

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TAMIL TRANSLATIONS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE***

**A thesis submitted to
Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli
for the award of the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH**

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(Ref. No.32608/Ph.D.2/English/PT/Re-Regn/Jan.2012)**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TAMIL TRANSLATIONS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*** is a bonafide record of research work done by **V.T.SUBRAMANIAN**, in the **P.G. and Research Department of English, Rajah Serfoji Government College (Autonomous), Thanjavur** under my guidance and supervision, submitted to **Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli** for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English** and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award to the candidate of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title.

I further certify that the thesis represents the independent work on the part of the candidate.

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DECLARATION

I, **V.T.SUBRAMANIAN**, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled **A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TAMIL TRANSLATIONS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*** has been originally carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. K. RAJAMANICKAM**, Associate Professor (Retd.), P.G. and Research Department of English, Rajah Serfoji Government College (Autonomous), Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli and this work has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree.

October, 2013

Thanjavur – 613 005

(V.T. SUBRAMANIAN)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I profoundly thank the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Periyar Maniammai University, Prof. Dr. N. Ramachandran, M.E., Ph.D., for having initiated me with permission to do this research work. He has been a very great source of inspiration throughout the course of my study.

At the outset I thought that it would be a Herculean task to carry out a research work in the Translation of Shakespeare's work. But my belief was disproved and made easy by my Research Adviser Prof. Dr. K. Rajamanickam, Associate Professor (Retd.), P.G. and Research Department of English, Rajah Serfoji Government College (Autonomous), Thanjavur. Whenever I approached him, he was kind enough to help me by his intellectual expertise he has been gifted with. I am infinitely indebted to him as much as Bassano to Antonio in the chosen play for this study. I express my deep sense of gratitude to him.

I immensely thank my Doctoral Committee Member Prof. Dr. A. Noel Joseph Irudayaraj, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Professor and Head (Retd.), Department of English, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, for having offered a constructive criticism on my research work and added value to the thesis with his outstanding scholarship in the field.

I express my heart-felt thanks to Prof. Dr. Palani Arangasamy, B.O.L., M.A., Ph.D., Professor of English (Retd.), Department of Lexicography, Tamil University and Emeritus Professor and Head, Department of English, Periyar Maniammai University, Vallam, Thanjavur. I am very much indebted to him for having streamlined my thoughts

with his versatility and fruitful ideas towards the successful completion my Doctoral Research.

I fervently thank the principal of Rajah Serfoji Government College (Autonomous), Prof. Dr. K. Anbu and Prof. Dr. R. Parthiban, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of English. I also thank Dr. L. Baskaran, Dr. P. Thiyagarajan and all the faculty members of the Department of English, Prof. K.G.R. Radhakrishnan, Associate Professor of Chemistry of the college, and Mr. S. Govindarajalu, Headmaster, G.H.S.S., Sengipatti, for having offered their fullest support and earnest cooperation to accomplish this research work,

I thank the authorities of Connemara Library, Chennai, for having provided me the earliest translated versions of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. My sincere thanks are due to Mr. A. Pavunraj, Sr. Implementer, TCL Tech. Ltd., Chennai for having helped me to procure the secondary sources needed for this research work,

I honestly record my sincere gratitude to my Co-research Scholars Prof. Dr. R. Sam, Mr. P. Jaya Prabu and Dr. N. Latha for their word of encouragement and also for their unstinting support in all my endeavours throughout the study.

There are many scholarly personalities, academicians and erudite professors who have enabled me to accomplish this research work. Remarkable among them are Prof. S. Mohammed Yusuf, Prof. S. Albert, Retd. Professors, JMC, Prof. S. Sheik Ismail, JMC, Prof. S. Navaneethan and Prof. S. Kumar, Rtd. Professors, H.H.The Rajah's College, Pudukkottai, Prof. Dr. N. Vetrivelan, H.O.D., Computer Applications, Periyar Maniammai University, Vallam and Prof. S. Arumugan, Retd. Professor,

Prof. R. Swaminathan, Professor of Economics, A.V.V.M. Sri Pushpam College, and Dr. T. Ravimanickam, Thanjavur, I express my gratefulness to them.

As rightly stated by Alexander "I live because of my parents. I live well because of my teachers", I owe my parents and all my noble and dedicated teachers who have shaped and introduced me to this intellectual arena.

I thank the members of my family - wife Ms. S. Senthamarai Selvi, Children S.Ajay and S.Subhashini and all my relatives for their fullest cooperation towards the completion of this Doctoral Research.

I thank M/s. Nagu Computers, Thanjavur, for having undertaken the job of printing and binding of my thesis and brought out in the form of a thesis.

Last but not least I thank the unseen force which stood by me through and through.

V.T. Subramanian

TEXTUAL NOTE

The thesis has been framed by strictly following the guidelines given in the seventh edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

The following abbreviations are used for indicating name of the authors of the primary sources of both versions immediately after the quotations and texts.

ARS	-	Aru. Somasundaran
A.W.V.	-	A.W. Verity
ECP	-	E.C. Pettet
KPP	-	S.V. Kallappiran Pillai
PSM	-	Pammal Sambanda Mudaliyar
TNS	-	T. Namasivayam

ABSTRACT

Shakespeare, an Elizabethan playwright is popular in England and equally reputed in countries other than England. Such global reputation has been acclaimed by a very few dramatists in those days. Even today he is familiar among the literates all over the world. His plays were enacted and read in English. As and when England became an empire and English became a medium of instruction in the British colonies especially in India, the reputation of Shakespeare grew by leaps and bounds. Many native scholars of English in colonial countries began rendering the plays of their own choice. Many writers have drawn inspiration from him for developing their native stagecraft.

Among the plays rendered into Tamil, *The Merchant of Venice* tops the list with its Tamil prose version by Viswanatha Pillai in 1870. Ever since, a number of bi-lingual scholars have attempted to render, adapt, summarise and translate the same play.

As many as 10 translators have rendered the play *The Merchant of Venice*. Of them, the renderings of Pammal Sambanda Mudaliyar, S.V. Kallappiran Pillai, Aru. Somasundaran and T. Namasivayam have been subjected to critical assessment in this dissertation. The net result has been analysed and reported in this dissertation.

Shakespeare, the British playwright is of a different cultural milieu. The society of Elizabethan England is certainly opposite to the customs and

manners of a conservative Tamil society, as it existed in the middle and later decades of the 19th century. Expressions that are unsophisticated, vulgar and colloquial were found among the rustic and minor characters. Transporting them as such into Tamil proved to be a major hurdle for the early translators. Besides these cultural restraints, idiomatic expressions, proverbial sayings, puns classical allusions and application of dramatic ironies that proved to be difficult have been identified and analysed. Those that are lexically operating could not be translated. These obstacles, to what extent have been narrowed down, passed off, and surmounted have been critically analyzed and recorded with justifications.

Anton Popovic, the Russian Translation Theorist has enunciated translation theories such as shifts, equivalences etc. An attempt has also been made how those translators knowingly or unknowingly applied these theories in their renderings.

Chapter I forms an introduction to the thesis. It traces out the origin, practice and need for translation in Tamil Nadu besides introducing the chosen translation for study and their forms.

Chapter II deals with the sporadic omissions of sub-plots and additions for the purpose of clarity and substantiates with obvious examples. Localizations of names and characters, proper nouns, the use of allusions and their significance have been analysed. It also brings out the uniqueness of the translation of the chosen translators.

Chapter III elaborately discusses the barriers with respect to cultural, social, linguistic, idiomatic, proverbial and even with literary allusions faced by the translators while rendering the English play *The Merchant of Venice*. It also deals with how they have surmounted all these barriers.

Chapter IV gives an account as to how translation proved to be window in the dissemination of knowledge of Shakespeare especially the popularity of the chosen play in translation, its reach at the grass root level, until the twentieth century, impact of the play on the school and college students on enactments and effect of the Shakespearean plays when filmed.

Chapter V is the concluding chapter that deals with the status of Shakespeare's plays in the curriculum during and after the reign of the Britishers. It gives an estimation of the future of Shakespeare's plays. It also establishes some facts and findings. It records the present trend and future prospects with respect to the reading of Shakespeare's plays.

Thus this research has identified various setbacks, impediments impossibilities in translation, and additions and omissions that were made by the translators towards the suitability of the Tamil readers and viewers. Besides these things, the scope for future studies have also been found out and reported in the dissertation.

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Appendix – I

A Brief Note on the Translators

Pammal Vijayaranga Sambanda Mudaliar – popularly known as Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, credited with “Father of Tamil Drama” born in 1873 in Pammal, Tamil Nadu; educated at Pachaiyappa’s College, Chennai; Founding father of modern Tamil theatre: a playwright, director, producer and actor of the late 19th century and early 20th century: influenced by his father who had a big library –



developed interest in drama as a child: parents encouraged him. Influenced in particular by his childhood reading of works of Shakespeare – wrote his own plays at an early age; staged these plays at his home, along with his brother and sister, for audiences comprising family and neighbours.

In 1891 even as a student, founded the theatre company known as Suguna Vilasa Sabha with a view to reviving and reforming Tamil drama at the age of 19: First faced failures – Later became successful: full time worked as lawyer and later as a judge: maintained his involvement in drama thereafter. His plays watched throughout the Madras presidency; written 96 plays; Notable among them – “Sati Sulochana”, “Vedala Ulagam”, “Ratna Vali”, Manohara and Sabapathi.” Manohara, the first adaptation of ‘Hamlet’ proved to be a failure. Changed the title into “Amaladhithan” and rewritten the entire play: became very successful: developed Tamil theatre as a respectable art

form, caused a shift where by the old derogatory term for actors 'Koothadi' was replaced by "Kalaigan": placed more stress on dialogue than song. His works included adaptations from English and Sanskrit plays: received with much enthusiasm; changed stage conventions, created new sets of sceneries that surprised the viewers. After retiring as a judge, he acted for the Sabha, gave equal importance to narrative and aesthetics in Tamil drama. The British Government, as a token of appreciation, honoured PSM with the title Rao Bahadur in 1916, for his meritorious service in the field of drama. He was credited with the title Nadakap Peraciriyar (revered professor of Drama) in a literary conference presided over by Sri R.K. Shanmugam Chettiar in Erode (1943). *Swadesa Mitran*, the nationalist oriented Tamil News paper published his life history in serial form, translated into English – six volumes entitled "Over 40 years Before The Footlights" with the original title Natakametai Ninaivukal (Reminiscences of the stage) published in book form in 1938 – published his autobiography in 1963 – The British Government, as a token of appreciation, honoured PSM with the title Rao Bahadur in 1916, for his meritorious service in the field of drama. He was credited with the title Natakap Peraciriyar (revered Professor of Drama) in a literary conference Presided over by Sri R.K. Shanmugam Chettiar in Erode (1943) - died in 1964.

Aru. Somasundaran (ARS), M.A., B.T., born in Karaikkudi, Southern Part of Tamil Nadu, South India, basically a teacher: Written 15000 poetry in Tamil and brought them out in two volumes. First volume was released in 1961 by the then Tamil Nadu Education Minister Hon'ble C.Subramaniam and the second by Hon'ble K.Kamaraj, in 1965.



Authored 100 books which include poetry, essays, plays, travelogues, spirituality, criticism and Translation.

Credited with “Porkizhi Kavignar” – an award instituted by the Tamil Nadu Government. First to have received this award after institution: received it from Hon'ble Dr. Kalaignar M. Karunanithi in 1973. Translated 14 plays of Shakespeare including ‘*The Merchant of Venice*’ the chosen play for this study into Tamil. Honouring his intellectual service, Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore honoured him with “Mahakavi Bharathi Award” with cash award besides several other awards and medals. Toured Asia, Europe and Middle East Countries. Having seen the city of Venice, inspired to translate *The Merchant of Venice* well known for his discourses in the epics such as *The Mahabharatha*, *The Ramayana*, *The Periyapurana* and the ethical treatise *Tirukkural*.

Appendix – II

List of Tamil Translations of *The Merchant of Venice* (Chronological Order)

1. V. Viswanata Pillai, *Venice Vartagan*, Madras: M. Verasamy Naidu Company, 1870.
2. Venugopala Chariyar, *Venice Viyapari*, Madras: C. Roster and Company, 1874.
3. Narayanaswamy Aiyar, *Venice Vanigan Kadhai*, National Press, Thanjavur, 1895.
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Chapter - I

Chapter - II

Chapter - III

Chapter - IV

Chapter - V

Bibliography

Appendices

Contribution by the Research Scholar

The Shakespeare Room The Life of Shakespeare William Shakespeare was born in 1564 to John Shakespeare and his wife, Mary Arden. His father was wealthy and held a number of municipal offices. Shakespeare received a good education, but he did not go to the university as many other writers of his time did. William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Christians did not make profits whereas people like Shylock made their profits from interest, this clearly did not please the Christian community, this may have created negative attitudes towards all Jews. Antonio is aware that "Shylock seeks my life; his reasons I well know: I oft delivered from his forfeitures Many that have at times made moan to me; Therefore he hates me." No Fear Shakespeare Translations. Shakespeare Study Guides. Shakespeare Life & Times. Glossary of Shakespeare Terms. Literature. No Fear Literature Translations. Literature Study Guides. Here's where you'll find analysis about *The Merchant of Venice* as a whole, from the major themes and ideas to analysis of style, tone, point of view, and more. Themes. Motifs. Symbols. Plot Analysis. Protagonist. Antagonist. Get ready to write your paper on *The Merchant of Venice* with our suggested essay topics, sample essays, and more. How to Write Literary Analysis. Glossary of Literary Terms. How to Cite This SparkNote. Suggested Essay Topics. A+ Student Essay. Purchase. Although William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is considered a comedy, it is probably better categorized as a tragicomedy (a play with both comic and tragic elements). As a comedy, the play focuses on Christians whose problems have a happy resolution. As a tragedy, the play focuses on the downfall of a Jewish moneylender, Shylock, who is forced at the end to become a Christian and to forfeit property. He leaves the stage a broken man. Composition and Publication. Shakespeare wrote the play between 1596 and 1598. It was first published in a quarto edition in 1600 from Shakespeare's original manuscript, which contained editing and proofreading insertions. While Shakespeare does humanize Shylock, an audience of that period would not have felt sorry for him, and would have called the story a romantic comedy. Continue Reading. It is not a tragedy. My students and I just finished reading *The Merchant of Venice* this week. It is interesting to watch a 2019 audience full of young people schooled in the ways of tolerance and acceptance read a play produced back in 1605. I would say that it is pretty impossible to read the play without understanding that Shylock is the villain specifically because he is a Jew. William Shakespeare wrote this play between 1596 and 1599. Though this play is a comic work but is famous for its dramatic scenes. *The Merchant of Venice* summary revolves around a merchant of Venice, Antonio. Antonio is the protagonist of this play. He took a loan from a Jewish moneylender, Shylock, in order to help his friend. But Antonio is unable to pay back the loan. It describes the merchant of Venice quick summary. The story starts with Bassanio's desire to marry Portia, a wealthy heiress of Belmont. In order to become a suitor to her, he is in need of 3000 ducats. He seeks Antonio's help who is a merchant of Venice and also his friend. But, Antonio says that he is short of cash as his ships and merchandise are expected.