

***AN EVALUATION OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF  
SELECTED TAMIL POETRY OF  
POST INDEPENDENCE ERA IN INDIA***

**Dr. N. MANGAIARKARASI**

**Editors**

**Dr. Kalyani Anbuchelvan**

**Dr. Sheba George**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Chapter I

Translation: An Introduction

Chapter II

History of the theory of translation

Chapter III

An Evaluation of English Translation of Selected  
Tamil Poetry of Post Independence Era

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Bibliography

## PREFACE

Speaking of translations, one cannot but remember the works of Homer and Virgil, the translations of which have greatly contributed to changes in western thought and civilization. Can any learned being that knows anything about life on earth forget the influence that the King James translation of the Bible had and has on human thought and progress? Such is the power of good, eminent translation. The works of Rabindranath Tagore written in Bengali, but carefully translated into English, have conveyed to the western world the power of an uncorrupted eastern mind.

The minds of great men of a particular language, minds of great men that shape human life have been made available to all who can read and hear in all parts of the world because of the art of translation. Even the heart of God is made threadbare to the hearts of mortal men because some undertook to translate words that were spoken or written in unknown tongues.

Fine translations have conveyed the heart and mind of the author without changing his meaning, intention, idea and purpose. So, according to Webster, the term “translate” means “to express in another language, while systematically retaining the original sense.” Here, one must note that translations that do not retain “the original sense” of the author do more damage than good to human life and thought as they are misrepresentations of a work of art or idea. Apart from being unfair to the authors who are misrepresented, wrong translations are also unfair to people who trust the translators and read their translations.

TRANSLATION studies which are relevant, actively research oriented, burgeoning field of study, today has come to be seen as a discipline in its own right from the late twentieth century. Eminent theorists of translatology Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere rightly note “Translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture, and no study of comparative literature can take place without regard to translation” (THC 12). In the words of Pierre Translation studies have gained recognition as a discipline in its own right. (IX)

Tamil is a language with a continuous literary tradition from ancient times to the present. The sangam anthologies constitute a highly unified literary corpus, defined not only by its chronological placement in Tamil literary history, but also by a shared repertoire of situations, settings, characters, and poetic figures. (Richman 248)

One of the oldest regional literatures from the Indian subcontinent, Tamil literature is known for the beauty of its classical love poetry and heroic poetry, the variety of its religious texts, and the existence of a sophisticated and self-critical commentarial traditional (Richman 246).

Within the field of literary translation, more time has been devoted to investigating the problems of translating poetry than any other literary mode. According to the views of Dr. Thirumalai, a selected list of translation of source language poems and their translation was prepared to form the basis for the assessment. A representative sample of authors and their poems have been chosen.

In the present era translation studies are emerging as important fields of study and research. People have begun to take interest in various literatures, other than their own. This interest towards literature of other regions has led to translation of regional vernacular into a universal language like English. People without the knowledge of the Tamil vernacular but evincing keen interest in its literature are helped to gain knowledge through translation.

It is an enviable fact that Tamil poetry has established tradition with a record of immense achievements that stand comparison with that of any developed world language. Lyrics, epics, devotional songs and didactic poetry of the highest order have been created in Tamil literature. The acquaintance with modern Western poets, the inadequacy of traditional forms-cum-diction to express the complex experiences of modern man and the inherent thirst of the poets for new forms are the primary causes for the growth of modern Tamil poetry.

The literary treasure hidden in Tamil literature is brought into limelight and the focus of world's attention through English translation. This book is an attempt in arriving at an evaluation of English Translation of the poetry of poets who belong to post - independent India. Their poetry is noteworthy for its profundity, universality and social relevance which can revolutionize the mindset of the modern age.

The evaluation of the translated works will also become a study of the approaches, nature, strategies, techniques, and parameters of translation. This will prove to be beneficial for future translators. The many reflections on the translated works will not fail to highlight the problems of translation. "An evaluation of English Translation of Selected Tamil Poetry of Post Independence Era in India" will ultimately prove to be a broad spectrum of theoretical, textual and contextual specifics in the field of translation.

## CHAPTER - I TRANSLATION: AN INTRODUCTION

The concept of translation varies from age to age and country to country. The theory of translation has developed differently in the East and the West. To give an exact meaning of 'translation' is not an easy task. 'Translation' like poetry has become elusive. It is both a substitution and a transference of meaning from one language to another.

Translation according to Dr. Johnson involves the process of "change into another language, retaining the sense. Theodore Savory defines translation as an 'art and Eric Jacobsen defines it as a 'craft, while Eugene Nida describes it as a 'science' borrowing this concept from the German. Horst Frenz goes a step ahead to accept translation as an 'art' but with qualifications, stating that, "translation is neither a creative art nor an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two. Though translation has been described differently as an art, a craft and a science, none of these is adequate.

Catford has defined translation as follows: "Translation may be defined as follows: the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language." (20) He further states that "Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language – a general linguistic theory." The concept of translation has undergone a sea change over the years. The theories of translation developed from purely linguistic approach of the sixties to textual focus of the seventies, have now yielded place to the culture-based theory.

As G.E. Wellworth rightly suggested that in a literary translation, what is required is the re-creation of a situation of cohesive semantic block in the new language in terms of the cultural setting of that language.

As Susan Bassnett-McGuire rightly observes that "Translation involves more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages and as can be seen in the translation of idioms and metaphors, the process may involve discarding the basic linguistic elements of the SL text so as to achieve Popovic's goal of 'expressive identity' between the SL and TL texts. But once the translator moves away from close linguistic equivalence, the problems of determining the exact nature of the level of equivalence aimed for, begin to emerge.

Ages ago Cicero summed up the translator's dilemma in the following words, "If I render word for word, the result will sound uncouth and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording. I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator."

A.H. Smith maintains that “to translate is to change into another language retaining as much of the sense as one can. Catford defines translation from the linguistic point of view. He adds emphatically. The central problem of translation – practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. Peter Newmark opines that each act of translation involves some loss of the original meaning and this “basic loss of meaning is on a continuum between over translation and under – translation.

Translation is more than all these art, craft and science. It is a process of analysis, interpretation and creation which leads to a replacement of one set of linguistic resources and values for another. In the process part of the original meaning is lost but an easily identifiable core is kept. It is an act of adjustment and a compromising exercise.

In the words of J.P. Postgate, “Translation in literature is the art of rendering the writing of one language into another language.” “The art of translation lies not merely in translating the literal sense of one language into another but of translating also the feeling, thought and character of the work, so that the finished translation is equal in quality to the original.” (Ray 12)

“Translation in the first place, is a transference of meaning from the Source Language to the Target Language... But what matters is not a translation of words from SL to TL, for exact equivalence of words of the former is hard to get in the latter... Translation is both linguistic and cultural activity and it is concerned with communication of meaning... It is not merely lexical equivalent of words of one language to that of another. But much more. Since each word is charged with memory, associations, and literary echoes, it is difficult to find all equivalence of a SL word in another word in TL.” (Das 20)

Translation is not a process of transcoding but an act of communication; the text is an integral part of the world and not an isolated specimen of language. Some of the translated works of concur with the rules of Atinie Dole:

“More familiar modes of translation are literal translation or paraphrasing, free translation or paraphrasing, adaptation, and real translation. In literal translation or paraphrasing or word to word rendering, the translator has to follow the original closely. Since language changes both horizontally and vertically, the translator cannot render it faithfully” (Patil, 16).

In the words of Chakraborty, “The purpose of translation is primarily to carry the theme and the meta-theme of a source language (SL) into a text written in another language, i.e. target language (TL). This journey of the theme and the meta-theme, encoded into one language, to another language, is the kernel of the translation process. There is hardly any set procedure for translation” (Chakraborty, 42).

Reiterating again he remarks “At a level of syntax, substitution of one linguistic framework by another is also not possible. Had there been one common syntactic pattern in all human languages, there should have been then one language in the world. Human languages are arbitrary, non-negotiable” (Chakraborty, 50).

As the Surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, the translator cannot treat the text in isolation from its empirical – cultural associational factors system (Kundu 58). Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, the noted social reformist, vigorously justified ‘faithful translation’. According to him, “The Translations do not deviate from the original as far as possible; and Changes are made in the original content to accommodate the culture and temporal differences between the SL and the TL.”

“Translation is not merely an imitation of a text in another linguistic system but communication of a message to his prospective target readers whose culture and language differ from the culture as used in original message and so hinders direct communication of message between the received and so hinders direct communication of message between the received message and its recipient. Thus, translation involves translation of a culture, as J.B. Casagrande has put it.”

The generic term translation has several implications such as alteration, change, conversion, interpretation, paraphrase, rendering, rephrasing, rewording transcription, transformation and transliteration, while the specific meanings of the word are translating, rephrasing, interpretation, rendering, decoding. (Patil 12) Octavio Paz’s famous observation: “Every text is... the translation of another text” (9)

All texts, he claims, are part of a literary system which, again, is descended from and related to other systems, and are thus translations of translation of translations; Paz’s observation, of course, foregrounds intertextuality rather than interlingual transference. (Kundu 56)

This book opts ‘to detect the translator’s norms and options, the constraints under which he works. A model of translation description takes into account the multiple relations between the source text and the system of similar and/ or other texts originating from the same language, culture and tradition; between the source and the target system between the target text and its read between the target text and other translations of the same source text as focused in the same target system, and so on (58-59)

In the words of “Dryden All translation, I suppose, may be reduced to these three heads: First that of metaphrase, or turning an author word by word, and line, from one language to another. The second way is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense: and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. The

third way is that of imitation where the translator assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but forsakes both as he sees occasion, and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork, as he pleases.

Hillaire Belloc's views are as follows. "The art of translation is a subsidiary art and derivative. On this account it has never been granted the dignity of original work and has suffered too much in the general judgement of letters" (OT2).

Translation is an extension of creative exercise in the same sense as critical act is extension of creative exercise characterized by almost the same process. Translator is a creative reader-critic. He reads, interprets, criticizes, and creates, for translation is a way of reading, interpreting, criticizing and in the same process creating a new text for those who have no access to literature in an alien language system. It is 'carrying over' into a new reader's realm."

In reality, translation of a genuine creative work raises and poses certain questions whether it is prose or poetry. Every creative work is an expression of certain vision realized by a genius but a person who intends to approximate this work in another language is not concerned with the vision contained in it or with its expression.

A translation is said to 'have the same meaning' as the original. Dostert defines translation as "that branch of the science of language which is specifically concerned with the problem - or the fact - of the transference of meaning from one set of patterned symbol... in to another set of patterned symbols..."

The traditional discourse on translation mainly discusses the translation of poetry. Translation is not an easy job. The whole process of translating from SL to TL is unusually complex one, which, if Richards is correct, "may very probably be the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos". The job of the translator is further complicated by host of restrictions imposed upon him by both the subject and the audience. However, he will have to make some very difficult choices. (Pathak 21)

Thus, the system of translated literature does not function in isolation. It fully participates in the history of the literary polysystem, as an integral part of it, related with all the other co-systems.

This venture opts 'to detect the translator's norms and options, the constraints under which he works. A model of translation description takes into account the multiple relations between the source text and the system of similar and or other texts originating from the same language, culture and tradition.



## CHAPTER - II HISTORY OF THE THEORY OF TRANSLATION:

Edward Sapir claims that ‘language is a guide to social reality’ and that human beings are at the mercy of the language that has become the medium of expression for their society. Experience, he asserts, is largely determined by the language habits of the community, and each separate structure represents a separate reality: “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.”

No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of natural language. Language, then, is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril.

In his definition of translation equivalence, Popovic distinguishes four types. Linguistic equivalence, where there is homogeneity on the linguistic level of both SL and TL texts, i.e. word for translation. Paradigmatic equivalence, where there is equivalence of ‘the elements of a paradigmatic expressive axis, i.e., elements of grammar, which Popovic sees as being a higher category than lexical equivalence. Stylistic (translational) equivalence, where there is ‘functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation aiming at an expressive identity with an invariant of identical meaning’. Textual (syntagmatic) equivalence where there is equivalence of the syntagmatic structuring of a text, i.e. equivalence of form and shape.

S.S. Prawar suggests two ideal modes of translation as explained by Goethe: There are ..... two maxims for translators; one demands that the author belonging to some other nation should be brought over to us, so that we can regard him as our own; the other demands of us that we should go across to the stranger and accustom ourselves to his circumstance, his manner of speaking, his peculiarities”. (Joshi 80).

“There are different degrees of paraphrase, some reflecting much more interpretation of the meaning of the text than others. Second, there is the dynamic equivalence method. This is a more recent theory of translation developed by Dr. Eugene Nida. The object is to produce for the modern reader the closest equivalent meaning of the original text. This does not necessarily require a word-for-word or literal rendering. Finally, there is the literal or complete equivalence method. It requires the closest possible correspondence between the original language words and their consistent English translation. (Tiwari 51, 52)

Steiner (1975) rightly observes that language is a science but translation is an art. The art lies in assessing the type of translation required by the piece, the right kind of strategies to be selected and integrated in the right proportion.

Arnold thinks that “the translator’s ‘first duty is to be faithful’” (CT98.) J.C. Catford, in his well-known book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965), attempts to describe translation in terms of the scale and category grammar proposed by Halliday et al. (1961,64) and the contextual view of language proposed by J. R. Firth (1957). He defines translation in terms of equivalence relations. He asserts: ‘The central problem of translation practice is that finding TL translation equivalents. J.C. Catford opines “A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence”’.

Eugene Nida differentiates between two types of theories of translation: those based on surface structure and those based on kernel structure. He argues that “instead of going directly from one set of surface structures to another, the competent translator actually goes through a seemingly roundabout process of analysis, transfer, and restructuring” (79). His approach to translation is essentially sociolinguistic with focus on the role of the receptor. For him, the ultimate test of a translation must be based upon three major factors: “the correctness with which the receptors understand the message of the original. the ease of comprehension, and the involvement a person experiences as the result of the adequacy of the form of the translation.”

Newmark proposes two types of translation namely Semantic translation and Communicative translation. The former focuses primarily upon the semantic content of the source text and the latter focuses essentially upon the comprehension and response of translation has to be decided. Newmark categorizes the function of the text as expressive, informative, and vocative. His distinction between semantic translation and communicative translation are undoubtedly useful for the analysis of TL tests. Newmark defines translation as “a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in another language” (7) This issue of transferring message, according to him should not encompass deviate target texts and socio-cultural dimensions of the target culture.

Unlike Catford who establishes equivalence on the basis of the source language and target language words referring to same thing in the real world, i.e., on the basis of their referential equivalence, he shifts the entire focus in the process of translation towards the potential users of the translation and their reactions to it. The translation has to be tested, not in terms of the extent of verbal correspondence, but in terms of the amount of dynamic equivalence - how the potential receptors of it react to it.

Nida talks about the old focus and new focus in translating. He also defines two different systems for translation. One is the direct method in which the source language structure gets transferred to that of the receptor language through a universal linguistic

structure. In certain cases, structure of poems is analysed in terms of grammatical relationships and meanings of words and combination of words. The transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language.

According to Nida, many writers have made a significant contribution to the field of translation. The process of translation varies depending on the type of the text. Peter Newmark can be ranked along with Catford and Nida for his major contribution to the theory of translation. “His unique tribute to the theory is his detailed treatment of semantic vs. communicative translation. The semantic translation focuses primarily upon the semantic content of the source text and the communicative translation focuses upon the comprehension and response of receptors.”

According to Eugene Nida (1975) this is due to the fact that the SL text is not static. Inherent in each text is a variant core. But another is a quintessential uniformity in all the transactions and according to Popovic (1976) there is also an invariant core in all the texts which is basic and constant, and which saves chaotic and idiosyncratic interpretations. (Oberioc 75).

Variations in one of the above elements, may change the very nature of the TL text. Minor alterations can be made but the basic structure has to be the same. This dichotomy bothers translators when they seek cent per cent beauty or faith. Translation can be most satisfying with its integration of beauty and faith in varying proportion without making radical digression in the TL text. (Oberoi 75).

Newmark talks about three functions of language – expressive function which is author - centred, Informative function which gives the extralinguistic information content of the text and vocative function which is reader centred.

Apart from these principles, Newmark also talks about three levels of translation. They are referential, textual and subjective levels. He also expounds two basic translation processes i.e., comprehension and formulation comprehension has to do with interpretation and formulation has to do with recreation. The translator has to function smoothly between these processes. The two methods of translation that Newmark advocates are the communicative translation and the semantic translation.

Even-Zohar identifies three sets of circumstances in which it can occupy a central position: When a literature is “young”, in the process of being established; when a literature is either “peripheral” or “weak”, or both; when there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums in a literature. (121)

Newmark further states – “All translation must be in some degree, both communicative and semantic, social and individual. It is a matter of difference of emphasis” (Oberio 73).

Even-Zohar conceives of translated literature as a system in its own right because, he claims, translated works do correlate in at least two ways: “In the way they are selected by the target literature, the principles of selection never being uncorrelable with the co-systems...; and in the way they adopt specific norms, behaviours, and policies which are a result of their relations with the other co-systems.” (in Holmes et al. 1978: 118)

Eugene Nida distinguishes two types of equivalence, formal and dynamic, where formal equivalence ‘focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. In such a translation one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept.’ Nida calls this type of translation a ‘gloss translation’, which aims to allow the reader to understand as much of the SL context as possible. Dynamic equivalence is based on the principle of equivalent effect, i.e. that the relationship between receiver and message should aim at being the same as that between the original receivers and the SL message.

Equivalence in translation, then, should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version. Popovic’s four types offer a useful starting point and Neubert’s three semiotic categories point the way towards an approach that perceives equivalence as a dialectic between the signs and the structures within and surrounding the SL and TL texts.

Basic lines of approach to translation have emerged at different periods of European and American culture and to consider how the role and function of translation has varied. So, for example, the distinction between word for word and sense for sense translation, established within the Roman system, has continued to be a point for debate in one way or another right up to the present.

George Steiner, in *After Babel*, divides the literature on the theory, practice and history of translation into four periods. The first, he claims, extends from the statements of Cicero and Horace on translation up to the publication of Alexander Fraser Tytler’s *Essay on the Principles of Translation* up to the publication of Alexander Fraser Tytler’s *Essay on the Principles of Translation* in 1791. The central characteristic of this period is that of ‘immediate empirical focus, i.e. the statements and theories about translation stem directly from the practical work of translating.

Steiner’s second period, which runs up to the publication of Larbaud’s *Sous l’invocation de Saint Jerome* in 1946 is characterized as a period of theory and hermeneutic

enquiry with the development of a vocabulary and methodology of approaching translation. The third period begins with the publication of the first papers on machine translation in the 1940s and is characterized by the introduction of structural linguistics and communication theory into the study of translation.

Steiner's fourth period, coexisting with the third, has its origins in the early 1960s and is characterized by 'a reversion to hermeneutic, almost metaphysical inquiries into translation and interpretation; in short by a vision of translation that sets the discipline in a wide frame that includes a number of other disciplines: Classical philology and comparative literature, lexical statistics and ethnography, the sociology of class-speech, formal rhetoric, poetics, and the study of grammar are combined in an attempt to clarify the act of translation and the process of 'life between languages'.

T.R. Steiner analyses English translation theory between the cut-off dates of 1650-1800, starting with Sir John Denham and ending with William Cowper, and examines the prevailing eighteenth – century concept of the translator as painter or imitator.

Studies of past translators and translations have focused more on the question of influence; on the effect of the TL product in a given cultural context, rather than on the processes involved in the creation of that product and on the theory behind creation.

Cicero points out that mind dominates the body as a king rules over his subjects or a father controls his children but warns that where Reason dominates as a master ruling his slaves, it keeps them down and crushes them. With translation, the ideal SL text is there to be imitated and not to be crushed by the too rigid application of reason.

Both Horace and Cicero, in their remarks on translation, make an important distinction between word for word translation and sense for sense (or figure for figure) translation. The underlying principle of enriching their native language and literature through translation leads to a stress on the aesthetic criteria of the TL product rather than on more rigid notions of 'fidelity'.

There is also an additional dimension to the Roman concept of enrichment through translation. The good translator, therefore, presupposed the reader's acquaintance with the SL text and was bound by that knowledge, for any assessment of his skill as translator would be based on the creative use he was able to make of his model. Longinus, in his Essay on the sublime, cites 'imitation and emulation of the great historians and poets of the past' as one of the paths towards the sublime and translation is one aspect of imitation in the Roman concept of literary production.

One of the first writers to formulate a theory of translation was the French humanist Etienne Dolet (1509 – 46) who was tried and executed for heresy after 'mistranslating' one of Plato's dialogues in such way as to imply disbelief in immortality. In 1540 Dolet published a

short outline of translation principles. entitled *La maniere de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre* (How to Translate Well from one Language into Another) and established five principles for the translator:

The translator must fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author, although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities. He should have a perfect knowledge of both SL and TL. He should avoid word-for-word renderings and should use forms of speech in common use. He should choose and order word appropriately to produce the correct tone.

Dolet's principles, ranked as they are in a precise order stress the importance of understanding the SL text as primary requisite. His views were reiterated by George Chapman (1559 – 1634), the great translator of Homer. In his dedication of the *Seven Books* (1598) Chapman declares that the work of a skilfull and worthy translator is to observe the sentences, figures and forms of speech proposed in his author, his true sense and height, and to adorne them with figures and formes of oration fitted to the original in the same tongue to which they are translated: and these things I would gladlie have made the questions of whatsoever my labours have deserved.

Further he repeats his theory more fully in the *Epistle to the Reader* of his translation of the *Iliad*. In the *Epistle* Chapman states that a translator must: avoid word for word rendering. Attempt to reach the 'spirit' o the original and avoid overloose translations, by basing the translation on a sound scholarly investigation of other version and glosses.

The Platonic doctrine of the divine inspiration of poetry clearly had repercussions for the translator, in that it was deemed possible for the 'spirit' or 'tone' of the original to be recreated in another cultural context. The translator, therefore, is seeking to bring about a 'transmigration' of the original text, which he approaches on both a technical and metaphysical level, as a skilled equal with duties and responsibilities both to the original author and the audience.

Matthiesson's study of Elizabethan translators gives a number of examples of the way in which the affirmation of the individual in his own time manifests itself. He notes, for example, the frequent replacement of indirect discourse by direct discourse in North's translation of *Plutarch* (1579), a device that adds immediacy and vitality to the text, and quotes examples of North's use of lively contemporary idiom.

In poetry, the adjustments made to the SL text by such major translators as Wyatt (1503-42) and Surrey have led critics to describe their translations at times as 'adaptations', but such distinction is misleading.

The updating of texts through translation by means either of additions, omissions or conscious alterations can be very clearly seen in the work of *Philoemon Holland* (1552-1637)

the ‘translator general’. In translating Livy he declared that his aim was to ensure that Livy should ‘deliver his mind in English, if not so eloquently by many degrees, yet as truly as a Latine, and claimed that he used not any affected phrase, but ..... a meane and popular style.

Translation in Renaissance innovation, and amid a real threat of surfeit and disorder, translation absorbed, shaped, oriented the necessary raw material. It was, in a full sense of the term, the *matiere premiere* of the imagination. Moreover, it established a logic of relation between past and present, and between different tongues and traditions which were splitting apart unde stress of nationalism and religious conflict.

Translation was by no means a secondary activity, but a primary one, exerting a shaping force on the intellectual ilfe of the age, and at times the figure of the translator appears almost as a revolutionary activist rather than the servant of an original author or text.

Sir John Denham (1615-69), whose theory of translation, as expressed in his poem ‘To Sir Richard Fanshawe upon his Translation of Pastor Fido’ (1648) and in his Preface to his translation of the Destruction of Troy (1656) (see below) covers both the formal aspect (Art) and the spirit (Nature) of the work, but warns against applying principle of literal translation to the translation of poetry : To quote, “for it is not his business alone to translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie; and Poesie is of so subtile a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a Caput mortuum.”

Denham argues for a concept of translation that sees translator and original writer as equals but operating in clearly differentiated social and temporal contexts. He sees it as the translator’s duty to his source text to extract what he perceives as the essential core of the work and to reproduce or recreate the work in the target language.

John Dryden (1631-1700), in his important Preface to Ovid’s Epistles (1680), tackled the problems of translations by formulating three basic types: metaphrase, or turning an author word by word, andline by line, from one language into another; paraphrase, or translation with latitude, the Ciceronian ‘sense-for-sense’ view of translation; imitation, where the translator can abandon the text of the original as he sees fit.

Of these types, Dryden chooses the second as the more balanced path, provided the translator fulfils certain criteria: to translate poetry, he argues, the translator must be a poet, must be a master of both languages, and must understand both the characteristics and ‘spirit’ of the original author, besides conforming to the aesthetic canons of his own age.

Dryden uses the metaphor of the translator / portrait painter, that was to reappear so frequently in the eighteenth century, maintaining that the painter has the duty of making

his portrait resemble the original. In his *Dedication of the Aeneis* (1697) Dryden claims to have followed his prescribed path of moderation and to have steered ‘betwixt the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation, but following French models he has updated the language of his original text:

Goethe (1749 – 1832) argued that every literature must pass through three phases of translation, although as the phases are recurrent all may be found taking place within the same language system at the same time.

Translation theory from Dryden to Tytler, then, is concerned with the problem of recreating an essential spirit, soul or nature of the work of art. But the earlier confident dichotomy between the formal structure and the inherent soul becomes less easily determinable as writers gradually turned their attention towards a discussion of theories of Imagination, away from the former emphasis on the artist’s moral role, and from what Coleridge described as ‘painful copying’ that ‘would produce masks only, not forms breathing life’.

In his study of Shelley and translation Timothy Webb shows how the ambiguousness of the role of the translator is reflected in the poet’s own writings. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) proposed the creation of a separate sub-language for use in translated literature only, while Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 82) proclaimed the translator’s subservience to the forms and language of the original. Both these proposals represent attempts to cope with the difficulties described so vividly by Shelley in *The Defence of Poesy* when he warned that:

“It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as to seek to transfuse from one language to another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower – and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel.”

Schleiermacher’s theory of a separate translation language was shared by a number of nineteenth century English translators, such as F.W. Newman, Carlyle and William Morris. Newman declared that the translator should retain every peculiarity of the original wherever possible, with the greater care the more foreign it may be. While an explanation of the function of peculiarity can be found in G.A. Simcox’s review of Morris’ translation of *The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs* (1870) when ‘he declared that the ‘quaint archaic English of the translation with just the right outlandish flavour’ did much to disguise the inequalities and incompletenesses of the original.

What emerges from the Schleiermacher – Carlyle – Pre – Raphaelite concept of translation, therefore, is an interesting paradox. In other words, the translator invites the intellectual, cultivated reader to share what he deems to be an enriching experience, either or



moral or aesthetic grounds. Moreover, the original text is perceived as property as an item of beauty to be added to a collection, with no concessions to the taste or expectations of contemporary life. On the other hand, by producing consciously archaic translations designed to be read by a minority, the translators implicitly reject the ideal of universal literacy. The intellectual reader represented a very small minority in the increasingly diffuse reading public that expanded throughout the century, and hence the foundations were laid for the notion of translation as a minority interest.

Matthew Arnold (1822 – 68) in his first lecture On translating Homer advises the lay reader to put his trust in scholars, for they alone can say whether the translation produces more or less the same effect as the original and gives the following advice to the would-be translator:

“Let not the translator, then, trust to his notions of what the ancient Greeks would have thought of him; he will lose himself in the vague. Let him not trust to what the ordinary English reader thinks of him; he will be taking the blind for his guide. Let him not trust to his own judgement of his own work; he may be misled by individual caprices. Let him ask how his work affects those who both know Greek and can appreciate poetry.”

Longfellow’s extraordinary views on translation take the literalist position to extremes. For him, the rhyme is mere trimming, the floral border on the hedge, and is distinct from the life or truth of the poem itself. The translator is relegated to the position of a technician, neither poet nor commentator, with a clearly defined but severely limited task.

In complete contrast to Longfellow’s view, Edward Fitzgerald (1809 – 63), who is best known for his version of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1858), declared that a text must live at all costs ‘with a transfusion of one’s own worst Life if one can’t retain the Original’s better’. It was Fitzgerald who made the famous remark that it were better to have a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle. In other words, far from have a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle.

In other words, far from attempting to lead the TL reader to the SL original, Fitzgerald’s work seeks to bring a version of the SL text into the TL culture as a living entity though his somewhat extreme views on the lowliness of the SL text, quoted in the Introduction, indicate a patronizing attitude that demonstrates another form of elitism. The Romantic individualists line led on, in translators like Fitzgerald, to what Eugene Nida describes as a ‘spirit of exclusivism’ where the translator appears as a skilful merchant offering exotic wares to the discerning few.

The main currents of translation typology in the great age of industrial capitalism and colonial expansion up to the First World War can loosely be classified as follows: Translation as a scholar’s activity, where the pre-eminence of the SL text is assumed de facto

over any TL version. Translation as a means of encouraging the intelligent reader to return to the SL original.

It can also be means of helping the TL reader become the equal of what Schleiermacher called the better reader of the original, through a deliberately contrived foreignness in the TL text. Translation as a means whereby the individual translator who sees himself like Aladdin in the enchanted vaults (Rossetti's imaginative image) offers his own pragmatic choice to the TL reader. Finally, Translation is a means through which the translator seeks to upgrade the status of the SL text.

### CHAPTER – III

## EVALUATION OF THE TRANSLATION OF TAMIL NEW POETRY OF THE POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

Translation of poetry is the most difficult mode of translation. This is because it abounds in figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, irony, paradox and unprecedented phonological, syntactic and semantic patterns such as rhyming alliteration, versification, morphological parallelism, syntactic parallelism and above all syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations between words. The translator of poetry should remember that he is to ‘translate’ a piece of poetry, not to ‘re-write’ or ‘produce an interpretation’ of it. (Das 32)

“The problems of translation are many-fold but two major problems that baffle the translators are linguistic and cultural. Again, of all types of translation, the most elusive one is that of the translation of poetry.” (Das 38). They have reproduced either the forms of syntax and lexis or the semantic content of the original. To a great extent they have the style of the original and have retained the text form of the source language.

The translator of poetry must take into account both the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of a poem and try to re-create the poem in the target language. The linguistic aspect deals with sound pattern of words, rhymes and rhythms while the non-linguistic aspect is concerned with ideas, images, symbols based on culture of the SL poem. Some of the translations read like originals, but others like a translation.

“The central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence.” (Oberoi 70). Das remarks,

“No doubt, poetry translation poses formidable challenge to the translator. The most difficult thing in poetry translation is to find equivalent words of literacy echoes in target language. He further opines it is generally believed that a verse translation is itself poetry, but whether it really in poetry or not is a questionable matter. Any poem will not move fluently into translation, my own experience reveals the many hazards and difficulties encountered in the process.” (28)

Translation is first of all a semantic operation. In the words of Dr. Chellappan “Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor’s language the closest natural equivalent of the SL message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (22). So, in the act of translation the writer changes poems into another language retaining as much of the sense as one can.

## Equivalence

Catford defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (SL)” He further reiterates that “the central problem of translation – practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. One of the tasks is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence.

The problems of translation are greatly enhanced by linguistic indeterminacy which is the result of perpetual change. (Das 22). As K. Chellappan has rightly pointed out that “this basic symbol is evolved in relation to other symbols in the poem, which again are generated in the context of the poem, though they also have traditional links. If the ultimate meaning of the poem depends on all these facts, and if some of the components like Ruth or Hippocrene belong to the particular milieu, what do we do with them? Equivalents in the target culture may not do, because they bring a whole world of associations” (Das 32).

In the following poems of Pasuvaiah’s, *at Kanyakumari*, we have again and again multiple equivalence, of exquisite transference at the phonetic linguistic cultural levels. It is perhaps more than equivalence in the sense that it seems, even better than the original.

| <b>Kanyakumariyil</b>   | <b>At Kanyakumari</b>   |
|---|---|
| Indru Apoorvamai<br>mekamatra vanam<br>mikapperiya sooriyan<br>Ore ratha kalangal<br>engirundo vandhu<br>sooriyasthanathai maraikkirathu<br>entha aattukutti<br>asadu<br>abotham<br>thannilai ariyathathu<br>edam peyarvatha<br>nindra nilayil nirpatha?<br>moolyil tharkkam<br>arupattu vizhithathum<br>nakarthodiyirinthu aattukutti.<br>sooriyanai kanom | Today<br>rarely enough<br>a clear sky.<br>A very big sun.<br>A whirlpool of blood.<br>From somewhere comes<br>this lamb<br>and stands between me and<br>the setting sun<br>Idiotic<br>unaware<br>not knowing itself.<br>Should I move aside<br>or stand where I am?<br>I work out<br>this syllogistic exercise<br>and wake up;<br>the lamb has moved off.<br>The sun is gone. |

Pasuvaiah's *This shadow* is cited as another example. The reader is at once thrilled with the pleasure of recognition of the equivalence achieved as found in *This Shadow*. Such equivalence is, indeed, rare.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Entha Nizhal</b><br>Engiruntha Arambikkirathu entha nizhal?<br>pathathin vilimbiliruntha thana?<br>allathu athan adiyiliruntha?<br>bhoomiyil kaaloondri nirkumpothu<br>nizhalmel than nirkirom?<br>kalai thooki parkalam than.<br>antha yonai naan erkkavillai.<br>bhoomiyil nirkumpothu<br>engirunthu aarambikkirathu entha nizhal<br>enpathuthan enku theriyavendum | <b>THIS SHADOW</b><br>Where does this shadow start?<br>Is it from the edge of the feet itself<br>or from below it?<br>When we stand still on solid ground<br>do we stand on a shadow?<br>step off the shadow and look for yourself.<br>I do not accept that suggestion;<br>I only want to know<br>where does this shadow start<br>when we stand on the ground. |
|--|--|

During translation, the translator is faced with the troublesome task of maintaining the meaning as well as the rhythm of the original. Private associations and shared experiences may differ significantly from one language to another. (Pathak 31).

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><b>Ootacamund</b><br/> The purity of your love -<br/> like the water<br/> scooped from<br/> the mid-river.</p> |
|--|---|

In the above-mentioned poem purity is not the exact translation for the word elimaiyanathu. The beauty of the lines is lost in the translation.

Sukumaran's *Then Books* is a translation which not only achieves equivalence at every level, but also emerges as a fine poem in its own right. This is a case that justifies Octavio Paz's claim that a translation "up to a certain point, is an invention, and as such constitutes a unique text." (Kundu 65)

Transcreation of Sukumar's *Then Books* offers an unbiased philosophical perspective and presents the main theme of the original text in simple, ordinary language easily accessible to today's readers. It enables readers to feel that they were originally written in their own language since the readers captures the excitement of discovery its relevance to their own lives.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Appothu Pothakangal</b><br/> Appothu<br/> puthagangalum nambikkaikalum ennai<br/> kai vittana<br/> yosikka thodanginen puthithai<br/> sorpam kaiyirippu -<br/> thangum suvarkalin pathukappatru<br/> railway platparathukku virattapatten<br/> kali vayittrudan<br/> thookkam purakkanithu neelamana eravu<br/> mudiya kathirukkiren<br/> engum minvilakkukalin oolai<br/> akanda simbaniyondrin sayalai nerudavittu<br/> enginkal pilirum edayideye<br/> oru pey kanavin<br/> ottraikanpola thongum kadikaram<br/> kooraiyilirindu uthirndhu<br/> olividam thedi narum<br/> yanthira urumalkalukku pazhakiya nondi<br/> kuruvi<br/> vayattrilum kankilum pasiyudan</p> | <p><b>Then Books</b><br/> Then<br/> books and hopes<br/> deserted me.<br/> I began to think anew<br/> of the life<br/> lying on the left-over leaf.<br/> A few savings -<br/> without the protection<br/> of a room to stay in<br/> was driven to<br/> the railway platform.<br/> With an empty stomach<br/> I waited for the long night to end<br/> the night that sleep discarded.<br/> Everywhere<br/> the howl of<br/> the electric lights.<br/> Off and on<br/> the engines blare<br/> irritating the echo</p> |
|---|---|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>mounamai nacharikkum<br/>akalamai mallikai soodiya pen<br/>kanavukal pothintha sumaikuludan<br/>disai</p> | <p>of a great symphony.<br/>The clock over the platform<br/>hangs like a single eye<br/>of a ghostly dream.<br/>A lame sparrow<br/>accustomed to the<br/>roaring of the engines<br/>falls from the roof<br/>crawls to a hide-out.<br/>Hunger<br/>in her tummy and eyes<br/>silently pesters a girl<br/>coiling her hair<br/>at an inapposite time<br/>with jasmine flowers.<br/>With dream-filled baggage<br/>passengers huddle<br/>to reach their destination.<br/>Unable to stand<br/>the life here<br/>a friend<br/>not known to me<br/>became<br/>a tatter of flesh<br/>beneath of flesh<br/>beneath the wheels.<br/>A hue and cry.<br/>Then<br/>stillness.<br/>On the platform<br/>a few blood-stained<br/>footprints -<br/>Death passed<br/>leaving behind witnesses.<br/>Books and hopes<br/>deserted me<br/>then.</p> |
|--|---|

Whenever a scientific or technical word occurs which has an exact equivalent in Tamil the equivalent is of course to be used. It is not easy for the translator to get equivalents at the various levels.

## TRANSLATION AND CULTURE

“Language is largely culture oriented and therefore, translators face the problem of translating certain culture-based words into another language with a different culture. Colloquial expressions, culture-words, slangs, proverbs are difficult to translate for there is not one to one correspondence between one culture and another or one language and another.” (Das 23)

In an alien language and culture many unforeseen problems may crop up if the translated text is not presented with sufficient clarity. Cultural words cause difficulties in the translation. The following list of words have been exactly transliterated as they are and many times without foot notes. A foreigner cannot understand these words.

## CULTURAL WORDS

| Author          | Title in English           | In Tamil | Words             |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Pasuvaiah       | That Friend                |          | Jubba             |
|                 | Flower Bedecked dream      |          | Pandal            |
| Neelapadmanaban | Sleep                      |          | Kora Grass        |
|                 | Aloneness                  |          | Viswaroopa        |
| Sirpi           | Tied to a stake            |          | Kolukkattai grass |
|                 |                            |          | Jowar             |
| Devadevan       | The Sea Sleeps             |          | Kaili             |
|                 |                            |          | Paan              |
| Bharathidasan   | The Unwritten Poem         |          | Punnai Tree       |
| Meera           | Where have you been        |          | Karthikai Months  |
|                 |                            |          | Margazhi Months   |
|                 |                            |          | Thai Months       |
|                 | You gave me the xerostomia |          | Agaya Gangai      |
|                 |                            |          | Amudasurabi       |

“The connection of meaning must be even more distinctly marked in the translation than in the original” (CT 165). The ‘depth of intention’ and ‘direction of intention’ are extremely difficult to communicate across language and culture barriers. The depth of intention is the degree to which a speaker feels committed to an utterance. The “direction of intention” refers to the implications of an utterance. It is from the context that the translator can know the implications involved so that he can create similar implications in the target language. Kundu remarks,



“Certain times the translator moves away from close linguistic or cultural equivalence. In many cases in the TL text a total linguistic or cultural equivalence is difficult to be achieved. The translator has to integrate various strategies in order to communicate most effectively. At times due to culture difference, linguistic inequality occurs and therefore culture communication suffers. Cultural untranslatability surfaces when it involves absence in the TL culture of a relevant situational feature for the SL text” (60).

Tiwari observes “Transcreation is across between straight translations and creative copywriting, using specialist translators to come up with appropriate and relevant counterparts to word plays or other creative concepts while maintaining the sense of the original text. Translations are either too literal and abstract, or written in very formal, incomprehensible English, or are philosophically one-sided (53).

The poetry and ideas of Bharathiar, the Tamil poet, has won national and international acclaim; however, this research observes that his work suffers not so good treatment in the hands of some of his translators. Of Bharathiar’s poem, “Jesus Christ,” one may translate these words to read, that *Mary Magdalene, a wayward woman came to Jesus and remorsefully asked of him to save her from her evil ways and their consequences. Jesus showed her grace. According to Christ’s legend, Mary Magdalene saw with her own eyes this Jesus as he was raised from the dead on the third day of his burial to be glorified. This episode is explained by this poem here.*

With these words of introduction, Bharathiar presents his insightful poem on Jesus Christ.

This poem is transcribed in English here for the benefit of those who can understand Tamil but cannot read the Tamil script. One may also notice the masterful skill of the poet who has employed the musical devices of alliteration, assonance, and consonance. The writer also uses soft sounds rather than harsh sounds to keep up with the sweet grace of Christ that he expounds.

‘Easan vanthu siluvayil mandan’  
Yellunthu yirthanan nall oru moondril:  
Nesama Maria Magdalena  
Nerile yintha cheithiyai kandall;  
Thesatheer! Yithan utporul keeler;  
Thevar vanthu nammak utpukunthe  
Nasamindri nammai nitham kappar,  
Num aganthaiyai nam kondru vital.

Anbu kan Maria Magdalena,

Aavi kanutheer Yesu Christu:  
Munbu theemai vadivinai kondral  
Moonru nalinil nalluyir thondrum;  
Pon polinthe mukathitr kande  
Potruvan anthe nalluyir thannai  
Anbe num Maria Magdalena  
Ahah! Salap perungkali ukthe.  
Unmai yendra siluvayit katti  
Unarvai aani thvang kondadithal,  
Vanmai peruyir Yesu Christu  
Vana meniyil angu vilangum  
Penmai kan Maria Magdalena,  
Penum nallaram Yesu Christu,  
Nunmai konda porilithu kandeer  
Nodiyi likthu payindridalagum.

The words, “Easan vanthu siluvayil mandan” expresses concisely the eternal plan of salvation executed by God. Note that the word, “Easan,” refers to the divine God who controls all life and is not subject to the control of the forces of earth, be it the force of flesh or nature. Also note in these words that Bharathiar pronounces the love and power of the almighty God willingly dying a vicarious death on the cross. However, this idea is misrepresented by the words of the translator Prema Nandakumar who says,

‘My Lord expired on the Cross  
And ascended in three days’.  
Beloved Mary Magdalene  
Saw this happen.  
Friends! Here’s the esoteric sense.  
The gods will enter us  
And guard us from all ills  
If we transcend pride.

Mary Magdalene is Love,  
Jesus the Soul.  
The outer evil destroyed,  
The good life sprouts.  
She praised the radiance  
In that golden face.  
That was the love of Magdalene,  
Ah, what joy!

If sense is bound to the cross of Truth,  
And crucified on the thorn of austerity,  
Jesus of the strengthened soul  
Will rise as the boundless sky.  
Magdalene is eternal Feminine,  
Jesus Christ is deathless dharma,  
Draw we close to the symbol:  
Look, an inner meaning glows.

The word “expired,” would mean to “breathe out” or “exhale” involuntarily. A good background study of the Bible and research of this poem will show Bharathiar’s understanding of the scripture in Mathew 27: 50, “Jesus . . . yielded up the ghost.” Christ’s voluntary act of laying down his life and taking it back again is well understood by Bharathiar who says in the second line, “Yellunthu yirthanan nall oru moondril.” Bharathiar does not present Christ and his actions in a passive mode but in a powerful active voice. Thus, the translation is flawed.

Note the grave error in the use of the word “ascended” by the translator in the second line. This word is used to convey the poet’s idea of resurrection. The poet says that Christ rose from the dead on the third day. He says, “Yellunthu yirthanan nall oru moondril,” whereas the translator writes that Christ “ascended in three days.” She has clearly no idea about the difference between the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Bharathiar speaks of the resurrection from the dead and brings about an excellent correlation of the human nature of men and women that must die before their regenerated spirit can come forth to live a glorious life. Bharathiar takes the life of Mary Magdalene to point out how the love of Christ experienced by her enables her to lay her life before Christ. The compassion of Christ has so transformed her that the works of the flesh including her pride and unholiness are destroyed. She, thus, realizes the new life of love that springs forth from accepting the spirit of Christ within her. In the second stanza Bharathiar writes, “Anbu kan Maria Magdalena/Aavi kanutheer Yesu Christu:/Munbu themai vadivinai kondral/Moonru nalinil nalluyir thondrum.” In line with this idea of the risen Christ who changes the lives of dying men and women, Bharathiar says in the first stanza, Thesatheer! Yithan utporul keleer;/Thevar vanthu nammak utpukunthe/Nasamindri nammai nitham kappar,/Num aganthaiyai nam kondru vital. Here, Bharathiar, infact, proclaims that Christ indwells the humble and the lowly, the ones who surrender their pride to him. He comes in to live in the hearts of men and women like Mary Magdalene to transform them and turn them from their wicked ways.

This magnificent thought is reduced to mere shallow-sounding words by the translator who writes, “Friends! Here’s the esoteric sense. /The gods will enter us/And guard us from all ills/If we transcend pride. Note that the very essence of the poem of Bharathiar is lost in

these words of the translator. The translated version does not convey what Bharathiar says in Tamil.

The second stanza of the translator is also turns out to be a disaster when she says,

Mary Magdalene is Love,  
Jesus the Soul.  
The outer evil destroyed,  
The good life sprouts.  
She praised the radiance  
In that golden face.  
That was the love of Magdalene,  
Ah, what joy!

Bharathiar does not say that Mary Magdalene is love; he clearly says that she sees love in Christ: “Anbu kan Maria Magdalena, /Aavi kanutheer Yesu Christu.” Here, Bharathiar eloquently says that the spirit of Christ is love. The poet points to Christ who shows love in action. The spirit of Christ is manifested in acts of love. If one wishes to see Christ, one may see Him in acts of love. Anyone who experiences Christ like Mary Magdalene will know the spirit of Christ which is not in empty words but in deeds of love. Bharathiar adds that Christ crucified has set the example for men and women to destroy the form of evil seen in their nature. According to the poet, the resurrection of Christ following his death and burial for three days signifies new life that shall sprout forth in men and women whose fleshly nature is crucified like Christ’s. He writes, “Munbu theemai vadivinai kondral/Moonru nalinil nalluyir thondrum.” But the words of the translator (“The outer evil destroyed, /The good life sprouts.”) do not come close to the insight of the poet.

An error in the third stanza brings the translation as not so well translated. The translator writes, “Jesus of the strengthened soul/Will rise as the boundless sky. /Magdalene is eternal Feminine, / Jesus Christ is deathless dharma.” Bharathiar speaks neither of the “strengthened soul” nor the “eternal Feminine [femininity].” He declares that Christ who embraced the cross of truth (“Unmai yendra siluvayit katti”) is the epitome of all the glorified manly strength or heights of excellence one may claim to scale (“Vanmai peruyir Yesu Christu/ Vana meniyil angu vilangum”). Christ who surrendered his desires of the flesh to be crucified on the cross (“Unarvai aani thvang kondadithal”) is the very picture of feminine frailty overcome as in the case of the now surrendered Mary Magdalene. Christ’s act of love has transformed the very weakness of the humankind, even that of Mary Magdalene. (“Penmai kan Maria Magdalena, /Penum nallaram Yesu Christu”).

While these are some examples of complete misrepresentation of subject matter and ideas in this translation, one also finds careless use of diction that does no justice to the work of the poet. For the word “Easan,” the translator uses the word “Lord” which is a synonym of “Aandavan” or “one who is in Lordship over the surrendered soul.” But “Easan” points out

to the eternal, divine God who is the maker of the finite, mortal human. The word, “aani” which means “nail” is erroneously referred to as “thorn” by the translator. In the second stanza, the word “soul” is used by the translator when indeed the word “spirit” must be employed. Note that “aavi” is “spirit” but “aanma” is “soul.” The original poem does not use the word “aanma.”

In the first stanza, the translator employs the word “esoteric” which means “intended for or understood only by a particular group,” “known by a restricted number,” or “not publicly disclosed” (Webster). The phrase, “esoteric sense” is used to translate the word “utporul” in the line, “Thesatheer! Yithan utporul keleer.” Bharathiar, speaking of the vicarious death of Christ and his resurrection, is not by any means saying that these events are “intended for or understood only by a particular group,” “known by a restricted number,” or “not publicly disclosed.” “Utporul” means “essence” or “the true underlying meaning” in this context.

Added to the flaws related to ideas, meaning and diction, the translation has many syntax and grammar errors. Example: “The outer evil destroyed, /The good life sprouts.” When the translator writes, “Mary Magdalene is Eternal Feminine,” not only does she go wrong in presenting the “original sense” of the poet Bharathiar, but also does she make use of an adjective (“Feminine”) in the place of the noun (“femininity”).

One may better capture the “original sense” of Bharathiar by translating his poem thus:

‘God came and died on the cross’  
In three days, He rose from the dead.  
This event, she saw face to face  
Mary Magdalene, the beloved.  
People of the land! Hear its essence:  
May we lay our pride down  
For into our hearts will come God’s presence  
And eternally keep us from damnation.

Mary Magdalene perceived love  
Embodied in the spirit of the risen Christ.  
The form of evil is destroyed;  
Now in three days has new life sprung.  
Beholding His glorious face  
And praising the good Christ  
Mary Magdalene stood for love.  
Ah! What great joy!

If one is bound to the cross of truth,  
 And his desires are nailed by penance,  
 Jesus Christ who embodies all manly might  
 Will be glorified in the heavens;  
 By acts of love Christ took care all human frailty  
 As seen in Mary Magdalene and her femininity.  
 This deep truth you have seen  
 To put to practice in no time.

The translator does not convey that religious connotation of divine grace which would have been immediately recognized by the reader in the SL culture. (Kundu 59) An English reader would not be able to grasp the real implication of such statements. Self-translations will fail to encapsulate the real connotations intended by the original version.

### ORNAMENTAL WORDS

The problem of language in poetry is not easy to overcome. Das is of the opinion that “Ornamental words (rhetoric) based on lyricism are almost impossible to translate” (28). The translation of certain poems of Tamil are a challenge, as expressed in the following quotation.

“How will that vigour, the flow, that spring, that change, the flutter, that fierce pungence wedded to naturalness, that freshness in dialogues, nature in description, that lusture, that clash of sentiments, that dissection of fibres of heart etc. be brought in our poetic composition marching with graceful rhythmic gait, dancing with ringing sound of anklets of alliteration or moving like a decorated she elephant on left and right.” (Joshi, 85)

Linguistic untranslatability is apparent when SL sentences involve structures that do not exist in the TL. In this context the few lines of Bharadhidasan’s *Kaalam* are herewith recalled.

In the last few lines of Bharathidasan’s *Natures riches*, *Freedom*, in *the Blue garment* and *the sacrificial Altar*, the ornamental words of the poet have not been translated effectively into English.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Suthanthiram</b><br/>         Akka, Akka, endru nee azhaithai<br/>         akka, vanthu kodukka<br/>         chukka milaka suthantharam kiliye?</p> | <p><b>Freedom</b><br/>         Sister! Oh my sister!”<br/>         It is ginger or pepper<br/>         For your sister to give?<br/>         It is sweet liberty, dear parrot!</p> |
|---|--|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Bhalipeedam</b><br/> Bhethikkum noykkum perumpasikkum<br/> palae<br/> bheethikkum vaythirappeerkalo! Izhi<br/> sathiyellam ethirppeerkalo? - selvar<br/> veethiyey than mathipeerkalo</p> | <p><b>The Sacrificial Altar</b><br/> Can thou open they mouth<br/> against Cholera, ills, hunger acute and<br/> fears countless?<br/> Will thou protest it called low-born?<br/> Can thou even tread the street of the<br/> wealthy? (O men!)</p> |
|---|---|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Neelavan Aadaikkul</b><br/> Anthiyirulark karukum ulaku kanden;<br/> Avvare van kanden thisaikal kanden;<br/> Pinthiyantha karirulthan sirikka nilave nee<br/> than<br/> perunchirippin olimutho nilave neethaan<br/> sinthaamal sitharamal azhakai yellam<br/> sekarithu kulirettri oliyum ooty<br/> enthavendre iyarkai annai vaanil<br/> Ezhil Vazhvai sithiritha vannaanthaano</p> | <p><b>In the Blue Garment</b><br/> I saw the world darkening in the twilight<br/> gloom;<br/> And so did I see the sky and all the corners<br/> Could it be that, later, this dark gloom<br/> burst into laughter?<br/> Moon! Are you the bright pearl of the<br/> peals of lauther?<br/> Is this the hue with which Mother Nature<br/> Pains in the sky a Life of Beauty,<br/> Gathering all the graces, a wee-bit not<br/> wasting.<br/> Cooling them and feeding with light<br/> And offering them, “here, take thou all”.</p> |
|--|---|

## STRUCTURE/GRAMMAR

Considering the structure some of the poems that have been translated from Tamil to English are longer in the English Translation. Among the many, Atmanam's *Invitation* and Brahmarajan's *The Second Refuge* are cited as examples.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>Invitation</b><br/>In the second floor<br/>on the terrace<br/>by the only window<br/>I was dining with myself.<br/>The crow called-<br/>the crow perching on<br/>the bough of a neem tree<br/>nearby.<br/>Thought<br/>it embodied<br/>my manes or<br/>celestial beings;<br/>Placed before it<br/>a handful of cooked rice.<br/>The rice remained.<br/>The crow flew away.<br/>Whose means did it represent?<br/>I do not know.</p> |
|--|--|

### The Second Refuge of Brahmarajan

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>The Second Refuge</b><br/>Lakes have turned dry;<br/>Their false faces<br/>have disappeared.<br/>The orphaned cranes<br/>will set their eyes<br/>on the moving feet<br/>of the cattle<br/>and wait.<br/>When will the grasshopper hop?<br/>A man<br/>vexed with the walls<br/>of his new room<br/>opens the door and<br/>comes out</p> |
|--|--|



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>to the tender fingers<br/> that will untangle<br/> his cobwebbed locks.<br/> the village-hut<br/> will have dark corners<br/> even in the glowing moonlight<br/> for the firefly.</p> |
|--|--|

It is a firm view that a poem translated into another language inevitable loses its texture and impact, since the resonance, so much a part of its originality, cannot be recaptured in a language with very different rules of **grammar** and syntax.

In Pasuvaiah's *Do not rap on my door*, some translated words make us to ask what it is.

Similarly in Nakulan's *Step aside* the words have been translated as A voice said, "Step aside". The poem is in present tense, while the translation's last but one line is in past tense.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Ivvalavu periya<br/> veettil<br/> enakku edamillai<br/> ivvalavu<br/> periya nagarathil<br/> arintha mukam ethumillai<br/> arintha mukam kooda<br/> merpoochu kalaya<br/> anniyamaka<br/> urukkatti<br/> maraikirathu<br/> ennuruvam<br/> kalaya<br/> evvalavu<br/> kalam<br/> kadanthu sella vendum<br/> endru ninaivu vara<br/> sattre nakar<br/> endru oru kural koorum</p> | <p><b>Step Aside</b><br/> I have no place of my own<br/> in such a large houses;<br/> No known face<br/> in such a big town.<br/> Even the known face<br/> when it shows itself<br/> to be what it is<br/> turns into that of a stranger.<br/> When will I cease to be<br/> what I appear to be?<br/> The thought came up.<br/> A voice said,<br/> "Step aside."</p> |
|---|--|

Sukumaran's *Walls* in Tamil has been written in the past tense. But in the English version it has been translated in the present tense.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Suvarkal</b><br/> vantha vazhikalellam adaippattana<br/> purungal nimirnthu suvarkalaayina<br/> vivarangalattru<br/> akappatten naan<br/> vanam sathuramai siruthathu<br/> erandu ettiyil kalgal thirumbe<br/> en ulakam<br/> nodyil surungathiyu<br/> meendum meendum naane swasithu<br/> kattru vizhamaayittru<br/> Veliyera vazhiyattru thikaithen,<br/> paraavi nizhal tharaiyai kadakka<br/> Annanthal<br/> neela verumai<br/> Aatharavukkaai anuppiya kural<br/> suvarkalil mothi sariyum<br/> veenaakum yathnangal<br/> thalir pachaikko<br/> sirippolikko<br/> mazhaithulikalo<br/> pookkalukko eengum pulankal<br/> nalthorum suvarkal valara<br/> kailavakum vanam<br/> suthanthiram nakarntu pokum<br/> kathavukal ellayenaninum<br/> veliyai kana<br/> suvarukkoru jannalavathu anumathi<br/> nichayam veliyeri viduven</p> | <p><b>Walls</b><br/> All the ways<br/> I have come through<br/> are closed.<br/> The world before me<br/> has turned into walls.<br/> I am caught.<br/> The sky has shrunk<br/> into a small square.<br/> I take two steps .<br/> In a moment<br/> the world becomes<br/> very small.<br/> Again and again<br/> I breathe in<br/> breathe out<br/> the very air<br/> that is poisoned.<br/> No exit<br/> Stand baffled.<br/> The shadow of a bird's wing<br/> falls atward the ground<br/> I look up<br/> The blue void<br/> The voice of hope<br/> hits the walls<br/> Vain efforts.<br/> The senses long for<br/> the sight of green leaves<br/> the sound of laughter<br/> the drop of rain</p> |
|---|--|

In the translation of Irainbu's poem *Azhamana Elaiyuthiril* there is a grammatical error in the line "has not yet **became** a butterfly."

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Azhamana elaiyuthiril<br/> Innum pattampoochiyakavillai entha<br/> puzhu</p> | <p>In the deep autumn<br/> This caterpillar<br/> Has not yet became a butterfly"</p> |
|---|--|

## GOOD TRANSLATION

Croche remarks that good translation should compare favourably with the source text, it should have its original value as a creative work and should be capable of standing on its own independently.” (Joshi 80).

Good translators are fluent in the language they are involved in. They are familiar with the structure of the other language and its linguistic diversity. “In some rare cases when the translator is gifted with rare sensitivity and fine aesthetic sense, and at the same time has a thorough multilingual-multicultural orientation, then there could be moments of exquisite aesthetic pleasure and instances of excellent, almost complete equivalence.” (Kundu 60)

Though uninterrupted emotional shades are expressed, in Bharathi Dasan’s Azhaghu, Dr. Chellappan has translated it without losing its flavour. He is able to differentiate between the denotative, connotative and idiomatic meanings of words.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Azhagu</b><br>Kaalayilam parithiyile avalai kandeyn!<br>kadarpparappil, olippunalil kandeyn! antha<br>solayile, malarkalile, thalirkal thammil<br>thotta edam elamkannil thattupattal!<br>manayiley mettrisayil elaku kindra<br>manikka sudarilaval erunthal aalanj<br>salayile kilaithorum kiliyin kootam<br>thanil antha azhakenpal kavithai thandal.<br>sirukuzhanthai vizhiyinile oliyay nindral ;<br>thiruvilakkir sirikkindraal. naaraduthu<br>narumalarai thoduppallin viralvallayil<br>nadakathai seikindral: adade senthot<br>parathinile kalappayudan uzHAVAN sellum<br>puthuudayil poorithal; vilaintha nansai<br>nilathinile envizhiyai niruthinal: en<br>nenjathil kudiyeri makachi saithal<br>thisaikandeyn, van kandeyn utpurathu<br>serinthanavaam palappalavum<br>kandeynyandum<br>asaivanavum nindranavum kandeyn<br>mattrum<br>azhaguthanai kandeyn nallinbanganden<br>pasaiyulla porulilellam pasaival kaan!<br>pazhamayinal sakatha elayaval kan!<br>nasayodu nokkada engum ullal! | <b>BEAUTY</b><br>In the tender rays of the dawn I saw her;<br>In the expanse of the sea, in the flood of<br>light I saw her;<br>In the grove, in the flowers, in the sprouts<br>She made herself visible wherever I<br>touched:<br>She shines in the ruby lamp<br>That glimmers in the sky in the dusk.<br>In the roads, in the parrots of the<br>branches.<br>Dame Beauty offered the gift of poetry.<br>She stood as the light that shines in the<br>eyes of the child;<br>She smiles in the holy lamp and performs<br>A dance in the curve of the fingers of the<br>lass<br>Who weaves a garland of the flowers:<br>behold<br>She dwells jubilant in the shoulders.<br>In the majestic walk of the peasant with a<br>plough:<br>She fastens my eyes on the colourful<br>paddy field<br>And inspires joy by dwelling in my heart.<br>Directions and the sky I saw; and |
|--|--|

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| nallazhagu vasappattal thunbamillai. | The infinite variety enshrined within:<br>All that is in motion and still, I saw:<br>Again I saw Beauty and I found joy.<br>See, She is the pulp behind all that is green<br>See the virgin unravished by antiquity<br>Look with love, She is everywhere<br>If you submit to her charms, sorrow there is none. |
|--------------------------------------|--|

### TRANSCREATION

“Iyenger remarks, “Poetry by its very nature is untranslatable. Ideas can be translated from language to language, but poetry is the idea touched with the magic of phrase and incantatory music. Competent translator can, however, play the good broker between the Poet and the reader, and surpassing the mere prose of statement can give intimations of the poet’s sovereign utterance. Good translation can create trust and it can stimulate interest.” (Das 39)

Bharathidasan’s *Indha sumayai* can be cited as an example. This act of translation at its best emerges as an act of transcreation.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Indha Sumayai</b><br>Indha Sumayai<br>yethanai naal sumappathu?<br>endravathu oru naal<br>yirakkithan<br>theera vendum<br>yaranum<br>irakkathal<br>yirangi vaikka<br>tholin sumayalle<br>yethu<br>nenjin sumai! | <b>How Long can I</b><br>How long can I<br>bear this burden?<br>I must unload it<br>one of these days.<br>For some one<br>to help place it down<br>out of pity,<br>it is not a shoulder’s weight;<br>It is<br>my heart’s strain. |
|--|--|

It is the opinion of Culler that every text, takes place as a mosaic of citations. Infact every text is the absorption and transformation of other texts. It makes the translator recreate the poem, both thematically and stylistically, within the paradigm of the age concerned. Vairamuthu’s *Erumbukalodu Oru Pechu Varthai* is a good translation of artistic creation. In fact, it transcends translation; it becomes a new creation.

| <b>Erumbukalodu Pechu Varthai</b>   | <b>Conversation with Ants</b>  |
|---|--|
| <p>Erumbukale Erumbukale<br/> uyirthulikalinal oorvalangale<br/> pathu kodi aandukul munne<br/> bhoomiyil oorntha poochiyiname<br/> ulakin mikachiriya ascharyame<br/> ungalodu pesavendum<br/> sirithu neram sevi saippeera?<br/> “nindrum pesi neerankazhikka<br/> nangal ondram manitharkala ellai<br/> ethu ketpathayinum<br/> Emmodu oornthuvarum<br/> oru senti meetariyil<br/> ootri vaitha ulakame<br/> arpa uyirendru<br/> avalappattathunda?<br/> bethai manithare<br/> milli meter alavilum<br/> emminathil uyirundu<br/> than edai pola imbathu madangu<br/> erumbu sumakkum<br/> neer sumappeer?”<br/> ungal pozhuthupokku....?<br/> vazhve pozhuthupokku<br/> thedale vilayattu<br/> oorthale oyvu<br/> aaru muthal pathuvaram<br/> ayul konda vazhvu – ethil<br/> oyvenna oyvu? thalai<br/> saivenna sayvu?<br/> entha ayulukka<br/> ethanai padu?</p> | <p>Ants, O ants!<br/> O droplets of life in procession!<br/> O insect species that crawled on this earth<br/> a hundred million years ago!<br/> O minuscule wonders of this world!<br/> I wish to converse with you<br/> Would you for a short while listen to me?<br/> We are not humans to waste time<br/> stopping for conversation<br/> Whatever you may wish to ask<br/> do so as you crawl with us<br/> O microcosm poured into<br/> a centimetre<br/> have you ever felt dispirited<br/> that you are such impuissant creatures?<br/> O foolish man!<br/> In our species are creatures<br/> just a millimetre long<br/> and yet an ant can carry<br/> fifty times its weight -<br/> are you capable of that?<br/> Your pasttime?<br/> Life itself is a pastime<br/> the quest is recreation<br/> crawling is repose<br/> Our lifespan<br/> is but six to ten weeks - in that time<br/> wherefore rest - yea rest?<br/> Wherefore to recline the head - yea<br/> recline?<br/> Moil you thus<br/> for such a lifespan?</p> |

Chakraborty opines, “A good translation shows a spontaneous and creative process of journey of a theme and meta-theme from one linguistic framework to another linguistic framework. Translation of this nature, the aim and objective of which is recreation, is also an artistic marvel.” (42)

Neelapadmabhan's Sleep can be mentioned here as an example of a poem, where the translator has exhibited a knowledge of the subject of translation. Indeed, he preserves the original in the reworded version, and avoids all unnecessary departure from the style of the original. Here the translator captures the quality of a great work of literature in English.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>Sleep</b><br/> in mother's womb<br/> in her breast's warmth<br/> in the cloth cradle<br/> in the creaking crib<br/> in father's embrace<br/> on the kora-grass-mat<br/> on the cane-spun-coach<br/> in the sensuous<br/> rapture of the<br/> opposite sex<br/> on the velvet mattress<br/> at children's touch<br/> on the kora-grass-mat<br/> on the bare earth<br/> on the green-bamboo-bier<br/> held shoulder high<br/> by<br/> F            O<br/> U            R<br/> men<br/> on the dreid dung-cake<br/> at the burning ghat<br/> in the liberating fire<br/> in the six foot earth<br/> in the ethereal plain</p> |
|--|--|

To quote Tiwari, "One other important translation feature is our attempt to be as consistent as possible with the rendering of original language words." (52). Brammarajan's Vazhum Kanangal or Living Moments can be cited as an example.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Vazhum Kanangal</b><br/> Moolai narambondru arunthu<br/> olivellam ulle pukundhu<br/> manaveliyum nilavoliyil kulira<br/> sevipparai suyamaai athira</p> | <p><b>Living Moments</b><br/> A never in the brain snapped<br/> A flash of light rushed in<br/> The mind's expanse cooled<br/> in the moonlight</p> |
|--|---|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| mannil orupothum kettiratha<br>oosai uvakaikal ezhumbine<br>bhashai urugi oodittru<br>oru sol michamillai<br>en pregicknai diravamaki<br>prepanjathin sarumamai<br>nedukilum padarntathu<br>oru kanamthan<br>maru kanam<br>lariyin eraichal<br>ethire kaali naarkaali | The ear-drum beat<br>on its own<br>and the joys of sound<br>never heard of on earth<br>rose<br>Langauge melted<br>flowed on<br>Not a word remained<br>My awareness turned liquid<br>spread all over the surface<br>of the universe<br>Only a moment<br>The next<br>the hurtling of a lorry<br>Right before me<br>the vacant chair |
|---|---|

M.S. Ramaswamy's translation has most effectively recaptured the words of Bharathiyar's *Wind Come*. The translator invests his words with particular nuances.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Kattre vaa.... methuvaka vaa...</b><br>noyntha vedu: noyntha kathavu<br>noyntha koorai, noyntha param<br>noyntha udal, noyntha uyir<br>noyntha ullam...<br>evattrai kattru thevan<br>daithu norukki viduvan. | <b>Wind, Come</b><br>The Ramshackle house<br>The rickety door<br>The tattered thatch<br>The rotten rafter<br>The weak body<br>The weary spirit<br>The sick heart : |
|---|--|

Sirpi's Mounam is perhaps the best example what the poet sought to accomplish through translation. His translation concurs with the views of Walter Benjamin who writes, that real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though, reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Silence</b><br>Wide world am I<br>Said the lamp<br>Bueatiful am I<br>Said the wick |  |
|---|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Pulsating life am I<br>Said the flame<br>The oil Born at toil<br>Filling the lamp<br>With sweat and blood<br>Uttered no word. |  |
|---|--|

When image, metaphor and symbol of poems evolve out of a very personal poetic imagination, the work of translation becomes more challenging as seen in the translation of Atmanam's Maru Pariseelanai translated as reconsideration.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Marupariseelanai</b><br>Naan ethanaiyume marupariseelanai<br>vittuvidukeran<br>naan paditha puthakangal ennai keli<br>saikendrma<br>nee pazhaya manithan than enkirathu oru<br>puthakam<br>puthiya manithan than enkirathu innoru<br>puthakam<br>naan manithan thana endru sothithukollum<br>nirbanthangal<br>thondayil sikkikonda meenin mullena<br>pachai pulveliyidai sikkikonda karupambu<br>verumane summa erukka mudiyatha pena<br>sitharpparakkum pinathinni kazhukukal<br>engo ketkum kookkural<br>thunikkayittril thongum kuralvalaigal<br>thoongubhavargalaiyum thoonguvathu pol<br>nadippavargaleyum<br>ezhuppum varthai koottangal<br>puruppattakivittathu karuppu padai | <b>Reconsideration</b><br>I leave everything for reconsideration<br>The books I read mock at me.<br>You're the old man, says one book:<br>You're the new man, says another.<br>The compulsions that test<br>whether I am a man at all<br>like the fish bone stuck in the throat<br>the black snake entangled in the green<br>grass<br>the pen that cannot remain still<br>the vultures that fly around<br>eating the corpses<br>the piercing cries afar off<br>the necks strangling the string<br>the verbal glut<br>that awakens<br>those who sleep and<br>those who sham it.<br>The black army has started<br>its march. |
|---|--|

Most good writers have each a particular style of their own, which style the translators have endeavoured to preserve. Some faithful translators, add nothing and do not omit anything. They accord in all parts even length, with its original. They attempt to pursue closely the syntax, cadences and sound of other language into their own.

The translation in Sukumuran's At a hill station is actually transformation of ideas expressed in such a way that the beauty and concept conveyed in the source language are not spoiled. There is a commendable honesty and fidelity to the original in his works.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Malainagarathil naal</b><br/> Alarum kali kudanguludan penkal<br/> nizhalil pathungiya vazkai payanangalai<br/> yizhthu kondu siruvarkal<br/> (sontha edangalil olinthukollum)<br/> sirakukalai<br/> ursakamai asainthukondu priyanikal<br/> oru sayangalam mudivadaikirathu;<br/> yookkaliptus marangalukku pinnal<br/> arupatta thalayena maraiyum sooriyan<br/> ratham sithari<br/> iruludan kuzhambum eri<br/> malai – oru unnatham<br/> payanam – oru porattam<br/> yeninum<br/> manach chuvattril yidayarathu kasiyum<br/> rakathin keetrai ninaivuruthi parakkum<br/> manjal mooku paravai yirukkum<br/> yengeyum</p> | <p><b>At a Hill Station</b><br/> Women with wailing pots<br/> Children dragging<br/> life’s fears<br/> that lurk in the shadow<br/> Travellers<br/> swing joyously their wings<br/> (hidden in their own places).<br/> An eveing ends:<br/> Behind the eucalyptus trees<br/> the setting a severed head<br/> scatters blood<br/> And the lake<br/> blends with the dark.<br/> Mountain – a magnificence<br/> Journey - a struggle.<br/> And yet<br/> everywhere there will be<br/> the yellow – beaked bird<br/> that flies<br/> reminding<br/> the snatch of a melody<br/> that seep ceaselessly<br/> through the walls of the mind.</p> |
|--|---|

Some of Dr. Marunathanayakam’s translation of Sirpi’s poems are herewith cited for good translation. Here the translator, before he starts encoding the meaning of SL text into a TL text, identifies the tone, the colour and the style of SL text. What matters most here is the translator’s bilingual competence.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Kavinjanin Nenjam</b><br/> Thozhuthezhum yezhai vazhvai<br/> thuyarkadal aakkivittu<br/> kozhuthirum selvan konda<br/> kodaigunam pottra matten;<br/> kozhumunai nilathil paya<br/> kottidum thozhilin selvan<br/> uzhaippinai pottruven naan;<br/> uvandhidai yinithu nenje!</p> | <p>For the sake of Living<br/> Our countrymen don’t know<br/> the harm caused by<br/> the falsity of the show staged<br/> by the literature that sway<br/> like the trees caught<br/> in a storm; all these troubles<br/> My grief stricken heart!</p> |
| <p><b>Naan</b></p>  | <p><b>I am</b></p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Yenakkoru kodiyaum yenakkoru padaiyum<br>yeraivan tharavillai;<br>manakkadal alaiyil sanathiral naduvil<br>maraivai kida endran! | No Flag, no army<br>God has given me;<br>In the waves of the sea – mind<br>in the midst of masses<br>“Lie hidden”, he bade me. |
|--|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>En Ezhuthukkal</b><br>Uyaram Kuraindhavan naan<br>Aayinum enathu<br>ezhuthukkal kullamanavai alla<br>koolikku avaikal pirandhadhumillai<br>velikkul mudangi kidandhadhumillai | <b>Short Statured I am</b><br>Short-statured I am<br>but my writings are not,<br>They were never born of wages<br>Never lay hidden behind fences. |
|--|---|

Matrum Sila Kelvical by Vairamuthu exemplifies the translator’s faithfulness to ST.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>matrum sila kelvical</b><br>mozhiyay muthirnthathu oli<br>kavithayay muthirnthathu mozhi<br>ennavay muthirum kavi?<br>eruppukkollatha bhoomi<br>erulukkul thirumbi kondu<br>sooriyan maranthanendru<br>solluthul sariyamo?<br>kelvical nallavai<br>soonyathil pooppuvai<br>vazhvai salikkavidathavai | <b>A few More Questions</b><br>Be it fit for the feckless earth<br>to turn its face toward the dark<br>and declare<br>that the sun is dead?<br>Does the appellation of Mother<br>befit the earth<br>that accepts within itself all that is created?<br>Cogent questions are these<br>that bloom in vacuity<br>and beguile tedium life<br>the wheels they are<br>that conduct humankind forward<br>the seeds they are<br>that will break out and grow<br>from the rainfall<br>if not of today ...or of tomorrow...<br>of some aftertime<br>Cogent questions they are |
|---|---|

In the views Chakraborty, “A translator’s awareness of the ‘cultural significance’ leads him to examine the pragmatics of SL text. Pragmatic deals with the ‘characterization’ of speaker’s meaning.’. Linguistic pragmatics is the analysis of the use of context to make inference about meaning. Interpretation of symbols, imagery, allusion, etc.,

depends on many occasions upon the analysis of context – the analysis which comes under the purview of pragmatics.” (42)

There is greater freedom and subjectivity in interpretation in the case of the translation of a literary text. On the other hand, a literary translation, aesthetic in nature, is an independent text because it tolerates and encourages deviations, additions, and omissions. Hence the literal translation of a literary text will not be faithful to its spirit, for the life of the literary text is its subtext or “inspeech”. The translator is being faithful to the spirit of the text. (Oberoi 67, 68) Premanandakumar Kuyil Song is cited as an example. Here the translator enjoys enormous but reasonable freedom.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>Kuyil’s Song</b><br/>Love, oh love without end:<br/>    and love failing,<br/>death, but death for ever.<br/>Light, everlasting light:<br/>    and light failing,<br/>darkness unending.<br/>Joy, joy for always:<br/>    and joy failing.<br/>misery, O misery.<br/>Music oh sweet the music:<br/>    and when music fails,<br/>only cacophony.<br/>Beat the rhythm, beat the rhythm:<br/>    and when rhythm fails,<br/>mere confusion.<br/>Divine the poetic voice :<br/>    but when poetry fails,<br/>just the dross of the earth.<br/>Welcome earthly fame:<br/>    but a slip once made,<br/>infamy for ever.<br/>Stand steadfast, firm:<br/>    and when you waver,<br/>crumble in the dust.<br/>O bliss of lovers’ union:<br/>    but when the partner leaves,<br/>only pie for ever.<br/>O rich melodious flute!<br/>    but when it cracks,<br/>alas, cast it away.</p> |
|--|--|

## Literal Translation

Cicero gave vent to the translator's dilemma long ago when he said: "If I render word for word, the result will sound uncouth, and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator. (Pathak 21)

Chandrika opines, "A literal translation, conveys only the surface meaning, and is important for the information content, because it is faithful only to the surface text. If the translator has to be faithful to the sub-text, he/she has to be more literary than literal in her translation. Insistence on literal faithfulness is not always healthy, especially in the translation of literary texts, for it would often produce an unreadable text. A certain degree of creative freedom has to be granted to the translator of literary texts." (65)

In the words of Patil, "More familiar modes of translation are literal translation or paraphrasing, free translation or paraphrasing, adaptation and real translation. In literal translation or paraphrasing or word to word rendering, the translator has to follow the original closely. Since language changes both horizontally and vertically, the translator cannot render it faithfully." (16)

Dryden writes that a translator ought to possess himself entirely and perfectly, comprehend the genius and sense of his author, the nature of the subject, and the terms of the art of subject treated of. And then he will express himself as justly and with as much life, as if he wrote the original; whereas he who copies word for word loses all the spirit in the tedious transfusion (Bassnett 149).

Doraiswami Pillai in his translation of Bharathiyar's Koel Song has translated the text word by word, sentence by sentence, producing a highly difficult to read version. Here though he is faithful to the surface text, in the word for word translation, the poem sounds strange.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>The Song of the Koel</b><br/>Love, Love, Love!<br/>Love forsaken, Love forsaken is<br/>Death, death, death!<br/>Kindly light! Kindly light!<br/>Light put out, light put out,<br/>Darkness, darkness, darkness!<br/>Delight, delight, delight!<br/>Delight, when limit is set to it, is<br/>Lament, lament, lament!<br/>Sound, sound, sound!</p> |
|--|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Sound is dead and gone, comes<br/> Destruction, destruction, destruction!<br/> Rhythm, rhythm, rhythm!<br/> Rhythm obstructed, is<br/> Dirt, dirt, dirt!<br/> Tune, tune, tune!<br/> Tune dislocated, tune dislocated is<br/> Mud, mud, mud!<br/> Fame, fame, fame!<br/> Fame besmirched, fame besmirched is<br/> Shame, shame, shame!<br/> Promise promise, promise!<br/> Promise broken, promise broken is<br/> Shattering end, shattering end!<br/> Unison, unison, unison!<br/> Partner departed, partner departed is<br/> Lament deplorable!<br/> Flute, flute, flute!<br/> Flute broken, flute broken is<br/> Waste, waste, waste!</p> |
|--|---|

### NOT SO GOOD TRANSLATION

Translation is a new or recent phenomenon. No translation is perfect in an absolutist sense. The expectations of the readers of the original may be different from those of the readers of the translation. Hence judgements will always vary. It is difficult to assert that a not so good translation is better than no translation, A bad translation is certainly harmful, while not having any translation cannot be said to be positively harmful. (Pathak 43)

F.S. Growse remarks that the ‘language employed is certain times throughout curiously unidiomatic, that in many places it is absolutely unintelligible without a reference to the original’, and that the translated version misrepresents the ‘spirit’ of the original work. All bad translations are partial translations because they are simply structure-oriented or content-oriented. The errors are due to lexis acquired through inadequate syntactic information.

Certain lines are omitted in the translation in such way as not to affect the readability of the text. But it must be said that at certain places, the freedom for interpretative translation is taken a bit far by the translator. (Oberoi P 67)

The way words in sentences of the SL text are arranged may be changed in sentences of the TL text. For example, Nakulan’s Step aside can be cited as an example.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ivvalavu periya<br>veettil<br>enakku edamillai<br>ivvalavu<br>periya nagarathil<br>arintha mukam ethumillai | Step Aside<br>I have no place of my own<br>in such a large house;<br>No known face<br>in such a big town. |
|---|---|

The Tamil poem begins with, “in such a large house.” Then again the next point begins with “in such a big town” while it is not so in the Tamil version. exact reproduction of the poems from the source language into TL text is not found. The way words are arranged in a sentence, governs its style. In some translations words phrases, clauses or stanzas, have been omitted. Certain times translators have used difficult words in the translation. For example Vairamuthu’s Music, the words ‘occluded’, in his Few more questions, the words, the feckless earth, appellation of Mother, Cogent questions, bloom in vacuity will challenge an ordinary reader.

Foreign words such as en masse, in Vairamuthu’s music, boudoir from Erumbukalodu Oru pechu varthai, will pose problem for the ordinary reader.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Esai</b><br>Athanai thulaikkum<br>thiranthal arithu<br>athanai kodi thulaikalaiyum<br>ore kanathil thiranthuvaikkum<br>esaye | <b>Music</b><br>Most holes<br>are occluded since birth<br>and remain unopened until death<br>Rare is it<br>to uncloze all the holes<br>Where, O Music,<br>did you acquire he device<br>to unstop all the holes en masses<br>at an instant? |
|---|--|

The translation of Sirpi Balasubramaniam’s Mounam as stillness by M.S. Ramaswamy is not appropriate, when only the word Silence is correct. K.S. Subramaniam has retranslated it with the title silence. There are many **titles** of the Tamil poems which have not been translated properly.

| Author    | Tamil | English                |
|-----------|-------|------------------------|
| Pasuvaiah |       | That friend            |
|           |       | Do not Rap on the Door |
|           |       | The Ocean Laughed      |
|           |       | In Front of a Mirror   |

|                              |  |                              |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Subramania Bharathi</b>   |  | <b>Snaker</b>                |
| <b>Bharathi Dasan</b>        |  | <b>Justice for Women</b>     |
|                              |  | <b>The Sacrificial Altar</b> |
| <b>C. Manee</b>              |  | <b>Room</b>                  |
| <b>Neelapadmabhan</b>        |  | <b>Aloneness</b>             |
| <b>Sirpi Balasubramaniam</b> |  | <b>Stillness</b>             |
|                              |  | <b>Tied to a Stake</b>       |

In the following poems of Iraianbu some of the lapses in the translation are highlighted.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| maniyosakal Maraikindrna<br>malarkalin vasam mattume<br>meethamirukkindrana<br>pooranamai malai pozhuthu | Temple bells die out<br>the fragrant blossoms remain<br>A perfect evening |
|--|---|

In the above-mentioned lines temple bells fade out will be more appropriate than die out. “The fragrant blossoms remain / a perfect evening” could be rewritten as floral fragrance alone lingers / a perfect evening.

Another poem of the same author is quoted below where the appropriate words are not used in the translation.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Pettikku vantha piraku<br>ellarume samam -<br>sathuranga kaikal<br>- ISSA | once in the box<br>everyone of them equal -<br>the chess pieces.<br>- ISSA |
|---|--|

Nakulan’s few lines of the poem *Ellaikal* may be quoted as an example of the need to avoid inappropriate words used in translation.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Ellaikal</b><br>Avan ellaikalai kadanthu kondi<br>rindhan. Oru kalai pin vaithu<br>oru kalai mun vaithu nakarvathil<br>than nadai sathiyamakirathu. Iru<br>kalaiyum oru sera vaithu nadanthal<br>thadalendru vizhithan vendum | <b>Boundaries</b><br>He was crossing the boundaries. Walking<br>becomes<br>possible only when one takes<br>a step forward and a step<br>backward. If one walks<br>with both feet simultaneously |
|--|---|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | one comes down crashing.<br>If one stands without crossing the boundaries “there is the shock of the becoming it.” |
|--|--|

Two more poems are cited as example from one portion of Bharathidasan’s Kavinjanin Nenjam and his Yezhuchiyuttra Pengal.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Kavinjan Nenjam</b><br/>Vazhvukkai thangal yeena<br/>vayittru natpai mattrum<br/>thazhvuttror theeya ullam<br/>thakarthisa, edindhu veezha,<br/>pazhukku neerirainthu<br/>panpukku nanju thanthum<br/>vazhuvor neerai poka<br/>va nenje! yezhutha nenje!</p>  | <p>For the sake of living,<br/>for the sake of bellies poor,<br/>the debased will betray friends;<br/>to assail their evil minds<br/>to bring about their downfall<br/>and to annihilate those<br/>that nourish the wicked<br/>and poison the virtuous<br/>Come! My heart, write!</p>  |
| <p><b>Yezhuchiyuttra Pengal</b><br/>Virindhu oru vanathil olivellathai<br/>viraindhu vandhu karumegam<br/>vizhungakkoodum!<br/>yerundha veyil yirulakum oru kanathil!<br/>yithu athuvai marividum marukanathil<br/>therindhuthan; analum ondeyondru<br/>thilindha or ullathil yezhundha kathal<br/>parundhu vandhu kothumendrum<br/>thanivathillai;<br/>padaithirandu vandhalum salippathillai!</p> | <p><b>The Awakened Women</b><br/>The brilliance of the light beyond<br/>May be eaten up by dark clouds:<br/>Sunshine may vanish in a moment!<br/>It is well known that a change<br/>Comes the very next moment!<br/>But the love that springs in a clear heart<br/>Does not fear the swoop of a vulture!<br/>It does not dry up when an army attacks it.</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Veedukalai savakasamaka<br/>vaithirukkiren<br/>kavalaippadatheer<br/>silanthikale<br/>-issa</p> | <p>Don’t worry spiders<br/>I keep houses casually”<br/>- ISSA</p> |
|--|---|

In the above-mentioned translation, the word “casually” is not the appropriate word for savakasamaka.



In the following poem of Eraianbu the translation this “flowering weed” is not the correct translation for “pookkum entha pullai”. Grass cannot be weed.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Teiji Ezhuthiya Oru Hi-koo Kavithai</b><br/> Peyarai kettathum<br/> puthithaka parthen<br/> pookkum entha pullai</p> | <p>Hearing its name<br/> I looked at it a new<br/> this flowering weed.</p> |
|--|---|

In Vairamuthu’s A few more questions, *Matrum Sila Kelvigal*, in the line “into what with the poet ripen” the word *poem* has to be used. The word poet has been used in the translation. Since *poem* is the right substitute for the Tamil word is Kavi.

In Pasuvaiah’s *That friend*, the word “gone” has to be translated as “disappeared.” In his poem *Flower bedecked dream*, the word Kuzhumbi has been translated as I am dazed instead it should have been I am confused. Further in his In search of my flower branching problems, could be suggested translation for The tortuous lanes. In Vairamuthu’s *Music* the words Rare is it is not the correct translation for Thirithal Arithu. It could have been Rare it is. In Meera’s My very face fond of seeing yours hides it and that is the worst of it is not the correct translation for Un mugam kana vizhaium en mukame un mukum maraikkum visithira kodumai. In Bharathiar’s *this world is one* the last few words have not been appropriately translated. To quote

This one is the ‘self’  
The self is God  
The self is ambrosia  
the deathless.

Here self is not the correct word for athma (BjUô). The word spirit is the correct word and the word deathless has to be translated as eternal.

### OMISSIONS / ADDITIONS / DEVIATION

When translators ‘add’ something to the text they are translating, or ‘delete words or stanzas, or alter, such questions often baffle the readers. They result in the distortion of his/her fidelity to the SL text. This has been a perennial problem for translators.

In Bharathiyar’s The Trembling leaf, the last line is not translated. In Sukumaran’s Images inspired by *music - Isai tharum padivangal*, the fourth section has not been translated. In his *summer notes* second and third sections only have been translated.

In Bharathidasan’s beautiful lines Mannil vanamum undu, vanathil mannum kooda have not been translated in the poem engengu kaninum. In his poem Kaalam four lines have

not been translated. In Kavinganin Nenjam stanzas one and four, in En Ezhuthukkal the third stanza have not been translated. Third stanza of the En ezhuthukkal has not been translated. The translator has missed translating the latter half of Kavi Mugam. The translator omitting such beautiful stanzas of Bharathidasan's poem is indeed a great loss.

The translation of some of the beautiful songs of Kannadasan as found only in the Internet has missed translating some passages.

A sincere attempt has been made to translate the above mentioned poem which is as follows.

**Atho antha paravai pole . . .**

Live, we must, like that bird there;  
Dance, we must, like these waves.  
Under the heavens and on this same land,  
Sing, we will, one song of liberty.

Sukumaran's *Summer notes* II & III section only. In Si. Manee's Arraiveli the word jumped is missing. Meera's in the ulagam the word Valithathu has not been translated.

The English version of Pasuvaiah's *Kannadi Mun Kadavulaiyum Serthu Oru Pukar* does not try to reach anywhere near the complexity of the images of the original and does not render even a trace of the sense of intense feelings of the poet. The wrong title of the English version, *In front of the mirror* misleads the reader and the metaphor of God is dropped in the English translation. The English translation gets nowhere near the intricate ambiguity of the original poem.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Kannadimun kadavulaiyum serthu oru pukar</b><br/>en manam en mukam nakka<br/>kandrin kuriyai thaai nakkupol<br/>nakki adimadi ekkalithu sukangal<br/>kilukiluppu kal ezhukka<br/>yethainai tharam unmun nakarthapattain<br/>ippoZHuthu atharkku alla.<br/>ularntha en mukum velippadum salippil<br/>spurithathu erukkume unakkum oru<br/>mukum<br/>enge athu<br/>en bimbathin pinnila<br/>naan endri unnai kana oru aasai<br/>un mukam kana vizhaiyum en mukame</p> | <p><b>In Front of a Mirror,</b><br/>The cow licks her calf's behind,<br/>her udder tickling,<br/>feels happy;<br/>the thrill drags her legs.<br/>likewise<br/>how many times was I moved to you<br/>to see my mind resemble my face?<br/>Now,<br/>not for that,<br/>In disgust<br/>my haggard face muses:<br/>"You too should have a face."<br/>Where is it?<br/>Is it behind my image?</p> |
|---|---|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>un mukum maraikkum visithira<br/> nakshathirangalum<br/> vallthudikka kathum anilum punarchiyum<br/> kanakkum karuthum thamukkin osaiyum<br/> en mun en mukam kakkuvathu en?<br/> endru aadai urithu<br/> ammanam pattrum en parvai.</p> | <p>A desire to see you devoid of me.<br/> My very face<br/> fond of seeing yours.<br/> masks it<br/> And that is the worst of it.<br/> If you are the mirror itself<br/> why should my face<br/> throw up before me<br/> the tree the sea<br/> the sparrows the stars<br/> the chattering squirrel<br/> thumping its tail<br/> the couplation<br/> the calculation<br/> the forethought<br/> the drum-beat?<br/> When will my sight<br/> undress<br/> and seize the nudity?</p> |
|---|---|

The following lines cited from Nakulan’s Step aside proves that translation is not effective here. Though the right meanings of the words for the original are used to avoid the loss of the sensibility in the translation, still the effect is lost. To quote,

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>arintha mukam kooda<br/> merpoochu kalaya<br/> anniyamaka<br/> urukkatti<br/> maraikirathu<br/> ennuruvam<br/> kalaya<br/> evvalavu<br/> kalam<br/> kadanthu sella vendum<br/> endru ninaivu vara<br/> sattre nakar<br/> endru oru kural koorum</p> | <p>Even the known face<br/> when it shows itself<br/> to be what it is<br/> turns into that of a stranger.<br/> When will I cease to be<br/> what I appear to be?<br/> The thought came up.<br/> A voice said,<br/> “Step aside.”</p> |
|--|---|

Sirpi's Mounam has been translated as Stillness by M.S. Ramaswamy can be cited as another example for not effective translation.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><b>Stillness</b><br/> The wide world<br/> I am that<br/> Said the small clay-lamp;<br/> The lovely flesh<br/> I am that<br/> Said that wick;<br/> The moving spirit<br/> I am that<br/> Said the flame;<br/> The; oil remained:<br/> The blood drops<br/> That labour sweats.<br/> It remained<br/> Still.....</p> |
|--|---|

The following poem of Si. Manee's *The Room* are not effective because the translation with some errors is not the exact translation of the source language.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Arrai Veli</b><br/> thappi vitten endru vizhithen<br/> sutru mutrum parthen. mele<br/> vanam; nanku pakkamum poovirul<br/> koorai, suvarkal ethuvum ellai<br/> ellapakkamum vazhikal therinthana<br/> vetta velithan ethu. arai alla<br/> endru silakanam thulliyathu enmanam.<br/> merke nadanthen edithathu orusuvar<br/> therke nadanthen edithathu orusuvar<br/> vadakke nadanthen edithathu orusuvar<br/> kizhakke nadanthen edithathu orusuvar<br/> ezhumbi kuthithen edithathu koorai</p> | <p><b>The Room</b><br/> Escaped<br/> thought I<br/> and woke;<br/> looked around the sky<br/> above and gloam on all sides.<br/> I here was nothing;<br/> no roof, no walls;<br/> only patns<br/> everywhere.<br/> This is space<br/> infinite not a room;<br/> my heart jumped<br/> a few moments.<br/> I walked<br/> towards the west<br/> towards the south<br/> towards the north<br/> towards the east:<br/> the walls struck me.</p> |
|--|--|

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
|  | I sprang up<br>And the roof hit me |
|--|------------------------------------|

In the English translations, the original Tamil, is sometimes unrecognizable because they are mutilated beyond recognition. The translations of Bharathidasan's Tamilthai is quoted as an example.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Thangappa</b> | <b>MOTHER TAMIL</b><br>Mother Tamil,<br>You are the one<br>Who will exalt our lives.<br>All glory is yours<br>You save us from downfall;<br>valour and victory come from you<br>I will never allow you<br>I am a Tamil, my head<br>Will never be bent in shame.<br>O Mother, our source of joy<br>Mother of rich Tamil<br>You are the life in my body.<br>How can I forget you?<br>My life, and my life's fragrance.<br>I dedicate to you<br>My body and my soul.<br>If you are harmed<br>My life would go to pieces;<br>And if you are raised to eminence,<br>I'd become exalted.<br>Like a host of lotuses you bloomed<br>On the lake of humanity<br>Which lay in utter ignorance<br>In ages past.<br>You illumined them, O Tamil,<br>All hail to you. |
|------------------|--|

This research undertakes to explore the great damage that is done to human thought and works of art when translators do not retain the “original sense” of the words of writers. Inappropriate translations are caused by carelessness or unfair treatment of a thought conveyed by the author. Lack of scholarship or careful study also results in erroneous translations, making the original author, his work, and his ideas irrelevant and false.

While good translations become the voice of the original authors leaving the readers to be judges of their thought and idea, false translations use the original authors as their mouthpiece. Good translations are truthful vehicles of the thoughts of original writers, whereas false translations corrupt the works of the original writers making them subservient to their cause. Corrupt translations cause death to ideas. Thus, it is even more appropriate when Webster says that to translate is to “convey to heaven without natural death.”

This meaning although refers to the human body and not words, one finds here that it may be applied to the words of men and women as well. Their thoughts and ideas conveyed through the vehicle of language, if not preserved in their purest form to the best of our ability, die at the hands of men and women who cannot “translate” them to life. Such examples of ideas that have not survived not-so-careful translators are sadly seen in English translation of Tamil poetry. This research argues that the ideas of the poets of Tamil Nadu do have a right to live and not die.

## CHAPTER - IV CONCLUSION

Summarising the findings this venture has examined various procedures that are available to the translator for the translation of unmatched elements of culture and what use he makes of them in particular communicative situations. In particular, it has examined how the translator's strategies are related to the content of the cultural element in question, its expression in the source language, contrastive relations with possible expressions in the target language, its communicative function in the original message, and the communicative function of its different target-language counterparts in the translated message.

The true act of translation is the most sincere tribute that can be paid to the work translated. As testified good translators have responded to literature in the right way. Many writers have made a significant contribution to the field of translation. They have a good number of strategic options while translating a literary text. Many translators have interpreted the poems reasonably well, as they have restructured their interpretation into English while striving to approximate the original structure.

To a great extent they have the style of the original and have retained the source language text form. Some of the translations read like originals, but others like a translation. Some of the translators preserve the original in the reworded version and avoid all unnecessary departure from the style of the original.

Translations have remained faithful to the overall messages of the SL text, or to the vision of the authors of the SL text. In good translations, the authors have proved to be faithful both to the author of the text, and to himself since, the translator himself becomes an author when he translates the text. They have been faithful to the surface text and to the sub text. The translators remain faithful to the reader of the original text and the reader of the translated text.

Good translations have been made readable, easily accessible and acceptable in the target language. The translators have exhibited clear knowledge of the author and his work, his language, and the target language. A kind of multiple equivalence, of exquisite transference at the phonetic linguistic and cultural levels is perhaps more than equivalence in the sense that it seems, even better than the original. Good translation stimulates interest. Such good translations prove to be an artistic creation.

In the many examples of translation, the beauty and concept conveyed in the source language are not spoiled. Translators have a good number of strategic options while translating a literary text.

Most good writers have each a particular style of their own, which style the translators have endeavoured to preserve. Some faithful translators, add nothing and do not omit anything. They accord in all parts even length, with its original. They attempt to pursue closely the syntax, cadences, and sound of other language into their own. Transcreation offers an unbiased philosophical perspective and presents the main theme of the original text in simple, ordinary language easily accessible to today's readers.

Some of the problems faced in translating poetry from Tamil into English for the non-availability of source language texts, the reason given by a particular shop is that poetry books do not have a market. It is a sad situation that many of the libraries of the leading colleges do not have even the works of prominent post independence era writers.

No reprints of the source and target language text are available except for a few who have been reprinted recently. Some of the practical problems faced in the analysis are that many of the Tamil poems don't have a title. The first line of the poem is the title. Many books of Tamil poems don't have an index. Only the first lines are indexed. Some of them are not even indexed, whereas the translations have titles. So, to trace a few poems the entire collection has to be read. Tracing the poem with the first line of the poem and identifying the translation is indeed a time-consuming job.

Certain times translators alter not only the style by translating the poems in "simple", language, but also radically change the imagery, the tone, and the register of their language, in order to cater to the discursive parameters of English. In some translations, words, phrases, clauses, lines, or stanzas, have been omitted.

Sometimes in the translated versions, word order of the Tamil poems is changed. It takes days to trace one poem. Added to this some of the English translations have inappropriate titles. At other times books bought with such great enthusiasm do not have one poem of translation among the entire collection of Tamil poems. The substance of the SL text is retained but the form is changed in certain translations. When metaphor and symbol of poems evolve out of a very personal poetic imagination, the work of translation becomes more challenging.

Certain books were procured from other states as far as from Delhi and London. With immense difficulty, available books were traced and finally bought. With great difficulty a collection of Bharathidasan's translated collections were traced in a leading library of Madurai. But with great hesitation, permission was granted by the library to photo copy only a few poems with their translation.

Some of the poems of Kannadasan were available on the Internet only with some translations. Bharathiar's translations of the Kuyil poems by Doraisawmy Pillai was got from a lecturer at another college. But getting it from that person took many days for various



reasons. A better version of the translation by Prema Nandakumar was procured from Delhi. A few books of the source language and the target language were borrowed from well-wishers and friends.

Apart from all these challenges, the translated works have lapses like use of incorrect words, inappropriate words, foreign words, and difficult words. Many words of Tamil culture translated exactly as they are, have caused great difficulty. Grammatical errors of several kinds are prevalent in the translations.

In certain cases, poems translated into another language lose their texture and impact, since the resonance, so much a part of its originality, cannot be recaptured in a language with very different rules of grammar and syntax. Certain times the translator moves away from close linguistic or cultural equivalence. In many cases in the TL text a total linguistic or cultural equivalence is difficult to be achieved. The translator has to integrate various strategies in order to communicate most effectively.

At times due to culture difference, linguistic inequality occurs and therefore culture communication suffers. Cultural untranslatability surfaces when it involves absence in the TL culture of a relevant situational feature for the SL text. Sometimes the translation makes the poem sound too trivial and almost meaningless, since it is flawed in its choice of words and presentation of images. The process of translating some poems as samples of good translations demanded time. The entire work in progress was like going against a tide.

This venture has examined various procedures that are available to the translator for the translation of unmatched elements of culture and what use he makes of them in particular communicative situations. In particular, it has examined how the translator's strategies are related to the content of the cultural element in question, its expression in the source language, contrastive relations with possible expressions in the target language, its communicative function in the original message, and the communicative function of its different target-language corresponds in the translated message. Different strategies have to be blended for optimum result.

To quote Kundu, "In the Indian context transcreation is the only process by which we bridge the gap between different dialects, language, and cultures. It not only provides its readers the essence of the particular piece of literature but also creates the lust in the reader as the substantial inclusion of real instance of joys and pangs that are necessary corollary to the practice as a creative work of art" (54).

Translation has become the need of the hour. It is the only medium of exchanging our ideas and to update us in every field." (Tiwari 51). With emergence of multilingual society all over the globe and reduction of the globe to a village, translation has emerged as an invisible yet indispensable bridge not only for literary but for socio-cultural and even

commercial transactions as well. So, Translation has rightly been called as the eternal profession. (Joshi 78).

Trivedi remarks, it must be acknowledged that it is only in English that much of our ancient literature is accessible to us today. The English translations of Indian texts, both ancient and contemporary, have done the signal service of enhancing the awareness of the variety and richness of Indian literary culture not only abroad but, more importantly among the people of our own country.” (27).

Translation has thus proved to be a way of reading, interpreting, criticizing and in the same process creating a new text for those who have no access to literature in an alien language system. It is ‘carrying over’ into a new reader’s realm.”

Since language and culture are inextricably interwoven translation proves to be a way of establishing contacts between cultures. In particular, it examines how the translator’s strategies are related to the content of the cultural element in question, its expression in the source language, contrastive relations with possible expressions in the target language, its communicative function in the original message, and how the communicative function of its different target-language corresponds to the translated message.

“In spite of all the problems that threaten the authenticity of translation and undermine its position, the desire to translate on the part of scholars and translators has shown an upward trend.

Translation proves to be an act of communication; thereby it is an integral part of the world and not an isolated specimen of language. Its importance lies in the fact that it brings the readers, writers and critics of one nation into contact with those of others not only in the field of literature alone but in all areas of development: science and medicine, philosophy and religion, political science and medicine, and law and so on. Thus, translation helps in the cause of nation building.

In the Indian context the translator has a greater role to play. Several regional literatures of the country can reach all the Indian readers only through translation. Translation is not only desirable but also indispensable too. Life is too short to learn even the major languages of the world and enjoy their literatures. Hence, translation is the only potent vehicle of reaching out to those who do not have direct access to literature and knowledge in an alien language. (Sing 9)

To conclude with words of Joshi every language can enrich itself by translating the best creative works from other language into it. (78)

=====

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amur, G.S.  
K.R. Shirwadkar                      Essays on Comparative Literature and                      Linguistics.  
New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt.                      Ltd., 1984.
- Bassnett, Susan.                      Translation Studies. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2002.
- Bhatnagar, Y.C.                      Theory and Practice of Translation. New Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1993.
- Brain, Joseph, J.                      Poetry and Prose. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1967.
- Dingwancy Anuradha                      Between Languages Cultures, London: Oxford Books.
- Dr. K.S. Subramanian                      Tamil New Poetry, Twentieth Century Tamil Poets, New Delhi: Katha Poets Café, 2005.
- Drew, Elizabeth.                      A Modern Guide To Its Understanding and Enjoyment. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc, 1959.
- Husain, Kausar.                      Translation and Mother Tongue in Language Teaching. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1996.
- K. Karunakaran and M. Jayakumar. Translation as Synthesis: A Search for a New Gestalt, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Private Limited, 1988.
- K. Ray Mohit                      Studies in Translation. New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002.
- K. Ray, Mohit.                      Studies in Translation. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002.
- K. Singh, Avadhesh.                      Translation its theory and Practice. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1996.
- Macleish, Archibald.                      Poetry and Experience. England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1965.
- Meera                      Fancies + Fantasies = Scraps, Udumalpet: Ennes Publications, 1998.

- Menon Balan A drop in Search of the Ocean, New Delhi: Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd., 2003.
- Mukherjee Sujit Translation as Recovery. New Delhi: Suneha Computer Systems, 2004.
- Mukherjee, Sujit. Translation as Discovery. Hyderabad: Orient Longman Limited, 1994.
- Mukherji,  
Nirmalangshu. The Architecture of Language. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Nandakumar, Prema. Poems of Subramania Bharati, New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1977.
- Niranjana, Tejaswini. Siting Translation. Hyderabad: Orient Longman Limited, 1992.
- Ramaswami, M.S. Modern Tamil Poetry. Calcutta: A Writers Workshop Publication.
- Raman, N.S.S. Problems of Interpretation and Translation of Philosophical and Religious Texts. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2004.
- Ramaswami, M.S. Modern Tamil Poetry. Calcutta: A Writers Workshop Publication, 1988.
- Rattu, K. K. Translation through Media in New Millennium. Jaipur: Surabhi Publications, 2000.
- St-Pierre Paul, C. Kar Prafulla. In Translation Reflections, Refractions, Transformations New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Creative Unity. Madras: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1971.
- Toury, Gideon. Translation Across Cultures. New Delhi: Bahri Publications Private Limited, 1987.