

## CHAPTER – V: IN(CON)CLUSIVE CONCLUSION

The magnetism of certain literary works is so pervasive, perennial and potent that they attract translators in the domain of the same target language quite often. The grand example of Homer's *Iliad* is at hand: it has been translated into English itself some 100-odd times between 1581 and 2015. There is, again, the example of Tagore's "Karna-Kunti Samvad" which has an abiding appeal to the Bengali minds and which has been translated as many as five times into English (see Laha 2017). Such repeated translations of an SLT into the same target language indeed disarms the allegation that poetry is untranslatable.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghnadbadh kabya* has till date five English translations, including Seely's and Radice's. As Radice (2010) puts it:

My translation is the fourth that has been done. The first (not at all well known) was done by Rajendranath Sen and published in Benares in 1926. It is in fluent English blank verse, and the translator deserves more credit for his achievement than he has ever received. Another translation, by Shyamal Bandopadhyay, was published by Toms Publications in Calcutta in 1986. It is described on the title page as 'translated into English Blank Verse', but in fact it is in free verse: the lines do not follow any metrical or rhythmic pattern. Then, in 2004, Clinton B. Seely's translation appeared [...]. (*The Poem cii*)

Radice did not know that Seely had already completed the translation; and when one fine morning he received a copy of Seely's translation, he was unsure whether he should proceed with his own translation. To quote him once again:

[Seely's] book was a major step forward in the interpretation and dissemination of *Meghnādbadh kābya* to non-Bengali readers, and [...] I was strongly tempted to give up. Professor Seely urged me not to, saying [...] that

he warmly welcomed my translation as a companion piece to his book. His view – and I agree with him – is that a great poem like *Meghnādbadh kābya* deserves many translations. I am sure that mine will not be last. (*The Poem* cii-ciii)

True to Radice's expectation, the fifth translation appeared in 2017: *Meghmaadbadh Kabya*, translated by Bina Biswas and Sayantan Gupta. The first and the second translations ever remained unavailable to the present researcher, despite repeated and desperate quests made before and even during COVID-19 pandemic predicament the world over. Hence this chapter will take a look at the latest translation of Dutt's epic and compare it with both Seely's and Radice's translations that preceded it, as well as with their common SLT.

At the beginning of Chapter IV, we have discussed what Seely and Radice have to say about their respective methods of translation. We now need to take a look at Biswas and Gupta's prefatory remarks on their own method of translation:

Our translation is in free verse. This has given us greater freedom of expression. Many words in Bengali cannot be translated in a mere word or two. Sometimes the syntax has to be inverted entirely. By following free verse we have endeavoured to catch the spirit of the original. Preserving and creatively transferring the astoundingly great spirit of this masterly epic poem for non-Bengalis was counted as more important than anything else by us, in settling on this method of translation. (xxiii)

And here is the renowned Bengali poet and academic Alokranjan Dasgupta's appreciation of this 2017 translation of Dutt's epic:

In fact, Michael's intention has been translated in terms of diction and *idiom of identity* in their [Biswas and Gupta's] version executed in the spirit

of *Jugalbandi*. At the same time their excellent rendition has the quality of *explication de texte* as well. In other words Sreemati Biswas and Sree Gupta have been able to interpret aesthetically Michael's masterpiece, studded with ambiguous allusions and metaphoric depths, in conformity with the *zeitgeist* of our millennium. This indeed is a great achievement. (Biswas and Gupta xiii)

In collating Dutt, Seely, Radice, and Biswas & Gupta some important lines relating to the central event of the poem – the 'Slaying' or 'Killing' of Meghnad – will be chosen for a comparative critique of the SLT and the three TLTs. The central event, as indeed the titles of the SLT and the TLTs register, is Laxman's dastardly attack on Indrajit (Meghnad) and slaying / killing him with support from the gods. Laxman has been guided by the Machiavellian philosophy—the end justifies the means – “মারি অরি, পারি যে কৌশলে” (Banerjee VI.490) while Indrajit demands a fair duel which is unacceptable to Laxman as he is far inferior to Indrajit as warrior. Part of the last, moving words by and about Indrajit is reproduced below, first in the Bengali original and then in translations, for the purpose of the intended comparative study.

Dutt:

অন্যায় সমরে পড়ি, অসুরারি-রিপু,  
 রাক্ষসকুল-ভরসা, পরুষ বচনে  
 কহিলা লক্ষণ শূরে; - “বীরকুলগ্লানি,  
 সুমিত্রানন্দন, তুই! শত ধিক্ তোরে!  
 রাবণনন্দন আমি, না ডরি শমনে!  
 কিন্তু তোর অস্ত্রাঘাতে মরিনু যে আজি,  
 পামর, এ চিরদুঃখ রহিল রে মনে!  
 দৈত্যকুলদম ইন্দ্রে দমিনু সংগ্রামে  
 মরিতে কি তোর হাতে? কি পাপে বিধাতা

দিলেন এ তাপ দাসে, বুঝিব কেমনে?  
 আর কি কহিব তোরে? এ বারতা যবে  
 পাইবেন রক্ষোনাথ, কে রক্ষিবে তোরে,  
 নরাধম? জলধির অতল সলিলে  
 ডুবিস্ যদিও তুই, পশিবে সে দেশে  
 রাজরোষ-বাড়বাগ্নিরাশিসম তেজে!  
 দাবাগ্নিসদৃশ তোরে দক্ষিবে কাননে  
 সে রোষ, কাননে যদি পশিস্, কুমতি!  
 নারিবে রজনী, মূঢ়, আবরিতে তোরে।  
 দানব, মানব, দেব, কার সাধ্য হেন  
 ত্রাণিবে, সৌমিত্রি, তোরে, রাবণ রুধিলে?  
 কে বা এ কলঙ্ক তোর ভঞ্জিবে জগতে,  
 কলঙ্কি?” এতেক কহি, বিষাদে সুমতি  
 মাতৃপিতৃপাদপদ্য স্মরিলি অস্তিমে।  
 অধীর হইলা ধীর ভাবি প্রমীলারে  
 চিরানন্দ! লোহ সহ মিশি অশ্রুধারা,  
 অনর্গল বহি, হায়:- আদ্রিল মহীরে।  
 লঙ্কার পঙ্কজ-রবি গেলা অস্তাচলে।  
 নিৰ্ব্বাণ পাবক যথা, কিম্বা ত্রিশম্পতি  
 শান্তরশ্মি মহাবল রহিলা ভূতলে। (Banerjee VI.642-670)

Seely:

Felled in unfair combat, that foeman of the Asuras'  
 foes, that hope of the Rākṣasa clan, addressed the champion  
 Lakṣmaṇa with harsh words, “Disgrace to the community  
 of warriors, you, Sumitrā's son! Shame on you a hundred

times! I, the son of Rāvaṇa, fear not Śamana. But  
 what will be an eternal sorrow in my heart, base one,  
 is that by a blow from your weapon I shall die today.  
 I—who in pitched battle subdued Indra, the subduer  
 of the clan of Daityas—am to die now by your hand? For  
 what false step has Providence meted out such punishment  
 upon this humble servant—shall I ever understand?  
 What else can I say to you? When the lord of Rākṣasas  
 gets word of this, who will save you, O meanest of all men?  
 Even though you plunge into the sea's unfathomed waters,  
 our sovereign's wrath will navigate to that domain—burning  
 like Vāḍaba. That rage of his, like a forest fire, will  
 incinerate you in the woods, if you flee into the  
 forest, you beastly thing. Even Night, you fool, will not be  
 capable of hiding you. Dānava, divine, or man—  
 who is fit to rescue you, Saumitri, when Rāvaṇa  
 is angered? Who in the world will wipe away your blemish,  
 blemished one?" Saying this, that noble-minded one recalled  
 with sadness in those final moments the lotus feet of  
 both his mother and his father. Anxious, he grew calm as  
 he thought of Pramīlā, his eternal bliss. Tears blended  
 with his blood as both flowed freely, alas, dampening the  
 earth. The sun of lotus Laṅkā had reached his setting-hill.  
 Like dying embers or gentle rays of Tviṣāmpati,  
 just so the mighty one lay on the surface of the earth. Seely 6.645-673)

Radice:

Falling in unfair combat, the scourge of the foes of the

Asuras, the hope of the Rākshasas,

Said in harsh tones to Lakshman: ‘You are a blot on the

race of warriors, O son of Sumitrā!

A hundred curses on you! I am Rāvan’s son—I do not

fear death!

But oh what perpetual pain it will be in my mind, O

miscreant, that I died today from your sword’s blow!

Did I defeat Indra—conqueror of demons—to die at

your hand?

How shall I understand why God has dealt this torment

to me? What sin I have committed? What else shall I

say to you?

When the Rākshas lord gets news of this, who will save

you, miserable man that you are?

Even if you dive to the bottom of the sea, his royal

anger, volcanic in its power,

Will reach you there; it will burn you up like a forest-fire

if you hide in forest, O evil one!

Night will not conceal you, you fool. Who among

demons or men or gods has power to rescue you,

Son of Sumitrā, from Rāvan’s fury? Who can expunge

your shame from the world,

O sinner?’ Dying as he spoke, noble Meghnād recalled

the lotus-feet of his father and mother.

In anguish he thought of Pramilā, his eternal joy! A

stream of tears mixed with blood,

Flowing unrestrainedly, drenched the earth! The lotus-

sun of Lankā set!

Like a flame snuffed out, or the fading sun itself, his

mighty strength lay on the ground. (Radice VI.642-670)

Biswas & Gupta:

Felled in an unfair combat, the foe of the enemy of Asuras,

the mainstay of the Rakshasa race, harshly said to

Lakshman,

“Oh, you son of Sumitra, you are a disgrace to all warriors!

Fie on you a hundred times over! I am the son of Ravana.

I do not fear death! But I die, struck down by your

arms, scoundrel,

this brings in everlasting grief in mind. Did I

vanquish Indra,

the scourge of the demons, only to die in your hands?

Due to what fault of mine had Fate assigned such a

grief for me

I shall I understand? What more shall I tell you?

When this news will reach the King of Rakshasas, who

will save you,

you lowly human? Even if you immerse yourself

in the deepest waters of the ocean, the Imperial rage

will reach there –  
 blazing, like the sea-horse breathing fire.  
 If you of the evil mind, enter a forest,  
 this rage will incinerate you like a forest fire!  
 The night will not be able to enshroud you, you imbecile.  
 If Ravana gets infuriated, then, oh son of Sumitra,  
 demon, human, god, who can protect you?  
 Whosoever in this world will be able to do away with  
 your disgrace,  
 you disgraceful man?’ Saying this, the noble one, in  
 his final hour,  
 recalled with sadness the lotus-feet of his parents.  
 Remembering Pramila, his eternal joy, the steadfast one  
 became restless! Tears flowed, and mingling with  
 blood, alas,  
 moistened the earth. The lotus-sun of Lanka set.  
 Like fire getting extinguished, or the sun becoming mellow,  
 the mighty hero lay on the ground. (Biswas and Gupta 190-191)

‘পড়ি’ (=পড়িয়া) is a tricky verb for non-Bengali translators. It may mean ‘having fallen down’ (like, say, felled trees; it may also (figuratively) mean ‘circumstanced’ (i.e. hurled into certain situation) as in the Bengali – “করোনা অতিমারির জন্য গরিব লোকেরা খুবই অসুবিধের মধ্যে পড়ে গেল” or “পড়বি তো পড়, আমারই চোখে পড়ে গেল” in which the verb ‘পড়ে’ has nothing to do with physical falling. Both Seely and Biswas & Gupta translate it as ‘felled’ and thereby try to indicate both the physical and circumstantial plight of Meghnad. Radice wanted to deviate from Seely, and so he makes the verb ‘Falling’ without any loss whatsoever. As Biswas &

Gupta was later to arrive on the scene, they could follow either Seely or Radice if they wished. It may, however, be noted that ‘felled’ is semantically more sinister than ‘falling’, as Shakespeare’s ‘Time’s fell hand’, supplies as with a top-up implication.

The fine double compound ‘অসুরারি-রিপু’ has been finely (and poetically, too) translated by Radice as ‘the scourge of the foes of the Asuras’. (One is reminded of Hamlet’s ‘scourge and minister’ (Davies 213). Seely’s ‘foeman of the Asuras’ / foes’ is made rather bland by the repetition, while it is not clear what semantic profit Biswas & Gupta have earned by the synonymous use of ‘foe’ and ‘enemy’ in their ‘the foe of the enemy of the Asuras’. ‘রাক্ষসকুল’ has been translated as ‘the Rākṣasa clan’, ‘the Rakshasa race’ and simply ‘the Rākshasas’ by Seely, Biswas & Gupta, and Radice respectively. A finicky target reader may stop and ponder the appositeness of the term ‘clan’ or ‘race’, but will surely give the benefit of the doubt to Radice’s plain and simple ‘the Rākshasas’. Seely retains the word ‘শূরে’ and translates it as ‘champion’, while in the other two translations the word has been left out. Seely normally translates each and every important word, and he makes compromise only when his syllable-based verse-structure demands such a compromise. It may be argued that in dropping the word ‘শূরে’ from their translations, the other two translators were making a functional approach; they perhaps thought that the word ‘champion’ or ‘valiant’ might not go well with a character who wins a game by underhand methods. It may also be argued that ‘scoundrel’ (as translated by Biswas & Gupta) or ‘miscreant’ (as translated by Radice) is more forceful than Seely’s ‘base one’ for the Bengali word ‘পামর’, which Meghnad is certainly using abusively.

One of the insuperable hurdles in translating a Bengali text into English is that English has no equivalent(s) for the various connotations of the pronoun ‘তুই’ and its several grammatical forms. This Bengali pronoun can be used endearingly as in – to give a very strong example – the devotional songs of Ramprasad where a devotee is using this pronoun

with regard to Goddess Kali. But more often than not this pronoun is a pronoun of despise, so to say, which bolsters the intended abuse. The English ‘thou’ is no match here, in spite of Hamlet’s peculiar, sudden shifts from ‘you’ to ‘thou’, and back to ‘you’ again, in his harsh conversations with Ophelia in Act III, Scene 1 of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The dying superhero, Meghnad, is here vitriolic against the unfair means adopted by Laxman to slay him. This deep despise of Meghnad, whose another name is ‘Indrajit’ because he defeated Lord Indra in a battle, is by no means expressed in the English ‘you’ / ‘your’ in lieu of the Bengali ‘তুই’/‘তোর’ as used in the SLT. But, as they say, what cannot be cured, must be endured. It may be assumed that all the translators court this unavoidable linguistic defeat quietly. Anyway, a note or gloss on this Bengali pronoun would be welcome in any translation. We take this opportunity to quote just two lines from Tagore’s poem “জনকথা” where a child is asking its mother a question:

‘খোকা মাকে শুধায় ডেকে, এলেম আমি কোথা থেকে

কোন্ খেনে তুই কুড়িয়ে পেলি আমারে?’ (Tagore 455)

Here ‘তুই’ in the second line of the quote is used very endearingly, and would require some sort of notes from the translator to compensate for the inability of the English translation of the pronoun as ‘you’ to capture the spirit of the original. ‘You’ belies the playfulness of the child.

Seely certainly forces the target reader to browse his notes for the meaning of ‘Samana’ which is just a transliteration of Dutt’s ‘শমনে’ without the inflection. ‘Samana’ may a little baffle the reader as he/she may confuse the word with ‘Shaman(ism)’ well known to Anglo-American readers of poetry. Others have, of course, judiciously translated the Bengali word as ‘death’ which can readily be understood by any sort of reader. Although English is their mother tongue, both Seely and Radice slips into ungrammaticality as they translate

‘মরিতে কি তোর হাতে’ as ‘die [...] by your hand’ and ‘die at your hand’ respectively. Biswas & Gupta, have made a dumb mistake in translating ‘তোর হাতে’ as ‘in your hands’. The standard idiom should be ‘at your hands’; besides, ‘in’ in lieu of ‘at’ changes the meaning, as any usage dictionary would make it clear. Seely’s translation of ‘কি পাপে বিধাতা / দিলেন এ তাপ দাসে, বুঝিব কেমনে?’ as ‘For what false step has Providence meted out such punishment upon this humble servant – shall I ever understand’ seems to a Bengali ear all right except for the low-key synonym for ‘sin’ as a translation of ‘পাপ’ which has a religious connotation. Radice’s translation splits the single interrogative sentence into two, and puts in some more dramatic touches. The corresponding translation by Biswas & Gupta is syntactically wrong, may be due to a printing mistake: ‘I shall I understand’ does not make any sense.

It is interesting to see that the rather difficult compound word ‘বাড়বাগ্নিরাশিসম’ has been tackled in three different ways in the three translations. Radice combats the oxymoronic idea of ‘sea fire’ with the help of a different geological analogy – ‘volcanic in its power’; Seely makes it ‘burning / like Vādāba’, and has ample comments on the word in the Glossary. Depending on his sources, he describes Vādāba as ‘mare’s fire’. This mythological idea is directly there in the translation done by Biswas & Gupta – ‘like the sea-horse breathing fire’ – but as their book has no notes or glossary, readers may stumble on the simile until they fathom it out from their known resources. The demand of Seely’s syllabic verse, once again, makes him choose a semantically odd word as he translates ‘পশিবে’ as ‘will navigate’. Radice’s and Biswas & Gupta’s ‘will reach’ is a much better translation. Radice’s ‘burn you up’ for ‘তোরে দক্ষিবে’ is more homely and reader-friendly than Seely’s, and Biswas & Gupta’s, ‘incinerate you’. Seely’s and Radice’s translations of ‘নারিবে রজনী, মূঢ়, আবরিতে তোরে’ as ‘Even Night, you fool, will not be / capable of hiding you’ and ‘Night will not conceal you, you fool’ respectively are better than ‘The night will not be able to enshroud you, you imbecile’ of Biswas & Gupta; but Radice’s is more natural than Seely’s : Seely writes ‘capable of

hiding’ instead of a smoothier version like ‘able to hide’ because he is manacled by his own choice of the fourteen-syllable verse-form that he has used all along.

In translating ‘দানব, মানব, দেব’ as ‘Dānava, divine, or man’ Seely flouts the normal grammatical stipulations of either capitalizing ‘divine’ or putting a definite article before the lowercased adjective ‘divine’ to imply godhead. Biswas & Gupta claim that their translation is in free verse; but one might wonder why even ‘free verse’ has produced such a bizarre syntax: “If Ravana gets infuriated, then [...] demon, human, god who can protect you?”! Radice’s rendering of this interrogative sentence is far easier to read and understand: “Who among / demons or men or gods has power to rescue you [...]”. Even so, we should not miss the point that Dutt’s ‘দানব, মানব, দেব’ imply plurality which is defied by the singular verb ‘has’.

When a hero dies, he thinks of his country (may be even of his countrymen) but the fond, familiar faces of his family, too, flash across his sullen mind. What does the vision of the pretty face of his beloved spouse bring him – quiet or disquiet? It appears that the three translations that we have of Dutt’s “অধীর হইলা ধীর ভাবি প্রমীলারে” read the line in two entirely different ways. Seely translates it as ‘Anxious, he grew calm as / he thought of Pramīlā’, implying that as Indrajit thought of his spouse, he became dignifiedly quiet; Radice’s rendering is: ‘In anguish, he thought of Pramīlā’; and Biswas & Gupta have it thus: ‘Remembering Pramila [...] the steadfast one / became restless’. A Bengali reader of these translations will definitely side with Radice, and Biswas & Gupta. Last but not least, where did the hapless hero fall on? Dutt says it was ‘ভূতলে’; the other translators than Seely say it was ‘on the ground’; Seely requires three more syllables for his line and so describes the location as ‘on the surface of the earth’. One wonders if Dutt would love or laugh to see the linguistic latitude Seely avails himself of in negotiating with ‘ভূতলে’ rather too geographically!

We may here in passing reflect on the matter of ‘mistakes’ in translation. Aveling’s paper (2002) begins with a joco-serious expostulation:

Translators are regularly berated by various critics for their apparently endless “mistakes”. All of us who are practising translators know this well. We labour for years to translate a text, in a sensitive and caring way, only to be told that “there is a comma missing on page 45”, “this sort of bird is a pigeon and not a magpie, and “the subjunctive, which is a particular feature of this author’s style in the original, is missing in the translation”. Mistakes, mistakes, mistakes ... (2)

It is, however, interesting to see that contemporary theorization of translation has not taken the issue of ‘mistakes’ seriously into consideration. Here is some proof proffered by Aveling:

In fact, very few of the some twenty books about translation I have on my home bookshelf have entries in their index on either “mistakes” or “errors” at all. And this includes the index to Lawrence Venuti’s monumental anthology *The Translation Studies Reader* (Routledge, London 2000), although if one turns to the word “equivalence”, one is encouraged to “*see also* adequacy, accuracy, correspondence, fidelity, identity”. (4)

The survey of the theories / principles of translation done in Chapter I, the discussion made in Chapter III of what is known as ‘the poetics and politics of translation’, and the comparative study of Seely’s and Radice’s translations attempted in Chapter IV as well as in this chapter lead us to infer that a functional approach rather than an approach based on search for equivalence can make a poetic translation all the more successful. What, then, are the essentials of a functional approach? Let us quote Aveling once more:

1. The translator interprets the source text not only with regard to the sender's intention but also with regard to its compatibility with the target situation.
2. The target text should be composed in such a way that it fulfils functions in the target situation that are compatible with the sender's intention.
3. The text world of the translation should be selected according to the intended target-text function.
4. The code elements should be selected in such a way that the target-text effect corresponds to the intended target-text functions. (7)

All told, both Seely's and Radice's translations, despite the difference in their verse-structures (one is syllabic and the other, three-phrase) follow more or less the functional approach Aveling talks about. Naturally, they have tried their best to overcome what Aveling calls 'functional inadequacies' (7) which, in his opinion, are of four types: (a) pragmatic translation errors which Christiane Nord (1997) describes as resulting from "inadequate solutions to pragmatic translation problems such as lack of receiver orientation" (75); (b) cultural translation errors which we have discussed at some length in Chapter III; (c) linguistic translation errors which have been pointed out amply in Chapter IV; and (d) text-specific translation problems, which have been mentioned in Chapter I, while comparing Seely's and Radice's translations of a passage taken from Canto/Book-I of Dutt's poem.

In spite of some dumb mistakes and a considerable number of deliberate mistakes, the two translations have done laudable justice to their common SLT. These are indeed what Derrida calls 'relevant' (a term we have discussed at the end of Chapter III) translations; both the translators have 'surrendered' – Spivak's phrase, discussed in Chapter III – themselves, as best they could, to the original; both the translators have 'negotiated' (Eco's phrase) well enough to ferry the Bengali epic-poem across/away from the Ganges (or Kapataksha?) to the Thames or the Chicago River; both the translations reveal reflections of and refractions from

the original, and they can exist as original poems in their own rights. What does the target reader get ultimately – ‘Mouse or Rat’ (the title of an Eco book much utilized in Chapter III)? Maybe either of them, but by no means a mole (Talpidae) or ‘ছুচ্ছন্দরী’, to take a word from the title of Jagabandhu Bhadra’s lampoon (‘ছুচ্ছন্দরীবধ’ i.e. ‘The Poem of the Slaying of a Mole’), published in 1868, on the epoch-making Bengali epic poem.

Even the blurbs vindicate our general appreciation of Seely and Radice as translators of *Meghnadbadh kabya*. The Penguin classics, the publishers of Radice’s translation, blurbed their appreciation as follows: “This lyrical and vigorous translation by William Radice is accompanied by an extensive introduction, detailed footnotes [...]” The blurb on the back cover of Seely’s book has appreciations by three academies of repute. Rachel Fell McDermott of Barnard College comments:

This book is a polished gem, a sparkling gift of translation and contextualization from Clinton B. Seely—legendary teacher, speaker, and translator—to all students of Bengal, colonial history, *Ramayana* studies, and Indian literature. *The Slaying of Meghanada*, Seely’s artistic rendition of Michael Madhusudan Datta’s classic Bengali version of the *Ramayana*, invites us to understand and feel, with Datta and through Seely, the particularly Bengali pathos of a doomed, humanized, agonized Ravana. Here is a text for our times, where Rama is not the hero.

The historian Dipesh Chakrabarty of the University of Chicago opines:

“This is a landmark book, indispensable to students of literature and modernity in colonial South Asia. It consolidates Seely’s reputation as one of the finest contemporary translators of Bengali into English. A truly remarkable achievement.”

And, finally, here is the historian Romila Thapar of Jawaharlal Nehru University in praise of Seely:

The *Meghanada-vadha-kavya* captures some intersections of Indian and European cultures in then nineteenth century. Clinton Seely's translation evokes the potential of this historical moment and also of the epic genre, both of which resonate with the perceptions of Michael Madhusudan Datta.

A writing takes place in history which ferries the writing across contemporaneity into futurity. Any writing's uniqueness is not conclusive or cocooned in a given time but 'projected' into posterity where it attains further signification, acting as both a signifier and a signified. The uniqueness of Dutt's *Meghnadbadh kabya*, a star that dwelt apart in the glorious firmament of the Bengal Renaissance, is thus not 'conclusive' or 'exclusive' but 'inclusive' of how futurity has retrieved it in one way or another.

As we have already mentioned, Dutt's epic was parodied—not long after its publication—in a poem titled "*Chuchundaribadh kabya*"; Tagore, in his early youth was very critical of Dutta's poem, but changed his views in straight angle later in his mature years. In 1926, Rajendranath translated the poem into English in blank verse; then gradually the poem became a canonical Bengali text—a solitary peak in the whole landscape of early modern Bengali poetry; in 1986, the poem was revisited by Shyamal Bandyopadhyay who translated it in free-verse; the first two decades of the present century saw three translations of it, including Seely's and Radice's; and now, in 2020, some reflections on the translations of Dutt's poem have been made in the present thesis.

A text gets regenerated through its receptions and translations continuously over time, and no single evaluation of it or its translation(s) can be conclusive. A text has to be evaluated and reevaluated in all its inclusiveness. Hence the fifth and last chapter of the

present work has been titled, with a tinge of oxymoron, “In(con)clusive Conclusion”. Structurally, this is the concluding chapter; but that it is *not* ‘conclusive’ but rather ‘inclusive’ (of what is to come) is made clear from our decision to bring in the latest translation of *Meghnadbadh kabya* for a comparative discussion in this chapter itself. The present thesis, therefore, is only part of a continuum; and as we all know, no continuum can have an exclusive conclusion as it always remains in a state of flux to be explained, extended, debated and interrogated, and therefore, supplemented by newer scholarships to come.