

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

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## Introduction

Lyric poetry may be distinguished from dramatic, narrative and didactic poetry. 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 unmediated consciousness or agency as the center 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. Lyric poetry is often described as a special form of poetry, in which the poet directly expresses his emotion. 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. When poets envision the lyric poem as song, however, remembering and memorializing may take a different form entirely. 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 the senses of sound or rhythm, but other readers continue to know them only as poems; neither poem nor song has taken away the other's glory. 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.

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. 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 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.

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. 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.

Rabindra Sangeet or the songs written by Rabindranath Tagore have maintained their popularity throughout the ages and are still under constant experimentation. Not only are the songs translated from Bengali to the other languages, but also within same language those are constantly changed and modified. The aim of this research is to locate these changes and transformations; and trace the journey of how the lyric changes its form to become a song.

## Chapter-I (Outline)

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 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 on the balanced units of thoughts. 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'. 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. 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. 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. A scheme of mixing music or song with prose or poetry is not unique in the long history of poetry. Examples range from the sirens' song in the *Odyssey* or Penelope's lament to the lyric poems of Sappho, Alcaeus and Anacreon. 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. Apart from Sappho, the other two most renowned lyric 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. 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. 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. Latin lyrics were written by Catullus and Horace in the 1<sup>st</sup> 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. 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 11<sup>th</sup> century and were often imitated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Many troubadours claim that the lyric delights its audience or its own singer and the "I" persona; sometimes they suggest that it will console them for the sorrows of love. The dominant form of German lyric poetry in this 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. 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*. 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". In the tradition of sonnet-writing the Lady-love is conventionally treated 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". In the Renaissance, the most finished form of lyric, the sonnet, was brilliantly developed by Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, and John Milton. Edmund Spenser is an exception, as he underscores the motif of unrequited love heavily. In his celebrated sonnet-sequence *Amoretti*, the lady is introduced in the very first sonnet as being among the "Angels blessed". 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.

Lyric is the dominant poetic form in 17<sup>th</sup> 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. Marvell also cultivated the old metaphoric extravagance associated with John Donne; and Ben Jonson’s language in “Song to Celia” functions in a double fashion – he exhibits an unreal-ness which again disallows any human tenderness.

Especially identified with the lyrical forms of poetry in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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. 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—a similar social withdrawal can be found in Emily Dickinson, who embodies the lyric’s self-containment and self-reliance. Where the main trend of 18<sup>th</sup> 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. Samuel Taylor Coleridge saw the imagination as the supreme poetic quality, Wordsworth and his followers, particularly Keats, found the prevailing poetic diction of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century stale and stilted. Wordsworth accordingly sought to bring the language of poetry back to that of common speech; when he published his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, the time was ripe for a change, as the flexible diction of earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century poetry had hardened into a merely conventional language. Lyric poetry appeared 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.

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. The 19<sup>th</sup> century in France sees a confident recovery of the lyric voice after its relative demise in the 18<sup>th</sup> 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. Surprisingly enough, Stéphane Mallarmé showed no evidence of desperate Romantic agony, his early poems demonstrate his 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. Of all the arts, music figures most predominantly in Mallarmé’s conception of poetry’s communicative function. It seems significant that Mallarmé attaches particular importance to the corporeal or human element in music, 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. The 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries constitute the period of the rise of Russian lyric poetry, exemplified by Alexander Pushkin. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

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. The great masters in the *Kavya* form were Aśvaghōṣa, Kalidasa, Baṇa, Daṇḍin, Magha, Bhavabhūti, 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). Both of his works are written 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. 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. 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. Sanskrit 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. The finished epic *kavya* form, however, was not evolved until the time of Kalidasa, the author of the two best-known Sanskrit artistic epics, the *Kumarasambhava* and the *Raghuvamsa*. The most elaborated of the longer lyric compositions are the *Meghaduta* and the *Ritusamhara*, both works by Kalidasa. The bulk of lyric poetry, however, is in single miniature stanzas, which strongly suggest the didactic proverb poetry that Indian poets also cultivated with great success. The most famous collection of such stanzas, that of Bhartrihari, consists of lyric, didactic, and erotic poems. Considered the second great master of the erotic stanzas 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—all applied to traditional themes, most often the love between men and women. The style finds its classical expression in the so-called *mahakavya* (“great poem”). Another form of lyric, the short lyric, is single-stanza lyric, in which Sanskrit poetry is revealed most intimately in its real aims. Many such love lyrics, especially when they describe feelings experienced by women, are composed not in Sanskrit, but in Prakrit. 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 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 endeavoured to attain perfection even in the smallest elements of the poem. While poetry of the minor form, *laghukavya*, may have developed directly out of the lyrical beginnings; the development of the major form, *mahakavya*, was not at all so simple. 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. 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 prominent role in the medieval religious philosophy. However, it was never devoid of joyous blissfulness. *Bhakti* is a celebration of life—the word *bhakti* indicates love towards one's personal god (*ishta-deva*) and it became the medium of literature of sublimation and attachment. *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. 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. Any account of the *bhakti* tradition of the medieval India will be incomplete without a reference to *Gita Govindam* of Jayadeva (13<sup>th</sup> 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. *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. 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. Similar to the ideologies of *Bhakti*, *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. Among the four *Sufi* orders, the *Chistiya* order of *Sufis* is essentially an Indian one founded by Khwaja Mu'inud-Din Chistie. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century after Islam was introduced in Sindh and part of Punjab, Sufism became a big attraction and poets like Sheikh or Baba Farid, Shah Hussain, Sultan Bahu, Bulleh Shah 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. With time, 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 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.

The signs of the so-called lyric poetry of modern age in Bengali literature appeared first in 1862 in Madhusudan's 'Atmavilap'. Here the intense personal feelings of the poet's mind are rightly expressed. However, the pioneer of Bengali lyric poetry is Biharilal Chakraborty. 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. Biharilal, however, 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. In the case of Bengali lyric poetry, a 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. Lyric poetry is the artistic expression of intense personal feelings. In Madhusudan's 'মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য', Hemchandra's 'বৃদ্ধ-সংহার', Navinchandra's 'রৈবতক', 'করলক্ষত্র', 'প্রভাস', Dwijendranath Tagore's 'স্বপ্নপ্রয়াণ', Ishanchandra Bandyopadhyay's 'যোগেশ'—however, these personal feelings of the poet were covered with the twist of classical consciousness. 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. 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. Moreover, the new path taken in the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Chapter-II (Outline)

For an investigation of ‘performativity’, ‘performance studies’ is likely the first discipline brought to mind. In his book, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 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. “Perform” and “Performance” imply a temporally limited action—“Performance” evokes an act or an event, inscribed within and limited by a fixed span of time. The term “to perform”, then, refers to acts that take place before and are intended for the benefit of an audience. “Performativity”, however, refers to a process of interpretation or meaning-making that takes place at each exchange between an audience and an event, object, or activity. 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.

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 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 always been a performance practice based on sound, temporal movement and aural impressions. 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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. 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. 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. 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.

At least three different meanings of song 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 case, 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. 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. 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. 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.

Song not only invokes action; the singing presents itself as an act or gesture and appears to embody different powers of knowing. 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. Song-poems ask to be imagined as scripts for performance, hence belonging to many voices and not representing a single voice.

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. 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 (or different from) the original. 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, therefore, is not just a matter of choosing between being faithful to the author of the original or serving the reader of the target culture; apart from that accountability in translation means answering to both author and reader, even while knowing that this answer is itself subject to displacement and deferral. 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.

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. 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. 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 believed in 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. He also envisions God as a mother, as a friend, as a master, as a king or even as a poet supreme. 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. 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*.

The readers of *Gitanjali* often had the notion that the poems in the collection are purely spiritual. 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. 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. “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. 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. *Gitanjali*'s poems talk of that confluence, that connection with the universe. Tagore's *Gitanjali* is mystical yet there is a difference in it from the mysticism of the west. It is his humanism that distinguishes Tagore and makes *Gitanjali* unique.

### Chapter-III (Outline)

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 27<sup>th</sup> 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. *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 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. However, there were slight variations between the India Society edition and the Macmillan edition. 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 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 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. 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. Rabindranath did not formally express his thoughts on how the translation of poetry should be executed 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. 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. The poet did not forget the source, the 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 every one 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. 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.*

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. 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. The poet's 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. However, it is impossible to fully understand the principle of translation in English *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* without trying to understand the poet.

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. Savitri Devi was invited to Santiniketan and after listening to her southern songs (specially ‘Meenakshi mey mudam’), 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 own lyric poetry. Some of the songs which were composed in this creative circle with the beauty of the new form are: ‘নীলাঞ্জন ছায়া প্রফুল্ল কদম্ববন’, ‘বাজে করুণ সুরে হয় দূরে’, ‘বাসন্তী হে ভুবনমোহিনী’ etc. Not only from Hindustani classical music, Rabindranath 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. 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 can be well observed in the songs like – ‘বড়ো আশা ক’রে এসেছি গো, কাছে ডেকে লও’, ‘আজি শুভদিনে পিতার ভবনে অমৃতসদনে চলো যাই’, ‘সকাতরে ওই কাঁদিয়ে সকলে, শোনো শোনো পিতা’, ‘আনন্দলোকে মঙ্গলালোকে বিরাজ সত্যসুন্দর’, ‘এ কী লাভণ্যে পূর্ণ প্রাণ প্রাণেশ হে’ – which were directly inspired from several Kannada melodies. Just as Rabindranath was influenced by Western melodies, he was also inspired by native *ragas*, melodies and the *Baul* and *kirtan* songs. Rabindranath was particularly fond of the verses created by Jayadeva in *Gitagovindam*, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Gyandas, Govindadas and other vaishnava poets. 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 his 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 *kirtan*. The compassionate 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*. Later, it can be observed that *Baul* melody became essential in the poet’s patriotic songs. Through this melody, the poet

has evoked the excitement, 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 creation, gaining a new dimension by being associated with the words of the poet’s own songs.

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 breezes 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’

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.

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 that were 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.

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*

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".

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  
পুণ্যপীয়ুষ-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”. 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. 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 মিশায়ে
	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.*

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. 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 England. In fact, when it comes to lyric poetry, it is doubtful whether we



can differentiate between poetry 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 essence, the atmosphere that they create. 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. According to Tagore, he does not possess the ability to translate, and prefers to rewrite or remake his poetry according to his creative inclinations. In rewriting *Gitanjali* 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. 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 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 reaffirm the fact that his translation is deeply rooted in the subconscious. 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.

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. 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. When the complex and majestic form of 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 সহিবে 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 a trained singer, 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.

#### Chapter-IV (Outline)

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 there is an inseparable combination of melody with words. 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. 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. 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.

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 later followed the correct notation. The structure of the song can be found in the 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 the meaning properly, great injustice will be done to the songs.

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 even different environments. For example, the song – ‘আমার নিশীথরাতে 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. 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 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 হৃদয়াসনে’ 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.

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 the poet’s life. 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 general norms 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. Rabindranath 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 the eastern and western musical 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 তারেই 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.

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. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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. 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. Rabindranath himself has made it clear that he equated music with poetry. Later it is seen that a special form of dance-drama is introduced, where song and drama go hand in hand. The song is here, 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 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. 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. 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. After a long period of pursuit, observation and rejection, Rabindranath established 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'.

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 the *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. 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 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. 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. 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 কচিৎটের 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 গোখুলি 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 শাবণরাত্তি’, 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 ঝরনাতলার নির্জনে / মাটির এই কলসখানি ছাপিয়ে গেল/কোনখানে’—was composed in 1918; and later in 1936, when it was transformed into two separate poems, and it was not unsuccessful to achieve distinct identities.

One of the poems was:

আমার এই ছোট কলসিটা পেতে রাখি  
ঝরনাধারার নিচে  
বসে থাকি কোমরে আঁচল বেঁধে  
সারা সকাল বেলা  
শেওলা ঢাকা পিছল পাথরটাতে  
পা ঝুলিয়ে

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. 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 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-ঠাকুরানীর 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 আঁখির 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 ‘ঠাকুরমশয়, 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 বিস্ময়ে...’, which was transformed from ‘মহাবিশ্বে মহাকাশে মহাকালমাঝে / আমি মানব কী লাগি একাকী ভ্রমি বিস্ময়ে’. The song ‘বসন্তে কি শুধু কেবল ফোটা ফুলের মেলা রে / দেখিস নে কি শুকনো-পাতা বরা 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 দেখে রে তেরা 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’. 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.

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 ক’রে 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...*

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 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 ভেবেছিঁনু আপনা ভুলিয়া  
তোমার চরণে দিব হৃদয় খুলিয়া  
চরণে ধরিয়া তব কহিব প্রকাশি  
গোপনে তোমারে, সখা, কত ভালোবাসি....

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 19<sup>th</sup> century was comfortable with, but which the 20<sup>th</sup> 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. 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. 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 *Naibedyā* 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. Reproducing the original rhythm so that the words may fit in with the tune would be a critical thing to attempt and all that a translator 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.

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. Each 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/her interpretation, it is necessary that he/she knows both the source and the target linguistic system and cultural system. 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.

## Conclusion

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.

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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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*). Since music is a distinctive art that has the potential to ‘awaken’, that is to say, express a deep sense of perception that 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. 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.

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. 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. 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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