

CULTURE-SPECIFIC NUANCES IN THE TRANSLATION

OF VACANAS BY A. K. RAMANUJAN

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

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CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

The Indian sub continent, in the world map, is always known for its most diverse linguistic and cultural arenas. The words like, ‘Unity in Diversity’ are highly prudent to a country like India that is incredibly rich in culture and heritage. India has always played the role of ‘Parent’, ‘Guardian’, ‘Friend’, and so on to the needy from all over the world. Stretching a helping hand and making them one among other Indians is in the very cultural tradition of India. In fact, India is the country of villages. Most of the customs and traditions are being practiced even today in Indian villages. This is what A.K. Ramanujan writes in his poem “Small Scale Reflections on a Great House,” whatever comes in the house gets lost in the things lost long ago and becomes one among them. If English remained the official language along with the regional languages in India today it is due to the assimilative quality of the Indians. This is how English has become the only link language in India for inter-state communication during various social, educational and such other situations.

In fact, decolonisation of English in modern India and the emergence of Indian English have proved that India is ever ready to accept the changes. Moreover, since its introduction, English language in India, has taken deep roots across the length and breadth of India practically in every field, more so in the field of higher education and research. Likewise, English language progressively made inroads into government administrative machinery, the media, the education system, the legal system and the social milieu as well. It is very remarkable to note the way in which English has been modified in India by Indians to suit various

circumstances. Customizing the language and changing it according to our need is an ongoing process in India. The good thing about the process is that this change is very positively accepted all over the world.

Today in India English is no more treated as a foreign language. It has become an integral part of Indian culture. The varieties of English in India are the result of various characteristic features at the phonological, lexical and syntactic and even at discourse levels. English language has developed its regional, social and occupational varieties. Although it is originated from the British English, Indian English has travelled a long distance till today. A number of factors have affected it in its journey that makes it a unique language of its kind.

Indian Writing in English is one of the various factors that enriched or contributed to make English language the lingua franca. In fact, the British introduced English education in India through the missionary schools. As a result of that there began the reading and writing in English. Of course, there was literature in India earlier but it was as diverse as the Indian languages. Those who studied in English schools imitated the English authors in their writings. They followed the English authors. Gradually the habit of writing in English improved, and then started the translation of the regional works into English and vice versa. As it is said elsewhere, initially the publication of English works in India was started with the translation of western classics including novels, and later it continued under the inspiration of Western models. It is well said in the words of K.R. Srinivas Iyengar:

What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature, and not just an overflow of English literature, is the equality of Indianness – in the

choice of subject, in the texture of thought and play of sentiment, in the organisation of the material.¹

The introduction of English education and modern technology there began the new awareness, a distinct cultural and national identity among the Indians. In this kind of climate of social ferment originated the Indian Writing in English. Moreover, as it is said earlier, it started first with the translations followed by other original written forms of literature. That is how translation is not new to the Indians. However, this was all due to the advent of colonisation. In a way, colonisation brought significant changes in the ways of life and modes of thinking. Such changes provided a stimulus for positive growth in more than one fields. What K.R. Srinivas Iyengar writes about this positive growth is worth quoting here:

The introduction – the infiltration – of western culture, the study of English literature, the adoption of western scientific techniques, although they gave a jolt to India's traditional life, although they generated a good many wrong movements, nevertheless served us as nobly by shocking us into a new awareness, a sense of urgency, a flair for practicality, and an alertness in thought and action. The long dormant intellectual and critical impulse was quickened into sudden life, a new efflorescence was visible everywhere and reawakening Indian spirit went forth to meet the violent challenge of the values of modern science and the civilisation of the west... It is an extraordinary story of endurance, assimilation and integral transformation. (Iyengar, 1)

Like this, began a new trend in the history of Indian literature. Especially, Raja Ram Mohan Roy played a major role in the renaissance in Indian literature. His act as a bridge between the western scientific approach and

the traditional Indian approach is noteworthy. It is vividly noticed that the modern Indian English writers today have emerged as a very specific 'breed'. In fact, the writings are shaped by the negotiation between cultures and more so in the case of translation. Therefore, the cross-cultural experiences and the changes in the social front continue to draw critical attention.

There are cultural differences between countries from one another due to various geographical and climatic conditions. According to the climatic conditions and the landscape the people have developed certain customs and traditions of their own. Like this, the language they speak and their social life form their culture. Therefore, when there was no such rapid movement of humans earlier, they developed their individual culture as they had no contact with other regions. However, in the present global world such diverse traditional practices between different cultures can be very well experienced when one is placed in a different culture. As people keep on moving from one place to the other, they are exposed to different cultures. Likewise, A.K. Ramanujan placed himself in the American culture, a completely different culture from that of his native Indian culture.

With the passing times, and changing locations life keeps on changing. Thereby, making the word 'culture' mean not one thing; rather making it to mean many things. That is how today there are various definitions of culture due to the changes in the life of the people living anywhere in the world. This is all because of the addition of changing things and practices of life to the definition of culture. As a result, definitions of culture by different theoreticians given at different times certainly have differences.

In her introduction to the book *Writers of the Indian Diaspora* Jasbir Jain writes about the creation of cultural theory thus:

Expatriate writing occupies a significant position between cultures and countries. It generates theory and defines positions as it constructs a new identity, which negotiates boundaries and confines and relates to different temporal and spatial metaphors. Cultures travel, take root or get dislocated and individuals internalise nostalgia or experience amnesia. Writers living abroad live on the margins of two societies and cultural theory is today being created by people who live on the margins.²

In this present global world people migrate from one country to another for varied reasons. Especially, the writers play a major role in cross-cultural negotiation as they express their experiences in their writings. In a way these migrations have encouraged translations from world literature. 'Usually, for a migrated writer, the native moorings will give way and his main springs of the creative activity will get automatically transferred to the new found land,' says TMJ Indra Mohan in his article *Nirad C. Chaudhuri: Dual Identity*.³ Moreover, Ramanujan himself began his translation work before poetic works. He also acknowledged that he was influenced by such English writers like W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Donne, and Shakespeare.

Due to the cultural variations every language is unique. The languages differ in vocabulary, grammar, syntax, associations, with their connotations and denotations. Therefore, a message in one language may not be mechanically reproduced in the other language. Some degree of alteration certainly takes place in translation. This is because the translator transposes his experience in that language and when he does it

he may see before him all the problems that a language can create. A translator's difficulties are chiefly related to linguistic and cross-cultural nuances. Therefore, it is required to convey a message in terms of meaning and style. This becomes all the more difficult when the source language and the target language belong to diverse cultures. Translation is not a mechanical thing rather it is a negotiation of cross-cultural connotations which pose every possible difficulty for the translator.

Cultural negotiation is unavoidable in translation. In fact, translation is a process of assimilation and assertion of different cross-cultural norms. Certain erudite scholars have successfully overcome the difficulties posed by the cross-cultural aspects in translation. One of such scholarly translators – A.K. Ramanujan – was impressed very much by the tenth and twelfth century classical Tamil and medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poetry. He learnt many things from his intent involvement in the study of classical Tamil and medieval *Bhakti* traditions. *Speaking of Siva* -- Kannada *bhakti* poems by *Virasaiva* saints (1973) -- is one among the translations by Ramanujan. His other translations are from Classical Tamil. They are *The Interior Landscape* (1967), *Hymns for the Drowning* (1981), and *Poems of Love and War* (1985).

As it is said earlier, translation is not new to the Indians. Translation in India began with the introduction of English education in India in schools and colleges. The curiosity of the natives of both the cultures gave them the impetus to know more and more about the alien culture. This resulted in the translation of the selected works from both the cultures into their mother cultures. Hence, the study aims at affirming the cultural nuances in the translation of *Vacanas* into English. Especially, the author A.K. Ramanujan's translated work *Speaking of Siva* is the pioneer work

in translating the medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poems. The project attempts to study the differences in the Kannada and English versions of *vacanas*. It throws light on the impending cultural differences emerging from this study.

A.K. Ramanujan was undoubtedly a master craftsman and his own poetry owes much to his translations. There is the influence of translation on his images, language, thoughts, and the techniques in his poetry. Essentially A.K. Ramanujan was trilingual – Kannada, Tamil, and English but his creative forte is bilingual confined to Kannada and English. His works reveal his erudite skill in making best use of his multilingual situation. His works seem to be an experiment with language as he wrote in Kannada and English. He used his bilingual sensibility for the purpose of translation, parody and irony. His works are like an enterprise of dialogue and exchange between language and cultures. His translations are not just ‘typing in a foreign language’, as translators are forced to continually analyze, interpret, evaluate and - as Umberto Eco puts it - negotiate with a text in order to construct a translation that conveys not just the ‘meaning’ but also the intent of the original.⁴

Ramanujan’s unobtrusive fusion of an essential Indian sensibility with modern Western approach is skillfully infused in his translation of *Speaking of Siva*. Due to his native and alien experiences, the force for his intellectual concern was both overwhelming and strengthening. There is the influence of both Indian and American cultures on him in more than one way. This particular quality of his poetry makes him a modernist. His translations are part of his undertaking as a bilingual poet. There is certainly ‘human displacement’ and ‘cultural dislocation’ in Ramanujan’s poetry. It was not just a movement but he tried to bridge the

gap between those places through his translations and his creative writing. Even when he wrote five volumes of poetry and translated classical Tamil and Medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poetry into English, still he was of the opinion that writing in a second language poses disadvantages specifically in translation. Whatsoever, Ramanujan's felt experience is very well given momentum in his creative expression.

Specifically the *vacana* writers had a great influence on him as they spoke of immortality of the moving (*Jangama*) and mortality of the standing (*Stavara*). The translations of Ramanujan, specifically the medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poems pose great challenge as they are in common man's language. The writers of *vacana* were mainly concerned to reach the common man through their vernacular language. They ridiculed and questioned fiercely the classical belief systems, social customs and superstitions in their *Vacanas* to establish a classless society.

The study is hoped to become a ready report for reference to those who wish to know the cultural nuances. It will also give enough scope and source to future researchers. This also shows how the author had tried to appropriate the meanings of certain Kannada words into English. The study will help in grasping the commonalities as well as contradictions in the two different cultures: Indian and the Western.

Objectives of Study:

- a. To understand the various shaping influences of culture and the primacy of culture in shaping one's experience.

- b. To identify the premises of Ramanujan's translations: his unobtrusive fusion of an essentially Indian sensibility with modern Western approach.
- c. To assess the significance and ramifications of cross-cultural nuances in Ramanujan's translations, especially *Speaking of Siva*.

The Plan of Study:

The present study is divided into five chapters including this introductory chapter and concluding with a chapter of a formal statement of evaluation.

The second chapter 'Review of Literature' provides the theoretical framework in which to situate this study. This chapter focuses on the different points of views of the critics on A.K. Ramanujan to study the cross-cultural nuances in the works of the author.

The third chapter 'Cultural Variations in the Translation of *Vacanas*' focuses primarily on the the cultural variations in the translation of some selected *vacanas*.

The fourth and the last concluding chapter summarises the formulations based on the observations and insights emerging from this study.

The fifth chapter 'List of Additional Words' provides the remaining words and terms that are indispensable or untranslatable for the translator.

Notes:

¹K.R. Srinivas Iyengar. Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2003, p. 698

²Jasbir Jain. Ed. Writers of the Indian Diaspora. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2007, p. 11

³Mohit K. Ray. Ed. Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2003, p.2

⁴Umberto Eco. Mouse or Rat: Translation as Negotiation. From Wikipedia the free encyclopedia referred on April 8, 2010.

CHAPTER – 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides the theoretical framework in which to situate this study. The chapter focuses on the different points of views of the critics to study the cultural variations and the difficulties in translation in general and the works of A.K. Ramanujan in particular.

Section (i)

Diverse Critical Views and Perspectives on Translation and

A.K. Ramanujan:

Being the first generation immigrant A.K. Ramanujan was one of the prominent Indian English writers as far as Indian classics and the culture are concerned. Though he lived in America, he was more fascinated by the Indian classics. His poems and his translations reveal his interest in the powerful projection of country's classical literature. In his book, writing about A.K. Ramanujan, Bruce King rightly asserts:

His poetry blends the techniques and conventions of European, Indian, American, and British literatures, with those of Kannada, Tamil, and Sanskrit. A Scholar and translator of Tamil and Kannada, he has been influenced by their conventions and the problems of translating Indian classical and medieval verse into modern English.¹

In poetry more than in any other form of literature, compliance with the source language and the target language becomes a very important consideration for a translator. In fact, the Indians mastered the language of the coloniser and produced not just the original works but translated

the native literary works into English as well. It is evident in what A.K. Ramanujan once said:

If I translate someone else's poetry, I can't take liberties with it. Not that I am literally faithful to them – that's a way of being unfaithful in fact. ...because languages have systems of their own. ...besides, the experience in each language is different... So one has to find equivalents in the other language faithfully.²

Therefore, the word to word translation is nearly impossible. However, the equivalent words and terms in the target language should be used faithfully. Prof. Theo Hermans, in the same way, asserts that 'consciously or subconsciously we are all profoundly influenced by the way in which our culture denotes, delineates and, ultimately, constructs translation through various kinds of figurative usage'. Further he opines that ...we construe translation as a form of delegated speech governed by the assumption of equivalence.³ In fact, India being ruled by the British for more than two hundred years, acquired English language of the ruler. Especially, when the target language is the language of the ruler and the source language is that of the ruled the translator would normally be reverentially approximating to the conventions of the ruler's culture. Therefore, the power equation between the source language (Indian) and the target language (English) plays an important role in translation. Specifically, Ramanujan translated keeping in mind the western readers. However, the other translators like Armando Menezes, S.M. Angadi and others maintained the original signature line of *vacanakaras* take for instance Basavanna's – '*Kudala Sangama Lord*' for Kannada '*Koodalasangama Deva*'. Ramanujan translated the signature lines of the

vacanakaras literally for instance Basavanna's '*Koodalasangama Deva*' as – 'Lord of the Meeting Rivers' in English.

The translator when conforms to the western reader that does not mean a value instead it is a form of subjugation. Hence, 'negotiations' in translation become interesting both academically and socially. In translation the writer consciously attempts to retain the intrinsic indigenous values/ethos. In fact, the translator endeavours to 'bend' the target language to suit his particular needs as Raja Rao too did in his foreword to *Kanthapura*. This is what Chinua Achebe too does in his novels wherein he uses the culture specific words from the tribe 'Ibo.' For instance, in his *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe uses the words like 'ekwe,' 'udu,' and 'ogene' for the musical rhythms. When it comes to the translation of such literary works as *vacanas* that are loaded with the social customs, traditions and such other rituals the translator needs to be extra cautious. Ramanujan was very particular in his translation. He surmounted the challenges posed by the social ethos of both the source language and the target language. He maintained the native words in his translations which were culture specific for instance 'Amma' to address the mother. Particularly in *vacanas* he endeavoured to 'bend' the target language to suit his particular needs.

Therefore, the translator needs to understand the development of language in the particular culture of the source text. Similarly, Ramachandra Sharma too emphasizes as:

Its genius is to be understood in the larger context of how a language develops in tune with the cultural milieu that has produced it. ...the problem assumes gigantic proportions

when we consider two languages, which are actually different, for example English and Kannada.⁴

Likewise, as it is said earlier, the Indian culture imbibes the qualities of various other cultures as in Ramanujan's poem "Small Scale Reflections on a Great House," the things get lost among the things lost long ago. That means the western life style influences the Indians and soon that style becomes part of Indian culture. When the translation of works from such tradition bound culture like India is concerned, the translator needs to be well versed with the traditional practices in that culture. Certainly, the translator will face various factors like culture specific terms that limit him somewhere in translation. Specifically the Indian terms used to address familial relations like 'amma', 'appa,' 'anna,' for mother, father, and elder brother etc. correspondingly. That is why Ramachandra Sharma tells that Ramanujan and he 'agreed to disagree on what a good translation is'. Further, he tells, 'both of them were always on the same side on the question of the importance of translation efforts'. (Gupta, p.130) Similarly, in his essay '*Intercultural Hermeneutics and Literary Translation*' Pramod Talgeri opines:

Two factors condition the necessity of a literary translation. In an obviously intellectual context, it is the great cultural divide between the source and target language cultures, which necessitates a process of understanding through translation. Secondly, if both the cultural regions belong to two heterogeneous language families, the heterogeneity of the languages creates the necessity for translation. (Gupta, p.85)

In a way, a translator is required to deal with cultural recontextualisation. Ramanujan's translations certainly recontextualise the Indian classical

Tamil and Kannada *bhakti* poetry. Due to his keen interest in the translation the Indian classical texts are available even today in the global world. His translations stand testimony for his success in the field of translation.

In fact, the literary texts will be certainly implanted in a particular cultural context. Therefore, the words from that language get a culture-specific meaning along with other contextually possible interpretative meanings. Hence, the translation of a particular text is actually rewriting the text in another language. According to George Steiner, the translated works fall broadly into three classes:

The first comprises strict literalism, the word-by-word matching of the inter-lingual dictionary of the foreign language primer, of interlinear crib. The second is the great central area of 'translation', by means of faithful but autonomous restatement. The translator closely reproduces the original but composes a text which is natural to his own tongue, which can stand on its own. The third class is that of imitation, recreation, variation, interpretative parallel. It covers a large, diffuse area, extending from trans-positions of the original into a more accessible idiom all the way to the freest, perhaps only allusive or parodistic echoes.⁵

It is evident here that translation is an autonomous restatement of the source text into the target language. In fact, what Steiner emphasises here is the differences in translations. In almost all these three classes there is certain amount of deviation from the source language. However, all of them convey the readers the culture of the target language in their own style. Further in the same work, Steiner highlights the function of translation as below:

The first order of translation acquaints us with foreign cultures and does so by a transference 'in our own sense'. It is best performed in plain, modest prose. Rendered on this way, the foreign matter will, as it were, enter our daily and domestic native sensibility....imperceptibility. The second mode is that of appropriation through surrogate. The translator absorbs the sense of the foreign work but does so in order to substitute for it a construct drawn from his own tongue and cultural milieu. A native garb is imposed on the alien form. But the impulse to metamorphosis and entelechy which governs living shapes, leads inevitably to a third category of translation. The highest and last mode will seek to achieve perfect identity between the original text and that of the translation. (Steiner, p.257,258)

Likewise, the translated works play a vital role in cultural assimilation and assertion. For that the translator has to absorb the sense of target language culture in order to substitute for it a construct drawn from his own tongue and cultural milieu or the source language text. Therefore, throughout the process of translation the translator seeks to achieve the possible utmost perfection. As far as the translation of '*Speaking of Siva*' is concerned, Ramanujan did not translate it word by word, rather he translated the ideas as expressed in the original Kannada verse form. He took almost twenty years to complete the translation. In an interview by Chirantan Kulshreshta, Ramanujan said, 'I began the translation of Kannada *vacanas* in 1952. It will be published in 1972'.(OIR) According to Bruce King, 'the line breaks, the compound words, the puns, the stanzaic forms, the word order, even the punctuation is essentially his own choice for conveying in English his reading of the Dravidian poems'. Further, in the same work writing about Ramanujan, Bruce King asserts:

As a follower of Ezra Pound, he translates as if the original were a contemporary poem of today. They stand on their own as modern poems. (King, p.12)

Ramanujan's translations are not transliterations rather they express the original idea as in the Kannada *Vacanas*. Prof. Theo Hermans too opines in the same way in his essay '*Paradoxes and aporias in translation and translation studies*' as:

A translation cannot double up with its parent text. It uses different words, which issue from a different source, in a different environment. A translation cannot therefore be equivalent with its prototext, it can only be *declared* equivalent by means of a performative speech act.⁶

Further, writing about translated works, Hermans stresses that they are 'necessarily plural, hybrid, and polyphonic'.(Riccardi, p.11) 'Similarly, Ramachandra Sharma asserts this in his essay "*Mediating between English and Kannada*" as '...the art of taking the essence of a poem from one language into another is not a reprehensible act, but an act of creation'.(Gupta,p.126) Further in the same essay, referring to the translator in general, Sharma writes, '...he will have taken into account not only the genius of the target language but also its cultural particularity'.(Gupta,p.126)

Similarly, Juliane House⁷ in her essay '*Universality versus culture specificity in translation*' rightly opines that 'one does not translate language but cultures and in translation we transfer cultures not languages'.(Riccardi, p.92) According to her, language is 'viewed as embedded in culture such that the meaning of any linguistic item can be

properly understood only with reference to the cultural context enveloping it'.(Riccardi,p.92) In fact, poetry can be considered as the peak of literary style in a language and certainly it reflects the socio-cultural characteristics of the time during which it is produced. Hence, to understand a poem it requires all-inclusive acquaintance with the socio-cultural uniqueness of that language because the language of that particular society reflects its socio-cultural traits. This is because 'language is the highest form of expression known to man'.⁸

Of course, linguistic conventions associated with the region, caste, class, and occupations and the linguistic signs are usually accepted by a particular society. That means a language is the production of the people of that particular region, which the people use in their day to day life. Therefore, the translator needs to stay near the poem to have an ideal translation. This is what C. Sivashanmugam opines as, 'to stay close to the poem is surely the ideal translation'.(Koul,p.17) According to V.V. Rama Rao the translator should aim 'to take as much of the beauty and significance of the source text into the target text. In matters of style, diction, expression etc. what is most important is appropriateness, aptness, and felicity in the target language.(Koul,p.42)

Apparently, poetry is imaginative, creative writing. Hence, there is the scope for a wide variety of interpretations. Therefore, the translator needs to be equally creative to make his translation as reminiscent as the original text. In his interview by Chirantan Kulshrshta, Ramanujan said:

I do not translate out of love but out of envy, out of a kind of aggression towards these great poems. I think one translates out of a need to appropriate someone else's creation, done better than one

could ever do. The ability to engage entirely the world of things, animals, trees, and people, attending to their particularity, making poetry out of it and making them speak for you – this seems to me extraordinary.(OIR)

Therefore, the translator needs to continually analyze, interpret, and evaluate the text. He should negotiate with the text to construct a translation that conveys not just the meaning but also the intent of the original text. In his Research paper '*Translation – A Basis of Cross-cultural Understanding*,' Y.C. Bhatnagar aptly remarks, 'it is an acknowledged fact that literary translations from one language to another since ages have not only enriched the literary traditions of the literature but also brought about a dialogue between two cultures, their people and societies'.(Gupta,p.89)

That is how, translation as it carries the culture of the source language to the target language it also contributes to the development of socio-cultural understanding among the people of different cultures. George Steiner moves further regarding the meaning and equals the translation activity with the original experience of formulating meaning in a word. According to Steiner:

In translation the dialectic of unison and of plurality is dramatically at work. In one sense, each act of translation is an endeavour to abolish multiplicity and to bring different world picture back into perfect congruence. In another sense, it is an attempt to reinvent the shape of meaning to find and justify an alternate statement. ...translation is no specialized secondary activity at the interface between languages. It is the constant necessary exemplification of the

dialectical, at once welding and divisive nature of speech.(Steiner,p.235)

Like this, translation plays an important role in representing the multiplicity towards achieving the universal culture. Because of globalization English language has been playing the role of a link language between the world nations with different languages and more so between Indian States which have different State languages.

According to Juliane House it is 'tendency towards 'cultural universalism' and 'cultural neutralism'.(Riccardi,p.107) Due to the flexible nature of English language it has made inroads in almost all the world languages. Moreover, English language has acquired various words from other world languages. Hence, the words of a particular culture become part of another culture through translation. Therefore, translation leads to 'cultural universalism' and thereby any culture specific words become neutral in translation. Because language and culture are semantically interrelated the words in that language certainly reflect that culture. In fact, translation encourages 'cultural neutralism' and hence the remark made by Juliane House is quite apparent in this regard. In this direction A.K. Ramanujan played an important role in making the Indian classics available in the West through his translations. And that is how the *vacana* movement and the contribution of *vacanakaras* became 'culturally universal' and 'culturally neutral' in Ramanujan's translation.

As far as literature is concerned, the social discrimination was opposed long back by the 12th century Kannada *bhakti* poets especially the *Vacana* writers. These poets were involved in different professions and most of these professions were related to the outcastes or the lower castes. They

wrote in the vernacular/regional language. This is what Eleanor Zelliott rightly points out in ‘A Note on Bhakti Poetry’ in the *Speaking of Siva* as:

Poets of every caste and class imaginable composed songs in the vernacular, they were known by name and surrounded with legend. The movement included women also. Being anti-ritualistic, the *bhaktas* placed their trust in devotional experience. Though no *bhakti* movement had the same structure, attitude, or history, all shared some sense of the importance of religious feeling and religious experience, and most left literatures in regional languages. (OIR,SS,p.1)

This tradition of *vacana* poetry was significantly spread between tenth and twelfth centuries. A.K. Ramanujan translated the *vacanas* of four major *vacanakaras*: Basavanna, Dasimayya, Allama Prabhu, and Mahadeviyakka. To tell something about the form of *Vacanas* -- they followed no model and no form. Of course, they evolved a different structure. Basavanna said the same in one of his *Vacanas*: ‘I’ll sing as I love’.⁹ This is what Ramanujan points out in the ‘Translator’s Note,’ ‘the strictness of traditional metres, the formality of literary genres, divisions of prose and verse, gave way to the innovations and spontaneity of free verse, a poetry that was not recognisably in verse’. (SS. p.vii) This shows that they did not stick on to any form or model of writing poetry and they wrote as it came to their mind. They are spontaneous as the *vacanakaras* believed in *jangama* (ever moving) and not in *stavara* (stagnant). It was Basavanna, a great social and religious reformer, who set to work with unflinching zeal to eradicate social discrimination in the society. In fact, the society was divided on the basis of castes. There was a lot of social discrimination between the upper caste and the lower caste people. Of course, the *vacanakaras* gave utterance to their spiritual experiences,

which were so original and unique. They approached this social discrimination through their spiritual expression. These writings in the style of poetic prose came to be called '*Vacanas*'. In fact, they are of a high literary and philosophical value and they have enriched Kannada literature by lending strength and sustenance to it. Writing about the *Vacanas* of Basavanna Prof. Armando Menezes rightly points out:

He found around him arid formulas of a religion emptied of all meaning; and he plunged into an effort to reform it from within. His drive was oriented in two directions: towards religion itself, and towards society; and perhaps towards a closer approximation between the two.¹⁰

Ramanujan appreciated this very nature of approximating the religion and society from the perspective of practicality that he found in the medieval *bhakti* traditions. During his interview by Chirantan Kulshreshta, Ramanujan said, 'these traditions explore character and relationships in a lyrical, not a novelistic, way; and include, imply, a great human scene; they create a world through sequences of interacting poems'.(OIR) In the translator's note, to *Speaking of Shiva*' A.K. Ramanujan writes:

Vacanas are literature, but not merely literary. They were of every class, caste and trade; some were outcastes, some illiterate. They are literature in spite of itself, scorning artifice, ornament, learning, privilege: a religious literature, literary because religious, great voices of a sweeping movement of protest and reform in Hindu society, witnesses to conflict and ecstasy in gifted mystical men. (SS. p.viii)

Vacanas are the Kannada devotional poems and they are personal in tone. The writers of *vacana* rejected the tradition of Vedic religion. Some of

the *vacanas* even mock at orthodox performances of rituals, recitations and animal sacrifice, which were practiced in Indian society. They ridiculed and questioned fiercely the traditional belief systems, social customs and superstitions and endeavoured to establish a classless society. What the *vacanakaras* wanted was '*bhakti*' and they stressed more on experience. They denied the 'temple culture' and priesthood. They stressed more on professional equality and people-friendly practice of religion. Through the often quoted slogan 'work is worship' they encouraged the dignity of labour and work culture. They never tolerated violence against the low-caste, poor, untouchables and women. Therefore, they used the common man's vernacular language to propagate their views through *vacanas*. They gave voice to the low-caste, poor, untouchables and denied gender discrimination. They emphasized both the 'internal purity' and the 'external purity'. Indeed '*Vacana*' is a kind of submission to the speaker's personal God in the form of message through the language of common man. *Vacanakaras* opposed the establishment of temples based on castes, which divided the society into 'Great' and 'Little' traditions. Rajeev Patke too rightly points out that:

The *vachana* saint rejects not only the "great" traditions of Vedic religion, but the "little" local traditions as well. They not only scorn the effectiveness of the Vedas as scripture; they reject the little legends of the local gods and goddesses....¹¹

In the same way, *vacanas* are the outcome of the movement of social upheaval by and for the poor, the low caste and the outcaste against the upper caste, the rich and the privileged. Some of the poets here are the representatives of the suppressed class of society. Therefore, to reform the traditional Hindu society, they used this *Vacana* form.

The *vacanas* are written by the saint poets who were sorry for the plight of the outcaste and the subaltern. The four saint poets express their contempt towards the meaningless traditional cultural practices that pushed certain category of people out of the rituals and such other celebrations in the society. These *vacanakaras* sought the blessings and their communion with the Lord. According to Ramanujan 'they all speak of *Siva*, and speak to *Siva*: hence the title'. (SS. p.vii) These *vacanas* very well demonstrate in vernacular the gender discrimination, caste distinction, ill-treatment of the low-caste, the poor people, and the untouchables.

For Ramanujan, none of his childhood memories and family relationships was out of place. In his writings, the 'present' works through the 'past'. He carried 'Indianness' with him and created a space for it in the world of his adoption'.¹² This diversity of the spatial and temporal in Ramanujan is well explained in the words of Akshaya Kumara:

He has to wade his way through the diversity of everyday culture not in terms of the mere 'dominant' but in terms of the 'residual' and 'emergent' as well. In case of Ramanujan 'diversity' is not just horizontal, it is vertical; not just spatial it is temporal as well. Spatially he has to flit across his motherland India and his 'fatherland' America; temporally he has to jostle with his ancient Tamil and Kannada past, colonial present along with a host of other local and national / international temporalities.¹³

Likewise, as A.K. Ramanujan spent decades in the west, he could form a vivid picture of both Oriental and Occidental cultures in his works. He found a platform in the foreign milieu that evoked an assimilation of

Western and Eastern cultures. Therefore, Ramanujan succeeded in blending the tradition with modernity. He grew up in the traditional Indian culture, and that in fact, did not compel him to embrace everything of Indian culture and so also, he never rejected it outright. This character of the poet is cogently explained in the words of Anugamini:

First and foremost, he was a Tamil Brahmin belonging to an orthodox family, but during his long stay in America, an advanced nation no doubt, much of his culture and tradition has taken a back-seat. It was pretty difficult for him to adjust himself in an opposite environment. In the meantime, he developed a critical insight. And this made him neither a nostalgic traditionalist nor an advocate of modernization but a product of both.¹⁴

Postcolonial literary analysis is grounded in socio-historical approaches to culture, race, and nationality. A.K. Ramanujan's poems 'are shaped round a chain of time expressions that turn various ways – past and future, near and remote, vague and precise; together with these are the significant images of permanence' says thus Elizabeth Reuben.¹⁵ According to Rama Nair, Ramanujan's Indianness aids him in his self-realisation. As she writes it, 'the Indian ethos pervades Ramanujan's poems, and it is in the Indian ethos that the poet realizes himself'.¹⁶

The self-conscious use of myth and the family tree involves in many ways his religion and cultural experience. Taqi Ali Mirza rightly points out this by quoting R. Parthasarathy in his essay 'A.K. Ramanujan's Particular Hell': Ramanujan's poetry is the product of a specific culture, and that his real greatness lies in his ability to translate this experience into the terms of another culture'.¹⁷ Actually, the affinity to his birthplace and loyalty to the settled nation became points of convergence. He was

able to fuse the two divergent cultures together. This quality of assimilation of two cultures made Ramanujan different from other writers of his time. Comparing A.K. Ramanujan with V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie in his essay titled '*Ramanujan's Credo*' D. Ramakrishna aptly points out:

He is different from the expatriates like V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie who are rootless but look at India as exotic. Ramanujan's rootedness in Indian culture and involvement with American culture has resulted in his skillful articulation of both the Indian and the Western ideas with ease.¹⁸

Although it is quite natural to experience, a cultural ambivalence in an alien culture, Ramanujan could succeed in fusing the two cultures together. His translations alongwith his creative works stand testimony to this. Similar to the author's experience, Partha Chatterjee opines that the European world, '...had failed to colonize the inner, essential identity of the East, which lay in its distinctive, and superior spiritual culture'.¹⁹

Ramanujan was intellectually conscious about the cultural variations that he came in contact in translation. This is what Ramanujan says in his own words to Dr. B.C. Ramachandra Sharma as:

When we go from one language to another language if we use that language in a proper, meaningful way with our full consciousness to it the corresponding subject will be different. Even if we use same language in different styles the subjects will be different says Wallace Stevens. 'A change of style is a change of subjects' he says. Therefore, we cannot tell that the subject is one and I write in two different languages. Because no

subject would come in front of your eyes uncovered and ask you whether you would like to write me in Kannada or English. When it likes to come, it comes in Kannada, and if it likes to come in English, it comes with full body.²⁰

Therefore, Ramanujan's use of Kannada, bilingualism in writing poetry, and multi-lingualism in translation, must be seen in the light of the complex historical backdrop of conflicting linguistic practices as well as his diasporic existence. He was clearly aware of the connection of language with concepts of nation and culture and it is quite vivid in his translations as well as in his poems. The concepts like customs and traditions and other social practices form the theme of some of his poems. Whereas, the vernacular words from the same customs and traditions and other social practices challenge him in his translation. However, the author succeeds in taking the Indian classics to the western reader.

In all his writing, whether Kannada or English, Ramanujan tried to interfuse both the languages as in his translations. He interfused one language with the other in an attempt to align it closer to his own divided legacy and self. It is clearly mentioned by Ramanujan himself during various interviews at different times. He had revealed that the three languages that he used were, side by side, each with a clearly defined role. Starting from his childhood days, English was used for intellectual purpose; Kannada was used in the normal situations outside home as well as for creative writing. The third language, Tamil he used it for non-intellectual and domestic purposes. However, later when he went to the United States of America he used all the three languages. In America, English remained useful for intellectual purpose as well as it was used for

creative writing and for normal interaction with the people out there. Then he used Kannada for creative writing and translation, whereas he used Tamil only for translation of Tamil Classics into English. Ramanujan made the best use of his situation of being well versed in the three languages. This is what he explained during an interview with Rama Jha, as how the three languages interact in his creative writing:

No, I don't mean I think in those languages and write in English. If you do, then you cannot write in English. Because even when I am translating from classical Tamil, even Kannada, modern Kannada, I have to still think in English...I have to. There is no way out. How else I would write?...my English has affected my knowledge of Indian languages and my knowledge of Indian languages has affected my English language. It has given me intimacy and a kind of aesthetic distance. I think my Kannada poetry is greatly affected by my knowledge of English and my poem 'Murugan' for instance, could not have been written if I did not know classical Tamil forms and even some of the images there.²¹

Similarly, in an interview by Chirantan Kulshrestha Ramanujan asserts:

Self-conscious, we write out of a corner of ourselves filtering out our childhood, our obscenities, our bodies, our mythologies, the fabric of allusion that a first language. (Many first language poets are no better; they do the same) You don't just write with a language, you write with all you have. When I write in Kannada, I'd like all my English, Tamil, etc. to be at the back of it; and when I write in English hope my Tamil and my Kannada, like my linguistics and anthropology,

what I know of America and India, are at the back of it. (OIR)

Likewise, Nissim Ezekiel too writes, 'My background makes me a natural outsider, circumstances and decisions relate me to India'. Further, he says that, 'A man can do something for and in his environment by being fully what he is, by not withdrawing from it: I have not withdrawn from India'.²²

Usually the poets are concerned with the intellect and emotions that exhibit their past in their poetry. While comparing Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das with A.K. Ramanujan and R. Parthasarathy, P.K.J. Kurup is right when he says:

...these two poets concern themselves with the issue of relationship that intellect has to emotion. By and large, the concentric circle that their poetry exhibits is that of the self in relation to history but in Ramanujan's case it is family, which forms the core unit. If the distinguishing factor in Ezekiel's stance is his poetic self's commitment to the milieu, in the case of these two poets, it is their concern for the need of a quest for a "relevant past" and a seminal mythic tradition. As for Ramanujan, he feels none of the detachment from the Indian scene that one finds in Ezekiel and works from a deep unfractured Indian spirit, without any anxieties of Parthasarathy. (Kurup,p.295)

As Ramanujan has written in his poem, 'Conventions of Despair,' 'I must seek and will find my particular hell only in my Hindu mind'-- this kind of an involvement in his past speaks of the intellectual growth of the poet in A.K. Ramanujan. His involvement in the Indian past works as a stimulus for his poetic career as well as the translator in him. This is the

theme of the poet to search for his past, the quest for traditional Hindu cultural moorings. This memory for A.K. Ramanujan according to Saranga D. Baral is, 'as commonly accepted as a storehouse for the times past, for the experiences done away with, is not the concept to which Ramanujan subscribes'.²³

The 'outer forms' and the 'inner forms' of the makeup of the Ramanujan's poetic self were his linguistic situation and cultural determinants i.e. the present and past life of the poet. The 'perversity' of his movements from one language to other language, according to him 'serves to keep alive the immediately absent parts of (me) the poet'. (OIR) All this shows that Ramanujan's poetry is the outcome of the interaction and assimilation of the forces of his engagements with linguistics, anthropology, field trips. Moreover, his creative works and his translations showcase his personal and professional pre-occupations with Indian regional languages like Kannada and Tamil and the world language English. According to Dr. B.K. Das:

Both the *Striders* (1966) and *Relations* (1971) are the heir of an interior tradition, a tradition very much of this sub-continent, the deposits of which are in Kannada and Tamil, and which have been assimilated into English. Ramanujan's deepest roots are in the Kannada and Tamil past and he has repossessed that past, in fact made it available in English language.²⁴

There is a western-trained intellect in Ramanujan that looks at the oriental things with a detached interest and without any attempt to disown the richness of experience.

In a way, the words ‘diasporic’ and ‘expatriate’ too mean the same as ‘exile’. In the case of A.K. Ramanujan, his exile helped him to explore his own past life. C.N. Srinath makes it very clear while telling about Siddhartha’s (Gautham Buddha) self-imposed exile. He says, ‘There is an incessant self-introspection, self-examination and self-exploration and the resulting enlightenment has universal significance because of the underlying compassion’.²⁵ When Ramanujan’s poems and translations are read, one is quite sure to feel the same way, for most of his poems abound in the poet’s past in terms of personal life and the classical literature of his country, especially the Kannada *bhakti* poetry. Similarly, Ramanujan’s poems and translations reveal his self-introspection, self-examination and self-exploration. Therefore, his poems abound in his past. Further, in the same essay C.N. Srinath writes, ‘It is by such epiphanic moments only both life and literature prove to be worth living for’.(Shrinath,p.61) This can be seen in the life and works of A.K. Ramanujan too, who made a significant contribution to Indian Writing in English. This fete, according to C.N. Shrinath is:

Exile as metaphor here is both agony and ecstasy – what is missed acutely becomes the compelling and overriding theme that generates an underlying streak of celebration even in the pain of deprivation. Exile is an opportunity for self-discovery and a perception of the past. (Shrinath, p.61)

To this very thought of C.N. Shrinath, Ramanujan is the best example. His first volume of poetry *The Striders* (1966) contains such poems that abound in the poet’s self-discovery. This volume contains forty-one poems, which reveal the poetic sensibility of Ramanujan being in conflict with the western surroundings. They contain the points of identity crisis,

strangeness and alienation, and so also was his second volume of poetry *Relations* (1972). Referring to *Relations*, K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar opines that it is ‘an even maturer achievement, and is something of a bridge spanning childhood and age, and India and America’.²⁶

Further, in the same essay C.N. Shrinath ends his view with these words of T.S. Eliot: ‘what is escape to the laity is exile to the wise and exile after all is that epiphanic moment in eternity when the moment becomes momentous and eternal. By this and by this only we have existed’. (Shrinath, p.63) This indeed is the very characteristic feature of A.K. Ramanujan’s creative forte. Therefore, Ramanujan’s works abound in cross-cultural negotiations, despite various cultural variations in his translations. Similarly, writing about literature in his essay, “Literature across Cultures”, Prof. G.A. Giraddiyavar rightly points out:

There is something in literature that transcends the barriers of culture, religion and geography. Literature is as much an expression of the universal values of life as it is of the manifold aspects in the social and cultural life of a community. It is this aspect of literature that makes it universal in its essential impact.²⁷

Therefore, Ramanujan becomes an iconic figure in the history of Indian Writing in English, and Indian English Poetry in particular. Further, in the same essay Prof. G.A. Giraddiyavar asserts by quoting Prof. V.K. Gokak’s views wherein Prof. Gokak points out that due to the ability of literature to transcend the barriers of culture ‘it is possible to enjoy ‘Macbeth’ without knowing anything about medieval Scotland. (Giraddiyavar, p.94)

A.K. Ramanujan is known for his vivid presentation of the attendant particularities of Indian culture. The ordinary things have turned into the exotic in his poetry due to his skillful use of the language. Chirantan Kulshrestha very well observes it: 'Ramanujan...attempts to reach out to the state of creative freedom that comes to the artist when he is perfectly relaxed in the intricacies of his own language and can even convey their emotional and intellectual contexts of another language'.²⁸ The three languages that Ramanujan used for his creative purpose - Kannada, Tamil, and English - were for him, complimentary to each other. Due to this natural privilege, K.R. Srinivas Iyengar asserts, Ramanujan is 'one of the most talented of the 'new' poets for whom it is no small achievement to have matched the old sophistication of romantic love to the current sophistication of linguistic finish'. (Iyengar, p.672)

For Ramanujan, it was his experience in India that forced him to produce such exemplary poetry. Therefore, poetry turns to be a tool for self-expression or self-actualisation thereby creating a link between the poet and the society. The search for roots is a trend in the Indian English Poetry. The poet's consciousness accommodates various humanistic aspects like self-relation with the society. In her review of Shyam Selvadurai's *The Hungry Ghosts*, Shelley Walia says:

People have moved across spaces through history. There seems to be no cultural sanctity left any more and the agitated quest for home and belonging continues. However, the diasporic state throws up an opportunity to think through some of the vexed questions concerning religion and politics, belonging and distance, insider and outsider space.²⁹

As K.R. Srinivas Iyengar puts it, ‘poetry may be written with words, but intrinsically it grows out of experience and is a recordation of fragments of experience’. (Iyengar, p.709) Further, writing about A.K. Ramanujan, Iyengar continues:

He is one caught in the cross fire between the elemental pulls of his native culture and the aggressive compulsions of the Chicago milieu. On one side, the metaphor of the family with its ineluctable inner filiations, and on the other, the self-forged prison of linguistic sophistication. There is the Dravidian God, Murugan, whispering to the soul, and there are the distractions of everyday life. But these tensions, these challenges, these existential encounters peter out in the end. (Iyengar, p.714)

With the discussions held thus far, it is clear that the study of Ramanujan’s translations would be a rewarding experience.

The poems of Ramanujan stand out as an evocative blend of tradition and modernity, western and Indian cultures negotiating immigrant anxieties with a detached kind of love and longing for the homeland. Ramanujan himself tells in an interview, ‘you can take me out of Kannada but you cannot take Kannada out of me’.³⁰ In the case of Ramanujan, it is true that his creative works were the medium of his cross-cultural negotiations, which acted as a bridge like relationship between Indian and American cultures. Many of the poems display the author’s intimate knowledge of American life and culture. This is what V.K. Gokak writes in his book *The Concept of Indian Literature*: ‘Nowhere else is the unity of world literature seen better than in the mutual impact of East and West in literature’.³¹ Likewise, Ramanujan’s works reveal the impact of his past on his modernist poetry. It would be better if Ramanujan is studied

under this mutual impact of East and West. That is why A.K. Ramanujan is greatly admired and widely read in the United States of America as well as in India. The study would be confined to the *Speaking of Siva* of A.K. Ramanujan in order to understand how the translation of author exhibits the cross-cultural variations.

Section (ii)

Critiquing the critics:

All the above observations prove that there is the need to study A.K. Ramanujan's *Speaking of Siva* from the point of view of cross-cultural variations in it. The critics have studied the author as either an Indian writer or his Indianness in his poems, and his cultural preoccupations. Many others have studied his translation techniques and the line alignments in his poems. Hence, the close analysis of the *Speaking of Siva* of the author is supposed to bring to light the fact that his translation and creative genius look for the particular (western reader) as opposed to the general.

Ramanujan has not been studied from the viewpoint of culture-specific nuances. There are a few books on Ramanujan and remaining are stray articles published in the edited books. The first book on Ramanujan, *A.K. Ramanujan and His Poetry*, by A.N. Dwivedi was published in the year 1983. Although this book discusses the imagery and form of poetry of Ramanujan, it does not include the poems written after 1983 or anything about *Speaking of Siva*. Rama Nair's *Of Variegated Hues: the Poetry and Translations of A.K. Ramanujan*, published in 2002 seems to be over simplistic and not precise. Dr. Sumana Ghosh's *A.K. Ramanujan as a Poet* published in the year 2004 is yet another work on Ramanujan's

poetry. She focuses on the range of Ramanujan's poetry, the social dimensions, tradition and modernity, his poetic craft, the philosophical dimensions and the treatment of women in his poetry.

One more work by Akshay Kumar is *A.K. Ramanujan in Profile and Fragment* was published in the year 2004. This book seems to be a rigorous work on A.K. Ramanujan. Although Akshay Kumar studies the author from different perspectives, he too has not touched upon the translations, especially *Speaking of Siva*. Of course, Bruce King's *Modern Indian English Poetry* and *Three Indian Poets* published in the year 1991 and the second edition of *Three Indian Poets* published in the year 2005 are serious academic works. They study Ramanujan with multicultural approach. Bruce King analyses the total collection of poetry of A.K. Ramanujan according to the title of the books. His analysis reveals the complexity of Ramanujan's poetry with regard to crisis, tensions in marriage, growing awareness of death, inner turmoil, and unresolved emotions and ideas. King asserts that Ramanujan's poems move on 'with the times from modernism to post-modernism'.(King,p.94)

There is a section in Jahan Ramazani's book: *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* published in 2001. According to Akshay Kumar, in this book Ramazani asserts that 'Ramanujan negotiates spatiotemporal differences between the east and the west, the ancient and the modern, the native and the alien'.(Akshaykumar,p.8) Rajeev Patke in his essay entitled: 'The Ambivalence of Poetic Self-exile: The Case of A.K. Ramanujan' published in *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, studies the translations of Ramanujan in terms of his diasporic condition. In fact, Ramanujan has been studied both as a poet of Indian

diaspora and as an Indian poet by the critics located abroad and within the country respectively.

The two other edited books *Millennium Perspectives on A.K. Ramanujan* by Surya Nath Pandey and *The Poetry of A.K. Ramanujan* by M.K. Bhatnagar were published in the years 2001 and 2002 respectively. Both the books contain the critical essays contributed by different critics on different aspects of Ramanujan's poetry. Rita Kothari and Rama Nair have tried to explore Ramanujan's *Speaking of Siva* in their essays. However, Rama Nair studies *Speaking of Siva* from the perspective of mysticism and that too she throws light on only Mahadeviyakka. Of course, Rita Kothari rightly observes 'hybrid intercultural spaces' in her essay, "Network of Relations". She writes:

The reading, interpretation and the translation of ancient poets into English is coloured by English poets. The ancient and the modern, the Indian and the Western have criss-crossed in the very act of translation. This implies translation not at a linguistic level alone, but also at a cultural level. It reinforces the view of translation as seeking to articulate hybrid intercultural spaces and identities.³²

However, they seem to be deficient in projecting cross-cultural negotiations of Ramanujan in his creative works. Indeed Vinay Dharwadker has done a meticulous study on Ramanujan's works. Similarly, R. Parthasarathy points at the Indian tradition in the poems of Ramanujan and the family as the central metaphor in particular.

Thus, different critics from different viewpoints have studied Ramanujan's works and they have discussed various aspects of

Ramanujan's works. They, certainly, have not discussed Ramanujan's *Speaking of Siva* from the perspective of cross-cultural variations. In fact, the diasporic wonderings of Ramanujan and his travels along with his past in India have been of great influence on the author's creative works. In addition, Indian cultural tradition has been observed from the perspective of the modern American culture in the creative works of A.K. Ramanujan. Therefore, the interactions between the regional, national and international issues co-exist in his creative works. Hence, this study will focus on this aspect of culture-specific nuances in the *Speaking of Siva* of A.K. Ramanujan. The various issues related to Ramanujan's translation are further discussed in the following chapters.

Notes:

¹Bruce King. Three Indian Poets New Delhi: OUP, 2008. p.72

²A.K Ramanujan. Span. in an interview by Chidananda Dasgupta. Nov., 1983, p.34

³Theo Hermans. “Paradoxes and aporias in translation and translation studies.” Translation Studies. Ed. Alessandra Riccardi. New Delhi: CUP, 2010, p.10

(Theo Hermans is a Professor of Dutch, comparative literature and translation at University College London).

⁴R. S.Gupta. Ed. Literary Translation. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1999, p. 127-128

⁵George Steiner. After Babel. London: OUP, 1975, p.253

⁶Alessandra Riccardi. Ed. Translation Studies. New Delhi: CUP, 2010, p.11

⁷Juliane House is Professor of general and applied linguistics at the University of Hamburg and member of the Research Centre on Multilingualism of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*.

⁸P.P.Giridhar. “Language as it Relates to Literature and Translation: Interrogating Some Entrenched Notions.” Translation Issues and Perspectives. Ed. Omkar N.Koul and Shailendra Singh. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004, p.32

⁹A.K Ramanujan. “Speaking of Siva.” The Oxford India Ramanujan. Ed. Molly Daniels -Ramanujan. New Delhi: OUP. 2004 rpt 2005, p.45

[Hereinafter all further references to this edition are incorporated in the text itself as – SS]

¹⁰Armando Menezes. Airy Nothings: Essays in literary criticism. Dharwad: Karnatak University, 1977, p.156

¹¹WWW.google.com / Rajeev Patke / article: The Ambivalence of Poetic Self-Exile: The Case of A.K. Ramanujan. (Referred on 07-01-

2009) Rajeev Patke is a professor in the National University of Singapore.

¹²Jasbir Jain. "Series Editor's Preface". A. K. Ramanujan: In Profile and Fragment. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2004

¹³Akshaya Kumar. A.K. Ramanujan: In Profile and Fragment. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2004, p. 2

¹⁴Anugamini. "Modern Love in A.K. Ramanujan's *The Striders*". *Journal of Literatures in English*. Vol.2, Issue 3, Jan-June 2009, p.36

¹⁵Elizabeth Reuben. "The Presence of the Past: The Sense of Time in the Poetry of A.K. Ramanujan". *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*, vol.17, No 1, Jan 1989, p.16,17

¹⁶Rama Nair. "A.K. Ramanujan: A Study in Psychological Realism, in *Indian Literature Today*, vol. II, Poetry and Fiction", Ed. R.K. Dhavan. New Delhi, Prestige Books, 1994, p.38

¹⁷Shahane Vasant A. and M. Sivaramakrishna. Ed. *Indian Poetry in English: A Critical Assessment*, Madras, The Macmillan Co. India, 1980, p. 160

¹⁸Suryanath Pandey. Ed. Millennium Perspectives on A.K. Ramanujan. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001, p. 1

¹⁹Partha Chattarjee. The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories. Princeton studies in culture/power/history. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993. p. 121

²⁰Personal collection C. D. my own translation

²¹A.K. Ramanujan, in an Interview with Rama Jha, "*The Humanities Review*", Vol. 3, Nov. 1, 1981, p. 7

²²P.K.J. Kurup. *Contemporary Poetry in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1996, p. 283, 285

²³Mohit K. Ray. Ed. Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2003, p. 219

²⁴Dr. B. K. Das. Modern Indian English Poetry. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1992, p. 123

²⁵C.N. Srinath. “Exile in Life and Literature”, *The literary criterion*. Vol. 36, No 1+2, 2001 p. 58

²⁶K.R. Srinivas Iyengar. Indian Writing in English, New Delhi: Sterling Pub. Pvt. Ltd, 1985 rpt.2003 p. 672

²⁷Prof. G.A. Giraddiyavar. *Journal of the Karnataka University*, Vol.19, 1975 p. 94

²⁸Chirantan Kulshrestha. Ed. Contemporary Indian English Verse: An Evaluation. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1980, p. 177

²⁹Shelley Walia. *The Hindu* Sunday Literary Review, July 7, 2013, p. 4

³⁰In an undated interview in Kannada held at Bangalore Ramanujan’s reply to Dr. B.C. Ramachandra Sharma – Personal collection CD. My own translation.

³¹V.K. Gokak. Concept of Indian Literature. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publications Pvt. Ltd. 1979, p. 64

³² Surya Nath Pandey. Ed. Millennium Perspectives on A.K. Ramanujan. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001, p. 163

CHAPTER – 3
**CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN THE TRANSLATION OF
VACANAS**

This chapter focuses primarily on the translation of A.K. Ramanujan, particularly *Speaking of Siva*. Most of the *vacanas* that he translated carry the notions of tradition and modernity as far as the cultures of India and America are concerned. The translation of these *vacanas* reveals the strong projection of his interest in Indian classical works. Therefore, the selected representative *vacanas* of the four saint poets are studied in this chapter from the perspective of culture-specific nuances/variations.

A.K. Ramanujan excelled in the field of translation of poems from classical Tamil and *Bhakti* poems of medieval Kannada. There is the difference between his translation and the other's translation of the *Bhakti* poems. As it is discussed in the previous chapter he has taken liberty with the original. This makes clear the very nature of his creative writing. Hence, his poetry, prose, and translations reveal his negotiation between the two different cultures: the traditional Indian culture and the modern American culture. It is evident in his use of English words like, 'O Lord of the Meeting Rivers' for the Kannada '*Kudala Sangama Deva*'. In their translation of '*Vacanas of Basavanna*' L.M.A. Menezes and S.M. Angadi write it as 'O Lord *Kudala Sangama*'.¹ This shows Ramanujan's modern approach to the twelfth century Kannada '*Bhakti*' poems. His intention here seems to be to make the West know the Indian culture. Indeed, this is very significant, as it was not thought by anybody else before Ramanujan. It is he who gave a new look to the *Vacanas*. He approached the Indian classics as a modernist. Particularly, he took liberty in his translation of Indian classics in order to reveal the cultural

values in them to the people of English speaking world. Thus, the major concern in this study is to identify cross-cultural variations in his *Speaking of Siva*.

Due to their affinity to the regional culture the words in a particular language make translation a difficult task. There are no two languages which can represent the same society because the social and cultural environments of the source language differ very much from those of the target language. In fact, a language is the vehicle for the culture of a particular region. More than that language and culture are semantically interrelated. They can never be separated; instead the words in a language mirror the culture of the people speaking that language. Therefore, the translator needs to stay close to the poem so as to produce the ideal translation to complete the cross-cultural journey or the diasporic journey. Moreover, languages are ‘cultural capitals’ and Asha Sarangi aptly asserts this in her book, *Language and Politics in India* as:

Languages become cultural capitals to provide instantly a sense of belonging to communities – religious and linguistic – which need to be integrated within the territorial limits of nations and nationalities...the language question is obviously related to group and community rights and identities.²

Kannada being one of the four Dravidian languages of South India is spoken in the state of Karnataka. There are various cultural connotations in Kannada which are intangible or untranslatable that too into English. Similarly, certain English words cannot be transcribed into Kannada. This is because of the culture specificity in the regions where these two languages are used. As certain words abound in cultural connotations

they cannot be transcribed into the other language hence the need to study the culture-specific nuances in the translation of *Speaking of Siva*.

Twenty five *Vacanas* are discussed in this chapter with reference to cultural variations of which ten are of Basavanna, and five *Vacanas* each of the remaining three *Vacanakaras*. In fact, there are totally 157 *Vacanas* in *Speaking of Siva* of which 44 are of Basavanna, 28 of Devara Dasimayya, 47 of Mahadeviyakka and 38 of Allama Prabhu. As it is discussed in the preceding chapters there is difference between the translation of Ramanujan and others' translation of the Kannada *Vacanas*. Ramanujan's translations reveal that he had tried to convey the gist of the original *Vacanas*. This is what Ramanujan himself writes in one of his essays as, "translations are transpositions, re-enactments, interpretations... one can often convey a sense of the original rhythm, but not the language-bound metre; one can mimic levels of diction, but not the actual sound of the original words".³ Therefore, Ramanujan's translations are not word to word translations.

In the following *vacana* the speaker prays to his lord to make him hear that he belongs to the house. The speaker points at the ill treatment of the people in the tradition bound Indian society as:

ಇವನಾರವ ಇವನಾರವ ಇವನಾರವನೆಂದೆನಿಸದಿರಯ್ಯಾ;
ಇವನಮ್ಮವ ಇವನಮ್ಮವ ಇವ ನಮ್ಮವನೆಂದೆನಿಸಯ್ಯಾ
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯ ಮಗನೆಂದೆನಿಸಯ್ಯಾ!⁴

This *vacana* in Ramanujan's translation is as follows:

Don't make me hear all day
'whose man, whose man, whose man is this?'
let me hear, 'This is mine, mine,
this man is mine'.

O lord of the meeting rivers,
make me feel I'm a son
of the house. ⁵

The words '*endenisadirayya*' in Kannada becomes 'hear all day' in English, '*iva nammava*' becomes 'this is mine', '*nimma maneya maganendenisayya*' becomes 'make me feel I'm a son of the house'. The signature line '*koodalasangamadeva*' becomes 'Lord of the meeting rivers'. It is impossible to find the similar corresponding words in English for such culture bound Kannada words as these. However, it should be noted that 'language is embedded in culture such that the meaning of any linguistic item can be properly understood only with reference to the cultural context enveloping it'. ⁶

Similarly, the other *vacana* in Kannada reveals about the innocent lamb which is going to be killed the next moment by the devotees of the lord. But the speaker mocks at the very act of killing the innocent creature to fulfill their personal desires. The *vacana* in Kannada appeals to any conscious reader and makes one feel sympathetic. It reads as:

ಹಬ್ಬಕ್ಕೆ ತಂದ ಹರಕೆಯ ಕುರಿ
ತೋರಣಕ್ಕೆ ತಂದ ತಳಿರ ಮೇಯಿತ್ತು
ಕೊಂದಹರೆಂಬುದನರಿಯದೆ
ಬಂದ ಒಡಲ ಹೊರವುತ್ತಲಿದೆ
ಅದಂದೆ ಹುಟ್ಟಿತ್ತು, ಅದಂದೆ ಹೊಂದಿತ್ತು
ಕೊಂದವರುಳಿವರೆ ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ? (BVS, p.72, 73)

In English translation this *vacana* appears to be more mechanical and technical. The *vavana* fulfils the need of translation but fails to appeal to the readers as the Kannada *vacana*. It reads thus:

The sacrificial lamb brought for the festival
Ate up the green leaf brought for the decorations.

Not knowing a thing about the kill,
it wants only to fill its belly:
born that day, to die that day.
But tell me:
Did the killers survive,
O lord of the meeting rivers? (SS. p.40)

Harakeya kuri – becomes ‘sacrificial lamb,’ *talira* becomes – ‘green leaf’, *torana* – decorations, and *Bendavodala horevuttalide* becomes ‘wants to fill its belly’. The English words lack to effect that devotion and sympathy in the reader. These English terms can never produce the effect which the Kannada words can produce because Kannada terms are culturally loaded. They have a different meaning in the context of this *vacana* which is a prayer-cum-question to the speaker’s lord. If this English version is translated again into Kannada it will not sound like the original *vacana* instead it will become another *vacana*.

There are certain dialects in Kannada which are very much culture specific and they are not widely used but the people of certain community use them. The following *vacana* of Basavanna speaks of the inability to have a place of worship in a simple and philosophic way. But this simple *vacana* poses challenge to the translator.

ಉಳ್ಳವರು ಶಿವಾಲಯವ ಮಾಡಿಹರು
ನಾನೇನ ಮಾಡುವೆ ಬಡವನಯ್ಯಾ
ಎನ್ನ ಕಾಲೇ ಕಂಭ, ದೇಹವೆ ದೇಗುಲ
ಶಿರವೇ ಹೊನ್ನ ಕಳಸವಯ್ಯಾ
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವ ಕೇಳಯ್ಯಾ
ಸ್ಥಾವರಕ್ಕಳಿವುಂಟು, ಜಂಗಮಕ್ಕಳಿವಿಲ್ಲಾ! (BVS, p.18)

Ramanujan’s translation as discussed elsewhere reveals the appropriation of words. He uses the nearest similar words to reach the perfection. However, the cultural variation cannot be overruled.

The rich will make temples for Siva,
What shall I, a poor man do?
My legs are pillars,
the body the shrine,
the head a cupola of gold.
Listen, O lord of the meeting rivers,
things standing shall fall,
but the moving ever shall stay. (SS.p.50)

It can be easily noticed here that 'will make' in first line and 'do' in second line mean the same in Kannada as *maadu*. Similarly, the words like Kannada *shira* becomes 'the head' in fifth line, *sthaavara* and *jangama* in the last lines 'standing', and 'moving' correspondingly. The 'standing' and 'moving' cannot be considered as the Kannada *sthaavara*, and *jangama* because of the culture-specificity.

Thus, the translator can bring in the nearest words to mean what is said in Kannada but not the exact meaning. The following *Vacana* of Basavanna brings forth different words that are culture specific.

ಚಂದ್ರಮನಂ ಕಳೆ ಸಮನಿಸಿತ್ತನಗೆ:
ಸಂಸಾರವೆಂಬ ರಾಹು ಸರ್ವಗ್ರಾಸಿಯಾಗಿ ನುಂಗಿತ್ತಯ್ಯಾ:
ಇಂದೆನ್ನ ದೇಹಕ್ಕೆ ಗ್ರಹಣವಾಯಿತ್ತು:
ಇನ್ನೊಂದಿಗೆ ಮೋಕ್ಷವಹುದೋ, ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ? (BVS, p.74)

In English translation this *vacana* sounds as if it is a different poem, especially the beginning of the English version. Further, in the next lines there are certain words that Ramanujan retains.

I added day by day
a digit of light
like the moon.
The python-world,
omnivorous rahu,
devoured me.

Today my body
is in eclipse.
When is the release,
O lord of the meeting rivers? (SS, p.34)

The first line *chandramanam kale samanisitenge* in Kannada version becomes 'I added day by day/ a digit of light/ like the moon.' Here, both the versions need independent explanation. Although the Kannada *vacana* is in common man's language, the English version makes it difficult for the common reader to understand. The words like 'The python-world' cannot replace Kannada *sansaara* because it is very much culture bound. It has its own value in Indian society, and these English words fall short of that value.

The following *vacana* expresses the intense feeling of the speaker with his Lord and questions Him for giving him life. The common man's terms in vernacular fail to find similar words in English. That is why, the very first word '*akatakata*' in Kannada finds no place in English translation.

ಅಕಟಕಟಾ! ಶಿವ, ನಿನಗಿನಿತು ಕರುಣವಿಲ್ಲ;
ಅಕಟಕಟಾ! ಶಿವ, ನಿನಗಿನಿತು ಕೃಪೆಯಿಲ್ಲ.
ಏಕೆ ಹುಟ್ಟಿಸಿದೆ ಇಹಲೋಕದುಃಖಿಯ?
ಪರಲೋಕ ದೂರನ ಏಕೆ ಹುಟ್ಟಿಸಿದೆ?
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ಕೇಳಯ್ಯಾ,
ಏನಗಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ತರುಮರನಿಲ್ಲವೆ? (BVS, p.4)

If the words like 'mercy' replace the Kannada '*karune*', the word 'heart' in the second line fails to replace the Kannada '*krupe*'. Further, the Kannada '*paraloka doorana*' is replaced by 'exile' in English. Translation of this kind of vernacular texts needs the translator to be well versed in that culture. Despite, the translator's familiarity with the source

text culture, it won't guarantee perfect translation. The translator can only find the nearest word in the target language. This is what the reader clearly feels while reading the following English version of this *vacana*.

Siva, you have no mercy.
Siva, you have no heart.

Why why did you bring me to birth,
wretch in this world,
exile from the other?

Tell me, lord,
don't you have no more
little tree or plant
made just for me? (SS, p.37)

Likewise, in the following *vacana* the Kannada word '*tumbi*' finds no place in English translation. Of course, the translator could reproduce the Kannada effect in the English version.

ಮನೆಯೊಳಗೆ ಮನೆಯೊಡೆಯನಿದ್ದಾನೋ ಇಲ್ಲವೋ?
ಹೊಸ್ತಿಲಲ್ಲಿ ಹುಲ್ಲು ತುಂಬಿ, ಮನೆಯೊಳಗೆ ರಜ ತುಂಬಿ,
ಮನೆಯೊಳಗೆ ಮನೆಯೊಡೆಯನಿದ್ದಾನೋ ಇಲ್ಲವೋ?
ತನುವಿನೊಳಗೆ ಹುಸಿ ತುಂಬಿ ಮನದೊಳಗೆ ವಿಷಯ ತುಂಬಿ,
ಮನೆಯೊಳಗೆ ಮನೆಯೊಡೆಯನಿಲ್ಲಾ.
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವ. (BVS, p.68)

Except the word '*tumbi*' almost the complete translation is very close to the Kannada *vacana*. In fact, the *vacana* is very simple but full of values and message for life. The translated version in English reads as below:

The master of the house, is he at home, or isn't he?
Grass on the threshold,
dirt in the house:
The master of the house, is he at home, or isn't he?

Lies in the body,

lust in the heart:
no, the master of the house is not at home,
our Lord of the Meeting Rivers. (SS, p.37)

In the following *vacana* the speaker appeals to his personal God asking Him his personal question. This *vacana* in English is very close to the Kannada version.

ಏನಿಸುಕಾಲ ಕಲ್ಲು ನೀರೊಳಗಿದ್ದರೇನು,
ನೆನೆದು ಮೃದುವಾಗಬಲ್ಲದೆ?
ಏನಿಸುಕಾಲ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಪೂಜಿಸಿ ಏವೆನಯ್ಯಾ,
ಮನದಲ್ಲಿ ದೃಢವಿಲ್ಲದನ್ನಕ್ಕ?
ನಿಧಾನವ ಕಾಯ್ದಿದ್ದ ಬೆಂತರನಂತೆ:
ಅದರ ವಿಧಿಯೆನಗಾಯಿತ್ತು, ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, (BVS, p.25)

Of course, the two words: ‘heart’ and ‘gold’ in English seem to be not so effective as the Kannada ‘*mana*’ and ‘*nidhi*’. They sound just as mere technical terms and fail to cease the reader’s mind. Except these two words the remaining translation of this *vacana* is particularly well done.

Does it matter how long
a rock soaks in the water:
will it ever grow soft?

Does it matter how long
I’ve spent in worship
when the heart is fickle?

Futile as a ghost
I stand guard over hidden gold,
O lord of the meeting rivers. (SS, p.38)

The following *vacana* reveals the effect of ‘poverty’ in human life as it also reveals the effect of the riches. In this *vacana* there are certain words that seem to be different in English translation from the Kannada words.

ಹಾವು ತಿಂದವರ ನುಡಿಸಬಹುದು,
ಗರ ಹೊಡೆದವರ ನುಡಿಸಬಹುದು;
ಸಿರಿಗರ ಹೊಡೆದವರ ನುಡಿಸಲು ಬಾರದು ನೋಡಯ್ಯಾ;
ಬಡತನವೆಂಬ ಮಂತ್ರವಾದಿ ಹೊಗಲು ಒಡನೆ ನುಡಿವರು,
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ. (BVS, p.64)

The translation of this *vacana* is almost perfect except two words in Kannada: ‘*gara hodedavara*’, and ‘*sirigara hodedavara*’. The translation of these words sounds too plain to reach that height of the Kannada *vacana*. As in the previous *vacana* here too the English words: ‘evil planet’ and ‘struck dumb by riches’

You can make them talk
if the serpent
has stung
them.

You can make them talk
if they’re struck
by an evil planet.

But you can’t make them talk
if they’re struck dumb
by riches.

Yet when Poverty the magician
enters, they’ll speak
at once,

O lord of the meeting rivers. (SS, p.41)

The following *vacana* in Kannada reveals the feeling of the speaker with his personal God. This *vacana* is almost like a perfect translation in English but fails to produce the feeling of serenity that the Kannada version does. The English technical words ‘iamb’ and ‘dactyl’ don’t seem to be close to the Kannada ‘*amruthguna*’, and ‘*deveguna*’.

ತಾಳಮಾನ ಸರಿಸವನರಿಯೆ,
ಓಜೆಬಜಾವಣಿಯ ಲೆಕ್ಕವನರಿಯೆ,
ಅಮೃತಗುಣ ದೇವಗುಣವನರಿಯೆ!
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ನಿನಗೆ ಕೇಡಿಲ್ಲವಾಗಿ
ಆನೋಲಿದಂತೆ ಹಾಡುವೆ! (BVS, p.5)

In English translation it reads like some technical reading. The common reader can easily feel that he is reading something on learning music. But in fact, it is the prayer of the speaker to his God. The Kannada *vacana* is translated in its entirety here. The gist of the *vacana* aptly translated except the Kannada word '*kedillavagi*', which in English becomes 'nothing will hurt'.

I don't know anything like time-beats and metre
nor the arithmetic of strings and drums;
I don't know the count of iamb and dactyl.

My lord of the meeting rivers,
as nothing will hurt you
I'll sing as I love. (SS, p.45)

Whatever it is, but the Kannada version appeals more than the English version to the common readers. It might be so with only the readers familiar with the Kannada culture. However, the English version of Ramanujan takes the Kannada reader somewhere near the original *vacana*. In the following *vacana* of Basavanna the word '*ayya*' in the first line is very culture specific and the English word 'sir' cannot appeal to the reader as the Kannada word.

ನಾಲಗೆ ತಾಗಿದ ರುಚಿಗೆ ಮನವೇ ಸಾಕ್ಷಿ, ಸಾಲದೇ ಅಯ್ಯಾ?
ಮಾಲೆಗಾರನ ಕೇಳಿ ನನೆ ಅರಳುವುದೆ?
ಆಗಮವನಿದಿರಿಗೆ ತೋರುವುದು ಆಚಾರವೇ ಅಯ್ಯಾ?
ನಮ್ಮ ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗನ ಕೂಡಿದ ಕೂಟದ ಕರುಳ ಕಲೆಯನು
ಇದಿರಿಗೆ ತೋರುವುದು ಆಚಾರವೇ, ಅಯ್ಯಾ? (BVS, p.59)

The word '*aralu*' in Kannada becomes 'to break into flower' in English. The way Kannada word appeals to the reader is more pleasing than the English words. This is what limits the translator in his progress but makes him aware of the cultural variation. The Kannada culture is too different from that of the English culture and that is why the vernacular words are untranslatable. Hence, the translator needs to find the nearest word in the target language.

Sir, isn't the mind witness enough,
for the taste on the tongue?

Do buds wait for the garland maker's word
to break into flower?

Is it right, sir, to bring out the texts
for everything?

And, sir, is it really right to bring into the open
the mark on our vitals
left by our lord's love-play? (SS, p.51)

India is known for the wide spread practice of castes. These castes have their individual dialects in Kannada language. Due to this reason certain words in Kannada remain intangible and untranslatable. Dasimayya is the second of the four *vacanakaras* that Ramanujan translated. Dasimayya is a weaver by profession and he is known as '*Devara Dasimayya*' or God's Dasimayya' and also '*Jedara Dasimayya*' or 'Dasimayya of the weavers'. (SS. p.53) 'Ramanatha' is the signature line of Dasimayya which occurs in all of his *vacanas*. The concern in his *vacanas* as well as the others' *vacanas* was to abolish the caste system and make this society harmonious and these *vacanakaras* expected solidarity and equality in the society.

The following *vacana* of Dasimayya in Kannada speaks about the constitution of the human body. In the first line the word ‘*bhootha*’ is very difficult to explain in English and more so to find a single word. It is too culture specific and Ramanujan could find the nearest word in English to replace the Kannada ‘*bhootha*’.

ಒಂದಾಗಿಹವೈದು ಭೂತ
ಚಂದ್ರಸೂರ್ಯರು ನಂದಿವಾಹನರು ನಿಮ್ಮ ತನುಷ್ಲವೆ?
ನಿಂದು ನೋಡಲು ಜಗಭರಿತನಾಗಿಪ್ಪೆ
ಇನ್ನೂ ನೋಯಿಸುವೆನಾರನಯ್ಯಾ ರಾಮನಾಥ!⁷

The Kannada word like *Bhootha* becomes ‘elements’ in Ramanujan’s English translation. If the exact meaning of Kannada *Bhootha* is taken in English it means ‘ghost’, ‘devil’, or ‘evil spirit’. The Kannada word ‘*nandi*’ in Ramanujan’s translation becomes ‘rider of the bull’. Of course, it is the vehicle of ‘*Siva*’ but still it sounds too plain in English. In English the *vacana* is as follows:

The five elements
have become one.
The sun and the moon,
O rider of the bull,
aren’t they really
your body?
I stand, look on,
you’re filled with the worlds.
What can I hurt now
after this, Ramanatha? (SS. p. 59)

The other *vacana* of Dasimayya brings forth yet other culture specific words, ‘*kuruhu*’, and ‘*maya-moha*’. These words are loaded with the vernacular culture and the English ‘face’ and ‘illusion’ fall short of the impression that Kannada words create in the minds of the readers.

ತಾಯಗರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಶಿಶು ತಾಯ ಕುರುಹನರಿಯದು
ಆ ತಾಯಿ ಶಿಶುವಿನ ಕುರುಹನೆಂದೂ ಅರಿಯಳು
ಮಾಯಾ-ಮೋಹದಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ಭಕ್ತರು ದೇವರನರಿಯರು
ಆ ದೇವರು ಆ ಭಕ್ತರನೆಂದೂ ಅರಿಯನು ಕಾಣಾ ರಾಮನಾಥ! (DDV,
p.20)

Further, the words like '*bhaktaru devaranariyaru*' in Ramanujan's translation becomes 'the man... does not know the lord'. These English words sound too plain and at the same time pose difficulty to the translator in finding the corresponding English words to replace these words. The translation of this particular *vacana* appears to have challenged Ramanujan, because the English version is too ordinary to stand equal with Kannada version.

In the mother's womb
the child does not know
his mother's face

nor can she ever know
his face.

The man in the world's illusion
does not know the lord

nor the lord him,
Ramanatha. (SS, p.56)

Of course, the following *vacana* is very simple in Kannada but is loaded with culture specific meaning and values. Although these experiences are common in human life, they cannot be easily translated in the other language. As it is discussed elsewhere in the preceding chapter, a language forms the 'cultural capital' of that particular region. So, the word '*kichchu*' in the following *vacana* repeated in all the lines, poses real challenge to the translator.

ನಡೆ-ನೋಟ ಸೊಲ್ಲೆಡೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಕಿಚ್ಚು,
ಮಡದಿ-ಪುರುಷರೆಡೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಕಿಚ್ಚು,
ತಡೆದುಂಬ ಎಡೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಕಿಚ್ಚು,
ಪಡೆದರ್ಥ ಕೆಟ್ಟೆಡೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಕಿಚ್ಚು,
ಕೂಡಿದ ದ್ರವ್ಯದ ಮೋಹದೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಕಿಚ್ಚು,
ಇಂತೀ ಐದು ಕಿಚನಿಕ್ಕಿ ಬಾಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಣ್ಣು ಹೊಯಿದು-
ಕೆಡಿಸಿದೆಯಯ್ಯ ರಾಮನಾಥ! (DDV, p.22)

It becomes just 'fire' in English, the other words like, 'yede' - 'the plate of food', and 'koodida dravya' - 'coupling'. The words towards the ending of the Kannada *vacana* 'inthe' and 'kedisideyayya' get no place in Ramanujan's translation. These are culture bound and certainly have no match in the present context of English language.

A fire
in every act and look and word.
Between man and wife
a fire.
In the plate of food
eaten after much waiting
a fire.
In the loss of gain
a fire.
And in the infatuation
of coupling
a fire.

You have given us
five fires
and poured dirt in our mouths
O Ramanatha. (SS, p.57)

According to the *bhakti* poet, although the society knows the plight of the human beings, the people ignore the ways of the creator God. The *vacana* movement intensifies the socio-cultural practices in the tradition bound Indian society.

Dasimayya feels that his personal God 'Ramanatha' is the creator of the world. Dasimayya as he expects others also to worship his God he considers everything created by his God. There is again a culture-specific word in the following *vacana* that has no match in English.

ಇಳೆ ನಿಮ್ಮ ದಾನ: ಬೆಳೆ ನಿಮ್ಮ ದಾನ,
ಸುಳಿದು ಬೀಸುವ ಗಾಳಿ ನಿಮ್ಮ ದಾನ,
ನಿಮ್ಮ ದಾನವನುಂಡು ಅನ್ಯರ ಹೊಗಳುವ
ಕುನ್ನಿಗಳನೇನೆಂಬೆ ರಾಮನಾಥ? (DDV, p.69)

The word '*daana*' in Kannada has the greater value when compared to the English word 'gift'. This Kannada word is so intrinsic with the local culture and certainly has no match in English. Gift is too ordinary as the gift can be given at any occasion but '*daana*' is given only during certain special occasions. Other than this the Kannada '*anyaru*' becomes 'everyone else'. Of course, this *vacana* in English has come out well but lacks the intensity of the Kannada *vacana*.

The earth is your gift,
the growing grain your gift,
the blowing wind your gift.

What shall I call these curs
who eat out of your hand
and praise everyone else? (SS, p.61)

This all was due to the wide spread practice of 'casteism' in the society that made people self divided even before twelfth century. Obviously, the people of high-caste thought of themselves and looked down upon the poor and the untouchable. That is why, the *vacanakaras* emphasized universal brotherhood in their *vacanas*. The following *vacana* very well reveals the confidence of the poet in his God, who will look after the humans depending upon their confidence and faith in the God.

ಹರ ತನ್ನ ಭಕ್ತರ ತಿರಿವಂತೆ ಮಾಡುವ,
ಒರೆದು ನೋಡುವ ಸುವರ್ಣದ ಚಿನ್ನದಂತೆ
ಅರೆದು ನೋಡುವ ಚಂದನದಂತೆ
ಅರೆದು ನೋಡುವ ಕಬ್ಬಿನ ಕೋಲಿನಂತೆ
ಬೆದರದೆ ಬೆಚ್ಚದೆ ಇದ್ದಡೆ
ಕರವಿಡಿದೆತ್ತಿ ಕೊಂಬ ನಮ್ಮ ರಾಮನಾಥ! (DDV, p.81)

The English translation of this *vacana* is simply the gist of the Kannada version, because the Kannada 'hara', has no match in Ramanujan's translation. He starts it with just 'He', and the whole translation of this *vacana* misses the intensity of the Kannada *vacana*. Everything is quite well translated in English but due to the Kannada 'hara' it lacks that intrinsic value. The English version reads as follows:

He will make them roam the streets;
scrape them on stone for colour of gold;
grind them for sandal;
like a stick of sugarcane
he will slash them to look inside.

If they do not wince or shudder,
he will pick them up by the hands,

will our Ramanatha. (SS, p.62)

Akkamahadevi, the other member of *Bhakti* movement, joined the – 'Anubhava Mantapa' -- an academy of mystics, saints and philosophers of the Lingayat faith in the 12th century presided over by Allama Prabhu. Many of her *vacanas* speak of the conflict of a woman. She desired to 'shatter the entire framework of so-called legitimacies. She rebelled against the 'indecent pruderies of the society around her'. (SS, p.23) She was the first woman who opposed the confinement of woman's life. Similar to the other *vacanas*, the following *vacana* of Mahadeviyakka too poses difficulties to the translator which in Kannada reads as:

ಎನ್ನ ನಾನರಿಯದಂದು
ಋನ್ನ ನೀನೆಲ್ಲಿದೆ? ಹೇಳಯ್ಯಾ
ಚಿನ್ನದೊಳಗನ ಬಣ್ಣದಂತೆ ಎನ್ನೊಳಗಿದೆಯಯ್ಯಾ
ಎನ್ನೊಳಗಿದು ಮೈದೋರದ ಭೇದವ
ನಿಮ್ಮಲ್ಲಿ ಕಂಡೆನು ಕಾಣಾ ಚನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನ! ⁸

The translation of these terms in English sounds too vague to create the impression of the Kannada words. This is a *Bhakti* poem where the speaker finds her lord in herself. In Ramanujan's translation it reads as:

When I didn't know myself
where were you?
Like the colour in the gold,
you were in me.
I saw in you,
lord white as jasmine,
the paradox of your being
in me
without showing a limb. (SS, p.75)

Here too the culture bound words can be noticed such as the signature line of the poetess Mahadeviyakka '*channamallikarjuna*' and the word '*maidorada*'. In fact, the signature line of Mahadeviyakka in Kannada is more meaningful and it has its own intrinsic value too. Whereas, the English words although explain the meaning, they fail to match with the Kannada term. Likewise, the following *vacana* of Mahadeviyakka poses certain difficulties to the translator.

ಎನ್ನ ಕಾಯ ಮಣ್ಣು, ಜೀವ ಬಯಲು!
ಆವುದ ಹಿಡಿವೆನಯ್ಯ ದೇವ?
ನಿಮ್ಮ ನಾವ ಪರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಾ ನೆನೆವೆನಯ್ಯ?
ಎನ್ನ ಮಾಯವನು ಮಾಣಿಸಯ್ಯ ಚೆನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನಯ್ಯ! (AV, p.47)

This *vacana* expresses the speaker's intense feeling of herself being immersed in the 'illusions' of life. The way she expresses her feeling reveals that she has been ceased by that thought. The very culture of Kannada makes it difficult to translate such situations into other language. Certain words like, 'mannu', 'bayalu', 'hidi', 'nenesu', and 'maanisu' might have equivalent words in the other Indian languages but certainly not in the English language.

My body is dirt,
my spirit is space:
 which
shall I grab, O lord? How,
and what,
 shall I think of you?
Cut through
my illusions,
lord white as jasmine. (SS, p.73)

Due to the culture specificity such Kannada words when translated into English certainly lose their effect. The English words like, 'dirt', 'space', 'grab', 'think', and 'cut through' fall short of the extended meaning of the Kannada words. However, they carry something of the source language culture to the target language culture. Similarly, the following *vacana* is very much imbedded with the vernacular culture.

ಅರಲುಗೊಂಡ ಕೆರೆಗೆ ತೊರೆ ಬಂದು ಹಾಯ್ದಂತೆ,
ಬರಲುಗೊಂಡ ಸಸಿಗೆ ಮಳೆ ಸುರಿದಂತಾಯ್ತು ನೋಡಾ!
ಇಂದೆನಗೆ ಇಹದ ಸುಖ, ಪರದ ಗತಿ ನಡೆದು ಬಂದಂತಾಯ್ತು
ನೋಡಾ! ಚೆನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನಯ್ಯ, ಗುರುಪಾದವ ಕಂಡು
ಧನ್ಯಳಾದೆನು ನೋಡಾ! (AV, p.56)

The very first word in the Kannada version, '*aralugonda*' has no equivalent word in English. The very naturalness is usually lost in English translation. That is because of the culture-specificity of the

words. Look at the third line: ‘*indenage ihada sukha, parada gati nadedu bandantaayittu*’ this is quite difficult to find the equivalent terminology in English to match with the Kannada expression. Both the languages have their limitations regarding their culture and Ramanujan has tried here to carry forward just the gist of it.

It was like a stream
running into the dry bed
of a lake,
like rain pouring on plants
parched to sticks.

It was like this world’s pleasure
and the way to other,
both
walking towards me.

Seeing the feet of the master,
O lord white as jasmine,
I was made
worthwhile. (SS, p.75)

When this English version is read, one can easily feel the cultural differences between Kannada and English. The following *vacana* further intensifies the immersion of the speaker in her personal God.

ಕಿಡಿ ಕಿಡಿ ಕೆದರಿದರೆ
ಎನಗೆ ಹಸಿವು ತೃಷೆ ಅಡಗಿತೆಂಬೆನು!
ಮುಗಿಲು ಹರಿದು ಬಿದ್ದರೆ
ಎನಗೆ ಮಜ್ಜನಕ್ಕರೆದರೆಂಬೆನು!
ಗಿರಿ ಮೇಲೆ ಬಿದ್ದರೆ ಎನಗೆ ಪುಷ್ಪವೆಂಬೆನು!
ಚೆನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನಯ್ಯ, ಶಿರ ಹರಿದು ಬಿದ್ದರೆ
ಪ್ರಾಣ ನಿಮಗರ್ಪಿತವೆಂಬೆನು! (AV, p.61)

The Kannada words like, ‘*kedaru*’, ‘*majjanakkere*’, ‘*pushpa*’, and ‘*praana*’ although translated into English, reveal the cultural variation

very vividly. These words in the English translation cannot produce that serenity in the minds of the readers. The English version is as follows:

If sparks fly
I shall think my thirst and hunger quelled.

If the skies tear down
I shall think them pouring for my bath,

If a hillside slide on me
I shall think it flower for my hair.
O lord white as jasmine, if my head falls from my shoulders
I shall think it your offering. (SS, p. 76)

Likewise, the following *vacana* of Mahadeviyakka, further reveals the cultural disparity between Indian and American or English. The word used to address the elders and the respectful persons in Kannada is 'neevu'. But, this word has no place in English culture, because in English for both singular and plural the same word 'you' is used. Further, the words like 'devataru' and 'sarvabharitanaagi' are very culture specific and they are intangible too.

ವನವೆಲ್ಲಾ ನೀವೆ
ವನದೊಳಗಣ ದೇವತರುವೆಲ್ಲಾ ನೀವೆ
ತರುವುನೊಳಗಾಡುವ ಖಗಮೃಗವೆಲ್ಲಾ ನೀವೆ
ಚೆನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನ, ಸರ್ವಭರಿತನಾಗಿ
ಎನಗೇಕೆ ಮುಖದೋರೆ? (AV, p.65)

In English translation these words are: 'the great trees', 'filling and filled by all'. Of course, they reveal the difficulty in finding the equivalent words from English language. However, what the Kannada words mean is quite different from these English words. In Kannada these words mean that they are not just trees but they are equal to the God. Worshipping the

trees is in the very culture of India and that is what is quite different or missing in American culture.

You are the forest

You are all the great trees
in the forest.

You are bird and beast
playing in and out
of all the trees

O lord white as jasmine
filling and filled by all

why don't you
show me your face? (SS, p.79)

As the feminists raise their voice for women rights today, Mahadeviyakka did it in the twelfth century. She broke all the socio-religious dogmas and through her spiritual achievement led a free life which was a taboo for women during her time. Especially, she fought against the established male dominated value system in the society. She denied the male-female disparity considering it meaningless; she hinted at the 'soul' which knows no male or female distinction.

As in the earlier *Vacanas* here also there are certain culture-specific terms which pose a challenge to the translator. Allama Prabhu's appeal is too humble in this *vacana* where he puts forward his request to help the poor and the needy people so as to get salvation. The other *vacana* refers to the barren woman who is also looked down upon in her family for not bearing children. In the same way Allama Prabhu the other *vacanakara* too writes in Kannada.

ದೇಹವೇ ದೇವಾಲಯವಾಗಿದ್ದ ಮೇಲೆ
ಮತ್ತೆ ಬೇರೆ ದೇಗುಲಕ್ಕೆ ಎಡೆಯಾಡುವರಿಗೆ
ಏನ ಹೇಳುವೆನಯ್ಯಾ?
ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರಾ, ನೀ ಕಲ್ಲಾದೆಡೆ ನಾನೇನಪ್ಪೆನು?!⁹

It sounds more as a re-writing of the Kannada *vacana*, because there is lot of difference between the first line Kannada *dehave devaalayavaagidda mele* and ‘with a whole temple in this body’ in English translation. Similarly, the signature line too sounds hazy as the Kannada *guheshvara* is the personal God of the speaker; in English it is just ‘lord of caves’. This shows that the felt experiences like this can be best expressed only in ones mother tongue and not in an acquired language. There is difficulty in translating the medieval Kannada literary works into English and Ramanujan has clearly mentioned this difficulty in his translator’s note and in the introductory part in *Speaking of Siva*. In Ramanujan’s translation it becomes:

With a whole temple
in this body
where’s the need
for another?
No one asked
for two.
O lord of Caves,
if you are stone,
what am I? (SS. p.101)

Likewise, the following *vacana* of Allama Prabhu reveals the mystical feeling. This is like a sincere question to the speaker’s personal God. Moreover, this is the felt experience presented through the mystical experience and it presents certain untranslatable words in the vernacular. The *vacana* in Kannada is like this:

ಬೆಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಚಳಿಯಾದಡೆ
ಏನ ಹೊದಿಸುವರಯ್ಯ!
ಬಯಲು ಬತ್ತಲೆಯಾದಡೆ
ಏನ ನುಡಿಸುವರಯ್ಯ?
ಭಕ್ತನು ಭವಿಯಾದಡೆ
ಏನನುಪಮಿಸುವೆನಯ್ಯ - ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರ? (APV, p.66)

The Kannada words like, 'bhakta', and 'bhaviyaadade' have no match in English. Of course, they are translated in English as 'the lord's men' and 'worldlings', but due to their culture-specificity these English words fall short of the intensity of the Kannada words.

If mountains shiver in the cold
with what
will they wrap them?

If space goes naked
with what
shall they clothe it?

If the lord's men become worldlings
where will I find the metaphor,
O lord of caves. (SS, p.100)

The following *vacana* though mystical, the theme is very simple and conveys the meaning in an effective manner. There are not many words that pose challenge to the translator. This *vacana* conveys the ways to meet the Lord, the speaker's personal God.

ನೆಳಲ ಹೂಳಿಹೆನೆಂದು ಬಳಲುತ್ತಿದೆ ಜಗವೆಲ್ಲಾ.
ನೆಳಲು ಸಾಯಬಲ್ಲದೇ ಅಂಗ ಪ್ರಾಣಿಗಳಿಗೆ?
ಸಮುದ್ರದಾಚೆಯ ತಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಳ್ಳನ ಕಂಡು
ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಮುನಿದು ಬೈದರೆ ಅವ ಸಾಯಬಲ್ಲನೆ?
ಭಾವದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಲಿದ ಹೊಲಿಗೆಯ ಭೇದವನರಿಯರು,
ಕಾಮಿಸಿದರುಂಟೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರಲಿಂಗವು? (APV, p.105)

The translation of this *vacana* is very close to the vernacular. However, the last but one line fails to match with the Kannada version in its effect and intensity. The Kannada word '*bhaava*' is translated as 'feeling' but this English word can never reach the height of Kannada word. Then the word, '*bheda*' is translated as 'secret' and this also seems too light.

The world tires itself thinking
it has buried all shadow.

Can shadows die
for limbed animals?

If you rage and curse here
at the thief out there
on the other shore,
will he just drop dead?

These men they do not know
the secret,
the stitches of feeling;
would our lord of caves
come alive
just because they wish it? (SS, p.106)

In the following *vacana* the poet mocks at the marriage celebration. In India the marriages exhibit the 'culture' of people belonging to different communities. Certain expressions in Indian culture particularly used during celebrations have no match in English language. Their ways of such expressions differ completely from the Indian ways.

ಮೋಟರ ಮದುವೆಗೆ
ಭಂಡರು ಹರೆಯ ಹೊಯ್ದು
ಮೂಕೊರತಿಯರೆಲ್ಲಾ ಕಳಶವ ಹೊತ್ತರೆಲ್ಲಾ!
ಉಘೆ ಚಾಂಗು ಭಲಾ ಎಂದು ನಿಬ್ಬಣ ನೆರೆದು
ಹೂದಂಬುಲಕ್ಕೆ ಮುನಿವರಿದೇನಯ್ಯ?
ತ್ರಿಜಗವೆಲ್ಲಾ ನಿಬ್ಬಣ ಹೋಯಿತು!
ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರನನರಿಯದ ಹಗರಣವೋ! (APV, p.106)

The translation of such expressions is really challenging, that too in English. The Kannada words like, ‘*kalasha*’, ‘*nibbana*’ and ‘*taambula*’ when translated into English can carry only the literal meaning but not the culture-specific meaning. Especially, these words are used only during the auspicious occasions but when translated into English they lose their credence. Of course, Ramanujan’s undaunted effort can be easily sensed here in the translation of this and all other *vacanas*.

For a wedding of dwarfs
rascals beat the drums
and whores
carry on their heads
holy pitchers;

with hey ho’s and loud hurrahs
they crowd the wedding party
and quarrel over flowers and betelnuts;

all three worlds are at the party;
what a rumpus this is,
without our Lord of Caves. (SS, p.107)

The following *vacana* too has certain culture-specific words which are loaded with the Indian culture. Especially, the Kannada word, ‘*talawara*’ has no match in English language.

ಉದಕದ ಕೈಕಾಲ ಮುರಿದು
ಅಗ್ನಿಯ ಕಿವಿಮೂಗನರಿದು
ವಾಯುವ ತಲೆಯ ಹೊಯ್ದು
ಆಕಾಶವ ಶೂಲದಲ್ಲೆಕ್ಕಿದ ಬಲ್ಲಿದ ತಳವಾರನೀತನು!
ಅರಸು-ಪ್ರಧಾನ-ಮಂತ್ರಿ ಮೂವರ
ಮುಂದುಗಡಿಸಿದ ಬಲ್ಲಿದ ತಳವಾರನೀತನು!
ಒಂಬತ್ತು ಬಾಗಿಲ ಕದವನಿಕ್ಕಿ ಬಲಿದು
ಬೀಗವ ಹೂಡಿ

ನವಸಾಸಿರ ಮಂದಿಯ ಕೊಂದುಳಿದನು! ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರ. (APV, p.117)

In Ramanujan's translation this *vacana* reveals a plain story of a common policeman, whereas in the Kannada *vacana* it is quite different. Of course, the work of the Kannada '*talawara*' and English 'policeman' may be similar, but culturally their value is quite contrasting. As far as literal translation is concerned the translation seems to be nearly perfect.

He's powerful, this policeman!
broke off the hands and feet of water
lopped off the nose and ears of fire
beheaded the winds
and impaled the sky on a stake.
Destroyed the king and his two ministers.

Closed and shot the bolts of the nine gates
and locked them up
killed nine thousand men
till he was left alone

our Lord of Caves. (SS, p.109)

Even after spending later half of his life in America Ramanujan could never have the feeling of an insider in American culture. This is what he acknowledged in his interviews also. Therefore, Ramanujan gives a parable at the end of one of his essays to convey that one hundred percent translation is not possible. As he writes,

At such times one draws consolation from parables like the following. A Chinese emperor ordered a tunnel to be bored through a great mountain. The engineers decided that the best and quickest way to do it would be to begin work on both sides of the mountain, after precise measurements. If the measurements were precise enough, the two tunnels would meet in the middle, making a single one. 'But what happens if they don't meet?' asked the emperor. The counselors, in their wisdom answered, 'If they don't meet, we will have two tunnels instead of one.' So too, if the

representation in another language is not close enough, but still succeeds in ‘carrying’ the poem in some sense, we will have two poems instead of one.¹⁰

Speaking of Siva thus reveals the close connection of Ramanujan with the Indian culture. If Ramanujan had not been aware of Indian culture he would not have translated these *Vacanas* in this way. He has taken liberty in the translation of these *Vacanas*. Therefore, in spite of the culture-specific nuances in the translation of these *Vacanas* one should appreciate skill, knowledge, and resourcefulness of Ramanujan. Despite the challenges that he encountered during translation it never compelled him to give up midway. It is found that Ramanujan’s *Speaking of Siva* endeavoured to dispel the dread about literary translation.

This *Bhakti* movement started with the internal spiritual experience and addressed the socio-economic and religious disparities that were inherent in Indian culture. Specifically, the leading *vacanakara* Basavanna voiced the problems of untouchables despite the strong hold of Brahmanical hierarchy. All through their *Bhakti* movement they raised their voice against the existing socio-religious dogmas like upper-lower caste distinctions and socio-economic disparities which embedded in the society during their time. Of course, these saint poets’ voice could not bring any long-lasting change in the society due to the strong hold of brahmanical hierarchy. Therefore, as the movement began it never stopped and today there are many modern *vacanakaras* in Kannada. Despite the cultural nuances Ramanujan made this great reformative movement in all its diversity available to the English speaking world through his translations.

Notes:

¹H. Deveerappa. Ed. Vacanas of Basavanna. Sirigere: Annana Balaga, 1967

²Asha Sarangi. Language and Politics in India. Delhi: OUP, 2011, p. 5

³Vinay Dharwadker. Ed. The Collected Essays of A.K. Ramanujan. New Delhi: OUP 1999, Sixth impression 2012 p.230

⁴ಸ.ಸ. ಮಾಳವಾಡ. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ಶ್ರೀ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರ ವಚನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ. ನವದೆಹಲಿ: ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ ಅಕಾಡೆಮಿ, ೨೦೦೨ ಪುಟ ೧೧೪
(Hereinafter all the further references to this edition are incorporated in the text itself as BVS)

⁵A.K Ramanujan. “Speaking of Siva.” The Oxford India Ramanujan. Ed. Molly Daniels-Ramanujan. New Delhi: OUP. 2004 rpt. 2005, p.36
[Hereinafter all further references to this edition are incorporated in the text itself as – SS]

⁶Juliane House. “Universality versus culture specificity in translation”. Translation Studies. Ed. Alessandra Riccardi. Delhi: CUP, 2010, p.92

⁷ರಮೇಶ ಮಾಳಾ. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ದೇವರ ದಾಸಿಮಯ್ಯನವರ ವಚನ ದರ್ಪಣ. ಕಲಬುರಗಿ: ಗಾಯತ್ರಿ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾನ, 1998, ಪುಟ 38
[Hereinafter all further references to this edition are incorporated in the text itself as – DDV]

⁸ಡಾ. ಎಲ್. ಬಸವರಾಜು. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ಅಕ್ಕನ ವಚನಗಳು. ಮೈಸೂರು: ಗೀತಾ ಬುಕ್ ಹೌಸ್, 2012, ಪುಟ 57
[Hereinafter all further references to this edition are incorporated in the text itself as – AV]

⁹ಡಾ. ಎಲ್. ಬಸವರಾಜು. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ಅಲ್ಲಮನ ವಚನಗಳು. ಮೈಸೂರು: ಗೀತಾ ಬುಕ್ ಹೌಸ್, 2011, ಪುಟ 79, 80
[Hereinafter all further references to this edition are incorporated in the text itself as – APV]

¹⁰Vinay Dharwadker. Ed. The Collected Essays of A.K. Ramanujan. New Delhi: OUP 1999, Sixth impression 2012 p.231

CHAPTER – 4

CONCLUSION

This last and concluding chapter summarises the formulations based on the observations and insights emerging from this study.

A.K. Ramanujan was undoubtedly a master craftsman. As he started his translations earlier than his creative writing, his own poetry owes much to his translations. His immediate environment was not hostile to him; neither does he feel isolated from it. There is no nostalgia in his poems. One only finds his cultural dilemmas and the ironic stance of an outsider which do not amount to alienation. Ramanujan's works project the simultaneous existence of local vernacular and the global English in his creative writing as well as translation. There is the traditional Indian culture and the modern American culture though not void of its own typical traditions in his works.

Essentially A.K. Ramanujan was trilingual – Kannada, Tamil, and English but his creative forte is bilingual confined to Kannada and English. His works reveal his erudite skill in making best use of his multilingual situation. It is notable that his knowledge of Kannada and English poetic tradition enriched his English translations. He used his bilingual sensibility for the purpose of translation, parody and irony. In fact, his childhood family in India formed his worldview and intellectual concerns. His childhood family in India was engaging to him in the sense that his life in America was filled with tensions and uncertainties. These very experiences of native and alien life lead him to produce the pioneer work in the translation of the medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poetry with the backdrop of cross-cultural nuances negotiation.

His works seem to be an experiment with language as he wrote in Kannada and English. Ramanujan's unobtrusive fusion of an essential Indian sensibility with modern Western approach is skillfully infused in the translation of *vacanas*. Due to his native and alien experiences, the force for his intellectual concern was both overwhelming and strengthening. The cultures of both India and America influenced him in more than one way. This particular quality of his translations makes him a modernist. While reading his creative works the reader can feel the comic irony that is often blended with deep concern for the situation particularly based on cross-cultural connotations.

Especially, his poems show the influence of Western imagists, Kannada saint poets and Tamil *Sangam* poets. His translations are part of his undertaking as a bilingual poet. He could neither accept his father's global heritage nor access his mother's local world. Starting from his childhood days Ramanujan was a person moving through and between places like 'upstairs and downstairs', America and India respectively. There is certainly 'human displacement' and 'cultural dislocation' in Ramanujan's poetry. It was not just a movement but he tried to bridge the gap between those places. Even when he wrote five volumes of poetry and translated classical Tamil and Medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poetry into English, still he was of the opinion that writing in a second language poses disadvantages specifically in translation.

Through his translations, Ramanujan brings national and international variants of reality in a frame that is cross-cultural. His translations are infused with the local vernacular and modern American cultural variants. Therefore, his works are like an enterprise of dialogue and exchange between language and cultures. His translations affirm his instinctive

access to his past native cultural heritage. Although he lived in the culture with material progress and technological advancement, the traditional cultural practices remained central for Ramanujan. That is what he made clear in his poetry, essays and in the introduction to his translations that there is a perpetual link between the past and the present. In fact, all that he borrowed from Indian myths and traditions acted as the background for all his creative works. Almost all his works revolve around the cross-cultural aspects, which played a predominant role in his personal life. The self in the creative works of Ramanujan seems to be a complex character with the web of different social and cross-cultural experiences.

Ramanujan's overwhelming concern towards his past proves the intellect and an inextricable sustained bond with the Indian cultural tradition. Perhaps his involvement in the translation of Indian classics into English must have helped him in negotiating the American culture. Specifically the *vacana* writers had a great influence on him as they spoke of immortality of the moving (*Jangama*) and mortality of the standing (*Stavara*). The translations of Ramanujan, specifically the medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poems reveal the subaltern concerns in the vernacular language. The writers of *vacana* rejected the tradition of Vedic religion. The *vacanakaras* ridiculed and questioned fiercely the classical belief systems, social customs and superstitions in their *vacanas* to establish a classless society. The spontaneous worship of the *Bhakti* movement surpassed the existing social barriers like caste related hierarchies, and social disparities. The four saint poets that Ramanujan translated express their contempt towards the meaningless traditional cultural practices that kept certain category of people out of the rituals and such other celebrations in the society. Therefore, the *bhakti* poets used the common man's language.

In the works of Ramanujan, English becomes hybrid by the blending of elements that were not part of its original occidental make-up. Due to the introduction of Kannada names of objects, designations of relatives, habits of language, and actions that are indigenous -- make his English translation less inward-looking, and more multi-ethnic. This infusion of the native, Eastern version of its poetic insurgence supplemented Modernism and lost its colonial essence. In particular, Ramanujan's *Speaking of Siva* pave way for the emergence of an ethically, and socio-culturally enlightened global literature. Like his essays, his translations too globally amalgam the cultures and consolidate the identities. Throughout the *Speaking of Siva* there is the illustration of cross-cultural variants. These medieval Kannada *Bhakti* poems play a vital role in exploring the cultural variants. Even in the introduction to *Speaking of Siva* and in the notes to it he explores the grammatical, syntactic, lexical, semantic and phonological differences between Kannada and English. Moreover, he hints at the presence of the past in the present. The content of all his works stand testimony to this.

Of course, the impact of modern American poets like Yeats, Eliot and the metaphysical poets like Herbert and Donne on Ramanujan cannot be denied. Ramanujan himself acknowledges the influence of the English poets in his translations. The stories in the epics are retold in the folktales and in classical literary traditions. The notable characteristic feature of this classical Tamil poetry is the division between the 'domestic (*akam*) and the 'public' (*puram*) poems. Ramanujan illustrates various instances from these poems in his translation. Certain devices like ironic understatement, wit, word play and economy of expression cut across Ramanujan's translations. Like this, his poetry abounds in its fold the

diverse experiential realities and patterns, techniques, themes and such other devices that he encountered in his translation.

There are dissimilar and cross-cultural frames of native Kannada and Tamil regional culture and tradition along with the postmodernist American culture in general and Chicago in particular. These cross-cultural experiences are well explored in Ramanujan's translations as well as creative writing. There is the predominant Indian culture explored in his poetry, translations and essays. But it does not definitely confront the hegemonic colonial culture and revert back to the traditional, the Indian. Despite, all these cross-cultural dilemmas and confusions Ramanujan accommodated the already pluralistic Indian experience with the Modern American experience. In fact, Ramanujan's translation makes a pattern in the mosaic of global culture. His works are spread through space and time extending to the different cultural traditions and they are explored well in his poetry, translations and essays. The study shows that the poet was in fact a gifted Indian writer in English to savour both the Indian and the American cultures.

This is how, Ramanujan's *Speaking of Siva* showcases the fluidity of literature as a means to explore the cross-cultural experiences and stand testimony to what constitutes such cross-cultural experiences. The study is hoped to become a ready report for reference to those who wish to know the cultural nuances. It will also give enough scope and source to future researchers. This also shows how the author had tried to appropriate the meanings of certain Kannada words into English.

**WORDS WITH CULTURE-SPECIFIC NUANCES FROM OTHER
VACANAS**

From Kannada Vacanas¹

ಸಂಸಾರ (p.4)

ಹುಯ್ಯಲು/ಗೋಳು (p.4)

ಕೃಪೆ ಮಾಡು (p.7)

ನಿಮ್ಮಾಣೆ (p.7)

ಬೆಂದಮನವನೆಂತು (p.10)

ಕಾಯವಿಕಾರ (p.11)

ಎನ್ನ ಬಿಡು, ತನ್ನ ಬಿಡು (p.11)

ಬಾಯ ಬಿಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆನಯ್ಯಾ (p.16)

ಪಶು (p.16)

ಹೆಳವನ ಮಾಡಯ್ಯಾ (p.17)

ಸುತ್ತಿ ಸುಳಿದು ನೋಡದಂತೆ (p.17)

ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಕೇಳದಂತೆ (p.17)

ಎನ್ನೊಡನೆ ಕಾಯುಕೊಂಡಿಪ್ಪನಯ್ಯಾ
(p.378)

ಗುರುಭಕ್ತನಾಗಬಲ್ಲದೆ? (p.37)

ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗನ ಶರಣರ ಬಂದ ಬರವ
ನಿಂದ ನಿಲವ ಅನಂಗ ಸಂಗಿಗಳೆತ್ತ ಬಲ್ಲರು
(p.37)

ನೀರೆರೆದರೆ (p.125)

ಪಲ್ಲವಿಸಿತ್ತು(p.125)

ಜಂಗಮ ಪಡಿಪದಾರ್ಥವ ನೀಡಿದರೆ
(p.125)

ಆ ಜಂಗಮ ಹರನೆಂದು ಕಂಡು ನರನೆಂದು

From Speaking of Siva²-Basavanna

Look, the world, in a swell (p.34)

Listen to my cries (p.34)

Have mercy on me (p. 35)

I give you my word (p. 35)

This burning thing, this heart(p.35)

The body's lusts (p.35)

Let go! Let go! (p.35)

I make mouths at this corner (p.36)

Till my lord sees this beast (p.36)

Cripple me, father (p.36)

not look at this and that (p.36)

not hear anything else (p.36)

Stays with me/Every step of the
way/And looks after me (p.37)

Do they get to be devotees/to the
Master? (p.40)

How can the slaves of the Bodiless
God, Desire, know the way our Lord's
Men move (p.40)

pour water there (p.44)

it sprouts green (p.44)

The Lord's mouth is moving men
Feed them (p.44)

You'll go to hell/If, knowing they are
the Lord/You treat them as men.

ಭಾವಿಸಿದರೆ ನರಕ ತಪ್ಪದು ಕಾಣಾ (p.125)	(p.44)
ಕಾಡಿನೋಡೆನ್ನನು,ಬೇಡಿನೋಡೆನ್ನನು(p.51)	<u>come test me ask me</u> (p.44)
ಪಾದೋದಕ (p.139)	I drink the <u>water we wash your feet with</u> (p.44)
ಪ್ರಸಾದ (p.139)	I eat the <u>food of worship</u> (p.44)
ದಣಿಯವು (p.144)	And <u>not find content</u> (p.45)
ನಿಮ್ಮುದರವ ಬಗಿದಾನು ಹೋಗುವ ಭರವೆನಗೆ (p.145)	I have it in me/ <u>to cleave thy belly/ and enter thee</u> (p.45)
ಬೊಬ್ಬಿಟ್ಟೆಲ್ಲರ ಕರೆವರಯ್ಯಾ (p.176)	<u>Beat their breasts</u> - And <u>call the crowd</u> (p.48)
ಸತ್ಯದನಿಲುವನರಿಯದೆ ಹೋದಿರಲ್ಲಾ (p.194)	But <u>you went without the truth</u> (p.48)
ಸದ್ಗುಣವೆಂಬ ಫಲವಬಿತ್ತಿ ಬೆಳೆಯದೆ (p.194)	You <u>went without sowing and reaping the good</u> (p.48)
ಅರೆದರೆ ಸಣ್ಣವಾಗಿ (p.209)	If your <u>grain grows fine in the grinding</u> (p.49)
ಒರೆದರೆ ಬಣ್ಣವಾದರೆ (p.209)	If you <u>show colour in the filing</u> (p.49)
ಗಂಡುಗೂಸೆ (p.214)	Look here, <u>dear fellow</u> (p.49)
ನಿನಗೆ ವೀರನಷ್ಟೇ (p.214)	<u>I'll make wars for you</u> (p.49)
ಮಾಡುವಾತ (p.252)	I'm no <u>worshipper</u> (p.50)
ತನು ಕರಗಿ ನೆರೆವ ಸುಖವ ನಾನೇನೆಂಬೆ? (p.256)	The <u>flesh melts in the pleasure how can I tell you?</u> (p.51)
ನಮ್ಮ ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮ ದೇವರ ಮುಟ್ಟಿ ನೆರೆವ ಸುಖವ ನಾನಾರಿಗೇನೆಂಬೆ? (೦.257)	I touched and joined my lord of the meeting rivers/How can I talk to anyone of that? (p.51)
ಅರಿದರೆ ಶರಣ (p.261)	Aware, one is the Lord's (p.52)
ಮರೆದರೆ ಮಾನವ (p.261)	unaware, a mere human (p.52)
From <u>Kannada Vacanas</u> ³	From <u>Speaking of Siva-Dasiamyya</u>
ಧರೆ (p.6)	You balanced the <u>globe</u> (p.56)
ನೀನಲ್ಲದೆ ಉಳಿದ ದೈವಗಳಿಗಹುದೆ	Which gods could have done this?

(p.6)

ಅದು ನೀ ಮಾಡಿದ ಜಗದ
ಬಿನ್ನಾಣದೊಡಲು (p.6)

ಹಸಿವೆಂಬ ಹೆಬ್ಬಾವು/ ಬಸಿರಬಂದು
ಹಿಡಿದಡೆ ವಿಷವೇರಿತ್ತಯ್ಯಾ ಆಪಾದ
ಮಸ್ತಕಕ್ಕೆ (p.105)

ಸುಂಕಕ್ಕಂಜಿ (p.35)

ಅಳಿಮನದವನ ಭಕ್ತಿ (p.35)

ತೀವಿ ಕುಳ್ಳಿದ ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ/ಬಲ್ಲದೆ
ದಾನಮರ್ಮವ? (p.36)

ಹುಣಸೆಯ ಹೂವೆಲ್ಲ ಕಾಯಾಗಬಲ್ಲದೆ?
(p.36)

ಕರ್ತಾರ (p.42)

ಗಂಡ ಭಕ್ತನಾಗಿ (p.48)

ಹೆಂಡತಿ ಭವಿಯಾದಡೆ (p.48)

ನಳಿನ ಚಂದ್ರಮನ ಮಡಗಿ (p.76)

ಶಂಭು ಧ್ಯಾನದಲ್ಲಿ(p.85)

ಕೋಟಿ ತೀರ್ಥವ ಮಿಂದಡೇನು (p.85)

ಅಂತ್ಯಜನು (p.86)

ಹಿಡಿಗೋಲ (p.86)

ನೀನಿಕ್ಕಿದ ತೊಡಕು (p.86)

ಹೊತ್ತಾರೆ ಅಮವಾಸ್ಯೆ (p.88)

ವಾರಣಾಸಿ (p.88)

ನಿನ್ನ ಪ್ರಾಣ ಎನ್ನಲ್ಲಡಗಿದ ಭೇದವ
(p.113)

ಒಡಲುಗೊಂಡವನೆಂದು ನೀನೆನ್ನ
ಜಡಿದೊಮ್ಮೆ ನುಡಿಯದಿರಾ (p.116)

ಓ ಎಂಬುವ ನಾನೊ ನೀನೊ (p.119)

(p.56)

It is the fickle body of the burning
world you made (p. 56)

Hunger the great serpent/ has seized
the vitals/ and the venom is mounting/
from foot to brow. (p. 57)

Fearing the toll-gate (p. 58)

The devotion of the faint-hearted (p.
58)

Can the assemblies in session/ give
charities to men (p. 58)

Can every tamarind flower be fruit?
(p. 58)

Maker of all things (p. 60)

When man is of the Lord (p. 60)

And his wife of the world (p. 60)

Arranged the lotus and the moon (p.
61)

In meditation of the Lord? (p. 62)

And bathes in a million sacred rivers?
(p. 62)

Did the outcaste (p. 63)

The stick of his tribe (p. 63)

The snares you set (p. 63)

There is no dawn/no new moon (p.
63)

Benares (p. 63)

The miracle/of your breath in my
body (p. 64)

O you, don't you rib/ and taunt
me/again/for having a body (p. 65)

Who is that echoes O!/in answer...is

ಈ ಪರಿಯ ನರರೆತ್ತ ಬಲ್ಲರೈ (p.121)

ಈ ಪರಿಯಂತೆ ನರರವರೆ ಕ್ರಿಯಾಜ್ಞಾನ
ಭೇದವ (p.122)

ಬಯಲು ಬಣ್ಣವ ಮಾಡಿ/ಸ್ವಯವ ನಿಲವ
ಮಾಡಿ/ ಸುಳಿವಾತನ ಬೆಡಗ ಬಲ್ಲವರಾರೈ
(p.125)

From Kannada Vacanas⁴

ಭಾವದ ಮರೆಯ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮವಾಗಿಪ್ಪ
(p.43)

ಚೆನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನನ ನಿಲವನಾರೂ
ಅರಿಯಬಾರದು (p.43)

ನೀರಕ್ಷೀರದಂತೆ ನೀನಿಪ್ಪೆಯಾಗಿ(p.47)
ಕರ್ತೃ (p.47)

ಭೃತ್ಯ (p.47)

ರುದ್ರನಾಗದೆ (p.47)

ತೆರಣಿಯ ಹುಳು ತನ್ನ ಸ್ನೇಹದಿಂದ
ಮನೆಯಮಾಡಿ (p.48)

ಬೇವುತ್ತಿರುವೆನಯ್ಯ (p.48)

ಮಾಣಿಸು (p.48)

ಬಂದೆ/ಬಾರದ ಭವಗಳನುಂಡೆ/
ಸುಖಾಸುಖಂಗಳ! (p.48)

ಜಗದ ಯಂತ್ರವಾಹಕ...ಸಾಕೆಂಬನ್ನಕ
(p.49)

ಜಗದ ಜಂಗುಳಿಗೆ ಬೆಂಗೋಲನೆತ್ತಿ
ಕಾಡಿತ್ತು ಮಾಯೆ (p.50)

it you /or is it me? (p. 65)

How will men know/that this is so?
(p. 66)

Do men know/it's like that/with
knowing and doing? (p. 66)

Who can know the beauty/of the
Hovering One/ who's made Himself
form/and of space/the colours? (p. 67)

From Speaking of Siva-
Mahadeviyakka

The absolute hidden away/in the heart
(p.72)

No one can know/the ways of our
lord/ white as jasmine (p.72)

You are like milk/in water (p. 72)

The master (p. 72)

The slave (p. 72)

Grow/to demon powers? (p. 72)

Like a silkworm weaving her house
with love (p. 73)

I burn (p. 73)

Cut through (p. 73)

I have come/through unlikely
worlds/guzzled on/ pleasure and on
pain (p. 74)

O engineer of the world...I've run till
you cried halt (p. 74)

With stick raised high, illusion

ನೀನೊಡ್ಡಿದ ಮಾಯೆ (p.50)

ಕಂಡೆ ಶರಣರ ಸಂಗದಿಂದ (p.60)

ಅರಸಿ ಹಿಡಿದೇನೆಂದು ನೀನಡಗುವ ತಾವ
ಹೇಳಾ! (p.60)

ನಗೆಮೊಗದ ಕಂಗಳ ಕಾಂತಿಯಿಂ
ಈರೇಳುಭುವನಮಂ ಬೆಳಗುವ (p.62)

ದಿವ್ಯಸ್ವರೂಪನಂ (p.62)

ಗಂಡಗಂಡರನೆಲ್ಲಾ ಹೆಂಡಹೆಂಡಿರನಾಗಿ
ಆಳುವ ಗುರುವನ ಕಂಡೆ ನಾನು! (p.62)

ಜಗದಾದಿಶಕ್ತಿಯೊಳು ಬೆರಸಿ ಒಡನಾಡುವ
ಪರಮ ಗುರು (p.62)

ಚಿಲಿಪಿಲಿ ಎಂದೋದುವ ಗಿಳಿಗಳಿರಾ!
(p.64)

ಎರಗಿ ಬಂದಾಡುವ ತುಂಬಿಗಳಿರಾ! (p.64)

ಅಳಿಸಂಕುಳವೆ! (p.65)

ಕಡೆಯಲಿದ್ದಾಡುವ ನೊರಜು (p.66)

ಕೋಣನ ಮೈಯ ಮೇಲಣ (p.66)

ನಿಮ್ಮ ಕಳವಳದಲ್ಲಿಪ್ಪೆನು (p.67)

ಲಿಂಗದ ವಿಕಳಾವಸ್ತೆಯಲ್ಲಿಪ್ಪೆನು (p.67)

ನಿಮ್ಮ ಹಂಬಲದಲ್ಲಿ
ಮೈಮರೆದೊರಗಿದೆನು! (p.67)

ಗೊರವ (p.69)

ಚಿಕ್ಕ ಚಿಕ್ಕ ಜಡೆಗಳ (p.69)

ಮಾರುಗೊಂಡನವ್ವ!

ಸೂರೆಗೊಂಡನವ್ವ! (p.70)

ಎನ್ನಿರವನಿಂಬುಗೊಂಡನವ್ವ! (p.70)

ಮನಮನ ತಾರ್ಕಣೆಯ ಕಂಡು

ಅನುಭವಿಸಲು/ (p. 72)

ನೆನಹೇ ಘನವಹುದಲ್ಲದೆ/ ಅದು

herds/the worlds (p. 74)

Your illusion (p. 74)

I met your men/and found you (p. 76)

You hide/lest I seek and find/Give me
a clue,/to your hiding places (p. 76)

Eyes in a laughing face/that light up
fourteen worlds (p. 77)

His glory (p. 77)

I saw the haughty Master/for whom
men, all men/ are but women, wives
(p. 77)

Great One/ who plays at love/ with
Sakti/ original to the world (p. 77)

O twittering birds (p. 78)

O circling swooping bees (p. 78)

O swarm of bees (p. 78)

A fly darting nearby (p. 79)

On the buffalo's hide (p. 79)

I grieve for you (p. 80)

I'm mad for you (p. 80)

I lie lost/ sick for you (p. 80)

I saw an ascetic (p. 80)

Small matted curls (p. 80)

He bartered my heart/ looted my flesh
(p. 81)

Took over all of me (p. 81)

When one heart touches/ and feels
another (p. 81)

Won't feeling weigh over all/ can it

ಹವಣದಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಲ್ಲುವುದೇ?! (p. 72)	<u>stand any decencies then?</u> (p. 81)
ಸಲೆ ಮಾರುವೋದೆನು! (p. 73)	<u>I've given in utterly</u> (p. 81)
ನಿನ್ನ ತಾಯಿತನವನೊಳ್ಳೆ, (p. 73)	<u>I'll have nothing/ of your mother-and-daughter stuff</u> (p. 81)
ಗುಣ-ದೋಷ (p. 73)	<u>Knowledge of good and evil</u> (p. 82)
ಮೋಹದ ಮಂದಿರ; (p. 73)	<u>House of passion</u> (p. 82)
ಮದದಾವರಣ (p. 73)	<u>Fence of pride</u> (p. 82)
ಬೆಳವಲಕಾಯಿ (p. 76)	<u>The round nut</u> (p. 82)
ಆ ಕಾಯವ ನಾಯಿ ತಿಂದರೇನು ನೀರ ಕುಡಿದರೇನು?! (p. 77)	<u>Who cares if it feeds/ a dog/ or soaks up water?</u> (p. 83)
ಆಗೀಗಲೆನ್ನದಿರೋ (p. 77)	<u>Don't give us your <i>nows</i> and <i>thens</i>!</u> (p. 83)
ಉಸುರಿನ ಪರಿಮಳವಿರಲು ಕುಸುಮದ ಹಂಗೇಕಯ್ಯ? (p. 78)	<u>Breath for fragrance/ who needs flowers?</u> (p. 83)
ಸಮಾಧಿಯ ಹಂಗೇಕಯ್ಯ? (p. 78)	<u>Who needs the Ultimate Posture?</u> (p. 83)
ಉಟ್ಟಂತ ಉಡಿಗೆತೊಡಿಗೆಯನೆಲ್ಲ(p. 79)/ ಮುಚ್ಚಿ ಮುಸುಕಿದರ್ ನಿರ್ವಾಣವ	<u>Every strip/ you wear</u> (p. 84)
ಸೆಳೆದುಕೊಳಬಹುದೆ? (p. 79)	<u>Can you peel/ the Nothing, the Nakedness/ that covers and veils?</u> (p. 84)
ಉಡಿಗೆತೊಡಿಗೆಯ ಹಂಗೇಕೋ (p. 79)	<u>Where's the need for cover and jewel?</u> (p. 84)
ಹಾವಿನ ಸಂಗವೇ ಲೇಸು ಕಂಡಯ್ಯ!(p. 90)	<u>It's great to have snakes.</u> (p. 85)
ಕಾಯದ ಸಂಗವ ವಿವರಿಸಬಲ್ಲಡೆ(p. 90)	<u>If one can single out/ the body's ways</u> (p. 85)
ಕಾಯವಿಕಾರವು (p. 90)	<u>The body's wrong</u> (p. 85)

ನಾಚಲೆಡೆಯುಂಟೆ?(p. 98)

How can you be modest? (p. 85)

ಮುಚ್ಚಿ ಮರೆಸಬಹುದೆ ಹೇಳಯ್ಯ.(p. 98)

What can you cover and conceal? (p. 85)

ಇಕ್ಕದಂತೆ ಮಾಡಯ್ಯ! (p. 102)

Make them give nothing (p. 86)

ಎನಗೇಕಯ್ಯ? ಸಾವ ಪ್ರಪಂಚಿನ ಪುತ್ಥಳಿ/
(p. 129)

Why do I need this dummy/of a dying world? (p. 87)

ಬೆರಳು ತಾಳ ಹಣ್ಣು ಹಿಸಿದಡೆ
ಮೆಲಲುಂಟೆ? (p. 129)

Finger may squeeze the fig/to feel it,
yet not choose/ to eat it. (p. 87)

ಕಲ್ಪತರು! (p. 135)

All-giving tree (p. 87)

ನೆಲವೆಲ್ಲ ಅವಿಮುಕ್ತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ! (p. 135)

All the land a pilgrim's holy place(p. 87)

ಜಲವೆಲ್ಲ ನಿರ್ಜರಾಮೃತ! (p. 135)

All the water nectar against age (p. 87)

ಮೃಗವೆಲ್ಲ ಪುರುಷಮೃಗ! (p. 135)

Every beast the golden deer (p. 87)

ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ! (p. 135)

The Wishing crystal (p. 87)

ಭವವಿಲ್ಲದ ಭಯವೆಲ್ಲದ
ಚೆಲುವಂಗಾನೊಲಿದೆ! (p. 139)

I love the Beautiful One/with no bond
nor fear/no clan no land/no
landmarks/ for his beauty (p. 88)

ಮುಡಿ ಬಿಟ್ಟು, ಮೊಗ ಬಾಡಿ, ತನು
ಕರಗಿದವಳ/ಎನ್ನನೇಕೆ ನುಡುಸುವಿರಿ,(p.
146)

Why do you talk/ to this woman/hair
loose/ face withered/ body shrunk? (p.
88)

ಭಕ್ತಿಯಾಗಿ (p. 146)

Turned devotee (p. 88)

ನಿಮ್ಮಂದವ ತೋರಯ್ಯ (p. 153)

Show me/ your ways. (p. 89)

ಇಂದ್ರನೀಲದ ಗಿರಿಯನೇರಿಕೊಂಡು (p.
154)

Riding the blue sapphire mountains
(p. 89)

ತಾನು ದಂಡಮಂಡಲಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋದನೆಂದರೆ/
ನಾನು ಸುಮ್ಮನಿಹೆನು (p. 155)

If He says/ He has to go away/ to fight
battles at the front/ I understand and

ನೊಂದ ನೋವ ನೋಯದವರೆತ್ತ
ಬಲ್ಲರು?(p. 155)

ಹೊರಳುವೆನ್ನಳಲನು ನೀವೆತ್ತ ಬಲ್ಲರೆ,
ಎಲೆ ತಾಯಿಗಳಿರಾ! (p. 155)

ಕಳವಳದ ಮನವು (p. 156)

ಸುಳಿದು ಬೀಸುವ ಗಾಳಿ ಉರಿಯಾಯಿತವ್ವ!
(p. 156)

ತೊಳಲುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆನವ್ವ! (p. 156)

ತಿಳುಹು ಬುದ್ಧಿಯ! ಹೇಳಿ ಕರೆತಾರೆಲೆಗವ್ವ!
(p. 156)

ನಿಮನಿಮಗೆಲ್ಲ ಶೃಂಗಾರವ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಿ
(p. 156)

ಇದಿರುಗೊಳ್ಳ ಬನ್ನಿರೇ ಅವ್ವಗಳಿರಾ! (p.
156)

ಬಂದಹನೆಂದು ಬಟ್ಟೆಯ
ನೋಡಿ/ಬಾರದಿದ್ದರೆ ಕರಗಿ ಕೊರಗಿದೆನವ್ವ!
(p. 156)

ಕಾಣದೆ ಇರಲಾರೆ!(p. 156)

ಎನ್ನ ದೇವ ಚೆನ್ನಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನನ
ಅಗಲಿ-ಅಗಲದ ಸುಖವೆಂದಪ್ಪುದೋ! (p.
156)

ಅತ್ತೆ ಮಾಯೆ, ಮಾವ ಸಂಸಾರಿ!
ಮೂವರು ಮೈದುನರು ಹುಲಿಯಂಥಾ
ಅವದಿರು (p. 157)

ಆರು ಪ್ರಜೆಯತ್ತಿಗೆಯರ ಮೀರಲಾರೆನು
ತಾಯೆ! (p. 158)

can be quiet (p. 90)

How can the unwounded/ know the
pain/ of the wounded? (p. 90)

I writhe./O mothers/ how can you
know me? (p. 90)

The heart in misery (p. 91)

The blowing gentle breeze/ is on fire.
(p. 91)

I go restlessly here and there (p. 91)

Dear girl go tell Him/ bring Him to
his senses/ Bring Him back (p. 91)

Wear your best, wear your jewels (p.
91)

Girls, come/ meet Him at the door. (p.
91)

I look at the road/ for his coming/ If
he isn't coming/ I pine and waste
away (p. 92)

I cannot wait/ to get a glimpse of him.
(p. 92)

Friend, when will I have it/both
ways,/ be with Him/ Yet not with
Him/ my lord white as jasmine?(p.
92)

I have Maya for mother-in-law/ the
world for father-in-law/three brothers-
in-law, like tigers (p. 93)

I cannot cross the sisters-in-law (p.
93)

ಮನವೆಂಬ ಸಖಿಯ ಪ್ರಸಾದದಿಂದ/
ಅನುಭಾವವ ಕಲಿತೆನು ಶಿವನೊಡನೆ (p.
158)

ಶ್ರೀಶೈಲ (p. 158)

ಮೆಚ್ಚು ಅಚ್ಚುಗವಾಗಿ ಒಪ್ಪಿದ ಪರಿಯ
ನೋಡಾ! (p. 161)

From Kannada Vacanas⁵

ದೇಹವೆಂಬುದೊಂದು ತುಂಬಿದ ಬಂಡಿ
ಕಂಡಯ್ಯ (p.54)

ಅದರಿಚ್ಚೆಯನರಿದು ಹೊಡೆಯದಿದ್ದರೆ
(p.54)

ಎತ್ತನಿಂದೆತ್ತ ಸಂಬಂಧವಯ್ಯ?! (p.57)

ಸಮುದ್ರದೊಳಗಣ ಉಪ್ಪು (p.57)

ಹೃದಯಕಮಲದೊಳಗೊಂದು/
ಮರಿದುಂಬಿ ಹುಟ್ಟಿತ್ತು! (p.63)

ಪಂಚವರ್ಣದ ಹಂಸೆಯ ಪಂಜರವ
ಖಂಡಿಸಿದರೆ (p.64)

ನಿಜದುದಯದ ಬೆಡಗಿನ ಕೀಲ/ನಿಮ್ಮ
ಶರಣರನುಭಾವಸಂಗಮದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದು
ಕಂಡೆನಯ್ಯ. (p.64)

ಪುರದರಸು ತನ್ನ ಪಾಯದಳಸಹಿತ
ಬಂದರೆ (p.79)

ವಾಯದ ಗಗನದ ಮೇಲೆ/ ತನ್ನ ಕಾಯವ
ಪುಟನೆಗೆದು ತೋರುತ್ತಿಹುದ ಕಂಡೆ!
(p.79)

ಕೊಡಗೂಸುಗಳು (p.79)

ಆ ಕೋಡಗದ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಣಿಕ್ಯವ
ಕೊಟ್ಟಡೆ /ನೋಡುತ್ತ ನೋಡುತ್ತ

My mind is my maid/ by her kindness,
I join/ my Lord. (p. 93)

The mountain-peaks (p. 93)

Look at/ love's marvelous/ ways (p.
93)

From Speakin gof Siva- Allama
Prabhu

The body is a wagon/ full of things (p.
98)

Unless you ride it / in full knowledge
of its ways (p. 98)

When were they kin? (p. 98)

Sea salt (p. 98)

A little bee born /in the heart's lotus
(p. 99)

When/the cage of the five-coloured
swan/was broken (p. 99)

Living among your men/ I saw the
lovely tactic/ of truth's coming on. (p.
99)

When the king came/ with an army (p.
100)

I saw him juggle his body as a ball/ in
the depth of the sky. (p. 100)

Virgins (p. 100)

I saw him grow from amazement/ to
amazement, holding a diamond/ in his

ಬೆರಗಾದುದು ಕಂಡೆ! (p.79)	hand. (p. 101)
ಪ್ರಾಣಲಿಂಗ (p.79)	The <i>Linga</i> of the breath (p. 101)
ನವರತ್ನದ ಖಂಡಿತಹಾರವಡಗಿತ್ತು. (p.81)	A necklace of nine jewels/ lies buried (p. 102)
ನವಚಿತ್ರ ಪತ್ರದ ವೃಕ್ಷ (p.81)	A tree /with leaves of nine designs (p. 102)
ರತ್ನದ ಹಾರವ ವೃಕ್ಷಕ್ಕಾಹಾರವನಿಕ್ಕಿದಡೆ/ ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರಲಿಂಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾಣಲಿಂಗಕ್ಕೆ ಸುಖವಾಯಿತ್ತು. (p.81)	When you feed the necklace/ to the tree/ the Breath enjoys it/in the Lord of the Caves. (p. 102)
ಕತ್ತಲೆಯೆಂಬುದು ಇತ್ತಲೆಯಯ್ಯ! /ಗುಹೇಶ್ವರನೆಂಬುದು ಅತ್ತಲೆಯಯ್ಯ! (p.81)	It's dark here/ with the Lord of Caves/ out there. (p. 102)
ಕಂಗಳ ಮುಂದಣ ಕತ್ತಲೆಯಿದೇನೋ?/ಮನದ ಮುಂದಣ ಮರವೆಯಿದೇನೋ? (p.89)	What's this darkness/ on the eyes?/ this death on the heart? (p. 103)
ಬಳಕೆಗೆ ಬಂದ ಬಟ್ಟೆಯಿದೇನೋ (p.89)	This path familiar to the feet? (p. 103)
ಕಂಗಳ ಕರುಳ ಕೊಯ್ದವರ (p.104)	Who have cut the guts/ of the eye (p. 106)
ವಿಪರೀತಚರಿತ್ರನೆ (p.113)	O extremist Character (p. 107)
ಸಿಡಿಲ ಬಣ್ಣದವೆಂಟು ಹೂವಾದವು ನೋಡಾ! (p.116)	Look/ eight flowers/ thunderbolt- coloured (p. 108)
ಆ ಭೂಭೂಕಾರವ ದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಮುಟ್ಟಿದಡೆ/ಅಟ್ಟಿ ಸಹಸ್ರವಾಡಿತ್ತು!/ಲೆಕ್ಕವಿಲ್ಲದ ಮರಣ ಮಡಿಯಿತ್ತು! (p.117)	Flapping and crackling in the vision/ a thousand bodies dance in it/ and die countless deaths. (p. 108)
ಹಿಂದೆ-ಮುಂದೆಯಾಡುವ ಕವಿಗಳೆಲ್ಲರೂ/ ಎನ್ನ ಲೆಂಕಡಿಂಗರಿಗರು!/ಹರಿ-ಬ್ರಹ್ಮ-ರುದ್ರ ಈ ಮೂವರೂ/ ಎನ್ನ ಕಕ್ಷೆಯ ಒಕ್ಕಲು! (p.119)	The poets of the sky/ are babies in my cradle/Visnu and Brahma/ are my kinsmen and sidekicks. (p. 109)
ಜಗತ್ಪ್ರಳಯವಾದಲ್ಲಿ (p.120)	If it is the Very last Flood of all the worlds (p. 110)
ಮದವಣಿಗನಾರೋ? (p.127)	No one knows the groom (p. 111)

ಮೂರು ಲೋಕದ ಧೀರೆ
ನಿದ್ರಾಂಗನೆ/...ಪ್ರಾಣಾಕರ್ಷಣೆಯಂ ಮಾಡಿ/
ತಟ್ಟುಗೆಡಹಿದಳಲಾ! (p.135)

ಹರಿವ ನದಿಗೆ ಮೈಯೆಲ್ಲ ಕಾಲು
(p.145)
ನಿಮ್ಮ ಶರಣಗೆ ಸರ್ವಾಂಗವೆಲ್ಲ
ಲಿಂಗಮಯವಯ್ಯು! (p.146)

ಅರೆಯದೆ ಬರುಸೂರಿವೋದರು (p.149)
ತಾರಾಮಂಡಲವೆ? ಸೂರ್ಯಮಂಡಲವೆ?
(p.150)

Sleep, great goddess sleep/ heroine of
three worlds/...draws breath/and
throws them down/sapless (p. 113)

A running river/ is all legs. (p. 113)

For your men/ every limb is Symbol
(p. 113)

They tire themselves out. (p. 113)

What is It/the circular sun/ the circle
of the stars? (p. 114)

Notes:

¹ಎಚ್.ಟಿ. ಮಹಾಂತೇಶ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿ. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ಶ್ರೀ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರ ವಚನಗಳು. (ಸಟೀಕಾ). ಗದಗ: ಪಿ.ಸಿ. ಶಾಬಾದಿಮಠ ಬುಕ್ ಡಿಪೋ, ೧೯೬೬

²A.K Ramanujan. "Speaking of Siva." The Oxford India Ramanujan. Ed. Molly Daniels-Ramanujan. New Delhi: OUP. 2004 rpt. 2005

³ರಮೇಶ ಮಾಳಾ. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ದೇವರ ದಾಸಿಮಯ್ಯನವರ ವಚನ ದರ್ಪಣ. ಕಲಬುರಗಿ: ಗಾಯತ್ರಿ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾನ, 1998

⁴ಡಾ. ಎಲ್. ಬಸವರಾಜು. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ಅಕ್ಕನ ವಚನಗಳು. ಮೈಸೂರು: ಗೀತಾ ಬುಕ್ ಹೌಸ್, 2012

⁵ಡಾ. ಎಲ್. ಬಸವರಾಜು. ಸಂಪಾದಕರು. ಅಲ್ಲಮನ ವಚನಗಳು. ಮೈಸೂರು: ಗೀತಾ ಬುಕ್ ಹೌಸ್, 2011

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