Preface & Acknowledgements

In *Gitanjali*, Tagore said that the world should not be broken by narrow domestic walls. But we are more and more now divided by continents and countries, states and districts, sometimes even by streets. Is not Tagore patriotic? He is not just patriotic. He is at once patriotic and universal. Here is Goldsmith’s golden citizen of the world. A total native like Subramania Bharathiyar would construct narrow domestic walls around his patriotism. An expatriate is more patriotic or truly patriotic unlike a total resident. After exposure to the sun, one knows the value of shade. More than an American or an Indian, a Jew loves his Israel better.

The native writing of Kaniyan Poongundranar gives us false picture of the foreign situation. Every expatriate can understand how innocent, how ignorant Poongundranar is! An expatriate realizes that each is not his town and each is not his kin. Everywhere, an expatriate is treated as second rank human being. equality or universality is just a myth or wishful thinking. Then the inevitable Diaspora happens. Your body likes alien comforts, but your soul needs Indian consolation.

Travel brings alienation but it also brings enlightenment. Ulysses travelled. Rama travelled. Pandavas travelled. Buddha travelled. Some kind of travel or migration or alienation is even good for many citizens. While a patriot may repel another patriot, an expatriate very much loves his compatriot. A repatriate loves his country more especially after his expatriation.

A tapestry serves two purposes. It reveals and also covers like the Grecian Urn. It is at once a weapon and a shield. Enlightening expatriate writings cover Bharathi’s local
patriotism and also Kaniyan’s hollow universalism. Expatriate writings reveal the bitter truth and the immigrant truth. As a tapestry covers and prefects walls or furniture, expatriate tapestry protects and sustains our ultimate patriotism. Variety of reality distinguishes one tapestry from another. Every tapestry is a portrait gallery. But expatriate writings are blessed with even a tapestry gallery. We are impressed with the incredible Indian diaspora. Then the wild Canadian Diaspora overpowers us. Then the adventurous American diaspora attracts us. Then the interesting English diaspora influences us. Then the articulate African diaspora amazes us. Definitely it is better to appreciate the combined tapestries of all the expatriate writings.

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