CHAPTER I

Introduction

This book is writ in such a dialect,
As may the minds of listless men affect,
It seems a novelty, and yet contains
Nothing but sound and honest gospel strains.
- John Bunyan

Not a tale told for fun,
Neither petty pleasures spun
In verse and passed as one
Bowl of ant hill cobra poison,
But it’s precious potion
For soul’s salvation.
- Krishna Pillai

The Pilgrim’s Progress (1678) by John Bunyan (1628-1688), the celebrated English allegorist who was affectionately called Bishop Bunyan, is a globally renowned allegory. Iraçarinya Yattirikam (1894), though relatively an obscure epic, is still considered to be the magnum opus of the Tamil savant, H.A. Krishna Pillai (1827-1900), popularly eulogised as Kiristavak Kampan (Christian Kampan). Gwilym O. Griffith comments, “If a good book is a candle, then John Bunyan lighted three great candles, and ... they have not grown dim” (7).

The monumental works thus referred to are Holy War (1665), Grace Abounding (1666) and The Pilgrim’s Progress. Of these, The Pilgrim’s Progress, by any critical standards, is considered to be the greatest. Perhaps it is an accidental coincidence that Krishna Pillai, who meticulously followed the tradition of the great masters of the Tamil literature-- Tiruvalluvar,

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1 Although the title Iraçarinya Yattirikam figuratively stands for The Pilgrim’s Progress, the title literally means “The journey of salvation.”

2 The poet H.A. Krishna Pillai is endearingly called Christian Kampan, after the immortal Tamil epic poet Kampan who wrote the great Rāmāyana, for his artistically erudite achievement in epic poetry in composing Iraçarinya Yattirikam.
Kampan and Ilanko -- has also to his credit three literary lamps in *Irațcaniya Yăttirikam*, *Irațcaniya Camaya Nirmāgam* ([An Apology for the Religion of Salvation] 1899) and *Irațcaniya Maṇḍakam* ([The Beauty of Salvation] 1898) which the passage of time has not dimmed. "These three books," asserts Paul Appasamy, "will be valued so long as the Tamil language exists" (258). Again, of the three, the general critical perception conceives *Irațcaniya Yăttirikam* as the greatest.

The present study seeks to highlight the similarities and differences between the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Irațcaniya Yăttirikam*. The study aims to bring to the attention of a larger body of readers the merits of a great work of art in Tamil which has a rich literary tradition. Its comparison with the world-renowned classic of John Bunyan may enhance the prestige of not only the regional poet but also add to the glory of the Tamil tongue and thereby project the image of India as a nation that could produce works of international stature.

Literary history has grown with world literatures to a point at which one literature looks at itself in comparison with another. The field of Comparative Literature has brought great literatures of various cultures to light. French, German and American schools of Comparative Literature have propounded various theories through which literary works are studied (Weisstein 27). The dialectic of Comparative Literature within its ethnological framework is resilient and elastic. The fluidity and dynamism of it lends itself to various fields of study. What the "French School" established by interpretation and enumeration led to deep studies extending beyond the frontiers of France, penetrated several civilizations and cultures. In his

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1 The comparison is confined to the main story in Part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress* precisely because its sequel in Part II has no counterpart in Krishna Pillai's *Irațcaniya Yăttirikam*. However references to Part II have been made in the study wherever they are relevant.
foreword to Gayard’s *La Littérature Comparée* (1951), Carré defines comparative literature as follows:

Comparative Literature is a branch of literary history: it is the study of international spiritual relations, of *rapports de fait* between Byron and Pushkin, Goethe and Carlyle, Walter Scott and Alfred de Vigny, and between the works, the inspirations and even the lives of writers belonging to different literatures. (qtd. in Weisstein 3)

But Remak seems to take the boundary of comparative literature beyond different literatures of different culture and adumbrates even "other spheres of expression." However, he is of the opinion that comparative literature “is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of expression” (qtd. in Weisstein 23). Comparative study, needless to say, bridges the gap between the literatures of various cultures juxtaposing the divergences, similarities, recurrent symbols, myths, topoi, character types, concepts and images, often revealing the archetypal patterns that prevail in all the literatures of the world.

The dialectic history of Comparative Literature dates back to the French School whose orthodox representatives are Paul Van Tiegem, Jean Marie Carré and Marius - François Guyard. In his monumental work *La Littérature Comparée* Paul Van Tiegem explains the purpose and profit of the study of influence as “unconscious imitation” and imitation as “directed influence,” whereby the receiver has not simply copied the “emitter,” but has been able to re-create a work of his own. But J.T. Shaw seems to look at it from a slightly different angle; and to him, “In contrast to imitation, influence shows the influenced author producing work which is essentially his own” (qtd. in Weisstein 31).
The dissemination of the theory of "influence" has gradually given way to the word "reception" and reception studies have gained ground. Weisstein rightly repudiates Claudio Gullen's view that influence is a psychological phenomenon which leaves no visible traces in the influenced work, and accepts the theory of reception as a satisfactory solution. According to him, "reception might designate a wider range of subjects, namely, the relations between these works and their ambience, including authors, readers, reviewers, publishers and the surrounding milieu" (48).

Here one has to take cognizance of the process of communication between the two which, with all its epistemological restrictions, promotes cultural osmosis. Apart from the "active" and "passive" factors of influence, the assimilation takes place through an active third factor called "intermediaries." Ferdinand Baldensperger highlights the roles of the intermediaries in his Goethe and France and other comparative studies. The crucial fact is that "often the 'emitter' and the 'receiver' of a literary influence are not in direct touch with each other but are linked by 'intermediaries' or 'transmitters' such as translators, reviewers, critics, scholars, travellers or vehicles like books and journals" (qtd. in Weisstein 30).

A literary osmosis takes place through the process of reception and assimilation through a conscious or unconscious appropriation. Such influence is far from imitation. In fact, it is a re-creation through a reaction of reception. A close scrutiny of the two works of art chosen for the present study clearly shows how there is a re-creation through a reaction of reception in Krishna Pillai's rendering of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress in Tamil. It also strikes one with their thematic unity despite their structural divergences. They perform religious as well as artistic functions as Fokkema rightly points out, "artistic texts (usually) also have religious, cognitive or other function and predominantly cognitive or religious texts may also have an artistic function" (8).
The Tamil epic is obviously not a mere imitation of the fictional allegorical counterpart in English, but it is a poetic re-creation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is composed of five *paravarikal* (Books), forty-seven *Paṭalikā* (Sections), three thousand six hundred and twenty two *Paṭalkā* (Verses) and one hundred and forty-four *tevāram* (songs of praise). The *tevārams* are exquisitely poetic and bhakti compositions which lend a religio-artistic lustre to the entire composition of *Iraṭkarēya Yāttikam*. Fully endorsing the views of M. Vararatharasu, S.V. Subbramaniyan comments, "The interspersed heart rending *tevārams* make Krishna Pillai comparable to the poets of *tevārams* and Tivya Prapantams like Āḻwar and Nāyānmārs" (Sivakama 230).

While, like Milton, Bunyan is silent about the source, Krishna Pillai, like Kampan, is all praise for *The Pilgrim's Progress* and "is all admiration for it." What Sivakami says about Milton and Valmiki in this connection is worth quoting:

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A *tevāram* is a hymn set in pure diction to be sung in praise of God. Usually it contains ten verses. Hence it is called *patikam*. The *tevārams* of Krishna Pillai are similar to the hymns of praise in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In Cumai Nīlku Paṭalām the poet makes the hero sing praises to the holy name of God and calls it *Tirumāna Patikam*. It is noteworthy that these songs are found in Krishna Pillai's *Iraṭkarēya Manākaram*. The Pilgrim is in great rapture when he is freed from the burden of sin and begins to sing. All the stanzas end with the words *Yaṇu nāmam* (the name of Christ alone) and reveal great piety. The first stanza runs thus:

For men who cause this world
To stay to be saved
None other in Heaven and earth
Than the one the scripture praises
Nectar unto sinners is
The name of Jesus Christ alone.
What the Bible praises as
The only name in heaven and earth
For lives of men to be saved
And nectar to sinful lives is
The name of Jesus Christ alone. (Cumai 2.1)
Milton does not speak in any of his exordiums of the source material for his epic. On the other hand Kampan, the Rāmāyana of Valmiki, not only speaks of its source, but is all praise for the work and Kampan is all admiration and reverence for Valmiki (307).

Just as *Divine Comedy* profoundly influenced Baudelaire and Eliot and contributed to their poetic compositions, *The Pilgrim's Progress* made a lasting impression on Krishna Pillai and propelled his soul, as it were, to compose his magnum opus, *Irattiyam Yaṭṭirikam*. Krishna Pillai’s student and later critic, Amy Wilson Carmichael, was only stating the obvious when she commented, “Krishna Pillai put his very soul into this book” (qtd. in Popley n pag.)

The approbation received by the Tamil version of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* published under the title *Paraiyin Makkappirayam* (The wanderer’s journey to salvation) published in 1793 by the S.P.C.K. Society encouraged the publications of many subsequent versions. *Makkappirayam*, written in *marappravala* (A popular form of Tamil writing during Krishna Pillai’s days) Tamil prose, at once became a household word in every Christian home. As John Samuel rightly points out, “Among the Tamil versions of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the Tamil rendering by Samuel Paul (1844-1900) which came in 1882, evoked very great response among the native Christian congregation” (x).

It was his friend Thanakoti Raju who gave the Tamil translation of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* to Krishna Pillai before he became a Christian and pleaded with him to read it (RY 1981, 41). Evidently it was this translation that exerted an everlasting impact on the formative Christian mind of Krishna Pillai. Whether Krishna Pillai was influenced only by the Tamil translation or whether he also chanced to read the English original still remains a moot point. Yesudhasan argues that Krishna Pillai was not well versed in the English language (41).
Mrs. Packiam Muthammal, the poet's great granddaughter, who lives in Palayamkottai, affirms this statement (Personal interview 17 Nov. 1994). However, the author's intimate contact with the Rev. Huxtable, the Rev. Sargeant, Amy Wilson Carmichael and other British men and women of his time could not have left him ignorant of the English tongue. That the author himself makes mention of Butler's *Analogy* in his preface to the first edition vouches for his inclination towards English literature made available to him in the colleges he worked (xxxv).

A cursory reading of Krishna Pillai's *Iraṭamya Yattrikan* reveals that it is a mould of his personality and creative acumen. That it is much more than a mere translation and that it is, in every sense of the term, a transcreation is amply attested by Popley, "While it does reproduce the story and characters of the original as well as a good deal of conversations, it is much more than this because it gives the picture of the author's own inner life and of his devotion to Christ" (n. pag.).

Krishna Pillai also profoundly acknowledges his study of "the content and meaning found in a Tamil translation of Bunyan's masterpiece" (Samuel iii). That Krishna Pillai was greatly indebted to Bunyan is succinctly made clear in one of the verses of his work:

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It is the one and only method
That the holy truth explained
In the story of salvation
Written by John Bunyan
Who followed what he searched
In the Bible, wisdom filled. (Cirappu 11)
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Krishna Pillai may also have read his contemporary Suvikara Nadar's *Mutiviṭ Ammēṇai* (The songs of heavenly way) which celebrates Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in a popular verse form known as *Ammēṇai* that used to be sung by women while playing a game of balls. Suvikara Nadar has acknowledged his debt to Samuel Paul's prose translation. (Gnanasikhamani 96).

It is interesting to note that the last decade of the twentieth century has found a similar epic called *Mōcag Payaga Kāvīyam* (Epic on the journey to heaven) by Cōti Nayakam. In his introduction the author mentions the versification of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by Cuvikaranar's *Mutiviṭ Ammēṇai* in 1887 and H.A. Krishna Pillai's *Irattiriyā Yattirikam* in 1894. The author claims that his is an entirely different work from those of his predecessors. Unlike the other two, it is free from digressions of any sort. It is composed of three Cantos with forty-three sections of six hundred verses (v-vi). Brevity and elegant diction are its salient features. While the other two writers are not free from Sanskrit expressions, Cōti Nayakam has woven the verses in pure Tamil.

*The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Irattiriyā Yattirikam* taken for study easily lend themselves as an eternal guide for every man's salvation. Moreover, these two religio-artistic works representing entirely two different cultures also bring to light how even a great work of art is conditioned by ethno-sociological factors and their respective landscapes coupled with the local literary traditions. It is, therefore, a truism to say that a study of these two authors would reveal in all its varied dimensions what Fokkema calls "Cultural Relativism." That a comparative study of this sort would ultimately lead to such fundamental questions is what Wellek and Warren meant when they said:
Any objective analysis will have to distinguish questions concerning the racial descent of authors and sociological questions concerning provenance and setting, from questions concerning the actual influence of the landscape and questions of literary tradition and fashion. (52)

The present comparative study seeks not only to bring into uniform focus the underlying common spiritual quest but also unravel the socio-cultural backdrops which gave rise to the evolution of these two works of art. Most of the characters and the plot in the Tamil work could be rightly termed adaptations, but the ambience here is strikingly oriental and original, and the cultural milieu is definitely Tamil. The purpose of Krishna Pillai is said to be his irresistible inner urge to share with his fellow poets the profound truth of salvation that was deeply ingrained in the ever vibrant soul of the newly transformed poet (Gnanasikhamani 99).

With such a noble purpose and devotional piety Krishna Pillai employs the kind of simple but sublime diction that the occasion demands, but he does not deviate from the Tamil epic tradition, although alterations in the architectonics of the work are made to accommodate biblical tenets and ecclesiastical doctrines (Gnanaskhamani 20). But it is primarily through the local landscapes, indigenous images, inimitable metaphors and the rich oral heritage of native wisdom revealed through sayings and similes which manifest the regional and cultural specificity of the Tamils that the essentially central theme of the epic is presented in all its vivacity and vigour.

Bunyan begins his work with the protagonist’s slippage into a sleep or a dream of damnation and redemption, but Krishna Pillai goes back to the genesis of creation and seeks to enlarge the framework of Bunyan’s work which serves as a kind of prototype. Realizing the ignorance of his readers’ knowledge of the Bible, Krishna Pillai details the creation story in
“Cirustippu Patalam” (The section on creation), fall of Adam and Eve in “Rāja Turōka Patalam” (The section on treason), Old and New testament tenets in “Pārva Pātaip Patalam” (The section on the path of old) and “Cuvicesha Mārkap Patalam” (The section on the path of salvation). Maybe because Bunyan perceives Christian as a man born and brought up in the basics and fundamentals of the Christian faith, one does not find frequent references to familiar biblical stories in The Pilgrim’s Progress. Krishna Pillai, quite unlike Bunyan, had a different non-Christian audience in mind, and so one finds in his work all possible references to the Christian basics and fundamentals such as the creation story, the Decalogue, The Trinity, Sacraments, Beatitudes, Christ’s Parables, Lives of Prophets and so on in Iratcaniya Navaṅga Patalam (The section on the newness of salvation). Krishna Pillai extends a call to the people of the world to worship Christ and come to the path of salvation. What is really important is that Krishna Pillai devotes one entire section entitled “Iratcaniya Carita Patalam” (The story of salvation) containing four hundred and ninety-eight verses exclusively for presenting the entire events of the passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ which constitute the seminal rock of the Christian faith... It is noteworthy that this entire episode of the death and resurrection of Christ does not absolutely find any expression in Bunyan’s work. Besides, one can also find interspersed through the poem, homilies that drive home the cardinal virtues cherished by the church. But the singularly unique feature of Iratcaniya Yāṭṭirikam is the tevārams which adorn the work of art like a diamond in a crown.

Bunyan, while explaining the subject and purpose of The Pilgrim’s Progress in his prefatory verses says:

The book chalketh out before thine eyes
The man that seeks the everlasting prize:
It shows you whence he comes, whither he goes
What he leaves undone; also what he does:
It also shows you how he runs and runs
Till he unto the gate of glory comes. (7)

John Bunyan, a puritan nonconformist imprisoned in Bedford jail, wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the most admirable allegory in English Literature, which displays, as Myers puts it:

The habit of the puritan, from constant study of the Bible, to employ in all forms of discourse its language and imagery, is best illustrated in the pages of this remarkable work. Its fervent spirit and language have both been caught from a long and devout study of the Holy Word. Here, as nowhere else, we learn what realities to the puritan were the scriptural representations of sin, repentance, and atonement of heaven and hell. (254-255).

But it is remarkable to note that “In all his works,” as Dennis Hudson aptly comments, “Krishna Pillai held to an evangelical emphasis in Christian theology” (61). Perhaps this is a seminal contribution of Krishna Pillai in *brahmiya Vairāya* which theologically and structurally distinguishes Bunyan’s work from that of Krishna Pillai’s. Bunyan’s book builds up the biblical path of salvation through the magnificent matrix of an allegory. The learned poet Krishna Pillai too prefers this form of art although he, unlike his English counterpart, clothes it with poetry.

Allegory is a Greek word which is etymologically defined as speaking “in other terms.” It is “a form of art which sustains simultaneously both literal and abstract levels of meaning” (WI, 20). It is seen to be a story with a level of meaning concealed behind its apparent literal or superficial meaning. Allegorical methods have been used in Europe since the eleventh
century. It was used to express the sentiment of love which the powerful poetry of Troubadour did. The tradition is carried on through the middle ages. Chretien de Troyes found allegory helpful in the psychological passages of Lancelot to explore the human heart. Moods and emotions find their full expression in “shadowy persons”. In other words allegory is the carrier of the latent subjective elements of the subtle human mind. “Allegory”, thus to C. S. Lewis, “besides being many other things, is the subjectivism of an objective age” (30).

Greek thinkers developed this form as against literal interpretations. Until medieval times allegorical interpretation of the Bible flourished. Allegory lends itself to a hidden, symbolic or mystical meaning beyond the primary meaning that the words convey in the literal sense. Song of Solomon in the Bible is treated as an allegory to symbolize the love between God and Israel or between Christ and the Church. There are the allegories of the choice of a king (Judg. 9:8-15), the old age (Eccl. 12:2-7) etc. in the Old Testament. Allegory allows an interpreter great latitude for subjective speculation.

Materialization of the immaterial in figures that are fictitious seems to be the modus operandi of allegory. While drawing a clear line between allegory and symbolism or sacramentalism C. S. Lewis adds, “The allegorist leaves the given -- his own passions -- to talk of that which is confessedly less real, which is a fiction. The symbolist leaves the given to find that which is more real” (45). Personification is the pivot of allegory. Abstract qualities are given concrete human form. And C. S. Lewis offers an illuminating elucidation as to how allegory as an artistic form ought to be employed:

If you are hesitating between an angry retort and a soft answer, you can express your state of mind by inventing a person called Ira with a torch and letting her
contend with another invented person called Patience. This is allegory, and it is with this alone that we have to deal. (45)

In William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* Lad Mead and her companions personify both virtues and vices. Written as early as 1230 A.D., it is one of the earliest allegorical works. Bunyan defends his use of allegory with lines such as, "rays of light turns our darkest night to days," "the dark and cloudy words," "dark figures and allegories" "do but hold the truth" (*PP* 5), the divine truth as Bunyan himself confesses in his preface:

> All things solid in show not solid be,
> All things in parables despise not we,
> Lest things most hurtful lightly we receive,
> And things that good are, of our souls bereave,
> My dark and cloudy words, they do but hold
> The truth, as cabinets enclose the gold. (5)

Critics have taken pains to affirm that Bunyan was very much indebted to Langland for his idea of Dream, Pilgrim, Personification etc. (Brown 823-825).

A very famous poem in this mode is the French *Romance of the Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris, in which the characters are personifications of moral and emotional abstractions such as Fear, Shame, Chastity and Pity. Dante's famous *Divine Comedy* also offers literal as well as multiple allegorical meanings. Fables, parables and exemplia are variations of allegory, which have been employed by writers in English from Chaucer down to the present day in different literary genres. Material facts are presented naturally in metaphors. For instance, pleasures are enemies, appetites, thieves and "Life is a journey wherein we shall often be
weary, at one place we shall lose a fellow traveller, at another be afraid. One is reminded of *The Pilgrim's Progress, and there is nothing whimsical about the association*” (Lewis 93)

Citing further illustrations of metaphors Lewis continues:

The journey has its ups and downs, its pleasant resting-places enjoyed for a night and then abandoned, its unexpected meetings, its rumours of dangers ahead, and above all, the sense of its goal, at first far distant and dimly heard of, but growing nearer at every turn of the road (69).

But it is in the exemplary handling of allegory as an art form that Bunyan excels in.

The grandeur of Bunyan’s use of allegory is made explicit when a comparison is made between *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and the fourteenth century allegorical poem, *Pelerinage*, written by De Guile Ville. The homiletic passages in the poem which account for the monstrous delay before the protagonist is allowed to set out when contrasted with the opening lines of Bunyan in which he pictures the pilgrim starting his journey emphasizes the greatness of Bunyan’s skill as an effective writer. Lewis adds, “Bunyan opens with a picture which prints itself upon the eye like a flash of lightning; and in a few pages he has his pilgrim started upon a journey as enchanting as any in romance” (268). While tracing the source for Bunyan’s use of allegory, and that of Spenser’s, Lewis argues that “they have a common source--the old-fashioned sermon in the village church still continuing the allegorical tradition of the medieval pulpit” (311). The greatness of Bunyan’s talent in handling allegory with a Miltonic expertise in handling the epic is attributed to his inborn ability. While talking about the talent of Bunyan, Emily Legouis observes, “A natural talent, enabled him to impose on his thousand observations the unity of an allegory with a lucidity and lifelikeness which learned authors like Spenser had been far from attaining” (172).
The perennial strangeness, the adventurousness, the sinuous forward movement par excellence make *The Pilgrim's Progress* an allegory of the highest order. Even while defending his style Bunyan envisions allegorical meaning stating, “Dark clouds bring Waters, when the bright bring none” (*PP* 3). He moves on to employ the fisherman-poet image in expounding and justifying the use of metaphors and allegories in:

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Behold how he engageth all his wits,
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks and nets,
Yet fish there be, that neither hook nor line,
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine:
They must be groped for, and be tickled too,
Or they will not be catched, whate'er you do. (*PP* 3)
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Bunyan goes on to ask:

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But must I needs want solidness because
By metaphors I speak? Were not God's laws
His Gospel laws, in olden time held forth
By types, shadows and metaphors? (*PP* 4)
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Tamil literature too is not without allegorical works. Scriptural writings of most religions are embedded in one form of allegory or the other. Sanskrit literature, which permeated the length and breadth of India, has been replete with allegorical works since the Vedic period. Thiruvenkadanathar, a seventeenth century poet, has written an allegoric epic based on the Sanskrit drama called *Prapāta Candraśayam* (Gnanasikhamani 103-104)

Krishna Pillai, who wanted to compose a grand epic to rival Kampan’s *Rāmāyaṇa* found *viruttam* (a poetic mode) to be the fitting form to enshrine Bunyan’s allegory. His
Irakanyya Yāṭirikam allegorizes the doctrine of Christian salvation almost on the same wavelength of John Bunyan’s work with, of course, a special emphasis on “evangelizing Christian theology” which finds only rare expression in The Pilgrim’s Progress.

Krishna Pillai endeavours to explain the elusive spiritual struggle in the soul’s journey to eternal bliss. He adapted Bunyan’s work and transcreated a moral and spiritual tale having a literal meaning with an extended metaphorical message. This erudite poet makes allegory an effective medium for his epic. Of its epic stature Katampavana Suntaranar affirms, “Irakanyya Yāṭirikam is really an epic or kaviyam in accordance with the rules governing Tamil epic. It stands in comparison with Kampan’s immortal work”. He adds, “The advantage is in favour of the Yāṭirikam” (viii). And Dhayanandan Francis states that

Krishna Pillai has created his epic following the epic poets Kampan and Chekizhar to a large extent. It is possible to see them picturing natural scenery in their verses. A godly fragrance emanates from their poems, when Kambar describes the river Sarayu and Chekizhar the Ponni” (43).

Allegory in Tamil, is called Muttaruvakam. Tamil lexicon defines it as a “complete metaphor; a metaphor in which there is similarity in all respects between the objects of comparison” (VI: 3295). Tantyalamkāram, a Tamil grammatical treatise on figures of speech explains it as “a complete metaphor of the parts of a work and the whole work in comparison with its context and other intended meanings” (a-68). The whole work is one metaphor, or

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1 An epic in Tamil is a poem which contains praise, prayer to the deity, proclamation of the purpose of the work, the four objectives namely agam (morality) porul (wealth), impam (pleasure) and vidu (heaven), an incomparable hero, the descriptions of mountains, sea, land, town, season and the rising of the sun (Thankarasnaran 66).
various metaphors connected together to its meaning. It is the implied inner meaning that gains prominence rather than the apparent meaning.

Douwe Fokkema in his *Issues in General and comparative Literature* writes, "Comparative literature focuses on the historicity of the literary text, that is to say, the specific circumstances under which it is produced and received (64). Hence a survey of the milieu, manner and materials they produced would be profitable to probe into the thematic and structural coherences and divergences of the greatest works of these great men of two great literatures of the world.

John Bunyan was imprisoned twice for unlicenced preaching (in Nov. 1660 and in June 1677). Bunyan did not spend his time of confinement in prison in a supine and careless manner but made long tagged laces for the maintenance of his family and for his own. Besides, Bunyan occupied the position of a spiritual counsellor to some who called on him for guidance. Bedford gaol made Bunyan its preacher too. He prayed and preached with faith and assurance of divine assistance. Considerable congregation of the inmates came together on the first floor of the gaol which was used as a chapel where the heart-stirring sermons echoed. Some of these sermons grew into books that had the fortune to find their way to Francis Smith, the publisher near Temple Bar. According to John Brown, Bunyan’s biographer, “His first venture of a literary sort after his arrest was into the region of poetry in a work entitled *Profitable Meditations*” ([1661]171). It is in the form of poetical dialogue between Satan and the tempted soul which resembles the parley between Christian and Apollyon in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (172).

The next book that issued forth from the prison is *Praying in the Spirit* (1662). It is a treatise on prayer by a man who enjoyed a living communion with the living God. It is not lip-
labour, but a burdened soul’s groans and thanksgivings that carries with it a sense of sin and unworthiness. It also reads as a prison manifesto of his reasons against using the *Book of Common Prayer*. Bunyan’s third prison-book was entitled *Christian Behaviour* (1663) Christians are called to be fire with warmth, flowers with fragrance and trees with fruit. It is a didactic utterance on the duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants with Bunyanesque touches. Brevity as against talk and tattle and humility as against pride and pomp are advocated. Bunyan seems to have conceived the idea of the gardener setting the flowers where they stand and quarrel not, as found in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, twenty years earlier in this little book:

> When Christians stand everyone in their places and do the work of their relations, then they are like the flowers in the garden that stand and grow where the gardener hath planted them, and then they shall both honour the garden in which they are planted and the grandeur that hath so disposed of them. From hyssop on the wall to the cedar of Lebanon their fruit is their glory. (qtd. in Brown 175).

Some of the passages read like St. Paul’s prison epistles wherein Bunyan’s words seem to convey his apprehension that the prison-cell may one day open upon the scaffold. Bunyan writes, “Thus have I, in few words, written to you before I die, a word to provoke you to faith and holiness, because I desire that you may have the life that is laid up for all them that believe in the Lord Jesus, and love one another, when I am deceased” (qtd. in Brown 175).

The pathos and, at the same time, the hope of eternal rest and glory pronounced in the book challenge the reader. But Bunyan’s pen found no rest as more books like sparks from coal did multiply between 1663 and 1665. *Serious Meditations on the Four Last Things* (1663)
and *Ebal and Garzin* (1664), two poetic works which call for no special remark, the *Holy City* (1665), *The Resurrection of the Dead* (1665), and *Prison Meditations* (1665) appeared in quick succession.

*Holy City,* along with *The Resurrection of the Dead* and *Prison Meditations,* a poetic piece, appeared in the fifth year of his imprisonment. This sermon-turned book “is an exposition of the vision of the New Jerusalem given in the concluding Chapters of the Book of Revelation” (176). Clothed in Biblical language, his spiritual insight and commonsense has made him visualize New Jerusalem to be nothing other than the Church, the Bride of the Lamb and the City of Life, two complementary symbols. The description of the City of God, its King and its subjects throws light into the beauty and grandeur of God’s Kingdom. It is probable that Bunyan set out to write the story of his life, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* after sending this poetical epistle to his friend.

*Grace Abounding* (1666) is a transcript of the writer’s soul penned from the valley of the shadow of death with the assurance of God’s help while sticking between the teeth of the lions in the wilderness. In 1660 Bunyan was arrested for his publication of *The Lord’s Loud Call to England.* He was pronounced a fanatic and his house searched for arms ten times even when he was ill. Bunyan’s *Confession of Faith* and *A Defence of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith* appeared in 1672, shortly before his release from his second imprisonment. *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* appeared in 1680. *Holy War* (1682) is an allegory depicting the struggle between good and evil -- the battle for the conquest of man’s soul. The ever-flowing pen of Bunyan has produced “more than 60 published works” (CE 378).
Over the successive centuries of the appearance of *The Pilgrim's Progress* it has enjoyed common suffrage because of the singular felicity of its fact and form along with the earnest purpose of the author that lies beneath the charm of the story. Scarcely has any writer equalled Bunyan in expounding the Protestant doctrine of salvation by grace with such clarity and intensity. It is no wonder that, as Taine puts it, "After the Bible, the book most widely read in England is the 'Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan" (Brown 292). This book has been able to touch the hearts of the readers and move them to tears. In John Gay's (1715) *The What-d'ye-call-it* a condemned man cries out:

I will! I will!

Lend me thy hand kercher (sic). The Pilgrims Pro--r [reads and weeps]

(I cannot see for tears) Pro-progress: Oh!

............................................................................................................................

Oh! It is so moving, I can read no more. [drops the book]. (Sharrock 49)

Macaulay (1800-1859) indeed endorses it when he says, "*The Pilgrim's Progress* is the only book of its kind that possesses a strong human interest, that while other allegories only amuse the fancy, this has been read by thousands with tears" (qtd. in John Brown 299). While David Hume (1757) would not bear to talk of Bunyan on a par with Addison. Dr. Johnson (1773) praises him highly. He points to the extensive sale of the book saying that it has "great merit, both for inventions, imagination, and conduct of the story; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind" (Boswell 520). It is praised as a work of original and uncommon genius illustrating the Calvinistic doctrines.

*The Pilgrim's Progress* has enjoyed equal patronage during the nineteenth century too. George Crabbe (1826) writes of a little child of six caught reading "incessantly and
"insatiably" at five o'clock in the morning. S.T. Coleridge (1830), after acknowledging its "lowest style of English, without, slang or false grammar, recommends it as one that teaches and enforces the whole saving truth according to the mind of Christ" (Sharrock 53). Robert Southey (1830) praises Bunyan's "intellectual and imaginative" powers. Sir Walter Scott (1830) opines that Bunyan faithfully adapted the pilgrimage of Christian to the Calvinistic tenets that he meticulously followed but for the question of the institution of a regular and ordained clergy (59). Thomas Arnold (1836) has been able to see it as "a complete reflection of Scripture, with none of the rubbish of the theologians mixed up with it" (54). John Ruskin (1886) tells how strict mothers and aunts used to teach The Pilgrim's Progress to children. One finds that the book was also considered a Children's classic during the nineteenth century. The Victorian way of life could accept it as a work of art that can perform a didactic function. It has been used to illustrate and illumine biblical truths for children.

Macaulay records its popularity among the Scottish peasantry and in every nursery (67). He argues, pointing to the inconsistencies, that it is not a "perfect allegory" (69). But he appreciates Bunyan's style of language and strength of theology. He goes on to praise and place him with Milton saying that,

"Though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of those minds produced the Paradise Lost, the other the Pilgrim's Progress" (77).

In J.W. Hales' (1893) opinion Bunyan is "the chief wonder" of the English literature. Being the man of one book, the Bible, he has disproved the proverb that tells us to beware of the man of one book. Sir. Charles Firth (1898) offers the success of his allegory to the
familiarity of the subject, pilgrimage being a common idea. According to him, “Bunyan was not merely the first of English allegorists, he is one of the founders of the English novel and the forerunner of Defoe”. He calls it “the prose epic of English Puritanism” (Sharrock 102).

Twentieth century, though a century that is called the age of reason, is not without admirers and critics of John Bunyan. Robert Bridges, the poet, sees the work as a record of Bunyan’s experiences, with prodigious “artistic awkwardness.” Yet the story is far from his life, for Bunyan married twice in life, while the hero leaves his hearth and home (108). Bridges brands Bunyan a sectarian preacher who “talks about religion without practicing it,” proving a saint abroad and a sinner at home (108). Perhaps the greatest praise was heaped on Bunyan by none other than Shaw himself when he compares Bunyan’s characters with Shakespeare’s characters. George Bernard Shaw (1907) is all praise for Bunyan’s characters, “Bunyan’s coward stirs your blood more than Shakespear’s hero” (117). T.R. Glover (1915) asserts that “it is one of those permanent books which survive their own theories” (126).

Critics seem to find something new in Bunyan’s work. Nineteenth century writers could find in him an initiator of a new genre and place him on a par with Milton. But there are critics who seem to place Bunyan’s greatness outside the orbit of England too. Arthur Stanly (1947) in his book *The Bedside Bunyan*, agrees to the fact that Bunyan “shared in the knowledge handled down by tradition, the medieval miracle plays and moralities,” apart from the familiarity of the idea of human life as a pilgrimage (19). “But,” he adds, “to find the prototypes of some of Christian’s tests we should go back to the Hindu myths and the initiation rites of ancient Greece” (19). He argues against the opinion that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* owes something to Spenser’s *Faerie Queen* and asserts its originality. He agrees with Macaulay that “the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest” (19). It is a remarkable fact of
literary history that this seventeenth century work of art is received in every century that followed with the same kind of approbation and applause.

Maurice Hussey (1949) gives *The Pilgrim's Progress* greater credit because of its "appreciation for moral theology," than its preference to "sophistication in artistic matters, perfecting it in the character of Ignorance who blithely whistled along the green lane of carnal confidence. Arnold Kettle (1951) appreciates "Bunyan's power to transform the myth ... into something positive" and his "profound and disciplined participation not only in the folk-mythology of his day, which he made new... (Sharrock 142). He contrasts *The Pilgrim's Progress* with *Gulliver's Travels*, though they are of the same genre, with Swift’s worldly and bitter satire. R M Frye (1960) finds it different from the work of Milton, “Milton carries us from the heavenly city to the earthly situation, and Bunyan reverses the course, taking us from this world to that which is to come” (144). Henri A Talon finds everyman in Christian, the truly religious man who courageously recognises his weakness (159).

Roy Pascal (1965) recognises the use of the power of present tense in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and praises Bunyan for being “so sure and consistent in his grammatical usages.” Roger Sharrock (1966) points out Bunyan’s shift in attitude towards women in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* where Christiana, the conventional seventeenth-century woman, is allowed to be a pilgrim. The chivalrous path of Christian is now free from the terrors and troubles that Christian had to encounter all by himself. Sharrock opines that the dream in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a frame by which Bunyan “was able to crack the sectarian pattern and free the biblical truths to describe the way of the people of God in living terms” (194).

1 Wife of Christian, the hero of *The Pilgrim's Progress*
Discussing “The Vision of John Bunyan” (1969), C.S. Lewis observes that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is read with delight by people either unmindful or ignorant of its didactic intent. He pities those critics who look for the real in the allegory failing to recognize it just as a “vehicle”. F.R. Leavis in “Bunyan’s Resoluteness” (1969) records Bunyan’s “Theological intention” recognising in the Puritan allegorist the artist and his creative power. He finds the tinker-dreamer deal with not the kind of Calvinism one finds in *The Scarlet Letter* or in Dickens’ Mrs. Clennam, but one of a profoundly positive accomplishments where sloughs and abysses are but inevitable hazards and menaces which the pilgrims have to pass through. He explains that “Puritan” must not be taken to suggest a stern or morose austerity, or, in the preoccupation with Grace, any indifference to the graces of life” (219).

John R. Knott, Jr. (1973) argues against Stanley E. Fish (1972) that “the basic figure of the journey which underlies the narrative” is not compromised and trivialised in the specialization of the “way” (221). The metaphor of the journey is extended to perfection in order to drive home the truth that world is “an alien, and unsubstantial country through which God’s people must journey until they attain the ultimate satisfaction of communion with God” (240).

Talking about the “multiple experience of making a journey” Philip Edwards (1980) points out that “Initially, in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* the journey is simply an escape” from the impending doom of the City of Destruction (Newey 112). To him it is “Adventure, keeping to the path, movement forward” (115). He rightly concludes that “Christian path-keeping (at least as Bunyan sees it) means not only keeping to the path but keeping the whole path” (116).

In his article “John Bunyan -- Puritan Preacher” Warren Wiersbe (1985) recommends its reading, calling it a classic, saying, “Mark Twain defined a classic as a book everybody
talked about, but nobody read. Pilgrim’s Progress is a classic, and it ought to be read” (30). Over the years the popularity and the merit of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* have grown steadily. It is read universally and has been translated into more than one hundred and twenty languages (Francis 37). While there are apologetic passages, the book reflects the author’s evangelistic fervour.

Nineteenth century was a period of renaissance in Tamil literature. Many a Tamil savant composed poems of praise unto his gods. Such works of art stood the test of time. Ever since his conversion from 1857 until his demise in 1900, Krishna Pillai’s pen had found no rest and produced a prolific Protestant Tamil poet. Of his writings, Walker says, "at the cost of time and pains," Krishna Pillai, "laboured to produce something which shall be worthy from a literary point of view" (qtd. in Samuel xxv).

The most prominent and productive Tamil poets of the nineteenth century were Vethanayaga Sasthiriyar (1773-1864), who hailed from Thanjavur and Henry Alfred Krishna Pillai a native of Palayamkottai. While the former was born into a family that moved from the Catholic to the protestant faith, the latter took birth in a family of Thenkalai Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism and converted to the Protestant faith. Unlike Bunyan, Krishna Pillai got initiated ritualistically into his religious sect and retained his devotion to Vishnu until his transformation into a Protestant Christian. Thereafter the literary treasures he had gathered as a budding scholar from classical Tamil and Sanskrit masters Krishna Pillai very powerfully exploited to interpret and explicate his new-found faith.

His literary endeavours energized by his religious fervour after his conversion cover a period of forty-three years (1857-1900). His first Christian religious experience finds its literary expression in a beautiful verse:
O Sea of Compassion!
O Sun that dispels the darkness of Sin!
O God who for thy servant's sake did thy life forsake!
To you, who found it time to enslave
This wicked wretch unacquainted with the Truth,
Surrender I my heart,
O embodiment of Dharma! (qtd. in Ira. Yā xv)

The Hindu scholar in the Christian poet here projects himself through the use of native imagery and phraseology. It is noticed that even when the content of creed has had a metamorphosis, cultural residues are retained in terms of style and structure. The Christian concept of God losing himself through His Son to find the lost sinner sunk in ignorance of the Law is markedly pronounced.

Krishna Pillai carried on his traditionally rich Tamil literary career to create Irañçya Caritam ([The history of slavation] 1860). It came out in a serialised form through Narpotakam, a monthly publication. Introducing the series the poet explained his preference for the use of the poetic form to propagate the Good News to his people in the Vaishnavite and Saivite folds as they loved poetry rather than prose. The idea behind the composition of Irañçya Caritam was to create a parallel poetic text encompassing in its three sections the seminal creeds of the Old and the New Testaments which could correspond to the three progressive stages in the Vedic and Puranic texts of the Hindus. The authorial intent seems to have been an attempt to capture not only the imagination of the lovers of poetry in his community but to make them empathize through the power of poetry with the disciple of Christ in him. What baffles one is his renunciation of his attempt to captivate his fellow scholars through his
parallel faith in this book. But he may have given up this idea when he contemplated the creation in Tamil of Bunyan's *Pilgrim’s Progress* with the title *Irakcariya Yattirikam* just as Milton abandoned his attempt to write his Arthurial poems in favour of the fall of man imitating the poetic traditions of Virgil.

When he moved from Murugankurichi to Sawyerpuram and got back into his former position as a Tamil pandit in the Seminary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), with a view to shepherding juvenile Hindu scholars through a selection of their own sacred lores, Krishna Pillai edited *Kaviya Taruma Cankiramam* ([A compilation] 1893). This prolix poem contains verses from various Tamil works of art of nearly two thousand and five hundred verses. This work displays his profound knowledge of the Scriptural texts of the Hindus (*Gnanasikhamani* v). He wanted to guide his own children as well through a prayerful poem with the title *Paliya Pirarthanai* (Child’s prayer), which now forms a part of *Irakcariya Mantharam*. In 1872 he authored a book of one hundred verses called *Irakcariya Navamitham* (The newness of salvation).

After an interval of nearly a decade he got back to Palayamkottai to be on the staff of the newly opened college run by the Christian Mission Service, now known as St. John’s College. The twelve years of his subsequent life here witnessed the death of his son, the temporary estrangement of his wife and his row with his brother, Muthaiya Pillai. To console himself in this phase of sorrow he composed several devotional songs like *Irakshariyamithi* (The minuteness of salvation [1893]). Some of the hymns written during this period were given the traditional trappings of Saivite devotional devotional verses. These twelve pieces were later used as songs of praise uttered by the hero of his magnum opus *Irakcariya Yattirikam*. This book was called a “Moral Poem” (*Gnanasikhamani* 1978.311).
The framework of the poem has in it the mythic dimension of the Hindus in general and the traditions of the Tamil in particular. It is mainly into the theme of the poem that the poet evolves the Christian creed that John Bunyan has woven into an allegory and attracted the attention of artists both in the West and the East. While the content comes from the West, the form with all its structural ramifications derives its strength from the indigenous culture. One can find in it religious words of the Saivism and Vaishnavism, their thoughts, philosophies, hereditary observances, cultural elements, poetic structures and the like.

Ever since the serialising of Irâtkâraya Yâttirikam in Narparâkam critics have heaped laurels of appreciation on the one hand and complaints of the unintelligibility of the verses on the other. In his introductory notes to his first edition of Irâtkâraya Yâttirikam Krishna Pillai defends his work saying that the unintelligibility of the Tamil verses is "not the fault of Tamil" (xxxv). As a true teacher he chides his critics for their lack of seriousness in learning Tamil dismissing it as easy or useless. But he also mentions the appreciation of more than four hundred learned men, including pastors, pundits and other learned men, as early as November 1891.

Rev. T. Walker (1894) in his preface to the first edition explains the authorial intention of writing such a profound poem and acknowledges that he has "derived much pleasure and benefit therefrom" (xxvii). Kadambavana Sundaranar (1924), who has authored the life story of H. A. Krishna Pillai, eulogizes his epic saying:

Irâtkâraya Yâttirikam, which is acclaimed as an epic, is an incomparable book among the Tamil Christians. As its prosody, poetics, figures of speech, ornamentation and exposition are similar to Kamparakãrayaam and the pleasure and profit equal Kampan's verses many have praised him as Krishivakkammar (37).
Sir. David Devadoss (1946), the nephew of Krishna Pillai endorses the merit of *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* and vouches that the poet’s conversion was due to his conviction, and not out of coersion or compulsion (78). R.P. Sethu Pillai (1947) explains how Christ is portrayed in *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* (62). Cu. A. Ramasamippulavar (1955) states that *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* made the contemporary Christians happy (135).

D G. Thankarasanar (1958) in his *Kivistavak Kampan Kiruṣṭa Pillai* (Christian Kampan Krishna Pillai) informs his readers that one of the greatest men of his times K. T. Paul took a copy of *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* along with him to London when he went to attend the round table conference in 1930. He adds that “Christian and non-Christian savants studied and praised it” (68). But he hastily concludes, “Christ is the protagonist of *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* (68). Mylai Seeni Venkatasami is all praise for Krishna Pillai’s versification (216).

The renowned Tamil critic A. Sinivasarahavan (1770) points out the poetic excellence of Krishna Pillai’s Tamil when he praises “Iraṭcāṇiya Carita Patalam” as the best part of *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* (42). Vidhvan V. Thankiyah in his foreword to *Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam* (1958) compares it with ancient Tamil epics and hold the view that “Iraṭcāṇiya Yāṭṭirikam and Tēmpāvārai are the two Tamil epics on a par with Čeṭakacintāmaṇi, Periyapurāṇam and Kampaṭţamṭṭaram.”

Ponnu A. Sathia Satchi (1977) praises it as “Krishna Pillai’s unique work of art” and identifies it as an “allegory” and considers it as “a ship of metaphors” (ix). According to him, “The protagonist” of Krishna Pillai’s epic “is the metaphoric personification of the poet’s spiritual experiences” (5).

C.V. Savarimuthu (1981) considers *Iraçcariya Caritam*, which later became a section in *Iraçcariya Yăttirikam*, as "an historical event," "It is neither a purana, nor a fiction; it is a narrative of an historical event" (ii). This adds to the greatness of the epic. Quoting S. Ramakrishnan and Horace he compares Krishna Pillai with Homer in his use of "retrospective narration" in the epic just as Homer does in Odyssey (13-14).

P.S. Yesudasam (1981) brings out the artistic competence of the poet in expounding the biblical tenets of Christianity in his epic. "*Iraçcariya Yăttirikam* has brought out the difficult and intricate doctrine of Trinity and other theological truths in a simplified manner" (94). Critics like C.V. Subramanian (1984) place Krishna Pillai among the poets of Tamil Bhakti Literature. Subramaniam praises *Iraçcariya Yăttirikam* for its allegorical treatment.

Nirmala Thankaraj (1985) has brought out the salient features of *Iraçcariya Yăttirikam* both from the thematological and structural perspectives. Enose (1992) affirms the fact that *Iraçcariya Yăttirikam* is "an adapted epic" and brings out the greatness of Krishna Pillai’s *I săvărams* (414). To John Samuel (1998) the achievement of Krishna Pillai's epic lies in its poetry, "The chief merit of Kirusna Pillai’s work is its poetry characterized by simple but excellent diction" (xi). Y. Packiamoni (1999), a scholar in Tamil Christian Literature, also compares Krishna Pillai with Kampan, "Kampar’s epic is a portrait of love, a great work of art that
abounds in the taste of delight. But *Iraṭcanāya Yaṭṭirikam* is a divine epic without the passion of carnal love (n. pag.). Packiamony (1999) regards him as “one of the Christian bhakti poets of Tamil Nadu like Veeramamuniver, Vetanayaka Sasthiriyar, and Mayuram Vethanayakam Pillai” (249).

Comparative literary studies presuppose a comparative focus on two writers in terms of reception, influence or parallel study. Under the normal conditions it is difficult to establish the influence of one writer on the other because no writer would own it up. When Remak talks about World Literature, he acknowledges the difficulties. But he emphasises the need for transferring the great literatures of one language into another, especially the more influential ones. That is how great English classics have been brought into Tamil.

Instead of being mere translators the creative writers have tended to adapt and in the process re-create the original work of art. In adaptations the central focus and the unifying theme are maintained whereas other aspects like diction, prosody and often anecdotes are changed in keeping with the target language. Very often such adaptations, thanks to the creative genius of the writers who adapt, become works of art in their own right. Even when the writer acknowledges the source the reader is able to enjoy the work in TL as an autonomous work of art. In such cases adaptations become re-creations. Krishna Pillai’s *Iraṭcanāya Yaṭṭirikam* is one such work of art.

A close study of the process of the spiritual transformation of Bunyan and Krishna Pillai would help one understand how it has resulted in the transcreation of their spiritual realizations into *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Iraṭcanāya Yaṭṭirikam*.