

20 October '58

253 Uxbridge Road,
London W.12,
England

Dear Professor Ferrater Mora:

I venture to trouble you with this letter in connection with a book I am writing in Bengali on Rabindranath Tagore - a socio-literary study of his reputation and influence in the West - due to be published in India next year. I shall be grateful for a reply.

You will no doubt remember the enthusiasm produced by Tagore's "Gitanjali" on its first appearance in English (and later in French in Andre Gide's translation "L'Offrande lyrique", in Spanish in Zenobia Camprubi's rendering, and in other European languages) many years ago. Lovers of poetry in the West - among them Yeats, AE, Gilbert Murray, Rilke, Hauptmann, Gide, Rolland, Francis Jammes, Juan Ramon Jimenez etc. - welcomed it with great excitement; the expanding sentiment of these poems, they thought, achieved a rhythm - even through the alien medium of English prose - which in its ~~strength~~ strength and melody recalled to many of them familiar passages in the Psalms or Solomon's Song. W.B. Yeats, from about 1912 through 1915, felt his blood stirred, as he said, by Tagore; Ezra Pound, you will also remember, considered the appearance of these poems, "a great event in the history of English poetry and of world poetry." The Tagore adoration that followed the success of "Gitanjali" and his other works (poetry, drama and prose - including his philosophical essays), and the reaction all adoration entails, however, have gradually passed away; and the admirers of Tagore are now sadly conscious of his decline in the West. Edward Thompson, his English biographer, has this to say: "He has the misfortune to come up for judgement by the age of T.S. Eliot. He won't get justice now - nothing could get him justice."

I am writing a chapter on "Tagore in the Western World Now", and it is in this connection that I should like to see him reassessed by writers and poetry-lovers of the West. I have already had correspondence with some on the present status of Tagore. Bertrand Russell, in a letter to me, frankly admits that Tagore's writings were "too mystical" for his taste. Arnold Toynbee, on the other hand, believes that "while literary fashions come and go, his work will have a lasting influence." E.M. Forster, who seems to hold the balance between Tagore's champions and detractors, answers me by saying that "his poetry is not communicable to the West in a translation, even when the translation is made by Tagore himself."

I shall be most grateful if you will kindly let me know what you feel about Tagore - and what you think of his popularity and influence in the Spanish-speaking world -- or your general impression -- which will greatly help me to ascertain his standing in the Spanish and Spanish-American literary world. I shall be glad to have any relevant information, (especially about his influence), suggestions,

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anecdotes or recollections which may be useful for my survey.

I should be especially grateful if you could send me a note on Ortega y Gasset's El Sol article on Tagore (which, I gather, has been reprinted in Ortega's Obras completas vol. III), with your personal comments, *on it*.

With cordial regards,
Yours very sincerely,

N Chatterji

(N. CHATTERJI)

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BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AÉROGRAMME

Please forward



Professor José Ferrater Mora,

Bryn Mawr College,

Bryn Mawr,

Pennsylvania,

U.S.A.



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Sender's name and address: N. Chatterji

253 Uxbridge Road

London W.12, England

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