

**Translating Performance Text, from Lyric to Song: A
case study of songs of Rabindranath Tagore**

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By

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“Translating Performance Text, from Lyric to Song: A case study of songs of Rabindranath Tagore” submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Sujit Kumar Mandal, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata-700032, and that neither this Thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any Degree or Diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

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Introduction

It can be said that poetry is words arranged in rhythm. The words contain the history of national culture; the rhythms are individual and universal at the same time. Moreover, poetry itself serves a purpose, be it an illusive matter; and aesthetics can be reproduced in another language and culture if accommodation is made. It would be highly likely that the target readers would obtain rather similar if not the same aesthetic pleasure reading the translation as would the source readers reading the original poem. But, on the other hand, the art of translating vocal texts to be sung differs materially from that of translating poetry to be merely read. In the case of the vocal texts, the translator must not only reproduce the ideas of the poet in graceful and intelligible form, but also must provide words which confirm to the essential rhythmic and emotional flow of the particular music, and which can be sung with it easily and audibly.

In the *Anatomy of Criticism* Northrop Frye defines the lyric as utterance overheard: “The lyric poet normally pretends to be talking to himself or to someone else: a spirit of nature, a Muse, a personal friend; a lover, a god, a personified abstraction, or a natural object...”¹ The principle of intelligibility in lyric poetry, depends on the phenomenalization of the poetic voice. Therefore, when the lyric form is transformed or translated into a song, the poetic voice itself becomes the root of the hardship, mostly faced by the translator. Here, the focus will be to examine the difficulties faced in the process of translating a lyric into a song, mainly by looking into the songs of Rabindranath Tagore in different translated and performed versions, and also to deal with the question whether a performance text can be translated, keeping intact its primary essence and finally, what becomes of it.

1.1 Lyric: in search of the genre

It is a very significant fact that through the whole history of literature, lyric poetry in all its great blossoming periods has been closely associated with music. The Greeks invented the very name; as such poetry was by then associated with the lyre, and was considered inconceivable without it. Lyric is sometimes determined in terms of its

¹ Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, 249-250.

structure and extension. Some say, brevity is the unique feature; others say it is the use of short lines. Often stress is given on the use of stanzas, or at any rate of balanced units of thought, strophe and antistrophe or their effective equivalents. Variation of rhythm, as opposed to the steady march of heroic verse, is also noticed. It may be observed, by the way, that all these are compatible with the category of 'singability'. Lyric utterance is generally involved in time and space, sometimes closely, seldom remotely, but always moving, always part of living experience. The lyric mode is not primarily that of thought, but lively involvement in something here and now. If we try to think of the motive, that prompted the poet to write, often it can be observed that the lyric comes out parthenogenetically; purely impulsive and inward. However much the impulse is owed unconsciously to the accumulation of experiences on the part of the poet, the feeling or idea at the moment of writing belongs to that moment and him alone.

'Lyric' had its roots in Greek and Latin literature. As a term for a genre, lyric dates from the Hellenistic period, when the librarians of Alexandria, collecting the poetic production that remained from Greek antiquity, canonized nine *lyrici vates*, Sappho, Pindar, Anacreon, Alcaeus, and others less well known today. The term 'lyric' preserves the reference to verse, sung to the lyre, and the classical lyric was generally addressed to someone. Ralph Johnson reports that only fourteen percent of Horace's poems and nine percent of Catullus's are meditative, while seventy percent of Horace's and eighty-seven percent of Catullus's are addressed to another person, but with Mallarmé seventy percent are meditative while only twenty-five percent are addressed to someone. Johnson claims that with the modern lyric, the disintegration of pronominal form entails the disintegration of emotional content; the Greek lyric is direct, addressed to its real audience, while the modern lyric is no longer addressed and is therefore solipsistic. Not for the first time, with the help of traditional oppositions—public/private, speech/writing, integrated/alienated—the classical is held up as a norm to suggest the individualistic, alienated character of the modern. The move is so familiar that it can seem just another case of mythmaking; but this dubious interpretation of the classical model should not prevent us from allowing a description of classical origins to exercise some leverage on our thinking. The Greek model is useful because it treats the poem as an event addressed to an audience, performed for an audience, even if it idealizes situations of social ritual, which did not obtain even in classical times – Horace, for instance, presents himself as a lyric singer though there is no evidence that he could play the lyre or that his odes were ever sung to an audience rather than solely written. This

model leads us to think of the lyric speaker not as a character in a novel, whose motivations must be elucidated, but as a performer picking up traditional elements and presenting them to an audience, whether listeners at a ceremony or readers of poems. In ancient Greece, poetry was a form of epideictic discourse, a rhetorical transaction and an instrument of ethical paideia. The audience was expected to make observations (*theoros*) about what was praiseworthy, and worthy of belief. By this model, we should think of the poem as discourse addressed, a rhetorical transaction, so the hyperbolic forms of address characteristic of lyric—from apostrophes to birds and clouds and urns to obsessional addresses to a mistress—would be foregrounded. Charles Baudelaire writes of lyric – “First of all, let us note that hyperbole and apostrophe are the forms of language that are not only most agreeable but also most necessary to it”². The lyric characteristically depends on these figures of apostrophe and prosopopoeia, which associate lyric with voice and, by presuming and foregrounding ‘I’–‘you’ relations, generate anthropomorphism, “a conceit by which human consciousness is projected or transferred into the natural world”—De Man writes:

Anthropomorphism involves not just a trope but an identification on the level of substance. It takes one entity for another and thus implies the constitution of specific entities prior to their confusion, the taking of something for something else that can then be assumed to be given. Anthropomorphism freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations and propositions into one single assertion or essence...³

Lyric is characteristically extravagant, performing speech acts not recorded in everyday speech and deploying not only meter and rhyme, which connote the poetic when encountered elsewhere, but also its own special tenses; The special language of lyric generates this distinctive lyric temporality. What we call the lyric, the instance of represented voice, conveniently spells out the rhetorical and thematic characteristics that make it the paradigm of a complementary relationship between grammar, trope, and theme. The set of characteristics includes the various structures and moments encountered along with the specular symmetry and an axis of assertion and negation. Rene Wellek, in the article “Genre Theory, the Lyric and Erlebnis” concludes that the generic idea of lyric as expression of intense subjective experience does not work:

² Johnson, W. R. *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

³ De Man, Paul. *Hypogram and Inscription: Michael Riffaterre’s Poetics of Reading*. *Diacritics* 11:4, 1981.

These terms cannot take care of the enormous variety, in history and different literatures, of lyrical forms and constantly lead into an insoluble psychological *cul de sac*: the supposed intensity, inwardness and immediacy of an experience that can never be demonstrated as certain and can never be shown to be relevant to the quality of art—The way out is obvious. One must abandon attempts to define the general nature of the lyric or the lyrical. Nothing beyond generalities of the tritest kind can result from it.⁴

Northrop Frye speaks of the roots of lyric as *melos* and *opsis*⁵, babble and doodle—neither of which is reducible to narrative representation, both of which involve patterning of language. And *melos*, in its relation to song, calls us to focus on the lyric as a linguistic event. Lyric is the foregrounding of language, in its material dimensions, and thus both embodies and attracts interest in language and languages—in the forms, shapes, and rhythms of discourse. If we believe language is the medium for the formation of subjectivity, lyric ought to be crucial, as the site where language is linked not only to structures of identification and displacement before the consolidation of subject positions but especially to rhythm and the bodily experience of temporality, on the one hand, and to the formative dwelling in a particular language, on the other. Narrative structures are translatable, but lyric, in its peculiar structural patterning, figures the givenness, the untranscendability, of a particular language, which seems to its users a condition of experience. And lyric is memorable language—made memorable by its rhythmical shaping and phonological patterning.

To distinguish lyrical style from other poetic styles, the word ‘lyre’ provides its guiding syllable, giving the concept of language musically accompanied, measure marked by musically pitched accents. It serves as contrast to the term foot, common in the descriptions of poetry in many languages as a unit of measure more durational, more ground-covering, and so more spatial, than the lyre’s pitched string. Narrative and dramatic forms both cover ground; they march and confront. The lyrical air too moves in time, from note to note; but its motion is less durational, less spatial, more relational in terms of musical pitch. The lyre makes shorter intervals than narrative and drama require; and makes closer relations of these intervals, one to another. Of the dimensions of a tone, pitch or height, duration or breadth, stress or intensity, and timbre or quality, it is the deepening rather than the widening forces which are most at play.

⁴ Wellek, Rene. *Genre Theory, the Lyric and Erlebnis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 228.

⁵ Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

The lyric is an art of time in sound, both tonal and referential, which plays across the fabric of temporal sequence the material of atemporal relations; or accents its atemporal materials with a temporal design not only of word sequence but of formal timing by measure. To distinguish lyrical styles one from another is to observe how poets play upon one or another of the emphases open to them within the nucleus of the genre. Traditionally, types have been distinguished by the subject of reference, by the word or occasion, as in elegy, epitaph, epigram, morning song; or by certain habits of forms which cohere, as in ballad, ode, or sonnet. But if we hold together the lyric coherences of reference and tone as they are lyrically conceived, we need to consider what kinds of tonal-referential emphasis are possible to basic choice. One would be song, the fullest use of patterns of pitch, of melody; one would be stress measures, as in the more deliberative and level verse of blank verse, couplet or cadence. A third would be the strong uses of timbre, or tone quality, with less emphasis on outer stresses for meter and line, and more for inner patterns of assonance and consonance, even of onomatopoeia; a development of the potential harmonies of the tone. Variations on these three possibilities have been named by Pound—*logopoeic*, *phanopoeic*, and *melopoeic*: the accentuating of the forms of speech, including song; or of forms of stressed tonal presentation; or of inner harmonies. As *phanopoeia* pulls away from the interworking of sound and sense toward sense, *melopoeia* pulls toward sound, colour; the force of relation, the precarious combination, is most fully held by *logopoeia* when its measures are marked by melody as in song. The idea of style brings us to some repeated ways of use, with some relevance, maybe as expression or disguise or objectification, to the lyric writer. Many of what we would call lyrical styles are styles of the times in which they are written; or styles relevant to certain subject-matters. Most truly we can speak of styles in lyrics when we think of recurrent clusters of those traits particularly characteristic of the lyric. A good example is the contrast between the 18th century and 19th century styles – the first highly involved with choral music, the harmony of melopoeias as Dryden specifically noted, and the sudden return to the song “melodies” of Moore and Byron. Differing and changing concepts of lyrical function have modified the concepts of its essentials. Greek classification was by subject, by meter, by accompanying instrument, and, obliquely, by point of view, the first-personal. For Dante, it was a compact statement of ideas in contrast to the more extended epic movement. For the Renaissance, its bent, its trope, was vital. For Romanticism, the temporality of personal memory, and thus the back-and-forth between psyche and object, spatial yet non-spatial in romantic ambiguity.

The great historical mass of the lyric allows for remarkably stable variations on this remarkably stable theme. To speculate on what all the variations share is to heighten our sense of the possibilities within lyric styles as intrinsic rather than extrinsic – the variations made possible by the lyre itself - that is, the point at which musical note and verbal tone interact - the point of pitch. Vital varieties in lyric styles then, are based upon variations in the use of verticality of sound, of pitch-stress in relation to the essential temporal duration in speech patterns. The meaning, the feeling of the lyric goes up or down as well as along. It can take on the high cry of jubilation or wailing, the low note of meditation or mourning, as well as the steady stichic or linear motion of narration and argument. Its measures are in time but not by time. In lyric, most closely measured of poetries, the closest use of both quantity and quality of sound, the nearest spoken approximation to music in its use of vertical as well as durational properties of tone, the force of melody and pitch variety are intrinsic to the design of form and meaning. In lyrical styles there are various possible combinations of tonal traits: a strong rhythm or beat; a strong melody either confirming of, or indifferent to, or in conflict with the sense-measure and the reference; accentuating either external boundaries or internal focal points. Strong overtones often carrying into depth the implications of the melody and often superseding it, again possibly in conflict with, possibly confirming, the sense. The more lyric the poem, the more its full meaning needs to be discerned in the many different possible relations of its sense to its sound, and the more the richness of its powers of sound conveys that sense in their multiplications of tonal design. In the chief characteristics of tone itself reside the chief characteristics of spoken sound for poetry. Stress provides measure, making for chant at its simplest, making possible the monotone in which much poetry is read aloud; providing the frame for such ongoing measures as the blank verse. Timbre and duration together provide the tone colour of euphony, the harmonic and chordal qualities, the built-in music, of patterned consonants and especially vowel sounds. Finally, pitch, so much more important to song than to speech, leaves its song-like residue in the lyre's lyric, with its potentiality of tuned accompaniment.

Latin lyric first appears in a living way in the hymns of the Church—apart from their intrinsic merit, these hymns gave us our modern metres. Rhyme already occurs in a tentative and sporadic way in hymns as early as the 4th century; but owing to restrictions placed on Church-music at various times from the 4th to the 9th centuries, which severed

it from the music of the people, the growth of rhyme was checked, and it came to be used mainly as a barbaric ornament of classic metres: when the popular element once more began strongly to influence the hymns of the Church—the growth of rhyme progressed rapidly, as the natural outcome of the new music and the new poetry. Learned music soon went its own way once more, Latin Church poetry soon declined, but the stream of modern European lyric had started on the path along which its greatest triumphs were to lie.

In England, as on the continent, the stream goes on-hesitatingly at first, with many an awkward turn to negotiate—till in the Elizabethan age it bursts into full flood. This does not necessarily imply that the age of Keats and Shelley, for instance, did not produce a volume of lyric poetry of equal bulk and of equal excellence. Two other criteria, do clarify “lyric” through a larger context. First, lyric plays roles in politics that differ diagnostically from those of epic or drama. Lyric poems or lines often shade off into or become slogans or songs that can arouse people. Since in lyric poetry ego expression dominates, it often works powerfully to define the emotional identity of an individual, whether the poet or an appreciator of poetry, and whether in terms of individual eccentricities or of the positioning of the individual in the conflicts and complementarities of differing dialects, cultures, or social strata.

1.2 Music, Song and Performance

A scheme of mixing music or song with prose or poetry is not unique in the long history of poetry—from the *Odyssey* through *Beowulf*, in Theocritus’s idylls, Virgil’s pastorals, and Spenser’s *Shepherd’s Calendar*, in Aeschylus’s as in Shakespeare’s plays; and in Walter Scott’s poetic and prose romances: songs interrupt the longer works in which authors place them. Examples also include the sirens’ song in the *Odyssey* and Penelope’s lament, which she compares to the nightingale’s song, and in *Beowulf*, the lyric interlude known as ‘The Father’s Lament’ or the embedded lyrics known as ‘The Last Survivor’ or ‘The Messenger’s Prophecy’, or laments for the fallen king. Even when present only as texts, these songs, usually marked by formal and typographical differences from what surrounds them, are presented as sung. What all these hybrid forms offer is a contrast that foregrounds the form and function both of the interrupting

song and of the surrounding verse or prose. Poets have made use of this contrast to intervene in particular cultural debates, to work out their own relationships to the forms and conventions of poetic discourse as these are pressing in historically specific ways. Interludes of formal song have been used to comment critically, if at times obliquely, not only on the action or ideas of the longer work like the function of the chorus in Greek drama, or the songs in Shakespeare's plays; but also on the dominant genre's most basic but hidden assumptions about language, medium, temporality, or voice. The nature of the contrast between song and its contexts, of course, shifts historically as well. For poet-singers and their audiences, epic narrative and its embedded praise songs, siren songs, or laments may all be sung, if differently, but the songs often preserve archaic phrases and rhythms from other, ritual contexts. For later poets and their readers, the interrupting song asks us to attend to the differences between reading and performing or listening. Late 18th century and Romantic poets like Walter Scott, printed ballad texts precisely to explore a conjunction between oral traditional and single-authored literate poetry. They used popular ballads to construct a nationalist literary history grounded in oral popular tradition, and, as they did so, worked out the historiographic criteria for collecting, editing, and publishing oral arts of the past. The model of the lyric that still informs our reading had its birth in the 16th and 17th centuries, not in the Romantic era or after. While the 18th and 19th centuries saw a persistent, though uneven, shift to the higher valuation of short poetic forms—a shift resulting in the glorification of lyric as the essence of poetry – the equation of lyric with short poems in general, began taking hold much earlier and remained largely unaffected by the ups and downs of lyric's reputation. Accounts like Colie's, which trace the intermingling of the smaller literary forms in the 16th and 17th centuries, particularly of the epigram, the emblem, the song-lyric, and the sonnet, give indications of how this happened. The most common examples of the lyrics of the few that were intended for singing were the Petrarchan love poems, reaching their English apogee during the period 1560-1620; but Petrarchism had its roots in the 14th century and had already reached its peak by the mid-16th century. The era of the Petrarchan lyrists and composers was relatively brief, as G. J. M. Hutchings observes:

Song lyric is distinguished by a self-conscious, highly conventional artifice; the conventions being derived in part from the Petrarchan lyric. The decline of English song in the seventeenth century is thus partly attributable to a reaction against the Petrarchan conventions. Such a reaction is apparent,

not only in the satire of Suckling, but also in the sonnets of Shakespeare, in the poetry of Donne, and in the work of Ben Jonson himself.⁶

This seems apparent, as far as it goes, but poets were not only reacting against Petrarchism but were also moving in favour of a more highly epigrammatic style even while continuing to invoke the tradition of lyric as a poem to be sung. Coupled with the dramatizing fiction of the poetic “speaker”, this allowed for a certain coherence in approaching poems as wildly different as *Go, Lovely Rose*, which was easily and well set to music, and *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, which is inconceivable as an actual song. The practice of composing, for longer works, short song-poems ‘sung’ in the ear of the reader was widespread in the 19th century. Among Victorian poets, Tennyson experimented most often with the embedded song, famously in *The Princess*, subtitled ‘a medley’, a poem where mixed genres formally modelled gender mixtures. Tennyson’s first volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), the one for which Arthur Hallam wrote his famous review, consists largely of short poems that collapse the distance between song and lyrical poetry. Hallam suggests that in Tennyson’s poems, as in the song-poems of the anonymous ballad-makers and those of the great Renaissance Italian lyric poets, meaning is conveyed through effect expressed verbally, but in the language chosen and arranged to realize semantic content as unfolding sensory event in the motion of organized sound. Tennyson, Hallam proposes, also thinks through sound, not only empathetically projecting himself into the mood of the character of his subject but embodying its shifts and gradations of affect in the aural movement of his verse, to create a piece of wholly verbal music. ‘The tone becomes the sign of the feeling’ and vice versa, tones organized into an ‘exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed’.⁷

Song not only invokes action; the singing presents itself as an act or gesture and appears to embody different powers of knowing. Lest we fail to imagine the sung song in its strangeness, the prose text prepares us to listen and to hear the difference before the singing begins. As for Tennyson, so too for Swinburne does singing evoke its own space and time, differently shaped than that of the surrounding text. Old songs re-sung create connections with distant, temporally discontinuous occasions: the song text remembers

⁶ Hutchings, G. J. M. *Elizabethan Lyric: Poetry for Singing-Poetry for Speaking*, English Studies in Africa-30, 1987.

⁷ Armstrong, Isobel. *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry, 1830-1870*. London: Athlone, 1972.

and invites other performances past and future, and in so doing constructs communities with other singers at other times. Song also displaces, while it shapes its own space. The strongly marked if metrically rough rhythms move us through another time shaped by the pauses and beats, the verbal repetitions and echoes of the song's spare, end-rhymed, two-line stanzas. While it is being sung, its rhythms reorganize our experience of temporal passing. Continual repetition and variation of melody, harmony, and metre, of rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and repeated verbal figures of meaning: these construct continuities, compelling us to keep listening as we discover unfolding aural, visual, and semantic patterns.

Studies of the history of poetry tend to agree that, before the Romantics, it was highly unusual to think of a poem as unaddressed, without addressee. Poetry then still had a strong affiliation with oral forms that presupposed a "you" listening to the poetic "I". The influential studies of oral poetry by Albert Lord show how early poetic recitation was above all a means of preserving communal memory and convention for "us", rather than of advancing individual vision for "me". Far from showing the epic singer alone on a mountaintop, Lord's research demonstrates the radical dependence of the bard on audience reaction, arguing that this was the model for the epic and folk poet from ancient times up to the rise of print. Similarly, the medieval troubadour and minnesinger were not expressing themselves only for the inner joy of it, but were also taking part in ceremonious contests and courts of love subject to audience evaluation. The addressed audience was essential to the lyric event. As late as the Renaissance, according to David Lindley, the lyric was not regarded as a "voice talking to itself", as T.S. Eliot described lyric in the modern age, but was rather almost always what Lindley calls a "directed performance"⁸ words addressed to a listener with a certain purpose in mind. In Philip Sidney's "An Apology for Poetry", the love poem is not just a well-wrought set of images evoking a poet's erotic impulses, but is spoken to the lover with the aim of "persuading" her.⁹ Such a poem could thus be conceived as a rhetorical event, a directed performance hitting the audience with a performative force less overt than the older bard performances, but just as audience-dependent. If rhetoric is the art of persuasion through words, and if affecting the audience is a form of persuasion, then we could point to a

⁸ Lindley, David. *Lyric*. London: Methuen, 1985, 63.

⁹ *Ibid*, 64.

whole dimension of lyrical performative rhetoric that is only imaginable when the possibility of poetic address is acknowledged. The pre-modern, pre-Romantic poet was not just speaking something that the audience may or may not hear, not just singing to himself, but was performing a *lyric address* of the audience, talking to them as much as any storyteller, in a poet/audience collaboration.

Similarly ambiguous as address is the Romantic genre of the song or ballad, which was reaffirmed as a vestige of older pre-industrial communal life, with the poet as bard speaking to his community, but which in fact became something meditative and private, very unlike traditional ballads. Romantic narrative poems with balladic content imitated older ballads not as a performative oral event—poet addressing song to audience in a performance, but rather as a set of formal qualities. Keat’s “Eve of St. Agnes”, for example, with its balladic theme of star-crossed lovers and midnight escape, is unimaginable as a performed event: it is not meant to be addressed orally and theatrically, but to be read privately and reflectively. Thus removed from its oral discursive context, and placed in a context of self-reflexiveness and subjectivity, the form of song could be figured as a song to oneself: an occasion for thought. Its song-like qualities would not be used musically to enchant a gathered audience, but rather internally to enhance the sense of private fantasy. The privately read, unsung song became an emblem of the self’s power to transcend its environmental constraints through literary experience—yet this was precisely the genre that retained all the marks of its earlier public oral performance status. Thus, like Romantic apostrophe, Romantic song both ejected and indirectly reinstated the addressee.

“The Solitary Reaper” (1805), depicts a girl working in the fields and singing not in address, but precisely to no one but herself, yet overheard by the speaker of the poem. He hears only the accidental effects of her singing the melody—but not the content, so that no communicative message is sent. This may be because he is too far from her, or because, as he explained in a note, she is singing in Gaelic:

*Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?*

If Wordsworth's speaker had heard not just the melody or "numbers" of the reaper's song, but its communicative content as well, then it would be possible to say that an address had occurred. But as it is, there has been song without addressed meaning. Song has been detached from communication; the only communication that occurs here is what the poet communicates to himself upon not hearing the words of the song. Thus the failure to hear the singing girl is a poetic victory. If the poet had heard and recorded the girl's content, then Wordsworth's poem – and by extension much of modern poetry – would lose its characteristic self-reflexiveness and introspection. The poet both hears and does not hear the Reaper's song, hearing the sound but not the sense. This detachment of song from communicated meaning could be said to herald modern verse, in which the modern poet sets himself far away from communication, too far to hear it, and thus forcing each listener to generate thought from within. If in oral cultures the singer and the poetic communicator were one, now they were split into two separate and distanced figures, which modern poets were forced to choose between. Shelley's poetry is music that must not be played for an audience. Thus Shelley describes the poet as a music-maker unaware of any audience he may have: "A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds".¹⁰

In Wordsworth's "To a Skylark", the song of the bird is inspiring not because it communicates thoughts to the listening poet, but precisely because it does not communicate thoughts-song, being void of thought, thus opens a space for free imaginative conjecture within the poet:

*What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?*

These are questions, not statements and thus they merely point to the empty space where the communicated content of song could be. Thus the music of the song has reached the audience's mind (the audience being the poet hearing the bird), but the meaning has not

¹⁰ Winstanley, L. ed. *Shelley's Defence of Poetry: Browning's Essay on Shelley*. Boston; London: D. C. Heath & Co., 1911.

reached it, and so is self-invented from within the urn of the mind, rather than communicated from beyond it.

Music has always been a performance practice based on sound, temporal movement and our aural impressions. The dynamics of music in time and space makes musical expressions unique in our understanding of the world and of other humans. But as a kind of communication system, music has some similarities with the spoken word and language. As any other human practice, music has had the need to pass on acquired knowledge from one generation to the next. This has been done aurally, but even if this kind of objectivation of practice could be supported by oral legitimation, it was bound to the here-and-now situation for establishing a tradition. In most societies a multiplicity of traditions would be accepted as an enrichment of the human community. But in order to give identity to a society, there was a need for giving some traditions priority, making a hierarchy of musical performance practices. Church music was the first to be written down systematically in order to establish an objective musical practice, connecting musical performance to a literacy context. Bringing literacy to music had several consequences. First, literacy functions as an enhancing process in establishing a tradition, as it allows transference of knowledge from one generation to another in an abstracted manner, establishing both the object of knowledge and the ideological framework for the knowledge that identifies the tradition. The notation system objectifies the music and the elements in notation are results of choices that have ideological background and consequences. Second, literacy opens up for a separation between the creator (composer) and the performer (musician). This dimension was not important in the beginning in the church music as its focus was on the use of music in the congregation, not on musical work as such. The separation became very important when the separation of the roles of composer and musician developed from the Renaissance. The third consequence of bringing literacy to music is, in a way, contradictory to the first one. As any notation system must be based on a reduction of the object to a linear sign system, there is a possibility for the formation of a new relation between the content and context of the original object. This might be destructive to the actual tradition and its development as a musical (aural) tradition. For example, the traditional skewed tonalities and rhythmical variability in folk music are not possible to capture in the traditional music notation system. Transference from one generation to another based on traditional notation in folk music, might therefore reduce the amount of expressive qualities in the folk music. The link between content and context in a tradition is also the crucial

momentum in establishing a genre (within a tradition). It is, of course, possible for any genre to use any sounding element as content in their music, but there are restrictions in the use bound to the context of the performance/music in order to be identified as music in a special genre. A genre will be identified by its intrinsic elements reinforcing the link between the content and context of its tradition. In music, written scores allow strangers to participate in music performances, and the strangers' backgrounds and expressions affect the performance. Initially, literacy in music was closely related to the performing of texts in liturgical contexts. The musical content was only sketched in an allegorical way related to the melody. The overall framework of the music/performance was determined by the context of the performance. The need for more efficient transference of the traditional material made way for a more systematic notation system in music, covering melody, rhythm and harmony. Keeping these notions in mind, this study attempts to examine not only the written text as a medium for understanding the lyric or songs composed by Rabindranath, but also shed light on the sphere of performance as an integral part of it.

1.3 'Performativity' and Performance Text

A performance text can be considered as a text intended to be or capable of being performed. The notion of performance text is therefore abstract and theoretical. It considers the performance as a scale model, in which the production of meaning may be observed. However, with the texts of performing works, such as plays, musical compositions, choreographed dance etc. the relationship of the text and the user is quite otherwise. In this case, the users of texts are generally performers, who influence the performance that an audience sees or hears. The artist must therefore appropriate or assimilate the text or texts in such a way that something other than the written text is created — the performance. Performing texts serve two complementary purposes. On the one hand, they foster stability in the works they represent; the natural impulse of performance is towards novelty: text acts as a restraining influence on this impulse. On the other hand, they encourage innovation. Ideally, then, performing texts facilitate controlled change. The meanings which it incorporates remain unstable, varying from

epoch to epoch, and from reader to reader. For this reason, the audience has always been a very important aspect of a performance text or a performance, itself.

Performance texts and the ‘performativity’ inherent in it, creates massive difficulties while translating it into a different language, as well as a different form. As a performance text itself, songs have the huge capability of addressing change in every possible form, when it is performed by different individuals. Not only the rhythm or the beat, but sometimes in this process the meaning of the lyrics may also lose its primitive form. Therefore, arrives the question of ‘translatability’ of a song, where it is quite a big challenge for the translator to maintain the original essence of the particular song.

Much attention has been given to what happens when a song becomes a poem—particularly in the case of the “arti-factualization” of the ballad and folk song, when it is collected and circulated in print. Such medium-shifting was widespread in the late 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, with the collecting, editing, and printing of old songs and ballads. This process, it has been argued, not only severed words from music, but also destroyed the old song’s immediacy of event and feeling, an emotional and often a political charge tied to its presumptively communal origins or performance. But what happens when a poem becomes a song? Of course, when a poem, set to a tune, is widely sung, it enters a new life as song. In that life it may be severed from its poet-author and changed in words and prosody, henceforth recognized and remembered first in its musical form. That form may itself not be stable: as song it is subject to perpetual reshaping. The work of the song, what it is and what it does, changes not only with its singers but with new audiences and contexts of performance. It becomes the possession of those who sing and hear it, perhaps no longer associated with a poet or a composer at all. The passage from poem to song has often been viewed by poets and critics as a struggle for mastery that the poem may lose. However attractive the prospect of song’s immediacy in social performance, the argument goes, the poem set to music may give up not only the poet’s claims to authorship but the poem’s subtleties of both meaning and verbal music as well; the poem must die to enter a life in song. But history suggests something different: that the traffic between poem and song, between verse written and song musically performed, has always flowed in both directions, and that some poems, like some songs, not only survive transformations but thrive. It is with this history in mind, one may argue, that some poets look to the idea of song not only for what it might do for poetry but also for how their poetry might affect popular cultures of song. A poet

may imagine the work of a poem as that of song even in the absence of a musical setting. This work of song is quite different from that envisioned for lyric poems by many poets, particularly for the form of the sonnet. Although the name may literally mean “little song”, architectural and sculptural metaphors for sonnets prevail over musical ones, with the sonnet invoked as potential stay against time and forgetfulness for both the poet and his subject. When poets envision the lyric poem as song, however, remembering and memorializing may take a different form entirely. For Donne, a poem on the pains of love is not a monument; circulating in manuscript to lover or friend, it inscribes an intimate speaking voice, restraining grief in verse. But this disciplined and private voice will be transformed if—

*Some man, his art and voice to show,
Doth Set and sing my paine,
And, by delighting many, frees againe
Griefe, which verse did restraine.*¹¹

The private grief shaped by a lover into verses for intimate circulation will be released into a wider life if the poem becomes song. Shelley celebrates the soaring, spreading voices of an unseen skylark or a high-born maiden singing in a palace-tower; the poem’s verbal music becomes another invisible, diffusive presence when that poem is figured as a song. Swinburne has Sappho boast that her lyric poems grant their author a more-than-mortal life in musical verses that will be henceforth woven into the very texture of the natural world; for those who come after Sappho, in everything of which she sang “memories shall mix and metaphors of me”¹². Lyric imagined as song changes the way future readers, listeners, and poets experience the world and the poet by becoming part of that world. The poem-as-song possesses the iterative pervasiveness of a song repeated by new singers, for new listeners, until it provides for those who come after the poet their linguistic and affective vocabularies for perceiving and responding to the world. For these poets, the lyric poem is neither monument nor citadel; what it offers is the possibility of a second, perhaps anonymous, but much wider life for poem and poet in song. It is not always possible to separate the life of a poem from its life as song. “Sumer is Icumen In” is both one of the earliest lyric poems in English and the oldest song: both

¹¹ Herbert, J. & C. Grierson, *Poems of John Donne*, London: Oxford University Press, 1912.

¹² McGann, Jerome & Charles L. Sligh. eds. *Major Poems and Selected Prose*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

words and music were first recorded, together, in a 13th century manuscript. Whether it lives as a song or a poem is in the eye and the ear of the beholder. Taken separately, poem and song offer quite different experiences, though the words remain the same:

*Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu!
Groweth sed and bloweth med
And springth the wude nu.
Sing cuccu!*

The bird's call is incorporated into the lyric as repeating command, an imitative solicitation to the bird to sing again, and again ("sing cuccu!"). This pattern, visibly organizing the eye's rhythmic progress down the printed page, is grasped with the eye or with the ear of the mind. The poem already has its own, verbal musicality—distinctive rhythmic and acoustic effects—even while it remains a text. The poem silently outsings the bird; and as song, the effect is altered but also amplified.

More commonly, priorities are assigned to one form or the other: the work either begins life as a poem that readers encounter in manuscript or print, or as song that singers and their audiences know when it is performed, perhaps with the help of a score but ultimately as the possession of a succession of singers and their communities. This is where a closer look at the extensive traffic between the life of song and that of poetry may illuminate the transit of poems into the moving life of song—moving in both senses, of shared emotion and of collectively produced movement and change—that some poets have sought without the help of music. The traffic between literary poetry and popular song has been a two-way traffic—sometimes this traffic involves a definitive change of state: the poem lives on as musical song, severed from its place in the corpus of a known poet; or the song enters a second life as verse, its musical origins forgotten. But more often the passage is only partial or proves reversible, though with each transit the work may be altered in important ways. The passage from performance to print does not always affect a life in song while singers and their audiences continue to sing, or even simply to retain the memory of the work in its musical form. The songs in Shakespeare's plays, which were sung, seem already to have been popular contemporary songs before Shakespeare borrowed them. After they were performed on stage, they were printed, but only as text, and memory of their original musical lives was gradually effaced. Poems by Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh and Ben Jonson had long

second lives when they were set to music, not always with their poets' names attached. Like Herrick's or Marlowe's or Jonson's 17th century songs, later pieces also began life as poems but reached far wider audiences in their musical forms, while retaining their separate lives as poems for other audiences. In each of these cases, a brief lyric poem is extracted from its original context and acquires quite different powers and meanings when it becomes the property of singers and their listeners. For those who know these as songs, of course, it can be difficult to read them as poems without the memory of their musical settings affecting our senses of sound, rhythm, and even sense, but other readers continue to know them only as poems. Robert Burns' "Auld Lang Syne" is a more complicated case: like some of the songs now widely attributed to him, "Auld Lang Syne" was in fact a much older popular song collected by Burns for The Scots Musical Museum. Many, like "Auld Lang Syne", were collected with additions to their verses by Burns. He not only wrote several new stanzas for "Auld Lang Syne"; but also suggested an alternative: another existing folk tune, the one most widely sung today. In this new form, Burns' verses returned to the wider life of song as community possession from which they were taken.

Lyric theory works differently in the context of musical performance, and the context of musical performance also provides new and exciting theoretical tools with which to work. It is possible to write poems shaped by the idea of song even in the absence of musical setting: shaped, that is, not only by heightened attention to a poem's potential for verbal music, or by a scientific or philosophical interest in the poem as a kind of thinking analogous to music but by a poet's interest in particular kinds of songs as they travel back and forth between print and performance. In a sense a singer, performing—in print—the work of moving a song forward. In this way the very idea of song became more than an idea, and not just for the poet-singer; it became an experience of embodiment that might connect persons across time and place, so that the changing iterations of reading, like those of singing, might continue to link emotion to motion and person to person in the shared labour of moving the song.

Central to the musical enterprise is performance, the process of getting the work to the listener. Formally understood, performances are instantiations of works subject to certain structural and historical constraints. Less abstractly, performances, as goal-directed activities, are subject to various contextual and agency-related conditions which make for their success as coherent occasions of a special sort and as skilled actions.

1.4 Translation/Transcreation in the light of songs of Rabindranath Tagore

Translation used to be considered an inter-language transfer of meaning, which is the point of departure for research and study. Many earlier definitions demonstrate this, using source language and target language as their technical terms. Moreover, translation theories strictly confined themselves within the sphere of linguistics. For many years the popular trend in the translation circles had been perfect faithfulness to the original both in content and in form, and it had been regarded as the iron criterion as if from the holy Bible for translators to observe. The godly status and the impossible idealistic belief were not altered until new thoughts arose with the respect of consideration of target readers, the unavoidable translator subjectivity and the purpose and function of translation. If we try to look at translation from new angles such as the accommodation to target cultural conventions, the translator's consciousness of linguistic and cultural adaptations to make it easy for readers to understand translated works without too much pain and effort, and translation as a purposeful endeavour, then it can be understood as a much more complicated activity with a much broader scope. The cultural task of translation is not meant to blur difference. On the contrary, the difference is to be preserved and even heightened; it is to remain uncannily dissonant, strange and un-homey.

In a discussion of a lecture by Buber on the cultural ironies of translating the Hebrew Bible into German, Lawrence Rosenwald mentioned:

Translating means serving two masters. It follows that no one can do it. But it follows also that it is, like everything no one can do in theory, everyone's task is in practice. Everyone must translate, and everyone does. When we speak, we translate from our intention into the understanding we expect in the other...¹³

With this, I want to stress upon the fact that no longer does the word 'translation' only refer to the act of transferring the meaning of a text from one language to another; rather, it represents a lot more than that. Anything and everything which can be said to be an act of transformation, transcreation, or adaptation, in a way fall under the huge spectrum of translation itself.

¹³ Mendes-Flohr, Paul. *Translating Texts, Translating Cultures*. Jewish Studies Quarterly. Volume 14, Number 2, June, 2007, 97-100.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) seems to have a concept of translation at the back of his mind when he was engaged in translating his Bengali songs and poems for the English *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912). But unlike Dryden (1631-1700) or Tytler (1747-1814), he did not write any treatise on the theoretical aspects of translation. Unlike Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) delivering his famous lecture on translating Homer, he did never make any such lecture on how to translate an author, ancient or modern. Nor did he leave behind any discourse on translation after the fashion of Walter Benjamin or Jacques Derrida. Commenting on the nature of existing translation writings and their tone, Tejaswini Niranjana states: “Nearly all speculations on translation exist in the form of translators’ prefaces to specific texts, and the tone they adopt ranges from the apologetic to the aggressively prescriptive.”¹⁴ But, it is noticeable that Tagore did not write any such ‘preface’ except a one-line confession about his mode of translation in the preface to *The Gardener* and the tone of his writings on translations is simply descriptive and interpretative.

Translation, as conceived by Rabindranath, is basically a ‘rewriting’ or re-creation of the original text. Recalling his experience of translating the *Gitanjali* poems he writes to Indira Devi (dated 6 May, 1913):

...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 bravery; I simply 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 past days.¹⁵

What Tagore wanted was to ‘recapture’ the creative mood as a kind of aesthetic experience for rewriting his Bengali poems in English. Tagore distinguishes between ‘translating’ and ‘rewriting’, the former implying ‘word-for-word transference’ from one language to another, and the latter, sense-for-sense transference leading to the ‘re-birth’ or ‘reincarnation’ of the original in the target language. His theory and practice of translation are often so inextricably interwoven that while speaking of his self-translation, he is found enunciating, perhaps unconsciously, a theory of translation, or,

¹⁴ Niranjana, Tejaswini. “Representing Texts and Culture”, in *Siting Translation*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1992.

¹⁵ Tagore’s letter to Indira Devi, *A Tagore Reader*. ed. Amiya Chakravarty, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2003.

to be precise, discussing a particular aspect of the translation problem. He makes a comparative discussion on the literal or word-for-word translation and what may be called 'rewriting' or creative translation. He speaks of the aesthetic joy that he derives from 'rewriting' or creative translation, a joy that literal or word-for-word translation cannot provide. He rewrites his Bengali poems in English drawing on what he calls their 'essential substance'. In other words, he takes much liberty with the original poems interpreting them in English following the promptings of his creative imagination. By his own admission, Tagore is incapable of 'translating' and he loves to rewrite or remake his poems at the dictate of his creative sensibility. The politics of translation, so vigorously championed by Lefevere and Bassnett, was something foreign to his translation thoughts. That is why, words like 'ideology', 'poetics', and 'manipulation' have no relevance to his concept of translation. Naturally, he rewrites the *Gitanjali* poems creatively, drawing on the feelings and sentiments of the original. And thus the poems undergo a creative 're-incarnation' in the English language and seem to come spontaneously from the poet's heart.

Paradoxically, Tagore's ability to mould the Bengali into flexible, sometimes uneven English, has resulted in bold experimentation by innumerable translators of his works. Tagore encouraged the process and readily gave permission, oversaw drafts, and happily participated in the acts of new rendering. The legacy of fearless translation has carried into modern times.

Rabindranath has composed about two thousand songs, roughly speaking, so that any discussion on the subject calls for some sort of classification. One broad division would be: words and music both his own; own words set to others' music; and own music but others' words. Words again may be subdivided according to the different languages and forms used and the various sentiments expressed; and the songs as a whole into the different categories of music represented. Rabindranath's keen and active mind was as eager to experiment in the field of music as in the other fields – though his roots were firmly embedded in the soil of tradition.

In 'Sangit Chinta', Rabindranath often expressed his fondness for music and distinctly differentiated between songs and poetry. He is of the view that no one should misjudge the two as similar things, because poetry is something which is read; but songs are meant for listening. Often it is seen that a beautifully written poem does not sound good when

it is transformed into a song; or likewise a very nice song may lose all its charm while it is read-out. So, no one should really judge a song only by reading it, instead the song should be heard. Rabindranath has repeatedly stated in many of his essays, how Indian music has paved the path for creating his own songs — his childhood training in classical music and his great fondness for rhythm, made him able to understand the universal appeal of music and therefore, not only in Bengali, but also in the English translations of many of his songs, he had tried to portray the innate feelings and sentiments of the human race.

An outstanding characteristic of Rabindra Sangeet is the wonderfully happy union between the words and music. Whether the words are being spoken musically or whether the music is forming the words itself, is difficult to distinguish.

It is fairly well-established that Tagore, and especially his music, have been a ubiquitous part of Bengali life, within India or outside, for the better part of the past eight or nine decades. Even his detractors have been unable to minimize, much less eliminate, the indispensable presence of Tagore's songs, widely known as Rabindra Sangeet. Given the absolute position of command held by his music over the Bengali psyche, much to the great bewilderment of many observers on the outside, it would be natural to expect that the exquisite lyrics in Bengali that are the very soul of his musical creations, would be available in worthy translations that would communicate to the non-Bengali audience the essential beauty and poetic vision that Tagore expressed in them almost effortlessly and with unsurpassed mastery.

But therein resides the prohibitive and essentially impossible challenge. As it is, great literary creations almost always suffer qualitative degradation whenever they are transported to a language different from the original. Even so, in the hands of masterly translators, often accomplished literary figures themselves, many classic works of literature have found worthy and honourable renditions in other languages. In the main, though, outstanding literary translation often the products of keen, skilful and passionate minds, have been essentially in the domain of prose—such as fiction, drama, criticism or travelogues. An intrinsically lyrical piece of work suffers brutally when rendered into a different language—no matter how sincere, skilled or able the translator. Some translators do attempt, with great effort, to channel the rhyme and lyrical spirit of the original into the new form, and on rare occasions, achieve some success.

When it comes to Tagore's poems, which earned him the most well-known Bengali sobriquet, *Visva-Kavi* (World-Poet), there have been several commendable translations, including several by Tagore himself. The translations have been in a great variety of languages, and names such as Neruda, Meireles, Jimenez Akhmatova, Gide and others readily come to mind. However, a significant gulf exists when it comes to Tagore's songs, which are lyrical poems, and indeed the selections used by Tagore in *Gitanjali* are essentially prose renditions of a rather small sampling of his songs that appear in the compendium *Gitabitan*.

The magical combination of his supremely artistic and inspired words and the musical structure that lifts them to a higher plane is indeed impossible to regenerate outside the source language. Yet, over the years, it was not only the great literary stalwarts of 20th century Europe, the list including an array of eventual Nobel laureates, including Yeats, Pound and Eliot, that were greatly stirred by Tagore's rendition of the *Gitanjali* songs. Many decades later, there are still people around the world, who are moved by the lines of *Where the Mind is Without Fear*, or *On the Seashore of Endless Worlds*. Despite the impossibility of rendering his Bengali songs equally in another language, Tagore himself came reasonably close to appropriately expressing the emotions of these works. Tagore's English rendering of the *Gitanjali* songs was an inspired creation—an inspiration oddly enough acquired during a period of ailment on board a ship sailing to Europe.

Many well-meaning Tagore-admirers have attempted to improve Tagore's translations over the years; however, over the past six or seven decades, a number of his songs have in fact made their way to the Western musical tradition, especially in the sacred music category. This is actually quite a non-negligible record, and yet one that barely receives any recognition in the popular consciousness. There are renditions of his songs into English and other languages, and several of these appear in Western notation. These further affirm that Tagore was received and established initially in the West as a devotional and mystical writer, and most of his songs in European languages are therefore from the devotional category. Since *Gitanjali* acquired worldwide fame, several classical composers in the West set a number of songs and poems from *Gitanjali* and *The Gardener* to music, and these were evidently performed to highly receptive audiences. The practice in fact continues to this day, via piano, flute and choral recitals.

The vast majority of these are based on *Gitanjali*, but several also include *The Gardener*, *The Crescent Moon*, *Fireflies* and others.

Tagore's music in its manifestations around the world may be classified in three broad categories: the broadest, overwhelmingly familiar and most widely practiced of these is, of course, the ubiquitous Rabindra Sangeet. These songs were composed directly in Bengali primarily by Tagore himself, with a relatively small number having been composed by others of prominence with Tagore's consent. These songs are structurally fairly diverse, even though they represent a style that is uniquely Tagorean. To a trained ear, the rendition and atmosphere of a Tagore song are unmistakable. Yet, many aficionados of classical Indian music would be surprised to learn about the intricate classical foundation of many of Tagore's songs. Being a musical innovator and experimenter of the highest order, Tagore incorporated a variety of musical styles in the performance of the songs identified as Rabindra Sangeet.

The second category consists of external sources (outside Bengal) as well as well-known musical traditions within Bengal from where Tagore derived the framework for setting the music for a considerable number and range of his songs. Properly rendered, they represent the style and spirit of how Tagore himself envisioned his songs to be performed to their fullness. Rabindra Sangeet represents the pinnacle of what stirs listeners to the very depth of their beings in terms of the message, crafted with extraordinary lyrical mastery bordering on the divine, and yet deeply human, and the melody.

The third category consists of a sizable number of Tagore's songs and poems, composed by primarily classical musicians of the West, to be performed as chorales or as instrumentals based on the piano, organ, horn, flute or combinations thereof.

Tagore communicates almost daily to the hearts and souls of his followers through his compositions. It is quite simply that Tagore's words, so inspiring to many in the English language, are considerably more lyrical, intuitive and imbued with beauty in his original Bengali. The songs composed by Tagore himself, directly in the Bengali language created the most dominant style of Bengali music of the 20th century. The sheer grace and mastery of Tagore's language – both the prose and more so the songs with their unmatched lyricism make the task of translation even more difficult in every possible way.

My thesis consists of four chapters with a separate introduction and conclusion. The first chapter—“Lyric: definition, genre, mode” looks into the origin of lyric as a genre, its development, journey and moderations. It also focuses on the characteristic traits of lyric, its form and variety. The second chapter—“Poetry, Song, Performance” aims to deal with ‘song’ as a particular form of performance and its nature, as well as the factor of music. It also deals with the notion of ‘performativity’ and ‘musicality’ as a whole and traces the journey of how a lyric becomes a song, by studying the etymology of ‘performance’ itself. By dealing with the notions of ‘translation’, ‘translatability’, ‘function of translation’ etc. the third chapter—“Translating Performance Text” focuses on how the art of translating vocal texts to be sung differs materially from that of translating poetry to be merely read. By examining the songs of Rabindranath Tagore in different translated and performed versions, this chapter also tries to identify ‘performance texts’ and analyse how it facilitate change. The fourth and final chapter—“Rabindra Sangeet: Translation and Performance” intends to examine Tagore’s lyrics as performance texts, and its journey of becoming songs. Through close examination of the translated and transcreated versions of the songs, popularly known as Rabindra Sangeet, the chapter tries to trace the changes and transformations that make the translated songs different from its primitive text.

Therefore, the research work, by incorporating the aspects of Performance Studies, Translation Studies and Reception Studies, brings within its purview the changes and transformations of a performance text, here lyric; and its journey of becoming a song.

CHAPTER-I

Lyric: definition, genre, mode

Lyric poetry is often described as a special form of poetry, in which the poet directly expresses his emotions. From its original musical association with the classic lyre or the romantic harp, an animated or impassioned expression, adapted to the subject, is considered essential. But it should be kept in mind that all emotional poetry cannot be lyric, and the fact that the poems are couched in melodious metres does not make them lyrical. And yet all kinds of emotional poetry are loosely and popularly considered as lyrics. To say that most emotional poems are lyrical is to twist or stretch the generally accepted description of a lyric and bring in a series of modern ideas incongruous as well as inexact.

We take it for granted that we know what a lyric is. As a term derived from ancient Greek to designate a song accompanied by the lyre, its association with musical performance persists today in popular “song lyrics” with instrumental accompaniment, but “lyric poetry” is also invoked more abstractly as a literary production that is read, not sung. Often a poem is considered lyric when it represents an utterance in the first person, an expression of personal feeling, according to a model of modern lyric reading that diverges from the way poems were performed (and read) in antiquity. Or as an alternative to expressive reading, a poem may be called lyric when it foregrounds the musicality of language by appealing to the ear or to the eye. Sometimes poems are called lyrics simply because they are short; sometimes lyric is defined in opposition to narrative, assuming a modern binary in literary modes; increasingly, lyric is a way to describe the essence of poetry, a poem at its most poetic. Whether we think about the lyric as ancient origin or modern imaginary, on the page or in the air, we need to have some idea of what a lyric is (or was) in the first place. Yet it has become as notoriously difficult to define the lyric as it is impossible to define poetry itself. How is it possible that almost all poetry has come to be read as essentially lyric and at the same time we do not seem to know how to define the lyric? Since assumptions widely shared are usually the ideas least and last investigated, it may be the case that because we have come to think of all poetry as lyric, we have not really wanted a concise definition of lyric. Perhaps the lyric has become so difficult to define because we need it to be blurry around the edges, to remain capacious enough to include all kinds of verse and all kinds of ideas about what poetry is or should

be. To say that the lyric is a modern idea or theory rather than an ancient genre might surprise readers accustomed to thinking about lyric poetry as a given in the Western tradition—indeed, as the oldest form in that tradition, the origin of literature and civilization. It is true that if we think of choral hymns or Sappho’s odes or even tribal chants or popular songs as the roots of lyric, a critical genealogy of lyric as a modern theory does not make much sense. But the concept of lyric as the oldest form of poetic expression is actually a relatively recent notion; specifically, it is a post-Enlightenment idea, developed steadily over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. The history of lyric reading is the history of thinking about poetry as more and more abstract and ineffable.

Hegel cast the lyric as the most difficult of modern genres because in it the poet must become ‘the centre which holds the whole lyric work of art together’, and in order to do so he must achieve a “specific mood” and “must identify himself with this particularization of himself as with himself, so that in it he feels and envisages himself.”¹⁶ The lyric is the genre in which the poet, like the ironic writer, turns his back on his audience. It is also the genre which most clearly shows the hypothetical core of literature, narrative and meaning in their literal aspects as word-order and word-pattern. It looks as though the lyric genre has some peculiarly close connection with the ironic mode and the literal level of meaning. The most natural unit of the lyric is the discontinuous unit of the stanza, and in earlier periods most lyrics tended to be fairly regular strophic patterns, reflecting the ascendancy of epos. Stanzaic epos, such as we find in medieval romance, is usually much closer to the atmosphere of a dream world than linear epos. With the Romantic movement a sense that the “true voice of feeling” was unpredictable and irregular in its rhythm began to increase.

The traditional associations of lyric are chiefly with music. The Greeks spoke of lyrics as *ta mele*, usually translated as “poems to be sung”; in the Renaissance, lyric was constantly associated with the lyre and the lute, and Poe’s essay on this matter lays an emphasis on the importance of music in poetry which makes up in strength what it lacks in precision. Implicitly or explicitly, the speaker in a lyric poem is an “I.” This figure is a generic “I,” not to be confused with an extralinguistic entity. The lyric works with the material experience of the somatic production and reproduction of words as sounds and sounds as words, whether spoken, written, or read. Formal schemes that abstract and

¹⁶ Hegel, G. W. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

stylize the distinctive sonic and grammatical shape of a language serve to foreground its material reality and put up an organized resistance to meaning, both as sense and as intention.

Lyric language presents—to the ear—that which resists communication and the will of an individual “speaker”. Northrop Frye, while identifying an underlying structure of lyric, stated:

The lyric poet normally pretends to be talking to himself or to someone else: a spirit of nature, a muse, a personal friend, a lover, a god, a personified abstraction, or a natural object...The radical of presentation in the lyric is the hypothetical form of what in religion is called the ‘I-Thou’ relationship. The poet, so to speak, turns his back on his listeners, though he may speak for them and though they may repeat some of his words after him.¹⁷

The fundamental characteristic of lyric, in this account, is not the description and interpretation of a past event but the performance of an event in the lyric present, a time of enunciation. What lyrics demand of the world is often something to be accomplished by the performativity of lyric itself. Criticism of the modern lyric, or modern criticism of the lyric in general, has challenged the romantic conception of lyric as the direct or sincere expression of emotion, but in so doing, it has allowed emphasis to fall on the importance of thinking of the speaker of lyric as a persona created by the poet rather than as the poet himself or herself. If the speaker is a persona, then interpretation of the poem is a characterization of the persona, as if he or she were a character in a novel, and of the situation in which the event of speech occurs. Though there is separation of the discourse of the lyric from the life of the poet as historical-biographical figure, emphasis falls on the lyric as a representation of consciousness, and ideally of a drama of consciousness. Though there are many second-person pronouns in Greek and Latin lyrics, they very rarely designate a community the poet could be said to address directly. Sappho’s only complete poem is a complex invocation of Aphrodite where the discourse addressed to Aphrodite quotes how the Goddess herself on previous occasions invoked Sappho:

What is it now? Who, O Sappho is wronging you?

This configuration is very striking and unusual, giving concrete form to what for later poets could only be wished for: that the figures invoked would actually respond. And Sappho’s most famous poem —

¹⁷ Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, 250.

*He seems to me equal to the Gods, that man who sits opposite you
and listens close to your sweet speaking...*

— addresses the girl whose sweet speaking and laughing “puts the heart in my chest on wings”. Critics trying to imagine directness here have suggested that this might have been sung at a wedding celebration, praising the bridegroom as a god while describing a powerful erotic reaction to the bride, but this is a certainly a stretch and of course the poem is incomplete.

What we have is both extremely powerful and hard to imagine spoken directly to the ‘you’ as its audience. We find here a structure of triangulated address fundamental to lyric. If we look to Horace and Catullus for models of lyric, we find, first, that they do not address the Roman people, the most obvious possible community. Of eighty-seven poems in the first three books of Horace’s *Odes*, only nine are addressed to no one and twenty-three to non-human addressees, including gods and goddesses. In *The Idea of the Lyric*, Ralph Johnson writes:

Lyric as inherited from the Greeks was sung to an audience, so that there is a ‘you’ as well as an ‘I’, ‘a speaker’, or ‘a singer’, talking to, singing to, another person or persons.¹⁸

Modern conceptions of the lyric, according to Johnson, have led us to imagine that the lyric, in general, is to be understood as the solipsistic meditation of an individual, expressing or working out personal feelings, if not the impersonal statement of someone unable to communicate, whereas in the classical model, “I” and “you,” speaker and listener are directly related to one another in a community. There are conflicts about the familiar move that opposes public to private, speech to writing, integrated to alienated, but Johnson’s argument at least alerts us to the potential importance of address, though it does lead us to ask whether the forms of address in the classical lyric do really indicate an integrated community. Perhaps there is always a ‘you’ in the lyric, whether expressed or not, whatever its variations, as lyrics strive to be an event in the special temporality of the lyric present. Often that ‘you’ is expressed— the ‘you’ of the beloved, or the wind, a flower, a yearning. But the lyric ‘you’ is also a bit of language, a trope. It is through preserving the notion of lyric as a genre, an open process of generic negotiation, that such historical variations in function and effect can be registered and analyzed.

¹⁸ Johnson, W. R. *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, 3.

2.1 What is a lyric?

The difficulty of answering this question lies in the fact that many kinds of poetry, from elegies to odes to dramatic monologues, have historically been lumped together under that label. Nonetheless, it can be said that a lyric is a relatively short piece of writing that evokes an interior landscape or an external scene while self-reflexively foregrounding sound and word-play. In lyric poetry speech remains situated among the things and beings of the world, and directed toward them. In *Anatomy of Criticism* Northrop Frye defines the lyric as utterance overheard:

A lyric poet normally pretends to be talking to himself or to someone else: a spirit of nature, a Muse, a personal friend, a lover, a god, a personified abstraction, or a natural object.... The poet, so to speak, turns his back on his listeners.¹⁹

The word 'lyre' provides its guiding measure to distinguish lyrical style from other poetic styles. The lyre makes shorter intervals than other literary forms require and makes closer relations of these intervals, one to another. Northrop Frye speaks of the roots of lyric as *melos* and *opsis*; And *melos*, in its relation to songs, calls us to focus on the lyric as linguistic event.

Lyric poetry may be distinguished from dramatic, narrative and didactic poetry. Both the narrative and dramatic poetry forecast elements of objectivity. The poet speaks, if he speaks at all, through the person of his character or the chorus. On the other hand, didactic poetry emphasizes its theme, exposition and success in convincing the reader; in contrast to the emotional expression and personal attitude of the lyric. The most striking difference of the lyric form, perhaps lies in its inclusion of an exclamatory tone with some adaptability to song through the help of its rhythm, repetitions and easy progression of thought. It can also be said that this unique feature of 'singability' is due to the brevity of its form, variation of rhythm and the use of strophe and antistrophe or their effective equivalents.

Meaningful deviation from everyday language can be also mentioned as a feature of the lyric. Lyric tends to emphasize the individual perspective or the perception of the lyric agency, rather than the perceived objects. This individual perspective, so to say, is frequently triggered by emotions. One can also observe the existence of a seemingly

¹⁹ Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, 249-50.

unmediated consciousness or agency as the centre of the lyric utterance. Nonetheless, the lyric appears to be the genre in which self-referentiality and self-reflexivity as a feature has played a greater role than either in drama or in narrative fiction. Walter Bernhart in his essay entitled “Überlegungen zur Lyriktheorie aus erzähltheoretischer Sicht” (Reflections on Lyric: from a narrative-theoretical point of view) inquires into the possibilities of defining lyric in contrast to narrative fiction:

[...] a lyrical work presents an absolute (vs. a contextualized) utterance where the primary motivation for the utterance lies in the manifestation of the mental attitude taken by the shaping force, or source, of the utterance (vs. the mimetic construction of a coherent fictional world, i.e. an emphasis on the content of the utterance [in fiction]).²⁰

The Hellenistic world observed a dedicated impact of the Lyric poetry from the 17th century B.C., along with the Greek-speaking Mediterranean, with a focus in Alexandria. In ancient Greece it was associated with the Apollonian element, as opposed to the revelry of the Dionysian. For the people of ancient Greece, Lyric Poetry carried a precise technical meaning: verse that was accompanied by a *lyre*, *cithara*, or *barbitos*. Such works were also known as melic poetry, as they were sung along with the instrument. The melic poet, so to say, bore no resemblance to the writer of plays, the writer of trochaic and iambic verses or the writer of epic. The lyric age seems to have its roots tied to the poets, who cogitated such poems related to a particular occasion. Aleman’s “*Maiden Song*” is one of the earliest known lyric poems attributable to a particular poet; which also talks about a festival to the gods.

Among the most noteworthy musician-poets of the classical Greek literature, Alcaeus, Anacreon, Archiochus, Bacchylides, Ibycus, Lasus, Mimnermus, Pindar, Sappho, Simonides, Steseichorus, Theognis, and Xenophanes are of chief importance. Although the archaic lyric form was characterized by strophic composition and live musical performances, later few poets like Pindar extended the metrical forms to a triad, including strophe, antistrophe and epode.

The choral lyric, or poetry designed to be sung at occasions of public ceremony or worship, seems to have been cultivated most successfully as a whole among Dorian

²⁰ Bern, Walter. “Überlegungen zur Lyriktheorie aus erzähltheoretischer Sicht”. In: Herbert Foltinek/ Wolfgang Riehle/ Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (eds.) *Tales and “their telling difference”*. *Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Narrativik. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Franz K. Stanzel*. Heidelberg: Winter. (1993), 359.

communities, and its characteristics resembles to those traditions, which were mainly ascribed to the Dorian Greeks: sobriety, stateliness and dignity. The Dorian character, therefore, comes out most plainly in the meters employed. Interestingly, one can find striking similarities of this persistence of literary dialect within the Attic drama as well. In Greek tragedy certain interludes were sung by a trained chorus who executed a sort of pantomimic dance in accompaniment. The language of these interludes differs from that of the rest of the play, but only in passages intended to be sung.

Lyric poems were often composed about victories in athletics, usually at organized games like the Ancient Olympic Games; as bravery and valour was highly prized amongst soldiers, these poems tend to inspire these traits. Another type of lyric in Ancient Greece had a religious purpose and were crafted into hymns and other songs for the purposes of worship and to express devotion. According to some scholars, it is believed that lyric poetry may actually be older than epic poetry because it arose from ancient folk and religious songs. For nearly 200 years, many of the best poets of Greece expressed themselves through the form of lyric poetry. And this very form remained important until the 400 B.C., when the lyric was replaced by the drama as the most significant form of Greek literature.

Although Lyric is commonly known to be sung with the accompaniment of a lyre, the elegy, a different form of Greek lyric poetry was not sung but spoken, often to the accompaniment of a flute. Also, the Iambic lyric was spoken without accompaniment. Greek lyric poetry was performed by either an individual or a chorus: Lyric that was performed by a chorus is called choral lyric, and the other, which was performed by an individual is called monodic lyric. These two types of the lyric poetry not only differ in form and content, but also in their style of performance. On one hand, the monodic lyric was written in the first person, short in length and had the personal experiences and feelings of the poet as its subject matter. Sappho, Alcaeus and Anacreon are generally known to be the leading practitioners of the monodic lyric; first two among them wrote around 600 B.C., and the latter around 500 B.C. On the other hand, the choral lyric, in contrast to the monodic lyric, is longer, more complex and less concerned with the personal feelings and experiences of the poet. Instead, it is often based on common knowledge or shared myths and focuses on group values. As mentioned earlier, the earliest known example of a choral lyric is a poem by Aleman of Sparta that was written in the 600s B.C. Aleman's work "Maiden Song" had a complex and long structure, which strongly suggests that a tradition of composing choral lyric may have already existed by

that time. And it is seen that after Aleman, the complexity and length of the choral lyric increased even more. Stesichorus and Simonides were popular poets who wrote choral lyrics around 500 B.C. The final period of choral lyric lasted from 500 B.C. to 450 B.C., which includes the victory odes composed Pindar and Bacchylides. Pindar's victory odes were mostly composed for the Olympic Games and the other great athletic contests of Greece and had such an everlasting impact that after Pindar, the writing of victory odes had come to a discontinuance.

Apart from Sappho, the other two most renowned monodic poets, Alcaeus and Anacreon had very less in common. While Alcaeus wrote about love or certain political topics, Anacreon's works were bereft of such personal overtone and contained immense wit and wordplay.

2.2 Western genre: Ancient

Lyric poetry possesses a strong element of emotional yearning or longingness, and this feature can be observed in its highest degrees in the works of none other than Sappho. Although only fragments of Sappho's poetry have survived, she was without doubt the greatest of the monodic lyric poets. Her works forecast great intensity and feeling, and reflect unparalleled use of eloquence, delicacy, imagery, and metrical skills of her verse. The only poem of Sappho, which has been completely preserved, is "Ode to Aphrodite". And like the subject matter of most of her poems, this too is about love.

Sappho is believed to have lived on the island of Lesbos and gained much recognition around 600 B.C. Although very little is known about her life, various tales regarding her portrays that she might have organized a school or society for girls who were taught different art forms, poetry, music and chorus singing for marriage ceremonies, along with the training to be the companions of men. As a matter of fact, it cannot be overlooked that through her poems, she often addressed young women with great affection. But the relationship between the women in her society and Sappho herself is not clear as her poems reflect both love and a sense of jealousy, she felt for them. Sapphic verses broadly include 500 poems, with 12000 lines, of which only 700 lines have survived in only fragments via strips of papyrus taken from ancient mummies. Most

of the works talks about women and their feelings and some explore the intensity of emotions surrounding love: the journey, celibacy, the despair and the passion.

Michael Schmidh, in his book *The First Poets: Lives of Ancient Greek Poets*, while mentioning about Sappho's poetic style, states: "Sappho's art is to dovetail, smooth and rub down, to avoid the over-emphatic"²¹.

It is often argued that lyric poetry rose out of a literate culture; but there is a strong connection and similarity between the way the lyric poets used to sing their verses in public and their oral counterparts, which belonged to the age of Homer. Clearly, Sappho and her fellow poets wrote their works instead of composing them orally and performed them as memorized pieces. By keeping in mind the huge popularity and recognition of some lyric poets, it can be argued that at least some of their poems probably circulated in written form too. This new form of literature, the "written text" looked ahead to the next stage in the evolution of narrative arts. In ancient Greece poetry preceded prose as a literary form, partly because the invention of the Greek alphabet was much later than the introduction of the poetic story-telling performances. One of the reasons being the fact that the rhythm of poetry made stories easier to remember. Rhetoric, as the power of persuasion, was an important skill to the Greeks. In this connection, it can be mentioned that the first literary work in prose was a history book by Herodotus (480-425 B.C.), which was written 800 years after the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Iambic meter was already in use by the 7th century B.C. and was associated with great orators namely Solon and Archilochus. After a while, more expressive lyric poetry was introduced and came to be known as medic poetry.

Lyric meters are usually less regular than non-lyric meters. The lines are made up of feet of different kinds, and can be of varying lengths and stress. The most common Greek lyric meters are the Ionic, the Aeolic and the Dactylo-epitrite. Some lyric meters were used for solo songs, such as some of the poems of Sappho and Alcaeus; others were used for choral dances, such as the victory odes of Pindar. The Doric choral songs were composed in complex triadic forms of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, with the first two parts of the triad having the same metrical pattern, and the epode a different form.

Longinus' *On the Sublime* has been an influential model of close reading and the notion of organic unity, which have greatly influenced twentieth-century critics of literature.

²¹ Schmidh, Michael. *The First Poets: Lives of Ancient Greek Poets*. Vintage, 2006.

Allan H. Gilbert has stated in *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (1940) that the method of the book has entered into all judicial criticism of the details of literature. If Aristotle may be said to have determined the view of the structure of a literary work, Longinus has shown how to approach an individual passage. In one of the most famous sections of the treatise, for instance, Longinus quotes in its entirety a lyric poem by Sappho that begins with “Peer of gods he seemeth to me”. He then proceeds to study with exacting precision the skilful composition and appropriate attention to detail shown by the poet. Longinus argues that it is Sappho’s selection of the most vital details and her working them into one whole which produce the outstanding quality of the poem. The poem is carefully contrived in order to produce a particular sort of experience, and the well-integrated effects involved in that experience are both the poet’s task to produce and the critic’s job to understand and appreciate.

Longinus emphasizes the felt effects induced by great mental conceptions or figures of speech or well-chosen diction. Frequently such an emphasis produces a subtle and illuminating close reading of lines and phrases. He traces the techniques by which Sappho’s poem enacts an astonishing fit of passion, one in which the lover undergoes the sudden shock of seeing her beloved as a “peer of gods” and herself succumbs to a series of violent transformations under his gaze. The lover loses a sense of her own boundaries and identity, as the manifest pronominal confusion makes clear, and is precipitately thrown into a rapid series of metaphors and images that present her experience as a series of natural cataclysms (raging fire, roaring waves, rampaging river, unsettling earthquake, the painful descent of autumn). Sappho’s lover is herself a sudden “close reader” of the sublime, and she undergoes the violent felt effects of the greatness and self-transcendence that can befall one “lost in the love trance”.

Finally, regarding the poem’s organic structure or organic unity, Longinus asks—how does Sappho excel? He immediately responds that her excellence has to do precisely with her organic conception and composition, her skillful choice of the most important and intense details, and her relating them to one another. Writers such as Sappho and Homer have sifted out the most significant details on the basis of merit, so to speak, and joined them harmoniously without inserting between them anything irrelevant, frivolous, or artificial; such additions spoil the total effect.

This conception of organic structure and unified wholeness sounds much like that of Socrates in Plato’s *Phaedrus* and that of Aristotle in his *Poetics*. The originality and

critical importance of Longinus in this matter may lie in the direction toward which he refines the notion. Longinus recognizes that not all writing or oratory exhibits organic unity; however, the utilization of organic structure and wholeness, both in the creation and in the critical reception of literary discourse, heightens the “dignity”, “distinction”, and extraordinary character of that discourse. In a passage that owes much to the same analogy that Socrates uses in the *Phaedrus*, Longinus writes that:

[one of] the factors which give most dignity to discourse is structure, which corresponds to the arrangement of the limbs of the body. One limb by itself, cut off from the others, is of no value, but all of them together complete and perfect the composition of the whole. So it is with great expressions: scattered here and there, apart from each other, they lose their own value and undo the greatness of the whole, but when they form a whole in close association, joined together by the bonds of melodious word-arrangement, then in the rounded structure of the whole they find their voice.²²

The renewed engagements, as mentioned in Longinus’ text, with the author’s subversively unstable oppositions between nature and art, the spoken and the unspoken, genius and craft, simplicity and complexity, concealment and dazzling exposure—have thus found echoes in many later critics and readers.

After Pindar, lyric poetry lost its vitality and verse thrived primarily in the drama. Pindar of Thebes was the first Greek poet to reflect on the role of the poet and the nature of poetry. His “Epinicia” or the victory odes were composed to celebrate triumphs in various Greek athletic festivals and competitions. These victory odes not only served the purpose of praising athletic achievements, but also had a strong religious fervour that entitled the heroes and their noble deeds with immortal entities. Pindar’s fame in Greece was unquestionably greater, and his circle of readers larger than it is in the modern world. The spirit of Pindar’s poetry is Panhellenic. *The Epinicia*, or Songs of Victory, composed by him were widely circulated because those were written to celebrate the rewards of success in contests at the great national festivals at Olympia, Nemea, Corinth, and Delphi. But *The Epinicia* lacked much poetic inspiration, as they were only a way of expression, merely for expression’s sake. The language of Pindar is not characterized by Athenian fluency, nor does it represent the spoken speech; it only serves as a literary vehicle, somewhat responsible for the ‘old world mellowness’. Pindar’s use of intricacy of the metres is one of the reasons for facing difficulties to read his poems.

²² Russell, D. A. ed. *On the Sublime*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964. [Greek text and commentary]

In Pindar we find a large rhetorical element as well; his diction is lofty and elevated, with much fullness. As in sentence structure Pindar shows a fondness for coordination, so in his arrangement of words, coordination prevails. Pindar is especially fertile in similitudes for poetical effort and has much of the old epic tone, as he cleaves to the old epic view of the poet as the inspired minstrel. Pindar's diction can be called highly figurative and imaginative; various similes and other rhetorical devices can be found in his works. The Odes of Pindar are strongly ornamented with figures of metaphor and for that, his love for figures which portray swiftness along with flashing brilliance, has been the subject of much consideration.

Dornseiff seems to find in him the elements of coiling and uncoiling:

Pindar is continually mingling picture and reality, or is continually hovering back and forth between the concept and the portrayal, between the object itself and a pretty veil for the object. The archaic tendency to strong metaphorical speech is so intensified in Pindar that his figures cross each other so frequently as to make it difficult to see the end of his flourishes.²³

One of the most important and fascinating aspects of Pindar's poetry is his presentation of himself and his songs within the milieu of celebrating the athletic success of his aristocrat. While considering Pindar's work, one should not pass over the general form of the victory odes itself. Each of these songs of victory was merely another variation of the same theme, in which constituted four different elements: the personal, the gnomic, the hymnic and the epic-mythical. The personal element offered praise and publicity to the victor who commissioned the poet. But right beside the aspects of pleasure, joy, or fame that either the spectator or the contestants gained, there was an urge to honour the patron and to various deities. Reverence for the divine power is a strongly marked and ever-present characteristic of his works. The poem which celebrated a victory won at any game or contest, must therefore honour the god, whose worship gave the opportunity to the victor to fill himself with glory. This is the reason for which one can find scattered words of praise for the gods like Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, or Heracles throughout the poems. The mythic fervour of these victory songs is perhaps the element, which provides a strong cohesion to its whole structure. 'The Fourth Pythian', Pindar's greatest poem, is a famous handling of an epic theme in a lyric manner, with a great aesthetic appeal. The moral reflections and the maxims of conduct, found scattered in Pindar's poetry

²³ Dornseiff, Franz. *Pindar's Stil*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1921, 66.

express the Greek feelings about life in an earnest form. Matthew Arnold possessed a high opinion of Pindar and his works: “Pindar is the poet above all others on whom the power of style seems to have exercised an inspiring and intoxicating effect.”²⁴

Lyric poetry was also popular in Han dynasty China and the period of the Warring States and Three Kingdoms, with important poets being Cao Cao (155–220 c.e.), Cao Pi (the former emperor Wen, 187–226 c.e.), and Cao Zhi (192–232 c.e.). The best-known Japanese lyric poets are Ariwara no Narihara (825–880), Ono no Komachi (c. 825–c. 900) and Saigyō (1118–90). The Persian tradition includes Anvari (1126–89), Asadi Tusi (d. 1072), Attar (c. 1142–c. 1220), Ferdowsi (935–1020), Omar Khayyam (1048–1131), Nezami (1141–1209), and Rudaki (859–941). While translations of Greek and Latin poetry and literature have been available in the West for many centuries, access to Chinese and Japanese materials has long been limited.

Latin lyrics were written by Catullus and Horace in the 1st century BC; and in medieval Europe the lyric form can be found in the songs of the troubadours, in Christian hymns, and in various ballads. In the Renaissance, the most finished form of lyric, the sonnet, was brilliantly developed by Petrarch, Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, and John Milton. Especially identified with the lyrical forms of poetry in the late 18th and 19th centuries were the Romantic poets, including such diverse figures as Robert Burns, William Blake, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Goethe, and Heinrich Heine.

Catullus is often grouped among the elegiac poets and reaches heights in his verse for his simplicity and lack of conscious adornment; and while it is true that Ovid and Catullus have in common a light, delicate touch, still the emotions of the latter seem more genuine and sincere. Though born in a Roman province, at Verona, Catullus passed most of his life at Rome, surrounded by revolutionary influences, and with his name is associated the names of some of the most noted leaders of the State and society at that time. The lyric tradition exemplified in Catullus seems to have been started by Laevius, who without great poetical merit, seems to have had a considerable metrical facility. Catullus’ work differed little in kind from that of his contemporaries. Catullus and the elegiac poets are admittedly alike in their aims as they sing about their loves and their

²⁴ Arnold, Matthew. *Poetical Works*. London: Macmillan, 1890, 420.

beloved. But even here a sharp contrast is seen between them and Catullus as the love affair of Catullus and Lesbia, with its cycles of ecstatic joy and heart-rending grief, buoyant hopes and bitter disappointment, is vividly and vitally portrayed in his passionate lyrics. The personality of Lesbia is most conspicuous. It is with her character that every account of Catullus must deal. Rich, witty, voluptuous, the wife of the great, noble Metellus, her beauty was of the Junoesque type, and she had won the title bestowed on Juno herself. Catullus' ardent and sanguine character, reckless of consequence, is burned into our imaginations as we share the poet's loves, dreams, joys, and woes. We see the character of Lesbia, fascinating yet false, delightful yet deceitful. We notice the poet's gradual realization that Lesbia is not the angel of his dreams, and with him we taste the bitter ashes of disillusionment. Of the love poetry of Catullus, Sellar remarked:

Other tales of love told by poets have been more beautiful in their course or more pathetic in their issue; none have been told with a more touching realism or a more desperate intensity of feeling.²⁵

The poetical love stories of most of the Roman poets are of a different kind. In this respect Catullus is strongly contrasted with Horace. That the latter, with 'no sorrow in his song, no winter in his years' gives us his real experiences may well be doubted. His poems on love themes are metrical essays in love expressions; though the expressional features are quite entertaining, but the loves of Horace are merely shadows, and there is not much regret seen when they have floated by. But Catullus gives to us the bloom and blight of his love, and his words reveal to us his actual experiences, or else he had that intensity of imagination which could furnish ideally the content of an actual experience, and whatever we deny to his experiences so much must we add to his imaginative powers. Lesbia is the one and only woman whom he loves; also it is Lesbia alone whom he hates. Whatever may have been the practical attitude of Catullus, as illustrated by his association with Lesbia, the poems dealing with marriage are among his best creations. Two among them have been called epithalamia; but one is rather a monologue, and the other does not seem to have reference to any particular marriage, so that the song in the marriage of Peleus and Thetis may be taken as the only true epithalamium of Catullus, one of the great ones in literature, such as is the *Epithalamium* of Spenser, and one in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*. The central thought in the song is the future glory of Achilles and it expresses feelings of the deepest reverence and purest joy.

²⁵ Sellar, W. Y. *The Roman Poets of the Republic*. Oxford, 1932, 461.

In Catullus, we see that he is somewhat concerned with a moral point. For Catullus, as for many other Latin writers *decorum* exacts behaviour, governed by standards recognizably ethical. The end of Catullus' many lyric poems establish such a moral dimension, one for which there is little precedent in Greek love lyricism. The most famous adaptation of the Atys tradition in Roman poetry, was Catullus' *gall-iambic Attis*. However, Catullus inverts the usual story of the goddess-protected priest frightening away the lion by instead presenting the angry goddess setting one of her lions against Attis and frightening the rebellious priest back into her sacred grove. But on the other hand, it can be observed that when Horace takes on this subject matter, he does not hesitate to reject Catullan form and manner. Instead of being influenced by Catullus' more familiar and recent poem, he went back to the original Greek story and effectively corrects the Catullan narrative so that he could privilege the authority of the Greek original. The form of Horace's lyric verse was quite imitative, and it would be difficult to overestimate his debt to the Greek poets in the matter of meters. He is proud of the debt and considers it high enough praise to have been the first to set Latin words to the lyric measures of Greece. Horace proved himself a master in the composition of lyric verse as he is the inventor of a style, in which he has had no successor in his own or in any other language. But it is not wholly upon such achievements that his popularity rests. The essentially personal quality of his writings, his vivacity and sense of humour, his interest and observations on men and life and the element of humanity—these are the eminent markers, which forecast his genius.

Both Catullus and Horace were gifted to an eminent degree with a humorous touch. Each could treat a trivial subject in such a way as to produce a sparkling poem. While Horace playfully tells of his inglorious retreat from a battle without his shield, and amusingly describes his misadventures with a bore, Catullus similarly makes us smile at his playful rebuke to a guest who pilfered a napkin for a souvenir, and again when he satirizes the 'cockney' accent of one of his acquaintances. Both poets have a tendency to digress abruptly from a trivial theme to the utterance of some solemn reflection on life.

Horace, for example, breaks off in a light poem on springtime to remind his friend that death comes alike to kings and to knaves, and that all too soon. Such sudden and surprising changes come often in Catullus. A poem was written by him on the death of Lesbia's pet sparrow and he handled the theme delicately with a touch of certain dramatic suddenness, describing the bird's love for its mistress and its antics in her lap. As Horace and Catullus have many traits in common, so do they differ in many respects. Although,

like Horace, Catullus often turns from trivial thoughts to solemn reflections on deep or fundamental truths, but when he does that, he does not moralize as much as does Horace. Horace's love odes are no doubt delightful and playful; also they can be said to be the excellent imitations of the Greek models in Latin verse, but still those cannot be compared to the passionate, ecstatic outbursts that surged up from the heart of Catullus. To Catullus, to live was to love; to Horace, love was one of those pleasant interludes that while away an idle hour. As lyric poetry demands that the emotion expressed to be personal to the poet and yet universal, touching all mankind, both Catullus and Horace have proved their genius as lyric poets.

2.3 Western genre: Medieval to Metaphysical

The lyric poetry of Europe in the medieval period was created largely without reference to the classical past, by the pioneers of courtly poetry and courtly love. The troubadours, travelling composers and performers of songs, began to flourish during the 11th century and were often imitated in the 13th. Many troubadours claim that the lyric delights its audience or its own singer and "I" persona; sometimes they suggest that it will console them for the sorrows of love. It is also common for the troubadours to say that the lyric is inspired by, and expresses, joyous sentiments. *Trouvères* were poet-composers, who were roughly contemporary with and influenced by the troubadours. They are known to have composed their works in the northern dialects of France. The first known *trouvère* was Chrétien de Troyes (1160s-1180s).

The dominant form of German lyric poetry in the period was the 'Minnesang'—a love lyric based essentially on a fictitious relationship between a knight and his high-born lady. 'Minnesang' represents the first poetic expression in Germany in which the "I", the poetic ego, is central. This poetry does not involve a process of self-awareness in which the "I" is taken as a separate entity. Rather, self-exploration takes the form of making visible the relationships between poet, lady, audience, love, and nature. Hence, the contrastive pattern is less a means by which these relationships are established, than it is the structural determinant that makes such relationships possible. Here, the primary factor is the structural determinants and the content is secondary. Its importance lies in the fact that the elements are sustained by the contrastive pattern and cannot stand by

themselves as separate entities. These elements are provided with meaning and substance through the variety of relationships possible. In the pre-courtly poets, the contrastive pattern has the entirely different function of summarizing a brief lyric narrative or introducing a stanza, which is followed by a narrative elaboration describing unfulfilled love. What gives substance to the stanza is not the contrastive pattern, but rather the element of change. Initially imitating the lyrics of the French troubadours and trouvères, 'Minnesang' soon established a distinctive tradition itself.

The lyric is understood to take on the qualities and values inherent in the love that inspires it. Sometimes the qualities are those of joy and delight, since love, even if not requited, is often described in the medieval lyric as a joyous and exulting experience; the joy and the love which many poets claim inspire their love lyrics, are often not separable. Joy and delight can thus often, though not always, represent a feature common to song and love, and the existence of such potential common attributes no doubt contributes substantially to the near-identification of love and song in the Middle Age. Nevertheless, these lyric poets do not give the pleasure of the addressee or audience special emphasis over the other delights associated with the love lyric, the most obvious of these being the delights expressed in the lyric.

The 14th century and 15th century French courtly poets of love often discuss the practicalities of composition. They are more explicit and legislative than previous poets in their claims that their poetry is in general designed to please, and they make clear that love poetry pleases most, that love provides the primary or even the only possible focus for pleasurable verse. Love is the most delightful sentiment and matter for any courtly poetry. Many of them also return to the traditional question of poetic sincerity and inspiration, either developing or reneging upon the love poets' claim that it is love that 'makes the poet compose'. The effect of this is to intensify the old contrast between the poet's personal experience and poetic convention.

The Middle English lyric is not especially courtly but by and large homely, moralistic, sometimes didactic, sometimes bawdy, and mostly lacking in intricacies of verse technique. In spite of the fact that the subjects and methods used, may not be considered very fashionable, the poems themselves are often exciting, compelling, even memorable, and deserve more close study than they have received in both poetry and medieval literature. R. M. Wilson has written that of all Middle English literature, it is the lyric

“which strikes the most modern note and is the easiest for a modern reader to appreciate”²⁶.

The treasures of Latin hymnody can be found chiefly in the service books of the medieval church. Rare liturgical texts in which hymns have an appointed place, have been published in England by the Surtees Society and by the Henry Bradshaw Society within the period under consideration.

It has long been known that the Arabic ‘Muwassahas’ or ‘Moaxahas’, poetic compositions divided into stanzas, were often provided with Spanish endings, since ancient Arab authors mention these endings; but none of them were known to moderns. The Hispano-Hebrew poets imitated the Arab ‘Muwassahas’, which ended with a few lines in Spanish or in a mixture of Arabic and Spanish: the *Mozarabic Jarya* (meaning ‘exit’). Ibn Sana al-Mulk, the Egyptian poet, compiled an anthology of Arab ‘Muwassahas’ and studied their structure. The final stanza of the poem served as an introduction to the characters who spoke in the concluding *Jarya*, thus tying the whole poem together. This *Jarya*, with some exceptions, was written in a popular dialect or even in conversational Spanish, that is to say, in the usual speech of the characters. Many of these compositions were love-songs which had been preserved orally. The speaking character is a lovesick maiden who bewails the absence of her sweetheart. Other poems are mostly poems of condolence, whose transition stanza is very interesting. These compositions were merely the written record of a poetic oral tradition which goes back much further and also reveal a Romance tradition of lyric verse, at a period when nothing similar is to be found.

Hebrew lyric poetry is known to have its origin in the Bible; but it is not just in the three books which is traditionally considered as poetic compositions (Job, Psalms and Proverbs), but also scattered throughout, and particularly in the Song of Songs. It is known that Jews also composed secular poetry in the Hellenistic period and in pre-Muslim Arabia, but these were in languages other than Hebrew. The post-biblical period saw in Palestine the emergence of liturgical Hebrew poetry, some of which employed rhyme for the first time in a conscious and consistent manner in Hebrew verse. But secular Hebrew poetry developed only under Muslim influence, and apparently originated in Muslim Spain around the 10th century. Unlike earlier liturgical poetry,

²⁶ Wilson, R.M. *Early Middle English Literature*, London: Methuen, 1951, 274.

Hebrew secular verse was both rhymed and metered, at first borrowing Arabic meter and then expanding to develop new meters. Many themes were also derived from Arabic poetry, but later the Hebrew poets expanded the variety of the themes of their poems eventually. The period of Hebrew poetry in medieval Spain extends from the 10th century to nearly the time of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. And the most renowned poets of this period are Samuel Ibn Nagrillah, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Moses Ibn Ezra and Judah ha-Levy. The conventions of love poetry were derived from the familiar notions known to the Muslim world and many poems were composed about the endeavours of Platonic and courtly love.

On the other hand, in Arabic poetry, one can find intense descriptions of sexual actions engaged in both with women and with boys. As it is known that the early classical Arabic poetry has the convention of presenting the *Nasīb* section, which had the inclination of projecting erotic love; Among the modern poets of the tenth and eleventh centuries, however, personalized love poetry and definitely erotic love poetry emerged distinctly. Here, the customary lament for the departed loved one can also be observed with some emotional touch to it.

Like the Greeks, a special position was alluded to the adolescent boys, and the sexual relationship with those boys was a prominent theme in the Hebrew poetry as well. Nights were devoted to wine parties, which usually lasted until the dawn. Typically, at these parties would be boy cup-bearers, whose duty it was to fill the cups of the guests. Often, they also danced, as appears to be the case here. The saliva of the beloved boy is frequently compared to wine when tasted in a kiss, and that stands as the sign of the boy's invitation. The idea of being a ransom, which actually means willingly to give one's life for the beloved—is quite common in Arabic poetry, but its existence can also be traced in the Bible.

Solomon Ibn Gabirol was an outstanding poet and philosopher and in his youth a disciple of Ibn Nagrillah. One of his early poems is a *qasida* or ode, praising Ibn Nagrillah, with a truly outstanding introductory love section. The Hebrew *Kharja* is a popular form of love-poetry and Ibn Gabirol was one of the first Hebrew poets to utilize this form. In those poems, the poet tends to put the words into the mouth of the boy himself, who protests to his former admirers, who now turn from him. He complains that they were always before as his slaves; but they answer that the sprouting hairs on his face are like the writing on a document of manumission, freeing them from his servitude. The theme of the night phantom—the image of the beloved appearing at night in a dream to the

lover is also very prominent in Arabic and Hebrew poetry. The most famous example of this kind in Hebrew poetry is the great ode in honour of Samuel Ibn Nagrillah by Yusuf Ibn Hasday.

Another major genre of Hebrew poetry was that devoted to the praise of wine. As a matter of fact, Jewish poets, as well, saw nothing wrong in adopting an 'eat, drink and be merry' philosophy of life.

The idea that the wine should be 'old from the days of Adam', or at least, no newer than 'the time of Noah', appears to be directly borrowed from the famous Muslim poet Abu Nuwas:

*Give me fine wine to drink, of a vintage from before the creation of Adam, /
a wine that existed when nothing was except heaven and earth, /
that watched time grow up and grow old and decrepit /
while it in turn became a liberated spirit that has parted from flesh and blood.²⁷*

The *qasida* poem frequently begins like a love poem, evoking memories of old love affairs, describing a beautiful woman, or otherwise making use of elements of love poetry. Such openings or the *Nasib* were usually a part of the conventional introductory themes leading up to the real subject of the poem. This erotic *Nasib*, which has been mentioned earlier, carried the prestige of antiquity. However, the classic theme of the *qasida* is friendship or admiration for an individual, an emotion closely related to that of love poetry and often expressed in the same terms. For example, the essential themes of the separation of lovers and the nostalgic evocation of past joy create an appropriately elegiac atmosphere in which the poet can lament his separation from the friend or patron to whom the poem is addressed. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the poet to portray the friend or patron in imagery similar to that used of lovers. As in the case of the wine poem, this anthology avoids the *qasida* in favour of lighter, more unified poems. The typical medieval Hebrew love poem belongs to a genre known in the Arabic literary tradition as *ghazal* and formally resembling the wine poems. They are short, usually four to six verses, and composed in the classical prosodic patterns of quantitative meter and monorhyme borrowed from Arabic. Besides these short poems, there exists a rather large body of 'Muwassahas' devoted exclusively to love; indeed, the entire genre seems

²⁷ Translated by Andras Hamori, *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature*. Princeton, 1974, 66.

originally to have been exclusively devoted to love poetry. Several 'Muwassahas' that are truly about love are included as representing a variety of love poetry of distinctive character and outstanding importance. Since they draw their themes, diction, and rhetoric from the same resources as do the poems of the ghazal type, their importance resides entirely in their forms of versification. Love poems mostly fall into two categories resembling somewhat the division of the wine poem into descriptive and meditative types. They are conveniently designated as descriptive love poems and petitionary love poems.

Descriptive love poems closely resemble descriptive wine poems in that they select certain elements of the object to be described and attach to them comparisons and figures of speech drawn from the traditional fund; the main difference is that in love poetry the object is a living person instead of an inanimate thing, and even this difference is not so great as might first appear. In petitionary love poems, the poet implores the beloved to pay attention to him, return his affection, renew an earlier tie now broken, or the like. The essential difference between the two types is that the petitionary poem poses as an instrument of the love affair itself, representing a real or imaginary moment in life, from which it derives a dynamic character; the descriptive poems are rather static, not implying any particular circumstances in life as the point of origin. Descriptive love poems concentrate on the beloved's body. The descriptions consist simply of familiar figures of speech; the eyebrows are shaped like bows; the eyes shoot arrows which wound or kill the lover; the cheeks are rouged with the lover's blood, etc. The beloved's superiority to all others is a matter of degree, not of kind; she possesses no quality which would render her unique except the highest degree of the characteristics expected in a beloved. She does not even possess a name. It is sometimes said that the love poet's practice of referring to the beloved by stock pet names such as "fawn" or "gazelle" arose out of the need to protect the beloved from the social harm that exposure of the affair might bring upon her, so that these epithets resemble in function with the creation of the troubadours.

It is already obvious that nature is combined with wine as a sub-theme of the genre of wine poetry. Nature poetry, or more precisely, poems simply rejoicing in the beauties of nature, though far from common in Arabic poetry, is quite prevalent in Hebrew poetry. Often such poems combine one or more other themes as well, as we can find in the works by Ibn Nagrillah. The boy, of course, is the cup-bearer, who holds wine in his hand –

often compared to blood, but here also to the blood of the innocent, his admirers whom he has slain by ignoring them. The herding of stars in a dream at night, is a common theme in Arabic and Hebrew poetry and Moses Ibn Ezra probably wrote more poetry on the theme of nature than all of the other poets combined. A common picture in most of his poems is the hosts of stars, that are imagined as flowers in a garden, and they disappear with the coming of dawn. Judah ha-Levy takes motifs from nature poetry and uses them in a somewhat unusual way. The praise of poetry itself was a common theme in medieval Hebrew verse. All of the poets provide fine examples though the most famous is certainly Ibn Gabirol's poems. Here the very motif is not derived from Latin poetry, but perhaps influenced by a Jewish source.

For courtly Hebrew love poetry, like courtly Arabic love poetry, is not really about sex but about beauty. Love is 'spiritual' whether consummated by sexual intercourse or not, whether heterosexual or homosexual, it should be understood by its practitioners as the ennobling service of beauty itself. Within this great innovation, the quiet use of the masculine gender in love poetry takes its place as a mere variation on a truly great theme. W. H. Auden, introducing Shakespeare's sonnets, remarks that "men and women whose sexual tastes are perfectly normal, but who enjoy and understand poetry, have always been able to read them as expressions of what they understand by the word love, without finding the masculine pronoun an obstacle".²⁸

In this connection, it should be mentioned that 'Ghazal' as a literary form has quite resemblance with the European medieval love poetry. C. S. Lewis begins his account of the courtly love poetry of Western Europe with the words, "Any idealization of sexual love, in a society where marriage is purely utilitarian, must begin by being an idealization of adultery".²⁹ Yet prominent scholars of Urdu do not seem to be willing to speak in similar terms. Most Urdu poets who depict their love experience in these terms are not writing direct. Those are more realistic accounts of what they have known, but using those terms as conventional metaphors for the description of other experiences. It is well known that the ghazal is the poetry of two kinds of love—earthly and divine.

²⁸ Shakespeare, William. *The Sonnets*. intro. W. H. Auden, ed. William Burts. New York: A Signet Classic, 1965, xxix.

²⁹ Lewis, C. S. *The Allegory of Love*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, 13.

Earthly love depicts the love of man for woman or some other beloved human; whereas divine love represents the love of man for God. In one and the same ghazal one will find some verses which one naturally takes in the earthly sense and others which one takes in the divine sense; and when one takes a second look there are many which could be taken in either sense or indeed in both at the same time. In the Urdu ghazal the radical, potentially subversive trend in mysticism is made quite explicit, and indeed is not only made explicit, but like almost everything else in the ghazal, carried to an extreme. The worship of God means the love of God, and love as all-consuming as love for a beautiful mistress. Rituals of worship are of no significance as compared with this. It is believed that the worship of the beauty of the universe is the worship of God, whether it be the beauty of nature, or of a beautiful woman, or of a handsome boy.

The ghazal poet composed his ghazals for recitation at a *mushaira*, that is a gathering, sometimes small, sometimes quite large, at which poets assembled to recite their verse. An element of competition among them was always present. Each couplet would be assessed by its hearers as the poet recited it, and approval, indifference, or disapproval politely but unmistakably expressed. The poet was supposed to have the ability to hold his audience as the *mushaira* is a long-drawn-out affair, and the poet's main enemy is monotony. He sometimes wins his audience with a couplet designed mainly to enable them, given their prior knowledge of the rhyme scheme, to complete for themselves the second line of his couplet without his needing to recite it all. Their purpose was, in the main, simply to heighten the impact of the verses into which they had put what they most wanted to convey.

Chinese *Sanqu* poetry was a Chinese poetic genre from the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234), through the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), to the following Ming period. The *Sanqu* were dramatic lyrics written to fixed musical modes, or metrical forms, and could contain several lyric song segments in one suite. *Sanqu*, however, could be composed in single discrete sections. It is often said that the *Sanqu* verses tend to reflect excess energies and resentments of contemporary disenfranchised Chinese literate personnel. There were many forms of *Sanqu* during the Yuan Dynasty. These included a kind of opera, dance accompaniment, and instrumental accompaniment. During feasts, actors would hold lotus flowers in their left hands and, holding their goblets in the right, would sing a song of the heavy rains hitting the lotus flowers. Playwrights like Ma Zhiyuan (c. 1170-1330) and Guan Hanqing (c. 1300) were well-established writers of *Sanqu* Dramatic Lyrics.

This poetry was composed in the vernacular or semi-vernacular, which utilized the spoken language of the people as fully as possible. Although line length and tonal pattern were still governed by a given tune, extra words could be inserted to make the lyrics livelier and to clarify the relationship between phrases and clauses of the poem.

In Italy, during this time (1300s), Petrarch developed the sonnet form, which was inherited from Giacomo da Lentino and which Dante had widely used in his *La Vita Nuova*. Ernest Hatch Wilkins in his “The Invention of the Sonnet” (1915) established the fact that Giacomo da Lentino was the one, who has created the earliest sonnets; and in writing the earliest sonnets Giacomo did not borrow from the troubadours’ eight-line canzone for the octave of his poems. Rather, Wilkins argued that the sestet of Giacomo’s sonnets may have derived from the Arab *zajal*, a rhyming stanza popular with the Arabs living in Sicily in Giacomo’s time. The earliest sonnets were written presumably within the period 1220-50, during the Frederician activity in general. No sonnets by pre-Frederician writers have survived. The poets of the court of Frederick-II are believed to constitute thirty-one sonnets, among those twenty-five sonnets are attributed to the literary leader of the group, Giacomo da Lentino. Six other sonnets are attributed to the members of the group, who seem to have been contemporary with Giacomo: three to the Abbot of Tivoli, one to Jacopo Mostacci, one to Piero delle Vigne, and one to Monaldo d’Aquino. The sonnets of the Abbot occur in a five-sonnet *tenzone* or a literary strife with Giacomo; those of Mostacci and Piero delle Vigne occur in a three-sonnet *tenzone* with Giacomo, where the *tenzone* opens with the sonnet of Mostacci, and to which the other two poems are replies. The sonnet of Monaldo is independent. Each of the thirty-one sonnets consists of fourteen hendecasyllables and opens with the rhyme-scheme ABABABAB. These sonnets are formally divided, by a change in the rhyme-scheme, into octave and sestet.

The octave proceeds by a repetition of two varying endings. It is then both logical and effective to close the stanza with a repetition of three varying endings: a scheme of precisely the same nature, as that of the octave, yet possessing just enough more complexity to adapt it for use in the climax. The original sestet scheme was possibly CDCDCD. The octave of the sonnet was taken from the regular eight-line Sicilian *strambotto*, but the source of the sestet is uncertain. Most of the sonnets are love poems, and the tone of the love sonnets is essentially courtly in idea and phrase.

It has been universally accepted that the word “sonnet” means “little song”; or more precisely “little sound”, and that it derives from “suono” meaning “sound” with the “etto” suffix acting as a diminutive. It is believed that the octave of the sonnet derives from a musical form, the *strambotto*; the performable and musically accompanied lyrics of the troubadours were well known to Giacomo and must have influenced him indirectly to produce his variation, which we call the sonnet and which must be regarded as a species of poetry that is somehow “musical” and “performable”. Leigh Hunt argues:

The sonnet derived its name, like the composition called a *Sonata*, from being sounded or played; that is to say, accompanied by a musical instrument. To sound, in Italian, still means to play music; and the sonnet, of old, was never without such accompaniment.... The sonnet, agreeably to its appellation, was never heard without the sounding of the lute or the guitar. This connection, as we shall see, lasted a long time; and when it ceased, it left upon the little poem a demand for treatment more than commonly musical, and implying, so to speak, the companion which it had lost.³⁰

Giacomo’s earliest sonnets themselves provide the strongest clues to the possibility that in writing them the poet was deliberately turning away from the kinds of songs made and sung by the troubadours and creating a new type of lyric with new, “modern” and silent intentions. Certain themes, such as the concept of “malatia” or love as a sickness and the notion that the lady possesses immense power over the very life of the lover, are common in the love-songs of the troubadours and undoubtedly reflect Giacomo’s indebtedness to them. But what makes his poems exceptional is the fact that he transgresses from two major essential elements from that of the troubadour poetry: the absence of any even implied address to a listening audience, and the absence of multiple or dual personae, i.e. “love-persona” or the persona who actually suffers the pains of unrequited love, and the “poet-persona” who makes the song. Giacomo’s poems are not addressed in any sense to the “Lady-love”, rather it is addressed to the poet himself. The remarkable feature of Giacomo’s works is its dialectical structure, he presents a problem in love in the octave and it is resolved in some fashion in the sestet. The poem is argumentative in nature: In the octave we learn of the love-persona’s difficulty, which results from his devotion to a lady who will have nothing to do with him and who has the power to kill him with her indifference; and in the sestet we, along with the love-persona, find the solution: it lies in the love-persona’s acceptance of his own humanity, of his passionate and affectionate

³⁰ Hunt, Leigh and S. Adams Lee, eds., *The Book of the Sonnet*, Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1867, 8.

nature. He recovers his ability to live among people to be more fully alive and also discovers the way out of his predicament neither by appealing to an outsider, listening audience nor by appealing to the lady herself: he finds it through a process of dialectical self-confrontation, and he finds it within himself. Indeed, as in many of Giacomo's sonnets, the man and the love-persona of the poem have blended – achieving an intimacy, which was not sought by the troubadours. The love problem may thus be seen as immediately capable of solution, once it achieves the sonnet-form which Giacomo is inventing: and the persona of the poem, realizing this, addresses himself not to any outsider but to the form itself as the form of the poem will solve the problem itself. Certainly, it marks a turning point in the history of the lyric. It is not surprising to find that the earliest sonnets were written by a “notary” in the service of Frederick-II, because “Notaro” in Giacomo's day meant “lawyer” and in Giacomo's case this meant a very important person, with direct access to the most literary-sound emperor of the age. Therefore, it is expected of him to produce a poetic form which is simultaneously dialectical and introspective. The nature of this new lyric, the sonnet, with its capacity for self-confrontation, corresponds perfectly to the “modern” spirit of Frederick's own life and career.

The Petrarchan type of sonnet has had a life of almost seven centuries. One reason behind this, is the fact that instead of following in the wake of Dante's lyrics, which are in fact rime sparse, connected by no internal principles of construction, Petrarch followed in the wake of Dante's *Vita Nuova*, the first modern collection of lyrics to be deliberately arranged according to a predetermined sequential order. But whereas Dante connects the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova* by means of prose passages that are intended to elucidate the poetry, Petrarch removes the connecting prose passages, and leaves his poems open to interpretations that are limited by nothing but the order in which the poems are arranged. In other words, Petrarch takes from Dante the idea of transcribing previously written lyrics into a new order where the order generates significance, but he does not take Dante's means of controlling the prose, so to say.

Petrarch has created a genre in which the peace he is always seeking is as elusive formally as it is thematically. The mechanic form of the Petrarchan sonnet furnishes a source of aesthetic pleasure in its system of equipollence. Petrarch's poetry reflects a static world in which everything seems to change while remaining the same. The circular nature of the experiences related in most of his works is especially evident in the *Secretum* and in the *Canzoniere*. The points of departure and arrival meet, giving these

works the structure of infinity. Furthermore, one finds in Petrarch a continuous variation of the same themes: a microscopic exploration of themes which aspires to universal significance while seeking, at the same time, the essence of the poet's individual being. T.B. Macaulay, while mentioning about Petrarch's distinct style, wrote:

It is impossible to look without amazement on a mind so fertile in combinations, yet so barren of images. His amatory poetry is wholly made up of a very few topics, disposed in so many orders, and exhibited in so many lights, that it reminds us of those arithmetic problems about permutation which so much astonish the unlearned.³¹

Petrarch seems to accept the narrative burden of the time when he arranges his lyrics in a sequence. From a narratological perspective, the lyric sequence is a peculiarly paradoxical genre, since it insists simultaneously on fragmentation. Each lyric is an individual entity endowed with a beginning and ending; and on fragmentation's opposite, a linearity was brought about by the existence of the larger unit that subsumes the individual parts into a common structure, with a common beginning and ending. But the truly noteworthy feature of the lyric sequence created by Petrarch is that these terms could be reversed and the individual lyric could be viewed as the paradigm of unity, of anti-fragmentation, and the common structure as the agent of fragmentation, as that which continuously disrupts the unity achieved by the individual poems. In the same way the poet precisely calibrates information and disinformation in such a way as to hook the reader without ever gratifying him and paradoxically balances the factors of unity and of disunity. Petrarch has created a remarkable consonance between form and content. The question posed by the content of the *Canzone*, whether the poet is capable of conversion or transition at all—also signifies the idea of change as surely as anything the poet can say. So, it can be said that Petrarch was able to create a genre in which the peace he is always seeking is as elusive formally as it is thematically.

A crucial index of Petrarch's concern with narratological issues is his division of the collection into the two parts, labelled "in vita di madonna Laura" and "in morte di madonna Laura". Petrarch's division is a creative act without precedent in the lyric collections of his forbearers. The manuscripts testify that the division was placed by the poet at *Canzone*-264, with a large ornamental initial, and there are seven blank pages

³¹ Corrigan, Beatrice. ed., *Italian Poets and English Critics, 1755-1859: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, 139.

between it and *Canzone*-263. *Canzone*-265 and 266 refer to Laura, when she was alive. Moreover, one of these two sonnets, *Canzone*-266, is an anniversary poem, referring to a time three years before Laura's death. Thus, part-2 begins with sonnet 267, to register Laura's death. The fact that the part-2 begins with 264, which is followed by two sonnets that treat of Laura alive, becomes significant when we reach *Canzone*-267, where she is dead; and it becomes more significant when we finish reading the collection and realize that the rest of the Laura poems in part-2 endorse Laura's death in 267. If, with respect to the canzone that precedes them, these sonnets are discontinuous, with respect to the poems that follow them they are completely anomalous, since they represent a living Laura.

Petrarch finds ways always to go back, never forward, a fact that highlights the importance of the first verse of the first canzone, poem-23, "Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade"; for Petrarch, there are no new beginnings, and so the first time — the "prima etade"— is the only time. Petrarch, however, aims for a greater fluidity, always seeking ways to reduce the form's resistance. While Dante strives to keep the rhyme words in their primary significance, Petrarch creatively adopts equivocal and impure rhymes. Along with these, there is another group of poems, namely the anniversary poems, which carry their own time bombs in the form of numerical expressions and are a sequence of poems whose physical order is invested with not only a generally narrative but also a specifically temporal burden. The very existence of a set of fifteen anniversary poems scattered through the *Fragmenta* confirms Petrarch's manipulation of latent narrative structures in his text, and also illuminates his keen awareness of the relation between narrative and time. The anniversary poems are emblematic of Petrarch's paradoxical relation to time; although a sequentially linked narrative set whose common and avowed purpose is the marking of time, they contain some of the poet's most pronounced refusals to accommodate time.

The relationship between the narrative and lyric potentialities of Petrarch's poems correspond to cultural dynamics, thus further explaining the influence of Petrarch's works in English culture. The relationship between narrative and lyric in Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* is significant in part, because this arena also helps to illuminate broader theoretical questions about those two modes. On one hand, lyric has traditionally been seen as an unmediated expression of the subjective and of subjectivity itself. It is also frequently associated with the absence of a specific time and place. On the other hand, narrative, in contrast, is generally rooted in a specific time and place. But interestingly,

many poems in Petrarch's sequence could be classified as a vision or that sibling of the vision, the dream, and both of those modes inherently challenge distinctions between narrative and lyric. Thus, the vision often involves narrating a story; although, visions like lyric, are by definition also intensely subjective, and they are often though not inevitably located in an indeterminate landscape rather than a specific time and place. Petrarch's anniversary poems demonstrate how the visionary mode encourages complex combinations of narrative and lyric. In one sense these lyrics are typically narrative, as they involve not one but two stories: the original tale of seeing Laura and the tale of recalling that moment. In addition, they firmly foreground time and place by emphasizing the number of years since the first sight of Laura and referring specifically to the locales in which she has been sighted. These poems portraits the passage of time, which separates the vision from the original one, though the original one is relived in the course of the poem. Petrarch's anniversary poems are, however, also intensely lyric in their emphasis on the static and subjective experience they evoke.

Another noteworthy fact is that Petrarch himself shapes stories about his experience and in doing so, shapes that experience as a whole, which leads him to tell stories about the future as well. Such narratives about the future were to figure prominently in the work of many of his successors, notably Shakespeare. Narrative, too, is associated very specifically with what is potentially the principal triumph of the sequence: the movement towards God. For that movement depends on distinguishing a past of loving only Laura, a present of moving towards God, and a future of achieving spiritual peace. Petrarch's creations serve to negotiate cultural attitudes towards repetition. Both Petrarch's works and its counter discourses attract writers and readers in Renaissance England greatly. The subjectivity of the Petrarchan lover in England, like that of his continental counterparts, is mapped by means of several coordinates of repetition: he repeats a conventional literary language that is itself loaded with tropes of repetition, and he perpetually re-enacts previous attempts to win the lady's favour, and he sometimes constructs his relationship to his counterparts in the tradition as a version of repetition with a difference.

Petrarch's poetry resists generalizations, for Laura is portrayed in varied and contradictory ways. Gentle and stone-like, loving and cruel, she both generates and exemplifies the oxymoron. Yet despite these contradictions, some general patterns emerge: Laura is repeatedly aestheticized. Her tears are described as "belle", meaning "lovely", and her braids compared not just to gold but also to polished gold. Petrarch,

along with celebrating the beauty of his beloved, also occasionally erases and redesigns the body of his beloved as well. But he, unlike many of his French followers, refers only rarely to other, more erotic body parts.

Allusions to Laura's speech are as frequent as they are paradoxical. Although, Dante had celebrated the "salute" or greeting of Beatrice, comparing her speech to that of God, but Laura's speech is even more central to the sequence because Petrarch is seen to evoke Laura by referring to her eyes, her voice, and her movements. Moreover, he repeatedly emphasizes how deeply her words have affected him. Yet Laura is granted direct discourse relatively infrequently, and almost all the instances occur in the "in morte" sonnets. In some sonnets Laura is seen, lacking her own voice, merely repeating the words Love has taught her. So too, however, does Petrarch on other occasions, and Dante before him as well, where the author describes himself as learning what Love dictated to him. Like Petrarch's, Laura's speech, is constructed in contradictory ways; her voice is associated with power and powerlessness, with cruelty and kindness, with divine wisdom and all too human temptation.

Petrarch's poetry provided English poets not only with a model for male-female interactions but also with a paradigm of one important manifestation of diacritical desire, the relationship between men, especially male rivals. For desire in Petrarch is to and even enabled by a diacritical response to other men and even to earlier versions of oneself. John Freccero, in his study of Petrarch's poetics, argues that there is no psychological content to be reconstructed other than the "reflection or a thematic translation of Petrarch's auto-reflexive poetics".³²

Among all the genres of poetry the sonnet form always seems to have invited an immanent aesthetics. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's well-known metaphor of the sonnet as a "moment's monument", from the introductory poem to his sonnet sequence *The House of Life*, refers to the continuity and stability of the genre. It also illustrates the antithetic nature of the sonnet by linking through alliteration two contrasting ideas. The word "moment" relates to the content of the sonnet, hinting at the intensity and fugitiveness of an experience which sparks off the creative effort; "monument", on the other hand, stands for the architecture of the sonnet, its time-resistant, which encloses the transitory poetic moment. In the tradition of sonnet-writing the Lady-love is conventionally treated

³² Freccero, John. *The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics*. Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts. Ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, 27-32.

as a paragon of virtue, so pure as to approach divinity. The motif emerges most fully, however, after the lady's death, as, for example, in Dante's *Vita Nuova* and Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. Then she becomes a disembodied spirit – “made into an angel”—who appears to the poet, bringing him visions of the life to come. Most English cycles underplay this very motif, none treats the death of the lady, and most are too deeply rooted in the here-and-now to rise above clichés about the lady's “divine beauty” or her “heavenly virtue”. Edmund Spenser is an exception, as he underscores the motif heavily. In his celebrated sonnet-sequence *Amoretti*, the lady is introduced in the very first sonnet as being among the “Angels blessed”. In Sonnet-3 her beauty is an illumination and she, herself, is of “celestiall hew”, who “ravishes” the poet's pen. While in Sonnet-17 the poet says that no artist can express “The glorious portrait of that Angel's face”. The sonnets carry suggestions of contempt for the world, since by contrast to the spiritual excellence of the lady, human glory becomes “worthless”. In contrast to this motif, there stands the “cruel fair” motif, in which the lady-love's virtue causes her to deny the lover, and the denial, in turn, leads to the anguish of frustrated desire. The lady thus can appear to be proud, capricious, and cruelly indifferent to the suffering she is causing. This motif is also ultimately Italian, but it was thoroughly domesticated in both French and English love poetry of the sixteenth century. In Spenser's Sonnet-6, because the lady-love refuses to grant her favours, she is denounced for “rebellious pride”; in Sonnet-10 she is called a “Tyrannesse”, who delights in “huge massacres”; whereas, in the eleventh sonnet, she is referred to as “cruell warriour”. Both the motifs used in Spenser's works are responses of the poet to love. On the one hand, he worships the lady as a spiritual being, an angel of light, a Platonic Idea, a paragon to whom the world and the flesh are “drossy slime”. On the other hand, he desires her physically, feels pain when she refuses her favours, and accuses her of cruelty, vanity, and a sadistic delight in causing suffering. The opposition embodies a conflict between the claims of the spirit and those of the flesh, and in the first section of *Amoretti* this opposition is static. The poet is divided against himself, because love involves worship and desire; although, he is unable to satisfy any of them.

Gradually, the contradictory impulses of the first twenty-one sonnets are reconciled, and the other section ends with six sonnets celebrating a love that is simultaneously spiritual and physical. The basis of this new impulse is the ideal of married love that is regarded as Spenser's unique contribution to the tradition of English love poetry. The other dominant tone in his poetry is sorrow, but this tone is relieved by hints of creative

sacrifice, of salvation through divine love. By purifying man, it prepares him to share the glories of the Resurrection. In the *Amoretti*, then, the poet's quest for a new understanding of human love moves forward against the background of the Christian search for a new and deeper relation to divine love. Spenser emphasizes the parallelism. The close linking of human and divine love can be tracked back to Dante—and forward to Donne. Although, it can be said that the seriousness of Spenser's attitude is Italian rather than metaphysical and is more striking, because it is more suggestive of a genuine religion of love. However, the turning point of the sequence can be found in Sonnet-62, the New Year's poem, in which the "New Year" as a moment of conversion, significantly represents a state of turning away from sin and error. From this point on, the mood of the sequence is wholly positive. Sonnet-63 begins with a reference to a long, arduous process finally nearing completion. Sonnet-64 celebrates the first kiss through imagery comparing the lady to an ideal garden and Sonnet-65 praises married love as bondage that brings true liberty. The image of "spotlesse pleasure" defines the new understanding of love precisely. *Amoretti* begins with a series of sonnets in which worship and desire, spirit and flesh, at first, stand in a painful and sterile opposition; but eventually move towards a reconciliation. The desired synthesis is beautifully and fully expressed in Spenser's Easter sonnet, where human and divine love are treated as complementary to each other. Among the last twenty-one sonnets of the sequence, Sonnet-70 celebrates the lady-love in a blazon anticipating the Song of Songs imagery of the *Epithalamion*. Sonnet-74 associates Elizabeth Boyle with two other important women, who has great influence on Spenser's life—his mother and his queen. Sonnet-80 inverts the motif of the conflict between love and artistic creativity and Sonnets 84-86 rebuke un-named critics for questioning the purity of the poet's love. The last three sonnets lament the absence of the lady. Although, this absence is temporary and acts as a prelude to the final possession in the *Epithalamion*. Therefore, *Amoretti* can be said to be a unified, intensely dramatic, presentation of the experience of human love in the context of Christian belief. Moreover, Spenser's *Amoretti* is the truest sequence of the decade of the 1590's and almost alone among Renaissance sonnet cycles, which celebrates love as a benign life force.

The major English renaissance sonnet sequences of Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, along with the works of Watson, Barnes, Drayton and Daniel, share a characteristic overall structure. This structure controls and gives meaning to particular sonnets and also discrete Petrarchan motifs, which is considered to be the defining

characteristic of the new renaissance genre. The existence of this structure has a number of important implications. It confirms the general indebtedness of the English sequences to those of Dante and Petrarch, and its presence validates the standing order of the English sequences. This approach to the sequences reveals profound similarities within the rich diversity of the sequences of Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, works which have ordinarily been considered in isolation from each other. The nature of the sequences of Dante and Petrarch provide an essential context in which the structure of the English sequences may be understood. The Italian model—fragmentary composition followed by careful selection and arrangement into a sequence—both justifies the expectation of structure in the sequences and is apparent in introductory sonnets which mainly forecast three strands of the sequences: the poet-lover's passion, the beloved who must be celebrated and won, and the unity of the lover and the beloved. After the opening, the narrative develops through progression in the mode of address, in the degree of eroticism and in the use of biographical detail. The first part explores the static Petrarchan relationship. The second part moves beyond it: toward solitary sublimation and transcendence in the Italian sequences and toward mutual sexual passion in the English ones. There are historical, psychological and generic reasons for this difference. Most of the English sequences conclude with their goal unachieved, their conflicts unresolved, but all make gestures toward closure: abrupt stops which freeze lover and beloved in their impasse, formal detachment which diffuses the conflicts into other poetic modes, or, occasionally, a denouement which resolves the plot.

At a given time Petrarch was working on widely scattered poems from both parts of the sequence as well as developing its overall shape. His concern to establish a deliberate overall structure is apparent in the arrangements and rearrangements, the establishment of the two parts, and the careful revisions in the beginning and ending. The scattered evidence available concerning the English sequences suggests a pattern similar to that of Petrarch's. Sidney originally composed Song-V from *Astrophel and Stella* for the Old Arcadia, and included it in his sonnet sequence. Whereas, Shakespeare's sonnets 138 and 144, first published in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, later appear in the 1609 Quarto of the sonnets much revised and strengthened and with additional resonance gained from the context. Milton's sequence developed over an extended period of time and was published in different forms with some sonnets published separately. Although political concerns are more central to Milton's sequence than to the other English sequences, its beginning and ending with their personal amorous concerns reveal its close

connections with them. However, Drayton, like Petrarch, paid especially close attention to the beginning and end of his sonnet sequence *Idea*. The dedicatory sonnet of 1594 becomes the last sonnet of 1599 in which the first three sonnets and four penultimate sonnets are new. By 1619 the sequence had yet another new introductory sonnet and a new arrangement of concluding sonnets. An examination of its development shows that Drayton's sequence, like Petrarch's, was a structured yet elastic work, which could expand, contract, and regenerate itself without altering its fundamental characteristics. This pattern of generation indicates that fragmentary composition over a long period of time is compatible with a deliberately ordered structure. Sonnets take on new meanings in a context designed to allow them to. Sonnet sequences do not "tell a story", if to do so implies a straightforward narrative progression from sonnet to sonnet throughout. Neither are they "prolonged lyric meditation", collections of random poems on related themes; they are something just in between.

The English sequences, like those of Dante and Petrarch, open with sonnets which introduce characters, plot, and themes. They do so through the voice of the poet-lover, who, experiencing and generating the sequence, serves both the "Muse" and "Love" and whose goal is to win the beloved. To do so, the poet declares and analyses his passion, celebrates and courts the beloved, and writes poetry to please her/him. These three aspects of the sonneteer's project are stated at the beginning of all of the sequences although in varying order and with varying emphasis. Having described the attributes of his love, the poet may move to describe its source, the beloved's perfection. But the beloved is never his whole concern, another focus of the sequences is on the poetry itself—its function, its power, its limitations. The poetry provides expression and solace for the poet-lover and functions to win the beloved, but at the same time the poems are intended for an audience other than the beloved. Dante, establishing the genre, sends his first sonnet not to the lady at all, but to three poet friends, soliciting their interpretation. The same interest in the writing itself and in the wider audience is prevalent in the English sequences. Many of them begin by addressing the reader directly, preceding the sequences of Sidney, Fletcher, and Watson, in Watson's headnotes, and in introductory poems like Drayton's "To The Reader of These Sonnets". These addresses are characterized by a mixture of pride and embarrassment; many of them specifically raise questions about the relationship between being in love and writing and reading love sonnets. Watson hints that true love need not be the source of the poetry, and Drayton

disqualifies lovers as readers of his rebellious sequence. Other sonneteers suggest that only lovers could sympathize with their passion.

The first half of Shakespeare's sequence is in many ways typically Petrarchan though its range serves to conceal its origins. The young man is created and cherished, adored and eternized as are other Petrarchan beloveds. His faults are acknowledged, and the poet-lover's self-abasement is complete in this sequence. The friend's promiscuity is more dangerous than chastity, for it strikes at love in both its senses—at the idealizing passion and at its idealized object. But in spite of acknowledged threats to it, Petrarchan devotion is here pushed to its limits. Then, in the second half of the sequence, Shakespeare diverges radically and self-consciously from the Petrarchan model. The division is clearly marked by the six-couplet envoy which formally ends the first half and by the shift to a new relationship to a new object in the second half. Although, the poet's love is immune from any destruction, the beloved is not immune to mortality; Nature, like the poet, cannot protect the youth. However, the movement toward a mutual sexual relationship, commenced in Sidney and Spenser, is completed in the sonnets to the dark lady. These are an inversion of the first half of the sequence and might almost be seen as a perversion of the conclusions of Dante and Petrarch. But in the second half of Shakespeare's sequence, the poet, the dark lady, and the youth descend together in mutual lust, mutual deceit, mutual destruction. For all of the English sonneteers, including Shakespeare, ending the sequence poses a difficult problem as the poet-lover's goal has not been achieved and the continued presence of the beloved and the increasing eroticism and reciprocity of the second half have exacerbated the lover's conflicts. The English sonneteers demonstrate diversity and ingenuity in dealing with this problem. In their sequences three main strategies of closure can be discerned, sometimes used in combination with each other. The first strategy is to stop abruptly in *medias res*, acknowledging the futility of the enterprise. The second is to achieve detachment from irresolvable conflicts by moving the verse into a new mode, genre, or voice. The third is to provide a narrative resolution, however precarious. Although, in concluding sonnets of the major sequences, the poet-lover is similarly trapped and he is pictured alone, in darkness, consumed by the flames he has been fanning throughout. Exaggerating the poet's despair still further, though presenting it with less power and poignancy, other endings attribute to the lady's implacable cruelty and the lover's destruction. These conventions are in the process of becoming outmoded as a result of changed attitudes toward love, sex, and marriage in the Elizabethan period, attitudes which postulated a

new relationship between the lover and the beloved. Finally, the English renaissance sonneteers were poets as well as lovers who, like Dante, made use of the genre to serve an aesthetic as well as an amorous apprenticeship. Their willingness to stretch the shape of the genre to include new material in it, to try out a variety of gestures toward closure shows the eclectic, experimental nature of renaissance poetics and the enthusiasm, with which the English poets refashioned both their classical and renaissance heritage. While in their overall lineaments and particular parts the English sonnet sequences reflect their descent from the sequences of Dante and Petrarch, they are not reproductions of their predecessors but reconstructions of them.

Spanish devotional poetry adapts the lyric for religious purposes. The most renowned poets of this cluster include Teresa of Avilla, Saint John of the Cross, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Garcilaso de la Vega and Lope de Vega.

Harold Bloom calls Shakespeare's achievement nothing less than the invention of the human. By this he refers to the psychological interiority, the self-referencing, the meta-narrative of the early modern mind. According to him, what Shakespeare invents are ways of representing human changes, alterations not only caused by flaws and by decay but effected by the will as well. In other words, before Shakespeare there was characterization—types, allegorical categories—as seen in Homer, Chaucer, and later still in Spenser. After Shakespeare, there were characters, men and women with highly individuated personalities. Other scholars of this field also agree that the “invention of personality” is a literary achievement as well as a step in psychological evolution, and that this phenomenon occurs in the early seventeenth century. Although, some of them nominate Milton as the inventor: the anxious Milton of *Paradise Lost*, of course, but more so the Milton of those sonnets “drawn from real events”. Milton's agony is a personal agony—neither typical nor archetypal. Rather his is the discomfort of a man acutely aware of himself in the wrong time, surrounded by wrong-minded others of wrong faith.

Lyric is the dominant poetic form in 17th century English poetry from John Donne to Andrew Marvell. The poems of this period are short, rarely tell a story and are intense in expression and thought. John Donne composed his nineteen Holy Sonnets between 1609 and 1611. The *Holy Sonnets* record a spiritual crisis in powerful and effective terms and present an intimate view of the poet's life. As Barbara Kiefer

Lewalski has pointed out, these lyrics are unified by “the Protestant paradigm of salvation in its stark, dramatic, Pauline terms”, moving through election, calling, adoption, sanctification, and glorification.³³ The painstaking self-analysis that was a requirement of 17th century English writings, found an apt literary match in the religious lyric which, as Lewalski notes, was “a private mode, concerned to discover and express the various and vacillating conditions and emotions the soul experiences in meditation, prayer, and praise”.³⁴

Donne’s *Holy Sonnets* present nineteen emotional moments and what allows these nineteen moments to outweigh the narrative scope in the poet’s eyes is their depth. Donne’s language is simply able to absorb us because it possesses a depth that comes from its rootedness in the earth. A primary characteristic of any lyric voice and especially of Donne’s voice in these lyrics is limitation: Donne’s lyric voice is limited to one moment or a few, to one emotion or a few, to one thought or a few. The voice is not in a position of power, not in an elevated position, but is subjected to the confusions of forces both within and without. The lyric voice, however, is not alone.

It addresses another regarding such intimate matters that the relationship it assumes must be intimate as well. Marvell also cultivated the old metaphoric extravagance associated with John Donne, the out-of-fashion, faintly fusty metaphysical style. His couplets accommodate a vast range of tone and of pacing. If the beginning of “To His Coy Mistress” is old-fashioned and metaphysical, slow and hyperbolic-witty; the end of the poem is modern, streamlined, and speeds like nothing else in English poetry. Throughout the English Renaissance the “Courtly Love” and “Petrarchan” conventions appear repeatedly in lyric poetry. The man is in love with a lady whom he describes in the most exaggerated terms, but however, this lady does not return his love. Ben Jonson’s language in “Song to Celia” functions in a double fashion – like in the usage of the word “die”, that in the Renaissance period had two meanings: actual physical death and sexual climax. As for “love”, Jonson’s treatment of it never seems to display any human tenderness, and even when in poem-XI of *The Forrest*, he endeavours to sing of two ways of love, he succeeds only in making us remember that “The thing, they here call Love, is blinde Desire.”³⁵ The frequent references to seduction in his personal poems

³³ Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, 265.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Herford, C. H. and Evelyn Simpson. ed. *Ben Jonson*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1952, 110.

reveal nothing but the coldest of appetites. Even in some of his lyric poems, he exhibits an unreal-ness which again disallows any human tenderness. As a matter of fact, in the first half of the Renaissance, these conventions were used seriously as part of the fabric of English lyric poetry, while in the second half they were used for the purpose of ridicule. This ridicule developed into the “Convention of the anti-convention”; particularly evident in the work of the metaphysical poets.

What distinguishes Wyatt’s love poetry from other lyric poems is his complex and powerful handling of the speaker in the poem. Wyatt deals with conventional themes and attitudes in his poetry of love, yet his major emphasis in the poems, expressed as subject and strategy, is the subjectivity of the speaker. Wyatt’s focus on the experience of the speaker allows him both to create the power of feeling in a way appropriate to lyric, and to comment on that power in response to his material, the conventional attitudes of courtly love. No conventional blazon of the lady’s beauty, characteristic of the earlier lyric, appears in Wyatt, nor does the poet describe the lady in order to investigate attitudes of mind, as in Petrarch. Nothing in Wyatt anticipates the emotional and thematic value of the concrete descriptions of the lady in Spenser’s *Amoretti*, nor her concretely imagined dramatic role in the poetry of Donne. Indeed, external nature in general, in addition to the concrete presence of the beloved, is excluded or minimized in the poetry. The weary despair of loving a disdainful mistress is a conventional theme in love poetry of both native and continental kinds, yet Wyatt’s handling of the theme reveals the way that the feeling itself is the subject of the poem, rather than the contexts, genesis, or even the evaluation of it. Wyatt’s strategy is to emphasize the subjective force of the state of mind, its quality as experience. In varied and sophisticated ways, then, Wyatt achieves the distinctive and individualized “voice” of his poetry by creating lyric speakers whose subjectivity comes to be both subject and strategy in the poetry. Wyatt treats conventions of love poetry as occasions for the lyric expression of states of mind. Analytical or narrative development is usually curtailed, or even excluded, in order to evoke inwardness in its full power. In this his poetry differs from the anonymity of the medieval love lyric as much as it does from the polished rhetorical investigations of late-Elizabethan Petrarchan poetry.

2.4 Romantics & Modernist Western Lyrics

In the early Romantic era, the self's evolving interiority becomes even more fully textualized. Here it is transcribed into a landscape that itself takes the shape of the human psyche. Wordsworth represents an example of the power of self-realization, but also embodies the peril of solipsism—both traits of the mind in modern literature. In Book-VIII of *The Prelude*, he admits his potentially self-enclosed predicament: “the love of nature leading to love of man” is so consuming that he cannot present a vision of social complexities. A similar social withdrawal can be found in Emily Dickinson, who embodies the lyric's self-containment and self-reliance, with her pathological fear of those “close-packed human crowds”. But throughout her work, the radical paradox of Dickinson's self-imposed privacy is its articulation not apart from but through the tropes of community. Privacy is a precious entity, a mark of the mind's increasing valorisation of the self. And the self is a self only as it resists, but relates to, all the others. Although the usual lyric speaker is alone, this solitude does not mean that he is without social ambiance. The story of the self in lyric poetry is the story of such contradictions. The progress of lyric poetry—like the progression of personhood—seems to have moved from outward to inward, from social function to self-realization. Lyric poetry is never merely about a self but is always also a social performance, just as the linguistic and formal material of poetry is a social achievement. The more the self is identified, in detail and in context, the more connective and sympathetic is its relationship to others.

William Blake's affirmation in 1793 that “a new heaven is begun” was matched a generation later by Percy Bysshe Shelley's “The world's great age begins anew”. “These, these will give the world another heart, / And other pulses”, wrote John Keats, referring to Leigh Hunt and William Wordsworth. Fresh ideals came to the fore; in particular, the ideal of freedom, long cherished in England, was being extended to every range of human endeavour. The most notable feature of the poetry of the time is the new role of individual thought and personal feeling. Where the main trend of 18th century poetics had been to praise the general, to see the poet as a spokesman of society addressing a cultivated and homogeneous audience and having as his end the conveyance of “truth”, the Romantics found the source of poetry in the particular, unique experience. It followed that the best poetry was that in which the greatest intensity of feeling was expressed, and hence a new importance was attached to the lyric. Another key quality of Romantic

writing was its shift from the mimetic, or imitative, assumptions of the Neoclassical era to a new stress on imagination. Samuel Taylor Coleridge saw the imagination as the supreme poetic quality, a quasi-divine creative force that made the poet a godlike being. Hand in hand with the new conception of poetry and the insistence on a new subject matter went a demand for new ways of writing. Wordsworth and his followers, particularly Keats, found the prevailing poetic diction of the late 18th century stale and stilted, or “gaudy and inane”, and totally unsuited to the expression of their perceptions. It could not be, for them, the language of feeling, and Wordsworth accordingly sought to bring the language of poetry back to that of common speech. Wordsworth’s own diction, however, often differs from his theory. Nevertheless, when he published his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, the time was ripe for a change: the flexible diction of earlier 18th century poetry had hardened into a merely conventional language.

Useful as it is to trace the common elements in Romantic poetry, there was little conformity among the poets themselves. It is misleading to read the poetry of the first Romantics as if it had been written primarily to express their feelings. Their concern was rather to change the intellectual climate of the age. William Blake had been dissatisfied since boyhood with the current state of poetry and what he considered the irreligious drabness of contemporary thought. His early development of a protective shield of mocking humour with which to face a world in which science had become trifling and art inconsequential is visible in the satirical *An Island in the Moon* (1784–85); he then took the bolder step of setting aside sophistication in the visionary *Songs of Innocence* (1789). His desire for renewal encouraged him to view the outbreak of the French Revolution as a momentous event. In works such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790–93) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), he attacked the hypocrisies of the age and the impersonal cruelties resulting from the dominance of analytic reason in contemporary thought. As it became clear that the ideals of the Revolution were not likely to be realized in his time, he renewed his efforts to revise his contemporaries’ view of the universe and to construct a new mythology centred not in the God of the Bible but in Urizen, a repressive figure of reason and law whom he believed to be the deity actually worshipped by his contemporaries.

Wordsworth’s attempt to set out his mature faith in nature and humanity can be observed in his investigation of the relationship between nature and the human mind in the long autobiographical poem addressed to Coleridge and later titled *The Prelude*. Here he

traced the value for a poet of having been a child “fostered alike by beauty and by fear” by an upbringing in sublime surroundings. The Prelude constitutes the most significant English expression of the Romantic discovery of the self as a topic for art and literature. The poem also makes much of the work of memory, a theme explored as well in the “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood”. In poems such as “Michael” and “The Brothers,” by contrast, written for the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth dwelt on the pathos and potentialities of ordinary lives.

Coleridge’s poetic development during these years paralleled Wordsworth’s. Having briefly brought together images of nature and the mind in “The Eolian Harp” (1796), he devoted himself to more-public concerns in poems of political and social prophecy, such as “Religious Musings” and “The Destiny of Nations”. Becoming disillusioned in 1798 with his earlier politics, however, and encouraged by Wordsworth, he turned back to the relationship between nature and the human mind. Poems such as “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison”, “The Nightingale” and “Frost at Midnight” combine sensitive descriptions of nature with subtlety of psychological comment. “Kubla Khan” a poem that Coleridge said came to him in “a kind of reverie” represented a new kind of exotic writing, which he also exploited in the supernaturalism of “The Ancient Mariner” and the unfinished “Christabel”.

In his own lifetime, Blake’s poetry was scarcely known. Sir Walter Scott, by contrast, was thought of as a major poet for his vigorous and evocative verse narratives *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808). Other verse writers were also highly esteemed. *The Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) of Charlotte Smith and the *Fourteen Sonnets* (1789) of William Lisle Bowles were received with enthusiasm by Coleridge. Robert Southey was closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge and was looked upon as a prominent member, with them, of the “Lake school” of poetry. His originality is best seen in his ballads and his nine “English Eclogues”, three of which were first published in the 1799 volume of his *Poems* with a prologue explaining that these verse sketches of contemporary life bore “no resemblance to any poems in our language”.

The Romantics highlighted the healing power of the imagination, because they truly believed that it could enable people to transcend their troubles and their circumstances. Their creative talents could illuminate and transform the world into a coherent vision, to regenerate mankind spiritually. In ‘A Defence of Poetry’ (1821), Shelley elevated the status of poets:

‘They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit...’³⁶

Wordsworth was concerned about the elitism of earlier poets, whose highbrow language and subject matter were neither readily accessible nor particularly relevant to ordinary people. He maintained that poetry should be democratic; that it should be composed in ‘the language really spoken by men’. For this reason, he tried to give a voice to those who tended to be marginalised and oppressed by society: the rural poor; discharged soldiers; ‘fallen’ women; the insane; and children. Blake, too, was radical in his political views, frequently addressing social issues in his poems and expressing his concerns about the monarchy and the church. His poem ‘London’ draws attention to the suffering of chimney-sweeps, soldiers and prostitutes.

The Romantics were inspired by the environment, and encouraged people to venture into new territories – both literally and metaphorically. In their writings they made the world seem a place with infinite, unlimited potential.

Emboldened by the era’s revolutionary spirit, Romantic poets invented new literary forms to match. Romantic poetry can argue radical ideas explicitly and vehemently or allegorically and ambivalently. Romanticism can do justice to the disadvantaged, to those marginalized or forgotten by an increasingly urban and commercial culture—rural workers, children, the poor, the elderly, or the disabled—or it can testify to individuality simply by foregrounding the poet’s own subjectivity at its most idiosyncratic or experimental.

Lyric poetry appears in a variety of forms, the most popular of which is arguably the sonnet; The ode, a formal address to an event, a person, or a thing not present, is another common branch of lyric poetry. Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge were first-generation Romantics, writing against a backdrop of war; followed by the second-generation Romantics, such as Byron, Shelley and Keats. Although the Romantics stressed the importance of the individual, they also advocated a commitment to mankind.

Romanticism offered a new way of looking at the world, prioritising imagination above reason. There was, however, a tension at times in the writings, as the poets tried to face up to life’s seeming contradictions. Blake published *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of*

³⁶ Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Shelley’s poetry and prose: authoritative texts, criticisms*. Ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers, London: Norton, 1977, 485.

Experience, shewing the two contrary states of the human soul. Here we find two different perspectives on religion in ‘The Lamb’ and ‘The Tyger’. The simple vocabulary and form of ‘The Lamb’ suggest that God is the beneficent, loving Good Shepherd. In stark contrast, the creator depicted in ‘The Tyger’ is a powerful figure. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake asserted that—without contraries there can be no progression. Wordsworth’s ‘Tintern Abbey’ (1798) juxtaposed moments of celebration and optimism with lamentation and regret. Keats thought in terms of an opposition between the imagination and the intellect.

Unlike the Renaissance sonnet sequences, where the confessional statements of the speaker cannot be directly related with the feelings of the author, the speaking voice in greater Romantic lyric as practised by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and others is not some fictional persona. In the greater Romantic lyric, characterized by M. H. Abrams in 1965, the speaker, engaged in a meditation in a particular landscape achieves an insight, faces up to a tragic loss, comes to a moral decision, or resolves an emotional problem. The speaking voice, then, is the author himself. The intense pathos in the crisis lyric may be disconcertingly melodramatic, as in Shelley’s “I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!” in *Ode to the West Wind* or in Coleridge’s lament in *Dejection: An Ode*—“now afflictions bow me down to earth/ Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth”. Undoubtedly, it can be said that these speakers are the poets. The traditional form of the sonnet is revived in Britain, with William Wordsworth writing more sonnets than any other British poet. Later in the century the Victorian lyric is more linguistically self-conscious and defensive than the Romantic lyric. Victorian lyric poets include Alfred Lord Tennyson and Christina Rossetti. Lyric poetry was popular with the German reading public between 1830 and 1890, as shown in the number of poetry anthologies published in the period. According to George Lukacs, the verse of Joseph von Eichendorff exemplifies the German Romantic revival of the folk-song tradition, initiated by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Johann Gottfried Herder and receiving new impetus with the publication of Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano’s collection of Folk Songs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The 19th century in France sees a confident recovery of the lyric voice after its relative demise in the 18th century. The lyric becomes the dominant mode in French poetry of this period. Baudelaire envisaged readers to whom the reading of lyric poetry would present difficulties. The introductory poem of *Les Fleurs du mal* is addressed to these readers. Willpower and the ability to concentrate are not their strong points. What they prefer is sensual pleasure; they are familiar with the “spleen” which

kills interest and receptiveness. It is strange to come across a lyric poet who addresses himself to such readers—the least rewarding type of audience. There is of course a ready explanation for this. Baudelaire wanted to be understood; he dedicates his book to those who are like him. The poem addressed to the reader ends with the salutation: “Hypocrite lecteur,—mon semblable,—mon frere!”³⁷ The kind of reader he envisaged is described in the introductory poem, and this turned out to have been a far-sighted judgment. He would eventually find the reader his work was intended for. The dark power of Baudelaire’s poetry in *Les Fleur Du Mal/ The Flowers of Evil* (originally published in 1857) is best experienced when it disturbs and is difficult to access, rather than when it is made more palatable through aesthetic appreciation and valorisation.

In *Hymn to Beauty*, Baudelaire writes:

*Are you from heaven or hell, Beauty that we adore?
Who cares? A dreadful, huge, ingenuous monster, you!*

Baudelaire is an anti-sensual master of sensuality. He condemns pleasure by plunging into its intensity like no one has done before. Baudelaire’s idea of beauty is a challenge to Platonic beauty as pure idea. Beauty is *not* a pure idea. It is an idea made flesh, and flesh that is blind to its own excess. Baudelaire’s aesthetics of love raises questions on the norms of judgement that are used to mis/understand our intensities: How to judge love’s madness? How to judge a quality that is always in excess of what judges it? Who can sit in judgement of love?

But Baudelaire’s recurring motif in *Les Fleur Du Mal* is that love is a force of excess that cannot be tamed and satiated, even by love. It is impossible – after all the rapturous follies are committed – to escape the feeling of “ennui” in love, that “eye filled with an unwished-for tear” as he describes in his dedication of *Du Mal* to the reader. I next turn to Baudelaire’s famous poem, *Correspondences*, for its metaphorical richness that suggests the way he sees the world.

The first four lines go:

*Nature is a temple whose living pillars
Sometimes gives forth a babel of words;
Man wends his way through forests of symbols
Which look at him with their familiar glances.*

³⁷ “Hypocrite reader-my fellow creature-my brother!” – The quotation is from “Au lecteur” (To the Reader), the introductory poem of *Les Fleurs du mal* (first edition 1857—Trans.).

— one thing corresponds to another in Baudelaire, not dialectically but through a relation that is as ancient and modern as nature. The “forest of symbols” is a web not of mere, blind objects, but objects that glance back at you; and we are surrounded, trapped by symbols. Poetry is an act of recapitulation of these symbols. Charles Baudelaire’s works are, for Walter Benjamin, the last European example of lyric poetry, which were successful on a mass scale.

Surprisingly enough, Stéphane Mallarmé showed no evidence of desperate Romantic agony, none of the excesses, mind-altering drugs, bankruptcy or scandalous capers of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Huysmans, Villiers de l’Isle-Adam or Oscar Wilde. The early poems of Stéphane Mallarmé such as *Un Coup de dés* or *Hérodiade* demonstrate Mallarmé’s complex ambitions to compose in language the fiction of stable subjectivity. His “A Throw of the Dice”, for that matter, surely is unlike anything that ever came before. Mallarmé knew that he participated in a radical change in the nature of poetry in France, which he equated with a change in France itself. The symbolist poet considered meter, in its measuring of the chaos that would otherwise prevent any form of social order, to embody the very possibility of human community. Reading “A Throw of the Dice” is difficult for reasons that are not readily apparent. The vocabulary is not especially difficult, but the syntax, phrase within phrase, the typography—different sizes, style (normal, bold, italics), the blank spaces, lack of concreteness are all signs of difficult thought. Therefore, it becomes an atomic text, words are broken into particles, and negatives are supplanted by further negatives. Each phrase is potentially a center around which others may be construed and the print gives pattern to space, scattered and becomes even mobile. Intelligibility is constantly under threat. The text itself is unstable and inconsistent in the demands it makes on us. The task of the reader is to disentangle main from subordinate material in order to make the lines of a sentence, to make meaning, to distinguish subjects from predicates, order from chaos, arguments, chronologies, causes and effects, narrative structures. Mallarmé’s obscurity is that his devotion to the relation of sounds and musicality of poetry outweighs his concerns for the meaning conveyed by his verse. Mallarmé’s devotion to internal rhyme comes from English alliterative poetry; and he claims that such alliteration goes back to the essential roots of speech, where language and sound coincide. The interior design of Mallarmé’s poems in group formats is as important to his concept of poetry as the actual writing process. Throughout his career, he tried to direct and orchestrate the published appearances and presentations of his poetry in order to bring about an architectural effect.

Of all the arts, music figures most predominantly in Mallarmé's conception of poetry's communicative function. In his 1894 essay "La Musique et les Lettres", Mallarmé claims that music and literature together constitute in their form and content the very fabric of their mystery, the essence of which he calls "Idée". Music, a non-linguistic code of symbols, transcends any representational value that might be attributed to it when interpreted or performed. Whereas, literature, visualized as text constitutes a place of aesthetic expression, in providing cognitive manifestations of the metaphysical. In the space of Mallarmé's poems, language, conceptualized as a reflection of the metaphysical Idea, functions as the agent which attempts to reveal the significance of this mysterious union and may be seen to represent both the corporeal and the spiritual since music - a performing art with reference to the body - and literature - a performed art of the mind - make up the two sides of the coin "Idée". It seems significant that Mallarmé attaches particular importance to the corporeal or human element in music, which can explain his notion of an originary sound emanating from the voice, capable of bridging contrary poles of representation that are evoked in his poetry, such as music and literature, presence and absence, the temporal and the eternal, the material and the spiritual. Mallarmé's fusion of music and literature exemplifies the heightened recognition of music's primacy over the other arts amongst Symbolist poets in France.

The 18th and early 19th centuries constitute the period of the rise of Russian lyric poetry, exemplified by Alexander Pushkin. Apart from these, Italian lyric poets of the period include Ugo Foscolo, Giacomo Leopardi, Giovanni Pascoli and Gabriele D'Annunzio. Taneda Santoka, Masaoka Shiki and Ishikawa Takuboku were some notable Japanese lyric poets of this period; whereas, we can find the names of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Rosalía de Castro and José de Espronceda as the best-known Spanish lyric poets of the time.

In the early years of the 20th century rhymed lyric poetry, usually expressing the feelings of the poet, was the dominant poetic form in America, Europe and the British colonies. The English Georgian poets such as A.E. Housman, Walter de la Mare and Edmund Blunden used the lyric form. The Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore was praised by William Butler Yeats for his lyric poetry and compared with the troubadour poets, when the two met in 1912.

The relevance and acceptability of the lyric in the modern age was called into question by modernism, the growing mechanization of human experience and the harsh realities of war. After the Second World War, the form was again championed by the New

Criticism, and in the late 20th century lyric once again became a mainstream poetic form. The dominance of lyric was challenged by American experimental modernists such as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams, who rejected the English lyric form of the nineteenth century, feeling that it relied too heavily on melodious language, rather than complexity of thought. Wallace Stevens and Hart Crane, however, were modernists who also worked within the tradition of post-Romantic lyric poetry.

The tension between the traditional subjects of lyric poetry and the horrors of war are expressed in the War Poetry of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Ivor Gurney. Owen's poem "Strange Meeting" has been described as "a dream of a conversation with a dead lyric poet, or possibly even dead lyric itself."³⁸ The Irish poet William Butler Yeats's work up to 1917 is predominantly dramatic and lyric love poetry, but after the First World War he explores the political subjects of Irish independence, nationalism and civil war. The American New Criticism returned to the lyric in the 1950s, advocating a poetry that made conventional use of rhyme, meter and stanzas, and was modestly personal in the lyric tradition. Lyric poets consistent with the New Criticism ethos include Robert Frost and Robert Lowell. Lyric poetry dealing with relationships, sex and domestic life constituted the new mainstream of American poetry in the late twentieth century, influenced by the confessional poets of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton.

The very impossibility of stabilizing the definition of lyric exposes the greater significance of this curious literary category. An abundance of texts can be found that fit the requirements of any definition of lyric, but no such definition satisfactorily includes all the well-known poems considered lyric or lyrical. And yet this confusion may explain the continual reappearance of lyric as an ideological marker in various critical schools. Among the lyrics of the Greeks, the Renaissance genre theorists, the Romantics, and the New Critics, for instance, the overlapping sets of characteristics have no common core, and any proclaimed core would exclude many familiar lyrics. But the empty set that lies at the centre of the history of lyric criticism remains available for continual re-inscription by the ideologies of lyric's critics. And it is only when lyric is linked to a particular critical school and, by extension, to that school's own ideological interests, the lyric's possibilities are collapsed into a set of rigid norms.

³⁸ Campbell, Matthew. *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*. Ed. Neil Roberts. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001, 72.

2.5 Indian genre: Kavya, Laghukavya

In Indian usage, the concept of *kavya* covers two main things. Firstly, it refers to poetry itself, i.e., all those works that conform to artistic and literary norms. Secondly, *kavya* is used of individual poems. Poetry is of course only one part of all the writing comprehended in the Sanskrit word *vanmaya*, which is used in some texts that deal with literature and other writings to include everything that is expressed in words. Indian manuals on poetics and the practice of poetry tend to reflect the impression that all poetry falls into one of two categories; on one hand poetry that is purely oral (*sravya*) and, on the other, poetry that can also be seen, that is to say, performed (*drsya, preksya*). This view is of course justified. Quite a number of poets have written works in both genres, and one of the distinguishing marks of later drama is that the metrical passages and some of the longer prose sections display an artistic use of words that is closely allied to poetry. The division of *kavya* into *drsya* and *sravya* is, however, not strictly observed. As we know, poetry, unlike non-literary texts, is created in India as elsewhere when a poet employs certain artistic devices. Furthermore, it is evident that the nature of these artificial or artistic devices varies in different periods and regions, as does the extent to which they are employed. To characterize *kavya* as court poetry is not satisfactory either as we know that it was not confined to the court but also flourished in towns, in learned schools and in the houses of Pandits, courtesans and merchants. Sanskrit poetics also endorse the role of *kavya* as a vehicle for instruction. While the earliest theorists - Bhamaha, Dandin and Vamana – state that the aims of poetry are the recognition won by the poem and the enjoyment experienced by the reader, later critics specify instruction (*upadesa*) as an additional aim. However, they make it clear that, unlike prosaic, tedious textbooks, poetry imparts very gentle instruction and includes the deeds of heroes in various fields of human activity in its teaching and advice.

The great masters in the *Kavya* form were Aśvaghōṣa, Kalidasa, Baṇa, Daṇḍin, Magha, Bhavabhuti, and Bharavi.

The earliest surviving *kavya* literature was written by a Buddhist, Aśvaghōṣa, said to have been a contemporary of the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka (1st century AD). Aśvaghōṣa's work also marks a shift away from the Pali of the Theravada branch of Buddhism back to the more and more accepted Sanskrit of the *Mahayana* branch. Two works are extant, both in the style of *mahakavya*: the *Buddhacarita* ("Life of the Buddha") and the

Saundarananda (“Of Sundari and Nanda”). Compared with later examples, they are fairly simple in style but reveal typical propensities of writers in this genre: a great predilection for descriptions of nature scenes, for grand spectacles, amorous episodes, and aphoristic observations. The resources of the Sanskrit language are fully exploited; stylistic embellishments (*alankara*) of simile and metaphor, alliteration, assonance, and the like are employed, often quite felicitously. The original *Buddhacarita*, rediscovered in 1892, had been known from Tibetan and Chinese translations. The Sanskrit text is fragmentary, breaking off in the 14th canto (major division of the poem) with the enlightenment of the Buddha, while the other versions take the story through the Buddha’s Nirvaṇa. Though intended to instruct the reader to turn away from the sensuous life and follow the Buddha’s path, the work is at its best in descriptions of that very life. This is even more apparent in the *Saundarananda*, which recounts a well-known story of how the Buddha converted his half-brother Nanda, who was deeply in love with his wife, Sundari, and with the good life, to the monastic life of austerity. In his mastery of the intricacies of prosody and the subtleties of grammar and vocabulary, Aśvaghoṣa shows himself the complete forerunner of the Hindu *mahakavya* authors.

If we attempt to form a picture of the Indian poet, the *kavi*, we must not forget that Sanskrit poetry is a highly educated, indeed directly academic art. Classical poetry arose in a well-developed society when India already possessed a rich scientific, religious and cultural heritage, and when *kavya* was born it could look back on several centuries of advanced civilization. The social classes from which *kavya* sprang possessed considerable cultural refinement which found expression not merely in outward forms, but also in sophisticated education, elaborate social intercourse and in a devotion to belles-lettres (*sahitya*), music (*sangita*) and the arts (*kala*). Some forms of poetry were naturally practiced in older times, in the early Vedic period, but poetry in the sense of *kavya* is associated with the brilliance and elegance of later eras, with Hindu court life and the wealthy upper classes found in cities. The figure of the poet now changes completely: in place of the seer, the *Rsi* of the Vedic era and of the bard, in place of the rhapsodist of the popular poetry that is now lost to us or of the epic poet, we now find a man of refined taste and great versatility who has a broad education acquired by wide reading and, generally, a command of several languages, particularly Sanskrit.

Classical literature of India written in the Sanskrit language may be divided into the Vedic period (circa 1500 BC—200 BC), when the Vedic form of Sanskrit was in use,

and the Sanskrit period (200 BC—AD 1100), when classical Sanskrit had developed from Vedic. Notwithstanding the chronological continuity of Indian writings, the spirit of Sanskrit-period literature differs greatly from that of the Vedic period. The chief distinction between the two is that Vedic literature, consisting of the Vedas (Veda), Brahmanas, and Upanishads, is essentially religious, whereas classical Sanskrit literature is, with rare exceptions, secular. In the Vedas the lyric and legendary forms are in the service of prayer, or exposition of the ritual; in Sanskrit epics such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, didactic, lyric, and dramatic forms have been developed far beyond their earlier state for more purely literary, aesthetic, or moral purposes. In Sanskrit literature, moreover, with the exception of the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, the authors are generally definite persons, more or less well known, whereas the writings of the Vedic period go back either to families of poets or to religious schools.

The form and style of classical Sanskrit literature is different from that of the Vedas. Sanskrit poetry also differs from Vedic poetry. The bulk of the poetry, especially the epic, is composed in the *sloka* meter, a development of the Vedic *anushtubh* stanza of four octosyllabic lines of essentially iambic cadence. Numerous other meters, however, usually built up on Vedic prototypes, have become more elaborate than their old originals, and in the main, more artistic and beautiful.

Classical Sanskrit literature may be divided into epic, lyric, didactic, dramatic, and narrative verses and didactic, dramatic, and narrative prose. Epic poetry falls into two classes, the freer narrative epic, termed *itihasa* (“legend”) or *purana* (“ancient tale”), and the artistic epic, called *kavya*. The great epic called the *Mahabharata* (between 300 BC and AD 300) is by far the most important representative of the *purana*. The beginnings of the artistic style are seen in the *Ramayana* (3rd century BC). The finished epic *kavya* form, however, was not evolved until the time of Kalidasa, about the 5th century AD. This poet and dramatist is the author of the two best-known Sanskrit artistic epics, the *Kumarasambhava* and the *Raghuvamsa*.

Lyric poetry has its individual traits, the most important of which is the refined elaboration of the single strophe, as opposed to continuous composition. The forms of these strophes are highly elaborate and almost infinitely varied. The most elaborated of the longer lyric compositions are the *Meghaduta* and the *Ritusamhara*, both works by Kalidasa. The theme of the former work is a message sent on a cloud by an exiled yaksha, or supernatural being, to his love. The *Ritusamhara* is famous for its descriptions of tropical nature in India, interspersed with expressions of emotion.

The bulk of lyric poetry, however, is in single miniature stanzas, which strongly suggest the didactic proverb poetry that Indians also cultivated with great success. The most famous collection of such stanzas, that of Bhartrihari, perhaps the greatest poet of India next to Kalidasa, consists of lyric, didactic, and erotic poems. Considered the second great master of the erotic stanza is Amaru, who is probably of a later date than Bhartrihari. His collection is known as *Amarusataka*.

The style, called *kavya*, is characterized by an extremely self-conscious effort on the part of the writer to compose poetry pleasing to both the ear and the mind. It evolved an elaborate poetics of figures of speech, among which the metaphor and simile, in their many manifestations, predominate; a careful use of language, governed by the stated norms of grammar; an ever-increasing tendency to use compound nouns instead of drawing on the quite plentiful possibilities of Sanskrit inflection; a sometimes ostentatious display of erudition in the arts and sciences; an adroitness in the use of varied and complicated, if appropriate, metres—all applied to traditional themes such as the epic had provided and to the rendering of emotions, most often the love between men and women.

The style finds its classical expression in the so-called *mahakavya* (“great poem”), most akin to the epyllion (“miniature epic”) art form of the Alexandrian poets (a school of Greek poets, c. 3rd–1st centuries BC); the strophic lyric (a lyric based on a rhythmic system of two or more lines repeated as a unit); and the Sanskrit theatre. It can also be extended to narrative literature, especially the prose novel.

In its classical form, a *mahakavya* consists of a variable number of comparatively short cantos, each composed in a metre appropriate to its particular subject matter. The subject matter of the *mahakavya* itself is taken from the epic, which is not, however, followed slavishly. Most *mahakavyas* display such set pieces as descriptions of cities, oceans, mountains, the seasons, the rising of the sun and moon, games, festivals, weddings, embassies, councils, war, and triumph. It is typical of the genre that, while each strophe, or stanza, is intended to be part of a narrative sequence, it more often stands by itself, a discrete unit conveying one idea or developing one image. In this, the tendency of the Rigvedic stanza continues in the classical literature. Although the lines of the classical stanza are long enough to convey their meaning quite explicitly, it is the pride of the poet to suggest rather than to express. Sometimes this is done by simple collocation of words: for example, in the first line of Kalidasa’s *Meghaduta* a yakṣa (a mischievous elf-like creature) is afflicted by a curse, “the more painful because it spelled separation from his

beloved”; the next word notes that he had been negligent in his duties; taken together, the two words, though syntactically unrelated, suggest that it was his armour that made him neglect his duties. Another common suggestive device is the double meaning, or play on words. These double meanings often add a certain graceful playfulness to the poetry, reminding one that the poem was written first of all to give pleasure to the man of taste.

Traditionally there are six model *mahakavyas*, three by Kalidasa and one each by Bharavi, Magha, and Śriharṣa, to which sometimes the Bhaṭṭikakya is added. In two of his *mahakavyas*, Kalidasa draws on epic lore. The first, and probably earlier one, is the *Kumarasambhava* (“Birth of the War God”), which describes the courting of the ascetic Shiva, who is meditating in the mountains, by Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayas; the destruction of the god of love (after his arrow has struck Shiva) by the fire from Shiva’s third eye; and the wedding and lovemaking of Shiva and Parvati, which results in the conception of the war god. The original is in eight cantos, but a sequel was added by an imitator. The second *mahakavya*, the *Raghuvamṣa* (“Dynasty of Raghu”), deals with themes from the *Ramayana*: it describes the vicissitudes of the Solar dynasty of the ancient Indian barons, culminating in the *Ramayana* story of Rama and Sita. The *Raghuvamṣa* is famous for its beautiful descriptions and incidental narratives, which give the poem a somewhat episodic character; among them are a description of the six seasons (spring, summer, rainy, autumn, winter, and dewy) and the story of a young hermit who went to the river to fill a water jar for his parents and was killed by a stray arrow.

Unique in Sanskrit love poetry is Kalidasa’s *Meghaduta*, in which the poet tries to go beyond the strophic unity of the short lyric, which normally characterizes love poems, by stringing the stanzas into a narrative. This innovation did not take hold, though the poem inspired imitations along precisely the same story-line. The *Meghaduta* is the lament of an exiled yakṣa who is pining for his beloved on a lonely mountain peak. When, at the beginning of the monsoon, a cloud perches on the peak, he asks it to deliver a message to his love in the Himalayan city of Alaka. Most of the poem, composed in an extremely graceful metre, consists of a description of the landmarks, cities, and the like on the cloud’s route to Alaka. It must be considered among the finest poems, if not the finest poem, written in Sanskrit. Kalidasa also wrote for the theatre and was no doubt the most versatile author of Sanskrit literature; his works became well-nigh canonical models.

Bharavi (6th century) probably hailed from the south during the reign of the Pallava dynasty. He took up a *Mahabharata* theme in his *Kiratarjuniya* (“Arjuna and the Mountain Man”), recounting the Paṇḍava prince Arjuna’s encounter and ensuing combat with a wild mountaineer who in the end proves to be the god Shiva. Bharavi’s language and style are more difficult than Kalidasa’s, but the poem is highly regarded in Indian literary tradition. Magha, who wrote in the 8th century, was a conscious rival of Bharavi, whom he attempted to surpass in every respect. His *Sisupalavadha* (“The Slaying of King Sisupala”) is based on an episode of the *Mahabharata* in which the rival King Sisupala insults the hero-god Krishna, who beheads him in the ensuing duel. Magha is a master of technique in the strict Sanskrit sense of luscious descriptions; intricate syntax; compounds that, depending on how they are split, deliver quite different meanings; and the full register of stylistic embellishments. To some critics, the preoccupation with technique, the triumph of form over substance, appears to have spelled the doom of the *mahakavya*. A curious but entirely Sanskritic phenomenon, for example, is the *Bhaṭṭikavya*, a poem by Bhaṭṭi (probably 6th or 7th century). It again deals with the story of Rama and Sita, but at the same time it illustrates in stanza after stanza, in exactly the proper sequence, the principal rules of Sanskrit grammar and poetics. Less artificial is the *Naiṣadhacarita* (“The Life of Nala, King of Niṣadha”), written by the 12th century poet Sriharṣa and based on the story of Nala and Damayanti in the *Mahabharata*. An example of another kind of excess indulged in by *mahakavya* writers is the *Ramacarita* (“Deeds of Rama”), by the 12th century poet Sandhyakara, which celebrates simultaneously the hero-god Rama and the poet’s own king, Ramapala of Bengal.

Another form of lyric, the short lyric, is single-stanza lyric, in which Sanskrit poetry is revealed most intimately in its real aims. As noted, almost all of high Sanskrit poetry is strophic in fact; in the lyric it is so in intention. It is eminently a genre of the poetic moment, making an aesthetic observation and placing it within the Sanskritic universe of discourse. It may be an observation of anything: a fish glintingly jumping from a pond, aboriginal tribesmen engaged in a bloody rite, love in all its manifestations, a glimpse of God perceived or remembered. But in the monumental lyric collections that have been preserved, and in the many stray verses still circulating among educated Hindus in India as so-called *subhaṣitas* (“well-turned” couplets), the more common topics are praise of the god of one’s devotion and the vagaries of love. In the short lyric it is hard to make a distinction that depends on the language in which it is composed; for, although the

language may be different, the subject matter and forms are the same. Many love lyrics, especially when they describe feelings experienced by women, are composed not in Sanskrit but, instead, in one of the Prakrits, or Middle Indo-Aryan languages. The collection of 700 poems in this language, compiled by Hala under the name of *Sattasai* (“The Seven Hundred”), tends to be simpler in imagery and in the emotion portrayed than their Sanskrit counterparts, but essential differences are difficult to pinpoint. The devotional lyric, a short verse expressing the author’s devotion to a god, is linked with both the hymnal poetry of the *Rigveda*—though far less determined by a desire for compelling magic—and the temple worship of Hinduism. Though by no means always, there is often a particularism about them: the deity is invoked as it appears in a specific iconic stance or in a local temple or in a manifestation especially pleasing to the poet. The number of such verses is countless; every major religious and philosophic leader is held to have added to their stock. Some are especially famous: the *Suryaṣṭaka* (“Eight Strophes for the Sun”), by Mayura; the collections attributed to the philosopher Sankara, the *Saundaryalahari* (“The Wavy River of the Beautiful Sky”); and the *Kṛṣṇakarmṛta* (“The Elixir of Hearing of Krishna”), by Bilvamangala, among others. These *stotra* (“lyrics of praise”) quite often were set to music, and people continue to sing them today—without necessarily comprehending the full intention of the Sanskrit, much as hymns in Latin were traditionally sung by Roman Catholic believers. The entire erotic experience, from budding love to the aftermath of consummation, is represented brilliantly in lyric poetry. But among the many themes inspired by love, poets have been most attracted to the lament of separated lovers. It is mostly the sufferings of the woman that are portrayed, but the grief of the man is also depicted—in Kalidasa’s *Meghaduta*, for example. The love lyrics consist of single verses, many of which seek to suggest the mood of *sringara* (physical love). While often extremely erotic, they are very rarely obscene. The erotic and the devotional lyric merge freely, and at times it is impossible to make out whether the free sexual imagery employed is to be taken literally or as an allegory of the human soul courting the love of its god.

Authors of *subhaṣitas* often collected them themselves, the favourite form being that of the *Sataka* (“century” of verses), in which 100 short lyrics on a common theme were strung together. Mention has been made of Hala’s *Sattasai* (“The Seven Hundred”, consisting of lyrics in the Maharaṣṭri dialect). Four well-known Sanskrit collections, of the 7th century, are the famous *Sataka* of Amaru, king of Kashmir, and the three *Satakas*

by the poet Bhartṛhari; one of the latter's collections is devoted to love, another to worldly wisdom—a very popular theme in epigrammatic verse—and the third to dispassion. Of the same type but in a different vein is *Caurapançasika* (“Fifty Poems on Secret Love”), in which the 12th century poet Bilhaṇa fondly recalls the pleasure of his clandestine amours with a local princess.

The main purpose of lyrical poetry was to affect the senses of the reader by suggestion. While epic poetry created art on a large scale and, by its very nature, aimed at painting a broad canvas, in short poems detailed descriptions and suggestive techniques formed an ideal combination which, aided by the format itself, endeavoured to attain perfection even in the smallest elements of the poem. The ground was prepared for classical poetry by the literary currents, naturally the influence of each varied considerably: while poetry of the minor form, *laghukavya*, which is the older form of poetry, may have developed directly out of the lyrical beginnings; the development of the major form, *mahakavya*, was not at all so simple. The long poem, also called *sargabandha*, was rather the result of a long period of assimilation which united the epic and the lyrical traditions. Epic elements, which carry the action forward in a logical manner, are prominent in older *mahakavyas* such as Aśvaghōṣa's poetry; in later long poems, however, they are largely replaced by the lyrical tendencies inherent in the concentrated stanzas of the minor form to such a large extent that *laghukavya* and *mahakavya* come to resemble each other. This convergence, which became fashionable scarcely three hundred years after Aśvaghōṣa, gradually eliminated the differences in technique that originally distinguished epic from lyrical poetry until finally there remained only a few criteria, mainly of a formal nature, to differentiate between the two forms.

The distinction between poetry of the minor form, *laghukavya*, and poetry of the major form, *mahakavya*, is however, important since the history of classical poetry did not begin with epic works of considerable length, as has been long thought, but, on the contrary, with short poems which exercised a strong influence on long poems even in later eras. The division was maintained even when the differences between the two categories gradually began to disappear, due to the fact that isolated stanzas from *mahakavya* could sometimes be enjoyed equally well as short independent poems. Apart from the *Bharatiya-Natyasastra*, which deals mainly with drama, even the oldest existing works on the theory of poetry are of a relatively late date. It is therefore not

surprising that Bhamaha and Dandin, the first authorities on Indian poetics, give no detailed descriptions of *laghukavya* whatsoever. They take the view that although short poems do in fact exist, they require no separate explanation as they can all appear in the form of parts (*anga*) of *mahakavya* or *sargabandha*. However, we must not forget that although *mahakavya* is the centre of poetic interest, Indian critics have seldom been able to regard a long poem as a single, unified whole due to the prominent position they accord to single stanzas and the often-exaggerated attention they devote to poetic figures. This attention, however, does not extend either to whole sections (*sarga*) or to a number of verses linked together by a common theme. The unit on which they base their rigorously applied criticism is always the stanza which, even when it is part of a long poem, has a unity of its own and is actually more important than the whole. Older works on poetics have perhaps given greater emphasis to the importance of short poems than do the oldest extant texts, indeed it is not impossible that lost works even regarded *laghukavya* as the only true origin of *kavya*.

A more sharply defined category of *laghukavya* is *khandakavya*, which has an independent position between *laghu* and *mahakavya*. The name means literally—*kavya* consisting of (only) one section (*khandā*). It is frequently confused with *samghata*, but in fact there are two quite clear differences between the two: *khandakavya* can employ themes much more freely and, even more important, it contains some kind of a story which, however limited or cursory and even when it is only intended to provide a background for the narrative, nevertheless acts as a vehicle that can bear up the descriptive writing in the stanzas. The classic examples of this category are Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* and Bilhana's *Caurisuratapançasika*. As the title indicates, the latter consists of fifty stanzas whereas Kalidasa's poem has just over a hundred.

In the chapter titled "Lyric Poetry"³⁹ Macdonell, while identifying lyric poems, mentions the *Meghaduta*, *Rtusarhhara*, *Ghatakarparakavya*, *Caurapançasika*, Hala's *Sattasai*, *Satakas* of Bhartrhari and Amaru, and *Gitagovinda*. To this list Keith adds *Aryasaptasati* of Govardhana and the *Santisataka* of Silhaṇa. Winternitz further includes the *Stotraeatakas* of Baṇa and Mayura, Samkara's stotras, *Pançasati* of Mukakavi,

³⁹ Macdonell, Arthur Anthony. *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1900, 336.

Mukundamala of Kula-sekhara, *Krsṇakarṇamṛta* of Lilasuka, *Bhikṣatana* of Sivadasa Utpreksa Vallabha and some later *duṭakavyas*. This gives a fairly imposing list of lyric poems in Sanskrit. However, it has been often alleged that Vedic hymns have lyrical impulses, which cannot be denied as they are the outpourings of devotional feeling and some of the hymns possess the proper lyrical quality. As for instance, one may refer to the hymn of eight stanzas ascribed to *Vac*, in which the woman-seer in a pantheistic mood of mystic exaltation declares her identity with the universe as the source and regulating spirit of all things or in which Visvavara approaches the blazing sacrificial fire and personally prays for concord and bliss in married life. But most other *Rigvedic* hymns of praise and prayer do not conform to the necessary criterion of intimate personal emotion, as they express the general attitude and feeling of the Vedic people, and not the deeply personal emotion of the individual poet. Coming to the *Kavya*-s, the *Meghaduta*, in spite of being a truly well-knit poem, cannot be regarded as strictly conforming to the modern concept of a lyric. Although, the earnestness and warmth of its poignant portrayal of the sorrow of the parted lovers, make it almost lyrical in effect. On the one hand, there can be found various literary *stotras*, attributed to Samkara, Puspadanta, Upamanyu, Manatunga, Siddhasena Divakara and others, which are of a descriptive character and permeated with religious thoughts. On the other hand, we have a series of highly emotional *stotras* which received impetus from the mediaeval Bhakti movements. The inspiration behind these *stotras* is the mood of erotic mysticism which expresses intense religious longings in the language of earthly passion. The three professedly devotional works, which stand out prominently are: the *Mukundamala* of Kulasekhara, *Krsṇakarṇamṛta* of Lilasuka and *Gitagovindam* of Jayadeva. The first-named *stotra*, in spite of its stylistic affectations, gives passionate expression to supplication and surrender, and becomes as a whole a fine devotional lyric. The same remarks apply also to the *Krsṇakarṇamṛta*, which is as much a deliberate work of art as it is the best example of a Sanskrit devotional lyric. The *Gitagovindam*, with its extremely musical and sensuous word-pictures and finely composed padavalis, however, represents, another aspect of the same devotional tendency, but differs in its form and spirit from the earlier lyrics.

2.6 Medieval Indian Lyric: *Bhakti* & *Sufi*

The medieval age of India was a vibrant era of immense changes and consolidation coupled with fervent activities, practically in every field of human enterprise. We see, on one side, the rise and fall of dynasties, emergence of new languages, the downfall of Buddhism, the growth of new philosophy of *bhakti* (devotion) and also the various schools of Indian philosophy, including the rise of systematic interpretations of Brahma Sutras of Vadarayana or its Vedantic interpretations by Shankaracharya in the 9th century; also the re-establishing of the Vedas and the Vedic way of life on a stronger foundation with the help of a fresh interpretation of the texts. It was the time when cultural influences that came with Muslim invasions integrated with the culture and tradition of India like the religio-philosophical influence of *Sufism* representing the inward or esoteric side of Islam and mythical dimension of Muslim religion. The Hindu and the Muslim ideologies were poles apart in their religious fervour, but the intense give-and-take among their poets and mystics—the *Sants* and the *Sufis*—in a land, whose people were in the habit of singing their poetry, had led to a period phenomenally rich in the creative arts.

The dominant element of medieval Indian literature was no doubt devotional in spirit and primarily religious, having strong philosophical concerns and also life-negating aspects, but at the same time there existed a powerful stream in literature of that time which was life-accepting and attached to the pleasures of mundane life. These two streams in Indian literature of *yoga* and *bhoga* are in complete harmony; but at the same time, the ideals of asceticism and the concern for a life of detachment is given a greater and more prominent role in the medieval religious philosophy. However, it was never devoid of joyous blissfulness. After all, *bhakti* is a celebration of life with the Divine in one's own self. The word *bhakti*, indicating love towards one's personal god (*ishta-deva*) became the medium of literature of sublimation and attachment, and turned the era attractive and joyful.

Bhakti or devotion is poetry of connection, poetry that connects the devotee with God. Love is the connecting factor and hence *bhakti* is love. It is not worldly love which binds one into temporality; the love expressed in *bhakti* unbinds one from a worldly state and leads to eternity. It is a joyful openness to an unparaphrasable reality. A great many-sided shift occurred in Hindu culture and sensibility between the 6th and 9th centuries AD

in India, like the great consonantal shift described in Indo-European linguistics. Like other shifts of this kind, it was systematic, began in a small way in a particular locality or even in a particular community and, depending on a whole variety of conditions, slowly spread out from there in waves. This innovation did not universally replace older forms but developed a parallel existence and brought forth an avalanche from the south in the form of *bhakti*.

Bhakti poetry was first written in the 6th to 7th centuries AD in Tamil, and appeared in Tamil-speaking areas. From there, as referred to by the Padmapurana, it moved to Karnataka and, in Kannada, Pampa wrote *bhakti* poetry. Chronologically then, it flourished in Marathi and Gujarati and later in Rajasthani. This takes us to the 13th century AD, during which it spread within Kashmir. Then, between the 15th and 16th centuries AD, it proliferated into the whole of mid-India, where devotional poetry was mostly written in the *Braj* and *Avadhi* languages. Slowly, *bhakti* became a pan-Indian movement when the Oriya, Manipuri, Bengali, and Assamese languages were adopted for writing devotional poetry. *Bhakti* poetry is, in fact, like a stream of flowing oil, *taila-dhara*, from vessel to vessel, from verse to verse, from mind to mind, from god to devotee. It was a revolution that took the imagination of people by storm.

As Suguna Ramanathan says, *bhakti* is love and faith and humility, as opposed to common forms of discourse that serve to delimit a field, mark off its boundaries, legitimise norms and perspectives. Discourse is the practice of power through language that keeps a society stable, but there comes a point when such a world is felt to be radically insufficient. The heart, disturbed by love, moves towards a point outside the given boundaries and challenges common discourse. The devotional poets like Kabir, Nanak and Mira and many others cross the boundaries of rules and authority and wander from place to place, as they sing of the love of God. In traditional cultures like India, context-sensitive facts rule and bind life. The dream is to be free of context and create an alternative paradigm, to reject the current discourse and subvert its value systems. Hence, Krishna is black and not fair. The colour white indicates purity, fair-play, power and authority and black is the opposite of that; but, in reality, black Krishna possesses all that is divine. He is not a Brahmin of the elite class but is of the cowherd caste, almost a commoner. He is not connected with order, harmony, and the light of the heaven. He is rooted in this earth where, despite in their own, discourse-governed rules are not the most important thing. In fact, by breaking those rules men reach the transcendental state of reality which is the state of freedom from worldly bondage. As soon as Krishna starts

playing his flute, the message of love is floated on a flower-scented breeze and all self-control is lost. Paradoxically, in the discourse-governed world, unruliness becomes the rule. Faith breaks the boundaries, stands outside discourse and addresses it in a wholly new and strange way. It is the faith of complete surrender (*atma nivedana*) for union with the non-containable and non-finite, the 'other', the transcendent which the phenomenal world is insufficient to satisfy. Hence, a longing for completeness is the starting point of the devotional mystical way. It is a reversal of *Gita*'s model of *svadharma*, *nishkamakarma* and *atmasamarpana*, which is possible only in a state of equableness, harmony and balance or *samadarshanah*. Here, surrender is the first step, because one does not have the quality of *samadarshanah* without the act of surrender. If the god or transcendent is the great good entire, then the human, a fragment of that whole, longs to be reintegrated, reabsorbed into that whole. As Suguna Ramanathan explains, love is a primary, directing force that floods the soul and flows outward towards the other. This intensity and reckless devotion for unqualified surrender to the object of love became sanctified. According to the poetics of *bhakti* it is not *kama* (worldly/physical love) but *prema* (the divine love) which legitimises everything, so nothing is illegitimate or irregular. In the process, tradition gets reinforced and is changed into an alternate way of living.

Bhakti, as a means of attaining god, must be recognized as belonging to the earliest awakening of man to the divine. *Bhakti* arises out of the meeting of Sanskrit texts like the *Bhagavat Purana*, *Narada Bhakti Sutra*, *Sandilya Bhakti Sutra* etc. with mythology but more directly out of the love poetry of Prakrit and Tamil. Moreover, the brilliant inspiration of the Tamil poets enthroned Vishnu or Krishna as the Lover and turned them into the yearning beloved. Playing a crucial role in the background was a strong tradition of Tamil, Prakrit and Sanskrit love lyrics. These lyrics were neither sacred nor religious. Some had a moral thought or religious belief cleverly injected into them but their core is of the earthy nature. The celebration of life in these songs is of stylised romance.

The signifiers of love-poetry are enlisted for a new signification (*bhakti*). The changes are subtle, only a name (Shiva) or a context (feet) can change a profane poem into a sacred one. Or, we can speak of 'framing' the erotic poem in a new context of *bhakti*. The *bhakta* is a sign that is a union of the signifier, the entire erotic tradition, and the signified, i.e., *bhakti*. The signature line (*bhanita* or the name of the poet in the poem) is used to differentiate between worldly love and divine love (*madhurya* or *prema bhakti*).

Thus, the poetry is not intended to be general, timeless, abstracted from here and now, but to relate to a present god or a specific audience with whom the poet shares his god, his myths and his *bhakti*. Now, God is no more inaccessible, out of bounds—now he is brought from the temple to stay in the house because *bhakti* poetry is the poetry of sharing, touching, seeing the many in one. The *bhakta* and the god he worships become one. It is the domestication of godhood. The experience of *bhakti* is not simply ecstasy (withdrawal) nor ecstasy (out of body experience), but embodiment—a partaking of the god.

Sisir Kumar Das (Das 1984) explains that the words meaning ‘mad’ or ‘crazy’ in almost all the Indian languages in the medieval period attained a new connotation, which is evidence of the recognition of ‘madness’ as a significant element in spiritual life. A *Baul* poet of Bengal sings:

*That is why, brother, I became a madcap Baul
No Master I obey, nor injunctions, Canons or Custom
Man-made distinctions have no hold on me now.
I rejoice in the gladness of the love that wells out of my own being.
In love there is no separation, but a meeting of hearts forever.
So I rejoice in song and I dance with each and all.
That is why, brother, I became a madcap Baul.*

In *bhakti* poetry, one hears a new kind of utterance, as Ramanujan explains, that cannot be adequately described by earlier terms. The *Vedas* are shruti or heard or revealed. The Puranas, epics and Gita are smriti or remembered. Upanishad means ‘that which is learnt by sitting at the feet of a teacher’. All these terms suggest passive or receptive modes. *Bhaktas* prefer the active mode. Now, the emphasis has shifted from hearing to speaking, from watching to dancing, from a passive to an active mode, from a religion and poetry of the esoteric few to a religion and poetry of anyone who can speak.

The *bhakti* poets were all against the imposition of the elitist Sanskrit language on their *bhashas* (mother tongue) and, hence, poets like Kabir in the north showed his displeasure by saying:

*Sanskrit is standing water of a well.
Bhasha is flowing water of a river.*

In their view, god lives inside us as a mother-tongue does, and we live in God as we live in language — a language that was there before us, is all around us in the community and will be there after us. To lose this first language is to lose one's beginnings. Thus, the poet-saints required and created a poetry and a poetics of the mother-tongue. They empowered language, the mother tongue, and toned down the influence of Sanskrit, known as the language of gods.

The language of *bhakti* is symbolical and it embodies a symbolic act, as the devotee's life, religion and language are all one. The love of *bhakti* unbinds one from the worldly state and leads to eternity. In *bhakti*, the mundane meets the spiritual to celebrate life. It is freedom from the bindings of the world. In the small circle of love, one experiences the expanse of the divine. Ramananda, a disciple of Ramanuja, brought *bhakti* from Southern India to North India and was the first acharya to propagate *prema* and *bhakti* in Hindi:

*Bhakti dravir upaji laye Ramananda
Pragat kiyo Kabir-ne sapta-dvip nau-khand*

[Bhakti arose among the Dravidians, (in the south);
Ramananda carried it (to the north) and Kabir spread it
all over (the earth, which consists of) the seven continents
and (is divided into) nine parts.]

Special mention should be made here of the two followers — Rupa (1591) and Sanatan Goswami (1591)—of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1458-1533) who were destined to become the theologians of this great acharya from Bengal. Rupa in his *Bhaktirasammritasindhu* in Sanskrit distinguishes three types of *bhakti*: *sadhana-bhakti*, *bhava-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti*.

Prema-bhakti is the intense form of *bhakti* and is associated with a sense of possession in God and absolute detachment from all other things. Rupa in another insightful text, *Ujjvalanilamani*, from the point of poetics describes the *madhurya-bhakti* or the amorous sentiment by referring to the deep love between Krishna and Radha or gopis. The *Haribhaktivilasa* by Sanatana Goswami also in Sanskrit is a detailed manual which still regulates the religious rites of the Bengal Vishnuites.

Any account of the *bhakti* tradition of medieval India will be incomplete without a reference to *Gita Govindam* of Jayadeva (13th century). It is significant because it marks

the entry of ‘nayaka-nayaki bhava’ into Sanskrit in lyrical form; besides, Radha, a heroine in folk tradition, becomes enshrined in devotional literature, Prakrit metre and poetical conventions are employed to lend musicality and mysticism to the whole work. *Gita Govindam* is a collection of songs connected by a slender narrative of the Divine Love between Krishna and Radha treating it, however, at the human level without suppression or even sublimation. The passionate love affair depicted by Jayadeva between Radha and Krishna records the various moods of the lovers, their longing for each other, separation and the final union. One can understand Jayadeva’s facile oscillation between the profane and the sacred against the background of the *Vaishnava* tradition where Radha, an archetype of woman in love, is elevated to the status as the divine consort of Krishna. The ambivalence of the poet is very much visible because he wants it to be a secular poem but at the same time, he is unable to go against the tradition and creates a poem which emerges from sensuous love and turns ultimately into sublime love. Apparently, its structure of a love lyric has given it immense popularity which can be measured by the fact that by the 15th century as many as 132 imitations had appeared on the scene. In creating this love poem Jayadeva seemed to imply that love lyrics need not always be apostrophic or impersonal. What the Alvars sought to experience in relation to Krishna, Jayadeva actually experienced while singing about Krishna and his love – a personal experience of love. Thus the poetry is not intended to be general, timeless, abstracted from here and now but to a present God, or a specific audience, with whom the poet shares his God, his myths and his devotion. In Canto X.19 the poet says: ‘So sings Jayadeva, the poet, the spouse of Padmavati’ and then the song proceeds:

Dearest Radha! Oh the Sweet natured one! (says Krishna)

Punish me with your merciless tooth-bite

And shackle me with the rope of your delicate arms,

Inflict me with the intense pressure of your breasts.

One feels it is not Krishna but Jayadeva who is urging Padmavati to join him in the game of love because in the beginning of the poem Jayadeva says that his songs impel Padmavati to dance and he sings this song of love-frolic of Krishna as an accompaniment to her dance. The whole background is set on two levels: One is the level of earthly love and other is the level of Divine Game (*lila*) of Radha and Krishna. After all this poem is not only sung but enacted on stage, as created by Bharata in two levels – the higher level

is 'ranga sirsha' or the level of gods and the lower level is 'ranga pitha' which is the level of human beings. On the stage both the levels coalesce with each other to prove that the devotional poetry is a kind of means between the sacred and the profane, the metaphysical and the physical and thereby it refuses either as absolute priority and suggests that both have certain value and as a result the love of *Gita Govindam* is no longer admitted as subject of a debate whether it was profane or sacred. It became, for Indians, profane and sacred—both at the same time.

The later *Vaishnava* poets, particularly Vidyapati of Mithila and Chandidas, the Bengali poet have added new dimensions to the character of Radha, and built a mythology of Radha; but the credit goes to Jayadeva for introducing Radha, the passionate lover of Krishna who became the most towering personality of medieval Indian literature.

During the 14th to 17th centuries, a great *bhakti* movement swept through Central and Northern and Western India, and poets like Suradas (1487-1584), Mirabai (1498-1547), Kabir (1440-1518), Tulsidas (1532-1623), Namdev (1270-1350), Nanak (1469-1539), Jnaneshwar (1275-1296), Tukaram (1608-1650), Narsi Mehta (1413-1476), Akha Bhagat (1613-1663) and other devotional poets spearheaded the *bhakti* movement in the north. They thought that people could cast aside the heavy burdens of ritual and caste, and the subtle complexities of philosophy, and simply express their overwhelming love for God. It is generally believed that the *Varakari bhakti* movement, especially because of Namdev, turned out to be the motivating force, for the emergence of the *bhakti* movement in the north. This period was also characterized by a spate of devotional literature in prose and poetry in the Indian *bhashas* like Hindi, Braj, Avadhi, Marathi, Gujrati, Gurumukhi and other languages. Most of these *bhakti* poets focused their attention on Krishna or Rama and there were some who invoked the non-iconic, the One Supreme. In fact a very natural comingling of iconic (*saguna*) and non-iconic (*nirguna*) doctrines can easily be discovered in the poems or songs even of a singular devotional poet which establishes the existence of multiple layers in a single poetic universe.

Bhakti also became a vehicle for the feminine literary voice, which was seen as a contradiction to the dominance of the male literary voice in Sanskrit texts, rather than proving that *bhakti* practice existed beyond gender identification, it is exactly because of the repeated use of feminized experiences and the feminine perspective which ties *bhakti* to gender. Additionally, the conversational nature of *bhakti* extends through both the oral performance setting by which these poems were publicly circulated, as well as through conversational templates within the poems themselves.

While Vedic ritual and the Brahmin class conserved religious authority amongst themselves and practiced inside a closed circuit of their peers, *bhakti* initiated points of connection between the poet or the devotee and others. Characterized by a central tradition of vernacular composition, *bhakti* sentiments, both behavioural and poetic, challenged central elements of Brahminical social prescriptions and also repeated existing Sanskrit narratives regarding ethics and religion (*dharma*). While the use of emotive and theologically charged language, and the use of the feminine literary voice, remain notable themes across the *bhakti* poems of various authors, unanimous and uniform scholastic claims about the nature of *bhakti* rarely hold up to unmediated readings of specific poems or poets.

The term *bhakti*, from the Sanskrit root *bhaj*, is most commonly translated as devotion. However, the term also conveys other meanings or devotional moods which complicate and even contradict dominant academic conceptions of *bhakti*. A.K. Ramanujan in his book, *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Visnu by Nammalvar*, a book of poetry attributed to the Vaisnava poet-saint (880-930 CE), turns to a dictionary entry adapted from Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, for an extended translation of *bhaj*:

bhaj to divide, distribute, allot or apportion to, share with; to grant, bestow, furnish, supply; to obtain as one's share, receive as, partake of, enjoy (also carnally), to possess, have; to turn or resort to, engage in, assume (as a form), put on (garments), experience, incur, undergo, feel, go or fall into...to feel terror...; to pursue, practise, cultivate; to declare for, to prefer, choose (e.g. as a servant); to serve, honour, revere, love, adore.⁴⁰

Through this entry, Ramanujan traces the complicated variety of experiences which can be qualified as an expression of *bhakti*. And as the root *bhaj* shows, experiences related to *bhakti* are diverse and often surprisingly subversive. Ranging from declarations of love, themes of sharing or partaking, putting on or assuming, to experiences of possession and fear, *bhakti* revolves around a system of emotive yet active relationships which often appear antithetical. In each case of *bhakti*, direct engagement or intimacy with the divine remains central, even while the terms of *bhakti* engagement take on various forms. For those who emerged as proponents of *bhakti*, their compositions can often be seen as interrogating the divide within *dharma* between nature and nurture.

⁴⁰ Ramanujan, A. K. *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Visnu by Nammalvar*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Because dharma represents both ‘the good’ and ‘how to be good’ within life (*samsara*), an interrogative conversation between the two emerges.

Love Poem: A Case of Possession, by Nammalvar (translated by Ramanujan) reads:

*I'm beyond all learning,
I'm all the learning you learn.”
“I'm the cause of all learning,
I end all learning,
I'm the essence of all learning”, says she.
Does my girl talk this way
because our lord of all learning
has come and taken her over?
How can I tell you,
O learned men!*

—In the first stanza of the poem, Nammalvar uses the determiner ‘my’ to describe a girl who is supposedly “just learning to speak”. While his use of the determiner ‘my’ could infer that the child is his daughter or a relation, it could also be seen as a figurative or metaphorical imagination of himself. Although the poem begins within this pretense, by the third line, not only is the girl speaking, but she goes on to claim that she already embodies all the learning possible to achieve in the world. In addition, she paradoxically claims that she is simultaneously beyond all learning while also being the end of all learning. What Nammalvar stresses through this paradox is a girl who seems to be the center of all knowledge even while she has had little chance to study or even communicate, as Nammalvar suggests.

On the other hand, Kabir’s religious faith, which is rooted in his personal spiritual experience does not arise out of any formally fixed ideology or doctrine of bhakti. Kabir believes not in a personal but an impersonal God. His *bhakti* does not depend upon a dualistic view of Reality but rests on his keen awareness of the essential oneness of things. Furthermore, the emotional intensity of his devotionism does not rule out the path of self-knowledge or *jnana*. Kabir uses the word *bhakti* in its basic and intrinsic meaning, in the sense of a bhava or feeling, and implies by it a mental attitude, and not a formal belief. He very often uses the phrase *bhava-bhakti* in the sense of devotion. *Bhava-bhakti*, explains Kabir, can be known only through personal experience. It is not a matter of verbal exposition, nor can it be explained and known through argumentation

and hearsay. Thus, *bhakti* is not just a simple act of faith for Kabir, but is a reasoned and individual act of spiritual striving. According to Kabir *bhakti* is caused by and attained only through divine love which is not easy to find — the devotee must strive for it and remain constantly occupied with it. The divine love does not grow in the fields, nor is it sold in the public places; whether a king or a commoner, only he who holds it dearer than his own life – can obtain it.

Like Kabir, Dadu, Mira, Ravidas, Nanak, Lalladyad and many other *Nirguna sants* created a big stir in Northern India and spoke against the establishment. They wrote their poetry couched with mystical symbolism. Lalleshwari (1320-1392) also known as Lalla, was a mystic of the Kashmiri Shaivite sect, and creator of the mystic poetry called *Vaks*, literally meaning ‘speech’. Ravidas was the worshipper of the one infinite God, who is above and beyond all religious sects and without a beginning or an end. He preached that the Lord resides within the hearts of his devotees, and cannot be known through the performance of any rites and ceremonies. Only one who has felt the pangs of divine love will find Him, and the highest expression of religion in life is service to man. One of the greatest women saints of India, Mirabai, a worshipper of *Giradhar Gopal*, was later initiated into the worship of the One—the Infinite. Kabir, the central figure in the religious history of medieval India was not in favour of useless mortification of the flesh. He advised:

Be pure, live a natural and simple life. The whole creation is within your own self, behold creation there. There is no distinction of the outer and the inner, for all distinctions have been harmonized in Him who is beyond all distinctions. In his harmony are truth and realization.⁴¹

The most famous of the followers of Kabir’s ideals was Dadu (1544-1633), who believed in the value of self-realization, complete surrender to God who resides within the self and through love, devotion and meditation one can realize Him. The path to realization is not so much through prayers but by joining our service to His service to the universe. The unique thing that happened in the *Nirguna Sant* movement was that though the *Nirguna Sant*-poets including Nanak were against any kind of institutionalization of religion, yet they all had authorial identity of a poet and became patron saints of their

⁴¹ Sen, Kshitimohan. *The Medieval Mystics of North India* in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV. Ed. Haridas Bhattacharya. Calcutta, 1969.

respective *panths* or sectarian institutions whereas with other poets like Tulsidas, Surdas, Mirabai etc of the medieval period, this sectarian perspective, with its tendency to canonization and even apotheosis, is not so vividly present.

A prominent feature of the 14th century, when the *Bhakti* movement had covered the entire country, is the presence of Islam and Islamic culture: its forced conversions and the numerous raids enacted under the rule of the Mongol, Afghan and Turkish invaders; which culminated into the Mughals, establishing a stable Mughal empire by the earlier half of the 16th century. The advent and rule of Islamic invaders in their first century in India saw the Delhi Sultanate changing hands among the Mongols, Afghans and Turks who kept ousting and snatching power from each other; the inception of the *Bhakti* movement and the coming of Islam and the *Sufis* to India was curiously simultaneous in the north and north-west of India. The *Sufis*, who were rebel-saint-poets from within the Islamic infrastructure were identically placed, vis-a-vis the Islamic orthodoxy, its Ulemans and the Mullahs. The *Sants* and the *Sufis* in other words were representing the marginalised classes—the periphery; while the Brahmin orthodoxy and the Islamic fanatics were the priest-heads of the central ruling class.

Going back to history, *Sufism* was born in the 9th century Arabia and during its travel and sojourn through Iran and India, it underwent slight perceptual shifts. Between the end of the 12th century and the end of the fifteenth century, three great *Sufi* orders had migrated from Iraq and Persia into northern India. They were, the Chistis, the Suhrawardis and the Firdausis. The *Sufis* had followed the Muslim conquerors to India, more with a view to propagating Islam. However, only those survived, who absorbed and mingled with the culture of the land, and propagated a more liberal *Sufi* philosophy. Their approach to God was that a lover-wife, who pines for a reunion with her beloved husband, suffers, repents, undergoes asceticism, finally gains enlightenment and merges with God. Some *Sufis* justified the incorporation of music, not sanctified by orthodox Islam, on the ground that:

...a Sufi is a lover of God, and as such he stands in a different relation to God from others who are merely 'abd' or slaves. The Indian *Sufis* laid stress on repeating the name (japu), concentration (dhyān), and meditation (habs-i-dhyān)...like the Iranian *Sufis* who sang the praises of Yusuf Zulaikha, Laila Majnun and Shinn Farhad, the *Sufis* in the 17th, 18th century Punjab idealised the romances of Heer Ranjāh, Sohni Mahiwal and Sassi Punnun.⁴²

⁴² Sekhon, Sant Singh & Kartar Singh Duggal. *A History of Punjabi Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1992, 65.

Sufism is the mystical tradition in Islam which can be defined as a practical path of love leading to God, learned from and practised under the supervision of a spiritual teacher generally called a *Murshid*, *Sheikh* or *Pir*. Yet many elements of *Sufism* are universal features of mysticism, existing long before Islam. Although the religion to which all *Sufis* relate is Islam, *Sufism* is decidedly a case of eclecticism against dogmatism of Islam. Initially though it spread in Iran its origins are obscure. R.A. Nicholson comments: “The truth is that *Sufism* is a complex thing, and therefore no simple answer can be given to the question how it originated”.⁴³

Like all mystics, a *Sufi*'s knowledge is essentially experiential. His real learning comes through direct experience, not by mere knowledge. The essence of the *Sufi* message is that the experience of God is real; that God is everything and everything is God. Hence it is related that when *Rabiah/Rabi* (a *sufi* women from Basra) was once asked,

“Do you actually see Him whom you worship?”

She replied, “I would not worship Him unless I saw him”.⁴⁴

Sufism, as it developed, laid emphasis on spiritual meditation and ecstatic experience. It is monastic in substance, and believes that in essence and attributes God is absolute. As Mansur Hallaj said, ‘Ana’l Haqq’ (I am Truth), brings it close to the tenet of non-dualism found in Vedantic thought. Mansur spurned the role of a mediator between god and devotee, and believed in personal intuition and mystical ecstasy. He asserted passionately:

I am He whom I love

And He whom I love is I

We are two spirits dwelling in one body,

If thou seest me, thou seest him.

*And if thou seest him, thou seest us both.*⁴⁵

The *Sufis* aimed at *fana* which implied total destruction of the ego leading to *baqa*, the fusion of the self with God - an ideology akin to the non-dualism of the Vedanta.

⁴³ Nicholson, Reynold A., tr. *The Mystics of Islam*. London: Routledge, 1914.

⁴⁴ Davidson, John. *A Treasury of Mystic Terms: The Principles of Mysticism, Part 1*, New Delhi: Science of the Soul Research Centre, 2003.

⁴⁵ Zaehner, R.C. *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.

The two corner-stones of *Sufism* – i) *pir* or *guru* and ii) *love*—are very much near to the medieval devotional philosophy of *nirguna prema marga*. In this the lover and the beloved or the *Murid* and *Allah* become lover and beloved to be identified with each other so that the lover becomes the beloved and the beloved the lover, thus forging a complete fusion of the two into one. God, the creator and macrocosm, is commonly portrayed as an ocean, with man, the microcosm, as a drop or part of that ocean. God is the whole and each part of the creation in some way reflects the whole: man is not merely a drop that can merge with the ocean, but a drop that contains the ocean, a microcosm that contains the macrocosm. The theologians maintained that there could be no love between God and man because there can only be love between like and like, and God is totally unlike any created thing. When the *Quran* speaks of love, it means no more than obedience.

Sufis trace their tradition to *Rabiah*, the greatest exponent of a mystical love for God, or *Dhu'l-Nun*. To quote Zaehner, “For Dhu'l-Nun love is an intense yearning of the soul, and he is not afraid to use the word ‘Shawq’ meaning ‘passionate longing’, so to make the meaning clear”.⁴⁶

Sufism came to India quite early with the advent of Islam and reached far and wide in the country and made its place along with Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanical Hinduism with its several variants and regulated the literary production of medieval India. Love and spiritual devotion being the chief tenets of *Sufism* it had great attraction for the people in India. *Sufis*, like the Hindu saints, stressed on personal faith and the values of detachment and renunciation. Some of them like *Rabiah* believed in ‘loving devotion’ to the Lord – credo which approximated the Hindu concept of *bhakti*. According to Vijayendra Snatak though the *Sufi* ideology in India had Persian roots, it developed some special features of its own. The Indian *Sufis* recognized four stages (*maqamat*) in the journey of the self to God. The first is ‘*nasut*’ (the mundane) when a devotee has to observe the rituals and lead life in accordance with the teachings of the holy *Quran* and *Hadis*. The second stage is ‘*malakut*’ (the celestial) in which he tries to rise above the mundane world, purify himself and move further in the spiritual quest. The third stage is ‘*marifat*’ (spiritual knowledge) in which, equipped with inner strength, he moves along the path of ‘*jabrut*’ (the transcendental) that leads one to God. In the last

⁴⁶ Zaehner, R.C. *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.

stage ‘haqiqat’ (the Reality), he attains *Ultimate Truth* and realizes ‘lahut’ in terms of Indian metaphysical equivalents: ‘jagrat’ (world of manifestation, wakefulness), ‘swapna’ (world of souls, dreams), ‘sushupti’ (annihilation of distinction between Thou and I), and ‘turiya’ (union with the Supreme). He who realizes ‘lahut’ has an ecstatic experience which is beyond the power of words; to describe so, says Divani Shamsi Tabriz:

*He comes, a Moon whose like the sky ne'er saw,
awake of dreaming,
Crowned with eternal flame no flood can lay,
Lo, from the flagon of thy love! O Lord,
My soul is swimming,
And ruined all my body's house of clay.*

Rizvi is very emphatic that among the four *Sufi* orders (*Chisti*, *Suhrawardi*, *Silsila* and *Firdawsiyya*), the *Chistiya* order of *Sufis* is essentially an Indian one founded by Khwaja Mu'inud-Din Chistie.⁴⁷ He died on 1236 at the age of 96 in Ajmer and since then Ajmer became an important *Sufi* centre. In the 8th century after Islam was introduced in Sindh and part of Punjab, Sufism became a big attraction and poets like Sheikh or Baba Farid (1173-1265), Shah Hussain (1539-1592), Sultan Bahu (1629-1591), Bulleh Shah (1680-1759) and other *Sufi* poets, having their equal influence on the Hindus and the Muslims, contributed a lot to the propagation of ethical and spiritual values of life. *Sufis* and Sikh gurus, having some common elements in their belief and faith, were able to work together for the social and religious awakening of the people in Punjab. These *Sufi* poets reorganized the Punjabi language and gave it a standard form and some of them are known to be architects of modern Punjabi language. The brief sayings of Baba Farid are indeed pearls of wisdom emerging out of his long experience, often couched in memorable language and the apt figures of speech:

*Don't belittle the dust, O Farid!
No one equals its worth indeed
While we live: 'tis under our feet,
And over our head, when we are dead.*

⁴⁷ Rizvi, Sayyad Athar Abbas, *A History of Sufism in India, Vol. I*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994.

In Hindi literature the philosophy of *Sufism* turned into an ideology of love and a distinct tradition of *Sufi* epic poetry (*Sufi premakhyan kavya*) based on the theme of love, made the medieval Hindi poetry rich and meaningful. Mulla Daud's *Chandraya*, Kutban's *Mrigavati* and Malik Muhammad Jayasi's *Padmavat* and other *Sufi* love epics, mostly written in 'Masnavi' style depict the theme of love and beauty using the story as an allegory to establish the philosophy of *Sufism* of union of the self with the Supreme.

In Sindhi, poets like Sachal Sarmast have exercised their undying influence by expounding truth and beauty through music and dance and made Sind the chosen place for *Sufism*. Infact, Rumi, the great and celebrated founder of the Vedantic type of *Sufism* in Islam introduced 'sama', a particular type of devotional dance as part of *Sufism* which was later on introduced in India particularly by every *Sufi* saint in different languages of India.

Sufism reached Kashmir in the 14th century and Kashmiri poetry came directly under the influence of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) of *Sufism* while the influence of Buddhist *sunyavada*, Kashmiri *Saivism*, Vedanta and *bhakti* had been already there and all these impacted Kashmiri literature. Nund Rishi, a Muslim by faith added Vedanta to his *Sufi* ideology in his poetry and created a confluence of various streams of mysticism.

His poetry known as 'Shrukh' (*shloka*) is recited as sacred lore, which at times touches the sublime. In his thinking and execution of the theme, he is close to Guru Nanak and Kabir. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325), the father of Urdu literature, was a celebrated *Sufi* poet, and a disciple of Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya. He wrote in Persian or Hindi and sometimes by mixing both the codes. Khusrau wrote a very meaningful *Sufi* couplet on the death of his *Murshid* Nizam-ud-Din Auliya which celebrates the love, that is the fundamental source of *Sufism*:

The beloved sleep on her couch with her face covered

With her curled locks

Oh Khusrau! Return to your own home for the

*Entire world is now covered by night.*⁴⁸

It will not be out of context to mention here the historical significance of the *Malfuz* literature of medieval India. *Malfuz* literally means 'words spoken'; in common parlance

⁴⁸ Rizvi, Sayyad Athar Abbas, *A History of Sufism in India, Vol. I*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994.

the term is used for the conversations or table talks of a mystic teacher. It was in 1307 that Amir Hasan Sijzi, a famous poet of the Khilji period and a friend of Amir Khusrau, decided to write a summary of what he heard from his master, Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya. The decision was epoch making, so says K.A. Nizami, as it marked the beginning of a new type of mystic literature, known as *Malfuzat*. Amir Hasan's collection of his spiritual mentor's utterances, the *Fawa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, was welcome in mystic circles and it became a guide book (*dastur*) for mystics anxious to traverse the mystic journey. It inspired others to render similar services to their masters. The tradition of *Malfuz* literature was followed by saints of all *Sufi* affiliations (*silsilahs*): *Chistis*, *Suhrawardis*, *Firdausis*, *Shattaris*, *Quadiris*, *Maghribis* and *Naqshabandis*. The enormous *Malfuz* literature appeared from every part of India and it continued to be produced during Mughal period and became a tradition with mystics of all *silsilahs* to get their *malfuzat* recorded by some of their learned disciples. The *Sufi* quest was for spiritual purity and union with God. It was thought that this could be attained through self-examination, physical and mental discipline, and the life of service. *Sufism* with its doctrines of self-effacement and Divine Love had a great influence on the medieval Indian literature.

If the start-off point for the medieval Indian literature is 7th century AD then one could easily include in it the emergence of a new genre in Sanskrit which is normally designated as *gadya-kavya* or romance by the Western scholars. Its origin can be traced in the stories in the Vedic literature and its structure is similar to *Betala Panchavimshati* or *Shuka Saptati*, where several stories are connected by one main story or what is known as chain story configuration. As S.K. De suggests, "Its immediate ancestor is the ornate *kavya* itself, whose graces were transferred from verse to prose for the purpose of rehandling and elaborating the popular tale".⁴⁹ Another trend in the medieval times, practically in every language, the poetry of love tales commingled with the philosophy of *bhakti*, both Krishna *bhakti* and *Sufi* mysticism, was a very popular way of literary expression. The heroic and the romantic either alternately or together are used as subject matter of these love narratives. Malik Mohammad Jayasi (16th century), a Muslim *Sufi* poet writing in Avadhi Hindi related love tales of human conditions but at the same time using it allegorically to express love for God. All these poets accepted the non-iconic way of worship, but a glimpse of the iconic God was visible in their poetry owing to the acknowledgement of the symbolic style in the description pertaining to God.

⁴⁹ De, S.K. *History of Sanskrit Poetry*. Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1960.

The *mangalakavya* in medieval Bengali literature in praise of certain deities can be defined as a longer narrative poem where the earthly life of a deity is described with the message that if the deity is worshipped with devotion and respect, he would appear as benign (*mangala*) to poets, worshippers and audience. Vijayagupta, Mukundarama and others are poets of this genre which can be termed as poetry of miracle and battle. In Bengali the love tales of *Sati Mayna* or *Lor-Chandrani* by the 17th century poet Daulat Qazi are well known which describe Sufi mysticism under the garb of allegory. Similarly, Sayyad Alawol (1673) composed Jayasi's *Padmavat* in Bengali with some *Sufi* gleanings here and there and made himself very popular in the court of the mong king of Arkan. The medieval Indian literature enriched by several religious and philosophical traditions also had the presence of a new trend, still not vigorous but highly refreshing—the poetry of Buddhist *Sahajiya* and its proximity to real life and nature.

What is fascinating in *bhakti* poetry is the manner in which medieval India evolved a language of symbolism that became universal. By the time Jayadeva came into scene, Indian symbolism of the bee and the lotus, the mango-blossom or the southern breeze that generates love, the magic of the flute, the inseparable sakhi, and the clandestine tryst all turned into pan-Indian conventions of symbolism. The medieval India enriched by extraordinary religious fervour brought the temples into the centre. The Indian religious life in all periods has been dominated by holy places including temples which meant in the most of the Indian languages 'the house of god'⁵⁰. The *bhakti* movement in the south and less in the north is so intimately connected with the temples that it is not possible to appreciate the background of this great literary and mass movement without realizing their interdependence.

Most of the medieval literatures show a happy blending of the secular and the sacred. In the devotional poetry of India mundane meets the spiritual to celebrate life. The devotional poetry is a kind of means between the sacred and the mundane, the metaphysical and physical and thereby it refuses either world on absolute priority and suggests that both have certain values. This poetry gives the experience of the limitless infinite in the finite. It is nearness; it is moving in the same region and realizing one's transcendental Self within the limitation of one's worldly existence.

⁵⁰ Choudhuri, Indra Nath, *The Genesis of Imagination*. New Delhi: Sterling, 2001.

2.7 Eastern & Western: Earl Miner

Lyric poetry has a long history in the West but an uncertain generic status. The renowned comparatist Earl Miner concludes:

Lyric is the foundation genre for the poetics or literary assumptions of cultures throughout the world. Only Western poetics differs. Even the major civilizations that have not shown a need to develop a systematic poetics (the Islamic, for instance) have demonstrably based their ideas of literature on lyric assumptions.⁵¹

And he adds “The first thing to be said of lyric poetic systems is that they are not mimetic”.

One might argue that it is for quite contingent reasons—the fact that Aristotle wrote a treatise on mimetic poetry, poetry as an imitation of action, and not on the other poetic forms that were central to Greek culture—that Western literary theory neglected the lyric until the romantic era. Aristotle was thoroughly familiar with the Greek lyric, as numerous examples in his Rhetoric show, but he omitted it from the Poetics, probably because he viewed it not as a form of mimesis but as epideictic, like oratory, a versified discourse about what is to be valued, praised or blamed.

At any rate, because of Aristotle’s decision, lyric was treated as a miscellaneous collection of minor forms, despite the flourishing of lyric in ancient Rome, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Lyric was finally made one of three fundamental genres in the late 18th century, when a more vigorous and highly-developed conception of the individual subject made it possible to conceive of lyric as mimetic: an imitation of the experience of the subject. The Abbé Batteux’s *Principes de la littérature* (1775) emphatically reinserts the lyric within the Aristotelian framework of literature as mimesis—mimesis of feeling—and lays the groundwork for the romantic elevation of lyric to the poetic norm or even the essence of literature, even though thinkers quickly moved from a mimetic to an expressive theory of the lyric.

Hegel offers the fullest exposition of the romantic theory of the lyric, as subjectivity coming to consciousness of itself. The lyric poet absorbs the external world, stamps it with inner consciousness, and gives expression to this enriched poetic inner life, this

⁵¹ Miner, Earl. “Why Lyric?” in *The Renewal of Song: Renovation in Lyric Conception and Practice*. eds. Earl, Miner and Amiya Dev. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2000, 5.

subjectivity. This conception of the lyric, as a representation of subjective experience, while widely disseminated and influential, no longer has great currency in the academic world. It has been replaced by a variant that treats the lyric not as mimesis of the experience of the poet but as a representation of the action of a fictional speaker: in this account, the lyric is spoken by a persona, whose situation and motivation one needs to reconstruct. This has become the dominant model in the pedagogy of the lyric in the Anglo-American world, though not elsewhere.

The most explicit theoretical account of this widespread implicit theory is Barbara Herrnstein Smith's: lyric is an imitation but of a speech act. In effect, the dramatic monologue, which puts on stage a character speaking to a defined audience or to him – or herself, is made the model for lyric, which becomes the fictional imitation or representation of a real-world speech act.⁵² One of the leading New Critics, John Crowe Ransom, offers a remarkable version of this claim:

The poet does not speak in his own but in an assumed character, not in the actual but in an assumed situation, and the first thing we do as readers of poetry is to determine precisely what character and what situation are assumed. In this examination lies the possibility of critical understanding and, at the same time, of illusion and the enjoyment.⁵³

“Just as the feminist argument rests on the unshakable rock that justice be done to that half of the race that bears us, so consideration of the other three-quarters or four-fifths of the race must enter into any literary study denominating itself comparative”.⁵⁴ – with that declaration Earl Miner in *Comparative Poetics* sets out to explore both western and non-western literary traditions in search of poetics that would lay claim to true universal validity. He undertook such an ambitious exploration, for he has worked extensively in both English and east Asian literatures all through his career. It is as if he was trying to look back on his own past writings and organize them into a coherent theory of literature. On the other hand, the retrospective stance seems to have helped him to ascertain his literary taste with a greater conviction than ever before: the book, despite its theoretical outlook, contains a number of highly personal statements that reflect his own likes and dislikes.

⁵² Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. *Poetic Closure: A Study of how Poems End*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

⁵³ Ransom, John Crowe. *The World's Body*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1938.

⁵⁴ Miner, Earl. *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, 259.

Miner, here attempts to define the basic nature of three major literary genres. For each genre he sets up a couple of key concepts which he believes are universal enough to be meaningfully applied to all literatures. In drama they are “estrangement” – a sense of distance from what we presume to be real, and “engagement” – a sense of involvement in what we know is not real. Lyric seen as a genre distinguished by “presence”, an illusion of personally being at a specific temporal point, and “intensification” – a feeling of something universal and permanent being condensed into that point. The essentials of the third genre, narrative, make a sharp contrast with those of lyric, for they are “continuum” – an extension of time that allows a sequence of events to develop, and “fulfilment” – a satisfying end that cuts off that extension and makes it a meaningful whole. Drawing on his broad knowledge of the world’s literatures, Miner examines how those basic concepts and their corollaries manifest themselves in a wide variety of works.

Miner’s ultimate goal, however, is not so much to elucidate the features of individual genres as to seek out an intercultural theory of literature that can be founded on them. He repeatedly brings up the question: How does a poetics derived from intercultural comparisons differ from a poetics founded on western culture alone? He tries to answer the question at various points, mainly through comparisons between European and East-Asian literature. He observes, for instance, that western theories of literature are by and large based on mimetic assumptions. whereas their East-Asian counterparts are dominated by factual presumptions. Whereas critics in East-Asia have always paid high respect to the poet in their reading of a poem, westerners’ tendency to distrust “the author” has led to the concept of “intentional fallacy” and finally to Deconstructionism. The idea of the narrative point of view may not be as widely applicable as western theorists may believe, for narratives in east Asia make more use of the “point of attention”, the focal point of what is seen and narrated. According to Miner, these and other differences are observable between western and non-western theories of literature mainly because Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the foundation of all European theories, was built on drama. By contrast, major non-western theories of literature had their origins in lyric poetry.

One may argue that many of Miner’s points have been made by other comparatists before, albeit in different terms. Yet one would have to agree that they have seldom been made in a context as general and comprehensive as his. Specific comparisons he makes in support of his contentions are often original and revealing. For example, in order to

show how the point of attention can be manipulated for a narrative purpose, Miner first discusses a brief scene in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, then analyzes long passages from *The Diary of Izumi Shikibu* and *The Tale of Genji*, and finally compares them to a paragraph in Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*. On another occasion he juxtaposes a classical Chinese lyric, Tennyson's *The Princess*, a poem by Emily Dickinson, and two *tanka* by Fujiwara Teika, thereby illustrating how poems dissimilar in language and cultural background can share the common purpose of lyric intensification. Miner's interpretive comments on these and many other examples are laden with original insights made from a viewpoint that goes well beyond the borders of western culture.

The systematic comparison of poetic systems in different cultures has been quite neglected in the past. This has thwarted the possibility of finding culture-independent invariants in poetics. Miner's central argument is that an originaive poetics develops when a critic or critics of insight defines the nature and conditions of literature in terms of the then most esteemed genre. In employing the term 'genre' Miner has in mind the classical (western) division into drama, lyric and narrative. What matters here is that various cultures have come up with different poetic systems because they based themselves on different 'foundation genres' which, in turn, played very different roles in those different cultures. If there are important works of literature which seem a little starved of attention, some such policy of deferment was surely inevitable.

Miner's undoubted erudition leads him to some conclusions of very great scope and ambition, and it is here that reservations begin to arise. His principal conclusion, which indeed he describes as 'the central issue of comparative poetics', is that Western literature is unique because its foundational poetics is mimetic. Miner is quick to disavow any claims of superiority on this ground: the fundamentally representational character of Western literature is just a fact, not merit. All other world literatures, he claims, are essentially affective/expressive (a category which Miner also stretches to include the didactic), and their foundational genre is therefore the lyric poem, not, as in the West, the drama.

Crucial to Miner's argument is his finding that the Eastern classics converge with the genre of lyric; he dubs this genre as "affective-expressive". The East, however, grounds its lyric in historical fact and the initial assumption that the poet and the narrator are one; the West, despite Horace's grafting of an affective expressive component, relies on fiction and the awkward taboo against any immediate identification of the author with

the narrator. Lyric shares the estrangement of drama but is of the “moment” and, Miner argues that to be a literature of radical presence. Lyric uses other genres to become more lyrical; its conventions are repetition as emphasis, rhythm, and the use of “attributive versions of drama and narrative” in the reduction of active characters. For the Chinese lyric fictionality is not an interpretive option, because there is a firm belief in intentionalism. In Japan, however, the poet is the speaker, notwithstanding demur in the West on the part of New Criticism.

Of course, Miner is aware of the strong currents of affective, expressive, and formalist endeavour which coexist in Western literature with mimesis. But he still holds this last to be ‘foundational’. In the same way, the fact that *Genji Monogatari*, ‘the greatest work of Japanese literature’, is a narrative does not dent Miner’s confidence that Japanese, and indeed East-Asian literature as a whole, is essentially lyrical in outlook.

These difficulties can be seen in Miner’s two arguments for his central claim that Western literature is mimetic. The first derives from the influence of Aristotle, though Miner’s concept of mimesis, as far as can be determined, seems to be closer to Plato than Aristotle. M. H. Abrams held, in his classic study *The Mirror and the Lamp*, that the concept that art is imitation; it played an important part in neo-classic aesthetics—but closer inspection shows that it did not, in most theories, play the dominant part. Thus, for Abrams, Sir Philip Sidney is only superficially Aristotelian. Miner cites him, on the other hand, as a fundamentally mimetic theorist. There are really two problems here, neither of which Miner sufficiently addresses: what exactly did Aristotle mean by mimesis; and, what, if anything, does ‘fundamental’ or ‘foundational’ mean in this context? Be that as it may, the question certainly demands more clarification of terms than Miner gives it: is ‘fundamental’ or ‘foundational’, for example, to be referred to the writer’s intentions, the critic’s explanations, or the reader’s untutored response? Miner never defines the term, and this must be considered a paralyzing omission.

Miner’s second argument turns not on the historical influence of a critic writing at a time when most Western literature did not exist, but on the current use in the critical discourse of a number of allegedly mimetic terms. Miner lists ‘representation’, ‘fiction’, ‘originality’, ‘unity’, ‘plot’, and ‘character’. On hearing these, he says, ‘one knows the talk is mimetic’. He does not explain why ‘unity’ or ‘character’, for example, are covertly mimetic terms, but perhaps ‘representation’, on which he lays most stress seems clearly mimetic, even if the rest do not.

But of course, Miner's ambitious enterprise raises in acute form several problems of relativism, and his richly illustrated work on defining 'drama', 'lyric', and 'narrative' across the cultural divides is full of interest and insight. Miner's arguments are successful in its deployment of a wide-ranging and humane erudition to raise, if not settle, a number of important theoretical issues.

Beside representing an elegant example of the comparatist's approach to texts, its greatest value lies in Miner's understanding of what has, should, and should not define comparative studies as an academic discipline. In witty, readable prose, he uncovers the mimetic assumptions that have controlled the West's literary theory. He even lists their lexis. He makes an excellent case for a lyric expressiveness and effectiveness, even if he has to arrogate Horace into a somewhat uneasy position to do so. He legitimizes the modernist argument for "estrangement" in lyric and drama and goes far to bring into legitimate question New Critical norms about fact, fiction, narrator, author, and authorial intention.

For a book of poetics, *Comparative Poetics* is not as tightly structured or neatly systematic as one might expect. It is, rather, a book that makes its points by raising important issues for debate. Because the amount of material covered is so vast, and because the author is not timid in making large generalizations, readers are likely to find a point of disagreement here and there. One might raise questions at some general observations, for instance, that there is no Japanese didactic literature of importance or that in east Asia narrative affiliations with lyric and drama are not to be sought in verse narrative. Of course, anyone who attempts this kind of comparative study must face problems of evaluation and judgment, of setting up criteria that are at once unbiased and workable. The author is aware of the problems and discusses them through "Relativism". Yet, problems of relativism aside, such intercultural generalizations have the effect of leading us to ponder critical issues at a level free from ethnocentrism. All comparatists, no matter what specific disagreements they may have with Miner, will find it difficult to dismiss the sentence with which he concludes the book: "The great gain from intercultural comparative study is that it avoids taking the local for the universal, the momentary for the constant and, above all, the familiar for the inevitable".⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Miner, Earl. *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

To compare the correspondences between the Indian schools and the Western schools is to be amazingly aware of the immensity and profundity of the systematic study of the Indian aestheticians. By comparison the Western poetics appears perfunctory in spite of occasional bright insightful flashes that we find in Aristotle, Coleridge or Mallarme for that matter. In the culturally different west, the perception of the four-fold goals of life, of final liberation of the soul from the bounds of the worldly-life and the blissful enjoyment of *rasa* are absent in the philosophical or critical scenario. Like Valmiki in India, Homer is the major ancient poet of the western tradition. Homer had sung the story of the legendary war of the Greeks against the city of Troy, and is considered as the father of classical Greek culture which the Europeans regard as their common legacy. In the *Iliad Book-I* Homer urges the muse to sing about the wrath of Achilles that caused misery to his enemies and also about the fulfilment of the will of Zeus, the head of all Olympian Gods. In *Odyssey* he narrates the wanderings and sufferings of Odysseus who could not return to the Kingdom of Ithaca and re-join his family after the Trojan War because he had been the target of the anger of Poseidon, the god of the seas. Like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in India, the narration of heroic deeds and the potential mythology of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* for the sake of glory, obligation, wealth and desire contributed to the flourishing of arts and literature in ancient Europe. The influence of Greek literature had been continuing in Europe throughout the mediaeval ages and the inspirational power of these epics has not been totally diminished even in the modern times.

Indian Aesthetics considers 'Rasa' as of paramount importance in poetry, and expends considerable energy in analysing the process of Aesthetic Realisation, which is experienced by the connoisseurs of poetry. Western Aesthetics also consider experience of Bliss as the aim of Poetry, but because of the mental set up of literary theoreticians it fails to arrive at the Infinite that constitutes the seat of Bliss and Beauty. Aristotle mainly discusses the external elements of Poetry and while analysing the concept 'Katharsis' describes it as the method of purgation that makes the man free from the thoughts concerning his mundane existence. Aristotle, however, does not take Poetry to a higher level, and does not assert the principle that Poetry not only makes the man free from all mundane prepositions but places him on a higher plane reaching which he can realise his kinship with all the members of the Universe, because the Infinite is present in all. It is here that Western Aesthetics differs mainly from Indian Aesthetics, because while Indian theoreticians describe the experience of identity of the man with the Infinite as the goal

of human existence, Western theoreticians put more emphasis on individuality and consider Poetry as an expression of the individuality of the artist. It is here that it is necessary to understand the distinction between 'individuality' and 'personality'. While 'individuality' prompts the individual to remain alone, unable to experience his kinship with the members of the universe, 'personality' enables the man to consider himself as one, related not only to all members of humanity, but to all members of the association of the universe. It is because of this that while the individual establishes the relation of confrontation with others, 'personality' enables the man to enter into the hearts of others and share their joys and sorrows.

While Western Aesthetics suffers from this deficiency it must be said to its credit that it has been able to present certain general truths that are in line with the truths projected by Indian Aesthetics. Thus, Longinus gives profound importance to the function of Suggestion and asserts that in the Sublime Poetry the function of Suggestion is of paramount importance and when this function of Suggestion is triggered into action it unfolds multiple tiers of meaning and implant Sublimity in the document of literary art. It is because of this that when one dives deep into Longinus he has the feeling that these happen to be the writings of Anandavardhana, the propounder of the doctrine of *Dhvani*. Shelley, in his "Defence of Poetry" says the same thing and following the line of Anandavardhana says that the function of Suggestion converts the most ugly into the most lovely, enabling the refined reader to have experiences of Beauty. Coleridge similarly considers the function of Suggestion as of paramount importance and describes Poetry as an organic whole. At the same time he asserts that even if a single expression is dissociated from the structure of Poetry it makes the poet say something else than what he intends to say. It is refreshing to note that T.S. Eliot is the only literary artist, who dives deep into the theory of Aesthetic Realisation and floats the concept of 'objective correlative', that is nothing but the conglomeration of the excitant and the ensuant, the permanent and the transient moods. Eliot is influenced to a great extent by the speculations of Indian philosophers and consequently it becomes easy for him to speak of the subordination of tiny ego and emergence of expanded ego, consequential upon the experience of Beauty. It is this expansion of ego-boundary that constitutes the essence of Aesthetic Realisation.

Broadly, there is a common agreement that the end of poetry is pleasure derived out of the aesthetics of a poem, although for the Horatian school the end is not just pleasure, but pleasure with instruction. There is also a common agreement that a poem is a verbal

artifact where everything happens or is made to happen through language. To compare Western and Eastern poetic traditions, scholars have often turned to the subjective element and toward universalizing understandings of poetry as a primeval speech form closely related to song, which ultimately arises from an innate human need for emotional utterance. This understanding of poetry has been useful to comparatists because it assumes the universality of poetry – its definition, its uses and social functions – in order to establish uncomplicated grounds for comparison.

It is, in fact, this broad sense of lyric that informs the notion of world literature, both as Goethe posited it in the early nineteenth century as *Weltliteratur* and as it has continued to be understood today. Goethe was convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times.

What makes poetic experience special, according to Indian theory, is the fact that it has not only *abhidha*, but also the power of generalization (*bhavakatva*). Therefore aesthetic object and subject are freed from individuality, which is called *sadharanikarana*. Enjoyment (*bhojakatva*) is another power of language. This power allows the spectator to relish the experience in a poetic creation at the aesthetic level, rather than at the practical.

In Western theory, the appeal of poetry is discussed by, among others, literary critic I. A. Richards. The first experience in reading poetry is hearing the sound of the words, and then building up images in our minds. In poetry, words are mostly ambiguous or contain different meanings, and this triggers our minds to work more laboriously. In “Poetry and Abstract Thought”, Paul Valery says that “poetry is an art of language”⁵⁶. Language is a means of communication. It has phonetic and semantic functions. But a poet, with his or her intellect and aesthetics, can transform language into a certain state that will affect the readers. Valery compares poetry and prose by saying that they are like dancing and walking. Unlike walking, dancing has no goal. Its end is in itself. Language in poetry is understood by the reader through its meaning. So the role of a poet is making the bond between the word and the mind closer.

⁵⁶ Valery, Paul. *The Art of Poetry*, trans. Denise Folliot. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.

2.8 19th century Bengal: ‘Geetikabita’

The definition of ‘Lyric’ has evolved with time from the initial idea of songs, which were performed with ‘lyre’—a special type of musical instrument. In ‘Lyric’ each poem shall turn upon some thought feeling or situation. Lyric poetry is the expression by the poet of his own feelings and here, the person ‘I’ prevails over all others. That ‘I’ is the poet himself or the poet’s own being.

Greek, Egyptian, and Hebrew lyric poetry originated from religious reform and practice. However, these lyric poems are generally considered as the seeds of lyric poetry. The lyric poems written in the 7th century BC have two phases: personal lyric by Sappho, Alcacus on one side; and impersonal and objective lyric by Alcman, Ibycus, Arion, Stesichorus on the other. Later, Church lyrics were written by Abelard, Ausonius, Fortunatus, Paulinus. In medieval Bengali Vaishnava poetry, the mysterious ambiguity, the desire for distant beauty, the richness of imagination, the intense emotional realization, the imagination of ideal beauty, the expression of pictorial existence, love of nature and religious passion can be seen. Rabindranath himself called Vidyapati’s compositions to be “Geetikabita”. There are some signs of lyric poetry in *Shakta* verses too.

The Romantic era is the golden age of lyric poetry in English literature. Wordsworth teamed up with Coleridge to publish the *Lyrical Ballads* (1820), Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Swinburne, Browning’s poems have rightly become lyric poetry. From this time onwards, three categories can be observed in the lyric poetry: (1) Philosophical lyric poetry, (2) Thoughtful lyric poetry, and (3) Emotional lyric poetry. In modern lyric poetry, instead of religious sentiments, the sentiments of the poet’s individual heart have been appeased.

The signs of the so-called lyric poetry of the modern age in Bengali literature appeared first in 1862 in Madhusudan’s ‘Atmavilap’. Here, the intense personal feelings of the poet’s mind were rightly expressed. However, the pioneer of Bengali lyric poetry is Biharilal Chakraborty. In this context, Rabindranath himself has called him the ‘bird of dawn’ in the history of Bengali poetry (বাংলা কাব্য সাহিত্যের ভোরের পাখী). The matter, however, is subject to historical judgment. Before the emergence of Biharilal as a poet, modern Bengali lyric poetry was created by many poets like Madhusudan—the origin of lyric poetry can be traced back to his sonnet formulas. The poetic soul of Madhusudan was

formed by an amalgamation of classical and lyrical essence. As a result, in his epic or narrative poetry, on the one hand, he felt the flow of lyricism, and on the other hand, he wrote some unique fragments of poems, where his personal heartfelt emotions have been highlighted. Madhusudan's 'রেখো মা দাসে রে মনে' or 'আশার ছলনে ভুলি কি ফল লভিনু হয়' can be regarded as pure lyric poems in their exuberant vibration of emotion.

Madhusudan's poetic genius was a combination of classicism and romanticism. Therefore, some of the features of modern romantic lyric poetry, the far-sightedness, the mystical ambiguity etc. have not become very clear in those. Moreover, Madhusudan never primarily aimed at composing lyric poems; Biharilal, on the other hand, did not think of composing poems other than lyric poems. In the same way that Wordsworth started a new era in English literature, a new era started in Bengali literature centered on Biharilal Chakraborty's 'Sardamangal'.

The importance of Biharilal in the domain of Bengali Literature is that he was the first poet to capture the basic tone of the lyric poetry. The collection of poems like 'সঙ্গীত শতক', 'বঙ্গ সুন্দরী', 'প্রেম প্রবাহিনী' etc. express the poet's natural emotions and personal feelings.

'নিসর্গ সন্দর্শন'-এ 'সমুদ্রদর্শন' জনিত উল্লাস এবং নভোমণ্ডল'-এর বর্ণনা শিল্প সার্থকভাবে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

'বঙ্গসুন্দরী'তে গীতিকবির বিরহ কোনো কাব্যিক রূপে রূপায়িত হয়েছে। উষা বন্দনা দিয়ে বিহারীলালের শ্রেষ্ঠ গীতিকাব্য

'সারদামঙ্গল' শুরু হয়েছে—

চরণ কমলে লেখা

আধ আধ রবি রেখা

সর্বাস্তে গোলাপ-আভা, সীমান্ত গুরুতারা জ্বলে।

'সাধের আসন' কাব্যে কবি নিজস্ব সৌন্দর্যের অধিষ্ঠাত্রী দেবীকে অন্বেষণ করেছেন। সৌন্দর্যের দেবীকে তিনি পান আবার

পেয়েও হারান। সৌন্দর্যের অনুভূতি এবং মিস্টিক অনুভূতি এখানে মিলেমিশে একাকার হয়ে গেছে। 'বাউল বিংশতি',

'দেবরাণী'; 'ধূমকেতু' প্রভৃতিতে কবির আত্মভাব, সৌন্দর্য অনুভূতি, বিরহচেতনা প্রাধান্য পেয়েছে।⁵⁷

The first poet who went far enough to introduce the new epoch in Bengali literature was the very talented Michael Madhusudan Dutt. He can be called a pre-Romanticist. In his epic poem *Tilottamasambhaba kavya* (1860), he broke the chains of traditional rhyme and introduced blank verse, but in *Meghnadbadh kavya* (1861), the poet turns the characters and events upside down by depriving Rama of any divine halo and turning the

⁵⁷ ঘোষ ও মুখোপাধ্যায় (সম্পা.) । *উনিশ শতকের গীতিকবিতা* । কলকাতা: জে. এন. ঘোষ এন্ড সন্স । ২০০৮ ।

demon king Ravana and his son Meghnad into heroes. His individualistic and subjective approach and his brilliancy of imagination and delicate sense of beauty proved to those who could appreciate what this religious and aesthetic rebel did that one can write poetry as powerful in Bengali as in English. In good writing, he was followed by a very great authority in imaginative prose, essayistic writing, and social thought: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. From the view-point of the changes that took place in the sensibility of Bengali intellectuals, Bankimchandra by far was not alone. The talented poets Rangalal Bandyopadhyay and Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay each in their own way also represented the new age, of which a limited individualism, aesthetic non-traditionalism, locally patriotic motives, and a return to India's history were characteristic.

Now it is a trite assertion that Biharilal Chakravarty was, in the words of Bishnupada Panda, 'the crown-gem of those very few poets in Bengali literature, whom the critics have treated as entirely unconventional'.⁵⁸

Practically by every researcher, he is also called the first genuinely modern lyricist. Yet one cannot say that he has ever been widely read regardless of Rabindranath's praises of him and the statement after Biharilal's death in 1894 that to those who knew him, he was 'the greatest poet of Bengal'. Saying so, Rabindranath may not have meant only or mainly the poetic talent of Biharilal Chakravarty, but his fully liberated, highly imaginative sensibility, which marks a clear break with the writing of all his predecessors. Nature and love—the two main themes around which much else in Biharilal's writing revolves—are not new at all. Yet for the first time in Bengali, a poet from his heart addresses the reader's heart, by-passing religious factors or moralistic maxims. Beyond doubt, Biharilal also teaches as even art-for-art's sake prophets like Oscar Wilde teach. But his teachings are genuinely novel and centre around undeclared yet unmistakable stress on full artistic freedom, which also means ideological and social freedom as far as Indian conditions permitted them. The poet was a very mild person and extremely kind to all those who happened to know him personally. He usually protests indirectly. Yet Biharilal Chakravarty is also capable of expressions that Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay could not even express through his character Kamalakanta:

The Bible, the Koran, the Vedas

Do not remove the mind's grief.

⁵⁸ Panda, Bishupada. *The Poet Biharilal Chakravarty and the Bengali Poetry*. Calcutta: Sarat Publishing House, 1981.

*Piling up philosophies
Only aggravates confusion.*⁵⁹

It is quite difficult to mention the source of influence for these compositions. It seems so obvious that Wordsworth or Shelley lived much earlier than Biharilal Chakravarty, let alone Tagore, that the treatment of nature or love, or woman, or poetic beauty and beauty in general underwent great changes after the 1870s in Bengal, followed by what took place in Germany and England at the very end of the 18th century. It is also beyond questioning that the main authorities for Bengali poets and writers in the second half of the 19th century were English and American Romanticists. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay a well-known historian of Bengali literature, concludes that not only English literature but a ‘lyric turn of mind since birth’⁶⁰ made Biharilal so much like the Lake School poets. That is, at least in his case the critic is ready to admit that English nuances were not deciding. If one looks closely at what was happening in Bengal beginning approximately 1870, it becomes clear that neither Biharilal Chakravarty, nor Rabindranath Tagore, nor other poets, were sheer echoes of European or American Romanticists. Ishwarchandra Gupta could not set before him the aim to express the unknowable or even in a way create poetic beauty for beauty’s sake as Biharilal Chakravarty did, because he was a child of another epoch. But Chakravarty, perhaps being no less rational in his own everyday life than Gupta, creates the mysterious goddess *Sarada*, the quintessence of which might be the poetic impossibility to look at man and the world that surrounds him in no other way than with eyes full of wonders and insoluble dilemmas. In Biharilal’s poems, we meet with almost ceaseless questioning, he often uses the word *ananta* (boundless), even discussing the lyrical hero’s sleep. For the poet:

*Mystery is life in the world,
Mystery its manifestation,
In mystery is clad the existent universe.
Mysterious are also brothers and friends, love and tenderness.
Mysterious and fascinating Is the world’s grace and beauty.*

⁵⁹ Datta, Romesh Chunder. *Cultural Heritage of Bengal: a biographical and critical history from the earliest times closing with a review of intellectual progress under British rule in India*. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1962.

⁶⁰ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, অসিতকুমার । *বাংলা সাহিত্যের সম্পূর্ণ ইতিবৃত্ত* । কলকাতা: মডার্ন বুক এজেন্সি । ১৯৭৭ ।

Buddhadeva Bose notes:

Tagore grew up in the period of Romantic nationalism. The age was for self-discovery and self-expression, both as individuals and as people. There was a reaching to the past and to the hidden resources of rejuvenation; translations were made from Sanskrit; collections of folk-poetry and fairy-tales were published; history, philology and archaeology became charged with enthusiasm thanks to the labours of inspired amateurs.⁶¹

Biharilal Chakravarty found it necessary to publish twenty *Baul* songs, and he was followed by Tagore, sometimes even imitating the *Bauls*, collecting other folk-songs and publishing long essays on folk literature. Turning to history, which convincingly appears in Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's novels and essays and which becomes a full-blooded Romantic historicism in much of Tagore's poetry at the turn of the century, is another hallmark of the new sensibility brought about by the age. Biharilal's writing can hardly be regarded as comparable to Tagore's mighty heritage. Yet there is so much in common between them; in addition to what has already been said, both depicted love as a highly poeticized and universal feeling, because at least in the ideal the unity among people could be stressed. Woman in turn in their *belles-lettres* acquired an unheard-of mundane dignity, because her emancipation was the call of the day. In Biharilal's poetry there are strong enough indications that he was close to *Vedanta*, which indirectly presupposes to depict nature as very close to man. In Biharilal Chakravarty's *Saradamangal* (1879), the imagination which was running wild, can also be likened to the mythmaking for which Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis stood so strongly. *Sarada*, in this poem only in name, is a well-known Hindu goddess. In Biharilal's creation it is not worshipped. The poet does not know what it really is. Instead he asks who the one is which possesses the features of mother, father, daughter, wife and friend on the one hand and love, devotion, tenderness, charm, and nobleness on the other. She, unlike her Hindu image, is the embodiment of love and beauty, including the beauty of nature, from stars and the sea to humble grass.

Tagore's mysterious *jivan-devata* (the deity of live) is convincing deification of the poet's vocation, which we find in Indian and other most ancient sources. The superhuman force commands what the poet does and he feels like its vehicle. We see its description in many poems and letters, but never in prose, which supposedly deals with

⁶¹ Bose, Buddhadeva. *Tagore: Portrait of a Poet*. Bombay: University of Bombay, 1962.

very mundane matters. In the poem 'On the Seashore', *jivan-devata*, perhaps being poetic imagination, marries the lyrical 'I'. 'The deity of life' is outside one's heart as a male or female god and within it as something reminiscent of *Atman*; it is like the 'man of the heart' in *Baul* songs and the later god in the Religion of Man. It is present in poems like 'The Golden Boat' and 'On the Seashore' of the mid 1890s, in the poem 'The Voyage of Time' (*Kaler jatra*, 1932), and in the image of *lila-sangini* (the partner in play) in the poetry of approximately the same period. It is the all-powerful poet who is supposed to get the Chariot of Time moving when others have failed to do it. 'The deity of life' may be and may be not identified by this name, but all the same it has something to do with the supernatural power of the one who creates. If one treats it as Romantic glorification, even deification of beauty and artistic creation, it had already originated in the early 1880s in Tagore's short essays. In one of them, Rabindranath says that poets sing songs of beauty (which is also the expression of freedom) and sets other hearts free from bondage. Their task is not to instruct. Poets are immortal, because their subject is immortal; they sing songs resorting to immortality. Flowers will always bloom, winds will always blow, birds will always sing, and in those flowers the poet will be revealed, the poet will be carried along by those winds, in the birds' song the poet will sing.

Both in case of Biharilal Chakravarty and Rabindranath Tagore and a few other less known poets, their imagination must have been unconsciously fed by traditional, very ancient Indian ideas on the status of art and the artist, on nature and a person's unity with it, and the unity of arts and of mythology, religion and philosophy. The rich national past also provided the necessary force of attraction for the great interest in history and folklore. One can add to those ingredients the emotionality and rich imagination of Bengalis, as well as subjective factors—above all European Romanticism provided tools of work and a perspective. On the whole, Bengali *belles-lettres* shows that in the last quarter of the 19th century one should speak more of aesthetic revolution than evolution. We meet with a new view of nature, love and beauty, in a limited way but unmistakably—with human personality as a value in itself, with woman as the embodiment of all virtue, with *Baul* and other folklore heritage as great art, with great interest in real history, and with the appearance of true nationalism.

Before modern love poems were written in Bengali, *Kavigan* and *Toppa* were the only love poems. However, as lyric poems, these are not completely successful. Behind the footsteps of Vaishnava poets there was a rich tradition, a well-regulated philosophy; the genuine *anubhuti*, the touching simplicity and the intuitive acquaintance with the

common people — made the poets compose songs. In the first half of the 19th century, apart from Ishwar Gupta, only two poets were maintaining the tradition; the first is Raghunandan Goswami, the second is Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. Raghunandan's Bengali compositions are: 'রামরসায়ন কাব্য', 'রাধামাধবোদয় কাব্য' and 'গীতমালা'. Raghunandan carried the essence of the *panchali* style of the last era. And Madan Mohan Tarkalankar composed two Bengali poems 'রসত্তরঙ্গিনী' and 'বাসবদত্তা'.

The poem 'বাসবদত্তা' is in many ways a remarkable poem of the first half of the 19th century. Even though he was a student of Sanskrit College, he did not agree to be influenced by the change of taste of that era. He composed the poem based on the famous Sanskrit lyric poem written by Shubandhu. The composition of this poem, the division of verses, the mention of *raag* at the head and the end of the song undoubtedly testify to the adherence to the ancient ideology. The narrative is conventional, the word application is predominant on the art. This poem has an external lyrical form, but the poet did not have a lyrical attitude.

Ishwar Chandra Gupta cannot be considered as a modern poet. But he was the first to announce the advent of modern Bengali literature, standing on the threshold of the modern age. The decline of ancient literature that began in Bharatchandra was completed in the first half of the 19th century. The juncture of ancient and modern age is the age of Ishwar Gupta —

প্রাচীন ও আধুনিক যুগের সন্ধিস্থল ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের যুগ (১৮৩০ হইতে ১৮৬০ খৃষ্টাব্দ পর্যন্ত)। ইহা যুগান্তরের লগ্ন। সেই লগ্নের পুরোহিত ঈশ্বর গুপ্ত। গোঁড়ামি ও রক্ষণ শীলতার ধারক, কবিগান ও টপ্পার অনুরাগী ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের পথে উদার ব্যঙ্গ বিদ্রূপ, রঙ্গরস কাব্যের বিষয়ব্যাপ্তি—দৈনন্দিন প্রত্যক্ষ সাময়িকের প্রতি আকর্ষণ, সঙ্কোমুক্ত আত্মসচেতনতা, শান্তরিক দেশপ্ৰীতি ও স্বাজাত্যবোধ লক্ষ্য করা যায়। রক্ষণশীল সংস্কারবিরোধী প্রাচীন মনোভাব ও ব্যঙ্গপ্রবণ আধুনিক মনোভাব : এই দুই বিন্দুর মধ্যে গুপ্ত কবির মন আন্দোলিত হইয়াছে। তাহার ঋতুবর্ণনামূলক কবিতা বলিষ্ঠ বাস্তববোধ ও পরিহাসপ্রবণভাই প্রধান। প্রকৃতি সম্পর্কিত যথার্থ কাব্যদৃষ্টি তাহার ছিল না। নৈতিক ও পরমার্থিক কবিতাগুলিও সার্থকতা লাভ করে নাই। সেগুলি উপদেশপ্রধান ও তত্ত্ব প্রতিপাদনমূলক কবিতা হইয়াছে। যে আত্মলীন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি গীতিকবিতার মূল উপাদান, তাহা ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের ছিল না।⁶²

⁶² মুখোপাধ্যায়, অরুণকুমার । *ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর বাংলা গীতিকবিতা* । কলকাতা: জিজ্ঞাসা । ১৯৬০ ।

Ishwar Gupta's poems indicate that the advent of modern lyric poetry is imminent. The poems of Ishwar Gupta have some value as an indication of this impending advent. If we compare Ishwar Gupta's poem 'Atmavilap' with Madhusudan Dutt's 'Atmavilap', the difference of point of view will be noticed.

Ishwar Gupta writes:

না বুঝিলে সার মর্ম হয় হয় হয় রে।
কে আমার আমি কার, আমার কে আছে যার।
যত দেখ আপনার, শ্রম মাত্র তায় রে আমার আত্মীয় কই,
আমার আত্মীয় কই, আত্মার আত্মীয় নই, খাত্মা কই কায় রে.....

On the other hand, Madhusudan has expressed his grief in his poem 'Atmavilap' (1861), which has filled the birth of modern lyric poetry with sadness.

আশার ছলনে ভুলি কি ফল লভিনু হয়,
তাই ভাবি মনে।
জীবন প্রবাহ বহি কালসিন্ধু পানে যায়,
ফিরাব কেমনে?
দিন দিন আয়ুহীন, হীনবল দিন দিন
তবু এ আশার নেশা, ছুটিল না, একি দায়!

The journey of lyric poetry has started with this sadness. At the very beginning of this poem there is a tragic deep sincere identity which has undoubtedly passed the stage of self-absorbed lyric poetry. Due to the intensity of the poet's heart-felt emotions, his grief has taken the form of pure self-absorbed lyric poetry—it was here that Madhusudan denied Ishwar Gupta's legacy and paved the path for the vast possibilities of modern lyric poetry.

...গীতিকবিতার সুগভীর প্রেরণা "আত্মবিলাপে" বিধৃত হইয়াছে। একটি আবেগোচ্ছ্বসিত কবিচিত্তের বিষাদপূর্ণ আত্মাবলোকন এই কবিতাটি। আশাভঙ্গের বেদনা ইহাতে সর্বত্র সঞ্চরিত এবং একটি রোমান্টিক কবি চিত্তের হাহাকার-সংসার জীবন ও কালের নশ্বরতা সম্পর্কে গীতিবিলাপ ইহাকে করুণ মাধুৰ্য্য দান করিয়াছে। কবিতার গঠনশিল্পেই এই বিলাপ অনুসৃত হইয়া আছে। প্রধান চরণগুলি দ্বিপর্বিচ ও অতি দীর্ঘ (৮+৮ মাত্রা) : সংসার ও জীবন সম্পর্কে নিরাসক্ত দার্শনিক মনোভাবের প্রতীক। প্রতি স্তবকে প্রথম ও তৃতীয় চরণটি দীর্ঘ, দ্বিতীয় ও চতুর্থ চরণটি হ্রস্ব। ধীর লয়ের দীর্ঘ

চরণের পরেই দ্রুত লম্বের হ্রস্ব চরণ তীব্র ব্যক্তিগত দুঃখের প্রতীক রূপে ব্যবহৃত হইয়াছে। আবার স্তবকের শেষ দুইটি চরণ—পঞ্চম ও ষষ্ঠ—পূর্বতন দৈর্ঘ্যে প্রত্যাবর্তন করিয়াছে, যেন কবি ব্যক্তিচেতনাকে উত্তীর্ণ হইয়া নিরাসক্ত দৃষ্টিতে সকল দুঃখ ও জগৎকে দেখিতেছেন। স্তবকের প্রথম ও শেষ চরণের অন্ত্যমিল সর্বজগত-গত সত্য ও ঐক্যদৃষ্টির প্রতীক, আবার পঞ্চম চরণের অপ্রত্যাশিত অন্ত্যমিল ছন্দে দ্রুতগতি আনিয়াছে এবং কবিমনকে একটি আকস্মিক প্রেরণাবলে বস্তুজগতের উর্ধ্ব উত্তীর্ণ হইতে সাহায্য করিয়াছে--যেখান হইতে কবি সংসার ও বাস্তব জগতের একটি ব্যাপক গভীর দর্শন লাভ করিয়াছেন।⁶³

Undoubtedly, the deep lyricism expressed here signifies the birth of modern Bengali lyric poetry and its journey in the future has been marked by the compositions of Michael Madhusudan Dutt. The beginning of introspective lyric poetry in Michael Madhusudan Dutt's poems embody the rebellion and recognition of 19th century Bengali-mind, protest and support, joy and sorrow. Through him the deep inner-struggle of the intellectual middle-class Bengalis of that day was wonderfully revealed. This introspection was needed for the development of modern Bengali lyric poetry. Madhusudan is basically an epic poet, but even in his epics, the imprint of the eternal tradition of Bengali poetry has remained. He has captured the tune of lyric poetry in his epic as an infallible poetic reform. In 'মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য', the poet's life anguish, the cries of deprived failed hope, the sovereign anger towards the universe and the tunes of rebellion can be clearly heard. With the publication of the poem 'বঙ্গসুন্দরী' in 1870, the modern Romantic lyric poem appeared in Bengali literature—and it was established fully with the publication of 'সারদামঙ্গল' (1879). In Biharilal's poetry, the basic essence of modern lyric poetry is clearly expressed. The self-realization of the poet's mind took place – the poet immersed himself in the mental world by completely denying the external world. In this introspective lyric, Biharilal soaked the reader's mind. In Rabindranath's words:

বিহারীলাল তখনকার ইংরেজি ভাষায় নব্যশিক্ষিত কবিদিগের ন্যায় যুদ্ধবর্ণনাসংকুল মহাকাব্য, উদ্দীপনাপূর্ণ দেশানুরাগমূলক কবিতা লিখিলেন না, এবং পুরাতন কবিদিগের ন্যায় পৌরাণিক উপাখ্যানের দিকেও গেলেন না—তিনি নিভূতে বসিয়া নিজের ছন্দে নিজের মনের কথা বলিলেন।⁶⁴

From the year 1870, lyric poetry began to make its debut slowly. In the last quarter of the 19th century, there has been a great test in the world of Bengali poetry: will the classic

⁶³ মুখোপাধ্যায়, অরুণকুমার । *উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর বাংলা গীতিকবিতা* । কলকাতা: জিজ্ঞাসা । ১৯৬০ ।

⁶⁴ Ibid

style of poetry be maintained, or will the style of romantic poetry prevail? In the end, romantic lyric poetry has won and Biharilal's exception has become the unanimous rule. The victory of this lyric genre has been declared in Rabindranath—Bengali poetry has abandoned the path of epic poetry and adopted the genre of lyric poetry as its own.

It is to be noted here that in the last part of the 19th century, the two streams of *Akhyayikakavya* and *Gitikavya* have flowed side by side; Rabindranath began his poetic career with a long narrative, *Akhyayikakavya*, but within a short period his poetic mind realized that this was not his way; his real path is 'Geetikabita' or lyric.

The melody of despair has overwhelmed the Bengali lyric poetry of the 19th century. It was only when the dream of ideals and romance was shattered in the rough conflict of the road that this despair and sadness arose. This tune of despair was heard all around the world at that time. The famous critic Alfred Austin stated that during the last few years, a wave of doubt, disillusionment and despondency has passed over the world. One by one, all the fondly cherished theories of life, society and empire had been abandoned. No one seemed to know whether things were marching, and many appeared to think that it was towards Perdition.

In the case of Bengali lyric poetry too, the melody of despair and the predominance of sadness were noticed. Extreme frustration about life, fatigue of carrying the burden of failure, helplessness of man in the hands of unseen controlling destiny etc. were also discussed in Bengali lyric poetry. This attitude, termed as romantic melancholy, can be seen in the compositions of Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Hemchandra, Navinchandra, Biharilal, Akshay Boral, Kamini Roy, Saralabala Dasi, Priyambada Devi, and Rabindranath's pre-'Manasi' episodes.

In Hemchandra's poems, the main poetic-thought depended upon logic. The whole world will evolve and evil will be defeated by aiming at the ideals of welfare and good — the poet had such an imaginary belief — from this belief his poetic thought was born. Navinchandra has introduced new religious poetic thoughts. Debendranath Sen has shown a strong attraction towards nature—he seeks to enjoy the fullness of mortal beauty:

চিরদিন চিরদিন রূপের পূজারী আমি

রূপের পূজারী,

সারা সন্ধ্যা সারা নিশি রূপ বৃন্দাবনে বসি-

হিন্দোলায় দোলে নারী আনন্দে নেহারি

Coming to Rabindranath, this romantic and philosophical poet-thought has attained perfection. He, like Shelley, has seen that leap in the atomic nucleus of the world.

রোমান্টিক গীতিকবিতা যে মানব হৃদয়ের সনাতন সৌন্দর্যবোধ, রহস্যানুভূতি ও বিস্ময়-প্রবণতার উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত, তাহার প্রমাণ সেদিনের বাংলা গীতিকবিতায় পাওয়া যায়। বিহারীলালেই এই রোমান্টিক চরিত্র সর্বপ্রথম নিঃসংশয় পদক্ষেপে আপন আবির্ভাব ঘোষণা করিল। যে আদর্শ সৌন্দর্যের (Ideal Beauty) জন্যে বিহারীলালের হাহাকার, তাহাই পরে রবীন্দ্রনাথে আসিয়া শতসহস্র গীতিধারায় উচ্ছলিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। বিহারীলাল ও তাহার অন্তবর্তীরা-অক্ষয় বড়াল, নিত্যকৃষ্ণ বসু, দেবেন্দ্রনাথ সেন এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর—এই সৌন্দর্যসাধনার ক্ষেত্রে ইংরাজ রোমান্টিক কবিদের প্রতিস্পর্ধী হইয়া উঠিয়াছেন।

আত্মতন্ত্রতা ও ভাব-নিমগ্নতাই বিহারীলালের কবিপ্রকৃতির প্রধান লক্ষণ। বিহারীলালের মন্ত্রশিষ্য অক্ষয় বড়ালের কাব্যেও এই লক্ষণ দেখা যায়। অক্ষয়কুমারের 'প্রদীপ' (১৮৮৪), 'কনকাজলি' (১৮৮৫), 'ভুল' (১৮৮৭) কাব্যে বাস্তবাতিরিক্ত কল্পনার উল্লাসই বেশী। মধুসূদন, হেমচন্দ্র, নবীনচন্দ্র একাধারে ক্লাসিক ও রোমান্টিক কবি। ইহাদের অসংখ্য গীতিকবিতা আছে। উপরন্তু ইহাদের ক্লাসিক কাব্যের অভ্যন্তরে গীতিকবিতা দেখা দিয়াছে। ১৮৭০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে 'বঙ্গসুন্দরী' কাব্যে বিহারীলাল তাঁহার নিজস্ব সুরটিকে ধরিতে পারিয়াছেন। বস্তুতঃ তৎপূর্বেই গীতিকবিতা দেখা গিয়াছে মুখ্যতঃ যাহারা ক্লাসিক কবি, তাঁহাদের কার্যাবলীতে।⁶⁵

The characteristic of the lyric is that it is the product of the pure poetic energy un-associated with other energies. Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* ushered in a new era of English literature. From then on, the romantic era in English literature began to take off. The footsteps of the romantic era were heard at the end of the classical era with the flow of Bengali lyric poetry in the 19th century. In Bengali poetry, romantic feeling was immersed in Madhusudan's classic poetic spirit. At the beginning of Madhusudan's 'মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য', he stated 'গাইব মা বীররসে ভাসি মহাগীত'— instead, it turned out as compassion, generated from intense personal feelings. Lyric poetry is the artistic expression of intense personal feelings. In Madhusudan's 'মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য', Hemchandra's 'বৃত্ত-সংহার', Navinchandra's 'রৈবতক', 'করুক্ষেত্র', 'প্রভাস', Dwijendranath Tagore's 'স্বপ্নপ্রয়াণ', Ishanchandra Bandyopadhyay's 'যোগেশ', however, these personal feelings of the poet were covered with the twist of classical consciousness.

⁶⁵ ঘোষ ও মুখোপাধ্যায় (সম্পা.)। *উনিশ শতকের গীতিকবিতা*। কলকাতা: জে. এন. ঘোষ এন্ড সন্স। ২০০৮।

The subjective as well as the basic motivation of composing lyric poetry became stronger after getting the inspiration of English literature. However, it was in the hands of Biharilal that the youthful liberation of romantic lyric poetry came into totality. Biharilal Chakraborty overcame the dilemma of Rangalal, Madhusudan, Hemchandra, Nabinchandra, or Surendranath, and consciously devoted himself to composing lyric poems. In ‘সারদামঙ্গল’ the ideal-love, compassion and beauty with the melody of separation and reunion created a unique uninterrupted flow of poet’s inner-feelings:

তবে কি সকলি ভুল?

নাই কি প্রেমের মূল?

বিচিত্র গগনফুল কল্পনালতার?

মন কেন রসে ভাসে----

প্রাণ কেন ভালবাসে

আদরে পরিতে গলে সেই ফুলহার?

Moreover, apart from these prominent poets, there were some female poets as well, who composed lyric poems during this period, as mentioned in ‘উনিশ শতকের গীতিকবিতা’:

কবির আত্মকথার বাহন লিরিক বা গীতিকবিতা। বিশুদ্ধতম কাব্য প্রেরণাই গীতিকবিতার জন্মভূমি। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের ভাষায় বজ্রর ভাবোচ্ছ্বাসের পরিস্ফুটন মাত্র যাহার উদ্দেশ্য, সেই কাব্য গীতিকাব্য। যদিও উল্লেখযোগ্য রকম প্রচেষ্টা সত্ত্বেও গিরীন্দ্রমোহিনী দাসীর ‘অশ্রু-কণা’, ‘আভাস’ এবং ‘অর্থ’-র কবিতাগুলোয় মূলত প্রাধান্য পেয়েছে ব্যক্তিগত জীবনকথাই। তবে অনুভূতির সঙ্গে স্বকীয়তার একটা সহজ সখ্যের উদাহরণ তাঁর কাব্য। ব্যক্তিগত বিষণ্ণ জীবন এবং পুত্র কন্যাদের কথাই তাঁর কবিতার মূল সুর। এই যন্ত্রণার সুর শুধু একা গিরীন্দ্রমোহিনীর নয়, ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর বাংলা গীতিকবিতার ধারায় মহিলা কবিরূপে সুপরিচিত, মধুসূদন দত্তের ভাইঝি মানকুমারী বসুও উনিশ বছর বয়সে কন্যাসন্তানের জন্ম দিয়ে বৈধব্যদশা প্রাপ্ত হওয়ায় তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত হৃদয়যন্ত্রণা তাঁর কাব্যকে দিয়েছে বৈরাগ্যভাবের ছাড়পত্র। প্রমাণ তাঁর রচিত ‘কাব্যকুসুমাঞ্জলি’ (১৮৮৩) ও ‘প্রিয়প্রসঙ্গ’ (১৮৮৪)।

তবে এদের মধ্যে বিহারীলাল প্রবর্তিত গীতিকবিতার ধারার অন্যতম গীতিকবি কামিনী রায়। তিনি ইংরেজি শিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত হওয়ায় ইংরেজি লিরিক কবিতার আদর্শে বেশ কিছু ভালো গীতিকবিতা রচনা করেন। রবীন্দ্রযুগের পরিমণ্ডলে কাব্যসাধনা করলেও তাঁর স্বকীয়তা উল্লেখ করবার মতন। তবে প্রথম কাব্যগ্রন্থ ‘আলো ও ছায়া’ (১৮৮৯) একটি প্রণয়মূলক কাব্য হলেও দ্বিতীয় কাব্যগ্রন্থ ‘মাল্য ও নির্মাণ’ (১৯১৩) -এ কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথের দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হয়েছেন তিনি। তাঁর অন্যান্য কাব্যগ্রন্থগুলি হল----‘পৌরাণিকী’, ‘গুঞ্জন’, ‘অশোক সঙ্গীত’, ‘দীপ ও ধূপ’, ‘জীবনপথে’। তাঁর স্বদেশপ্রেমমূলক কবিতাগুলিতে রূপলাভ করেছে কবি-হৃদয়ের আন্তরিকতা--

যেইদিন ও চরণে ঢালি দিনু এ জীবন,
হাসি অশ্রু সেইদিন করিয়াছি বিসর্জন।
হাসিবার কাঁদিবার অবসর নাহি আর,
দুঃখিনী জনমভূমি, মা আমার মা আমার।⁶⁶

In lyric poetry, the poet's monolithic sentiments are expressed in a well-balanced and emotional way. The lyric poem is not really a lifeless mass of information, in fact it has been claimed by later critics that poetry is philosophy and philosophy is poetry. প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন in his book 'আধুনিক বাংলা গীতিকবিতা' rightfully stated:

লিরিক কবিতার রস নিত্যকালীন ও সর্বজনীন, কোনো বিশেষ কাল বা জনসম্প্রদায়ের সম্পত্তি নয়। তাই অজ্ঞাত-অখ্যাত লোকসাহিত্যেও এই রসের সন্ধান মিলতে পারে। কারণ আনন্দবেদনার হৃদয়রস অখ্যাত লোককবির রচনাতেও উচ্ছলিত হয়ে ওঠা অসম্ভব নয়।

শুধু গীতাঞ্জলিই নয়, কোনো আধুনিক বাংলা গীতিকবিতাই প্রাচীন গীতিকবিতা থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন নয়। বিচ্ছিন্ন করে দেখলে সত্য করে দেখা হবে না। আসলে আধুনিক বাংলা গীতিকবিতার ধারা বাঙালির মর্মজাত ভাবধারার সঙ্গে অভিন্ন, তার উৎস নিহিত রয়েছে সুদূর অতীতে তার ঐতিহ্যের নিভৃত কন্দরে। পশ্চিম থেকে নতন স্রোত এসে তার ধারায় প্রবলতা ও নবীনতা সঞ্চার করেছে, কিন্তু তার উৎসই পশ্চিমদেশে এ কথা বললে শুধু স্বদেশকে নয়, ইতিহাসকেও অবজ্ঞা করা হবে। আধুনিক ও প্রাচীন গীতিকবিতার প্রাণবস্ত এক। কিন্তু একটু পার্থক্যও আছে—সে পার্থক্য বহিরঙ্গে, অন্তরঙ্গে নয়।⁶⁷

Various poets who were contemporary of Rabindranath, paved the way for later modern poets by unveiling the genre of Bengali lyric poetry. Rabindranath and his lyric poetry, is undoubtedly one of them. However, later on in the poems of Satyendranath Dutta, Jatindranath Sengupta and Mohitlal Majumdar, there is a tendency to deviate a little from the path taken by Rabindranath. Yet the new path they took in the 19th century, following the footsteps of English romantic poets, is to be acknowledged both in the history of Bengali literature and in its own value and glory.

⁶⁶ ঘোষ ও মুখোপাধ্যায় (সম্পা.)। *উনিশ শতকের গীতিকবিতা*। কলকাতা: জে. এন. ঘোষ এন্ড সন্স। ২০০৮।

⁶⁷ সেন, প্রবোধচন্দ্র। *আধুনিক বাংলা গীতিকবিতা*। কলকাতা: অনিমা প্রকাশনী। ১৯৫৪।

CHAPTER-II

Song and Performance

For an investigation of ‘performativity’, ‘performance studies’ is likely the first discipline brought to mind. As a discipline and method of analysis, ‘performance studies’ stands as one of the most heterogeneous and, in many circumstances, contested terms in academia. In his book, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*,⁶⁸ Richard Schechner takes note of this variegated form when he writes that there is no finality to performance studies, either theoretically or operationally rather he implies that there are many voices, opinions, methods, and subjects. Reflecting the circumstances under which something is considered to be ‘performance’ and exploring how ‘performativity’ takes place and unfolds—is therefore more important than the definitions of what performance ‘is’ or might be. According to Schechner, ‘performance studies’ should regard itself as a “means of understanding historical, social, and cultural processes and ‘performance’ must be construed as a ‘broad spectrum’ or ‘continuum’ of human actions ranging from ritual, play, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts and everyday life performances to the enactment of social, professional, gender, race and class roles, and on to healing, the media and the internet”.⁶⁹

3.1 Etymology of ‘Performance’

The Oxford English Dictionary proposes two etymological origins for “perform”. Either the word derives from the Old French “par” or “per” plus “former” or “furmer” meaning “to carry through in due form”; or, it derives from the more common Old French “parfournir”: to complete, to carry through to completion, to finish, to perfect, or to provide what is lacking. According to the OED, Chaucer is the first author to use the word in English, followed by Wyclif. In the 17th century the word “perform” was linked to the stage, and then quite significantly by Shakespeare, who used the verb to describe

⁶⁸ Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An introduction*. Oxon: Routledge, 2013, 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 7.

the process of acting or playing a part or character. It was also in the 17th century that “performance” was used first to describe the enactment of a play or a piece of music for an audience. Although the French word “performance” was first used at the end of the 15th century, its association with a public spectacle appears only in the 18th century; this use of the word derives from English.

In their various forms in English and French, “perform” and “performance” imply a temporally limited action. “To perform” assumes the end-point of a procedure that requires a beginning point: a task is completed; an actor assumes a role and then sheds it; the play or piece of music lasts for a predetermined span of time. “Performance” evokes an act or an event, inscribed within and limited by a fixed span of time. From its earliest use in the 14th century, the word focuses on an act or the agent who is responsible for it. However, their transformation in the 17th century introduced an audience or the public as an implicit component of their definition: “to perform” and “performance” are actions or acts that take place before and are intended for the benefit of an audience. “Performance” developed as a theoretical concept in the 20th century within the context of two distinct traditions in the humanities and social sciences. On the one hand, it became associated with models of communication and meaning-making in linguistics and the philosophy of language. Noam Chomsky opposed “competence” to “performance” in order to differentiate between an individual’s knowledge of how to construct and understand grammatical sentences—that is, an ideal capacity for language use—and his or her actual production of language in specific instances. The word “performative” was developed in English in the domain of speech act theory and then adopted from this origin in other European languages. J. L. Austin was the first to use the term in 1955 and following Austin, a performative is a particular kind of utterance that accomplishes an action as the words are spoken, such as, “I do”, stated within the vows of the marriage ceremony. John Searle expanded this limited category of performatives to argue that an individual establishes the meaning of language through contextually specific speech acts. And in a second stage he argued that non-language acts, such as the attribution of value to currency, are also performative; that is, they have no foundation outside of a group’s collective imposition of worth on a piece of paper or metal. In each case the efficacy of language is determined not by the inherent meaning of words and grammatical structures but by their communicative success in spatially and temporally bound acts involving both an agent and a recipient. The second tradition within which performance was theorized was as an explanatory model for human

behaviour and identity formation. Scholars primarily in the fields of anthropology and cultural studies, ranging from Clifford Geertz and Erving Goffman to Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, invoke the seventeenth century association of performance with orchestrated events before a public as a metaphor to describe individual and group activity and behaviour. Consequently, they maintain a focus on an audience, even if that audience is fictive or imagined, and on an action or activity that is limited in time. Although the objects of their study and the conclusions they draw vary greatly, there is a commonality in this scholarship: it seeks to understand social behaviour as a function of learned and repeated activities, rather than as natural or instinctive. In turn, it considers that these activities contribute to the formation of individual and community identity. Within this tradition, Judith Butler drew explicitly on speech act theory to formulate a model of gender and sexual identity as constituted through repeated acts, the contours of which are defined by and through regulative discourses. And Michel de Certeau, acknowledging his debt to Noam Chomsky, emphasized the agency of social actors to redefine commodities and cultural products through their individual creative practices. In its designation of a wide range of social activity as performance, this scholarship has effectively diminished the divide between stage-based theatre and other forms of human expression. Institutional factors such as the foundation of departments of performance studies and theatre history also have contributed to an expansive definition of performance, which incorporated aspects of everyday life, in addition to more traditional forms of audience directed activity. Equally influential in this process was the creation of the term “performance art” in the 1960s. As the topics of academic teaching and research expanded beyond the stage, artistic practice moved outside the confines of the gallery or museum. This new artistic form referred initially to works that integrated the artist’s body, and then became associated with ones that involved their audiences both physically and/or as active agents in the constitution of meaning. The historical use of the words “performance” and “performativity” can be summarized under three general headings.

Therefore, drawing on its etymology, “performance” refers to an event demarcated by a beginning and an end point, which takes place before an audience. And also, the word refers to any act of display by human beings or groups, which establishes their individual or communal identity. Whereas, “performativity” refers to a process of interpretation or meaning-making that takes place at each exchange between an audience and an event, object, or activity.

3.2 Perception of ‘performativity’/ ‘musicality’

Scholars in a variety of disciplines have recognized the potential of “performance” and “performativity” to capture and articulate distinct aspects of medieval society, such as the complex history of and interaction between orality and literacy, and the way in which ceremonial occasions regulated the lives of individuals and established the authority of civic and religious institutions and leaders. The three uses of these words sketched above have provided a productive framework for evaluating the role of pictures and texts within medieval culture and as interpretive models for investigating these artefacts as evidence for the past. “Performance”, in the first sense, has provided a framework for scholars to focus on the reception of various kinds of texts—pictorial, written, and notational—by audiences within temporally demarcated circumstances. For musicologists this was a logical move, since notation implies the physical transmission of a melody within a fixed time span. Leo Treitler was the first to consider the relationship between the notational record and its performance in his study of the transmission of Gregorian chant. Similarly, scholars of medieval drama have shifted their focus on the designation of authoritative play scripts to thinking about these texts as documents of their production before an audience. Scholars in all fields have, in turn, recognized the aural reception of the medieval texts they study. This has resulted in productive investigations into the specific contexts in which audiences experienced texts, such as civic proclamations of charters, the singing of love poetry, and reading practices among noble women. It has also resulted in the re-evaluation of manuscripts as evidence for their use in these situations. Rather than aspiring to identify or create an authoritative edition of a text, scholars consider each manuscript as a distinct manifestation of a set of information, which itself was experienced differently under varying circumstances. One of the significant by products of the incorporation of the term “performance” into medieval scholarship is that it mitigates the force of arbitrary distinctions between types of ceremonies. The term bridges any artificial divide between what might be categorized as either liturgical, ritual, or theatrical. “Liturgy” was first used to describe prescribed religious practices in the sixteenth century; the first appearance of “ritual” as related to religious practices was in the seventeenth century. The word “theatre”, however, was used in the Middle Ages, but it referred to ancient Roman spectacle, not to the contemporary drama. There are certainly differences between orchestrated events in a church setting by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and either self-directed actions repeated by individuals or groups

outside the church, or occasional events featuring lay people and organized by civic authorities. There are, however, similarities between these events and the choice of liturgical, ritual, or theatrical to describe them does not necessarily provide a sufficient explanation for how one event differs from another. The use of the broader term “performance” encourages us to describe and evaluate the specificity of each event in its own historical terms.

In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, Peggy Phelan discusses performance broadly and, in the process, postulates a theory of the ontology of performance. Phelan states:

Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented... once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being—becomes itself through disappearance.⁷⁰

Phelan theorizes performance as the art form which most fully understands the generative possibilities of disappearance. Poised forever at the threshold of the present, performance enacts the productive appeal of the non-reproductive.

“Performance” was developed as an interpretive model for human behaviour and action within medieval studies and it has been applied to a range of social activities and events. Victor Turner’s study of Christian rites of passage identifies and describes the significance of institutionalized rituals in the integration of individuals into a community. His work prompted a body of scholarship on the role of religious practices and ceremonies in the formation of individual and communal identity. Crucial to this work are two ideas: religion is not to be understood as a given set of prescriptions, texts, or beliefs but as a set of practices adopted and repeated by individuals and through which they establish and confirm their place within a group; and identity and community are not automatically attributed but created through repeated acts. Within the civic sphere “performance” is invoked in reference to the symbolic practices through which the power of the ruler or the social status of individuals is configured and conveyed. Here too the emphasis is on how characteristics and institutions that might appear natural or automatic

⁷⁰ Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

are, in fact, the result of codified social processes. Power or social status is not an inherent quality possessed by an individual; it is established and confirmed through ritualized activities and events. The focus on the conditions of reception of medieval texts has initiated approaches that incorporate “performativity” in the third sense. Manuscripts provide evidence for a process through which the meaning of words and pictures was realized or completed as they were experienced by readers, listeners, and viewers. In some cases, the manuscript allows us to recover a trace of an event, which required a speaker’s or singer’s improvisational and corporeal involvement for its enactment. Paul Zumthor’s work on 12th century love lyrics, for instance, demonstrates that surviving poems provide the basis for a variety of combinations of the same set of themes, which when sung expressed the lover’s desire for his beloved. Sylvia Huot shows, in turn, that the transcription and illustration of these love lyrics in 13th and 14th century illuminated manuscripts provide evidence for the poet’s self-definition as both singer and as writer. For other scholars, the manuscript offers clues for a reader’s active involvement with the object. Pamela Sheingorn and Robert Clark’s detailed studies of the parchment, illuminations, and other markers rely on a model of what they term “performative reading”, in which the audience established the connections between these components of the manuscript thereby creating the meaning of the text. These detailed studies of groups of manuscripts integrate a definition of meaning making that draws on the claims of speech act theory. However, “performativity” has also entered medieval studies simply as an adjectival form of “performance”. In this use of the term the audience’s response or experience often becomes the object of study, rather than the way a particular artefact or text produces meaning. The word has come simply to mean related to or like a “performance”. It could be an object, text, or event that initiates a performance on the part of its audience, or that initiates and/or contributes to a performance of some kind, like a ceremonial or ritual occasion.

Performativity implies not a simple expression of action, but a complex amalgam of a performance and production (*mis-en-scène*). According to the scholars of this particular field, ‘Performativity’ and ‘performance’ are terms used with different accents of meaning, in various different disciplines such as aesthetics, action theory, literary and cultural theory, linguistic philosophy, gender theory, anthropology and ethnography. A performative utterance, whether it be in word, image (gesture) and/or sound, is an act that constitutes what it presents. It brings into existence what – at least in the first instance

– it refers to. A performative utterance is an event, an occurrence of which the practical relevance is primarily related to its taking place in the here and now, in its need to be carried out and presented and, in consequence, in its need to be perceived in this very moment. A performative utterance is an intentional act, which is not just performed in the literal sense of being executed, but something that is being staged. The act of staging implies, on the one hand, a performer, the one who presents herself and by doing so constitutes her/himself, her/his identity; and on the other hand, a spectator—the one who supports the role of the performer by taking up the position of being a member of the audience. Staging oneself in front of an audience brings us to the concept of a performative situation, or performance. Two basic features of the performance and the performative orientations are self-reference and self-reflexivity. Because of its constituting and staging aspect, a performance by definition refers to, and reflects on itself and on the event in which the performance occurs. Audiences are aware, even during the most naturalistic of presentations, that they are witnessing a staged ‘reality’, not actuality itself. Self-reference and self-reflexivity are not only characteristics of the performance itself, however, but also of the perceiver who assumes the position of the spectator, of the audience. The performative orientation and, even more so, the aesthetic orientation are very much self-referential and self-reflexive. The aesthetic orientation facilitates a liberating confrontation with one’s own experience, which is made perceivable through engagement with the aesthetic object. This implies a requirement to reflect on the possibilities of freedom under the circumstances and conditions of a historical presence. The aesthetic experience transcends the projections of daily life precisely to afford a confrontation with its constraints and to open up possibilities for change. This specific orientation provides the aesthetic perception with its excessive potential. Aesthetic action in production as well as perception, may be considered a form of exploration and reflection, which reinforces the communicative competence of socialised individuals. This also implies an assumption that aesthetic action has a therapeutic as well as educative function. According to Erika Fischer-Lichte, performativity corresponds with a renunciation of “comprehensive ability”, which results in re-enchantment and an “embodied mind”. It is the duty of human agents to act in life, as enactment would take place in art. The unleashing through performances is accompanied by an enchantment of culture, which, parallels modern society. Reflecting the circumstances under which something is considered to be ‘performance’ and exploring how performativity takes place and unfolds is therefore more important than

a-priori definitions of what performance ‘is’ or might be. According to Schechner, performance studies should regard itself as a “means of understanding historical, social, and cultural processes and performance must be construed as a ‘broad spectrum’ or ‘continuum’ of human actions ranging from ritual, play, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts and everyday life performances to the enactment of social, professional, gender, race and class roles, and on to healing, the media and the internet”⁷¹. Similarly, Fischer-Lichte proposed that what she called “performative studies” would denote the study of culture through the perspective of the performative; it thus stands for a specific interdisciplinary approach to different subjects, which are analyzed from the perspective of the performative. The turn to performance is sometimes seen as constructivist, but it has particular implications. It suggests that technologies, knowledges, and working may be understood as the effects of materially, socially, and conceptually hybrid performances. In these performances different elements assemble together and act in certain ways to produce specific consequences.

The word ‘musicality’ is ambiguous and a number of different meanings can be found in the literature. Definitions of the term ‘musicality’ found in dictionaries commonly presuppose constructs of ability, accomplishment, and musical knowledge, often with reference to conventions surrounding performance. Musicality is a noun that means sensitivity to, knowledge of, or talent for music. The word also refers to the quality or state of being musical. A musical person has the ability to perceive differences in pitch, rhythm and harmonies. One usually differentiates between two types of musicality: to be able to perceive music and to be able to reproduce music as well as create music. Musicality may also refer to fitting a dance to the music being played, with the goal of relating the dance to the music’s rhythm, melody, and mood. The OED definition for example is, “the quality or character of being musical; accomplishment or aptitude in music; musical sensibility”. This conception signifies background conventions of musical skill, that is, implicit comparison with a generic model of what “good” or “competent” musical knowledge constitutes. Another broader definition of musicality is outlined by Malloch and Trevarthen in their model of communicative musicality. The research focusing on the developmental origins of musicality is quite diverse, the study of links between early language acquisition and musicality. These considerations of the

⁷¹ Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Oxon: Routledge, 2013.

definitions and expressions of musicality indicate one way to situate studies on the development of musicality—that is, on a dimension where precise and specific musical skills can be placed at one end of the spectrum and research on communicative musicality at the other.

The performer carries within him or her an acquired accumulation of experience with the musical traditions on which any performance is based. These traditions create expectations for the performance. These expectations are also held by the listeners, relative to their experience with the music traditions. This ground of expectations for both the performer and the listener is complimentary and serves as the basis on which the performer makes interpretive decisions. Music has been described as a series of tension-relief events. The tension of dissonance is relieved by its resolution to a more consonant sound, that is, to a harmony containing a relative absence of tension. A composer might place an unexpected chord in a phrase; creating a tension brought about by the element of surprise. A performer might, after establishing a tempo, create a tension of anticipation by hesitating momentarily before continuing in that tempo; then by continuing in the original tempo, he or she can cause the release of the tension that had been created by the digression from the expected pattern. However, to do this effectively, a musician must work from a comprehensive knowledge of the tradition on which the expectations are based.

If the musician constructs a composition or performance strictly according to tradition-based expectations, then the product can be said to be a result of technical mastery and experience. But when the musician deviates from the expectations, is this deviation based on a skill of judgment in the selection of the deviation and of its potential aesthetic consequence, or can the process be called creative? There may be no final answer to this question as it is stated, but one must acknowledge that society, rightly or wrongly, judges the highest results of such a process to be a highly creative product, with the subsequent conclusion being made that the creator of the product is a highly creative individual.

3.3 Music and/as Performance

Music has always been a performance practice based on sound, temporal movement and aural impressions. The dynamics of music in time and space make musical expressions unique in our understanding of the world and of other humans. But as a kind of communication system, music has some similarities with the spoken word and language. This similarity has made it possible to develop literacy in music. As any other human practice, music has had the need to pass on acquired knowledge from one generation to the next. This has been done aurally, but even if this kind of objectivation of practice could be supported by oral legitimation, it was bound to the here-and-now situation for establishing a tradition. In most societies a multiplicity of traditions would be accepted as an enrichment of the human community. But in order to give identity to a society, there was a need for giving some traditions priority, making a hierarchy of musical performance practices. The most powerful identity maker in the western culture of music in the last two thousand years has been the church. The need for distinguishing church music from the practice of non-Christian's musicianship, made it natural and necessary to develop a kind of uniformity in a music tradition. As this uniformity was to be the same in the whole church, independent of geographical and cultural differences, a kind of notation system that would secure a transition from one generation to the next without being bound to a here-and-now situation was to be developed. The similarity to language and the written word became the basis for the first musical notation. In the church societies the spelling of the Word was essential, and this also contributed to making the literacy an important element in identifying and structuring the Christian societies. Church music was the first to be written down systematically in order to establish an objective musical practice, connecting musical performance to a literacy context. Bringing literacy to music had several consequences. First, literacy functions as an enhancing process in establishing a tradition, as it allows transference of knowledge from one generation to another in an abstracted manner, establishing both the object of knowledge and the ideological framework for the knowledge that identifies the tradition. The notation system objectifies the music and the elements in notation are results of choices that have ideological background and consequences. Second, literacy opens up for a separation between the creator (composer) and the performer (musician). This dimension was not important at the beginning in the church music as its focus was on the use of music in the congregation, not on musical work as such. The separation

became very important when the separation of the roles of composer and musician developed from the Renaissance. The third consequence of bringing literacy to music is, in a way, contradictory to the first one. As any notation system must be based on a reduction of the object to a linear sign system, there is a possibility for the formation of a new relation between the content and context of the original object. This might be destructive to the actual tradition and its development as a musical (aural) tradition. For example, the traditional skewed tonalities and rhythmical variability in folk music are not possible to capture in the traditional music notation system. Transference from one generation to another based on traditional notation in folk music, might therefore reduce the amount of expressive qualities in the folk music. The link between content and context in a tradition is also the crucial momentum in establishing a genre within a tradition. It is, of course, possible for any genre to use any sounding element as content in their music, but there are restrictions in the use bound to the context of the performance/music in order to be identified as music in a special genre. A genre will be identified by its intrinsic elements reinforcing the link between the content and context of its tradition. Initially, literacy in music was closely related to the performing of texts in liturgical contexts. The musical content was only sketched in an allegorical way related to the melody. The overall framework of the music/performance was determined by the context of the performance. The need for more efficient transference of the traditional material made way for a more systematic notation system in music, covering melody, rhythm, and harmony. This process took several hundred years, and continues to develop in response to the search for better representation and accuracy between musical content and notation.

The best advantage of learning through visual and performing arts is their ability to extend the learners' understanding of themselves and their world while guiding them in creating meaning and developing their range of self-expression. Through the arts, language and culture come alive to ignite inquiry and active learning whereby memorization of facts and recall tasks hardly fit the bill. Music defines and transmits culture, dissolving barriers of religion, cultures, race, geography, and class. Every society responds to and creates music. Classic works release the learner on a fascinating ride through cultural history. Through the music and lyrics, one can learn about other cultures, their influence on musical genres, and the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultures that influenced the artists and their work. There are connections to other

disciplines such as art, history, environment, social issues, literature, and obviously music. Throughout performance-based assessment, one can make comparisons between the issues revealed in the lyrics and the messages in music from their own cultures. People use music in a variety of ways: They listen to music to change moods, play music in the background while studying or traveling, play a musical instrument or sing, or discuss musical tastes with friends - and these are only a few of the many possible examples. Many authors already have discussed the role music plays in the lives of people. Andreas C. Lehmann, John A. Sloboda, and Robert H. Woody dedicated a chapter to “The User” in their book, *Psychology for Musicians: Understanding and Acquiring the Skills*. The authors described ways that people approach and think about music, how musical skills have evolved as society and cultures have needed, and how music functions in different cultures. Through multiple case studies, it was examined that music was used as a tool in people’s lives, helping them articulate identity and control emotions.

Music using can be divided into different categories, and often music uses are linked to and rely on one another to serve their own individual purposes. Discussing music with others can involve the use of musical terminology and the expression of opinions that come as a result of evaluating and knowledgeably supporting individual ideas and beliefs. These conversations also can include the use of comparative language to identify differences and similarities between different music. Evaluating refers to analysing and interpreting musical content and concepts found in a performance or a recording. When evaluating, one makes decisions about music based on the knowledge that has been gained through discussion and study.

Despite the fact that music performance provides a rich perspective on our musical experiences, our understanding of music performance has not caught up with the empirical study of other types of musical experiences. Techniques for measuring and quantifying performance have improved with the advance of computer-aided musical instruments. Perhaps a more important reason for the small number of performance studies comes from a subtle but widely held premise in study of Western art music that performance is primarily an intermediary stage between a musical composition and its apprehension by a listener. In this view, the main source of information is the composition, and the performer’s job is to clarify the composer’s message. Another way of stating this belief is to say that there exists an ideal interpretation for each musical

score, which serves as the goal for performance. This premise is most obvious in a common reliance on the score as the starting point for music-theoretic analyses and most psychological studies of perception. However, studies based on interviews with performers suggest that musicians construct structural ambiguity in each musical piece, and perceptual studies suggest that interpretive aspects of performance influence perceptual judgments about musical structure. Research on music performance typically focuses on expression arising from a performer's emphasis of musical structure as specified in a compositional score. There are, however, many other sources of performance expression, including notational variants of compositional scores, different editor's and publisher's editions, performer-specific styles, and influences of stylistic expectations based on cultural norms.

Literacy in music has changed dramatically over the centuries with the advent of music notations. Initially, music notation was used as a memory aid, emphasizing the importance of the text and the context of the performance. Performance practice drove notation and bringing literacy to music had several consequences, especially the separation of the creator (composer) from the performer. In the 18th century, the idea of music as a work of art made a new separation between the performance and the work. This idea opened up a kind of literacy in music where the musical notation became only one of several written sources of knowledge that could contribute to the understanding of music, its works, and performances. The reliability of a performance in classical music has become connected to the performer's interpretation of the musical score and the literacy of that music. The fall of literacy in classical music is partly a result of the dominant factor the gramophone records have had on musical life in the 20th century. This has given us a dissemination of classical music that goes beyond the traditional links between musical content and its social context and performance venues. The importance of the composer is reduced, the performer's role and the importance of expressive qualities in the performance are enhanced, and classical music is about to become a performance practice again.

A specific historical conception including a special relation between composer and performer, literacy and audibility, and between content and context of music developed in the Age of Enlightenment. While in the Middle Ages music was still thought upon as a gift from God, the individualism in the Renaissance made way for the general understanding of music as an activity created by humans. The separation of roles between creator and performer that had been latent in the literacy-based music society

was now released with establishment of the composer as the creator of musical works and the performer as the presenter of these works. While the earliest compositions/notated music were merely a memo for traditional elements to be used in a special context, compositions in the Renaissance and Baroque era became individual works with more or less specific relation to a context. The growing music publishing industry gave new possibilities for music literacy, broadening the connection between composer and performer to become a connection between a composer and many different performers. These musical works were a reflection of the musical practice and, in addition, these new compositions were contributions to the development in the style history of an individual musical genre, as seen by the individual composer. It was not only a documentation of practice but also an attempt to construct a musical world of its own, independently of the context of a performance. The idea of a musical work took increasing impetus with the rise of the middle class. The new bourgeois society took on the concept of art as one of their identifiers. Art was defined as a dimension of music, literature, painting, or sculpture that could be exposed for individual appreciation and public comment. In the hierarchy of the feudal society, it was the commissioner who decided whether a musical work was good or not; this was now changed as the bourgeois society opened up for dialogue among people in the society to discuss the music as a work of art. With the rise of instrumental music in the Baroque era, musical notation became more accurate and the specifications from the composer on how to perform his musical work became more detailed. Even if instrumentation and articulation were more prescribed for the performer, notation was still rather loose on tempo and sonority. The use of figured bass notation in the Baroque era indicates that there was a strong connection and need for mutual understanding between composer and performer in their realization of a musical work.

A musical performance and its relation to the musical work were separated with the establishment of the idea of a musical work as a work of art, independent of the actual performance. This separation was essential in bourgeois society and it opened up for a kind of literacy in music where the musical notation became only one of several written sources for knowledge that could contribute to the understanding of music and its works and performances. Listening to a specific musical work was no longer a single event; several performances could be compared and their interpretative potential could be discussed. The separation in audience between those who know music and those who are connoisseurs of music have some similarities with the roles of composer and performer,

as the former uses his knowledge in composition and music history, while the latter uses reference to his own experience of the expressivity of the performance. The similarity is based on the assumption that the composer's role is to construct music and the performer must give it expressivity in the performance.

There is a need for music to be a part of a tradition and this will be established as a specific relation between content and context that certifies the performance as a valid and reliable part of a tradition. The context includes the arena for performances, the audience and their social status that enabled them to be present at the performance, and what have been described earlier as the literacy of the musical work. It is this combination of content and context (arena, audience, and literacy) that makes it possible to develop any style or genre from a performance practice. Music that is appreciated as art will be related to both social and literacy elements and it is the literacy elements that are basic for the development of the concept of music as art. This affects the internal components of a musical work both for the performer and the composer.

3.4 From Lyric to Song

The lyric works with the material experience of the somatic production and reproduction of words as sounds and sounds as words, whether spoken, written, or read. Formal schemes that abstract and stylize the distinctive sonic and grammatical shape of a language serve to foreground its material reality and put up an organized resistance to meaning, both as sense and as intention. Sounds are not without semantic resonances—whether associations specific to a particular poet and/or a given language, or “universal”—but their formal system operates independently of signification and keeps in constant view the intractably nonsensical, sensory basis and medium of meaning, of sense and intention. Lyric language presents to the ear that, which resists communication and the will of an individual “speaker”. Thus, oddly, an individuated speaker is heard in a language that foregrounds the materiality of the linguistic code and resists an individual will. The lyric is a foundational genre, and its history spans millennia; it comprises a wide variety of practices. Whether the lyric is read as oppositional or complicitous, it is still understood to be the self-expression of a prior, private, constitutive subject. Lyric

language is a radically public language, but it will not submit to treatment as a social document—because there is no “individual” in the lyric in any ordinary sense of the term. The lyric makes audible a virtual subjectivity in the shape of a given language. In the form of a poem the prescriptive shape of the language itself becomes audible, and the “voice”—an individuating emotional inflection and rhythm, a voiceprint of a speaker—is heard in and as its manner of submission to the constraints of a prescriptive code. The concept and status of an a priori “individual” are always already in question in a language that foregrounds the rules of the linguistic and formal codes; a subject is historically formulated in language precisely by subjection to a pre-existing system that at once socializes and individuates it. Language produces the subject, not the other way around. Although in the usual lyric the speaker is alone, this solitude does not mean that he is without a social ambiance. It means only that his current social conditions are presented as they are reflected on in solitude, embodied not in “live” interaction with other persons but in lexical and intellectual reference. The necessary solitude of the lyric speaker is evident and it is of course the poet-speaker’s own ethical choices that become articulated in the language creating the elastic space between himself and the other.

In 1965 C. Day Lewis suggested that the history of the song lyric be seen in social terms as consisting of “two lines, which sometimes interweave and at other periods have little or no contact: we would call them the lyric of the folk and the lyric of the few”.⁷² This points to an actual rift in the audience for lyric that persists to this day. In Lewis’s study, he examined that the lyric of the few began as a courtly amusement. It ramified in the great 1560-1620 period of the lutanists and the madrigal, when music was an accomplishment expected of every gentleman. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, the lyric divided and more of its impulse was to flow into lyrical poetry. What Lewis means by “lyrical poetry” is lyric poetry that is for the few but not for singing, although it continues to present itself as song or song-like. The poem-as-song possesses the iterative pervasiveness of a song repeated by new singers, for new listeners, until it provides for those who come after the poet their linguistic and affective vocabularies for perceiving and responding to the world. For these poets, the lyric poem is neither monument nor citadel; what it offers is the possibility of a second, perhaps anonymous, but much wider life for poem and poet in song. A continuing tradition of

⁷² Lewis, C. Day. *The Lyric Impulse*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 7-8.

reading or reciting poetry aloud to an audience might be said to bring poetry partially into the life of song. Without the prompt of a musical setting, however, we may hesitate to invoke what can seem empty metaphor (the poem as song) merely on the basis of verbal rhythm and sound patterning. This is where a closer look at the extensive traffic between the life of song and that of poetry may illuminate the transit of poems into the moving life of song—moving in both senses, of shared emotion and of collectively produced movement and change—that some poets have sought without the help of music.

When poets envision the lyric poem as song, however, remembering and memorializing may take a different form entirely. For Donne, a poem on the pains of love is not a monument; circulating in manuscript to lover or friend, it inscribes an intimate speaking voice, restraining grief in verse. The private grief shaped by a lover into verses for intimate circulation will be released into a wider life if the poem becomes a song. Shelley celebrates the soaring, spreading voices of an unseen skylark or a high-born maiden singing in a palace-tower; the poem's verbal music becomes another invisible, diffusive presence when that poem is figured as a song. Swinburne has Sappho boast that her lyric-poems grant their author a more-than-mortal life in musical verses that will be henceforth woven into the very texture of the natural world; for those who come after Sappho, in everything of which she sang "memories shall mix and metaphors of me".⁷³ Lyric imagined as song changes the way future readers, listeners, and poets experience the world and the poet by becoming part of that world. A brief lyric poem is extracted from its original context and acquires quite different powers and meanings when it becomes the property of singers and their listeners. For those who know these as songs, of course, it can be difficult to read them as poems without the memory of their musical settings affecting our senses of sound, rhythm, and even sense, but other readers continue to know them only as poems; neither poem nor song has murdered its other. The introductory poem of *Songs of Innocence* recounts the passage of the poems through a succession of transformations, from piping to singing to verses written down so that every child may joy to hear. While text and images encourage readers to imitate the feeling practices of innocence, Blake's songs also work by drawing attention to sound as an important part of their empathetic practice. Perhaps, as music theorist Victor Zuckerkandl suggests, the

⁷³ Swinburne, Algernon Charles. "Anactoria", *Major Poems and Selected Prose*. ed. Jerome McGann and Charles L. Sligh. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004, 93-100.

musical tones themselves, or a poem's rhythmically repeated rhymes and intermittently echoing sounds of all kinds—assonances, alliterations, other phonemic repetitions and their variations as arranged by the poet—help to “remove the barrier between person and thing, and clear the way for what might be called the singer's inner participation in that of which he sings”.⁷⁴ If so, Blake's illuminated verses, we might say, intend to participate in song's work upon the world: to alter that world by giving the reader/singer new languages, at once poetic, visual, and audial, for perceiving it.

We often say or write the word ‘Song’, but seldom pause to consider the divergent but overlapping uses we make of it. At least three different meanings are generated in everyday discourse: 1) the act or art of articulating words or sounds to musical inflections of the voice; 2) a poem or other formal composition, usually in rhyme and a recognizable verse-structure; 3) a sequence of musical tones, with or without words; a tune. In the first definition voice and music fuse with words, but the other two split these components apart, one of them privileging the verbal, textual, or poetic, and the other placing emphasis instead on the musical. This semantic fissure suggests the importance of exploring the probably inexhaustible topic of song from both literary-critical and musicological perspectives, bringing together, as in this special issue, the divergent outlooks and protocols of these and other disciplinary approaches.

From the Greek Anthology to the present, lyric poems commonly go untitled, becoming popularly known by their first line elevated almost to a title's status. Often a lyric poem will carry only its particular formal name, like the poems simply named “Sonnet” in Keats's volumes. The intent of such a title is at least partly to stress that the poem is supposed to be a fine or unusual exercise in the specific form named. Much more rarely do poets follow a third course of giving a work an extremely general name like “Poem”, which would have the effect of a novelist naming his book *Prose*, like a generic grocery item; and even more rarely do poems named “Poem” follow one another in a concentrated sequence. Rather, a compact series of elements generally named “Song” calls attention to itself as an equally general reflection on poetry, a reflection the puzzlingly identical titles lead the reader to think somehow united. Given the self-conscious reference of a lyric poem to itself by its generic name, a song simply named

⁷⁴ Smith, John Thomas. *Ballads Within*. London: Colburn, 1829, 175-176.

“Song”—the reader has to wonder to what extent this group forms a unified statement about lyric poetry and its potentials.

The lyric poem has been practiced for more than four thousand years, and it is very much alive even today. It has been spoken, chanted, sung and written, compacted and compressed, expanded and enlarged. It has been pictorialized on tablets, inked into papyrus, typed onto paper, and generated in virtual space. Later on, it has been radically wrenched and questioned, turned and twisted, stretched nearly beyond recognition, reframed, reformed, hybridized, ecologized, politicized, erased—its difficulties are notorious, and yet it continues to speak from the margins, to move and tell stories, to disturb and console us. It engages our interior lives, social experiences, planetary woes. The Greeks defined the lyric as a poem to be chanted or sung to the accompaniment of a lyre, the instrument of Apollo and Orpheus, and thus it stands as a symbol of poetic and musical inspiration. It emerged from religious ritual, tribal practice. Poetry everywhere is inseparable in its origins from the singing voice and the first songs were most likely created to accompany occasions of celebration and mourning. Prayer, praise, and lamentation are three of the oldest subjects of poetry. The lyric was counter-posed against the epic. Whereas the speaker of the epic acted as the deputy of a public voice, a singer of tales narrating the larger tale of the tribe, the speaker of the lyric was a solitary speaker or singing on his or her own behalf. The lyric poem thus opened up a space for personal feeling. It introduced a subjectivity and explored the capacity for human inwardness. The intimacy of lyric stood against the grandeur of epic, its exalted style and heroic themes, its collective nostalgia. The short poem asserted the value and primacy of the singular witness. Moreover, one can argue that it is possible to write poems shaped by the idea of song even in the absence of musical setting: shaped, that is, not only by heightened attention to a poem’s potential for verbal music, or by a scientific or philosophical interest in the poem as a kind of thinking analogous to music, but by a poet’s interest in particular kinds of songs as they travel back and forth between print and performance, in fact or in the poet’s imagination. The poet, indeed, might be said to have conceived himself as in some sense a singer, performing—in print—the work of the singer moving a song. In this way the very idea of song became more than an idea, and not just for the poet-singer. It became an experience of embodiment that might connect persons across time and place, so that the changing iterations of reading, like those of singing, might continue to link emotion to motion and person to person in the shared labour of moving the song.

At least since the early 17th century, music has been conceived as a form of address in which one person transmits feelings or states of mind to another. The address may be thought to come from the composer, the performer, or a fictional surrogate; the addressee in each case is the listener, who may also be the performer. The music acts as if passing a body of experience, a sense of being a certain way, from one subject to another. This conception is not exclusive, nor is it always explicit, but it is ubiquitous. The recognition of its emergence, rise, and possible fall offers valuable resources for writing the twin histories of subjectivity and of music, and of highlighting the special importance of the latter for the former. Song plays an especially vital role in this process, particularly as the free-standing solo song, establishes itself as an independent genre, first as art song, and shortly afterward as a principal medium of popular entertainment—the two, often mixing. This development has a long and complex history. Song intensifies the conception of music as an address by turning from the quasi-metaphorical form, available to music without voice to the quasi-literal form created by the presence of the singer and the addition of language. As vocalist, the singer makes the primary medium of address in sound into a musical instrument. As one who intones the words of a text, especially those of the pre-existing poetic texts basic to the art song as a genre, the singer channels musical expression through language, a medium in which address is not merely always possible but virtually inevitable. These features of singing have shaped the figure of the singer as exceptional interlocutor since ancient times. As song extricates itself more fully from the general matrix of music, its subjective force increases. Song multiplies the capacity of music to draw those who participate in it into exemplary circuits of subjectivity. Those circuits are historically specific, although they have remarkable carrying power toward both the past and future. Song might even be said to be one of the principal means by which subjectivity comes to overflow its historical boundaries. The circuits may sometimes break down, or be interdicted, or give way to denials of subjective agency, but only in response to the default production of subjective energies. Once it becomes possible to think of music as the communication of subjectivity, the possibility becomes permanent. Song in this dispensation becomes a means of making communicable what would otherwise remain obscure, even to the subject who experiences it. Second, song, especially the love song, fosters an embrace of the damaged subject as the exemplary subject. As Shelley put it, speaking of poetry, “Most wretched men / Are cradled into poetry by wrong; / They learn in suffering what

they teach in song.”⁷⁵ Song in this perspective becomes a means of making subjective excess endurable. The unusual power of song within this historical frame is to give the divisibility of the subject an affirmative form and so to make it liveable and even a source of pleasure. As a condition of genre, the song is about the process by which its music reconceives and rearticulates, but never erases, a prior statement in words. The composer’s job is to make that process discernible. The performer’s, especially the singer’s job, is to make it audible. To do that requires a continual negotiation with the demands—sometimes competing, sometimes contradictory, sometimes just different—of textual and musical expressions. Words and music are presented as an indivisible unity, even when they have been cobbled together and so, words and music do not represent separate agencies, nor are they kept separate from the agency of the performer; the music is not a commentary or critique or interpretation of the words. A song is the virtual paraphrase of an actual or potential utterance, independent of whether the words involved are treated as sources of enunciation, mimicry, or deformation. The song acts globally first and then, where the text is known or can be surmised, the song acts with local intelligence. But at the same time the independence of the song as paraphrase from textual enunciation opens up dimensions of the song, that are themselves independent of any act of utterance, though they are not unrelated to the immanence of utterance. It is important to add in this connection that there is no point in indulging in false paradoxes about verbalizing the nonverbal. The independence of song grants no license for that. In other words, it can be said that song reshapes language, song lessens and sometimes nullifies the distance between language and the basis of language in sound; song hovers or soars over language and rummages beneath it. Traditional considerations of song focus on the expressive and interpretive relationships between music and verbal enunciation, a focus that remains in place even when the traditional assumptions of unity and congruousness between words and music are dropped, and even when matters traditionally ignored, such as space, body, and performance, are factored in the text, when the song addresses the words. The effect of the semantic register depends on the degree of power or authority accorded to the text. As noted earlier, art songs, as a condition of their genre, depend on mostly pre-existing texts that remain independent of the songs that set them, and that preserve part of their separateness while also yielding

⁷⁵ Shelley, Percy Bysshe. from “*Julian and Maddalo*”, in *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald Reiman and Sharon Powers. New York: Norton, 1977, 125.

to appropriation by the music. Popular genres generally have “lyrics” rather than “texts”; the lyrics have little or no independent value and become, on any occasion, whatever the song, the singer, or the arranger makes them. Song lyrics gain power or authority from the music and the performance; texts set by art songs yield power or authority to the music and the performance that appropriate them. From the perspective of the semantic register, there is no preestablished “text” for a song to set beyond a certain fairly crude level of topicality. The traditional idea that the song divines the meaning of a text in the latter’s innermost secrecy and unfolds that meaning better than the words can, with an understanding that supposedly exceeds that of the text’s author, is a fiction that throws a veil of glamour over a process infused with uncontrollable possibilities of transformation. The song must construct the text before setting it, or rather in the very act of setting it. But the song must also construct the text as semantically incomplete. Therefore song, in this sense is more candid about the power of song as paraphrase; it makes the words dance to its tune. But no matter the model, song is always on the edge of something. The phonetic register paraphrases utterance and the sound of speech in song enunciates the words of the text or the lyrics in an audibly intelligible way. Song engages in a “topological” distortion of speech patterns. The range of possibilities here depends in part on the degree to which melismatic phrasing is admissible in a given song or genre, and similarly on the degree to which false accentuation is permitted or overlooked. Setting the words is the means of setting the text. But of course, the text, as one paraphrases or seeks to paraphrase it by one’s musical discourse, will also have opinions about how its words should be treated. Composing the song is in this sense a kind of listening. And song, which seems like such a simple and natural thing at heart, quickly reveals itself to be complex and qualified. The immediacy of expression in song is not a work of transmission but a process of distillation.

Music, when mentioned in Mallarmé’s works, is nearly always golden, evoked with images of light, and hardly can be separated from representations of vision, energy or clarity. Mallarmé’s poems reveal that music and silence give shape to an idea situated in the poetic text, and this transformative pattern acquires a meaning relative to experiential thought and sensibility. Mallarmé’s deliberations on the functioning of syntax, rhythm, rhyme, and timbre, language’s exact modes of passage from ordinary “*exécutions concertantes*” to the absolute “*musicalité de tout*” are never fully illuminated: it is as if

the poet's words, drawn toward "une réminiscence de l'orchestre"⁷⁶, must disappear into a hidden resonating chamber where music is so thoroughly occulted within and beneath language that the two finally emerge together as art—music thickens the apparently clear texture of language with forms and effects fully perceptible only to listeners initiated into its mysteries. Mallarmé's poems as text are particularly evocative of the aesthetic ideals that Mallarmé adopted, conjoining theory and art and relating musical concepts to poetic motivations. Music's immense power of affect was largely due to its public setting. The audience, especially the ideal audience, was central to the question and, as he worked it through, a new premise for this lyrical intimacy was admitted to allowing for public exchange.

From Mallarmé's own thoughts on the intimate associations between poetry and music, it can be observed that the concept of voice can exist in poetic writings. Mallarmé acknowledges the presence of poetic and musical bodies in performance, which perpetuate a totalizing language through voice. Yet the realization of this total action of expressive form and latent meaning does not remove the listener from the poetry into a purely musical realm but instead implies the regenerative potential of poetry when voiced and incarnated. Ultimately, voice's resonance reveals itself as an integrative unity and presence, informing the expressive potentialities in the intertexture of music and poetry.

For well over a century now, whatever else a song may be, it is something that may be recorded. The advent of recording technology did not bring about a mere adjunct to speaking or singing voice. On the contrary, it irrevocably changed what speech and song are. Then, song is a fragment of the afterlife of the voice that has sung its words. That much is true of any song, in any genre. Songs may still be granted a certain abstract existence in the form of the composed score, which remains subject to interpretation in both the performative and the hermeneutic sense.

The most basic and long-lasting formal distinction that Greeks made within what we call "poetry" was between "song" requiring full melodic presentation, and "verse" that may have been chanted but was not sung. It should be noted, however, that the distinction

⁷⁶ Hillary, David, "Mallarmé and the Transposition au Livre" in *Music and Poetry in France from Baudelaire to Mallarmé*. Berne: Peter Lang, 1986.

between sung *melos* and recited *epe*, carried with it social implications, connoting, for example, certain skills, education, and experience required of potential performers and a range of roles available to audiences. Singable form was fundamental to lyric generification, but not as form for its own sake. After occasion and form, the third and final parameter in defining archaic lyric kinds was “content”, the range of topics conventionally thought appropriate to song in a given context and performative mode.

Song, then, has the power to estrange the self from its own past even while making that past temporarily present in a way that prevents the arrival of the future. Song not only invokes action; the singing presents itself as an act or gesture and appears to embody different powers of knowing. Lest we fail to imagine the sung song in its strangeness, the prose text prepares us to listen and to hear difference before the singing begins. The text of the song remembers and invites other performances past and future, and in doing so constructs communities with other singers at other times. Song acts: the poem as song, with its fictions of performance, and asks us to imagine passionate motions of the senses, the emotions, and the mind even when they must be conveyed solely through language sounded by the eye while scanned silently by a solitary reader. It is not simply the song as text, but the fact that it is being sung, or that we are asked to imagine it as sung while we read, that marks its difference from the longer text and therefore acts upon it. Song poems are likely to exhibit what from the perspectives of both poetry and popular musical song is an excess of complex verbal patterning, aural and visual. They proliferate schemes of sound and sight and figures of meaning; especially metre, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance; stanzas and refrains; and syntactic and semantic parallelisms. It is the character of such schemes and figures that not only repeats but is there to repeat with variation, suggesting that each is open to infinite extension in a potentially continuous evolution of expectation, satisfaction, and surprise. This verbal music, paradoxically, produces the condensations and elisions of fundamentally figurative thinking, a feature that helps to give the song poem its memorability. Song’s echoed repetitions in a way haunt lyric poetry, where lyric speech takes on song’s patterned condensations, its memorability, and its strong rhythmic force to orchestrate movements of intense passion. The effect of these transformations of poetry by song depends on more explicit comparisons: with formal songs, marked and unmarked, embedded in longer works. Song poems ask to be imagined as scripts for performance, hence belonging to many voices and not representing that of a single, individually distinctive “voice” at all.

Chapter-III

Translating Performance Text

In one sense, everyone “translates” all the time. Translation is simply the basic interpretive process of rendering external data into terms that “make sense” to a person. Even between two speakers of the same language, the process of trying to understand each other involves a mode of translation. Less ubiquitous, but still almost universal, is the process of translating between and among different languages. As long as there have been languages, people have had to cross the linguistic borders between them. Everyday functioning in polylingual social settings requires translation, the finding of rough and ready equivalencies and similarities of meaning across languages so that one can engage in both necessary and casual communication with others. For some people, this process is elevated into a more consciously pursued practice. A person works carefully and painstakingly to bring a text in one language—a legal contract, a government document, a bill of lading, a poem—into a second language. Issues of accuracy and precision become more important. Greater control over both languages, the source and the target, becomes a concern. Training and experience in translation may be desirable skills on the part of the practitioner. In some settings this practice of translation becomes a performance. The tour guide, the pilgrim priest, the simultaneous translator at a diplomatic conference, the person signing a speech or performance for hearing impaired members of the audience—each is performing translation. The concept of performance can also be extended to the playful and painful rendering of a powerful hymn from a classical language understood by few into a vernacular tongue, so that everyone who hears or reads it can appreciate and experience its beauty and influence. If the concept of “practice” in translation emphasizes the need for discipline and application, the concept of “performance” reminds us that translation can be a virtuoso act aimed at receiving the appreciation of an audience.

Viewing translation as a creative practice is crucial to studies concerned with the translating ‘self’, notably those exploring how voice, style and subjectivity are formed through translation. As Theo Hermans suggests: Translation, as the retrieval and representation of an anterior discourse, can be viewed as a form of quotation. In this view the translator is a reporter who simulates, re-enacts, reproduces the reported discourse

mimetically. That makes translation a form of direct speech, with as a consequence, limited to minimal reporter control over the reported words. However, even a simulation contains a deictic aspect, which we attribute to the simulator. The matter is complicated further, first by the selectivity of the representation, which again reveals the simulator's agency, then by the problem of clearly telling the mimetic from the diegetic, and thirdly, and most importantly, by the fact that in an interlingual translation the words we encounter are unmistakably those of the translating reporter.⁷⁷

For Hermans, it is precisely to the extent that the translator is more than just a soundbox or mouth-piece animator that the translator's subject position becomes discernible in translation. When translating translation theory and engaging with a text on a theoretical level in particular, the translator's perspective on the theory translated creates room for the expression of an attitude which works as a response to the theory expressed in the source text. 'Translations', Benjamin claims, 'prove to be untranslatable not because meaning weighs on them heavily, but rather because it attaches to them all too fleetingly'.⁷⁸

Responsibility in translation lies in the translator's response to the source text, in the way he/she interprets it, represents it and expresses his/her own experience of it. The translator's responsibility resides in the articulation of his/her own perception of the source text, while making a claim of fidelity to that text. Responding, in this context, means both enacting and transforming the prior utterance; it implies saying something more than the original. A response, in this approach, is not a folding back, or a return to the first utterance, but a displacement, a new act of communication. As Susan Petrilli suggests in *Translation, that for Translation*, to be adequate 'the translation-text must not simply repeat the [source text], but must establish a relation of answering comprehension to it'.⁷⁹

The responsible translator must respond to the original: he/she must render the source text, but he/she can only do so by interpreting it, reacting to it and transforming it. Responsibility in translation is never just a movement of response – or rather, the response it articulates is also concurrently, and inevitably, an address. A double sense of

⁷⁷ Hermans, Theo. *The Conference of the Tongues*. Manchester: St Jerome, 2007, 74–75.

⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin, *The Task of the Translator*, trans. Harry Zohn, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti. New York: Routledge, 2004, 75.

⁷⁹ Susan Petrilli, *Translation and Semiosis*, in *Translation Translation*, ed. Susan Petrilli. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003, 24.

responsibility is thus at play in translation, for while responding to the source text the translator also addresses someone else: a reader, an audience. Even when literally responding to a text – the response constitutes a new interpellation, an address which displaces the initial act of communication and its reception. Response in translation is not circular; it does not go back to the first sender. Instead, it establishes a new address that transforms the first utterance into a new act of communication.

Translating requires taking responsibility for one's personal response to a text – both with regard to the author of the original and to the reader of the target text. Translators are concurrently bound to the source text to which they must respond and be exposed to an audience that they cannot entirely anticipate. As Walter Benjamin succinctly phrases it in 'The Task of the Translator', 'no poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener'.⁸⁰

Just as it is impossible for a writer to predict every translatorly response to his/her work, so the translator is unable to guarantee who the reader of her text will turn out to be. Paradoxically, at the very moment of addressing a text to a specific audience, the translator faces the impossibility of securing the specificity of this address.

In the process of performing the other text, the translator also, and inevitably, presents his/her own interpretation of the original, positions himself/herself in relation to it and develops his/her own understanding of what translating is about. Translation in this sense is metatextual. It does not only represent the source text, but also expresses the translator's attitude towards it. The process of translating creates a subject-position – a sense of self and a point of view – which gets inscribed in the translated text itself. In the process of performing a text, the translator creates a difference which functions as an embodied critical position. Being responsible in translation is not just a matter of choosing between being faithful to the author of the original or serving the reader of the target culture, as Friedrich Schleiermacher's famous formula tends to suggest: 'Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him.'⁸¹

⁸⁰ Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', trans. Harry Zohn, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti. New York: Routledge, 2004, 75.

⁸¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On the Different Methods of Translating*, trans. Susan Bernofsky, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti. New York: Routledge, 2004, 49.

Instead, accountability in translation means answering to both author and reader, even while knowing that, as a heterogeneous address, this answer is itself subject to displacement and deferral. A translator must account for his/her own impersonation of the source text. He/she must answer for the changes produced as a result of her subjective engagement with it. At the same time, the meaning of the text he/she creates is itself unstable and open, calling for further interpretation. Regardless of the amount of colouring and guidance provided, translation ultimately remains at the mercy of the reader. Responsibility resides in this deferred act of communication – in the displacement of the translator’s response, in the uncertainty surrounding the reception of the call it formulates and in the indefinite deferral of this responsive call.

4.1 From *Gitanjali* to *Gitabitan*

Before the publication of the original book *Gitabitan*, Tagore’s songs were scattered in thirteen books. The first edition of this book was published in the year 1885 under the name of *Rabichchaya* in the interest of the poet-lover Yogendra Narayan Mitra and the last one was published in the year 1925 under the name of *Giticharcha* edited by Dinendranath Tagore. The poet’s mind may not have been touched by the format or planning of the books published during the long forty years. And so, there are many differences between today’s *Gitabitan* and the first published *Gitabitan*. And that change was made by Rabindranath himself.

What was that lyric seventy-two years ago? What changed? The curiosity to know all this is normal, but even before that we need to know when and where the songs were printed before they were included in the lyrics. Did Rabindranath include all the songs composed up to that time in the first published lyric book? If not, are the songs that were banned by Rabindranath lost? All these questions make us curious and then we have to look at his anthology books, which were written before publishing the *Gitabitan*. The first book of the anthology *Rabichchaya* was published in 1885 when Rabindranath was only 24 years old. Ever since the first edition of *Gitabitan* was published, Rabindranath felt a lack of “usability” in the book. His mind became desperate to decorate it in a completely new way – various plans were going on in his mind. The truth of this belief becomes clear when one sees the first edition. Thinking of rearranging, he was marking

the number 1, 2, 3 next to the first umbrella of the song in the table of contents. All the poems have been already categorised into six themes:

Puja (worship), *Prem* (love), *Prakriti* (season), *Swadesh* (patriotism), *Aanushthanik* (occasion-specific), *Bichitro* (miscellaneous) and *Nrityanatya* (dance dramas and lyrical plays)

In the first edition, *Gitabitan* was compiled in keeping with the poet's prescribed order, in which two chronological and alphabetical creations were added at the beginning and end of the book, respectively. The call was from the author, because it contained the editor's editing. The first word of the first verse was alphabetical.

After the first and second volumes of *Gitabitan* compiled and edited by Rabindranath were published, the third volume of *Gitabitan* was published in a completely new form after Rabindranath's death. The period from the death of Rabindranath in 1941 to the transformation of Visva-Bharati University in 1951, has certain importance. Although there is uncertainty about the future outcome of these institutions, their staff, teachers and students and others have sincerely continued to practice Rabindranath's ideals. Relentless efforts were made to keep Rabindrasahitya, Rabindrasangeet and all the other activities correct and alive according to the ideals. In 1950, the third volume of *Gitabitan*, with an introduction to books, was published. After its publication, a complete collection of songs composed from Rabindranath's first collection of songs, *Rabichchaya*, till the last day of his life, was found. Some questions arose from the identity of that time, which still seems to be significant today.

The word *Gitanjali* comes from *git*, meaning song, and *anjali*, meaning offering. *Gitanjali* in both Bengali and Sanskrit implies song offerings. Apparently, at first it seems that the recipient in these melodies is God, however perusing the melodies over and over at various marks of time, one gets the possibility that this outcome is far from obvious, or at least not as simple as that. Every song or poem in *Gitanjali* contains religious and even theological meaning. Therefore, it makes sense to consider the songs as offerings to God. The problem arises when someone tries to pin down this god. What is the idea of this God that Tagore is singing to? From *Gitanjali* and other important works like *Sadhana*, *Creative Unity*, *The Religion of Man*, and *Personality*, one gets a rough idea that Tagore's God is intensely personal, and instead of the transcendence to mysticism, it appears more apt to ascribe to it the immanence of the God of the poet and of poetry. In all the songs, the image of the divine is a personal one. However, the image is sometimes

that of transcendence and sometimes of immanence, and in both these modes, there are different ways in which the divine functions as the addressee of the songs. By reducing God to not just the object of prayer but prayer itself, not the object of song but the singing itself, the poet of the *Gitanjali* might as well be waiting for the Event as for his Friend-God, waiting for that which goes on in God's name as for God itself.

Tagore belongs to the line of mystic poets who have an inner vision and seek to convey the truths in the language of ordinary experience. Tagore's mysticism is neither a creed nor a philosophy but a practical way of looking at the world with pure soul and the realization of the inherent unity in all. Mysticism is a striking feature in Tagore's poetry, especially in *Gitanjali*, wherein he had the vision of unity or oneness in all things, of the one inseparable in the separate phenomena of the universe. He was not only a poet, but also a seer, a mystic. And as a mystic, Tagore defers from the western romantics who found themselves in spiritual wilderness, in an aimless, meaningless, godless world, and it is against this background that his poetry gains an importance, immediacy and a spiritual significance that the modern world cannot afford to ignore.

To Tagore, mysticism was essentially an attitude of the mind based on instinctive confidence of unity, of oneness, of likeness in all things. The object in *Gitanjali*, therefore, is to raise the soul of man from materialism and to establish a perfect spiritual union between man, his surroundings and ultimate reality. His *Gitanjali* poems hold, as it were a mirror up to the poet's mystical experience. The poems in *Gitanjali* are organized architecturally and arranged in logically connected groups. Each succeeding poem is related with the previous one and the one that follow. The following main groups are found in it.

First Group (1-7): It reveals the immensity and vastness of God's love and the deep relationship of love existing between God and the poet.

Second Group (8-13): It deals with the way how to realize God. He can be realized through love of humanity.

Third Group (14-36): Here the poet describes his intense yearning for complete identification with God and also the pangs of separation and obstacles in the path of God's realization.

Fourth Group (37-57): The poet reveals his intense joy when the union God takes place.

Fifth Group (58-70): God also partakes in the joy born out of this union. The phenomenal world is Maya, the veil that separates man and God.

Sixth Group (71-78): The poet says that man should realize the eternal through the bondage of separation. He should ungrudgingly dedicate himself to the service and love of God.

Seventh Group (79-103): The feeling of separation is a main cause of sorrow in human life. Death is the messenger of God who will bring to an end this feeling of separation. Death will dissolve this veil of Maya and will “take the soul on its voyage to its eternal home”

The chief traits of mysticism that can be observed in *Gitanjali* were:

God as a Father:

The unity of mankind was central to Tagore’s ideology. In his view, all segregation and fragmentation that is made in the name of religion, caste, creed, or nationality should be condemned. The only language he understood was that of his heart, the only religion he valued was that of love, the only caste he understood was that of humanity, and the only God he understood was omnipresent. Tagore thus prays to God as his father to take him into the heaven of freedom where spirituality, universal education, truth, peace, love and non-violence will reign supreme.

God as a Mother:

The poet addresses god as his beloved mother and says: “Mother, I shall weave a chain of pearls for thy neck with my tears of sorrow...”

And this would be his offering to the mother goddess. The poet realizes that he can't give anything related to wealth or fame, as these things are the gift of the goddess, and thus the only thing that belongs to him is his sorrow. Hence, he will weave out of his tears a chain that looks like pearls and present it to the goddess.

God as Child:

Here the poet shows the relationship between child and the mother.

Tagore found certain amount of mystic quality in children just like Blake and Wordsworth. He spontaneously enlightened the ordinary picture of a child playing at the seashore with cosmic symbolism. He hopes that by honouring the innocence of children, we can restore man’s lost connection with nature. Moreover, there is an indication provided by the poet which suggests that we are all the children of God.

God as Lover:

The relationship between the god and the god-lover is brought forth here. Tagore here expresses Vaishnava faith when he says that god permeates the entire universe. The kernel of Vaishnava-lore lies in Viraha or separation. The supreme lord has separated man from him so that he may feel the pangs of separation. Though God is one and unique, yet he creates within himself a plurality of souls. And from them he receives love and adoration. Thus, the poet is the beloved and God is the lover and like a true beloved he waits sincerely and patiently for God, and on his arrival determines to give himself up to him for love.

God as beloved:

A superior variety of Madhura Bhakti is projected here, where the poet takes god for his spouse.

“Yes, I know, this is nothing but thy love, oh beloved of my heart this golden light that dances upon the leaves, these idle clouds sailing across the sky, this passing breeze leaving its coolness upon my forehead”.

Then he pictured his beloved’s face bent from above with his eyes gazing down at his own. It appears to him that his heart has touched the feet of his beloved. Thus, the poet sees love to be reflected everywhere. To the poet, even nature and its phenomena reflect the messages of his beloved.

God as Master Poet:

In the presence of god, who is also the finest poet and musician, the poet’s vanity melts away and disappears. The poet is fit only to sit at his feet. Prior to attaining complete union with the lord, he would make his life simple and straight to enable him to compose highly effective and beautiful songs. Thus, the poet realizes that if he wants to be divinely inspired, he must make his life upright for only then a straight reed can be made into a flute and resound with music when it is played upon.

God as Master:

Daasya Bhakti is presented here. God’s luminous music makes the poet speechless with its incredible beauty, but he wishes he could sing in unison with it. If he holds his listeners spellbound with his songs, the master’s music captivates his own heart and makes him incapable of anything else. A poet’s song is a vain imitation of God, since

God is the master. In spite of this fact, the poet sings at the commend of the eternal singer and he is proud of this fact.

God as Friend:

Saakhya Bhakti is focused upon here. The poet says that he had played with God as an equal and a close friend during most of the part of his life. But, he has been ignorant enough to misjudge his playmate. In the earlier hours of the morning the divine companion used to awaken him and like a playmate would run with him. But he never bothered to know the meaning of the songs he had heard from his companion. There were moments when the poet was conscious of the divine presence, but he did not appreciate the significance of these moments. However, in the evening of his life, when the playtime was over, the poet realizes that he had not played with an ordinary person but with the divine. It was quite late in life, when he understood that the whole universe is bound to the feet of god and all creation including the sky and the stars, bowed down its head before him in awe and reverence.

God as King:

There is a universal tendency to view God as a king in every religion. As the God is the ruler of the entire universe, poets, mystics and philosophers bestow him comfort and richness. The poet here glorifies charity and the renunciation of worldly possessions. There are a variety of personal relationships between God and mankind found in mysticism as well as various forms of worship found here.

Who will give the unequivocal answer to why Rabindranath wrote *Gitanjali*? From 1313 to 1321, what is the motivation behind this uninterrupted flow of songs from time to time? In order to pay the debt of *Maghotsab*, some creations were accumulated in the basket of songs every year. But there was no such immediate demand behind composing *Gitanjali's* songs. Yet, why the composition of so many songs for eight long years? Why did the poet project his thoughts sometimes in submission, sometimes in self-sacrifice, sometimes in love and sometimes in devotion?

There must be a reason behind composing poetry. If so, what level of mind is leading the poet to the creation is still a mystery. However, it must be admitted that sometimes in the essence of poetry, the identity of poetic inspiration can be found. Some poems carry the identity of the inherent inspiration in their own body. For example, some of the poems in 'Balaka' bear various signs of wartime mental conflict and prove that the racially

motivated war of that time aroused various thoughts in the mind of the poet. As a reader many may think that it would not be impossible for the reader to discover a meaning of the poem without this search for the background or cause of birth of the poem. But there are also those who think that poetry is not a skyscraper, it is not a bizarre dream arrangement.

Goethe once told Eckerman that the world is so great and rich and life is so full of variety, that one can never want occasions for poems. But they must all be occasioned, that is to say, reality must give both impulse and material. Goethe, of course, said that any event can inspire the poet, but the efficiency of the poet can be measured in his efforts of representing the event. So, it can be traced back to the anguish that caused him to step down from the position of composer of ‘Chitra’, ‘Chaitali’, ‘Kalpana’, ‘Kshanika’. Several deaths in a row have dealt a severe blow to his being. All those deaths have taken him through various emotional experiences. The glory of experience has inspired great poetry. For example, let’s take the song “*Antare Jagicho Antarayami*”— there is no novelty in the words - there is no time to express special beauty in the composition of the song. Yet this is not a regular worship prayer of all the devotees, it is like a heart-wrenching declaration of a soul. But whether it is sorrow, joy, pain, self-sacrifice, its main tone is differently presented in each different poem.

These events of loss and despair in his personal life were actively influential behind the change of direction in Rabindranath’s poetry. Death came not in his horrible image, but in the guise of a friend, like a relative. The poet spoke of the days and hours wherein death itself became a loved companion-no longer the king of terrors, but altogether transformed into a cherished friend. Actually, he was writing those poems for himself, he never thought of publishing them when he was writing.

In a letter, written to Indira Devi in 1913, after the fame of the English *Gitanjali*, the poet mentioned—“I did not write these poems just for the sake of writing — this is my true self-sacrifice in my inner life — in which all the joys and sorrows of my life have melted together and taken shape”.⁸² Whatever motivation the poet got for writing the poems of Bengali *Gitanjali*, the joy of creation was awakened in the subconscious mind of the poet at that time; the same attitude applies to all the songs that he has written after composing the songs of *Gitanjali*.

⁸² ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । চিঠিপত্র । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৪০৭ । (Translation)

The readers of *Gitanjali* often had the notion that the poems in the collection are purely spiritual. Some even proudly said that Rabindranath Tagore in *Gitanjali* is a poet who is fascinated by words and language and he is no longer a devotee and sage. Contemporary readers saw the joy of spiritual embodiment in these poems. In each song, a group of fascinated readers listened to the echoes of ancient sages. In other words, some of the readers and critics of the day thought that this was just a poem, a fancy expression of *Brahmasadhana*; the journey of a higher path of sadhana has taken refuge in the unveiled phrase without all these ornaments.

In his introduction to the English *Gitanjali*, Yeats called Rabindranath the offspring of the Renaissance. Critics have stated that if poet Yeats had thought so after reading the poems of *Gitanjali*, then he has been able to look at the very heart of India; At the root of India's Renaissance is the pursuit of the devotee, the renunciation of the monk, the enlightened consciousness of the *sadhaka*.

A very interesting argument was also raised in this context – the gap between the devotee and the deity in *Gitanjali* is not found in the Vaishnava tradition, where the devotee and the god are the same. *Gitanjali's* dualism cannot be same as the Vaishnava thought. So where did it come from? Critics say the poet received it from Catholic saints. That is why *Gitanjali* has been mentioned as a favourite of western readers. Many have also said that the influence of the Bible is too great in these poems; others say it is of Vaishnava poetry. The poet's own character, the development and evolution of his artistic life did not get much importance then. Therefore, there has been an attempt to continue his poetry as a religious mystical poet in the simplest way and the poet has never been indifferent to the task. "Jagate Ananda Yagne Amar Nimatrana" – the chief driving force of the poems of *Gitanjali* is recited in this song. Surprisingly, not only in abroad, but also at home, *Gitanjali* gave him the status of a sage, if not so much of a poet. The sorrows, pains, adversities of personal life could not push the poet towards God without happiness. For the poet there is a God, sometimes a lord, sometimes a friend, sometimes a husband, sometimes a lover - sometimes he keeps him awake with sorrow, sometimes he breaks his pride and sometimes he opens the door of his creation and gives innumerable ceremonies of enjoyment. Not only in meditation, not only in the daily practice of chanting mantras, in all the activities of life, in the joy and suffering, in the enjoyment of beauty, there is this constant intercourse with that eternal man. *Gitanjali's* poems talk of that confluence, that connection with the universe.

Gitanjali's poems are not merely religious poems or poems of oneness with the common man. It is like coming back to yourself for a moment, tasting this world in different ways. In the words of Ayub – Only 'you' and 'I' are alone, the society is far away, even if it is not false. Sometimes one's self-surrender to the Creator, sometimes one's promise to crush arrogance, sometimes one's longing for love – how strange one's feelings are in the songs and poems of this collection. And there are desperate attempts to assert one's existence in this world from various perspectives. Such a great arrangement has been made to give us pleasure, it should not be rejected in pursuit of any restraint against the senses. Not to turn away from life, to adapt oneself to life in absolute attachment, to be delighted by its taste. *Gitanjali* spreads that passion for life and the poet, through his poems, is eager to feel this truth in his mind again and again. Some of the songs in the *Gitanjali* are songs of the devotee's conversations with God and the rest are life-affirming. This life-addiction has been expressed in many ways in Rabindranath's writings. When the poet had the opportunity to float in a boat in the river and immerse himself in the beauty of the surroundings, he stated that it is enough to believe in love, to be loved, to live as human beings and to die as human beings, without thinking that the world is a hoax of the Creator and a snare of the devil. Rabindranath did not indulge in any religious consciousness which could lead to an aversion to the beauty of form. In *Atmaparichay*, it was mentioned in his own words:

আমি যদি সাধু প্রকৃতির লোক হতুম তা হলে হয়তো মনে করতুম, জীবন নশ্বর, অতএব প্রতিদিন বৃথা বাক্যব্যয় না করে সংকার্ষে এবং হরিনামে যাপন করি। কিন্তু আমার সে প্রকৃতি নয়—তাই আমার মাঝে মাঝে মনে হয়, এমন সুন্দর দিনরাত্রিগুলি আমার জীবন থেকে প্রতিদিন চলে যাচ্ছে। এর সমস্তটা গ্রহণ করতে পারছিনে! এই সমস্ত রঙ, এই আলো এবং ছায়া, এই আকাশব্যাপী নিঃশব্দ সমারোহ, এই দু্যলোকভুলোকের মাঝখানের সমস্ত শূন্য-পরিপূর্ণ-করা শান্তি এবং সৌন্দর্য, এর জন্যে কি কম আয়োজনটা চলছে।⁸³

He was speaking as a poet and this remained prevalent when he added:

আমি কেবল অনুভবের দিক দিয়া বলিতেছি, আমার মধ্যে আমার অন্তর্দেবতার একটি প্রকাশের আনন্দ রহিয়াছে। আমার চোখে যে আলো ভালো লাগিতেছে, প্রভাত-সন্ধ্যার যে মেঘের ছটা ভালো লাগিতেছে, তৃণতরলতার যে শ্যামলতা ভালো লাগিতেছে, প্রিয়জনের যে মুখচ্ছবি ভালো লাগিতেছে—সমস্ত সেই প্রেমলীলার উদ্বেল তরঙ্গমালা।⁸⁴

⁸³ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *আত্মপরিচয়*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ১৯০০।

⁸⁴ Ibid

Until the last day of his life, Rabindranath believed in his senses to enjoy the world. This pursuit of *sadhana* with life is a major pursuit of Rabindranath Tagore's life. And that very *sadhana* is also expressed in the songs of *Gitanjali*. That particular way of seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling, that unbound joy has become important in *Gitanjali's* poems.

Tagore's *Gitanjali* is mystical yet there is a difference in it from the mysticism of the west. *Gitanjali* is not a sigh of pain but an abundance of cheerfulness. His mysticism stems not from asceticism alone, but from the thoughtful life of man and animal in this world. It is his humanism that distinguishes Tagore and makes *Gitanjali* unique. The esoteric nature of these lyrics is derived from the mystical quality found in them. The divine is there with the poet all along as his lover and playmate. And all through *Gitanjali* the poet reiterates the concern, care and love for the world around. A solitary pilgrimage eludes him, but he prefers a procession with the following out of joy, abounding with soulful generosity that welcomes even death as a guest.

4.2 From *Gitanjali* to *Song Offerings*

Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* was published in Bengali in September 1910 with 157 songs and poems. Out of these songs, 20 were previously published in *Shārodutsav* in 1908 and *Gān* in 1909. The remaining 137 poems and songs were written in 90 days in between August 1909 to August 1910. As a matter of fact, Rabindranath Tagore himself took the task of the translation of *Gitanjali*, when he sailed for England on 27th May 1912. There he handed over the poems to William Rothenstein whom he met earlier in Calcutta in the year 1911. Moved by the poems, Rothenstein in turn gave the poems to W.B. Yeats to read. The literary and artistic circle of Yeats decided to publish the poems after Yeats made a selection of them and wished to write an introduction to it. That is how *Gitanjali* was first published by India Society of London on 1st November 1912. It was written in the half title page of the publication that "seven hundred and fifty copies of this edition have been printed for the India Society of which two hundred and fifty copies only are for sale".⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. London: The India Society, 1912, 80.

Regarding this Rabindranath wrote to Kshitimohan Sen “...I feel he must be happy with my writing and wants others to share that happiness. It is something like our taking delight in the lotus we offer him because he delights in it. I feel he has brought me from East to West...”.⁸⁶

The next edition of *Gitanjali* was published in the next year (March 1913) by Macmillan and Company, London. The number of poems in Bengali and English *Gitanjali* are not the same. In Bengali there were 157 poems, but in English there were 103. The poems were first published in different collection of poems. At the end of the Indian edition of India Society or Macmillan there was a statement: “These translations are of poems contained in three books- *Naivedya*, *Kheya* and *Gitanjali* – to be had at the Indian Publishing House, 22 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta; and of a few poems which have appeared in periodicals”.⁸⁷

But this information is not complete as the poems were collected from ten books. In fact, *Gitanjali* submitted for the Nobel Prize is a collection of 103 poems from ten other books of poems published earlier. The Table given below indicates the poems taken from different books of poems and their years of publication:

| Sl. No. | Book | Year of Publication | No. of poems |
|---------|---|---------------------|--------------|
| 1 | <i>Chaitali</i> | 1912 | 1 |
| 2. | <i>Kalpana</i> | 1900 | 1 |
| 3. | <i>Naivedya</i> | 1901 | 15 |
| 4. | <i>Smaran</i> | 1903 | 1 |
| 5. | <i>Shishu</i> | 1903 | 3 |
| 6. | <i>Utsarga</i> | 1903 | 1 |
| 7. | <i>Kheya</i> | 1906 | 11 |
| 8. | <i>Gitanjali</i> | 1910 | 53 |
| 9. | <i>Achalayatan</i> | 1912 | 1 |
| 10. | <i>Giti-malya [12](collected from the manuscript for Gitanjali, before publication as book in 1914)</i> | 1914 | 16 |
| | Total | | 103 |

[Table: Poems of *Gitanjali* from different collection of poems]

⁸⁶ Tagore, Rabindranath. Letter to Kshitimohan Sen, London, 20 June. Kept in Rabindra Bhavana.

⁸⁷ Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. London: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1913, 81.

Poems of *Gitanjali* were written at different places even on the train, though majority of the poems were written at Bolpur-Santinketan (18 poems out of 52).

Gitanjali: Song Offerings first published by the India Society, London, in 1912, had as a frontispiece a portrait of the poet from a drawing of William Rothenstein, to whom the book is dedicated. The work includes 103 poems translated into English by the author from the original Bengali. Only 53 of these poems occur in the Bengali work under the same title published in 1910. The rest come from several other works: 15 poems from *Gitimalya* (1914), 16 from *Naivedya* (1901), 11 from *Kheya* (1906), 3 from *Shishu* (1903), 1 each from *Kalpana* (1900), *Smaran* (1903), *Chaitali* (1896) and *Utsarga* (1914), and 1 song from the play *Achalayatan* (1918). The English work, therefore, can be considered as an anthology of Tagore's poems written over one decade. The arrangement of the poems in *Gitanjali* is neither in chronological order of their publication nor according to any sequence in the growth of mood or idea. They are self-contained, independent lyrics, though they have a slender thematic connection, all of them being addressed to a God who reveals himself in myriad forms and shapes, in the beauty of nature, in the everyday situations of human relationships. Tagore adopts the framework of medieval Indian mystic poetry where the infinite seeks its expression in the bondages of the finite: it is not that man alone longs for God; but God too longs for man. The recurring images in these poems are derived from familiar situations: the crossing of the river, the call of the boatman, the flight of cranes, dark clouds gathering in the sky, the lingering shadows of the evening, lovers waiting for the beloved, and so on. All these metaphors, coming as they do from the rural experience of the poet as well as from the religious poetry of the pre-British period, have acquired a cosmic dimension. Tagore's own construct of the imagery of the king became the most dominant one in his religious poetry and later in his plays.

The *Gitanjali* poems indeed have deep links with the Upanishadic conception of Godhead, as has often been claimed by Indian critics, but they have neither the authoritarian voice of the Upanishadic seers nor their apocalyptic vision. They are more indebted so far as verbal texture is concerned, to the Bhakti poems of medieval India in general and the love-symbolism of the Bengali Vaishnava poets in particular. Free from all sectarian and theological doctrines, these poems have so intricately woven the sacred with the secular that the *Gitanjali* poems are conspicuous by their complete coalescence. The dominant note of *Gitanjali* is life-affirmation: it creates a world of light and colour and abundance. If one hears a voice of melancholy in one lyric, there is an expression of

joy in another; if there is despondency in one, there is another celebrating the joy of fulfilment.

The original poems are marked by simplicity of diction, structural compactness and effortless rhyming and cadence: almost each and every lyric is an example of Tagore's mastery of craftsmanship. The translations, though in prose, retain the haunting quality of the original to a great extent as is evidenced by the enthusiasm with which the book was welcomed by W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound in England and the phenomenal popularity it enjoyed for at least one decade. The translations are more or less faithful to the Bengali original, the deviations, which are not many, that one might point out are not only legitimate but satisfying too.

The book was later published by Macmillan, in March 1913. There were slight variations between the India Society edition and the Macmillan edition, as shown below:

| | <u>India Society</u> | <u>Macmillan</u> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Poem 30 | My Lord | My lord |
| Poem 51 | Someone has said | Some one has said (fifth paragraph) |
| Poem 52 (last para) | Shy and soft demeanour | Coyness and sweetness of demeanour |
| Poem 87 | My Lord | My lord |

The variants in the India Society edition were prompted by C. F. Andrews which made Yeats extremely unhappy (Yeats to Tagore, 9 January 1913). Tagore apologized and requested Yeats to revise the proofs of the Macmillan edition (Tagore to Yeats, 26 January 1913). Yeats was particularly unhappy with the change in poem no. 52. Tagore asked Rothenstein to request Macmillan to submit the proofs of the second edition of *Gitanjali* to Yeats for 'necessary restoration' (Tagore to Rothenstein, 14 February, 1913).⁸⁸

Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian Nobel Laureate to receive the Prize in Literature after the publication of *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. In the prize citation, the committee remarked that the prize had been awarded to Tagore because of his profoundly

⁸⁸ Das, Sisir Kumar (ed). *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore: Volume One—Poems*. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2004.

sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse; through which, with great skill and efficiency, he has made his poetic thought expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West. Clearly, it can be pointed out that the Nobel committee was acutely aware of Tagore's non-westernness and of the fact that *Gitanjali* was originally written in Bengali. It was Tagore who could have translated *Gitanjali* for his fans and friends in the West, for the sentiments therein hailed from a spiritual world to which they had no direct access. In order for Yeats to be able to read the poems that so moved him, and later the Nobel Prize Committee, Tagore had to translate them from their original Bengali into English, a process marked by Tagore's often expressed anxieties about his fluency in English. Tagore produced a new English translation of *Gitanjali*, one which sought faithfulness to the original, but nevertheless came perilously close to discouraging it. Therefore, the translated text is both his own, "intimately personal", and yet foreign. Tagore's prescriptive similarity between the two texts—in which every line has been composed as much close to the original as possible—reminds us of the indissoluble difference between the Bengali and the English, a difference borne out of the impossibilities of translation and the liminality of the colonial conditions.

The delightful descriptions of the astonishing amazement and appreciation that the translations of the original *Gitanjali* in English brought to the West in the late 1912s, is almost a legend today. Some prominent English scholars have written their responses or left eyewitness accounts of their fascination. But the real context of the overall acceptance of this translation and the overwhelming response of a large number of English readers seems to have become blurred. So, our attitude towards the fame and notoriety of Tagore, as a poet in England, is still ambiguous. Evidence of this dilemma can be found by looking at the hitherto proposed and generally accepted explanations. The validity of any of the views is beyond doubt. It has been said that the error in the English translation done by the poet himself is responsible for the loss of his reputation. But if the poet's translation had been inadequate, there is no such explanation which can indicate the reason behind the first wave of fame of the poet. In response to this, many may say that whatever the later translations of the poet, the translation of the first book, the English *Gitanjali*, is impeccable, based on the poet's victory over England.

Behind these views lies an undoubted hypothesis about the excellence of Rabindranath's poetry, and even the uniqueness of the English translation of the poems in the English *Gitanjali*. In the early half of the poet's conquest in England, this excellence was rightly recognized. Later on, if that recognition has become a thing of the past, then it has

happened due to external reasons. Doubts have been expressed not only about the quality of his poetic translation but also about the quality of his original poems. It is said that the source of his first fame was a hoax, not because of the force of poetry, but because of the propaganda of some English mystics and Indian experts. Again, a class of English readers did not consider his poems to be Indian, they found in the English *Gitanjali* a Western religious feeling, an incapable echo of Western consciousness. Though there are many misconceptions in these opinions, there is no doubt that Rabindranath's fame was mixed with complexities in England. Apart from that, he was accustomed to think of himself as a messenger, and the fascination with this concept overwhelmed even a part of his English readership. It should not be forgotten that even before the publication of the limited edition of the English *Gitanjali*, Rabindranath was hailed as a poet in the Times Literary Supplement and it was also hoped that he would be able to do in poetry what the contemporary English poets could not. Even after that, all the reviews of his translated works have been judged as his poems in various English newspapers. Moreover, Yeats, Pound or Bridges undoubtedly welcomed him as a poet like them and the simplicity of the language of the poet's translation did not fail to fascinate the readers as well as the poets of that time.

Having said that, it is also important to acknowledge that not all English readers were overwhelmed by the poet's translation, and that there were contradictions and differences of opinion from the very beginning. It is quite natural to have different opinions about the writings of an author. But what is surprising is the radical opposition and contradiction of opinions about the literary value of his writing. Of course, there are also conflicting views on the relevance of his writings, his words, and his philosophy of life, and even with the quality of his English language. Therefore, the emergence of the English *Gitanjali* has created a whirlwind of reaction in the thinker society of England. Although translated into prose-form, a large number of English readers were fascinated by the poetic quality of the English *Gitanjali*. However, there was no shortage of readers who considered the prose of the English *Gitanjali* to be awkward, devoid of originality and full of imitation. There are so many aspects and dimensions of the problem, that the task of analysis is not at all easy. Any translation process can be divided into three distinct levels. If the translation itself is at the center of the discussion, then at its two ends is the process of translating and acceptance of the translation. The translation itself demands aesthetic critique, and its translator awaits a more subtle and comprehensive

analysis from the reader. In the case of the English translation of Rabindranath, there is a complex cycle around these three edges. Translating poetry is a difficult task, yet the process of trying to reach out to readers of different languages never stopped. There is no lack of variety in opinions and ways on what might be the best way to translate. With that in mind, one has to understand the style and character of Rabindranath's English translation. We can imagine his reasons and history according to how he deemed it appropriate to adopt his style. Maybe both artistic and psychological factors worked simultaneously in the consciousness of the poet. Our advantage as Bengali readers is that we can always match the original poem with the English translation done by the poet. Given how faithful the translation is to the original or how it deviates from the original, do we not gain some valuable insight into both the translator and the translation? The majority of English readers, however, did not know the original poem, they saw the translation of Rabindranath as a self-contained new poem. So, one must be aware of their potential appeal as a self-contained independent creation.

Most importantly, if the analysis of the translation is on the one hand involved in judging the reaction of the reader; on the other hand, it is also inseparable from the analysis of the psychology of the translator. Moreover, in the case of Rabindranath's translated poems, there are hints of more complex psychology than the consciousness that worked at the beginning of the poet's translation period and when the reader's reaction brings about a subtle but far-reaching change in the poet's mind. Surely this speculative history of giving and taking between translator and reader is relevant to the fame and notoriety of Rabindranath in England. The process of acceptance among the English readers remains far more complicated.

What they found in Rabindranath's poetry, how they understood him and analysed in their own way is very interesting. It goes without saying that they might not have been able to capture all the essence of the poetry from the special style of translation of the poet, some people have clearly misunderstood. Yet the meaning they have generated, even if it is wrong, does not diminish its importance. Detailed testimonies regarding this can be found in various reviews of the poet's books published in contemporary English periodicals. The picture of the English mind and consciousness that we get from these testimonies becomes clearer when we compare it with the history of contemporary English poetry.

Rabindranath's comments about his own translation often deceive us. The first of the two phrases he repeatedly tried to emancipate may not be untrue. But it would be wrong to think of the second as the inevitable and normal consequence of the first. Rabindranath has repeatedly said that his rights in English are limited. So his aim was to serve only the essence of his poetry in simple English prose:

ভাষাটাকে অত্যন্ত না জানার একটু সুবিধা আছে। অল্প জমি একজোড়া গোরু জুতিয়াও খুব ভাল রকম চাষ দেওয়া যায়
-- তেমনি নিজের সঙ্কীর্ণ অধিকারের মধ্যে যেটুকু পারা যায় সেইটুকুর মধ্যেই নিজেকে আবদ্ধ রাখিয়া বারবার করিয়া
সেটাকে মাজাঘষা সহজ।⁸⁹

There is excellence in the analogy of the poet, but it is difficult to say how appropriate it is in the case of poetry. In poetry, the essence of the land of thought is expressed in the crop of language, there is no way to separate the two. Therefore, it should not be concluded that the incompetence of the English language is wholly responsible for the special form of the translation done by the poet. It is not necessarily the style of Rabindranath's translation that is to be found in the conscious examination; in an attempt to translate his poetic experience into translation with minimal distortion. However, the poet is aware of this, the history of his observations is also unexplained, because he did not formally express the rest of his thoughts on how the translation of poetry should be in prose. He has given many opinions in letters, interviews and conversations. But all of that is the aftermath of the success of the English *Gitanjali*. But his attitude towards the translation of the poems, as to how it came to be intertwined with the various forces, remains unspoken. If we look at the translations of Rabindranath's poems by various authors before the poet himself started translating it in 1912, we can clearly see how the poet is approaching the well-known form of English translation by taking the complicated path of rejecting the example of his earlier and contemporary translators. It is possible to reconstruct the complete picture of the poet's thoughts only by filling the analysed decisions with a little sensitive imagination.

He himself took the task of translating his own poems. Breaking the mould of the original poem and building a new one — which was the original essence of Rabindranath's translation, did not represent unlimited freedom. The poet did not forget the source, the

⁸⁹ দীনেশচন্দ্র সেনকে লেখা চিঠি, ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৪০৭ ।

original, even for a moment. Apparently, when we think that the translation is moving away from the original, we can simultaneously get the essence that it has never deviated from the spirit of the original. Therefore, in “Ogo Mouno, Na Jodi Kaw Nai Koile Katha”, the translation of the poem-71 of *Gitanjali*, the expression – *Jwaliye Tara Nimeshara* becomes *the night / with starry vigil* or another more complex expression – *Tokhon Amar Pakhir Bashay/ Jagbe Ki Gaan Tomar Bhashay* becomes *Then thy words will take wing in songs from everyone of my birds’ nest*. If we examine closely, it will be quite clear that at the heart of the poem’s thought and composition was a complex imagery of night and morning, silence and the contradiction of language. Although he did not try to translate it literally, Rabindranath’s vision was to capture the rhythm. The four paragraphs of the translation are therefore rotated in the verse of ‘silence night-patience-morning-voice’. It is noteworthy that where imagery is the basis of thought, the poet has used all his skills to capture it properly. The poet seeks to capture the submerged imagery of the flow of the river, not only in isolated lines, but in the whole form of the translation. This can also be seen in the many quoted translations of the multi-quoted poem “Chitta Jetha Bhayashunya”; From the fifth verse of the poem, we get a glimpse of this imagery:

যেথা বাক্য হৃদয়ের উৎসমুখ হতে
 উচ্ছ্বসিয়া উঠে, যেথা নির্ধারিত স্রোতে
 দেশে দেশে দিশে দিশে কর্মধারা ধায়
 অজস্র সহস্রবিধ চরিতার্থতায় --
 যেথা তুচ্ছ আচারের মরুবালুরাশি
 বিচারের স্রোতঃপথ ফেলে নাই গ্রাসি,
 পৌরুষেরে করে নি শতধা -

This imagery is also the mainstay of translation:

*Where words come out from the depth of truth;
 Where tireless striving stretches its
 arms towards perfection;
 Where the clear stream of reason has
 not lost its way into the dreary desert
 sand of dead habit: Where the mind is led forward by
 thee into ever-widening thought and action—*

Although Rabindranath could not have captured “Marubalirashi” without the adjective ‘dreary desert’, the translation of ‘বিচারের স্রোতঃপথ ফেলে নাই গ্রাসি’ is excellent. In the previous stanza, ‘যেথা নির্ধারিত স্রোতে দেশে দেশে দিশে দিশে কর্মধারা ধায়/অজস্র সহস্রবিধ চরিতার্থতায়’, there was a very simple and short translation like: ‘*where the tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection*’. In fact not all of the ideas were translated there; So, he brought some of it in the latter lines. After saying that the flow of the river was not deserted, he directed towards the expression – অজস্র সহস্রবিধ চরিতার্থতায়:

*Where the mind is led forward by
thee into ever-widening thought and action—*

This change has enriched the imagery a lot. In addition, repeated sentences of the same grammatical structure (although they have variations in vibration) have brought an irresistible momentum to the translation, the implication of “Into that heaven of freedom” which has no respite until it reaches heaven. It is as if the form of translation is composed in such a way that the imagery of the river is embodied in it.

One of the advantages of reconstructing the lining of thought is that it has been possible to remove the opacity and immaturity that has often entered the original poem. It is because of this different construction that we often sit down to judge the addition-exclusion-change in translation from the original. It is not that there has been any evolution or change of thought during translation. Sometimes the language has to be twisted to make the two stanzas exactly identical and to keep the rhythm of the match intact. As a result, there is an opaque cover over meaning in some places, and in case of some, the poet had to add a line that is not an integral part of the original thought. Sometimes there are some words, sounds or thoughts in the interplay of some words-thoughts which are not very consistent overall. When the poet loosens the original text in translation, allowing the lines of thought to capture their natural form in English, it not only becomes straightforward and transparent, but also falls away from the center of some rigid thought structure. For this reason, when we look at the translation of the fourteenth poem of *Gitimalya*, we can relate the same:

সবার চেয়ে কাছে আসা

সবার চেয়ে দূর।

বড়ো কঠিন সাধনা, যার

বড়ো সহজ সুর।

When translated, becomes:

*It is the most distant course that
comes nearest to thyself, and that
training is the most intricate which
leads to the utter simplicity of a tune.*

This version is more infallible and memorable. In another expression:

ভরিয়ে জগৎ লক্ষ ধারায়
‘আছ-আছ’র স্রোত বহে যায়
‘কই তুমি কই’ এই কাঁদনের
নয়ন-জলে গ’লে।

If the meaning of the verses is not so clear in the first attempt, it is not surprising because their grammatical relation is not very simple. In comparison:

*The question and the cry ‘Oh,
where?’ melt into tears of a thousand
streams and deluge the world with the
flood of the assurance ‘I am!’*

This version is undoubtedly more easily accessible.

In the poem no.151 of *Gitanjali*, the two stanzas of ‘শ্রমের হাতে ধরা দেব/তাই রয়েছে বসে’- the two lines — “তার লাগি যা শান্তি নেবার/ নেব মনের তোলে।” and “সকল নিন্দা মাথায় ধরে/রব সবার নীচে।”— both are omitted in the translation. Punishment of condemnation in spite of repetition is not an integral part of the idea of the poem, but it is added for the sake of loosely incorporating rhythm, harmony and balanced shape of the stanza. As a result, they did not get the right to break the word structure of the original poem and reconstruct it only in the order of thought. In addition, by adding ‘for’ between the two parts, Rabindranath was able to summarize the true meaning of the poem:

*They come with their laws and their
codes to bind me fast; but I evade
them ever, I am only waiting for
love to give myself up at last into his hands.*

Rabindranath was the first to realize that even a proper and sincere prose translation of the line of thought is not sufficient for a faithful translation of the whole poem. The artist, in his infallible sense, also realized that the translation needed to have its own form in order for the method of translating its meaning to be fully effective. The overall meaning and significance of the original poem will be retold in that form. So, when the poet allows the lines of his thoughts to find their natural vibe in English and develops the form of translation according to the overall meaning and significance of the poem, then he is deeply faithful to the original translation of his poem. The fact that the new form was created in comparison to the original poetic form is due to its subdued nature. Rabindranath did not inadvertently resort to this subtle form of prose translation, but sought out consciously so as to alleviate much of his poetic experience, the possibility of the application becoming oblique in the traditional form of rhyming English poetry.

As a result, what Rabindranath was able to do is introduce a sense of newness in the context of English poetry. Unknowingly therefore, he started his journey towards English Prose-Poem. This particular form has been increasingly used in French poetry since the mid-nineteenth century. But surprisingly, no English poet has long been tempted to experiment with this, despite their acquaintance with the writings of Bruntier, Baudelaire, Gerard de Nerval, and so on. There were, of course, examples of the authorized form of the Bible. And there was the model of some of the prose stories of Oscar Wilde, written during the time of Rabindranath, which had a format, actually very close to prose-poems. In the first decade of the 20th century, in English poetry, suddenly there was a tendency towards adaptation of prose-poetry. By that time the English *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* entered. Perhaps because of his unfamiliarity with the application of earlier French poets, and perhaps partly because he felt humiliated by his right to the English language, Rabindranath could not claim credit for it. He was quite satisfied by naming his translation as 'Frankly Prose'.

But when it comes to building translations in new verses, does the English *Gitanjali* give a full explanation of the style of translation? Through close examination, it can be seen that there was another strong invisible pull on the poet's translation process. Reading the English *Gitanjali*, one can feel this invisible presence in every verse if he/she looks at the language of translation with a subtle, alert and precise analytical vision. Naturally, the translator's sense of language becomes especially important when the translated line

does not follow the original. The question is not just about English language rights. It is important to note the type of English that he used—the poet himself calls it simple plain English prose. However, there are some words, phrases that the sensitive reader has to stumble upon—‘Droop and drop in the dust’ or ‘dreary desert’ or ‘sun embroidered gloom’ or the use of semantic adjectives like ‘vague’, ‘sweet’, ‘strange’ etc. is sometimes quite different. Poet’s English as a whole is confined to a particular area here, based on a specific tradition of language-use. Although the distant memory of that tradition is not visible, the poet continues to control the power invisibly. Gradually, all the changes, additions and deviations that have taken place in the translation from the original cannot be explained in terms of different constructs. Although the poet was not aware of this, his English language sense played an active and significant role in the translation process of *Gitanjali*. The history of the development of this English sense is quite complex, and its mode of mediation between the original and the translation is also crooked. However, it is impossible to fully understand the principle of translation in English *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* without trying to understand him, the poet.

Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak in her book “The Politics of Translation” asserts that the act of translating is associated with a sincere relationship between the reader and the translator, the author and the text. Spivak further states that apart from the fact that the author and the translator are two different people, the translator remains in a dynamic linguistic space, where he/she can navigate between and within the languages of translation.⁹⁰ Tagore’s enigmatic mediation between the English and Bengali versions of *Gitanjali*, rather than recommending a populist politics of translation, embraced dexterous modes of concealment—retaining an aspect of oriental opacity for which some of the most prominent poets of the time sought him out. Despite their praise of him and the congeniality of their acquaintance with him, the modernist iconic poets remained unable to access some of the poems of *Gitanjali*. There is an obvious contradiction of desires in Yeats’s introduction to *Gitanjali*: to know of Tagore’s poetry and to have it confirmed as unknowable. Yeats further suggests that the poems in *Gitanjali* call for a second interpreter—a sort of fictive native informant without whom the actual biographical empathy can remain unsuccessful. However, Yeats also makes himself the

⁹⁰ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “The Politics of Translation”. *Inside the Teaching Machine*. London: Routledge, 1993, 95–118.

means by which the Western audience might come to a glimpse of the original poet, even if it is only a reminder of his unknowability.

Tagore's was an incorporated character. His way of thinking of life, his verse and instructive belief system, his social sense and political awareness, every one of the features of his character were interrelated and brought each other into more extensive help. To fathom Tagore's instructive idea, it is, therefore, important to comprehend his way of thinking of life. To Tagore, the entire universe is an appearance of one all-powerful being which invades untouched and space. This is the reason he sees the standard of solidarity in variety working no matter what—invigorate or on the other hand lifeless, natural or inorganic. He perceives that there is a heavenly flash in every single thing. This actuates Tagore to regard and love each animal of God, howsoever humble it might be. This is the genuine premise of his naturalism, humanism and entomb patriotism. His *Gitanjali* mirror this very cognizance and feeling. Tagore is essentially an idealist. But his idealism does not allow him to escape from reality—the hard facts of this material world. His inner world is coterminous with the outer world. Rabindranath Tagore's arrival in London in June-1912 marked a new chapter in the East-West literary exchange; It was with the India Society, who published a limited edition of *Gitanjali*, his free verse translations of selected Bengali poems and through *Gitanjali*, a paradigm was set for modern literary reciprocity between India and the West.

4.3 “Gaan Bhangga Gaan”: transcreation

The journey of Rabindranath's lyric writing is more than sixty years long. So many discoveries have been made in this evolutionary path, which continues to fascinate and amaze the followers of Rabindra Sangeet. Newness of expression can be observed sometimes in the lyric poems, sometimes in the indescribable melody.

One of the uniqueness of Rabindranath's compositions in this variety of creations, is the application of ornaments of South Carnatic music in the melody of his songs. That loan has come so aesthetically that it has never been imposed, it has actually passed the melody and as end product, the melody has reached a new level. Tagore is the unique composer in Bengali songs to incorporate this compositional-technique.

How did the ‘exotic’ ornaments of the southern melody capture the essence of Rabindranath’s imagination of beauty? In what process did this South Indian or Karnataka flavour, in his melody, adopt itself, and take it to a new level of beauty? Rabindranath had called on the geniuses from all over India and the world to Santiniketan and many had responded. One of them was Sangameshwar Shastri, the weaver of the royal court of Pithapuram. The king sent him at the request of Rabindranath and at that time, Shastri was able to make an impression by playing his southern harp. Rabindranath’s plan was to adopt the southern Veena to enrich North Indian music. Rabindranath must have been fascinated by the wonderful sound of the southern harp. Rabindranath came to Madras in the late twenties. At that time he was a guest of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, where he came across a girl named Savitri, and was fascinated by her songs. Savitri Devi was invited to Santiniketan and after listening to her southern song, Rabindranath composed his own verses and completed them with southern tunes. He has given a fancy form to that southern melody and brought an indescribable melody to his lyric poetry. Some of the songs which were composed in this creative circle with the beauty of the new form are:

—নীলাঞ্জলি ছায়া প্রফুল্ল কদম্ববন

—বাজে করুণ সুরে হয় দূরে

—বাসন্তী হে ভুবনমোহিনী

—বেদনা কী ভাষায় রে মর্মে মর্মরি

—শুভ্র প্রভাতে পূর্ব গগনে উদিল

It was the golden age of lyric drama innovation. Rabindranath continued to create wonderful poetry and melody by arranging nature as an actor. The new lyric drama was performed in Santiniketan and as well as on various stages of Kolkata. When Rabindranath started composing his very first song with the melody of the songs heard from Savitri Devi, She was asked to sing the hymn of Meenakshi Devi. While listening to the hymn, he began to write new verse that would fit the melody; then Savitri Devi was asked to sing the newly composed Bengali song in the tune of ‘Meenakshi mey mudam’:

— বাসন্তী হে ভুবনমোহিনী

দিকপ্রান্তে, বনবনান্তে,

শ্যামপ্রান্তরে, আশ্রয়হায়ে,
সরোবরতীরে, নদীতীরে,
নীল আকাশে মলয় বাতাসে,
ব্যাপিল অনন্ত তব মাধুরী।।

Strikingly, the melody of this special composition crossed the boundaries of southern songs and merged with the domain of the songs of Rabindranath. Among these newly created songs by Rabindranath, some of the early-composed songs have the name of the melody in the notation as ‘Mysore Bhajana Sur’ or ‘Madrasi Bhajana Sur’ or ‘Shankarabharanam’ etc. But it can be said that though the melody of these songs is certainly inspired by some original southern songs, they have become Rabindranath’s very own. Likewise, the melodies of Dakshini Bhajana, that Sarala Devi used to bring from Mysore to Rabindranath, and new songs were composed, no southern bhajana singer would claim after hearing the re-enactment of that tune by Rabindranath to be their own.

Indira Devi Chowdhurani has given a detailed and authentic discussion of broken tunes in her book ‘Rabindra Sangeet-er Tribeni Sangam’. According to her, a group of dancers used to come and present their songs to the poet, when he was residing at the port of Bombay. Rabindranath was greatly influenced by those Kannada songs, which he later decided to incorporate in his own creations. According to the list of ‘Tribeni Sangam’, the songs mentioned below are directly influenced from the songs of the Kannada group:

—বড়ো আশা ক’রে এসেছি গো, কাছে ডেকে লও
—আজি শুভদিনে পিতার ভবনে অমৃতসদনে চলো যাই
—সকাতরে ওই কাঁদিয়ে সকলে, শোনো শোনো পিতা
—আনন্দলোকে মঙ্গললোকে বিরাজ সত্যসুন্দর
—এ কী লাভণ্যে পূর্ণ প্রাণ প্রাণেশ হে
—সুমধুর গুনি আজি প্রভু তোমার নাম

When Rabindranath’s lyric poems and melodies are sung in the singer’s voice and the idol begins to take hold, its construction reaches its culmination by crossing the four

levels or steps of the composition, *asthaya-antara-sanchari-avog*, which comes from the Indian classical tradition. Rabindranath's lyric poems are composed while keeping in mind this technique of his melody. One by one, these four parts take the melody of the song in a new direction and each turn appears to be a new melody of the song. The variety of melodies in this part or 'tuk' inevitably brings a variety of moods — the passage of landings, and the lyrics — the climax of the theme — the last words. Of course, all the songs of Rabindranath are not bound by this classical rule. There are some notable 'tappa-songs' that end in two, three or four lines. Again there are some long songs, and it can be seen that their melody repeats in every stanza. The song '*Prothom juger udaya digangane*', a prelude to the *Gitanjali*, has an antara that ends in two parts, a long narration. Many of the stanzas of the Swadeshi stage, like the rich kirtan songs like *Ohey Jeevanballav* or *Nayan Tomare Paay Na Dekhite*, or the wonderful lyric compositions composed as poems like *Krishnakali ami tarei boli* etc. do not fall in this group, but most of the songs of nature-love and worship consist of four 'tuks'. These four tuk songs are generally two-two by eight lines or two + three + two + three by ten lines. Again, it may be more or less according to the sentence structure.

The Jorasanko Tagore family used to hold gatherings of the great master singers of Bengal. Rabindranath has been listening to these songs from a very young age. Although he did not regularly take up any kind of music training with anyone, music entered into all of his nature very easily. We know that in his childhood, Rabindranath came in contact with talented artists like Bishnu Chakraborty, Jadu Bhatta, Radhika Goswami. When he composed music under the inspiration of Dada Jyotirindranath Tagore, Jadu Bhatta and Bishnu Chakraborty, his songs were influenced by Hindustani music. His deep respect for Hindustani music is reflected in many of his utterances:

জনশ্রুতি আছে যে আমি হিন্দুস্থানী গান জানিনে, বুঝিনে। আমার আদি যুগের রচিত গানে হিন্দুস্থানী ধ্রুবপদ্ধতির রাগরাগিণীর সাক্ষীদল অতি বিশুদ্ধ প্রমাণসহ দূর ভাবী শতাব্দীর প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিকদের নিদারণ বাকবিতণ্ডার জন্য অপেক্ষা করে আছে। ইচ্ছা করলেও সে সংগীতকে আমি প্রত্যাখ্যান করতে পারিনে, সেই সংগীত থেকেই আমি প্রেরণা লাভ করি এ কথা যারা জানে না, তারাই হিন্দুস্থানী সংগীত জানে না।⁹¹

⁹¹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ২০১৪।

Not only from Hindustani classical music, he has also got the inspiration to create music from different provincial music. Wherever he went, he listened attentively to the songs, their melodic features, and did not hesitate to take them into his music if necessary. Of course, he did it while maintaining his individuality. In this regard, Indira Devi Chowdhurani mentioned in her *Tribeni Sangam*⁹²: In the early period of Rabindranath's music composition, the poet has composed melodies in strict accordance with the rules and regulations of Marg music. So the names of *Raga-ragini* and *Taal* can be seen on the songs of his first episode. But in later life he withdrew himself from composing certain songs. Because he was a staunch opponent of imitation. In this regard, it should be also mentioned that although he opposed imitation, he always congratulated acknowledgment.

Surprisingly, he may not have composed his melody according to the specific melody in the song, but it has been seen in many cases that the form of a particular melody may have been specially captured in the song. There are also hints of several melodies in many songs. In fact, the expression of various *raga-ragini* heard in his childhood was tied in his heart. That is why the poet unknowingly expressed it through the melody of the song. For example, the melody of *Purabi* or *Kedara* can never be found in the morning song. Again, in any evening or night song, the melody of *Bhairo*, *Bhairabi* or *Tori Ragini* will not match. So, it can be observed that Rabindranath, in order to maintain the harmony of the melody with the underlying style of the song, has made an exception to the rules of the *raga-ragini*; The purity of ragas like *bhairabi* or *tori* was not preserved in the evening or in the morning, but it did not harm the overall flavour of the song.

Indira Devi Chowdhurani repeatedly suggests that Rabindranath's understanding of Ragas was so intricate, that he could effortlessly mix them according to the compositions. It is not always possible to express the whole thing through a single raga. For example, the varied form of the rain, its external form, its fickleness, the sad form of his heart, as well as the merry form, cannot be expressed only by relying on the raga *Malhar*. There is a need to mix more in the melody. So in many of Rabindranath's rain songs we get a hint of *Mishra-malhar* ragas. In some rainy songs, a mixture of one, two or three ragas is completely different. For example, *Raga Emon*'s melody in "Rimiki Jhimiki Jhore Bhadarer Dhara", *Raga Emonkalyan*'s melody in "Ashar Sandhya Ghaniye Elo" can be mentioned. Again, in the puja stage, the song "Tumi Ekla Ghare Boshe Boshe" is a

⁹² চৌধুরানী, ইন্দিরা দেবী। *রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের ত্রিবেণীসংগম*। কলিকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৩৬১।

mixture of *Baul* melody with *Kedara* tunes. In some songs, however, we only get the remnants of rag-ragini. In this way, it is seen that neither the poetic form nor the melody of the song has manifested itself in the combination of ragas or melodies, but the combination of both has beautifully portrayed the overall form of the song.

Needless to say, this is the identity of Rabindranath's unique genius of independent thinking. Rabindranath never pursued classical music according to any conventional tradition. He himself said, many times he used to stand by the door as a child and listen to the songs of the masters who came to his house. In this way, it was only in that way of listening and mere irregularity that he got his singing lessons, and from this he got the inspiration to compose songs. We wonder why his songs have been recognized as so admirable, beautiful and wonderful at the door of the world, especially by so many conservative musicians in the country. The answer, of course, will be found, if we understand and remember that Rabindranath came to us as an extraterrestrial man, and an extraterrestrial man only manifested himself. So the work of listening and learning of Rabindranath cannot be like that of the common people, his work was extraordinary. Ever so true, his self-imposed melodies in various songs continue to enchant the listeners even today. There is no doubt that he gained an extraordinary knowledge of *raga-ragini* and melodies under the influence of his own inherent strength, even though he did not practice it properly under a master guru. In fact, he embodied the abstract form of all ragas in his heart with the radiant genius of his spontaneous knowledge. Apart from this, it can be said that from the very beginning of composing songs, Rabindranath had paid special attention to *Dhrupa-pada* music, and therefore he has worshipped the greatness and sweetness of that music in a beautiful and restrained way all his life.

Through such recognition, he has adopted in his music the tunes of Hindustani classical music and various provincial music, as well as Western music, the *Baul-Kirtan-Bhatiali* melody of Bengal without any hesitation. Just as different rivers merge into the sea and give more fullness to the sea, so different melodies have merged into the songs of Rabindranath and due to his luminous genius has gained immense depth like the ocean. In this way, his music collection has reached perfection and has become radiant with its own characteristics.

Thakurbari used to have regular music festivals. From Rabindranath's confession, we get to know that the *Dhrupada* songs were more popular in classical music:

আমরা বাল্যকালে ধ্রুপদ গান শুনতে অভ্যস্ত, তার আভিজাত্য বৃহৎ সীমার মধ্যে আপন মর্যাদা রক্ষা করে। এই ধ্রুপদ গানে আমরা দুটো জিনিস পেয়েছি—একদিকে তার বিপলুতা, গভীরতা, আর একদিকে তার আত্মদমন, সুসংগতির মধ্যে আপন ওজন রক্ষা করা।⁹³

Rabindranath's deep respect for classical music has influenced his music throughout his life. Before discussing the influence of *Dhrupada* in Rabindra Sangeet, we must understand what is *Dhrupada* song and when it originated. *Dhrupada* songs were one of the most ancient classical music forms of India. The word 'dhru' means fixed and sacred, the word 'pada' means song. Therefore, the meaning states—stable and holy song. *Dhrupada* songs are a creation of classical music genre from the 'Dhruv'. It has been mentioned in Bharata's *Natyashastra*. The details of this are found in the *Sangeet Ratnakar* texts of Shangadev and in the musical documents of Parshvadev. Classical music was practised and adored in the court of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Tansen was the best of the many classical artists in his meeting. Since the time of Emperor Akbar, most of the later Hindu and Muslim masters have followed different lyric styles or genres. Raja Rammohun Roy was the first composer of classical music, particularly *Brahma-Sangeet*, in entire Bengal. Maharshi Debendranath was so deeply influenced by this classical music that as a result we see the practice of this type of classical music in his family for long. Rabindranath followed this technique from his adolescence. Therefore, in his compositions of that time, there is a special following of *Marga-Sangeet*, especially in *Raga-Tal-Lay*. However, the language resources are his own. Although the songs composed by him during this period are not full of his amazing individuality and fullness, in most cases the songs have become a mixture of language, thought and melody.

The '*Bishnupur Gharana*' of Bengal is the own style of the prominent artists of Bishnupur. Since Rabindranath came in contact with Bishnupur from his family side, most of his Hindustani classical style songs have followed this Gharana. Among the various genres of Indian music, Rabindranath adored classical music, specially *Dhrupads* the most. One of his remarks about this states that – If the creation of these dhrupads is more extensive than before, more multi-chambered, if there are many variations in its range, then our talent in music will be world-conquering. In most of the

⁹³ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ২০১৪।

compositions of Rabindranath's early life, the *dhrupadi brahma-sangeet*, a direct influence of Jaduvatta can be observed, as a homage to his genius. Following in the footsteps of Jaduvatta's *Bahar Raga* and *Teora Taal*, the classical song *Aju Bahut Basanta Pawan Sumand*, Rabindranath composed a classical *brahma-sangeet*—*Aji Bahiche Basanta Pawan Sumand Tomari Sugandha Hey*.

Rabindranath did not make much difference to the conventional style of Hindustani classical music in composing and performing songs. However, classical songs of Hindustani music were more prevalent and it was more popular. Rabindranath was also inclined to infuse the charm of music through the four sections: *Asthayi*, *Antara*, *Sanchari* and *Abhog*. That is probably why most of the songs, apart from the classical songs, are arranged in these four parts. In the case of rhythm, classical *Chautal* was more prevalent. Even before that, classical songs used *Rudratal*, *Lakshmital*, *Santital*, *Brahmatal*, *Mattatal* etc., but later the use of these rhythms decreased. During Rabindranath's time *Dhrupada* songs usually used *Chautal*, *Ara Chautal*, *Jhamptal*, *Teora* etc. and this influenced his compositions as well.

He has ruled out the excessive technicality of the rhythm, the excess of rhetoric because he is basically a poet. Rabindranath felt that the excess of rhetoric in the music would disturb the lyrics of his songs. Therefore, in his *Dhrupadanga* songs, the nature of the *Dhrupadas*, as well as its seriousness has been maintained, and a wonderful harmony has been maintained between the words and the melody.

Before discussing Rabindranath's *Dhamar-Anga* songs, it is necessary to mention the salient features of *Dhamar* songs. The position of *Dhamar-Anga* songs in Hindustani music is just after the *Dhrupadanga* songs. *Dhama* is the name of a rhythm and the song is called *Dhama* because it is sung to that rhythm. However, in the case of literature, the words of *Dhamar-Anga* songs are a bit more fascinating and humorous than the classical ones. *Hori* or *Holi* is another name of this particular form of music, as these are sung in the *Holi* festival. It is more rhythmic. In Hindustani music, different groups of singers have divided the rhythm of *dhama* in different ways. Although the rhythm of *Dhama* is constituted of 14 levels, Rabindranath broke this rhythm structure and re-arranged it into three claps, two empty — in this way. In the case of Rabindranath's *Dhamar-Anga* songs too, he composed it in a simpler format, without using the original technical excesses.

The prevalence of *Kheyal* songs in Bengal was particularly noticeable during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the deposed masters of the Mughal dynasty

settled in Bengal; However, the popularity of classical music at that time was much higher than *Kheyal* songs. Over time, the practice and popularity of *Kheyal* songs continued to grow. *Kheyal* songs also became popular in different parts of Bengal, and the practice of this particular type of songs also started in Bishnupur. However, in the Jorasanko Tagore family, *Dhrupadi* classical music was chiefly practised and appreciated, and Rabindranath himself preferred classical music to *Kheyal*. But later, the popularity of *Kheyal* song increased so much in Bengal eventually, that even Rabindranath could not ignore it. Though he did not compose *Kheyal* songs following the complete Hindustani format, nor did he use Hindustani melodies like *Taan*, *Boltaan*, *Bistaar* etc. in his songs. He did not want to overwhelm it with the weight of the melody to give precedence to the lyrics. However, he has often used *meer*, *gamaka* etc. in his *Kheyal* songs.

Tappa like *Dhrupada*, *Dhamar* or *Kheyal* are also a prominent genre of Indian music. It is a Hindi word which originally means leap, and denotes something which is short or in a summarised form. For this reason *Tappa* is shorter than *Dhrupada* and *Kheyal* songs. Although as short as *thungri*, *tappa* is more serious than *thungri*. It has only two *tuks-asthayi* and *antara*. Almost all the ragas of *Kheyal* are used in *Tappa*. The only difference lies in the melody. These types of songs are faster and lighter in nature, and therefore, are not suitable for God-related songs. According to many, this song was popular among camel riders. Later, it was incorporated in Hindustani music after various modes of transformation. Golam Nabi, a resident of Ayodhya, elevated the *Tappa* song to the level of classical music with his own talent. Nidhubabu or Ramnidhi Gupta is credited with making *Tappa* songs in Bengali from Hindustani *Tappa*. His *Tappa* songs were very different from Hindustani *Tappa*. Later, talented musicians like Sridhar Kathak, Ram Basu etc. gained fame in *Tappa* songs. In Jorasanko Thakurbari, *Tappa-Gaan*, especially Nidhubabu's *Tappa* song had a special status. Rabindranath used to sing Nidhubabu's songs. Rabindranath was fond of Sridhar Kathak's song *Ki jatona jotone mone mone mon-e jaane*. The simplicity of the lyrics and melody of these songs touched his mind. This particular song by Sridhar Kathak has influenced some of Rabindranath's *Tappa* songs, however Nidhubabu's *tappa* songs had a great influence on the mood of most of his own *Tappa* songs. However, Rabindranath did not use ornaments like *taan-boltaan* like Hindustani *tappa* in his *Tappa-gaan*; In the case of rhythm, he has composed songs in the rhythm of *Madhyamaan*, *Aaratheka*, *Teora* etc. according to the general *Tappa*

style. Rabindranath believed in acknowledgment or assimilation, not imitation. So, he has used different components of *Tappa* in his songs very sparingly, which has given birth to a completely new form— *Rabindra-tappa*.

In terms of content *Thungri* is a love song or a song of love dedication. Some songs of this form are also sung at the Holi festival. The lyrics of these songs are very short. The exact origin of the songs is not known. The great masters do not give *thungri* songs the status of the classical, because the raga form is not always equally preserved here. However, there is a need for sufficient technique in mixing melodies in *thungri* songs. The use of *taan* in these songs is less. More focus is kept on fine tuning. Speculations state that the artists of *Kheyal* songs might have created *thungri* songs. Later, like *Dhrupad* and *Kheyal*, various gharanas of *thungri* songs were also introduced. Among these, three gharanas are predominant:

(1) Lucknow gharana, (2) Benarasi gharana, (3) Punjab gharana.

Thungri songs gained popularity in Bengal right after the rise of *Dhrupad* and *Kheyal* songs. But, *Thungri* songs were not very popular in Jorasanko Thakurbari. Although *Thungri* songs failed to impress Rabindranath greatly, as there was less predominance of words or phrases in the songs and more subtle craftsmanship of the melody; but some of his creations took the model of some *thungri* songs like: *Khelar sathi bidaay dwaar kholo* or *Ki sur baje amar praane*.

Apart from *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar*, *Kheyal*, *Toppa* and *Thungri*, there is another form of classical music, they are called *Tarana*. It is said that during the reign of Alauddin Khilji, Amir Khasru introduced this particular form of *Tarana*. It was customary to sing *tarana* songs in the music halls of *Kheyal* songs. In Bengal, *Tarana* is called *Telena*. It was also introduced and practised in this country just like *Kheyal* songs. Rabindranath was somewhat influenced by this form of songs, though he did not use the exact metre in his own music. Songs like *Oi pohailo timir raati*, *Shukhoheen Nishideen* can be mentioned in this regard.

Rabindranath was not only influenced by Hindustani Classical music. Just as he composed songs with lyrics inspired by his brother Jyotirindranath's piano tunes, so did he compose songs from tunes of Sitar like: *Esho Shyamala Sundara*, *Mor Bhabonare Ki Haway*, *Kothay chhili sajani lo* etc. Influenced by South Indian melodies, Rabindranath wrote a number of songs, the lyrics of which were sung by Savitri Devi. He also

composed songs by adding tunes derived from songs of different regions including Gujarat, Punjab, Mysore and Kannada. Regarding *Kirtan* songs, Rabindranath wrote:

কীর্তন সংগীত আমি অনেককাল থেকে ভালোবাসি। ওর মধ্যে ভাবপ্রকাশের যে নিবিড় ও গভীর নাট্যশক্তি আছে সে আর কোনো সংগীতে এমন সহজভাবে আছে বলে আমি জানি নে। সাহিত্যের ভূমিতে ওর উৎপত্তি, তার মধ্যেই ওর শিকড়, কিন্তু ও শাখায়-প্রশাখায় ফলে ফুলে পল্লবে সংগীতের আকাশে স্বকীয় মহিমা অধিকার করেছে।⁹⁴

In order to analyse the reasons for this comment of Rabindranath and to determine the effect of *Kirtan* songs in Rabindra Sangeet, it is necessary to first discuss something about *Kirtan* songs. ‘Kri’ means praise. The word *kirtan* originates from the descriptive hymns sung in praise of Lord Krishna. The love of Radha and Krishna is the main subject of these verses. The prominent form of these verses can be noticed in Jayadeva’s *Gitagovindam*. He named his songs *Padaavali* and this name was later adopted by the Vaibhav lyricists. After Jayadeva, *Srikrishnakirtana* of Baru Chandidas, verses written by Maithili poet Vidyapati which we find in mixed Brajabuli language, verses of Deen or Dwij Chandidas have been composed. In addition to these different genres of *kirtan*, another genre of *kirtan* called “Dhop Kirtan” originated in Bengal in the nineteenth century. Although the verses are composed in *Padaavali* structure, this particular style has a mixture of *Panchali* and *Jatragaan*, therefore also called as “Bhanga Kirtan”. Rabindranath composed his *kirtan* songs in a combination of *Padaavali* verses and *Dhop kirtan*. He has adopted the simple style of *dhop kirtan*. But the sentiment and tone of the *Padaavali* verses has remained in full swing in his songs. He also used relatively simple rhythms like Dadra, Kaharba, Teora, Jhampatal etc. without going into complications. Rabindranath has discussed *kirtan* songs in his writings time and again:

বাংলা কি গান গায় নি? বাংলা এমন গান গাইলে যাকে আমরা বলি কীর্তন। বাংলার সংগীত সমস্ত প্রথা, সংগীত সম্বন্ধীয় চিরাগত প্রথার নিগড় ছিন্ন করেছিল। দশকুশী, বিশকুশী, কত তালই বেরল, হিন্দুস্থানী তালের সঙ্গে তার কোন যোগই নেই। খোল একটা বেরল যার সঙ্গে পাখোয়াজের কোন মিল নেই। কিন্তু কেউ বললে না, এটা গ্রাম্য বা অসাধু। একেবারে মেতে গেল সব-নেচে কুঁদে হেসে ভাসিয়ে দিলে। কত বড়ো কথা! অন্য প্রদেশে তো এমন হয়নি।⁹⁵

⁹⁴ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ২০১৪।

⁹⁵ Ibid

Such remarks by Rabindranath about *kirtan* music show how deeply the poet was attracted to *kirtan* songs. Rabindranath was particularly fond of the verses created by Jayadeva in *Gitagovindam*, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Gyandas, Govindadas and other vaishnava poets. Especially when he was a child, he used to read the book *Gitagovindam* frequently, although he did not fully understand the Sanskrit language at that time, but the rhythm, beauty and melody of the verses of *Gitagovindam* fascinated him. Inspired by this, he tried to compose *Bhanushingher Padaavali*. For example, following the melody of Jayadeva's "Patati Patatre Bichlita Patre", his verses "Satimir Rajani Sachakita Sajani" have been composed. Apart from *Gitagovindam*, the influence of the Vaibhava poet Vidyapati and Govindadas's Brajbuli language is very much found in these verses.

"Ami jene shune tabu bhule achi", "Majhe majhe taba dekha pai", "Nayan Tomare Paay Na Dekhite"— are some of the songs that Rabindranath composed with the influence of *kirtans*. The melody of *kirtan* songs can be noticed in different parts of some of Rabindranath's songs as well. The passionate plea in the song "Tobu Mone Rekho" or "Krishnakali ami tarei boli", "Ogo shono ke bajaay", "Mori lo mori amay banshite dekeche ke", "Sakhi oi bujhi banshi baaje" the poet has painted various imagery with the beauty of *Kirtana* melodies. In the song "Amar Mallika Boney", the passion in the background of nature is beautifully expressed in the melody of *kirtan*. Similarly, in the song "Ami Takhono Chhilem Magan Gahan Ghumer Ghore", the character of the *kirtan* is beautifully highlighted and in the song "Aji ey Niralakunje", in the background of the new spring, the love and longing of a lady's heart has become enchanting with the melody of *kirtan*. In this way, the poet has composed innumerable *kirtan* songs throughout his life. Despite the rules of ancient *kirtan*, the novelty, variety and sweetness that the poet has infused in his *kirtan*-influenced songs deeply captivates the hearts of the listeners.

Just as Rabindranath was influenced by Western melodies, he was also inspired by native ragas, melodies and the *Baul* songs. In the last half of the nineteenth century, Rabindranath was the first Bengali to encourage, especially the educated mass, towards *Baul* music. *Baul* songs, of course, have been composed long before him. He himself had for a long time been particularly attracted to Bengali folk life and folk culture and *Baul* music. His attraction has gradually increased and deeply intertwined with his own lifestyle. The poet had to spend a long time at Shilaidaha to look after the zamindari.

There he met the common people of Bengal, got acquainted with their lives, and listened to their songs. At that time he developed a deep interest in *Baul* music. Although he was already curious about *Baul* songs from the very beginning, after visiting places like Shilaidaha, Kushtia, etc., his attraction towards *Baul* songs intensified. As a result, the influence of *Baul* in his numerous songs can be seen quite noticeably. Rabindranath himself did not hesitate to acknowledge this effect in an unequivocal voice. In his words:

Those who have read my writings know that I have expressed my affection for *Baul* verses in many writings. When I was in Shilaidaha, I always met and conversed with the *Baul* team. In many of my songs, I have adopted various melodies from the *Bauls* and in many songs, *Baul* melodies have merged with other melodies, knowingly or unknowingly. From this it can be easily understood that the melodies and words of *Baul* have spontaneously merged in my mind at some point”.⁹⁶

Shantidev Ghosh in his book *Jiboner Dhrubatarā*⁹⁷ discusses the influence of Lalon Fakir on Rabindranath and the combination of influence of different religions. There we find out that when Rabindranath got acquainted with Lalon Fakir and came to know that Lalon prefers to be a formless lover, he was deeply attracted to this vision. Later it can be observed that *Baul* melody was essential in the poet’s patriotic songs. Through this melody, the poet has evoked the excitement, insanity, enthusiasm and reassurance of life. Such songs include: “Amar Sonar Bangla”, “Aji Bangladesher Hridoy Hote”, “O Amar Desher Mati”, “Banglar Mati, Banglar Jol” etc. It should be noted here that the poet has written patriotic songs with the essence of *Baul*; but, on the other hand, his songs like “Jodi Tor Daak Shune Keu Na Ashe” or “Tor Apanjone Chharbe Tore” etc. are not songs of mass struggle, but songs of single struggle and here too there was a need to incorporate the *Baul* melody. The poet has deeply incorporated not only the *Baul* melody but also the words and spirit of the *Baul* in his songs. The poet has used *Baul*’s emancipation, their bond, the concept of man of soul, etc. in his *Baul-angik* songs. For example, “Ami Kaan Pete Roi”, “Amar Praner Manush Ache Praane”, “Tomar Khola Hawa”, “Amake Ke Nibi Bhai” — these are the songs of his exclusive *Baul* mind. Nature and love songs composed in the last stage of the poet’s life have also been mixed with the melody of *Baul*. Rabindra Sangeet has been given universality by mixing *Baul* melody with the wonderful words of the poet. *Baul* tunes have become a part of Rabindranath’s own

⁹⁶ Thompson, Edward. *Rabindranath Tagore—Poet and Dramatist*. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

⁹⁷ ঘোষ, শান্তিদেব । *জীবনের ধ্রুবতারা* । কলিকাতা: আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমি. । ১৪০৩ ।

creation, gaining a new dimension by being associated with the words of the poet's own songs. The word "Sahoj", widely used by the Bauls, is used repeatedly by Rabindranath in his songs as well; Songs like "Sahoj Hobi, Sahoj Hobi" or "Ja Peyecchi Prothom Dine" etc. are noteworthy in this context. He was fascinated by *Baul* song's natural and simple art-sense; the inner-thought of these songs attracted him in particular. However, he did not imitate the melodies of any *Baul* song completely. In almost every song, he efficiently mixed other tunes with some of the Baul tunes and created something unique.

Rabindranath's song "*Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami Tomay Bhalobasi*", which has won the hearts of both the Bengals, is based on the melody of the Baul song: "Ami Kothay Pabo Taare, Amar Moner Manush Je Re". In the same way, songs like "Jodi Tor Daak Sune Keu Na Ashey" or "Ebar Tor Mora Gangey" are also influenced by *Baul* tunes such as "Harinam Diye Jagat Matale", "Man-Majhi, Shamaal Shamaal Dublo Tori" etc. Also, the song "Amar Praaner Majhe Shudha Achey" been composed by the imitation of popular *Baul* song of Burdwan district: "Ma Yashoda, Tor Chele Ghore Jaay Ki".

The songs that attracted Rabindranath right after the *Kirtan* and *Baul* songs were the devotional music, composed and tuned by Ramprasad Sen. Rabindranath composed many songs in these simple and authentic Bengali melodies; such as: "Ami Sudhu Roinu Baki", "Dekhbo ke tor kache ashey" "Priye Tomar Dhenki Hole" etc. *Saari-Gaan* or *Saari*-songs are one of the most popular folk songs in East Bengal. The boatmen while rowing the boat, sing the *Saari*-songs together. Rabindranath did not totally imitate the melodies of the *Saari*-songs, rather just like Baul-Kirtana, he gave it a new form with efficiency. Songs like "Aaj Dhaaner Khetey", "Ami Maarer Sagor Paari Debo" etc. are composed with an impression taken from the *Saari*-songs. The number of Rabindranath's songs with the combinations of multiple melodies is more than the usage of just a single melody, collected from folk music. In this regard, eminent Rabindra-Sangeet artist Suchitra Mitra remarked:

When the genre of Bengali music was especially tied to the heights of ragas, the composer Rabindranath's exuberance became overwhelmed with the recognition of neglected folk music. Rabindranath used the immense richness of the musical variety of rural Bengal and the melodies of folk music in his various songs.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ মিত্র, সুচিত্রা । *রবীন্দ্রসঙ্গীত জিজ্ঞাসা* । কলকাতা: নবপত্র প্রকাশন । ১৯৮৩ । (Trans.)

Just as he has combined *Kirtana* with *Baul* melody on one side, he has also mixed *Saari-Bhatiali* on the other. In that sense, each of the Rabindra Sangeet influenced by folk music is therefore bright and distinctive in its own right.

Rabindranath was particularly influenced by Western music in his early life. While abroad, he intensely listened to Western music. He later discussed various features of the Indian music in his various writings. In his essay titled “Bideshi Sangeet” in *Jibansmriti*, he states:

আমাদের দেশে গান সাধাটাই মুখ্য, সেই গানেই আমাদের যত-কিছু দুরূহতা যুরোপে গলা সাধাটাই মুখ্য, সেই গলার স্বরে তাহারা অসাধ্য সাধন করে। আমাদের দেশে যাহারা প্রকৃত শ্রোতা তাহারা গানটাকে শুনিলেই সন্তুষ্ট থাকে, যুরোপে শ্রোতারা গান গাওয়াটাকে শোনে... যুরোপীয় সংগীতের মর্মস্থানে আমি প্রবেশ করিতে পারিয়াছি এ কথা বলা আমাকে সাজে না। কিন্তু বাহির হইতে যতটুকু আমার অধিকার হইয়াছিল তাহাতে যুরোপের গান আমার হৃদয়কে এক দিক দিয়া খুবই আকর্ষণ করিত। আমার মনে হইত এ সংগীত রোমান্টিক।...ইহা মানবজীবনের বিচিত্রতাকে গানের সুরে অনুবাদ করিয়া প্রকাশ করিতেছে। আমাদের সংগীতে কোথাও কোথাও সে চেষ্টা নাই যে তাহা নহে, কিন্তু সে চেষ্টা প্রবল ও সফল হইতে পারে নাই। আমাদের গান ভারতবর্ষের নক্ষত্রখচিত নিশীধিনীকে ও নবোন্মোষিত অরণ্যরাগকে ভাষা দিতেছে; আমাদের গান ঘনবর্ষার বিশ্বব্যাপী বিরহবেদনা ও নববসন্তের বনাগু প্রসারিত গভীর উন্মাদনার বাক্যবিস্তৃত বিহ্বলতা।⁹⁹

– This gives us an idea of how deeply and thoughtfully he entered the depths of Eastern and Western music. In his early life, Rabindranath indulged himself in various experiments with the Western music. In his *Balmiki Pratibha*, he composed two songs with the tunes of western music: “Kali Kali Bolo Re Aaj” and “Tobe Aay Sobe Aay”. The tune of “Kali Kali Bolo Re Aaj” is deeply influenced from the song of ‘Nancy Lee’. There were several songs composed under the influence of English or Scottish songs in *Kalmrigaya* as well, like:

1. “Phule Phule Dhole Dhole” –taken from a Scotch song called ‘Ye banks and brees of Bonic Doon’.
2. “Sokoli Phuralo” – taken from a Scotch song called ‘Rabinadir’.
3. “Tui Aay Re Aay Kache” – taken from the English song ‘Ye mariners of England’

⁹⁹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *জীবনস্মৃতি*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৯৪১।

In addition to these two lyric plays, he composed three more songs, having direct influence from English songs around 1885: “Ohey Dayamay Nikhil Ashray” (Go where glory waits thee), “Purano Sei Diner Katha” (Auld Long sync) and “Kotobar Bhebechinu Apona Bhuliya” (Drink to me only).

The influence of European music is evident in a few more of Rabindranath’s songs: “Ami Chini Go Chini Tomare”, “Praan Chay Chokkhu Na Chay”, “Tomar Holo Shuru”, “Amar Sokol Rosher Dhara”, “Tumi Amader Pita”, “Boli O Amar Golapbala” etc.

In some of the songs composed in his early life, Rabindranath adopted the melody of western music, but later on he overcame much of it. In later life, Rabindranath concentrated on his own creation without any direct influence; but his songs composed at different times have indirectly or subtly recreated some essence of Western melody. For example: “Ey Monihar Amay Nahi Saaje”, “Klanti Amar Khoma Koro Prabhu”, “Birosho Din Birala Kaaj”, “Elem Natun Deshe”, “Vengecho Duwar Esecho Jyotirmoy”, “Ha re re re”, “Kharabayu Boy Begey” etc. Even though the poet does not consciously apply western melody in many such songs, we get a hint of it. This is called assimilation. Rabindranath’s own melody blends with the melody of western music in these songs, which makes the songs more diverse.

From an early age, Rabindranath had a very clear idea of the nature of Indian music. As he was nurtured in the climate of classical music, he noticed that successful music could not be composed without proper melody. According to him:

“The singers place the music on the unconscious mass, I want to bring it to life, they sit down to bring out the melody, but I connect the melody to express the meaning of the words properly.”¹⁰⁰

This is why he set out to open the door to new possibilities of music in the place of lifeless court-music – composing songs, which are truly unique in nature, one by one. But he did not only stop there, rather he started mixing ragas to establish life in the tunes, indulging in a revolutionary experiment; and with the touch of his extraordinary genius, they became an eternal treasure. At the same time, he did not neglect the various rural tunes of Bengal, his Rabindra Sangeet included the essence of *Baul*, *Kirtana* and much

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, Edward. *Rabindranath Tagore—Poet and Dramatist*. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

more from the heart of Bengal itself. Moreover, not only did he successfully compose his own songs by applying melodies of different provincial music, but his songs also amalgamated different melodies of western music, that came hand in hand with the Indian ones.

The development of the composer Rabindranath and of his music took place at several stages — the characteristics of the different melodies were not so evident in most of the songs, created during his adolescent period. In the second phase, his songs got a new momentum with the combination of western tunes, different ragas and *Baul* tunes from Bengal. It is at this stage that the prelude to *Gitanjali* can be seen in the songs of the *Naivedya*. Besides, he also experimented with new rhythms like *Navtaal*, *Ekadashi* etc. during this period.

Then came the bold and strong melodies of *Swadeshi* songs. Songs, influenced by the tunes from *Kirtana* also came into existence at this time. And in the third stage, there is a wonderful variety in the melody of the songs, composed for the dance-dramas like *Shyama*, *Chandalika*, *Shaapmochan* and *Chitrangada*. In this way, very consciously, Rabindranath instilled a new momentum in music. The various forms of folklore, the beauty of its rhyme and literary value influenced the poet's literary pursuits in many ways. In this context, Amit Chaudhuri in his book "On Tagore: reading the poet today" said: "From the beginning of the poet's life till the last age, Bengali folk literature and folk culture were manifested with a unique glory and significance in Rabindranath's mind and consciousness."¹⁰¹

It is known from Rabindranath's own words that he was particularly attracted by the variety of ideas, language, melodies and subject-matters of folk music. He says himself:

Just as many tiny and big rivers spread their nets in the courtyards of Bengal, so did the streams of music flow in different streams. Yatra, Panchali, Kathakata, Kabir-gaan, Kirtana and so much more resounded all over the country; I don't know if there is any other country with so much diversity in folk music.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Chaudhuri, Amit. *On Tagore: reading the poet today*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2012.

¹⁰² Thompson, Edward. *Rabindranath Tagore—Poet and Dramatist*. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

4.4 Problematics of translating performance text

When he translated his Bengali songs and poems into English for *Gitanjali: Song- Offerings*, Rabindranath Tagore seemed to have had an understanding of translation in his mind. In contrast to Dryden and Tytler, he did not write any treatises on the theoretical aspects of translation, and he did not give any similar lectures on how to translate a particular author like Matthew Arnold did. Likewise, he did not give rise to any discourse on translation in the manner of Walter Benjamin or Jacques Derrida. Commenting on the nature of translation writing and its tone, Tejaswini Niranjana points out: “Nearly all speculations on translation exists in the form of translators’ prefaces to specific texts, and the tone they adopt ranges from the apologetic to the aggressively prescriptive”.¹⁰³ Even so, Tagore did not write any such ‘preface’ other than a one-line confession about his translator’s mode in the preface to *The Gardener* and his writings on translations are descriptive and interpretive.

With the publication of his *Gitanjali: Song-Offerings* (1912) from the India Society in London and its phenomenal worldwide success that was rewarded with Tagore’s Nobel Prize in 1913, Tagore became an overnight literary celebrity. At home and abroad, his friends and admirers enquired about his translated works, and he had to reply to their questions about what Buddhadeva Bose called a ‘miracle of translation’.¹⁰⁴ According to Jacques Derrida, “every translator is in a position to speak about translation”.¹⁰⁵

As a translator of his own works, Tagore provides a more intimate understanding of translation than any other translator. A resolute letter-writer, Tagore came in contact with a huge number of individuals, openly communicating his views on various scholarly issues. Whereas, talking about his self-translation, he has made plenty of articulations on interpretations in common on the premise of his first-hand encounter of deciphering his composed lyrics. A few of his interpretation are only self-translation-centric, indeed in spite of the fact that they show up to be concerned with the hypothetical perspectives of interpretation. But most of the explanations on the differing angles of interpretations lie scattered here and there within the multitudinous letters that he composed amid his long life. Other than that, he took up for dialogue, from time to time, the issues of

¹⁰³ Niranjana, Tejaswini. *Representing Texts and Culture in Siting Translation*, Orient Longman, 1992, 49.

¹⁰⁴ Bose, Buddhadeva. *An Acre of Green Grass*. Calcutta, 1948, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Derrida, Jacques. *Difference in Translation*. ed. Joseph F. Graham, Cornell University Press, 1985, 184.

interpretations indeed in private discussions as well as interviews to remote daily papers or diaries. It is by collating his various explanations and remarks on interpretations that ready to have a well-coherent thought of what may be called Tagore's concept of translation. Tagore translation's theoretical aspects have not been adequately addressed by critics. Shyamal Kumar Sarkar presented many of Tagore's remarks and statements on translation from 1900 to 1939 in his article "Tagore on Translation" (1977). However, they don't give us a coherent understanding of Tagore's translation theory. When discussing his translation practices, Asrukumar Sikdar mentions his translation thoughts when discussing "Kabir Anubad" (1998). His book does not elaborate much on Tagore's translations as a whole, simply because they are outside the scope of his book.

Translation, as conceived by Rabindranath, is basically a 'rewriting' or re-creation of the original text. Recalling his experience of translating the *Gitanjali* poems he writes to Indira Devi (dated 6 May 1913): "...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 bravery".¹⁰⁶

The aim of Tagore's English rewriting of his Bengali poetry was to 'recapture' the creative mood as an aesthetic experience. Once again it can be observed that regarding his proposed translation of his own short stories, he writes to Rothenstein (dated 31 Dec. 1915):

"Macmillans are urging me to send them some translations of my short stories.... They require rewriting in English, not translating. That can only be done by the author himself but I do not have sufficient command of English to venture to do it."¹⁰⁷

Evidently, Tagore here distinguishes between 'translating' and 'rewriting', the former implying 'word for word transference' from one language to another, and the latter, sense-for-sense transference leading to the 're-birth' or 'reincarnation' of the original in the target language. In his letter to Ajit Kumar Chakravarty [dated 13 March 1913], Tagore drew a similar distinction between translating and rewriting. This letter remains a seminal statement of his concept of translation.

¹⁰⁶ Tagore's letter to Indira Devi; *A Tagore Reader*. Ed. Amiya Chakravarty, 1961, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Tagore's letter to Rothenstein; *Imperfect Encounter*. Mary M. Lago, Harvard University Press, 1972, 216.

Ever since I came to Urbana I have spent my mornings in writing out my lectures in prose and the rest of the day in translating my poems... it is the translating of my poems which pleases me most—it simply seizes me like an intoxicant. To transfer to a different language what I had once composed is an aesthetic enjoyment of a kind. To me it is the reception of the bridal pair following the ceremony of marriage. The marriage has been ritualized but the bride has to be introduced to the larger community. When the guests accept refreshments at the hands of the bride the union of man and wife becomes an accepted fact of the world. When I wrote the poems originally in Bengali it marked the union of the poet and his poetry; at that moment I had no clear awareness of any other motive. But when I translate the same, I virtually extend an invitation to others to come and partake of something at the bride's hand. It is happiness of another kind.... Repeatedly, repetitively I am erasing and striking out, brushing up and chiselling—acting as if in a frenzy. Nobody here would accept that these are translations—none would hear that these were originally written in Bengali and written better. As for myself, I, too, cannot quite dismiss this opinion as entirely unjustified. In fact, one cannot quite translate one's own works. My right with regard to my own works is not of an adventitious sort. Had it been otherwise than inherent, I would have, unlike what I do, to account for each word I use. I intend to carry the essential substance of my poetry into the English translation and this means a wide divergence from the original. You may not even be able to identify a poem of mine unless I do it for your benefit. Many of the poems have naturally become much shorter. Usually a poem springing into expression in Bengali comes with all the playful amplitude of language and cannot resist a display of its patrimony in public which for her is the bridegroom's family. But while travelling abroad the same ornaments would become a burden and are therefore to be left behind. Especially while on pilgrimage the glitter and the glory of dress and ornaments are unbecoming. I am engaged in divesting my poetry of its adornments—it has attired itself afresh retaining only its bridal veil; it has not turned European, however, by wiping off the essential signs of marriage—the auspicious marks of vermilion and the iron bangle. I cannot for all such reasons dismiss the oof English readers who emphatically refuse to treat those poems as translations. Had these been mere translations these poems would have had but a temporary stay at an inn in the course of their journey abroad, they should have conducted themselves in a manner suggesting an intention to go back home soon. But readers here have welcomed the poems as if these are their near and dear ones and not guests.... The English language has a beauty and a splendour of its own and my poems will also attain a class if they achieve the rebirth by being invested with the virtues of the English language. I experience a new delight because I have this in view as I write these. I am acting under no pressure and I am short of time in respect of any other form of writing.¹⁰⁸

A comment on this letter was provided by Sujit Mukherjee in his 'Translation as Recovery': "This letter is very important because it is an attempt to explain and defend

¹⁰⁸ Sarkar, Shyamal Kumar. *Tagore on Translation*. Visva-Bharati Quarterly 43:1-2(1977), 75.

the mode of translating or reworking his own poems in another language that he had practiced prior to his departure for England in May in 1912....”¹⁰⁹

As a matter of fact, here he describes his concept of translation and defends his method of ‘translating’ at the same time. His hypothesis and practice of interpretation are regularly inseparably intertwined to the point that while talking about his self-interpretation, he is found articulating, maybe unknowingly, a hypothesis of interpretation, or, to be exact, examining a specific part of the interpretation issue. A nearby assessment of this letter will, most likely, edify us on the hypothesis and practice of Tagore’s translation. Firstly, he makes a comparative discussion on the literal or word-for-word translation and what may be called ‘rewriting’ or creative translation. He speaks of the aesthetic joy that he derives from ‘rewriting’ or creative translation, a joy that literal or word-for word translation cannot provide. Since Tagore cannot translate literally, he follows a translation method called ‘rewriting’ which does not require him to ‘account for every word’ of the original. On the contrary, he rewrites his Bengali poems in English drawing on what he calls their ‘essential substance’. In other words, he takes much liberty with the original poems interpreting them in English following the promptings of his creative imagination. Secondly, Tagore has no hesitation in accepting translation as a form of original creative writing with the poem of which it is a translation.

One is left astonished by knowing how many songs of the *Gitanjali*, Rabindranath had to improvise more than once for the final version.

A poem named “Light, oh where is the light?” in *Gitanjali*, from the original bengali “কোথায় আলো কোথায় ওরে আলো” has innumerable corrections and improvisations, manuscript-image of which has now been printed in many bilingual *Gitanjali*. If we look at the difference between the original text and the revised text in another poem from *Gitanjali*: ‘সে যে পাশে এসে বসেছিল’, one may point out that initially in the manuscript, the poem had the line:

তুমি পাশে এসে বসেছিলে

But, later it changed into: সে যে পাশে এসে বসেছিল

¹⁰⁹ Mukherjee, Sujit. *Translation as Recovery*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2004, 86.

One of the major changes throughout the poem is this ‘তুমি’ of the manuscript, became ‘সে’ in the later printed version:

এলে তুমি নীরব রাতে
বীণা তোমার ছিল হাতে,
স্বপন মাঝে বাজিয়ে গেলে

— took the form of:

এসেছিল নীরব রাতে
বীণাখানি ছিল হাতে,
স্বপন মাঝে বাজিয়ে গেল

That is why even in the English translation of *Gitanjali*, ‘সে’ has been represented instead of ‘তুমি’: “He came and sat by my side”.

In the notebook in which Rabindranath translated *Gitanjali* into English, there are three complete translated-poems, that have not been compiled in any of Rabindranath’s works. In the manuscript of *Gitanjali*’s English translation contains a total of 86 translated poems. Of these, 83 poems are known to all of us but the other three translated poems are still not a part of any collection. Not all the poems of Rabindranath’s English *Gitanjali* are taken from Bengali *Gitanjali*; some are also adapted from various books like *Gitimalya*, *Naibedyā*, *Kheya*, *Achalayatan*, *Shishu*, *Smaran*, *Kalpana*, *Utsarga* etc. Of the three English translations of Rabindranath that have been banished to the manuscript page, the first is poem no. 144 of *Gitanjali*, the second is poem no. 28 of *Gitimalya* and the third is poem no. 70 of *Nivedya*.

Poem no. 1 (translation found in the manuscript):

*On the day thou break it through this my
name, my master, I shall be free and leave
this phantasy of my own creation and take
my place in thee..*

*By scribbling my name over thy writings
I cover thy works. I know not how further such a horror could be carried.*

*This pride of name plucks feathers from
others to decorate its own self and to drown
all other music it beats its own drum.*

*Oh, let it be utterly defeated in me and let the day come when only thy name will play
in my tongue and I shall be accepted by all by my nameless recognition.*

Original poem (Gitanjali poem no. 144):

নামটা যেদিন ঘুচাবে নাথ,
বাঁচব সেদিন মুক্ত হয়ে--
আপন-গড়া স্বপন হতে
তোমার মধ্যে জনম লয়ে।
ঢেকে তোমার হাতের লেখা
কাটি নিজের নামের রেখা,
কতদিন আর কাটবে জীবন
এমন ভীষণ আপদ বয়ে।
সবার সজ্জা হরণ করে
আপনাকে সে সাজাতে চায়।
সকল সুরকে ছাপিয়ে দিয়ে
আপনাকে সে বাজাতে চায়
আমার এ নাম যাক-না চুকে,
তোমারি নাম নেব মুখে,
সবার সঙ্গে মিলব সেদিন
বিনা-নামের পরিচয়ে।

Poem no. 2 (translation found in the manuscript):

*More life, my lord, yet more, to quench my thirst and fill me. More space, my lord,
yet more, freely to unfurl my being.
More light, my lord, yet more, to make
My vision pure. More tunes
my lord, yet more, stirring the strings of my heart.
More pain, my lord, yet more, to lead
me to a deeper consciousness. More Knocks,
my lord, yet more, to break open my prison door. More love, my lord, yet more, to
completely drown my self.
More of thee, my lord, yet
more, in thy sweetness of grace abounding.*

Original poem (Gitimalya poem no. 28):

প্রাণ ভরিয়ে তৃষা হরিয়ে
মোরে আরো আরো আরো দাও প্রাণ।

তব ভুবনে তব ভবনে মোরে আরো আরো আরো দাও স্থান

আরো আলো আরো আলো

এই নয়নে, প্রভু, ঢালো।

সুরে সুরে বাঁশি পুরে

তুমি আরো আরো আরো দাও তান।

আরো বেদনা আরো বেদনা

দাও মোরে আরো চেতনা।

দ্বার ছুটায় বাধা টুটায়

মোরে করো দ্রাণ মোরে করো দ্রাণ।

আরো প্রেমে আরো প্রেমে

মোর আমি ডুবে যাক নেমে।

সুধাধারে আপনারে

তুমি আরো আরো আরো করো দান।

Poem no. 3 (translation found in the manuscript):

*Thy rod of justice thou hast given to every man on this earth
and thy command is to strike
where it is due. Let me take up that harsh office from thy hand with bent head and meek
heart. Where forgiveness is sickly and self indulgent give me the strength to be cruel.
Let truth flash out from my tongue like a keen sword at thy signal
and let me pay my best homage to
thee by righting wrong with all my power. Let thy wrath burn him into ashes who does
what is unjust or suffers injustice to be done.*

Original poem (Gitimalya poem no. 28):

তোমার ন্যায়ের দণ্ড প্রত্যেকের করে
অর্পণ করেছ নিজে, প্রত্যেকের 'পরে
দিয়েছ শাসনভার, হে রাজাধিরাজ।
সে গুরু সম্মান তব সে দুরূহ কাজ
নমিয়া তোমাতে যেন শিরোধার্য করি
সবিনয়ে, তব কার্যে যেন নাহি ডরি কভু কারে।
ক্ষমা যেথা ক্ষীণ দুর্বলতা,

হে রুদ্র, নিষ্ঠুর যেন হতে পারি তথা
তোমার আদেশে। যেন রসনায় মম
সত্যবাক্য ঝালি উঠে খরখস-সম
তোমার ইঙ্গিতে। যেন রাখি তব মান
তোমার বিচারাসনে লয়ে নিজ স্থান।
অন্যায় যে করে, আর, অন্যায় যে সহে
তব ঘৃণা যেন তারে তৃণসম দহে।

There are obviously certain difficulties faced in the process of changing the form of poetry. However, some trans-creations have been termed as ‘versions’, which is nothing but a new creation in a pattern very close to the original, adopting the idea of the original. The question of fidelity in translation is complex, it is difficult to gain fidelity, but that is why this question and effort cannot be considered irrelevant. The modesty and respect that we expect from a translator facing the original, as embarrassing as the deplorable lack of it among the so-called ‘version’ writers, is their eagerness to claim that their own translation is a re-creation. In fact, the creativity of the translation and the fidelity to the original poem are not related to each other. The concept of ‘version’ is also worth mentioning in the discussion of Rabindranath’s own translation. The credibility of the translation and the intent of the translator are in doubt only when the occasion becomes the basis of the original poem. Therefore it can be seen in songs like:

চিরকল্যাণময়ী তুমি ধন্য,
দেশবিদেশে বিতরিছ অন্ন,
জাহ্নবী যমুনা বিগলিত করুণা
পুণ্যপীযুষ-স্তন্য বাহিনী

With the omission of the appropriate English synonyms in the translation, the English reader is satisfied with the familiar words and expressions:

*O, blest thou ever-hallow'd land.
That feedest many a foreign strand,
Flowest with Gunga, Jumna bland,
Pure nectar-bosmed thou!*

More translations like this can be found in Robi Dutt’s attempts to translate Tagore’s poems in his collection “Echoes from far east and west”. There is no doubt that Robi Dutt’s translation has a kind of apparent skill. He did not try to imitate the shape of Rabindranath’s songs and poems, the increase and decrease of the lines or the rhythm for that matter. In some cases there are also efficiency in the form and shape of the rhyme-scheme. It is permissible for him to omit the original verse or to add his own verse (to duplicate the stanzas or for the sake of similarity), but it can be also pointed out that while finding it difficult to transform Indian thought-connotations, he took the liberty to replace them with similar words-connotations of English poetry. In Rabindranath’s own translations, the principle of addition-exclusion-change is quite the opposite. A striking example of all this can be found in the translation of ‘*Manaspratima*’:

| | |
|------|--------------------------|
| তুমি | সন্ধ্যার মেঘ শান্ত সুদূর |
| | আমার সাধের সাধনা, |
| মম | শূন্য-গগন বিহারী। |
| আমি | আপন মনের মাধুরী মিশায়ো |
| | তোমারে করেছি রচনা— |
| তুমি | আমারি যে তুমি আমারি, |
| মম | অসীম গগন বিহারী। |

The transformation that took place in the hands of Robi Dutt left no possibilities of recognizing the originality of Rabindranath. He became a mixed and fluid version of some well-known English poems:

*Thou-my cloud of twilight sweet,
With the sunset-winged feet;
Thou — the heart's ambition high;
Pilgrim of my lonely sky,
I, combining in a whole
All the sweetness of my soul,
Thus have made thee-mine thou art,
Mine, sweet pilgrim of my heart.*

There are also influences of Marvel’s ‘To his Coy Mistress’ in the sentence structure of ‘I, combining in a whole / All the sweetness of my soul’. Robi Dutt is helpless wherever there is unquenchable anxiety in Rabindranath’s poetry.

Loken Palit's translations of Tagore's poems are much easier to comprehend for English-speaking readers. But there are some subtle touches left in the translation of Rabindranath which distinguishes these translations from the translation of an ordinary sensitive reader. Palit's *'I hold thy hands'* may follow the English style of grandeur, but *'I clasp both thine hands in mine'* done by the poet himself, is much richer to convey a hint of longing. Rabindranath can create a successful translation, free from the tyranny of literalism: *'The breath of the twilight is deep with the fullness of a farewell feeling'* can utter the deep-rooted essence of – 'বহে কি না বহে/বিদায়বিষাদভ্রান্ত সন্ধ্যার বাতাস'. This ideal method of converting phonetic connotations into poetry can be found in the English *Gitanjali*. However, in a few cases, neither of the two translators could bring the richness of the original content. Rabindranath's own translation of 'যে অমৃত লুকানো তোমায়' was 'the immortal flame', whereas Loken Palit's attempt remained – 'Thy sweetness veiled'.

The gap between this first attempt of Rabindranath in the natural judgment of translation and the interpretation of Loken Palit is quite contrasting. These two can be taken as examples of two opposite ideologies of translation. Any translation has two edges, two distinct entities of the original language and the target language, two different biographies combining the formation, pronunciation, connotations of language and culture. The ease of poetry in the original language, is the chief hindrance for the translator, as he/she tries to present the language as simple and natural as possible through the translation. But the translator has to make an inevitable decision only when it becomes almost impossible in the language of a completely different character like Bengali and English. To whom will his initial loyalty be? Will he try to translate every thought-image-imagery of the original, even if it is not easily digested in the intended language, even if it appears with a foreign look; or will he be more loyal to the reader of the language of translation, insisting on making the translation a neat poem without hesitating to take some liberties about the original? Rabindranath and Loken Palit made two different decisions. They have translated from two ends. The young poet Rabindranath is faithful to his poetry, this affection is natural. Loken, however, insisted that the translation be accepted as English poetry. This radical difference in the background and perspective of the two translators is particularly noteworthy.

Surely Rabindranath had the opportunity to compare Loken Palit's translation with his own translation. Even if it hadn't happened in the eighties and nineties, it would have happened after Loken's translation was published in the *Modern Review*. First of all, he must have noticed the superiority of Loken's style of translating the meaning of the whole poem, rather than translating each line. Second, did Rabindranath have a dilemma about translating his poems into the rhythmic traditional form of English poetry, a dilemma that would soon turn into reluctance? He should also note that the translation of the poem needs to pay special attention to the form of translation, otherwise the content and experience of the poem will not be properly reflected in the translated version. There was a growing feeling that the use of the conventional language and rhyming form of English poetry could stand in the way of a faithful translation of his experience. In the same way, for the same reason, it was questionable whether the translation form's own sharpness will be alleviated by adopting the muted form of prose-poems.

In the early half of 1912s, Rabindranath returned to the English translation of his poems to fill an unwanted leisure at Shilaidaha. In his letters to Indira Devi, he gave a pleasant description of his situation there: "...অগত্যা মনটাকে শান্ত রাখবার জন্য একটা অনাবশ্যক কাজ হাতে নেওয়া গেল"¹¹⁰. But it was not unnecessary at all, the translations did not happen casually. There was a long thought behind it. Although not uninterrupted since the first attempt in the 1890s, he occasionally had to think about the English translations of his poems.

Translations of short stories began to be published long before 1911s. Naturally, it was quite the right time for translation of the poems. Some foreigners have expressed curiosity to get the translation of the poems just by hearing about the fame. Ramananda Chattopadhyay showed a special interest in taking the poet to foreign readers and from the arrival of Anand Kumaraswami to Santiniketan in March, 1911, the matter began to take shape. With his help, Ajit Kumar Chakraborty translated two poems from "Shishu" – 'Janmakatha' and 'Bidaay', and it was quickly published in two consecutive issues of *Modern Review*. The second, however, has been advertised as a joint translation of the poet and Kumaraswami. But it is almost certain that it was Ajit Kumar's translation. Rabindranath's responsibilities here were limited to a few modifications. Later, when

¹¹⁰ ইন্দিরা দেবী চৌধুরানীকে লেখা চিঠি। ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *চিঠিপত্র*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ১৯০৭।

Rabindranath himself translated the poem in *The Crescent Moon* under the title ‘*The End*’¹¹¹, the entire translation took a different form altogether. The principle behind the two translations is quite different. However, the benefit of this revision was probably that his vague feelings about translation became sharper and clearer. Rabindranath has repeatedly praised Ajit Kumar’s translation in his letters. He did not forget to mention his popularity among the foreign readers. He translated both the poems ‘*Janmakatha*’ and ‘*Bidaay*’ in a completely new way. These transformations bear irrefutable proof of the poet’s secret dissatisfaction with the earlier version. It is quite clear that Rabindranath took Ajit Kumar’s efforts in front of him, while translating ‘*Janmakatha*’. The significant difference in the translation of the first two stanzas is noticeable. Where Ajit Kumar literally translated the first stanza and used the present tense of verbs, Rabindranath used past tense in accordance with the style of narration. As a result, however, the whole translation gained a clear momentum, which was absent in Ajit Kumar’s translation. The difference from the third stanza is evident:

আমার চিরকালের আশায়,
আমার সকল ভালোবাসায়,
আমার মায়ের দিদিমায়ের পরানে—
পুরানো এই মোদের ঘরে
গৃহদেবীর কোলের পরে
কতকাল যে লুকিয়েছিলি কে জানে।

Ajit Kumar’s translation is:

*In all sweet hopes that ever were mine,
In all my loves and desires,
In the life of my mother and in grandmother’s life hast thou lived.
In the lap of the Lady
who rules in our house
Thou hast for ages been hidden
my dearest darling.*

Rabindranath’s translation has rejected the excesses:

*In all my hopes and my loves, in my life,
in the life of my mother you have lived.
In the lap of the deathless spirit who rules our home
you have been nursed for ages.*

¹¹¹ Tagore, Rabindranath. *The Crescent Moon*. London: Macmillan, 1913.

Whereas, Ajit Kumar did word-for-word translation, Rabindranath wanted to capture the essence of the thought. The two words that he includes in the translation, avoiding literal translation — ‘deathless’ and ‘nursed’, add to the glory of the translation. The next stanza also is remarkable in Rabindranath’s translation:

যৌবনেতে যখন হিয়া
উঠেছিল প্রস্ফুটিয়া,
তুই ছিলি সৌরভের মতো মিলায়ে,
আমার তরুণ অঙ্গে অঙ্গে
জড়িয়ে ছিলি সঙ্গে সঙ্গে
তোর লাবণ্য কোমলতা বিলায়ে।

Ajit Kumar’s translation is:

*When in girlhood my heart
Like a flower was opening
Thou wast a sweet fragrance about it:
Thy own tender softness
Thou gavest, unknown,
To my youthful form,
My dearest darling.*

And in the transformation that took place in the hands of Rabindranath, the translation became the rival of the original.

*When in girlhood my heart was opening
its petals, you hovered us a fragrance about it.
Your tender softness bloomed in my youthful limbs,
like a glow in the sky before the sunrise.*

The poet kept the implicit metaphor as implicit, not allowing its connotation to be lost. In addition, he added another analogy at the end, which did not follow the original, but highlighted his inner soul with amazing skill. The difference between the application of the two translations is obvious. There is a straightforwardness in the poet’s own translation, beside which Ajit Kumar’s translation seems to be full of words. The main idea of the poem can be touched as easily and directly as in the translation of Rabindranath, but not so much in the translation of Ajit Kumar. The poet’s translation of the central idea of the poem has not been distorted for even once.

He freed himself from trying to follow the language of the original poem, leaving only the direct appeal of the translation to be the main one. In the translation of the last two stanzas, much of the original is omitted. Ajit Kumar's translation policy is different. If we try to comprehend, we will see that this principle is in fact similar to the first translation attempt of Rabindranath in the 1890s, although the poet himself has moved away from that principle. Ajit Kumar's translation could not go beyond the actual word-for-word form of the poem.

The translation of 'Bidaay' which was published in the *Modern Review* under the name 'Bidaay (Farewell)' belong to solely Ajit Kumar. An accurate Rabindranath's translation can be seen in 'The End' of *The Crescent Moon*. However, in 'The End' the thought of each stanza is transformed into one or two sentences:

*In the gusty night when the rain patters on the leaves
you will hear my whisper on the bed, and my laughter
will flash with the lightning through the open window
into your room.*

In the combination of such successive sentences, there is an overall and concise straightforwardness in translation. This is the most striking difference between the translations of Rabindranath with the translations done by others.

Successful poetry speaks for itself, its significance is embodied in all its forms. The same goes for successful translation. Most of the translations of the English *Gitanjali* are a shining example of this. But whenever there is a need for explanation in the translation, the flow and effective essence is somehow lost. It is more important to translate the essence of the original poem than to translate it literally. If we look at poem no.8 of the English *Gitanjali* as the translation of 'রাজার মতো বেশে তুমি সাজাও যে শিশুরে', the original essence is somehow lost.

In the Bengali poem where we have lines like:

*দুয়ার খুলে দাও যদি তো ছুটি পথের মাঝে
রৌদ্রবায়ু-ধুলাকাদার পাড়ে।*

In its translation:

*...it is no gain, thy bondage of finery.
if it keep one shut off from the
healthful dust of the earth*

– the unnecessary addition of the word ‘healthful’, brings forth the tendency of providing an explanation. The biggest criticism is that the idea of ‘healthful’ was not in the original poem, it was an irrelevant import.

Theories instead of experience, advice instead of feelings are more broadly found in the next translation. Like many Baul songs, the poem ‘আর আমায় আমি নিজের শিরে/বইব না’ is actually a conversation between the poet and his inner self, which is predominantly missed in the translation: ‘*O fool, to try to carry thyself upon / thy own shoulders!*’ – the character of this address is so different, with the disappearance of the posture of the interlocutor, the depth of the narrated experience also changed drastically.

The last stanza of a very well-known poem —

‘কত অজানারে জানাইলে তুমি’:
সবারে মিলায়ে তুমি জাগিতেছ,
দেখা যেন সদা পাই।

—in the translation, Rabindranath, as usual, did not give importance to the words but highlighted the inner meaning:

that I may/never lose the bliss of the touch of the/one in the play of the many

Similar techniques were followed in the case of the translation of –

‘তাই তোমার আনন্দ আমার ’পর’:
তাই তো, প্রভু, হেথায় এল নেমে,
তোমারি প্রেম ভক্তপ্রাণের প্রেমে,
মূর্তি তোমার যুগল-সম্মিলনে
সেথায় পূর্ণ প্রকাশিছে।

But the English reader will remain bereft of the deep understanding that the Bengali reader gets from these lines:

*And for this/thy love loses itself in the love of thy/lover,
and there art thou seen in the perfect union of the two.*

The Bengali version of the poem is full of immersive imagery. The idea of ‘মূর্তি তোমার যুগল-সম্মিলনে’ – is not absurd to the Bengali reader at all, because behind it there is a hint of Radha-Krishna-Leela. It is an archetype in the Indian imagination, not to the English

reader. As a result, as soon as the essence of the imagery was removed, the translation was concluded into a statement. Rabindranath's personal and lively translation format can be found in poem no. 34 of the English *Gitanjali*. The original 'তোমায় আমার প্রভু করে রাখি' – was translated into:

*Let only that little be left of me
whereby I may name thee my all.
Let only that little be left of my will
whereby I may feel thee on every side,
and come to thee in everything, and
offer to thee my love every moment.
Let only that little be left of me
whereby I may never hide thee.
Let only that little of my fetters be
left whereby I am bound with thy will,
and thy purpose is carried out in my
life and that is the fetter of thy love.*

The appearance of the translation testifies that the poet did not think about the apparent form of the original poem, but radically restructured his whole thought in the form of a deeper construction. The gesture of surrender is well captured. Four similar sentences, periodically short and long, rising and falling like the position of a hymn or like a wave. Reaching the very last sentence: 'and that is the fetter of thy love' – as if to get a glimpse of the completeness of the devotion, and at the same time the translation becomes complete and self-sufficient. The incredible variety of vibrations and the application of phonics are the absolute treasures of the English *Gitanjali*, where there are no signs of excessively long sentences as Rabindranath constructed each and every stanza with outstanding skill.

In the context of the poems of the *Gitanjali* episode, it is also noticeable that they are basically songs. We are used to making a difference between translating songs and poems. Although poetry can be translated, song is absolutely untranslatable – this is the general idea. During the translation, the connection between the lyrics and the melody is broken, even if some of the lyrics may reach the translation, the melody is left behind. Ezra Pound reminded this particular problem to the poet in the context of the publication of the English *Gitanjali* at the very beginning of the poet's fame in England¹¹². In fact, when it comes to lyric poetry, it is doubtful whether we can differentiate between poetry

¹¹² Pound, Ezra. 'Rabindranath Tagore' in *Fortnightly Review*, March (1913).

and song in this way. If we judge from the point of view of translation — especially considering Rabindranath’s method of translating ideas in simple English prose — we will see that no acceptable explanation of the success or failure of his translation can be given just because of the presence of the melody. Rather, if we start thinking in terms of the principle of formation, we can find a much more reliable basis. Most of the songs and such poems also have very loose structure and these songs and poems have their soul in their atmosphere. More emphasis is placed on the creation of this atmosphere and its transmission in the mind of the reader than on the perfect expression of thought. That is why the appeal of *Gitanjali*’s songs are so immediate and infallible in spite of its relaxed poetry. It is possible to capture the original soul only if we can capture the atmosphere. Rabindranath’s style of translation is also suitable for creating this desirable atmosphere and there lies the greatest proof of the perfection of his success. Many minor changes in the English translation from the original can be explained with the intention of creating this perfect atmosphere: ‘নিশার নীরব দেবালয়ে তোমার আরাধন’ can become—‘*silent worship at dark temple of midnight*’ and ‘বাজবে বীণা সোনার সুরে’ can become ‘*the golden harp is tuned*’. Every word is unique, unchangeable. So, keeping in mind the conventional notion that songs cannot be translated, it can be said that Rabindranath’s translation method of the songs of the *Gitanjali* was successful and behind its success one of the major reasons was the fact that those were songs.

Tagore’s concept of translation as ‘rewriting’ reminds one of what Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett say in the preface to *Translation, History and Culture*: “Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society.”¹¹³ Translating, in this view, is the rewriting of the original text with the intent of adapting it to a system, ideology, or poetics of the target population. Tagore, however, regards ‘rewriting’ as purely creative endeavour without any ulterior motive or manipulation. According to Tagore, he does not possess the ability to translate, and prefers to rewrite or remake his poetry according to his creative inclinations. To his translation thoughts, the politics of translation, so heavily pushed by Lefevere and Bassnett here, was alien.

¹¹³ Lefevere, André and Susan Bassnett, *Translation, History and Culture*. Routledge, 1990.

Thus, the words ‘ideology’, ‘poetics’, and ‘manipulation’ have little significance for the concept of translation in his view. In rewriting *Gitanjali* (1912) he naturally draws on the feelings and sentiments of the original. Therefore, the poems undergo a creative reincarnation in English and seem to emerge spontaneously from the poet’s heart. The poems are absolutely free from the strain of adapting themselves to any ideology, power or poetics. For Tagore, the objective of rewriting is, then, creative ‘reincarnation’ or ‘rebirth’ of the original.

What Tagore writes to Satyendranath Dutta about his translations is worth quoting here: “These translations of yours are like reincarnations. The soul has migrated from one body into another. It is not an act of craft; it is an act of creation”.¹¹⁴

Thus, it becomes a creative transformation or a ‘rebirth’ through the process of translation and acquires a new lease of life. Tagore’s view of translation as ‘reincarnation’ seems to have been echoed by Walter Benjamin (*The Task of the Translator*, 1923) when he says, “a translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife.” By ‘afterlife’ Benjamin means a ‘continued life’ of the original or its survival in the target language and his concept of ‘afterlife’ here seems to bear a close resemblance to Tagore’s reincarnation. Translation, as envisaged by Tagore, is therefore a creative act which takes its origin from the unconscious or what Tagore calls ‘the subconscious’ level of the mind. In his letter to Rothenstein (25 July 1919) he reminds us: “...It is the subconscious mind which is creative.”¹¹⁵ In fact, when a creative writer attempts to translate his works in a foreign tongue, all he can do is to re-create them in a state of creative mood. Tagore’s inability to do a translation consciously seems to re-affirm the fact that his translation is deeply rooted in the unconscious. Tagore wrote in a letter dated 12 May 1913: “My English writing emerges from my subconscious. Once I mount the peak of consciousness all my wit and wisdom get muddled. That is why I cannot gird up my loins to do a translation. I can only set my boat adrift and not sit at the helm at all. Then, if and when I touch shore I cannot quite understand myself how it all happened”¹¹⁶. Tagore articulates here, perhaps for the first time, the role of the

¹¹⁴ Tagore’s letter to Satyendranath Dutta quoted by Kanak Bandyopadhyay in his introduction to Kabi Satyendranather Granthabali [Collected Works of Satyendranather Granthabali] Ed. Bishnu Mukhopadhyay, Vol. 1. Calcutta: Vak-Sahitya Private Limited, 1971, 16.

¹¹⁵ Tagore’s letter to Rothenstein, *Imperfect Encounter*. Mary M. Lago, Harvard University Press, 1972, 258.

¹¹⁶ Tagore’s letter to Ajit Kumar Chakraborty quoted in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore Vol.1—Poems*. Ed. Sisir Kumar Das, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2004.

unconscious in translation that Lawrence Venuti characterized almost a century later as ‘the translator’s unconscious’ When Tagore was at the height of his literary fame in 1915, he is reported to have told Robert Bridges about the role of ‘unconscious’ in his translation: “If there is any excellence in my translations it is unconscious, it is like correctly walking in dreams in places which it is not safe to attempt when wakeful.”¹¹⁷

This ‘unconscious excellence’ can in some cases be followed in Tagore’s utilization of the English language. As he is unequivocally against the interpretation of his poems in metrical lines, he needs them to be delivered into clear exposition. He trusts that the melody of Bengali language and Bengali mood cannot be moved to English and that the delivering of thoughts in basic English just can draw out its inward excellence. Ever diffident of his command of the English language, Tagore intends to use English prose creatively in his translation so that his Bengali poems achieve a ‘rebirth’ in English with all its ‘beauty’ and ‘splendour’. It is through the creative use of English prose that he comes to discover its inherent ‘magic’ which helps his Bengali poems attain a ‘reincarnation’ in the English language.

¹¹⁷ Tagore’s letter to Ajit Kumar Chakraborty quoted in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore Vol.1—Poems*. Ed. Sisir Kumar Das, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2004.

CHAPTER-4

Rabindra Sangeet: Translation and Performance

In the warm presence of Maharshi, Rabindranath had the opportunity to experience a spiritual atmosphere from his childhood days. Therefore, there is a direct and indirect spiritual effect in his entire poetry and in his pursuit of life. After all, he was not only a poet, he was a creator, composer; he was a sage. The influence of Vedas-Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. played a revolutionary role in shaping his mind. In the words of the poet:

আবাল্য উপনিষদ আবৃত্তি করতে করতে আমার মন বিশ্বব্যাপী পরিপণে তাকে অন্তর দৃষ্টিতে মানতে অভ্যাস করেছে।
...উপনিষদের ভিত দিয়ে প্রাক পৌরাণিক যুগের ভারতের সঙ্গে এই পরিবারের ছিল ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্বন্ধ। অতি বাল্যকালেই প্রায়
প্রতিদিনই বিশুদ্ধে উচ্চারণে অনর্গল আবৃত্তি করেছি উপনিষদের শ্লোক।...এই মন্ত্র চিন্তা করতে করতে মনে হতো
বিশ্বভুবনের অস্তিত্ব আর আমার অস্তিত্ব একাত্মক।...এই ভুলোক, অন্তরীক্ষ, আমি তার সঙ্গে অখণ্ড। এই বিশ্বব্রহ্মাণ্ডের
আদি যিনি আছেন তিনিই আমাদের মনে চৈতন্য প্রেরণ করেছেন। চৈতন্য ও বিশ্ব ; বাহিরে ও অন্তরে সৃষ্টির এই দুই
ধারা এক ধারায় মিলছে। তিনি বিশ্বাত্মাতে আমার আত্মাতে চৈতন্যের সঙ্গে যুক্ত।¹¹⁸

This spiritual realization of Rabindranath is greatly reflected in his literary works, especially in his music. Because through the composition of the melodies, the rhythms, maybe his spiritual consciousness would have been revived. The poet himself has admitted that there is nothing more enjoyable than writing songs. This spiritual experience of the poet predominates in the songs of *Gitanjali*, *Gitimalya*, *Gitali* and so on. The spiritual essence of India is reflected in most of the creations of Rabindranath. One of the chief themes of Rabindra Kavya is the union between the limit and the limitless. This union of limit and infinity pervades his innumerable songs; the poet is always listening to the melody of the infinity in the middle of the limit, its expression can be seen in:

সীমার মাঝে, অসীম, তুমি বাজাও আপন সুর –

আমার মধ্যে তোমার প্রকাশ তাই এত মধুর।

¹¹⁸ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

The poet seems to be anxious as he wants to know when will the joyous song that is being sung all over the world play within his heart:

জগৎ জুড়ে উদার সুরে আনন্দগান বজে,
সে গান কবে গভীর রবে বাজবে হিয়া মাঝে

The poet did not see nature as mere inanimate object, rather he saw it as a part of the eternal world and life, he felt it deeply in his heart. Rabindranath was both a lyricist and a composer and according to him, poetry and music are intimately and intricately connected to each other:

আমার মনে যে সুর জমেছিল, সে সুর যখন বিকশিত হতে চাইল তখন কথার সঙ্গে গলাগলি করে সে দেখা দিল;
ছেলেবেলা থেকে গানের প্রতি আমার নিবিড় ভালবাসা যখন আপনাকে ব্যক্ত করতে গেলে, তখন অবিমিশ্র সংগীতের
রূপ সে রচনা করলে না – সংগীতকে কাব্যের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে দিলে, কোনটা বড় কোনটা ছোট বোঝা গেল না।¹¹⁹

In an essay titled “সংগীত ও কবিতা” (Music and poetry) written by Rabindranath at a young age, he stated that both music and poetry are a way of expression. It is true that melodies can arouse moods such as sad, melancholy, cheerful, excited, etc. and if the melody of a song creates a special mood and the words of the song express a specialized, clarified and elaborate expression of that mood, then the words and melody become inseparable. Although the functions of the two are slightly different, they will be complementary and augmentative. The melody will give depth and intensity to the feeling; some of the thoughts in our minds and senses will make it clear; and since the idea is not at all vertical, it is inextricably linked with the perception of the external world, so that thematic aspect of the idea will also be conveyed by gestures, sometimes by indirect description. The role of words and melody in Rabindra Sangeet is of this type.

In Rabindra Sangeet, the melody does not exist in its full glory, only one aspect of the melody, that is, only the power of emotion or mood-creation is used to intensify the word-carrying thought. But there is another aspect of the melody - the direction of its stylistic expansion, the aspect of the stunning splendour of its imagery. The full establishment of this aspect is in *Marg Sangeet*. When the complex and majestic form of

¹¹⁹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

a melody slowly begins to manifest itself in the voice of a trained singer, then it completely pulls our mind. The words of the song, that is, the meaning of the words, then become trivial. When the full form of the melody is properly expressed, it is able to evoke a special kind of feeling that produces the proper enjoyment of a subtle and multifaceted imagery or form of the music. On the other hand, in Rabindra Sangeet we see that words are of significant importance. The melody is seen to have permeated everywhere to the majesty of the words. Apparently, there are thousands of songs that can be cited as examples, but if we just hum the melody, we will get as little as their full value; But even if we read it only as a poem without the presence of melodies, we have to be overwhelmed by the poetic excellence of those songs. Buddhadeva Basu once said that he loves to read the songs of the *Gitanjali* period. There is no doubt that poems like—‘আরো আঘাত সহবে আমার’, ‘অশ্রুভরা বেদনা দিকে দিকে জাগে’, ‘এসো শরতের অমল মহিমা’, ‘কোথা যে উধাও হল মোর প্রাণ উদাসী’ – are beautiful to read as poems, but after listening to the voices of Kanika Bandyopadhyay, Suchitra Mitra, Neelima Sen or Debabrata Biswas, the value of those poems get multiplied for a listener, penetrating a deeper understanding into the heart. However, it is true that in a large number of Rabindranath’s songs, our appreciation depends mainly on the words; but the melody is not negligible at all, as its role stands as an assistant, not as a rival. Referring to the variety of content in Rabindra Sangeet, Shantideb Ghosh in his book ‘রবীন্দ্রসংগীত’ stated:

বিষয়বৈচিত্র্যের দিক থেকে গুরুদেবের গান বহুমুখী এবং প্রত্যেক বিষয়ের গানই রসোত্তীর্ণ হয়েছে একথা বলা চলে। গীতবিতানের পূজা অংশের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন বিষয়গুলির নাম হচ্ছে, গান, বন্ধু, প্রার্থনা, বিরহ, সাধনা, সংকল্প, দুঃখ, আশ্বাস, অন্তর্মুখে, আত্মবোধন, জাগরণ, নিঃসংশয়, সাধক, উৎসব, আনন্দ, বিশ্ব, সুন্দর, বাউল, পথ, শেষ, পরিণয়। এই অংশেই আছে বিখ্যাত স্বদেশী গানগুলি সব। আর দ্বিতীয় খন্ডের প্রেম পর্যায়ে পাচ্ছি, প্রেমবৈচিত্র্য ও নানা ঋতু বা প্রকৃতিকে নিয়ে গান। এছাড়া এই ভাগের বিচিত্র অংশে বহু গান আছে যা বিষয়ের দিক থেকে উপরের কোনটার মধ্যে স্থান পায় না। এ ছাড়া দুটি পূর্ণাঙ্গ গীতি রচনা করে বাংলা গানে তিনি যে এক নতুন অধ্যায়ের সূচনা করে গেছেন একথা নিঃশংসয়ে বলতে পারি।...আরো এমন কতকগুলি বিষয়ে গান রচনা করে গেছেন যা নিয়ে গান রচনার কথা তার আগে কেউ ভাবেনি। যেমন খেলার গান, চলার গান, পথের গান, জন্মদিনের গান, বিবাহের গান, মৃত্যুলোকে শান্তির গান, চাষ করার গান, ধান কাটার গান, গৃহ প্রবেশের গান, চায়ের গান, হাসি ঠাট্টার গান, তৃষ্ণার জলের গান, দীনের হতে দীন যে মানুষ তাদের প্রতি সমবেদনার গান, এ ছাড়া শান্তিনিকেতন বিদ্যালয়ের নানা উৎসবের উপযোগী নানা গান।¹²⁰

¹²⁰ ঘোষ, শান্তিদেব । *রবীন্দ্রসংগীত* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

In fact, this vast range of content and themes in Rabindranath's songs is another testament to his wonderful creative genius. The songs are recorded in three separate sections within *Gitabitan*:

1st Section – Puja and Swadesh (পূজা ও স্বদেশ)

2nd Section – Love, Nature, Varied, Formal/Occasional (প্রেম, প্রকৃতি, বিচিত্র ও আনুষ্ঠানিক)

3rd Section – National Anthem, Worship and Prayer, Formal, Love and Nature, Drama-songs, Bhanusingh's Verses, Lyrical-drama and Dance-drama (জাতীয় সংগীত, পূজা ও প্রার্থনা, আনুষ্ঠানিক, প্রেম ও প্রকৃতি, নাট্যগীতি, ভানুসিংহের পদাবলী, গীতিনাট্য ও নৃত্যনাট্য).

Nonetheless, there are variations in the format of the subject-matters in the above-mentioned sections; for example, the 'Nature' stage has six seasonal songs, namely summer, monsoon, autumn, fall, winter and spring; the 'Prem' stage has songs related to union and separation, the 'Bichitra' stage is really diverse in terms of content. There are 140 songs in this stage. On one hand we see the poet's passionate declaration in – 'আমরা নতুন যৌবনেরই দূত', and on the other hand, he is seen in a calm gesture amidst nature – 'গ্রাম ছাড়া রাঙা মাটির পথ'.

5.1 *Tumi Kamon Kare Gaan Koro Hey Guni*: Mechanism of Rabindra Sangeet

Rabindranath in his *পশ্চিমযাত্রীর ডায়রী* wrote:

গান লিখতে যেমন আমার নিবিড় আনন্দ হয়, এমন আর কিছুতে হয় না। এমন নেশা ধরে যে, তখন গুরুতর কাজের গুরুত্ব একেবারে চলে যায়, বড়ো বড়ো দায়িত্বের ভারাকর্ষণটা হঠাৎ লোপ পায়, কর্তব্যের দাবিগুলোকে মন এক ধার থেকে না-মঞ্জুর করে দেয়।¹²¹

None but the one who sees the world through his songs can compose such lines – 'আমার আপন গান আমার অগোচরে আমার মন হরণ করে, নিয়ে সে যায় ভাসিয়ে সকল সীমারই পারে।'

Even if Rabindranath had only composed songs, he still would have appeared as brilliant in our hearts as he does today. On the one hand, just as the rhythm intermingled with the

¹²¹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *পশ্চিমযাত্রীর ডায়রী*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০০৫।

words and melodies in a balanced combination of Rabindranath's songs have a unique depth of thought and deep connotations, on the other hand, the periodic themes have created a wonderful variety.

When the first edition of *Gitanita* was published, the compilers were not able to categorize the songs chronologically. As a result, Rabindranath himself has arranged the songs in different stages by preserving the connotations of the thoughts in the second edition, thinking of the difficulties of the readers. These stages are 'Puja', 'Swadesh', 'Prem', 'Prakriti', 'Anushthanik' and 'Bichitra'. Rabindranath has specially divided the songs of the 'Puja' stage into several sub-stages: *Gaan* (32 songs), *Bandhu* (59 songs), *Prarthana* (36 songs), *Biraha* (47 songs), *Sadhana O Sankalpa* (17 songs), *Dukkho* (49 songs), *Ashwas* (12 songs), *Antarmukhey* (6 songs), *Atmabodhan* (5 songs), *Jagaran* (26 songs), *Nisshongshoy* (10 songs), *Sadhak* (2 songs), *Utsab* (7 songs), *Ananda* (25 songs), *Biswa* (39 songs), *Bibidha* (143 songs), *Sundar* (30 songs), *Baul* (13 songs), *Path* (25 songs), *Shesh* (34 songs).

This subtle sub-divisional variation of the songs belonging to the 'Puja' stage, cannot be noticed in any other stages. There are two subdivisions of the songs belonging to the 'Prem' stage: the first is the 27 songs under 'Gaan', and the second is the 368 songs under 'Prem Baichitra'. The poet has divided the songs of 'Prakriti' stage into seven categories – *Sadharan* (9 songs), *Grishma* (16 songs), *Barsha* (115 songs), *Sharat* (30 songs), *Hemanta* (5 songs), *Sheet* (12 songs), *Basanta* (96 songs). Apart from these, Rabindranath did not divide the songs belonging to other stages into different sub-stages. In fact, the periodic classification of songs in *Gitanita* has resulted in an invisible unity among the varied music composed at various stages of his life. In this way, Rabindranath categorized the songs of his *Gitanita* according to the subject matter and made them beautifully poetic. Rabindranath's songs are songs of nature, songs of the world, of the universal man. The melody of his music was not limited to art creation or entertainment, he took the melody as a stepping stone of devotion in the heart. So, he sang:

যারা কথা ছেড়ে বাজায় শুধু সুর / তারা সবার সুরে সবাই মেলে নিকট হতে দূর।

Rabindranath wrote songs as well as composed melodies. But while judging the songs, it must be remembered that Rabindranath was basically a poet; and that is why the appeal of his songs is so poetic. The heartfelt appeal that is at the core of this music is not only in its melody, but also in its words. Rabindranath started writing songs when he was 14

or 15, and it ended a month or two before his death. He has been composing songs continuously for almost 66 years. More than 2500 songs are identified with and without melody, with the help of three volumes of *Gitabitan* published by Visva-Bharati. The songs in which the poet has himself composed the melodies, present something unique in nature. The poet has repeatedly reminded us that he has been inspired to create newness in lyric writing with the help of the traditional forms. In order to get a proper idea of his great musical personality, we must always keep in mind that Rabindranath was always against blind imitation. He did not imitate the traditional, he was inspired by the old to create the new. In the context of music — the old ragas that he had heard in the voices of many experts since childhood — the very thoughtfulness of those inspired his mind and gradually came to his songs through his own thoughts and ideas. That is why the mixture of ragas and raginis in the songs created by the poet do not always follow the pre-existing way or opinion of any particular scripture or grammar. This pursuit of the world of music is his own, exclusively self-created. And in fact, it is for these reasons that we see in the life of the poet, like the daily and biological activities, the pursuit of song or song-writing was a regular habit of his.

However, it is important to note here that Rabindranath did not only compose songs, he also gifted us with innumerable literary and poetic resources, but it is quite surprising that he wrote so many songs in the midst of it. With that, the poet has successfully encouraged not only his countrymen, but singers from different continents. It is very rare in the history of the world that an artist or a poet has been able to go through such a huge success with the recognition of his talent in one life. These Rabindra-Sangeets are one of the most wonderful aspects of the creative genius of Rabindranath Tagore. There is an infinite abundance of words in it as well as there are variations of melodies and subject matter. Rabindra Sangeet is our constant companion in the joys and sorrows, reunion and separation of daily life. The poet's statement can be observed in 'আলাপচারী-রবীন্দ্রনাথ':

কম গান লিখেছি? হাজার হাজার গান, গানের সমুদ্র...দেশকে গানে ভাসিয়ে দিয়েছি। আমাকে ভুলতে পার, আমার গান ভুলবে কী করে? ...আমি জানতুম বাংলাদেশকে আমার গান গাওয়াবই। সব আমি জোগান দিয়ে গেলুম,— ফাঁক নেই। এ না গেয়ে উপায় কী! আমার গান গাইতেই হবে — সব কিছুতে।¹²²

¹²² চন্দ, রাণী । *আলাপচারী-রবীন্দ্রনাথ* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৪২ ।

Because this self-confidence was well established in the heart of the poet all his life, he has repeatedly guided us with valuable insights regarding his own musical thoughts. Rabindranath was the poet of the world, most of the songs he composed were universal in nature; and so there is no place for any particular religion or community in his style of music. However, this decision has to be made by omitting some of the songs composed in his early life. And in fact, above all, Rabindra Sangeet has gained universality today — possibly due to the universal nature inherent in it. Reviewing the history of Rabindranath’s song-writing, it is known that he composed many songs in his early life, under the tutelage of eminent musicians like Vishnu Chakraborty, Jaduvatta and Jyotirindranath Tagore. So the work of arranging his melody in the songs followed the conventional style of those pioneers. But later Rabindranath freed himself from it and the method by which he was inspired to compose songs was entirely created in the light of his own genius. It is through this creation that we get Rabindranath’s new stage lyric poems — the poet’s own style of melody. This is the essence of his musical endeavour. Poet Rabindranath brought a new mixture of melodies to the songs; some of his melodies tend to match with the past, some do not. The compositions dazzled the minds of many, especially those who are well-accustomed to the ways of music. So is it a sudden invention, or something new? Judging by a very subtle comparison with many, it can be seen that the work of this mixture done by Rabindranath is not a new object of Indian *raga-raginis* and its accompanying rituals, but as if it were a new realization! The inclusion of this novelty and uniqueness in the songs is the hallmark of the poet's world-conquering genius. As the abundance of Rabindranath’s words in Rabindra Sangeet is endless, so is the variety of melody and rhythm. The variety of topics is endless, in terms of melody and rhythm too, these are one of the glorious resources of Bengal and India. The poet Rabindranath was the master of rhythm; he started experimenting with song-writing so that the rhythm of the poem would not be disturbed. Rabindranath knew very well and understood that there were strict rules in musicology to protect the rhythmic movement of songs, from which even the slightest deviation would not be recognized in the singing community. So, the poet himself stated in ‘সঙ্গীতের মুক্তি’:

“অনেকদিন হইতেই কবিতা লিখিতেছি, এই জন্য, যতই বিনয় করি না কেন, এটুকু না বলিয়া পারি না যে – ছন্দের তত্ত্ব কিছু কিছু বুঝি।”¹²³

¹²³ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

And in fact, this independent sense of rhythm shows that he had his unique talent in composing songs. Rhythm is the accounting department of music. On the whole, the variety of rhythms that Rabindranath has experimented with and its successful application in the rhythm of the songs is only in the light of his incomparable genius. Nevertheless, the traditional rhythms, such as *Dadra*, *Karfa*, *Trital*, *Teora*, *Jhampal*, *Surfaktal*, *Chautal*, *Dhamar* etc. have been efficiently used in his songs. It is not known that Rabindranath himself ever practiced tabla or pakhoyaz. But even then, he has come across a variety of educated musicians from home and abroad using different types of musical instruments, and he had the opportunity of listening to their music. Therefore, through various experiences, it was possible for him to develop his own idea about the merits of using all these musical instruments. In this case, it is to be noted that while describing Rabindranath's efficiency in melody-creating, Indira Devi Chaudhurani once stated in her 'গানের স্মৃতি': "রাগ তিনি [রবীন্দ্রনাথ] খুব ভালো জানতেন বলেই তার মিশ্রণে ওস্তাদ ছিলেন".¹²⁴

Rabindranath has introduced some new rhythms in the world of music through his glorious genius. The names of those rhythms are: *Jhampak*, *Shasthi*, *Rupakra*, *Navtal*, *Ekadashi* and *Navpancha*.

Rabindranath did not hesitate to compose songs which were different from the conventional rhythm-structure. Again, the melody and lyrics of the song have been expressed together in his mind many times in the emotion of the song, he clarified:

সঙ্গীতের একটা প্রধান অঙ্গ তাল। আমাদের আসরে সবচেয়ে বড় দাঙ্গা এই তাল লইয়া। গান-বাজনার ষোড়দৌড়ে গান জেতে কি তাল জেতে এই লইয়া বিষম মাতামাতি। দেবতা যখন সজাগ না-থাকেন তখন অপদেবতার উৎপাত এমনি করিয়াই বাড়িয়া ওঠে। স্বয়ং সঙ্গীতই যখন পর-বশ তখন তাল বলে : 'আমাকে দেখো', সুর বলে : 'আমাকে'। কেননা দুই ওস্তাদে দুই বিভাগ দখল করিয়াছে—দুই মধ্যস্থের মধ্যে ঠেলাঠেলি-কর্তৃত্বের আসন কে পায়—মাঝে হইতে সঙ্গীতের মধ্যে আত্মবিরোধ ঘটে"¹²⁵

A poem becomes successful only when the reader considers the poet's feelings in the poem as his own feelings. In the same way, successful music resonates in the strings of our hearts. Music reaches its glory only when it is created by combining words and melody. In Rabindra Sangeet, it has been revealed to the world in an impeccable form as

¹²⁴ চৌধুরানী, ইন্দিরাদেবী । *রবীন্দ্রস্মৃতি* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬০ ।

¹²⁵ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

there is an inseparable combination of melody with words. Here, the context of how music originated in Rabindranath's heart, can be revealed. The Tagore family of Jorasanko was a prominent center of Bengali culture. The family has been practicing music even before the birth of Rabindranath. There used to be almost regular music festivals and famous singers of Bengal used to perform in this house. Rabindranath was accustomed to this environment from birth. As a child, Rabindranath came in contact with prominent musicians or master singers who either performed or taught music at Jorasanko's Tagore house. Among them Vishnu Chakraborty, Srikantha Singha and Jaduvatta – these three names deserve special mention, because Rabindranath took music-lessons directly from them. Vishnu Chakraborty was the first guru of Rabindranath's musical journey. He was appointed by Raja Rammohun Roy as a paid singer of Adibrahma Samaj. Later, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore invited him to his home as a tutor. Although Vishnu Chakraborty was a master singer of Hindustani music, he used to teach Bengali rural songs to the children of the house. Later in his essay titled 'আমাদের সংগীত', he mentioned:

বিষ্ণুর কাছে দিশি গান শুরু হয়েছে শিশুকাল থেকে। গানের এই পাঠশালায় আমাকেও ভর্তি হতে হল। ...শিশুদের মন ভোলানো প্রথম সাহিত্য শেখানো হয় মায়ের মুখের ছড়া দিয়ে; শিশুদের মন ভোলানো গান শেখানোর শুরুও সেই ছড়ায়... এইটে আমাদের উপর দিয়ে পরখ করানো হয়েছিল। ...যে কয়দিন আমাদের শিক্ষা দেবার কর্তা ছিলেন সেজদাদা হেমেন্দ্রনাথ, ততদিন বিষ্ণুর কাছে আনমনাভাবে ব্রহ্মসংগীত আউড়েছি। কখনো কখনো যখন মন আপনা হতে লেগেছে, তখন গান আদায় করেছি দরজার পাশে দাঁড়িয়ে।¹²⁶

Although Rabindranath was a child at that time, the essence of Indian classical music entered his creative genius in the company of Vishnu Chakraborty and later it became richer in the company of Jaduvatta. Before getting acquainted with Jaduvatta, Rabindranath was accompanied by another singer, Srikantha Singha. Rabindranath has never had such a wonderful audience for reading out his poetry before Srikantha Singha. *Jibansmriti* mentions that Jyotirindranath, the elder brother of Rabindranath, composed a song—'অন্তরতর, অন্তরতম তিনি যে, ভুলো না রে তাঁয়'—by reconstructing the tunes of a Hindi song, heard from Srikantha Singh's voice. Rabindranath stated:

¹²⁶ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

গান সম্বন্ধে আমি শ্রীকৃষ্ণবাবুর প্রিয়শিষ্য ছিলাম। তাঁহার একটা গান ছিল—‘ময়, ছোড়ো ব্রজকি বাসরী’। ওই গানটি আমার মুখে সকলকে শোনাইবার জন্য তিনি আমাকে ঘরে ঘরে টানিয়া লইয়া বেড়াইতেন। আমি গান ধরিতাম, তিনি সেতारे বংকার দিতেন এবং যেখানটিতে গানের প্রধান ঝাঁক ‘ময় ছোড়ো’, সেইখানটাতে মাতিয়া উঠিয়া তিনি নিজে যোগ দিতেন ও অশ্রান্তভাবে সেটা ফিরিয়া ফিরিয়া আবৃত্তি করিতেন এবং মাথা নাড়িয়া মুগ্ধ দৃষ্টিতে সকলের মুখের দিকে চাহিয়া যেন সকলকে ঠেলা দিয়া ভালো-লাগায় উৎসাহিত করিয়া তুলিতে চেষ্টা করিতেন।

...আমাদের বাড়ির বন্ধু শ্রীকৃষ্ণবাবু দিনরাত তলিয়ে থাকতেন ঐ গানের মধ্যে। ...তিনি ত গান শেখাতেন না, গান তিনি দিতেন; কখন তা তুলে নিতুম জানতে পারতুম না।¹²⁷

In fact, Rabindranath’s sensitive, creative self did not want to confine himself to any fixed boundaries. Although Jaduvatta was later appointed as the tutor for music lessons and his elder brothers regularly attended his classes, Rabindranath used to listen to all those songs from a distance. There is no doubt that their musical influence had a great effect on his musical endeavour. In addition to these three teachers, Rabindranath mentions a few others with reverence, who were not famous as masters, but influenced Rabindranath thoroughly. They were Akshay Chowdhury, a friend of the poet’s brother Jyotirindranath, Biharilal Chakraborty and Kishori Chatterjee. In this way, Rabindranath has received inspiration and encouragement for music from various people, from the very early days of his childhood. Even as a child, Jyotirindranath, Rabindranath’s elder brother, inspired him to compose music and compose language according to the composition of the song. Jyotirindranath used to play new tunes on the piano and Rabindranath used to create that tune with words. This is how Rabindranath started composing music. Just as his elder brother Jyotirindranath had an influence on Rabindranath’s musical life, so did his father Maharshi Debendranath. Rabindranath mentions this in *Jibansmriti*. He writes:

যখন সন্ধ্যা হইয়া আসিত, পিতা বাগানের সম্মুখে বারান্দায় আসিয়া বসিতেন তখন তাঁহাকে ব্রহ্মসংগীত শোনাইবার জন্য আমার ডাক পড়িত। চাঁদ উঠিয়াছে, গাছের ছায়ার ভিতর দিয়া জ্যোৎস্নার আলো বারান্দার উপর আসিয়া পড়িয়াছে আমি বেহাগে গান গাহিতেছি।¹²⁸

¹²⁷ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *জীবনস্মৃতি*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৯৪১।

¹²⁸ Ibid

At a young age, on the occasion of Maghotsav, the poet composed many songs and took those to his father for him to listen. One of the songs is 'নয়ন তোমারে পায় না দেখিতে, রয়েছ নয়নে নয়নে'. Maharshi Debendranath was very happy to hear this song in the poet's voice and encouraged his son by awarding him with a check for five hundred rupees. In fact, Maharshi Debendranath understood that his youngest son, who escaped from schools and was not caught in the trap of rules, had immense talent and creativity. He rewarded him for further stimulating and acknowledging that talent. On the one hand, Rabindranath assimilated various melodies and rhythms of Hindustani music, on the other hand, he adopted various melodies of Western music in his songs. Added to this were Bengal's own style of *Baul*, *Kirtan*, *Sari*, *Ramprasadi*, *Tappa* tunes. In this way Rabindranath assimilated different genres of music and gave birth to a completely unique genre which is his own creation. Rabindra Sangeet has become radiant with impeccable sentimentality and dramatic connotations with its wonderful melodies, meaningful words and successful balanced application of rhythm. Rabindranath has found the Infinite through his music.

In Rabindra Sangeet, therefore, there is such a close union of *raga-ragini* with *kavya-rasa*, that one cannot be separated from the other. Rabindranath's reputation is not as a melody analyst, he never wanted to prove or promote himself as a great musician or master. On the contrary, the opposite has been noticed in his character. We find in his various compositions that he himself loved Hindustani music wholeheartedly. Most of the melodies of Bengali songs have been composed from Hindustani music. That is why the melody of Bengali songs has a spiritual relationship with Hindustani music. Although Rabindranath had a deep respect for Hindustani music, he wanted to break its conservatism and stereotypes.

If we mention some of Rabindranath's songs as examples, we can find the main features of his music, his uniqueness, depth of thought and inner feelings. In the essay 'রবীন্দ্রসংগীতে সুরবৈচিত্র্য' written by Soumyendranath Tagore, he states:

'ও গো স্বপ্নস্বরূপিনী' গানটির সুরকে যদিও পরজ বসন্ত বলা হয়, তবু আসলে এটি বসন্ত শ্রী, কেন না ঝাঁকটা কোমল রেখাব ও কোমল ধৈবতের। এটি 'শ্রী'-র লক্ষণ। এটি একেবারে নতুন মিশ্রণ। সন্ধ্যার সুর শ্রীর সঙ্গে গভীর রাতের সুর বসন্তের মিলন যে কি মধুর হয়েছে তা আপনারা শুনলেই বুঝবেন।¹²⁹

¹²⁹ ঠাকুর, সৌম্যেন্দ্রনাথ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান* । কলকাতা: অভিযান । ১৯৫২ ।

The song titled ‘আমার নয়ন তব নয়নের নিবিড় ছায়ায়’ is very familiar to the listeners. In the song, the secret pain of separation touches the heart of the listener deeply, the deep longing evoked through the melody is remarkable. In another song ‘চিনিলে না আমারে কি’, the deep sorrow, pain and pride of the lover’s heart has got a touching form in the depth of the melody of the song. Various emotions including frustration, anguish and pride are reflected thoroughly in the melody. ‘বর্ষণমন্ত্রিত অন্ধকারে এসেছি’ is a love song composed against the backdrop of rain. Here the detachment of the detached mind, the longing is in harmony. The lyrics ‘কোনো কথা নাহি বলে ধীরে ধীরে ফিরে যাব চলে’ stir up a strange shiver in the heart of the listener. If the whole form of raga-ragini had not been captured in the heart of the poet, would it have been possible to create such a deep appeal only by arranging the melody according to the grammatical rules of mixing melodies? In this context, another similar song can be mentioned—‘গোধূলি গগনে মেঘে ঢেকেছিল তারা’, which is also a love song composed in the backdrop of rain. The song is melodic, in which the use of both mediums conveys depth and tenderness at the same time. In the song ‘ফিরবে না তা জানি’, the lover has drowned his beloved in the sea of separation and gone away, and even though she knows that he will never come back, the beloved is spending her days waiting for his way by lighting the lamp for his welfare. The word ‘আহ তবু’ has been used repeatedly in this song. There is a strange combination of tenderness, loyalty, greetings, love and compassion between the two. And with the proper application of the melody it has become more meaningful. One of the most popular and frequently sung songs of the puja-stage is ‘যে রাতে মোর দুয়ারগুলি ভাঙল ঝড়ে’ – this song possesses a striking harmony of melody with the lyrics. In ‘ভাঙল ঝড়ে’—the form of the break has become more intense as the melody suddenly descends from a high tone to a lower one. The exact same thing can be seen in case of another song—‘আমি যখন ছিলাম অন্ধ’. The essence of this song has deepened the pain by combining the words with the melody. In another song of the puja-stage ‘বেলা গেল তোমার পথ চেয়ে’, the use of *purabi ragini*, brings out a melodious anticipation of surrendering one’s life at the feet of God and accepting death. It emanates from a serious melody which conveys a deep impersonal feeling in the heart of the listener. Another notable feature of this song is the use of pure *dhyavata* in the *purabi ragini*. Generally, in Hinduatani classical music, *raga purabi* is accompanied with *komala-dhyavata*. Although Rabindranath was well acquainted with the Bishnupuri gharana, as from his childhood days he has witnessed masters from Bishnupur, performing in the

Tagore house, he has used pure *dhyavata* in many of his songs. ‘বীণা বাজাও হে মম অন্তরে’, ‘আজি এ আনন্দসন্ধ্যা’—these songs are also composed by following the Bishnupuri gharana. In contrast to that, ‘দিন অবসান হল’, ‘সন্ধ্যা হল গো’ – these songs have both forms of pure and *komala-dhyavata* in the mixing of its chief raga—*purabi*.

‘দুঃখের তিমিরে যদি জ্বলে তব মঙ্গল আলোক’ – this song is about accepting all the sorrows, injuries, griefs, deprivations of life as a gift from God and accepting it peacefully. We know that various episodes of Rabindranath’s long life are marked by the death of many of his close relatives. But all these traumatic events did not disturb him or distract him from his life’s goals and ideals. He has accepted everything as a gift from God and this has been expressed in many of his songs and poems. In the song, therefore, he has been able to utter - ‘মৃত্যু যদি কাছে আনে তোমার অমৃতময় লোক/তবে তাই হোক’; ‘তবে তাই হোক’/So let it be — this line has come back again and again in the song but the melody has changed its form every time.

‘আজি যত তারা তব আকাশে’—this song is quite the opposite of the aforementioned song. In this song, along with the joyful exuberance of the words, the melody has achieved a different tone. The deep longing is beautifully expressed through the melancholy repetition of the word ‘হারাও না’. Rabindranath had a longing for the infinite, he was not bound by any narrow boundaries. He is a poet of the world. So in response to the distant call, he wrote: ‘আমি চঞ্চল হে, আমি সুদূরের পিয়াসী’. In this song, even in the melody, that sublimity, intense passion, has been transmitted and has made it even deeper.

‘না যেয়ো না যেয়ো নাকো’ is a song of nature-stage, in which the speaker, knowing that spring will go away, begs with all his heart to the spring to stay. This plea is nicely captured in the melody of the song. Similar emotions has been captured in another song, composed for the rainy season: ‘তিমির অবগুণ্ঠনে বদন তব ঢাকি/ কে তুমি মম অঙ্গনে দাঁড়ালে একাকী’. One who sings these songs, should not only maintain the structure of the melody, but also have to breathe life into it and that will be possible only when the artist is able to assimilate the inner-message of Rabindra Sangeet.

Just as the balanced application of words and melodies has given Rabindra Sangeet great depth or indescribability, so has the balanced distribution of rhythm given a new dimension to this music. Evidence of how deeply Rabindranath thought about the rules of rhythm in music can be found in his various essays on music, as well as in each of his compositions.

He believed that rhythm is also a part of expression. Rhythm is as necessary as lyrics, both are almost equally necessary, so the rhythm must be maintained according to the change of mood, it is not necessary to keep the rhythm all the same everywhere. In order to give freedom to the mind, it is necessary to give a lot of freedom to the melody and rhythm, otherwise they keep the mind bound from all sides. From various statements of Rabindranath, it is clear that he wanted to emphasize the importance of rhythm in a song. He did, but he never wanted the rhythm to become dominant by impressing the words and melody of the song. As much as rhythm is needed to make the song melodious and lively, Rabindranath has focused on that only. In his early life, Rabindranath was particularly inspired by the rules of European music. ‘Balmiki Pratibha’ was one of his early compositions. In it, he has tried to match the western melody with the eastern melody and has also given variety to the rhythm by keeping the harmony with the melodies. In a discussion of the comparative rhythm of Eastern and Western music, he wrote in his essay ‘সংগীতের মুক্তি’:

যুরোপীয় গানে স্বয়ং রচয়িতার ইচ্ছামত মাঝে মাঝে তালে ঢিল পড়ে এবং প্রত্যেকবারেই সমের কাছে গানকে আপন তালের হিসাবনিকাশ করিয়া হাঁফ ছাড়িতে হয় না। কেননা, সমস্ত সংগীতের প্রয়োজন বুঝিয়া রচয়িতা নিজে তার সীমানা বাঁধিয়া দেন, কোনো মধ্যস্থ আসিয়া রাতারাতি সেটাকে বদল করিতে পারে না। ইহাতেই সুরে তালে রেঘারেঘি বন্ধ হইয়া যায়। যুরোপীয় সংগীতে তালের বোলটা মৃদঙ্গের মধ্যে নাই, তাহা হার্মনি বিভাগে গানের অন্তরঙ্গরূপেই একাসনে বিরাজ করে। লাঠিয়ালের হাতে রাজদণ্ড দিলেও সে তাহা লইয়া লাঠিয়ালি করিতে চায়, কেননা রাজত্ব করা তার প্রকৃতিগত নয়। তাই ওস্তাদের হাতে সংগীত সুর তালের কৌশল হইয়া উঠে। এই কৌশলই কলার শত্রু। কেননা কলার বিকাশ সামঞ্জস্যে, কৌশলের বিকাশ দ্বন্দ্বে।¹³⁰

How many of us have the mentality to understand this well-thought-out statement of Rabindranath about rhythm? This is the reason why when we see that the rhythmic application of Rabindra Sangeet does not match with the rules of our well-known widely used rhythmic structure, we express our helplessness without realizing the reason.

Rabindranath has experimented with the rhyme and rhythm structure in his poetry and he has successfully embodied those in his composed songs by his brilliant expertise.

¹³⁰ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । সংগীতচিন্তা । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

In this context, it is necessary to say a word or two about the notation of Rabindra Sangeet. There is no doubt that all the notation-composers of Rabindra Sangeet were highly qualified personalities in their field. They have tried to compose the notation perfectly in keeping with the melody of Rabindra Sangeet. But in some cases this notation system causes various difficulties to the students, performers and listeners of Rabindra Sangeet. For example, the artists of the old days who had the opportunity to learn music from Rabindranath, there is a lot of difference between that Rabindra Sangeet and the Rabindra Sangeet that follow the correct notation. There are many Rabindra Sangeet whose melody is so wide and different, that its beauty cannot be preserved if it is tied to a certain rhythm of the conventional method. But for the sake of the notation, one has to tie the melody to certain parameters. We get the structure of the song in notation; but one has to grasp the inherent essence of the song in order to establish life in it. If Rabindra Sangeet can be mastered only with the help of notation without learning or understanding it properly, great injustice will be done to the songs. Because these songs are a thing of complete realization. So if a person fails to feel the meaning of the song properly, it is not possible to establish life in it.

Now if one learns the notation of Rabindranath's songs belonging to the Swadesh-stage, and performs those national-consciousness stimulating songs at his own pace, then that song will lose its originality. The tendency to sing a similar slow-moving song of sorrow or separation is equally to blame. It is possible to sing the song correctly only after listening to the song well first, mastering its singing style, rhythm etc. and then following the notation. However, as a result of many years of practice, those who have mastered Rabindra Sangeet can easily sing by looking at the notation. Reviewing Rabindranath's entire musical career, we can see that in his early life when Vishnu Chakraborty, Jadu Bhatt, Jyotirindranath were close to him, he could not ignore the conventional rhythm rules. That is why he has named the *raga-ragini* and *Taal* in the upper portion of the songs. This can also be noticed in the songs of the play *Sharadotsab*. In the notation also, the name of the rhythm, the melody and the division of the rhythm are mentioned. These are especially noticeable in the case of *Bhanga-gaan*. But later on, Rabindranath did not give much importance to mentioning the name of *Taal* in the song itself.

That is why there is no mention of rhythm in the songs, which were composed later for the play *Sharadotsab*. He did not even feel the need to show all the rhythmic variations everywhere in the song, which can be seen more prominently in the songs, composed at the last stage of his life. However, in order to maintain the level of accuracy of the

notation and the rhythm of the notation, in many cases the melody of the song has been increased or decreased by matching the rules of tabla. Just as there is a need for rhythm in poetry, there is also a similar requirement of rhythm in a song. That is the reason, for which in poetry, the rhythm becomes faster in the case of joyful expression and the rhythm of a poem of melancholic tone is naturally slow and serious. In many cases, the same words in the song, using two different rhythms, create completely different meanings or different environments. For example, the song – ‘আমার নিশীথরাতের বাদলধারা’ is composed in two different rhythms. The first is *Kaharba*, the second is *Dadra*. When the song is sung in the *Kaharba Taal*, it is seen that the rain enters the inner world of the human mind. There, in a lonely room, the rain is secretly being called to the dream world as a melody. But then when the song is sung to the rhythm of *Dadra*, its oscillating fast rhythm is captured in the form of a continuous stream of rain. In other words, the external form of the rain is predominant here. In this way, the mood of the song has also changed with the change of rhythm. The poet has also applied two different rhythms in the song - ‘বসন্তে বসন্তে তোমার কবিরে দাও ডাক’, in one, the song is tied to the morning melody with a slow rhythm of *Kaharba* in which the deep sad-hearted tone of farewell occurs. But when the song is sung in the rhythm of *Dadra* in the melody of the night, the melody of the upcoming farewell does not overwhelm the mind. On the contrary, even if spring departs, all its forms, smells and rhythms will survive for the days to come.

In another song ‘ঝড়ে যায় উড়ে যায় গো’— one of the rhythms used is *Dadra*, and the other is *Kaharba*. While the song is sung in *Dadra*, the suddenness of the storm, the disaster, the unrestrained enthusiasm of life is not felt. Instead a calm, mind-boggling apathy arose. But the form of the catastrophic storm floats in front of the eyes in a relatively fast rhythm of *Kaharba*. The moment of meeting the beloved in the midst of all the decorations, the sudden removal of the obstruction by the storm and the flash of the electric light on the night of that great calamity has become clear here. The roar of nature and the soft tune of life have merged with the rhythm of the song.

Rabindranath has composed several songs like this – ‘এই তো তোমার প্রেম ঝগো’ [*Kaharba* and *Dadra*], ‘আজি ঝারঝারো মুখর বাদরদিনে’ [*Shashthi* and *Kaharba*], ‘বসন্তে কি শুধু কেবল ফোটা ফুলের মেলা’ [*Kaharba* and *Teora*], ‘সংশয় তিমিরমাঝে’ [*Karfa* and *Teora*], ‘হেরি অহরহ তোমারি বিরহ’ [*Ektaal* and *Choutaal*], ‘যেতে যেতে একলা পথে’ [*Jhampak* and *Dadra*] etc. Only the change of rhythm has resulted in a change in the meaning of the songs. Of course, in most cases the tune has

also changed. Here are some examples of the application of different rhythms in the structure of the same song: ‘হে নিরুপমা, হে নিরুপমা’—at the beginning of each stanza of this love song, the rhythm has been changed impeccably along with the melody by apologizing to the beloved Nirupama for agility. *Kaharba* is used in the first stanza, *Shashthi* in the second stanza, *Teora* in the third stanza and *Dadra* in the fourth stanza. This has created variety and depth in the song. The poet has conveyed variety in melody and rhythm by applying the rhythm of *Jhamptaal* and *Qawali* in the song ‘বিশ্ববীণারবে বিশ্বজন মোহিছে’.

Another example is ‘নৃত্যের তালে তালে’, in which, four stanzas have been used to represent Nataraja’s different dance style through the use of *Dadra*, *Kaharba*, *Shashthi* and *Jhamptaal* respectively. By increasing the rhythm, the form that is being swayed around the world in the swing of Nataraja’s restless dance has been highlighted. At the end of each stanza, by adding ‘নমো নমো নমো—তোমার নৃত্য অমিত বিস্ত ভরুক চিত্ত মম’, a humble prostration is offered to Nataraja by using *Dadra* rhythm. The rhythm variety of the song ‘মধুর মিলন হাসিতে মিলেছে হাসি নয়নে নয়ন’ also catches the eye. The use of *Kaharba* in the first half and the use of *Dadra* in the remaining half of the song gives a beautiful rhythmic variation to the song. Another such song is ‘আনন্দধ্বনি জাগাও গগনে’ belonging to the Swadesh-stage. The first stanza of the song uses *Ektaal* and the next verse itself, that is, from the part ‘কে, আছ জাগিয়া’, the rhythm has changed into *Teora*. The same *Teora taal* has been used in the next stanza. And in the following stanza, the rhythm has been changed to *Ektaal* and has been continued till the last part of the song with a comparatively quick rhythm to create variety. Another thing to note here is that at the end of each stanza, when the line ‘আনন্দধ্বনি জাগাও গগনে’— is being repeated, the rhyme is being used again in a relatively slow manner. In this way, as the novelty has been created through the change of rhythm, a strongness has also been revealed, which is especially desirable in the songs of the Swadesh-stage. It has been already mentioned that Rabindranath experimented with the rhythm of Bengali poetry as well as with the rhythm of songs. He also composed some songs following the exact rhythm-structure of the poem. For example: ‘কূল থেকে মোর গানের তরী’, ‘হৃদয়ে মন্ডিল ডমরু গুরুগুরু’, ‘জীবনমরণের সীমানা ছাড়ায়ে’, ‘মম চিত্তে নিতি নৃত্যে কে যে নাচে’, ‘সকল কলুষতামসহর’, ‘ঘাটে বসে আছি আনমনা’, ‘খরবায়ু বয় বেগে’, ‘হৃদয়শশী হৃদিগগনে উদিল’, ‘গহন ঘন ছাইল’, ‘কাঁপিছে দেহলতা খরখর’,

‘দুয়ার মোর পথপাশে’, ‘ব্যাকুল বকুলের ফুলে’, ‘ও দেখা দিয়ে যে চলে গেল’ etc.—here words and rhythms are mixed in such a way that one cannot be separated from the other. Rabindranath has used consonantal words in some of his poems or songs to create a variety of sounds and rhythms, such as — ‘আঁধার অন্ধরে প্রচণ্ড ডম্বর’, ‘প্রচণ্ড গর্জনে আসিল এ কী দুর্দিন’, ‘নীল অঞ্জনঘন পুঞ্জছায়ায়’, ‘হিংসায় উন্মত্ত পৃথ্বী’, ‘হৃদয়ে মন্ত্রিল ডমরু গুরু গুরু’, ‘মাতৃ-মন্দির পুণ্যঅঙ্গন’, ‘মনোমন্দির সুন্দরি মণিমঞ্জীর গুঞ্জরী’, ‘নমো যন্ত্র, নমো যন্ত্র, নব কুন্দধবলদল সুশীতলা’ etc. The use of such ornamental words and conjunctions in these songs has created seriousness and robustness. In this way Rabindranath has infused novelty in the field of rhythm in his compositions.

Most of the songs he composed in his early life were lyrical. At that time he composed very few songs. The main reason for this seems to be that he was influenced by the seriousness of Indian classical music from his childhood and most of his compositions from the early period have the rhythm of *Kheyal*, *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar*, *Thungri*, *Tappa* etc.

Shantideb Ghosh in his book ‘রবীন্দ্রসংগীত’ stated:

বাউলের ছন্দে জাতীয় সংগীত রচনাকালে তিনি যে মুক্তির আনন্দ পান, সেই প্রেরণা তাঁর সমস্ত বাকি জীবনের গানে প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছে। তখন থেকে বাউলের ভাবে বহু ধর্মসংগীত রচনা করেছেন, ঋতুসংগীতও করেছেন নানা রকমের, অন্যান্য গানও আছে অনেক।¹³¹

In later life, the poet is more inclined towards rhythmic songs. This is probably due to the influence of folk music and *Baul* songs. Those who have learned the songs like ‘এ কি করুণা করুণাময়’, ‘হৃদয়বাসনা পূর্ণ হল’, ‘কে বসিলে আজি হৃদয়বাসনে’ etc. in the company of Rabindranath, they tend to sing in a free-rhythm-structure. But it all depends on the singer’s ability and craftsmanship. Just as the melody loses its sweetness and the listeners lose their patience when the song is sung unnecessarily long by dragging it further, it also loses its sweetness if the singer ignores the meaning of the song while showing his/her own expertise on possession of the rhythm. Therefore, the singer should always pay attention so that the meaning and the tone of Rabindranath’s compositions remain intact while performing.

¹³¹ ঘোষ, শান্তিদেব । রবীন্দ্রসংগীত । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

5.2 Reception and Representation

The Englishmen got a chance to settle permanently in the city of Calcutta after the battle of Plassey (1757). In fact, after that they took possession of the whole of Bengal. Immediately there was a strong desire in their society to entertain themselves through dance, song, theatre etc. Various music clubs and theatre groups were formed at great expense. The first theatre with a European model was established in Calcutta in 1775. European instrumental and vocal clubs, opera, balls, military bands, and all kinds of European dance methods were practiced quite well. Singers, dancers and actors were also brought in from England. In the beginning, for many years, amateur clubs were the main source of entertainment. In 1783 Shakespeare's famous plays such as "Hamlet", "King Lear", "Othello", "Richard the Third" were performed in such theatre-clubs. Prior to this, there was no place for women in European theatres. Men used to play the role of girls, but in 1783 European women were allowed to perform in theatres for the first time. The only way Europeans in those days had leisure was to go to clubs, listen to concerts and music, or go to the theatre. Professional dancers often danced. Symphony, sonata of famous composers were very much appreciated in such concerts.

The Bengalis, however, did not have any communication as such with the theatre or music-clubs established by the English in those days. Everything was entirely for the Englishmen, managed and maintained by them. But when an amateur theatre company called 'The Chowrangi Theatre' was formed in 1813, Dwarkanath Tagore was seen as a member of its board of directors. From this point of view, he seems to be the only Bengali in that era to engage himself with the foreign theatre. We see him as a member of the same theatre till 1835. Prior to his first trip to Britain, Dwarkanath was associated with another theatre named 'Lewis'. In the first half of the 19th century, the influence of English theatre spread widely among the other wealthy Bengalis residing in Calcutta. There was great enthusiasm among the Bengalis for the Bengali drama in the English style. A play called "Ratnabali" was performed in July, Jatindra Mohan Tagore was the main initiator. Ishwar Chandra and Pratap Chandra Singh, rich zamindars of Paikpara, were collaborators. Jatindra Mohan gave the task of forming their own orchestra group by following the model of European orchestra to Kshetramohan Goswami and Jadunath Pal, the music gurus of their family. They composed the songs based on the popular raga-raginis which were suitable for harmony. European instruments were also used in this concert along with local instruments. Just like the tradition of European musicians, the

instrumentalists used to play the instruments by following the newly introduced Bengali notation, noted on a piece of paper, kept it in front of them. It was from this concert that the first Bengali notation originated in Bengal. Jatindra Mohan Tagore himself used to attend the English theatre, opera and other musical performances of the English in Calcutta. By acquiring a first-hand experience of all those performances, he became enthusiastic to use his newly-formed concert in the play “Ratnabali” while performing it. After the orchestra of the play “Vidyasundar” in 1835, there was a renewed interest regarding orchestra through the play “Ratnabali”. Later, when Jatindra Mohan formed a theatre and concert troupe in his own house, many foreign instruments were also used along with the local ones for their performances. The era of theatre formed under the patronage of rich Bengalis of Calcutta came to an end in 1872 with the efforts of Girish Ghosh and Amritlal Basu. That marked the beginning of professional theatre in Bengal and they named this theatre ‘National Theatre’. After listening to the performances and songs of foreign professional drama and opera troupes, Amritlal and a group of young enthusiasts like him were very encouraged to form such professional theatre troupes. As a result, the ‘National Theatre’ came into existence. A few years later, due to the efforts of this theatre, a lyric-drama was performed in Bengali in imitation of the Italian opera, which is a significant event in the history of Bengali drama. One of the reasons is that this is first of its kind; and the second reason is that this play paved the way for the composition of the lyric-drama “Balmiki Pratibha” by Rabindranath.

From the very beginning of the theatre-clubs in Calcutta, the concert composed under the influence of European drama was an integral part of the drama. In order to maintain this legacy, the rich enthusiasts had to hire a band and a bandmaster at great expense. Separate educational institutions were also set up to alleviate the shortage of foreign machinery, the only task there was to form a proper team for the orchestra. It is clear from several accounts that the Bengalis of Calcutta first came into contact with a completely new genre of European dance, lyricism and acting in the late 18th century, and then from the early 19th century extensive efforts were made to reconcile the European with the Indian forms. As a result, there was a wide variety in the usage of European instruments along with the native instruments, songs and dances were composed in Bengali; this marks the beginning of Bengali notation, Indian musical texts in European notation and Bengali lyric-dramas in Italian model. A music academy, a college and a school for music education were also established during this time.

Jorasanko's Tagore family was one of the most educated rich families in Calcutta. Dwarakanath Tagore, the grandfather of Rabindranath, was the first in this dynasty to gain respect and considerable positions in both Bengali and European societies. His love for European education and culture was strong and the depth of his fascination with European music and drama is quite evidently presented in his biography. Dwarakanath had the good taste to appreciate European music and theatricals, and he became so enamoured of Italian Opera, that he engaged one of the travelling artists to give him lessons in singing. No wonder, therefore, that he yielded to the intoxication of similar delight on a large scale when he arrived in England. Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, son of Dwarakanath, in his early youth learned to play the piano in the European tradition. Debendranath's eldest son Dwijendranath Tagore also learned to play the piano. Jyotirindranath Tagore was able to play piano, violin, harmonium and mouth-organ quite well. He used to compose different melodies in the style of European music. Hemendranath Tagore was also very fond of music. Along with Indian music, he also made his children learn European instruments and vocal music in the proper manner. Surendranath and Indira Devi were well versed in European music. In this regard, Indira Devi wrote in her memoirs:

ছেলেবেলা থেকেই আমরা গান বাজনার আবহাওয়ায় মানুষ—দেশী বিলিতি দুরকমেরই। ঠাকুর বংশে দেখতে পাই পুরুষানুক্রমে এই দুই ধারাই অল্পবিস্তর চলে আসছে। যারা বাংলাদেশের সেকালের সংগীত ইতিহাসের খোঁজ রাখেন, তাঁদের এই সূত্রে স্বভাবতই পাথুরেঘাটার সৌরীন্দ্রমোহন ঠাকুরের নাম মনে পড়বে। তাঁর ছেলে প্রমোদকুমার ঠাকুরের রচিত কতকগুলি বিলিতি স্বরলিপিতে লিখিত ও বিলিতি স্বরসন্ধিযুক্ত (harmony) দেশী রাগরাগিণীর ছোট গৎ আমার কাছে এখনও আছে। মনে আছে, আমাকে, আমার দাদা সুরেনকে আর সরলা দিদিকে রবিকাকা একবার “নির্ব্বারের স্বপ্নভঙ্গ” কবিতাটির উপর একটি স্বরসন্ধিযুক্ত পিয়ানোর গৎ রচনা করতে বলেছিলেন। কথা ছিল যার সবচেয়ে ভালো হবে, তিনি তাকে পুরস্কার দেবেন। আমাদের মধ্যে একমাত্র সুরেনই উৎসাহ এবং পরিশ্রম করে এই অনুরোধ রক্ষা করেছিলেন।¹³²

Sarala Devi was the daughter of Swarnakumari Devi. A European teacher was hired to teach her European music and piano for one hour every day. In later times many of the children of this house practiced European music. Some of them even choreographed many of Rabindranath's songs in European style and printed them in newspapers.

¹³² চৌধুরানী, ইন্দ্রাদেবী । *রবীন্দ্রস্মৃতি* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬০ ।

In the era of amateur theatre introduced by the rich people of Calcutta, there was a tendency among the youth of Jorasanko Tagore's house to form a theatre group with orchestral music. Rabindranath's elder brothers and their friends together formed a drama community at home. Keshab Sen's brother Krishnabihari Sen was their acting teacher. Vishnu Chakraborty used to compose songs for these drama concerts. The instruments included harmonium, two or three violins, claps, drums, tabla, clarinet, piccolo and a large violin. Later, in 1879, with the encouragement of Jyotirindranath, we get the news of the performance of a lyric-drama called 'Basanta Utsab' written by Swarnakumari Devi, which had prominent incorporation of opera music. A few years later, Rabindranath himself composed the lyric-drama 'Mayar Khela' with much enthusiasm. Jorasanko's Tagore family was one of the 19th century Bengalis who tried to master European music and acting, and were inspired to find new ways.

Before discussing the influence of European music on Rabindranath's songs, we need to take a closer look at how much he practiced this music or his direct knowledge of it and how he got it. In the context of the first introduction to European music, he says:

At 17, when I first came to Europe, I came to know it intimately, but even before that time I had heard European music in our own household. I had heard the music of Chopin and others at an early age. As a young boy I heard European music being played on the piano; much of it I found attractive, but I could not enter fully into the spirit of the thing.¹³³

From these statements it is clear that at the time of Rabindranath's birth, European music was practiced in his family and that musical environment also attracted him in his childhood days. He wrote about listening to the first good song:

"I first heard European songs when I was 17-years old, during my first visit to London. The artist was Madame Nilsson, who used to have a great reputation in those days."¹³⁴ He first visited England at the age of 17 and during this time in England he not only studied, but also listened to European music on various occasions and practiced vocal music with enthusiasm. Rabindranath returned from Europe in 1880 with a profound influence of foreign music. Shortly after his return to the country, Jyotirindranath inspired him to compose the lyric-play 'Balmiki-Pratibha' at an annual event called 'Vidyajjan Samagam Sabha', to entertain the invited guests by performing plays.

¹³³ ঘোষ, শান্তিদেব । *রবীন্দ্রসংগীত বিচিত্রা* । কলকাতা: আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড । ২০১৯ ।

¹³⁴ Ibid

‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ was first performed in February 1881. Recalling this incident, he writes:

...দেশী ও বিলাতি সুরের চর্চার মধ্যে ‘বাল্মীকি-প্রতিভা’র জন্ম হইল। ইহার সুরগুলি অধিকাংশই দিশি কিন্তু এই গীতিনাটো তাহাকে তাহার বৈঠকি মর্যাদা হইতে অন্যক্ষেত্রে বাহির করিয়া আনা হইয়াছে ; উড়িয়া চলা যাহার ব্যবসায় তাহাকে মাটিতে দৌড় করাইবার কাজে লাগানো গিয়াছে। সংগীতকে এইরূপ নাট্যকার্যে নিযুক্ত করাটা অসংগত বা নিষ্ফল হয় নাই। বাল্মীকি প্রতিভা গীতিনাটোর ইহাই বিশেষত্ব। সংগীতের এইরূপ বন্ধনমোচন ও তাহাকে নিঃসকোচে সকল প্রকার ব্যবহারে লাগাইবার আনন্দ আমার মনকে বিশেষভাবে অধিকার করিয়াছিল। গুটিতিনেক গান বিলাতি স্বর হইতে লওয়া। বিলাতি সুরের মধ্যে দুইটিকে ডাকাতদের মন্ততার গানে লাগানো হইয়াছে এবং একটি আইরিশ সুর বনদেবীর বিলাপগানে বসাইয়াছি। বস্তুত, বাল্মীকিপ্রতিভা পাঠযোগ্য কাব্যগ্রন্থ নহে, উহা সংগীতের একটি নূতন পরীক্ষা ; অভিনয়ের সঙ্গে কানে না শুনিলে ইহার কোনো স্বাদগ্রহণ সম্ভবপর নহে। — ইয়োরোপীয় ভাষায় যাহাকে অপেরা বলে, বাল্মীকিপ্রতিভা তাহা নহে, ইহা সুরে নাটিকা; ইহার নাট্যবিষয়টাকে সুর করিয়া অভিনয় করা হয় মাত্র, স্বতন্ত্র সংগীতের মাধুর্য ইহার অতি অল্পস্থলেই আছে।¹³⁵

Undoubtedly, ‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ is a new experiment in Indian music. In our country, various full-length lyric-dramas of ancient style are still popular. Following the Italian opera, the lyric-drama ‘Kaminikunja’ has been performed at the National Theater in Calcutta or ‘Basanta Utsab’ at Rabindranath’s house has been performed. The actors did not sing in the style of acting as the dialogue of these characters was perfectly tied to the rhythm of the song. It was sung in the style of a conventional song, keeping a close eye on the melody and rhythm, gaps and dimensions. For ‘Balmiki Pratibha’ Rabindranath composed a variety of Hindi and Bengali songs, but completely ignored the conventional style of singing. During the performance of this play, various characters re-enacted the song with the rhythm of ordinary words or in the manner of speaking. Here the question arises, how did the idea of this type of lyricism come to his mind? In his biography *Jibansmriti*, he wrote:

হার্বার্ট স্পেন্সরের একটা লেখার মধ্যে পড়িয়াছিলাম যে, সচরাচর কথার মধ্যে যেখানে একটু হৃদয়বেগের সঞ্চার হয় সেখানে আপনিই কিছু না কিছু সুর লাগিয়া যায়। বস্তুতঃ, রাগ দুঃখ আনন্দ বিস্ময় আমরা কেবলমাত্র কথা দিয়া প্রকাশ করি না, কথার সঙ্গে সুর থাকে। এই কথাবার্তার আনুষঙ্গিক সুরটারই উৎকর্ষসাধন করিয়া মানুষ সংগীত পাইয়াছে।

¹³⁵ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *জীবনস্মৃতি* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৪১ ।

স্পেনসরের এই কথাটা মনে লাগিয়াছিল। ভাবিয়াছিলাম এই মত অনুসারে আগাগোড়া সুর করিয়া নানা ভাবে গানের ভিতর দিয়া প্রকাশ করিয়া অভিনয় করিয়া গেলে চলিবে না কেন। আমাদের দেশে কথকতায় কতকটা এই চেষ্টা আছে; তাহাতে বাক্য মাঝে মাঝে সুরকে আশ্রয় করে, অথচ তাহা তালমানসংগত রীতিমত সংগীত নহে। ছন্দ হিসাবে অমিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দ যেমন, গান হিসাবে এও সেইরূপ; ইহাতে তালের কড়াঝড় বাঁধন নাই, একটা লয়ের মাত্রা আছে। ইহার একমাত্র উদ্দেশ্য, কথার ভিতরকার ভাবাবেগকে পরিস্ফুট করিয়া তোলা, কোনো বিশেষ রাগিণী বা তালকে বিশুদ্ধ করিয়া প্রকাশ করা নহে। বাল্মীকিপ্রতিভায় গানের বাঁধন সম্পূর্ণ ছিন্ন করা হয় নাই, তবু ভাবের অনুগমন করিতে গিয়া তালটাকে খাটো করিতে হইয়াছে। অভিনয়টাই মুখ্য হওয়াতে এই তালের ব্যতিক্রম শ্রোতাদিগকে দুঃখ দেয় না।¹³⁶

The two songs that he composed for ‘Balmiki Pratibha’ by imitating foreign melodies are ‘কালী কালী বলো রে আজ’ and ‘তবে আয় সবে আয়’; The lament song of the forest goddess composed in Irish tune is ‘মরি ও কাহার বাছা’. This song was not there at first. It was composed during the re-enactment of the play during 1875. It can be said that the right way to judge Rabindra Sangeet as a whole can be found from the thoughts that arose in Rabindranath's mind about composing music as a result of his experience in practicing local and foreign melodies in ‘Balmiki Pratibha’. He expressed his musical thoughts in detail in three essays published in the same year, in these three essays, the main secrets of the various types of music creation of his whole life have been hidden. In one of the essays, titled ‘সংগীত ও ভাব’, Rabindranath stated:

অল্পদিন হইল বঙ্গসমাজের নিদ্রা ভাঙিয়াছে, এখন তাহার শরীরে একটা নব উদ্যমের সঞ্চার হইয়াছে। আমাদের বঙ্গসমাজে একটা আন্দোলন উপস্থিত হইয়াছে, এমন-কি সে আন্দোলনের এক-একটা তরঙ্গ যুরোপের উপকূলে গিয়া পৌছাইতেছে। এখন হাজার চেষ্টা করো-না, হাজার কোলাহল করো-না কেন, এ তরঙ্গ রোধ করে কাহার সাধ্য! এই নূতন আন্দোলনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আমাদের দেশে সংগীতের নব অভ্যুদয় হইয়াছে। সংগীত সবে জাগিয়া উঠিয়াছে মাত্র, কাজ ভালো করিয়া আরম্ভ হয় নাই। এখনো সংগীত লইয়া নানা প্রকার আলোচনা আরম্ভ হয় নাই। নানা নূতন মতামত উদ্ভিত হইয়া আমাদের দেশের সংগীত শাস্ত্রের বন্ধ জলে একটা জীবন্ত তরঙ্গিত শ্রোতের সৃষ্টি করে নাই।

আমার ইচ্ছা যে, কবিতার সহচর সংগীতকেও শাস্ত্রের লৌহকারা হইতে মুক্ত করিয়া উভয়ের মধ্যে বিবাহ দেওয়া হউক। রাগরাগিণীর উদ্দেশ্য কী ছিল? ভাব প্রকাশ করা ব্যতীত আর তো কিছু নয়। আমরা যখন কথা কহি তখনও সুরের উচ্চনীচতা ও কর্ণস্বরের বিচিত্র তরঙ্গলীলা থাকে।...সেই সুরের উচ্চনীচতা ও তরঙ্গলীলা সংগীতে উৎকর্ষ প্রাপ্ত হয়। সুতরাং সংগীত মনোভাব প্রকাশের শ্রেষ্ঠতম উপায় মাত্র। সংগীত আর কিছু নয়—সর্বোৎকর্ষ উপায়ে কবিতা পাঠ করা।

¹³⁶ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *জীবনস্মৃতি*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৯৪১।

কথা कहिया যে ভাব অসম্পূর্ণ ভাবে প্রকাশ করি, রাগ-রাগিণীতে সেই ভাব সম্পূর্ণরূপে প্রকাশ করি। অতএব রাগ-রাগিণীর উদ্দেশ্য ভাব প্রকাশ করা মাত্র। তাল-ও ভাবপ্রকাশের একটা অঙ্গ। ভাবের পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তালও দ্রুত ও বিলম্বিত করা আবশ্যিক—সর্বত্রই যে তাল সমান রাখিতেই হইবে তাহা নয়। ভাবপ্রকাশকে মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য করিয়া, সুর ও তালকে গৌণ উদ্দেশ্য করিলেই ভালো হয়। আমাদের সংগীতে যে নিয়ম আছে যে, যেমন-তেমন করিয়া ঠিক একই স্থানে সমে আসিয়া পড়িতেই হয়, সেটা উঠাইয়া দিলে ভালো হয়। তালের সমমাত্রা থাকিলেই যথেষ্ট, তাহার উপরে আরও কড়া কড় করা ভালো বোধ হয় না। তাহাতে স্বাভাবিকতার অতিরিক্ত হানি করা হয়। গায়কেরা সংগীতকে যে আসন দেন, আমি সংগীতকে তদপেক্ষা উচ্চ আসন দিই, তাহারা গানের কথার উপরে সুরকে দাঁড় করাইতে চান, আমি গানের কথাগুলিকে সুরের উপরে দাঁড় করাইতে চাই। তাঁহারা কথা বসাইয়া যান সুর বাহির করিবার জন্য, আমি সুর বসাইয়া যাই কথা বাহির করিবার জন্য। সাধারণ কবিতা পড়িবার জন্য ও সংগীতের কবিতা শুনিবার জন্য। গানের কবিতা পড়া যায় না, গানের কবিতা শুনা যায়।¹³⁷

This essay is actually an analysis of the nature of ‘Balmiki Pratibha’. A new feature of ‘Balmiki Pratibha’ is that almost all of the songs cannot be sung separately from the drama, nor are they something to be enjoyed as poetry. This is why he says, this play is a garland of drama in the form of songs. In the play, happiness, sorrow, tears, fear, laughter, joys, surprises, etc., various types of emotions are easily tied in various Indian melodies and rhythms in the style of conversation. This led to the transformation of the melodies. It does not match the conventional form. He adopted the European melody and style to the tune of great joy, since in native melodies, there were no such form to express immense joy or drunkenness, which was suitable for bandits. Since most of the songs were sung in the rhythm of ordinary conversation, there is no rhythm of tabla or pakhoyaz. That is why the first edition of the lyric-drama ‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ published in a book form, shows that there is no mention of rhythm except the mention of *raga-raginis* in the songs.

In the next essay titled ‘সংগীতের উৎপত্তি ও উপযোগিতা’, Rabindranath attempted for an explanation of the essay by Herbert Spencer entitled “The Origin and Function of Music”. In that particular essay he stated:

আনন্দে বা বিষাদে বা অন্যান্য মনোবৃত্তির উদয়ে সকল প্রাণীরই মাংসপেশীতে ও অনুভবজনক স্নায়ুতে উত্তেজনার লক্ষণ প্রকাশিত হয়। মনোভাবের বিশেষত্ব ও পরিমাণ অনুসারে কণ্ঠস্থিত মাংসপেশীসমূহ সংকুচিত হয়; তাহাদের বিভিন্ন

¹³⁷ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । সংগীতচিন্তা । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

প্রকারের সংকোচন অনুসারে আমাদের শব্দযন্ত্র বিভিন্ন আকার ধারণ করে; এবং সেই বিভিন্ন আকার অনুসারে শব্দের বিভিন্নতা সম্পাদিত হয়। অতএব দেখা যাইতেছে, আমাদের কণ্ঠনিঃসৃত বিভিন্ন স্বর বিভিন্ন মনোবৃত্তির শরীরগত বিকাশ। মনোভাবের বিশেষ উত্তেজনা হইলেই তবে আমরা আমাদের স্বাভাবিক মাঝামাঝি সুর ছাড়াইয়া উঠি অথবা নামি। বেগবান মনোবৃত্তির প্রভাবে আমরা আমাদের স্বাভাবিক কথাবার্তার সুরের বাহিরে যাই। সচরাচর কথাবার্তার সহিত মনোবৃত্তির উত্তেজিত অবস্থার কথাবার্তার ধারা স্বতন্ত্র। উত্তেজিত অবস্থার কথাবার্তার যে-সকল লক্ষণ, সংগীতেরও তাহাই লক্ষণ। সুখ দুঃখ প্রভৃতি উত্তেজনায় আমাদের কণ্ঠস্বরে যে-সকল পরিবর্তন হয়, সংগীতে তাহারই চূড়ান্ত হয় মাত্র। গানের স্বরও উচ্চ, গানের সমস্তই সুর। গানের সুর সচরাচর কথোপকথনের সুর হইতে অনেকটা উঁচু অথবা নিচু হইয়া থাকে এবং গানের সুরে উঁচু নিচু ক্রমাগত খেলাইতে থাকে। উত্তেজিত মনোবৃত্তির সুর সংগীতে যথাসম্ভব পূর্ণতা প্রাপ্ত হয়। তীব্র সুখ দুঃখ কণ্ঠে প্রকাশের যে লক্ষণ, সংগীতেরও সেই লক্ষণ। সংগীত আমাদেরকে অব্যবহিত যে সুখ দেয়, তৎসঙ্গে আমাদের আবেগের ভাষার (Language of the emotions) পরিস্ফুটতা সাধন করিতে থাকে। আবেগের ভাষাই সংগীতের মূল।¹³⁸

And in the third essay titled 'সংগীত ও কবিতা' he states:

আমাদের ভাবপ্রকাশের দুটি উপকরণ আছে—কথা ও সুর। কথা যতখানি ভাব প্রকাশ করে, সুরও প্রায় ততখানি ভাব প্রকাশ করে। এমন-কি সুরের উপরেই কথার ভাব নির্ভর করে। একই কথা নানা সুরে নানা অর্থ প্রকাশ করে। অতএব ভাবপ্রকাশের অঙ্গের মধ্যে কথা ও সুর উভয়কেই পাশাপাশি ধরা যাইতে পারে। সুরের ভাষা ও কথার ভাষা উভয় ভাষায় মিশিয়া আমাদের ভাবের ভাষা নির্মাণ করে। কবিতায় আমরা কথার ভাষাতে প্রাধান্য দিই ও সংগীতে সুরের ভাষাকে প্রাধান্য দিই। কথোপকথনে আমরা যে-সকল সুর যেরূপ নিয়মে ব্যবহার করি, সংগীতে যে-সকল সুর সেরূপ নিয়মে ব্যবহার করি না, সুর বাছিয়া বাছিয়া লই, সুন্দর করিয়া বিদ্যাস করি। কবিতায় যেমন বাছা বাছা সুন্দর কথায় ভাব প্রকাশ করে, সংগীতেও তেমনি বাছা-বাছা সুন্দর সুরে ভাব প্রকাশ করে। যুক্তির ভাষায় প্রচলিত কথোপকথনের সুর ব্যতীত আর কিছু আবশ্যক করে না, কিন্তু যুক্তির অতীত আবেগের ভাষায় সংগীতের সুর আবশ্যক করে। এ বিষয়েও সংগীত অবিকল কবিতার ন্যায়। সংগীতেও ছন্দ আছে। তালে তালে তাহার সুরের লীলা নিয়মিত হইতেছে। কথোপকথনের সুরে সুশৃঙ্খল তাল নাই, সংগীতে তাল আছে। সংগীত ও কবিতা উভয়ে ভাবপ্রকাশের দুইটি অঙ্গ ভাগাভাগি করিয়া লইয়াছে। তবে, কবিতা ভাবপ্রকাশ সম্বন্ধে যতখানি উন্নতি লাভ করিয়াছে, সংগীত ততখানি করে নাই। তাহার একটি প্রধান কারণ আছে। শূন্যগর্ভ কথার কোনো আকর্ষণ নাই, না তাহার অর্থ আছে, না তাহা কানে তেমন মিঠা লাগে। কিন্তু ভাবশূন্য সুরের একটি আকর্ষণ আছে, তাহা কানে মিষ্ট শুনায়। এইজন্য ভাবের অভাব হইলেও একটা ইন্দ্রিয়সুখ তাহা হইতে পাওয়া যায়। এই নিমিত্ত সংগীতে ভাবের প্রতি তেমন মনোযোগ দেওয়া হয় নাই। কবিতা উচ্চ

¹³⁸ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। সংগীতচিন্তা। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

শ্রেণীতে উঠিয়াছে ও সংগীত নিম্নশ্রেণীতে পড়িয়া রহিয়াছে; কবিতায় বায়ুর ন্যায় সূক্ষ ও প্রস্তরের ন্যায় স্থূল সমুদয় ভাবই প্রকাশ করা যায়, কিন্তু সংগীতে এখনো তাহা করা যায় না।¹³⁹

It is clear from these three essays that Rabindranath embarked on a new experiment through the music of ‘Balmiki Pratibha’, keeping the ideals of European music in mind, and it was during this period that he came to believe that Indian music was far behind European music in many respects. His deep fascination with European culture as a whole, as early as from his youth, is evident from the various letters in his book “যুরোপ প্রবাসীর পত্র” published at that time. We already know that in Rabindranath’s music too, the European influences were formed and changed a lot over time. After the performance of ‘Balmiki Pratibha’ and the publication of the aforesaid essays, the second lyric-drama ‘Kalmrigaya’ was performed.

In ‘Kalmrigaya’ there were six compositions, directly influenced by the melody and rhythm of European songs: ‘ফুলে ফুলে ঢলে ঢলে’, ‘সকলি ফুরালো’, ‘মানা না মানিলি’, ‘তুই আয় রে কাছে আয়’, ‘ও দেখবি রে ভাই’ and ‘এনেছি মোরা, এনেছি মোরা’.

The rest of the songs were composed in accordance to various Indian songs. In this period, very few songs can be found to be influenced by English melodies, that were not meant for any lyric-drama. It is known that in the next six years after the first visit to Europe, only three such Bengali songs, directly influenced by European tunes were composed. Those were: ‘ওহে দয়াময় নিখিল আশ্রয়’, ‘পুরানো সেই দিনের কথা’ and ‘কতবার ভেবেছি’.

During the re-enactment of ‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ in 1886, the song ‘মরি ও কাহার বাছা’ was re-added as a lament of the forest goddess. This time the performance of ‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ was greatly enhanced. There were only four songs, influenced by European melodies in this performance: ‘কালী কালী বল যে আজ’, ‘তবে আয় সবে আয়’, ‘এনেছি মোরা, এনেছি মোরা’, ‘মরি ও কাহার বাছা’.

He composed about 20 new songs in Indian model for the play and a total of 9 songs of ‘Kalmrigaya’ were added to it.

In *Jibansmriti*, while describing the enthusiasm that arose in his mind towards new experiments while composing lyrical plays, he stated:

¹³⁹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

বাল্মীকি-প্রতিভা ও কালমৃগয়া যে-উৎসাহে লিখিয়াছিলাম সে-উৎসাহে আর কিছু রচনা করি নাই। ওই দুটি গ্রন্থে আমাদের সেই সময়কার একটা সংগীতের উত্তেজনা প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। জ্যোতিদাদা তখন প্রতাহই প্রায় সমস্ত দিন ওস্তাদি গানগুলোকে পিয়ানো যন্ত্রের মধ্যে ফেলিয়া তাহাকে যথেষ্ট মন্থন করিতে প্রবৃত্ত ছিলেন। তাহাতে ক্ষণে ক্ষণে রাগিণীগুলির এক-একটির অপূর্ব মূর্তি ও ভাবব্যঞ্জনা প্রকাশ পাইত। যে-সকল সুরে বাঁধা নিয়মের মধ্যে মন্দগতিতে দস্তুর মান রাখিয়া চলে তাহাদিগকে প্রথাবিরুদ্ধ বিপর্যস্তভাবে দৌড় করাইবামাত্র সেই বিপ্লবে তাহাদের প্রকৃতিতে নূতন নূতন অভাবনীয় শক্তি দেখা দিত এবং তাহাতে আমাদের চিত্তকে সর্বদা বিচলিত করিয়া তুলিত। সুরগুলো যেন নানা প্রকার কথা কহিতেছে, এইরূপ আমরা স্পষ্ট শুনিতে পাইতাম। এইরূপ একটা দস্তুর ভাঙা গীতবিপ্লবের প্রলয়ানন্দে এই দুটি নাট্য লেখা। এইজন্য উহাদের মধ্যে তাল-বেতালের নৃত্য আছে এবং ইংরেজি-বাংলার বাছবিচার নাই। আশ্চর্যের বিষয় এই যে, সংগীত সম্বন্ধে উক্ত দুই গীতনাট্যে যে দুঃসাহসিকতা প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে তাহাতে কেহই কোনো ক্ষেত্র প্রকাশ করেন নাই এবং সকলেই খুশি হইয়া ঘরে ফিরিয়াছেন।¹⁴⁰

The third lyric-drama ‘Mayar Khela’ was performed in December, 1888. He started composing songs for this about a year ago. In this lyric-play called ‘Mayar Khela’, instead of drama, songs or its music was the chief thing. ‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ and ‘Kalamrigaya’ are like a garland of drama in the form of song, ‘Mayar Khela’ is like a garland of song in the form of drama. The main difference between this lyric-drama and the previous two lyric-dramas is that many of its songs can be separated from the drama and sung as individual songs. Besides, the rhythm of *tabla* has also been preserved in many of its songs. For which there is mention of rhythm along with the mention of the melody of the songs of this drama. Even so, this lyric drama has only one song, which is directly influenced from English melody – ‘আহা আজি এ বসন্তে’. It can be seen that during these seven years from 1881 to 1888, his only inclination was to compose lyric-plays and to perform his songs in the same manner.

Rabindranath’s second Europe-visit took place in August, 1890. He left with great enthusiasm, arriving in September, but returned in November after only a month in the country, feeling bad for the country and home. During this period, he used to spend his time by practicing country music, as mentioned in his book ‘যুরোপ-যাত্রীর ডায়ারি’:

সন্দের সময় আর একবার গানবাজনা নিয়ে বসা গেল। Walter Mull বেশ Piano বাজায়। Miss Mull-এ আমায় মিলে অনেকগুলো গান গেয়েছি। এরা আমার গলার অনেক তারিফ করছে। Mull বলছিল, আমি যদি গলার চর্চা করি

¹⁴⁰ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । জীবনস্মৃতি । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৪১ ।

তাহলে St. James Hall Concert-এ গাইতে পারি— আমার রীতিমত উচ্চশ্রেণীর গলা আছে। সমস্ত দিন প্রায় গানবাজনায় কেটেছে। Miss Mull গান শেখালে। কতকগুলো নতুন গান (গানের স্বরলিপি) কিনে এনেছি, সেগুলো গেয়ে দেখা গেল। Miss Mull আমাকে সব গানগুলো গাওয়ালে। ‘Remember me’ বলে একটা গানের পর সে আস্তে আস্তে আমাকে বললে, Mr. T, I shall remember you। ...এখন অভ্যয়ক্রমে যুরোপীয় সংগীতের এতটুকু আশ্বাদ পাওয়া গেছে যার থেকে নিদেন এইটুকু বোঝা গেছে যে, যদি চর্চা করা যায় তাহলে যুরোপীয় সংগীতের মধ্যে থেকে পরিপূর্ণ রস পাওয়া যেতে পারে।¹⁴¹

So this time, in this short visit, his singing ability has improved tremendously and he has been praised as a singer. But after returning to the country, for the first time, he did not express the same amount of excitement as he did earlier in regard to foreign music. There is no news of any new lyric-drama or composition of songs from English melodies. However, it is known that in 1893, ‘Balmiki-Pratibha’ was once again performed with much enthusiasm. This time too he played the role of Balmiki himself and the picture of Rabindranath in the role of Balmiki that we are familiar with today was taken during this time. While referring to Rabindranath’s love of English music, Indira Devi wrote:

আমি অবশ্য রবিকাকার অনেক বিলিতি গানের সঙ্গে পিয়ানো বাজিয়েছি, সে-সব এখনও সেদিনের মুক সাক্ষী-স্বরূপ আমার গানের বাঁধানো বইয়ে পড়ে আছে, যথা, ‘In the gloaming’, ‘Then you will remember me’, ‘Good night, good night, beloved’, সুইনবার্নের ‘If’ ইত্যাদি। এছাড়া বেন্ জনসনের বিখ্যাত গান — ‘Drink to me only with thine eyes’ ভেঙে লিখেছিলেন ‘কতবার ভেবেছি’। আর একটা গান, রোমান ক্যাথলিকদের বিখ্যাত স্তব ‘আভেমারিয়া’, রবিকাকা পিয়ানো ও বেহালার যুগল সংগতে গাইতেন, সেটি আমার বড় ভালো লাগত। ‘Darling you are growing old’ প্রভৃতি ইংরিজি গানের সুরও মজা করে টেনে টেনে গাইতেন।¹⁴²

Ever since he was a young man, Rabindranath has deliberately expressed his fascination towards European music, but it seems that at the age of about 30, he first feels that the nature of music in India and European countries is not the same, there are many differences between the two. Since then, he has been thinking about what the real nature of music in both countries is and this can be pointed out from his statements in ‘যুরোপ-যাত্রীর ডায়ারি’—

¹⁴¹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *যুরোপ-যাত্রীর ডায়ারি*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ১৮৯৪।

¹⁴² চৌধুরানী, ইন্দিরাদেবী। *রবীন্দ্রস্মৃতি*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ১৯৬০, ৪৩।

আমার কাছে ইংরাজি গানের সঙ্গে আমাদের গানের এই প্রধান প্রভেদ থেকে যে, ইংরাজি সংগীত লোকালয়ের সংগীত, আর আমাদের সংগীত প্রকাণ্ড নির্জন প্রকৃতির অনির্দিষ্ট অনির্বচনীয় বিষাদের সংগীত। আমাদের নির্জন এককের গান, যুরোপের সজন লোকালয়ের সংগীত। আমাদের গান শ্রোতাকে মনুষ্যের প্রতিদিনের সুখদুঃখের সীমা থেকে বের করে নিয়ে নিখিলের মূলে একটি সঙ্গীবিহীন বৈরাগ্যের দেশ আছে সেইখানে নিয়ে যায়-আর যুরোপের সংগীত মনুষ্যের সুখদুঃখের অনন্ত উত্থান-পতনের বিচিত্র ভাবে নৃত্য করিয়ে নিয়ে চলে।¹⁴³

In the analysis of the nature of Indian and European music, this thought of Rabindranath has remained unchanged till the end of his life. Revisiting the differences between the music of the two countries in a section entitled 'বিলাতি সংগীত' published in 1911, he said:

যুরোপের সংগীত যেন মানুষের বাস্তবজীবনের সঙ্গে বিচিত্রভাবে জড়িত। তাই দেখিতে পাই, সকল রকমেরই ঘটনা ও বর্ণনা আশ্রয় করিয়া যুরোপে গানের সুর খাটানো চলে। আমাদের দিশি সুরে যদি সেরূপ করিতে যাই তবে অদ্ভুত হইয়া পড়ে, তাহাতে রস থাকে না। আমাদের গান যেন জীবনের প্রতিদিনের বেষ্টন অতিক্রম করিয়া যায়, এই জন্য তাহার মধ্যে এত করুণা এবং বৈরাগ্য।...যুরোপের গান আমার হৃদয়কে একদিক দিয়া খুবই আকর্ষণ করিত। আমার মনে হইত, এ সংগীত রোমান্টিক। ইহা মানবজীবনের বিচিত্রতাকে গানের সুরে অনুবাদ করিয়া প্রকাশ করিতেছে। আমাদের সংগীতে কোথাও কোথাও সে-চেষ্টা নাই যে তাহা নহে, কিন্তু সে-চেষ্টা প্রবল ও সফল হইতে পারে নাই।¹⁴⁴

The newly-introduced songs of the lyric-drama, and the method of singing that was adopted during the performance were not in accordance to the norm of any type of ancient or conventional Indian lyric-drama. The way in which the songs of the lyric-drama were composed and sung under the influence of European musical thoughts was the result of a harmonious influence.

Most of the Bengali songs based on foreign melodies were composed in the era of lyric-drama. However, the real impact of European music is not limited to this. From the composition of the songs for lyric-plays, this influence has been manifested in various ways in Rabindra Sangeet from the beginning to the end of his life. The English songs that Rabindranath learned and could sing well in England in 1878 and 1890, are:

“Won’t you tell me, Molly darling”, “Darling, you are growing old”, “Good-bye, sweet heart, Good-bye”, “Then you will remember me”, “In the gloaming”, “Goodnight, goodnight, beloved”, “Go where glory waits thee”, “The Vicar of Bray”, “Of all the

¹⁴³ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *যুরোপ-যাত্রীর ডায়ারি* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৮৯৪ ।

¹⁴⁴ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *জীবনস্মৃতি* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৪১ ।

wives as e'er" (Nancy Lee), "The British Grenadiers", "Ye bank and braes", "Robin Adair", "If" (By Swinburn), "Drink to me only with Thine eyes" (By Ben Jonson), "Ave Maria" (Roman Catholic Chant), "Serenade" (By Gounod).

Gounod's musical Messe Solennelle and Faust, Chopin's Funeral March and Galops, and Wagner's Parsifal Opera were also well known to him.

After composing songs for 'Balmiki Pratibha', a new path was opened for Rabindranath to compose more songs. In other words, he was inspired to compose songs suitable for singing from beginning to end with the idea of verse, without putting melody in the style of *kali*-division of Indian music. And he also realized that while singing, it is necessary to change the rhythm from place to place keeping in view the way of conversation. This new attempt at composing songs was not limited to the lyric-play only, its expression can be noticed in a couple of songs of his general lyrical emotion. The song "বলি, ও আমার গোলাপ-বালা" was composed by him in this way, in Ahmedabad, before the first foreign trip. After returning from abroad, he tried to incorporate a few changes and modifications in the song, which was a result of the direct impact, as far as European music is concerned. He did not compose the melody in the style of Indian *Kali*-division in the song, the song has to be sung up to 23 lines continuously:

(বেহাগ একতলা)

| | |
|----------|------------------------------|
| বলি, | ও আমার গোলাপ-বালা, |
| তোল | মু'খানি, তোল মু'খানি, |
| | কুসুমকুঞ্জ কর আলা! |
| বলি, | কিসের সরম এত! |
| সখি, | কিসের সরম এত ! |
| সখি, | পাতার মাঝারে লুকায়ে মু'খানি |
| | কিসের সরম এত। |
| বালা, | ঘুমায়ে পড়েছে ধরা |
| সখী, | ঘুমায় চন্দ্রতারা, |
| প্রিয়ে, | ঘুমায় দিক্‌বালারা, |
| প্রিয়ে, | ঘুমায় জগৎ যত। |
| সখি, | বলিতে মনের কথা, |
| বল, | এমন সময় কোথা! |
| প্রিয়ে, | তোল মু'খানি আছে গো আমার |
| | প্রাণের কথা কত ! |
| আমি | এমন সুধীর স্বরে, |
| সখি, | কহিব তোমার কানে, |
| প্রিয়ে, | স্বপনের মত সে কথা আসিয়ে |
| | পশিবে তোমার প্রাণে। |

| | |
|--------|----------------------|
| তবে, | মু'খানি তুলিয়া চাও |
| সুধীরে | মু'খানি তুলিয়া চাও! |
| সখী, | একটি চুম্বন দাও |
| গোপনে, | একটি চুম্বন দাও। |

At the same time, he composed another song in Behaag-Khambaj Ragini in the same style— “সখি, ভাবনা কাহারে বলে?”—there are total 31 lines in this song:

(বেহাগ-খাম্বাজ—একতালা)

| | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| সখি, | ভাবনা কাহারে বলে? |
| সখি, | যাতনা কাহারে বলে? |
| | তোমরা যে বল দিবস-রজনী |
| | ভালবাসা ভালবাসা— |
| সখি | ভালবাসা কারে কয়? |
| সেকি | কেবলি যাতনাময়? |
| তাহে, | কেবলি চোখের জল? |
| তাহে | কেবলি দুখের শ্বাস? |
| | লোকে তবে করে কি সুখের তবে |
| | এমন দুখের আশ? |
| | আমার চোখে তো সকলি শোভন, |
| | সকলি নবীন, সকলি বিমল, |
| | সুনীল আকাশ, শ্যামল কানন, |
| | বিশদ জোছনা, কুসুম কোমল, |
| | সকলি আমারি মত! |
| (তারা) | কেবলি হাসে, কেবলি গায়, |
| | হাসিয়া খেলিয়া মরিতে চায়, |
| | না জানে বেদন, না জানে রোদন, |
| | না জানে সাধের যাতনা যত! |
| | ফুল সে হাসিতে হাসিতে ঝরে, |
| | জোছনা হাসিয়া মিলায়ে যায়, |
| | হাসিতে হাসিতে আলোক-সাগরে |
| | আকাশের তারা তেয়াগে কায়। |
| | আমার মতন সুখী কে আছে। |
| | আয় সখী আয় আমার কাছে |
| | সুখী হৃদয়ের সুখের গান |
| | শুনিয়া তোদের জুড়াবে প্রাণ। |
| | প্রতিদিন যদি কাঁদিবি কেবল |
| | একদিন নয় হাসিবি তোরা, |
| | একদিন নয় বিষাদ তুলিয়া |
| | সকলে মিলিয়া গাহিব মোরা। |

In our country, in several long-length poems consisting of many lines, such a scheme has not been seen before. From the time, when Rabindranath's second lyric-play 'Kalmrigaya' was composed and performed in the style of 'Balmiki-Pratibha', until the end of his life, he turned a large number of long-length poems into songs in the same style. Such as:

“আমার প্রাণের 'পরে চলে গেল কে”, “তোমরা হাসিয়া বহিয়া চলিয়া যাও”, “এই তো ভালো লেগেছিল”, “এস এস বসন্ত ধরাতলে”, “এ শুধু অলসমায়া”, “কে আমারে যেন এনেছে ডাকিয়া”, “প্রাঙ্গণে মোর শিরীষ শাখায়”.

When the *raga* or *ragini* of classical Hindi music is spread in the style of conversation, the main enduring lyrical emotion of the *ragini* gains a special momentum. It does not stand still; it moves forward in various forms. The enduring emotion of the long-length poems of Rabindranath's lyrical passion did not want to be confined within a small boundary, engrossed in that variety of forms in the consonance of words and rhymes. It was obvious that when he planned the strata based on the meaning or concept of each of these poems, the dynamism of the poems as a song was not disturbed. Therefore, one has to sing these songs from beginning to end in a single flow. The total number of lines in the song “এস এস বসন্ত ধরাতলে” is 23, which is composed in mixed rhythm. There is no chance in this song to come back again and again to the beginning lines, as the melody has not been set in the conventional style. Although the song is composed in a fixed rhythm, the motion keeps on changing according to the idea of the verse, sometimes in slow, sometimes in the middle, sometimes fast, it has to be sung without stopping.

From the period, when he started composing songs for 'Balmiki Pratibha', the following basic styles of establishing melodies according to their nature, were engraved so deeply in his mind that he never deviated from it:

- (i) Feelings of despair, depression, estrangement, sadness or crying will erupt, stretched and extremely drawn.
- (ii) The melody of the lively, energetic, cheerful, happy and exuberant song will move fast, two or three melodies will rise or simultaneously or fall very suddenly.
- (iii) Those of respect, adoration and serious emotion will not be sung by stretching long. The tones will sit close and the rhythm will not be too slow or too fast.
- (iv) For those who require singing in a conversational style like acting, the rhythm needs to be changed according to the emotions, differentiation should be made with the rhythm in the same song.

– Rabindranath kept in mind the effectiveness of these rules while composing songs throughout his life; also it forecasts the significant impact of Herbert Spencer’s notion of music and European musical formats in his compositions. Indian music has a vast collection of various *raga-ragini* and rhythm-patterns. Therefore, Rabindranath had the privilege to use those in his compositions. There were some special styles of melody and rhythmic application in the ancient music of our country as well and Rabindranath did not fail to notice that while composing songs in foreign melodies for his lyric-plays. Since then, it has been his advantage to make extensive use of India’s ancient musical resources in composing music. The pace of Hindi classical songs composed in *Chautal* is slow and the nature is serious. There is no excitement in these songs as they are calm and conducive to sublime worship. While singing, the singers have to keep a close eye on the purity of the rhythm-structure. The traditional style of this rhythm is to express each melody clearly upon the words. *Kheyal* was closely related to the *Dhrupads* in the early period. Rabindranath’s songs of serious nature express a sense of classical and primitive depth and seriousness; he composed almost all the songs of slow and serious nature in the rhythm of *Chautal*, *Dhamar*, *Dhima-Tetala* and *Ektala* in the style of classical songs.

In *Jhamp-tal* and *Teora-tal*, used in the ancient classical songs, the expression of excitement or joy suddenly moves up and down with some gaps in the rhythm-structure. Rabindranath has used these rhythms in his own songs and his style of arranging the melody is the same. *Kheyal* is the rhythm of restless joy. Particularly the fast-paced *Kheyal* makes the listener’s mind flutter with joy. Such a lively joy can also be observed in the Bengali songs composed in this rhythm by Rabindranath. Classical Hindi or Bengali *Tappa* rhythm is not so apt for expressing serious or deep feelings, it is more suitable for expressing the sadness of separation. Whenever Rabindranath composed Bengali songs following the ancient *Tappa-gaan*, the emotion of separation or melancholy was expressed in it. There is no hint of excitement in the rhythmic pace of the *Tappa* songs.

In this way he used the Indian musical resources in various ways while composing his songs. Judging from the collection of songs composed by Rabindranath, it can be seen that while composing songs expressing serious, provocative, joyful or sad emotions, he arranged the melodies according to the classical pattern, even with the help of foreign impacts. We find the successful combination of these two countries’ thoughts in his dance-dramas written in the last decade of his life. In those, according to the idea of the

lyrics, the rhythm, the breakage, and the melodies have all arrived at a juncture. Many songs were also composed in the pattern of conversations, such as: “কৃষ্ণকলি আমি তরেই বলি”, “তুমি কি কেবলি ছবি”, “তবু মনে রেখো”, “কাঙাল আমারে কাঙাল করেছ” and “এস হে বন্ধু ফিরে এস”. The way in which Rabindranath paved the path for the liberation of Indian music with his efficiency, cannot be called just an imitation of European music-thoughts, rather it can be seen as a harmonious amalgamation.

5.3. The performer and the performance of Rabindra Sangeet

In 19th century Bengal, the practice of music was still stuck in the desires of Babu and Bibi and in the inter-connection between worship and love. In the later part of that century, a newness was welcomed in the domains of art, literature and culture. Jyotirindranath of Thakurbari, at this time, was seen to be very enthusiastic about music as well as drama. Plays like ‘Sarojini’ or ‘Chitour Akromon’ by him, came into existence. His younger brother Rabindranath made his debut in this connection during 1875, at an age of 14 years only. The playwright states in this regard:

রাজপুত মহিলাদের চিতাপ্রবেশের যে একটা দৃশ্য আছে, তাহাতে পূর্বে আমি গদ্যে একটা বক্তৃতা রচনা করিয়াছিলাম। যখন ঐ স্থানটা পড়িয়া প্রফ দেখা হইতেছিল, তখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ পাশের ঘরে পড়াশুনা বন্ধ করিয়া চুপ করিয়া বসিয়া বসিয়া শুনিতেছিলেন। গদ্য-রচনাটি এখানে একেবারেই খাপ খায় নাই বুঝিয়া, কিশোর রবি একেবারে আমাদের ঘরে আসিয়া হাজির। তিনি বলিলেন: এখানে পদ্যরচনা ছাড়া কিছুতেই জোর বাঁধিতে পারে না। প্রস্তাবটা আমি উপেক্ষা করিতে পারিলাম না। কিন্তু এখন আর সময় কৈ? আমি সময়ভাবের আপত্তি উত্থাপন করিলে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেই বক্তৃতাটির পরিবর্তে একটা গান রচনা করিয়া দিবার ভার লইলেন, এবং তখনই খুব অল্পসময়ের মধ্যেই.....গানটি রচনা করিয়া আনিয়া আমাদের চমৎকৃত করিয়া দিলেন। গানটি ছিল:

জ্বল জ্বল চিতা! দ্বিগুণ, দ্বিগুণ,

পর্যাপ-সঁপিবে বিধবা-বাল্য।

জ্বলুক জ্বলুক চিতার আগুন

জুড়াবে এখনি প্রাণের জ্বালা।

শোন্, রে যবন! শোন্ রে তোরা!

যে জ্বালা হৃদয়ে জ্বালালি সবে,
সাক্ষী রলেন দেবতা তার
এর প্রতিফল ভুগিতে হবে।¹⁴⁵

Rabindranath's composition became an accompaniment of the melodious dialogues, created by Jyotirindranath. It is as if Rabindranath came, saw and conquered the culture and society of Bengal through this song and that was only the beginning. Even before this, Rabindranath had to enter the realm of rhythms and melodies when he was tasked by his tutor Gyan Chandra Bhattacharya to translate Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Bengali. His expertise in rhythm-construction was evident from his translations of the songs of the witches in *Macbeth*:

*Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble,
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting.
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing
For a charm of pow'rful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.*

The translation done by a 13-year-old Rabindranath was as alive as the original:

দ্বিগুণ দ্বিগুণ দ্বিগুণ খেটে
কাজ সাধি আয় সবাই জুটে।
দ্বিগুণ দ্বিগুণ জ্বলরে আগুন
ওঠরে কড়া দ্বিগুণ ফুটে।
জলার সাপের মাংস নিয়ে
সিদ্ধ কর কড়ায় দিয়ে।
গির্গিটি-চোক ব্যাঙ্গের পা,
টিকটিকি ঠ্যাং, পাঁচার ছা।
কুত্তোর জিব, বাদুড় রোয়াঁ
সাপের জিব আর গুওর শোঁয়া

¹⁴⁵ চট্টোপাধ্যায়, বসন্তকুমার । জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথের জীবনস্মৃতি । কলকাতা: শিশির-পাবলিশিং হাউস । ১৯১৯, ১৪৭ ।

শক্ত ওষুধ কোরতে হবে

টগবগিয়ে ফোটাই তবে।

The stage success of ‘Sarojini’ carried ‘promotion’ for young Rabindranath, Jyotirindranath says:

‘সরোজিনী’ প্রকাশের পর হইতেই, আমরা রবিকে প্রমোশন দিয়া আমাদের সম-শ্রেণীতে উঠাইয়া লইলাম।

এখন হইতে সঙ্গীত ও সাহিত্যচর্চাতে আমরা হইলাম তিনজন— অক্ষয় (চৌধুরী), রবি ও আমি।¹⁴⁶

The next thing which followed was the acting lessons with Jyoti-dada. In the second half of 1877, a play titled ‘এমন কর্ম আর করব না’ was enacted in Jorasanko Thakurbari. Jyotirindranath was the playwright as well as the director and the role of the hero ‘Alikbabu’ was played by 16-year-old Rabindranath himself:

নাট্যমঞ্চ সাধারণের সমক্ষে প্রকাশ হইবার পূর্বে জ্যোতিদাদার ‘এমন কর্ম আর করব না’ গ্রহসনে আমি অলীকবাবু সাজিয়াছিলাম। সেই আমার প্রথম অভিনয়। তখন নবযৌবনের নব নব উদ্যম নূতন কৌতূহলের পথ ধরিয়া ধাবিত হইতেছে; তখন সকল জিনিসই পরীক্ষা করিয়া দেখিতে চাই...তখন লিখিতেছি, গাহিতেছি, অভিনয় করিতেছি, নিজেকে সকল দিকেই প্রচুরভাবে ঢালিয়া দিতেছি...সেদিন এই-যে আমার শক্তিকে এমন দুর্দম উৎসাহে দৌড় করাইয়াছিলেন, তাহার সারথি ছিলেন জ্যোতিদাদা।¹⁴⁷

17-year-old Rabindranath had his first trip to Europe with ‘Mej-da’ Satyendranath. During this period, he wrote the poem ‘ভগ্নহৃদয়’, which had a sensation—very much attached to drama; so he wrote:

এই কাব্যটিকে কেহ যেন নাটক মনে না করেন। নাটক ফুলের গাছ। তাহাতে ফুল ফুটে বটে, কিন্তু সেই সঙ্গে মূল, কাণ্ড, শাখা, পত্র, এমনকি কাঁটাটি পর্যন্ত থাকি চাই।¹⁴⁸

Instead of completing his law course, he returned to his own country by befriending literature and music. At that time in Calcutta, apart from conventional stage-dramas and *jatra*, many dramas in the forms of ‘opera’, ‘geetika’, ‘geetabhinoy’ and ‘geetinatya’

¹⁴⁶ চট্টোপাধ্যায়, বসন্তকুমার। *জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথের জীবনস্মৃতি*। কলকাতা: শিশির-পাবলিশিং হাউস। ১৯১৯, ১৫১।

¹⁴⁷ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *জীবনস্মৃতি*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৯৪১।

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

were performed on the stage. The migratory influence of contemporary Italian opera in those drama-performances cannot be denied. Somewhere there was an abundance of songs and somewhere there was a complete expansion of songs throughout the drama. Rabindranath performed in the role of *Madan*, whereas Jyotirindranath was *Basanta* for the lyric-drama ‘Maanmoyi’. Besides the acting practices, Rabindranath started indulging himself in the literary compositions. In 1881 ‘Balmiki Pratibha’ was performed as a lyric-drama, where the dialogues were crafted with songs:

আইরিশ মেলডীজ্ বিলাতে গিয়া কতকগুলি শুনলাম ও শিখিলাম কিন্তু আগাগোড়া সব গানগুলি সম্পূর্ণ করিবার ইচ্ছা আর রহিল না। অনেকগুলি সুর মিষ্ট এবং করুণ এবং সরল, কিন্তু তবু তাহাতে আয়ারল্যান্ডের প্রাচীন কবিসভার নীরব বীণা তেমন করিয়া যোগ দিল না।...এই দেশী ও বিলাতী সুরের চর্চার মধ্যে বাল্মীকি-প্রতিভার জন্ম হইল। ইহার সুরগুলি অধিকাংশই দিশি, কিন্তু গীতি-নাট্যে তাহাকে তাহার বৈঠকি মর্যাদা হইতে অন্য ক্ষেত্রে বাহির করিয়া আনা হইয়াছে, বাল্মীকি প্রতিভার অনেকগুলি গান বৈঠকি গান ভাঙা, অনেকগুলি জ্যোতিদাদার রচিত গতের সুরে—এবং গুটিতিনেক গান বিলাতী সুর হইতে লওয়া। বস্তুত, বাল্মীকি প্রতিভা পাঠযোগ্য কাব্যগ্রন্থ নহে—ইহা সঙ্গীতের একটা নতুন পরীক্ষা-যুরোপীয় ভাষায় যাহাকে অপেরা বলে বাল্মীকি প্রতিভা তাহা নহে — ইহা সুরে নাটিকা; অর্থাৎ সঙ্গীত ইহার মধ্যে প্রাধান্য লাভ করে নাই, ইহার নাট্যবিষয়টাকে সুর করিয়া অভিনয় করা হয় মাত্র—স্বতন্ত্র সঙ্গীতের মাধুর্য ইহার অতি অল্প হলেই আছে।¹⁴⁹

The song of the forest goddesses for the captive girl:

মরি ও কাহার বাছা, ওকে কোথায় নিয়ে যায়

আহা, ঐ করুণ চোখে ও কাহার পানে চায়....

— was composed in the Irish melody:

Go where glory waits thee

But while fame elates thee.

Oh! still remember me.

The resemblance is not in the language, but in the melody. Although the lyricist of the song is Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, but the melody follows the ancient Irish song ‘Maid of the Valley’. Similarly, the sailor’s song ‘Nancy Lee’, composed in 1876, became a song of praise for the bandits. Here also, the similarity lies in the melody itself:

*Of all the wives as e'er you know,
yeo ho! lads! ho! yeo ho! yeo ho!*

¹⁴⁹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *জীবনস্মৃতি* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৪১ ।

*There's none like Nancy Lee, I trow.
yeo o! Lads! I have! yeo ho! yeo ho!*

In Rabindranath's composition it became:

কালী কালী বলো রে আজ
বলো হো, হো হো, বলো হো হো হো, বলো হো!
নামের জেরে সাধিব কাজ—
বলো হো হো হো, বলো হো, বলো হো!

In Rabindranath's perception:

“গীতিনাটো, যাহা আদ্যোপান্ত সুরে অভিনয় করিতে হয় তাহাতে, স্থান-বিশেষ তাল না থাকা বিশেষ আবশ্যিক। নহিলে অভিনয়ের স্ফূর্তি হওয়া অসম্ভব।”¹⁵⁰

So he composed a woman's cry-song:

হায়, কী দশা হল আমার
কোথা গো মা করুণাময়ী, অরণ্যে প্রাণ যায় গো।

— based on a Persian song, sourced from father Debendranath:

হাল মে রবে রবা
তু আপনে ফজল করি, দমমে রবসাঁই।

Rabindranath, in favour of this modification, stated in his essay ‘সংগীত ও ভাব’:

আমরা যখন রোদন করি তখন দুইটি পাশাপাশি সুরের মধ্যে ব্যবধান অতি অল্পই থাকে, রোদনে স্বর প্রত্যেক কোমল সুরের উপর দিয়া গড়াইয়া যায়, সুর অত্যন্ত টানা হয়। আমরা যখন হাসি—হাঃ হাঃ হাঃ হাঃ, কোমল সুর একটিও লাগে না, টানা স্বর একটিও নাই, পাশাপাশি সুরের মধ্যে দূর ব্যবধান, আর তালের ঝাঁকে ঝাঁকে সুর লাগে। দুঃখে রাগিনী দুঃখের রজনীর ন্যায় অতি ধীরে ধীরে চলে, তাহাতে প্রতি কোমল সুরের উপর দিয়া যাইতে হয়। আর সুখের রাগিনী সুখের দিবসের ন্যায় অতি দ্রুত পদক্ষেপে চলে, দুই তিনটা করিয়া সুর ডিঙাইয়া যায়। তাল ও ভাব প্রকাশের একটা অঙ্গ। অতএব ভাবের পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তালও দ্রুত ও বিলম্বিত করা আবশ্যিক...ভাব প্রকাশকে মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য করিয়া সুর ও তালকে গৌণ উদ্দেশ্য করিলেই ভালো হয়।¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

¹⁵¹ Ibid

In the lyric-drama ‘Mayar Khela’, we see that the dependence on the theme has become more prominent and important than the dependence on story-line. The main current of this drama is the contrast of human-love and universal-love. Drama is not about any event or character, but about human feelings, emotions and human conflict as a whole. The dialogues have attained certain lyrical aspects:

তাই এত হায় হায় ।
প্রমে সুখ দুখ ভুলে তবে সুখ পায় ।
সখী, চলো, গেল নিশি, স্বপন ফুরালো,
মিছে আর কেন বলো ।
শশী যুমের কুহক নিয়ে গেল অস্তাচল ।
সখী, চলো ।
প্রেমের কাহিনী গান হয়ে গেল অবসান ।
এখন কেহ হাসে, কেহ বসে ফেলে অশ্রুজল ।

Whereas, in the case of ‘প্রকৃতির প্রতিশোধ’, written in 1884, it cannot be said that the use of music has met the demand of drama in all aspects. However, the songs of the peasant group are undoubtedly a unique addition in contemporary Bengali drama:

হেদে গো নন্দরানী
আমাদের শ্যামকে ছেড়ে দাও ।
আমরা রাখাল বালক দাঁড়িয়ে দ্বারে,
আমাদের শ্যামকে দিয়ে যাও ।
হেরো গো প্রভাত হল, সূর্যি উঠে,
ফুল ফুটেছে বনে—
আমরা শ্যামকে নিয়ে গোষ্ঠে যাব
আজ করেছি মনে ।

In poet’s own words: ‘গানটি একটি ছবি, যার রস নাট্যরস’. Keeping this in mind, Rabindranath composed dramas like ‘রাজা ও রাণী’ in the format of verse-dialogues. The drama revolves around the love story of Kumar Sen and Ila. The songs of this drama are mainly sung as part of the sub-plot. However, the song of Ila’s self-dedication became popular among the masses, which was composed in the heightened speech:

আমি নিশিদিন তোমায় ভালোবাসি

তুমি অবসরমত বাসিয়ো।

আমি নিশিদিন হেথায় বসে আছি।

তোমার যখন মনে পড়ে আসিয়ো।

Rabindranath's superiority in the domain of lyric-play was established through the composition of 'বিসর্জন'. The hero Jayasingha is orphaned, raised in the temple under the auspices of Raghupati. His heart is filled with devotion to the goddess and faith in his guru. But when Raghupati persuaded him to kill his brother to keep his glory intact, conflict arose in his mind:

.... তুমি

সত্য, গুরুদেব, তোমারি আদেশ সত্য—

সত্যপথ তোমারি ইঙ্গিত মুখে। হত্যা

পাপ নহে, ভ্রাতৃহত্যা পাপ নহে, নহে

পাপ রাজহত্যা!

Rabindranath matched the melody of *Kirtan* in the essence of *Baul* for portraying the mental state of the protagonist:

আমারে কে নিবি ভাই সাঁপিতে চাই আপনারে

আমার এই মন গলিয়ে কাজ ভুলিয়ে সঙ্গে তোদের নিয়ে যারে।

তোরা কোন্ রূপের হাটে চলেছিস্ ভবের বাটে,

পিছিয়ে আছি আমি আপন ভারে—

তোদের ওই হাসিখুশি দিবানিশি দেখে মন কেমন করে।

According to Rabindranath—'সৃষ্টির গভীরতার মধ্যে যে একটি বিশ্বব্যাপী প্রাণকম্পন চলছে, গান শুনে সেইটেরই বেদনাবেগ যেন আমরা চিত্তের মধ্যে অনুভব করি।'¹⁵² And this very thought was prominently felt in the songs, composed by him during late 19th century:

হৃদয়বাসনা পূর্ণ হল আজি মম পূর্ণ হল,

শুন সবে জগতজনে।

¹⁵² ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । সংগীতচিন্তা । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

কী হেরিনু শোভা, নিখিলভুবননাথ

চিত্ত-মাবে বসি স্থির আসনে।

In Shantiniketan, however, music was practiced in a completely different way. Rabindranath, just after composing a new song, immediately taught that to Dinendranath; and Dinendranath used to teach that song to the pupils including the children of Shantiniketan in the evenings, in the 'Binodan' period. Often Rabindranath himself used to stay there, listen to songs, and teach new songs to everyone. There were students of different natures in that huge group. Most had no education in music. Not everyone had that melodious voice. People from other provinces also attended such classes. Some of them have learned Bengali language, some of them have started learning, none of them were perfect in pronunciation and singing style. But neither Rabindranath nor Dinendranath ever forbade any of them to join the class as they were eager to learn Rabindra Sangeet. In this regard, Pandit Bhimrao Shastri can be mentioned. He was from Maharashtra, a Sanskrit scholar. He was equally proficient in playing *Dhrupad-Dhamar*, *Kheyal*, *Tappa* etc. as well as playing *Tabla* and *Pakhawaj*. He was appointed as a professor of Hindi-Sangeet for the students of Shantiniketan. He started learning Bengali language and Rabindranath's songs with great devotion and he used to sing solo songs in many festivals. He also created the notation of many of the songs. From 1896, Shyam Bhattacharya was employed to sing religious songs composed by Rabindranath in the morning and evening at Shantiniketan. The manner in which he sang those religious songs was very different from the conventional notation, but Rabindranath never asked him to follow the proper notation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, professional singers of that time started recording Rabindranath's songs. Those artists did not always follow the exact notations while singing. Almost all the artists sang Rabindra Sangeet in their own style. Rabindranath himself has heard many of those recorded songs, and for a long time he did not say anything to the authorities of the record company. After the formation and establishment of Visva-Bharati in 1926, Rabindranath gave close attention to this matter and instructed to stop selling old records, which were not sung according to the proper notation. It was decided with the company that whoever sings those songs, should learn the song properly with proper notation and rhythm. Since then, many record-artists have tried to learn and sing Rabindranath's songs in the proper manner, and he has also generously allowed

their records to be marketed. As a testament to this generosity, a few renowned artists can be mentioned, who got Rabindranath's approval for recording their songs, such as Kundan Saigal, Kanandevi, Pankaj Mullick, K. C. Dey, Niharbala, Shanta Apte, Renuka Dasgupta, Radharani etc. Rabindranath never doubted whether Rabindra Sangeet in their voices was appropriate or not.

Dr. Arnold Bake, a foreign music scholar, spent many years in Shantiniketan (1925 to 1934), learning many songs from Dinendranath, and composing notations of many songs. He always used to sing Rabindranath's songs along with a piano, in his European voice, with his European accent. He sang many songs in Shantiniketan and in Calcutta and in many other cities of India.

There is a lot of debate about who will sing Rabindranath's song or who has the right to sing so. A special genre of song called "Pure (Bishuddha) Rabindra Sangeet" can be often heard. The preachers of "Pure Rabindra Sangeet" believe that a specific form of singing should be followed for such songs. They think that it is different from the singing style of Hindi songs or any other Bengali songs, so to say. Its varieties are completely different. They also project that if different types of singers sing Rabindra Sangeet, the genre of Rabindra Sangeet will lose its uniqueness. But in the words of the poet himself, we can see a different connotation altogether:

I do not hesitate to say that my songs have found their place in the heart of my land, along with her flowers that are never exhausted, and that the folk of the future, in days of joy or sorrow or festival, will have to sing them.

...আমার গান বাঙালী জাতিকে নিতেই হবে, আমার গান গাইতেই হবে সকলকে, বাংলার ঘরে ঘরে, প্রান্তরে, নদীতীরে।¹⁵³

However, it is true that he wanted all the singers to pay attention to the mood of the song in the sense that he himself composed the songs, with the same enthusiasm or with the same passion. So, he had to say:

“একটু দরদ দিয়ে, রস দিয়ে গান শিখিয়ে। এইটেই আমার গানের বিশেষত্ব। তার উপর (দরদ, রস) যদি তোমরা স্টীম রোলার চালিয়ে দাও, আমার গান চ্যাপ্টা হয়ে যাবে।”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ দাস, প্রফুল্ল কুমার । *রবীন্দ্রসংগীত প্রসঙ্গ* । কলকাতা: জিজ্ঞাসা পাবলিকেশন । ১৯৬১ ।

¹⁵⁴ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬৭ ।

In other words, everyone will try to sing Rabindranath's songs, in need of their own happiness and sorrow. But just memorizing it like a pet bird will not do justice to it. The purpose will be to entertain the mind by singing the song itself. In this way, the audience will be satisfied with the ability to immerse themselves in the depth of the song.

Before Visva-Bharati was established, Rabindranath wrote:

‘বিশ্বভারতী যদি প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় তবে ভারতীয় সংগীত ও চিত্রকলা শিক্ষা তাহার প্রধান অঙ্গ হইবে—এই আমাদের সঙ্কল্প হউক।’¹⁵⁵

Earlier, he was able to transmit the practice of music in the life of the ashram. There were no specific music classes, but during the recreation period, the students used to practice various types of songs for worship and other gatherings. With the help of Rabindranath and Dinendranath, the students performed those songs on various occasions. Apart from various ceremonies at the ashram, students from Shantiniketan also went to sing at the Magh-festival in Kolkata. In 1916, the students of Shantiniketan sang in the choir performed by ‘Falguni’ of Calcutta. Its main purpose was:

শান্তিনিকেতনের বাইরের প্রান্তরশ্রী যেমন অগোচরে ছেলেদের মনকে তৈরী করে তোলে, তেমনি গানও জীবনকে সুন্দর করে গড়ে তোলবার একটা প্রধান উপাদান। ওরা যে সকলে গাইয়ে হয়ে উঠবে তা নয় কিন্তু ওদের আনন্দের একটা শক্তি বেড়ে যাবে, সেটাতে মানুষের কম লাভ নয়।¹⁵⁶

This is how music education was going on in Shantiniketan. Later, when Rabindranath was convinced that it was possible to teach music as a separate subject, he appointed Bhimrao Shastri to teach the students of Shantiniketan. Bhimrao Shastri regularly taught vocals and various *raga-raginis*. He had special arrangements for teaching the selected students in this class. In 1918, new thoughts started emerging regarding the school in Shantiniketan:

যেসকল বালকদের গলায় সুর আছে বা সুরবোধ আছে, তাহারা প্রতিদিন নির্দিষ্ট সময়ে সংগীত শিক্ষা করে। শ্রীযুক্ত ভীমরাও শাস্ত্রী ও শ্রীযুক্ত দিনেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয় কণ্ঠ ও যন্ত্রসংগীত শিক্ষা দিতেছেন। ইহাতে সাধারণ ছাত্রদের মধ্যে অনেক সুগায়ক হইতেছে। শ্রীযুক্ত ভীমরাও শাস্ত্রী মহাশয় যন্ত্রের সহিত রাগরাগিনী ও হিন্দীগান শিক্ষা দিয়াছেন। শ্রীযুক্ত

¹⁵⁵ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬৭ ।

¹⁵⁶ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩, ৪২-৪৩ ।

দিনেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয় অতিশয় যত্নের সহিত গুরুদেবের গান ও এস্রাজ প্রভৃতি বাদ্য সুনিপুণভাবে শিক্ষা দিয়া আশ্রমের সংগীতচর্চা ভরপুর করিয়া রাখিয়াছেন।¹⁵⁷

Visva-Bharati was established in 1921. In the initial account history, we see six students in the music department. By the following year, the music department had Bhimrao Shastri— teaching Veena, Mridanga and Hindi songs, Dinendranath Tagore—teaching Bangla songs and Nakuleshwar Goswami teaching Esraj and other songs. There were 12 male students and 10 female students at that time. From the record, it can be seen:

ছাত্রগণ ভৈরব, ভৈরবী, টৌড়ী, আসোয়ারী ইত্যাদি অনেক রাগ-রাগিণী অভ্যাস করিয়াছে। ছাত্ররা যেসমস্ত গান শিখিয়াছে তাহাদের প্রায় সকলকেই স্বরলিপি শেখান হইয়াছে। মৃদঙ্গ, তবলা ও বীণার ছাত্ররাও উন্নতি করিয়াছে। শ্রীযুক্ত দিনেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের নিকট যেসকল ছাত্র বাঙলা গান ও শ্রীযুক্ত নকুলেশ্বর গোস্বামীর নিকট যাহারা এস্রাজ শিক্ষা করে তাহাদেরও উন্নতি প্রশংসনীয় ও সন্তোষপ্রদ।¹⁵⁸

In the meantime, the first syllabus of Visva-Bharati has been published. Shortly after the publication of the syllabus, the second syllabus was published in a modified form. The course of Music, too, was of six years, three years being for general efficiency and three years for higher proficiency. Lessons were given in classical Indian Music as well as in Rabindranath's songs. For a comparative study, Western Music was also taught in a general manner and lessons in instrumental music were also given. A few students were found in the music department from the school. But the most important thing was the inclusion of Western music in the curriculum. At that time Rabindranath went to Europe and from there he wrote a few letters to Anadikumar Dastidar, the first student and professor in the department of music:

অন্যান্য সকল বিষয়ের চেয়ে সংগীতশিক্ষাই তোমার প্রধান বিষয়। বিশ্বভারতীর একটি প্রধান অঙ্গ সংগীতবিদ্যা। তুমি যদি এই বিদ্যায় পারদর্শিতা লাভ কর তা হলে আমি আনন্দলাভ করব এবং বিশ্বভারতীর পক্ষে সে একটা গৌরবের বিষয় হবে। পণ্ডিতজি, দিনু এবং নকুলেশ্বরের কাছ থেকে কণ্ঠসংগীত তুমি অভ্যাস করো—সংগীতের অবকাশে অন্যান্য বিদ্যায় হাত দিতে পার কিন্তু ঐটির প্রতিই বিশেষভাবে তোমাকে মন দিতে হবে। প্রতি মাসে ১৫টি করে গান শিখতেই হবে এমন একটা পণ করে রেখো। তাছাড়া স্বরলিপি তোমার এমন অভ্যাস করা কর্তব্য যে বই পড়ার মতো স্বরলিপি

¹⁵⁷ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩, ৫১ ।

¹⁵⁸ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬৭ ।

থেকে যাতে গান গাইতে পার। অর্থাৎ প্রতিদিনই কিছু কিছু স্বরলিপি তোমাকে অভ্যাস করতে হবে। আর একটি কাজ কোরো—দিনুর কাছ থেকে ইংরেজি সংগীতের staff-notation ও শিখে নিয়ো। ঐ নোটেশনই সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ এবং ভারতবর্ষের সংগীতকে বিশ্বের কাছে পরিচিত করবার জন্য ঐ নোটেশনের দরকার হবে। অনতিদূরে ভবিষ্যতে যুরোপীয় সংগীতে পারদর্শী কোনো যুরোপীয় ওস্তাদকে আমাদের বিশ্বভারতীর জন্য সংগ্রহ করব এ আমার মনে আছে। ইতিমধ্যে তুমি আমাদের প্রাচ্য সংগীত যথাসম্ভব অভ্যাস ও আয়ত্ত করে নিয়ো। ভবিষ্যতে পাশ্চাত্য সংগীতেও তোমাকে প্রবেশলাভ করতে হবে— তার পরে তুমি আমাদের বিশ্বভারতীতে একদা সংগীতাচার্য হবে। এই আমার মনে আছে। স্বরলিপি যদি তোমার আয়ত্ত হয় তাহলে ভারতবর্ষের নানা প্রদেশ থেকে লৌকিক সংগীত তুমি সংগ্রহ করে আনতে পারবে—সেই একটি মস্ত বড়ো কাজ আমাদের সামনে রয়েছে, এই কাজের ভার তুমি নেবে বলে সঙ্কল্প কর।¹⁵⁹

From this letter, it can be easily seen exactly how his thoughts on music education and teaching were taking shape. In 1921, Rabindranath accepted the system of examinations, certificates and degrees in the newly formed Visva-Bharati. Music and dance education has been taught through classes since school days, considering the need for general festivals. In 1934, Sangeet Bhavan was separated from Kala Bhavan and made a completely separate division. From then on, students started enrolling for the sole purpose of learning vocal music, dance and instrumental music. And in 1936, for the first time, a syllabus of music and dance was required in Visva-Bharati and the number of enrolled students was 50. By this time, the practice of Sangeet in music schools like Sangeet-Sangha or Sangeet-Sammilani had already begun in Kolkata, but it cannot be called academically, so to say. *Raga-sangeet* were generally taught there for performing on various occasions or festivals. And the curriculum of Rabindra Sangeet has been prepared, changed and expanded as per the demand of the time. Anadi Dastidar was the first person to take up Rabindra Sangeet as a profession and he was the first Rabindra Sangeet teacher outside the domain of Shantiniketan, after Rabindranath and Dinendranath. He also taught at music conventions. One of the main components of this teaching method was to give the melody of Rabindranath to others. This trend continued for a long time in and around Shantiniketan and it continues even today. Within a few years, a considerable number of young people have made a living from Rabindra Sangeet and with the advent of professionalism, there is a necessity for in-depth examination of the concept Rabindra Sangeet as a whole. If we do not know the life of Rabindranath as well as the evolution of his music composition, it is quite impossible to evaluate

¹⁵⁹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬৭ ।

Rabindranath's music properly. But then again, the concept of Rabindra Sangeet education has come a long way since the beginning. So nowadays one doesn't have to memorize the melody of a few songs. Just as all students need to be aware of the language and form of music, they also need to be more proficient than before in the use of musical variations and ornamentations. Along with this, in judging and analyzing the background of Rabindranath's songs, it is necessary to take a thorough look at the lyric genres of the contemporary and pre-Rabindra era. Many people of earlier days were not familiar enough with other Bengali songs. Dinendranath knew various Bengali songs and Dwijendranath was an accomplished singer of humorous songs. There is no lack of evidence that Rabindranath himself used to sing songs of different genres. The teaching method of Rabindra Sangeet has undoubtedly changed so much with time. One the chief medium of instruction was 'Tanpura' in the early years, but that has been shifted to harmonium in order to maintain the balance with the age. But the question remains, can artists be created? It is possible to develop innate talent by teaching music and awakening artistry. That is the limit of teachers' teaching duties. Admittedly, the approach to Rabindra Sangeet education has changed in modern times, but it is never true that it has not progressed. The way in which the practice and education of Rabindra Sangeet has progressed in the present social and economic conditions is significant.

আমার গান আমার আপন মনের গান, তাতে আনন্দ পাই, শুনলে আনন্দ হয়। এই সুরগুলি কারো কাছে ধার করা নয়। কোথা থেকে এসেছে বলতে পারিনে। কিছু বাছবিচার, ভয়ডর নেই। আপনার ইচ্ছামতো গলায় এসেছে—গেয়েছি; গান হয়ে উঠেছে। তাই ফিরে শুনি যখন বিস্মিত হই এবং আমি নিজেকে বলি—তোমার গান রইল, এ আর কাল অপহরণ করতে পারবে না।¹⁶⁰

Rabindranath had a firm belief in his mind about his songs and melodies which were not merely emotional. His faith deepened in the course of his life and so, he did not forget to mention it again and again in various contexts. The truth of this belief is no longer awaiting proof today. Composers had no special presence in Indian music then, the artist was himself the composer. The artist wanders as he pleases in the rhythm of a certain melody. But in Western music, the artist is only the presenter for the composer. By agreeing with Satyajit Ray in this regard, we can say that Rabindranath did not fulfil at

¹⁶⁰ চন্দ, রাণী। *আলাপচারী-রবীন্দ্রনাথ*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ১৯৪২।

least one of the responsibilities of a composer. He did not give any clear instructions regarding the accompaniment of his song. There is no definite indication of instrumentation. According to his own expectations, ‘এ গান ঘরের মাপুরী পাওয়ার জন্য, বাইরের মধ্যে হাততালি পাবার জন্যে নয়।’—but things have turned the other way round these days. From the historical view-point, different instruments like piano, mouth-organ, harmonium, esraj, harp, flute etc. have been played with Rabindranath’s songs at different times only as accompaniment. All these instruments are mainly followed by the original melody. Among the percussion instruments used for rhythm are pakhawaz, tabla, khol and mandira. This trend continues even today. It seems that during Rabindranath’s lifetime, his songs did not feel the need to be associated with instruments. Songs have been composed mainly as part of students’ education. Rabindranath had to compose innumerable songs on the occasion of various festivals and plays and for *upasana* or worship. Those songs have spread to the horizon from the domain of the ashram and in many cases has become ‘ঘরের মধ্যে মাপুরী পাওয়ার গান’—fulfilling Rabindranath’s expectations. The way Rabindranath’s songs were widely circulated after his death, was not the case during his lifetime. Today, Rabindranath’s songs are the livelihood of many and the task of widespread promotion, that took place in the courtesy of the media, was quite unthinkable for Rabindranath himself. So, the difference between the environment of Rabindranath’s song in Shantiniketan and the external environment has now diminished a lot. Overall, the need for the instrumentation of Rabindra Sangeet has increased a lot. It is important to note that the contribution of Indian classical music to the original inspiration for the creation of Rabindra Sangeet is first and foremost. Besides, there is Bengali *Kirtan* and *Baul*, songs from other provinces of India or some hints of western music—the process of formation is captured in his diverse creations. In the case of classical music, we see that the accompaniment of the sarangi or harmonium is mainly followed by the singer. In order to consider how essential the instrumental accompaniment is in Rabindranath’s songs, it is necessary to be in tune with the form of Rabindra Sangeet. The structure of each of Rabindranath’s songs is fixed. There are no gaps to fill in most of the compositions; so, one of the two tasks that can be done is to select the appropriate instrument to follow the main melody; and arrangements can be made only to fill the gap during the pause. In the case of Rabindra Sangeet, harmonium, esraj and violin are the most used instruments today. The character of the harmonium is completely unique. The melody inbuilt in this instrument helps the singer a lot during

the performance. It is necessary to mention here an overview of Shantidev Ghosh in this regard. He writes:

১৯৩৯ সালে ভারতের কিছু সংগীতপ্রেমী আকাশবাণীর যাবতীয় কণ্ঠসংগীতের কর্মসূচী থেকে হারমোনিয়ম যন্ত্রটির ব্যবহার সম্পূর্ণ নিষিদ্ধ করবার জন্য একটি আন্দোলন তোলেন। কিন্তু এর বিরুদ্ধে প্রবল প্রতিবাদও উঠেছিল। তখনকার খ্যাতনামা বেশ কিছু উচ্চাঙ্গ সংগীতের প্রখ্যাত performing শিল্পী, এর প্রতিবাদ করেন। এইরূপ পরস্পরবিরোধী আন্দোলনের সমস্যার মধ্যে পড়ে, দিল্লী আকাশবাণীর কর্তৃপক্ষ, বোধহয় Lionel Fedden বিব্রত হয়ে, কলকাতার আকাশবাণীর তৎকালীন অধ্যক্ষ অশোক সেনকে নির্দেশ দেন, বেতারে সব প্রকৃতির সঙ্গীতের সঙ্গে হারমোনিয়ম বর্জনের অনুকূলে গুরুদেবের সম্মতিসূচক একটি পত্রসংগ্রহ করতে। অশোক সেন তা পেয়েছিলেন।¹⁶¹

Whereas, Esraj, Dilruba or Violin occupy the most notable place as a follower-instrument, which simply follows the song, without any fixed form. One of Satyajit Ray's remarks in this regard seems particularly noteworthy:

আজকাল সংগীতের যে নিয়মটা রবীন্দ্রসংগীতে মানা হয় সেটা হল টানা-টানা সুরের গানে টানা সুরের যন্ত্র ব্যবহার—তা এম্রাজই হোক, বা বাঁশিই হোক, বা বেহলাই হোক। এ ছাড়া কোনো প্রচলিত নিয়ম চোখে পড়ে না। টানা গানের সঙ্গে যদি টানা যন্ত্রে তার পুনরাবৃত্তি হতে থাকে তা হলে সংগীত টটলজি-দোষে দুষ্ট হয়ে পড়ে।¹⁶²

More than focusing on the differentiation between domestic and foreign in the selection of instruments, one should be careful to keep the character of the song intact. It is appropriate to select instruments according to the requirements.

The way Rabindra Sangeet has been preserved in the world of Bengali music is incomparable. Rabindranath's songs have been preserved mainly through notation. The notations have different versions and it is uniquely marked. If all the songs had been sung by Rabindranath himself, it would have been possible to keep them as the standard format, and there would have been no room for argument regarding the singing style. Only a few songs have been able to capture that pattern, and there are some songs sung by Dinendranath Tagore which have not become popular among the masses. The uniqueness of the singing style of the two of them can be easily understood from those songs that are available. And there are some songs by some of the female artists who

¹⁶¹ ঘোষ, শান্তিদেব। *রবীন্দ্রসংগীত বিচিত্রা*। কলকাতা: আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড। ২০১৯।

¹⁶² রায়, সত্যজিৎ। 'রবীন্দ্রসঙ্গীতে ভাববার কথা'। *প্রবন্ধ সংগ্রহ*। সন্দীপ রায় (সম্পাদিত), কলকাতা: আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রা. লিমি.। ২০১৫।

have learned directly from Rabindranath, which are transmitted through gramophone records.

The notation of one of Rabindranath's earliest *Brahma-sangeet* – ‘আছ অন্তরে চিরদিন, তবু কেন কাঁদি’— was published in 1926, where the main rhythm followed was *Kafi* along with *Chautaal*. But within a few years, this song has been performed in a free-rhythm structure. The singing style became softer and the prescribed depth of prayer was lightened. The exact opposite happened in another song. A song from the play ‘Prayashchitta’ titled—‘ও যে মানে না মানা’ initially was composed in *Bhairabi / Qawali* rhythm, but in later performances the rhyme-scheme, melody and the pace of the same song has been changed in such a way, that it seemed to have lost its original essence. Another thing that is often heard is about the ‘Gayaki’ or the way of singing. In the case of Indian classical music, ‘Gayaki’ is probably referred to as the singing-style. If this is accepted, then how can it be established that there can be only a single singing-style of Rabindra Sangeet? The question arises, is the singing-style of the creator himself and the followers of all his songs can be exactly the same? Is Sahana Devi, Amala Das, Amita Sen, Kanak Biswas, Malati Ghoshal etc. singers sing in the exact same style? The way in which Shantidev Ghosh, Samaresh Chowdhury or Rama Kar sing, are quite different from each-other. Or for that matter, the same songs sung by Subinoy Roy, Suchitra Mitra, Rajeshwari Dutta, Debabrata Biswas or Kanika Bandopadhyay are not the same where singing-style is concerned. Just as the melody of a song has a notation, each person has a unique technique to express their feelings which differs from one to the other and that uniqueness is expressed in Rabindranath's songs while performing. That is when the question arises about the readability of the poetic form of the songs. The readability of these songs is much higher than other Bengali songs and it can still make an impact on modern minds. There is a clear explanation of this in the words of Rabindranath. He says:

কবিতায় আছে অগীত সংগীত, তার সীমানায় যদি গীত-সংগীতের ব্যবধান অলঙ্ঘ্য হয় তা হলে তো স্বভাবতই গানের সৃষ্টি হতে পারে না। গানে যে আলো মনের মধ্যে বিছিয়ে যায় তার মধ্যে আছে এই দিব্যবোধ যে, যা পাবার নয় তাকেই পেলাম আপন করে। এই বোধ যে, জীবনের হাজারও অবাত্তর সংঘর্ষ হানাহানি তর্কাতর্কি এসবের তুলনায় বাহ্য—এই হল সারবস্তু, কেন-না এ হল আনন্দলোকের বস্তু, যে জৈব লীলার আদিম উৎস। প্রকাশ লীলার গান কিনা সবচেয়ে সূক্ষ্ম - ethereal - তাই তো অপরের স্বীকৃতির স্থূলতার অপেক্ষা রাখে না। শুধু তাই নয়, নিজের হৃদয়ের বাণীকে সে রাঙিয়ে

তোলে সুরে। যেমন, ধরো যখন ভালোবাসার গান গাই তখন পাই শুধু গানের আনন্দকেই না; ভালোবাসার উপলক্ষিকেও মেলে এমন এক নৈশ্চিত্যের মধ্যে দিয়ে যে, মন বলে পেয়েছি তাকে যে অধরা, যে আলোকবাসী।¹⁶³

From this, it is not so difficult to understand that these songs are meant for every individual –songs of a solitary soul. These songs are still equally alive and present, not because the feelings of the primitive instincts of man have been expressed, but also because these songs have become more habitual in our lives. The artists who perform Rabindra Sangeet not only indulge themselves to be in proper tune with the melody and rhythm, but also what they conceive is a unique sense of world-view, whose true nature is not comprehensible. One of the wonders of Rabindranath's songs is the integrated application of imagination. The Indian concept of rhetoric has been repeatedly associated with art or music. And Rabindranath's songs have carried such meaningful expressions throughout its journey:

শুধু তোমার বাণী নয় গো, হে বন্ধু, হে প্রিয়
মাঝে মাঝে প্রাণে তোমার/পরশখানি দিয়ে।

—This song has been sung like this from the day of its composition, but none has paid much attention to the emotional expression of the second line. Here is another example of a song:

[তারি বাণী দুহাত বাড়ায় শিশুর বেশে
আধো ভাষায়] ডাকে তোমার বুক এসে।

The repetition marked from the beginning is followed by the artists, without even realising the difference that it makes. In this regard, another point should be noted; there is a line in the song—‘ডেকো না আমারে ডেকো না’ as—আমার দুঃখ জোয়ারের জল শ্রোতে — most of the time during the song being sung, this line is performed as—‘আমার দুঃখজোয়ারের জলশ্রোতে’. Even those who can, are not aware of the huge difference that a single expression of ‘দুঃখ জোয়ার’ when mispronounced, can represent. Similar thing happens with the line *যে নৈরাশা গভীর অশ্রুজলে ডুবেছিল বিস্মরণের তলে* of the renowned song—‘মধ্যদিনের বিজন বাতায়নে’. Meanings can be distorted through the pace of the singing as well.

¹⁶³ দাস, প্রফুল্ল কুমার । *রবীন্দ্রসংগীত প্রসঙ্গ* । কলকাতা: জিজ্ঞাসা পাবলিকেশন । ১৯৬১ ।

Often we talk about an unsavoury combination between the words and melodies in Rabindra Sangeet. The poet himself said:

গীতরসের যে সঞ্চয় বাল্যকালে আমার চিত্তকে পূর্ণ করেছিল, স্বভাবতই তার গতি হল কোন্ মুখে তার প্রকাশ হল কোন্ রূপে, সেই কথাটি যখন চিন্তা করে দেখি, তখন তার থেকে বুঝতে পারি সংগীত সম্বন্ধে আমাদের দেশের প্রকৃতি কী।
...ছেলেবেলা থেকে গানের প্রতি আমার নিবিড় ভালোবাসা যখন আপনাকে ব্যক্ত করতে গেল, তখন অবিমিশ্র সংগীতের রূপ সে রচনা করলে না। সংগীতকে কাব্যের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে দিলে। কোন্টা বড়ো কোন্টা ছোটো বোঝা গেল না।¹⁶⁴

Rabindranath himself has made it clear that he equated music with poetry. Rabindranath did not want to compose *ragas* in any way, what he wanted was just to compose songs. Such excitement can be marked in Rabindranath's songs, which unveil the ever-new emotion within the structure of *raga-raginis*, and cherish the possibility of a new creation.

There are many songs of calm nature which are rich in melodic quality but in their expression, there are some instructions which are not able to express themselves without theatricality. For example—*ক্লান্ত যখন আত্মকলির কাল, মাধবী বারিল ভূমিতলে অবসন্ন*—it is doubtful whether the real appeal of this song will be captured if it is sung only by following the notation. There are some special qualities that require performance and which can only be embodied in the voice of the artist, it is difficult to find that image in the notation.

In fact, modern artists are following the ideology of this age, their style is not the same as the previous style. They like to keep their voices under control, in their opinion, the promotion of the song is bound to be pure only if the following of the notation is pure.

Let us witness a song in this context:

ও যে মানে না মানা

আখি ফিরাইলে বলে না, না, না।

যত বলি নাই রাতি মলিন হয়েছে বাতি

মুখপানে চেয়ে বলে না, না, না।

This song cannot be sung properly without having at least some knowledge about the *Tappa* or *Ar-Khemta* songs. All these were prevalent in Rabindranath's youth, therefore, he was quite familiar with those forms; But nowadays, though the artist tries his/her best

¹⁶⁴ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

to articulate the song, the intricate details of the song remain unreachable. On the other hand, when Rabindranath used to sing and compose, it was customary to use the voice and the pitch freely, there were some distinctive styles of decoration and the organization of the song had to be carefully considered. Many artists now condemn singing out loud as and many ornaments are considered by them to be obsolete or superfluous to this age. The object of art is such that it never becomes obsolete, one genre surrenders to another genre, but retains much of it. In the world of music too, from the time of Nidhubabu to Rabindranath, according to the sequential rules, a culture has been gradually advanced and surrendered for the waiting future. They could value, they had individuality and most of all self-confidence which kept their talents constantly on the lookout for new things. However, there were fortunate notations, the lion's share of which was recorded by an outstanding genius like Dinendranath, or it is doubtful whether this pattern of Rabindra Sangeet could have been found at all. The inner quarters of Rabindranath's songs draw us closer to a dichotomous world, with an oscillation between a sense of concealment from the outside and expansion from the inside:

একটা গানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন নিঃসংশয়ে বলেন—*একতারাতে একটি যে তার আপন-মনে সেইটি বাজা।* – তখন অন্য এক গানে প্রকাশ করেন এমন খণ্ডতা যে—*একতারাটির একটি তারে গানের বেদন বহিতে পারে।*

এখানে এই যে দুই গানে বিপরীত দুই বাণী ও উপলব্ধি তা কি বিরোধী? আসলে সাধকের দ্বিস্তর বোধহয় ফুটে উঠেছে দুই গানে। প্রথম গানে স্পষ্টত রয়েছে আত্মস্থ হয়ে একাগ্র হাতে বলা কিন্তু দ্বিতীয় গানে গানের বেদন কথাটি নতুন। জীবন যেখানে প্রকাশমান, আত্ম অবগুষ্ঠন খুলে যা মিলতে চায় বিশ্ব-বেদনায় সেই সৃজনের সংবেদে ভাঙতে হয় নিজেকেই।...এই অনুভবের ভরকেন্দ্র থেকে রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের জন্ম। নিজের একের সঙ্গে বিশ্বব্যাপী এককে মেলানো। বরং বলা চলে মেলাতে চাওয়ার আততি, মেলাতে না-পারার বেদনা, মেলানোর নিবিড় গভীরগোপন আনন্দ— এই-সব অনুসূক্ষ্ম বোধ রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর গানে ধরেছেন। বিরস-দিন বিরল কাজের অবকাশে সহসা প্রেম মহাসমারোহে এসে দরোজা ভাঙে। একেলা থাকার অলস মনকে বিধ্বস্ত ক'রে প্রেম সংযোগ সাধন করে বিশ্বব্যাপী বোধের সঙ্গে।...এ যদি হয় ক্ষুদ্রের বিস্তার বৃহত্তর অভিমুখে ও সংসর্গে, যদি বা তাকে রূপক দিয়ে বলি একতারায়ে সাতটি তার সংযোজন, তবে বিপরীতটাও সত্য হয়ে ওঠে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানে। বাহির পথে যে-হৃদয় বিবাগী হয়ে ঘুরে ঘুরে শুধুই ভ্রষ্টসঞ্চয়ের বোঝা বাড়ায়, জীবনের প্রবল তাপে যা কেবলই লবণ সমুদ্রের অতৃপ্তি জাগায়, তাকে কুড়িয়ে এনে জড়ো করা চাই আত্মস্থতায়, আপন মৌনে। কেননা 'না যদি রয় সাথি' কিংবা 'না যদি জ্বলে বাতি' তবু—তবু তো আছে আঁধার কোণে ধ্যানের ধনগুলি একেলা বসি আপন-মনে মুছিবি তার ধূলি।¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ চক্রবর্তী, সুধীর। *নির্জন এককের গান রবীন্দ্রসংগীত*। কলকাতা: আনন্দ। ১৪২৫।

During the days of ‘Balmiki Pratibha’, the young composer Rabindranath had a dream that music would one day be able to express all kinds of emotions like poetry, and would gain independence. ‘Balmiki-Prativa’, ‘Kalmrigaya’ were composed back-to-back with the joy of unravelling the bondage and exercising varied use of music. He wanted to capture the drama through the songs, he tied the strings of the drama in the thread of the songs. The release of the songs was accompanied by the idea of ‘Natyamukti’. But the compositions were mainly melodic dialogues, those cannot be called complete songs. In the lyric-drama ‘Mayar Khela’ all the songs were composed in a proper structure, but the strings of the songs and the knot of the ‘Natyasutra’ were not strong.

Twenty years later, a musical atmosphere has evolved from ‘Sharadotsab’ with the use of innumerable songs along with dialogues in his unique composition. A new structure of the play was being introduced. Now, beyond the limits of words, various theatrical meanings are expressed in the language of melody. The multiplicity of songs never stood in the way of drama; Rabindranath’s pursuit of creating a new theatrical language by combining dialogue and song, language of speech and language of melody has been going on for a long time. In the search for emancipation, the difference between dialogue and song is eliminated in the last stage of drama writing, through the form of dance-drama. At this time the poet wrote:

...আজও দেখতে পাই বাংলা সাহিত্যে গান যখন-তখন যেখানে-সেখানে অনাহত অনধিকারপ্রবেশ করতে কুণ্ঠিত হয় না। এতে অন্যদেশীয় অলংকারশাস্ত্রসম্মত রীতিভঙ্গ হয়ে থাকে। কিন্তু আমাদের রীতি আমাদেরই স্বভাবসংগত।...আমাদের আদর্শ আমাদের নিজের মন আপনার আনন্দের তাগিদে স্বভাবতই সৃষ্টি করবে। সেই সৃষ্টিতে কলাতত্ত্বের সংযম এবং ছন্দ বাঁচিয়ে চলতে হবে, কিন্তু তার চেহারা যদি সাহেবী ছাঁচের না হয় তবে তাকে পিটিয়ে বদল করতেই হবে এ কথা বলতে পারব না।...বিদেশী অলংকারশাস্ত্র পড়বার বহু পূর্ব থেকে আমাদের নাট্য, যাকে আমরা যাত্রা বলি, সে তো গানের সুরেই ঢালা।¹⁶⁶

In the next stage, we see a form of complete dance-drama, where song and drama go hand in hand. The song is now on one hand, the language of his self-expression in the play, and on the other hand, the self-contained strong theatrical language. While keeping his own musical character intact, he is able to express even the hardest tragic

¹⁶⁶ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

consciousness or intricate complexities of the play without any doubt. ‘Lyrical’ has thus become ‘Dramatic’.

Most of the songs in the dance-drama ‘Chitrangada’ are full-length songs, suitable for singing separately in addition to the dance-drama. Here the poet has used various *raga-raginis* by changing and mixing in an effective way. In this dance drama, the poet has combined the art of dance and acting with the wonderful music of his own style created by combining different rhythm-structures. In ‘Chandalika’, prose dialogues have become incredibly beautiful after being associated with the tunes. Rabindranath once again has combined the poetic music with the prose-dialogues to give it a rhythm:

যে আমারে পাঠাল এই অপমানের অঙ্ককারে
পূজিব না, পূজিব না, পূজিব না সেই দেবতারে, পূজিব না।
কেন দেব ফুল, কেন দেব ফুল,
কেন দেব ফুল আমি তারে
যে আমারে চিরজীবন রেখে দিল এই ধিক্কারে।
জানি না হয় রে কী দুরাশায় রে
পূজাদীপ জ্বালি মন্দিরদ্বারে।
আলো তার নিল হরিয়া, দেবতা ছলনা করিয়া,
আঁধারে রাখিল আমারে।

‘Chandalika’ dance-drama has no separate dialogues which are bereft of music. Some of the songs composed for this dance-drama are meant solely for dialogue or conversation, they do not possess any separate identity. But there are some songs that can be regarded as successful individual lyric-songs, even if those are separated from the original dance-drama; for example—‘নব বসন্তের দানের ডালি’, ‘আমার মালার ফুলের দলে আছে লেখা’, ‘দই চাই গো দই চাই’, ‘ওগো তোমরা যত পাড়ার মেয়ে’, ‘মাটি তোদের ডাক দিয়েছে’, ‘ওগো ডেকো না মোরে’, ‘ফুল বলে ধন্য আমি’, ‘চক্ষে আমার তুল্লা’, ‘আমায় দোষী করো’, ‘দুঃখ দিয়ে মেটাব দুঃখ তোমার’, ‘ঘুমের ঘন গহন হতে যেমন আসে স্বপ্ন’ etc.

A glimpse of the musical features of Rabindranath’s later life has been captured here. The poet’s heart had a special connection and bond with the *Baul* and *Kirtan* songs of Bengal. That is why the influence of *Baul* and *Kirtan* can be observed in almost all of

his lyric-plays or dance-dramas. This effect is more noticeable in ‘Chandalika’ dance-drama.

In the songs like— ‘দই চাই গো দই চাই’, ‘মাটি তোদের ডাক দিয়েছে’, ‘কী কথা বলিস তুই’, ‘এ নতুন জন্ম’, ‘কেন গো কী চাই’, ‘মিথ্যে ওজর গুনব না’—a strong impact of *Baul* can be found; whereas, in songs like— ‘শুধু একটি গভুঘ জল’, ‘রানিমার পোষা পাখি’, ‘বল দেখি বাছা’— impact of *Kirtan* can be seen. The dance-drama ‘Shyama’, also has no separate dialogue in exclusion of music. All the dialogues are performed through music. In Shyama's dialogues, prose form is less than that of ‘Chandalika’. The poet has individually created poetic, rhythmic oscillations in Shyama’s dialogue. The songs of this dance-drama have also reflected the shadows of different *raga-raginis*, as well as the melody of Bengali *Baul* and *Kirtan*, crafted in Rabindranath’s own style. Rabindranath’s idea of freedom or expansion of music was fulfilled in the songs that were composed for several dance-dramas. It marked the assimilation of the poet’s lyrical and dramatic creations. It is a poetic genre worthy of lyric talent. In his plays, ‘Natir Puja’ ‘Shapmochan’, ‘Tasher Desh’, he himself planned and executed the way in which the expressions inherent in the songs, can be expressed through proper postures of the body. He has created complete musical-dramas with special emphasis on vocals as well as body language. In the journey starting from the lyric-plays to the songs composed for the dramas and the dance-dramas, one can witness a full-circle of the long-awaited poet’s intended theatrical goal, where song and drama merge into a single unbroken form, the whole song becomes a worthy way to discover the whole drama.

It was quite hard to find a place or an occasion, where Rabindranath’s songs were not sung. In gatherings of all kinds, theatre houses, even in day-to-day life, Rabindra Sangeet gained much popularity. At the beginning of the 20th century, the golden age came for Bengali songs with the compositions of Rabindranath, Dwijendralal, Atul Prasad and Rajanikanta; along with that came a wave of recorded songs. During the anti-partition movement (1905 – 1906), the first record was sold by the name of ‘H. Bose’s Record’ in Bengal. Rabindranath’s songs were on that record and he himself sang in it. The song was imprinted on Hemendramohan Basu’s phonograph machine. Rathindranath Tagore mentioned in this context:

খামখেয়ালি সভার প্রত্যেক অধিবেশনের জন্যই বাবা নতুন গান বেঁধে রাখতেন। যৌবন বয়সে বাবা কী মিষ্টি অথচ জোরালো গাইতে পারতেন, লোকে তাঁর গান শোনার জন্য কিরকম পাগল হয়ে যেত, যারা না শুনেছে তারা কল্পনা করতে

পারবে না। গ্রামোফোন তখন আবিষ্কার হয়নি, তাঁর গলার রেকর্ড কয়েকটি মাত্র আছে, কিন্তু তাও বৃদ্ধবয়সে নেওয়া, তখন গলা পড়ে গেছে। তখনকার দিনে ফোনোগ্রাফ নামে মেশিন ছিল, মোমের সিলিন্ডারের উপর রেকর্ড উঠত। তার নকল নেওয়া যেত না। ‘কুন্তলীন’-এর এইচ. বোস এই মেশিন এ দেশে আমদানি করেন। তিনি বাবার গলার বিস্তর রেকর্ড নিয়েছিলেন। কয়েক বছর পূর্বে তাঁর ছেলে নীতীনকে এই রেকর্ডগুলির খোঁজ নিতে বলি। দুঃখের বিষয় বহু অনুসন্ধানের পর কয়েকটি মাত্র সিলিন্ডার পাওয়া গেল— সেগুলিও তখন নষ্ট হয়ে গেছে।¹⁶⁷

Then the days of cylinder records were soon over. Hemendramohan realized that he had to develop a new way. He started the new business of recording in ‘disk’, in a joint venture with a company in France during 1906. Hemendramohan probably preferred to work with a French company rather than a British one during the Swadeshi movement. A branch office of Gramophone Company was opened in the country in October 1901 at Chowringhee. The company’s headquarters were moved to Dalhousie Square on May 1, 1902. Rabindranath’s song ‘বাঁশিতে ডেকেছে কে’ in Anukul Chandra Das’s voice was the first song to be recorded in the Gramophone Company’s Kolkata factory. Xenophone record list in 1911 shows that Balaidas Shil, Manada Sundari Dasi and Purnakumari have recorded multiple songs of Rabindranath. In 1911, Rabindranath’s songs sung by Balaidas Shil were published under the title ‘Brahma-Sangeet’. It should be kept in mind that even then Rabindranath’s song did not become ‘Rabindra-Sangeet’.

রেকর্ড-লেবেলে তখন গীতিকার-সুরকারের নাম উল্লেখ হত না। গানের পাশে রাগরাগিণীর নাম লেখা হত। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাম রেকর্ড লেবেলে ছাপা হয় ১৯২৫ সাল নাগাদ। সে সময় বাইজি, বাবু ও ওস্তাদদের ঘরে ঢুকে পড়েছিল কবির গান। তাঁদের কণ্ঠে কবির গানে ও ভঙ্গিতে দেখা গেল কালোয়াতি চং, সরগম, তান কর্তব, পুকার দম ইত্যাদির ব্যবহার। ফলে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানের বাণী ও সুরের নিজস্ব চেহারা গেল বদলে। বলাইদাস শীল, পূর্ণকুমারী, মানদাসুন্দরী, বেদানা দাসী, রাধিকাপ্রসাদ গোস্বামী, কে মল্লিকের যে কোনও রেকর্ড বাজলেই সহজে বোঝা যায় যে, গায়ক-গায়িকারা তখন নিজস্ব গায়নরীতিকে প্রাধান্য দিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান পরিবেশন করতেন। ওই সময় কবির গানকে বলা হত ‘রবিবাবুর গান’।¹⁶⁸

In 1915, Rabindranath’s solicitor Khagendranath Chattopadhyay wrote a letter to the gramophone company, claiming the royalty of the song composed by the poet. The gramophone company agreed to give the poet the lyricist’s royalty. In India, Rabindranath was the first lyricist to receive a royalty for his compositions. Then there

¹⁶⁷ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *পিতৃস্মৃতি* । কলকাতা: জিঞ্জাসা পাবলিকেশন । ১৯৪৪, ২১-২২ ।

¹⁶⁸ দে, সন্তোষকুমার । *কবিকণ্ঠ ও কলের গান* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৯৩ ।

was the arrival of a new disaster. The record began to use arbitrary application in the performance of the song. Reaches offensive levels. The poet was forced to seek legal help in 1926. At that time, he wrote to Dilip Kumar Roy:

রচনা যে করে রচিত পদার্থের দায়িত্ব একমাত্র তারই, তার সংশোধন বা উৎকর্ষসাধনের দায়িত্ব যদি আর কেউ নেয় তা হলে কলাজগতে অরাজকতা ঘটে। ললিতকলাতে ধর্মনীতির অনুশাসন এই যে, যার যেটি কীর্তি তার সম্পূর্ণ ফলভোগ তার একলারই। আজকালকার দিনে ছাপাখানা ও স্বরলিপি প্রভৃতি উপায় নিজের রচনায় রচয়িতার দায়িত্ব পাকা করে রাখা সম্ভব, তাই রচনাবিভাগে সরকারি যথেষ্টাচার নিবারণ করা সহজ এবং করা উচিত।¹⁶⁹

An artist named Amala Das set her foot outside for the first time to record Rabindranath's songs, ignoring the various social norms of the time. In an advertisement published in a newspaper on December 25, 1931, with the heading—‘রবীন্দ্র-সঙ্গীত প্রতিযোগিতা’—the word ‘Rabindra Sangeet’ was first used in public and in print.

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সত্তর বছর পূর্তি উপলক্ষে ‘রবীন্দ্রপরিচয়সভা’-র উদ্যোগে ‘জয়ন্তী-উৎসর্গ’ নামে একটি সঙ্কলন গ্রন্থ প্রকাশ করা হয়। এই সঙ্কলনে ধূর্জটিপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় ‘রবীন্দ্রনাথের সংগীত’ নিবন্ধে লেখেন, ‘হিন্দুস্থানী সংগীতে রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের স্থান এবং ব্যক্তিগত মৌলিকত্ব জানতে হলে আমাদের দেশের, বিশেষ করে বাংলাদেশের গত শতাব্দীর মানসিক ইতিহাসের পাতা উলটে দেখা উচিত।’ ১৯৩১ সালের ২৭ ডিসেম্বর প্রকাশিত এই সঙ্কলনটির নিবন্ধগুলি আগেই সংগৃহীত হয়েছিল। সেই মুদ্রিত তথ্যের ভিত্তিতে বলা যায়, ধূর্জটিপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়ই ‘রবীন্দ্রসংগীত’ শব্দটি প্রথম ব্যবহার করেছিলেন। অন্যদিকে বলা হয় গ্রামোফোন রেকর্ডের মাধ্যমেই ‘রবীন্দ্রসংগীত’ আখ্যাটি সর্বজনগ্রাহ্য হয়েছে। জানুয়ারি, ১৯৩৫ (রেকর্ড নং পি ১১৭৯২- ‘মনে রবে কিনা রবে আমারে’/‘কাছে যবে ছিল পাশে হল না যাওয়া’) কনক দাসের এই রেকর্ড পরিচিতিতে সম্ভবত প্রথম ‘রবীন্দ্রসংগীত’ কথাটি লেখা হয়। হিন্দুস্থান কোম্পানির একটি অপ্রকাশিত রেকর্ডে (টেষ্ট রেকর্ড) রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এবং রমা মজুমদারের দ্বৈত কণ্ঠে গাওয়া ‘তোমার সুরের ধারা’ গানটি আবিষ্কার করেছেন রেকর্ড সংগ্রাহক শুভেন্দুশেখর পাত্র এবং সুরজলাল মুখোপাধ্যায় (হারুবাবু)। রেকর্ডটি তাঁরা বাতিল রেকর্ডের স্তূপ থেকে উদ্ধার করেন। জানা যায় এই রেকর্ডটি ১৯৩২-এ রেকর্ড করা হয়েছিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে দ্বৈত কণ্ঠে গাওয়া এই একটি রেকর্ডের সন্ধানই পাওয়া গেছে আজ পর্যন্ত।¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬৭ ।

¹⁷⁰ দে, সন্তোষকুমার । *কবিকণ্ঠ ও কলের গান* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৯৩ ।

Rabindranath clearly mentioned at the outset that his songs should be sung unaltered. He did not even give permission to Dwijendralal Roy's son Dilip Kumar, for bringing variation in his songs. Rabindranath stated in this regard:

হিন্দুস্থানী সঙ্গীতকার, তাঁদের সুরের মধ্যকার ফাঁক গায়ক ভরিয়ে দেবে এটা যে চেয়েছিলেন—তাই কোনো দরবারী কানাড়ার খেয়াল সাদামাটা ভাবে গেয়ে গেলে সেটা নেড়া-নেড়া না শুনিয়েই পারে না। কারণ দরবারী কানাড়া তানালাপের সঙ্গেই গেল, সাদামাটা ভাবে নয়। আমার গানেতো আমি সেরকম ফাঁক রাখিনি যে সেটা অপরে ভরিয়ে দেওয়াতে আমি কৃতজ্ঞ হয়ে উঠব।¹⁷¹

Here he has pointed out the difference between his songs and the songs that belong to Hindustani Classical Music. The latter provides freedom to the artist, as the composer creates his song based on a particular melody and what stands out is how the singer sings that particular melody. But Rabindranath claimed that each of his songs had its own and complete form. On the other hand, he writes in his essay 'সঙ্গীতের মুক্তি'—

এইখানে যুরোপের সঙ্গীত-পলিটিক্সের সঙ্গে আমাদের সঙ্গীত-পলিটিক্সের তফাত। সেখানে ওস্তাদকে অনেক বেশি বাঁধাবাঁধির মধ্যে থাকিতে হয়। গানের কর্তা নিজের হাতে সীমানা পাকা করিয়া দেন, ওস্তাদ সেটা সম্পূর্ণ বজায় রাখেন। তাঁকে যে নিতান্ত আড়ষ্ট হইয়া থাকিতে হইবে তাও নয়, আবার খুব যে দাপাদাপি করিবেন সে রাস্তাও বন্ধ। যুরোপে প্রত্যেক গান একটি বিশেষ ব্যক্তি, সে আপনার মধ্যে প্রধানত আত্মমর্যাদাই প্রকাশ করে। ভারতে প্রত্যেক গান একটি বিশেষ জাতীয়, সে আপনার মধ্যে প্রধানত জাতিমর্যাদাই প্রকাশ করে।¹⁷²

Putting these two texts side by side, it seems that Rabindranath may have wanted to follow the European style in the implementation of the song. Each song has its own form, which distinguishes it from other songs and which is self-complete as a composition and which does not belong to any particular group. But how do we find the unadulterated form of every song? The simple answer is by looking at the notation. That is the European method. But in the case of Rabindra Sangeet, there is confusion. There are many reasons for this. Firstly, there are more than one notation of many of the Rabindra Sangeet. For instance, a popular song like 'আমি চিনি গো চিনি তোমারে'—has three available notations, which differ from one another. One is done by Sarala Devi, another is by

¹⁷¹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

¹⁷² Ibid

Jyotirindranath and the third is done by Dinu Thakur. There are slight differences in the three notations. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the unaltered single form. In the same way, we get four different notations for the song ‘তবু মনে রেখ’, which are not exactly the same. Many records are available of the song ‘এ পরবাসে রবে কে’ — but all those recordings do not follow a particular singing-technique:

এটির অনেকগুলি রেকর্ড বাজারে পাওয়া যায়। তার মধ্যে যদি কণিকা বন্দোপাধ্যায়ের রেকর্ডটি শোনেন এবং অমিয়া ঠাকুরের গাওয়া গানটি (এটি সত্যজিৎ রায় তাঁর ‘কাঞ্চনজঙ্ঘা’ ছবির জন্য রেকর্ড করান) শোনেন, তা হলে দেখবেন, ‘কে রবে সংশয়ে’ এই অংশে, কণিকা ‘শয়ে’-তে মধ্যম থেকে কোমল নিখাদ (ম-৭) অবধি একটি মীড় টেনেছেন, স্বরলিপিতেও তাই আছে, কিন্তু অমিয়া ঠাকুর তা করেন নি। দুজনেই তো সমান মান্য। একজন শান্তিনিকেতনের সঙ্গীতভবনে শৈলজারঙ্গনের শিষ্যা, আর অন্যজন ঠাকুরবাড়ির বউ, এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বয়ং তাঁর গান ভীষণ ভালোবাসতেন ও তাঁকে নিজে শিখিয়েছেন!¹⁷³

One of the early compositions of Rabindranath, ‘স্বপন যদি ভঙ্গিলে’—was sung by Radhika Prasad Goswami (Bishnupur Gharana) by following the raag *Ramkeli* purely. Tagore himself gave permission to record that song. And later on, after listening to that song on record, Ustad V. V. Jhalawar wrote the notation of the song. Therefore, in this case, the notation was written after the song had been sung. There are more examples like this:

গোপেশ্বর বন্দোপাধ্যায়ের গাওয়া, নটমল্লার রাগে ‘মোরে বারে বারে ফিরালে’ গানটিতেও, স্বাধীন সুরবিহারের নজীর মিলবে। তেমনি আবার ‘বুঝি ঐ সুদুরে’ গানটির কোন স্বরলিপি প্রথমে ছিল না। রবীন্দ্রনাথ একবার বসন্ত উৎসবের জন্য গানটি লেখেন (সাহানা দেবীর কাছে একটি হিন্দুস্থানী শাস্ত্রীয় গান শুনে) এবং সাহানা দেবীকে শেখান। এই গানটি পরে সাহানা দেবী রবীন্দ্রভারতীর জন্য রেকর্ড করে দেন, যা থেকে স্বরলিপি করা হয়।¹⁷⁴

Here also, it can be seen that the song was sung at first, and then the notation was composed. In these cases, however, the form of the song becomes completely dependent on the singer, and Rabindranath himself mentioned:

¹⁷³ বসু, অনিন্দ্য. *রবিবাবুর গান ও তার গায়ন*, <https://www.parabaas.com/rabindranath/articles/pAnindya.html>

¹⁷⁴ দে, সন্তোষকুমার। *কবিকর্প ও কলের গান*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৯৯৩।

আমার অনেক গান আছে যাতে গুণী এরকম ছাড়া পেতে পারেন। অনেকখানি। আমার আপত্তি এখানে মূলনীতি নিয়ে নয়। তার প্রয়োগ নিয়ে। কতখানি ছাড়া দেব? আর, কাকে? বড়ো প্রতিভা যে বেশি স্বাধীনতা দাবি করতে পারে একথা কে অস্বীকার করবে? কিন্তু এক্ষেত্রে ছোটো বড়োর তফাত আছেই...¹⁷⁵

Rabindranath is keen to maintain the uniqueness of his songs, but at the same time admits that since most of his songs are based on the original Hindustani classical music, and according to the structure of that music, there are opportunities for a singer to improvise. However, Rabindranath was hesitant to give this freedom to everyone, for good reason of course. But Rabindranath's songs are not just raga-sangeet, there is equal importance of words and tunes. Therefore, it is difficult to accept if the words are neglected while trying to focus only on the melody. He has repeatedly spoken about the equality of song and melody. In a letter to Dhurjatiprasad Mukherjee, a professor of economics at Lucknow University and a leading scholar of Hindustani music, discussing the features of Bangla songs, he said:

বাংলায় নতুন যুগের নতুন গান সৃষ্টি হতে থাকবে ভাষায় সুর মিলিয়ে। সেই সুরকে খর্ব করা চলবে না তার গৌরব কথার গৌরবের চেয়ে হীন হবে না। সংসারে স্ত্রী-পুরুষের সমান অধিকারে দাম্পত্যের যে পরিপূর্ণ উৎকর্ষ ঘটে, বাংলা সঙ্গীতে তাই হওয়া চাই। এই মিলনসাধনে ধ্রুবপদ্ধতির হিন্দুস্থানী সংগীতের সহায়তা আমাদের নিতে হবে, আর অনিন্দনীয় কাব্যমহিমা তাকে দীপ্তিশালী করবে।¹⁷⁶

Later, in a letter to Prafulla Kumar Mahalanabish, Rabindranath is seen to be sceptical:

বুলাবাবু, তোমার কাছে সানুনয় অনুরোধ এঁদের একটু দরদ দিয়ে, একটু রস দিয়ে গান শিখিয়ে – এইটেই আমার গানের বিশেষত্ব। তার উপরে তোমরা যদি স্টিম রোলার চালিয়ে দাও, আমার গান চেপ্টা হয়ে যাবে। আমার গানে যাতে একটু রস থাকে, তান থাকে, দরদ থাকে ও মীড় থাকে, তার চেপ্টা তুমি কোরো।¹⁷⁷

Apart from *Raga-Sangeet*, Rabindranath has composed songs by implementing western melodies to his lyrics, such as 'ফুলে ফুলে ঢলে ঢলে', 'পুরানো সেই দিনের কথা', 'কতবার ভেবেছি' etc. Besides, there are melodies of Bengali folk music especially *Baul* and *Kirtan*, which he

¹⁷⁵ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

¹⁷⁶ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *চিঠিপত্র*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ১৯৬৭।

¹⁷⁷ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ। *সংগীতচিন্তা*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ। ২০১৪।

has used in many songs. For example— ‘গাম ছাড়া ঐ রাজা মাটির পথ’, ‘ধানের ক্ষেতে রৌদ্র ছায়ায়’, ‘গহন কুসুম কুঞ্জ মাঝে’—whether there is a scope for improvisations of any kind in these songs, is a matter of debate. There are a few songs like ‘পরবাসী এসো ঘরে’, ‘বাজিল কাহার বীণা’, ‘মম চিত্তে নিতি নৃত্যে’, ‘যদি তারে নাই চিনি গো’ etc.—which are unique, uncategorized and fully claim the dignity of composition. The artist, while performing these songs has to accept the demands of the creator and try to be faithful to the notation while maintaining his own identity in terms of expressions. Now, if we take a step ahead and focus on the context of rhythm-structure, then it can be seen that many of the songs, while being performed, have transgressed the original rhythm-structure and adopted free-rhythm-structure:

রবীন্দ্রভারতীর এককালীন স্বরলিপি অধিক্ষক শ্রী সুভাষ চৌধুরি একটি তালিকা করেছেন প্রায় ৮৯-টি গানের যাদের স্বরলিপি তাল বা নির্দিষ্ট মাত্রা নিবন্ধ কিন্তু তা মুক্তছন্দে গাওয়া প্রচলিত। এমন কী, ‘এ পরবাসে’ গানটি যা আমরা মুক্তছন্দে অনেকের কণ্ঠে শুনেছি, সেটি মালতী ঘোষাল তাল ও ছন্দে নিবন্ধ করে গেয়ে রেকর্ড করেছেন।¹⁷⁸

Satyajit Ray has raised the question about the orchestration of the songs:

আরেকটা জিনিস যেটা স্বরলিপিতে পাওয়া যাবে না সেটা হল গানের সংগতের নির্দেশ। সঙ্গত সম্পর্কে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কোথাও কিছু বলে যান নি। এখানে সুরকারের একটা বড় দায়িত্ব তিনি পালন করেন নি।¹⁷⁹

Songs which were recorded in the early period, the use of accompanying instruments such as *sarangi*, *esraj*, *sitar*, *dotara*, *tabla*, *pakhoyaz* and *khol* are seen frequently. One reason behind that might be that all these instruments were quite popular and easily available at that time. But problems were still rising. The Visva-Bharati music board itself has not approved the recording of the songs ‘এসেছিলে তবু আসো নাই’ and ‘মেঘ বলেছে যাব যাব’ by artists like Debabrata Biswas, because he sang those songs by applying musical interlude and echo-chambers with the help of some modern instruments. At first, it was stated that in spite of repeated requests to control and restrict uncalled for composed musical interludes, the same has been applied freely, making the production awfully jarring and distorted. And then, the reason for which the authority discarded the song was mentioned that the recording was awfully melodramatic in the voice productions

¹⁷⁸ দে, সন্তোষকুমার। *কবিকণ্ঠ ও কলের গান*। কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী। ১৯৯৩।

¹⁷⁹ রায়, সত্যজিৎ। ‘রবীন্দ্রসঙ্গীতে ভাববার কথা’। *প্রবন্ধ সংগ্রহ*। সন্দীপ রায় (সম্পাদিত), কলকাতা: আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রা. লিমি.। ২০১৫।

and the echo-chamber which seems to have been used has utterly spoiled the fine note-combinations in the song.

As Rabindranath did not give any clear instructions regarding this matter, it was quite confusing to decide which form of interlude was acceptable and which should not be considered as ‘melodramatic’. Later, however, the artist Debabrata Biswas got the approval for recording the song. But as a result of this caution more than once, many artists like Debabrata, stopped recording Rabindra Sangeet. Nowadays, Rabindra Sangeet has a lot of arrangements made with the help of various instruments and the long interludes are used by famous artists. Rabindranath was the first in this country who wanted to give a distinct form to his songs by following certain European melodies and rhythm-structures. But that was not entirely possible in the case of song-writing as he took the basis of the melody and rhythm of the song from the songs of this country itself. However, in the part of poetry, Rabindranath was more unique in the field of poetry from the very beginning and in the case of melody too, he was able to gradually transcend the conventional genre and create his own form.

কিন্তু তাঁর গানের অবিকৃত রূপ শুধুমাত্র স্বরলিপি ধরে মিলবে না। আমাদের রাস্তাটা দেখাবেন রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের প্রথমদিকের শিল্পীরা। তাঁদের গাওয়া গানগুলিকেই আমাদের আদর্শ ভেবে এগোতে হবে। যেখানে সেটা সম্ভব নয়, সেখানে স্বরলিপিকে মূল হিসেবে ধরে, রবীন্দ্র ভাবনার সঙ্গে পরিচিত হয়ে, তাঁর ভাব, ভাষা এবং বাংলা উচ্চারণ বিধির সম্বন্ধে সচেতন থেকে খোলা গলায় স্পষ্ট উচ্চারণে গাইতে হবে। রবীন্দ্র সংগীতকে কোন committee বসিয়ে বাঁচানো যাবে না। কোন প্রতিষ্ঠান তার ব্যবসায়িক আয়োজনেও তাকে বাঁধতে পারবে না। তার ঐতিহ্যকে আমাদেরই বাঁচিয়ে রাখতে হবে, ভালবেসে, যত্ন নিয়ে...সচেতন হয়ে...অনুভব করে।¹⁸⁰

Following the path of Rabindranath and Dinendranath, a distinctive singing-style of Rabindra Sangeet was established. Later that style was preserved and presented by two noteworthy successors—Shailajaranjan Majumder and Shantideb Ghosh. The salient features of which can be seen in the singing-style of Kanika Bandyopadhyay and Suchitra Mitra. Roughly speaking, most of the Rabindra Sangeet singers belong to these two styles mentioned here. But the only exception can be found in the singing-style of Pankaj Kumar Mullick. While indicating the reasons behind this, Subhas Chowdhuri mentioned:

¹⁸⁰ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ। *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য*। কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস। ২০১৩।

প্রধানত পঞ্চজবাবু রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের রীতিসিদ্ধ ঘরানায় শিক্ষিত ছিলেন না। দিনেন্দ্রনাথের কাছে দু-একটি গান শিক্ষা করেছিলেন মাত্র। তাই তাঁর কণ্ঠে রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের গায়কির বিশিষ্ট ছাপটি কখনোই ছিল না। অথচ তিনি এমনই জনাদৃত ছিলেন যে স্বাভাবিকভাবেই সেকালে এবং পরবর্তীকালে অনেক শিল্পী তাঁকে অনুকরণ করে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছেন। এই ধারার অন্যতম বিশিষ্ট শিল্পী হেমন্তকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়।...পঞ্চজবাবুর গায়কি যথার্থ রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের ঘরানার গায়কি থেকে কিছু স্বতন্ত্র। স্বরক্ষেপণ, উচ্চারণ, সুরের অলংকার বর্জন, কণ্ঠে কম্পমান ধ্বনি ব্যবহার, এমন-কি গানের সুরেও স্বাধীনতা নেওয়ার প্রসঙ্গগুলি বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখযোগ্য।¹⁸¹

Pankaj Kumar Mullick has been known as an artist singing Rabindranath Tagore's songs since it was known as 'Rabibabu's Song', instead of 'Rabindra Sangeet'. Pankaj Mullick's name is distinguished among those who have been singing Rabindranath's songs with reverence to the educated Bengali music lovers outside Shantiniketan since the 1930s. The magic wand of popularity was in the originality of his voice. The selection of songs, the melodious seriousness of the voice, the pronunciation and the unique style of singing helped him to establish himself as an artist. In 1926, he first performed Rabindranath's songs on the Calcutta radio station. Two years later, he started teaching music regularly. Later, he sang Rabindranath's songs on a gramophone record. In September, 1932, he recorded songs for the first time, which included songs like — 'থলয় নাচলে যখন' and 'তোমার আসন শূন্য আজি'.

Pankaj Kumar first sang on the Calcutta radio station in 1926. He took lessons Anadikumar Dastidar and Dinendranath and was permanently engaged in teaching Rabindra Sangeet in Calcutta. The recorded Rabindra Sangeet in his voice was especially appreciated by the educated Bengali community at that time. He took the help of Shantideb Ghosh in selecting Rabindra Sangeet for the film 'Parichay'. He learnt the songs of Lalan Fakir and Gagan Harkara for recording in gramophone and by applying tune to the poem—'হে মোর দুর্ভাগা দেশ', written by Rabindranath, he recorded it. In November, 1944, he recorded the songs—'তুমি কি কেবলি ছবি' and 'সঘন গহন রাত্রি' under the direction of Abdul Ahad; and later recorded the songs— 'নাই নাই ভয়', 'খরবায়ু বয় বেগে', 'তিমির অবগুষ্ঠন' and 'আঁধার অন্ধরে' under the direction of Subinoy Roy. Pankaj Kumar also recorded some of the songs, the notations of which were still unpublished till then—'বর্ষণ-মন্ত্রিত অন্ধকারে', 'বাণী মোর নাই', 'ওগো স্বপ্নস্বরূপিণী', 'আজ শ্রাবণ আকাশে ওই' etc. In this case, when the notations

¹⁸¹ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩ ।

were published later, there was a significant difference in the melody of the record with the notation. He is one of the pioneers in the promotion of Rabindra Sangeet on 'Kolkata Betar Kendra' and has sung in both records and tapes with utmost diligence. On a different note, his singing-style has welcomed the possibilities of being criticized with respect for transformations within Rabindra Sangeet. Subhas Chowdhuri mentioned:

পঙ্কজবাবুর গাওয়া রবীন্দ্রসংগীতগুলির মধ্যে কয়েকটি উল্লেখযোগ্য গানের উদাহরণ দিই— 'কী পাই নি তারি হিসাব মিলাতে' গানটির শুরুতে একটি 'আ' শব্দ জুড়ে দিলেন এবং গানের 'ভালোবেসেছি' ও 'সাধনা' শব্দ দুটির পরে অতি দীর্ঘ এমন মিড় প্রয়োগ করেন যাতে অসাধারণ গানটির সংহত রূপ নষ্ট হল। আমরা বঞ্চিত হলাম সুপরিমিত আনন্দ থেকে। আবার 'এমন দিনে তারে বলা যায়' ও 'ওরে সাবধানী পথিক' গান দুটির শুরুতে হঠাৎ 'আহা' শব্দ যোগ করে গান দুটির সৌন্দর্য নষ্ট করলেন। এরূপ আরও দৃষ্টান্ত দেওয়া সম্ভব, যেমন —'তাই তোমার আনন্দ আমার পর' -গানের প্রথম ছন্দে 'আমার পর' কথাটির অবিশ্বাস্য রকমের সুর-বিকৃতি। জানি না এমনিই কোনো সুরের উন্নতি সাধনের তাড়নায় শান্তিনিকেতন থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ২০ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৩৮ জানকীনাথ বসুকে লিখেছিলেন, 'আজকাল অনেক রেডিও গায়কও অহংকার করে বলে থাকেন তাঁরা আমার গানের উন্নতি করে থাকেন। মনে মনে বলি পরের গানের উন্নতি সাধনে প্রতিভার অপব্যয় না করে নিজের গানের রচনায় মন দিলে তাঁরা ধন্য হতে পারেন। সংসারে যদি উপদ্রব করতেই হয় তবে হিটলার প্রভৃতির ন্যায় নিজেদের নামের জোরেই করা ভালো।'...১৯৭১ সালে পঙ্কজবাবুর একটি লেখায় দেখি, 'আজকাল অনেকেই যথার্থ রবীন্দ্রসংগীত গাইছেন না, অথচ তা স্বীকার করতেও তাঁরা নারাজ। রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'মরণের মুখে রেখে যাও' গানটিতে শুদ্ধ ধৈবতের জায়গায় আমি কোমল ধৈবত লাগিয়ে পরিবেশন করেছি। আমি অন্যায়ে করেছিলাম। গাইতে গেলে অনেক সময় সুরের একটু এদিক ওদিক হয়ে যেতে পারে। কিন্তু ইচ্ছাকৃতভাবে এরকম করা আমার মতে শুধু অন্যায়ে নয়, অপরাধও।'...এই অকপট স্বীকারোক্তির মধ্যেই পঙ্কজবাবুর যে মহৎ শিল্পীসুলভ মানসিকতা নিহিত আছে তা অনস্বীকার্য।¹⁸²

If someone intends to sing Rabindranath's songs, he/she needs to have an intimate acquaintance with the sentiment of the song. The farther the artists can go in this direction, the easier the path of song creation will be for them. But in order to move forward on this path, not only the purity of pronunciation is required, what should be kept in mind is the proper understanding and expression of the innate feelings of the song. The artist needs to develop empathy, love and understanding of the nature around him. Rabindranath himself had a sense of deep love for nature and the world. So, the melodies of universal joy as well as sorrow have been presented through his songs and

¹⁸² চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩ ।

poems. According to Shantideb Ghosh, who had the opportunity to learn Rabindranath's songs, directly from him:

গুরুদেব এমন বহু গান রচনা করেছেন, যার অর্থ করলে দেখা যাবে যে, তা কোন নারীর মনের কথা। এইসব গান পুরুষের কণ্ঠেও গাওয়া হয়। গুরুদেব নিজেও গেয়েছেন, দিনেন্দ্রনাথও গাইতেন। কিন্তু এতে যদি আপত্তি থাকে, তবে এর থেকে কয়েকটি জটিল প্রশ্নের সম্মুখীন হবো। যেমন, পুরুষের পক্ষে কি নারীর মন নিয়ে কোন কথা বলা সম্ভব? যথাযথভাবে নারীহৃদয়ের সুখদুঃখের কথা কি পুরুষেরা প্রকাশের অধিকারী? দু'দলের মানসিক ও দৈহিক ব্যবধানের বিচারে তা সম্ভব নয় বলেই তো মনে হবে। কিন্তু তা হলেও যুগে যুগে পুরুষেরা নারীর হৃদয়ের কত কথাই না গানে ও কবিতায় প্রকাশ করে গেছেন। পুরুষদের মত এতখানি মর্মস্পর্শী করে কোন নারী কি নিজেদের কথা বলতে পেরেছেন? গুরুদেবের এই রকমের গান ও কবিতা প্রচুর আছে। সে গান যদি পুরুষেরা গায়, তার মর্মটি উদ্ঘাটন করে, তবে তা অস্বাভাবিক হবে কেন? হিন্দী খেয়াল, টপ্পা ও ঠুংরী গানে দেখি, নারীহৃদয়ের বিরহের বিচিত্র বেদনা। এ গানের শ্রেষ্ঠ গাইয়ে ও শ্রেষ্ঠ রচয়িতারা সকলেই কিন্তু পুরুষ। বড় গোলাম আলি খাঁ যখন “বাজু বন্ধ খুল খুল যায়” গানটি ভৈরবী রাগিণীর ঠুংরিতে গাইতেন, তখন তাঁর গানে কিশোরী রাধার বিরহের আবেগ টিকে অনুভব করে অনেক শ্রোতারই চোখে জল এসেছে। তাঁরা তো খাঁ সাহেবের মত গুরুধারী বিরাটবপু পুরুষে তা গাইছেন বলে শুনতে আপত্তি বা রসহানির অভিযোগ তোলেননি। এ থেকেই বোঝা যায় যে, গান যখন আমরা শুনি তখন কে গাইছেন বা গানের কথা নারী বা পুরুষের কিনা, এ চিন্তা আমাদের মনে একেবারেই বড় স্থান পায় না। গানের মূল আবেগটি যথাযথভাবে প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে কিনা, আমাদের কান ও মন সেইদিকেই উন্মুখ হয়ে থাকে।...“মরি লো মরি আমায় বাশিতে ডেকেছে কে” গানটি গুরুদেবের একটি অতি প্রিয় গান। যৌবনে এ গানটি তিনি খুবই গাইতেন। বৃদ্ধ বয়সেও তাঁকে আবেগের সঙ্গে গানটি গাইতে শুনেছি। তার মত পুরুষের পক্ষে শ্রীমতী রাধার বিরহের গান রচনা করা ও গাওয়া যে অস্বাভাবিক হয়েছে, শুনে কিন্তু পূর্বে কেউ তা মনে করেনি।¹⁸³

Although the song “মেঘের কোলে রোদ হেসেছে” is meant for children, the reasoning behind it being sung by the adults is the same. Earlier, Dinendranath Tagore used to sing the song together with a group of children in Shantiniketan. It is true for the poems, which are apparently created by keeping the children in mind. As for poetry and drama, he believes that he composed them for the purpose of entertaining the young minds of children, but through those compositions he tried to express his own heartfelt emotions. It is necessary to be careful while performing about the distortion of Rabindra Sangeet or singing in wrong words or with mis-pronunciations. This applies to all songs as a whole; when

¹⁸³ ঘোষ, শান্তিদেব । *রবীন্দ্রসঙ্গীত বিচিত্রা* । কলকাতা: আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড । ২০১৯, ১১১ ।

Bengali artists practice Hindi Classical music, they naturally have to pay attention to the perfect pronunciation of Hindi or Urdu words. Rabindranath has composed songs in Bengali language, with very simple and known words. No one in general would sing these songs knowingly or voluntarily with wrong words or incorrect pronunciations. Some districts of Bengal have their own style of pronunciation, and that impression is often carried by the singers unknowingly. Artists can't help but correct it under the watchful eyes of today's listeners.

Rabindranath's songs have been popularized since 1961 and the media, through which Rabindranath's songs have reached the masses, was run by two governmental and one commercial organizations. There were also gatherings, what is commonly known as 'Ganer Ashor' or 'Ganer Jalsha'. Reviewing the activities of all these organizations, it is clear that their main purpose was to make the general public happy and also to make money. To make this happen, one has to compromise with the tastes of the audience and hence the predominance of business attitude prevails in almost all cases. This compromise was made by business organizations, concert organizations, and even government-run organizations. At the same time, most of the artists have come to terms with the tastes of the audience:

এই প্রবণতা রবীন্দ্রনাথের দূরদৃষ্টিতে অনেক আগেই ধরা পড়েছিল। ৩০ জুন ১৯৪০ এ 'গীতালি'র অনুষ্ঠানে তাঁর বক্তৃতার মধ্যে দেখি : 'দোকানের মাপেতে দর অনুসারে বাঁকাচোরা করে তার রস-টস চেপেচুপে চলেছে আমারই গান'।

—এই বাঁকাচোরা করা, রস-টস চেপেচুপে চলা জিনিসটি কী, তা যে-কোনো দামি-নামি অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত হলে সহজেই বোধগম্য হবে। পারম্পর্যহীন গান পরিবেশন, স্থান-কাল সম্পর্কে সম্পূর্ণ বোধহীন (উদাসীন নয়) প্রভৃতি কথা বাদ দিলেও কখনও দেখা যাবে অকারণ অলংকরণের আধিক্যে গানের সমাধি, কখনো একই সঙ্গে খোল তবলা প্রভৃতি তালযন্ত্রের সহযোগে গান কোলাহলে পরিণত। এ সবই নাকি গানের সৌন্দর্য বৃদ্ধির জন্য। আসল কথা কিন্তু আপস। এ সবই করতে হয় শ্রোতার রুচির ইচ্ছা অনুসারে। আর এই সব করে জনাদৃত হতে পারলে প্রকৃতপক্ষে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়ার রাস্তাটি উন্মুক্ত হয়।¹⁸⁴

With the increasing popularity of Rabindra Sangeet, singing has become a profession for a large number of artists. One thing to be surprised about is that even after receiving so much fame, the artists are not aware of their responsibilities. The duty of the artist can be largely fulfilled by paying the slightest homage to the creator, keeping in mind that

¹⁸⁴ দে, সন্তোষকুমার । *কবিকর্প ও কলের গান* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী । ১৯৯৩ ।

Rabindranath pleaded to avoid any alterations of his songs. There is a sense of universality in the songs of Rabindranath. Humans have some eternal feelings—happiness, sorrow, love, estrangement, value, pride — these cannot be changed. We see the reflection of all of these in Rabindranath’s songs. Listening to each song, it seems as if it is sung for me, even for a moment, the subtle strings of our soul become clear. There is a lot of new music being created in the world. Yet people of all ages find their happiness or sorrow resonated in Rabindra Sangeet and it is for the sake of poetry. There is hardly any song with such a distinctive feeling, which also increases the practice of Rabindra Sangeet. The unique poetic quality in Rabindranath’s songs makes its mark. So, whoever sings the lyrics with a proper flow and a clear pronunciation, will succeed in the expression of Rabindra Sangeet. It is important to pay attention to retain the life within the songs, rather than being perfect. It is important to see whether the two, who is singing, and the one who is listening—are equally realizing the underlying meaning of the song. Only then the song is successfully performed. It is the responsibility of both the singer and the listener to make a song successful in every sense. In Rabindranath’s one of the poems, he said:

একাকী গায়কের নহে তো গান
 মিলিতে হবে দুই জনে।
 গাহিবে একজন খুলিয়া গলা
 আরেকজন গাবে মনে।
 তটের বুকে লাগে জলের ঢেউ
 তবে সে কলতান উঠে
 বাতাসে বনসভা শিহরি কাঁপে
 তবে সে মর্মর ফুটে
 জগতে যেথা যত রয়েছে ধ্বনি
 যুগল মিলিয়াছে আগে—
 যেখানে প্রেম নেই বোবার সভা
 সেখানে গান নাই জাগে।

So, in order to create effective music, one needs his/her own singing style in addition to a perfect notation and melody. It is important to remember that the notation contains the structure of the song. There is no life in it. Excessive notation-dependence can make a

song arithmetically correct, but it will not be pleasant to hear at all. In Rabindranath's songs, except for the inner meaning, if there is only the predominance of the structure, it will be immensely incomplete. Structure and essence - these two combine to create the artist's own singing style. Since not everyone has the same outlook or perception, change is inevitable. Man introduces intellect in the matter of knowledge, introduces merit in achievement, but introduces himself in his creations; and there lies the joy of creation. Of all his creations, Rabindranath gave the most importance to the creation of music - no one is unaware of this today. The creator also had a special weakness towards this creation. In his own words, 'আমার গানের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত হয়েছে দিনে দিনে সৃষ্টির প্রথম রহস্য, আলোকের প্রকাশ, আর সৃষ্টির শেষ রহস্য, ভালবাসার অমৃত।'

The Bengali listeners were not fully aware of the essence and radiance of Rabindranath's songs even after his death in 1941. The splendour and variety of his songs was largely unknown. The popularity of Rabindranath's songs was limited mainly to Shantiniketan, Brahma-Samaj and some of the elite educated families of Calcutta. From 1941 onwards, the promotion of Rabindranath's songs to the general public outside these specific boundaries continued to grow. In addition to some personal initiatives in this work, the active cooperation of the media is particularly noteworthy. Admittedly, Rabindranath was the first 'composer' in the Bengali musical tradition who wanted to see his works established in a specific context and was careful to compose rhythm-structures and melodies of his songs in a way that notations may retain the originality in the future. Although, printing the notations in a proper format was not so easy then, many scholars were aware of its importance—Jyotirindranath Tagore created 'স্বরলিপি গীতিমালা' (১৩০৪); In Sarala Devi Chaudhurani's 'শতগান'(১৩০৭) and in Kanganalicharan Sen's 'ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত-স্বরলিপি' (6 volumes: ১৩১১-১৩১৮), notations of many songs were covered. Right after that, the notations of Rabindranath's songs started to be published continuously: 'গীতলিপি' (১৩১৭-১৩২৫), 'গীতলেখা' (১৩২৪-১৩২৫), 'গীতপঞ্চাশিকা' (১৩২৫), 'বৈতালিক' (১৩২৫), 'কাব্যগীতি' (১৩২৬), 'কৈতকী' (১৩২৬), 'শেফালি' (১৩২৬), 'গীতিবীথিকা' (১৩২৬) ও 'নবগীতিকা' (১৩২৯) etc. Surendranath Bandyopadhyay was the editor of the first one, and the rest were prepared by Dinendranath Tagore. The Visva-Bharati Granthan Vibhag or the publication house was not established by that time. The first book of notation by Visva-Bharati was published in 1923. Dinendranath Tagore was the one who was behind the preparation of notations that were published in book formats till 1941. The only exception is 'Mayar Khela', which was prepared by Indira Devi

Chowdhurani. Apart from these, 'Gitamalika' in two volumes, 'Balmiki Pratibha' and 'Tapati' were published right after these. The publication of 'স্বরবিতান' in four volumes were completed during the presence of Rabindranath and the fifth part was published after his death. A significant incident that took place during this time was the death of Dinendranath, upon whom Rabindranath relied heavily on the preservation of the melody of his songs. The appreciation and use of Rabindranath's songs continued to increase in almost all the festivals, occasions, and it became difficult to maintain the purity of the melody of the songs as it was difficult to find authentic printed notation. In this context, the Visva-Bharati authorities formed a notation-committee for the purpose of speedy compilation of the notations of songs. All those who were nominated as members of this association have learned Rabindra Sangeet directly from Rabindranath and Dinendranath and have engaged themselves in music practice for a long time. The committee was also given the responsibility of compiling, preserving and editing the notations of Rabindra Sangeet. Under their supervision, the second edition of the first volume of 'স্বরবিতান' was published.

In the meantime, Rabindra Sangeet has been included in the curriculum from school to higher education, the scope of research on Rabindra Sangeet has been expanded considerably and the demand for vocal music has increased at an unexpected rate. The Visva-Bharati Granthan Vibhaga also kept in mind the need to publish new volumes of *Swaravitan*, and also tried to add information about the date of composition of the song, difference of texts available etc. in the upcoming editions.

Rabindranath gave permission to record his songs because he knew that his songs would reach the people most widely through the media; but that also opened the possibilities of various experiments with the songs. Every artist tries to sing Rabindranath's songs as much as he can with his own limitations, with his thoughts, with the teachings that he received, with his own taste and with his own voice modulations. These things differ from one to another.

After the announcement that Rabindranath's creations were free from copyright issues in 2001, many thought that all his works would be sold cheaply in low-quality publications, such a possibility was seen even before the copyright issues were prevalent:

কোনো এক অনভিজ্ঞ সংগীত পরিবেশনকারী, যতদূর মনে পড়ে নাম কুমারজিৎ, দূরদর্শনে একটি সাক্ষাৎকারে বিকৃত রবীন্দ্রসংগীত পরিবেশন করায় হই-চই পড়ে গিয়েছিল। এরও আগে বাংলাদেশের জনৈক শিল্পী 'রবীন্দ্রনাথ ২০১০'

শিরোনামে ‘না চাহিলে যারে পাওয়া যায়’ গানটিকে রক মিউজিকের ছাঁচে ফেলে ক্যাসেট করেন। কুমারজিতের গানের ক্যাসেট প্রকাশ হয়েছিল বলে শুনেছি। বিশ্বভারতী সংগীত সমিতির চাপেই সম্ভবত বাজার থেকে তা সরিয়ে ফেলা হয়। তখন প্রবীণ রবীন্দ্রসংগীত শিল্পী সহ অনেকেই গেল গেল রব তুলেছিলেন—‘বাঁদরামো’ থেকে শুরু করে কত-না আখ্যাই মিলেছিল তাঁর কপালে। তখন নিশ্চিত মনে হয়েছিল রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের এরকম বিকৃত পরিবেশনে যে প্রতিরোধ গড়ে উঠবে তা ছাপিয়ে আর কারও সাহস হবে না এমন কাজের পুনরাবৃত্তি করা। ভুল ভেবেছিলাম। তখন বুঝিনি, পরে বুঝেছি একদল মানুষ প্রস্তুত হয়ে আছেন স্বত্ব উঠে গেলেই রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের খামতিটুকু ভরিয়ে দেবেন।¹⁸⁵

After the copyright issues were abolished, the first recorded songs that were created were by the two artists—Debabrata Biswas and Hemanta Mukhopadhyay. The songs that Debabrata Biswas sang maintained only the melodic-structures, all the rest was in his own style. Shortly afterwards, he released another cassette, in which he sang—‘আমার হারিয়ে যাওয়া দিন’ and ‘মেঘেরা চলে চলে যায়’. It is pertinent to mention that the song ‘আমার হারিয়ে যাওয়া দিন’ was previously sung by Shantideb Ghosh and Debabrata Biswas was quite aware of it. But while recording the same song, the melody came out in a completely different form. Next in line was a cassette titled—‘এলেম’, with loud instrumentation and high-pitched singing-style. Another notable cassette was published by Sa Re Ga Ma (HMV), a collection of Rabindra *Kabya-Geeti* titled—‘প্রথম প্রদীপ’. It was sung by applying melody to four poems of Rabindranath, as requested by Maitreyi Devi. The cassette itself mentioned:

‘অপ্রকাশিত ও সুরারোপিত এই গানগুলি গেয়েছেন হেমন্ত মুখোপাধ্যায়, তাঁর নিজেরই সুরে।’— এগুলি যে গান, তা সম্ভবত রবীন্দ্রনাথও ভাবেননি কোনোদিন। ক্যাসেট-নির্মাণ একথা অবশ্য লিখিত ভাবে স্বীকার করেছেন যে এই চারটি গান বিশ্বভারতী সংগীত সমিতি অনুমোদিত নয়।

...এরও আগে শান্তিনিকেতন সংগীতভবনের প্রাক্তন ছাত্র পরিমল হোম একগুচ্ছ রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতায় সুর দিয়ে রেকর্ড করে প্রকাশ করেন, প্রখ্যাত চিকিৎসক ও সংগীত বিশারদ সমীরকুমার গুপ্ত ‘গীতাঞ্জলির গান’ বলে একাত্তরটি গানের স্বরলিপি প্রকাশ করেছেন স্বরবিতানের ছাঁচে—এমনকী তার সিডিও প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। কলকাতার একটি রেকর্ড কোম্পানির সঙ্গে দিল্লির তথ্য-সংস্কৃতি দপ্তরের যোগাযোগে বিভিন্ন ভারতীয় ভাষায় রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের ‘মিউজিক ভিডিও’ প্রচারিত হয়েছে। স্বত্ব উঠে যাওয়া যে একই শিল্পীর উপস্থাপনা কীভাবে পালটে দিতে পারে, তার একটি উৎকৃষ্ট উদাহরণ সুমন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের গাওয়া ‘কালো হরিণ চোখ’ ক্যাসেটটি। তাঁর নিজের গাওয়া পুরোনো গানের সঙ্গে এই ক্যাসেটের

¹⁸⁵ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩, ৮৭ ।

গানগুলি মিলিয়ে দেখলেই পার্থক্য স্পষ্ট বোঝা যাবে। চলচ্চিত্রে কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের এতখানি অপব্যবহার হয় নি। সেখানে গায়নশৈলী ও আঙ্গিক প্রচলিত ধারাতে সবসময় না মিললেও সুরের সম্মান রক্ষা করার চেষ্টাই দেখেছি। তবু এর মাঝে তরুণ মজুমদারের মতো গুণী পরিচালকদের হাতে ‘প্রাণ চায় চক্ষু না চায়’ গানটির রূপায়ণ দেখে বেদনাহত হতে হয়। আজকাল অবশ্য Remix বলে একটি ব্যাপার চোখে পড়ছে। সে যে কী ভয়ংকর বস্তু, তার উৎকৃষ্ট উদাহরণ ‘বং কানেকশন’ সিনেমার ‘পাগলা হাওয়ার বাদল দিনে’ গানটি। গানের বোধের কথা ভাবলে এই সব এক রং কানেকশন মাত্র।¹⁸⁶

Rabindranath’s songs on the record were broadcasted by various companies and agencies. Until 1915, most of the singers of Rabindra Sangeet on record were from outside the circle of Rabindranath. So the most popular artists of that era, such as: Bedana Dasi, Purnakumari, Krishnabhamini performed Rabindranath’s songs on the records, but in most cases they composed their own art-form of presenting the song. The main thing for them was *raga-raginis*. Although Rabindranath was mentioned as the composer or creator of the songs on the record label, there was always the name of the *raga-raginis* in brackets next to the first line of the song. Even Amala Das’s record is no exception, who is considered to be the only artist whose recordings were devoid of extraneous instruments, was structured in the original rhythm, form and tune of Rabindranath’s songs. But Rabindranath was so embarrassed by the distortion of his songs on the record, that he resorted to the law and finally the contract of Rabindranath and Gramophone Company was prepared on 5th October, 1926; there Rabindranath was mentioned as ‘The composer’ and for the first time any financial receivables were mentioned very clearly. Along with many of the conditions that were arranged, one was that the company shall pay to the composer or his nominee a royalty of eight annas for each double-sided record of any of the composer's said songs or recitations manufactured or to be manufactured by the company, provided always that the company shall at all times be at liberty to determine the selling price for all records. From then onwards, Rabindranath’s songs gained a financial aspect as well. On 29th June, 1945, a new contract was signed between Rathindranath Tagore, Visva-Bharati Music Board and Gramophone Company. Notable thing was that it mentioned from then, the Crest of Visva-Bharati shall be incorporated in the label design and the words ‘Recorded in co-operation with the Visva-Bharati Music Board’—shall be included in the text printed on the label and also the companies

¹⁸⁶ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩, ৮৭ ।

shall pay the secretary a copyright royalty of five percent per double-sided record. Rabindra Sangeet has since entered the Bengali middle-class family, the artists of Rabindranath's songs continue to get special status.

At the root of the perfection that Rabindra Sangeet evokes today is an artistic expression of a balanced and restrained style of words and melodies. This thing did not happen in one day. After a long period of pursuit, observation and rejection, Rabindranath took the aesthetic medium of his proper self-expression. There is a great distance between 'Rabindranath's song' and 'Rabindra Sangeet'. 'Rabindranath's song' has become 'Rabindra Sangeet' after crossing many paths, after going through several experiments — from 'রবিবাবুর গান' to 'রবিঠাকুরের গান' and then finally the poet's extraordinary talent was fully manifested in 'রবীন্দ্রসংগীত'. In order to understand this journey, it is necessary to know the chronological history of Rabindranath's entire music creation as well as to be acquainted with Rabindranath's literary works. When we say 'Rabindra Sangeet', a particular type of song is imprinted in our minds which is not only for the composition of Rabindranath, but also for the melody of Rabindranath. In his eighty years of life, Rabindranath has composed songs for more than sixty years. The number of songs collected so far are 617 songs in the *Puja-stage* of the first volume of *Gitabitan* and 46 songs in the *Swadesh-stage*. In the second volume, 395 songs in *Prem-stage*, 283 in *Prakriti-stage*, 140 in *Bichitra-stage*, 21 in *Anushthanik-stage*; and in the third volume, 20 songs from *Bhanusingha Thakurer Padabali*, 132 songs from *Natyageeti*, 16 *Jatiya Sangeet*, 83 *Puja and Prayer*, 17 *Occasional songs*, 109 from *Prem and Prakriti*, and the songs from lyric-dramas 'Parishodh', 'Kalmrigaya', 'Balmiki Pratibha', and dance-dramas 'Chitrangada', 'Chandalika', 'Shyama' and 'Mayar Khela'. This vast body of music amazes us, but how far have we been able to dive in to find its inner meaning? In answer to this question, we have to think about the depth of his creation:

কিছু গানের দৃষ্টান্ত দেওয়া সম্ভব, যা রবীন্দ্রনাথের হয়েও 'রবীন্দ্রসংগীত' হয়ে ওঠেনি। কয়েকটি গানের বাণীতেই তা স্পষ্ট হয়ে উঠবে যেমন :

“গা সখী, গাইলি যদি, আবার সে গান / কতদিন শুনি নাই ও পুরানো তান”, “ও কী কথা বল সখী, ছি ছি, / ওকথা মনে এনো না।”, “ওকি সখা, মুছ আঁধি / আমার তরেও কাঁদিবে কি! / কে আমি বা! আমি অভাগিনী / আমি মরি তাহে দুখ কিবা”।

...এমনি অনেক উদাহরণ দেওয়া যায় যেগুলি রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান হয়েও রবীন্দ্রসংগীত হয়ে ওঠেনি। এগুলির অধিকাংশই রচিত হয়েছে তাঁর গান রচনার প্রথম যুগে। এ ছাড়া আছে বেশ কিছু ভাঙা গান। যেখানে কোনোক্রমেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ পূর্ণ বিকশিত নন। তেমনি তিনটি গান : “হে মন, তাঁকে দেখো আঁখি খুলিয়ে / যিনি আছেন সদা অন্তরে”, “আজি মোর দ্বারে কাহার মুখ হেরেছি / জাগি উঠি প্রাণে গান কত যে / গাহিবার সুর ভুলে গেছি রে” এবং “ঘোর দুঃখে জাগিনু, ঘনঘোরা যামিনী / একেলা হয় রে—তোমার আশা হারায়ে”।¹⁸⁷

Rabindranath himself is the best exponent of Rabindra Sangeet; singer Rabindranath was in no way inferior to the creator Rabindranath. Subhas Chowdhuri, in his writings, mentioned:

রবীন্দ্রনাথের গলায় ছিল ‘একলা মানুষের কণ্ঠে হাজার পাখির গান’। তাঁর গানে কোথাও কোনো ফাঁক ছিল না। পিতা মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ বালকপুত্র রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান শুনে বলতেন ‘রবি আমাদের বাংলাদেশের বুলবুল’।

...নিজেই তিনি বলেছেন ‘আমি বাণীর সাথে বাণী, আমি গানের সাথে গান, আমি প্রাণের সাথে প্রাণ’।

অবনীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর প্রিয় রবিকাকার বিষয়ে তাই তো বলেছেন ‘তাঁর গানই তাঁর আসল জীবনী’।

...নিরূপম সৃষ্টি, রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান কত-না অনুষ্ণে ছড়িয়ে আছে অবনীন্দ্রস্মৃতিতে, আর জড়িয়ে আছে সেইসব মানুষের লেখায় যাঁরা সাক্ষী ছিলেন দুর্লভ সেই সৃষ্টি-মুহূর্তগুলির। একটুখানি প্রত্যাশা জানিয়েছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ উত্তরকালের কাছে:

‘হয়েছে শেষ, তবুও বাকি

কিছু তো গান গিয়েছি রাখি

সেটুকু নিয়ে গুনগুনিয়ে সুরের খেলা খেলো।’¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩, ১১১ ।

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, ২৯ ।

5.4 Change and modification: survival of a performance text

*A poem cannot be translated,
it can only be re-lived in a different atmosphere.*¹⁸⁹

The debate over whether translation of poetry is possible or not has been going on for a long time. The reason is that the words of the poem not only carry the meaning, but also the expression of the whole form by combining the meaning, sound, essence etc. of the poem. It is argued that poetry cannot be transmitted from one language to another, even if it is possible to preserve the meaning in translation, not only is the essence and its connotation omitted, also the difference of words in the translation takes its place. As a result, with the change of sound comes the destruction or change of form and meaning. If the form is left out, what is left in the poem can be called a paraphrase of general meaning, but it is almost impossible for it to be recognized as a poetic phrase. Hence the vanity of translations. In rare cases, the translation sometimes becomes a poem, but in that case, it has to be reborn from the essence of the original poem. In such a case, this new-born or reborn poem will be a poem, but the form will be different, that is, it will be a new poem, even if its form is added to the original poem, it will be unique in its originality.

But it can be seen that from the ancient times till today—no common-poet, great-poet, non-poet or bad-poet, per say, has lacked enthusiasm in translation. Though P.B. Shelley believed that the plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower — he himself has translated several poems from Greek, Spanish, German, and other languages. The amount of accurate poetic translations is not less, some of them have also gained fame: Cecil Lewis's translation of Virgil's *Georgics*, Louis MacNeice's *Faust*, Roy Campbell's *San Juan de la Crouth*, and so on. In addition, some of the world's leading poets have translated poems as an indication of their interests in the contemporary poets, such as: Eliot's translation of St. John Perse's poems; Eliot's poems have been translated by St. John Perse, and Rabindranath; Rabindranath's poems have been translated by Andre Gide, Rene Brimman, Neruda, Cecilia Meireles; Gide's poems have been translated by Rilke, Rilke's poems by Spender—these are memorable for their proper and complete translation. Apart from these, there are many attempts which are apparently incomplete and improper. Admittedly, it is a general perception that lyrical poems should

¹⁸⁹ Rabindranath Tagore in an interview given to Portland Press in Washington on 23 October, 1916.

be removed from the list of translatable poems beforehand because, the poetic form of lyrical poetry, which is formed in the form of subtle energy of phonetics, cannot survive in any way in translation. That is why if one wants to get the taste of lyrical poetry, there is no alternative but to approach the original poem. So it can be seen that while Shakespeare, Milton, Virgil, etc. have been translated into various European languages, there is no fair, even acceptable translation of Shelley, Keats or Yugo. The prose section of Dante's *Divine Comedy* has been translated extensively, but his works contain a bunch of lyrical poems called 'Conzoniere', to this day hardly a successful translation of those poems has reached us. For the same reason, Rabindranath's lyrical poems are beyond the reach of any other or ordinary translator. The proposal of translating lyric-poems is problematic, but a new problem arises when the poet himself sits down to translate his poems. The first question which arises for a poet is can he/she be bilingual or multilingual as a poet? Is it possible? Everyone will admit that the ability to compose poems in other than the mother tongue is quite rare. In addition to the practice of foreign languages, some poets have written poems in other languages, such as Dante wrote in Latin, Milton wrote in Latin and Italian, and Goethe wrote in English. But this kind of writing is considered as a by-product of the aforementioned poets in their own language and their poetic fame has nothing to do with those. But the three books of poems in French-language that Rilke published and which have found a place in his entire writings, cannot be included in the 'by-product', although his poetic reputation does not depend on these French poems at all. In this context, the English poems of Rabindranath will come to mind automatically. Like Rilke's French poems, they cannot be categorized as by-products. Although there is a fundamental difference between these English works of Rabindranath and Rilke's French poetry. Rilke's poems are nowhere to be found, on the other hand, Rabindranath's universal fame is mainly based on these English works. Rabindranath's English compositions are a prominent and famous addition to his vast creation cycle. If these can be regarded as translations, there are hardly any instances where translated poetry has conquered the whole world like those. Of course, it is a known fact that in the title page of English poetry books like *Gitanjali*, *The Gardener*, etc., it has been mentioned as—'translated by the author from the original Bengali'. That is why these poems are generally known as translations. And taking advantage of that word, Edward Thomson once gave some 'advice' to Rabindranath (December 12, 1920) in a letter, where he wrote that Rabindranath's translations were not proper and it has become a kind of a *précis* of the original work. But readers who are aware of the essence

of poetry will understand when they read these English works, written in simple prose, which are established in self-glory. If one tries to match it with the original, he/she will understand that with the translation, the form and essence of the poem have also changed and the measure of their success or excellence is not in the original Bengali poetry, it is in the poem itself. Moreover, in spite of the title-page notice, the poet himself has repeatedly said that his English works are not mere interpretations of the original. In a letter to Ajit Kumar Chakraborty in 1913, he said:

‘আমি আজকাল যেভাবে তর্জমা করি তার মধ্যে মূলের চেহারা খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না। আমার এগুলি প্রতিভাতি : প্রতিমূর্তি নয়।’¹⁹⁰

The poet did not cease to say that his English works were not translated in the conventional sense, but added a few remarks which shed light on the format of poetry. In a letter regarding his works to Professor J. D. Anderson in 1918, the poet wrote that he finds a sense of magic in English prose, which seems to transmute his Bengali verses into something which is original again in a different manner. Therefore, it not only satisfies but gives him delight to assist his poems in their English birth. Earlier, during a visit to America in 1916, he told similar things to a reporter that he eagerly wished that people might read his poetry in the original Bengali version as his English translations are not the same. Each country has its symbols of expression. So, when he took on the task of translating his works, he found not only some new images, but also some new thoughts and finally it has come out to be something almost entirely new. The fundamental idea is the same but the vision changes. In his description of the experience of how translation in his hands is transformed into a new creation, we find the special active role of the medium in the creation of poetry. Language, by its own power and temperament, is very much responsible for the promotion and control of poetry, language is not only a means of expression or a tool of formation, but also a strong verbal element of poetry. What is true in one’s own language is even more true when it comes to translating into a different language. Abandoning the agreement reached by the poet with one language, he has to deal with the demands of another language. Apart from Rabindranath, the other bilingual poet Rilke also expressed similar thoughts. The transformation of the essence of poetry in this way inevitably results in differences in poetic quality. Two examples will suffice:

¹⁹⁰ মিত্র, সৌরীন্দ্র । *কবির স্বধর্ম: রবীন্দ্র-বিষয়ক প্রবন্ধ* । কলকাতা: সিগনেট প্রেস । ২০১২, ১২২ ।

বাবলা শাখারে বলে আম্রশাখা, ভাই
উনানে পুড়িয়া তুমি কেন হও ছাই?
হায়, হায়, সখি, তব ভাগ্য কী কঠোর!
বাবলার শাখা বলে, দুঃখ নাহি মোর।
বাঁচিয়া সফল তুমি, ওগো চতলতা
নিজেরে করিয়া ভস্ম মোর সফলতা।’

The six lines taken from the collection of poems ‘কণিকা’, can be compared to the translated version presented in ‘Stray Birds’ —

The burning log bursts in flame and cries – “This is my flower, my death.”

First of all, many people do not recognize the above-mentioned lines written in English as a translation of the Bengali lines. However, like Thomson, one may argue that according to rules of mathematics, since the six-line verse has become a two-line English prose, it is nothing more than a précis of the original. Those who are interested in the essence, will not need an explanation that the English lines have given birth to a new poem, even though the Bengali verse is its prototype. The glory of self-sacrifice in the original, has become a wonderful poem on the transcendental passage of a tragic experience. Combining the poem ‘১৪০০ সাল’ from ‘Chitra’ with ‘The Gardener’s last poem, one can see how much difference there is between form and taste as the original Bengali 14 lines has been translated. The difference can be defined by Rabindranath’s analogy: the original Bengali poem is a fountain; and in English translation it has become a lake. In the context of Rabindranath’s English poetry, the word ‘translation’ is negative and exclusive. They are reincarnated poems, a small but notable addition to Rabindranath’s vast collection of literary works.

We can easily find an explanation of the popularity of the English *Gitanjali* or *The Gardener* or *The Crescent Moon* where Rabindranath has similarities with the Georgians who were the foremost in English poetry in 1912. There is no reason to think that he is insignificant even where they are different. Maybe this difference in Rabindranath’s poetry filled the gap of the two cultures and where there is a deeper conflict behind the apparent similarities, we may find in hindsight an indication of the poet’s immediate fame and impermanence. If the writings of the critics are a reliable reflection of

contemporary opinion, it is not difficult to understand that in terms of content, Rabindranath's translations attracted the reader. One of the main reasons for the contemporary appeal of the Georgians is their enthusiasm in real life, especially in the lives of ordinary people or in the trivial things—and in Rabindranath's poems, interest in human life and the real world was the first thing that attracted critics. Even in poems with obvious spiritual feelings, such as the English *Gitanjali*, as Yeats was certainly pointing out when he quoted Dwijendranath Maitra in the introduction. By following the contemporary tradition Rabindranath mentioned the theme of *The Gardener* to be—'Lyrics of Life and Love'. Although few scholars have argued that the poems in *The Gardener* lack the maturity of *The Gitanjali*, there are opinions quite opposite to it as well. According to Alice Roberts:

...there is no doubt that the verses in this book are far finer and more genuine than even the best in *Gitanjali*. He deals here with concrete and definite things, and he has the eye which Keats had, or Gautier, for the visible tangible world. For that we welcome him.¹⁹¹

Perhaps it is necessary to shed light on the matter from the point of view of the recipients of the translation as well. Perhaps Rabindranath unknowingly touched some of the deepest aspirations and expectations of the literary world of that time. So much of the colour that was involved in the English translation of his poems may have been due to the mentality of the English readers at that time. As soon as that literary mood and mentality changed a little, it was not long before the colour faded away.

'চৈতালি' থেকে 'পরিচয়', 'পুঁটু' বা 'দুই বন্ধু'-র মতো কবিতা যখন 'গার্ডনার' অনুবাদের জন্যে বেছে নিয়েছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন কি তিনি ঘুণাঙ্করেও জানতেন সমসাময়িক ইংরিজি কবিতার একটি প্রিয় মোটিফে তিনিও এমনভাবে অংশীদার হবেন? একটু সূক্ষ্মভাবে ভেবে দেখলে এ-মোটিফে তাঁর অবদানের মধ্যে কিছু স্বকীয়তাও কিছু খুঁজে পাই না? প্রাণিজগতের সঙ্গে মানবজগতের এক গভীর মেলবন্ধন কোনো কোনো মুহূর্তে আচমকা উদ্ভাসিত হয়ে ওঠে, সেই মুহূর্তগুলো যেন স্থায়ী হয়ে আছে তাঁর এইসব কবিতায়। দুই জগতের মধ্যের মগ্ন সম্পর্ক রবীন্দ্রনাথ যেমন করে এবং যতো সহজে ধরেছেন ঠিক তেমনটা কোনো ইংরেজ কবির কাছে পাই না।¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Kundu, Bhattacharya and Sircar. eds. *Imagining Tagore: Rabindranath Tagore and the British Press—1912-1941*, Delhi: Sahitya Samsad, 1990, 22.

¹⁹² ব্রহ্ম, চঞ্চলকুমার । *ইংলন্ডের দিকপ্রান্তে রবির উদয় রবির অস্ত* । কলকাতা: পারুল প্রকাশনী । ২০১১, ১৮৮ ।

Rabindranath was able to connect more deeply with the mentality of contemporary England through the essence of simplicity—simplicity of language, of attitude, and above all simplicity in depicting the philosophy of life. The word ‘simplicity’ has been used by English critics many times in the context of Rabindranath, this quality of his writing particularly fascinated them. The idea of poetry can be freely expressed in English only if the English translation is simple and clear – this close belief of the poet must have made the idea of simplicity in translation more comprehensible, more irresistible, which paved the way for the English readers to consider him as a natural poet. This simplicity is the biggest reason for the immediate appeal of Rabindranath’s poetry to the English mind. It is not difficult for the reader of English *Gitanjali* and *The Gardener* to understand that wisdom cannot be attained by the practice of pure knowledge and intellect, wisdom is in fact a kind of spiritual feeling and intuition. What it requires is simply returning to one’s heart and innate feelings, as was expressed in poem no. 102 of *Gitanjali*—*I put my tales of you into lasting songs. / The secret gushes out from my heart. / They come and ask me, ‘Tell me all your meanings’. / I know not how to answer them. / I say, ‘Ah, who knows what they mean!’ / They smile and go away in utter scorn*—it has been the inner-message for many of his compositions and through this vision the poet presented one of the most essential factors of poetry and translation—universality.

কবিতা কোনো প্রয়োগযোগ্য জ্ঞান বা নীতি বা দর্শনপ্রচারে ব্যবহার্য নয়। তবু কবিতার বাইরে কবিতার এক পরম মূল্য আছে। কবিতা কাজ করে মানুষের মনে আর কল্পনায়, তাদের পরিধি বাড়িয়ে দেয়, নিয়ে আসে নতুন দৃষ্টি। সেই কবিতার আসল উপযোগিতা। এসব কথা মনে রেখে যদি ইংরেজমানে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতার অভিঘাতকে স্পষ্ট করে বুঝতে চাই তবে মনে হয় সে সময়ের ইংরিজি কবিতার জগতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ফিরিয়ে আনলেন বড়ো রোম্যান্টিকদের কবিতার স্মৃতি। এডওয়ার্ডিয় ও জর্জিয়ে যুগের চৈতন্যের কিছু দিককে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অনুবাদ আশ্চর্যভাবে নানা রকমে নানা দিক দিয়ে স্পর্শ করেছিলো। কিন্তু তাঁর আত্মিক যোগ ছিলো ব্লেক, ওঅরডসওঅরথ, কোলরিজ, শেলি ও কীটসের সঙ্গেই। তাঁদের প্রসারিত জীবনবোধের দূর রেশ যেন আবার পাওয়া গেলো এই ভারতীয় কবির লেখায়। বিষয়বস্তু, মনোভঙ্গি বা জীবনদর্শনে জর্জিআন কবিদের সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অনুবাদের কিছু আশ্চর্য মিল তো রয়েছেই। উপরন্তু তাঁর লেখায় পাওয়া যায় কিছু গভীরতর প্রতিধ্বনি।¹⁹³

¹⁹³ ব্রহ্ম, চঞ্চলকুমার । *ইংলন্ডের দিকপ্রান্তে রবির উদয় রবির অস্ত* । কলকাতা: পারুল প্রকাশনী । ২০১১, ১৮০ ।

When the translation of *Gitanjali* by the poet entered with its special appearance and taste, even the poet could not have imagined that it would be synonymous with some of the themes and explorations of contemporary English poetry in such a way. What actually happened is more than just synchronizing. It is known that the character and appeal of prose-poems written by different poets can be different because every poet has a different subject-matter and style. The tactics they use to bring prose to the level of poetry are also different. There were some distinctions in the form of English *Gitanjali*'s poems which were especially memorable to the English readers of that time—it showed how the poet's personal feelings can become poetry in simple English prose.

‘Where the mind is without fear’—এ লাইনের গতি ও স্পন্দনে নদীর দুর্নিবার প্রবাহের অনুভূতি স্মরণে আসে। ‘Let all the strains of joy’-তে ছোটো ছোটো বাক্যাংশ কেমন করে পুঞ্জীভূত হয়ে ক্রমশ একটা পূর্ণতার দিকে এগিয়েছে তাও মনে পড়বে। অথবা উল্লেখ করি ইংরিজি গীতাঞ্জলি-র ‘ছ’ নম্বর কবিতা ‘Pluck this little flower’—এর, যেখানে দেখি ভাবনা-বিকাশের তিনটে পর্যায় কেমন পরিচ্ছন্ন ধরা পড়েছে হৃদয়-দীর্ঘ বাক্যের চালে। ফলত, রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখা বিদেশির গদ্যেই নিদর্শন পাওয়া গেলো যে গদ্যস্পন্দকেও এমনভাবে নিয়ন্ত্রিত করা সম্ভব যাতে বাক্যাংশের চালের মধ্যেই অভিজ্ঞতার প্রতিফলন ঘটে। শুধু ইংরিজি গীতাঞ্জলি-তেই নয়, অন্যত্রও এটা হয়েছে, যেমন দ্য ক্রেসেন্ট মুন-এর ‘দ্য চাইলড এনজেল’-এ :

They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair, they know no end to their wranglings.

Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child, unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence.

ফরমের দিক দিয়ে বন্ধনমুক্তির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে অভিজ্ঞতার নিজস্ব ছাঁদের প্রতি গাঢ়তর বিশ্বস্ততার, তখনকার কবিতাজগতের লক্ষ্যদুটো প্রোজ-পোয়মের ফরমেও অর্জন করা সম্ভব এমন একটা ইঙ্গিত হয়তো রবীন্দ্রনাথের সৃষ্টিতে ধরা পড়েছিল।¹⁹⁴

In order to capture the spirit of the original poem, it is necessary to create a changed form while translating in the intended language. In the early translations, Rabindranath somehow tried to do that. But even if the form of prose-poem is surprisingly compatible with contemporary consciousness, it is not possible to capture all the subtleties of the original. The poet has always been reluctant to translate his poems in a strictly rhythmic form, especially in terms of rhyme-scheme. Rabindranath himself has stated that the English translation of *Gitanjali* inspired him to write prose-poems in Bengali as well. But apart from this, by translating his writings into English and noticing the fluctuations

¹⁹⁴ ব্রহ্ম, চঞ্চলকুমার । *ইংলন্ডের দিকপ্রান্তে রবির উদয় রবির অস্ত* । কলকাতা: পারুল প্রকাশনী । ২০১১, ২৪৩ ।

of the English reader's attitude towards it—no evidence has been found whether this experience has left any other considerable impact on his later compositions or artistic thinking.

তাঁর সৃষ্টির প্রবাহ চলেছে তার নিজের রীতিতে, যখন তা মোড় নিয়েছে যেমন 'গীতাঞ্জলি'-পর্বের পরই 'বলাকা'-য়, তখনও সে রীতি-পরিবর্তন তাঁর সমগ্র বাংলা রচনার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতেই সবচেয়ে ভালো বোঝা যায়। অনুবাদের অভিজ্ঞতা বা অন্য ইংরিজি লেখালেখি তাঁর মনের ওপর কোন গভীর দাগ ফেলেছিলো বলে মনে তো হয় না। তাঁর জীবনকাব্যের মহাদেশে ইংরিজি অনুবাদ কোন উপনদীর মতো হয়ে উঠতে পারেনি, থেকে গেছে বড়োজোর একটা বিচ্ছিন্ন দ্বীপের মতো।¹⁹⁵

Rabindranath composed the lyrical-poems for *Gitanjali* for almost 8 long years—many critics have questioned the motivation behind this uninterrupted flow of songs. In order to perform at *Maghotsab*, some creations were accumulated in the basket of songs every year, but there was no such immediate demand behind composing *Gitanjali*'s songs. Yet through the variety of the songs, the poet time and again wanted to present himself either through submission, or through self-sacrifice, sometimes in love or sometimes in devotion. Some may argue that there must be a reason behind composing poetry; even if it is true, it is not quite clear in which way can the exact nature of the poet's creative impulses be determined. However, it must be admitted that the introduction of poetic inspiration is sometimes helpful in acquiring the essence of the poetry. Whereas, Goethe once told Eckerman that the world is so great and rich and life so full of variety, that one can never want occasions for poems. But they must all be occasioned, that is to say, reality must give both impulse and material. A particular event becomes universal and poetic by the very circumstance that it is treated by a poet.

যৌবনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যত ব্রহ্মসংগীত রচনা করেছিলেন তার অধিকাংশই পুরনো ব্রহ্মসংগীতের ধারা অনুসরণ করে চলেছিল। তবু এইটুকু বলে থামলে তাঁর প্রতি অবিচার হবে—কারণ তাঁর গানের সঙ্গে অন্যান্য ব্রহ্মসংগীতের পার্থক্য এই যে পুরনো ধর্মচেতনার সঙ্গে সর্বত্রই কবি স্বভাবের মিলনে এমন একটি আন্তরিকতার সুর গানে লেগেছে যা আমাদের ধর্মসংগীতে ইতিপূর্বে সহজলভ্য ছিল না। যেমন ধরা যাক 'অন্তরে জাগিছ অন্তরযামী' গানটি। কথায় নতুনত্ব নেই—গানের রচনাতেও বিশেষ সৌন্দর্য প্রকাশের অবকাশ নেই। তবু এ যেন সকল ভক্তের নিয়মিত পূজার প্রার্থনা নয়, এ যেন

¹⁹⁵ ব্রহ্ম, চঞ্চলকুমার। *ইংলন্ডের দিকপ্রান্তে রবির উদয় রবির অস্ত*। কলকাতা: পারুল প্রকাশনী। ২০১১, ২৫২।

একজনেরই হৃদয়-উৎসারিত ঘোষণা—'তবু তুমি মম জীবন স্বামী'। 'শক্তিরূপ হেরো তাঁর', 'সংসারে কোন ভয় নাহি', 'শান্ত কেন ওহে পাহু', 'গাও বীণা—বীণা গাও রে', 'মন্দিরে মম কে আসিলে হে', 'আমার হৃদয় সমুদ্রতীরে কে তুমি দাঁড়িয়ে', 'ভক্ত করিছে প্রভুর চরণে জীবন সমর্পণ' প্রভৃতি অজস্র গানে দেখা যাবে এক নিঃসংশয় ভক্তকে, সুখে দুঃখে যার শেষ শান্তিটুকু প্রভুর চরণছায়ে নিহিত আছে। তবু একথা স্বীকার করতে হবে যে 'অল্প লইয়া থাকি তাই', 'ঘাটে বসে আছি আনমনা' প্রভৃতি গানে ব্যক্তিত্বের এমন একটি স্পর্শ আছে যা ঐ ধর্মীয় চেতনার কাঠামোর মধ্যেও নূতনের স্বাদ এনে দেয়।¹⁹⁶

Some even argued that *Gitanjali's* Rabindranath is not just a poet who is fascinated by words or rhyme, rather he is a devotee and a sage. Contemporary readers saw the joy of spirituality in his poems. *Gitanjali's* poems are not merely religious poems or poems of oneness with the common man. It is more like coming back to one's own self for a moment, tasting this world in different ways all within the self—often by self-surrender to the Creator, or by promising to crush arrogance, even by longing for love, and there are desperate attempts to assert one's existence in this world in various beauties. Not to turn away from life, to adapt oneself to life in absolute attachment, to be delighted by its taste—*Gitanjali* is the poem of that passion for life. A very strong sense of life-affirmation has been expressed in many ways in Rabindranath's writings. In 'রোগশয্যায়', he writes:

অজস্র দিনের আলো

জানি, একদিন

দু চক্ষুরে দিয়েছিলে ঋণ।

ফিরায়ে নেবার দাবি জানায়েছ আজ

তুমি, মহারাজ।

শোধ করে দিতে হবে জানি

তবু কেন সন্ধ্যাদীপে

ফেল ছায়াখানি।

রচিলে যে আলো দিয়ে তব বিশ্বতল

আমি সেথা অতিথি কেবল।

¹⁹⁶ বসু, সোমেন্দ্রনাথ। *রবিপ্রদক্ষিণ পথে*। কলকাতা: টেগোর রিসার্চ ইনস্টিটিউট। ২০০৪, ২০।

This life-affirming pursuit is the major essence of the songs of *Gitanjali*. The poet's main intention was to give words to his inner feelings, express the joy of being in this world.

ইন্দ্রদেবীকে লিখেছিলেন ১৯১৩ সালে, ইংরেজি গীতাঞ্জলির খ্যাতি বিস্তারের পরে, “এই কবিতাগুলি আমি লিখব বলে লিখিনি—এ আমার জীবনের ভিতরের জিনিস—এ আমার সত্যকার আত্মনিবেদন—এর মধ্যে আমার জীবনের সমস্ত সুখদুঃখ সমস্ত সাধনা বিগলিত হয়ে আপনি আকার ধারণ করেছে।”...বাংলা গীতাঞ্জলির কবিতাগুলি লেখার যাই প্রেরণা থাক অবচেতন মনে তখন যে একটা সৃষ্টির উল্লাস জেগেছিল সে কথা ইন্দ্রদেবীকে ঐ পত্রেই লিখেছেন, “একদিন ভাবের হাওয়ায় মনের মধ্যে রসের উৎসব জেগেছিল।”...গীতাঞ্জলির গান রচনার পরেও যে সব গান লিখেছেন সেগুলির সম্পর্কেও ঐ একই মনোভাব, বলেছেন, “এগুলি আমার একান্তই অন্তরের কথা—অতএব কারো না কারো অন্তরের কোন প্রয়োজন ওতে মিটেতে পারে—ও গান যার গাওয়ার দরকার সে একদিন গেয়ে ফেলে দিলেও ক্ষতি নেই কেননা আমার যা দরকার তা হয়েছে। যিনি গোপনে অপূর্ণ প্রয়াসের পূর্ণতা সাধন করে দেন তাঁরই পাদপীঠের তলায় এগুলি যদি বিছিয়ে দিতে পারি এ জন্মের মত তাহলেই আমার বকশিস মিলে গেছে।¹⁹⁷

While composing songs, Rabindranath continued to compose melodies along with the lyrics, his lyrics and melody are a composite work, not two separate works. Unlike other lyricists, he did not have to compose melodies by playing instruments, or by keeping close-contact with *Sa-re-ga-ma*. Rather, his melodies accompanied the words and held the form in his mind with perfection. Many of his poems have been transformed into songs throughout his literary career; on the contrary, only a few songs can be identified to be transformed into poems for that matter. Sudhir Chanda mentioned in this regard:

কবিতায় সুরসংযোগ স্বাভাবিক। এই কৃতি একটি যোগ। আর গানকে কবিতা এক বিয়োগ। কবিতাকে গান তাৎক্ষণিক হতে পারে, পরেও হতে পারে। আমরা জানি রবীন্দ্রসংগীতে কাব্য ও সুর দুইই রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচনা। এই বাঁধাধরা নিয়মই 'রবীন্দ্রসংগীত' নামের সংজ্ঞা। রবীন্দ্র কবিতায় অন্যতর সুরকার সুরসংযোগ করলে তা রবীন্দ্রসংগীত বলে স্বীকৃত হবে না। এটা সর্বজন মান্য convention। তার কারণ রবীন্দ্ররচিত কাব্য – সুর ভাঙারের বিশালত্ব, তার স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণতা।¹⁹⁸

In Rabindranath's lyric poems, the melody in form of a song has entered from time to time—sometimes, for fulfilling the demand of the surroundings, or in the urge to present a new song in the festivals, or in order to add music to the recitation. Perhaps one of his favourite poems, after many days, seemed to have musical qualities, then he brought out

¹⁹⁷ বসু, সোমেন্দ্রনাথ। *রবীন্দ্রদক্ষিণ পথে*। কলকাতা: টেগোর রিসার্চ ইনস্টিটিউট। ২০০৪, ২৪।

¹⁹⁸ চন্দ, সুধীর। *রবীন্দ্রসুরের নির্মাণ*। কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস। ২০০৯, ৭৪।

its indirect latent melody and gave new life to the previous form. But such transformations from songs to poems cannot be seen very frequently. It can be said that this construction arrangement is an experiment in transferring the same drink to another container—a cosmetic change.

গানকে কবিতায় ঢেলে সাজানো মানে গানের সুর বাদ...এই বিয়োগ গায়কের কাছে, আবৃত্তিকারের কাছে নয়। এবং রবীন্দ্রসংগীতানুরাগীর কাছে। এই প্রতিস্থাপন, শব্দবন্ধ ও ছন্দের কিছু ভিন্নতা এনে গানের কথার এক কাব্যান্তর ঘটানো। যেন একই ছবির স্কেচ রং-এর ব্যবহার ভিন্ন। যেন চেনা চেহারার ভিন্ন make up—এক অনুবাদ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর 'সানাই' কাব্যগ্রন্থে করেছেন এই ব্যতিক্রমী উলটপুরাণ:¹⁹⁹

| Song (গান) | Poem (কবিতা) |
|---|---|
| আমার প্রিয়ার ছায়া— আকাশে আজ ভাসে, হয় হয় | আমার প্রিয়ার সচল ছায়াছবি সজল নীলাকাশে |
| যে ছিল আমার স্বপনচারিণী— তারে বুঝিতে পারিনি | যে ছিল আমার স্বপনচারিণী এতদিন তারে বুঝিতে পারিনি |
| তুমি কোন্ ভাঙনের পথে এলে – সুপুঁরাত্তে | কোন ভাঙনের পথে এলে আমার সুপুঁরাত্তে |
| এই উদাসী হাওয়ার পথে পথে (যাবার আগে) মুকুলগুলি ঝরে | উদাস হাওয়ার পথে পথে মুকুলগুলি ঝরে |
| বসন্ত সে যায় তো হেসে—(বিদায়) যাবার কালে | বসন্ত সে যায়... ঝলক দেবে হাসি খানি |
| মম দুঃখের সাধন যবে করিনু নিবেদন—তব চরণতলে শুভলগন গেল চলে | প্রাণের সাধন করে নিবেদন একদা করেছিঁনু চরণতলে |
| বাণী মোর নাহি, জরু হৃদয় বিছায়ে—চাহিতে শুধু জানি | ওগো মোর নাহি যে বাণী, আকাশে হৃদয় শুধু বিছাতে জানি |
| অধরা মাধুরী ধরেছি— ছন্দোবন্ধনে | অধরা মাধুরী ধরা পড়িয়াছে এ মোর ছন্দবন্ধনে |
| ধূসর জীবনের গোধূলিতে—ক্লান্ত আলোয় ম্লানস্মৃতি | এ ধূসর জীবনের গোধূলি ক্ষীণ তার উদাসীন স্মৃতি |
| দোষী করিব না, করিব না—তোমারে | দোষী করিব না তোমারে ব্যথিত মনের বিকারে |

¹⁹⁹ চন্দ, সুধীর । রবীন্দ্রসুরের নির্মাণ । কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস । ২০০৯, ৭৫-৮৭ ।

It is known that words and melodies come together in the composition of Rabindranath's song naturally accompanying each other, instantaneously. The general rule is to compose a poem and then put a melody in it. But Rabindranath continued to write his songs while humming the melody in his mind—so much so that the lyrics and the melody developed at the same time.

Variety can be seen in the transformation process while applying melody into poetry. Sometimes he chose the whole poem, and sometimes he chose a part of a long poem and by applying appropriate melodies, gave it a new form. The poet has cut short the long-narrative poems in the process of applying melody and creating songs, to avoid exaggeration or repetition. But in this very process, the poetic uniqueness of the poem is never harmed, the equality of song and recitation is kept intact.

এই যে কবিতার গীতায়ন এবং গানের কবিতায়ন, এই প্রক্রিয়ার বিবর্তন ধারাটির গতিপথ আমরা যদি লক্ষ করি তাহলে যে detail স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে তা হলো, কবিতাকে গানের দলে টেনে আনবার সৃজনকথাটির বা বলা যেতে পারে নবরূপায়ণ কৃতির দিকে ঝোঁক পড়েছিল, শান্তিনিকেতনের বিশ্বভারতী হয়ে ওঠার কালে, বিংশ শতকের তৃতীয় দশকে, যখন গীতিনাট্য সমূহের আবির্ভাব হতে লাগলো—কবির চোখ পড়লো গীতধর্মী পুরোনো কবিতার দিকে। তাদের সুগুসুরকে তিনি জাগিয়ে তুললেন। প্রথম সুর এলো 'ছবি ও গান' এর কাব্যে—'আমার প্রাণের পরে চলে গেল কে' এবং 'ওই জানালার কাছে বসে আছে' প্রথম সুরকে সাথী করে গান গেয়ে উঠলো ১৮৮৩ সালে। 'কড়ি ও কোমল'-এ আছে ৮টি গান : 'ওগো শোনো কে বাজায়', 'আমি নিশি নিশি কত', 'ওগো এত প্রেম এত আশা', 'আজি শরততপনে', 'ধরা দিয়েছি গো', 'এ শুধু অলস মায়া', 'কেন চেয়ে আছ গো মা', 'আমায় বোলো না গাহিতে'; 'মানসী'-তে ২টি গান: 'কে আমারে যেন এনেছে ডাকিয়া', 'তবু মনে রেখো'; 'সোনার তরী'-র ২টি: 'তোমরা হাসিয়া বহিয়া চলিয়া যাও', 'খাঁচার পাখি ছিল সোনার খাঁচাটিতে'; 'চিত্রা'-তে ১টি গান: 'নহ মাতা নহ কন্যা'; 'চৈতালি'-র ১টি: 'আজি কোন্ ধন হতে বিশ্বে'; 'ক্ষণিকা'-তে ৬টি: 'কোন্ বাণিজ্যে নিবাস তোমার', 'নীলনবঘনে আষাঢ় গগনে', 'হৃদয় আমার নাচেরে আজিকে', 'হে নিরুপমা', 'কৃষ্ণকলি', 'ভোর থেকে আজ বাদল ছুটেছে'; এবং 'কল্পনা'-এর বেশ কিছু গান: 'আজি উন্মাদ মধুনিশি ওগো', 'কিসের তরে অশ্রু ঝরে', 'কে এসে যায় ফিরে ফিরে', 'ওগো কাঙাল আমারে কাঙাল', 'ভালবেসে সখী', 'এবার চলি তবে', 'হেরিয়া শ্যামল ঘন', 'তুমি সন্ধ্যার মেঘ শান্ত সুদূর', 'অয়ি ভুবনমনোমোহিনী', 'কেন বাজাও কাঁকন', 'জানি হে যবে প্রভাত হবে', 'যামিনী না যেতে জাগালে', 'যদি বারণ কর তবে', 'আমি চাহিতে এসেছি শুধু', 'সখী প্রতিদিন হয়', 'দুইটি হৃদয়ে একটি আসন', 'ভয় হতে তব অভয় মাঝে', 'আমি সংসারে মন দিয়েছি'।²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ চন্দ, সুধীর । *রবীন্দ্রসুরের নির্মাণ* । কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস । ২০০৯, ৭৭-৭৮ ।

Among the poems that were compiled in the collection-‘নৈবেদ্য’, 17 out of the 100 poems turned out as individual songs. In ‘শিশু’, there is only one such poem-‘তোমার কটিতটের ধটি / কে দিল রাঙিয়া’—which was later transformed into a song for the purpose of performing in a drama. The original poem was written in 1903, whereas its musical form was composed in 1931. From ‘উৎসর্গ’, similar changes have been done to the poem ‘আমি চঞ্চল হে’—for the protagonist Amal’s performance in the drama ‘ডাকঘর’. On one hand, the poem ‘হে ভারত আজি নবীন বর্ষে’—was transformed into-‘হে ভারত আজি তোমার সভায় শুন এ কবির গান’; and on the other hand, some of the poems have been cut short for maintaining the flow and melody intact in the song-version, such as: ‘আমার গোধূলি লগন এল, বুঝি কাছে’, ‘আমি কেমন করিয়া জানাব’, ‘আজ বুকের বসন ছিঁড়ে ফেলে’, ‘তুমি এপার ওপার কর কে গো’ etc. The long-verse of ‘পরবাসী চলে এসো ঘরে’—was divided into two separate songs. The line ‘আজ বরষণ-মুখরিত শাবণরাতি’, which was there in the poem, was changed into ‘বরিষণ-মুখরিত’ for the sake of the rhythm in the song-version. Clearly, ‘বরষণ’ has become ‘বরিষণ’ for maintaining the sequence.

Now, if we look closely into the reverse motion, the transformation process of songs to poems, we will realise that the entire process is more of a re-construction, rather than deconstruction. The melody of the song was dropped, but an entirely new form was employed, with renewed architecture and renewed dimension as well. Apart from ‘সানাই’, Rabindranath has also composed poems from songs (‘গানের কবিতা’) at different times. For instance, the original song: ‘তোমারি বরনাতলার নির্জনে / মাটির এই কলসখানি ছাপিয়ে গেল/কোনখানে’—was composed in 1918; and later in 1936, when it was transformed into two separate poems, it was not unsuccessful to achieve distinct identities.

One of the poems was:

আমার এই ছোট কলসিটা পেতে রাখি
 বরনাথারার নিচে
 বসে থাকি কোমরে আঁচল বেঁধে
 সারা সকাল বেলা
 শেওলা ঢাকা পিছল পাথরটাতে
 পা ঝালিয়ে

And the other poem was:

আমার এই ছোট কলসখানি
সারা সকাল পেতে রাখি
ঝরনাতলার নিচে
বসে থাকি একটি ধারে
শেওলা ঢাকা পিছল কালো পাথরটাতে

By floating the poem on the raft of the song, the poet can take us to the sea of beauty, and then again by capturing the poetic elements from a song, turn the face of the raft towards a dreamy land.

রবীন্দ্রনাথ রচিত সর্বশেষ গানও এক রূপান্তর – এক কবিতার গান। ১৯২২ সালের জন্মদিনের জন্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ রচনা করেছিলেন ‘পুরবী’ কাব্যের ‘পঁচিশে বৈশাখ’ কবিতা—দীর্ঘ কবিতা। ১৯ বছর পরে সেই কবিতাকে আবার ডেকে নিলেন, তার শেষ দুই স্তবককে কিছু পুনর্বিন্যাস করে তাকে সুরে সাজালেন, গান হয়ে সে উঠে দাঁড়ালো এক লোকান্তর মূর্তিতে— রবীন্দ্রের শেষ পঁচিশে বৈশাখ। পরপারের ডাক অপেক্ষা করেছিল আর চার মাস। এই গান কবির অন্তিমের Premonition, ...সেই অন্তিম সুর ভৈরবী সুরের তান। ভৈরবী ভোরের রাগ, রবির উদয়সংগীত। রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভৈরবী অনুধ্যানে অবসান-প্রারম্ভ একাকার—

‘দিগন্তে আরক্ত রবি
অরণ্যের ম্লানছায়া
বাজে যেন
বিষম্ভ ভৈরবী’

—‘গানের কবিতা’-কে ভালবেসে প্রত্যক্ষ করলে রবীন্দ্রনাথের যে মানবিকতা আমাদের অভিভূত করে, তা হলো সাহস, এক অতি মানবিক প্রত্যয়। কবি যেন নিজেকে ব্যবচ্ছেদ করছেন। এর বদলে তিনি কি নতুন কবিতা নির্মাণ করতে পারতেন না? কিন্তু করলেন বি-নির্মাণ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ কি কৌতুক করে নিজেকে challenge জানাচ্ছেন?—তোমরা দেখ, আমি গড়তে তো পারিই, ভাঙতেও পারি, আবার সেই মাটি দিয়ে গড়তে পারি।²⁰¹

From the very beginning of his literary career, Rabindranath can be seen to engage himself in constant experimentation with the composition of his songs. In 1881, for ‘বউ-ঠাকুরানীর হাট’, he composed a song for the character Basanta Roy: ‘আজ তোমারে দেখতে এলেম

²⁰¹ চন্দ, সুধীর । রবীন্দ্রসুরের নির্মাণ । কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস । ২০০৯, ৮৬ ।

অনেক দিনের পরে / ভয় নাইকো সুখে থাকো / অধিক ক্ষণ থাকব নাকো / আসিয়াছি দু-দণ্ডেরি তরে / দেখবো শুধু মুখখানি / শুনব দুটি মধুর বাণী / আড়াল থেকে হাসি দেখে চলে যাব দেশান্তরে।’—here the main rhythm was *pilu*. In 1909, the novel ‘বউ-ঠাকুরাণীর হাট’—took a new form through the creation of a drama ‘প্রায়শ্চিত্ত’ and there the same character Basanta Roy sung the same song, only the words have changed a little bit:

‘আজ তোমারে দেখতে এলেম অনেক দিনের পরে / ভয় করো না, সুখে থাকো, / বেশিক্ষণ থাকব নাকো, / এসেছি দণ্ড-দুয়ের তরে / দেখব শুধু মুখখানি / শোনাও যদি শুনব বাণী, / নাহয় যাব আড়াল থেকে / হাসি দেখে দেশান্তরে।’ —but the real change has been in the melody, this time it was sung in the *Bhairabi* melody, *Dadra-taal*. Before the *Maghotsab* of 1884, the Sarba-Brahmo-Samaj was gathered at Jorasanko Thakurbari and young Rabindranath composed a song for that occasion:

মাঝে মাঝে তব দেখা পাই, চিরদিন কেন পাই না ?
 কেন মেঘ আসে হৃদয়-আকাশে, তোমারে দেখিতে দেয় না ?
 ক্ষণিক আলোকে আঁধির পলকে তোমায় যবে পাই দেখিতে
 হারাই-হারাই সদা হয় ভয়, হারাইয়া ফেলি চকিতে ॥

—the song was arranged in *Kafi-raag* with a classical fervour. Not long after, the poet tied the song to the tune of *Kirtan* and applied *Akhor* in it:

মাঝে মাঝে তব দেখা পাই, চিরদিন কেন পাইনা।
 কেন মেঘ আসে হৃদয়-আকাশে, তোমারে দেখিতে দেয় না।

আখর: মোহমেঘে তোমারে দেখিতে দেয়না অন্ধ ক’রে রাখে, তোমারে দেখিতে দেয় না।

By adding the essence of *Kirtan*, the song was transformed into a totally different one. His lyric-drama ‘Mayar Khela’ has been performed several times in the form of lyric-play or opera since its creation. Later, after going through all the stages of his artistic creation, in 1938, the poet wanted to give a new look to the play, to make it stand next to ‘Chitrangada’, ‘Shyama’, ‘Chandalika’ as a proper dance-drama. For this purpose, many songs which were composed and performed earlier were re-modelled and re-constructed according to the need. One such song is ‘কাছে ছিলে, দূরে গেলে’—some more lines were added to the original to give it a shape of a whole song:

কাছে ছিলে, দূরে গেলে-দূর হতে এসো কাছে। ভুবন ভ্রমিলে তুমি-সে এখনো বসে আছে।।

ছিল না প্রেমের আলো, চিনিতে পারেনি ভালো-

এখন বিরহানলে প্রেমানল জ্বলিয়াছে।।

জটিল হয়েছে জাল, প্রতিকূল হল কাল-

উন্মাদ তানে তান কেটে গেছে তাল।

কে জানে তোমার বীণা সুরে ফিরে যাবে কিনা-

নিষ্ঠুর বিধির টানে তার ছিঁড়ে যায় পাছে।।

Similarly, one of his early compositions:

‘মনে যে আশা লয়ে এসেছি হল না, হল না হে / ওই মুখপানে চেয়ে ফিরিনু লুকাতে আঁখিজল / বেদনা রহিল মনে মনে।’—
can be found in *Gitabitan* in a completely new structure, though the connotation remained unchanged:

মনে কী দ্বিধা রেখে গেলে চলে সেদিন ভরা সাঁঝে,

যেতে যেতে দুয়ার হতে কী ভেবে ফিরালে মুখখানি-

কী কথা ছিল যে মনে।

Dhananjay Bairagi’s song from the drama ‘প্রায়শ্চিত্ত’:

আমাকে যে বাঁধবে ধরে, এই হবে যার সাধন, সে কি অমনি হবে।

আপনাকে সে বাঁধা দিয়ে আমায় দেবে বাঁধন, সে কি অমনি হবে।।

আমাকে যে দুঃখ দিয়ে আনবে আপন বশে, সে কি অনি হবে।

তার আগে তার পাষণ-হিয়া গলবে করুণ রসে, সে কি অমনি হবে।

আমাকে যে কাঁদাবে তার ভাগ্যে আছে কাঁদন, সে কি অমনি হবে।।

—was later re-constructed in the play ‘মুক্তধারা’, retaining the essence while changing the lyrics:

আমাকে যে বাঁধবে ধরে, এই হবে যার সাধন-

সে কি অমনি হবে।

আমার কাছে পড়লে বাঁধা সেই হবে মোর বাঁধন

সে কি অমনি হবে।

কে আমারে ভরসা করে আনতে আপন বশে—

সে কি অমনি হবে।

আপনাকে সে করুক-না বশ, মজুক প্রেমের রসে—

সে কি অমনি হবে।

আমাকে যে কাঁদাবে তার ভাগ্যে আছে কাঁদন—

সে কি অমনি হবে।

Similar transformation can be seen in the song used in ‘কালমৃগয়া’ as ‘ঠাকুরমশায়, দেরি না সয়’, and its later rendition in ‘বাল্মীকি প্রতিভা’ as ‘সর্দারমশায় দেরি না সয়’ or in case of the song—‘তোমারেই করিয়াছি জীবনের ধ্রুবতারা’ from the original ‘তোমারেই করিয়াছি সংসারের ধ্রুবতারা’. Another song can be mentioned in this context—‘মহাবিশ্বে মহাকাশে মহাকাল মাঝে / আমি মানব একাকী ভ্রমি বিশ্বয়ে...’, which was transformed from ‘মহাবিশ্বে মহাকাশে মহাকালমাঝে / আমি মানব কী লাগি একাকী ভ্রমি বিশ্বয়ে’. The song ‘বসন্তে কি শুধু কেবল ফোটা ফুলের মেলা রে / দেখিস নে কি শুকনো-পাতা ঝরা ফুলের খেলা রে’—was first composed for the drama ‘রাজা’ in 1910; after a long time, the poet re-arranged the song to the tune of the Bengali folk song *Sari*. In this process some of the lines were dropped and the structure of the original was changed: ‘বসন্তে আজ দেখ রে তোরা ঝরা ফুলের খেলা রে’. Within a few years, another song was re-composed with an alternative melody: ‘হে সখা, বারতা পেয়েছি মনে মনে, তব নিঃশ্বাসপরশনে, এসেছ অদেখা বন্ধু, দক্ষিণসমীরণে.’; the expression ‘হে সখা’ was rejected and ‘মনে মনে’ was changed into ‘গগনে গগনে’.

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিশিষ্টভাবে বর্ষার গীতিকবি; তাঁর বর্ষার গীতিসত্তার এক মাত্রাতীত পরিমাপ নিয়ে বিশেষিত হয়ে আছে। সেই বর্ষালক্ষ্মীকে তিনি সুরের কত পথহীন পথে খুঁজেছেন, কেবলমাত্রা শাস্ত্রসম্মত মল্লার-বৈচিত্র্যের মধ্যেই বাঁধা থাকেন নি, এমন-কি বাংলার লোকায়ত সুর কীর্তনকে ও কি ভাবে মল্লারের স্থানাভিষিক্ত করে বর্ষার অনুভূতিকে সার্থক প্রকাশ করেছেন সে দৃষ্টান্তের অভাব নেই। সে রূপ কীর্তনাঙ্গ বর্ষার গানেরই অন্যতম—

আমার কী বেদনা সে কি জানো

ওগো মিতা, সুদূরের মিতা।

বর্ষণবিড় তিমিরে যামিনী বিজুলি-সচকিতা।

সুরান্তরের সঙ্গে পাঠান্তরও এসেছে; কীর্তনের ‘সুদূরের মিতা’ তখন চলে গেছে ‘অনেক দূরে’—

কী বেদনা মোর জানো সে কি তুমি জানো

ওগো মিতা, মোর অনেক দূরের মিতা।

আজি এ নিবিড়তিমির যামিনী বিদ্যুতসচকিতা।

...কোনো কোনো গানের বিশেষত্ব, কবি সেখানে সুরান্তর করেন নি, বাণী ও সুরের বিস্তার করেছেন, যেমন—

আমি-শ্রাবণ আকাশে ওই দিয়েছি পাতি

মম জল ছলোছলো আঁখি মেঘে মেঘে...

আবার কোনও গানের অনুভূতির দ্যোতনায় একটুবা আলাদা রং-এর পোঁছ লেগেছে, গানের সুর তখন চলে গেছে এক রাগপ্রতিমা থেকে রাগান্তরের স্বরগ্রামের আশ্রয়ে, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নববেশ-গীতরূপের শব্দ, এমন-কি বাক্যের পুনর্বিन্যাস ঘটেছে, যেন এক নতুন সৃষ্টি। ১৯৩৯-এর মার্চ মাসে বাঁধলেন প্রেমপর্যায়ের গান-‘ধূসর জীবনের গোধূলিতে ক্লান্ত আলোয় স্নান স্মৃতি / সেই সুরের কায়া মোর সাথের সাথী, স্বপ্নের সঙ্গিনী।’—কাফি রাগের বন্দিশে রূপ ধরল সেই ‘সুরের কায়া’, ছন্দ হলো কাহারবা তাল। মাস কয়েক পেরোতেই আবার পরিবর্তনের তাগিদ। আগস্ট মাসে তাকে দাঁড় করালেন—

ধূসর জীবনের গোধূলিতে ক্লান্ত মলিন যেই স্মৃতি

মুছে-আসা সেই ছবিটিতে রঙ এঁকে দেয় মোর গীতি

—এবার হল বসন্তকালের ‘পঞ্চম’ সুর, তাল একই। যে কথা ‘কাফি’ বলল বেদনা-শান্ত পরিবেশে, পঞ্চম তাই বলছে উন্মাদনার এক উচ্চ গ্রামে।...রবীন্দ্রজীবনের একেবারে শেষ দিকে রচিত গানগুলোর বিশেষ একপ্রকার গঠনবৈচিত্র্য রয়েছে, এদের অনেকগুলোতেই রবীন্দ্রগীতরচনার ধরাবাঁধা সাধারণ নিয়মগুলো ভেঙে কবি বেরিয়ে এসেছেন, আস্থায়ী-অন্তরা-সঞ্চরী-আভোগের সুরের মিল-অমিলের তাঁর আগের তৈরি হিসেব তিনি নিজেই মানেন নি।²⁰²

Just as in the case of poetry, so is for songs, the lyricist Rabindranath’s curiosity to create and re-create has constantly crossed new horizons. Just as he enriched his songs with new rhythmic inventions, so did the poet experiment with the compositions and brought remarkable innovations to the physiology of the songs. One thing needs to be mentioned here that the notation of many of Rabindranath’s songs is said to have been composed by more than one notationist at different times. Rhythm has changed, so has the singing-style. In ‘রাত্রি এসে যেথায় মেশে দিনের পারাবারে’, for instance, the rhythm is differently arranged in Surendranath Bandyopadhyay and Dinendranath’s notations, but the melody remained more or less same. Same happened with ‘হারমানা হার পরাব তোমার গলে’ or ‘মেঘের পরে মেঘ জমেছে’. It is the expertise of the poet to be able to create more than one melody for the same song or more than one version of the same composition.

²⁰² চন্দ, সুধীর । বহুরূপী রবীন্দ্রসংগীত । কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস । ২০০৭, ৩৯-৪০ ।

Music has always been the truest expression of Rabindranath's creative joy. The poet's unmistakable personal communion with the Creator has been repeatedly expressed through his compositions, such as the stanzas of the first song of the English *Gitanjali*:

*This little flute of reed thou hast carried over hills and dales
and hast breathed through melodies eternally new*

—which has been transcreated from the original lines: '...কত-যে গিরি কত-যে নদী-তীরে / বেড়ালে
বহি ছোটো এ বাঁশিটিরে / কত-যে তান বাজালে ফিরে ফিরে / কাহারে তাহা কব...'

In the third song of the English translation of *Gitanjali*, he says:

*I know not how thou singest, my master,
I ever listen in silent amazement....*

—Not only for the sake of poetry but also for the recognition of his spiritual contact with the Creator, in which there is absolute bliss and despair at the same time – this message can be heard in the original composition as well—

*তুমি কেমন করে গান করো হে গুণী
আমি অবাক হয়ে শুনি কেবল শুনি...*

Remorse over unfinished tasks can be heard in—

*আমার অনাগত আমার অনাহত
তোমার বীণাতারে বাজিছে তারা
জানি হে জানি তাও হয়নি হারা...*

The essence of despair has been kept intact in the translation as well:

*All my unformed thoughts and all my unstruck melodies are still sounding on the
strings of the 'vina'
and I know that they are not being altogether lost...*

Arnold Adriaan Bake's translation of Rabindranath's song—'যে প্রবপদ দিয়েছ বাঁধি বিশ্বতানে'—

*With the fixed time by which thou hast held together
the melody of the Universe I shall regulate the song of my life.
To the clear blue of thy sky I shall attune my own heart.
The peaceful, solemn message I shall take into my speechless soul.*

*With the words and music dawn sounds on the midnight shore,
with that sound my new hope will awaken.
With a melody natural like a flower, my morning will rise in its fullness.
And, when this song is with me at sunset, my day will know how to die.*

—has tried to capture the innate effect of stimulating words and melodies.

Rabindranath was greatly inspired by a song, which he came across during his stay in Europe—

*Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine.
Or leave a kiss within the cup
And I will not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink devine
But might I of Jove's nectar sup
I would not change for thine.*

—The first-second and third-fourth lines have the same melody, the fifth and sixth lines are tied in a different melody, the last two lines turn again in the initial melody—leaving each line in terms of rhythm, comes the match- ‘mine’-‘wine’-‘devine’-‘thine’, tying the stanza. The lyric poem of Rabindranath tied to the melody of this song is completely different in terms of structure.

*কতবার ভেবেছিনু আপনা ভুলিয়া
তোমার চরণে দিব হৃদয় খুলিয়া
চরণে ধরিয়া তব কহিব প্রকাশি
গোপনে তোমারে, সখা, কত ভালোবাসি....*

Arnold Adriaan Bake did the English translation of this song:

*How often have I thought that
Forgetting myself I should lay my heart
open at thy feet.*

*That clasping thy feet I should tell thee,
Thee alone, how much I love thee,
my friend.
I have pondered where thou art,
Deity from Heaven,
How I could tell thee of my love.
Over and over I have thought in my mind
That I should stay far, far away
and forever worship in solitude.
No one shall know my solemn love,
no one shall see my tears.
If I should come face to face with thee today,
How could I reveal how much I love thee.*

In connection to this particular song, Sudhir Chanda has stated:

মূল ইংরেজী গানের সুরের পাশাপাশি রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানটির তুলনা করলে যা খুব স্পষ্ট চোখে পড়ে, একটি খাঁটি বিলেতি সুর কি ভাবে ভোল পাল্টে আনকোরা বাংলা গানে পরিণত হয়েছে। মূলের বিশেষত্বগুলো চিনতে ভুল হয় না, কিন্তু এখানে তাদের প্রক্রিয়া আলাদা। প্রথম লাইনের সুর অবিকল ইংরেজী গানটির প্রথম দু' লাইনের অনুরূপ। পরের লাইন কিন্তু 'Drink to me'-র সুরকে অনুসরণ করে না, তার সপ্তক থেকে একেবারে এক সপ্তক নিচের ষড়্জে এসে দাঁড়িয়ে এক প্রতিবাদী সুররূপ তৈরি করে। বাংলা গানটির তৃতীয় লাইন একেবারে ইংরেজীর পঞ্চম ও ষষ্ঠ লাইনের সুরের মত, এবং শেষ লাইনটি আবার প্রথম লাইনের খাঁচে, কিন্তু অবিকল নকল নয়, কারণ তার মুখের অংশে সুরের সূক্ষ্ম রকমফের রয়েছে। কাজেই, রবীন্দ্রসংগীতটির প্রথম স্তবকেই পুরো ইংরেজী সুরটি উজাড়। এরপর থেকে গানটির গঠন একটি খাঁটি বাংলা গানের আদলে কবি বাঁধলেন, স্থায়ীর সঙ্গে সুরবৈষম্য রেখে অন্তরা এলো, ঝাঁক এল খাদের সুরের দিকে, বিশেষ কথার ভাবকে ফোটাতে গিয়ে সুর ষড়্জে এসে দাঁড়ালো বারে বারে। এই স্তবকের শেষের ভাগ ("ভেবেছিলাম মনে মনে") স্থায়ীর শেষ ভাগের ("চরণে ধরিয়া তব") সুরের মতই। এই গানটিতে এমন কোনো সুরের চলন নেই যা একটি দেশীয় সংগীতে মানায় না, কিন্তু মূল ইংরেজী গানটিকেও এর মাঝে চিনে নিতে ভুল হয় না। গানটির রূপান্তর ঘটেছে স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত স্বাভাবিকভাবে। তাঁর উদ্দীপনার গানগুলোতে, যেমন 'সব হতে আপন আমাদের শান্তিনিকেতন' বা 'অচলায়তন' নাটকের 'আলো আমার আলো' জাতীয় গানে সুর এমন এক বিশেষ আকার নেয়, ইয়োরোপীয় সংগীতের সঙ্গে পরিচয় না থাকলে

যেটা সম্ভব নয়। তাঁর গান একটি সুসম্পূর্ণ শিল্পরূপ, যার যথাযথ কারুকার্য—অলঙ্কার তিনি নিজেই যথাযথস্থানে সংযোজন করে গেছেন।²⁰³

Interestingly, in many cases the translation done by the poet himself and the later translation of the same poem produce a different text altogether. For instance, a poem can be mentioned from 'নৈবেদ্য':

একাধারে তুমিই আকাশ, তুমি নীড়।
হে সুন্দর, নীড়ে তব প্রেম সুনিবিড়
প্রতি ক্ষণে নানা বর্ণে নানা গন্ধে গীতে
মুক্ত প্রাণ বেঁটন করেছে চারি ভিতে।
সেথা উষা ডান হাতে ধরি স্বর্ণথালী
নিয়ে আসে একখানি মাধুর্যের মালা
নীরবে পরায়ে দিতে ধরার ললাটে;
সন্ধ্যা আসে নম্রমুখে ধেনুশূন্য মাঠে
চিহ্নহীন পথ দিয়ে লয়ে স্বর্ণঝারি
পশ্চিমসমুদ্র হতে ভারি শান্তিবারি।
তুমি যেথা আমাদের আত্মার আকাশ,
অপার সঞ্চরক্ষেত্র, সেথা শুভ্র ভাস;
দিন নাই, রাত নাই, নাই জনপ্রাণী,
বর্ণ নাই, গন্ধ নাই—নাই নাই বাণী।

Rabindranath's translation:

*Thou art the sky / and 'thou art nest as well.
O thou beautiful, / there in the nest / it is thy love / that encloses the soul / with colours
and sounds and odours.
There comes the morning / with the golden basket in her right hand / bearing the
wreath of beauty,
silently to crown the earth.*

²⁰³ চন্দ, সুধীর। বহুরূপী রবীন্দ্রসংগীত। কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস। ২০০৭, ১৩৪।

*And there comes the evening / over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through /
trackless paths / carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher / from the
western ocean of rest.*

*But there, / where spreads the infinite sky / for the soul to take her flight in, / reigns the
strainless white radiance. / There is no day / nor `night, / nor form / nor colour, / and
never, never a word.*

Whereas, the translation done by Robert Bridges differs from the poet's own version:

*Thou art the, sky / and thou art also the nest.
O thou Beautiful! / how in the nest thy love embraceth the soul
with sweet sound and colour and fragrant odours!
Morning cometh there, / bearing in her golden basket the wreath of beauty, /
silently to crown the earth.*

*And there cometh Evening, / O'er lonely meadows, deserted of the herds, /
by trackless ways, / carrying in her, golden pitcher cool
draughts of peace from the ocean-calms of the west.*

*But where thine infinite sky spreadeth / for the soul to take her flight, / a stainless white
radiance reigneth wherein is neither day / or night, / nor form / nor colour, /
nor ever a word.*

—it can be pointed out that with every word, that has been changed, so much change has also been brought to the expressions. Usage of English words are also varied due to the translators' rapport with the language itself.

Noticeably, Tagore's own translations of *Gitanjali* do not form a benchmark of authenticity for subsequent translators and that had a number of facets—one was the “high” literary diction of the English *Gitanjali*, its “thees” and “thous”, which the 19th century was comfortable with, but which the 20th century has categorically rejected; another was its compression and prosiness: one can only get a faint idea from Tagore's English translations of the richness of poetic form, rhyme, metre and alliteration that lurks in the Bengali original. Tagore knew his limitations, and though, as William Radice has pointed out, he worked well within them. The problem of translating poetry from a language such as Bengali is in the first instance linguistic and cultural; but there are a

number of translators who have already overcome these cultural obstacles and produced creditable work, like Ketaki Kushari Dyson, William Radice, Joe Winter, Pratima Bowes, and Martin Kämpchen. Modern translators are predisposed toward offering versions without a pronounced poetic form not because, they cannot cope with the linguistic demands of creating one, but because that is an aspect of contemporary taste. Joe Winter puts it challengingly – “Since Tagore’s time it has become fashionable to put down words with feeling and break them up somehow on the page and to call the result poetry”²⁰⁴.

It is thus not surprising that many translators do not attempt the task of representing the poetic structure of the song texts. Even William Radice, who in his translation of *Gitanjali* succeeds marvellously in producing English sonnets from the Bengali sonnet forms of the *Naibedya* poems, refuses to try anything similar with the songs. For him, showing the structure of the text as sung – through line repetitions and highlighting of refrains – is more important than reproducing metre and rhyme, because “when the songs are sung we are not particularly aware of the metre or rhyme”.²⁰⁵

William Radice’s translation of *Gitanjali*-26, “আর নাইরে বেলা, নামলো ছায়া ধরণীতে” –

*There’s no more time
Shadows fall on the world
Come, come to the ghat
to fill your water-pot
There’s no more time
There’s no more time
The evening sky is uneasy
when waters murmur
The evening sky is uneasy
when waters murmur
They call me, call me to the path
with their delicate sound
There’s no more time
There’s no more time...*

²⁰⁴ Winter, Joe. *Song Offerings*. London: Anvil, 2000, 20-21.

²⁰⁵ Radice, William. *Gitanjali*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2011, xviii.

—captures the mood and imagery of the poem well, although when compared with Tagore’s prose translation, it can be seen that Tagore’s own translations were generally to some degree cultural translations, and any specifically Indian imagery was substituted for by European equivalents wherever possible, whereas William retained the Bengali word and a footnote of explanation, or a glossary. Tagore himself, of course, had thought fit for at least a decade of his life to translate his compositions into English, and his fame in the western world depended substantially on his own translations of the song-lyrics of *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. And yet Tagore himself soon felt that anyone setting out to translate song-lyrics is embarking on a doomed enterprise. Disillusioned by the increasingly lukewarm and at times even critical reception in the west of later translations of his poems and song-lyrics, he eventually decided to stop translating them, and was eventually content to let others render his song-lyrics into print in their language. Songs express feelings in a way prose cannot and for that very reason, in 1926, in a letter to Arthur Geddes, Rabindranath wrote that he must not be asked to do the task as to translate Bengali poems into English verse form. Reproducing the original rhythm so that the words may fit in with the tune would be a critical thing to attempt and all that he can do is to render them in simple prose. Tagore insisted that in songs the words and the music could not be separated from each other and he also indicated that at best his song-lyrics could be translated into prose that had a whiff of music in them. This is also implied by the Sinhalese-Tamil writer and thinker A. K. Coomaraswamy, at one time close to the poet and translator of Tagore’s song-lyrics into English. Introducing his work in 1912, Coomaraswamy observed about his renderings that the translations convey only a shadow of the original poetry; they give only the meaning, that in the songs themselves is inseparable from their music. If we look at one of his translations, done with the collaboration of the poet himself, we can get a clearer picture:

From the original poem:

তবে আমি যাই গো তবে যাই
ভোরের বেলা শূন্য কোলে
ডাকবি যখন খোকা বলে,
বলব আমি, ‘নাই সে খোকা নাই।’

—the translated poem became:

Mother darling! Let me go, Oh! let me go!

In the dim and early dawn,

When you stretch your empty arms

And cry 'O Baby mine',

I shall whisper 'Baby is not here'

Mother darling, let me go!

I shall be as a breath of the blowing wind

And pass by your breast in a sigh.

You never can hold me fast in your arms:

I shall be a wave of the water

And none can ever know what I am.

When you bathe I shall play all around you.

When at night the rain falls down in showers

You will lie in our bed alone and think of me:

The patter of rain on the leaves will be my voice

I shall flash in lightning through your windows

Do you think you will know my wild laughter then?

When the night is late and dark

And you are wakeful and sad

I will be a star and softly whisper 'Sleep, mother dear!'

When at last you are sleeping worn and tired

I'll be the moon beam that rests on your bed

And kiss your sweet closed eyes.

If your eyelids are open ever so little

I shall come peeping in as a dream,

And love you while you're asleep.

Then you will wake with a start

And feel for me in the bed,

But I shall have vanished where nobody knows.

In the Puja holiday time

Children will come to play in our garden

*Saying 'Baby is not in this home'.
Even then in the sound of the flute
I shall pass through the sunlit sky
And follow you in all your work in the house.*

*When aunty comes and questions you
--With holiday presents in her hands--
'Sister, where has your baby gone?'
Say to her, 'Baby is everywhere,
He is in the pupils of my eyes,
He is on my breast and rests in my lap'.*

Indeed, on a few occasions, Tagore even acknowledged that translating song-lyrics was worth the effort, necessary and even inevitable. After listening to the singer Rattan Devi—the stage name of the singer Alice Ethel Richardson who would eventually marry Ananda Coomaraswamy and became Ratan Devi Coomaraswamy, and who had recorded Indian music and performed Indian songs in concerts in England and America—Tagore observed that sometimes the meaning of a poem is better understood in a translation, not necessarily because it is more beautiful than the original, but as in the new setting the poem has to undergo a trial; it shines more brilliantly if it comes out triumphant.

Rabindranath is also of interest to contemporary composers, they find music within words, so even if they are not directly acquainted with Rabindra Sangeet, it is not difficult to be introduced to Rabindranath through translation. One of America's most celebrated composers at the present time, Ann Callaway's Song-cycle "From the Gardener" (2002), composed for soprano, bass, choir, and piano, has found a place of its own in the application. She wants to convey to the listener the inherent emotion of Rabindranath's poetry through the musical performance. The five songs are:

i) *If you would be busy and fill your pitcher, come, O come to my lake.* [no. 12]

(যদি ভরিয়া লইবে কুম্ভ, এস ওগো এস, মোর/ হৃদয়-নীরে।/তলতল ছলছল।/কাঁদবে গভীর জল/ ওই দুটি সুকোমল চরণ
ধিরে। [“হৃদয়-যমুনা”, সোনার তরী])

ii) *My heart, the bird of the wilderness, has found its sky in your eyes.* [no. 31]

(আমি ধরা দিয়েছি গো আকাশের পাখি,/নয়নে দেখেছি তব নূতন আকাশ। [‘হৃদয়-আকাশ’, *কড়ি ও কোমল*])

iii) ‘Unspoken Things’

iv) *Speak to me, my love! Tell me in words what you sang./ The night is dark. The stars are lost in clouds. The wind is sighing through the leaves.* [no. 29]

(ওগো, ভালো করে বলে যাও।/বাঁশরি বাজায় যে কথা জানাতে/সে কথা বুঝায় দাও। [‘ভালো করে বলে যাও’, *মানসী*])

v) *You are the evening cloud floating in the sky of my dreams./ I paint you and fashion you ever with my love longings.* [no. 30]

(তুমি সন্ধ্যার মেঘ শান্ত সুদূর/আমার সাধের সাধনা,/মম শূন্য-গগন-বিহারী! [‘মানসপ্রতিমা’, *কল্পনা*])

—each composition differs from the other in the basic creative process, glorious in its own right. Melody has predominance in Anne Callaway’s music: at least in these songs from *The Gardener*. The relaxed keys of the piano convey the message of the words, so in ‘Unspoken Things’ there is only melody, not a single word. Instead of words, a smooth ‘humming’ flows—exactly which the composer Ann Callaway consciously wanted. According to her, Tagore’s writing had the lyrical poetic imagery, she was searching for, as well as a mystical element that she thought worked marvelously with the language of passion and beauty. In Rabindranath’s compositions and understanding of it, the equation of ‘lyrical’ and ‘mystical’ seems to have remained a constant star to every composer. However, Anne Callaway read Rabindranath in the context of world literature and originally she adopted Rabindranath Tagore’s poetry in contrast to the courtly-love tradition and Christian-mystic literature, and at the same time she understood how this Indian poet tied Eastern and Western customs and beliefs together. Callaway’s interpretation of *The Gardener* is that—it is the love story of the human spirit and the Divinity, though this story is spoken of in terms of love between two human lovers. Shubhabrata Bandyopadhyay’s observation is important in this regard:

এক স্থানিক মানবজাতির বাসনা যেন ভাষা পায় অ্যান ক্যালওয়ারের সংস্কৃত-এর শেষ গানে—‘You are the evening cloud floating in the sky of my dreams’। *দ্য গার্ডেনার*-এর ২৯, ৩০ এবং ৩১ সংখ্যক গান ব্যবহার করেছেন কম্পোজার, আলোচ্য গানটিতে পাওয়া যায় স্বপ্নের আকাশের উল্লেখ, এর পরেরটিতেই—‘মাই হার্ট, দ্য বার্ড অফ দ্য উইন্ডারনেস...’—এ আছে দু’-চোখে বিস্তৃত আকাশের ছবি। অনন্ত স্বপ্নের বাসিন্দাকে উদ্দেশ্য করে লেখা গানে কোনও বিশেষ কণ্ঠস্বর প্রাধান্য পায় না, সোপ্রানো এবং বেস কণ্ঠের সঙ্গেই শ্রুত হয় কোরাস, প্রত্যেক মানুষ তার প্রিয়তম সঙ্গীকে ঘোষণার মতো জানিয়ে দিচ্ছে, ‘ইউ আর মাই ওন’। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ‘২৯’ সংখ্যক কবিতার শেষে এসে লিখেছিলেন,

‘We shall look at each other’s eyes and go on our different paths’. কিন্তু তার পরের কবিতাটিতেই এই সম্ভাবনা এক সুদূরকল্পনা হয়ে ওঠে, কারণ এখানে অনেক বেশি তীব্রতায় প্রেমিক বেঁধে ফেলছে তার ‘জীবনমরণবিহারী’-কে। এবং সেই শৃঙ্খল অবশ্যই সংগীত— ‘I have caught you and wrapt you, my love, in the net of my music’. চোখের গভীরতায় কখনও সংগীত স্বয়ং হারিয়ে ফেলে পথ, তাই এখানে চোখে পরিণত হয়ে মোহের স্বপন-অঙ্গন, শ্যাডো অফ প্যাশন! বাংলা গানটিতে ‘তুমি আমারি’ শব্দদুটিই সবচেয়ে জোরালোভাবে প্রকাশিত হয় একাধিকবার, কিন্তু ক্যালওয়ার কম্পোজিশনে বন্ধনের মধ্যে যে জয় রয়েছে, সেটিই সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠে সম্ভবত। গানটি কোরাসে শেষ হয় ‘আই হ্যাভ কট ইউ, মাই লাভ’ লাইনটি তিনবার গেয়ে, যা আদতে রবীন্দ্রনাথেরই নয়। ‘সঙ্গীত তব অঙ্গে অঙ্গে দিয়েছি জড়িয়ে জড়িয়ে’-র ছবিটি সম্পূর্ণ বাদ দিয়ে দিয়েছেন কম্পোজার।²⁰⁶

Frank Ticheli, a professor of composition at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, worked with the songs of Rabindranath in 1992, composing three of Rabindranath’s English *Gitanjali* poems. The composition was titled—‘Songs of Tagore, for soprano, piano and alto saxophone’. The three compositions are:

i) *The day is no more, the shadow is upon the earth. It is time that I go to the stream to fill my pitcher.* [*Gitanjali*, no. 74]

(আর নাই রে বেলা, নামল ছায়া/ ধরণীতে,/ এখন চল রে ঘাটে কলসখানি/ ভরে নিতে। [গীতাঞ্জলি, ২৬])

ii) *Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart sweetening light!* [*Gitanjali*, no. 57]

(আলো, আমার আলো, ওগো/ আলো ভুবনভরা।/ আলো নয়ন-ধোওয়া আমার/ আলো হৃদয়হরা। [অচলায়তন])

iii) *I must launch out my boat. The languid hours pass by on the shore — / Alas for me!* [*Gitanjali*, no. 21]

(এবার ভাসিয়ে দিতে হবে আমার/ এই তরী।/ তীরে বসে যায় যে বেলা,/ মরি গো মরি। [গীতিমালা, ১৬])

—The three songs are not marked with their first line, they have titles—‘Nightfall’, ‘Light’ and ‘Departure’, respectively. Although Frank Ticheli’s “Songs of Tagore” is not his representative work, the creator’s specialty is expressed well-enough in compositions like ‘The Day Is No More’, ‘Light, My Light’ or ‘I Must Launch Out My Boat’. The melody and dramatics of the alto-saxophone, the spontaneous movement of the piano and the poignant vocals of the soprano have definitely made the songs stand out. In

²⁰⁶ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, শুভব্রত । সুদূরে বাজিছে বাঁশি: পশ্চাত্য সঙ্গীতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ । কলকাতা: সিগনেট প্রেস । ২০১৯, ১৪৬ ।

“Songs of Tagore”, Ticheli gives equal importance to soprano and saxophones. The piano, of course, is essential, the centerpiece of the whole creation, and the vocals and the saxophone are scattered on either side of it. There are no key signatures. The songs are, however, tonal, but the tonality is constantly shifting from one tonal centre to another. Ticheli did not want to tie the songs to a single scale, but the variety enriched his composition.

Karim Al-Zand is another composer, whose name demands a special mention here. In 2004 he composed 12 songs, which were directly influenced from Rabindranath’s poems—“Tagore Love Songs”. It is a collection of songs from various sources, but in each poem/song Karim has found simple and elegant lyricism, buoyant humour, and striking imagery. Karim has chosen the silent and intense language of love in the first song – ‘Do not keep to yourself the secret of your heart, my friend!/Say it to me, only to me in secret’ — the original Bengali version of which can be found in *Gitabitan*, song no. 63—‘তোমার গোপন কথাটি, সখী, রেখো না। মনে।/ শুধু আমায়, বোলো আমায় গোপনে’. The composer has arranged the entire composition in the form of ‘quasi-narrative’, there is a definite formula, of course, but the content of the twelve songs or the locus of thought is different. *The Gardener* was published in October, 1913. In the introduction, Rabindranath wrote,

*Most of the lyrics of love and life, the translations of which from Bengali are published in this book, were written much earlier than the series of religious poems contained in the book named Gitanjali. The translations are not always literal—the originals being sometimes abridged and sometimes paraphrased.*²⁰⁷

Rabindra Sangeet, surprisingly, has not reached the West even after Rabindranath’s worldwide acquaintance. In an interview with HG Wells, Rabindranath lamented,

*I have composed more than three hundred pieces of music. They are all sealed from the West because they cannot properly be given to you in your notation. Perhaps they would not be intelligible to your people even if I could get them written down in European notation.*²⁰⁸

Probably the purest way for later musicians to perceive Rabindranath was to realise the poet’s own passion for composing poetry, and then to express it in their tunes

²⁰⁷ Tagore, Rabindranath. *The Gardener*. London: Macmillan, 1913.

²⁰⁸ Das, Sisir Kumar. ed. *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. 3*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996, 909.

accordingly. In this way, western music too got another voice by culminating in the creations of Rabindranath.

There were very few translations of Rabindranath's works before he received the Nobel Prize. Although, several translations were published in Hindi. However, after receiving the Nobel Prize, *Gitanjali* was translated into almost all major Indian languages. The translation of Rabindranath's short stories and novels also started from 1915. However, there was not much interest in the translation of Rabindranath's poems at first. After the demise of Rabindranath and especially since the time of Rabindra-Janmashtavarsha, translation of Rabindranath's works in most of the Indian languages started extensively. Hindi language poets and writers took a leading role in this regard. The work of translating from Bengali to Hindi was started with the inspiration and efforts of Bharatendu Harishchandra. Rabindranath himself was fascinated by the medieval poets, who composed verses in Hindi, especially by the works of Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas from a very young age, as evidenced by his three poems—'অপমান বর', 'স্বামীলাভ' and 'সুরদাসের প্রার্থনা'. Poets belonging to Hindi literature were also greatly influenced by Tagore's works and the impact was quite visible. The interest of translators in translating Rabindranath's poems and songs into Hindi and other Indian languages, however, is not as great as in the translation of novels or stories. The reason behind this is that it is very difficult to translate a poem or a song while maintaining proper thought, rhythm and melody. Despite these difficulties, after Rabindranath was awarded the Nobel Prize for *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* in 1913, there was a strong interest in translating those poems into Hindi and other Indian languages. A translation of 101 poems of English *Gitanjali* was published under the title 'Gitanjali', by Giridhar Sharma 'Navaratna' in 1924. The essence of the original Bengali *Gitanjali* was nowhere to be found in this translation and the language has also been deprived of the gentle utility and companionship of rhyme. The next attempt was made by Shridhar Shastri in 1941 and then by Suryanarayan Choubey in 1942. Laldhar Tripathi in 1948 published 209 poems of Rabindranath in translation; since then, *Gitanjali* has been translated into Hindi by eminent writers like Bhawani Prasad Tiwari, Hans Kumar Tiwari and Kailash 'Kalpit'. Although there were several translations of *Gitanjali* during Rabindranath's lifetime, no other poem has been translated into Hindi except the poem 'Shishu'. In 1962, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Ramsingh Tomar, Ramdharisingh 'Dinkar', Hans Kumar Tiwari and Bhawani Prasad

Mishra translated the poems of Tagore and published ‘Rabindra Ki Kavitaen’. In 1966, Brajanandan Bharadwaj’s ‘Rabindranath Ki Mau Kavitaen’ was published—these are collections of poems by Rabindranath. Rabindranath’s songs or Rabindra-Sangeet have especially attracted the intelligentsia of Hindi literature. However, the translation of Rabindra Sangeet was done much later. In 1950, Raghubangsh Lal Gupta’s ‘Rabibabu-ke Kuch Geet’ was published. The two poets who deserve special mention in the translation of Rabindra Sangeet are Hans Kumar Tiwari, the eminent translator of *Gitanjali*, and Daulal Kothari, a prominent Rabindra-devotee. One of the most renowned translators of Rabindranath’s works in Hindi— Ranjit Shah in the introduction to his translations of *Gitanjali* states:

রবীন্দ্রনাথ কী কৃতিয়াঁ—বাংলা সে হিন্দী অনুবাদ করনেবালে কে লিএ চুনৌতী ভী রহী হয় ঔর : এয়াইসে (এসে) অনুবাদকোঁ কী দক্ষতা কী কঠিন পরীক্ষাতী। বেহদ সহজ, সরল, গেয়, লয়াত্মক ঔর ছোটো পদবন্ধো ঔর ছন্দো মেঁ হী নহী, পুরে বিশ্ব মেঁ অপনী প্রসিদ্ধি কে প্রতিমান বনে হুএ হয়। ঔর বাত জব গীতাঞ্জলি কী হো তো অধিকাংশ রবীন্দ্রনাথ-সাহিত্য-প্রেমী ঔর আলোচক ভী মানতে হয় কি য়হ (ইঅ) কবি রবি কী কাব্য-মনীষা কে উৎকর্ষ কা সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট নিদর্শন হয়।²⁰⁹

Hans Kumar Tiwari has translated many Rabindra Sangeet into Hindi and arranged for performances. In other words, arrangements have been made to sing Hindi-Rabindra-Sangeet in Bengali notation. Daulal Kothari has translated 101 songs of Rabindra Sangeet titled ‘Rabindra Sangeet Sudha’ (Part 1). Not only that, he has taken special initiative to popularize Rabindra Sangeet. Radheshyam Purohit prepared the notation of ‘Rabindra Sangeet’ in 1958. Similar initiatives were taken in other Indian languages like Odia, Assamese, Kannada, Gujarati and so on.

In a few years, two cassettes of Tagore’s songs, translated into Hindi, have been released. “O Meri Matribhumi”, sung by Arati Mukherjee, was translated by Daulal Kothari and “Tum Kaise Aisa Geet Gaate Chalte”, sung by Usha Mangeshkar and Suresh Wadekar, has been rendered into Hindi by Jalaj Bhaduri. Tagore himself, one presumes, would not have minded being translated, having liberally peppered his songs as he did with words in Hindi as well as Hindi-based dialects like Bhojpuri and Maithili. To Tagore, words like *toote*, *maange*, *laaj*, *aas*, *ishara*, *sharam* and several others were considered

²⁰⁹ তেওয়ারী, রামবহাল । *রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও হিন্দী সাহিত্য* । কলকাতা: করুণা প্রকাশনী । ২০০১, ১০ ।

common currency. The Hindi version of Tagore's songs lead to some linguistic munificence. For one, till now, Rabindra Sangeet was being translated for stage shows from English, but now the Hindi version could become the source for many other Indian languages. And the other point can be that translations were often halting and Sanskritised and sometimes ludicrous. How else do you account for 'Yeh Manimala Mujhe Nahin Saje' (এ মনিমালা আমায় নাহি সাজে) and 'Tera Yeh Alh Hai' (তোমার হলো শুরু)? But there are also evergreens like 'Teri Aawaz Pe Koi' (যদি তোর ডাক শুনে কেউ) woven into the cassettes which deserve appreciation. Tagore's composition was first introduced to Hindi cinema in 1941 by Pankaj Kumar Mullick for the film titled 'Doctor'. Pankaj Mullick also tutored Kundan Lal Saigal on how to control his pitch and modulate his voice, speak and sing Bengali songs and Rabindra Sangeet. Saigal was the first non-Bengali singer to sing Rabindra Sangeet. Mullick later used the tune of 'খড়বায়ু বয় বেগে' in the popular song 'Pawan Chale Zor' of the film 'Zalzala'. The far-reaching influences of the Rabindra Sangeet were apparent on several music directors of that era and interestingly few of them were not Bengali. It is said that the song 'Bachpan ke din bhula na dena' (Deedar, 1951, Naushad / Shakeel / Lata Mangeshkar and Shamshad Begum) was based on the tune of 'মনে রবে কিনা রবে আমারে'. Simultaneously, music director Anil Biswas's 'Raahi Matwale' (Waris, 1954, Suraiya / Talat Mahmood) drew heavily from 'ওরে গৃহবাসি'. Later in the film 'Angulimal', Biswas used the tune of 'মধু গন্ধে ভরা' for 'Mere Chanchal Naina' song. And in 'Hamdard', Biswas based the tune of the song 'Mere Man Ki Dhadkan' on a popular Rabindra Sangeet 'মম চিত্তে'.

Sachin Dev Burman, whose compositions tend to draw upon inspiration from Bengali folk traditions, has composed several tunes derived from Rabindra Sangeet— 'Mera Sundar Sapna Beet Gaya' (Do Bhai, 1947) draws a faint inspiration from 'ওয়ে মানে না মানা'; 'Nain Deewane' (Afsar, 1950, Suraiya) takes off from 'সেদিন দুজনে'; 'Jayen Toh Jayen Kahan' (Taxi Driver, 1954), is based on 'হে ক্ষণিকের অতিথি'.

'Tere Mere Milan Ki Yeh Raina' (Abhimaan, 1973) by Kishore Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar has shades of 'যদি তারে নাই চিনি গো'. The influences of the Rabindra Sangeet too ran deep in R.D. Burman's music. The song 'Zindagi ke Safar Mein Guzar Jaate Hain Jo Makaam' (Aap Ki Kasam, 1974) draws inspiration from Tagore's 'জাগরণে যায় বিভবরী'.

Singer, Composer Hemanta Kumar Mukherjee's composition 'Man Mera Udta Jaye' (Maa Beta, 1962, Lata Mangeshkar) was based on 'মন মোর মেঘের সঙ্গী'. Music director Rajesh Roshan's 'Chhookar Mere Mann Ko' (Yaarana, 1981, Kishore Kumar) is said to be influenced by 'তোমার হলো গুরু'; later in 'Yug Purush' Roshan used the tune of 'পাগলা হাওয়ার বাদল দিনে' in 'Bandhan Khula Panchi Uda'. Recent day's music composer Shantanu Moitra used the tune of 'ফুলে ফুলে ঢলে ঢলে' in 'Piyu Bole Piya Bole' (Parineeta, 2005, Shreya Ghoshal). The tunes of Rabindra Sangeet were also used by Salil Choudhury in 'Biraj Bahu', Kanu Roy in 'Anubhav' and Bappi Lahiri in 'Tootey Khilone'.

One can say with great confidence that Bangla film industry, both in West Bengal and Bangladesh, benefitted and continues to benefit from Tagore's works. It is extremely difficult not to be swayed by the universal appeal of Tagore's songs.

Tagore, in his songs, had touched on almost all human emotions, making it that much easier for filmmakers to pick up a song for any situation. Tagore's songs were incorporated in Bangla movies during his lifetime—"Mukti", which was released in 1937—directed and acted by Pramathesh Barua, music direction was by the famous protégé of Tagore, Pankaj Mullick. Under Mullick's direction, Kanan Devi sang two Tagore songs, 'আজ সবার রঙে রং মেশাতে হবে' and 'তার বিদায়বেলার মালাখানি'; Mullick himself sang 'দিনের শেষে ঘুমের দেশে'—which was a composition by Mullick himself from a poem by Tagore. Satyajit Ray, arguably the most celebrated Bengali film director, not only adapted several of Tagore's literary creations for his films, but also used several of Tagore's songs in these films and also in films which were not based on Tagore's works. To name a few: 'বাজে করুণ সুরে' in 'Teen Kanya', 'এই পরবাসে রবে কে' in 'Kanchanjanga', 'আমি চিনি গো চিনি তোমারে' in 'Charulata'. Similar influences can be seen in the music compositions of the films directed by Tapan Sinha, Tarun Majumder, Prabhat Mukherjee, Aparna Sen, Rituparno Ghosh.

But no other director made more dramatic use of Tagore songs in Bangla movies than Ritwik Ghatak. In his classic movie 'Meghe Dhaka Tara' (1960), Debabrata Biswas and Geeta Ghatak sang 'যে রাতে মোর'. The most notable Bangla film in Bangladesh in which one of Tagore's famous songs was so aptly used was Zahir Raihan's 'Jibon Thekey Neya' (1970)—Tagore's song 'আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি', which later became the country's national anthem, was used with much efficiency. The deep influence of

Tagore's music on Bangla films is unquestionable. His works are universal in terms of emotions and human relationships. One might say that the language of movies offers the most appropriate medium to make Tagore's creations accessible to the audience.

After the Visva-Bharati copyright over the songs of Tagore came to an end in 2001, creative minds began exploring various possibilities of using the musical inspiration derived from Tagore for innovative work. There were, of course, concerns in some quarters that this liberty might prove to be a license for distortion. Many fear that modern fusion music using Tagore's original melodies largely results in confusion, as earlier, Debabrata Biswas had been prevented from releasing several songs for his album as he was faulted for not adhering to the grammar of the songs.

রবীন্দ্রনাথ অত্যন্ত গায়ক-সচেতন শিল্পী ছিলেন। তাঁর গান যাতে কোনোভাবে বিকৃত না হয়, সেজন্যই তিনি গান রচনার পাশাপাশি তার স্বরলিপিও প্রস্তুত করেছিলেন। তবে তাঁর স্বরলিপি না মানার ভাবনা এখনও সক্রিয়। একালের সুপরিচিত শিল্পী অজয় চক্রবর্তীর 'অজানা খনির নূতন মণি' ক্যাসেট (আশা অডিও, ১২-২০০২) সে প্রচেষ্টার একটি ফসল। তাতে শিল্পী জানিয়েছেন : 'রবীন্দ্রনাথের অতুলনীয় সঙ্গীত ভাবধারার প্রাণশক্তি নিরস স্বরলিপির মধ্যে আবদ্ধ থেকে বারবার নিজের ভাবার্থ ও মহিমা প্রকাশে বাধাপ্রাপ্ত হোক এটা কাম্য নয়। স্বরলিপি নির্ভর রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানের পরিবেশনে এই গানের বিকৃত রূপকেই প্রাধান্য দেওয়া হবে বলে আমি মনে করি।' পণ্ডিত অজয় চক্রবর্তী রাগের মুখরা সহ রবীন্দ্রগান গেয়ে বিস্তর সমালোচনা মুখে পড়েছিলেন। আর আশা ভেঁসলে সুরেলা কণ্ঠ এবং নিখুঁত স্বরস্থান নিয়েও উচ্চারণ এবং ভঙ্গির কারণে সমালোচিত হয়েছিলেন। রবীন্দ্রগানের পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা নিয়ে সম্প্রতি যে হই চই শোনা যাচ্ছে, সেটির সূচনা কিন্তু কবির জীবিত কালেই। সেকালে ইন্দুবালা, আঙুরবালা প্রমুখ গুণী শিল্পীরা ইচ্ছেমতন সুর-বিহার করে, তান-সরগম দিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কিছু গান গেয়েছিলেন। সে গানের চেহারা দেখে বোঝার উপায় নেই যে যেগুলি রবীন্দ্রসংগীত। সংগীতবেত্তা এবং এককালের জনপ্রিয় গায়ক দিলীপকুমার রায়ের অভিমত, রবীন্দ্রগানের সুর-কাঠামো বড়ো একমাত্রিক, সরল—তাই তিনি তান দিয়ে, সুর-বিহার করে রবীন্দ্রগান রেকর্ড করতে চেয়েছিলেন, কিন্তু অনুমতি মেলেনি কবিগুরুর কাছ থেকে। সম্প্রতি আবার রবীন্দ্রগানের শুদ্ধাঙ্গীকরণ নিয়ে বিতর্কের সূচনা হয়েছিল 'গানের ওপারে' টেলি-ধারাবাহিকে সামন্তকের গাওয়া রবীন্দ্রগান প্রসঙ্গে। প্রচলিত রাবীন্দ্রিক গায়কি বর্জন করে সামন্তক আড় উচ্চারণে দ্রুতলয়ে গেয়েছিলেন ধারাবাহিকের জন্য, যা তরুণপ্রজন্মের কাছে তাকে জনপ্রিয়তায় পৌঁছে দিয়েছে। এছাড়া সংগীত পরিচালক নীল দত্ত একেবারে নতুন ধরনের আবহে এবং ভঙ্গিতে 'পাগলা হাওয়ার বাদল দিনে' আর 'জাগরণে যায় বিভাবরী' গানদুটি প্রয়োগ করেছিলেন। সোমলতা আচার্য 'মায়াবনবিহারিনি হরিণী' গানের কম্পোজিশনে এনেছেন অভিনবত্ব, ওয়েস্টার্ন অ্যারেঞ্জমেন্টে অন্যরকম ভাবে গেয়েছেন এই গান।²¹⁰

²¹⁰ বিশ্বাস, অপূর্ব। *রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিশ্চেতনার গান*। কলকাতা: পত্রলেখা। ২০১৯, ১০৯-১১০।

The history of anxiety in the Bengali intelligentsia over the “future” of Rabindra Sangeet, especially in terms of dissemination—the “purity” of the style of its rendition by individual artists—and reception, its “popularity”, is rather long. The tradition has to be seen in the light of the historical aesthetic duality of “pleasure” and “happiness” that has marked the production, dissemination and reception of all musical traditions, including that of Rabindra-Sangeet, over time. As Theodor W. Adorno reminds us in his article “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening”:

“Complaints about the decline of musical taste begin only a little later than mankind’s twofold discovery, on the threshold of historical time, that music represents at once the immediate manifestation of impulse and the locus of its taming”.²¹¹

It is not that Tagore was against the idea of the artistic freedom of improvisation, provided the structure of his musical composition for a particular song remained unimpaired, and the artist was powerful enough. But he had a very selective—to put it mildly—idea of a “powerful artist”. Interestingly, Tagore referred to two inventions of modern technology of artistic/musical dissemination in this context. One of them—the gramophone—was considered by him to have contributed to the deterioration of the general culture of Rabindra Sangeet through largely distorted rampant mechanical reproduction of his songs since the early twentieth century; the second technological tool—the printing press, apparently having no connection with music, but extremely useful in leaving the authorial signature on the work of art, including music, for use of posterity. Unlike literature, sculpture, painting and other forms of “high” art, music, as Tagore himself noted, is not an “author”/ composer-centric art, but a singer / performer-centric one, which also has traditionally sought and enriched itself through the assistance of the accompaniment of musicians / instrument-artists. Adorno argues, the real objective of artworks is not in the “meaning” of music, but in its “truth content”:

“The spirit of artworks is not their meaning and not their intention, but rather their truth content, or, in other words, the truth that is revealed through them”.²¹²

²¹¹ Adorno, Theodor W. *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture*, London: Routledge, 2007, 29.

²¹² *Ibid*, 171.

And it is a huge challenge for the Bengali performer or listener, to be able to interpret, render and appreciate many songs of Tagore in their totality at the crossroads of meaning and truth content. The individual singer or listener needs the enabling tutelage of traditions of performance and reception, marked by an investment in the form of some rigorous and austere training, to be able to capture this totality. The fate of Rabindra Sangeet is thus largely sealed by the larger material logic of this modernity, which reduces Rabindra Sangeet—and all other local musical traditions—to its state of deceptive “availability,” “simplicity,” “lightness,” pleasure-producing capacity, enjoyability and marketability. The duality of impact is quite evident in the post-technology predicament of Rabindra Sangeet. Rabindra Sangeet has definitely grown more “popular” in the literal sense by means of its large-scale dissemination through the media of radio, television, film, cassette, CD, mobile phone, print and electronic media, internet, software, iPod and several other contributions of modern information and communication technology. It has certainly reached corners erstwhile unexplored by the tradition and materially has become accessible to more people today.

The other pole of these benefits of technological modernity is crass commercialism, careerism, and decline into a culture of ritual singing and listening, the gradual and inevitable marginalisation—and surely not demise—of a tradition of rendering and participation in the life of the “truth content” of Rabindra Sangeet.

Rabindra Sangeet belongs to a very particular genre of music and Tagore had defined a specific full-throated style in which his songs were to be rendered with clear diction. There can be no compromise on this. However, since Tagore’s message is universal, his musical inspiration might encourage creative minds to carry his artistic essence into their own works. Tagore had himself drawn on various sources for his compositions – traditional folk as well as Indian classical; western folk as well as western classical. The windows of his mind were always open to fresh musical impulses and what he finally composed were his own unique creations. In many instances a song of Tagore can combine the echo of a classical raga with an element of folk musical strain while there can be a sudden refrain from a western composition. This is why it is impossible to categorize Tagore. It also explains why some of his songs still continue to strike a chord among audiences across the world.

On typing “Rabindra Sangeet” on YouTube, one finds videos of the concerned Bengali songs in diverse visual and aural compositions. Just like for every other type of video

that is put up on the site, as interesting as the videos may be, is the feedback they receive. Visuals of YouTube song videos of Rabindra Sangeet are diverse. So are renditions, with solitary or duet or band performances, and with varying rhythm and instrumental accompaniment. Some of these renditions can be categorized as ‘remixes’ because of their fast pace, bouncy vocals and electronic melody. In the electronic age, however much we record a rendition on devices, it is stored as data taking up space. Data is a common form that text, visuals, and audio all take. Though some recordings of Tagore’s voice can be found online, they are digital versions that have been converted from the analog. Besides the technical transition, today’s listener is also accessing it through a device and not listening to him performing. Two dynamics could happen here: either his performances are immortalised by the technology which has collected the sound of his voice in the exact way he has performed them and audiences will form an idea of “authentic” or “original”. And the other is that the audience will understand that in his time, when his voice was recorded, effects like electronic disco beats had not been invented. That way, the performances of Tagore’s verses that we are witnessing on YouTube today are the tangible notations combining with fresh new thought processes and constantly changing music performance styles, and manifesting in a contemporary media space. It is beyond just a copy, and to put it in Tagore’s own words, it is “not a gramophone”. Perhaps the accompanying instruments that were recommended for the verses have been replaced in a particular video with other and/or newer sources of musical sound—like digital sound. And the visuals in the video were probably not what the author was familiar with in his lifetime. In the film clips and non-cinematic material of Rabindra Sangeet videos, contemporary visuals include digital copies of photographs of Tagore and his contemporaries that help us make sense of his era.

Given the artistic spontaneity which Tagore believed in, and the changing technology, what do we mean when we say that Rabindra Sangeet is being “distorted”, or its “dignity” or “innocence” threatened? What is the misunderstood modern? What is this “original” missing from “experimentation”? Especially when the composer himself is not a witness to the forms his songs are taking today, what is this imagination of the ideal performance that leads to the judgment that another type of performance is not acceptable?

In this context, one may point out the performances of Ruma Ghosh or Roddur Roy to be ‘distortions’. The social media platforms have served as open arenas for performers like Roddur Roy, where the artist is seen to be presenting his own ‘version’ of ‘Rabindra

Sangeet’ — experimented, modified, ‘remixed into Electro-Tagore’²¹³ — according to his own needs and wishes. Roddur Roy has been making parodies of popular Tagore songs for quite a few years but the distorted version of the iconic romantic song ‘Sedin Dujone Dulechhinu Boney’ started getting noticed for the wrong reasons.

Whereas, in the performances of artists like Ruma Ghosh, it has been mentioned clearly that these videos are meant solely for entertainment purposes: “শিল্পী রুমা ঘোষ, মজার অনুষ্ঠান”²¹⁴ —the label verifies. The artist in these videos is seen to perform songs that are popular as Rabindra Sangeet, in her own singing-style, without adhering to the original rhythm or melody or anything conventional, for that matter. She sings, pauses, dances, laughs, forgets the lyrics, disrupts the tonal arrangements—and this forms her performance-structure. Rabindranath’s songs here, become secondary; and the ‘distorted’ performance, whatsoever, the primary source of entertainment.

Surely it is not only due to a lack of understanding of Tagore’s ideals that some renditions are marked as wrong. Many who don’t appreciate the new versions may actually be well aware of his life story or beliefs. At various instances, the beats, the voice, the performers are targeted. One of the integral features of a social media space is the option of “sharing” the content, i.e., individuals transmit it further to other users. While YouTube’s Likes and Comments give the content boost and analytics from YouTube automatically circulate this more “popular” content, individual users have a major role in the circulation of online content. Besides directly sharing, they can take either the audio or visual aspects of a video piece, restructure or redesign the piece, creating as a result an all-new video and circulating that. Through “appropriation and reproduction”, the web in general, and the web video in particular intensify the culture of the copy, for it provides its users free access to an immense database of ready-to-use information.

In such a situation, the original creator suddenly occupies the position of yet another spectator. Within this process, the role of transmitters is so important that they assume a vague position of authority over the works. An older and a newer understanding of the same cultural object co-exist on one space such as the standardised video frames of YouTube. Alongside Tagore’s voice are those of Kishore Kumar, Hemanta Kumar, Jayati Chakraborty, Shreya Ghoshal, and many others. A sense of the “original” exists

²¹³ Roddur Roy— https://youtu.be/0klvL_aVu98 , <https://youtu.be/ONmXBACqvc4>

²¹⁴ Ruma Ghosh— <https://youtu.be/OKlzK1clUiw> , <https://youtu.be/Tkl8NBsDsh8>

beyond Tagore's voice. As described earlier, when Tagore composed his music largely based on the notational arrangements prescribed by *Ragas*, he removed what he determined were complications of the indigenous classical music system. What he retained were what he comprehended as the moods evoked by particular *Ragas*, and engineered several songs on selected rules of different *Ragas*. In the process, he created a genre which, those who were not fortunate enough to get formal training in the classical grammar of music, could sing and engage in.

Social media exposes today that musical spontaneity has constraints in the collective memory of forms. Proving at the same time that music truly cannot be contained—since it has such diverse imaginations of the “real” at a time when the author is not alive any more. Tagore was “comfortable in the knowledge that his songs were like wild flowers”²¹⁵, drawing from natural landscapes and human emotions.

Intertextuality is a universal phenomenon that signifies a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts. At its least presumptuous meaning, it basically means the actual implied or understood the presence of one or many other texts within another text. To the extent that this entails that no single text comes into being or exists in total isolation but is, rather, necessarily connected with earlier and later texts and with the wider world, it is clear that this is a phenomenon which directly involves translation and translated works as well. Translation or transcreation is one sort of intertextuality, as all texts ultimately are translations of translations. Every text is thus a translation in the sense that any instance of writing is a transformation of some other text, i.e., no writing is original in any absolute sense but stands in a relation with preceding and surrounding texts. It may be that the writer is not even conscious of this fact when he/she is writing. Intertextuality describes processes of cultural interconnectivity – inside or outside of a given culture – normally, but not only, centered on a printed text. Intertextuality is thus a precondition for the intelligibility of texts; it is a system through which a text can refer backward or forward to other, previous or future texts. In translation studies it is easy to see that it cannot be either only the text or only the reader— but both. A translator is always a reader, and a meaning of a literary text cannot be obtained without the text, even though the meaning is not limited to the written text. In this context, Roman Jakobson's use of the word ‘interpretation’ is noteworthy. Each

²¹⁵ Som, Reba. *Rabindranath Tagore: The Singer and his Song*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009.

reading and understanding of any text necessarily constitute an interpretation. The issue of hermeneutics cannot be avoided in translation. The features of a text cannot be discussed without some reference to text production and/or interpretation. Translation always involves some form of interpretation. In order to translate a text, a translator needs to make an interpretation out of it. To guide his or her interpretation, it is necessary that he/she knows both the source and the target linguistic system (the word) and cultural system (semiotic knowledge). Indeed, translation does not take place in a cultural vacuum. As cultural processes entail a constant borrowing and mixing of ideas and practices, the role of translation remains significant, as translation brings otherness and the other to another culture and moreover, it has been clearly understood that culture is communication and communication is culture. While translation itself, of course, can be viewed as performative and since performing arts are multimodal, the translator must pay attention to the non-verbal dimensions of a performance. The text on which a performance is based does not stand alone since its meaning only achieves its full potential through the performer's interpretation of it. For translators this presents a huge challenge because no matter how apt their lexical choices or how clever their turns of phrase, they always need to consider how suitable those are for the performer. Indeed, the very best textual translation of a song may prove to be unusable if the singer discovers that the words do not match the notes because, for example, the natural accentuation of a particular language interferes with the rhythm of the music. At least two issues emerge for translators out of situations involving performance: the first, raised by several contributors to this issue, is why bother to translate at all, especially when technology can now provide monolingual spectators with the means to grasp what is happening through the use of subtitles and programme notes. The second issue concerns whether translators should always be expected to be knowledgeable about the domain or the genre to which belongs the text they are working on. Ideally yes, linguistic knowledge is never enough. In reality, however, while a few translators may be lucky enough to have specialized in the realm of music, theatre or cinema exclusively, most make a living by accepting any work that becomes available in any arts-related disciplines. Furthermore, as Susan Bassnett puts it: "A translator cannot be an actor, director, designer and audience all at the same time"²¹⁶, it is, therefore, difficult to expect them to always possess the expertise necessary for the production of a translation that adheres to the general criteria of

²¹⁶ Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. New York: Methuen & Co, 1980, 99.

performability. The discussion of the subject matter entails the problem of language varieties in lyrics whose degree of difficulty is quite related to each specific genre. Rock music, for instance, will offer the translator many difficulties since he/she will have to understand and translate some slang, dialects and particularly idiolects which are part of the author's own language and have an aesthetic function in the lyrics. As to dialects, Catford agrees that they may present translation problems:

“When the TL has no equivalent dialect, the translator may have to select one particular TL dialect, create a new ‘literary’ dialect of the TL or resort to other expedients”.²¹⁷

—the same, according to him, happens with registers, styles and other varieties. In other words, translatability will depend on the existence of equivalent forms in the TL language. Moreover, the pragmatic aspect represents a crucial problem in translating lyrics. The translator may also get worried with the notions of physical and chronological distance which separate both texts.

As Bassnett suggests:

“The greatest problem when translating a text from a period remote in time is not only that the poet and his contemporaries are dead, but the significance of the poem...”.²¹⁸

One crucial feature concerning this sort of translation is that the translator will always approach the text either by choosing to retain or to replace the form of the SL text. Sometimes, however, the text cannot have its form replaced, for this would involve shifts in the register and thus shifts in the semantic properties of the lyrics, in the message as well as in the relation it has with the subject matter and, of course, with the melody and the audience.

²¹⁷ Catford, J. C. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. London: University Press, 1965, 87.

²¹⁸ Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. New York: Methuen & Co, 1980, 14.

Conclusion

Literary engagements with performativity tend to focus on the performative function of language as represented in literary texts. One way literary scholars have adapted their understanding of texts to the environment of performance is by looking at performative mediating between language and modes of doing. Performing, in a way, reconstitutes the text; it echoes, gives voice to, or translates the text into a new form. Performance creates a sense of “proximity” to the text. While examining the implications of textual and performance studies, Austin observed: “...although language is iterable, this iterability begins to rupture when applied to utterances; as a result, the fixedness of a text is as illusory as the fixedness of an interpretation; neither is final, neither is authorial”.²¹⁹ J. L. Austin’s ‘How to Do Things with Words’ sparked both excitement and controversy, his rejection of an exclusive focus on truth-value semantics in favour of viewing language use as social action that emerges in the “total speech act” is echoed in Bauman’s emphasis on the emergent properties of performance. Performance-oriented scholars no longer think of performativity primarily as the use of specific features in signalling particular illocutionary effects within a fixed set of conventions and a given social context; instead, they view it as the interaction of complex and heterogeneous formal patterns in the social construction of reality.

6.1 What happens to the primary performance text?

Performance is much like the term culture—the “original difficult word”, as Raymond Williams puts it, in that it participates in “two areas that are often thought of as separate—art and society”²²⁰. Like culture, performance began its semantic life as a relatively simple noun of process. Just as culture basically meant the tending of something, performance also, simply meant carrying something out—a working out of anything ordered or undertaken.

²¹⁹ Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. ed. Marina Sbisa and J. O. Urmson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

²²⁰ Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford, 1983.

Peggy Phelan, begins her essay on “The Ontology of Performance” by saying that “Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance becomes itself through disappearance”.²²¹ Richard Schechner, too, puts forward the idea that—“Performances are always actually performed”.²²² Whereas the aesthetic of presence dominates Phelan’s approach, the aesthetic of repetition dominates Schechner’s contention—that restored behaviour is the main characteristic of performance. To put it another way, Phelan views performance essentially from a spectator standpoint, whereas, Schechner from the performer standpoint. Put simply: something is always restored in performance, even if the restoration comes through a simple framing device. Therefore, performance can be identified as that, which permits the structure of the text and the formation of the subject. This can be in terms of performance licensing and ‘implementing’ the text with respect to an audience.

For music composed before the age of electronic recording, musical texts — the unique arrangements of musical symbols by which music is represented in visible form — are the principal evidence for how that music sounded when it was created. Over the centuries, musical performance has varied in the degree to which it follows texts. The variance has depended on the individual performer, on the nature of the performer’s text, and, most importantly, on the conventions of the repertoire to which the work being performed belongs. In some repertoires, performers were expected to follow their texts quite closely; while in others, performers were granted considerable license in realizing their texts. But the performance of music is regulated not only by texts but also by unwritten conventions called performing practices and performing traditions. Performing practices determine how music is performed in particular times and places; performing traditions attach to individual pieces and are created by successive generations of performers rendering those pieces. Performing practices determine the quality of sound desirable in a voice or instrument, the density and placement of ornaments, and the degree to which performers are expected to adhere to or depart from their texts. Because elements of performing practice vary with time and place, following musical texts literally will not necessarily yield performances similar to those that the texts were intended to generate.

²²¹ Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

²²² Schechner, Richard. *Essays in Performance Theory: 1970-76*. New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977.

After Visva-Bharati lost control over Rabindra Sangeet, various incidents took place. Exactly according to history, all those events had already started. In all these cases, the basic premise is one and the same question—in the performance of Rabindra Sangeet, that is, in public performance, who will have the freedom to mechanically print the film on cassette CDs, and who will be following the former control. When we say Rabindra Sangeet, we are talking about a composition, composed of words and melodies, which are ‘recognized’ by Rabindranath. The history of that composition can be different. Sometimes the words have been composed before, then the poet has added the melody with it; sometimes the melody and the words have come together in various complex traditions, and at other times the melody has been created or adopted before, then the words have been placed in it. Many other incidents have taken place, such as slight variations in the lyrics of the poems. It may be that others have given the melody — but it has been accepted in *Swarabitan* as Rabindra Sangeet — this is also a condition. The epoch-making form of words and melodies created by these processes raises the question of ‘artist’s freedom’ during the performance in different mediums.

Needless to say, the image or concept of this freedom is not the same in everyone’s mind. The only text of Rabindra Sangeet printed in *Gitabitan* is verbal, word dependent. In other words, it is just the lyrics of the song, nothing more. Of course, in most cases, these songs are also rhyming poems. But in most cases the rhythm of the song has nothing to do with the rhythm of the poem except for the songs in which Rabindranath has created his own rhythms. For example, the rhythm of the song ‘আজ ধানের খেতে রৌদ্রছায়ায়’, written in group verse, is *Kaharba*; whereas ‘কান্নাহাসির দোল-দোলানো’ is written by using the same verse-style, but here the rhythm is *Dadra*. There is also a difference in the tempo of the two songs. In this way if the poetic rhythm of many more songs of Rabindranath, and the tempo is compared, it can be seen that the rhythm of the song has considerably less relation with the rhythm of the poem.

রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘কাব্য ছন্দের যে কাজ, গানের তালের সেই কাজ’—এ রকম একটা কথা আছে, কিন্তু কথাটা আক্ষরিক অর্থে ঠিক নয়, অনেকে এ কথাটা ওই ভাবে ধরে নিয়ে বিভ্রান্ত হয়েছেন। গীতবিতান অতিক্রম করে আমরা যখন স্বরবিতান-এ পৌঁছাই তখন আমরা শব্দপাঠের সঙ্গে সুরপাঠও পাই। বলা বাহুল্য তা পাঠ মাত্র, নিষ্প্রাণ মুদ্রণে নিহিত সুরের সম্ভাবনা। গায়কের কণ্ঠেই কেবল দুটি পাঠ মিলিত হয়ে গান হিসেবে মূর্ত হয়। কিন্তু এই গায়কের কণ্ঠ যখন যুক্ত হল তখন রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের আর-একটি পাঠ তৈরি হল, সেটি হল কণ্ঠপাঠ। এ পর্যন্ত তাহলে তিনটি পাঠ তৈরি হল

রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের (বা যে-কোনো গানের)—শব্দপাঠ, সুরপাঠ, কণ্ঠপাঠ। পাঠক তো প্রশ্ন করতেই পারেন যে, কণ্ঠপাঠ যুক্ত না হলে তা গান হিসেবে আদৌ গণ্য হবে কেন? এ তো বাড়ির ব্লু-প্রিন্টের মতো, সর্বাঙ্গসম্পূর্ণ বাড়ি তো নয়। কণ্ঠের বাহনে পরিস্ফুট হলে তবেই তা গীতবস্তু হয়ে ওঠে।²²³

Many songs can be read as individual poems, and many readers are fascinated by the various lyrics in *Gitabitan*, read them as poems and earn a lot of emotional resources from it. The singer's song, of course, creates another text, which is vocal-text (কণ্ঠপাঠ). But so far in the case of Rabindra Sangeet, a fairly strong control has been created, that is, the scope for freedom is limited. The lyrics of the song are composed by Rabindranath, it should not be changed; Rabindranath also composed the melody for those songs, which should not be altered. Then the general expectation is that the singer's vocals will basically follow the first two texts with devotion and respect.

There can be two pretexts of performing Rabindra Sangeet — one permanent, one temporary. Every day, from school to college, countless singers from children to adults are singing Rabindra Sangeet in hundreds of programmes. Most of them are playing some or the other musical instruments, with the support of drummer, table-player, esraj, guitar, sitar, violin or synthesizer player and even khanjani player. As a result, a musical text (বাদ্যপাঠ) is being created. This text was not created by Rabindranath, it was solely created by the musicians. On a temporary occasion this musical text is made and blended, but when it is recorded on a cassette/CD, it becomes a permanent text. Neither Rabindranath nor Visva-Bharati has any control over these musical texts—it remains in the hands of those who create them. As a result, we can simply think of these four texts in the formal presentation of Rabindra Sangeet:

Word-text (শব্দপাঠ), Melody-text (সুরপাঠ), Vocal-text (কণ্ঠপাঠ) and Musical-text (বাদ্যপাঠ).

However, some more 'texts' might evolve during some performances of Rabindra Sangeet, which are made for temporary occasions, and about which Rabindranath has no such given instructions.

It will not be irrelevant to mention Pabitra Sarkar's observations regarding this matter:

²²³ রায়, আলপনা (সম্পা.) । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান: সঙ্গ-অনুসঙ্গ* । কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস । ২০০১ ।

শ্রীমতী রাজশ্রী ভট্টাচার্যের একটি বর্ষাকালীন রবীন্দ্রগীতের খণ্ডে, গাছের ডালপালা ও পত্রপল্লব স্টেজে সাজিয়ে বর্ষার আবহ তৈরি করেছিল— সেই ‘প্রতিবেশ-পাঠ’ পরিবেশনের অঙ্গ, গানের অপরিহার্য অঙ্গ নয়। আবার ‘শেষ বর্ষণে’-র একটি অনুষ্ঠানে বর্ষাসংগীতের শিল্পীরা সবুজ পোশাক আর শরৎসংগীতের শিল্পীরা সবুজ পাড়ের সাদা শাড়ি পরেছিলেন। এও ওই অভিকরণ বা পারফরম্যান্সের আর একটা পাঠ। এরকম আর-একটি পাঠ হতেই পারে, যার নাম দেব ‘নৃত্যপাঠ’। যেসব গানের নৃত্যরূপ দেওয়া আছে বা দেওয়া হয়, এবং নাচের মধ্য দিয়ে গানের কথাগুলির ব্যক্তরূপ দেবার চেষ্টা করা হয় সেই নাচই ও গানগুলির নৃত্যপাঠ—একথা বলতে পারি আমরা। আরও অনেক অস্থায়ী পাঠ হতেই পারে। যেমন শিল্পীর শরীরী ভাষা, তারও পাঠ একটা তৈরি হয়। কিন্তু শুধু গান হিসেবে রূপায়িত করার ক্ষেত্রে চারটির মধ্যে প্রথম তিনটি পাঠ যত অপরিহার্য, পরেরগুলি ততটা নয়। আর আপাতত সেগুলি অস্থায়ী অভিকরণের অংশমাত্র, যদিও রবীন্দ্রসংগীতের ভিডিও রূপে তা স্থায়ী হয়ে থাকবে। আয়োজিত অনুষ্ঠানে পরিবেশিত গানে সাধারণভাবে বাদ্যপাঠও একটি জরুরি অঙ্গ হিসেবে ক্রমশ গৃহীত হচ্ছে।²²⁴

For those who want to look into this matter theoretically, will try to explore how much invisible control Rabindranath has in which text. Though, there is no way for the Visva-Bharati Sangeet Samiti to impose control now, but there is an importance to what ordinary Bengalis or the masses think about it. A singer deviating from Rabindranath’s words while performing Rabindra Sangeet — at least, it never seems to be part of the general expectations.

The most conservation can be seen regarding the word-text. To a poet, the words act as a weapon with which he constructs the meaning and essence of his intended expression. Not only the proper implementation of words, but also the inter-connection of the words are important in this case. The Czech structuralists look at the poet’s vocabulary process from two angles. First the poet chooses one of the many words, let’s say ‘বাঁশবন’ instead of ‘বেণুবন’ or ‘বেলফুল’ instead of ‘মল্লিকা’—it can be regarded as the paradigmatic selection.

That is to say, the poet picks a word out of more than one synonymous or almost synonymous words, which is said to be the most suitable for expressing his intended thoughts and meanings. This selection of the poet is a part of his creation process, but in another work with these words, his desire for creation becomes more unique and fancier—that is the arrangement of the words side by side, which is called Syntagmatic in the language of the Czech linguists-poets.

²²⁴ রায়, আলপনা (সম্পা.)। *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান: সঙ্গ-অনুসঙ্গ*। কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস। ২০০১।

মধুসূদন ‘শবদে শবদে বিয়া’ দেওয়া বলতে এটাই বুঝিয়েছেন।...শব্দ নির্বাচন এবং শব্দগ্রহণ—দুই-ই একজন কবিকে আর একজন কবি থেকে পৃথক করে, অন্তত যে-কবি পৃথক হতে চান তাঁকে তো করেই। এখানেই কবির নিজত্ব, তাঁর সৃষ্টির দখলদারির এলাকা।...‘ক্রমপাঠ’ গানটির শব্দপাঠেরই অঙ্গ। গীতিকার হিসেবে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন গানটিকে তার পূর্ণাঙ্গ শব্দরূপ দিলেন, তখন তা একটা বিশেষ ক্রমে সাজালেন। অনেক গানেই চার ভূকের ফ্রেম আছে, তাতে যে তিনি শুধু ভারতীয় ধ্রুপদের আস্থায়ী থেকে আভোগের ক্রম রক্ষা করেছেন তাই নয়, তিনি অর্থের, ব্যঞ্জনাবাহী চিত্রকল্পেরও একটা ক্রমবিন্যাস করেছেন। গানের প্রথম ছত্র যে কথা বলে তা পুরো গানটির ভূমিকা মাত্র। এই ভূমিকার একটা প্রাথমিক মূর্তি তৈরি করে দ্বিতীয় ছত্র, এরপর অন্তরাতে সূত্রের বিস্তার হয় এবং সঞ্চরীতে আবার একটা নতুন তরঙ্গ তৈরি করে গানের বৃত্তে সমগ্রতা দান করে। এই ক্রম ভাঙা উচিত নয়—রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানের ক্রমভঙ্গ ঘটানোর অর্থ গানকে শারীরিকভাবে আহত করা—বক্তব্যের ক্রমবিস্তারকে ছত্রভঙ্গ করা...²²⁵

Now, if one looks at the musical-text of some of the songs, the question arises whether it has been given by the composer himself or not. It is a fact that Rabindranath himself went to teach songs to one person at a time and made small changes in the melodies. And there are also many Rabindra Sangeet, in which the melody was composed by Jyotirindranath, not by Rabindranath himself. It has also been noticed that Rabindranath’s songs have become popular in the tunes given by others, such as Pankaj Mullick’s tune in ‘দিনের শেষে ঘুমের দেশে’ or ‘আনন্দধারা বহিছে ভুবনে’ in the tune given by Ramesh Chandra Bandyopadhyay, as Subhash Chowdhury has shown.

In spite of these exceptional examples, Rabindra Sangeet is, by and large, the collection of songs which has been noted in the 64 volumes of *Swarabitan*. There are, however, many questions about notations, words, etc., as there are some typographical errors. Sometimes some songs are sung even with printing errors. For example, in the inner part of the song ‘আকাশে দুই হাতে প্রেম বিলায় ও কে’—‘ফুলেরা সকল গায়ে নিল মেখে’ is probably sung for a long time as ‘ছেলেরা সকল গায়ে নিল মেখে’. No one has initially questioned that for a conscious lyricist like Rabindranath this rupture is unexpected; rather, the proximity of flowers and birds, in this case, is much greater—at least in poetry.

However, it must be said that the only source of getting hold of the melody-text adopted in Rabindra Sangeet is *Swarabitan*. Needless to say, various attempts to embellish the songs of Rabindranath with classical music are not a recent phenomenon. During 1925,

²²⁵ রায়, আলপনা (সম্পা.) । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান: সঙ্গ-অনুসঙ্গ* । কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস । ২০০১ ।

Dilip Kumar Roy almost forcibly obtained Rabindranath's permission to add *taan* and *alaap* to his songs. Determining the historical background of this experiment is not our immediate goal, but the question remains whether this 'version' was accepted fully by the audience or not. For whatever reason, no permanent form has been created by those versions. It is true that Rabindranath has taken a lot of inspiration from the tradition of North-Indian *Raga Sangeet*, and there is no hesitation in acknowledging this. Sometimes he has mixed *Bhairon* with *Bhairabi*, and often with the touch of *Emon* in the *Purabi*, he has created new melodies which can be regarded as the expansion of the melodies of North-Indian *Raga Sangeet*. This classical *raga*-based tradition is predominantly melodic, and Rabindranath, in his discussions with Dilip Kumar Roy and elsewhere, has repeatedly said that here, the words are insignificant; whereas melody and lyrics in his songs help and support each other—both are integral parts of the entire composition. Basically the 'poetic sense' of the words helps the melody to evoke the true emotion of the words. Rabindranath hints that just as his songs are part of the Bengali musical tradition, they are also his own creation of a conscious artist-person, both his words and melodies have the signature of his personality. Rabindranath's melodies are his conscious creation. Of course, he has taken tunes from various sources, from different musical traditions, and many melodies of Hindustani *raga sangeet* in many re-created '*bhanga*' songs. But even though most of his songs have hints of Hindustani *raga-ragini*, he has changed the pattern in such a way that they have become his own creations.

Few attempts have been made to compose new 'versions' of Rabindra Sangeet by adding melodies to Rabindranath's poems: a young man set his own tune in poems like 'Sonar Tari' etc. and the television stations also broadcasted it. But this attempt was very consciously and very consistently rejected by the Bengali audience. Another attempt demanded a little more attention when Hemanta Mukhopadhyay took the task of implementing melodies to some of the poems of Rabindranath, with the active support of Maitreyi Devi—nonetheless, the attempt was quickly rejected by Rabindra Sangeet-lovers. Another extension of this may be to replace the conventional melody of Rabindra Sangeet with another melody. One of such attempts was made during Rabindranath's lifetime, with Rabindranath's approval. He gave permission to Dilip Kumar Roy to re-compose the song 'তোমার বীণা আমার মনোমাবে', and the new notation was also printed in Dilip Kumar's book. But its permanent publication and promotion did not happen, no one ever

felt the need to preserve it vocally for that matter. Although it is a fact that others have composed more than one of his songs — starting from Jyotirindranath, Shantidev Ghosh or Pankaj Kumar Mullick. However, Shantidev Ghosh's 'হে মোর দুর্ভাগা দেশ' did not get as much recognition or stability as Pankaj Mullick's 'দিনের শেষে ঘুমের দেশে'. The melody-implemented Rabindra-Kavita composed by Parimal Hom, a former student of Santiniketan, did not even get the approval of Visva-Bharati Sangeet Samiti. There is evidence that Rabindranath became aware of the authenticity and standardization of his own music from the very beginning. In the essay titled, he suggested that notations for preserving the originality of the composition should be adopted—creation of new notation is at the root of the interest to make the basis of the melody permanent.

Ranindranath's notions regarding this matter are clearly projected in his conversations with Dilip Kumar Roy:

আমার গানের বিকার প্রতিদিন আমি এত শুনেছি যে, আমারও ভয় হয়েছে যে আমার গানকে তার স্বকীয় রসে প্রতিষ্ঠিত রাখা হয়তো সম্ভব হবে না।...এমন অবস্থায় সহজ মীমাংসা এই যে, যে-ব্যক্তি গান রচনা করেছে তার সুরটিকে বহাল রাখা। কবির কাব্য সম্বন্ধেও এই রীতি প্রচলিত, চিত্রকরের চিত্র সম্বন্ধেও। রচনা যে করে, রচিত পদার্থের একমাত্র দায়িত্ব তারই, তার সংশোধন বা উৎকর্ষ সাধনের দায়িত্ব যদি আর কেউ নেয় তা হলে কলা-জগতে অরাজকতা ঘটে।...তোমার একথা আমিও স্বীকার করি যে, সুরকারের সুর বজায় রেখেও, এক্সপ্রেশনে কম-বেশি স্বাধীনতা চাইবার এজ্জিয়ার গায়কের আছে। কেবল প্রতিভা অনুসারে কম ও বেশির মধ্যে তফাত আছে এ কথাটি ভুলো না। প্রতিভাবানকে যে-স্বাধীনতা দেব অকুণ্ঠে, গড়পড়তা গায়ক ততখানি স্বাধীনতা চাইলে 'না' করতেই হবে।²²⁶

Along with the notion of melody, comes the context of tempo/fusion/pause (লেয়)—which may not be precise at the moment of composing the song, and is mainly dependent on the performance. After singing the song for several times, one can confirm its expected ideal tempo (লেয়).

রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেই একই গানের লয়হীন ও লয়যুক্ত সুরান্তর নির্মাণ করেছেন, কখনও-কখনও দু-রকম তালে নিবদ্ধ করেছেন একই গানকে—তাতেও লয়ান্তর ঘটেছে। কখনও কখনও একই গানের নানা স্তবকে ও ছত্রগুলো ভিন্ন লয় এনে সে গানে বিশেষ নাটকীয়তার সঞ্চার করেছেন, যেমন 'বিশ্ববীণারবে', 'নৃত্যের তালে তালে'। প্রচুর গানে মূলে পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত, পরে গীতবিতান-এ ও 'স্বরবিতান'-এ প্রকাশিত কথার মধ্যে যেমন অল্পবিস্তর ভেদ আছে তেমনই প্রচুর সুরভেদ

²²⁶ বেরা, বিষ্ণু, হীরেন ভট্টাচার্য ও রত্না ভট্টাচার্য (সম্পা.)। *সংগীত ভাবনায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ*। কলকাতা: গণনাট্য প্রকাশনী। ২০০২।

ও ছন্দোভেদও আছে।...কিন্তু প্রচলনে কখনও-কখনও একটি সুর বা শব্দপাঠ বা লয়পাঠ বেশি গৃহীত হয়ে যায়, সেটিই তখন মান্য বা স্ট্যান্ডার্ড হয়ে ওঠে।²²⁷

There is no difficulty in adhering to these three general categories of fast, middle and delayed tempo of compositions, but there may be some slight differences in them. It will depend on the preparation of the artist's voice, the psychology and environment of the moment when it will be performed. Artists need to have the opportunity to explore and discover the relativity that lies in the relationship between these fast-mid-delayed fusions. The tempo of the song 'চলে যায় মরি হয়' differs from the one that is heard in the *Santiniketani gharana* and what was adopted in Hemanta Mukhopadhyay's gramophone record. So it will probably not be possible to create very strict rules in the case of fusion. Debabrata Biswas has also taken some liberties in some of the songs, but the reception has not been positive in all cases.

Rabindranath's songs have two aspects — melody and lyrical poetry. Most of his lyrics are composed in the mixed style of poetry. That is to say, the language of Rabindranath's songs and poems as one includes the same verse dialect. Nevertheless, there is a difference in history, variety, subject matter and perspective between the language of Rabindranath's songs and the language of poetry. If we judge from the point of view of history or etymology, we will see that the grammar of Rabindranath's poems has changed from period to period, but in the case of the language of song, it is difficult to say with certainty that any chronological evolution has taken place.

নবজাতক-এর 'সূচনা'-য় রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন, 'আমার কাব্যের ঋতুপরিবর্তন ঘটেছে বারে বারে।' এই পরিবর্তন কবিতার ভাববস্তুর তো বটেই, সেইসঙ্গে যে কবিতার ভাষাশৈলীরও—এ কথা বলা বাহুল্য। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতার ভাষা ও গানের ভাষার প্রথম প্রভেদ তৈরি হচ্ছে ঠিক এখানেই—দুয়ের ঐতিহাসিক বিবর্তন ঠিক সমান্তরালভাবে ঘটেনি। কবিতার শৈলী বদলের বড়ো কয়েকটি ধাপ তো সকলের কাছেই সুচিহ্নিত—মানসী (১৮৯০), বলাকা (১৯১৬), পুনশ্চ (১৯৩২) রোগশয্যায় (১৯৪০) ইত্যাদি কাব্যগ্রন্থ কয়েকটি বড়ো পরিবর্তনের পরিচয় বহন করছে। এই পরিবর্তনের মূল লক্ষণ হল যে, তা linear বা একরৈখিক—আগের পরিবর্তনগুলি থেকে ক্রমশ সেরে সেরে গিয়েছে। আগের শৈলী সংস্কৃত বা বর্জিত হয়ে নতুন শৈলীর উদ্ভব ঘটেছে কবিতার ক্ষেত্রে, ফলে কবিতার স্টাইলের ক্ষেত্রে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সধরণ প্রগতিশীল। কিন্তু

²²⁷ রায়, আলপনা (সম্পা.)। *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান: সঙ্গ-অনুসঙ্গ*। কলকাতা: প্যাপিরাস। ২০০১।

গানের ভাষাশৈলীর ক্ষেত্রে তাঁর এই ধারাবাহিক গতি লক্ষ করা যায় না।...একই ভাষাশৈলীতে লেখা দুটি গানের মধ্যে বহু বছরের ব্যবধান, অর্থাৎ প্রয়োজনমতো নানা কালের ব্যবধানে তিনি একই ভাষাশৈলীতে গান রচনার ক্ষেত্রে ফিরে এসেছেন। আবার একই সময়ে লেখা নানা গানের মধ্যেও ভাষাশৈলীগত পার্থক্য চোখে পড়ে। যেমন শারদোৎসব (১৯০৮) নাটকের 'আজ ধানের খেতে' এবং 'নব কুন্দধবলদল সুশীতলা' গান দুটির মধ্যে রীতিগত দূরত্ব খুবই স্পষ্ট। অর্থাৎ, গানের ভাষার ক্ষেত্রে কয়েকটি শৈলীর মধ্যে যেন তাঁর বৃত্তাকার পরিক্রমণ চলেছে।...যদিও অনেক সময় রবীন্দ্রনাথ একই শৈলীতে এক-এক গুচ্ছ গান রচনা করেছেন, তবু একটি শৈলীর বহু বছর পরে অন্য একটি গানে পুনরাবির্ভাব রবীন্দ্রনাথের সংগীত-রচনায় বিস্ময়কর নয়। ফলে তেইশ বছর বয়সে লেখা 'বরিশ ধরা-মাঝে শান্তির বারি' গানটির সঙ্গে আটচল্লিশ বছর বয়সে লেখা 'জরজর প্রাণে, নাথ, বরিশন করো তব প্রেমসুধা' গানটির শৈলীগত দূরত্ব খুব বেশি নয়, যেমন অস্পষ্ট নয় কুড়ি বছর বয়সের 'ওই জানালার কাছে বসে আছে' গানটির সঙ্গে আটাত্তর বছর বয়সের 'কিছু বলব বলে এসেছিলাম' গানটির শৈলীর নৈকট্য।²²⁸

In terms of composition, many of Rabindranath's songs are based on specific occasions, so the effect of that occasion should be prominent in the style of the songs. For example, the lyrics of the songs composed on the occasion of *Maghotsav* will be in the same format, and the lyrics of the songs composed on the occasion of the *Swadeshi* movement will have a similarity in their format; so that in the end it may be seen that the factor that has become more important and valuable in the language of Rabindranath's song than time, is the occasion, the immediate promotion of the composition of the song. Even if the language of Rabindranath's poetry and the language of song are mixed in one stream of evolution, the history of evolution of both should be shown separately and independently. In the first phase of Rabindranath's creative life, the language style of songs and poems was close to each other as in *Balmiki Pratibha* or in *Maya Khela*. As far as style seems to be concerned, the language of Rabindranath's poetry in general, from *Balaka*, goes beyond the determined scope and limited possibilities of the language of song and seeks a different path and expands its field of expression. Otherwise, the format of his songs was not far from the composition of his poems in general till *Gitamalya*. In other words, until that episode, it would have been difficult to distinguish any of his songs if they were separated from the melody and mixed with the poems written at the same time. But with the exception of the so-called lyric poems after *Balaka*, although the style of some songs are similar to that of contemporary poetry, most of the

²²⁸ সরকার, পবিত্র। *গানের ঝরনাতলায়*। কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস। ২০১৩।

songs of the general format stand away from the poetic form of that time. While comparing *Balaka*'s poem no. 15 with the song 'গানগুলি মোর শৈবালেরই দল', it is clear that after eight years, Rabindranath consciously abandoned the structure and style of poetry and arranged the words in terms of the song. Later, when the poems of *Sanai* were printed as transformed from songs, they did not come up with exactly the same repetition—here Rabindranath has to make a slight alteration of the pre-written songs to give form to the physical condition of the poems. The two songs of 'শেষ লেখা' — 'সমুখে শান্তি পারাবার' and 'ওই মহামানব আসে' are clearly different from the rest of the poems in the book in terms of rhythm.

The second difference between Rabindranath's poetic language and the language of song is that the breadth and variety of poetic language is not in the language of song. In general, it is not possible to capture specific and concrete things in songs as much as it is possible in poetry. As a result, the subject and connotation of the poems are much wider than the subject and connotation of the songs. By comparing words and melodies in different places, Rabindranath has pointed out the different areas of the two forms.

কবিতার প্রসঙ্গ, শব্দের আয়োজন ও বিন্যাস, অলংকরণ ইত্যাদি নানা সম্ভাবনা ও সম্প্রসারণকে গানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ব্যবহার করেননি, গানের শর্ত কবিতার শর্ত থেকে আলাদা বলেই। যে-কারণে চণ্ডালিকা (১৯৩৩) গদ্য-নাটিকার 'নাওয়াচ্ছিলুম'কে নৃত্যনাট্যে (১৯৩৮) 'স্নান করাতেছিলেম' করতে হয়।

...গানের কথা বা বাণী অংশ আধখানা সৃষ্টিমাত্র, তার বাকি আধখানা সুর। যেহেতু সুরের বাহনেই সেই কবিতা আমাদের কাছে আসছে সেহেতু, কথার আত্মস্বতন্ত্র ভূমিকা আর থাকছে না, তা অন্য মিডিয়ামের অংশ হয়ে পড়ছে। সেই কারণেই উচ্চারিত কথার ধ্বনি ও রূপগত নানা সম্ভাবনা—যা কবিতায় বহুভাবে অন্বেষণ করে দেখার সুযোগ আছে—গানের বাঁধনে বাঁধতে গিয়ে তার অন্তত কয়েকটিকে অপূরিত রেখে দিতে হচ্ছে।²²⁹

One prominent feature of Rabindra Sangeet is that apart from some songs, which were directly influenced from Hindi or other compositions and some songs belonging to the lyric-plays and dance-dramas, most of the songs adhere to the four *tukas* of the classical tradition—*Asthayi*, *Antara*, *Sanchari* and *Abhog*. But within that sphere, Rabindranath has never failed to create a rich variety. The usage of rhyming-metre is far more regular in the song-compositions than the poems. In fact, the *antamil* or the presence of rhyming metres in most cases distinguish Rabindranath's songs from his poems. Equality and

²²⁹ বসু, বুদ্ধদেব । *নিঃসঙ্গতা রবীন্দ্রনাথ* । কলকাতা: এম. সি. সরকার অ্যান্ড সন্স । ১৯৬৩ ।

heterogeneity in the use of sound in Rabindra Sangeet and the various combinations of the two are endless. A great area of phonetic equilibrium is the creation of alliteration by repetition of sounds or groups of sounds. The sequence of repetition of sounds or chords in alliteration is not always precise. The richness and variety of alliteration in Rabindranath's songs is such that any attempt to explain him with just a few instances is not enough.

রবীন্দ্রনাথ সমস্ত সম্ভাবনাকে নানাভাবে বাজিয়েছেন, একই ছত্রে একাধিক অনুপ্রাসের অবতারণাও বিরল নয়। তাঁর কবিতা থেকে এ-সবও তাঁর গানকে কখনো কখনো আলাদা করে দেয়; যেমন:

কনকচাঁপার কানে কানে: ক-এর অনুপ্রাস

আঁধারে আলো আবিল করে, আঁখি যে মরে লাজে: আ-এর

বেদনাতে বাঁশি বাজায় সকল বেলা যে: ব্-এর

রূপের রেখা রসের ধারায়: র-এর ইত্যাদি।

...কবিতার ভাষার সঙ্গে গানের ভাষার আর-একটি বড়ো তফাত তৈরি হয়েছে গানে বাক্য বা বাক্যখণ্ডের পুনরাবৃত্তিতে। ধ্রুবপদের বাইরেই অসংখ্য শব্দ, শব্দগুচ্ছ, এমন কী বাক্যের পুনরাবর্তনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে-আবেগ সৃষ্টি করেছেন তা বিশেষভাবে গানের আবেগ। সব সময় যে শব্দের বা শব্দগুচ্ছের হুবহু পুনরাবৃত্তি ঘটছে তা নয়। কখনও একই বিশেষণের পুনরাবৃত্তি হচ্ছে, কিন্তু বিশেষ্য বদলে যাচ্ছে, কখনও একই ধরনের বাক্যবন্ধের পুনরাবৃত্তি ঘটে parallelism-এর জন্ম হচ্ছে।²³⁰

A closer look at the composition of Rabindranath's songs reveals that his compositions revolved around a number of well-defined styles. By adopting the terminology of the linguists, it can be termed as 'register' or 'Nirukti'. The word register is defined as 'Language according to use'. The first register that comes to mind in case of Rabindranath's songs is the style of hymns or *vandana* — where the subject is shown to be of great significance, vast and a little distant — the poet himself is presented as overwhelmed and seldom surprised by the notion. This register is full of lofty and deep words; the following songs can be listed as examples:

'নীলাঞ্জনছায়া, প্রফুল্ল কদম্ববন', 'মধু-গন্ধে-ভরা মৃদু-স্নিগ্ধছায়া' etc.

Just the opposite register can be identified in the songs, which were composed for lyric-plays. These songs use less-formal, colloquial language and are more engaging:

²³⁰ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বীরেন্দ্র ও কণিকা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। *রবীন্দ্র-সঙ্গীতের নানা দিক*। কলকাতা: মিত্রালয়। ১৯৬৯।

Songs like ‘প্রিয়ে তোমার টেঁকি হলে যেতেম বেঁচে’, ‘আজ তোমার দেখতে এলেম’, or ‘কার হাতে যে ধরা দেব হয়’ can justify the claim. Some songs have captured the simple-joy and dismal of the *Bauls*: ‘আকাশে দুই হাতে প্রেম বিলায় ওকে’, ‘আপন হতে বাহির হয়ে’, ‘আমার নাই-বা হল পারে যাওয়া’, ‘ওরে মন, যখন জাগলি না রে’; whereas in some, the intimate emotional aspects of the *Vaishnavas* have been expressed: ‘ওর মানের এ বাধ টুটবে না কি টুটবে না’, ‘বঁধুর লাগি কেশে আমি পরব এমন ফুল’, ‘কথা কোস্ নে লো রাই’.

Apart from these, when a kind of deep friendship and demand for god awakens, the intuitive natural flow gets captured in some of the songs like— ‘তুমি এবার আমায় লহো হে নাথ লহো’, ‘ভেঙে মোর ঘরের চাবি’, ‘আমার খেলা যখন ছিল তোমার সনে’, ‘ও অকূলের কূল, ও অগতির গতি’ etc.

In between the classical register and the colloquial register or *Nirukti*, there can be numerous intermediate registers. It may be said that Rabindranath’s style of composition has acquired a special characteristic balance in the mixed *niruktis* — where the ornamentation of emotion has been rightfully mixed with the colloquial cordiality. Songs like ‘প্রাসঙ্গে মোর শিরিষ শাখায়’, ‘আমি তখন ছিলাম মগন’, ‘আজি গোধূলিলগনে’ or ‘লিখন তোমার ধুলায় হয়েছে ধূলি’ can be mentioned in this regard.

Rabindranath has established a validity of music by comparing words and melody, i.e. a ‘lyric’ or a song composed with melody. The essence of the psychological aspect in this context is that since poetry (even prose poetry) is the vehicle of human deep feeling, so is melody, so the union of the two is normal and expected. And when these two come together, the expression is bound to be more beautiful and sublime. The lyric part of a song is beautiful and satisfying most of the time as a poem, but Rabindranath kept on saying that with a touch of melody in it, it becomes ‘indescribable’ (‘অনির্বচনীয়’). Thus, in ‘সঙ্গীত ও ভাব’ and in various essays he mentions that: “কবিতা যেমন ভাবের ভাষা, সংগীতও তেমনই ভাবের ভাষা।” or “সংগীতের উদ্দেশ্যই ভাব প্রকাশ করা।”²³¹

As a result, poetry and melody – if the two mediums of expression combine, we see an attempt to legitimize the emergence of a more powerful new art. One argument must be that of aesthetics — that is, with the combination of the two arts, the third art that is born – must add to the excellence of the two and become a more advanced art. Of course, the question arises as to whether the excellence of that art can be accomplished in such a simple and mathematical manner.

²³¹ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

6.2 Rabindra Sangeet in translated versions

Two books—one in Bengali, the other in English. Not an exact translation of one another, yet the name is partly the same. One is *Gitanjali*, and the other is *Gitanjali–Song Offerings*, which is almost a translation of the main title. The Bengali *Gitanjali* was published in 1910, whereas the English *Gitanjali* was printed by the India Society of London on November 1, 1912. The two books are physically different, the language is different, but for whatever reason, these two books seem to have taken place in the same room in the Bengali consciousness. The *Gitanjali* that won the Nobel Prize is not a Bengali book, it is the English *Gitanjali (Song Offerings)*. Nevertheless, in daily-life conversations, in children's and student textbooks, in hastily written journalistic articles, it is repeatedly spread that Rabindranath won the Nobel Prize for his *Gitanjali*. Seldom it is made clear for which book he won the prize.

But experts know that the two books are different in many ways. Primarily, the language of the first is Bengali and of the second is English. The first consists of rhyming poetry, the second has a one-dimensional application of prose rhyme. The first contains 158 poems or songs, of which only 53 have been translated for the second one. There are 103 poems without melody in the translated one. Among the other books, from which various poems have been translated for the second book are *Naibedya* (17), *Gitimalya* (15), *Kheya* (11), *Shishu* (3), and one from each of the books—*Achalayatan*, *Chaitali*, *Kalpna*, *Utsarga*. Apart from these, Rabindranath also translated two of his later works for this purpose, which were composed after his arrival in England.

The two books are different, yet the two books are one. This justification is not only because of mathematical calculations, as a total of 53 songs of Bengali *Gitanjali* have found a place in English, but the essence of both is a similar kind of worship and self-sacrifice. Now, to whom is this self-sacrifice dedicated? The concept of god, here, differs from the general notions altogether. This God is a metaphor for the vast experience of life. The life which is cherished by all human beings on earth, but so much of which is uncontrollable. Rather much of this vast, endless, indefinite, incomprehensible life controls us, we do not understand its cause. We are insignificant to his power, we are stunned by his indifferent activities and from time to time, we are forced to submit to him unconditionally. Death is another form of this life—it is not isolated from life. Rabindranath has tried to portray him in all forms, such as 'পিতা', 'মাতা', 'নাথ', 'প্রভু', 'রাজা', 'বন্ধু'

—not with the aggression of an enemy, but with the submission and serenity of the refuge.

Language may carry the memory of scripture, but surrender to the creator and the great life is the main narrative of Bengali and English *Gitanjali*. “জীবনদেবতা ‘জীবনের দেবতা’ নয়, যা জীবন, সে-ই দেবতা, রূপক কর্মধারয়, ‘জীবনরূপী দেবতা’।”²³²—this is what he meant by ‘God of Life’. In *Gitanjali*, the presence of God, a very personal one, will seem much more important to him. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this process had already been started from *Naivedya*. Claiming the God of the community as a personal God is not something new, depending on which the acceptance of the God of the community grows. Many critics of Rabindra-kavya, starting from Pramathanath Bishi, saw a trail of this journey towards his inner world from *Kheya* (1906). But that journey probably started five years ago—a hint of a latent death consciousness in him can be traced from the poems of *Naivedya* itself:

...মৃত্যু যখন মৃত্যুর রূপ ধরে, তখন তাঁর ঈশ্বর তা থেকে তাঁকে পরিত্রাণ এনে দেন, ‘নিন্দা ও ক্ষতি, মৃত্যু-বিরহ, কত বিষবাণ উড়ে অহরহ’, ‘পাঠাইলে আজি মৃত্যুর দূত আমার ঘরের দ্বারে, তব আস্থান করি সে বহন পার হয়ে এল পারে।’²³³

In *Gitanjali-Gitimalya-Gitali*, he will encounter his ‘God’, whom he would like to bind to various human relationships—father, mother, friend, lord — somewhat reminiscent of Vaishnava connotations. In most of these songs, he does not want others to witness this exclusive and deeply personal encounter with his own god. The poet is seen to be engrossed in talking to himself or his inner-soul, and the world only overhears. It is as if outsiders are just overhearing their dialogues. These dialogues are basically one-sided, the poet speaks his words, but his God is not just a passive listener—he is constantly breaking, shaping, swaying the poet in various ways. However, in *Gitanjali*, apart from these, there are some songs or poems written for the readers, which have less inclination towards his God. So are the autumn songs or poems published under the name ‘দুর্ভাগা দেশ’ or ‘ভারত-তীর্থ’. But most of the songs in the three collections are by the poet are meant for his god – basically the poet is seen to be talking to himself. The simple words echo his deep inner-world. But why did he think of translating his own poems into another

²³² মিত্র, সৌরীন্দ্র । *কবির স্বধর্ম: রবীন্দ্র-বিষয়ক প্রবন্ধ* । কলকাতা: সিগনেট প্রেস । ২০১২ ।

²³³ সেন, সুগতা । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গীতিসাহিত্য* । কলকাতা: শ্রীভূমি পাবলিশিং কোম্পানি । ১৯৭৮ ।

language at all? His close-friend Jagadish Chandra Bose has repeatedly told him that he is the poet of the world, the people of the world should know more about him. In the meanwhile, he was ready to go to Britain, but he had to postpone the journey on 19th March, 1912 on the instructions of the doctor as he fell ill. He returned from Madras and after recovering a little, he left for Shilaidaha. *Gitimalya*'s songs are being composed there and one or two poems are being translated at the same time. Indira Devi writes in a letter that the process of translating his works started in Shilaidaha. He was hesitant about his English—and repeatedly expressed his anxiety to Indira Devi:

তখন চৈত্র মাসে আমের বোলের গন্ধে আকাশে আর কোথাও ফাঁক ছিল না এবং পাখির ডাকাডাকিতে দিনের বেলার সকল কটা প্রহর একেবারে মাতিয়ে রেখেছিল।...তার আলো তার হাওয়া তার গন্ধ তার গান একটুও আমার কাছে বাদ পড়ল না। কিন্তু এমন অবস্থায় চুপ করে থাকা যায় না—হাড়ে যখন হাওয়া লাগে তখন বেজে উঠতে চায়, ওটা আমার চিরকালে অভ্যাস, জানিস তো। অথচ কোমর বেঁধে কিছু লেখবার মতো বল আমার ছিল না। সেইজন্যে ওই গীতাজলির কবিতাগুলি নিয়ে একটি একটি করে ইংরেজিতে তর্জমা করতে বসে গেলুম।²³⁴

The pages of a small notebook slowly filled up. Meanwhile, he has returned to Santiniketan, where translation work was also going on. On 28th May, 1912, he finally started his journey for London and with the enthusiasm he received from William Rothenstein, the publication of his translated works have been initiated. In this context Krishna Kripalni said that William Rothenstein was the bridge that helped Tagore to cross over from his little world of Bengal to the big world or the West. Although, the relationship of the world with the poet and the scientist is not built on similar paths—where the scientist in his research greets the scientific community from all over the world from the very beginning, poets outside the English language do not get such an opportunity. He has to cross the boundaries of the native language and in a multilingual country like India, where there are many provincial languages, the boundaries of provincialism have to be crossed first. Of course, by writing or translating into English, it was possible for Indians to do two things at once – through that language they could pass from provincialism to nationality and from nationality to internationalism. In most cases, the poet was recognized internationally, as was the case with Rabindranath. As a result, Bangla *Gitanjali* has been left far behind in the race for fame than English *Song Offerings*. Not only in the western community, but after receiving the best award in

²³⁴ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *চিঠিপত্র* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ১৯৬৭ ।

literature, it gained the respect and attention of the whole world. For those, who knows or have learned the Bengali language and read the Bengali *Gitanjali* have, of course, understood what resources are hidden in the original, and how much of it has been lost in translation. Many western scholars as well as Indian personalities like Buddhadeva Bose, Nabanita Dev Sen, etc., have remarked that much of the original essence has been lost in most of the translations. Nonetheless, one must not consider *Song Offerings* as mere translations of Bengali source, rather it is the original work of Rabindranath in English. Subhas Chowdhury presents his arguments in favour of the poet in this regard:

অনেক কবিতার ক্ষেত্রেই মূলের একটা কবিতাকে তিনি অনুসরণ করেছেন, কখনও-কখনও তা করেননি; কিন্তু সেই অধিকার কি তাঁর ছিল না? তাকে আমরা সাধারণ অনুবাদক হিসেবে দেখব কেন? সাধারণ পেশাদার অনুবাদকেরা ‘অন্যের’ লেখা অনুবাদ করে, তাঁদের আমরা বেশি স্বাধীনতা দেবার কথা ভাবি না, কারণ তারা মূলের স্রষ্টা নয়। তাঁদের বেশি বিচ্যুতির অধিকার নেই, মূল থেকে সরে গেলে সংগত কারণেই তাঁদের সমালোচনা করি।...কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ যেখানে একই সঙ্গে স্রষ্টা আর অনুবাদক, সেখানে তাঁর স্বাধীনতা কি সাধারণ অনুবাদকের মতোই হবে, তার বেশি নয়? ইংরেজিতে এক আত্মস্বতন্ত্র কবি হিসেবে তাঁকে মেনে নিতে আমাদের বাধা কোথায়?²³⁵

Those who did not have the opportunity to read the poems in both languages, did not complain about the incompleteness of the poems, even they were quite enthusiastic in receiving the other translated works like *Crescent Moon* or *Strat Birds* after *Gitanjali* was published. Scholars and general readers from all over the world were overwhelmed by the appeal of the poems, though it was presented to them on translation. As a result, readers from all over the world, in their translations of these poems or songs from English to their own language, did not bother at all about how much of the original Bengali remained intact; rather what they found seemed sufficient and outstanding to them. The wide translations in various languages from all around the world once again proved the vivacity and international cum inter-cultural appeal of the creations. Father Pierre Fallon rightfully commented that the Western *Gitanjali* loses much of the musical beauty of the original poems, yet it is a jewel, even a jewel in English religious poetry. Some of those who translated it from English into other European languages were great poets themselves. The French and the Dutch versions were extremely beautiful, the Spanish ‘Ofrenda Lirica’ is beautiful too.

²³⁵ চৌধুরী, সুভাষ । *রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও অন্যান্য* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩ ।

The simplicity and sincerity of the language, the exuberance of the mood, and an inherent serenity make the English *Gitanjali* attractive and easily accessible to various translators. Within a few years of the English translation of the *Gitanjali* became available, various translations from that translation started to emerge in different European languages and till date in the West, Rabindranath's popularity can be marked mainly as the author of *Gitanjali-Song Offerings*.

Buddhadeva Basu remarked in his book 'কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ':

ইংরেজি গীতাঞ্জলি পদ্যছন্দে রচিত নয়, তা একটু পুরোনো বাইবেলি ঢঙের গদ্যে রচিত, তার মধ্য একটি অসামান্য অন্তর্গত ছন্দ আছে। এই গদ্যকবিতার ছন্দ চিনা, স্প্যানিশ ইত্যাদি নানা ভাষায় নতুন কাব্যরীতির জন্ম দিয়েছে। এমনকি, আইসল্যান্ডিক ভাষার নোবেল পুরস্কারজয়ী ঔপন্যাসিক হ্যাল্ডার লাখনেস জানিয়েছেন, সেই আইসল্যান্ডিক ভাষাতেও নতুন কাব্যভাষা নির্মাণে গীতাঞ্জলি-র প্রভাব কাজ করেছিল। স্প্যানিশে নোবেলজয়ী কবি হুয়ান রামন হিমেনেথ ও তাঁর স্ত্রী জেনোবিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রধান অনুবাদক, হিমেনেথের কাজের উপর রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রভাব পাশ্চাত্য সমালোচকদের চোখ এড়ায়নি।

...কিন্তু বাংলা গীতাঞ্জলি-র মধ্যে এমন কিছু আছে যা ইংরেজি *Gitanjali*-তে নেই, তার তা অর্জন করার কোনো উপায়ই ছিল না। সে হল বাংলা গানগুলির সুর। এই সুরের অভাব ইংরেজি কবিতাগুলিকে অন্তত ইংরেজি-জানা বাঙালিদের কাছেও একটু দূরবর্তী করে রেখেছে। 'আমার মাথা নত করে দাও হে' থেকে শুরু করে 'সার্থক জন্ম আমার', কিংবা 'জগতে আনন্দযজ্ঞে' বা 'তুমি নব নব রূপে এসো প্রাণে' ইত্যাদি যাবতীয় গান, রবীন্দ্র-আলোকপ্রাপ্ত বাঙালিদের ব্যক্তিগত ও গোষ্ঠীর উচ্চারণ হয়ে গেছে। ইংরেজি *Gitanjali*-র কবিতার বিশ্বব্যাপী মাহাত্ম্য বাঙালির কাছে সেগুলিকে এভাবে প্রাত্যহিকের সম্পদ করে তুলতে পারেনি। বাড়ির শিশুর 'আজ ধানের খেতে রৌদ্রছায়ায়' থেকে শুরু করে স্কুলের ছাত্রছাত্রী এবং যত বাঙালি বাংলা গীতাঞ্জলি-র নানা গানের সঙ্গে দিন কাটায়, তার তুলনায় খুব কম সংখ্যক বাঙালিই এ ভাবে ইংরেজি *Gitanjali*-র কাছে সঙ্গ চায়। বিদেশিরা আবার বাংলা গীতাঞ্জলি-র অভাবিত সংগীত সম্পদের খবর কমই রাখে, ইংরেজি বইটিই তাদের চিরপথের সঙ্গী।²³⁶

The area of influence of the two is different, the area of reception is also different in so many aspects – but both are outstanding literary resources of the cultural sphere of the world.

²³⁶ বসু, বুদ্ধদেব । *কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ* । কলকাতা: দে'জ পাবলিশিং । ১৯৮০ ।

Translating, then, is a creative activity that involves inspiration, transformation and rewriting. It is a dialogic process through which the translator discovers his/her own voice as a writer. Viewing translation as a creative practice is crucial to studies concerned with the translating ‘self’, notably those exploring how voice, style and subjectivity are formed through translation. Interpretation, is simultaneously experiential and analytical, practical and theoretical, emotional and critical. In this regard, Douglas Robinson in his book *The Translator’s Turn* suggests that translating is an activity in which the rational and the emotional are intertwined, indivisible:

...That our understanding of language, our memories of language, our use and reuse of language, our language-related choices and decisions are all ‘somatically marked’. That we have feeling for words and phrases, registers and styles, either when someone else is speaking or writing or when we are doing so ourselves, either when we are working in a single language or when we are engineering a transfer from one to another; and that all of our decisions about language, including what word or phrase would be best or what would be most ‘equivalent’, are channelled through these feelings.²³⁷

Translating compels the translator to transform the original text. The translator’s role as mediator – ‘the extent to which translators intervene in the transfer process, feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into their processing of a text’ – makes non-intervention impossible. Portraying translation as an operation of response highlights the subjective dimension of the translator’s relation to the source text. This does not mean, however, that the response is unreflective in relation to the writing it incarnates. Far from being removed from its source, the translator’s response to a text is inevitably indebted to it. In very simple terms, the translation needs the original in order to come into being; it inevitably reflects an aspect of the work to which it responds. The experiential perspective of Clive Scott while translating Baudelaire, describes translation as a process of self-discovery:

What if we read and translate in order to situate the ST in our own psycho-physiological response to it? I read Baudelaire in order to transpose him to my psychic, emotional and vocal range. This is not to confine the ST, but to be liberated by it, liberated not into Baudelaire so much perhaps as into territories of myself that Baudelaire makes available to me.²³⁸

²³⁷ Douglas, Robinson. *The Translator’s Turn*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

²³⁸ Scott, Clive. *Translating Selves: Experiences and Identity between Languages and Literatures*. eds. Paschalis Nikolaou and Maria-Venetia Kyritsi. New York: Continuum, 2008.

From this point of view, translating is a self-expressive response through which the translator develops his/her own sense of self. The translator responds to the source text on the basis of his/her own experience of it. In fact, each translation is also a translation of the self – the creation of a certain style, of a certain perception of oneself, of a certain vision of translation itself. The moment we acknowledge the subjective dimension of translational work, we become aware of various senses in which the translator is responsible to and for his/her work—‘Responsibility’ in translation lies in the translator’s response to the source text, in the way he/she interprets it, represents it and expresses his/her own experience of it.

As Susan Petrilli suggests in *Translation Translation*, to be adequate— “the translation-text must not simply repeat the source text, but must establish a relation of answering comprehension to it”²³⁹. The responsible translator must respond to the original: he/she must render the source text, but he/she can only do so by interpreting it, reacting to it and transforming it. A double sense of responsibility is thus at play in translation, for while responding to the source text the translator also addresses someone else: a reader, an audience.

Translating requires taking responsibility for one’s personal response to a text – both with regard to the author of the original and to the reader of the target text. Translators are concurrently bound to the source text to which they must respond and be exposed to an audience that they cannot entirely anticipate. translation involves both enacting the source text and responding to it – that is, expressing one’s personal, sensory and intellectual perception of it. In the process of performing the other text, the translator also, and inevitably, presents his/her own interpretation of the original, positions his/herself in relation to it and develops his/her own understanding of what translating is about. Translation in this sense is metatextual. It does not only represent the source text, but also expresses the translator’s attitude towards it. The process of translating creates a subject-position – a sense of self and a point of view – which gets inscribed in the translated text itself.

²³⁹ Petrilli, Susan. ed. *Translation Translation*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003.

6.3 Reception factor: intentions of a performer

In the texts of performing works—plays, musical compositions, choreographed dance—the relationship between text and user is quite intense. With performing works, the users of texts are performers—not only actors, musicians, and dancers but also directors, conductors, and producers—in short, anyone who influences the performance that an audience sees and hears. True, one may sit at home and read the script of a play or the score of a symphony, but with performing genres, the work is properly experienced only through performance. If, then, we accept that the essence of performing works is performance, then when we speak of the socialization of stage-texts, we must speak of the contributions of performers. Any composer, who wishes his/her work to be heard and seen by an audience must reach that audience through performers. And these same performers, unlike the readers of page texts, often act upon the texts they realize. There is a reciprocity between stage-texts and their users that does not exist between the texts of novels or poems and their readers. If it seems difficult to accept the idea that performers and their texts can be interactive, it is largely because we are accustomed to a model in which text precedes performance, in which the identity of a performing work lies primarily in its text. In this model, the text is understood to be an autonomous set of instructions that a playwright, composer, or choreographer provides to performers of his work. The text is seen as the “property” of its creator, his/her is the sole right to establish the text, and, once it has been established, to alter it. The performer’s function is limited to realizing the text in whatever ways his skill and talent permit, provided that in so doing he does not ignore, supplement, or contravene any of the instructions that make up the text. Thus, there emerges the idea of an essentially text-based work that can yield a variety of performances without departing significantly from the text established by the author. The problem with this text-precedes-performance model, however, is that it does not accurately describe the way that performing texts are realized. Performers depart from their scripts and scores all the time, and yet audiences consider them to have given valid performances of the works named in their programmes. Some departures are spontaneous and some departures from received texts are undertaken to modernize works for contemporary audiences. Some departures from received texts involve substantial modifications undertaken in order to address particular circumstances—to placate a temperamental performer or to avoid offending or inconveniencing an audience. If we judge performing works by published texts and formal manuscripts, then we will be

inclined to overlook the sorts of changes that texts undergo in performance. When we deal with works for performance, we are—in fact—concerned with stage-texts, that is texts materially used in connection with specific performances or productions. These texts get altered by performers in a variety of ways. Sometimes material is added to the received text, and sometimes material in the received text is excised and/or altered. It may seem that whether a text is a “page text” or a “stage text” should depend on the genre of the work it represents: the texts of novels and poems are page texts, and the texts of plays and musical compositions are stage texts. Instead, whether a text is a page text or a stage text depends upon how it is used—A score of Mozart’s fortieth symphony used in a library by a musicologist writing an article is a page text; that same score placed on a conductor’s music stand and marked up during rehearsals becomes a stage text. Performance is a social process, involving people and material objects, all with requirements that can change from performance to performance or production to production.

Performing texts get altered in several ways. The most frequent way in which performers modify their texts is by adding to an existing text memorandum that record ways in which the work represented by the text may be performed. There is much that the texts of performing works can tell a performer, but there is much that they do not—Western music notation has, for the thousand years of its existence, added more and more conventions to control more and more musical elements, but there is still much that a performer must work out for himself. Performers therefore often supplement received texts by adding technical and interpretive memoranda. Textual scholars understandably assume that the identity of a performing work lies in its text, but performers and audiences know that every work has another identity—one that lies in its performing tradition. Every performing work is successful enough to merit more than one performance or production makes its way through time in two parallel traditions: a textual tradition, which is manifest in material artifacts such as books and manuscripts, and a performing tradition, which, until the age of electronic recording, had no material existence and could only be passed down from one performer to another. The “performance tradition” can dictate interpretations that can have significant effects on our responses to a dramatic or musical work.

Of course, all texts share an impulse towards change. But because there are important differences between the ways stage-texts and page-texts are used, there are differences

in the ways in which these two sorts of text change. The conventions that govern the publication—and, more importantly, the republication—of poems and novels and essays are far more restrictive than those that govern the realization of the texts of plays and musical compositions.

Today’s readers of a poem by Donne may expect to see modernized spelling and 21st century book design; but they do not expect to see changes in content introduced by a publisher or editor—unless, of course, those changes are made by an editor under colour of bringing the text closer to what its creator originally intended. However, the conventions governing performance encourage novelty, and so these conventions must allow greater freedom in the management of texts associated with performance. A reader re-reading an essay after a decade does not expect the text to have changed, but a play-goer seeing a revival of a play the first run of which he saw ten years earlier, expects to see something different. And the performers, for their part, endeavour to give him something sufficiently different to motivate his attendance at the revival.

Rabindranath did not lose sight of the fact that music differs from other arts in one place. There is no mediator between the creator of other arts and the published creation, but there is so in case of music. In the meanwhile, music composed in most cases is brought to the listeners and consumers by a performer (*abhikar*). And his/her task is to perform (*abhikaran*). In his own words: “কাব্যকলা বা চিত্রকলা দুটি ব্যক্তিকে লইয়া। যে মানুষ রচনা করে আর যে মানুষ ভোগ করে। গীতিকলায় আরো একজন প্রবেশ করিয়াছে। রচয়িতা এবং শ্রোতার মাঝখানে আছে ওস্তাদ।”²⁴⁰

Of course, in this case, there is a resemblance between music, recitation, drama, etc.—all these arts, even films, reach the consumer through the mediation of the performer. Rabindranath’s own compositions reflect the combination of the both of forms of music and poetry. The history behind the creation of the song ‘আমি চিনি গো চিনি’ complements this very idea:

...স্বরগুঞ্জনের সঙ্গে প্রথম লাইনটা লিখিয়াছিলাম, ‘আমি চিনি গো চিনি তোমারে ওগো বিদেশিনী!’

সঙ্গে যদি সুরটুকু না থাকিত তবে এ গানের কী ভাব দাঁড়াইত বলিতে পারি না। কিন্তু ওই সুরের মন্ত্রগুণে বিদেশিনীর

এক অপরূপ মূর্তি মনে জাগিয়া উঠিল।²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

²⁴¹ Ibid

What people generally utter does not always become the words of the songs. Rabindranath thought of the ideal relationship between words and melody as ‘Ardhanarishvara’—both complementing each-other. The combination of words and melodies is strongly supported by the history of music and by Rabindranath’s own creativity and aspirations; so his unequivocal claim — that our common language is the language of reason and is not entirely accurate often as to the use of poetic language —

‘যুক্তির ভাষা’ গানের ভাষা নয়, কারণ গানের লক্ষ্য আর গদ্যের লক্ষ্য ভিন্ন।

যুক্তির ভাষা গদ্য-আমাদের বিশ্বাস করায়, আর কবিতার ভাষা আমাদের উদ্রেক করায়।²⁴²

Since music is a distinctive art that has the potential to ‘awaken’, that is to say, express a deep sense of perception and awakens empathy, its worthy words must also be justified for the particular art-form. According to Rabindranath, rhythm is the master of the melody; so the addition of rhythm to the words is the first step in elevating the words; and then it should be merged along with the melody to create the entirety.

There are a lot of arguments about the melody-text of a composition. The recitation or vocal-text conveys both the melody and the words of Rabindra Sangeet to the listener’s mind as faithfully as possible. But whether it is a melody or a word, both of them have two bases or stages of revelation. One is its grammar, and the other is aesthetics:

ব্যাকরণ কথার নিখুঁত উচ্চারণ সুরের ঘাট ও শব্দসহ বিশ্বস্ত অনুগত্যের নিয়মকানুন তৈরি রাখে। কোথায় দম নিতে হবে, কোথায় পঙক্তির অর্থগত বিভাজনকে উচ্চারণে স্বীকার করতে হবে—যেমন “শুধু তোমার / বাণী নয় গো”, না “শুধু / তোমার বাণী / নয় গো”; উচ্চারণ ‘মন্’ হবে না ‘মোন্’ (মন) হবে—এসব ব্যাকরণের এলাকা। ক্বচিৎ-কখনও কথা ও সুরের স্বতন্ত্র ব্যাকরণে একটা টেনশন চলে, একটা আর একটার ওপর প্রাধান্য করে। যেমন ‘কৃষ্ণকলি’ গানটিতে ‘কালো? তা সে যতই কালো হোক’ অংশে প্রথম ‘কালো’-তে সুরের ব্যাকরণ সম্পূর্ণ নিরস্ত, সেখানে উচ্চারণ মূলত কথারই। কিন্তু অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে সুরের ব্যাকরণই কথার উচ্চারণ শর্তকে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করে। আবার ‘আমি রূপে তোমায় ভোলাব না’ গানে ‘তোমায়’-এ টপ্পার কাজ দুই দল বা সিলেবলের কথার উচ্চারণকে খেলিয়ে নিয়েছে, যেমন সুর খেলিয়ে নিয়েছে ‘জোয়ারে ঢেউ তোলাব’-তে ‘ঢেউ’ শব্দটিতে।²⁴³

²⁴² ঠাকুর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ । *সংগীতচিন্তা* । কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থনবিভাগ । ২০১৪ ।

²⁴³ সরকার, পবিত্র । *গানের বারনাতলায়* । কলকাতা: প্রতিভাস । ২০১৩ ।

The singer has to climb the ladder of this grammar to a higher level of beauty or aesthetics and has to express the intended emotions through the perfect blending of words and melodies and it is supposed to be formed from within every singer, from the performer's inner realisation. It is quite normal that a singer will create a performance-text out of the original composition for that particular performance. The singer's costume, expressions, setting up the microphone, conversations with the table-player, handling the volume, maintaining the rhythm by clapping, the connection with the audience—all of these can become major parts of that performance-text.

The unique qualities of performing texts derive from their functions as instruments of performance. These functions include providing information that supplements the information contained in the received text, adapting the received text to the exigencies of particular performances, and, by continually assimilating information from new performances, keeping performing works up to date, fresh, and alive. It is these functions that distinguish performing texts from the texts of novels, or essays; and it is these functions that oblige and authorize them to play by their own rules.

Performing texts, therefore, serve two complementary purposes. On the one hand, they foster stability in the works they represent. The natural impulse of performance is towards novelty: text acts as a restraining influence on this impulse. On the other hand, text encourages innovation, since the ability—and predisposition—of text to record elements of performance means that innovations in performance can be captured and stored. Ideally, then, performing texts facilitate controlled change.

6.4 “Shesh Nahi Je, Shesh Katha Ke Balbe”: an epilogue

As a musical entity, song seems beyond the ken of most literary scholars. It appears evanescent, intangible by virtue of the differing complex conditions of its performance. Thus, despite the fact that song represents perhaps the most pervasive genre of literature across both time and space, literary scholars have tended only to attend to song in ways that evade its existence in performance. Yet if we define the “work” of literature as the interaction between the text and the conditions of its production and reception, then song, by virtue of its existence in performance, illustrates in exemplary fashion the dynamics of all literary work. To study the interplay between the song text (score and lyrics), performers, listeners and the particular physical, social and historical conditions of song performance can make manifest how meaning is produced through the interaction between any text, responses to it and the social and historical contexts of those responses: it enables us to see how not just song but all artistic work resides in the domain of performance. This type of song criticism would approach songs not as reified texts but as sites of social practice, treating them as performative activities responding to and acting on the cultural process. If performance entails completing the incomplete, all participants in the production of the “work” will share creative responsibility: in the case of songs, composers, lyricists, singers, instrumentalists—and even publishers, audience members and patrons.

Any song is regarded in the first sense of performance: as texts whose “work”—is completed in their performance. Of course, it is a widely accepted truism that all genres of music “live” only in performance. Every performance of every song, however, raises the question of whether the performance should constitute a completion of what is incomplete or whether performance should be regarded as a ritual re-enactment of work taken as already completed. This same issue, furthermore, applies to criticism not only of song but of all art; for the sense of performance as an act of completion challenges the hierarchy between “authors” and “readers”, “artists” and “consumers”—that is posited by the view of performance as re-enactment, a hierarchy that restricts some of these parties from participating in the creation and re-creation of works of art. The “work of an art” is seen not as an activity but as an entity residing in a reconstructed—printed or edited “text”, which is granted a status superior to any but an ideal performance of it.

Focusing on the text thus has the effect of reifying the working of a song into a “work” found either in idealized space—a reconstructed “text”—or in idealized time—a purely conceptual moment of performance. In case of songs, to focus on performance is to see the songs themselves as sites of negotiation for listeners, performers and songwriters. Though specific conventions of lyric content and musical setting style, helped to define and shape not only their genres but the social relations of those participating in their production, yet those relations are re-negotiated in each use of particular conventions and in every performance.

Tracing the interplay between the material production of a song and the social relationships embedded in its conventions, illustrates how we might demystify our idealization of and difficulties with songs as reified art; by foregrounding the role of the critic in producing the work song performs, also reveals the particular and strange historicity of the critic’s response to the songs: the momentariness of that response as one situated performance. Attending to that historicity should make us reluctant to accord final authority either to ourselves as listeners or to songs as texts, aware of the degree to which we rework both ourselves and the songs in every performance.

Yet if we locate the work of songs, like any art-work, not as something residing in their texts but as something negotiated and re-created in the play of each new performance, or “interpretation”, we can never wholly be finished with that work. Instead, we continually work toward the completion of the incomplete in accordance with the contemporary and in negotiation with the past.

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