The plays studied so far both under the pre-Independence and the post-Independence phases were those originally written in English. Among the plays translated into English, there are a few which were first written in the regional languages and subsequently translated into English by the authors themselves. Though, strictly speaking, these plays cannot be called fully Indo-Anglian, they can be studied under the topic in view of the fact that at least some of them are transcreations and not simply translations. It is, of course, difficult to keep track of all such authors' own translations; yet, there are some notable works of playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore, Girish Karnad, Mujeeb and others.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), who was essentially a Bengali poet, contributed impressively to many forms of literature. Deeply influenced by the Classical Sanskrit literature and also by his learning of the West, he created almost a renaissance in Bengali literature. First he wrote in his mother-tongue Bengali and then he himself rendered some of his works into English, while many were translated by different persons. It is learnt that the following plays and dramatic scenes were translated from his Bengali original into English by the author himself (Bengali titles are indicated within
1. Sanyasi, or the Ascetic (Prakritir Pratisoda)
2. Malini (Maliini)
3. Sacrifice (Visarjan)
4. The King and the Queen (Raja O Rani)
5. Kacha and Devyani (Vidyabhisap)
6. The Mother's Prayer (Gandharir Aveden)
7. Karpa and Kanti (Karpa-Kanti Samvad)
8. Ama and Vinayaka (Sati)
9. Somaka and Ritvika (Narakbas)
10. Chitra (Chitrangada)
11. Autumn Festival (Saradotsava)
12. The Waterfall (Muktadhara)

The following play is also found to be the author's translation:

13. Cycle of Spring

It may be noted that the more famous of Tagore's plays like The Post Office and The King of the Dark Chamber are not translations by Tagore himself but by others, hence they cannot be included in a consideration of Indo-Anglian drama.

A themewise classification would make these plays fall broadly into three groups:

a) Plays with religious and spiritual themes
b) Plays with epic and legendary themes
c) Plays with political themes.

Religious and Spiritual Themes

Sanyasi or the Ascetic (1923) is the English version of Tagore's original Bengali work, Prakritir Pratisodh (meaning, Nature's Revenge) which he wrote at Karwar and called a 'dramatic poem'. According to him, Nature's Revenge "may be looked upon as an introduction to the whole of my future literary work; or, rather this has been the subject on which all my writings have dwelt — the joy of attaining the Infinite within the finite".

For a long time, Sanyasi, the hero of the play, has been under an illusion that he can get deliverance by totally withdrawing from the world. In spite of his defense of the path chosen, the actuality of the world first disturbs him. Then the girl Vesanti appears on the scene attracting him to the real world of Nature; he runs away out of momentary panic. But he is soon convinced of the necessity of acceptance of the world to seek liberation from it. But now it is too late, as the girl is dead.

Tagore develops his plot to show that deliverance does not involve a total negation of life, but judicious acceptance of it and an honest attempt at inner purification. First, the Sanyasi, no doubt, reveals the unconscious inner urge in man to hate this world and flee from it.

3. Ibid., p.238.
This is clear from his soliloquy in the beginning —

"The division of days and nights is not for me, nor that of months and years. For me, the stream of time has stopped, on whose waves dazes the world, like straws and twigs .... I sit chanting the incantation of nothingness ... Now when I am free of fear and desires, when the mist has vanished, and my reason shines pure and bright, let me go out into the kingdom of lies, and sit upon its heart, untouched and unmoved."^4

He misleads himself thinking that he has taken shelter in the dark cave of the Infinite. The fact that he has come outside the cave and to this world indicates his unconscious craving for the light which he could not get in nothingness, in isolation from the world. Yet, he cannot easily come out of his new world and establish a proper link between the spiritual and the material.

Sitting by the roadside and watching the people, he thinks —

"How small is this earth and confined, watched and followed by the persistent horizons ... Why are these noisy men rushing on, and for what purpose? They seem always afraid of missing something, — the something that never comes to their hands".5

Next, though he hears the conversations of different kinds of people and finds his faith disturbed, he tries to defend himself —

"..... What sights of men have I seen! Can I ever again shrink back into the smallness of these creatures, and

5. Ibid., p.6.
become one of them? No, I am free. I have not this obstacle, this world round me. I live in a pure desolation". 

But, his defences are broken on Vasanti's arrival; and like Jaça Bharata of the Vishnupurāṇa, he finds his heart stirred as Nature takes revenge for total negligence. Here are the outbursts of his feelings —

".... No, no not those tears. I cannot bear them .... Weep not, child, come to me, You seem to me like a cry of a lost world, like the song of a wandering star..."

In the fourth (last) scene, the Sanyasi fully realises that, only in this finite world, one can realise the Infinite, the liberation of soul. In his words —

"Let my vows of Sanyasi go. I break my staff and my alms-bowl. This stately ship, this world, which is crossing the sea of time, -- let it take me up again, let me join once more the pilgrims..... I am free from the bodiless chain of the Nay. I am free among things, and forms and purpose. The finite is the true Infinite..."

Tagore asserts that deliverance can be achieved in the midst of bondage; and one can easily trace the direct influence of the Vaishnava philosophy on the playwright. Further, he tries to create symbols for some of his ideas; for example, the deliberate rejection of Vasanti the life-principle is indicated by the Sanyasi's uprooting of the creeper, and that of asceticism by his breaking of the bowl and staff. But, as S.K. Desai remarks, "the

6. Ibid., pp.15-16.
7. Ibid., p.32.
8. Ibid., p.45.
symbols are too superficially conceived and too deliberately contrived.\textsuperscript{9} Further, as the playwright's attention is mainly on the Sanyasi, he seems to neglect the portrayal of the other characters. According to Edward Thompson, the play is 'a sketch and not a finished composition'.\textsuperscript{10}

In his two-act play Malini (1923), Tagore deals with the conflict between an old ethic and a new one. Because of her leanings towards the Buddhism, Princess Malini becomes the target of attack by the Brahmins, who demand her banishment. Surprisingly enough, she herself appears before the unyielding Brahmins gathered before the palace. Her holy appearance attracts to her faith many who hail her as a Goddess and Mother. But, of the friends Kemankar and Supriya who stand apart, the former boldly attempts to bring foreign aid to fight the Buddhist heresy. Meanwhile, drawn to Malini, Supriya plays the traitor and gets Kemankar captured by the King. Malini seeks pardon for Kemankar; but unable to reconcile himself to the new situation, he kills Supria. The play ends with Malini's second appeal when the King is about to kill the murderer.


\textsuperscript{10} Edward Thompson, Rabindranath — Poet and Dramatist (O.U.P., 1926), p.51.
Tagore seems to emphasise the importance of the religion of love here. First he shows how the new ethic poses a challenge to the old one; and the heat of the conflict can be felt in the 'Brahmins' conversation:

First Brahmin: We must have audience with our King, to tell him that a snake has raised its poisonous hood from his own nest and is aiming at the heart of our sacred religion.

Supriya: Religion? I am stupid. I do not understand you. Tell me, sir, is it your religion that claims the banishment of an innocent girl? ¹¹

The conflict should naturally lead to the appearance of a savant, and the role is filled by Malini. As the playwright has in his mind the story of Buddha, his heroine follows almost the same path so far as the various phases of her life are concerned. It is true that she "was born in a king's house, never once looking out from my window". ¹² She "had heard that it was a sorrowing world ... but did not know where it felt its pain ..." ¹³; and, as the urge in her to redeem the world increases, it is but natural that she comes out of the material wealth and pleasure of the palace, and challenges the old order of which the strong-willed Kemankar is the main protagonist. His adventurous attempt to seek foreign aid in supressing the new faith and Supriya's betrayal of his friend, are well-conceived to develop the plot; and there are no unnecessary under-plots in the play.

¹¹ Tagore, Sacrifice and Other Plays, p.63.
¹² Ibid., p.71.
¹³ Loc. cit.
But there are sequences which puzzle the audience. How could the storm raised by the conservatives so suddenly come to an end just at the mere appearance of Malini before them? How could she become a Goddess to them all of a sudden and turn most of them to her faith? It is here that the playwright seems to be rather hasty in plot-construction. However, Malini's pleading for Kemankar's life twice is well-motivated. For, though she seems to be torn in conflict between the Buddha's teachings and her natural craving for friendship, the playwright tries to place her on a higher pedestal. As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar remarks, "Malini is indeed the new revelation, as in her own day and in her own way Joan the Maid was in France." But, however much we study the character of Malini, the impression persists that the playwright "has drawn the lines of her figure so tenuously that her thoughts and actions are seen as if moving through a mist of dreams; .... has left Malini a beautiful but faintly drawn outline."

The practice of sacrificing animals to the idol of Kali the Goddess of power and destruction forms the theme of Sacrifice (1923). Tagore dedicates it 'to those heroes who bravely stood for peace when human sacrifice was claimed for the Goddess of War'. As in some of his translations, this is a much shorter version of the Bengali original. Further, he is said to have played the chief role of Raghupati once.

15. Thompson, Rabindranath, p.139.
16. Tagore, Sacrifice and Other Plays, p.104.
All the incidents take place in the temple with Raghupati as the nucleus; and the change in his attitude indicates the revolution that comes over the people. In spite of the complex nature of the plot, the unities of time and place are observed. The playwright presents the beginning of the conflict at the right moment—when King Govinda is visibly moved at the sacrifice of a goat belonging to a beggar girl and forbids the cruel practice forthwith. This logically leads to a climax at Raghupati's preparation for sacrificing Druba the foster-child of the King with the aid of Nakshatra, and also his plot to kill the King. The lust for blood maddens many; and Jaisingh, who is no exception, agrees to finish off the King; but, unable to bear the mental strain and conflict, he kills himself. Also, how long can Raghupati, in spite of his vast learning of the scriptures and deep-rooted tradition, bear the stress and strain of his priestly megalomania? Hence, even the impregnable bastion of his strong will breaks; and as he realises the folly of the cruel practice of blood sacrifice, he has to throw away the stone idol, indicating the throwing away of his illusions. Though Raghupati first resembles Polydaon of Sri Aurobindo's *Perseus*, he is a different man altogether in the end as the commotion in his mind finally results in his deliverance from a long-perpetuated bondage. In this connection, Sen Gupta refutes Edward Thompson's charge that Raghupati's
change is sudden and unreasonable, for "the seeds of the change have been sown in the earliest part of the drama. Although Raghupati's one mission is to uphold the traditional religion, the priest has a personal life too ..." More than that, Raghupati's tense thought and action had reached the point of vaporisation, and any amount of energy conserved could not prevent the outburst of his human feelings and his mental revolution (when he sees Jaisingh dead) —

(Beatting his forehead on the temple floor) Give him, give him, give him! ... Give him back to me!

(Stands up addressing the image) Look how she stands there, the silly stone, — deal, dumb, blind, ... the whole sorrowing world weeping at her door, ... the noblest hearts wrecking themselves at her stony feet. Give me back my Jaisingh. Oh, it is all in vain. Our bitterest cries wander in emptiness, — the emptiness that we vainly try to fill with these stony images of delusion. Away with them! Away with these our impotent dreams, that harden into stones, burdening our world! (He throws away the image and comes out into the courtyard.)

_Sacrifice_ is thus a fine study of a character and its inner conflicts:

In spite of the difference in themes, Tagore's _The King and the Queen_ (1923) a drama of ideas which looks like a historical play on the surface may be studied as a companion to _Sacrifice_ because the King in the former

and the Queen in the latter are both shown to be afflicted with moral and spiritual blindness. Submerged in a sensual heaven, the King becomes the cause for an internal rebellion. The Queen Sumitra, asserting her responsibilities, tries to quell it with the aid of her brother Kumarsen, the ruler of Kashmir. The King feels highly insulted; and his lust for revenge followed by the desire of Kumarsen's uncle and aunt to seize the throne of Kashmir finally results in the ghastly tragedy of the death of both Sumitra and Kumarsen.

The Ibsenist influence on the play can be observed in Sumitra's refusal to be a mere doll and her walking out of her husband's house. Unable to reconcile herself to the King's humiliating terms of peace with the rebels, she takes to the adventurous path leading to her death. Another woman character Ila is a lovely figure in spite of her paling into insignificance in the end. But to highlight the women characters and show sympathy for their sufferings, should the playwright reduce the King, though highly self-centred and sensual, to the condition of a demented creature? Anyway, he achieves greater success in delineating women than men. Further, he aims at concentration in this play also by omitting a number of sub-plots in the Bengali original. Also, there is suspense in the play throughout; and even the scene of the Queen's leaving of the palace in her attempt to bring foreign aid, is very dramatic and indicates the
future tragedy:

Queen: I am going to leave you,

Vikram: Leave me?

Queen: Yes, I am going to fight the rebels.

Vikram: Woman, you mock me.

Queen: I take my farewell.

King: You dare not leave me.

Queen: I dare not stay by your side when I weaken you.

King: Go, proud woman. I will never ask you to turn back,—
but claim no help from me. (Queen goes). 19

Further development of the plot mainly hinges on this
dramatic decision of the Queen. The frustration which
the King hitherto suffers from, gives place to full
revenge when he actually learns that the Queen has
sought the help of the Kashmir King. In this state, it
is no wonder that the sensual king takes to the path
of war and destruction; and he finds the reflection of
his vengeful attitude in Revati —

Oh, the red flame of hell-fire. The greed and
hatred in women's heart. Did I catch a glimpse of my
own face in her face, I wonder? Are there lines like
those on my forehead, the burnt tracks made by a
hidden fire? Have my lips grown as thin and
curved at both ends as hers, like some murderer's
knife ..... 20

The tragic climax is reached when Kumarsen's severed
head is brought before the King, and the Queen kills
herself then and there. Even Ila's sequence is

19. Ibid., pp.212-213.
20. Ibid., pp.237-238.
rightly linked with the main plot as she is introduced in the end to complete the presentation of the King's character. As required by a tragedy, the playwright rightly shows that his hero the King does not realise his follies even after being warned by Devadatta's timely advice and his queen's departure; he also shows how even legitimate hopes and ambitions get frustrated in spite of the sacrifice made by wise people. Thus, as in some of his other plays, Tagore makes this play also a vehicle of ideas.

In *Ama and Vinayaka*, an orthodox Hindu Mother is merciless to her daughter Ama who has married a Muslim. Ama's husband is killed by her father and she is forced by her mother to commit *sati* at the funeral pyre of her previously appointed bridegroom, now dead in the fight. Tagore's intention here is to expose religious bigotry.

*Somaka and Ritvika* has a theme similar to that of *Sacrifice*. But the treatment of the theme of immolation here stresses the psychological rather than religious aspect of the problem. Ritvika, an insolent priest, demands and effects the sacrifice of King Somaka's infant son by way of atonement of a royal offence. The King who weakly acquiesces is purified by his suffering but prefers to suffer in hell with the bigoted priest until the latter expiates his sin fully. Here again religious obscurantism is condemned, though the stress is more on psychological portrayal.
Autumn Festival is a pastoral drama which expresses Tagore's joy of life, again emphasizing his idea that life in this world is meaningful and worth living.

Cycle of Spring makes the same point. In this play, the middle-aged King who fears the approach of old age is convinced by the Poet, who stages a symbolic play before him, that change being the law of life, the secret of happiness is joyous acceptance of the vicissitudes of human life.

Epic and Legendary Themes

Chitra (1928) is a playlet in nine scenes, the theme of which is drawn from The Mahabharata. The original epic story gives importance to God Shiva's boon to Prabhanjana (an ancestor of the Manipur Princess Chitrangada) that he and his successors shall be blessed with one child each; and hence her father Chitravahana agrees to give away his daughter to Arjuna only on the condition that the child born to them should be given to Manipur to perpetuate his race. But Tagore employs the theme so as to highlight the idea that the real feminine beauty in Chitra alone could win Arjuna, and not her borrowed beauty.

So, to create first the false self or illusion of Chitra, the playwright rightly shows Madana (Eros) the abiding Love granting her the temporary help of Vasant (Lycoris) —
Chitra: For a single day make me superbly beautiful, ..
Give me but one brief day of perfect beauty,
and I will answer for the days that follow.

Madana: Lady, I grant thy prayer.
Vasanta: Not for the short span of a day, but for one
whole year the charm of spring blossoms shall
nestle round thy limbs.21

Arjuna's infatuation is then introduced with his long
soliloquy22 where Bana's style of description is employed.
It is no wonder that Chitra's borrowed beauty so strongly
works on him that he is prepared even to break off his
heroic vow of celibacy; but this mean conduct suddenly
disgusts her. Next, in their married life, it is Arjuna's
turn who longs for the real Chitra. Thus, hopes and
disappointments alternate till the falling off of
Chitra's beauty-mask, "this borrowed beauty, this
falsehood that enwraps me",23 and the final longing for
'something that can last longer than pleasure, that
can endure even through suffering'.24 It is here that
Tagore introduces an idea reminiscent of the progress of
the love of Kalidasa's heroine Säkuntala — i.e. love
that is elevated from the plane of lust to that of the
spiritual; hence Chitra may be considered as Tagore's
version of Säkuntalam. However, in the process of
spiritual communion, the physical base cannot be
neglected as beauty and youth are part of human
experience. As K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar remarks,

22. Ibid., pp.11-12.
24. Ibid., p.39.
"Tagore rejected both negations — the ascetic’s denial of life as well as the sensualist’s denial of the spirit" and attempted at a beautiful blending of both life and spirit. But, as in some of his plays, the playwright stuffs the play with excessive thought and reduces the scope for action.

There are a few short dramatic scenes (and not full-fledged plays) like *Karna and Kunti* (1950) which are stated to have been translated by Tagore himself. In these, the playwright tries to draw our attention to a particular aspect of a character (or characters) or of a situation. For example, in *Karna and Kunti* he shows greater interest in exposing the inseparable bond between the mother and the child and the throbings of their hearts at the sight of each other, than on portraying the selfish Kunti of the epic, whose sole aim is to protect her sons of legitimate birth. Here is a meeting of the mother and her son in the war camp which gives them a chance for a communion of hearts even before the latter comes to know of his illegitimate birth. When Kunti introduces herself as 'the woman who first made you, acquainted you with that light you are worshipping', Karna exclaims:

'I do not understand; but your eyes melt my heart as the kiss of the morning sun mlets the snow on a mountain top, and your voice rouses a blind sadness within me of which the cause may well lie beyond...

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Here Kunti comes to Karna to take him 'to my breast thirsting for love'. But he cannot be tempted to covet the glory of greater parentage; and firmly rejects her request. Thus the playwright succeeds in his design of exalting the natural bond between the mother and the son without under-rating the latter's loyalty towards his foster-mother and the Kaurava Chief. Further the setting is symbolic as the silence and darkness combined with the tense atmosphere of the battlefield provide an apt background to the mystery hidden in Karna's life.

_Karja and Devyani_ is a dramatic dialogue like _Karna and Kunti_. Here Devyani, whose love has been spurned by young Kacca, curses him when he leaves her father's house where he has been living during his training.

Another such dialogue is _The Mother's Prayer_ which shows Gandhari the mother of the wicked Kaurava prince Duryodhana stealing her heart to press her weak husband to repudiate their son. Tagore has powerfully brought out the conflict in the mother's mind here.

27. Ibid., p.562.
Tagore's political convictions are revealed in *The Waterfall* (Mukta-Dhārā) (1952) where he condemns a technology divorced from religion and humanity. In order to keep the people of Shiv-Tarai under constant subjection, the King of Uttarakut plans to control their economic prosperity by building a dam across the mountain-spring Mukta-dhāra. Even the cries of the poor and the religious do not touch the hearts of the imperialistic King and his followers. Though it is a very difficult task, the King gets the dam constructed with the help of his Engineer's skill and arranges a festival in honour of the Machine (a mighty engine-tower constructed on a mountain-peak). Prince Abhijit makes an open protest in favour of the helpless people and, sacrificing his life, breaks the dam at a weak point.

Here is a conflict which modern technology has to encounter in case it tries to overpower humanitarian and religious ethics. The Machine erected over the peak consecrated to God Shiva with his Trident (Trisūl) symbolises the tyrant-technologist's challenge to religion, while the attempt to have full control over the irrigation of the lower terrain indicates his neglect of humanity. As one teaching the people to resist the tyranny of their king, Dhananjaya (whom we first see in *Atonement* or *Prayashitta*) reappears in the play. Further, the name Mukta-dhāra is also significant as it is Nature's
open gift to farmers; and the current of the spring imprisoned against Nature, should get liberated (mukta) again. Abhijit learns that he is not a real prince by birth, but a foundling picked up near its source; and it is equally natural that a son of the soil like him should fight against the heartlessness of man and sacrifice his life for the noble cause. As K.R.Kripalani remarks, "The social motive of the play, if it had any, seems to dissolve at the end on an undefined sense of mystic self-fulfilment..." In addition to the symbolism, the play has suspense and action coupled with songs meaningfully interspersed. Further, the playwright has not overburdened it with any sub-plot which might have checked the continuity of the theme; and incidentally maintains the unities of time and place. To call it a great symbolical play may seem to be somewhat of an overstatement; but the rich suggestion (dhvani) which the play conveys, cannot be underestimated.

In his letter to Andrews, Tagore is said to have remarked; "Critics and detectives are naturally suspicious. They scent allegories and bombs where there are no such abominations. It is difficult to convince them of our innocence." But it is very difficult to agree with the author; for, as already discussed, he gradually resorts to the use of symbolism and allegory in most of his plays though at times (as in his

The King of the Dark Chamber) the allegorical and the realistic appear to have been muddled on account of his over-elaborate working out of the details. As K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar observes, "Tagore could start the play, strike the opening chords, name the characters, — and memory and imagination would do the rest. Not the logic of careful plotting, but the music of ideas and symbols is the soul of this drama".  

Tagore, who unconsciously takes to poetic presentation of his ideas, does not seem to have bothered himself much regarding models and techniques and other aspects of drama (though he had a vast knowledge of the dramatic traditions of this country and of the west); in fact, he himself calls his first play Prakritir Pratisodh a 'dramatic poem'. It is clear that he has not been influenced by Elizabethan Drama like Sri Aurobindo; further, we do not find the use of our folk-stage techniques in these plays as we find at least a few in his Bengali plays like The King of the Dark Chamber: for example, the Jatra technique of the chorus commenting on the main action of the play; nor has he exploited the tradition of the Sanskrit Drama to the best advantage of his plays.

Without a perfect knowledge of Bengali, it is difficult to assess as to how far Tagore's translations are faithful to the original (though, of course, some

30. Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, p.123.
plays are adapted and abridged). Anyway we often come across the use of poetic prose which, at the same time does not sacrifice crispness. To illustrate, here is a tense situation where Raghupati and Nakshatra in Sacrifice talk of their plot to murder the King —

**Nakshatra:** Do we not hear the sound of a cry?

**Raghupati:** The sound of your own heart. Shake off your despondency, Prince. Let us drink wine duly consecrated. So long as the purpose remains in the mind, it looms large and fearful. In action it becomes small. The vapour is dark and diffused. It dissolves into water drops, that are small and sparkling. Prince, it is nothing. It takes only a moment, — not more than it does to snuff a candle. That life's light will die in a flash, like lightning in the stormy night of July, leaving its thunderbolt forever deep in the King's pride. But Prince, why are you so silent?

**Nakshatra:** I think we should not be rash. Leave this work till tomorrow night.

**Raghupati:** Tonight is as good as tomorrow night, perhaps better.

**Nakshatra:** Listen to the sound of footsteps.

**Raghupati:** I do not hear it.

**Nakshatra:** See there, — the light.

**Raghupati:** The King comes. I fear we have delayed too long.

31. Tagore, *Sacrifice and Other Plays*, pp.172-173,
In addition to Tagore, there are a few playwrights who have also produced English translations of their own works. Some of them are: R.S. Dalal's *Victory!* (1939), M. Mujeeb's *Ordeal 1857* (1958), C.C. Mehta's *Iron Road* (1970) and Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* (1972) and *Hayavadana* (1971 & 1975). While the first three playwrights directly deal with historical themes, Karnad attempts to interpret history and myth from an angle of the contemporary society.

As R.S. Dalal says in his Preface to the three-act play *Victory!*, it is his own translation of his original Gujarati play *Funaruddhar*. In the play, the author presents the 14th century episode of Hamirsinha, a descendant of Bapa Rawal who recaptured Chittore from the hands of Mahomed Tughlakh of Delhi.

With the help of the Sutrachera-Nati technique at the outset, the playwright draws our attention to the necessity of recalling the glorious history of our country. Then he highlights the hero's strong patriotic desire to make the prestigious State of Chittore free from Moslem rule again and the unholy marriage of a young widow Hansa brought about by the treachery of her father Maldeo, the Hindu General appointed by the Delhi Sultan. After her attempt to commit suicide is thwarted by the liberal-minded Hamir, she throws her heart and soul into

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her husband's risky task of recapturing Chittore. The sequence is logically followed by her patriotic-minded brother Vanavira's bold act of joining Hamir, their combined action to gather forces outside the fort and their final victory. The brahmin Brahmacatta provides comic relief, but he is also essential to the plot as he renders great help in risky jobs like helping Vanavira's escape from prison. The action is, however, prolonged after the climactic victory and hence the final episode is an excrescence.

According to the account given in the Foreword, Mujeeb's five-act play Ordeal 1857 is his own translation of his original play which had been published in Ajkal. It deals with some aspects of the political struggle of 1857 at Delhi (called the 'Sepoy Mutiny' by the Britishers and the 'First War of Independence' by the Indians). As the author says, here is an attempt to throw light upon some aspects of the struggle which have been generally ignored by historians. The characters and incidents in the play are not entirely fictitious; for example, there seems to be some evidence regarding the participation in the holocaust of women, the Kahars (professional palanquin-bearers) and the Boys' Brigade.

33. M. Mujeeb, Ordeal 1857 (Bombay, 1958), Foreword.
In the first act itself, the playwright introduces some revolutionaries like the Raja of Ballabhgarh, Seth Ram Sahay Mal, Munni and others who discuss in Mirza's court about their plans "in transforming this affair, which has begun with a mutiny of soldiers, into a War of Independence". The discussion is followed by different kinds of activities (in the remaining acts) like the soldiers' attack on Hakim Ahsanulla who is saved by the Kotwal of Delhi, General Bakht Khan's assumption of the leadership of the liberation forces, some soldiers' futile attempt to escape under disguise for want of food and arms, the extension of their fight outside Delhi with the help of Sidhari Singh and Yusuf. Thus, like Currimbhoy's Sonar Bangla, the play appears to be a collection of a few scenes, and as such, it is difficult to find one continuous organised plot. The most dramatic of all is the sequence in the last act where four soldiers of Bakht Khan in the British army uniforms raid the Seth's house to search for the two hiding women Salma and Rani Krishnan Kunwar. But these various scenes do not add up to an organic dramatic plot.

Iron Road, a three-act play by C.C.Mehta is from the recent history of the British period. According to the Author's Note, it is not an exact translation of his original Gujarati play AageGadi (which is double this size), but an adaptation. As the author further explains, it is a realistic picture of the horrible conditions of the Indians prevailing in the Railways.

34. Ibid., p.17.
during those days of the British regime. For example, according to him, the incident of the shooting down of the running torch-bearer happened practically before his eyes in Saurashtra in the early twenties; and even the women folk were made to work in both day and night shifts in loading an engine with coal. Further, being the son of a Railway employee, the author (right from his boyhood) had a first-hand knowledge of the Railway system including the discrimination made between the Indians and the British.

Mehta shows greater interest in presenting scenes depicting the miserable treatment given to the Indian workers in the Railways than in the development of the plot. However, he tries to weave the plot around Badhar, Naran, Ramcharab and some other workers. He gives a moving picture of these firemen, particularly when they are forced to do extra work for the sake of the Viceroy's special during odd hours, that too when they are sick; even the cow belonging to Badhar is killed by an English Officer for the offence of entering his garden; and the Indian customers booking their parcels are harassed. The untold suffering of the workers reaches a climax with the death of Badhar and Naran caused by torture. Regarding Badhar's death, Gulam Mahmad makes a right guess and, in this connection, gives a correct description of the workers' lot in the Railways:
"...The driver must have beaten him to death, and then thrown him off the engine. Ah, it's our bones that they burn in the engines, and our blood that makes the steam, with which the railway runs".  

Further, the playwright claims that "the platform scene, apparently not connected with the main plot, gives a happy relief and provides a picturesque scene from the vast variety of Indian life". But, it hampers the development of the main plot which already suffers from much looseness.

Girish Karnad is preoccupied with the retelling of Indian myth and history; and his three plays Yayati, Hayavadana and Tughlaq (originally written in Kannada) are significant in this respect. The last two, being his own translation, are taken here for the purpose of study.

While Karnad's Yayati retells the Indian myth on the theme of responsibility, Hayavadana is an interpretation of the myth attempting to solve the problem of man's identity in a world of complicated relationships. Devadatta, a man of intellect and Kapila, a man all body are close friends like Damon and Pythias. Devadatta's marriage with Padmini complicates their relationship because she is gradually drawn towards the youthful Kapila; and they kill each other. Though the Goddess Kali grants her a boon to save their life, she transposes their heads by mistake, resulting in further confusion and their peculiar behaviour. The play ends with their fatal fight and her committing suicide.

36. Ibid., p.105.
37. Ibid., Author's Note, p.11.
To the myth of Hayavadana found in Kathāsaritsāgara, Thomas Mann has given a further mock-heroic dimension in his version The Transposed Heads, from which Karnad has borrowed the theme. According to him, man should strive to achieve the unity of body and mind within the limits imposed by nature. The images of the river and the scarecrows in the choric songs fully describe Padmini's helpless situation. The playwright seems to present the death of all the three characters only to show the logic behind the absurdity of the situation, and not to strike a tragic note, though as Kirtinath Kurtkoti observes, "The sub-plot of Hayavadana, the horse-man, deepens the significance of the main theme of incompleteness by treating it on a different plane ... The animal body triumphs over what is considered the best in man, the uttamaṅga, the human head." 38 The playwright makes a dexterous use of some conventions of our folk stage like the Bhagavatā, his prayer to Lord Ganesha, masks, curtains, dolls and the story-within-a-story.

Tughlaq explores the paradox of Muhammad Tughlaq, the idealistic Sultan of Delhi whose reign is considered to be one of the most spectacular failures in Indian history. How it formed the theme of his play, is explained by Karnad himself:

"What struck me absolutely about Tughlaq's history was, that it was contemporary. The fact that here was the most idealistic, the most intelligent king ever to come on the throne of Delhi ... and one of the greatest failures also. And within a span of twenty years this tremendously capable man had gone to pieces. This seemed to be both due to his idealism as well as the short-comings within him, such as his impatience, his cruelty, his feeling that he had the only correct answer...".

In the play of thirteen scenes, the playwright presents the following sequences to throw light upon the complex personality of the Sultan: The affair of the two thieves Aziz and Azam; Tughlaq's attitude in levying heavy taxes on the poor farmers; his orders to change the capital from Delhi with all its people to Daulatabad; the futile conspiracy of the disgruntled Amir to kill the Sultan while at prayer; his cruel punishment to his step-mother for her crime of getting the Vizier Najib killed; Aziz's impersonation of the invitee-Caliph and its consequences; and finally the Sultan's death.

As these episodes follow each other on the stage, they make us focus our attention on Tughlaq, the dominating figure and a complex character like Caligula — idealistic, dreamy, intelligent, religious and at the same time cruel, 'an honest scoundrel (who) murders a man calmly and then actually enjoys the feeling of guilt'.

To help in unfolding his complex personality and peculiar nature, the playwright has created some minor characters like his cool-headed step-mother, the shrewd Vizier Najib,

40. Karnad, Tughlaq, p.28.
the straightforward Shihab-ud-din, the 'level-headed and honest' historian Barani and others. Murdering during prayer was what Tughlaq did in the case of his father; that the same weapon is tried on Tughlaq, shows the corruption of his life at its very source. There is a resonance between the Sultan's inner conflict and the external action. Both Tughlaq and his enemies who initially appear to be idealists, perpetrate its opposite in the pursuit of the ideal; and thus, as U.R. Anantha Murthy finds, "The whole play is structured on these opposites: the ideal and the real; the divine aspiration and the deft intrigue". The game of chess is symbolic; and the playwright skilfully handles cross-scenes and sub-plots like the story of Aziz and Azam running parallel to that of the Sultan. While the Annunciator reminds us of the Messenger of an Elizabethan play, the playwright brings the comic pair Akara and Makara of our folk-stage in the form of Azia and Azam. In addition, with its suspense and crisp dialogue, the play can be a success on the stage. In fact, it has been successfully staged many times in places like Bangalore; and the play-goers can never forget the impression made upon them and the impact of the dual personality, eerie nature and complex character of the Sultan. Thus it is rather difficult to agree with B.T. Desai who thinks, "When all is said and done, Tughlaq still leaves the reader unconvinced." It is an impressive achievement.

41. Ibid., p.17.
Models and Techniques

The study already made points out that Tagore evinces greater interest in poetic presentation of his ideas than in considering the theatrical aspect of his plays. Hence, in spite of his knowledge of the Indian dramatic tradition (and the Western also), he does not seem to have fully exploited their models and techniques.

It is Karnad who demonstrates how best the Indian stage-techniques could be employed. Dalal seems to be content with the use of the Sutradhara-Nati technique for his play Victory! where there is scope for introducing some folk-songs. While there is no attempt to use the Indian techniques in the plays like Mujeeb's Ordeal 1857 and Mehta's Iron Road, the Elizabethan five-act structure employed in the former serves no purpose as the play is intended to present a few scenes of freedom struggle.

Language

A perfect knowledge of the original languages of these plays is necessary to estimate the fidelity of the translations. Anyway, the discussion about Tagore's language shows that it is generally poetic and sometimes there is crisp prose-dialogue.

Among others, Dalal tries to employ a style in keeping with the classical model and history, (though his translation like 'It does my heart good to feel' appears
literal). The dialogue between his Sutradhara (Stage-Manager) and Nati (Manageress) in Victory! can serve as an illustration:

**Manageress:** My dear, you appear, besides yourself with joy. Tell me what has happened? Am I to think that in your moments of glee you could not have missed me.

**Stage-Manager:** All transports of joy are short-lived, my dear, without your comely presence, your aid and inspiration. It does my heart good to feel that you are with me here just now to listen as I recite the glorious deeds of Rana Hamirsinha...

**Manageress:** I am sure there are innumerable instances of such heroic achievements in India's age-long history.

**Stage-Manager:** There are, indeed. But most of the men who have recounted our country's story are not of our race or tradition; they were not nurtured in our soil and their blood does not warm as ours does to hear and to relate the brave deeds of our compatriots in the past...

While Mujeeb employs simple prose (like "in transforming this affairs, which has begun with a mutiny of soldiers into a war of independence"), Mehta tries to give an Indianness to his language by retaining certain original words such as Saheb, Bhaiyaji etc., and also

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47. *Ibid*, p.41.
employs usages embedded in our culture: "Your pious footsteps be turned towards the door". As regards Karnad, he does his best to retain the original spoken idiom in his translation. To illustrate, here is a conversation between the Bhagavata and Kapila:

**Bhagavata:** Who? Kapila?
**Kapila:** Yes.
**Bhagavata:** It's such a long time since we met.
**Kapila:** Yes.
**Bhagavata:** Where are you now?
**Kapila:** Here.
**Bhagavata:** Here? In this jungle? It's difficult to believe any man could live here.
**Kapila:** Beasts do. Why not men? 49

He also retains some original Sanskrit and other Indian words in preference to their English equivalents which would have failed to convey the intended sense; for example, 'Vakratunda-Mahakaya'. 50 'Dargah', 51 'Kalpa Vriksha', 52 'Allah', 53. He could have found better expressions for some words like 'skin of paddy' 54 and 'fistful of rice' 55. However as B.T. Desai remarks, "Karnad's translation is racy and reads well."

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48. Ibid., p.73.
49. Karnad, Hayavadana, p.53.
50. Ibid., p.1.
51. Ibid., p.9.
52. Ibid., p.40.
53. Karnad, Tughlaq, p.69.
54. Ibid., p.70.
55. Ibid., p.72.
To conclude, Tagore can ably dramatise ideas like the relation between Nature and the Spirit, the necessity and possibility of getting deliverance in bondage, the relation between the Individual Soul and the Cosmic Soul, the animal and human sacrifice taken to the extreme, the inseparable bondage between the mother and the child etc. But, as already shown (in the case of Chitra, Sanyasi and others), he makes his presentation mostly poetic and does not fully meet the demands of the stage in spite of his thought-provoking ideas. Further, he too has not tried much to benefit from the tradition of the Indian Classical Drama and the folk-stage in spite of his knowledge of the same. Nor (like Sri Aurobindo and Karnad) does he try to interpret an ancient myth from a contemporary angle of view. However, his non-symbolist plays like Sacrifice and The Waterfall with their suspense and action, may be staged with success.

Regarding other playwrights, it is rather difficult (with the help of just one or two works) to assess their contribution to the field. However, Mujeeb proves his ability to construct a few scenes; but, as already remarked, his play lacks an organic unity. Dalal achieves a greater success in his historical play Victory! The analysis made shows his ability to develop a plot for a full-fledged play though he lessens the effect by unnecessarily introducing a sub-plot in the end; and
also he demonstrates how the Nati-Sutradhara technique could effectively be used. The discussion about Mehta's *Iron Road* has shown how a playwright could artistically combine his imagination with the things actually seen by him and thereby give a realistic picture of a cross-section of society. While the contribution of these playwrights thus seems to be limited, Karnad shows a greater promise and, in a way, seems to surpass many in the field. For, as already shown, he can interpret a myth and history from a contemporary angle, compose convincing dialogue, employ various techniques of our folk-stage with advantage, and in a word, he has stage sense. Thus the translators or transcreators have had much to contribute to the development of Indo-Anglian Drama.