# Chapter – 4
# Translating Tagore : Theory and Practice

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Rabindranath Tagore is the most extensively translated Indian poet into English. For him we have many individual volumes in English, apart from *The Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore* (1937) issued in his life time with his approval and *A Tagore Reader* published in 1961 to mark the centenary of his birth. As a translator of his own Bangla works Tagore enjoyed so much liberty that his English versions have become something far from being simple translations. Sometimes he fused parts of separate Bangla poems into a single English poem, sometimes he abridged or modified the original Bangla poems into English, sometimes parts of the same Bangla poem have been used to produce two separate poems in English translation and even more in at least 26 cases he produced new English poems for which no Bangla source texts are found, though a phrase or line here and there might remind some Bangla poems. Besides, the poem entitled "The Child" was first composed in English by Tagore and later he translated it into Bangla and in this case also the translation is not exact. Tagore himself was not unaware of the gulf he was creating between the Bangla originals and their English versions. In a letter written to Sir William Rothenstein on 7 June 1912, a few months before the English *Gitanjali (Song Offerings)* was published, Tagore wrote :

> I send you some more of my own poems rendered into English. They are far too simple to bear the strain of translation but I know you will understand them through their faded meanings (Quoted in Mukherjee, 1994 : 103).

On 6 March 1912 Tagore wrote to Harriet Moody :

> Rothi has begun typing my poems – I won't call them translations" (ibid).

On 31 December 1913 Tagore wrote to Miss Harriet Monroe :

> I have been polishing the English versions of some of my narrative poems since we last met. I find it difficult to impart to them the natural vigour of the original poems (ibid).

In all the three statements Tagore admits that his English versions are not simple translations of Bangla originals but a fusion of 'translation and creation'.

The subtitle *Song Offerings* of the English *Gitanjali* is a literal translation of the Bangla title. But the Bangla *Gitanjali* contains 157 songs and poems while the English *Gitanjali* contains 103 poems, out of which the source of only 53 poems are found in Bangla *Gitanjali*. At least three Bangla sources like *Naivedya, Kheya* and *Gitimalya* went into the making of *Song Offerings*. It is to be noted here that the very opening poem of English *Gitanjali* – "Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure" can not be traced in Bangla *Gitanjali*. Its source is found in *Gitimalya*. While translating his Bangla originals Tagore either substituted terms which he thought would be familiar to western understanding or induced new

elements to aid such understanding. Regarding Tagore's translations Edward Thompson wrote :

> ... his treatment of his western public has sometimes amounted to an insult to their intelligence. He has carefully selected such simple, sweet things as he appears to think they can appreciate (Thompson, 1961 : 35).

The same allegation was made by Victoria Ocampo, a great Tagore admirer from Argentinia. Once as her guest, and on her request, Tagore made a translation of his just composed Bangla poem into English. She recorded the incident :

> I asked Tagore to put the English version into writing later. On the next day he gave it to me, written in his beautiful English handwriting. I read the poem in his presence and could not conceal my disappointment. 'But such and such things you read to me yesterday are not here,' I reproached him. 'Why did you suppress them ? They were the centre, the heart of the poem'. He replied that he thought *that* would not interest Westerners. The blood rose to my cheeks as if I had been slapped (Ocampo, 1961 : 43 – 44).

She was hurt at the doubts of Tagore as to the Westerner's capacity of understanding Eastern thoughts. Such doubts became even more apparent in the volumes that followed the English *Gitanjali*.

The sixth and last collection of Rabindranath's own English renderings published during his life time was *The Fugitive* (1921). About this time, on 2 February 1921, Tagore wrote to Edward Thompson :

> when I began this career of falsifying my own coins I did it in play. Now I am becoming frightened of its enormity and am willing to make a confession of my misdeeds and withdraw into my original vocation as a mere Bengali poet (Thompson, 1948 : 264).

Quoting this statement of Tagore, Sujit Mukherjee comments :

> The extend of his being frightened may be gauged from the fact that he did not publish any more new volumes of poetry in English after 1921. But in due course he must have got over the realization of 'falsifying my own coins,' because, *The collected poems and plays of Rabindranath Tagore* appeared in 1937. This volume was the ultimate falsification. It does not contain all his poems and plays in English. There is no preface or introduction, nor any dates or notes. Most excruciating of all, no where in the volume is there any indication that Rabindranath Tagore wrote poetry and drama in any language other than English, nor any admission that the poems and plays presented here originated in Bangla (Mukherjee, 1994 : 122).

Whatever may be the reason, one may argue that by omitting all reference to Bangla originals and by not mentioning the term 'translation' in *The Collected Poems and Plays*, Tagore was perhaps suggesting to regard these texts not as translation but as original English writings. But the English texts are so close to their Bangla originals that we regard them as English versions :

> The originals were as much his own property – for him to do what he liked with them – as the English texts which, by being born anew, had attained separate identities (ibid).

Tagore's doubt about the capacity and willingness of the English readers to understand the thoughts and values of Indian life reflected in his fictional works, and his attempt in translation to fit the source language text to the demand of the target language readers, affected the English translations of his novels, which is the specific area of interest of the research. When the English translation of his famous novel Gora was in progress, Tagore wrote to W.W. Pearson :

> I find that English readers have very little patience for scenes and sentiments which are foreign to them; they feel a sort of grievance for what they do not understand – and they care not to understand whatever is different from their familiar world ..... This makes me think that after you have done with your translation it will have to be carefully abridged (Tagore, 1943 : 178).

It is evident that they way Tagore himself treated his Bangla originals by abridging, modifying, changing and reordering them while translating into English is a process which is also found working in the translations of his novels undertaken during the life time of Tagore by the few translators chosen by him and also that were done within few years after his death by his close associates.

The scenario of English translation of Tagore novels has undergone remarkable changes in different personal approaches from 1990s onwards. Two important factors have been found prominently working behind this change. First,

the publication of Tagore's works that was supposed to have emerged out of copyright restrictions on completion of the fifty years of Tagore's death by the end of 1991, got extended for another ten years by the Central Government of India, ultimately attained liberation from the clutches of Visva Bharati on 31 December 2001. This probable liberation in 1990s attracted a few modern translators to undertake Tagore translation and the ultimate liberation at the end of 2001 broke all the restraints in different avenues of Tagore translations and the market started being flooded with multiple English versions of Tagore's Bangla works, novels in particular. Coupled with this was the development of Translation Studies as an independent discipline, especially with the emergence of 'cultural turn' ---- which changed the outlook of Indian literature in English translations broadly ---- the field of Tagore translation has accommodated diverse cultural paradigms.

A comparative study of the different English versions of the five selected novels – *Chokher Bali* (1903), *Gora* (1909), *Chaturanga* (1915), *Ghore Baire* (1916) and *Shesher Kabita* (1929) – provides a good illustration of the issues involved with Tagore translation. The present research takes into account aspects from both within the texts and beyond. In the later category aspects such as the title of the novel, the featuring of the translator's name, Para-textual segments amongst others have been taken into consideration. In the former category, the structural pattern of the text, the cultural negotiation, the idiomatic compatibility in translation and the subjective approaches of the different translators including omissions, deletions and additions. have been undertaken for study. As standard source texts the 1990 edition (1997 reprint) of *Rabindra Upanyash Sangraha*

(Collected Novels of Rabindranath Tagore) published by Visva-Bharati has been used for the study.

The first English translation of Tagore's novel that appeared in the form of a book was *Ghore Baire*. It was translated by the author's own nephew Surendranath Tagore and published by Macmillan & Co, London in May 1919. The version has been periodically reprinted sixteen times up to 1999 and revised in 2001 and 2004. It was the version which enjoyed the longest life of about 83 years as the only available English translation of the novel. It is only in the year 2004, Srishti Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, came out with the next English version of the novel *Ghore Baire* which was translated by Nivedita Sen. And in the very next year we got one more English translation of the novel from Sreejata Guha which was published by Penguin Books India. Of all these three versions, Surendranath's one enjoyed the rare privilege of being 'revised by the author' himself where as the other two versions enjoyed the freedom of copyright free state in the history of Tagore publication.

There are some more publications of Tagore's *Ghore Baire* in English like Rupa & Co. (2002, reprinted in 2006) and Wisdom Tree (2002, reprinted in 2004) which have reproduced almost the same Macmillan print without even any attempt to revise or improve the old translation. This may be treated as an unhealthy competition among some English publishers of India, in the copyright free state of Tagore publication, 'to cash in' on the brand name of Tagore. However, the research does not take into account such publications in its comparative study as because they are not new versions.

The title of the novel *Ghore Baire* is a symbolic juxtaposition of the two worlds that the three central characters of the novel live around – the home and the outside – especially in the case of Bimala. Surendranath Tagore titled his version as *The Home and the World.* Nivedita Sen interestingly retained both the original title given by the author and the translated title given by Surendranath Tagore and the title of her version appeared as, *The Home and the World : Ghore Baire.* Sreejata Guha, on the other hand, has omitted the beginning definite article 'The' from the title given earlier by Surendranath Tagore. Her title *Home and the World* makes the space of 'Home' a less specific abode. It should be mentioned here that Nivedita Sen in her "Introduction" justifies her own choice of the already familiar title *The Home and the World* though she does not find it suitable enough.

> ..... Since Macmillan and Penguin published it as *The Home and the World*, it is known outside Bengal by that name, and I have retained it as such, although I would have preferred to translate the title as *Between the Home and the World* (Sen, 2004 : X).

The reason for choosing the already familiar title, forsaking her own preferred one, for conforming to market compatibility, falls short of genuine scholarly logic. Moreover, it appears problematic that how Nivedita Sen in 2004 could see the title of Penguin version which came out in 2005 only. And, for the sake of argument, if she got the opportunity to become acquainted with the manuscript of Penguin version, one can not justify her declaration that appears in her 'Translator's Note':

> Ghore Baire rendered into English as *The Home and the World* in 1919 has not so far been retranslated (Sen, 2004 : 312).

As for the Para-textual segments of these versions are concerned, there is ample evidence of different treatments by the three different translators. In Surendranath Tagore's version we do not find any introduction by the translator or by any other scholar introducing the target readership to the social, political, religious and cultural background of the source text. There is neither a preface nor translator's note nor even a glossary. The translator's name which should have appeared on the cover page does not appear even in any page preceding the text of the translation except in the brief 'Publisher's Note' and on the backside of the last cover page with minimum possible importance. However, in the present revised edition we find an "Appendix" at the end of the text, which, as clarified by the "Publisher's Note", contains, "translations of selected passages and bypassed nuances which had been omitted in the previous edition of the book". We are informed by the publisher that these passages are translated by Sukhendu Ray. Though late, this is a good step taken by Macmillan.

In Sreejata Guha's version, though the translator's name does not appear on the front cover page, it appears clearly atleast on the third page preceding the text. The Penguin version also contains a rather long critical "Introduction" by Swagato Ganguly covering pages vi to xxi preceding the text. We also find 'Notes' by him at the end of the book explaining few 'allusions to Hindu Mythology'. But there is no note by the translator in the entire book. However there is a brief profile of the translator on the very first page of the book.

In Nivedita Sen's version, the name of the translator appears right on the front cover page itself and also on the second initial page preceding the text. There

is an 'Acknowledgement' too which does not appear in any of the other two versions. Nivedita Sen also provides a detailed "Introduction" in the beginning and a 'Translator's Note' after the text which contains a considerable discussion of how her version 'grapples' with the newness of yet another version of the novel. There is also a 'Glossary' at the end of the book which gives lexical information of nuanced Bangla items.

Entering into a comparative study of the text of the three translated versions of the novel, the first thing that strikes a reader is the gross structural change effected in the Macmillan version. In the original Bangla text there are eighteen chapters which are not marked by chronological numbers but by name as 'Bimala's story', 'Nikhilesh's story, and 'Sandip's story'. Out of total eighteen chapters, it is found that seven chapters appears as 'Bimala's story', seven as 'Nikhilesh's story and four chapters as 'Sandip's story'. There are some sub-sections in each chapter which are separated by spacing. But in Surendranath's version we find a peculiar type of three tier system of chapterization. First, the whole text is divided into twelve broad chapters in roman chronological number, then there are also twenty-three chapters separated by chapter titles out of which nine chapters appear under the name 'Bimala's story', eight chapters under the name 'Nikhil's story' and six chapters under 'Sandip's story'. The name of Nikhilesh is abbreviated here as Nikhil. Yet another arrangement of marking sub-chapters is made in three roman chronological order for the parts of stories of the three main characters separately. And here, the text is again divided into forty-nine sub-chapters out of which twenty-three (XXIII) come under 'Bimala's story',

sixteen (XVI) come under 'Nikhil's story' and ten (X) come under 'Sandip's story'. In Surendranath's broad chapterization, the last part of chapter 1 and chapters 2 and 3 of the original Bangla text appeared as 'CHAPTER II', chapters 4 and 5 as 'CHAPTER III', chapters 6, 7 and 8 as 'CHAPTER IV', chapter 9, 10 and first part of 11 as 'CHAPTER V', last part of chapter 11 and first part of 12 as 'CHAPTER VI', last part of chapter 12 as 'CHAPTER VII', chapter 13 and first part of 14 as 'CHAPTER VIII', last part of chapter 14 as 'CHAPTER IX', chapter 15 and first part of 16 as 'CHAPTER X', last part of chapter 16 as 'CHAPTER XI', and chapter 17 and 18 of Bangla original figured as 'CHAPTER XII'. Besides this, the order of sentences and paragraphs has been changed. Moreover, the 'Contents' showing names and numbers of chapters, that appear in Surendranath's version is his addition to the original text. Such kind of addition, alteration and reordering seriously affect not only the formal design of the original text but also cause discontinuities in its conceptual frame work.

In the versions of Nivedita Sen and Sreejata Guha we do not find any major structural change. Both of them retained the original structural pattern of 18 chapters by name, and sub-sections of each chapter by spacing. However, Nivedita Sen has added chronological numerals from 1 to 18 in the chapters of her version to make the text 'student friendly' as she justified in her 'Translator's Note'. Both Nivedita and Guha abbreviated the chapter titles as 'Bimala', 'Nikhilesh' and 'Sandip' from the original chapter titles : 'Bimala's story', 'Nikhilesh's story' and 'Sandip's story' (literal translation). In overall structural pattern and conceptual framework both the versions of Guha and Sen followed the original Bangla text.

There are some major deletions of poetic prose and omissions of textual matters in Surendranath's version. For instance Nikhil's feeling and sensitive involvement with the agony of the starving landless poor people of Bengal of the time like Ponchu at the end of chapter 11, and Chandranathbabu's past described in chapter 9 do not find place in Surendranath's translation. However, Macmillan in its 2004 edition by adding an 'Appendix' at the end of the book tried to compensate these deficiencies at least to some extent. In the other two versions we do not find such major omissions and deletions. But in translating the Tagore text with its peculiar idioms and culturally nuanced items all the three translators differ in their approaches. To illustrate this let us take, for instance, three different translated versions of a few passages of the Bangla novel *Ghore Baire*.

A. Translations of opening paragraph of the Bangla novel *Ghore Baire* (Pg. 847) :

(i) Mother, to-day there comes back to my mind the vermilion mark at the parting of your hair, the sari which you used to wear, with its wide red border, and those wonderful eyes of yours, full of depth and peace. They came at the start of my life's journey, like the first streak of dawn, giving me golden provision to carry me on my way (trans. Tagore, Surendranath, 2004 (1919) : 9).

(ii) O dear Ma, I remember the vermilion in the parting of your hair, your wide, red-bordered sari, and your deep, gentle, tranquil eyes, all spread like the crimson rays of the dawn across my heart. I started my life's journey with the asset of that golden glow. But then ? Did dark clouds come rushing like bandits to snatch it away,

not sparing a single ray of that light for me ? That gift of my mother's virtue at the inception of my life can be eclipsed by the storm, but can it be destroyed ? (trans. Sen, Nivedita, 2004 : 1).

(iii) Oh mother, today I remember the sindoor on your forehead, the red-bordered sari you used to wear, and your eyes – calm, serene and deep. They touched my heart like the first rays of the sun. My life started out with that golden gift. What happened after that ? Did the dark clouds come charging like brigands ? Did they destroy the gift of light ? And yet, that touch of the chaste dawn at the most important moment of one's life may perhaps be clouded by disaster, but it can never be erased completely (trans. Guha, Sreejata, 2005 : 1).

(B) Translations of last part of chapter 1 of Bangla original *Ghore Baire* (Pg. 863) :

(i) My husband came up to me and whispered : 'This is my master, of whom I have so often told you. Make your obeisance to him.'

I bent reverently and took the dust of his feet. He gave me his blessing saying : 'May God protect you always, my little mother.'

I was sorely in need of such blessing at that moment. (trans. Tagore, Surendranath, Pg. 49)

(ii) My husband introduced him to me as his teacher and said, "I have told you about him many times, please touch his feet." I bent down and touched his feet respectfully. He blessed me and said, "May god always protect you, my child".

At that juncture, I was in need of that benediction (trans. Sen, Nivedita, Pg. 42-43).

(iii) My husband came up to me and said. 'He is my teacher. I have spoken to you about him many a times; touch his feet.'

I touched his feet reverently. He blessed me, 'Ma, may the lord protect you always.'

Just at that moment I was in great need of that blessing (trans. Guha, Sreejata, Pg. 29).

(C) Translations of a passage from the first part of chapter 9 of Bangla original *Ghore Baire* (Pg. 894) :

(i) Bimala is full of the energy of life, and so she has never become stale to me for a moment, in all these nine years of our wedded life.

My life has only its dumb depths; but no murmuring rush. I can only receive : not impart movement. And therefore my company is like fasting. I recognize clearly to-day that Bimala has been languishing because of a famine of companionship.

Then whom shall I blame ? Like Vidyapathi I can only lament :

It is August, the sky breaks into a passionate rain;

Alas, empty is my house.

My house, I now see, was built to remain empty, because its doors cannot open. But I never knew till now that its divinity had been sitting outside. I had fondly believed that she had accepted my sacrifice, and granted in return her boon. But, also, my house has all along been empty (trans. Tagore, Surendranath, Pg. 128-129).

(ii) Bimal is full of the spirit of life. That is why she has never seemed monotonous to me in the nine years that we have been married. But if there is anything in me, it is a dumb gravity, and not a sweet vitality. I can empathies and acknowledge, but can hardly shake things around me. To any human being, my company is like observing a fast. Seeing her now, I realize I know what kind of starvation Bimal has had to endure all these days. Who should I blame for it ? Alas –

A cloud-laden Bhadra –

Yet vacant lies my shrine!

My temple was built not to be filled; its doors are closed. I did not realize that its deity was waiting just outside of it. I had thought that my deity had accepted the offerings of worship, and had also given her blessings. But alas, -- vacant lies my shrine (trans. Sen, Nivedita, Pg. 122-123).

(iii) Bimal is so full of life. That's why, in all of these nine years, she has never ever seemed boring to me. But if there's anything in

me, it is just mute profundity and not rippling surges. I am only capable of receiving but I cannot stir. My company is like starvation; when I see Bimal today I can understand what a famine she has survived all these years. Who is to blame ?

Alas –

Monsoon floods, July and August,

My temple lies vacant !

My temple is built to stay empty; its doors are closed. I failed to understand all these years, that my idol was waiting outside the door. I'd thought he had accepted the prayers and also granted the boons – but, my temple lies vacant, my temple lies vacant (trans. Guha, Sreejata, Pg. 86-87).

In A (i, ii, iii) we find three different versions of the opening paragraph of Tagore's novel *Ghore Baire*. In the Bangla original, the paragraph has seven sentences out of which first three are assertives and the rest four are rhetorical questions. In Surendranath's version we find the translation of only the first three sentences and the remaining four are simply omitted without stating any logic. Moreover, the second and third sentences are abridged to one. Such kind of omission and abridgement of sentences, phrases and paragraphs, which have repeatedly occurred throughout this version is a serious lapse of translation, causing a great harm to the correct understanding of a Tagore text to his readers in English. In Nivedita's version there is an attempt to make the complete rendering of the source text though she has reduced the number of sentences from seven to

five. The first two sentences of Bangla text have become one and the same is seen in the translation of fifth and sixth sentences. Sreejata Guha, in her translation of the Bangla paragraph retained the original number of sentences but she has changed the form of the last sentence from rhetorical question to categorical assertion.

The initial kinship address *Ma go* has been translated by Surendranath as 'Mother', by Sreejata as 'Oh Mother' and by Nivedita as 'O deer Ma'. The last one is more close to the original in sense and tone. The culturally nuanced item *Sindoor* is appeared in the versions of Surendranath and Nivedita as 'vermilion', while Sreejata retained the original to achieve better cultural approximation. Retaining such cultural items as they are in the original is preferred in modern translation but they require explanation either in glossary or in foot note, which is not there in Sreejata's version. Another such word, *Sari*, is kept as the original by all the three translators but explained in foot note only in Surendranath's version. The short rhetorical question in the middle of the paragraph is translated by Sreejata as 'what happened after that ?' and by Nivedita as 'But then ?' Nivedita's one is more close to the original in tone and sense. The simile employed in the second sentence in Bangla original is translated by Surendranath as 'like the first streak of dawn,' by Nivedita as 'like the crimson rays of the dawn' and by Sreejata as 'like the first rays of the sun'. Again the nuance word *Sati* is translated by Nivedita as 'virtue' and by Sreejata as 'chaste' which could have been kept as original with a foot note explaining its rich connotative dimension.

In B (i, ii, iii) we find three different versions of the end of chapter one. Here we have five sentences in the Bangla original out of which first two appear as the last part of the preceding paragraph, next two as an independent paragraph and the remaining single sentence stands as the last paragraph of the chapter. All the three translators have translated the five sentences without committing major omission. Yet they differ from each other in their subjective approach. Surendranath created an independent paragraph of first two sentences, Nivedita joined the first two sentences together and merged them with the next paragraph, while Sreejata retained the original division of sentences and paragraphs.

A ridiculous instance of word for word translation of Indian idioms, phrases and culturally nuanced words is seen in Surendranath's translation of the first sentence of second paragraph : "I bent reverently and took the dust of his feet." An English reader may wonder reason for taking the 'dust' of feet. The gross cultural loss in the translation of an Indian nuance word *pronam* is seen here. Its high ethical significance is also erased. Nivedita Sen translated the same sentence : "I bent down and touched his feet respectfully," and in Sreejata Guha's version it appears : "I touched his feet reverently." However, the term *pronam* could have been retained for better cultural negotiation. The translation of one more word *aashirbad* may also be noted. Both Surendranath and Sreejata translated it as 'blessing', a word familiar to Indian readers in English and semantically nearest to the original, but Nivedita brought here a connotative diversion by bringing the word 'benediction' which has direct relation with Christian ritual.

C (i, ii, iii) presents three different versions of the third and fourth paragraphs of chapter nine of the novel *Ghore Baire*. All the three versions show the effort of the translators to translate both the paragraphs without omitting any part of them, though in Surendranath's version the splitting and joining of sentences and paragraphs are visible. The initial proper noun 'Bimal' has become 'Bimala' in Surendranath's version but other two retained the original. The nature specific Bangla month *Bhadra* has become 'August' in Surebdranath's version, 'July and August' in Sreejata's version, while Nivedita retained the original. The nuance word *upobash*, when translated by Sreejata as 'starvation' misses its high ethical significance. Surendranath translated it as 'fasting' and Nivedita as 'observing a fast', though both closely reflect the original, Nivedita's one may be preferred. Again while *durbiksha* is translated by both Surendranath and Sreejata as 'famine', in Nivedita's version it has become 'starvation'. The word *mandir* is translated by Nivedita as 'shrine', by Sreejata as 'temple', but Surendranath has made it 'house'. Moreover, in Surendranath's version we find Nikhilesh is comparing his state of frustration with that of the classical Indian poet Vidyapathi which is an evidence of addition of new ideas in the process of translation. It may be said that the translator here has perhaps fallen in the 'trap' of improving the original.

The second novel of Rabindranath Tagore translated into English and published in the form of a book was *Gora*. It was translated by William Winstanley Pearson, a close English friend and admirer of Tagore, who also worked as a teacher in Tagore's school at Santiniketan. It was published by Macmillan & Co.,

London in 1924. The version was periodically reprinted about twenty times over the years without editing anything and remained unrivalled for as many as 73 years. It is only in the year 1997 Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, came out with an unabridged English version of the novel *Gora* which was translated by a modern Tagore translator, Sujit Mukherjee. However, in between these two versions, we find the appearance of an abridged version of *Gora*, retold by E.F. Dodd and published by Macmillan & Co., London in the year 1964. This was probably meant for school courses. Out of these three versions, Pearson's one enjoyed the privilege of being closely supervised by Tagore and his associates. The second one, the abridged version of E.F. Dodd, may be treated as an ideological design of the west to present Indians in derogatory light as explicated later in this chapter. The third one, Sujit Mukherjee's version, is a product of 1990s, a period when, with the development of Translation Studies as an independent discipline, translation is treated not merely as the transfer of text from one language to another but as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures. It is to be noted here that Rupa & Co., New Delhi, came out with one more publication of Tagore's *Gora* in the year 2002, the fourth impression of which has already come in 2005. But after close scrutiny it is found that Rupa has produced almost the same Macmillan print without even acknowledging it. Taking the freedom of copyright-free state of Tagore publication, Rupa came out with this. Instead of making an attempt to revise or improve the 'flawed' Macmillan text, Rupa simply deleted the end of the 'Epilogue' of the Macmillan version of *Gora*.

In the comparative study of all the three versions of *Gora*, the first thing that strikes a reader is the visibility or otherwise of translator. Now a days the

position of a translator is considered as important as a writer. So the name of the translator should have come clearly on the front cover page of a translated version. But the Macmillan version of *Gora*, published in January 1924 and periodically reprinted several times, does not make the translator's name visible. All throughout, only the following words appear in the page preceding the text :

> My thanks are due to Mr. Surendranath Tagore who very kindly made the final corrections and revisions for this translation. Any merits it possesses are due to his painstaking efforts to rectify my mistakes. – Translator (Peason, 2002 : 5).

The identity of the 'translator' remained a matter of conjecture. However, Sahitya Akademi in its book *Rabindranath Tagore : A Centenary Volume* (1961 : 514) and the bibliography appended to the Special Tagore Number of Sahitya Akademi Journal, *Indian Literature*, (vol. 4, 1961) name W.W. Pearson as the translator of this version. However, Macmillan at last in its pocket Tagore Edition (1980) rightly mentions the name of the translator as W.W. Pearson and that too on the rear cover page. E.F. Dodd's abridged version of *Gora*, published in 1964 and reprinted several times, also does not mention whether the story was abridged and retold from the original Bangla text or from the Macmillan's longer version. However, the text shows that it is based on Pearson's version. But Sahitya Akademi's version of *Gora* (1997) clearly shows in its second page, though not on the front cover page, that the translator is Sujit Mukherjee, and thus gives importance to the translator of a text.

So far as the Para-textual segments of three different versions are concerned, a remarkable difference is noticed. In Macmillan version we do not find any preface or introduction or translator's note or glossary of *bhasha* words or even foot notes. Without these the target readership will face difficulties in understanding and assessing the real value of such a great novel coming from a hugely different cultural hinterland with different social, political and religious hues. E.F. Dodd's abridged version is also without an introduction or glossary. However, there is a very short preface and a few foot notes which are not at all sufficient. But Sahitya Akademi's version of *Gora* has a 'Translator's Preface', a brief 'Acknowledgement' and a long critical 'Introduction' by Meenakshi Mukherjee covering as many as sixteen full pages preceding the text and a detailed 'Translator's Notes' at the end of the text. Moreover, the translator here clearly mentions that his translation is based on the 1941 Visva-Bharati standard text of original Bangla *Gora*.

So far as the structure of the novel is concerned, there are some major changes effected in Macmillan version. The Bangla original novel consists of 76 chapters, where as in Pearson's version we find 79 chapters. Chapters 36, 39 and 41 have been divided into two chapters each. Chapter 36 in Bangla appears as chapters 36 and 37 in Pearson's version, chapter 39 in Bangla appears as chapters 40 and 41, and chapter 41 in Bangla figures as chapters 43 and 44 in the English version of W.W. Pearson. Moreover, the beginning of chapter 13 in Bangla original appears as the end of chapter 12 in Pearson's version, and the same happens with the beginning of chapter 20 in Bangla which appears as the ending of

chapter 19 in the English version of Pearson. It is difficult to find any logic behind this splitting of chapters and shifting of paragraphs from one chapter to another. Besides these, within the same chapters the order of sentences and paragraphs have been changed. All these seriously effect not only the formal design of the text but also the coherence and fracture the conceptual frame work of the original text.

The most serious lapse that we find in Pearson's version of *Gora* is that of omission. Many phrases, sentences, dialogues, paragraphs and local details of the original Bangla text have been omitted and sometimes abbreviated, the logic of which has not been made clear. The version remains an incomplete translation even today as deleted portions have not been incorporated even in the latest reprint in 2002. Another feature noticed in this version is that the English used in translation is of various registers and the style and diction also considerably varies. This is, perhaps, because the draft translation after being prepared by Pearson, passed through several hands, including the author, before getting its final shape for publication. It is ridiculous that the name of a character Baradasundari has been spelled in three different ways. For instance, in page 408 the name is spelled both as 'Baroda' and 'Mistress Baroda, and in page 496 it is spelled as 'Bardasundari'. In missing details, in calling Barodasundari as 'Mistress Baroda' and Lakshmi as 'Mistress Lakshmi', and in using words and phrases like 'Motley' (for the saffron robe of the bowl) 'Cab' (for horse carriage), 'brake' (to curve or control), taking the 'dust of feet' (for offering *pranam*, the attempt of the translator to fit the source language text to the demand of the target language is evident.

E.F. Dodd's abridged version of *Gora*, though largely based on Pearson's version, operates on a different logic for its selection and exclusion of descriptions and episodes. It shows the colonial hegemony in translation in presenting the 'natives' of the source text as 'inferior'. It 'can be taken as a useful document to substantiate the Macaulay–Trevelyan type of orientalist programme for the education of the natives' (Mukherjee, Tuntun, 2002 : 153). The short preface included in the version describes *Gora* as depicting the lives and problems of 'orthodox and unorthodox Hindu families' during the late nineteenth century. The episodes included in the version clearly show orthodoxy, superstition and fanaticism. But the episodes which show the British in a bad light are carefully excluded. For example, Gora's altercation with the Englishman on the steamer, scenes of police oppression in the villages, the exploitation of riparian lands for indigo farming and the cruelty to the farmers are excluded. This shows that it is possible for a translator to impose an ideological design on the text or divert the rhetorical play of the source text.

Sahitya Akademi's version of Sujit Mukherjee marks a clear change in the theory and method of transaction. As in Para-textual segments so also in the structure and content of the text, this version shows a discernable development in the history of the translation of Tagore novels. It shows the serious involvement of Mukherjee in the task of translation and so the original structure of the novel including the order of chapters, paragraphs and details have been mostly retained without major omissions. Surely much thought has gone into the style of English to be used and so culture specific items have been retained in the translated version.

Keeping with the spirit of post-colonial trends, the translation in this version is in direct contrast to the use of language in the earlier versions, which reflect the colonial mindset of the translators. To illustrate this a few examples may be taken from the two major versions of *Gora* :

D. Translations of opening paragraph of the original Bangla text *Gora (Pg. 509)* :

(i) It was the rainy season in Calcutta; the morning clouds had scattered, and the sky overflowed with clear sunlight (trans. Pearson, W.W., 2002 (1924) : 7).

(ii) The clouds had dispersed on this Shravan morning, leaving the Kolikata sky full of clear sunlight. There was no pause in the traffic on the roads; the hawkers cried their wares untiringly. Fish and vegetable sellers had already visited households which would be sending people off soon to colleges, offices and law courts. Smoke from kitchen fires rose in the air. Inspite of all these common place happenings in a city as large, busy and hard-hearted as Kolikata, the golden sunlight streamed into its hundreds of streets and alleys like the flow of some unprecedented youthful impulse (trans. Mukherjee, Sujit, 2006 (1997) : 1).

E. Translations of fourth paragraph of chapter 76 of Bangla original *Gora* (Pg. 793):

(i) Gora, when he came in knelt down before Paresh Babu and putting his head on the floor took the dust of his feet. Paresh Babu

moved aside in distress, and lifting him up, exclaimed : "Come, come, my child, come and sit down !" (trans. Pearson. Pg. 860).

(ii) After coming in Gora went to Paresh Babu, bent low and touched his feet in pronam. Paresh Babu hastened to make the gesture of raising Gora, saying : "Come, come, my boy. Come and sit down" (trans. Mukherjee, Pg. 474).

F. Translation of first three paragraphs of the Epilogue of Bangla original *Gora* (Pg. 795):

(i) When Gora returned that evening to his home he found Anandamoyi sitting quietly on the verandah in front of his room.

He went up to her and, sitting down in front of her, laid his head at her feet, while Anandamoyi lifted his head and kissed him.

"Mother. You are my mother !" exclaimed Gora. "The mother whom I have been wandering about in search of was all the time sitting in my room at home. You have no caste, you make no distinctions, and have no hatred – you are only the image of our welfare ! It is you who are India !" (trans. Pearson, Pg. 867).

(ii) When Gora returned home that evening, he found Anandomoyi sitting by herself in the verandah near his room. He came to her and, kneeling down, laid his head on her feet. She raised his head with both hands and kissed it.

Gora said, "Ma, you are my only mother. The mother for whom I have looked everywhere – all this time she was sitting in

my house. You have no caste, you do not discriminate against people, you do not hate – you are the image of benediction. You are my Bharatvarsha ..." (trans. Mukherjee, Pg. 477).

In D (i, ii) we find the two different versions of the opening paragraph of Tagore's Bangla novel *Gora*. In Pearson's version only one sentence is used to translate the whole initial paragraph of the novel, omitting the local details altogether. But in Mukherjee's version it appears that sufficient care has been taken to transfer the text with local details and cultural specificities. Pearson translated the name of the Bangla month *Shravan* as 'rainy season' and the name of the city 'Kolikata' as 'Calcutta', while Sujit Mukherjee retained both the terms as they are in the original. In the example E. (i, ii) we find the two English versions of the fourth paragraph of chapter 76 of the original Bangla novel. In both the versions it appears as third paragraph of the chapter. Initial two small paragraphs of the chapter are joined together to make a single paragraph in both the versions. The most remarkable difference between the two versions is seen in the translation of nuance item *pronam* and its performance. In Sujit Mukherjee's translation it appears as 'bent low and touched his feet in pronam', but in Pearson's translation it has become, 'putting his head on the floor took the dust of his feet'. This is an evidence of cultural negotiation in Mukherjee's version and cultural loss in Pearson's version.

The example F (i, ii) shows two different versions of the first three short paragraphs of the Bangla original Epilogue of the novel. Here Pearson retained the original division of paragraphs, while Mukherjee joined together the first two

paragraphs. Moreover, for the Bangla word *kalyan*, Pearson's use of the English equivalent 'welfare' may be preferred to Mukherjee's use of the word 'benediction', a word which has different connotative dimension. But the sensitivity of Mukherjee is apperent in retaining the original term used for motherland 'Bharatvarsha' and the kinship addressing word 'Ma'; while the colonial burden is reflected in Pearson's translation of these words as 'India' and 'Mother'.

Tagore's texts like *Gora* offer a greater challenge to translators because he uses many words close to the spirit of Sanskrit and loaded with high cosmic or ethical significance. So the decision of Sujit Mukherjee to retain such words, for instance, *Shravan*, is of considerable importance. *Shravan* is a favourite season of Tagore. All the aspects of *Shravan* like the canopy of clouds and the play of sun and shade recall the love story of Radha and Krishna and suggest an associational complex of lovers' meetings. The connotative dimension of this ethically and culturally loaded word is lost or at least restricted, when it is translated as 'rainy season'.

Among the novels of Tagore that have been translated into English and published in the form of book *Chaturanga* chronologically comes in the third position. It was published by Macmillan & Co, London in the year 1925 under the title *Broken Ties and Other Stories*. It was not published as a separate book but with six other translated stories of Tagore. However, it should be mentioned here that this version of *Chaturanga* was translated into English earlier and published with the sub-title *A Story in Four Chapters* in the *Modern Review* in four

installments from February to May 1922. But it was not published in book form before 1925. The same English version of *Chaturanga* was later published, without any change, by Visva-Bharati under the title *Boundless Sky* in the year 1964. All throughout, the name of the translator of this version remains absent. The next version of *Chaturanga* came in 1961, the centenary year of Tagore's birth. It was translated by Asok Mitra and published by Sahitya Akademi under the title *Chaturanga (Quartet)*. The third English version of *Chaturanga* appeared in London in the year 1993. It was translated by Kaiser Haq, perhaps the only translator of Tagore novel in English from Bangladesh, and was published by Heinmann Educational Publisher's 'Asian Writers Series', under the title *Quartet (Chaturanga)*. It should be mentioned here that Rupa & Co, New Delhi, came out with an attractive paperback volume of *Chaturanga* under the title *Broken Ties* in 2007. But this is not a new version. Within a beautiful cover we find the same old Macmillan print without any attempt to revise or improve.

Out of these three versions of *Chaturanga*, the first one was translated under the supervision of the author and his associates and as such it suffered from the attempt of the translator(s) to fit the source text to the demand of the target readership. Sahitya Akademi's version, though coming twenty years after the death of Tagore, was not totally free from such problems. It is perhaps because, the translator of this version, Asok Mitra himself was one of the associates of Tagore. Moreover, the translation was supervised by Krishna Kripalini, one of the few translators chosen by Tagore. Asok Mitra himself has acknowledged this fact in the page preceding the text :

> I am indebted to Sri Krishna Kripalini for the care with which he went over every line with me and suggested many improvements. --- A.M (Mitra, 2005 : VI).

Kaiser Haq's version of *Chaturanga*, on the other hand, shows the influence of the development of Translation Studies as a theoretical approach in 1980s and 90s. It marks a clear change in the theory and method of translation.

The title of the novel *Chaturanga* has undergone several changes in the history of its English translation. After seven years of its birth, the Modern Review renamed the novel in its 1922 version as *A Story in Four Chapters* and only after three years of its English rebirth, the version was again renamed as *Broken Ties* by Macmillan in 1925. Again the same version was renamed in 1964 when Visva Bharati published *Broken Ties* collection under the title *Boundless Sky*. Thanks to Asok Mitra, the original title could get its rightful place in the English version. However, Asok Mitra keeps his translated title *Quartet* within bracket next to the original title and throws valuable light on it in the initial paragraph of his 'Translator's Note' that appears on a page preceding the text :

> The Bengali quatrain or *payer*, itself based on the primal rhythm of the Santal drum, and the classical four-part musical form were of inexhaustible interest to Tagore. Creator of the world's largest and most varied corpus of *lieder* and song cycles, he constructed many of his stories and novellas in four parts : exposition, development, variation and recapitulation. He was deeply attached to this form, its varying rhythms and speeds, and used it repeatedly not only in his early stories but in the most

> powerful novella of his early fifties (1914–15), *Chaturanga*. He returned to it with renewed power in his seventies in *Malancha, Dui Bon* and *Char Adhyay* (Mitra, Asok, 2005 (1963) : vii).

Kaiser Haq's version appears with the title of Asok Mitra's version of the novel but with an inversion. Here Haq keeps the translated title *Quartet* in the first position and then the original title *Chaturanga* is kept within bracket. It appears as *Quartet (Chaturanga)*.

The question regarding the identity of translator of the first English version of *Chaturanga* remains unsolved even today. Neither the Modern Review, nor Macmillan, nor even Visva Bharati gives any place to the name of the translator(s) of this version in their successive publications. We do not even find any authentic clue from any other source about the identity of the translator(s) of this version. The bibliography added to the Special Tagore Number of Sahitya Akademi Journal *Indian Literature* (Vol.4, 1961) and Sahitya Akademi's publication, *Rabindranath Tagore : A Centenary Volume* (1961 : 514) mention "Broken Ties and Other Stories, London : Macmillan. 1925." But they do not mention anything about the identity of the translator of this collection. From such confusing entry it seems, as if, these are the original English writings of Tagore. Sisir Kumar Das in his Volume Two (Pg. 14) of *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore* (1996), published by Sahitya Akademi, makes the entry : *"Broken Ties and Other Stories*, translated by several writers". Who are these 'several writers' we may never know. But, strangely enough, Rupa & Co. on the back cover page of its separate volume *Broken Ties* writes : "Broken Ties (1925) was Tagore's sixth novel, written after a

gap of five years following *Gora*. He translated it from *Chaturanga*, 1916, jointly with W.W. Pearson." However, on the basis of history, it is difficult to accept such a view. This short of irresponsibility shows the 'unfortunate' state of Tagore translation in English and the 'permanent damage' done to Tagore by his publishers – Macmillan earlier and Rupa today, as Meenakshi Mukherjee says in her article "The Practice and Politics of Literary Translation". However, other two versions of *Chaturanga* by displaying the names of their translator show the importance of the visibility of the translator of a text.

In the treatment of Para-textual segments, all the three versions of *Chaturanga* considerably differ from each other. Macmillan's *Broken Ties* has no preface, no introduction, no translator's note and no glossary of words. Even the text does not appear as a separate volume but as a collection with six other stories. In Asok Mitra's version we find a single sentence acknowledgement to Krishna Kripalini who 'suggested many improvements' and a one and half page 'Translator's Note; in the pages preceding the text and a short 'Glossary' which explains only thirteen *Bhasha* words at the end of the text. Mitra's 'Translator's Note', though brief, gives his critical insight and adds to our understanding of the novel. In Kaiser Haq's version we find fully developed Para-textual segments, though his 'Introduction' does not go beyond the basic factual elucidation.

Structurally the original Bangla novel *Chaturanga* has four major parts with several chapters in each part, which are chronologically figured by numerals. The first part, 'Uncle' has 6 chapters, the second part 'Sachis' has 10 chapters, the third part 'Damini' has 6 chapters with an 'Epilogue' at the end, and the fourth part

'Sribilash' has five chapters. All the three English versions retained the original major four parts of the novel. But in the chapterization within the four parts major changes effected in the earlier two versions.

In the Macmillan version the number of chapters in the very first part has been reduced from 6 to 5. Original Bangla chapters 2 and 3 appeared as chapter II, original chapters 5 and 6 (except last two paragraphs) appeared as chapter IV, and only the last two paragraphs of original chapter 6 figured as chapter V in the Macmillan version. In the second part of the novel, the very name of the character, after whom the part is titled, has been changed from 'Sachish' to 'Satish'. In the third part, the Epilogue which appeared in the original as the end of chapter 6 has been figured as chapter VII and the term 'Epilogue' is deleted. In the fourth part, the number of chapter is again increased from the original '5' to 'VIII' in Macmillan version. Original chapter 1 is divided as chapter I and II, and chapter 5 is divided and figured as chapters V, VI, VII and VIII in the Macmillan version. Besides this, in many cases the order of sentences and paragraphs has been changed. Moreover, the omission of phrases, sentences, paragraphs and local details which, though a serious lapse of translation, appears as a common feature of Macmillan versions of Tagore novels. Here in this version, for instance, the initial paragraphs of both chapter 1 and 2 of the first part of the novel are omitted. Another change, though minor, is noticed in the Macmillan version. In the original text the four major parts are marked not by chronological numerals but by name and each part is divided into several chapters by chronological numerals like 1, 2, 3 etc. In the Macmillan version the four major parts are marked both by name and by

chronological numerals, and the chapters in each part are figured in Roman numerals.

In Sahitya Akademi's version of *Chaturanga* we also find some major structural changes. Here, chapter 5 of part one of the original Bangla novel is divided into chapters 5 and 6, chapter 1 of part three of the original Bangla is splitted into chapters 1 and 2, and chapters 4 and 5 of part four of the Bangla original are joined together and figured as chapter 4. Another major change effected in the part four of the text is that the chapter 2 of the Sahitya Akademi's version begins from the middle of chapter 1 of the original text. Many omissions also occurred in this version. For example, the last paragraph of chapter 2 of part one of the original text is omitted in this version. It may also be mentioned here that Sahitya Akademi's version retained the original pattern of dividing the major four parts of the novel by name and not by number. But unlike the original, the different chapters of each part are marked by spacing.

One of the most difficult challenges that a translator faces in the act of rendering an Indian story, a Tagore story in particular, into English is that many words in the source text describing specific items of culture may not have proper equivalents in English. To face this challenge, Asok Mitra, very much like many modern Tagore translators, retained quite a few such original words, even though they are not English. So in his version the names of Bangla months *Chaitra, Magh, Phalgun* and *Shravan*, and some other culture specific items like *Sradh, Guru, Prabhu* etc. are retained with their illustration in the 'Glossary'. In the Macmillan version, when *Sradh* is translated as 'funeral', *Guru* as 'Master' and *Shravan* as

'rainy season' – the rich connotative dimension of these words are restricted and their cultural and ethical values are erased.

Kaiser Haq's version of *Chaturanga* marks a change in the theory and method of translation. In it the original structural pattern has been carefully retained. We also do not find any major omission in Haq's version, which seriously effected the translation of earlier versions. Haq also retained the culturally nuanced items, and other *Bhasha* words which do not have proper English equivalents, and the local details, some of which were omitted in the earlier versions. He accepts the challenge of translating the poet's novel and handles its challenging sections with the confidence of a poet. For instance, his translation of the cave scene, where Damini attempts to seduce Sachish retains almost the original passion and feeling of characters, gravity of scene and flavour of the poet's language.

Tagore's brilliant novel *Shesher Kabita* has two English versions. The first one was published by New India Publishing Company, London, in the year 1946 under the title *Farewell My Friend.* It was translated by Krishna Kripalini, one of the close associates of Tagore, who while working as an English teacher at Santiniketan, took the difficult task of translating *Shesher Kabita* in the year 1935. By 1941, the year of Tagore's death, Kripalini's translation of *Shesher Kabita* was in good progress. So the version enjoyed the privilege of Tagore's supervision, though it came out as a book five years after the expiry of Tagore. There after in the year 1956, Jaico Publishing House, Mumbai, came out with a new publication of this version, which includes Kripalini's translation of *Malancha* also, under the title *Farewell my Friend and The Garden* which was revised in 1999. Kripalini's

*Farewell my Friend* remained unrivalled for about 59 years. The second version of *Shesher Kabita* came out in the year 2005. It was translated by an eminent Tagore scholar of the new millennium, Radha Chakravarty, and published by Srishti Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, under the title *Farewell Song : Shesher Kabita.*

The first point that attracts our attention in the comparative analysis of the two versions of *Shesher Kabita* is the difference in the treatment of title. The literal meaning of the original Bangla title *Shesher Kabita* is 'Last Poem'. The novel ends with the last letter of Labanya written in the form of a poem to his lover Amit, which shows the peculiar nature of the fulfillment of their love not in union but in separation. The poet-novelist titled both the novel and its last chapter after this last poem of Labanya, which gives a final farewell to the prospect of her union with her lover. The last line of this poem 'My friend, farewell', which is repeated as refrain at the end of the last four stanzas, attracted Kripalini to title her version as *Farewell my Friend.* On the other hand, Radha Chakravarty retained the original title along with her translated title and it appears as *Farewell Song : Sheshar Kabita.* However, the last poem of Labanya with its tragic note, arising out of the deeper understanding of love and life, becomes the source of the title of both the translated versions as well as the original Bangla text.

In the treatment of Para-textual segments, both the versions considerably differ. In Kripalini's version we find only a 'Translator's Note' covering one and half page which introduces the readers to the grand theme and style of the original Bangla novel. Here, Kripalini also expresses his humble confession about the

difficulties in rendering such a grand text of Tagore, 'in an alien medium like English, whose spirit and idiom are so entirely different from those of the original'. He ends his Note 'with the hope that the reader will not judge the novel without having read the original Bengali version' (Kripalini, 2000 : viii). We do not find other required Para-textual segments like preface, introduction, acknowledgement or glossary of *bhasha* words. The translator's name appears only once on a page preceding the text. It does not appear either on the front cover page or at the end of 'Translator's Note'. Radha Chakravarty's version on the other hand, has a brief 'Acknowledgements' a rather lengthy 'Introduction' which appears more as a research paper covering pages IX to XXIV. There is also a 'Glossary' of *bhasha* words. All this adds to the understanding of the text. In this version sufficient importance is also given on highlighting the visibility of translator. The name of the translator appears on the front cover page, second inner page and at the end of 'Translator's Note'. There is also a brief translator's profile on the inner side of the back cover page.

Regarding the structure of the novel, we find at least one major change effected in Kripalini's version. The Bangla original *Shesher Kabita* has 17 chapters, which are marked both by chronological numerals and by separate chapter titles. But Kripalini increased the number of chapters in his *Farewell My Friend* from 17 to 18. Chapter 16 in Bangla original under the title *Mukti* (Liberation) appears in the English version of Kripalini as chapters 16 and 17 under the titles 'Liberation' and 'The End' respectively. Some major omissions and abridgements also appeared in Kripalini's version. Most of the poems that we

find in the Bangla original text are either abridged or totally omitted in the translated version. For example the long poem in chapter I and the very important concluding poem of Labanya are abridged to bare skeletons. What is more serious, the poem consisting of 24 lines and the short paragraph that follows the poem at the end of chapter 2 of the Bangla original text are totally omitted in Kripalini's translation. Giving the hint that there was a poem in the original text, Kripalini ends his chapter II : "Out came the thin, long note book and Nibaran Chakravarty dictated a poem." For Kripalini, perhaps, it was not 'found possible' (Translator's Note) to render into English the Bangla poems of Tagore that are omitted in his version. But there is no logic behind his splitting of original chapter 16 into two. Such kind of splitting of chapters, abridgement and omission of poems cause serious effects both in form and content of the text.

In Radha Chakravarty's version we do not find any structural change, nor do we find any serious omission. The original division of chapters and the order of paragraphs and details are carefully retained. Her bold step to render into English the relentless irony of Tagore's poetic prose, the poems that are attributed to the 'inimitable' Nibaran Chakravarty by Amit as well as the last poem of Labanya is praiseworthy. To a great extend she succeeded in retaining the original fluency of the longer passages as well as the sensitivity of the minor details. However, in few places some differences with the original are noticed. For example, at the end of the novel, we are told that Katy is mellowed by Amit's efforts to make theirs a companionate marriage. This part of the story is glossed over in Radha Chakravarty's version.

In translating idioms and phrases both the translators considerably differ in their approaches. To make a comparative analysis let us take two versions of a few passages :

G. Opening lines of chapter 8 of Bangla original *Shesher Kabita* (Pg. 1135) :

(i) Yogamaya said, "Labanya dear, are you sure you have understood ?"

"Indeed I have, mother."

"That Amit is very wayward, I admit; that is why I am so fond of him. Don't you see how distraught he looks – as though everything is about to slip away from him !" (trans. Kripalini, Krishna, 2000 : 50).

(ii) "Labanya, my girl, have you understood the situation correctly ?" Yogamaya wanted to know.

"I have understood it correctly, Ma."

"Amit is very restless, I must admit. That's why I'm so fond of him. Don't you see how disorganized he is ? As if he has butterfingers : things seem to keep slipping from his grasp" (trans. Chakravarty, Radha, 2005 : 73).

H. Opening lines of chapter 12 of Bangla original *Shesher Kabita* (Pg. 1146) :

i) The meal over, Amit announced :

"Mashima, I am leaving for Calcutta tomorrow. My kith and kin suspect that I have turned Khasi."

"Do the kith and kin know that you change so easily ?" (trans. Kripalini, Krishna, 2000 : 70, 71)

ii) "I leave for Kolkata tomorrow, Mashima," Amit informed them after lunch. "My relatives have begun to suspect that I have gone native."

"How would your relatives know that words could bring about such a transformation in you ?" (trans. Chakravarty, Radha, 2005 : 103).

I. Few lines from the middle of chapter 15 of Bangla original *Shesher Kabita* (Pg. 1161) :

i) Yogomaya was dumbfounded, she sensed mischief. She too realized that it would not be easy to maintain one's self-respect before them. Instantly foregoing her aunthood, she remarked, "I understand Amit Babu stays in your hotel. You should know his whereabouts."

Katie laughed unpleasantly, a laugh which translated into, "you may bluff, but you can't fool us" (trans. Kripalini, Krishna, 2000 :95).

ii) Yogamaya was confused. She realized there must be a problem somewhere. She also understood that it would be difficult

> to maintain her dignity with these people. Instantly discarding her aunt-like attitude, she retorted. "I'm told Amitbabu stays at your own hotel, so you should know his whereabouts."
>
> Katy gave a menacing laugh. "You may try to hide, but you can't escape," her laugh implied (trans. Chakravarty, Radha, 2005 : 138).

In the above example G (i and ii) we find two different versions of the opening lines of chapter 8 of the novel *Shesher Kabita*. Here, the affectionate address *Ma Labanya* in Bangla is translated by Kripalini as 'Labanya dear' and by Chakravarty as 'Labanya, my girl', while the original could have been retained for making better sense. In the second sentence Chakravarty retained the original kinship address *Ma* while Kripalini translated it as 'Mother'. In the third sentence the Bangla word *chanchal* is translated by Kripalini as 'wayword' and by Chakravarty as 'restless'. In the last sentence Chakravarty uses a uniquely English but appropriate expression 'butterfingers' which precedes the image of things falling from Amit's grasp. This is an example of the sensitivity of Chakravarty's translation to minute details.

In the example H (i and ii), Kolikata appears as 'Calcutta' in Kripalini's version, while Chakravarty retained the original. Again Chakravarty's 'lunch' and 'relatives' appear more appropriately English equivalent expressions than Kripalini's 'meal' and 'kith and kin'. But Kripalini's version retains the original specific race-name 'Khasi', while Chakravarty makes it less specific by translating it as 'native'. Similarly, the sense of interrogation 'Do' in the last sentence in

Kripalini's version is more appropriately equivalent than 'How' in Chakravarty's version. However, both the versions appropriately retain the original kinship address 'Mashima'. In the next example I (i and ii), Chakravarty's use of simple English equivalent 'confused' in the first sentence may be preferred to 'dumbfounded' in Kripalini's version. Similarly in Yogamaya's statement, 'I'm told' in Chakravarty's version appears more appropriately equivalent to the Bangla word *Sunechi* than 'I understand' in Kripalini's version. The Bangla abstract noun *mashitwa* is translated by Kripalini' as 'aunthood' and by Chakravarty as 'aunt-like attitude', which could have been more simply described as 'auntliness'.

The last novel that comes under the present study is *Chokher Bali*, which has the maximum number of English versions. It has as many as five English versions. As already mentioned in chapter 1, *Chokher Bali* was the first novel that Tagore wanted to be translated into English. Surendranath Tagore, as suggested by the author, translated the novel which appeared serially in The Modern Review in 1914 under the title *Eye sore*. It may be considered as the first English version of a Tagore novel. But this version has never been appeared in book form. It was only in the year 1959, after about 18 years of Tagore's death and after 56 years of the novel's inception, *Chokher Bali* could see its English rebirth in book form. It was translated by Krishna Kripalini and published by Sahitya Akademi under the title *Binodini*. There after for about 44 years no other English version of *Chokher Bali* appeared. It was in 2003, the centenary year of the novel's birth in Bangla, two more English versions of *Chokher Bali* came out in the market. One was translated by Sreejata Guha and published by Penguin Books India under the title *A Grain of*

*Sand : Chokher Bali* and the other version was translated by Radha Chakravarty and published by Srishti Publishers & Distributors under the original title. Only in the next year we find the appearance of one more version of *Chokher Bali*. It was translated by Sukhendu Ray and published by Rupa & Co. in the year 2004, under the original title.

The present study takes into account all the above four versions of *Chokher Bali* which are available in book form. It excludes Surendranath Tagore's 1914 version of *Chokher Bali* as it has never been published in the form of book. Out of these four versions, only the 1959 version is the translation of a close associate of Tagore, Krishna Kripalini, who enjoyed the privilege of being personally in touch with the author. Other three versions being the product of twenty first century enjoyed the advantages of the liberation of Tagore publication from copyright restriction and the fruits of the highly developed global scenario of Translation Studies as an independent discipline. In the comparative study of all these versions, differences are noticed in various aspects like title, Para-textual segments, structural pattern, omission, addition, idiomatic compatibility and cultural negotiation.

The title of the novel *Chokher Bali* has undergone several changes in its journey of translation. Krishna Kripalini titled his version as *Binodini*, after the name of the central protagonist of the novel, round whom all the important actions and episodes evolve. He further justifies the title of his translated version in the last paragraph of his 'Translator's Foreword' :

> The translator's liberty in changing the title of the book may be excused if it is recalled that in the first synopsis of the story jotted down by the author in his note-book the title originally conceived and given by him was 'Binodini' (Kripalini, 2001 : vii).

Sreejata Guha titled her version as *A Grain of Sand : Chokher Bali* on a different logic, which she explains in her 'A Note on Title' :

> One of the metaphorical evocations is that of the grain of sand that lodges inside the shell of an oyster and helps in forming a pearl. In my reading of Tagore's *Chokher Bali*, Binodini performs the function of this grain of sand. She lodges herself within Mahendra and Asha's household, afflicts their romance and through tears and tribulations, helps their relationship mature into a pearl (Guha, 2003 : v).

Thus Guha widens the scope of the title of the novel by developing a new symbolic interpretation. However, Radha Chakravarty and Sukhendu Ray retained the original title in their translated versions.

In the treatment of Para-textual segments we also notice differences in different versions. In Kripalini's version we find only a 'Translator's Foreword' covering three pages preceding the text. We do not find any preface, introduction, acknowledgement or even glossary of *bhasha* words which could have been added to aid the understanding of the text to the readers of English version. Even the 'Author's Note' which preceded the original Bangla text is simply deleted in Kripalini's version, despite its enormous importance to the understanding of the

new trend in the history of Bangla novel. Instead, we find a new addition of one page identity explanation of 'Main characters in the Novel' before opening the text. In Radha Chakravarty's version we find a brief 'Acknowledgements' and an 'Introduction' by the translator. Here also we do not find any preface or glossary of words. Only few foot notes are given, though many words in the text require such explanation. Here also, we find the 'Author's Note' is deleted. In Sreejata Guha's version, Penguin Books gives a very useful introduction in the very first page of the book introducing the readers to the author, the translator and even the scholar whose critical introduction is added to the book. Other than retaining the original 'Author's Note', we also find 'A Note on the Title' and a detailed critical 'Introduction' by Swagato Ganguly in the pages preceding the text. But here also we do not find glossary of *bhasha* words. In Sukhendu Ray's version we find a short 'Translator's Note' in the beginning and a 'Glossary' of a few nuance words at the end of the book. Here again the 'Author's Note', that preceded the Bangla original text, is deleted.

The name of the translator is visible in each of the four versions, though there is a difference in the manner of displaying the identity of the translator. In Kripalini's version the translator's name is displayed only in the second initial page, which should have come in the front cover page. No space is provided in the entire book to give a brief profile of the translator. In Sreejata Guha's version also, the translator's name could not find place in the front cover page. But the importance of highlighting the visibility of translator is noticed in publishing a brief profile of the translator that appears on the very opening page of the book. In

the versions of Sukhendu Ray and Radha Chakravarty the translator's name gained its deserving-place as it appears on the very front cover page. The importance of the visibility of translator is further highlighted by displaying a brief profile of the translator in these volumes.

As far as the structural pattern of the four translated versions of *Chokher Bali* are concerned, we find major changes effected in Kripalini's version. The original Bangla text *Chokher Bali* has 55 chapters which are marked by chronological numerals. But in Kripalini's *Binodini* we find only 51 chapters in all. Chapter 1 of the Bangla original text figured as chapter 1 and 2 in Kripalini's version. Chapter 4 and 5 of the Bangla original are joined together and marked as chapter 5 in Kripalini's version. Initial five long paragraphs of chapter 10 of Bangla original appeared as the last part of chapter 9 in Kripalini's version. Last part of chapter 10 and entire chapter 11 of Bangla original figured as chapter 10, bare skeleton of chapter 19 and the whole chapter 20 of Bangla original appeared as chapter 18, and only the first part of chapter 53 appeared as chapter 51 in Kripalini's *Binodini*. All these seriously affect not only the formal design of the text and shatter the coherence of the original but cause disjunctions and discontinuities in its conceptual framework.

The most serious lapse occurred in this version is that of omission. For example, there is a gross omission of the text of the original chapter 18. Entire chapter is abridged to almost nothing. Bihari's concern for Asha, which kindles the desire of Binodini to take revenge against Asha, who has taken her deserving place in Mahendra's life; against Mahendra, who by turning down her own marriage

proposal, married Asha and paved the path of her lifelong sufferings – all these important minute details of the text are deleted. Chapters 54 and 55 and almost the last two third of chapter 53 are also omitted. By omitting these last chapters, Kripalini has deleted the final denouement of the novel, where each main character forgives and forgets the sins of others, and where Binodini giving her money to Bihari, for using them in his social work, goes to *Kashi* with Annapurna to live a pious widow life, purging off her all earthly desires. This deletion of the final ending of the novel might be treated as an attempt of the translator to fit the source text to the demand of the target readership. While translating the text into English, Kripalini was, perhaps, influenced by the author's suspect about the 'patience' of the English readers 'for scenes and sentiments which are foreign to them'.

In all other three versions of *Chokher Bali* we do not find any major structural change. The original order of chapters, paragraphs and local details are retained in these English rebirths of *Chokher Bali* in the new millennium. Only a minor point of difference may be noted here. In the original Bangla text, chapter divisions have been indicated by chronological numerals like 1, 2, 3 etc., which Sreejata Guha retained in her version, while in the versions of Radha Chakraborty and Sukhendu Ray, chapter divisions are indicated by chronological number in words like One, Two, Three etc. But in translating the Bangla idioms and nuance words into English all the four translators differ in their subjective approaches. A few examples may be taken here for illustration.

J. Different versions of a few lines from chapter 35 of Bangla original *Chokher Bali* (Pg. 276) :

(i) "Then may I spend the night here?"

"No. I don't trust myself that much."

Binodini suddenly dropped on the floor and clasping Bihari's feet with her arms pressed them hard to her breast.

"So you do confess to a little weakness, Tharkurpo," she murmured. "Please keep it. Don't freeze into perfection like a stone god. Be human and just a little bad by loving the bad" (trans. Kripalini, Krishna, 2001 (1959) : 158).

(ii) Binodini said quietly, 'Let me stay the night here then?" Behari replied, 'No ! Even I do not have so much faith in myself.'

Binodini slipped off the chair, dropped to the ground, held Behari's feet to her breast and said, 'Thakurpo, don't wipe out that tiny bit of weakness that you have ! Don't be purer than the driven snow. Love the vile and be a little vile yourself' (trans. Sreejata, Guha, 2003 : 176).

(iii) "Let me stay the night here, then."

"No, I don't trust myself thus far."

Hearing this, Binodini instantly left the chowki and flung herself to the ground. With all her might she clutched Bihari's feet to her bosom and pleaded, "please retain that little weakness, Thakurpo. Don't be as rigidly pure as a stone god. Loving an evil one, allow yourself to become a little evil (trans. Chakravarty, Radha, 2003 : 255-56).

(iv) 'Can you not put me up for the night here?' Binodini asked. 'I am afraid not,' Bihari said. 'I can not trust myself.'

Binodini rose from her seat and sat down at Bihari's feet. Grasping his knees with her arms, she pleaded, 'You do not have to be so hard-hearted. A little softness will do you a whole lot of good. Sin a little by loving a sinner' (trans. Ray, Sukhendu, 2007 (2004) : 189).

K. Different versions of the first paragraph of chapter 39 of Bangla original *Chokher Bali* (Pg. 284) :

(i) The scandalized village was in an uproar. The elders gathered in the temple courtyard and said, "This is intolerable. We might wink at what happened in Calcutta, but this shameless audacity – writing letter after letter to the fellow and dragging him right here – this is scandalous ... the limit. We can't harbour such a harlot in our midst" (trans. Kripalini, Krishna, 2001 (1959) : 172).

(ii) There was an uproar in the village. The elders sat around the temple courtyard and said, 'This cannot be tolerated. It's possible to ignore whatever happened in Kolkata. But she has the audacity to ply him with letters, bring him into her house here and be so brazen about it all ! We cannot allow such a fallen woman to stay in the village' (trans. Guha, Sreejata, 2003 : 190).

(iii) The matter created a stir in the neighbourhood. The village elders gathered at the chandimandap, the shrine meant for the

annual Durga Puja, "This cannot be tolerated !" they declared. "We could ignore what was happening in Kolkata, but the brazenness of writing letter after letter to Mahendra, to drag him here, right into our neighbourhood ! We cannot permit such a fallen woman to remain in the village" (trans. Chakravarty, Radha, 2003 : 279).

(iv) The entire village now rose in protest. The elderly brigade decided that the situation had gone out of control. They were not concerned about what happened in Calcutta, but how could she be so shameless as to write to Mahendra, asking him to come to the village ? How can they suffer the presence of a woman of such lose moral timbre in their midst ? (trans. Ray, Sukhendu, 2007 (2004) : 204).

In the above example J (i, ii, iii and iv) the first sentence ends with full stop in the original Bangla text. Only Sreejata Guha retains the original tone of this sentence and all the three others by putting question mark effected change in tone and made the permission sought more formal. Again the name of the speaker of this sentence Binodini is not mentioned in the versions of Kripalini and Radha Chakravarty, while the other two versions retained the name. The addressing word 'Thakurpo' is deleted in Sukhendu Ray's version while other three retained it. But Kripalini has made it 'Tharkurpo'. Sukhendu Ray's translation of the last sentence 'Sin a little by loving a sinner' appears more appropriately equivalent English expression of the Bangla original that that of other three versions. The expression 'stone god' has a rich connotative ethical significance. Both Kripalini and

Chakravarty retained the original idea of stone god, while Ray and Guha by deleting the image of 'stone god' resulted cultural loss in their versions. Guha further brought a connotative diversion by bringing an altogether different image 'Driven Snow' in the place of 'stone god'. More over, the comparison made between man and 'stone god' in the original develops an idea that human being can not be or should not be totally without desire like a 'stone god'. This is what Binodini here wants to say to Bihari. In the versions of Ray and Guha this very idea of the original expression is lost.

In the example K (i, ii, iii and iv) there is an image of meeting of the elderly people at *chandimandap*, which is retained appropriately in Radha Chakravarty's version. She has also explained the nuance term *chandimandap* as 'the shrine meant for the annual Durga Puja'. Sukhendu Ray simply deleted the term, perhaps, finding no proper English equivalent. The very image of meeting of the elders of the village is also lost in his version. Kripalini and Guha translated *chandimandap* as 'temple' and thus the cultural specificity of the term is lost. Some other points of difference may also be noticed. The original place name 'Kolkata' is translated by Kripalini and Ray as 'Calcutta' but Chakravarty and Guha retained the original. Moreover, the name Mahendra has been replaced by the pronoun 'him' in the translation of Sreejata Guha and Krishna Kripalini and thus the importance of the person Mahendra is ignored. The decision of Radha Chakravarty to retain the culture specific items like *chandimandap* is of considerable importance. 'Chandi' is another name of goddess Durga in Hindu mythology. The yearly festival of Durga Puja, usually performed in a *mandap* (a

temporary temple, made for performing the puja), is the most important religious and cultural ceremony among the Bengali Hindus. The connotative dimension of this ethically and culturally loaded word is restricted when it is translated as 'temple' as in Kripalini and Guha, and totally lost when deleted as in Sukhendu Ray's version.

It is interesting to note here that most of the translators of Tagore novels, except the only Englishman W.W. Pearson and the only Bangladeshi Bengali Muslim Kaiser Haq, came from the same cultural milieu as the source text. Yet, no two translators can be expected to share the same perception of the source texts or maintain the same balance between the source language and the receptor language, the source culture and the host cultures. The translator can only hope to act as facilitator in the enlarging creative space to encourage more cultural plurality and in the constitution of a contemporary multicultural milieu that would privilege versions and view points. Translation is basically about legitimizing a democratic world view. Tagore is an inheritance that everyone has the right to access, and translation is a way out. The different translated versions of five novels draw our attention to the omissions, deviations, inflections and emphases. But they serve a greater purpose of enlarging the source texts and gaining, what Andrew Benjamin calls, 'differential plurality' (1989), which finds expression in Edwin Gentzler's statement :

> Andrew Benjamin does very fairly present the possibilities of double readings, of *differance* in all its differing, delaying, and conflictual senses. Translation in a post-Derrida discussion, for Andrew Benjamin, ceases to be understood as any simple,

definable single activity, but rather as a plurality of activities with a plurality of significations (Gentzler, 1993 : 178).

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