# A Comparative Study of K. R. Meera's Yudasinte Suvisesham and The Gospel of Yudas

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**How to Cite this Paper:**

Rekha, K. G., Nayana, K., & Manjula, K. T. (2023). A Comparative Study of K. R. Meera's Yudasinte Suvisesham and The Gospel of Yudas. *International Journal of Philosophy and Languages (IJPL), 2*(2), 1-11. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8187241

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *Rendered into multiple languages, K. R. Meera's novels have a wide reach among global readers of feminist texts. Translated into English by Rajesh Rajamohan from Malayalam, the text, The Gospel of Yudas, in translation has the proportionate amount of ingredients that K. R. Meera mixed, to retain its spicy flavour. The purpose of this research paper is to highlight how reflective is the translation of her novel, The Gospel of Yudas is, perhaps driving the same sense of emotion into the readers. As nothing much is said about the text as a translation, this paper would concentrate more on its translatory aspects. Translation demands an active involvement from the translator in order to retain its originality. When the target language is English, which is not the mother tongue of the translator, in most cases, translations are tend to lose their charm. This paper studies the text, not as an adaptation, but as a recreation and hence it's difficult to draw the line that segregates the original and the translation. This research paper considers the translated text, The Gospel of Yudas, as a medium through which the hard politics with abstractions about human lives is let known to the world of linguistic vitalities. The paper also considers the loss of meaning after a comparative reading of the two texts.*

**Design:** *Peer-reviewed journals, national and international publications, and other secondary sources were used to gather material for the article. The research gap is identified using online resources and research databases like Google Scholar, Research Gate, SSRN, Elsevier, Academia, and Shodhganga. Using ABCD analysis, the main points of the study are highlighted. For the suggested research, information is gathered from academic publications, doctorate theses, scholarly articles, and websites. The paper focuses on the terms 'reflective translation,' 'Indian translation,' 'history of Malayalam literature,' 'culture,' 'comparative study of The Gospel of Yudas,' and 'Yudasinte Suvisesham', and hence, analysing, interpreting the source text and the translated text. The methodology will make use of textual analysis and comparison. There will be a close reading of a few of the feminist writers, followed by discussions on relevant topics. Additionally, submitting research articles and attending related conferences would give further enhancement to the study. In order to comply with its requirements, the APA Manual was followed 'the thoughts conveyed by the source text, sometimes within the space, sometimes beyond. This research considers the source text ultimate though the articulation of both the texts takes a different mode. The target text is not simply an adaptation. There is the translator's own space through which the rebirth of the source text takes place.*

**Originality:** *This research paper portrays the target text as the by-product of powerful construction of the source text. It's truly original since it doesn't follow word-to-word translation. Hence the research article proposes the concept put forward by some of the translation theories, that there should be enough room for a translator.*

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**Paper Type***: Research Article*

**Keywords:** Translation, A Comparative Study, Yudasinte Suvisesham, K. R. Meera, The Gospel of Yudas, Recreation, Transcreation, ABCD Listing

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

Language, inevitably, is not a bare medium for exchange of ideas, it reflects culture, adapts culture and enrich culture. India, a country where linguistic varieties exist, translation and its language acts as real barriers for any kind of translatory deed. The role of translations in meeting the barriers set by the languages are commendable. A multilingual community such as India benefits most from translations due to their broader scope. According to Sujit Mukherjee, translators who have a superior command of English often take liberties that Indian language authors let out of customary respect for a fellow Indian who is secure in his or her English. The situation of modern Indo- English literature seems to be easy to Sujit Mukherjee, as the translator's task is easy as the primary aim of translation is fidelity to the original, if you consider not so recent theories of translation. Moreover, the translators tend to enjoy the same position as the original author. Hence, translators of the 21$^{st}$ century has a vital role to play as messengers of trans-culture. As Indian society is characterized by a wide variety of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, economic, religious, political, and social identities, national identity must be handled delicately. The Gospel of Yudas (2016) is set against the background of the Naxalite movement in Kerala during the 1960s, as related by K R Meera. Eventually, the novel shifts its focus to the state terror against the civilian population during the post-emergency phase, thus connecting the earlier Naxalite movement to the contemporary rebellions. The Gospel of Yudas is yet another translation of K. R. Meera through which she focuses on the injustice which is an eye-opener to the civilian population and also, the state itself.

## 2. RELATED WORKS :

The keywords used to search the literature are Translation, K. R. Meera, The Gospel of Yudas, Recreation, Transcreation, ABCD Listing ranging from the years 1889 - 2022. The search engines used for the search are Google Scholar, Research Gate, SSRN and Academia.edu.

**Table 1**: Related works on A Comparative Study of K. R. Meera's Yudasinte Suvisesham and The Gospel of Yudas

| S. No | Focus | Contribution | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Analyse the challenges the translator had during the translation process and the degree to which the translator was successful in obtaining a meaning equivalent bound in a cultural context. | The paper is unique in offering an unparallel match between the source text and the target text. | Ajeesh A. K., & Kumar, R. P. (2019). [1] |
| 2. | State terror against the civilian population in the post-emergency period, thereby connecting the earlier Naxalite movement with the contemporary rebellions, marking a significant turn in Naxalite narratives. | The paper clearly highlights the extent of support the state offers terrorist forces for the eruption of violence. | Meera, K. R. (2017). [2] |
| 3. | Effects of state violence on people both as perpetrators and victims. Representations of state and non-state violence in these periods through the police and the Naxalites. | Projects the harsh reality of the state-sponsored terror, finally making the people victims of brutality. | Joseph, L. (2019). [3] |
| 4. | An attempt to explore and analyse the unravelling of feminist | The paper offers a unique analysis of literary | Caroline, T. A. (2022) [4] |

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| | concerns in literary writings subsequently reveals the inherent injustices created by the existing hegemonic power relations. | theories and a feminist interpretation of the same. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5.** | Demonstrates how fluency shaped the standard of foreign literatures in English above other translation methodologies and looks into the cultural consequences that were both etched and hidden in foreign writings. | English language's fluency is a result of foreign languages which was facilitated by translations. | Venuti, L. (2017). [5] |
| **6.** | A regional identity different from the hegemonic and classical Sanskrit and Tamil traditions was formed through translation. | English as a language established its own identity separate from the vernacular languages. | Ramakrishnan, E. V. (2009). [6] |
| **7.** | The relations between literary history and dynamics of translation have been analysed with the help of examples from literary history of Malayalam. | An in-depth study of the literary history of Malayalam language and its translations is provided in the paper. | Raveendran, P. P. (2009). [7] |

## 3. RESEARCH GAP :

After the study of various secondary sources, it is observed that there is no research article on the text which attempts to compare/ analyse the translatory aspects of the source text and the target text. Hence, this study would help the research community find out how to compare and contrast the source text and the target text.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The major objectives of this research paper are:
(1) To highlight the status of the source text and the target text.
(2) To explore how the translator has tried to maintain fidelity to the source text.
(3) To evaluate how the translator has created a space for himself.
(4) To compare and contrast the source text and the target text in order to arrive at a conclusion.
(5) To analyse the risks undergone by the translator while translating and also while the readers react.

## 5. METHODOLOGY :

The research paper is based on explorative research and hence made use of research search engines like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SSRN, Academia.edu to study how different theories of translation help the translator and the researcher to evaluate a piece of translation. ABCD analysis is made use of to find out the advantages, benefits, constraints, and disadvantages of the research.

## 6. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY :

### 6.1 Translation in the Indian Scenario:

Translating regional writings into other regional languages is facilitated through English as English in India is a language most widely used ways to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and promote a sense of community. As a matter of fact, translations have the unique ability to cross language borders without causing major cultural loss. Despite the influence of western translation theories on them, Indian translators still adhere to traditional methods that place a higher priority on maintaining rasa equivalence than authenticity. When seeking to reach this equivalency, translators frequently make significant alterations to the translation. In the Indian translation tradition, there are a tonne of examples of these translations. Even though there have been calls to improve cross-cultural communication inside India, there is still a lot of translating between Indian languages and English. Specifically, this is to satisfy market expectations and guarantee the success of the original author and the translated work by

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extending its reach. English translations are frequently mediated by translations into Indian languages as a result of a fall in the number of linguistically skilled translators who can translate between two Indian languages [1] [2].

The extent to which bilingual literary production has been accepted in India as a normal literary practice, and the existence of such practices over a long period of time, are indicative of India's 'translating consciousness (Devy, 2015).

Translation scholars have extensively discussed translation's contribution to the development of languages and literatures in the West over the past quarter century. Since the mid-Eighties, when translation theory achieved revolutionary breakthroughs, diachronic translation studies have been widely viewed as translational interventions in discourse development and shifting ideologies in cultures. A changing paradigm of translation is all about changing idiomatic and structural paradigms in languages, constructing and disrupting canons in literature, and constructing and disrupting genres. The most comprehensive study on this topic was published by André Lefever. The author demonstrated how translation can contribute to literary systems and how translated literature can contribute to literary poly systems through convincing examples drawn from a variety of literary systems [3] [4].

Authors who are eager to introduce a specific class or mode in which they have already made or seek to make new experiments on their own into a certain literary system perform a significant amount of translation work. It makes perfect sense for them to want to speak with the leaders of that specific class or style inside the original literary system. The authors' natural inclination would be to invoke the masters of that specific class or mode in the primary literary system [5]. When aspiring translators who speak relatively fresh languages or literary systems import texts from more developed languages and literary systems, translation assumes a larger societal significance. Translation takes on a more societal purpose when prospective translators who speak relatively new languages or literary systems import texts from more mature languages and literary systems to enrich various discourses in those languages/literary systems. From a disciplinary standpoint, the following issues should be taken into consideration: We shall be able to strengthen the field of Translation Studies in India if we can retain the intellectual experiences of our earlier thinkers on translation. We might respond to India's translation theory by building on what has already been done. It is false to believe that a language's literature will flourish if it is not translated into or translated from literature in other languages. In this way, the history of translation in any language also provides an informal history of literature in that language. It's possible that some languages' patronage for translation was more diverse than others. Resources for literacy and civilization have been preserved for future generations through the translation process. The history of translation includes a discussion of what, how, and why things are translated in addition to how languages are translated from one to another. The history of translation is a description of what, how, and why things are translated as an intellectual exercise, in addition to describing translation from one language to another [6][7].

### 6.2 History of Translation from Malayalam:

Kerala was first colonised by Europeans in the late eighteenth century, but it wasn't until the early twentieth century that translations from English became widely used. For this, it is simple to understand. The remnant of the literary elite continued to read mostly precolonial Malayalam literature, while English-reading elites showed little interest in translating Malayalam literature. For writers like O. Chandu Menon, the practise of translating English novels into Malayalam and then writing in that language was a quick fix [8].

There have been several Malayalam translations published in the first half of the 20th century, which can be linked to the reformist or social-political groups known as the "Kerala Renaissance" that were active in Kerala at the time. The Malayali nationalism, reformist movements within Malayalam-speaking groups, anti-caste campaigns, and the politicisation of workers and peasants that resulted in the establishment of the Communist Party of India Kerala unit in 1939 were some of the causes of the Kerala Renaissance. Even if there isn't a lot of writing about the historical translation activity in India, this translation case is really intriguing. One of the most significant factors that makes the history of translation in India fascinating is the vibrant linguistic and literary culture that has supported this country for many years. India is well known for having a long history of illustrious literary traditions and linguistic diversity [9][10].

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However, there is no denying that translation has been crucial in preserving India's linguistic and literary diversity. India's variety of languages and cultures add to its richness in certain ways, but they also present intellectual challenges, particularly when it comes to documentation. It can be challenging to choose where to start and even more challenging to choose which languages not to include given a constrained timetable due to the different and understandably compatible writing and translation traditions of the languages used here. A single volume must also define where its boundaries are [11].

### 6.3 Yudasinte Suvisesham and The Gospel of Yudas- A Comparative Analysis:

Malayalam novels have been greatly influenced by western philosophical ideas throughout their literary history. Meera's novels are the latest in the series. Originally written in Malayalam, *The Gospel of Yudas* (2016) is a feminist philosophical work. Feminism exposes the injustices created by existing hegemonic power relations by unravelling feminist concerns. The text explores the concept of justice envisioned in the novel, which can be analysed using feminist existentialist theory to arrive at a subaltern feminist interpretation of justice. The Gospel of Yudas, for example, is a feminist existentialism novel. Its characters are characterized by feminist existentialism. Prema's strange love story with Yu (Das) might appear at first glance to be a strange love story, but in essence, the Gospel is the story of a traitor's quest for revenge. By standing up for her truth, and subsequently dying, Sunanda serves justice to all victims of institutionalized injustices as well. Das's love overpowered his ideology, while Sunanda's justice transcended that of her comrade and companion. She thus becomes the strongest resister against hegemonic power through her martyrdom [12][13].

The text in detail discusses the background of Naxalbari movement. Initially a peasant armed movement, the Naxalbari movement spread to other districts of West Bengal and several provinces in India in 1967. Social activism today is largely influenced by the issues raised or associated with the Naxalite movement in the 1960s. However, what makes the Naxalite movement so attractive to rural poor and dispossessed in many parts of the country is its abiding appeal. Social oppression and economic oppression were made intolerable for the marginalized sections of society through this program [14]. After India gained its independence, it was the Naxalite leaders who first justified using violence against the Indian state in order to bring about a fundamental socioeconomic reform. They did this by arguing that the state needed to be attacked with armed force. In large regions of the nation, Naxalite activists actually set the tone for political debate between the Indian state and disgruntled populations by questioning the state's monopoly on violence and reiterating the right of its opponents to use the same tactic [15].

In the collective memory of a society, certain geographical sites are associated with significant changes in history, even after decades have passed. There is a dam site in Kerala called Kakkayam, which is located in the district of Kozhikode. During the emergency period, Kakkayam camp was set up to suppress rebellions. Throughout The Gospel of Yudas, K R Meera incorporates Kakkayam into the memory of the Naxalites. According to Meera, Kakkayam represents torture and state violence for all Naxalites in The Gospel of Yudas. In this country, relatively low-ranking officers have absolute control over who they arrest, how they arrest, how to torture them, when they kill, and how to dispose of their dead bodies. Politicians and administrators are the ones who threaten and use coercive violence on behalf of the state [16][17].

A group of characters are clearly depicted as agents of state violence in K R Meera's The Gospel of Yudas. Throughout The Gospel of Yudas, we hear from a victim whose father was an agent of state violence. The psychological effects of state violence manifest in a variety of physical ailments such as insomnia, rootlessness, disease, indecision, insensitivity, and oversensitivity. The victims are chosen by K R Meera from a variety of backgrounds [18]. As a result of his deep concern about humankind's malice, greed, and cruelty, (Yu) Das chose a path of rebellion. Prema is one of the characters, who doesn't have any revolutionary lineage. She belongs to the State partly because her father was a retired police officer who served in the Kakkayam camp. The circumstances forced her to become a rebel. According to Sangeeta, she represents the next generation of rebellious people who fought against the brick-kiln factory, which intended to extract mud from the villagers' land [19].

As a result, many ecological problems arise, such as water scarcity, reclamation of farm land, and not being able to use the land for grazing cattle. Sangeeta fights against these atrocities on behalf of the poor and illiterate common people. Sunanda's niece died from brutal police torture at Kakkayam camp

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after being tortured by the police. She was raised by Naxalites, including her father, aunt, and grandfather. Because of this, she has a strong mind and doesn't hesitate to fight injustice [20].

The translator, within his space, has tried to incorporate ideas conceived by the novelist, maintaining fidelity to the source text. To an extent, he could contribute in conveying the radical, revolutionary ideas spoken by the author's pen, may that be against the system, against the state, against hierarchy. While considering the original text, the translation has followed its own style with regard to the content too. The back matter, which includes author- bio where the author speaks about the administrative machinery seems to have been replaced with accolades. A detailed insight into the author's different texts is also incorporated in the translated version [21][22]. The foreword of the text remains the same, but once again the translator has tried to recreate a little of the text than following word to word translation of the original text's Foreword. An instance for the same is the usage, 'Crocodile' Yudas, while in the original word is 'Muthala' Yudas. Likewise, the word 'traitor' is used for 'Ottukaran'. Some usages like 'Naalukettu', 'Anjiliwood', are retained in the original language, perhaps to maintain originality. Though the dialogues are reframed according to suit the language, the translator could bring a newness in his approach of dealing with the original. At the same time, it reflects the ideas tossed by K. R. Meera though at a loss of meaning [23][24].

### 6.4 The Role of Culture in Translation:

Culture has a profound influence on translation as language is a product of culture. Translation scholar, Peter Newmark, defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (Newmark, 1988). There are therefore cultural patterns unique to each community. Translators become transcultural mediators between communities. Language is not part of culture according to Newmark, but it is part of culture according to Hans Vermeer. According to Newmark, Vermeer thought it impossible to translate cultural elements. In terms of communication between cultures, translation is considered a platform. Translation serves as a means of cross-cultural bilingual communication among peoples. Translated novels provide readers with a great deal of insight into the society that produced the novel. Novelists rely on their cultural background when they write their novels. Given that the culture described in the novel and the language used to transmit it are unrelated, this particular setting offers a difficulty for Newmark's understanding of how the culture presented in the novel is similar to the language employed [25] [26].

Lotman's comprehension of language and culture is perfect for the source text in question. The impact of lexical changes on readers won't be given any thought because there is little correlation between language and culture in the source text and the study is focused on culture. The cultural elements in the text are also mentioned by the metalinguistic criterion. As Coulthard explains, the author must define the ideal reader by incorporating knowledge of certain facts, memories of certain experiences, and opinions, preferences, and prejudices as well as linguistic competence (Coulthard, 1992) [27] [28].

How much such factors influence a writer depends on their capacity to place themselves within a specific social group. At this point, it is important to note that the English-speaking international community, not the English-speaking Indian community, is the intended audience for this text. Applying these standards reveals that the probable target reader does not meet the majority of them. Since the target audience is unlikely to be able to completely understand and appreciate certain historical events and cultural situations in the ST, it is reasonable to assume that this will happen in this scenario. However, the intended reader may be able to draw comparisons to beliefs or biases in his or her own society [29][30].

When the cultural ramifications of the translation are taken into consideration, the fundamental cultural and social features of the ST become problematic. At this point, we need make clear that the target reader in this situation is not misled. Because of this, the translator must choose how much information is necessary to bridge the cultural gap and how much should be left up to the reader's interpretation. As a result, the text has significant cultural consequences, which then affect translation. There are numerous elements of the story that must be taken into consideration, including the title, body language and customs, cuisine, history, the setting's location, religion, politics, and even the ideas of death and marriage. Despite this, the study's goal is to determine the significance of these components in intercultural communication by employing translation as a communication tool, rather than to compare them [31].

Despite the fact that the story has little to do with Yudas, the Malayalam title conjures a mysterious and potent image of him, whereas the English title, while not conjuring any of these sentiments, is accurate to

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the book's substance. As a result, even before reading the article, a foreign reader can grasp the idea. It is also possible to consider the title's cultural implications when translating it [32].

There's a considerable amount of loss that usually happens while a text is translated. The first paragraph of the translated text's Foreword itself is an example. 'A traitor can never sleep…he still remains intensely conscious' is less intense than its original. 'Crocodile Yudas' doesn't seem to be a word that can replace 'Muthala Yudas'. Kozhikode seems to sound like a place less known with the word 'Kallai River'. The aquatic ambience where the novel is set also seems to sound very colourful in the original text, missed out somewhere to a reader in bringing out that feel in the translation. And what an ending Meera gave the original! The powerful language paved its way to one which brings just an idea of what she said. Death in its unwelcome moment, yet expected, concludes the story of Prema. Even in conceptions of equivalency, the concept of death is present in both the east and the west. In the past, western translators frequently developed an obsession with the notion of equivalency in their translations. Theological notions of the lost paradise and attempts to reclaim it, as well as the desire to capture its genuine meaning, have parallels with the fixation with the authentic and the original in the west and the desire to capture its true meaning [33][34].

In a theological sense, the idea of a paradise lost and restored is tied to creativity and the fear of failing to convey the meaning. However, Hindu belief systems hold that throughout a person's life, the soul changes continuously and cyclically from one body to another. It is therefore impossible to have an original state.

## 7. ABCD ANALYSIS :

In a qualitative company study, one might highlight significant advantages, benefits, limits, and downsides of each issue that has been recognised as a determining factor after choosing numerous concerns to be evaluated in a company [35]. This will also provide a fundamental understanding and can be regarded as the predefined requirement for ABCD analysis, often known as ABCD listing. The ABCD listing variant of the ABCD analysis is a qualitative discussion technique [36]. The ABCD listing is a list of the advantages, benefits, restrictions, and drawbacks of using the system or model. This study's goal is to analyse these five indicators utilising a novel qualitative analysis technique called ABCD analysis/listing. The proposal of using the ABCD Analysis framework to analyse the planned study is one that merits careful consideration [37]. The benefits, Advantages, Limitations, and Disadvantages of the research are investigated in this paper using a qualitative analysis of a system or idea known as the ABCD analysis framework/listing devised by P.S. Aithal [38] [39].

**Table 2:** ABCD Listing the Comparative Study

| ADVANTAGES | BENEFITS |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>It helps to understand the tools required by the translator.</li><li>It is used to determine the findings of the comparative study of the two texts.</li><li>It helps to weigh the two texts and arrive at a decision as to which text has credibility.</li><li>It helps to understand the background of translation.</li></ul> | <ul><li>The aim of the study is to determine the conclusions of the comparative study between the two texts.</li><li>Provides an understanding of the translator's risks.</li><li>Provides an indication of the superiority of the texts.</li><li>Beneficial in understanding translations.</li></ul> |
| CHALLENGES | DISADVANTAGES |
| <ul><li>It is challenging to choose where to start a translated text and convince the readers across nations about its originality.</li><li>There are challenges associated with the translation of the basic language.</li><li>The problem of acceptance of the translated text.</li><li>In the present world, an imperfect target text result in controversies.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Lack of compatibility between languages.</li><li>The problem of acceptance of the targeted text and its effectiveness.</li><li>The resultant loss of meaning.</li><li>Limitations of cross-cultural communication.</li></ul> |

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**Source: Author**

**Advantages**: The paper is aimed to be advantageous to understand the background of translation, in particular the history of translation, role of culture in translation, with reference to Indian scenario.
**Benefits**: The paper aims to be beneficial in understanding translations as they have sustained throughout succeeding ages, they, on the other hand represent the original periods and styles.
**Constraints**: It is challenging to choose where to start, and even more challenging to choose which languages not to include, given a constrained timetable, due to the absence of compatible writing and translation traditions of the languages used in a text vary depending on its compatibility.
**Disadvantages**: Though there are many researches discussing about translation in India, there have been appeals to improve cross-cultural communication inside India, there is still a lot of vagueness in translating between Indian languages and English.

## 8. FINDINGS :

After a detailed study of the source text and the target text, it is clear that the translator within his space, has tried to reflect the ideas of the novelist, though it can't be actually termed as a transcreation. There's nothing new he has tried to construct, yet from the point of view of fidelity and equivalence, the target text has been a successful one.

## 9. SUGGESTIONS :

It is suggested that a translated text to be rightly termed as a transcreation has more to do with the space given to the translator. Originality has nothing to do with word-to-word structure, rather it depends on the psychological judgement of the readers, in understanding that each language has its limitations. Hence, when the target text has most of the magical tools employed by the original author, conveyed in a new style by the translator, it becomes a transcreation.

## 10. CONCLUSION :

Due to the nature of the material and the differences between the source and target cultures, the translator had to make some changes to the text in order to maintain specific cultural allusions. The needs of the target translation readers do not call for formal equivalency, hence it was not attempted. Furthermore, comprehensive dynamic Therefore, neither of these extremes should be used since they have cultural repercussions. Equivalence is not preferred since it's important to protect some cultural aspects. Translation issues are brought on by more than just linguistic issues. It is a matter of aesthetics and ideology in literary history. Literary translation involves more than just transcribing a work into another language. An ordered sub-system of signs from one language is replicated in another language and corresponds to the same ordered sub-system. Translation does not imply the reversal of signs or meaning. The original work still occupies its original position after translation is finished. An endeavour to resuscitate the original in a different word arrangement and in a different chronological context is what a translation really is. Translations endure throughout succeeding ages; they nonetheless represent the original periods and styles.

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