seems to have diluted the meaning of the original. The arrogance is evidently different from confidence. There is something pejorative about the former word whereas the latter one is free from any such blemish. Apart from Radice, this poem have been translated by Hiren Mukherjee and Supriya Chaudhuri. Hiren Mukherjee's 'victory's arrogant speed' (Kabir 1966:246) and Supriya Chaudhuri's 'furious space, arrogant in victory' (Chaudhuri 368) convey adequate representation of the original meaning. But time has wiped them off, leaving no trace in sky which once resounded with

the display of their power and pride. Tagore intuitively knows that the ‘mighty British’ and their empire, like their imperialist predecessors, would equally be swept away by time. And Radice’s rendering of ^{‘সম্রাজ্যের দেশ-ছোঁড়া জাল’} ‘samrajyer-deshbeda-jal’ as ‘land-encircling web of their empire’ is more poetic than Mukherjee’s or Chaudhuri’s. Both Mr. Mukherjee (‘empire’s enveloping nets’) and Ms. Chaudhuri (‘encircling fences of empire’) convey the literal meaning of the original. But Radice surpasses them in capturing the poetic nuance of Tagore’s words and his use of the ‘web’ image of the internet in suggesting the world wide empire of the British lends a contemporary relevance to his translation. The British too would pass leaving not a sign behind. What would remain is the ‘sky’s pure blue’ at dawn and dusk and the common folk who toil and labour to sustain life on earth.

Looking down on the earth the poet discovers a procession of ordinary people going down the paths of the world. In this context, Tagore use of the expression ‘কলকলরবে বিপুল জনতা চলে’ has been variously rendered by the translators. Hiren Mukherjee translates it as ‘multitudes moving with vibrant voices along many roads’ whereas Supriya Chaudhuri interprets it as ‘I see passing in constant clamour / A great rush of people/On many paths’. Radice’s interpretation --- ‘hubbub of a huge concourse/ Of ordinary people / Led along many paths’ ---- seems to be poetic and allusive. It seems to remind one of the meandering line of the ordinary folk in Langland’s *Piers Plowman*. Then the poet’s focus shifts on to the non-descript common men who have been performing their normal chores of day-to-day life from time immemorial. Combining an interpretative power with his poetic vision Radice gives an excellent account of how human civilization moves forward through the normal activities of the common people in age after age:

ওরা কাজ করে

নগরে প্রান্তরে

রাজহত্র ভেঙ্গে পড়ে; রণডঙ্কা শব্দ নাহি তোলে;

জয়স্তুম মূঢ়সম অর্থ তাঁর ভোলে;

রক্তমাখা অস্ত্র হাতে যত রক্ত-আঁখি

শিশুপাঠ্য কাহিনীতে থাকে মুখ ঢাকি।
ওরা কাজ করে
দেশে দেশান্তরে ...।।
দিনরাত্রে গাঁথা পড়ি দিনযাত্রা করিছে মুখর।
দুঃখ সুখ দিবসরজনী
মন্দিত করিয়া তোলে জীবনের মহা মন্ত্রধনি।

They work ---
In cities and in fields.
Imperial canopies collapses,
Battle-drums stop,
Victory-pillars, like idiots, forget what their own words mean ;
Battle-crazed eyes and blood-smearred weapons
Live on only in children's stories.
Their menace veiled.
But people work –
Here and in other regions, ...
Filling the passage of their lives with a rumbling and thundering
Woven by day and night –
The sonorous rhythm
Of Life's liturgy in all its pain and elation,
Gloom and light.

Radice's rendering of রক্তমাখা অস্ত্র হাতে যত রক্ত-আঁখি / শিশুপাঠ্য কাহিনীতে থাকে মুখ ঢাকি is interpretative. The sense of dread that was once aroused by 'রক্তমাখা অস্ত্র' and 'রক্ত-আঁখি' is now alive only in children's story book. The use of the interpolative line --- 'Their menace veiled' --- throws light on his interpretative mode.

Note:

All citations from the Bengali poems in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are from Tagore's সঞ্চয়িতা, a selection of his representative poems by himself.