

Cognitive theories in self-transcreation studies: Conceptual equivalence in Tagore's Bengali and English poems

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Abstract

This paper explores the application of cognitive methodologies, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) in the analysis of cultural equivalence attained in the process of transcreation on the example of Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali and English poems. CMT tools allow for the re-creation of conceptual interrelations between the Bengali source text and the English target text, which reveals that the metaphorical context in the transcreated version is equivalent. CIT schemas complement cognitive analysis by reconstructing the thought process behind transcreation and revealing a consistent transcreation framework. Examples of the interdependence of CMT and CIT in the reconstruction of conceptual processes are the Bengali metaphorical blends *yājyā āsā*, 'going-coming' and *khelā melā*, 'game/play-fair/assemblage', integrated and transformed through the transcreation medium, the HIDE-AND-SEEK metaphorical blend, into conceptually equivalent context in the target text. The analysis reveals a process of conceptual integration in which the source context is expressed through a transcreation medium, a metaphorical tool recognizable in the target culture, to convey an aesthetically and semantically equivalent message in the target text. CMT and CIT allow for efficient examination of the transcreation process, with the prerequisite that conceptual contexts are approached intertextually.

Keywords: transcreation framework; conceptual; metaphors; blends.

1. Introduction: the concept of transcreation

Although the concept of transcreation existed long before formal research on translation began in the field of linguistics, it still remains open to defining and redefining its assumptions. At the basic level, transcreation is understood as a

creative type of translation in which the source text is transformed and expressed by means of expression different from the original, however, with the precondition that the source message and aesthetics are preserved in a way that evokes the original emotions and sentiments. Considering the fact that resolving the conflict between the cultural contexts of different languages is at the root of creative translation, further elaboration of the concept is required. Conceptual discrepancies between the source and target cultures constitute the core interest of the transcreation process, which primarily consists of the reinterpretation and re-creation of the source content and its cultural adaptation to the target audience.

There are many definitions of transcreation, depending on the different fields of translation activity. However, in recent research, Diaz-Millon and Olvera-Lobo offer probably the most concise and complete definition:

Transcreation is a type of translation characterized by the intra-/interlingual adaptation or re-interpretation of a message intended to suit a target audience, while conveying the same message, style, tone, images and emotions from the source language to the target language, paying special attention to the cultural characteristics of the target audience. This re-interpretation of the message may imply adaptations that move away from the original text to a greater or lesser extent to fit the original purpose, transmit the original message and overcome cultural barriers. For such reasons, it is present in persuasive and communicative contexts. (Diaz-Millon & Olvera-Lobo 2023: 358)

The term transcreation was coined and introduced by Purushottama Lāl in the preface to the English translation of *Śakuntalā* (Lal 1957: 5; Spinzi 2018: 4). The concept of transcreation is rooted in the Sanskrit tradition of translation poetry, which rejects rigid rules of mirroring the original text in another language and recognizes freedom of imagination and creativity. Any attempt to create a faithful rendition of the poetical text is refuted as impossible. Efforts to achieve what is now considered formal equivalence (Nida 2000: 136), in which a translator endeavours to remain as close as possible to the original in both structure and meaning, were negated centuries ago by the Sanskrit tradition, according to which poetry cannot be truly translated but can only be creatively recreated in another language (Spinzi 2018: 4).

Purushottama Lāl, the father of the term, dedicated his life to the transcreation of the greatest Indian works, such as the *Mahābhārata* and the *Upaniṣads*. His approach to translating poetry and literary texts was thus a

continuation of the Sanskrit tradition. Lāl redirected attention from the source text to the target text and the target audience in terms of culture, style, and time. However, it was not until the appearance of Haroldo de Campos and his transcreation theory on the international translation scene that transcreation began to be perceived as a revolutionary and approach to the translation process. His boundless commitment to the development of a theoretical approach to transcreation as a technique that breaks the formal boundaries of the source text on the basis of dynamic equivalence¹ has established his strong position in the open academic discussion on translation.

The synthesis of his transcreative thought consists in a metaphorical conceptualization of the transcreation process in terms of vivisection being a consequence of the patricidal act against the father-original and resulting in the cannibalistic re-incorporation of the disembarked structure of the original organism into the life cycle of a linguistically new body. (Borowski 2012: 104–105) Haroldo de Campos perceives transcreation as anthropophagy, which involves “transculturation, or, better, transvalorization (...) in which it is no longer possible to distinguish the assimilating organism from the assimilated material” (Guldin 2007: 113). This metaphorical representation of transcreation reflects the complex processes that determine the creative transference of the conceptual context of the source text to the coherent organism of the target text, in which the essence of the original message is blended with the target culture.

2. Rabindranath Tagore in the translation discourse

Rabindranath Tagore, a poet and translator of his own writings, belongs to the Sanskrit tradition that favoured the translation of poetry understood as the creative re-creation of original thought and aesthetics in another language over the relentless struggle to mirror the linguistic structure of the source text in the language of another culture, which was considered an impossible task. Frost believed that “[p]oetry is what is lost in translation. It is also what is lost in interpretation” (Utenmeyer 1964: 18). Tagore appears to ripost to Frost’s statement in his approach which proves that poetry is what must be retrieved imaginatively through creative translation. Rabindranath perceives the concept

¹The terms “dynamic equivalence” and “formal equivalence” were coined by Eugene Nida. As a result of further research, Nida replaced the term “dynamic equivalence” with the term “functional equivalence” as more accurate (Nida & Taber 1969).

of translation poetry as a process of reincarnation in which the soul-essence of the original poem transmigrates into a foreign form of another language and culture (Dasgupta 2012: 136–138). Poetry, which consists of subtle semantic substance, can only be reincarnated through the conceptual transmigration of the original content across cultural boundaries to a destination in a linguistically new form of expression in another language. The process is almost subconscious, as the core of the deepest conceptual stratum, which underlines the entirety of imagery and constitutes the metaphorical content, can only be grasped intuitively. The transcreation of this conceptual metaphorical essence can be compared to the journey of the soul from one body into another in a reincarnated form. In the process of transcreative transmigration, the translated text undergoes transformation, which results in the rebirth of the original into a new life. Tagore refers to this process, saying: “When poems are changed from one language into another, they acquire a new quality and a new spirit, the ideas get new birth and are reincarnated” (Tagore 1916; Ray 2007: 9).

Thus, the relationship between the target text and the source text is not a one-to-one relationship, where each word, phrase, or rhyme finds its mirror reflection in another language. This is a relationship based on a complex conceptual reformulation of the interrelations between particular semantic layers and the corresponding metaphorical images in reference to the cultural contexts of the target and source texts. The relationship between the source culture and the target audience conditions the entire transcreation process. The atmosphere of another language and its tradition become new colours of the original re-expressed in the target text. To achieve the same emotional effect and convey a comprehensibly equivalent message, both form and imagery must correspond to the aesthetics of the target language and the metaphorical realm of the target culture. Therefore, Tagore never makes an effort to remain faithful to the original in the literal sense. His concept of the reincarnation of a poem in a foreign language implies the formal death of the original and its conceptual rebirth in transcreation, which resonates similarly to Haroldo de Campos’s patricidal concept of the translation process.

Although Tagore was neither a linguist nor an academic scholar, he was a pioneer of open discussion on translation in India and voiced his opinion in an outstandingly professional manner, revealing an incredibly deep insight into the academic issue of the untranslatability of poetry and the role of culture and language in the entire process. As a Nobel Prize winner for creative self-translation of his Bengali poetry, he addressed the problem of untranslatability, referring to the essential goals he undertook in the process:

My English translations are not the same. Each country has its symbols of expression. So when I translate my work I find new images and presently new thoughts and finally, it is something almost entirely new. The fundamental idea is the same but the vision changes. A poem cannot be translated, it can only be relived in a different atmosphere. (Tagore 1916; Ray 2007: 8–9)

Tagore did not use any scientific terms and did not refer to any linguistic theory. His analysis was ahead of linguistic theories and translation studies known only in the second half of the twentieth century. The self-transcreation of his Bengali poems collected in *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings* was a unique achievement deemed a masterpiece, therefore, he must be recognized not only as a genius poet but also as a successful translator. However, as an author, he was in a privileged position that naturally allowed him to understand his own poetry better than anyone else. Yet, transcreating Bengali poetry into a foreign English language, belonging to a distant culture, was beyond any doubt a great challenge. Koller distinguishes between “true translation” and “self-translation”, also arguing that an author has more rights to introduce changes to the original in the course of translation than anyone else. (Montini 2010: 306–308) However, in the case of Tagore, we do not deal simply with freedom of choice in translation but with a conscious process of transferring the conceptual metaphorical context rooted in Indian culture to the distant, foreign soil of Western culture. Tagore consciously chooses not only images relevant to the Western world but also the most appropriate form to achieve high aesthetic values, which, in his opinion, is poetic prose for the English language. Thus, we deal not only with a talented poet but also with a talented translator who was intuitively aware of the challenges arising in the translation process.

3. CMT and CIT (CBT) in transcreation research: complementary roles, limitations, and goals

To understand the mechanisms that Tagore employed in the transcreation process, it is necessary to analyze the deep semantic structure of the source and target texts, beyond language limitations. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) provides cognitive tools for analyzing cultural differences between the source and target texts, as well as for understanding conceptual networks specific to the source and target cultures. Schematic analysis of the source and target domains reveals conceptual correspondencies between the texts.

CMT schemas are based on the mappings between the source domain, which is the basis for metaphorical expressions, and the target domain understood in terms of the source conceptual metaphor. Abstract concepts are conceptualized in more concrete terms based on the following cognitive mapping:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{mapping} \\ \text{source domain} \rightarrow \text{target domain} \end{array}$$

The fundamental assumption of CMT is based on the redefinition of metaphor so that it is understood as a conceptual phenomenon, not just a linguistic device, which makes the theory very relevant and effective in the analysis of the transcreation process. With a metaphor understood not linguistically but conceptually (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 231), it is possible to overcome the limitations of languages and reach the context of the source and target texts from a purely conceptual perspective in order to evaluate the level of equivalence achieved by the poet.

However, the very nature of poetry and its potential irrelevance to schema-based analysis must be considered. CMT reveals the conceptual structure of the text; however, behind the fundamental framework of metaphorical interrelations lies a unique semantic substance requiring further analysis, in which case Conceptual Integration Theory or Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) provides complementary tools. (Kövecses 2010: 274) CIT argues that the human thought process leads to the subconscious blending of various contexts, which results in amalgams. It offers a schematic model of cognitive processes organized as mental spaces, a generic space and a blended space, being the outcome of selective projection from input spaces and the result of dynamic elaboration accompanied by the development of additional meaning (Figure 1).

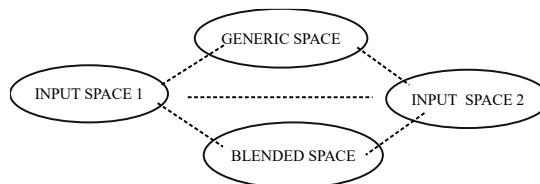


Figure 1. Conceptual blending framework.

A schematic representation of conceptual integration reveals the internal structure of mental processes that build a network of semantic interrelations. The analysis of conceptual blending is successful not only in reference to the source and target texts as interrelated units but also in reference to the transcreation process. Hence, the CIT methodology is applied not only separately within the structure of the source and target texts to understand their integral conceptual contexts, but also between them to intertextually examine cross-mappings. Thus, a cognitive analysis of exemplary conceptual metaphors and amalgams transcreated in the target text will be conducted to answer the most fundamental research questions concerning Rabindranath Tagore's self-transcreation of his Bengali poems into English:

- What are the complementary roles of CMT and CIT in the analysis of the transcreation process?
- What are the limitations of CMT and the preconditions of CIT for reliable evaluation of the source and target texts?
- Is there any coherent conceptual pattern that the poet followed in the transcreation process, resulting in a consistent transcreation framework?

4. Conceptual integration: metaphoric amalgams in transcreation, *khelā melā yāoyā āsāy* → HIDE-AND-SEEK

The process of transcreation applied by Rabindranath Tagore is revealed in the juxtaposition of metaphorical images against the background of philosophical and cultural concepts, in which the Bengali original is contrasted with its English version. For detailed research analysis, the extract of the poem *Āmi āmāy karba baro ei to tomār māyā* transcreated to 'That I should make much of myself and turn it on all sides', will be conceptually deconstructed with the schematic application of the CMT and CIT tools. Table 1 presents the juxtaposition of the Bengali extract with the equivalent English translation and transcreation into English by Tagore. The metaphoric amalgams are highlighted in bold.

The conceptual context of the above extract is shaped by the amalgamated metaphorical expressions *yāoyā āsā*, 'going-coming', and *khelā melā*, 'game/play-fair/assemblage', transcreated by means of the cross-cultural metaphor HIDE-AND-SEEK, which in the target text becomes conceptually integrated

with the source context. To understand the transcreation process, the conceptual context of the source text will be cognitively examined, then the HIDE-AND-SEEK metaphor will be analyzed as a transcreation medium purposed to convey the source meaning in the target text.

Table 1. A juxtaposition of the Bengali original, literal translation and English transcreation.

Bengali original	Literal translation
<i>Ākāś jure āj legeche tomār āmār melā.</i>	<i>Today across the sky has begun your and my fair/assemblage.</i>
<i>Dūre kāche chariye geche tomār āmār khelā.</i>	<i>Far and wide have spread your and my game/play.</i>
<i>Tomār āmār guñjarane bātās mātē kuñjabane, tomār āmār yāoyā-āsāy kāte sakal belā.</i> (Thākur 1914: 15)	<i>With your and my buzz the wind runs amuck in the grove, in your and my going-coming the whole time passes (Transl. mine)</i>

English transcreation

‘The great pageant of thee and me has overspread the sky. With the tune of thee and me all the air is vibrant, and all ages pass with the hiding and seeking of thee and me.’ (Tagore 2011: LXXI)

5. The source text

5.1. *Yāoyā āsā*, ‘going-coming’

The Bengali *yāoyā āsā*, ‘going-coming’, represents the reverse order of the expression *āsā yāoyā*, ‘coming-going’. Tagore inverts the usual order to reflect the Indian concept of the cycle of life creation and the human journey that underlies the conceptual context of the poem, both intratextually and intertextually, considering the entire collection of *Gitāñjali. Song Offerings*, the English version of his Bengali poems. The expression *yāoyā āsā* mirrors the direction from the inside to the outside, from the womb of creation, through birth, to life in the outward reality. At the moment of creation, man separates himself from the infinite body of his eternal parent to become a separate entity. With birth, he begins his *jīban yātrā*, ‘life’s journey’, the destination of which

is *satya*, ‘truth’, realized in reunion with his creator. The meaning of this journey is to comprehend unity in diversity. If he fails to achieve it, he will be reborn in the wheel of *samsāra* and will begin his life journey again. This is the intertextual context of the poem, based on the philosophical assumptions that underlie Tagore’s literary thought.

The metaphorical context of the *yāoyā āsā* amalgam is motivated by *viraha*, the Hindu concept of the separation of man from God, which implies the concept of *māyā*, ‘illusion’, since God leaves man only in human perception. The tension resulting from *viraha* is not a state, but a dynamic process occurring when man comes closer to his Creator and soon goes away from him, the context of which involves the repetitive character of experience. There are moments when man is close to *satya* and then God seems to be coming, and there are moments when man falls into *avidyā*, ‘ignorance’, and then God seems to be going away. These changes belong to the cause-and-effect cycle, and thus they constitute a cycle of human experience expressed in the metaphorical concept of a life journey. Hence, the course of going and coming in the conceptual network of a journey corresponds to the cycle of life experience where birth represents coming into the world as a consequence of separation from the parent, and death is a return to the primeval womb. Hence, going means leaving, going away from God in the act of creation, which separates man from his Creator, but simultaneously, going means coming into the world at the moment of birth. Coming, however, also means returning, coming back to the primeval parent at the end of a life journey, when man leaves, goes away from the world at the moment of death. Going-coming being the quintessence of the creation cycle, the life cycle, and thus, *samsāra*, is intertextually and intratextually conceptualized as a journey in *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*.

Moreover, in the English version, Tagore addresses the Creator with the following words: “This thy self-separation has taken body in me”, which means that there is also a concept of God going and coming. The Creator goes away, departs from himself when dividing himself in the act of creation, and at the same time, in his creation made of his body, he comes to the outer reality. This implies the metaphor: THE JOURNEY OF CREATION, which refers to the dissemination of God through his creation. This concept is rooted in the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*² and is intertextually present in *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*, in which God is often depicted as a wanderer on his journey of creation.³

²See the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.2.3.

³See Bengali *Gītāñjali* 20 and *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*. XXIII. See also Tuczyńska (2023: 9).

Thus, going contains the concept of going-coming, and coming contains the concept of coming-going. These interrelations are conceptually compressed into *yāoyā āsā*, which constitutes a blend integrating complex semantic networks based on the concepts of cyclic creation and life expressed in the conceptual metaphors: LIFE IS A JOURNEY and THE JOURNEY OF CREATION, and their culture-specific aspects LIFE IS A JOURNEY TO REUNION WITH GOD and CREATION IS A JOURNEY OF SEPARATION.

the LIFE IS A JOURNEY TO REUNION WITH GOD metaphor mapping:

source domain		target domain
domain of JOURNEY		domain of LIFE CYCLE
mapping		
traveller	→	man
coming	→	birth
going	→	death

the CREATION IS A JOURNEY OF SEPARATION metaphor mapping:

source domain		target domain
domain of JOURNEY		domain of CREATION
mapping		
traveller	→	creator
going (away)	→	extracting material from oneself
coming (in/within)	→	creation of another form from oneself

5.2. *Khelā melā*, ‘game/play-fair/assemblage’

The concept of *viraha*, separation from God, implied by *yāoyā āsā* is related to *māyā*, ‘illusion’, as the Creator is pantheistically ever-present in his creation. Tagore creates a conceptual context in which he metaphorically develops the philosophical concept of *māyā* into a semantic background for *yāoyā āsā*. The poet introduces a rhythmic, rhymed pattern of the words *khelā melā* ‘game/play-fair/assemblage’, metaphorically conceptualizing the image of God and man as two friends playing together. *Melā* in the Bengali language

means ‘fair’ but also ‘display’ and ‘assemblage’, which conveys the rich conceptual context of a place of gathering and, at the same time, a marketplace with a display of a variety of objects. It is thus an amalgam of ‘variety’ implied by the fair and ‘unity’ realized in the act of meeting. However, the metaphorical concept of a meeting among a variety of objects conveys an even more complex meaning of hiding and seeking among a multitude of forms. Diversity in this context means God’s creations, and therefore, an illusion, as God is everything, which creates a context of unity in variety.⁴ Thus, a fair corresponding to the world signifies the assemblage and display of God’s creations and forms.

The concept of a market-bazar in the English *Gītāñjali* requires a broader intertextual interpretative context, as Tagore employs it throughout the whole collection as a transcreation of different Bengali words. It acquires a special conceptual context of the material world expressed in the phrase *sansārer hāṭ*, ‘the market of this world’, in Poem LXXIX, and in the word *melā*, ‘fair’, in Poem XVII. An equivalent translation of different Bengali contexts reveals deeper conceptual layers implied by the poet. ‘Fair’ or ‘marketplace, bazar’ integrates the concept of the display of earthly life, which thus intertextually builds conceptual background for the *melā* transcreated as ‘pageant’ in the above analyzed Poem LXXI. Hence, the Bengali *melā*, in Tagore’s poetry, has an amalgamated meaning of the world understood as life in its variety, as a display of the earthly festival of life forms. This is an intertextual interpretation of the word *melā* that results from its conceptually consistent use throughout *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*.⁵

The Bengali word *khelā* means ‘game, play’, which, in the context of the word *melā*, metaphorically expressing ‘variety’, relates to the concept of *māyā*. The game does not represent reality, as the roles of game players are pretended. Consequently, Tagore builds *khelā melā*, a complex amalgam in which variety is combined with illusion. Furthermore, the *khelā melā* amalgam is blended with the *yāoyā āsā* amalgam related to the intertextual concept of *jīban yātrā*, to convey the illusion of the variety of creation, which refers to the concept of the life cycle understood as *samsāra*. Consequently, the life cycle is conceived in terms of the game cycle:

⁴ Unity in diversity refers to *Advaita Vedānta*, a Hindu philosophical school that recognizes Brahman as the ultimate reality, and the diversity of the world as *māyā*, ‘illusion’, and thus reality as non-dual.

⁵ See Bengali *Gītāñjali* 127/English *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*. VIII.

THE LIFE CYCLE IS A GAME metaphor mapping:

source domain	target domain
domain of GAME	domain of LIFE CYCLE
mapping	
player-seeker	→ man
player-hider	→ God
game	→ life
game cycle	→ life cycle
beginning of the game	→ beginning of life
course of the game	→ course of life
winning	→ success in life (finding God)
losing	→ failure (failing to find God)
repetition of the game	→ <i>samsāra</i> (death-rebirth)

Finally, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY is blended with the LIFE IS A GAME metaphor to create *khelā melā yāoyā āsāy*, ‘game/play- fair/assemblage in going-coming’. The LIFE IS A GAME metaphor in the context of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor conveys the concept of the illusion of variety in the cycle of life and creation (Figure 2).

6. The target text

6.1. HIDE-AND-SEEK

Tagore transforms the Bengali amalgams *yāoyā āsā* and *khelā melā* in the English transcreation into the hide-and-seek game that integrates the metaphorical context of the life cycle as a journey and the concept of variety as an illusory play of forms. Although the poet says ‘the hiding and seeking of thee and me’ there is a division of roles in this game, as it is God who hides and man who seeks and finds. This division is valid not only intratextually, within this particular poem but also intertextually, in other poems of *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*.⁶ The rules of the hide-and-seek game are as follows: ‘I let you go, you hide, and then I seek you. If I find you, I win. If not, I lose.’ It is a metaphorical representation of man’s relationship with God. Man, in *avidyā*, ‘ignorance’,

⁶ See: *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings* XIV.

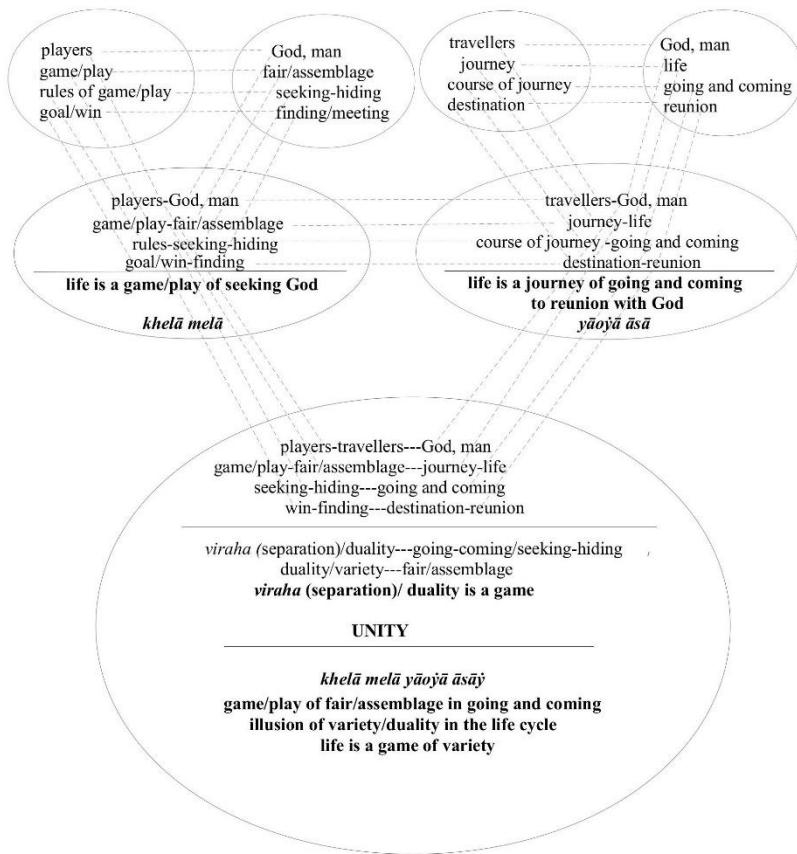


Figure 2. Source text: conceptual blending.

allows God to leave his life. Then, when the pangs of separation follow, he begins to seek him. The concept of God departing, going away, disappearing or hiding from man is related to *māyā*. These are human misdeeds that illusively cause God to disappear, as in fact God is always present, and it is only human misperception of reality that causes man to experience *viraha*.

Hiding and seeking implies not seeing and consequently attempting to find, which can be metaphorically interpreted as not knowing the truth represented by God and striving to find it. Consequently, the conceptual metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING is activated and transformed into KNOWING IS FINDING.

Moreover, the act of seeking God, metaphorically conceived in terms of a game, in which man endeavours to find the Creator hidden in boundless forms, corresponds to the life cycle and builds life's journey. The act of finding God and thus winning the game, is understood as reaching the goal of life's journey. As in the process of hiding and seeking, man experiences *viraha*, separation from his Creator, the journey of life inevitably involves longing that results from the feeling of love. The metaphorical concept of man's separation from his Creator is rooted in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, in which the concept of *viraha* is linked to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa is commonly depicted in the hide-and-seek game in the act of hiding away. Tagore primarily refers to the philosophical aspect of *viraha*, which results from the act of creation and the illusion of duality. However, he employs the hide-and-seek metaphor present in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, thus alluding to the concept of a loving relationship between man and God. Consequently, a complex conceptual context is implied in the transcreated text in which life conceived in terms of a game contains in its deepest semantic structure love as an act of creation in which God is manifested, the Creator ever-coming in the diversity of the world. Yet, man seeks God, perceiving reality as separate. The tension between man and God evolves through the experience of separation and the constant endeavour to overcome it. Tagore uses the concept of *viraha*⁷ in the Bengali original and in the English text in the context of creation as the force that motivates a journey of life to reunion with the first cause of existence.

Hence, the game of hide-and-seek corresponds to the life journey, the creation journey, and the cycle of life. The interrelations of particular conceptual metaphors and philosophical concepts, juxtaposed in a cognitive schematic diagram, reveal the multi-level processes of integration and mapping that determine the conceptual context of the target text (Figure 3).

The juxtaposition of metaphorical and philosophical concepts reveals how complex and multi-level the semantic network of interrelations is in the Bengali and English versions, a network whose intratextual interpretation depends on the intertextual conceptual context. However, in the target context, these interconnections lose their clear boundaries and become integrated into a semantic whole, the amalgamated conceptual context of the transcreated text, schematically depicted in the square space of connecting lines of the conceptual network.

⁷ *Viraha* is the Sanskrit version of the Bengali *biraha*.

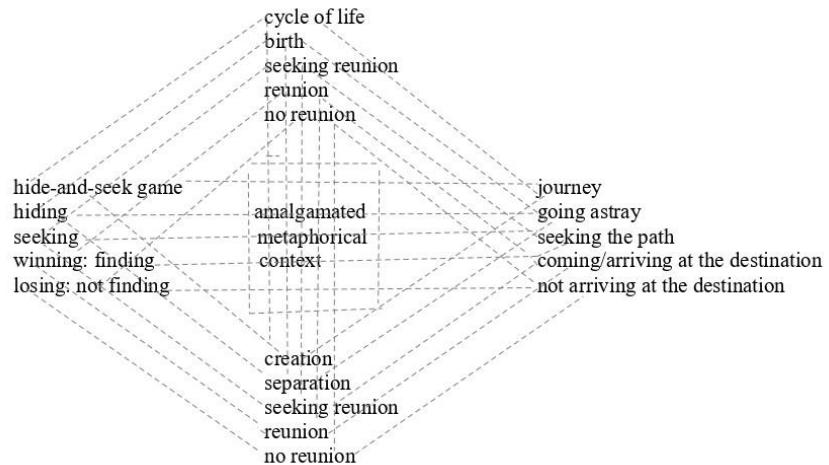


Figure 3. The conceptual networks of the amalgamated metaphorical context created in the transcreation process.

6.2. The transcreation process: conceptual integration

Cognitive analysis reveals that the transcreation process is conditioned by cross-cultural conceptual integration in Tagore's *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*. The conceptual context of the source text is decoded by the poet through an intuitive cognitive process and re-encoded in the target language. Tagore opens the living organism of the original poem, extracts the essence of its conceptual substance, and transfuses this metaphorical amalgamated content into the bloodstream of the organism of the transcreated poem.⁸ He uses the organic structure of the target culture as a base soil for the source conceptual substance. Then, the essence extracted from the source text is introduced into the organic system of the target text, thus forming a transcreated poetic structure that is a blend of the original conceptual content and the contextual potential of the target culture.

⁸The metaphoric conceptualization of the transcreation process as vivisection comes from Haroldo de Campos (Borowski 2012: 104–105).

Although Tagore compares this process to a dream and the workings of subconsciousness, his choices are not exclusively intuitive but also result from a deep understanding of the differences between the two cultures and from his imaginative talent for bridging the conceptual gap between the source and target languages in the transcreated text. Tagore chooses the cross-cultural metaphorical concept of hide-and-seek to convey the original meaning in the target text. This metaphor is a transcreation medium situated in the space-time context of the life cycle governed by the principle of *samsāra*, which is implied in the contextual background of passing ages when Tagore says: '(...) *all ages pass with the hiding and seeking of thee and me*' (Tagore 2011: LXXI). The interrelations constituting the conceptual networks within the source and target texts are bridged through the transcreation medium of a conceptual metaphor connecting two distant cultures. They are clearly revealed within the cognitive transcreation framework, which is presented by means of a simplified CIT schematic diagram extended by a transcreation network, which consists of the transcreation medium and its conceptual context (Figure 4).

The cognitive framework of transcreation displays the thought process of the poet, who intuitively extracts the *yāoyā āsā* amalgam with its philosophical and metaphorical complexity from the source text and expresses it through the rules of a metaphorical cyclical game of hide-and-seek. Additionally, the hide-and-seek game acquires the philosophical context of the *khelā melā* amalgam, conveying the illusion of variety in which God hides behind the diversity of forms in his creation. The poet introduces the concept of illusory duality in the act of creation in the preceding lines of the poem when he says: 'Thou settest a barrier in thine own being and then callest thy severed self in myriad notes. This thy self-separation has taken body in me.' Thus, hide-and-seek synthesizes the entire conceptual context of the target text, and at the same time conveys the semantic substance of the source text. The transcreative interrelations are compressed into a single amalgam, which is a masterpiece of creative translation. It is difficult to imagine a blend originally based on a conventional metaphorical concept situated in a complex intratextual and intertextual context that would be able to both metaphorically synthesize the content of the entire target version and convey the message of the original text rooted in the distant culture of a completely different language.

Thus, the *yāoyā āsā* and *khelā melā* amalgams are expressed through the hide-and-seek game in the target text. As a consequence, the following transcreation process can be distinguished: the transcreation medium, which is a Western culture-oriented metaphor or blend, is mapped to the culture-specific

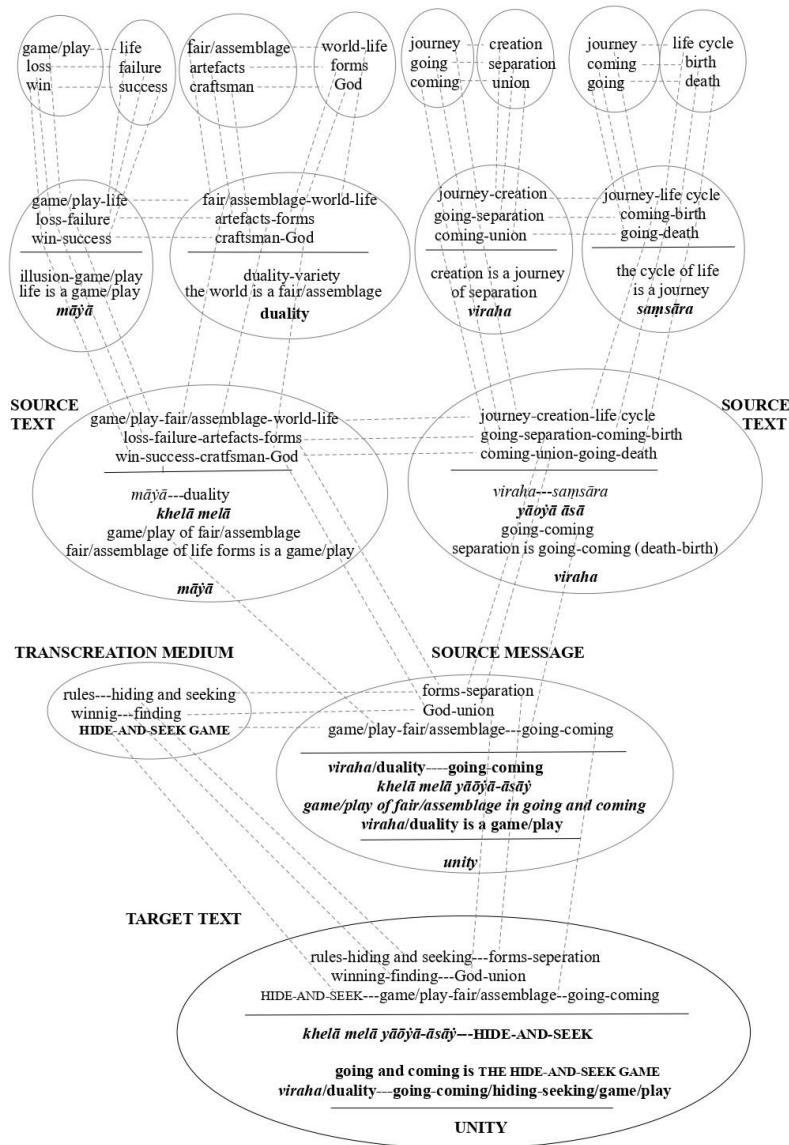


Figure 4. Transcreation process.

conceptual context of the source text; then, in a process of conceptual integration, the semantic essence of the source text and the transcreation medium are blended into the amalgamated context of the target text (Figure 5).

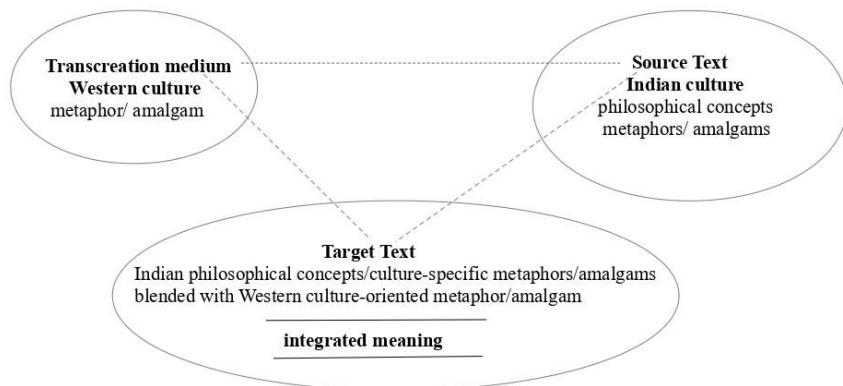


Figure 5. Transcreation framework.

This process is similar to what Riberio-Pires-Vieira (1994: 72) describes as 'nourishing from two sources, the source text and target literature'. Consequently, the target text is influenced by both the source text and the target culture. In some cases, the source text and target text may even influence each other bidirectionally. This process is possible in the case of simultaneous translation (Grutman & Trish 2014: 329). However, Tagore conducted the transcreation process consecutively, he did not create Bengali and English texts at the same time. The English version followed the Bengali original; therefore, English texts could not affect his Bengali poems. The whole process was directed towards the target text and the target audience, yet the phenomenon of interpenetration of two cultures in the translation process resonates similarly to the above analysis of Tagore's transcreation process. The reason behind this is perhaps the fact that in bridging different cultures and languages, the process of conceptual integration is not only indispensable but simply inevitable, and therefore CIT mappings and schemas are profoundly revealed in the above cognitive analysis.

7. Conclusion

The application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory allows for a thorough analysis of the semantic interrelations of the source and target texts, underlying the transcreation process depicted in the cognitive diagrams. The above analysis argues that Tagore blends the conceptual context of the Bengali original and the target culture to create an integrated conceptual context in the target text. He deconstructs the conceptual structure of the source text and reconstructs it in the target text through the conceptual integration of two cultural contexts. He employs a cross-cultural metaphor as a medium for the transcreation of a complex message. He refers to what is known to the Western audience to convey what is unknown and what is deeply rooted in Indian tradition. He bridges the conceptual gaps between both cultures to enable the meeting of the West and the East in his transcreated poetry. Conceptual Integration Theory not only reveals the deepest semantic substance of the source and target texts but also explores the complex conceptual processes underlying transcreation. The blending of metaphorical concepts and images between the source and target cultures reveals the poet's thought process in which the conceptual networks of both cultures were integrated into a coherent whole in the target text.

However, an important prerequisite for the successful application of CIT is the intertextual approach, which means that the whole collection of *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings* must be considered as a conceptual background for each analyzed poem or an individual metaphorical image. Without this precondition, CIT mappings and schemas can result in misleading and questionable conclusions.

Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 89) point out that conceptual integration happens subconsciously and imaginatively and is therefore hardly perceptible. In discussing the translation of poetry, Tagore addresses the intuitive, almost unconscious aspect of the process. The poet says: 'If there is any excellence in my translations it is unconscious, it is like correctly walking in dream in places which it is not safe to attempt when wakeful' (Dutta & Robinson 1995: 349; Dasgupta 2012: 269). Tagore was ahead of his time, as it is clear from the above analysis that he recognizes and employs in the transcreation process mental and conceptual frameworks that are relevant to the CMT and CIT methodologies, formulated long after the publication of *Gītāñjali. Song Offerings*. It is not important that both theories are chronologically much younger than Tagore's self-transcreation of his Bengali poems, as they essentially refer to

the most fundamental cognitive processes governing human thought and mind, and as such, they only waited for the right scholars to be recognized in academic research.

Thus, the poet followed these processes in his transcreation long before they were given names in the field of linguistics and were systematized into coherent theories. He used them intuitively, but he also addressed them indirectly in the discussion on the cultural translation of poetry, a translation beyond the language level, where metaphor is recognized as a conceptual phenomenon, not just a linguistic one, and culture is the foundation of the conceptual context of the text. The patterns and conceptual networks that he created in the transcreation of his Bengali poems reveal the full complexities of conceptual metaphors and blends. Tagore was ahead of modern linguistic theories, but also of translation theories intuitively implementing what had not been yet scientifically recognized by the academic world and receiving the Nobel Prize for his achievement.

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