

CHAPTER II

TAGORE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS: A REVIEW

At least it is never the function of a poet to personally help in the transportation of his poems to an alien form and atmosphere ... To the end of my days I should have felt happy and contented to think that the translations I did were merely for private recreation and never for public display if you did not bring them before your readers.

Letter from Rabindranath Tagore to William Rothenstein,
26 November 1932.

Notwithstanding his belated realization of the 'great injustice' he had done to his own works, the fact remains that Tagore translated his Bengali poems into English not merely for 'private recreation,' as he confessed in his letter to Mr. Rothenstein. He seemed to have in mind some foreign readers who were genuinely eager to have an acquaintance with his poetical works but were unable to access them in the original for linguistic barriers. He set himself translating his own poems in English in order to give them an idea about his poems and not to launch an 'English career' for himself. It needs to be mentioned in this context that both Beckett and Nabokov in the Western world translated their works in foreign tongues as Tagore did, but nobody ever did the job before him only to reach out to the foreign readers. But that does not mean that he wanted to float a separate career for himself in English. According to Buddhadev Bose, he was not "a translator by temperament; for his translation was not a part of the poetic vocation" (Bose 540-41). Unlike many writers of the world literature he did not turn to translation to regain the loss of original inspiration or creative power. He was too great a poet for the humble and laborious task of translation, which involves an act of self-denial (Ibid 541). Nevertheless, he had to undertake the task of translating his own works into English under the exigency of circumstances. In a letter to his

niece Indira Devi, Tagore gives a most fascinating account of the genesis of his translation, during his convalescing period at Shilaidaha in 1912:

You have alluded to the English translation of *Gitanjali*. I cannot imagine to the day how people came to like it so much. That I cannot write English is such a patent fact that I never had even the vanity to feel ashamed of it. If anybody wrote an English note asking me to tea, I did not feel equal to answering it. Perhaps you think that by now I have got over that delusion. By no means. That I have written in English seems to be the delusion. On the day I was to board the ship, I fainted due to my frantic efforts at leave-taking and the journey itself was postponed. Then I went to Shelaidah to take rest. But unless the brain is fully active, one does not feel strong enough to relax completely; so the only way to keep myself calm was to take up some light work.

It was then the month of Chaitra (March-April), the air was thick with the fragrance of mango- blossoms and all hours of the day were delirious with the song of birds. When a child is full of vigour, he does not think of his mother. It is only when he is tired that he wants to nestle in her lap. That was exactly my position. With all my heart and with all my holiday I seemed to have settled comfortably in the arms of Chaitra, without missing a particle of light, its air, its scene and its song. In such a state one cannot remain idle... Yet I had not the energy to gird up my loins and sit down to write. So I took up the poems of *Gitanjali* and set myself to translate them one by one. You may wonder why such a crazy ambition should possess one in such a weak state of health. But believe me, I did not undertake this task in a spirit of reckless bravado. I felt an urge to recapture through the medium of another language the feelings and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in the days gone by.

The pages of a small exercise-book came to be filled gradually, and with it in my pocket I boarded the ship. The idea of keeping it in my pocket was that when my mind became restless on the high seas, I would recline on a deck-chair and set myself to translate one or two poems from time to time. And this is what actually happened. From one exercise-book I passed on to another. Rothenstein already had an inkling of my reputation as a poet from another Indian friend. Therefore, when in the course of conversation he expressed a desire to see some of my poems, I handed him my manuscript with some diffidence. I could hardly believe the opinion he expressed after going through

it. He then made over the manuscript to Yeats. The story of what followed is known to you. From this explanation of mine you will see that I was not responsible for the offence, which was due mainly to the force of circumstances.

(Chakravarty 20- 21)

Whatever may be the psychological value of the above account, this letter fails to give us any concrete idea about the genesis of Tagore's own translations. The rendering of the *Gitanjali* poems that he began in the seclusion of Shilaidaha is not his maiden work. He had to undertake the translation of his poems 'under the force of circumstances', as he confesses in his letter to Indira Devi. The 'force of 'circumstances' impacted him in two ways. He has mentioned only the inspirational impact that the natural ambience of Shilaidaha in Spring had on his mind. But he seems to be silent on the psychological exigency that made him undertake the most controversial job. Somendrachandra, who accompanied Tagore on his third visit to England in 1912, seems to have drawn our attention to this exigency that made him the translator of his poems:

Dissatisfied with those renderings, Tagore himself began to translate into English some of his poems from the Bengali *Gitanjali*. On the way I saw him absorbed in rendering his poems in the train and aboard the ship.... He hesitated to show or read them out to anyone. Incidentally, he said, "I am, as it were, being carried away by a flood of creative joy of a new kind. But I do not know if they would satisfy anybody.(my translation)

(Pal 308).

The above-mentioned 'renderings' were probably done by Roby Dutt, Ajit Chakravarty, Lokendranath Palit and a few others in order to promote Tagore's 'English career' in the West. A brief account of 'those renderings' will help us understand why in 1912 Tagore took the apparently unusual decision of translating the poems of the Bengali *Gitanjali* (1910). Chanchal Kumar Brahma's penetrating study of those 'renderings' in his *ইংলন্ডের দিকপ্রান্তে রবির উদয় রবির অস্ত* (2000) confirms Sisir Kumar Das's view that Tagore's decision to translate his own poems was, in fact, 'the culmination of efforts started at least a decade

earlier' (Das10). It is, at the same time, the culmination of the intermittent translation activities that Tagore had been carrying on since 1911 at the request of someone or other.

Translations of Tagore's works in the pre-*Gitanjali* period may be classified into three phases: I. First phase 1890. 2. Second phase-1900-1901.3. Third phase 1909-1912 (Chakravarty 93). The history of Tagore translation in English began in the 1890s when Tagore translated two passages of 'নিষ্ফল কামনা' (Fruitless Desire) from a poem of মানসী (1890) and became the first translator of his own poems in English. According to Krishna Kripalani, this is perhaps 'the first English translation made by the poet of one of his Bengali poems' (Kripalani 222). This 'maiden attempt' at translation went without any follow-up exercise. Surprisingly, Tagore's rendering of 'Fruitless Desire' is in verse and the full text is given below:

All fruitless is the cry,
All vain this burning fire of desire.
The sun goes down to his rest.
There is gloom in the forest and glamour in the sky.
With downcast look and lingering steps
The evening star comes in the wake of departing day
And the breath of the twilight is deep with the fullness of a farewell
feeling.

I clasp both thine hands in mine,
And keep thine eyes prisoner with my hungry eyes;
Seeking and crying, Where art thou,
Where, O, where !
Where is the immortal flame hidden in the depth of thee!

(Kripalani15)

It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that some of his friends and admirers took the initiative of translating his works for his reception outside Bengal and India as a whole. Surprisingly, most of them were interested in translating his short stories rather than his poems or dramas. In 1901-02 English translations of at least five short stories of Tagore

appeared in *New India: A Weekly Record and Review of Modern Thought and Life* edited by Bipin Chandra Pal from Calcutta.

In England, around the same time Tagore's scientist-friend Jagadishchandra Bose tried his best to get his stories translated into English and published in the English magazines. He himself translated three stories of Tagore and got "The Kabuliwala" (1901) rendered into English by Sister Nivedita. But the translations were not accepted for publication in any British journal because of the Western readers' lack of interest in Oriental life. Translators of this period showed a tendency to concentrate more on the translations of his stories rather than his poems. In a letter written to Tagore from London towards the end of 1900 Bose throws light on this topic:

I shall not let you languish in obscurity for long in the countryside. Why do you use such an idiom in your poems that they cannot be translated? I shall get your stories published in this country so that people here should have some idea about your creative writings" (my translation).

(Bose & Tagore 44)

Here he seems to have suggested that there is something elusive about the idioms of Tagore's poems and that the translators of the time were unable to capture the subtle nuance of his poems.

Two important literary developments of the time seem to have a direct bearing on Tagore's emergence as a translator of his own poems. One of them is the launching of *The Modern Review* in 1907 by his friend Ramananda Chatterjee (1865-1943). It may be recalled here that *The Modern Review* was a literary journal published from Calcutta that was well-known in both England and America. This journal played a pioneering role in promoting translations of Tagore's works to the Western people. It was between December 1909 and June 1912 (the month of Tagore's third visit to England) that English translations of some fifteen short stories, nine poems and three essays of Tagore appeared in *The Modern Review*. Among the translators were such distinguished persons as Jadunath Sarkar, Sister Nivedita, Ajitkumar Chakraborty, Lokendranath Palit, Pannalal Basu, Debendranath Mitra, and, of course, Tagore

himself (Chakravarty 3-4). It was in the *The Modern Review* that William Rothenstein read Tagore's *The Post Master* (1911) translated by Debendranath Mitra and got an idea of Tagore's creative power. "It was in the Postmaster", he writes to Tagore, "I first saw mirrored a corner of the world of your creation ..." (Lago 163).

Most of the translations of his works that had appeared so far were of his stories and translation of his poems did not receive the attention it deserved from the translators. They considered it a most challenging job and Tagore himself discouraged translation of his poems into English. In a letter he writes to his friend Jagadish Chandra Bose:

But are you sure that stripped of the dress of Bengali language she [his poems] will not Be like Draupadi publicly humiliated? That is the big difficulty with literature --- she expresses herself in a certain manner to her near and dear ones inside a private area marked by language but loses that expression the moment she is dragged outside.

(Sarkar 69).

Though Tagore was not until then aware of the creative potentialities of translation, he tended to overlook the fact that it [translation] causes a 'change of dress' rather than any 'disrobing altogether' (Mukherjee 115).

Though Tagore was initially skeptical about translation of poetry, he changed his mind later, encouraging some of his friends and admirers for this job. With the arrival of A.K. Coomarswamy in Santiniketan in February 1911 the problematic issue of poetry translation began to take a concrete shape. Ajit Kumar Chakravarty, a teacher at Santiniketan school of the early days, was his first translator [of some poems from *Sonar Tari*, *Chitra*, *Chaitali*, *Naibedyā and Kheya* that he read out to his English friends] and was responsible for the first published translation of a Tagore poem ['The Country of the "Found-Everything"'] in a well-known weekly in England, *The Nation*, on 15th June, 1912, exactly a day before Tagore reached London (Chakravarty 6). Ajit Kumar's translation was historically important as being the first published work by an Indian in a British journal. But unfortunately his name as the translator of the poem first published in an English journal was not mentioned. This

poem was later reprinted in *The Modern Review* in September 1912 with the name of Ajit Kumar Chakravarty as its translator (Pal 321). He also translated two poems from Tagore's *Sisu* ["Birth story and Farewell"] in collaboration with A.K.Coomarswamy that appeared in *The Modern Review* in 1911. He played a pioneering role in the history of Tagore translation but he did not receive the proper recognition he deserved as a Tagore translator in his lifetime or even after his death. Tagore's friend Lokendranath Palit rendered two of his poems "Fruitless Cry" and "The Death of A Star" of which "Fruitless Cry" appeared in *The Modern Review* in 1911(Brahma 18).

As Coomarswamy did not know Bengali, he urged Tagore to make rough paraphrases of some of his poems in English so that he could give them poetic shape in English. Thus, Tagore Englished some of his poems hastily and handed them over to him for this purpose. The rendering of ^{'বিদায়'} ~~Biday~~ (Farewell) was published in April number of *The Modern Review* in 1911 with the names of Tagore and Coomarswamy as its joint translators. Tagore made paraphrases of some more of his poems to be given to Coomarswamy so that he could translate them into English. Thus, Tagore's experiment in collaborative translation with Coomarswamy might have taught him the importance of paraphrase-based prose translation which reached an artistic perfection in his rendering of the *Gitanjali* poems. According to Prasanta Kumar Pal, Tagore's noted biographer, the rough translations that Tagore handed over to Coomarswamy were of such poems as 'The Touchstone', 'Renunciation', 'The Creation of Women' and 'Is it True'. Subsequently, he made some alterations in the texts of these renderings and included them in *The Gardener* in 1913 (Pal 19).

It was sometime in 1911 that Ramananda Chatterjee requested Tagore to do some translations of his poems into English to be published in his journal. In spite of his initial reluctance he agreed in the long run to render some of his poems for the journal. Ramananda's request might have ignited in him the desire to translate them probably as models for rendering his poems. He seems to have felt that the translators of the time were not doing justice to his poems in their renderings. It was from an inner sense of dissatisfaction that he made translations of some of his poems and handed them over to Ramananda Chatterjee. According to him, these are "the first English translations by him

[Tagore] of his poems [that] appeared in the February, April and September numbers of *The Modern Review* in 1912....These are, to my knowledge, his earliest published English compositions. Their manuscripts are with me” (Chatterjee.X). These translations seem to have prepared him psychologically for the greater job of rendering the *Gitanjali* poems that would fetch him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Hence, the view that no English translations of Rabindranath was published anywhere before the *Gitanjali* is totally unfounded.

Another important manifestation of this sudden spurt in Tagore translations was that a group of young Bengali scholars, then in England, joined the exercise launched at home to project the many-sided genius of Tagore to readers outside Bengal and India (Das 12). The second important literary event of this period was the publication in England of Roby Dutt’s translations of ten Tagore poems included in *Echoes from East and West* (1909). Roby Dutt’s renderings were historically important as being the first published translations of Tagore’s poems in rhymed verse. He presented a copy of this book to Tagore obviously for his views about his rendering. Roby Dutt’s translation of his poems in rhymed verse did not satisfy Rabindranath and in a letter (dated 14 May 1912) to his friend Pramathalal Sen he made, for the first time, some comments on the translations of his poems.

I don’t think that my poems can be rendered properly into English. ...Certainly not in rhymed verse. Maybe it can be done in plain prose. When I go to England I shall try my hand at it.

(Mukherjee116).

In fact, Tagore was strongly opposed to the idea of metrical translation of his poems and wanted them to be translated in lucid prose. Though he was not satisfied with the translations of Ajit Kumar Chakravarty and Lokendranath Palit, he did not express his views publicly except rewriting some of the poems rendered by them (Brahma 30). But Roby Dutt’s translations of his poems evoked such a strong resentment in him that he gave up his reservations about translation and took the unprecedented decision to translate his own poems into English. According to Sisir Kumar Das, the editor of *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, two factors contributed to Tagore’s emergence as a translator of his



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31 MAR 2016

own poems --- increasing pressures from his admirers for more translations of his writings and his growing unhappiness with the translations of his poems done by others. "It was a kind of creative impulse", adds Mr. Das, "that had been simmering within him for a long time and finally burst into the open. For about three years a preparation had been going on, silently, which culminated in his momentous decision to be his own translator" (Das14). Mr. Das here speaks of a 'preparation' for about three years and a simmering 'creative impulse' that account for Tagore's emergence as the translator of his own works. Mr. Das's views need to be examined critically in the light of available historical facts.

As a matter of fact, the 'preparation' that Tagore actually had to go through for his translation was ^{for} much less than three years, if one takes the following two historical facts into consideration. Ananda Coomarswamy, who had been among Tagore's first translators, arrived in Santiniketan in February 1911 and expressed his desire to translate his poems in English. As Coomarswamy did not know Bengali, Tagore began to make rough paraphrases of his own poems from February 1912 onwards to help him translate his poems in English. Secondly, Tagore had announced his decision to translate his own poems while commenting on Roby Dutta's translation of his poems in his letter to his friend Pramathalal Sen on 14 May 1912. It may be mentioned here that Roby Dutta gave Tagore a copy of his *Echoes from East and West* (1909) in May 1912. Thus his 'preparation', for all practical purposes, was ^{for} a little more than a year, if one takes into account the letter to Indira Devi in which he mentions the month of Chaitra (from mid-March to mid-April) as the beginning of his translation. As he went on translating his Bengali poems, he came to be gradually possessed by what Mr. Das called a 'creative impulse' and he passed from one exercise book to another in a spirit of creative joy. What was actually simmering in Tagore was not a 'creative impulse', as suggested by Mr. Das, but an intense desire to 'recapture' in a foreign tongue the creative ecstasy or the 'feast of joy', in Tagore's own words, that gave birth to his *Gitanjali* poems.

When Tagore started translating his own poems into English at Shilaidaha during March-April 1912, he had before him two models of translation --- one followed by Ajit Kumar Chakravarty and the other by Lokendranath Palit. Ajit Kumar Chakravarty's translation is in

prose and literal, purported to be faithful to the poem as well as to the poet. Though Tagore had some fascination for Ajit Chakravarty's word-for-word, literal method, he was well aware that this method was incapable of 'reincarnating' the soul and spirit of his poem. Lokendranath Palit's model aimed at capturing the significance and beauty of the original poem in the conventional form of English poetry. Though he could not fully approve of Lokendranath's method that allowed the shadow of English poetry fall over his translation, he preferred the transference of a poem's beauty and significance to its word-for-word, literal translation. And he seemed to have drawn this lesson from his friend Loken's translation practice (Ibid 15)

While translating the Bengali poems for his English *Gitanjali*, Tagore adopted a novel method of translation to capture the essence and beauty of the original poems in 'a rhythmically free' [and] 'slightly biblical style of prose-poetry' (Radice 282). In a letter to Dinesh Chandra Sen Tagore clarifies his strategy of translation:

I feel translation can never be satisfactory unless done by myself . Since the melody of of Bengali language and Bengali rhythm cannot be transferred to English, the rendering of ideas in simple English can only bring out its inner beauty. I can easily do this work without any mistake (my translation) .

(Pal354).

In his attempt to re-capture, through the medium of the English language, the creative impulse of his Bengali poems, the poet rewrote them creatively in simple English prose drawing on the feelings and emotions of the original. And the *Gitanjali* (1912) poems underwent such a 'miraculous transformation' in English that they were "re-born in the process, the flowers bloom(ed) anew on a foreign soil" (Bose15). This makes the *Gitanjali* poems "a miracle of translation" (Ibid 15) and the best of Tagore's works in English. Ironically enough, the *Gitanjali* poems were lauded extravagantly in the West only for their 'mystical' qualities and he was regarded as a 'mystic', 'a seer from the East, or 'a saint' rather than a poet or a creative writer (Sengupta 62).

But unlike *Gitanjali* (1912), *The Gardener* (1913) is a collection of secular 'lyrics of love and life' that Tagore prepared as a counter-measure to the effect of *Gitanjali*, and also as an avowal that "he was a poet and not a guru" (Aronson 127). But even in his translation of non-devotional, secular verses in post-*Gitanjali* phase, he showed an unconscious tilt towards mystical connotation in his choice of words and phrases (Ibid 124). Thus, Tagore came to be recognized as a mystic poet in the West and he could not get rid of that label in his lifetime. The publication of *Complete Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore* (1936) from Macmillan only consolidated his identity as a 'mystic' in the West, let alone dispel it. Eventually, Tagore had to pay dearly for this valorization of a secondary element of his poems at the cost of their creative qualities. Consequently, his international fame suffered a steep decline and by 1920 he became more or less discredited as a writer in the West (Ibid 127).

Broadly speaking, the English translations of Tagore's Bengali writings fall into two distinct categories, one done by the author himself, and the other by different translators. According to Sisir Kumar Das, there exists 'an intermediary group' between these two categories which appeared around 1912 following the publication of the English *Gitanjali* and ended with the death of Tagore in 1941 (Das11). Translations of this group were done by close associates of Tagore very often under his direct supervision, and sometimes with his active collaboration. For a long time the translations of this group were supposed to have been done by Tagore himself. The *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore* (1936) contained, for example, two plays , *The Post Office* (tr. Devabrata Mukherjea, 1914) and *The Cycle of Spring*,(tr. C.F. Andrews & Nishi Kanta Sen, 1917) translated by others. His publisher Macmillan & Co. maintained a mysterious silence about it and did nothing to dispel the wrong impression about their authorship (Ibid).

To this 'intermediary' group belong the foreign helpers at his school and University at Santinikatan, especially C.F.Andrews and W.W. Pearson, who translated some of his short stories for Macmillan "with the author's help". Marjorie Sykes, who translated his *Three Plays* (1950) and also his book of reminiscences, *My Boyhood Days* (1928) is to be included in this group. Tagore's autobiography, *My Reminiscences* (*Jibansmriti*,(1912) was

translated(1917) by Surendranath Tagore, the poet's nephew, who also translated short stories and the novel *Ghare-Baire* (1914); *The Home and the World*, (1919). Tagore's longest and most ambitious novel *Gora* (1910) was translated by W.W.Pearson. Krishna Kripalani claims the credit of having translated three novels of Tagore --- *Two Sisters* (1945), *Farewell, My Friend*,(1949) and *Binodini* (1959) apart from the best biography of the poet in English (Chattapadhaya 114-120).The translations of this group suffered from some defects that would eventually pave the way for the emergence of 'a third' Tagore in the time to come.

Edward Thompson was the first Tagore critic who felt the need for the representation of the myriad aspects of his versatile genius in English translation to exorcise his reputation from the spectre of mysticism. Since he knew Bengali, he was well aware that Tagore was a much greater and more varied writer in Bengali than in English. Accordingly, he set out to validate Tagore's reputation by writing in English a critical appraisal of his Bengali works. A writer of poetry himself, he translated many poems representing the various aspects of Tagore's genius and included them in *Augustan Books of Modern Poetry* (1925) edited by him (Radice 1368-1371). But his maiden attempt to exorcise Tagore failed to produce the desired impact in the West. In the Introduction to this anthology he makes an observation that sums up the crying need of Tagore's own translations:

Tagore is known to the West almost solely as a mystical poet. I have tried to present sides of his versatile efforts that are unrepresented in his own translation.

(Mukherjee137-38).

What Mr. Thompson meant to say here is that the diverse aspects of Tagore's creative works would have to be represented in English translation so that the Western people might be aware of his true greatness. Again, in the obituary column of *The Listener* (14 August 1941) Mr. Thompson called for a drastic retranslation of his works:

His poems will have to be drastically retranslated some day, and only then will his greatness and range be understood.

(Kundu *et al* 581).

In his Bengali essay “Inrejte Rabindranath” Buddhadeva Bose also, after having pointed out the deficiencies of Tagore’s own translations, proposed that his poems should be translated afresh in English for his proper evaluation as a poet in the West (Bose127-28).

It is gratifying to note that there appeared a new category of translations after a decade and a half of Tagore’s death. It was totally free from intervention of any kind. Compared to the existing translations this new kind of translation represented the rendering of complete books rather than ‘mixed anthologies’. Sheila Chatterjee’s translation of Tagore’s *Syamali* [1936, tr.1955] belongs to this category and is one of the most successful translations of a complete book of his verse. She seems to have captured, for the first time, Tagore’s characteristic technique of writing *vers libre* with varying line-length.,or what Radice would famously call Tagore’s ‘sari-poem’ style. An extract from *Syamali* is given below:

Suddenly throwing away her newspaper
She greeted me with folded palms,
The path of social intercourse was opened,
I started the conversation---
How are you? How goes the world?
And so on.
She remained looking out of the window
With a look as of avoiding contact with the
days of our closer acquaintance.
She gave one or two very brief replies,
Some questions she never replied at all.
She communicated with the impatience of her hands ---
Why all this talk ?
It would be far better to remain silent.

[Accidental Meeting] (Chatterjee1955).

The visual effect of the arrangement of lines together with their interpretative rendering makes *Syamali* a distinctive book of Tagore’s verse. Aurobindo Bose is another noted Tagore translator of this category who was aware that selections of his poems would produce an incomplete and ‘patchy’ impression about Tagore. Hence he had translated three complete books in free verse in order to ‘provide an alternative to Tagore’s own sub-biblical prose-poetry’ (Radice 1368-71). These three books of poems are *Flight of the Swans* (1955), *The Herald of Spring* (1957) and *Wings of Death* (1960). His purpose, as he tells us in the Translator’s Preface (1955), is to make as literal a translation as possible of the original

verses, even at the cost of sounding a little strange to English ears. He has purposely retained many Indian words in the English text explaining their exact meaning in the notes.

The Tagore Centenary in 1961 provided a renewed impetus to Tagore scholarship and fresh translations of Tagore to highlight his many-sided genius that had hitherto remained obscure under the so-called 'mystic' image so fondly nurtured and promoted by the West. *Rabindranath Tagore : A Centenary Volume* (1961) published by Sahitya Akademi is unquestionably a monumental testament to Tagore scholarship--- a testament that brings into critical focus his infinite range, fabulous variety and incredible creative opulence. Tagore translations also needed a corresponding shift in focus to attune itself to the changing demands of the times. Pierre Fallon s.j., like Thompson and Bose before him, stressed the need for fresh translations of Tagore for a proper evaluation of his creative genius in the West:

New translations should be attempted, more exacting and thorough, not diluted and simplified, with textual notes or explanatory prefaces. These translations should give the foreign reader the whole of Rabindranath in the order of their artistic creation....(Fallon 320).

It was with the demand for new translation that Mr. Fallon gave a much-needed call for exorcising Tagore's reputation as a 'mystic' poet:

Tagore's reputation as a predominantly 'mystic' poet should be exorcised....The West knows Tagore only as the author of *Gitanjali* and believes this to be his greatest work: it is great indeed but representative of only one aspect of Tagore's poetical greatness. Till the other aspects are revealed to them Western readers will not know the real greatness of Rabindranath.

(Ibid 320).

Exorcising Tagore's reputation as a 'mystic' poet and revelation of his versatile creative efforts became the main focus of post-centenary Tagore translations in English, a focus that gave rise to a new breed of Tagore translators in the 1980s creating the 'third Tagore'.

Interestingly, Amiya Chakraborty (1901-1985), who acted for many years as the Secretary to Rabindranath Tagore, was perhaps the first to have felt the need for editing and presenting Tagore's own translations in the modern age to counter the damage caused to his international reputation by Macmillan & Co. publishing *Complete Collected Poems and Plays* of Rabindranath Tagore (1936) in a most unprofessional way. In the introduction to *A Tagore Reader* (2003) he says:

Tagore's creative power, and the impact of his spiritual personality, however, had been dimly assessed outside Bengal and India. Primarily this is owing to the linguistic barrier, but one of the major reasons is that his writings, even in Bengal, and *especially in English translations, were not brought into focus by any clear arrangement of materials or by the careful editing needed for an expression of his many-sided genius in a single frame of reference* (emphasis added).

(Chakravarty.N. pag.).

The outcome of this realization is the publication of *A Tagore Reader* (1961) edited by Amiya Chakraborty himself on the occasion of Tagore centenary. It is basically a selection of translations done by Tagore and others that intends to give a fairly comprehensive view of Tagore's versatile creative power. The individual introduction given to each section includes relevant information about the context, a brief discussion of the contents of each section and necessary facts concerning translations and ^{their} publications. The Notes and Glossary included in this volume are exclusively meant for the foreign readers. Despite the charge of haphazard arrangement of materials that Alokaranjan DasGupta brought against him (Ghosh108), this volume stands out as an ideal model for future editors of translations in general and Tagore translations in particular.

It was for the first time in 1961 that the need for translating and promoting the representative works of Tagore to a wider readership outside Bengal was felt to dispel the wrong impression about him. The Tagore Commemorative Volume Society was formed for this purpose, [^]The Society brought out an anthology of eighteen essays of Tagore in a volume entitled *Towards Universal Man* (1961). Encouraged by the warm reception of this anthology, the Society took the decision of bringing out a companion volume in English

comprising some of the best poems of Tagore .Consequently, an outstanding anthology of *One Hundred and One: Poems by Rabindranath Tagore* edited by Humayun Kabir was brought out in 1966 . It represented, to quote the words of the editor, the ‘best of Tagore’ poems covering his entire creative career from 1881 to 1941 (Kabir xiii) .The poems of this volume were translated by some of the most distinguished scholars of the time in the field of English scholarship in Bengal. The translators tried their best to make the poems accurate and readable; but the lack of a uniform translation style and the scholarly background necessary for understanding Tagore’s poems is conspicuously absent here.

Tagore’s *Last Poems* (1972) transcreated by P.Lal and Shymasree Devi is another landmark addition to Tagore translation.It contains all the fifteen poems that comprise Tagore’s posthumous volume ^{"শেষ কথা"} ~~*Shesh Lekha*~~. Some of the poems were earlier translated by Humayun Kabir (poem nos.11,13), Amalendu DasGupta (poem nos.14,15) and Amiya Chakraborty(poem nos.4,14,15).But the credit of translating the whole book of poems goes to P.Lal and Shymasree Devi. Their transcreations are faithful to the original to an extreme degree. They have tried to follow, in their rendering, ‘the line-structures, stanza-patterns and, wherever possible, even the inversions’ of the original. Nowhere have they made any attempt to ‘interpret’ and the ‘stark brevity’ of the original has been scrupulously retained.

“The first Sun asked
The world’s first Life:
“Who are you?”
No answer.

Years passed.
The last Sun
asked
the last question
from the western ocean
on a soundless evening :
“Who are you?
No answer (Lal & Devi, Poem 13).

The four-page long introduction to the volume is an excellent piece of criticism relating to the last phase of Tagore's creative life. The notes and interpretations of unknown words and myth-contents have been explained in the introduction instead of the customary 'Notes' section added to a book of translation. This new approach to Tagore translation as found in the *Last Poems* seems to have anticipated Radice's strategy of translation in the *Selected Poems* (1985) of Rabindranath Tagore.

The 1980s and 1990s that witnessed a new wave of Tagore translations may well be described as the golden period of Tagore translations. William Radice's *Selected Poems* (1985) of Rabindranath Tagore and Ananda Lal's *Three Plays* (1987) ushered in an era of 'new' Tagore translations as envisaged by Piere Fallon, Buddhadeva Bose and Edward Thompson. Hence, the years 1985 and 1987 may both claim to be the "annus mirabilis" in the history of Tagore translation. Radice's *Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Poems* (1985) stemmed from an awareness that existing Tagore translations--- especially the Macmillan volume (1936) of Tagore's *Collected Poems and Plays*--- offered no information or annotation, nor did they give the readers any idea of Tagore's place in the literary history of Bengal, or of how the translations relate to the Bengali originals (Radice, 230). He emerged as a pioneer of ~~the~~ translations of a new kind introducing, for the first time, a sensible introduction to Tagore, scholarly notes to each poem explaining difficulties in meaning, and a glossary of unfamiliar names and words to Tagore translation (Lal, 35). In the Introduction to *Selected Poems* (1985), Radice states that he had tried to be faithful to the spirit of Tagore's verse and had chosen 48 poems that would represent his entire career and that would also reflect his formal inventiveness. A poet himself, Radice had tried to poetically recreate Tagore's Bengali verse in English and won unprecedented fame as an authentic interpreter of Tagore. In the Introduction to his *Selected Poems* (1985) of Rabindranath Tagore, he 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). His avowed aim in the *Selected Poems* (1985) is to represent the infinite diversity and "the spirit of perpetual progress in Tagore" (Radice 36) in order to make him "internationally credible and interesting as a writer, not just as a sage" (Radice 77).

Radice's *Selected Poems* (1985) of Rabindranath, thus, remains an outstanding pioneering work in the history of Tagore translations.

Ananda Lal's *Three Plays* (1987) of Rabindranath Tagore is also an invaluable contribution to Tagore translation for its extensive background information on Tagore the dramatist, its elaborate notes, its relevant appendices and exhaustive bibliography. Fidelity to the original remains the basic principle of his rendering in these plays. He strives to maintain "a scrupulously close correspondence between Bengali and English", sentence for sentence, and in many instances, even word for word. Again, he tries to preserve, in his translation, the "speech-rhythms" of Tagore's characters and that is why he has to sacrifice "the restraint and economy of English in favour of the more luxuriant Bengali" (Lal 112). He is more concerned with the stage potentiality of the plays and their translations are to be considered not as definitive texts but as 'performance scripts' for producers and actors. His *Three Plays* (1987), he claims, ought to be given a special position in the history of Tagore translation as 'the first full-length study in English of Tagorean drama' (Ibid35).

The publication of Radice's *Selected Poems* (1985) and A. Lal's *Three Plays* (1987) seems to have opened the flood gate of Tagore translations in the 1990s. With the arrival of Tagore's 50th death anniversary in 1991 there began a new wave of Tagore translations: notably Radice's *Selected Short Stories* and *Selected Short Stories* translated by Krishna Dutta and Mary Lago. Radice's *Selected ^{Short} Stories* (1991) is a companion volume to his *Selected Poems* (1985) of Rabindranath and gives the Western readers, in Kaiser Haq's words, 'the surest proof of Tagore's achievement in fiction' (Haq 1). Radice chooses 30 stories from the most prolific period (1890s) of Tagore's creative life arranging them under three headings: sthale ('on land'), jalpathe (by water), and ghate (at the ghat). The selection here is made by only subjective considerations. *Selected Short Stories* (1991) of Rabindranath by Krishna Dutta and Mary Lago is a remarkable attempt to show Tagore's versatility of mood and milieu, his ironic sense of humour, and the modernity of his appeal. This is a selection of 14 stories representing both early and late, both shorter works as well as Tagore's mature novellas. Both the volumes contain an introduction providing the socio-cultural perspective of Tagore's short stories, elaborate notes and glossary of Indian words. Sujit Mukherjee's *Three*

Companions (Orient Longman, 1992) is an anthology of translations into English of the last three long stories of Tagore (*Teen Sangi*1940).

Ketaki Kushari Dyson's anthology *I Won't Let You Go: Selected Poems* (1992) containing 140 poems is a much more comprehensive effort than Radice's in representing Tagore's verse in English. However, Dyson unequivocally refers to her choice as 'personal', governed neither by academic nor representative criteria. Her volume is intended to give contemporary readers at least some idea of the range and variety of his achievement as a poet. Starting with poems written by the twenty-one year old Tagore and ending with the very last poem he dictated from his deathbed in 1941, Dyson includes poems from every phase of his career. They are competent and faithful to the original as far as the meaning and the movement of thought is concerned. Her collection is remarkable because of its excellent Introduction, detailed notes, and useful glossary. It is the most complete representation of Tagore's achievement as a poet in English translation.

Kaiser Haq's *Chaturanga*(*Quartet*) that appeared in London in 1993 seeks to project Rabindranath as an 'Asian' writer in Heinemann Educational Publisher's 'Asian Writers Series. It is the first full length translation of a Tagore novel by a Bangladeshi translator. It is the third translation of the novel within a span of 76 years. The translation done by Kaiser Haq is excellent – certainly better than the earlier attempts. His Introduction does not add to our understanding of the novel –but he handles the challenging sections of the novel with the confidence of a poet. Haq's English version is as eerie as the original (Mukherjee103-107).

Sahitya Akademi undertook a commendable project of bringing out a three-volume authoritative set of Tagore translations in the 1990s titling them as *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore* :

1. Vol. 1 *Poems* (1994) 669 pages.
2. Vol. 11 *Plays, Stories, Essays* (1996) 780 pages.
3. Vol. 111 *A Miscellany* (1996) 1099 pages.

These three volumes were excellently edited by Sisir Kumar Das with elaborate introduction, exhaustive notes, sources of English translations and index of first words .The editor deliberately left out Rabindranath's letters from his massive three volume project because of the ' unavailability of the correspondence in full'. The volume III contains the C.F.Andrews and the Gilbert Murray correspondence only because the complete exchange was available. Following the sudden demise of Sisir Kumar Das, the fourth volume of *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore* came out in 2007 with miscellaneous writings, edited by Nityapriya Ghosh . Had the editor of Macmillan & Co. (if there was any) edited *Complete Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore* in 1936 as meticulously as the editor of Sahitya Akademi, ^{* did *} the verdict of posterity on Tagore as 'a translated poet' might have been different. ^

Joe Winter's *Homage to Rabindranath Tagore* (1995) published from Writers Workshop, Kolkata, contains 24 poems of which some are his own, the rest are those of other poets. This volume has no prefatory note to indicate whether these are actually translations. Only seven poems represent translations of Tagore by Winter himself. The most important poem among them is "Urvashi" which is rendered in rhymed verse.

Radice's competent translation of *The Post Office* (1996), published in England is another full-length rendering of a Tagore play in English. This play marks a welcome departure from the rendering of poetry, fiction or drama of Tagore that have so far been translated at home and abroad. Set as a play-within-a-play by Jill Parvin for the Parallel Existence 1993 production, *The Post Office*, in Radice's rendering, recalls the Warsaw Ghetto 1942 performance by Janusz Korczak's Jewish orphans. According to Martin Kampchen, the play's plot proves "its universality by transcending its Bengali context and illuminating another context which was, originally, quite alien to it" (Kampchen 6).

In *An Anthology* (1997) Andrew Robinson and Krishna Dutta bring out a collection of assorted writings of Rabindranath and claim to have translated them into English .They have been accused of plagiarism for having used without acknowledgement some of the translations done by others. Their collection contains, inter alia, a 'new' version of *The Post Office*. They have remodeled an earlier translation and passed it off as their own, let alone

translate the original afresh. Devabrata Mukerjee, the first translator of *The Post Office*, made some glaring errors in his translation and those errors have crept into Dutta-Robinson's rendering, giving one the impression that they simply lifted those words .

Gora (1997) translated by Sujit Mukherjee represents the first-ever 'complete and unabridged' translation of the original text as it appears now in *Rabindracharanabali*. The first translation of *Gora* which was published in 1924 by Macmillan & Co from London was reprinted many times for 73 years, without providing any editorial aid or introductory matter. This new translation of *Gora* (Sahitya Akademi) in 1997 breaks resoundingly with this practice . It carries a one-page Translator's Preface, a 15-page Introduction to the novel by Meenakshi Mukherjee and 20 pages of Translators Notes. This new translation of *Gora* (1997) has already had three reprints in less than five years (Mukherjee 99-103).

Joe Winter's *The Gitanjali* (1998) of Rabindranath Tagore is historically important as the first ever translation in English of the original *Gitanjali* (1910) in Bengali. Rabindranath himself translated 53 songs and included them in his English *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* (1912). Radice did not dare translate the songs from *Gitanjali* (1910) except "Agaman", simply because he considered songs untranslatable (Radice 31). Winter's avowed aim ^{is} to render 157 poems as they 'appear on the Bengali page, each musically, intellectually and spiritually of a piece' (Winter 9). He intends to make the poems as musical as they could be in English by using rhyme and metre. Let us compare Tagore's translation of poem no. 14 from his *Gitanjali* with Winter's rendering of the same to examine how the latter succeeds:

If the day is done, if birds sing no more, if the wind has flagged tired, then draw
the veil of darkness thick upon me, even as thou has wrapt the earth with the
coverlet of sleep and tenderly closed the petals of the drooping lotus at dusk
(Tagore14).

(Das, Vol. I.50)

And here is Joe Winter's rendering of the above prose extract:

If the day goes, if birds will no more sing,
 And if the wind is spent and no more blows,
Then dear one, bring that deepest covering,
 And in the all-dense darkness me enclose ...
As when the Earth with dreams around
 Is secretly and slowly wound;
 The lotus settles in night's offering;
 And, as eyes entering sleep, you cover those (Winter, 193).

Tagore translates the first verse simply but eloquently. Although his translation is in prose, there is a musical element in this version. Winter adheres very closely to the formal elements of the Bengali version. He also strives to convey something of the music of the original, not only through his use of rhyme, but also through skillful repetition, as in the use of the "s" sounds in the following line "and in the all-dense darkness me enclose ...". At times his rhymes seem forced and lifeless.

Particles, Jottings, Sparks (2000) is a collection of the brief poems which remains another feather in Radice's cap. He was inspired to translate Tagore's brief poems by Martin Kampchen's German translations of a hundred poems in *Auf des Funkens Spitzen* (1989). Radice has not only translated the brief poems of Tagore's *Kanika* (1899), *Lekhan* (1927) and *Sphulinga* (1945) but also, in the appendices, translated some prose pieces that shed light on the poems' method and underlying thought. He has tried to keep as close as possible to the rhythm of the original poems. But in quite a few cases, the poems have lost their spirit, their true import. Take, for example, the well-known poem in *Kanika*: "Uttam nischintey choley..." which Radice translates as follows:

The finest are happy to walk with the lowly,
Those in between are not so friendly (Radice, 54).

The point here is, after all, not unfriendliness but the snobbishness of the middle class. He tries to make up by naming the poem "Prudent Mediocrity" but the essence is still lost. The

poems of *Particles, Jottings, Sparks* are, on the whole, true to the essence of the original poems.

The work is enriched by a detailed introduction, in which Radice has explored the concept of these short poems. Both the introduction and the appendices are helpful for foreign readers to grasp the context and background of these poems.

Rabindranath Tagore: Final Poems (2001) is the unique product of collaboration between the American poet Wendy Barkar and Saranindranath Tagore, a Bengali associate professor of philosophy who also happens to be a descendant of the Bengali bard. It is the second Tagore verse translation of the 21st century (Radice's *Particles, Jottings, Sparks*, 2000, being the first) The translators of the volume concentrate on translating the poems written by Tagore in the final year of his life when he was too ill to write and when he had to dictate them to others as they came to him.

In fact, these final poems are, “extraordinarily compact,” “austere” and “direct” (XIII). Representing a radical departure from all previous collections of his verse in their anguished meditation on the “unpresentability of Being”, the poems are also unique in that they manage to be musical and yet are mostly written in free verse . What distinguishes this volume is the excellent use of “ordinary American colloquial diction” (XIV) and “fresh language in English” (Barkar and Tagore 2001). Here is an example of the superb quality of translations produced by the two translators from two different hemispheres of the globe:

I dozed off,
Woke, and saw
By my feet
A basket of oranges
Someone had brought.
The mind sends
Gusses that return
One by one, gentle names.
I know--- or maybe I don't---
That with the one unknown,
Many names meet

From many directions.
In one name all become true---
Giving brings
Utter content.

(Barkar & Tagore, Poem 29)

Tagore: Final Poems (2001) is a slim volume that has attained excellence by concentrating only on some of the final poems.

Critics who were opposed to the lapse of Tagore copyright in 2001, are now reasonably convinced that the removal of the copyright had triggered a spate of innovative and exciting anthologies of fresh Tagore translations. The Oxford University Press (Delhi) in collaboration with Visva-Bharati had undertaken probably the most ambitious project of presenting the poet in competent English translations, with comprehensive introductions and notes, in separate anthologies, on thematic basis. Under Sukanta Chaudhuri's able leadership, Oxford University Press had already published the following Tagore Translations series earning a well-deserved reputation:

1. *Selected Short Stories: Rabindranath Tagore* (2000).
2. *Selected Writings on Literature and Language* (2001)
3. *Selected Poems: Rabindranath Tagore* (2004)
4. *Relationship (Jogajog)* 2005.
5. *Selected Writings on Education and Nationalism* (2009).
6. *Oxford Tagore Translations of Writings on children* (?).

The above volumes represent the work of many translators, overseen by an editor or two besides the general editor. *The Oxford Tagore Translations* clearly demonstrate that Tagore's works are translation-friendly. In this connection, Amit Chowdhury comments, *The OTT* is "a fresh attempt to assuage the anxiety that Tagore has seldom been well translated, least of all by himself, and to allay the fear that he cannot be" (Chowdhury, 2006). Again, the *OTT* seems to follow and continue the new translation approach initiated by Radice and Lal in *Tagore Translations*.

In 2008 Visva-Bharati published the translations of *Tasher Desh (Card Country)* and *Dakghar (The Post Office)* by the noted British Tagore scholar, William Radice. After his HarperCollins collection of *Particles, Jottings, Sparks* (2000) he continues his translation work with this double-set. Rabindranath's original hand-written texts are reproduced in facsimile and the translation is set on the opposite page. Radice's translation is vigorous and subtle at the same time; one finds here the careful hand of a poet and opera librettist.

Harish Trivedi complimented Radice on having created 'a third Tagore' in and through his Tagore translations. Concurring with Mr. Trivedi, Radice describes his own Tagore translations and those by others as follows: "As well as the Bengali Rabindranath and the English Tagore, *a third Tagore was being revealed by me and by other translators*" (Radice 76). The revelation of this 'third Tagore', he feels, continues to be the main focus of Tagore translations at the present stage. The process of constructing the 'third Tagore' has only begun and much work in this direction remains to be done. As he says, "It's a slow and difficult task. We're only at the beginning" (Ibid 77). This 'slow and difficult' task of projecting Tagore in the light of the subjective appreciation and understanding of the translators remains the agenda of Tagore translation in the post-modern age.

Translators such as Radice, Dyson, Joe Winter, and Wendy Barker and Saranindranath Tagore, and Sukanta Chaudhuri and his team, have been trying their best in recent times to usher in a revival of interest in Tagore's verse and to lift his international reputation out of the moribund state it had fallen into even in the poet's lifetime. Many more translations of his works are expected to have been undertaken on the occasion of his sesquicentenary birth anniversary to represent his poetic oeuvre in elegant and readable English of the time. Of the books of Tagore translations that appeared on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary the following three deserves special mention for different reasons. The first one is Tagore's *Three Novellas: Nasthanid, Dui Bon, and Malancha* translated by Sukhendu Roy who had already made his mark as a Tagore translator in making some of the excellent translations of poems for *The Oxford Tagore Translations for ^{Writings} ~~Poems~~ on Children*. This volume of Tagore translations published from Oxford University Press contains a valuable introduction written by Bharati Roy. The rendering of the stories is faithful to the original, and at the same time

fluent and readable. What is striking about his translations is his bold use of Bengali words in place of their poor English equivalents. His language is a bit more formal than is expected. He could have used less formal and more colloquial English in his rendering of the dialogues of the stories. The *Essential Tagore* published from Visva-Bharati seeks to acquaint the present generation of readers with the multifaceted aspects of Tagore's creative genius. It is basically a selection of works on various categories rendered by thirty translators. This volume edited jointly by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty is much like Amiya Chakravarty's *A Tagore Reader* in its aims and scope. But the translators of this volume fail to make their renderings faithful to the spirit of the original. No uniform translation policy has been followed in this selection. *The Essential Tagore* (2011?) fails to fulfill the expectation it raised among the readers of the present generation.

The appearance of *Gitanjali* (2011) translated by William Radice is a remarkable literary event that coincided with the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Tagore's birth. This new volume, commissioned by Penguin India, contains an entirely new translation of all the poems that formed Tagore's English book *Gitanjali*, which was a different book from his Bengali *Gitanjali* (1910). The English *Gitanjali* takes 53 poems from the Bengali book and the remaining poems of the collection come from a number of other Bengali books of verses by Tagore. Radice rewrites *Gitanjali* drawing on the manuscript, popularly known as the Rothenstein manuscript which is preserved among the William Rothenstein papers at Harvard. Between the two covers of the same book Radice has the guts to publish, for the first time, his own translation side by side with Tagore's iconic translation. He did it, obviously, not to devalue Tagore and upstage himself, but rather to enable his readers to have a taste of the original poems and at the same time, to show how the published text moved from the Rothenstein manuscript. The Rothenstein manuscript was the one Tagore's British artist friend William Rothenstein submitted to Yeats and from which Yeats effected his alterations.

Radice's book combines an 84-page Introduction and several Appendices, running into 113 pages, which minutely show how Yeats altered the original English *Gitanjali* --- the 'real *Gitanjali*, as he prefers to call it, and thus twisted the original intentions, the mood and the

literary quality of the book. According to Radice, Yeats did not merely correct or change the wording and the punctuation of the text. He also deleted the paragraphing of many poems and disrupted their sequences. Radice feels that by deleting the paragraphs of the poems Yeats altered the original rhythm of Tagore's English *Gitanjali*. Although the book contains a motley of songs and poems from different books, a subterranean rhythm holds them together and gives them coherence. Yeats misunderstood or disregarded it and tried to improve on it. Radice examined in five appendices the extensive differences between the manuscript and the published text as edited by W.B. Yeats. His book is a quest for "the real *Gitanjali*", and he also describes it as a "restitution", an attempt to give back to Tagore what was taken away from him by W.B. Yeats and other Western admirers (Radice lxxx). His purpose of rendering *Gitanjali* afresh is to give the Western readers the taste of the 'real *Gitanjali*' and 'real Tagore' (Ibid). In spite of his best efforts Radice fails to give us the taste of the 'real *Gitanjali*' and ends up giving us a shadow of the original. Radice does not, as in his earlier poetry translations, add annotations for each poem which had been a distinguishing feature of his *Selected Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*. His method of repeating lines in the song-texts is far from satisfactory.

Translation is dated and time-bound whereas creative literature is not. P.Lal elaborates the point in his *Transcreation* (1996):

Every age gets the translation it deserves ...It is trivial and irrelevant to condemn earlier translations for not sounding satisfactory to us. As best one should compare only contemporary versions of the same text; even that is not always desirable, because different translators aim at different groups of readers with different tastes. One does one's job as best as one can, and moves on. Some translate; some transcreate; some, with the best of intentions, transcorrupt. By the time Time passes an evaluating judgment, new and fresh versions are again needed --- and the cycle starts again (Lal 46-47).

What Lal here seems to imply is that a great literary work of the past is timeless in its appeal but its interpretation changes from age to age. Translations of a creative work represent and

reflect its changing interpretations in age after age. This is how a creative work of the past continues to be live and true to its time in every age. In the অনুবাদের বক্তব্য (1957) to Kalidas's মেঘদূত Buddhadev Basu says that translation plays the role of a ঘটক, 'catalyst' in making a literary work of the past live as well as contemporaneous. Hence the need for new translations of a literary work arises in age after age (Basu72). Sujit Mukherjee's observations, though made in a different context on the fresh translations of Tagore, are relevant even to-day and deserve mention here:

The time has come ...for fresh translations, not only in English, of whatever of Rabindranath that has been translated earlier, also of whatever that has not. *He is simultaneously one of our comfortingly great as well as perpetually modern writers... and he can withstand any amount of translation into any language of the world.*

(emphasis added) (Cited in Lal, 3).

It must be admitted then that the process of translating Tagore will go on against the changing scenario of time and place. Even after the sesquicentenary celebrations of Tagore, there is still much scope for fresh translations of his works in the time to come to highlight the infinite range, fabulous variety and wide range of his poetic creativity so that the people might re-discover him as "one of the world's greatest literary artists and ...perhaps the greatest since Shakespeare" (Bose 85).

Note:

Buddhadeva Bose and Buddhadeva Basu are not two different persons as the two surnames are supposed to indicate. The surname 'Bose' figures in his English writings and that of 'Basu' in his Bengali works, but the person remains the same.