

**An Illustration of the Connections between People, Culture, and Nature from Selected
Malayalam Literary Texts Translated Into English**

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ABSTRACT

The cultural implications of translation could range from lexical content and syntax to thoughts and ways of living in a specific society. "Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions." (Toury 1978:200). This paper focuses on the connection of culture with human and nature through Malayalam texts translated to English. The paper interprets the translated texts from Malayalam literature texts like "Chemmeen" by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, "Poovan Banana" by Vaikom Muhammed Basheer which depicts the correlation of culture with human and nature. The Twenty-first century Generation uses culture as occasion rather than adapting or implementing in their daily life, this paper shows how culture is intertwined with people and nature. As a result, the current generation is eager to learn about culture yet struggles to accept it. Hence the literary works arouse its connection between human and nature, and also will motivate the youngsters to pursue their culture.

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Translation is a conversion process that enables speakers of various languages to comprehend one another's viewpoints and continue to have productive conversations. Once more, it comes down to bridging cultural gaps and doing away with any that may still persist. Because it advances the cause of improved communication between two parties, translation plays a significant role in culture and language. The ways in which people behave are reflected in culture. It is a pattern in which we examine behavior, social practices, values, and beliefs. Language is a key factor while attempting to understand a culture, and translations are necessary because one may not be familiar with the target language. ("Understanding the Relationship Between Translation and Culture")

The connection between culture and translation aids in bridging any gaps that other languages may introduce. The translation has been a part of healthy cultural exchange due to the fact that we have so many Nations and that there are so many languages spoken within each Nation. The need for trade and the interdependence of the human race have given translation the all-clear. According to translation and Culture, the act of describing how members of one cultural community view the world and their role in it for members of another (n.d.). So, the cultural aspects are being transferred to the people by literature. Human beings use art to comprehend, mediate, and express their relationship to nature. "Ecosystem people are totally dependent on the animals and plants of a particular area, deeply accustomed to that area and in stable, sustainable relation to the local ecosystem." (KA, n.d) Basheer and Pillai's communal and environmental knowledge comes from growing up, living, and working in prolific ecosystems. One structure visible in both their novels is that of nature-culture dualism which is worth analyzing in ecocritical perspective though there are many binaries that arise from it.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai introduced Malayalam literature and the magical beauty of Kerala's coastal areas to the outside world through his novels. "In his best stories, one can almost hear the sound of breathing as if it were orally told. His imagination was down to earth, and his grand theme was the earth, man's attachment to the earth." (Menon, 1992) Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai wrote his novels when 'ecological studies' or 'eco-criticism' were still in their infancy. Yet his works are noted for his vivid descriptions of nature - fertile fields, forest, sea, and beautiful scenery in and around his native place. The waterlogged setting in Thakazhi forms a metaphor in his writings; it often forms the verdant backdrop against which Kerala's turbulent social history plays itself out. (Menon, n.d.) The fields of Kuttanad, its meandering waterways, rustic ethos, and burgeoning political consciousness have fertilised the imagination of an epochal writer whose works have been acclaimed as much for their lyrical power and penetrating insights as their avowed social content and rootedness. Thakazhi's novels calibrate the movement of history across a landscape at once placid and eruptive, where dualities coexist and the poles of paradox yield sudden luminous meanings like the elements are between two electrodes. (Menon n.d.) *Chemmeen* (Prawns) , which was a departure from the writer's extreme realism, attained immense popularity in 1956. I told a tragic love story in the backdrop of a fishing village in Alappuzha. The novel was translated into 19 world languages and adapted into film in 15 countries. It won the Kendra Salya heads Award in 1958. The film adaptation, directed by Ramu Kariat, won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in 1965. The novel and its film adaptation, *Chemmeen* (1965), earned him national and international fame. *Chemmeen* is a romantic tale laced with tragedy, set against the coastal belt and centered around the lives of fisherfolk. The storyline derives from the folk suction that a fisherman's survival at sea is linked to his wife's chastity while he is away. The plot deals with

the clandestine love between a fisherman's wife and a fish trader. The novel ends with their bodies being washed ashore. It is a simple unpretentious tale that was lapped up by the public, but treated with some reservation in literary circles. (Menon, n.d.) Pillai remarks, "The sea has influenced me through a different score. The first sight that the fishermen see at the break of dawn is the infinite sea, the ocean - the storehouse of precious stones. The sea dwells like a Goddess in the mind of Araya fishermen." (Satchidanandan 81) The sea with its significant hues and unpredictable moods plays a significant role in the novel *Chemmeen*. When Karuthamma enters the seashore of Palani, her husband and the entire shore looks strange to her. The hue of the sea differs from Karuthamma's shore. Nature itself is interpreted as a symbol, and the fisherman's continuous struggle with the sea for survival is depicted in a realistic manner. Mother Nature could be seen as the donor for the fishermen as she gives them abundant wealth. "The children of the sea are the inheritors of the sea of countless riches. It is customary for their palms to brim." (*Chemmeen* 7) Children of the sea are of five kinds: Arayan, Valakkaran, Mukkuvan, Marakkan, and a fifth caste of no particular name. Only the Valakkaran is allowed to own boats and nets. In fact, in the east, the protector of the shore, the Shore Master, would allow only the Valakkaran to buy the boats and nets. (*Chemmeen*, 31) The novel portrays the routine life of the fishermen. Even before the sun rises, the boats go out to the sea, the fishermen catch their fish, and they row back to the land expecting a good trade, and the sun sets. Boats represent the journey and adventure one undergoes in his/her lifetime. Absolutely they don't find any boundaries in the sea to stop their adventure. The sea is considered both as the protector and destroyer of mankind. The fishermen community believes that chastity is the highest ideal to be followed by the women of the community. The culmination of the fisherman's ambitions to have a boat and a net of his own is depicted in the novel in the most elegant manner. The sea occupies

the major portion of the earth. The very look of the sea gives oneself a mysterious experience as the line of the sky signifies the distant horizon and

the secret land of the sea. Every element of nature in Chemmeen is united in harmony with life. As a novel with ecological insights, Chemmeen instills in the mind of the reader a sense of sea-life, conservation of nature, and steps for sustenance of human life. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, also known as Beypore Sulthan, was a Malayalam literature writer. He was a writer, humanist, freedom fighter, novelist, and short story writer known for his innovative, down-to-earth writing style, which made him famous among literary critics as well as the general public. His works' translations into various languages have gained him international renown. In 1982, the Government of India bestowed upon him the fourth highest civilian honor, the Padma Shri. He also received a Sahitya Academy Fellowship, a Kerala Sahitya Academy Fellowship, and a Kerala State Film Award for Best Story. In 1993, he received the Vallathol Award. (Jan, 2010) Poovan Banana Short story portrays the climatic change happening during monsoon season and the protagonist of the story handles nature through his belief. "It was during the monsoons. Sunshine and rain followed each other without warning.

The water rose steadily in the river." (Basheer, 1994) Abdul Kahder goes to the town to meet his friends as usual and he gets delayed to return back home. Unexpectedly heavy rain covered the place and he is worried that his wife is alone at home. Abdul Kahder waits and then he tries to get a boat arranged but the ferryman says that it's not possible to reach the opposite shore at this time because of heavy rain and the water in the river flows hard.

"The water came up to his waist. He could not get a foothold. He began swimming with his head above the water. He moved forward, working his hands and feet. But in the darkness,

with the swift current, which way was forward and which way was backwards? He could not decide. He moved on, mainly on conjecture.”(Basheer, 1994) The protagonist was brave enough to handle the tide and tries to reach the shore by his assumption and calculation of the flow of the river. As we see, unless he knows about his environment and nature he couldn't have that confidence to cross the river. Water is the powerful element which cannot be controlled by anyone and which has the power to create as well as destroy nature. So, both the literary texts show the power of water and the connection of handling water through myth and belief. Mother Nature is portrayed as both a savior and a destroyer of life in *Chemmeen* and *Poovan Banana*. Nature remains peaceful when it feels safe. Similarly, if she detects any disruption, she is willing to take the lives of innocent individuals. These people's lives were at stake in *Chemmeen*. Chastity is the ultimate ideal to be followed by the ladies of the fishermen's community, according to the fishermen's community. Even in *Poovan Banana*, the story portrays the survival of the protagonist with a violent cyclone, reminding everyone of the forcefulness of the humility required in the face of nature. Nature has been artistically interlaced with language, becoming a persistent presence leading, encouraging, inspiring, and illuminating all who read it. The novelists have attempted to emphasize the importance of ecological balance throughout the books. The current socio-political context also serves as a trigger to heighten the gravity of the problem. The archetypes revealed by these literary texts depict both the positive and terrible aspects of nature. Not only did the lifestyles of the entire population alter, but so did our interaction with the rest of the ecosystem. To improve humanity's survival, it is necessary to investigate the fundamental green thinking in literature.

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