CHAPTER IV

Problems in translating
Literary Devices
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PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING LITERARY DEVICES

A literary system always operates with a code called "poetics" which makes communication possible between the author and the reader. As Andrew Lefevre has observed the poetics of a literary system broadly comprises of two components. "One is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, symbols, prototypical characters and situations, the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in society at large." The translator is primarily concerned with the first set of components when the corpus under translation belongs to a distant time and an alien culture. This chapter makes a study of the problems that a translator faces with the literary devices of the Cangkam literary tradition.

While the problems that arise out of the society and its culture form one side of the coin, the problems that a translator faces with the literary devices of a literary system form the other side. The two are not wide apart in their character but closely connected with each other. The problems become complex when the entire literary system is remote in its

time occupying a literary theory of its own. The student of Cangkam poetry is forcefully struck by the fact that Cangkam poets have produced highly original and individual poems without even slightly deviating from the conventional poetic tradition. The problems one encounters in translating such poems become more difficult because of this paradoxical nature of Cangkam poems, strikingly individual and at the same time rigidly conventional.

The Cangkam poems, as discussed in the chapter on "Meaning and Milieu", are products within a well defined literary system, the explication of which is to be found in the grammatical treatise tolka:ppiyam. Besides elaborately discussing the various components of Tamil poetics it also provides the foundation of Tamil aesthetics, thus earning the sobriquet "a grammar of life and literature."²

The literary devices improvised by the poets are discussed in its third part viz."porulatika:ram", meaning the chapter on the "subject of poetry". Any approach to these poems either as a translator or as a critic who studies the translations has to explicate the poems with the formulae provided in this part of the treatise. This part contains nine chapters dealing with

literary conventions, prosody and poetics. It is a "mine of information regarding the literary conventions of those days."3 This part of the present study dealing with the problems confronting a translator in relation to the literary conventions of the poems is based on the poetics discussed in those nine chapters of tolkappiyam.

What surprises one is the fact that the entire KuRundtokai anthology which is a compilation of individual poems written by a number of poets conform to the architectonics discussed in tolkappiyam. Every one of these poems possesses these literary features and conforms to the poetic tradition in its total spirit. To sum up one can say in the words of Zvelebil

In every classical Tamil poem, diagnostic features are present, which, to an informed listener and reader, reveal immediately the type of "tina" and the theme in which the poem is composed. Sometimes they are abundant. Sometimes they are only a few. They are conventional and traditional. There is great fixity, great stylization. The poet is obliged to abide by the tradition. The bardic practice ....... is conditioned by traditional material. The inner tension, the very dynamism of classical Tamil poetry arise out of this relation between the traditional material represented by conventional formulae, and the poet’s art of improvisation. 4

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The Cangkam poems have come to us not just as the authors had written but with certain types of notes added later by commentators or compilers. These notes specify the literary division and the time structure of these poems, and, over the course of centuries have come to be considered an integral part of the texts. These notes also identify for the reader the speaker of the monologue, the silent listener and whether he or she is present on the scene or not, the context of the poem etc.

tolkappiyar says that a poem should have features indicating the speaker, listener, the context and the time of occurrence. He calls these features "munnam" defined thus:

\[
\text{ivvitattu immozhi ivar ivarkku uriya enRu} \\
\text{avvitattu avaravarkku uraippatai munnam}
\]

tol. 1463

According to this prescription, the poet should know which phase of love the theme of the poem belongs to and should render it as spoken by a character appropriate for the message in an environment that suits the theme. Adequate features should be embedded in the poem for the reader to infer these details. The colophons serve such information and hence form an integral part
characters and the situation involved in the poem and hence are worth translating in full. But the translators under study have different approaches to the colophons. Only in the translation done conjointly by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden do we have the colophon in its full translation. Ramanujan mentions in each poem the identity of the speaker, but he is not systematic in providing details regarding the listener and the context in all the poems he has translated. This is all the more surprising since he writes about the importance and the contribution of the colophons in his "Afterword". To him the colophons are structurally important as they "assume for each poem a heading, a situation, a frame, a fictive world of speakers, hearers (and overhearers), times and place. These frames add subtleties and dramatic ironies."\(^5\)

But Hart has a different opinion. To quote his comments:

> All of the poems are accompanied by a colophon, a short statement of the situation of the poem that must have been composed long after the poems themselves. For the aham poems, the colophon is usually superfluous, and sometimes undesirable, placing unnecessary restrictions on the poem. I have therefore omitted it, though I have supplied its information in the notes wherever necessary.\(^6\)


Hart is not justified in brushing away the colophon as unnecessary. An analysis of a poem and its translations will show the importance of the colophon for the understanding of the poem by a non-native reader and how the notes that Hart provides are inadequate. The first poem of KuRundtokai is the best example. The source text is as follows:

```
cengaLam paTakkon RavuNart te:itta
cengko: lampiR cengko:TTi ya:naik
kazhaRoTic cerey kunRam
kurutip puvin kulaikkanmdtalTTe:
```

K 1.

/This is a monologue of her friend with the hero as listener. The hero wishes to get access to the heroine and her friends and hence presents a bouquet of kamdtal flowers. Her friend refuses to accept the gift and addresses him./

Hart renders the following translation:

```
Making the field red with his killing
he crushes demons.
He has red-shafted arrows,
red-tusked elephants, whirling battle anklets;
This hill belongs to Murugan
and it is thick with clusters of blood-flowered kamtal
```

Hart, 47.

and adds the following notes.

The hero, wishing to make love to his woman, has brought a gift of red kamtal flowers, whose acceptance means that she will have him. In this poem, she refuses his offering.

Hart, 47.
Ramanujan provides the following translation:

What Her Girl Friend Said
to him, refusing his gift of red flowers.

Red is the battle field
as he crushes
the demons,
red his arrow shafts,
of his elephants:

this is the hill
of the Red one
with the whirling anklets,

the hill of red glory lilies,
flowers of blood

AKR:PLW, 278-279.

The following is the translation by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden.

WHAT HER FRIEND SAID

(to him refusing his gift of a kantal
flower, to tell him that the romance
stage is over, that meetings are no
longer possible, and marriage is the
only way.)

This blood red kantal flower
grows by the bunch
in Murugan’s hills,

where dressed in shoulder
and ankle armor, he slew demons,
and, as the battlefield grew red,
his arrows and elephants’ tusks
rubbed red in their blood.

Pillai & Ludden, 112.
This is followed by extensive notes on the myth of God Murugan and its relevance.

The poem quoted above without colophon or notes, is just a description of the hill and its deity. Only the colophon makes it a poem of love indicating that the friend of the heroine refuses to accept the hero's gift of red flowers because acceptance will imply willingness for a night tryst. This frame of meaning is clear in the translations of Ramanujan and Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden through the colophons they have supplied with the texts. Hart's notes appended to his translation are inadequate. There is no indication as to who the speaker is and to whom it is said; the unspecified "she" in his notes is positively misleading; it may refer to the heroine or her friend and may lead to a distortion in the understanding of the text.

Another example of the absence of colophon leading to distortion of meaning is the translation of poem 393 by Hart. In the source text it is the monologue of the Friend of the heroine, the paraphrase of which is as follows: The days on which your man has embraced you in such a way that your garlands have got crushed up are very few; but the gossip over the affair is greater than the din in the battle ground at va:skai.
The following is the source text:

mayangkumalark ko:tai kuzhaiya makizhndan
muzhangkiya narTavac cilave: yalare:
kurkaik korzhi va:kaip paRandtalaip
pacumput: pa:Ntiyan vinaiva latikan
kaLiRoTu paTTa gna:nRai
oLiRuva:T kongka rairppinum perite:

K 393, 695.

/This is a monologue of her friend addressed
to the heroine with the hero as silent listener.
She hints at the gossip over their love affair
with the intention of indicating to the hero
that he should marry her soon./

Hart translates:

The days my man embraced me
crushing my garland of mixed flowers,
were very few,
and yet the gossip is greater than the cries
/ of the Konkan,
whose swords shone
the day Atikan
fighting for the Pandyan King who wears a newly
/ made ornament,
fell with his elephant on the field of Vakai,
where male owls roam.

Hart, 87.

The translation stands without any notes or colophon. The first
line "The days my man embraces me" makes the poem a monologue of
the heroine while it is of her friend. In the source text it
becomes obvious not only through the colophon and notes but also
by the first line of the text. The line in the source text and a
word to word translation will be as follows:

mayangku malark ko:tai kuzhaiya makizhndan
mixed flowers -- lady -- crushed -- hero
The referential meaning of the line viz. — "The hero who has crushed the mixed flowers of the lady" acquires the contextual meaning viz "the hero has crushed your garland of mixed flowers." The word in the source text that refers to the Heroine is "ko:tai" by which this becomes an address to the Heroine by her Friend. The distortion in meaning resulting from the absence of the colophon is made worse by the wrong interpretation of the word in the poem pointing to the addressee.

It is worth mentioning here that even the native readers of later generations need the colophon for a complete comprehension and enjoyment of the text. For example one can see the fund of information the colophon for the first poem of the anthology provides in the source text. The summary of it is --

**Monologue of Her Friend**

[The Hero, who wants to get in touch with the group of his lady's friends in order to express his desire in meeting his love, meets her friend with kamdta flowers as gift. Her friend refuses to accept the gift stating that they have them in abundance at their place.]

Her Friend refusing the kamdta flowers.

The first and last lines form the colophon and the enclosure in between are the notes appended by the commentator. These provide the reader with enough information for a full comprehension of the
poem. Hence it becomes essential for the translator to transfer them to the translations also.

In general, the omission of the colophon deprives the reader of the basis for the extension of meaning of the imagery and the message, an extension which is the characteristic feature of these classical poems. Hence they have to be translated along with the poem considering them as an integral part of the text.

A basic division that the tolka:ppiyam speaks of while initiating the discussion on the "Akam poetics" is on the material content of these poems. They are the "time and place" of the incident and experience described viz."mutal" or "the first things"; secondly the object of the environment viz."karupporul" which means the "elements of the soil" and thirdly the particular aspect of love viz."uripporul" which refers to the feelings and emotions employed. The last finds its appropriate exhibition through the first two enumerated. These three form the outer frame of any poem. How these features find their place in a poem and how they find their appropriate structural places and equivalences in the translations merit analysis.

The following is the source text of poem 42 of KuRundtokai.

```
ka:ma mozhiva tari:nun yamattuk
karuvi ma:smazhai vi:zhdtena varuvvi
viTarakat tiyampu nda:Tavem
toTarpund te:yumo: ndinva:yina:me
```

K 42.
Ramanujan's translation runs as follows:

**What Her Friend Said to Him:**

Even if passion should pass,

O man of the hills

where

after the long tempestuous rains
of night
the morning's waterfalls
make music in the caverns

would our love also pass
with the passion?

AKR:IL, 39.

The hero has expressed his desire to have a meeting with the heroine during night; but her friend declines to pass on the request and reasons thus -- In your place there was torrential rain during last midnight and it is alive in the waterfalls that runs through the mountains even today. Love between you which was strengthened by such earlier meetings will not die out even if there is no such meeting now, which you aspire for.

Let us look at the traditional and conventional matter at first and then the diagnostic features. To start from the third category viz. "uripporul" which is the nucleus of the poem. A poem may exist without "karu" and "mutal" i.e. without the space and time frames and without a reference to the objects or persons or animals of the region. But it must have the
"nucleus"; the theme of the poem, the particular aspect of love that gets expressed in the song. In this song the theme is "akam proper" which means well matched love. It must be strengthened with the cues of the "mutal" (the first things) and then with the "karupporul" -- the native objects. Here the space specified is "kurignci" -- the mountainous region. The hero is addressed as "man of the hills". The time is just before night when the hero seeks a meeting with the heroine during night and receives a blatant refusal from her friend. These elements of "mutal porul" are strengthened by the features that constitute the "karupporul" -- hills, rains and waterfalls which are the features of "kurignci" i.e. of the hills. Thus the overall framework is to be supplied by the poetic conventions and within this framework the poet is free to exercise his power of improvisation, using suggestion, inference and implied metaphor to develop his theme in depth.

If one looks at the structure of these poems one could observe two types, one from the point of view of thought-content and the other on the basis of form in the source language text. The poem quoted above is a 4 line stanza. The first line specifies the "time-space" frame a component of the "mutal porul" and leads us into the sub-division that Tolkappiar speaks of; if

\[ \text{tol., 957.} \]
is a frost and rainy night. This provides us the context of the lovers' earlier meeting -- "karmam ozhivatayinum" (even if passion should pass). The next two lines provide the "objects of the soil" viz. rain, waterfall and mountains which speak of the hero's country. The theme or the substance of the poem viz."uripporul" is found in the last line -- "toTarpundte:yumo: ndin vayindame:" (would our love also pass). The following table illustrates this structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mutal&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;karmam ozhivatayinum&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>even if passion should pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reminds us of the context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;yamattuk karuvimazhai vi:zhndtena aruvi viTarakattiyampu na:Tavem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that anticipates the message</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;karu&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O man of the hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where/after the long tempestuous rains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the morning's waterfalls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make music in the caverns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toTarpund te:yumo: ndin vayindame: the message is delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would our love also pass with the passion?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some poems the structure is exactly the opposite where a reverse technique starting with the message is followed.
Poem 25 in the anthology where the heroine desperately affirms her secret love recalling one of the night trysts is one such. The poem is a five line stanza and the following is a unitwise representation of it along with the corresponding translation of Hart.

\[
yaru \text{ millait tane: } kāvan \\
tañatu poyppin yamevan ceyko:
\]

"uri" only the thief was there, the message is delivered
no one else
And if he should lie, what can I do?

\[
\text{tinaitta: Lanna ciRupacung kadla} \\
\text{ozhukundi: rerral pasrkkum} \\
kuruku muNTu
\]

"karu" There was only the place and the objects are recalled
a thin legged heron standing and looking
and looking for lampreys

\[
\text{tañ maNandta gnaínRe:} \\
\text{in the running water}
\]

"mutal" time is specified

In this poem the central message viz. "what I will I do if my man betrays me by denying his meeting with me" is delivered at first. This is the "uri" the nucleus of the poem. The place and the objects around are mentioned next. The thin legged heron standing
in the rainy water specifies that the meeting of the lovers took
place near a rivulet. This forms the "karupporul" -- the segment
that denotes the objects of the soil. The last three words forming
the other segment provides the time-space frame indicating the time
of the meeting. This poem is structurally a contrast to the earlier
one in its presentation of context and form. The three segments
stand in complement to each other in the delivery of the message and
hence they need to be presented in the translation with great care
and felicity. The translators have employed their own order of
preference in presenting these segments in a poem. Ramanujan
acknowledges the superiority of structures in these poems and gives
primary importance to it. In his introductory remarks he says:

My fidelity has been chiefly to the
structure of the poems. This concern
has led me away from translating every
poem line by line. Rather I have
rendered a poem phrase by phrase as each
phrase articulates the total poem. I
have paid special attention to the
images and their placement. 8

8 A.K. Ramanujan, The Interior Landscape (Delhi: Clarion
Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden in their introductory note acknowledge that they have not shown any concern for its "construction nor its syntax". Though Hart does not speak of his method of translation with reference to its structure, his introductory note shows that he is very much preoccupied with the images used for suggestions at various levels and not with the structure of the poems.

It would appear to be the right procedure to present these segments in the order of the original and especially without distorting the features of any one segment. But a striking effect is seen in the translations of some poems where the order of the segment divisions of "uri", "karu" and "mutal" is presented differently from that of the source poems. The change makes the translation more effective in its unfolding of the scene and the message. A point to be noted here is that the resultant translation with altered segment order conforms to certain other poems in the source anthology with reference to the segment pattern; however no change is made within the segments with reference to their features. The translation by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden of the following poem stands as an example.

9  
Pillai and Ludden, xiv.

10  
Hart, Tamil Anthologies, 16.
The structural pattern of the source poem keeps the message at the end and the other segments at the outset. Following is the poem in the source text:

```
pazhamazhaik kalitta putuppuna varakIn
iralai menyndta kuRaittalaip paivai
iruvicer marungkiR putta mullai
verukucirir tanna pacuvi: menpiNik
kuRumukai yavizhndta ndaRumalarIp puRavin
vaNtucuzh malaiyum varar:
kaNticiR Rozhi poruTpirind tore:
```

K 220.

/This is a monologue of the heroine to her friend. She is worried because the hero has not come home though the time at which he promised to return has arrived/

While the same segment order has been followed in the translations of this poem by Ramanujan and Hart, Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden produce the translation with a different structure. Following is their translation:

```
Look my friend:
that man who left for wealth
will not come
even by evening, when bees
swarm in a plot of fragrant flowers,

where blossoms of jasmine
blooming from tiny, soft, buds
like the smile of a wild-cat,
are near the stubble of millet,
newly sprouted from old rains,
eaten and cut short
by male deer.
```

Pillai & Ludden, 21.
While the source poem has the structure of time-space frame (mutal), the objects of the soil (uri) and lastly the message, the translated version quoted above provides the message first and keeps the time-space frame and the objects of the soil next. Though the translation does not pay much attention to the structure of the poem in the process of rendering this type of variation does not distort the general structure of the poem and conforms to certain other poems in the anthology as that have the message as the first segment of the poem.

But sometimes the variation does distort the placing of certain facts, though the thematic content is not distorted. One such instance occurs in the translation of poem 46. The source poem is given below with the segment partition.

a:mpaR pu:vin ca:mpalanna
ku:mpiya ciRakar manaiyuRai kurisi
munRi luNangkan madnidi manRat
teruvinuN Tattu kuTaivana va:Ti
illiRaip paLLittam pillaiyoTu vatium
punkaN ma:liyum pulampum
inRuko Rozhiyavar cenRa na:TTei.

K 46.

/*This is a monologue of the heroine to her friend while her friend is grief-stricken over the sorrow of the lady due to her man’s delay in getting back home/
The first division consisting of four lines provides the objects of the soil (karu), the next segment consisting of two lines provides the message (uri) while the last line provides the space (mutal). The poem is a monologue of the heroine and she asks whether there won't be sad evenings nor loneliness where he stays? This is the message but the message is embellished with more objects related to the evening. She speaks of the evenings in which the house sparrows fondle with their nestlings.

Both the translations by Ramanujan and Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden take up the space segment at first. Following are the corresponding lines:

Don't they really have
in the land where he has gone

AKR:IL, 40, i-ii.

In that land where he has gone

Pillai & Ludden, 197, i.

But the translation of Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden, quoted second, pictures the sparrows as part of the evening scenery while that of Ramanujan presents sparrows and evenings as two separate entities. Whereas in the translation of Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden the message has two viz. the evenings and the lonelines after mentioning the space, Ramanujan's translation adds the "sparrows" as one of the features of the message.
Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden proceed thus:

In that land where he has gone,
my friend,
are there no sad evenings,
when sparrows .......

Is there no loneliness
Where he is?

Pillai & Ludden, 197, i-xiii

The term sad "evenings" is elaborated by the sparrows etc. in this translation. Ramanujan's translation makes the sparrows an independent part of the message. We have his lines as follows:

Don't they really have
in the land where he has gone
such things
as house sparrows
and miserable evenings,
and loneliness?

AKR:IL, 40.

Though the translation by Ramanujan does not distort the message there is a slight deviation in the thematic content of the poem when compared to the original.

As seen above the three components of the "akam" poem forming its structure and theme should preferably be translated without deviating from its sequence and disturbing its intrinsic features. The samples of translations discussed above also show that the segment sequence may sometimes be changed conforming to the general pattern of the other poems but the
details of the segments are to be placed only within the segments and if they get shifted to other segments there is every likelihood that the total effect conveyed will be different from that of the source text. In order to avoid this the features of the poem and the structural segments they belong to should register as the translator’s response to the poem. Only then can they be transformed without any deviation in theme, content and form.

A unique literary device of the Cangkam akam poems is its employment of similes which bring finer shades of meaning by its use of diction with terseness and concentration. In the KuRundtokai anthology we rarely find a poem without a simile. The special features of the similes, to quote Zvelebil, "are that they are never extensive but intensive, austere, accurate and sharp, never elaborate and full..." When compared to other literary devices such as metaphor, metonymy etc. a simile is more precise and restricted because it limits the resemblance of the "object" and "image" to a single property. But the concept of a simile as a literary device and its use in the Cangkam classics demand the special attention of its editors and translators. "The Tamil theory of comparison

Zvelebil The Smile, 108.
deserves an essay to itself" writes Ramanujan.\textsuperscript{12} \textit{tolkasppiyam} explains the features and use of the similes and metaphors in 37 verses. On the use of simile as a poetic device it says that the basis for comparison should start either with shape or colour or action or result.\textsuperscript{13} Hence the terms of comparison employed will involve one or more of these qualities. Further the conventional practice with these similes is to extend the comparison to successive layers of meaning. This stems from the predominant position that the poetics has given to Nature. "Human emotion and experience are always seen in comparison with Nature and its phenomena in order to give them a perennial and meaningful utterance in the cosmos. The vast variety of similes which employ the natural objects perform a dual function. Thematically they elucidate the experience and aesthetically they objectify and depersonalise the emotion.\textsuperscript{14}"

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{12} Ramanujan \textit{Love and War}, 247.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{13} tol., 1222.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
While translating, these similes need to be transplanted with this multidimensional function in the target language. The translators under study keep this goal and provide dynamic equivalences in English. These may be analysed with some sample texts. In poem 40 a hero after his tryst with the heroine reassures his lady of the eternal nature of their love. When she is afraid that he would leave her he says that neither their parents nor they themselves were known to each other earlier. But now their hearts are united together like the mingling of the rain water with the red soil. The source text runs as follows:

\[
yaru gnyum yara; kiyaro; 
endtaiyu nundtaiyu memmuRaik ke:Lir 
yanu ndiyu mevvazhi yaRitum 
cempulap peyanirr poi:la 
anpuTai ndegncand tarmkaland tanave:
\]

K 40.

(This is a monologue of the hero* to the heroine while she doubts the sincerity of his love with her."

The last two lines embed the simile. The following are the corresponding lines of the translations:

```
Like the rain
and red earth,
our loving hearts are mingled
as one.
```

Pillai & Ludden, 40.
While this is the translation of Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden, Ramanujan provides the following for these lines:

```
.....
But in love our hearts are as red earth and pouring rain:
mingled
beyond parting.
```

AKR:IL, 37, v-viii

Hart provides the following:

```
.....
like water that has rained on red fields,
our hearts in their love have mixed together.
```

Hart, 54, viii-x

The comparison that the simile provides is on the one of the union of the hearts of the lovers, and on the other that of the rain and earth. The union at one level is sensory in terms of colour and action while at another level the union is to be experienced by the heart. The point of comparison is sharply brought out in the source as well as in the target texts. When extended, the simile in the source text by its conventional features suggests amatory union of the lovers at one level but the union of Red Earth and Rain also lift the union of the lovers to a more universal and cosmic level. These extensions of meaning are possible for the reader of the source text and could be brought out only in the notes by the translators. But this simile makes it possible for
translation at least at the level of its referential meaning. It is to be noted that the simile employed here has so striking an image in the source language that the poet takes his pseudonym from this simile itself viz. "cempulappeyani:rar" -- the poet of Red Earth and pouring Rain.

But sometimes the components of a simile in the source text are such that the translators face a problem in bringing out the points of comparison. Poem 312 of KuRundtokai is a monologue of the hero where he talks about the dual nature of the heroine. At the dead of night she is pleasantly fragrant and is one with him; at dawn she puts on oil and flowers that give her a different look and she behaves indifferently with others. The pleasant fragrance of her body at night is compared to the fragrance of the forest in the "mulai" land. The relevant lines in the source text are:

\[
\text{iraNtaRi kaLvindang ka:ta lo:Le:} \\
\text{muraNko TuppiR cevve:n malaiyan} \\
\text{muLLurk kama nda:Ra vandtu ....} \\
\text{.... .... ... ...} \\
\]

K 312, i-iii.

This can be paraphrased as follows -- "My love came with pleasant fragrance, a fragrance like that of the forest of the chieftain with the Red spear". The simile is simple with a single point of comparison viz. the fragrance of the heroine is like that of the fragrance of the forest. This is a simile of sensory perception.
The following are the corresponding line in the translations:

By Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden:

She comes to me smelling like
the Mullai forest of Malaiyaman,
who has the spears
and is strong enough to oppose anyone;

Pillai & Ludden, 71, iv-vii.

By Ramanujan:

she comes like the fragrance
of the Red-Speared chieftain’s forest hill,
to be one with me.

AKR:IL, 92, ii-iv.

Here her coming towards him is compared to the flowing of the fragrance of the hills. An analysis of the presentation of the simile in the source text will show that it is only the fragrance of the body that is compared and not the coming of the heroine. Ramanujan has converted a simile of sensory perception into a simile of action which is not a proper equivalence. The problem lies in the interpretation of the simile and the features of its syntax.

The same type of problem is faced in the translation of poem 231 of kuRundtokai. This is a monologue of the heroine to her friend, commenting on the nonchalant attitude of the hero towards

15

R.Sarangapani, ed., Canška ilakkiya poruTKalandciyam
(Thanjavur: Tamil University, 1986) II, 319.
her while he has started an affair with the concubine. The source text reads as follows:

orur va:zhinugn ce:ri va:ra\:r
ce:ri varinu mazra muyangka\:r
e:ti la:Lar cuTalai po:ilak
ka:Naik kazhipa manne: na:NaTTu
"... ... ... ... ..."

K 231, i-iv.

It can be paraphrased as -- Though our man lives in the same village he does not come to our hamlet; even if he visits the hamlet he does not come to our street to embrace me. He looks at me with such nonchalance as he would show while passing the cremation ground for the aliens. The point of comparison is the nonchalant attitude of the hero while he looks at the heroine and at the cremation ground. The following are the translations of the corresponding lines:

By Ramanujan:

..............
He walks by, unseeing,
as if past the cremation grounds
of strangers

AKR: PLW, 97, v-vii.

By Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden:

.........
He passes me by without looking at me
as though I were a cremation ground
for foreigners.

Pillai & Ludden, 255, v-viii.
By Hart:

.............
He sees me and passes me by
as if I were a burning ground for strangers.

Hart, 73, v-vi.

Translations provided by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden and Hart compare the heroine to the burial ground though there is no possibility for such an interpretation in the text. Moreover while the first two translations state that the hero does not look at the heroine, the translation by Hart describes the hero passing after seeing her. Thus the vital point of comparison provided by the simile in the source text itself becomes a problem factor. This has arisen because the signifier and the signified in the simile of the source text are not identified.

In KuRundtokai we find that a song sometimes employs a single simile, presents it strikingly and brings out the message aesthetically. When more similes are used they are normally presented in different segments associated with the object of the soil or with persons. Sometimes similes on different objects are so piled one over another in one or two consecutive lines that one or the other is lost by the translator. The opening lines of poem 274 have posed such a problem to the translators. It is the monologue of the hero pacifying his heart about the dangers of the

desert while he embarks to earn wealth, leaving his lady. For him the ills of the deserts will be sweet when he remembers the beautiful breasts and loins of his lady. In this context he speaks of a tree and its fruits in the desert.

\[\text{puRavuppuRat tanna punka: lukarayk kasiinai yanna ndalikani yutira} \]

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\]

K. 274, i-ii.

These two lines speak of the tree and its fruits which wayfarers on the highway covet. The trunk of the tree is compared to a dove's soft back in the first line and its fruits are compared to gold coins in the second line; Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden bring out these two similes in the following lines:

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\]

\[\text{with its dried trunk like a pigeon's back,}
\text{and knock down fruit, like gold coins.}\]

Pillai & Ludden, 379, viii-ix.

When Ramanujan translates the same idea he alters the second simile. His translation of the corresponding lines are:

\[\text{Here, the trunk of the "ukai" tree is soft as the back of a dove, and its beads of fruit are shaken down}\]

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\]

AKR:IL, 81, i-iii.

The fruits are mentioned using the phrase "beads of fruit". This
fails to present the simile in its appropriate sense. A comparison in terms of its shape and colour is missed, in its place one more feature of the object is mentioned for which there is no context in the source text.

A similar type of simile comparing flowers with bells occurs in poem 243. A mention here is made of the sport of women of the seashore where they collect bright flowers for their games. The flowers are compared to the bells that are used to bedeck the necks of the horses. The following line bears the simile:

\[ \text{tara}\text{n}\text{i} \text{yanna voNpu}\text{k kozhuti} \]

Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden bring this out in the following lines:

\[ \text{picking} \]

\[ \text{radiant flowers, shaped like bells around a horse's neck,} \]

Ramanujan adds another detail to the simile. He translates:

\[ \text{its flowers that look like the shining beads and bells on a horse's neck,} \]

\[ \text{AKR:IL, 76, ix-x.} \]
The source text compares the flowers with bells. The corresponding word in the source text is "maNi" and it could be interpreted as "bead" also. But the image of the word in this context, evoked by the corresponding image of flowers, appears to warrant the meaning "bell" only. Even if Ramanujan chooses to interpret it differently, he could have employed either of these two possibilities and not both because the source text does not give room for both connotations. To realise the point of comparison involved in the simile the words in the source text need to be interpreted as they have been used in the text.

At times there occurs a simile which in its linguistic meaning does not convey any point of comparison at all. The source text readers, because of their ability to experience the text and the entire anthology more fully, infer the meaning and enjoy the poem. The meaning that is referred to here is what Nida calls "emotive meaning". As he explains, this meaning emerges out of the relationship between the symbols and the psychological reactions of the participants in the communication.\(^{17}\) Hence this meaning in a poem will not be explicit and when it exists in a simile this becomes obscure to a non-native reader. What has to be done in translating such a simile poses a problem to the translator.

\(^{17}\) Nida Science of Translating, 58.
A simile very intricate in its features, but posing
this type of problem, occurs in poem 273 of KuRundtokai. The poem
is a monologue of the heroine to her friend. When her friend
brings the message of the hero regarding his return from the
harlot, she refuses entry to him and informs her friend:

kaLLiR ke:Li rà:ttirai yuLLurp
parlai tandta pagnciyang kuRungkaiy
jongkirum peNNai ndungkotu peyaram
asti yaruman mutu: ranna
ayavel Lammpa lampakai neRittazhai
tittik kuRangki nurzhma Ralaippa
varume: ceryizhai yandtiR
kozhugnaR kai:Niya vaLiye:n ya:net

K 293.

This may be paraphrased as follows -- The harlot is like the old
village of asti aruman where those who go in search of toddy will
also deprive the tree of its tender fruits by taking them all.
She wears a skirt on which the white water lilies are many in
number and move alternately on her thighs. She has much of gold
and if she comes to see my husband I will be at a loss.

It is to be noted that the harlot is compared to the
city and no point of comparison is mentioned. The city is
described with some attributes. The source reader by his
association with the literary devices, especially those relating
to the employment of similes, infers the meaning that the harlot
is compared to those who go in search of toddy and harm the trees
by taking off the tender kernels of fruits as well. The harlot, while she visits him, does harm to the heroine by taking the hero away from her.

Ramanujan translates:

O friend, drunkards make pilgrimages into Ati Aruman's ancient city and bring back kernels from the tall black palm, its spathes full of fibrous fruit;

she is like that city, his harlot. Her full skirts of white water-flower wreaths move alternately on her thighs marked with love's pallor and she has gold on her. And she comes to see my husband here. Pity me, I need it.

AKR:IL, 88.

Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden give the following translation:

O red jewelled girl: she is like the old village of Ati Aruman, where men who come in search of toddy go home with tender fruits as well ... both from the tall, dark, palmyra tree, with soft, sweet fruit, growing from stems:

When she comes to see my husband, with the close-packed and overlapping petals of white water-lilies bouncing rhythmically on her thighs, I will be the loser.

Pillai & Ludden, 252.

In both the translations, one can observe that the translators have followed the structure of the source text and in the use of the simile also the structure in the source text is followed. Any western reader will certainly miss the point of comparison the
simile provides. It is not the beauty of the city that is used for comparison; the features that are described have a point of comparison with the hero, the heroine and the harlot — the heroine to the palmyra tree, the hero to its fruits and the visit of the harlot to the visit of the drunkards. This has not been brought out in the translations.

A problem of this kind could be solved by providing an extended simile in the translation expanding the one in the source text or through adequate footnotes explaining the features of comparison.

This discussion leads us to another type of simile, which is considered to be one of the unique literary devices of Tamil akam poetry viz. implied simile or implicit metaphor. In Tamil it is called "uLLuRai uvamam". Kamil Zvelebil calls this "allegory"; it also has been termed "simile incognito".

There are different critical appraisals among Tamil scholars and critics in comparing and differentiating the use of this literary device with another literary device named "iRaicci". A


discussion on the nuances and subtle distinctions between these two literary devices will be beyond the scope of this dissertation; this discussion is confined to the problems in transferring this device in translation, overlooking for the present the subtle nuances between the two, as the problems posed by the two are virtually the same in regard to translation.

Ramanujan discusses this in his "Afterword" under the subtitle Metaphor and Metonymy and calls this "Metonymous Metaphor".\textsuperscript{22} Tolkaappiyar discusses this in many aphorisms of which the following is the one that explains the function of this literary device in short:

\begin{center}
\texttt{uLLuRuttu itano:Tu ottupqoruL muTikaena uLLuRuttu iRuvatai ULLuRai Yuvamam}
\end{center}

tol. 994

The verse states that the poet keeps the intended message implied and brings out the simile alone. Not even a single word that brings out the comparison and the message is used in the poem. The success of the poet lies in making the reader realise the poet's intent in presenting such a simile. Without stating the implication and the inference directly in the text the poet is able to evoke a response in the reader because such a literary device is part of the pattern of literary conventions. How is this to be meaningfully translated

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{22} Ramanujan \textit{Love and War}, 246-247.
\end{center}
for an alien reader who is not accustomed to this literary device? The non-native reader has to be presented with a text which will bring to him the flash of joy in the realisation of the message concerned.

A good example of the various features of an implied metaphor and the problems they present while they get transcomposed can be seen in the translations of poem 8; it offers an excellent illustration of the functioning of an implied metaphor and an explicit simile. It is the monologue of a harlot. On hearing that the hero's wife has talked ill of her, she utters the following, with the neighbours of the heroine as silent listeners.

```
kazhani māttu vilainduku tirmpazhani
pazhana vaLai katu:u mutran
emmiR perumozhi ku:Rit tammiR
kaiyung ka:lund tukkat tukkum
a:Tip pa:vai po:la
me:vana ceyyundtan putalvan Rasykke:
```

The first two lines which seem to describe the village of the hero contain the implicit metaphor. The objects of the soil (karupporul) present have an implied correlation with the personae (uriporul) mentioned in the following lines. The next four lines bring the message with another simile which is explicit. The poem may be
summarised thus: In the hero's village the mango trees in the field have their fruit that fall down after ripening to the core; they are caught and eaten away by the sharks in the pool nearby. The hero from that village praised me in high terms here but in his house he obeys his son's mother as the image of a mirror obeys the object it reflects.

As for the implied message and the point of comparison in the opening lines, the mango tree that has its roots in the fields does not benefit the fields but drops its fruits to the pools nearby for the sharks to profit. In the same way the hero on whom the heroine has a legal right does not give himself fully in love to his wife but shows admiration for his harlot. One further comparison to note is that the sharks cannot go away from the waters of the pool like the harlot who cannot go away from her place seeking out the hero. The fields stand for the heroine; the mango tree is likened to the hero and the harlot to the sharks in the pool. There may be seen yet another layer of meaning. The harlot does not go in search of the hero as the sharks do not go in search of the mangoes. It is the hero who has gone towards the harlot like the fruits of the tree. The message is that the wife of the hero has no grounds to speak ill of the harlot.
Ramanujan gives the following translation:

You know he comes from
where the fresh-water shark in the pools
catch with their mouths
the mangoes as they fall, ripe
from the trees on the edge of the field.

At our place
he talked big.

Now, back in his own,
when others raise their hands
and feet,
he will raise his too:

like a doll
in a mirror
he will shadow
every last wish
of his son's dear mother

AKR:IL, 22.

The following is the translation of Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden:

That man
from the village where carp
in the pond
snatch ripe mangoes as they fall
from trees beside the field:

he flattered me with big words
when he was here;
but now, in their house,
he lifts his arms and legs,
like an image in the mirror ---
a puppet to every wish
of his son's mother

Pillai & Ludden, 256.

This translation is followed by a detailed note in which along with
other information regarding the poem, the implied simile is explained in detail.

One can notice that in both the source and the target texts the opening lines give just a description of the city. There are no explicit markers (e.g., the use of "like" that we find in the last segment of the poem). But the source text reader could comprehend the implicit metaphor without such markers. The non-native reader is at a loss with reference to the implied metaphor and the extension of meaning it provides.

Hence the translator in order to make the non-native reader understand and enjoy the poetic excellence of this literary device needs to augment the understanding of the poem either by providing notes as done by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden or to expand and make the implied metaphor an explicit simile in the translation itself. Neither is attempted by Ramanujan. The same problem is faced in the translations of the poems 3, 38, 42, 88, 151, 164, 303 and 308. An analysis of the translations of poems 3 and 42 show that Hart also leaves the implicit metaphors obscure, presenting them neither expanded in the text nor explained in notes, with the result that the receptor stands to lose this significant feature of the classical Tamil poems.

Poem 8, discussed earlier, employs one explicit simile besides the implicit metaphor. Hence even if the translation does
not bring out implicit metaphor explicitly, the non-native reader may get a clue to the message and derive poetic enlightenment from the simile translated. But there are poems with just an implicit metaphor and the message in one or two lines. Translations of such poems without expanding the implicit metaphor, in obvious terms of comparison sound almost prosaic to the non-native reader. An example is poem 42. This is a monologue of the friend of the heroine with the hero as the silent listener. He comes at night to have a meeting with the heroine. Her friend meets him and refuses permission for the meeting stating that even if he has his desire gratified the love that the lady bears for him is eternal. The source text is as follows:

katma mozhiva taryinum ya:mattuk
karuvi maimazhai vizhndtena varuvi
vitarakat tiyampu na:Tavem
toTarpund te:yumo: ndinvayi nda:ne:

K 42.

While the first and the fourth line supply the message, in the other lines the heroine’s friends address him as a man from the kurignci hills where the waterfalls that were formed out of the previous night rains resound in the caves of the mountains.

Ramanujan furnishes the following translation:

Even if passion should pass,

O man of the hills
where
after the long tempestuous rains
of night
the morning's waterfalls
make music in the caverns
would our love also pass
with the passion?

Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden's translation runs as follows:

O man from the land
where a waterfall
in the cleft of a mountain
declares that a great rain
fell in torrents
last night:

even if your passion die,
will the love between us
ever fade?

Hart's version is as follows:

Even if desire should cease
man from where a great midnight rain blasts down
with thunders and lightning
and makes a waterfall
resound through a cave,
will the bond wear away
that links me to you.

The implied simile is manifested in the address to the friend,
describing the features of nature. The hero's passion for the
heroine is compared to the pouring rain, the flow in the waterfalls
to the significant response and change in the heroine, and the
resounding at the caverns to the gossip of the town over the love
affair. The implicit simile suggests much more; the torrential rain fell during midnight when there was none awake; it registers itself the next day in the waterfalls that resound in the caverns of the mountains. Similarly, though the hero and the heroine meet at night unknown to others, the changes in the heroine’s looks because of her meeting with him will be understood by others and will form the basis for gossip among the people. Thus the argument, the basis of the message delivered in the last line, is manifest only in the implicit metaphor. Unless this is brought out in the translation the target reader is bound to miss the essence of the poem. The same problem is faced in translating poems 3, 38, 88, 151, 164, 205 and 308.

How can this problem be tackled? The translation of poem 42 cited above shows that Ramanujan has not attempted step to bring out the message that lies in the implicit metaphor. The translation by Shanmugam Pillai and Ludden carry abundant end notes and they make use of it to bring out the points of comparison of the message offered in the implicit metaphor.

Though referring to footnotes for all implicit metaphors will be like reading a novel with a dictionary, still the notes do lend a helping hand to the non-native reader in understanding the metaphor and the message. A casual reader may skip the notes and
peruse the text, getting out of it as much as is explicit; the careful student is helped by the notes to get much more out of the poem.

While it is true that the implicit metaphors cannot evoke the same emotive meaning in a translation as the original text does with a source reader, attempts could have been made to bring out the implicit metaphors through explicit similes, even if, as Newmark considers, simile is a weaker method of translating a metaphor. At least the points of comparison and the message in it would get conveyed. Since no translator under discussion has done it, an attempt may be made with poem 42 of Kurundtokai; the attempt is made specifically to examine how an implicit metaphor could be translated in explicit similes.

O man of the hills
    the torrential midnight rain
    makes its way in the waterfalls
    and resounds in the caves
    like
    the gossip of the town
    over the pallor on your girl
    after your meeting.

Even if passion should pass
    would our love also pass?

---

23 Peter Newmark, Approaches to Translation (Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English 1981), 123.
This method is one way of solving this particular problem and conveying to the non-native reader the significance of the implied metaphor and the points of comparison between the objects of the soil and the personae, vital to the poetic delight of these poems.

As seen earlier the literary devices employed in a particular literary system may not be available in the literary canon of the target language. With reference to the KuRundtokai anthology first of all the translators need to fix the text with all its emendations and additions as they pave way to the perception of the aesthetic qualities of the text. The structure of these poems especially the tripartite division of "uri" "karu" and "mutal" need to be followed as they are conventional and traditional practices. It is out of these that the total structure of the poem unfolds step by step. The similes whether they are explicit as similes or implied as metaphors are the special features of these classical "akam" poems and the poetic nuances embedded in them pose problems in bringing them out with dynamic equivalences in the target text. The translators need to resort to literal translation at times or have to adopt the practice of "addition" since these are unique and special features of Tamil classical poems.