

TRANSLATING A KATHAKALI CLASSIC

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The problems of translation are many and varied. One set of difficulties centre round the structural differences between the two languages involved. For instance, if the translation is from *Manipravalam* or *Sanskrit*, which are highly inflected languages, into modern English which has managed to do without inflections as far as possible, the problem becomes involved and ticklish. Time was when English was taught in our schools using the translation method. It proved ineffective chiefly because of the basic structural differences between the two languages. The language sense developed in one turned into a hindrance while learning the other. While one depends on the order of words to express the meaning the other can ignore word order as each word has a grammatical label attached to it. This freedom to use words in any order helps the poet to produce rhythmic effects that baffle the English translator.

Another major problem is the use in Sanskrit or Manipravalam of *Samasthapada* which compresses an abundance of detail and complexity of thought into a long compound word. They are like strings of adjectives and adjective phrases in English with the final member as the base of the modifiers which precede it. The whole compound itself falls into place as an appropriate part of speech in the sentence. No word for word translation can ever do justice to the tightly-knit structure or the sonority of the rolling compound. To add to the complication, these nominal compounds could give rise to ambiguity; while the relations of some members are clear, others could be interpreted in different ways. For instance the 'Veeraseenasutha-sāradhi' (In Nalacharitam, Part IV, scene 2, Bhaimi and Maids) could be interpreted grammatically either as, 'Veeraseena's son as charioteer' or as 'Veeraseena's son's charioteer' (the context here, however, makes it clear that the latter interpretation is the correct one).

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of Sanskrit or Manipravalam to incorporate into a translation is the wide reliance on *dhvani* or suggestive overtones which words and images carry, where these suggestive overtones

and images have a universal appeal these would echo in the translation also. But more often than not, these images or metaphors evoke specific and natural responses only in an Indian audience and are therefore, almost impossible to reproduce in an English translation. One obvious remedy is to add foot-notes but this exercise can easily slip into a sort of mini-commentary disfiguring the book and even provoking the protest of the publisher: Here is an actual experience of mine when my translation of *Nalacharitham* was in the press. An American friend of mine, a Ph. D., and Oriental Scholar happened to visit me. He read the script of the first day's play and when he came to that part of the story where the swan, intending to shake her love for Nala to fix it the more firmly, poses the possibility of Damayanti bestowing her favours on another, he could not grasp the relevance of Bhaimi's reply about the river and the mountain. There was a brief foot-note, viz., 'How chaste and suggestive the simile!', which was wasted on him because he did not have the cultural background of an Indian reader. So I supplemented the above foot-note with the following (see page 84 of my book): 'That rivers are the daughters of mountains and they join their husband, the ocean, is a poetic concept well-known in *Puranic* and religious literature. The implication is that her father would wholeheartedly second her choice.' This knowledge that I had taken too much for granted dealing with a foreign audience was a mild shock to me. I used that opportunity to test his understanding with the whole translation. I had to add a number of foot-notes with the result, the textual portions alone of my book carried as many as 77 foot-notes; but I have tried to make them as brief as possible.

These general theories of the problems of translation can only be of limited help because, as a rule, each translation throws up its own specific difficulties. Here are some of them with reference to my translation of *Nalacharitham*.

In Czechoslovakia, I understand, the editors of the state publishing house of Belles-Letters insist that every translator in a foreword or afterword should explain his approach to the original text. This came to me as a pleasant surprise because it confirms my independent conclusion to the same effect. As a matter of fact I had appended both a foreword and an afterword but the Kerala Sahitya Academy, the Publishers, dropped the foreword, presumably because it was too self-deprecatory. For, they had taken the wise precaution of getting my translation carefully scrutinized by one of the best bilingual scholar in Kerala, who pronounced it 'first class.' (Prof. Mundasseri also read the script and was very favourably impressed). This is the foreword which is not in the book: 'It is with a feeling akin to sacrilege that I attempt this prose rendering of *Nalacharitham* Attakatha by Unnayi Varier. Only a poetic genius can do justice to it. At best this can only be an introduction to the English knowing world to appreciate the

Attakatha in its original language. If it rouses their interest my aim is achieved. More than a mere summary, this would help non-Malayalis to follow the acting into its intricate details. The published 'note on translation' is on pages 221 and 222 of the book. I quote below only page 221 as it is more pertinent to the subject of this article:-

"All masterpieces in literature are difficult to translate because their merits are many-sided and when you attempt to keep faithful to one the others get neglected. I have tried to bring out all the ideas of this unique Attakatha in straight modern prose.

Even thus, I feel there has been some loss because the original composition in Malayalam is full of suggestive words and what Sanskrit literary critics call *dhvani* which is briefly, what could be read between the lines. When as a trial I tried to bring out that also my translation turned into a commentary and I had to give it up. But the ideas at best represent only half the poetic beauty

The other half of the merits of this play are many-sided. Its diction eminently fits the characters and their mood. The *padas* not only serve the deepest purpose of the music and choreographic needs of the actors but also make an appeal which transcends all language barriers. The *slokas* not only give subtle and detailed stage directions which modern stage-directors would envy but help the audience to appreciate the significance of the scenes. Examples could be found in this Attakatha for almost all the literary ornaments listed in prosody and grammar like metaphor, simile, alliteration, yamaka (words of three or more letters having different meanings) and above all, rhymes of which this drama is verily saturated, rhymes at the beginning, middle and end of lines, rhymes everywhere!"

Specific examples would speak more eloquently about the problems of translation than any amount of theorizing.

The book, '*Kathakali Manjari*', No. cl., Government Oriental manuscripts library, Madras, critically edited with introduction and notes by Dr. S.K. Nayar, M.A., Ph. D, contains a preface by Dr. S.K. Nayar from which I quote some portions:- Part one of this treatise deals with the history and development of the art of Kathakali. The second part is reserved for an exclusive study of the literary aspect of Kathakali. A novel feature of this part is that it contains a free rendering in English of some of the select passages from great Kathakali plays."

In this is included Nalacharitham, PI, scene 3—that part dealing with the actual interview of the swan with Damayanti, (see pages 166 to 169 of *Kathakali Manjari*.) I shall give below first, the transliteration of Nalacharitham Attakatha (of the relevant portion) and under it, the version

from Kathakali Manjari, and below it the version from my book, all in separate paragraphs. This would make a comparative study of the two versions in the light of the original, easier.

Sloka-10.

*Eini oratinatannāl Kittumē Kailennun
Pradipadamapi thōnnum māru mannam natannān;
Adha batha! Damayantī ālimārōtū veera-
Mathupozhutharayanna proudhanūchē Sahāsam.*

Sloka.

*At every pacing she felt she can catch him,
Thus he (the swan) slipped on, herself following,
Then alas! as soon as Damayanti
was led far away from her friends
The talented swan taunted her thus:*

Walking slowly creating the impression that with the next step he could be caught, when Damayanti got separated from her maids, the swan spoke thus, impressive yet smiling.

In Dr. Nayar's version the very first word, 'at' is a mistake, the appropriate preposition for 'pacing' being 'with'. He does not seem to know that the word 'pace' can be used either as a noun or a verb. It could be that he deliberately chose 'pacing' for its sound effect for which he has every right—Only, in that case, he would have to own that he implies that Damayanti was measuring (distance) for, that is the meaning the Oxford concise dictionary gives for the word! The use of the auxiliary verb 'can' in the first line is a slip for 'could' if the line should make sense. In the original the poet has given the credit for regulating the pace to the swan. Dr. Nayar assigns it to Damayanti which turns it into an absurdity. The interjection 'batha' in the original which indicates surprise is rendered, alas!, an exclamation of sorrow which has no place or relevance in this context. In the original the poet has used it to indicate surprise that a bird should speak. (I have omitted it in my translation because the usual English exclamations like, 'goodness me! 'won't go appropriately into the context here, where the person experiencing the surprise has not been identified.) The word 'far' in the fourth line of the doctor's translation is misleading and unauthorised in the light of the original text. It seems too much of a liberty to render 'ālimar', as 'friends'. Dr. Nayar has rendered the word 'ūchee' (spoke) in the original as "taunted" which according to the dictionary refers to a remark intended to hurt. This along with the fact that he has omitted to include in his translation the 'Sa hāsam' (with a smile) of the original turns his translation into a misrepresentation or even a parody of some of the finest touches in the

poet's text. The point calls for some explanation. The poet has shaped this scene, (as indeed, all others) with meticulous attention to detail. The swan first wants to impress on Damayanti that he has more than a bird's brain because, as he is a bird in appearance she may look upon him somewhat flippantly. As a counter-move he hits upon a small weakness of hers, obviously carried away by his charming appearance as the opening gambit of conversation. While this would help him to raise the level of conversation to a human level, he has to see to it, that, because it was an unflattering approach, he does not seriously offend her. That is why the poet has included the 'with a smile' in the original as an ingratiating sop to soften the implied criticism in his opening remarks. The poet has given the qualifying word, '*proudha*' to indicate he spoke impressively. The tally of blunders big and small, in this English rendering of a Manipravala sloka with eighty percent Malayalam content, by a head of the department of Malayalam, University of Madras is as many as eight, not counting the questionable phrase 'slipped on' in the second line.

Hamsam-Pallavi:	Anganamārmouli bālē! āsayenthayi thē?
Anupallavi:	yenginē pitikkunnu nē gaganachāriyāmennē?
Hamsa-Song:	Oh my little girl, you, gem of women, what is your wish? How dare you catch me, One flying in the skies?
Swan-Pallavi:	Oh! crown among women, what is the big idea?
Anupallavi:	How can you (a ground-based being) catch me, one who can speed through air?

'Āsa' has many meanings including 'wish' but in this context it means 'intention'. If the succeeding lines were to offer a boon or some such thing, 'wish' would be correct, but they criticize her action. The so-called literal translation can turn ridiculous. Incidentally, this example high lights the crucial difference between a *literal* and a *literary* translation. The nominative of address in the first line intending to convey the idea of 'bālē' in the original, also belongs to this category. The preposition 'of' before 'women', also in the first line is a mistake for 'among'. 'Dare' in the third line invites all my remarks about the use of the word 'taunted' noted above in connexion with the translation of the introductory sloka of this scene. The first line of the Anupallavi is simple Malayalam which a school-boy could translate, and yet Dr. Nayar mistranslates it in utter disregard of the mood of the pada which is conciliatory and not threatening as that of his rendering is.

If the swan were to use this sort of abusive language, the chances are that Unnayi Varier's Damayanti would give him short shrift, leaving the task of rewriting the course of the story to the translator! The last line, as it is, would mean that Bhaimi was attempting to catch the swan while he was actually flying! It seems strange that a Malayalam professor is unable to translate accurately a simple pallavi and anupallavi of this Attakatha.

Hamsam-Charanam 1: Youvvanam vannudichittum
 cheruthāyilla cheruppam,
 Avivēkamithu Kantāl arivullavar
 Parihasikkum, chilar pazhikkum,
 Vazhi pizhakkim thava ninakkimpol.

(Hamasa) Youth has dawned in you
 But your childishness is still in its infancy!
 Your folly if wise men happen to know
 They will laugh at you, some may scold you,
 And truly, you will go astray!

(Swan) Charanam 1: Though you have become a youth, childishness
 has not disappeared. Seeing this lack of
 maturity in you (running after a flying bird)
 wise people would make fun of you, some
 might find fault, and sometimes you may even
 lose your way ('go astray').

The meaning, such as it has, of the second line in Dr. Nayar's translation is not only confusing but contrary to the idea expressed in the original as 'childishness being still in its infancy' is cited as though it is a defect! The dictionary meaning of 'scold' being 'blame with angry words', it is far stronger than the 'pazhikum' of the original and out of tune with the tone of the pada. The same observation applies to the rendering of 'avivēkôm' as 'folly'; 'Kantāl' is not 'happen to know': Dr. Nayar seems an adept in the art of choosing the wrong words for his 'free rendering'.

Hamsam-pallavi. Preethipoondarulukayēē!
 chintitamellām Bheemanrapathi thanayēē!

Anupallavi. Veetha Visarkam Sakhimārilonnennē
 Orachu, lejjabhāram Kurachu nirākulam

Hamsa- Tell me with cheer all your desires
 Oh the daughter of the King Bhima.
 Consider me as one of your comrades,
 Clear off your suspicion;
 Have implicit faith in me;

Do away with your shyness
And tell me with cheer all your desires.

Swan-Pallavi: Princess! speak out all your thoughts at ease.

Anupallavi- Consider me, without hesitation, as one of
your maids and shed your shyness without fear.

In Dr. Nayar's version, 'desires' is a wrong word for 'chinthi-thamellam' (thoughts). The second definite article in the second line is a mistake and has to be dropped. Lines four and five of his translation, presumably, seek to convey the idea in 'nirākulam' which actually means 'without fear.' The whole betrays a patronizing attitude quite inappropriate to the general tenor of the poet's diction which is one of ingratiating pleading. The sixth line contains a piece of impractical, pompous advice ignoring the psychological truth that shyness is nature's gift for women and has to be dealt with most delicately. Translators, including M.A. Ph. D's, who approach Nalacharitham Attakatha in an off-hand way would come to grief.

Hamsam-Charanam 1.

Kātharamizhimār moulimālikā Damasōdari! ninakku bālike!
Ethorupurushanilullil Kouthukam, pārilaraneeyam
thasya jāthakam,
Enamizhi! paravan matikkaruthē,
Nānamkontiniyeethum marakyaruthē
Jñānunṭathinu thuna thava suthanō!
Mānahānithava varuthuvanō
Hasthagatham thava vidhi manēēshitha
Mukthamidam mama satyamidānēem.

(Hamsa) Oh! lovely one, sister of Dama,
whomsoever you love he is really lucky
Oh deer-eyed damsel, be not ashamed
In the least of telling me everything;
I am here to help you.
Would I bring disgrace on you?
Take me by my words,
Your wishes are achieved now.

Charanam 1.
(Swan) Gem among beauties, sister of Dama, that man
on earth for whom you have soft thoughts, is
indeed lucky. Fawn-eyed one, hesitate not to
speak out nor allow your modesty to hide it.
I am here to help you. Would I ever bring
disgrace on you? You can consider your desire

is within reach; these my words, stand for the
simple truth.

The word 'everything' in the fourth line is plainly an exaggeration on the part of the translator. The word 'achieved' in the last line takes the matter far beyond the 'hasthagatham vidhi' of the original (the reader is invited to compare it with the version from the book given alongside). The major defect in this version is using the blatant word 'love' in the second line. This needs some explanation. Preparing my script I straightaway wrote 'enamoured' of for 'ullil kouthukam', but a moment's reflection reminded me that the word 'love' was virtually inside that word. I knew from the manner the poet had shaped the scene that I am dealing with a very very shy and delicate-minded maiden. So I made various alterations and tried alternatives till I hit upon 'whose presence raises your pulse-rate' and preened myself about my cleverness. This satisfaction itself made me suspicious, grown wiser with my experience with this masterpiece. I had a vague feeling my vanity may land me in a pit-fall. I tried to refer the point to Unnayi's soul but all I got was an enigmatic or was it Puckish-smile. Some hard thinking gave me the clue. I was thinking of my readers, forgetting the passage is addressed to Damayanti. Now I tried to assess how she would have reacted (assuming ofcourse she was well versed in English) and found to my surprise that she would not only have disapproved of it but would deem it almost abscene! Thus I reached the version, 'for whom you have soft thoughts' in my book. Gentle reader, you may put me down for an egotist or a crank but I still feel, this way, it is easier to make my point clear than lengthy references to the poet's hints not only in the sloka for this part of the scene (Athyantham batha! Mugdha) but the numerous flattering nominatives of address and the subtle word 'Kouthukam' in the pada itself. And it is here that Dr. S.K. Nayar uses the word 'love', rushing in where angels fear to tread!

Bhaimi-Pallavi.	Arayannamannava! Ninno- tenthiha jhān paravō?
Anupallavi	Kulakanyakamārāl hridi Gōḍhanēyam vasthu parayāmō?
Dama	What shall I tell you, oh the king of Swans? A girl of noble birth should not betray her feelings.
Damayanti-Pallavi	Chief of Swans, what shall I tell you?
Anupallavi	The feeling treasured and hidden in the heart of a chaste maiden—should it be divulged?

Notice the definite article in Dr. Nayar's version in his first line: the definite article seems not his strong point. A comparison with my version would disclose how off the mark the second line of his translation is. Presumably, 'a girl of noble birth', in the opinion of Dr. Nayar would lose her status if she screams discovering a mouse in her bed-chamber!

Bhaimi-Charanam 1. Peerthupeerthu jana keerthyamananala-
 Pānthivōthamasal Kirttukal k teen
 Orthavanutal mōōrthukurthamgajastra meettu
 Neerthutan netuthāyi Veerthu Jnānarthayāyēēn.

Hamsa- Again and again, I have heard
 The great qualities of Nala,
 Often and on praised by one and all.
 Thinking of him I have become
 A sad victim to the sharp arrows
 Aimed at me by the God of love.

Damayanti-Charanam 1. Hearing constant reports about the
 adorable qualities of that best one among
 Kings, Nala, I installed his image in my
 mind with the result that the arrows of the
 God of love reduced me into a sighing shadow.

The appropriate preposition after the word victim (see line 5 of Dr. Nayar's translation) is not 'to' but 'of'. The details of 'neerthu' (reduced) and 'neduthayi veerthu' (sighing) are omitted in his version though he has added other details of his own hoping perhaps to improve the poet's diction!

Hamsam-

Charanam-Ullathu chonnathithennālannyunam nava-
 Pallava thulyāngi thava Kalyānam,
 Nallathu nallathinōtē chērēnam, thava
 Vallabhanaparan thulyan nahi nūnam,
 Mākhavāhananekal balavān
 Mōhanānganavanathi gunavān,
 Kamani! ratuakanakamgalute
 Ghatanayē ghatana ningalute,
 Vishnu Remaiku risaiku Sasānka
 Numaikyu Haran Nalanōrkil ninakkum.

Hamsa: You spoke the truth now,
 and so certainly you can have your wishes fulfilled,
 The worthy is to join the virtuous;
 No one less (else) should be your husband.
 He is mightier than the cloud-vehicled Indra,
 and quite handsome with all the virtues.
 Princess, your union is that of a jewel and gold!
 Lord Vishnu to Rama, the Moon to the Night,
 Lord Siva to Uma and thus Nala to you.

Pada 16, Charanam 2.

Swan : If you have spoken the truth you are indeed blessed. The good should join the good, for certain, none else is fit to be your husband. Stronger than Indra attractive in appearance he has all good qualities. Your alliance is as appropriate as mounting a gem in gold. As Vishnu to Rama, the Moon to the Night, as Uma to Siva, you are to Nala.

In Dr. Nayar's translation the first line is an assertive sentence while its counterpart in the original is a conditional clause. This change not only vitiates the conclusion in the second line but belittles the competency of the swan who has been painted by the poet with meticulous care. The third line seems an attempt to interpret the poet's diction but it has misfired. At least, that would be the view of Shakespeare whose tragedy *Othello* centres round the calamitous failure of the marriage of the *worthy* Othello with the *virtuous* Desdemona. I have said in my note on translation in my book, how the music of the padas transcends language barriers. Even in my prose version this rhythm erupts but the learned doctor has managed to smother it by using 'Lord' in lines 10 and 11 and adding the words 'and thus' the latter word serving as an effective dagger to murder the rhythm. The last two lines have no verb. 'Handsome' is too weak a word to indicate 'mōhanāṅgan'.

Bhaimi Charanam 2.

Nālil mālil varumādhimūlamida
Mālimārotumithanndithapoorvam,
Kālamē chennu nī marūla: paraka nara-
Pālanōtēllam prathipālithāvasaram.

Damayanti: This alone is the cause of worries haunting me
and increasing day by day.
Even to my comrades I have'nt spoken this.
Waiting on the Prince, my dear Swan,
You may inform him as early as you can.

Pada 17, charanam 2—Damayanti! My heart-burn increases day by day and it is a secret I have not shared even with my intimate maids. You report all this to the King without delay but choose an appropriate time.

In S.K. Nayar's version the sentence comprising the first two lines is an example of what grammarians call incomplete predication : what the pronoun, 'This' stands for is not known. The word 'this' in line 3 has no grammatical construction unless the preposition 'about' is added before it. In the fourth line, 'narapalan' has become a 'prince' which may be dismissed as a minor over-sight.

Hamsam-Charanam 3. Chennithu paravannripanōtabhilāsham, yennāl
 Ninnilumuntāmavanum parithōsham,
 Anyanilayi thē Varumō santhōsham? yennāl
 Mannavanuntāmennil bahurōsham;
 Thāthanoru varanu kotukku^m ninnē
 Preethi ninakkumuntamavanil thannē
 Vibhalaminnu parayunnathellām,
 Ithamnarthamuditwaramā, mathi-
 Nutharamōduka satwaramippōl.

Hamsa: I shall inform the Prince your desire;
 I am sure he will be pleased with you.
 Supposing you love some one else?
 Your father may propose somebody to you
 And you will in due course, love him:
 What I tell the King will be then in futile
 And the King will call me good for nothing!
 All these may perchance happen;
 Tell me soon what your assurance will be

Pada 16, charanam 3

Swan—I thall tell the King as you desire. In that case he too would get enamoured of you.

Would you start bestowing your favours on another? In that case the king would fall foul of me. Suppose your father marries you to another; in course of time you would learn to love him. All these words would then turn a laughing stock, into the bargain; such a sequel is on the cards: Answer me on this point at once.

In Dr. Nayar's version the 'your desire' in the first line, cannot stand as the object of the verb 'inform' as it has 'the prince' as its object. English usage would need the preposition 'of' before 'your desire'. In this context preposition before 'you' in line 4, is a mistake for the appropriate preposition 'for'. The idea of that fifth line is a definite understatement of the 'varanu kotukku^m ninnē' (marry) in the original. This is a serious defect because the line, as it is, has the suggestive overtone that Bhaimi as a fickle-minded maiden and she would resent the allegation. The 'in' before 'futile' in line seven is a mistake and has to be dropped. The word 'assurance' in the last line has a hectoring air as against the tactful conciliatory diction used by the poet. Indeed, Dr. Nayar seems insensitive to the nuances of the padas in the Attakatha.

Charanam 3,

Hamsam Hantha; hamsamē: chintayenthu thē?
 Annute hrdayamanyanilāmō?
 Arnavam thannilallo nimnaga chērnnu nyayām,
 Anyadha varuthuvān kunnu muthirnnētumō?

Damaya: Alas: my swan, what you think of me?
 Could my heart be for any one else?
 Great river flows to the Ocean,
 And the mountain won't stand on its way!

Charanam 3, Damayanti—What! Oh swan, why do you think like this? Would my heart ever turn to another? It is but natural for the river to join the sea. Would the mountain attempt otherwise? (The foot-note I have added I have quoted elsewhere in this article).

'Hantha' is a well-known exclamation of surprise and there is a legend in Kerala connecting that work with Uddhanna Sastri often quoted by men of literature; yet Dr. Nayar translates it as 'alas!' as he seems to have only that word in his English vocabulary to represent all exclamations! The correct idiom he wants to use is 'stand in the way' but he has altered it into 'stand *on its way*' ignoring the rules of English usage which do not allow the slightest change in an idiom as it has a meaning *as a whole*. His coined phrase has therefore to be interpreted literally; but because as a matter of geographical fact, there are mountains located not only in the way of their own rivers but others also, his version becomes inappropriate. The poet in the original steers clear of such incongruities by his careful choice of words—the river naturally joins the ocean and the mountain would not have it otherwise—points to the intention of the mountain rather than its location. Dealing with masterpieces in literature with a casual approach, 'free rendering' can land one in 'free blundering.'

If my comments on Dr. Nayar's translation appear meticulous or uncharitable it is not because my respect for his academic post or qualification is less but because my respect (and loyalty) for Unnayi Varier's *Nalacharitham* is more. Besides, I have given the original and the two translations side by side for the readers to decide which is more faithful to the original and couched in precise idiomatic English.

Before concluding let me recall some of the problems I encountered during my translation work of *Nalacharitham*. I shall confine myself to those that illustrate the variety of problems that may crop up. When translating one of the boons conferred on Nala by yama described in plain language by the poet thus:- 'Āpathilum nin buddhi adharmā vimukhi āvum'- I wrote straightaway, 'even in danger your mind would turn away from sinful

ways'. It was only at the time of revision of the day's work that the thought struck me that 'danger' as such never affected a person's sense of right and wrong. A little research showed the root-meaning of 'Āpath' was not 'danger' but 'ill-luck' or 'misfortune' and the current meaning of 'danger' was a derived one of recent origin, probably long after Unnayi's days. I changed the word 'danger' into 'adversity' which undermines one's moral code and thus befits the context.

I was doing Part IV, scene 2, Damayanti and her maids and had reached the end of Bhaimi's charanam 2, the last part of it which runs as follows:-

'Vairaseni Illa, neera-amāyi' gave me food for thought. I wrote, 'Nala is not there,' but could not decide how to deal with, 'neerasamāyi' : Could they be the words of Bhaimi as included in her charanam? If so it seemed to me it did not befit her nature to discuss such matters with her maids as judged by her previous conduct. If they are to be considered the words of the poet they should be in a *śloka* not a *charana*. It cost me some hard thinking before the simple solution hit me. Varier had always shown scant courtesy to tradition: he had a clear idea of his aim and reached it without caring for the means he adopted. It dawned on me that the poet was writing for a visual art-form in which even the padas are not spoken but mimed. So the question of whose words they are is irrelevant. If they help the acting, as they certainly do, then they are in order. My problem as a translator still remained for a while, because I could not translate it literally as the English version would call for the identity of the speaker: I could not write, "I was displeased." I was bent upon a correct solution and the answer, when it came, surprised me by its simplicity: I could adopt the same trick the poet had tried—and I added the simple interjection, 'alas! which too, be it remembered, is seldom uttered without acting accompaniment: The headaches the translation of this Attakatha gave me deserve a new name because far from enervating me, they worked as a tonic! (Ālochanāmṛitham—the nectar of reflection—as literary critics define the master-pieces in literature)

Patient reader, one more example and I have done. I was translating the *śloka* that introduces, Part IV scene 7, Damayanti and Bahuka, and rendered the 'Samasthapada' of the text, 'jāthakoothāiathanuthā pamasrnām' as—(spoke these words) 'words saturated with a hundred emotions and regrets.' When I happened to revise it as usual, I felt the word 'hundred', a literal translation of 'jatha' in the original, though it may go well with an Indian audience, would not produce the same degree of emphasis on a foreigner, and it should be changed to 'thousand' and I did so without hesitation. I feel the translator has the liberty to make such alterations though it remains a debatable point.

Translations have always been considered by all, including the translators themselves, as second class literature. Is there need or justification to revise the view at least in individual cases?