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OF LOVE, LOSS AND LOVE LOST: THE (UNCOMPLETED) RECEPTION OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN SPAIN

ABSTRACT

The paper is a concise review of the reception of Rabindranath Tagore in Spain and the crucial role played by the Spanish writer Juan Ramón Jiménez and his wife Zenobia Camprubí in promoting the poetry of the “great Bard of Bengal,” not only in Spain but in the whole Spanish-speaking world, with their marvelous translations produced mostly between 1913 and 1922. The piece describes how biographical factors (the couple’s own love story), literary contexts (the search for a new lyrical voice in Spanish poetry after modernism) and the progressive intellectual and political milieu of the first decades of the twentieth century converged in the unique response Tagore received in Spain, though he never visited the country. It also analyses why the admiration for Tagore persisted for decades even after the changes brought by Franco’s regime.

Keywords: Rabindranath Tagore, Juan Ramón Jimenez, Zenobia Camprubí, translation studies, modern Spanish literature, cultural studies

Though Rabindranath Tagore made a remarkable impact on the Spanish intellectual and literary scene in the years after receiving the Nobel Prize and was admired even decades later, it is surprising to discover how little of that literary and quasi-spiritual passion for the “Great Bard of Bengal” remains among the young generation of Spaniards today. If one were to carry out a survey and mention the Indian poet to any senior Spanish citizen above 70 years of age during his or her early evening *café* or in the park at his or her morning *paseo*, there are good chances his or her eyes would go wide open in a sign of admiration on hearing the name *Tagore: Yes!, Tagore... O what good old times when people were still romantic; I received that book, The Gardener, from my first love on my nineteenth birthday!...* Or, if one came across an elderly priest, he would probably remark in melancholy: *Of course, I used to teach the Bengali poet at school and give lectures on Tagore in world literature class!* But on the contrary, when inquiring with graduate students at a University campus (even English literature students) about Rabindranath Tagore, one would in all likelihood encounter puzzled faces: most college students would have never heard of that exotic sounding name or would just vaguely be able to relate it to India, if anything. With one notable exception: students of contemporary Spanish literature might immediately connect the name to the unique Spanish writer Juan Ramón Jiménez and his wife Zenobia.

Tagore's lasting fame in Spain was largely due to the exquisite translations rendered into Spanish by Zenobia Camprubí Aymar, who, with the help of her husband, the acclaimed Juan Ramón Jiménez (late in life also Nobel Laureate), had set herself the task of disseminating Tagore's work in the Spanish-speaking world. Between the year 1915, when *La Luna Nueva* (*The Crescent Moon*) first introduced Tagore to Spanish speakers, and 1955, when *Obra Escogida*, a selection of previous translations came out a year before Zenobia passed away, around twenty-five books of translations of Tagore's work were produced by the remarkable Spanish couple. Until the 1930s the translations were published in Spain, and later, after the Spanish Civil War, some of the books came out in Argentina. In fact, twenty-two volumes correspond to the material translated between 1913 and 1922. Many of these publications, which included collections of poetry, drama, and fiction, carried praising forewords and even original poems by Juan Ramón. The books became quickly popular and were re-edited in Spain and Latin America in numerous reprints. Thus, Zenobia's translations of Tagore gradually became part of the established canon of world literature in Spain and Latin America.

There are several academic scholars who have studied the weight of Tagore's influence in the Spanish literary and intellectual scene and interpreted it from diverse perspectives. Among these are scholars of contemporary Spanish literature, literary critics and educationists such as Shyama Prasad Ganguly, José Paz Rodríguez, Agustín Coletes Blanco, Emilia Cortés Ibañez and others, who have written seminal essays on the presence and influence of the Bengali poet on noted Spanish writers, artists and thinkers of the twentieth century.¹ It is not my intention here to provide an analysis of the various

¹ See for instance the following publications: A. Coletes Blanco, 'Un apunte sobre la fortuna de Tagore en España,' *Archivum*, Vol. 46-49 (1998), pp. 147-179, and 'Más sobre Tagore en España: una traducción olvidada (inglés-español) de Martínez Sierra,' *Archivum*, Vol. 50-51 (2001), pp. 119-148,

literary and cultural contexts that played a role in the reception of Tagore in Spain, nor do I wish to offer an overview or chronology of the wide-ranging influences of his work as a writer and educationist in this part of Europe. Rather, I would like to raise some vital questions that affected the uncompleted and fragmentary reception of Tagore in Spain, and pinpoint some peculiarities that turned the linguistic, literary and cultural process of translating Tagore into the Spanish language (literally) into a *passionate affair*. For this critical and popular response to Tagore is framed in an inspiring episode in the literary history of Spain that grew out of a true love story: that of Zenobia and Juan Ramón, a young adorable couple that became intimate in the crucial years when Tagore was becoming a towering literary figure and icon of orientalism around the world. I shall first introduce here this simple story that has a composite background with multiples strands covering literary-aesthetic, political-ideological, and socio-religious features in the rugged landscape of twentieth-century Spanish culture.

Zenobia started translating poems by Tagore from English into Spanish in the year 1913, when news of the Nobel Prize distinction spread Rabindranath's fame, and the publications of some his works in English began to circulate all over Europe. In the summer of that crucial year, Zenobia began courting the poet Juan Ramón Jiménez and she soon shared with him a few poems from *The Crescent Moon* that she was slowly but earnestly bringing to life in the Spanish language. Zenobia was more fluent in English than her lover but lacked the heightened lyrical sensibility and poetic technique that an established poet of Juan Ramon's stature had in the language of Cervantes and Lope de Vega. He offered to help, and together they transformed her first translation drafts into polished poems that seemed to have been reborn in Spanish as naturally as a new love in spring. The lyrical idiom that Tagore brought from far-away shores flowed easily in Juan Ramon's rhythmic verse. And the sensibility that the Spanish poet was to breathe into the translations was a perfect blending of the Bengali scenery with his own uniquely Andalusian ethos and imagery. For it is said that only a poet can translate a poet, and if the poet in question is in love, then nothing can stop him from moulding beautiful

at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.17811/arc.50.2000.%25p>>; E. Cortés Ibañez, 'La Recepción de Tagore en la Prensa Española' in eadem (ed.), *Zenobia Camprubí y la Edad de Plata de la cultura española*, Sevilla 2010, pp. 264-287, also in S.P. Ganguly, I. Chakravarty (eds.), *Redescubriendo a Tagore. 150 aniversario del nacimiento del poeta indio*, Mumbai 2011, pp. 264-287; S.K. Das, S.P. Ganguly, *Saswata Mauchak: Rabindranath O Spain*, Kolkata 1987; S.P. Ganguly, 'Recordando a Tagore (en el cincuenta aniversario de su muerte)', *Culturas*, No. 311 (Galicia, 1991), pp. 4-5, and 'Dinámica Conflictual en la Recepción de Tagore en España' in *Actas del XII Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas, 21-26 de agosto de 1995, Birmingham*, Birmingham 1998, pp. 149-157, also in S.P. Ganguly, I. Chakravarty (eds.), *Redescubriendo a Tagore...*, pp. 328-341; F. Garfias, 'Rabindranath Tagore en Español' in *Recuerdos*, Barcelona 1961, pp. 9-10; G. Palau de Nemes, 'Tagore and Jiménez. Poetic Coincidences' in S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Rabindranath Tagore, 1861-1961. A Centenary Volume*, New Delhi 1961, pp. 187-197, and 'Of Tagore and Jiménez', *Books Abroad*, Vol. 35 (1961), pp. 319-323; J. Paz Rodríguez, 'La Recepción de Tagore en España, Portugal y América Latina' in *XVIII Antonio Binimelis Memorial Lecture*, New Delhi 2005, pp. 1-2, revised in Ganguly and Chakravarty, *Redescubriendo a Tagore...*, pp. 242-263; T. Saramía Roncero, 'Pulso íntimo de un epistolario. (Las cartas de Zenobia Camprubí a Rabindranath Tagore)', *La Torre*, Vol. 31, No. 121 (1983), pp. 134-156, and 'Zenobia Camprubí-Hispanic Link of Rabindranath Tagore', *Hispanic Horizon*, Vol. 4 (1986-87), pp. 8-24.

artifacts into living works of art. In fact, there were and still are certain scholars who think of these translations as poems by Juan Ramón in their own right. Or at least they point out that there are many lines in the translations that could well have been written by the Spanish poet even before his platonic encounter with the Indian genius through his beloved Zenobia.²

Thus, unwittingly, Tagore acted as Cupid in the young couple's relationship. Their love gained in intensity through their joined reading of Rabindranath's verse, which was pouring its soul not only into the lyrical language of the Spanish translations but also into an emotional – and almost spiritual – bond that lasted many years. The letters that the two young lovers exchanged during this period are imbued with references to Tagore and his poems. Zenobia and Juan Ramón fell in love through and with Tagore and what started as a juvenile poetic love triangle was to continue for years after their marriage in 1916. Zenobia reveals in a letter to Tagore in 1919 how he had been a “spiritual companion” and had entered all their “things.”³

Zenobia's deep fixation, almost obsession, with Rabindranath was however to receive an unexpected blow only a few years later: Tagore was to visit Spain in 1921 and had confirmed his arrival in a number of letters written from Europe. Juan Ramón and Zenobia had planned this visit meticulously and a detailed program had been decided upon by the couple well in advance with the help and support of their artist friends associated with the famous *Residencia de Estudiantes* (Students' Residence) of Madrid.⁴ The early 1920s coincided with one of the most creative periods in twentieth-century Spain which brought together some of the seminal cultural personalities that shaped its modern history. The list of invitees and artists that were to actively participate in the various events in Tagore's honour is impressive: it included José Ortega y Gasset, Antonio Machado, Federico García Lorca, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, among others. One can only speculate over the outcome of such an encounter between the Bengali genius and the crème de la crème of Spain's intellectual and artistic elite of the past century. For this visit never materialized. As is often the case in history, chance took a different turn and one of the most expected conjunctions of East and West on Spanish soil never took place as Tagore cancelled his trip. It was truly a lost opportunity, but no less true than the evident admiration that these artists and writers confessed for the Indian bard.

After all the excitement and the thorough preparations for the historical visit, Zenobia was deeply disappointed. She felt as if a lover had let her down by not honoring a long-awaited rendezvous. Indeed, Tagore had not been able to keep his promise, but this lack of physical contact perhaps only increased the idealization of the mystic bard. Although the passion with which the couple had so profusely engaged with Tagore

² See for instance G. Palau de Nemes, 'Of Tagore and Jimenez.'

³ See T. Sarramía Roncero, 'Pulso íntimo de un epistolario...'

⁴ This institution was linked to the *Institución de Libre Enseñanza* (The Institute of Free Learning) which had been modeled on a new educational and scientific approach inspired by the ideas of the Kantian German philosopher Friedrich Kraus.

faded away, and the translation work stopped abruptly, his larger-than-life poetic presence continued to reverberate through the brilliant translations. After 1921 Zenobia suspended her translation effort and did not keep up her letter exchanges with Tagore, but she and her husband had already been deeply marked by their poetic reverence for Rabindranath and the intimate spiritual union that had emerged out of this creative experience.

It is remarkable to observe how, after the still unexplained⁵ cancellation of Tagore's trip to Spain, the halo of the poet's absent presence continued to shine in Spain. He became a living poet-saint, not seen nor touched, but alive and familiar through Zenobia and Juan Ramón's poetic voice. Just as love and loss relate so intimately to the Tagorean universe, so too an intense yet uncompleted reception defined Spain's relationship with Tagore. One should not forget, however, that among Spain's intellectuals of the early twentieth century Tagore was not only appreciated as a poet. He was also held in high regard as a pioneering educationist by scholars such as Giner de los Ríos and Bartolomé Cossío.⁶ Likewise, Ortega y Gasset's philosophical interpretations of *The Post Office* and other works are fine examples of how Tagore had in those early years entered Spain's intellectual space.⁷

But why did the poet Juan Ramón Jiménez become so attracted to Rabindranath Tagore's poetic oeuvre? If we look at the literary contexts of Spanish-language poetry in the first decade of the twentieth century, we can discern that the influential Spanish-American modernism (a la Rubén Darío) had soon worn out its sharp blade with which it had cut through the turn of the century. Its forms and modes did not satisfy the hunger of those writers who aimed to express something other than the deep disillusion of humanity with the modern world. The years of rebellious poets disenchanted with bourgeois society had passed and no modernist melancholia could ever stop the lyrical and contemplative undercurrent that flowed inside the Spanish poets who did not wish to tread into Rubén Darío's footsteps. Jiménez and other poets discovered through Tagore that it was possible to find an idiom of intimacy and directness, echoing the eternal spirit, yet fresh and made for the senses. At the same time, there were those who defended the rationalist vein and revolted against the "excessive" sentimentalism brought by "the mystic from the orient," the "beatified nirvana," as the writer-critics Emilia Pardo Bazán and Eugenia D'Ors dismissed Tagore.⁸ With literary and ideological fervor these authors denied Tagore his place in the universal literary canon and criticized his followers, Jiménez in particular, for their uninhibited acceptance of such oriental influences. So it is undeniable that Tagore did not only have admirers in

⁵ There are several hypotheses that explain the cancellation of this visit. José Paz Rodríguez claims, for instance, that the British prevented Tagore from travelling to Spain. J. Paz Rodríguez, 'La Recepción de Tagore en España...', p. 253.

⁶ Tagore's ideas on education and the parallelism with the works of Spanish educationists has been amply dealt with by Paz Rodríguez. For a summary see *ibid.*, pp. 249-250.

⁷ J. Ortega y Gasset, 'Estafeta Romántica, un poeta indio,' *El Sol* (January-March 1918).

⁸ See S.P. Ganguly, I. Chakravarty (eds.), *Redescubriendo a Tagore...*, p. 333.

Spain but also harsh critics who blasted his lyricism and “vague” imagery, and attacked those who they thought imitated his “idealized” style.

On the other hand, Juan Ramón Jiménez was not the first, and certainly not the only Spanish writer who found interest in the Bard from the East. He and Zenobia surely had competition in the race to promote the Bengali poet. Personalities as diverse as Martínez Sierra, Pérez de Ayala⁹ and Vicente Risco¹⁰ had “discovered” Tagore earlier and had wanted to establish him as a literary and intellectual giant in Spain in their own terms. These writers published praising articles on the Bengali poet as well as some translations from the English language as early as 1913-1915. Yet the credit of introducing Tagore at a larger scale¹¹ to Spanish readers goes without doubt to Zenobia and Juan Ramón.¹² Their translations were selected by the Spanish Ministry during the Second Republic in the 1930s to be among the contemporary literature books to be widely distributed in schools and libraries around Spain through its Pedagogic Missions, and thus Tagore’s poetry reached even remote rural areas. The Pedagogic Missions were presided by the noted writer Antonio Machado, who had chosen a few of Tagore’s works due to the mark that the graceful verse translations had earlier left on him. Though many others contributed to the endorsement of the Bengali poet, it is thanks to Zenobia and Juan Ramón’s translations that Tagore became a household name in Spain.¹³ Their renderings were widely read even in the 1930s, and after the Spanish Civil War the stature of Tagore did not diminish despite the huge trauma and transformation that the terrible conflict had caused.

⁹ See A. Coletes Blanco, ‘Más sobre Tagore en España...’

¹⁰ See for instance Paz Rodríguez’s interesting account of Vicente Risco’s shifting attitude towards Tagore. Before Zenobia introduced Tagore to a wide readership in Spain, the Galician artist-writer Vicente Risco had already proclaimed Tagore in 1913 as a “star of the first order.” Risco’s own love-and-loss story with Tagore has not only literary and intellectual connotations, but also evident ideological and political angles. His dwindling passion for Tagore offers an ironic counterpoint to what Zenobia and Juan Ramón experienced. Risco was the first Spanish intellectual to deliver a lecture on Tagore in Spain, on the occasion of the Nobel Prize in 1913. Yet he was gradually drawn to fascism in the 1920s and his fascination for the bard faded at the same pace as his love for nationalist ideologies increased. Then something else occurred in 1930 that brought him close to Tagore and yet far from the “ideal star.” By chance he was in Berlin when Tagore was delivering a lecture at The Kaiser Friedrich Universität. On seeing the real-life Tagore Risco was deeply disappointed by his hieratic theatricality. He could not help expressing his disgust at the Indian’s robes and the paraphernalia surrounding him, and as the artist notes in a 1932 article, *thus in front of my eyes in Berlin, fades away the image of Rabindranath Tagore*. V. Risco, ‘Rabindranath Tagore,’ *Ourense*, N°s 104, XIV, 9, (1932), pp. 146-148, qtd. in J. Paz Rodríguez, ‘La Recepción de Tagore en España...,’ pp. 242-244. The translation from Spanish is mine.

¹¹ A survey conducted in 1927 by the Madrid daily *El Sol* places Tagore as the second most popular foreign writer after the French poet Anatole France. See A. Coletes Blanco, ‘Más sobre Tagore en España...,’ p. 119.

¹² Though only some of the publications bear also his name alongside that of Zenobia Camprubí Aymar, Juan Ramón Jiménez co-authored the translations.

¹³ It was through Zenobia’s translations that Tagore became popular also in Latin America, but many intellectuals there actually read Tagore first in English and even in the French translations. Victoria Ocampo for instance, who developed an intimate relationship with Tagore, read the *Gitanjali* in the French translation by André Gide.

Franco's regime did however upset the educational project of the progressives who had founded their educational model free from the influence of the state and the Catholic Church, and who had observed Tagore's venture at Santiniketan with keen interest. Much to the dismay of many Spanish intellectuals and artists, the *Institución de Libre Enseñanza* (Institute of Free Learning) that had gained so many celebrated followers in the first three decades of the twentieth century was dismantled. And yet in the highly divided intellectual milieu and torn civil society under Franco, Tagore was both revered by the left as well as respected by the right. How could this be so? The answer lies perhaps in the great Spanish mystics and their uninterrupted, undivided influence on Spanish writers, artists and society at large. Saint John of the Cross, Saint Teresa of Ávila and other Spanish mystic poets of the sixteenth century were kept alive by a curiously unbroken chain of overt and secret admirers right into the twentieth century. The poetry and prose of these mystics, while being revolutionary, utterly fresh and ageless, had miraculously made it past the Spanish Inquisition (not without pain and loss) into the canon of the conservative Catholic Church and its orthodox educational system.

With Tagore's poetry appearing on the scene, the Spanish students and professors during the early and mid-twentieth century (who had been reciting the same verses by a handful of mystics for so many years at the traditional catholic educational institutions) found new inspiration from other (Indian) mystic poetic traditions and sensibilities, and new texts to add to their repertoire. They heard a contemporary mystic voice from the East that sang to them in a new, exotic, yet at the same time vaguely familiar (Juan Ramonian as well as Christian) idiom that made it not only censor-proof, but it enamored both young and old, and provided the same message of hope and spiritual optimism that had made the earlier Spanish vintage mystics so popular. And so, quite astonishingly, Tagore was adopted into the textbooks of contemporary world literature and read at religious seminars, high schools and university colleges across Spain, even during Franco's regime. There he found new admirers as he brought fresh air into the religious, poetic, and pseudo-erotic sensibilities of the time, just as the Spanish mystics had kept their large following intact with their profound and soul-penetrating voices. Later in the 1970s when conservative Spain slowly opened up after Franco's death (1975) Tagore also became popular among the progressive Christian youth that saw in him an alternative to the stale traditional church songs. And it is so that numerous adaptations of Tagore's lyrics then shared the stage, or rather the altar, with transposed melodies borrowed from Bob Dylan, Cat Stevens and other not-so-Christian folk.

When a whole new liberalization, modernization, and secularization process set in after Franco in the 1980s, and democracy slowly made its stride, the scene changed utterly. Tagore was mostly deleted from the syllabus, in fact world literature was not taught in the same manner anymore, as the focus was now on the neglected Spanish and Latin American (leftist) writers who had previously been censored. His idiom became passé in the materialistic and agnostic society of modern Spain, which was rapidly progressing and modernizing as if trying to catch up with the rest of Europe

after the “lost” decades. Even the New Age era of the 1990s, which renewed popular interest in eco-conscious, oriental spiritual traditions, only saw a few re-editions of Tagore’s classics.

We must admit that the reception of Tagore in Spain, even at the peak of his fame and popularity, remains incomplete till date for a number of reasons which include historical, cultural, as well as literary and linguistic aspects (since Zenobia did not have access to his works in the Bengali language). Indeed, the extant body of translated works of Tagore available in the Spanish language has too many lacunae to be able to offer anything but a fragmentary, if not distorted, vision of his vast and multidisciplinary output. The corpus accessible in English until the early 1920s, when Zenobia suspended her translation work, was very limited. And as is the case of other European languages, we do not have in Spanish a complete picture of Tagore’s literary work because almost nothing of what he published in the last ten years of his life, which coincided with a period of reinvention and change in his poetry, transpired into the Spanish speaking world as it was not even rendered into English.

Not only do we need to consider that the body of translations was and continues to be very limited. There are also the filters the poetic language had to pass through (from Bengali to English and then to the Spanish of Zenobia with Juan Ramon’s revisions). The first thing that is striking is that there were no direct translations from Bengali to Spanish. Tagore was read predominantly through the English versions and then through Zenobia and Jimenez’s voices. How much then of Tagore’s originals (if we consider only his Bengali texts to be originals) was lost in translation and how much was re-gained in Juan Ramon’s revisions and highly sincere verse? Could the couple’s efforts have been more accurate or effective had they been able to contrast the English translation with the Bengali originals as they had wished?

I for one think that the Spanish-speaking world needs to thank Zenobia and Juan Ramón, first for having fallen in love, and then for having poured their passion into such exquisite and delicate poetry. The Spanish-speaking readers are very fortunate to have Tagore available in such evocative imagery and craftsmanship. It is a historical fact that Tagore did not come to Spain and that he left many disappointed, but he did reach Spain’s poetic shores perhaps more vigorously than those of many other nations and languages he had direct contact with. That is the main advantage we have: the lyrical. Had these translations by one of the most exceptional Spanish poets of the twentieth century not seen the light of day, I doubt whether the spirit of Tagore would have left such a lasting mark on Spain.

Though his influence was certainly lost in the bustle of post-modern Spain, there is still time left to re-discover a missing treasure and lost love. And to achieve this one needs an open heart and spirit; and inspiration from great writers, too. There remains the rhetorical question that Ortega y Gasset posed to Zenobia in an open letter dedicated to Tagore in the daily *El Sol* in 1918, and which could well be invoked to address the Spanish minds of today: *How can it be strange that in these verses we are surprised by the revelation of our own secrets?* The letter ends on an ironic note with the answer: *It is so that the lyrical discovery has for us a reminiscence of a thing that we knew and had for-*

*gotten. All great poets, madam, plagiarize us.*¹⁴ Let us plagiarize then the great Spanish poets of the early twentieth century who enriched their private and artistic life by “being plagiarized” by Tagore. Let us copy their admiration for the hope-inspiring poetry that came from the East, and read, translate and imitate Tagore time and again.

Today’s secular, agnostic, spiritually and emotionally depressed, economic crisis – and social network – driven Spanish youth, “the lost generation” as it has been baptized by the Spanish media to describe youth unemployment of almost 40 percent, should try to emulate their grandparents’ early morning stroll in the park and heed their timeless wisdom: *Hey, young lad, why don’t you take a lungful of fresh air, read a book or download a couple of Tagore poems onto your smartphone* (for everyone seems to own one despite their empty pockets). *You may not find a job after reading a few Tagore lines, but, for God’s – and poetry’s – sake, why not dream, cry, yearn, express your feelings, experience love in poetry, and feel alive!*

So let us listen now to the old sage, the young eternal voice: let us feel the passion and pain again, let’s fall in love, in the garden, in the forest, under the crescent moon!

*Who are you, reader, reading my poems an hundred years hence?
I cannot send you one single flower from this wealth of the spring,
one single streak of gold from yonder clouds.
Open your doors and look abroad.
From your blossoming garden gather fragrant memories
of the vanished flowers of an hundred years before.
In the joy of your heart may you feel the living joy that sang one spring morning,
sending its glad voice across an hundred years.*¹⁵

* * *

*¿Quién eres tú, lector, que dentro de cien años leerás mis versos?
No puedo enviarte ni una flor de esta guirnalda de primavera,
ni un solo rayo de oro de esa nube remota.
Abre tus puertas y mira a lo lejos.
En tu florido jardín recoge los perfumados recuerdos de las flores,
hoy marchitas, de hace cien años.
Y te deseo que sientas, en la alegría de tu corazón, la viva alegría que floreció
una mañana de primavera, cuya voz feliz canta a través de cien años.*¹⁶

Fin

EPILOGUE

Thanks to another love story, that of educationist José Paz, the reception of Tagore in Spain is renewing and expanding its scope, and the legacy of India’s most universal

¹⁴ *El Sol*, 27 January 1918. The translation from Spanish is mine.

¹⁵ R. Tagore, *The Gardener*, London 1913, p. 85.

¹⁶ Idem, *El Jardinero*, trans. by Z. Camprubí Aymar, Madrid 1917, p. 85.

cultural personality may soon be seen in new light in this country in the course of the twenty-first century. The admiration of Galician professor José Paz for Tagore began in 1966 when at the age of nineteen his then girlfriend gifted him a copy of *El Naufragio* (*The Wreck*). It sparked a quixotic fascination for the Bengali genius which has lasted till this day. Since then, Professor Paz has built up a vast Tagore collection comprising over 20.000 volumes of books, journals, music albums, CDs etc. in all the available languages, including Esperanto.

This collection was donated to Casa de la India, the Indian cultural centre in Valladolid, Spain, in the year 2012, and will form the core for a future Tagore Research and Study Centre that is being set up there. It will hopefully generate new interest in the multi-faceted genius of Tagore among the young generations of Spain, and allow researchers and students to access a vast amount of multidisciplinary material, especially in Spanish and Portuguese, that was hitherto unavailable in the Iberian Peninsula. At the same time the succession of commemorative events in Spain throughout the years 2011-2013 coinciding with Tagore's 150th birthday anniversary and the centenary of the Nobel Prize triggered a series of international conferences, exhibitions and events which have brought the poet into the limelight once again at Spanish universities as well as in the media thanks to the relentless efforts of a handful of unconditional Tagoreans.

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