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**Papers in Tamil Literature**

# APERS IN TAMIL LITERATURE

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## PREFACE

This volume is a collection of ten papers written in different occasions throwing light on different aspects of Tamil Literature. Some of these papers were presented in different seminars; some were published in different journals; some were originally written in Tamil and later rendered into English; some were broadcast in the Madras station of All India Radio.

I hope that this collection will inculcate interest especially in the English knowing public to know further the hoary and grand literary tradition and treasure of the Tamils.

I am grateful to Dr. V. Jayadevan for having edited this volume and presented it in a pretty form. I am also thankful to Thiru P. Udayakumar for having added the Index to this volume.

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C. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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## DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES IN *KURUNTOKAI*

Tolkāppiyaṅār has wisely divided his grammar into three parts, namely Eḷuttatikāram, Collatikāram and Poruḷatikāram. These three parts of his grammar deal in extenso with many aspects: orthography, phonetics, phonology, morphology, etymology, syntax, semantics, prosody and rhetoric. The erudition of *Tolkāppiyam*, shows that even prior to that work, there must have existed some treatise on grammar, because Tolkāppiyaṅār mentions in a number of places previous authors on the subject. Words and phrases like 'eṅpa', 'eṅmaṅār pulavar', 'yappaṅi-pulavar', 'Nuṅṅitiṅ uṅarntōr' and 'molipa' occur frequently in his writings.

But most of the rules enunciated by Tolkāppiyaṅār lost their force by the time of Sangam literature as seen from the writings of the later day commentators on *Tolkāppiyam*. Therefore, *Tolkāppiyam* may well be looked upon as a treatise on grammar earlier in time compared to the Sangam period.

Tolkāppiyaṅār gives in detail elaborate rules and describes the various sentiments, etc., which were not so much essential for the narrative verse of the later day epic. The dramatic moments are depicted in separate unconnected lyrical stanzas in these works.

The Ceyyuḷ Iyal, in the third part of *Tolkāppiyam* is a treatise on prosody. It deals with the literary composition of the age. The theory of poetry is beautifully brought out in this chapter. The first 'cūttiram' itself speaks about the various constituents of a verse.

'The harking back to the ideal behaviour patterns of an ennobling humanity (Tiṇai); their varying main currents of activity (Kaikkōḷ); the speaker (Kūrṟu) whose expression is the poem; the person to whom the poem is spoken (Kēṭpōr); the place (Kaḷaṇ); the time of the poem (Kālam); the resulting effect or purpose of the verse (Payaṇ); the sentiment or emotion bubbling forth there; the elliptical construction or the yearning after completion of the sense, at every stage of its progress (Eccam); the context making the meaning (Muṇṇam); the underlying universality (Poruḷ); the ford of the poetic current where the particularity enters into the flow of poetry or the particularity of the poetic aspect of the verse (Tuṟai)'<sup>1</sup> are some of the important constituents of a poem.

From this it appears 'that every poem is expected to be spoken by one and addressed to some other, at a particular place and time, inspired by an urge or purpose, and resulting in an effect, the whole speech being aglow with a living major sentiment or emotion or feeling'.<sup>2</sup>

Further, Tolkāppiyaṇār stresses that the three units, of action, of time and of place are necessary for a poem. 'The unity of all these trinities within the unit of a poetical moment of one dramatic speech and no more!' This is quite clear from every *Akam* poem which invariably gives a series of illustrative rather than exhaustive poetic situations, where the dramatic personnel may give expression to their lyrical feelings'. Hence every poem may be considered a dramatic monologue. If these poems are rearranged as to make successive narrative, it may result in a connected story of love or war. In this sense all the *Akam* poems are all dramatic monologues of the lovers or their companions, or the foster-mother or the prostitute or the confidant of the hero and others. Tolkāppiyaṇār contemplates in his theory of poetry not any continuous narrative poetry in the form of an epic, but only isolated poems.

We find no drama or epic before *Cilappatikāram*. In those days there were actors, Porunars and dancers. But no drama

of Sangam age is extant. Only in the later age the idea of 'Kōvai' dawned in the minds of the poets.

W.H. Hudson speaks about three kinds of dramatic element in poetry. The first kind he calls by the name 'Dramatic Lyric'. The best examples for this type of dramatic lyric are Browning's works and Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*. The ballad or the short story in verse form such as Arnold's *Forsaken Merman* comes under the second division called the Dramatic story. 'The third species of Dramatic poetry comprises the Dramatic Monologue or soliloquy....The aim of the ideal dramatic monologue may, therefore, be defined as the faithful self-portrayal, without ulterior motive of the personality of the (supposed) speaker'.<sup>3</sup>

In the footnote, the same author remarks thus: 'Though the two words (Dramatic Monologue) are habitually employed interchangeably, soliloquy really means a poem in which the speaker talks to himself, as in Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*; monologue, a poem in which he addresses some listener or listeners, as in his *Andrea del Sarto* and *Fra Lippo Lippi*.'<sup>4</sup> 'It is essentially a study of character, of mental state, of moral crisis made from the inside. Thus it is predominantly psychological, analytical, meditative, argumentative'. W.H. Hudson emphasises that Browning was the greatest master in this field.

Let us look into the pages of *Kuruntokai*, having in mind the principles laid down by Hudson and assess its value as to the element of dramatic monologue prevailing in it.

The persons who are speakers in the poems, treating the theme of clandestine stage of love according to *Tolkāppiyam* are the Brahmin, the hero's friend, the lady-love's friend, the foster-mother, the hero and the lady-love.<sup>5</sup> Those who are speakers in the poems pertaining to the theme of married state of life, according to *Tolkāppiyam* are: the Bard, the male dancer, the woman dancer, the prostitute, the learned (Aṟivar) and the on-looker (Kaṇṭōr) in addition to the six persons who are mentioned in the clandestine stage of love.<sup>6</sup>

But in *Kuruntokai*, we have only the speeches of the lady-love or the heroine, the lady-companion, the lover or the hero, the foster-mother, the on-looker, the hero's friend and the prostitute. In the poem 396, there is the possibility of taking the speech as that of the 'mother' (Naṅṅāy).<sup>7</sup> The canons about the poem might have been written by a learned scholar since they are all of great help to understand the context of the poem, the mental state of the speaker, the hearers of the speech and the effect that it has produced. In short, the canons go a long way to make us fully understand and appreciate the dramatic situations and moments, the poem so aptly portrays. The canon of the above poem (396) simply illustrates thus 'Makaṅ pōkkiya Tāy uraittatu'. The first preference given by Dr. Swaminatha Iyer is to the speech of the foster-mother. Applying this verdict to this anthology, we do not see a single poem being spoken by the mother. Likewise there is no poem in *Kuruntokai* mentioned as the speech of the Pārppāṅ the bard, the learned scholar Aṅivar, the driver of the chariot Pākaṅ. But in one poem, we find that the lady-companion addressing the learned scholar although his reply is not given there.<sup>8</sup> There are five references that could be cited as addresses of the hero to the driver of his chariot<sup>9</sup>; but not *vice versa*.

Although the bard does not figure as a speaker in any poem in *Kuruntokai*, yet there are a few references where he is addressed by the heroine<sup>10</sup> or by the lady-companion.<sup>11</sup>

There are some apostrophes also to the moon<sup>12</sup>, to the cock<sup>13</sup>, to the rain<sup>14</sup>, to the mullai flower<sup>15</sup>, to the sea<sup>16</sup>, to the north wind<sup>17</sup>, to the river<sup>18</sup>, and to the beetle<sup>19</sup> which will be dealt in extenso later in this chapter.

In the canons, it is to be noted that the heroine is referred to as 'Talaivi', 'Talaimakaḷ' and 'Kiḷatti' and the hero as 'Talaivaṅ', 'Talaimakaṅ' and 'Kiḷavaṅ'. Likewise, both the words 'Kāval' and 'Kāppu' occur in the canons to denote the restrictions imposed by the parents in the case of their daughter when they come to know of her love-affair.

## LADY-LOVE OR THE HEROINE

The poems that are mentioned as the monologues of the heroine in the *Kuruntokai* collection are altogether 180 in number. Out of them, the heroine speaks to her lady-companion in 142 poems.<sup>20</sup> Thus nearly three-fourths of her monologues are addressed to the lady-companion. This shows the special position occupied by the lady-companion in the Akam poems.

Most of the verses are noted as the reply of the heroine to her companion when asked whether she is bold enough to hear the separation of the hero for a short period before marriage. In this context it is to be noted that the query of the lady-companion is not mentioned explicitly but we have to infer from the situation. Here is an instance:

‘The chillness of the north wind is felt more severely on the dreary nights when even the cranes and the crabs could not bear it. This season being so severe, the lover has not yet turned up here. Is it good on the part of any lover?’<sup>21</sup>

Sometimes, the heroine will say that she can bear the separation of the hero. One such instance is this: ‘Just now I had a look at the mountain of the hero where due to heavy down pour of rain, the peacocks are shivering and the grey-faced langurs with their young ones are also shivering with cold. Is my forehead still of the same state now? Let me know my companion’<sup>22</sup>.

Next to this, the theme relating to the advent of the season *paruva varavu*, occupies a prominent place in the conversation of the heroine and the lady-companion. On seeing the advent of the rainy season in which the hero promised to return, the heroine’s hardship knew no bounds. She utters these words in her desolate condition.

‘The Mullai buds blossom with the advent of the rainy season. The hero who is the reason for making the jewels on my body to get loose has not come here; but the evening has set in to make me feel more distressed’<sup>23</sup>.

When the lady-companion tries to appease her that it is not the rainy season proper, the heroine reluctantly and in a tone of desolateness asks her: "The Koṅrai flowers, which resemble the globular gold coins adorning the feet of the kids of the rich, have blossomed with the advent of the rainy season. If you say that this is not the season proper, tell me whether what I am seeing is only a dream?"<sup>24</sup>

Sometimes when the companion consoles her when her hero has gone away to a distant country, the heroine feels more miserable on seeing the Mullai buds on the shepherd's locks<sup>25</sup>, since Mullai served as the calendar of those days and indicated the in-coming of the rainy season.

Astonishingly in a few instances the heroine will take the budding of Mullai, etc., season as a false indication. For example in the poem 21 of *Kuruntokai*, the heroine says to her companion as follows: 'Although the Koṅrai flowers are adorning beautifully the tresses of the ladies, I would not take this season as the rainy season since my hero is not accustomed to tell lies'<sup>26</sup>.

There is only one instance in the whole of the *Kuruntokai* where the heroine speaks directly to the hero. The reference here is to the happy union of the hero and the heroine after his return from the house of a prostitute. The heroine exclaims to him: 'Oh my Lord of the sea! Even in subsequent births that are to follow, you shall be my husband, and I want to be dear and near to your heart'<sup>27</sup>.

Here the heroine cleverly uses the word as 'one who is dear and near to his heart' instead of the word 'wife'. No doubt, she remains as a faithful wife to him in this birth. But there appears to be no equal response from him as he was attracted by some prostitute to whom he had given his heart. So the heroine does not want merely to be his wife in the subsequent births but also wants his total love and affection to be reserved for her alone.

Sometimes the heroine speaks of herself when she is left in an utter state of desolation. One such instance is as follows: 'The Āmpal with closed petals looks like the back of the crane and indicates the setting in of the evening. Nay, not only the evening, but also the night is to follow it.'<sup>28</sup>

This is a sort of monologue where the heroine speaks out her heart, failing to control her feelings. There are eight occasions where the feelings of the heroine are thus expressed.<sup>29</sup>

There are twenty poems in *Kuruntokai* where we can see the *ciraip puṛak-kūrṛu* of the heroine.<sup>30</sup> 'Ciraip puṛam' is a 'secret place, a hedge-side near a mansion from which a lover can watch unseen what passes between his sweetheart and her maid.'<sup>31</sup>

There is not even a single instance of a speech of the heroine directly addressed to the hero in the *Kuruntokai*. But there is one example in the whole collection where the heroine speaks to her hero and that only a speech in married life. The noteworthy feminine modesty of the heroine stands in her way to speak to the hero direct or it was considered indecent to talk ill against the hero under his very nose. Further direct speech may not bring such good results. In some cases it may prove to be the other way about. So the heroine makes use of an indirect way of speaking to the hero. Knowing of the arrival of her lord very near the hedge where she stands, that too within earshot, the heroine speaks to her lady-companion telling her about her sorrowful plight as well as the unkind attitude of her hero. These speeches of pretention or the indirect way of dealing with the situations are considered to be more effective and appealing to the hero. Thus the *Ciraippuṛak kūrṛu* plays an important role in the clandestine stage of love.

The hero goes on postponing the actual marriage, longing for the emotional enjoyment of clandestine union. The heroine becomes impatient and distressed 'since she sees him less and less'.<sup>32</sup> She pines away with grief. The lady-companion speaks



ill of the hero when the heroine says 'that her love towards the hero is larger than the earth, higher than the sky and deeper than the sea'.<sup>33</sup> On hearing these words, it is certain that the hero would think highly of his lady-love and make efforts for an early marriage.

In another instance, the heroine addresses the cloud, but her intention is that her hero must get to know of her plight.<sup>34</sup> She blames the cloud for its merciless and harsh behaviour towards the pitiable women who are deserted by their lovers. It is needless to mention here, the over-hearer of her speech, i.e., the hero will take immediate steps to expedite the marriage.

An instance can be cited to prove the effect of the indirect speech of the heroine in the married state of life. In the single instance in the whole collection the heroine speaks to her husband indirectly when he has just come from the prostitute's house. She tells her companion that it is better to die than to demand from the hero the virginity that had been given away for the married life.<sup>35</sup>

There are two more apostrophes in the heroine's speech, one is to the cock<sup>36</sup> and the other to the river.<sup>37</sup>

The heroine experiences an immense measure of pleasure on the night on which the hero returns, and she comes to know of the day break suddenly when she hears the cock crowing. She chides the cock in her fury and curses it to become the prey of a wild cat.

Addressing the river which flows with torrents of water from the mountain of her lover, the heroine says (the hero overhears her words) that it is more merciless than her hero since it has rooted out the plantain tree from the mountain. 'On frequently seeing the plantain tree on the slope of her hero's hill, she had a sort of consolation in her desolation. Since the tree itself is now rooted out and brought down by the river, she is at the end of her tether. From hearing her words, it is

certain, the hero's heart will melt and he will quickly arrange for their marriage.'

The heroine speaks in two instances to the associates of the hero.<sup>38</sup> She complains of the ill treatment by the hero since he is responsible for her present paleness and the emaciated state of her body.

In another instance, she addresses the bard when he mentions the return of the hero. The words and the manner in which the heroine speaks imply haste. 'Have you seen him coming? or have you heard from others? Please state to me clearly. You will be rewarded with the prosperous and flourishing wealth of the city Pāṭali on the banks of the river Sōn where the white-tusked elephants are plunging into the waters to have a bath. Please tell me from whom you got the information of the home-coming of my hero'.<sup>39</sup>

This is a very good example to explain the dramatic monologue. The address of the heroine to the bard implies the dramatic situation that she was told by the bard of the return of the hero. Thus we infer the previous incident or talk that might have taken place.

Further, it is to be noted that the author of this poem is Paṭumarattu Mōcīkīraṇār, a poet who imagines the feelings of a woman and ably presents them. 'The symbolic nature of human events is even more evident in lyrical poetry. The emotional moment which a lyric celebrates may to the poet mean much more than itself; and if it is completely caught in language, it will suggest it to the reader also'.<sup>40</sup>

It is the dramatists' or the novelists' business to find a wide and continuous range of emotional effects; but in an Akam poem the continuous emotion of narrative of epic grandeur is not necessary.

Thus in every Akam poem the thoughts and feelings of the author are beautifully interwoven and expressed through the

characters he imagines and creates. The experience itself is thus transplanted in the minds of the reader.

There are four references in *Kuruntokai* where the heroine speaks to herself, that is to her own heart.<sup>41</sup> She really addresses her heart as 'eṇ neñcē.'

The lady-love here rebukes her heart for having loved the hero in spite of her warnings and doubt. The situation is that the hero is prolonging the secret courtship without arranging for their marriage early. Seeing her emaciated condition, the parents kept a vigilant watch over her. So it brought on her an unbearable grief since she is unable to meet her lover at a tryst. In her extreme misery she talks to herself as follows: 'O heart, I have warned you that you should not speak to the hero with soft, sweet and enchanting words. But you have totally forgotten all my words when you say him.'<sup>42</sup>

Here the poet Ammūvaṇ who is a poet par excellence in treating the Neytal theme, beautifully portrays the feeling and the pangs of love of the heroine, bringing out clearly the destitute condition of the lady-love.

Rarely the heroine refuses admittance to the hero even when it was requested through the companion. She compares the hero to the Neruñci that blossoms first and then grows thorns. The hero, who at first was kind in the clandestine stage, now turns to be cruel to her.<sup>43</sup> Telling this she denied admittance to the hero. This poem implies an earlier request of the companion to accept her husband, the hero. Further the poem ably portrays the past and the present attitude of the hero towards the heroine.

The companion visits the house of the heroine (kaṭi nakar) during her married life. She asks her how she is able to bear the separation of her hero now. The heroine replies that although her husband is away from her in a distant land on duty, he is very near to her heart, and hence she is able to bear the separation.<sup>44</sup>

She tells the companion that her Lord embraced her long ago in the white moonlight and her shoulders still preserve the sweet smell of the Mullai.<sup>45</sup>

### THE LADY-COMPANION

Next to the heroine, the lady-companion occupies the most prominent position among the women characters in the Akam poems. She is said to be the daughter of the foster-mother.<sup>46</sup> Scholars are of opinion that the lady-companion is always a married woman. She is clever and wise enough to play her part skillfully in the love-episodes between the hero and the heroine. She consoles the heroine when she pines away due to separation. She has rich worldly experience in store and rebukes the hero whenever she deems it fit to do. She is noted for her power of eloquence. She knows fully well how, when and where to deal with persons. She continues to be the companion of the heroine even in her married stage. In the clandestine stage she appeals to the hero to arrange for early marriage. In case it is not possible, she urges to agree to elope with the heroine. She visits the house of the heroine after the marriage to know how they are in their married state of life. Thus the lady-companion plays a major role in Akam poems.<sup>47</sup>

There are 140 poems where the lady-companion is the speaker. Nearly a half of the poems giving her speech in form to be addressed to the heroine. They are sixty eight in number<sup>48</sup> dealing with various situations.

Most of her talks with the heroine relate to two particular aspects. One is she consoles the heroine when the hero had left her for a short period prior to the marriage and the other speech is a consolation to the heroine when she becomes restless and desolate on the advent of the rainy season. Thus her main duty is to console the heroine during the absence of her hero both in the clandestine and married states of life.

The hero prolongs the period of the clandestine union and postpones marriage. The heroine becomes emaciated and pale.

She really pities her condition and fears that it may disclose to her parents her secret relationship. While consoling her, the companion utters thus: 'Let him restrain from coming over here to meet you. Do not feel much distressed over the deterioration of your health. Let us purchase in the local market smaller bangles that will fit in your withering hands and wear it to avoid the suspicion of your secret union by your parents.'<sup>49</sup>

This is really a good picture of poetry. In the first place the extraordinary skill of the companion in giving relief to the lady-love in her miserable condition is to be noted. Secondly it gives a vivid idea of what would have preceded this speech. Possibly the lady-love might have expressed her state of plight to her. This is the reply to the heroine by way of consolation and at the same time she suggests the remedy also which is easily available, i.e., purchasing smaller bangles and wearing them.

At the advent of the rainy season, the season when the hero promised to return, the heroine's misery becomes immense. So she becomes much distressed and her feelings of misery are beyond her control. At that juncture, the lady-companion consoles her that it is not really the advent of the rainy season, although the foolish peacock dances on seeing the early showers. Even the 'piṭavu' has also blossomed. But this is not the season proper. The sky is discharging the old stock of water of the previous rainy season for the sake of fetching fresh water from the sea. Hearing the thunderous sound of the sky, the peacock is foolish enough to mistake the rainy season had really set in. This is not really the incoming of the rainy season, my dear, do not feel distress'<sup>50</sup> (kār aṅṅu ikuḷai tīrka niṅ paṭarē).

Thus the lady-companion in a masterly and intelligent manner consoles the lady-love. This kind of speech of the companion is called 'paruvam aṅṅu paṭṭatu vampu eṅal'. This speech implies to be a reply to a question of the heroine on seeing the advent of rainy season.

Just to divert the feelings of the lady-love when she is brooding the companion tries to speak ill of her hero. The

consequence that may arise will be a speech in favour of the hero from the mouth of the lady-love. By denying the charge levelled against her lover, the lady-love forgets her distress and comes forward to defend her lover. While the maid accuses the hero for not getting her married soon, the lady-love begins to tell her the ennobling qualities of her lover. This is a trick played upon the lady-love by the companion to divert her feelings when she is filled with grief.

One such instance is this :

‘Your natural beauty is withered; your shoulders have lost their lustre; your soul gets troubled; you have no comfortable sleep in the nights; your face has become sallow; this is the result of your merriment with your lover’.

On hearing this, the lady-love is expected to get impatient and make a reply immediately telling all the ennobling qualities of her lord.

The speeches made by the lady-companion to the hero are really worth studying. There are instances where the unique skill of the companion is depicted. In the whole collection except two speeches,<sup>51</sup> that were made by the companion of the hero (*pāñkañ*) and one by the heroine in the married state,<sup>52</sup> the person who is addressing the hero is none other than the lady-companion. There are forty one speeches where she addresses the hero<sup>53</sup> in various ways. The striking speech of the companion could be seen in her address to the hero in urging him to accept the lady-love’s hand in marriage as early as possible when he on his part was postponing the marriage.

‘O Chief of the hill country of fertile slopes abundant with bamboo hedges and jack trees full of fruits at its roots! Like the big jack fruit hanging on the very thin boughs, the soul of the lady-love is very delicate whereas her love for you is very great. Whoever (except yourself) knows this? May you arrange to win her hand early in marriage’.<sup>54</sup>

In her address to the hero, she beautifully portrays the desperate condition of the lady-love. Since the hero happens to be a lord of the hillock, the big jack fruits hanging on the slender boughs could not have escaped his vision. So she aptly chooses this simile to give him an idea about the quantum of the love of his beloved.

The whole poem constitutes a dramatic monologue. This is called as 'expediting the marriage' (varaivu kaṭāval.).

Sometimes the parents, on seeing their daughter becoming famished seek the aid of a fortune-teller to find out the exact reason for their daughter's illness or languishing. At that time, thinking that the situation is going out of her hand, the companion speaks to the soothsayer so as to enable the mother and the foster mother infer about the clandestine love. She addresses the fortune-teller like this: 'O sooth-sayer! O fortune-teller! O sibyl with lengthy tresses as white as in colour of the conch! Sing the song. Again and again sing the song of his (hero's) lovely lofty hill'.<sup>55</sup>

The companion thus cleverly attempts to reveal to the mother and the foster-mother the secret love of the heroine. The dramatic monologue and the manner in which it is expressed by the lady-companion are really noteworthy.

The denial of the night-tryst to the hero is very suggestive. The hero despite the obstacles in his path during nights comes daily to meet his lady-love. But hearing the dangers of the route that he had to take to come to the night-tryst, the lady-love feels much and it becomes necessary to the companion to deny him the night-tryst. It will not be decent to tell him directly not to come henceforth. So she wisely says thus: 'O the Lord of the hill! The female monkey of your region, after the death of its male companion, unwilling to face widowhood, leaves its young ones under the care of its relation and commits suicide by leaping down from the top of the hill.

Please do not take such a route in the midnight. It will make us miserable'.<sup>56</sup>

The idea underlying this poem is that even a female monkey of his region is not willing to endure separation from its partner, then how could his sweet-heart be expected to remain even after hearing the countless difficulties and dangers that he had to face enroute his journey. Through this speech, the lady-companion appeals indirectly to the hero to arrange for the marriage early.

In an apostrophe to the moon she suggests to the hero that it is not advisable to come during nights when the full moon makes everything clearly visible.<sup>57</sup>

The lady-companion is really the mouth piece of the heroine. She takes full liberty to speak on her behalf. This is borne out by a number of poems in this collection.

The hero tries to be admitted by his wife when he is returning from a prostitute's house. He sends a bard as a mediator between him and the heroine. But the lady-companion stops the bard at the doorstep and says 'Your Lord is very affectionate according to you. The local male sparrow collects the white straw of the sugarcane to be preserved and used at the time of delivery of its mate. But your hero though he possesses rationality has no sympathy for his house wife'.<sup>58</sup>

Thus she plainly speaks of the unsympathetic attitude of the hero towards his wife, by drawing attention to the affectionate life led by the sparrows. She hinted at the irresponsibility on the part of the hero who was happy hitherto in the company of the prostitute.

There are six references where the companion speaks to the associates of the hero.<sup>59</sup>

There are eighteen poems in the *Kuruntokai* collection where the companion speaks to the heroine pretending not to have



seen the hero who has come there.<sup>60</sup> All the while the hero is hearing near the hedge of the hamlet.

In one case the companion tells the heroine thus: 'The days when your lover embraced you warmly and affectionately are quite few; but the public gossip is more clamorous than the victorious uproar of the sworded Kongars at their victory over Atikaṅ, the commander-in-chief of Pacumpūṭ Pāṇṭiyaṅ in the battle-field at Vākai.<sup>61</sup>

Through the mouth of the companion, the poet describe the relationship between the hero and the lady-love which had now resulted in public gossip.

The foster-mother is addressed by the lady-companion on only one instance.<sup>62</sup> When she was asked by the foster-mother about the continued languishing of the lady-love, she tells her that she has chosen a suitor worthy of her in every respect. 'It is fate that decides the course of love. There is no use of calling for a diviner to settle the matter who may say that the illness is due to the wrath of God Muruga.'<sup>63</sup>

There is only one address made to the learned scholar who knows the future<sup>64</sup> aṅivar where she asks him whether that is the proper time when the hero promised to return. In an apostrophe to the bee, but of course intended to be heard by the hero, who is there nearby she explains fully the state of the heroine due to the delay of getting married to the hero.<sup>65</sup>

Thus the lady-companion freely speaks with all the characters in the Akam poems. Sometimes, she even laughs at the hero for his actions.<sup>66</sup>

## THE HERO

The *Kuruntokai* contains sixtytwo poems having the speeches of the hero and one-third of them are soliloquies. Twenty poems relating to the hero are addressed to himself.<sup>67</sup> This leads us to assume that his mental set up is disturbed since his desire of meeting the lady-love was not invariably successful.

Here is an instance where the hero returned unsuccessfully without meeting his lady-love in a night-tryst. Despite the signal sound he made, his lady-love did not turn up to meet him. Perhaps her foster-mother might have been awake which prevented her from stepping out. At this juncture, the hero addresses his heart thus: 'Like the destitute person yearning for the happiness of life, you aspire for a rare object. You understand that the lady who is in love with you is gentle and good natured, but you do not realize that she is difficult to be obtained'.<sup>68</sup>

This is a beautiful soliloquy. Here the hero differentiates the two attitudes of the heart. It loves the lady-love very dearly but at the same time, it is reluctant to understand the difficulty of obtaining the maid in love.

On a few occasions, he exclaims thus: 'The love proved to be imaginary with the passage of time, i.e. the morning, the day, the desolate evening, the midnight, and the dawn (poḷutiṭai teriyiṛ poyyē kāmam). Henceforth it is a blameworthy act to ride on the chariot made of palmyra stalks (stalks). More than that it is ridiculous to live after separation'.<sup>69</sup>

Similar to this, there are five other instances where the hero speaks out and all of them are monologues.<sup>70</sup>

The hero's friend is called by the name 'Pāṅkaṅ' in Akam literature. He always takes proper care of the hero. On seeing the hero in distress he asks him the reason for the change of demeanour. On such occasions the hero's reply would run thus: 'The shouldered young lass, the daughter of the highlander living in the small hamlet put out the fire of my nature and has completely conquered my heart'.<sup>71</sup> The hero's speech forms a dramatic dialogue.

The hero addresses the driver of the chariot in six poems.<sup>72</sup> 'The days not spent by embracing the heroine from whose forehead emanates the smell of the mullai flower are all useless.

Only the days in close proximity with the heroine are the days really worth living here, in this world'.<sup>73</sup>

This clearly expresses the idea of love in the mind of the hero.

There are two apostrophes one to the Mullai buds<sup>74</sup> and the other to the north wind.<sup>75</sup> In the former case although the address is attributed to the north wind, really the hero speaks to the driver of the chariot.

On seeing Mullai buds blossoming due to the advent of the rainy season, he exclaims to them thus: 'You are smiling by showing your white teeth (petals) which are the result of the fresh showers in the red soil. Is it good on your part to laugh at persons who are away from their beloved and enduring loneliness?'

In an apostrophe to the north wind he speaks to the driver of the chariot, pointing out to him the exact location of the small hut in whose court-yard the 'maraiyā, was eating the gooseberry fruit (nelli).

Six addresses are made to the lady-companion.<sup>76</sup> The hero returns home wealthy. The lady-companion inquires of him whether he remembered his wife during the absence. The reply runs thus: 'Did I not remember her? Remembering, did I not think greatly about her? Did I not, thinking of the very nature of the world and I get confused? Like the floods that, touching even the boughs of the towering trees, diminish itself in its size and in the flow of water only to be ladled out with the hand and finally dry up altogether, my flood of love was immense when I was away from the heroine and has now become very thin on meeting her and ceased to flow after the warmth of the embrace'.<sup>77</sup> This is from the pen of Avvaiyār who has knit the feelings of the hero into a beautiful poem.

In an apostrophe to the rain,<sup>78</sup> the hero addresses it to shower in torrents since he is now in the happy company of his

sweetheart after the journey that he undertook to acquire enough wealth to lead a comfortable life.

The lady-love feels desolate when she learns that separation awaited her immediately after the happy union with her lover. On seeing this, the hero tries to console her by saying: 'O tender-hearted lady! If I separate from you, leaving you pine away with grief, let me have many days before me in which mendicants may not turn out for alms from my hands'.<sup>79</sup>

Three more poems also deal with the same subject.<sup>80</sup>

Thus the speeches or the dialogues of the hero are varied in the manner and method of expression. Many of the speeches are to his heart. There is no speech directly to the heroine. Even in the poems where the hero consoles the heroine over her fear of separation (*pirivaccam uraittal*), the speech of the heroine is only to be inferred. When he decides to go on a journey leaving her so that he might amass wealth for a better mundane life, he speaks to his heart about the gentle and sweet nature of his sweetheart and every such speech can be regarded as a dramatic monologue.

## THE FOSTER-MOTHER

There are nine poems in *Kuruntokai* in which the addresses are made by the foster-mother.<sup>81</sup> In no instance does she speak directly either with the hero or the heroine. *Tolkāppiyṅār* mentions in his grammar that the mother will not speak with the hero or the heroine.<sup>82</sup>

After hearing from the lady-companion that the hero and the heroine had married, she reveals to the mother that the intimacy of the lady-love with the young man has become as true as the proverbial truthfulness of the Kosars of Nālūr.<sup>83</sup>

The foster-mother, when she hears of the elopement, goes to the desert (*Pālai* region) in search of the eloped couple. She strains her eyes, walks hither and thither in her search. She

meets a large number of eloping couples and not her own foster-daughter. So she utters in distress that there are more persons than the stars in the sky engaged in secret courtship and elopement.<sup>84</sup> This is really a pathetic cry from the heart of the foster-mother when she could not discern the eloping couple.

After she comes to know of the elopement of her daughter with the hero whom she loved, through the lady-companion she remarks thus: 'She (the heroine) would not even drink milk; would not play with the ball but was always engaged in the company of her play-mates; does she now feel it easy to elope with the hero along the routes of the dry desert where the thirsty elephant eagerly awaits the incoming of rain in future!'

Thus the foster-mother connects and compares the past and present states of mind of the heroine.

It is also part of her duty to visit the house of the heroine after her marriage. She visits and observes the happy and dutiful life lead by her foster-daughter and tells the mother what she had seen at the heroine's house.

'With her tender rosy fingers, she mashes the curd and without even cleansing her stained fingers, she tucks up her saree and prepares sour soup, not even minding the smoke spread to her cool and charming water-lily like eyes. On the arrival of her husband to dine she commends the preparations and eats with joy. On hearing his good comments her fair-browed face brightens with subtle joy'.<sup>85</sup>

This is a beautiful description of the happy life of the couple by Kūṭalūr Kiḷār. This is a real happening that was observed by the foster-mother. In a dramatic monologue, she beautifully explains in detail the life by her daughter in her new home after marriage.

## PROSTITUTE

Five poems<sup>86</sup> are the addresses made by the prostitute mostly to be heard by the associates of the heroine except in one case where she blames another prostitute.<sup>87</sup>

When the prostitute heard that the heroine was talking ill of her, she (the prostitute) speaks out in such a way as to be heard by the associates of the heroine expressing her displeasure.

She blames the heroine like this: 'The hero despite the great promise that he had made, has now turned to be so good as to dance to the tune of the mother, of his son, i.e., the heroine'. The prostitute dislikes to mention the heroine as such. She simply mentions her to be the mother of the hero's son. By implication she does not want to give recognition to the heroine as the wife of the hero. There is an allegory also in her speech which means that she need not be blamed as she had not coveted the hero from the heroine, but that the heroine is not capable enough to attract her husband and keep him always with herself.

Thus the speech of the prostitute is in the form of narration of a dramatic monologue.

### KANṬŌR OR THE ON-LOOKERS IN THE DESERT

Three poems are the addresses made by the on-lookers in the desert.<sup>88</sup>

The on-lookers note the 'Kaḷal' on the feet of the hero and the anklet adorning the ankles of the heroine and thereby come to the conclusion that they are eloping. So they feel sympathy for them.

In another instance the on-lookers speak to themselves. They see the hero and the heroine who are eloping in prime of their youth. They utter thus: 'In their childhood days he caught hold of her locks; and in turn she drags the hair on his head; despite the interference of their respective foster-mothers they had not restrained from their harmless fighting. Those days are gone. Now they are inseparably united like the pair of flowers in a garland. This union is effected by fate, nothing but good fate'.

Although this is the speech of the on-lookers in the desert, it beautifully portrays the events that occurred in the past when they were children and the present happening when they are eloping.

### PĀṆKAN OR THE HERO'S FRIEND

There are two poems in the whole collection mentioning the Pāṅkaṇ.<sup>89</sup>

On seeing the hero pine away with grief, he asks his friend the real cause of his distress. The hero replies that it is due to the love for a lady. On hearing this, the friend rebukes him for the act of blemish that he has committed. In his opinion he feels that his love for a girl is disgraceful and below the dignity of the hero. The hero replies harshly to his friend thus: 'People deprecate love without understanding its true nature. Love is neither of the nature of misery nor of disease. It is more subjective than objective as it is evident in the case of a cow licking and enjoying the tender blades of grass subjectively on an old plateau.'<sup>90</sup>

Likewise, the friend of the hero will tell the real character of love for which the hero would be reluctant to take up his advice since love has taken deep roots in his heart.

Thus poems classified as Akam or dealing with love in Sangam literature constitute dramatic poetry, since they are talks expressing emotional experiences of the interlocutors, the hero, the heroine, the lady-companion and others.<sup>91</sup>

In this sense every poem in the *Kurunotkai* collection may be considered as a dramatic monologue uttered by the characters of the Akam poems.

### FOOTNOTES

1. *Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaraṅār Sixty-first Birthday Commemoration Volume* p. 56.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 60

3. W.H. Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, pp. 112, 113.
4. *Ibid.*, Footnote on p. 112.
5. பார்ப்பான் பாங்கன் தோழி செவிலி  
சீர்த்தகு சிறப்பின் கிழவன் கிழத்தியொடு  
அளவியல் மரபின் அறுவகை யோரும்  
களவின் கிளவிக்கு உரியர் என்ப —*Tol.*, 1445.
6. பாணன் கூத்தன் விறலி பரத்தை  
ஆணஞ் சான்ற அறிவர் கண்டோர்  
பேணுதகு சிறப்பின் பார்ப்பான் முதலா  
முன்னுறக் கிளந்த அறுவரொடு தொகைஇ  
தொன்னெறி மரபின் கற்பிற்கு உரியர் —*Tol.*, 1446.
7. இதனை நற்றாய் கூற்றுகவும் கொள்ளுதல் பொருந்தும்.  
—Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, *Kuru.*, Edition. p. 877.
8. *Kuru.*, 277.
9. *Ibid.*, 223, 237, 250, 323, 400.
10. *Ibid.*, 50, 75.
11. *Ibid.*, 45, 61, 85, 127, 359, 379.
12. *Ibid.*, 47.
13. *Ibid.*, 107.
14. *Ibid.*, 158, 270.
15. *Ibid.*, 162.
16. *Ibid.*, 163.
17. *Ibid.*, 235.
18. *Ibid.*, 327.
19. *Ibid.*, 392.
20. *Ibid.*, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 46, 54, 57, 60, 64, 65, 67, 76, 77, 79, 82, 86, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 110, 112, 118, 121, 126, 133, 134, 140, 145, 148, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 160, 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, 181, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 197, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 207, 208, 216, 218, 220, 221, 223, 224, 226, 228, 231, 234, 240, 241, 243, 245, 249, 252, 254, 257, 264, 266, 271, 278, 279, 281, 283, 285, 288, 289, 290, 293, 301, 302, 304, 307, 310, 314, 315, 316, 319, 322, 325, 329, 330, 334, 340, 341, 344, 352, 361, 368, 371, 377, 385, 386, 387, 391, 395, 398, 399.
21. *Ibid.*, 160.
22. *Ibid.*, 249.
23. முகை முற்றினவே முல்லை; முல்லையொடு  
தகை முற்றினவே தண்கார் வியன்புலம்  
வாலிழை நெகிழ்த்தோர் வாரார்  
மாலை வந்தன்று என்மாண்நலம் குறித்தே —*Kuru.*, 188.



24. *Ibid.*, 148.
25. *Ibid.*, 221.
26. *Ibid.*, 21.
27. *Ibid.*, 49.
28. *Ibid.*, 122.
29. *Ibid.*, 43, 68, 92, 122, 155, 157, 163, 195.
30. *Ibid.*, 3, 125, 141, 158, 161, 219, 239, 246, 261, 269, 296, 299, 311, 313, 318, 320, 326, 349, 360.
31. *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. III, Part III, p. 466.
32. 'காணும் பொழுதினும் காணப்பொழுது அதிகமாகலின்'
33. *Ibid.*, 3.
34. *Ibid.*, 158.
35. *Ibid.*, 349.
36. *Ibid.*, 107.
37. *Ibid.*, 327.
38. *Ibid.*, 50, 75.
39. *Ibid.*, 75.
40. L. Abercrombie, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 133.
41. *Kuru.*, 91, 305, 306, 401.
42. *Ibid.*, 306.
43. *Ibid.*, 202.
44. *Ibid.*, 228.
45. *Ibid.*, 193.
46. 'தேரழி தானே செவிலி மகளே' — *Tol.*, 1071.
47. M. Varadarajan, *Kuruntokai-c-celvam*, p. 34.
48. *Kuru.*, 16, 22, 34, 37, 48, 51, 52, 53, 59, 66, 74, 88, 117, 130, 135, 143, 146, 166, 176, 177, 180, 211, 212, 213, 215, 217, 230, 232, 247, 248, 251, 253, 255, 259, 260, 262, 265, 273, 275, 282, 284, 287, 297, 298, 308, 317, 321, 328, 331, 333, 338, 339, 343, 346, 348, 350, 351, 358, 367, 369, 373, 374, 380, 381, 382, 383, 389, 394.
49. *Ibid.*, 117.
50. *Ibid.*, 251.
51. *Ibid.*, 78, 204.
52. *Ibid.*, 49.
53. *Ibid.*, 1, 9, 10, 18, 42, 47, 69, 73, 81, 113, 114, 115, 124, 139, 146, 176, 179, 196, 198, 210, 225, 236, 238, 244, 258, 295, 303, 309, 324, 335, 336, 342, 345, 354, 355, 363, 365, 384, 388, 392, 397.
54. *Ibid.*, 18.
55. *Ibid.*, 23.
56. *Ibid.*, 69.
57. *Ibid.*, 47.

58. *Ibid.*, 85.  
 59. *Ibid.*, 45, 61, 85, 127, 359, 379.  
 60. *Ibid.*, 55, 89, 90, 109, 111, 123, 138, 159, 227, 263, 268, 292, 332, 353, 357, 373, 375, 393.  
 61. *Ibid.*, 393.  
 62. *Ibid.*, 366.  
 63. *Ibid.*, 366.  
 64. *Ibid.*, 277.  
 65. *Ibid.*, 392.  
 66. *Ibid.*, 236, 384.  
 67. *Ibid.*, 19, 29, 62, 63, 70, 71, 116, 120, 128, 131, 151, 165, 168, 182, 199, 274, 286, 312, 347, 376.  
 68. *Ibid.*, 120.  
 69. *Ibid.*, 32.  
 70. *Ibid.*, 56, 142, 223, 256, 267.  
 71. *Ibid.*, 95.  
 72. *Ibid.*, 100, 233, 237, 250, 323, 400.  
 73. *Ibid.*, 323.  
 74. *Ibid.*, 162.  
 75. *Ibid.*, 235.  
 76. *Ibid.*, 14, 17, 99, 173, 276, 337.  
 77. *Ibid.*, 99.  
 78. *Ibid.*, 270.  
 79. *Ibid.*, 137.  
 80. *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 300.  
 81. *Ibid.*, 15, 44, 84, 144, 167, 242, 356, 378, 396.  
 82. ' கிழவன் தன்னொடும் கிழத்தி தன்னொடும்  
 நற்றாய் கூறல் முற்றத் தோன்றது ' —Tol , 1448.  
 83. *Ibid.*, 15.  
 84. *Ibid.*, 44.  
 85. *Ibid.*, 167.  
 86. *Ibid.*, 8, 80, 164, 364, 370.  
 87. *Ibid.*, 364.  
 88. *Ibid.*, 7, 229, 390.  
 89. *Ibid.*, 78, 204.  
 90. *Ibid.*, 204.  
 91. M. Varadarajan, *The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature*, p. 4.

## 2

### CILAPPATIKĀRAM: AN INTRODUCTION

Cilappatikāram by Iḷaṅkō, the younger brother of Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṇ, the ruler of the Cēra country is regarded as the first epic in Tamil and it is supposed to be written during the 2nd Century A. D. Aṭiyārkkunallār, the commentator of the work calls it *iyal-icai-nāṭaka-p-poruḷ-toṭarnilai-c-ceyyuḷ* 'a poetical work dealing with a story with the elements of music and dance'. The prefatory verse, however, calls it *urai-iṭai-y-iṭṭa-pāṭṭuṭai-c-ceyyuḷ* 'a poetical work interspersed with prose and lyrics'. Both these terms are given up in favour of the more handy and shorter *kāppiyam* 'epic'<sup>1</sup>. Among the five major epics in Tamil, it tops, as 'it is a noble story, told in a long and loose narrative interspersed with digressions and lyrics'.<sup>2</sup> It is now freely acknowledged that it is 'among the supreme epics of the world, and its three-doned structure, the fiery purity and sublimity of the heroine, the startling shifts in scene and incident and character, the wide sweep of the action and the orchestrated grandeur of the whole have been admired by a choice of critics outside Tamil Nadu as well'.<sup>3</sup>

#### TITLE OF THE EPIC

The title *Cilappatikāram* comprises two words *cilampu* 'anklet' and *atikāram* 'literary work'. The story of the epic centres around the anklet and hence the title *Cilappatikāram*. This work can appropriately be named the *Epic of the Anklet*.

## STORY OF THE EPIC

There lived in the great city of *Kāviriṅṅampāṭṭiṅam*, otherwise known as *Pūmpukār* or *Pukār*, the capital of the Cōla king, two merchant princes *Mānāykan* and *Mācāttuvān* who respectively had a daughter *Kaṅṅaki* and a son *Kōvalaṅ*. On an auspicious day, the marriage of *Kōvalaṅ* with *Kaṅṅaki* took place. Soon a separate establishment was set up for the couple by their rich parents and the couple spent sometime together happily. One day when *Kōvalaṅ* was passing through the busy streets of the city, he happened to cast his eyes upon a charming damsel by name *Mātavi*, who hailed from a courtesan family well known for traditional dancing, on the occasion of the inauguration of her dance performance. She was appreciated for her talents and gifted with the customary presents of a garland and 1,008 coins of gold by the king. The garland was handed over to a hunch-backed woman who was asked to go to a particular street and offer it to any rich man prepared to give 1,008 coins of gold and thus become the lover of *Mātavi*. *Kōvalaṅ* having fallen in love with her, noticed this offer of sale and in no time paid the value and went to her bridal chamber. He was so much enticed by her charms that he forgot his home and wife.

Time went on. *Mātavi* pleased *Kōvalaṅ* with her love and affection as well as her beauty and artistic talents. She lived with him not like a courtesan but like a loyal wife. She gave birth to a beautiful girl *Maṅimēkalai*. *Kōvalaṅ* was very happy in the company of *Mātavi*. By all his acts of generosity and also by his lavish spending for the sake of his sweetheart *Mātavi*, he lost almost all his wealth. He was no more in his joyful and gay mood.

There then came the festival sacred to God Indra. All *Pukār* celebrated it with pomp, grandeur and splendour. The lovers were entertaining themselves with music in the park on the sea-shore. *Kōvalaṅ* sang songs on the river *Kāviri* and on the sea-shore with many traditional themes of folk songs on

love. On hearing the themes, Mātavi misunderstood him as expressing his love for some other woman. She pretended to be in a sulking mood, and sang songs on the same themes as if to retaliate and pay him in the same measure. On hearing the songs, Kōvalaṅ thought that she had her mind on another lover and that she as a courtesan had been deceiving him all along. This caused a change in his feelings towards her. With wounded pride he left her, as he intended, for good. Mātavi could not do anything, felt great pain in her heart and returned home in a desolate mood.

Kōvalaṅ came home and exposed his heart to his sorrow-stricken wife Kaṇṇaki. He said:

‘சலம்புணர் கொள்கைச் சலதியொடாடிக்  
குலந்தரு வான் பொருட் குன்றந் தொலைந்த  
இலம்பாடு நாணுத் தரும்’<sup>4</sup>

‘I lived with a false woman and lost  
all my ancestral wealth. I now feel  
ashamed of my poverty’<sup>5</sup>

Kaṇṇaki, with a smile replied:

‘சிலம்புள கொண்ம்’<sup>6</sup>

‘Here are my anklets. You can have them’.<sup>7</sup>

Kōvalaṅ told her that he would use these anklets as capital for his business and earn back all he had lost. He asked her to come with him to the city of Madurai.

Led by fate, he set out for Madurai with Kaṇṇaki, whose only remaining jewels were the pair of anklets, early before day-break so that none could notice their leaving. His idea was to sell an anklet at Madurai and with the capital raised thereby to set up some business. On their way to Madurai, they met *Kavunti aṭikaḷ*, the celebrated woman ascetic, who offered to accompany them and show them the right path to their destination and they gladly accepted her kind offer. During the journey, Kōvalaṅ met a messenger from Mātavi.

The messenger brought a letter of regret from Mātavi to Kōvalaṇ who felt that it was all his fault and that Mātavi was not to be blamed. He asked the messenger to deliver the same letter to his own parents so that they might be relieved of their poignant distress at his secret departure. Passing on, Kōvalaṇ, Kaṇṇaki and Kavunti reached the outskirts of the city of Madurai. Here they met Mātari, a cowherdess of the city, to whom Kavunti introduced the couple. She was requested to accommodate them until Kōvalaṇ was able to stand on his own legs. She was delighted to do so. The couple reached Mātari's cottage. Kōvalaṇ took one of the anklets of Kaṇṇaki and went towards the bazaar to sell it. He met the state goldsmith to whom he showed the anklet and offered to sell it for a fair price. This goldsmith, who had stolen the queen's anklet sometime before, thought that it a good opportunity to accuse Kōvalaṇ of the theft of the queen's jewel and proclaim himself innocent. He, therefore, readily consented to Kōvalaṇ's proposal and leaving him in the cottage went post-haste to the palace, informed the king that he had found out the thief who had stolen the queen's anklet, and handed it over to the king. Without bestowing a moment's thought on the matter, the king ordered his executioners to behead the thief. Kōvalaṇ was beheaded.

Kaṇṇaki came to know this shocking news of the murder of her spouse. The rude shock and the agony which she could hardly endure distracted her. She raved like a mad woman, fell down on the earth, rose up and sobbed aloud in anguish. She went to the bazaar, though it was late in the night, to have a look at her husband. She found him in a pool of blood. Her grief knew no bounds. She embraced his chest. He stood up and wiped the tears of her eyes with his hands. She wailed and fell to the ground clasping his feet with both of her hands. He then arose and joined a host of gods after saying 'stay here'!

She was in great dismay. She could no longer endure the wrong done to her innocent spouse. All her grief was now

turned into wrath against the king. She went to the palace with the remaining anklet of hers and demanded proper justice at his hands. She narrated her case and said 'I shall prove my spouse not guilty. My anklets have gems inside'. The king said 'our anklets contain pearls. Let this be verified'. She broke her anklet and the gem flew out. On seeing it, the king realised his grave mistake. He fell into a sworn which ended in his death. The queen trembled, fell down and breathed her last. It was no consolation to poor Kaṇṇaki whose innocent husband had been irretrievably wronged. She plucked off her left breast and threw it over the city. The God of Fire appeared before her and awaited her instructions. She told him 'Spare Brahmins, virtuous men, cows, chaste women, old people and children and consume the rest'. The city was enveloped by flame all round.

The guardian deity of Madurai at this time presented herself before Kaṇṇaki and narrated to her how in his previous birth Kōvalaṇ was *Parataṇ*, in the service of *Vacu*, King of *Ciṅkapuram*, who had killed an innocent merchant, *Caṅkaman* suspecting him to be a spy, and that was why he now had this fate. Asked as to Kaṇṇaki's future, the deity replied that on the fourteenth day from that hour she would go to Heaven invited by her husband in a celestial car.

Kaṇṇaki thereupon left Madurai. She reached *Murukavēl Kunṇam* 'the hill sacred to God Murukaṇ'. There she stood under the shade of a *Vēṅkai* tree to the wonder of the people of the place, most of whom were *Kuṇavās*. When they were looking at her, a host of gods brought Kōvalaṇ there and showered flowers on her. She went to heaven with Kōvalaṇ in a celestial chariot. This they reported to *Ceṅkuṭṭuvan*, their king.

The poet *Cāttaṇār*, who was there, narrated the events that had happened in Madurai. The queen desired that a temple should be set up in honour of Kaṇṇaki. *Ceṅkuṭṭuvan* who had been thinking for a long time of leading a military expedition to the north to subdue the refractory chieftains there,

resolved to secure a block of stone from the Himalayas to carve out an image of the Pattiṅikkaṭavuḷ 'goddess of chastity' as they called her. So he started on his northern expedition through the Nilgiris.

In the meantime there was a famine in the Pāṇṭiyaṅ kingdom due to continuous drought. Iḷaṅceliyaṅ, the Pāṇṭiyaṅ at Koṅkai, offered a sacrifice of 1,000 goldsmiths to the Pattiṅikkaṭavuḷ, and the country had plentiful showers of rain. Hearing this, the kings of Koṅkumaṇṭalam, of Ceylon, and of Uṅraiyyūr dedicated temples to Kaṅṅaki and instituted daily worship and the festivals. At this time, it may be noted, Gajabāhu was the king of Ceylon and Perunaṅkiḷḷi was the Cōḷa king at Uṅraiyyūr.

After defeating the northern kings Kaṅṅaka and Vijaya, Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṅ brought a stone from the Himalayas and after bathing it in the Ganges returned home. A temple was consecrated to the Pattiṅikkaṭavuḷ and was endowed for daily worship. The consecration ceremony was attended by eminent kings including those of Malva and Ceylon. After this, on the advice of Māṭalaṅ, the king engaged himself in the performance of Vēdic sacrifices and spent the evening of his life in peace and prayer.

## CONCLUSION

The story of the epic depicts all the three great capitals and royal courts of the then Tamilnadu. The author was fair to all the religions of his days. His erudition is well revealed in the epic which is characteristic not only of his genius, but also a will which guides the poet's fire in him as well as his religion and philosophy. The following three truths have been stressed in the epic: 1) The god of virtue will finally destroy the rulers who swerve from the path of righteousness. 2) Great men always adore a chaste lady 3) Destiny is relentless in making one suffer on account of one's past deeds. As advocated by the epic, let us lead a virtuous life and safeguard the prospects of life in the other world.



## FOOTNOTES

1. C. Jesudasan and H. Jesudasan, *A History of Tamil Literature*, p. 51.
2. *Ibid.*
3. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, "Foreword", *The Cilappatikaram*, trans. V.R.R. Dikshitar, p. xiii.
4. *Cilap.*, 9:69-71.
5. M. Varadarajan, *Ilango Adigal*, p. 23.
6. *Cilap.*, 9:73.
7. M. Varadarajan, *Ilango Adigal*, p. 23.

# 3

## TIRUKKURAL — A TREASURE - HOUSE OF WISDOM

Tamilnadu is fortunate enough to have Tiruvaḷḷuvar as one of the foremost ancient poets. His work Tirukkuṛaḷ transcends all the physical limits like clan, clime, creed and colour. His vast experience, deep penetration, quick conception have yielded Tirukkuṛaḷ which stands the test of time. It still remains a unique store-house of universal virtues. Hence the modern poet Bhārathi pays his tribute:

வள்ளுவன் தன்னை உலகினுக்கே தந்து  
வான்புகழ் கொண்ட தமிழ்நாடு<sup>1</sup>

The ideas - truths-virtues enunciated or advocated in Tirukkuṛaḷ have been so universal in that compelled Bhārathi to praise him thus.

Avvaiyār lists seven great works of Tamil in the following poem which appealed to her most, of which Tirukkuṛaḷ tops.

தேவர் குறளும் திருநான்மறை முடிவும்  
மூவர் தமிழும் முனிமொழியும்—கோவை  
திருவா சகமும் திருமுலர் சொல்லும்  
ஒருவா சகமென் றுணர்<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly Umāpathi Sivāchārya when listing six of the great works in Tamil gives priority to Tirukkuṛaḷ:

வள்ளுவர் சீர் அன்பர் மொழி வாசகம்தொல்  
காப்பியமே  
தெள்ளுபரி மேலழகர் செய்தவுரை—ஒள்ளியசீர்த்

தொண்டர் புராணம் தொகுசித்தி ஓராறும்  
தண்டமிழின் மேலாம் தரம்.<sup>3</sup>

Perundēvaṅār, the author of Bhāratham in a poem of Tiruvaḷ-  
ḷuvamālai equates Tirukkuṛaḷ with Bhāratham, Rāmāyaṇam,  
Maṅusmiruti and Vēda as follows:

எப்பொருளும் யாரும் இயல்பின் அறிவுறச்  
செப்பிய வள்ளுவர் தாம் செப்பவரு—முப்பாற்குப்  
பாரதஞ்சீ ராம கதைமனும் பண்டைமறை  
நேர்வனமற் றில்லை நிகர்.<sup>4</sup>

Thus Tirukkuṛaḷ has won the appreciation and admiration of  
great poets and scholars through the ages. Also the following  
proverbial expressions reveal the greatness of Tirukkuṛaḷ:

ஆலும் வேலும் பல்லுக்குறுதி  
நாலும் இரண்டும் சொல்லுக்குறுதி<sup>5</sup>.

பழகுதமிழ்ச் சொல்லருமை நாலிரண்டில்<sup>6</sup>

Tirukkuṛaḷ is otherwise known as Uttara vētam, Eḷutuṅṅa  
maṛai, Tamil maṛai, Tiruvaḷḷuvar, Tiruvaḷḷuvappayaṅ, Teyva  
nūl, Paḷamoli, Pālmurāi, Potumaṛai, Poyyā moḷi, Poruḷurai,  
Mutumoḷi etc.<sup>7</sup>

Maṅimēkalai praises Tiruvaḷḷuvar as never-failing poet,  
and Tirukkuṛaḷ as one pregnant with meaning:

பொய்யில் புலவன் பொருளுரை தேறாய்<sup>8</sup>.

Swāminātha Dēsikar when listing three great works in  
Tamil which offer clear vision to scholars includes Tirukkuṛaḷ.

பல்காற் பழகினும் தெரியா உளவேல்  
தொல்காப் பியந்திரு வள்ளுவர் கோவையார்  
முன்றினும் முழங்கும்<sup>9</sup>.

The following poem by Iṛaiyaṅār in Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai  
reveals that Kuṛaḷ is for all time showering the light of  
knowledge:

என்றும் புணராது யாணர்நாட் செல்லுகினும்  
நின்றலர்ந்து தேன்பிலிற்றும் நீர்மையதாய்க் குன்றாத  
செந்தளிர்க் கற்பகத்தின் தெய்வத் திருமலர் போன்ம்  
மன்புலவன் வள்ளுவன்வாய்ச் சொல்.<sup>10</sup>

Tirukkural commences with the letter அ and concludes with ன் which are the first and last of the Tamil alphabet. This implies that Kural covers the whole ocean of Tamil. The first and the last couplets of Kural altogether also throw light on life.

அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி  
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு (1)

As Alpha is of all letters' first and source of birth,  
So God primeval is alone the source of all this earth<sup>11</sup>.

ஊடுதல் காமத்திற் கின்பம் அதற்கின்பம்  
கூடி முயங்கப் பெறின் (1330)

The joy of love is sweetened by that quarrel we would  
feign  
That quarrel's joy is crowned by embrace-bliss could  
we that gain.

The very placing of the chapter on "The worship of God" at the beginning of the work reveals the depth of his knowledge.

The second couplet brings out the truth that the purpose of true learning is to worship God.

கற்றதனால் ஆய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்  
நற்றூள் தொழார் எனின் (2)

Pray, what could be the use of all the learning they  
have got,  
The good feet of the Sacred Wise came if they worship-  
ped not?

The first couplet in the chapter on "Learning" emphasises the importance of learning and treading that path.

கற்க கசடறக் கற்பவை; கற்றபின்  
நிற்க அதற்குத் தக (391)

Do learn with perfect faultlessness the lore that these  
must learn.

And learning thus, do tread the path that lore hath  
shown in turn.

Tiruvalluvar stressing the importance of acquiring know-  
ledge through learning says thus:

எண்ணென்ப ஏனை எழுத்தென்ப இவ்விரண்டும்  
கண்ணென்ப வாழும் உயிர்க்கு (392)

The science of numbers as well as the arts of letters rare,  
Are both of them the eyes of men alive, the wise declare.

கண்ணுடையர் என்பவர் கற்றோர் முகத்திரண்டு  
புண்ணுடையர் கல்லாதவர் (393)

The learned men alone are said to have their eyes always  
The unlettered have but a pair of sores upon their face.

Is there any one other than Tiruvalluvar who has sung so  
well on Learning?

He also says that the learning helps one to enrich  
knowledge:

தொட்டனைத் தூறும் மணற்கேணி மாந்தர்க்குக்  
கற்றனைத் தூறும் அறிவு (396)

The deeper is the sand-well dug, the more doth water flow.  
The wider is the man's learning, the more doth wisdom  
grow.

He expressed the fruit of the learning thus:

யாதானும் நாடாமால் ஊராமால் என்னொருவன்  
சாந்துணையும் கல்லாத வாறு (397)

Since all the learned whate'er land or town could deem  
 their own,  
 Why won't throughout one's life time go on one quite  
 learning alone?

ஒருமைக்கண் தான்கற்ற கல்வி ஒருவற்கு  
 எழுமையும் ஏமாப் புடைத்து (398)

The learning all which one hath gained in this one birth  
 alone  
 Throughout the seven-fold births of one avails one as  
 one's own.

தாமின் புறுவது உலகின் புறக்கண்டு  
 காமுறுவர் கற்றறிந் தார் (399)

Because they see their pleasing lore doth all the world  
 too please,  
 The learned men do love to see their learning still  
 increase.

கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி ஒருவற்கு  
 மாடல்ல மற்றவை யவை (400)

One's learning is to one a fortune great that decays not.  
 The rest of all the things one owneth are of fortune  
 naught.

Thus Valluvar brings out the knowledge that can be gained through learning. He also says that wisdom is a true weapon that wards off destruction and also it is a fortress that keeps the enemies at bay. The men who possess wisdom possess all the things of worth. Those who lack it, whatever they have, have nothing as earth.

அறிவுடையார் எல்லாம் உடையார்; அறிவிலார்  
 என்னுடைய ரேனும் இலர் (430)

Thus he stresses the importance of learning and possession of wisdom gained through such learning.

His education is well revealed throughout this master-piece. He speaks about the worship of God, the importance of rain, the greatness of ascetics, iteration of virtue's worth, the household life, the worthiness of wife, the blessing of children, the possession of love, the guest-service and similar virtues in the first book. The second book deals with the virtues of the rulers, the limbs of a state etc. The third book throws light on the love in secret union and in sacred wedlock. Thus Tirukkuṛaḷ serves as the treasure-house of knowledge. It has been acclaimed as such by scholars of various nations and cultures witnessing thus a note of Universality of the Kuṛaḷ. The fact that it is the second great work in the world that has been translated into numerous languages, numerous versions even in one language, bears illustrious testimony to the claim that the Kuṛaḷ is indeed a veritable *treasure house of knowledge and wisdom*.

### FOOTNOTES

1. *Bhārathiyār Pāṭalkaḷ*, p. 166.
2. *Nalvaḷi*, 40.
3. *Tirukkuṛaḷ* (ārāyccippatippu), K.V. Jagannathan ed., p. 189.
4. *Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai*, 30.
5. *Ibid.*, 162.
6. *Ibid.*, 163.
7. *Tirukkuṛāḷ*, Āṅumuka Nāvalar ed., *Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai*, p. 21.
8. *Maṇimēkalai*, Ciṅgai-cey-kātai, 61.
9. *Ilakkaṇakkottu*, 3.
10. *Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai*, 3.
11. K.M. Balasubramaniyan's English translation of *Kuṛaḷ* is quoted in this paper.

## LITERARY HERITAGE OF THE TAMILS: DEVOTIONAL POETRY

Tamil language is supposed to be co-eval with God. Tamil literature has been flourishing all along in all the highways and byways of literature. Literature is *life* mirrored up in all its aspects to the medium of language and hence it is a product of the respective human civilization. In the words of M. S. Purnalingam Pillai:

“Love and war formed the themes of the ancient classics; Religion and Philosophy of the medieaval poems as Science and Humanities predominate the modern writings.”<sup>1</sup>

Medieaval literature is the result of the Bhakti cult. The saintly poets of the age were mainly responsible for the evolution of medieaval literature. The quotation of ‘Thavathiru’ Thani Nayaga Adigal with regard to Tamil language is as follows:

“We do not find devotional songs of such quantity and grace in any other languages than in Tamil. If English is the language of trade and Latin as the language of law and Greek as the language of Music and German as the language of Philosophy and French as the language of embassy then we might call Tamil as the language of pious literature”.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Tamil language is supposed to be the pious language and Nāyaṅmārs and Ālvārs have contributed much for



its enrichment. Kumarakuruparar and Sivappirakācar have augmented the devotional literature in their ages. They are responsible for the growth of religion and the theme of social equality. Their devotional songs provide a turning point to the heritage of Tamil devotional poetry.

### LIFE AND THE DEVOTIONAL WORKS OF THE POETS

Kumarakuruparar is the famous poet of the 17th century. Born at Kailasapuram near Srivaigundam in Tirunelveli District to Shanmuga Sikamani and Sivagama Sundari, he was unable to speak in the age of five. His anxious parents placed him at the Sanctum sanctorum of Sri Senthilāṇḍavar Sannidhi at Thirucchendur temple. Lord Muruga was gracious enough to bless the boy with speech. The boy responded with extempore devotional effusion. His devotional songs include *Mīṇāṭciyammaip Piḷḷait Tamil*, *Maturai-k-kalampakam*, *Nītineṇi Viḷakkam*, *Tiruvārūr Nāṇmaṇi mālai*. *Mīṇāṭciyammaip Piḷḷait Tamil* is considered to be the best in that literary genre; *Maturai-k-kalampakam* in praise of Lord Somasundaram is famous for its felicity of diction and richness of devotion. *Nītineṇi viḷakkam* bears witness to his interest in instructing the people in social ethics. *Chidambara Mummaṇi-k-kōvai* paves a new way for literary development in Tamil. *Kāci-k-kalampakam* and *Sakala Kalavalli Mālai* are his best works in that they show his grasp of devotional modes of the North exemplified in the literatures of Sanskrit and Hindi the latter of which he learned at Banares to have an interview with the then Badshah at Delhi with a view to establish a Saiva Mutt at Banares.

Sivappirakācar, the renowned poet of the 18th century Vīrasaiva sect is acclaimed as the poet of rich imagination. Born at *Thuraimaṇḍalam* in *Toṇḍai Nāḍu*, he received his education under *Valliyambalattambiran* of the *Dharmapura Ātīṇam*. His best works include *Nīroṭṭaka Yamaka Andāti* a rare literary feat in the extempore composition of which no bilabial sounds should be employed; *Nālvar Nāṇmaṇi Mālai* shows his great love for the four great Saiva saints. *Prapulinga Līlai*, a highly imaginative work about the divine aspects

of Vīrasaiva religion is considered to be his masterpiece. *Nan̄neri* is a succinct expression of moral outpourings. His 'Sōna Sailamālai' is in praise of Lord Siva of Thiruvannamalai. *Tiruveṅkaikkōvai* is one of the best of *kōvai* works second only to *Tiru-k-kōvaiyār*.

The later half of the 18th century witnessed a more illustrious saint in *Tayumāṅavar*. His christening has been done after the name of the Lord *Tāyumāṅavar* of Tiruchi hill temple. Born to *Kediliyappa Pillai* and *Gajavalli Ammāl* at *Tirumaṅaikkāṭu*, he was tutored by *Mounaguru Swamigal*. His education included the study of Sanskrit works, literary and religious along with Tamil literature. He was offered some vocation under *Vijaya Raghunatha Chockalinga Naicker* a representative of the Naick rule at Madurai. In due course he became a saint and started composing religious and devotional works in Tamil. His description of the doctrines of Saiva Philosophy has been held in high esteem by the religious exponents. The oft-quoted lines from his works bear exemplary principles of religious cadence and catholicity.

He was forced to lead domestic life by his parents and relatives and as a result he was married to 'Mattuvār Kuḷali'. A boy was born to them whom he named, 'Kanagasabāpathi'. His songs have been found by experience by scholar after scholar, religious as well as secular to be highly effective in composing the abjectedly confused and disturbed feelings and emotions of the reader. Hence his sustained popularity among his readers.

The 19th century Tamil devotional literature was happy enough to find a more illustrious and highly instructive devotional poet in *Ramalinga Adigal*. His parents were *Ramaiyya Pillai* and *Chin̄nammāl*. Born at *Marutūr* in South Arcot District his life took him to Madras and *Karuṅkuḷi* for a few years. He breathed his last in *Vaḍalūr* at the age of 51.

He had a very brilliant academic career. His prose works include *Maṅumuṅai-kaṅṅa vācakam* and other pieces. *Tiruvaruṭpā* is his master-piece. It is an intensive poetic out-

pouring devotional and exhortive in nature. Principles of Ahimsa, religious tolerance, eradication of poverty from the very face of the earth, etc., are some of the important views of his religious teaching. His poetic tirades against the conflicts and conglomeration of differences of castes and religions are worth reception and reformation. This is how he is more of a reformist than a purely religious personality.

There have been many writers of devotional poems during the first eight decades of this century. But the chiefmost of them is Kaviñar Kaṇṇadāsān. His devotional poems are captivating in appeal and nostalgic in spirit. He is intensely personal and inimitably popular at once.

A good literary piece, according to Dr. M. Varadarajan<sup>3</sup> is the artistic form in the medium of language of the human emotions encircled in the complex environs, collected by experience conceived by intuition and portrayed imaginatively. Though it is the copy of Reality in its portrayal in compelling word painting a poet can be credited as the better creator of human life in all its multiple aspects. His word pictures are more enduring and enjoyable than those of the earth, the handiwork of Lord Brahma, the Creator. This idea of the supremacy of the poem over the Creator is enshrined in the following lines by Kumarakuruparar:

கலைமகள் வாழ்க்கை முகத்தது எனினும்  
மலரவன் வண்டமிழோர்க்கு ஒவ்வான்—மலரவன்செய்  
வெற்றுடம்பு மாய்வனபோல் மாயா புகழ்கொண்டு  
மற்றிவர் செய்யும் உடம்பு. <sup>4</sup>

The artistic significance of this poem has been appreciated by Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer in the following words:

“Of all the special speeches of Kumarakuruparar’s poetry it is the harmony of sound and rhythm that is more fascinating. Even before the reader is able to grasp the sense and import of the message, he is bewitchingly thrilled by the rhythm and cadence of the

metrical composition. Figures like alliteration, assonance, oxymoron, etc., spontaneously flock themselves to enhance the aural and aesthetic excellences of its poetry, irrespective of the metres selected".<sup>5</sup>

That he was an ardent lover of Tamil in all its aspects is revealed by the following lines when he invokes the grace of Lord Muruga and the Goddess Saraswathi.<sup>6</sup>

ஆசுமுத னாற்கவியு மட்டாவ தானமுஞ்சீர்ப்  
பேசுமியல் பல்காப் பியத்தொகையும்-ஒசை  
எழுத்துமுத லாமைந் திலக்கணமுந் தோய்ந்து  
பழுத்த தமிழ்ப்புலமை பாலித்து.

நாடும் பொருட்சுவை சொற்குவை தோய்தர நாற்கவியும்  
பாடும் பணியிற் பணித்தருள்வாள்.

Muruga, an aesthetic and Bakthi term means, in the words of Thiru. Vi.Ka.<sup>7</sup>, Beauty, Eternity, Youth and Divinity. Thiru. Vi. Ka. is aesthetically and pantheistically anticipated in the songs of Kumarakuruparar when he pours out his devotion to Lord Muruga in the following lines.<sup>8</sup>

இயலு நடையும் வடிவும் அழகும் எழுத அரியன.  
அழகு கனிந்து முதிர்ந்த இளங்கனி.  
வடிவி னழகும் எழுத வரிய புயமும் நறிய செக்கையும்  
மருமம் விரவு குரவுமரையின் மணியும் மணிகொள்  
கச்சையும்  
கடவு மயிலு மயிலும் ஒழுகு கருணை வதன பத்மமும்  
கமல விழியும் விழியும் மனமும் எழுதிஎழுதி  
யிருத்தலும்  
அடிகள் எனவுன் அடிகள் பணியும் அடியார்.

Though he was a staunch Saivite he was not intolerant of other religions or Gods as is evidenced by the following lines when he describes Thirumāl, the God of Vaishnavite cult.

பழமறைகள் முறையிடப் பைந்தமிழ்ப் பின்சென்ற  
பச்சைப் பசுங்கொண்டலே.  
கருணை பூத்தலர்ந்த கமலக்கண்ணன்.  
கொண்டல் மணிவண்ணன்.

Such broad outlook and religious catholicity of Kumarakuruparar has been appreciatively noted by Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer :<sup>9</sup>

ஒரு கடவுள், ஒரு மொழி, ஒரு கலை, ஒரு நாடு என்னும் வரையறையின்றிப் பல கடவுளரையும் பல மொழிக் கருத்துக்களையும், பல கலைச் செய்திகளையும், பல நாட்டு வருணனைகளையும் இவருடைய செய்யுட்களிற் காணுகின்றோம். இந்நாட்டின் தென்திசையிலுள்ள செந்தூரையும், வடநாட்டிலுள்ள காசியையும் இவர் கண்டறிந்து பாடுகின்றார். தாம் பிறந்த பாண்டி நாட்டையும், குருவைப் பெற்ற சோழநாட்டையும், வாழ்ந்து வந்த கங்கைக் கரையையும் வருணிக்கின்றார். சிவபெருமான் முதல் கலைமகள் வரையுள்ள தெய்வங்களைப் பாராட்டுகின்றார். சைவ பரிபாஷைகளோடு வைணவ பரிபாஷைகளையும் ஒரு சார் அமைக்கின்றார். இவற்றால் இவர் 'யாதும் ஊரே, யாவரும் கேளிர்' என்னும் மனோபாவமும், விரிந்த உலகியலறிவும் உடையவர் என்பதை உணரலாகும்.

The following is the list of works by Kumarakuruparar.

1. Kantar Kali veṅpā
2. Miṇāṭciyammaippiḷḷai-t-tamil
3. Maturai-k-kalampakam
4. Nitineri viḷakkam
5. Thiruvārūr Nāṇmaṇi mālai
6. Muttukkumāraswāmi Piḷḷai-tamil
7. Chidambara mummaṇi-k-kōvai
8. Chidambara cheyyuṭ kōvai
9. Paṇḍāra mummaṇi-k-kōvai
10. Kāci-k-kalampakam
11. Sakalakalā valli mālai
12. Kailai-k-kalampakam
13. Kāci-t-tuṇḍi Vināyakar patikam

That Kumarakuruparar was adept in composing several kinds of metrical variation is quite evident by a tentative analysis of his prosodical aspects.

<i>Type of metre</i>	<i>Compositions</i>
veṇṇpā	189
veṇṇāḷicai	5
veṇṇuṇai	5
veḷiviruttam	2
ācīriyappā	41
ācīriya-t-tāḷicai	2
ācīriya viruttam	298
kalippā	38
kalittāḷicai	9
kalittuṇai	96
kali viruttam	6
vañcippā	2
vañcittāḷicai	1
vañcittuṇai	3
vañci viruttam	4
maruṇpā	6

It is thus by his employment of various prosodical forms to close the various aspects of human devotion wedded to human welfare Now and Hereafter, that Kumarakuruparar has enriched Tamil poetry by his devotional songs.

Another important figure of the Saivite sect of the Tamil devotional poetry is Sivappirakāsa Swamigal. Pirapulinga Līlai his master-piece has earned him the title 'the mine of imagination.'

His impeccable love and ardour for the great saints of Saivism have been immortalised in imperishable songs. His love and devotion for these saints have been epitomised in the work 'Nālvar Nāṇmaṇi Mālai.' His love of Manickavasagar for his 'Tiruvācakam' is an illustration.

திருவா சகமிங் கொருகா லோதின்  
கருங்கன் மனமும் கரைந்துகக் கண்கள்  
தொடுமணற் கேணியிற் சுரந்துநீர் பாய  
மெய்ம்மயிர் பொடிப்ப விதிர்விதிர்ப் பெய்தி  
அன்ப ராகுந ரன்றி  
மன்பதை யுலகில் மற்றைய ரிலரே.

Though belonged to Saivite sect Tāyumāṇavar Swamigal has been of very broad religious outlook. His lines in Parāpara -k-kaṇṇi'

எல்லாரும் இன்புற் றிருக்க நினைப்பதுவே  
அல்லாமல் வேறென் றறியேன் பராபரமே

—பராபர. 221

illustrate this aspect of Tāyumāṇavar Swamigal's devotion.

Of his total songs 1454 the following metrical variations are found.

Mālai	587
Kaṇṇi	865
Akaval	1
Vaṇṇam	1

Of the fourfold Bakthi Margas Tāyumāṇavar emphasises the Gnāṇa Marga. Apart from descriptive and lyrical notes Tāyumāṇavar has used epigrammatic style also whenever he wants to drive home certain important messages. The following are some samples.

ஆசைக்கோர் அளவில்லை

—பொருள் வணக்கம்: 10

எல்லாமுன் அடிமையே

—கருணாகரக் கடவுள்: 3

அவனன்றி ஓரணுவு மசையாது

— எங்கு நிறைகின்ற பொருள்: 1

கல்லாத பேர்களே நல்லவர்கள் நல்லவர்கள்

—சித்தர்கணம்: 10

யமன்வரும்போது ஏது துணை

—வண்ணம் இறுதி அடி

எண்ணரிய பிறவிதனின் மானிடப் பிறவிதான்

யாதினும் அரிதுகாண்

—சித்தர்கணம்: 4

இப்பிறவி தப்பினால் எப்பிறவி வாய்க்குமோ

—சித்தர்கணம்: 4

வல்லான் வகுத்ததே வாய்க்கால்

— சுகவளி: 3

இன்றைக் கிருந்தாரை நானைக் கிருப்பாரென்று  
எண்ணவோ திடமில்லையே

— சச்சிதானந்த சிவம்

காயாத மரமீது கல்லேறு செல்லுமோ

— சச்சிதானந்த சிவம்: 8

வாயார உண்டபேர் வாழ்த்துவதும்

நொந்தபேர் வைவதும் எங்களுலக வாய்பாடு

— சச்சிதானந்த சிவம்: 8

Tāyumāṇavar is more philosophical and theological than Kumarakuraparar and other devotional poets of his age. His philosophy is discursive and even ratiocinative at times and is wholly divested of superstitions and sentimentals. Dr. M. Varadarajanar a lover and a practical disciple of Tāyumāṇavar has said that Tāyumāṇavar has never entertained blind superstitions even when they are pertaining to religion. His concept of religion is based on reasoning and universal love. The modern concept of universal religion shorn of regional and sectarian diversities is very much akin to the one preached by St. Tāyumāṇavar. The song 'Aṅkiṅku eṇātapaṭi', is an enlightened poetic expression of deep devotion in Gnana Marga style. His songs are priceless poetic addition to the Tamil devotional poetry.<sup>10</sup>

Saint Ramalingar like Tāyumāṇavar has an advanced notion of humanitarian concern. Though he is quite emphatic that only these songs which are sung in praise of Lord Nataraja are worth the name of devotional songs, the rest are mere linguistic dress of the composer's confusion of the ephemeral with the eternal.

அம்பலப் பாட்டே அருட்பாட்டு

அல்லாத பாட்டெல்லாம் மருட்பாட்டு.

His songs are full of compassion towards beings of all gradations, from the eternal Lord to the evanescent grass. He expresses that his songs are compassionate expression of the



sufferings of beings in this world full of fever and fret. He always identifies himself with the troubles and tribulations of the world and gives expression to them in the following lines.

ஆட்டுக்குக் காலெடுத்தாய், நினைப்பாடலர்  
 ஆங்கு இயற்றும்  
 பாட்டுக்குப் பேர்என்கொல்? பண் என்கொல்?  
 நீட்டிய அப்பாட்டெழுதும்  
 ஏட்டுக்கு மைஎன்கொல்? சேற்றில் உறங்க  
 இறங்கும் கடா  
 மாட்டுக்கு வீரம் என்கொல்? பஞ்சணை  
 என்கொல் மதித்திடினே.

After Maṇimēkalai the epic of the earliest expression of the plea for eradication of poverty, only the songs of Saint Ramalingar are powerful attack on poverty. He is quite alive to the problems of human differences in terms of castes and religions. Superstitions even pertaining to religion are condemned severely in the songs of Saint Ramalingar.

சாதியும் மதமுஞ் சமயமுந் தவிர்ந்தேன்  
 சாத்திரக் குப்பையுந் தணந்தேன்  
 ஓதிய அனைத்தும் நீயறிந்தது நான்  
 உரைப்பதென் னடிக்கடி யுனக்கே

நால்வருணம் ஆசிரமம் ஆகாரம் முதலா  
 நவின்றகலைச் சரிதமெலாம் பிள்ளைவினையாட்டே  
 மேல்வருணந் தோல்வருணங் கண்டறிவா ரிலைநீ  
 விழித்திதுபா ரென்றெனக்கு விளம்பிய

[சற்குருவே

Saint Ramalingar's concept of compassion does not have any hierarchical scale. He is as compassionate for the love and grace of Lord Nataraja as for the graceful life of a blade of grass.

வாடிய பயிரைக் கண்ட போதெல்லாம்  
 வாடினேன் பசியினால் இளைத்தே  
 வீடுதோறிரந்தும் பசியருதயர்ந்த  
 வெற்றரைக் கண்டுளம் பதைத்தேன் \*

Ahimsa or non-killing is another salient aspect of his religious point of view. He has a staunch supporter in Saint Tāyumāṇavar in this regard. He is impatient at the sight of dumb animals being sacrificed at the altar of small Gods. In short Saint Ramalingar represents a view of modern Bakthi cult which does not entertain dichotomy between religion and beings and which consequently lays emphasis on the fact that religion as such should take care of human life in all its complexities without detriment to the welfare of the spirit. Saint Ramalingar is an apostle of the masses to uplift their lot physically and spiritually as well.

## CONCLUSION

The above rapid analytic survey gives us an idea of the attitude of the devotional poetry of the Tamils. Kumarakuruparar, Sivappirakācar, Tāyumāṇavar and Ramalingar are the major devotional poets during the period under study. Apart from the traditional emphasis and the need of the spirit to be guided, enlightened and enshrined in the grace of God, these four poets in the order shown above have been increasingly concerned with the human life as it is lived on earth, Here and Now. It is this shift of emphasis in a balanced way from the entirely misplaced one on Hereafter and above that makes them what they are. The reformist principles like non-killing, eradication of poverty, denial of differences in terms of castes and religions and clear poetic evidences of the devotional poets of their modern view of the role and function of religion in the modern context.

It is thus a healthy shift from the emphasis on Life Negation to Life Living. This is not a small move. Tremendous moral courage, universal outlook in the truest sense of phrase and inexhaustible source of human interest—one and all these—are traits of impeccable intuitions happily and gracefully entwined in the personalities discussed above—of course, for us.

## FOOTNOTES

1. M.S. Purnalingam Pillai, *Tamil Literature*, p, 2.
2. Quoted by Somale in *Vaḷarum Tamil*, p. 280.

3. *Elutuwatu Eppaṭi*, p. 1.
4. *Nītinēṟiviḷakkam*, 16.
5. *Kumarakuruṣara cuvāmikaḷ Pirāṣantattiraṣṭu*, Introduction, p. 10.
6. *Kantar Kali Veṅpā*, 118, 119; *Cakalakalā valli mālai*, 2.
7. *Murukaṅ allatu Aḷaku*, p. 1.
8. *Muttukkumāracuvāmi Piḷḷait tamil*, *Vatrukaipparuvam*, 10; *Ceṅkīraipparuvam*, 7; *Muttapparuvam*, 10.
9. *Kumarakuruṣarcuvāmikaḷ Pirāṣantattiraṣṭu*, Introduction, p. 81.
10. M. Varadarajan's radio talk quoted by R. Muttukkumaracāmi in his paper "Tāyumāṅavar", *Tamil Ilakkaiyakkoḷkai* ed. by S. V. Subramaniam and K.D. Thirunavukkarasu, Vol. 2, p. 336.

## DRAVIDIAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

The word 'Dravidian' is an English expression. It is a hybrid consisting of the Indian word *Drāviḍa* and the English adjectival suffix—ian, which itself is from the Latin.<sup>1</sup> This word was created by British scholars in India. The word 'Drāviḍa' is used as an adjective<sup>2</sup> as in *Drāviḍa nāṭu* 'Dravidian land', *Drāviḍa moḷikaḷ* 'Dravidian languages', *Drāviḍa iṇam* 'Dravidian race', *Drāviḍa nākarikam* 'Dravidian Civilization', *Drāviḍappaṇpāṭu* 'Dravidian culture' and so on. Manu uses the term *Drāviḍa* to denote the people of the South. Mahabharatha also uses this in the same sense. Kumarila Bhatta of the 7th C.A.D. and Rajendra Mithilal of 1854 use this term in the same sense.<sup>3</sup> Robert Caldwell<sup>4</sup> uses this term in an extensive meaning. He uses this term to denote Dravidian speakers, Dravidian art, culture, civilization etc.

The origin of the word 'Drāviḍa' is still controversial. Caldwell<sup>5</sup> holds the opinion that the word 'Tamil' is originated from the Sanskrit word 'Drāviḍa' as follows:

*Draviḍa* → *Dramida*

*Dramida* → *Dramila*

*Dramila* → *Damilo*

*Damilo* → *Tamil*

It is not realistic to consider that the word Tamil is derived from *Drāviḍa*. Edward Webb, Gilbert Slater and many others say that the word *Drāviḍa* is Sanskrit.<sup>6</sup> But they did not commit that the the word Tamil is derived from *Draviḍa*.

Stenkenov is of the view that the word *Drāviḍa* is originated from the word Tamil. The word Dravidian is a conven-

tional one. It is derived from Sanskrit-Drāviḍa, a word which is again probably derived from older Dramiḷa, Damiḷa and is identical with the name Tamil.<sup>7</sup> In Sanskrit literature the word 'Draviḍa' is available only in later period. Heras observes that this word is not Sanskrit. A.L. Basham, a well-known Indologist in his "Studies in Indian History and Culture" says that in ancient India there was vaguely defined region of South India known in the north as Drāviḍa, probably a corruption of the word Tamil.<sup>8</sup> We can conclude that the word Drāviḍa is derived from the word Tamil as given below:

Tamizh  
 ↓  
 Damizha  
 ↓  
 Damiḷa  
 ↓  
 Dramiḷa  
 ↓  
 Draviḷa

There also prevail different views about the origin of Dravidians. They are that they have come from a) Australia, (b) Lemuria, (c) north-west of India and (d) Assyria and Asia Minor.<sup>9</sup> Of all such views, the view that the Dravidians are the aborigines of India seems to be more realistic and widely accepted.

India is a land of great diversity. Although its unique civilization has been a unifying factor and the intermixture of its peoples has produced a degree of uniformity, many differences originating in the distant past still exist. On the basis of characteristic physical, cultural and linguistic features, the people of one region can be distinguished from those of another.<sup>10</sup> Dravidians have similarities that set them off from others.

## RACIAL STRAIN

Among the major racial strains that have amalgamated in varying degrees to form the modern population of India, Dravi-

dians belong to the Mediterranean strain. This strain is termed as Mediterranean because of the prominence of this type in that area. It is characterized generally by a long head, moderate stature, a slight build, and dark skin. What appears to be an ancient type of this Mediterranean strain, in which the head is long and narrow with a high cranial vault, the face narrow, the nose small and moderately broad, the skin dark, and the hair wavy or curly, is the dominant physical type among the Dravidians of South India.<sup>11</sup>

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

With a few exceptions, cultural variations can be correlated only in a very general way with differences in racial type. The different peoples coming into India from east and west at different times adapted to different social and physical environments, and their subsequent development was shaped by influences that varied greatly. In some respects, the correlation is greater between culture and language than between culture and race.<sup>12</sup>

A hundred years ago cultural differences of all kinds were much greater than they are today. British rule caused changes that worked together toward increasing uniformity and developments since independence have been in the same direction. Nevertheless, striking differences persist, and it is scarcely too much to say that a Tamilian peasant transported to a village of Karnataka, would feel himself a stranger in a strange land.

### RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

India has had one of the world's most creative religious and philosophical developments. Among the religions which originated in India are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, a number of lesser-known faiths, and many reform movements, especially those allied to Hinduism. In addition, India has received two great religions of Semitic origin, Islam and Christianity, which have assumed distinctive forms there. India's religious creativity has been accompanied by a distinctive and subtle philosophy. Indeed, religion and philosophy have never maintained separate existences in India.<sup>12</sup>

Particularly at the village level, there is a great deal of regional variation with respect to religious beliefs and practices. In certain areas of Tamilnadu an elaborate festival is held to honour the major village goddess, *Māriyamman* who is believed to cause and cure such diseases as smallpox and cholera. Reverence for ancestral spirits, especially in the paternal line, and periodic offerings to ensure their welfare are a part of present day Hindu practice. Certain peoples of South India, for example the Coorgs and the Nayars, have a greatly elaborated cult of ancestor worship, and ancestral spirits who are believed to punish wrongdoing are worshipped in household shrines and regularly propitiated.<sup>14</sup>

## MUSIC

The ancient Dravidians had their own music system and musical instruments. They had five kinds of *paṇ* namely, *mullai*, *kuṛiñci*, *marutam*, *neytal* and *pālai*. Apart from this, they had seven musical notes, viz., *kural*, *tuttam*, *kaikkiḷai*, *uḷai*, *iḷi*, *viḷari* and *tāram*. These seven notes might be roughly equated with the seven modern musical notes, *sa*, *ri*, *ga*, *ma*, *pa*, *da* and *ni*. They had their famous *yāls* which are comparable with the modern *vīṇa*. *Pēriyāl*, *makarayāl*, *seṅkoṭṭiyāl* etc. are the names denoting different kinds of *yāls*.<sup>15</sup> We learn through the Dravidian Literature that they had many other musical instruments.

In a later period the stream of Karnatic music entered into classical music. Gradually the classical music disappeared. At present the Karnatic Music is being overshadowed by the film music, wherein western music is dominant.

## DANCE

Tamil is broadly classified into *iyal* (prose), *icai* (poetry) and *nāṭakam* (drama). *Nāṭakam* or *kūttu* is mainly concerned with dance. The ancient Tamils had two kinds of *Kūttu*, (1) *Vēttiyal* and (2) *Potuviyal*. *Vēttiyal* is specially meant for royal families and *potuviyal* is meant for the public. Later on this convention had disappeared. There had been professional dramatists till recent times. Since the kings had slowly

lost their power, the arts patronized by them also gradually lost their glamour. Thus the vēttiyal type of drama became extinct. The ancient Tamil country is the origin of the classical dance known as 'bharatanāṭya.'<sup>16</sup>

Drama and dance gradually emerged as two different branches. In 1960s and 1970s cinema has overshadowed drama.

## DRAWING AND PAINTING

The art of drawing and painting also was patronized by the kings. All over Tamil Nadu we can see temples, small or big, and almost all the temples are decorated by drawing and painting. The painting works at Cittaṅṅavācal (near Pudukkōṭṭai) are worth seeing.<sup>17</sup>

## ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

Tamil Nadu is famous for huge temples with marvellous gopurams. Rajarajan the Chola King constructed a temple in Thanjavur. The temple is very big in size and it is called Thanjaip periya kōyil 'the big temple of Tanjore'. His son Rajendra Chola who subdued the rulers of the region up to the river Ganges, constructed another big temple in Gangai Koṅṅa Chōlapuram. Except that the 'Thajnaip periya Kōyil' is bigger in size than the temple in Gangai Koṅṅa Chōlapuram, they are somewhat similar. The former was named as Rajarajeswaram and the latter was named as Gangai Koṅṅochōlēsvaram. These temples are famous for the huge nandhis and lingams. The temples of Madurai Meenakshi Amman, Kāñchi Varadarajaperumal, Chidambaram Natarajar are worth seeing.<sup>18</sup> The skill of Tamils in architecture and Sculpture can be seen in these temples.

The five cars carved in rocks at Mahabalipuram are extremely beautiful. There are also other works which show the skill of Tamils in Sculpture.

The collections of Vigrahas, statues, drawings and paintings, etc. found in the museums of Madras, Thanjavur, Pattiswaram and Kāvrippūmpaṭṭiṅam deserve special mention.



## FAMILY AND MARRIAGES

The most important social unit in India is the family. It is the seat of primary loyalties, and its interests are considered superior to those of the individual. Kinship, which extends as far as bloodlines can be traced, carries with it an elaborate set of duties, rights and obligations. The effective unit is the joint family, which usually comprises two, three or even four generations in a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal system. This means that the oldest living male progenitor is the head of the family, descent is reckoned through the sons, and brides are brought into the family to live.<sup>19</sup>

New families are created when established units break up upon the death of the patriarch or upon the departure of one or more brothers and their families.<sup>20</sup>

Within the family, roles are sharply differentiated by age and sex. Until his final declining years a man's status increases as he gets older and, in general, depends upon his standing with respect to the main line of inheritance and upon his contribution to the economic well-being of the family. The role and status of women are more complex. In childhood a girl plays freely with others of her age group, although she early assumes responsibility for the care of children younger than half. As puberty approaches, however, she is drawn into the exclusive company of older women and is trained for marriage. At puberty she is likely to be married and to move to her husband's household, where she assumes the position of an apprentice under the supervision of her mother-in-law. In certain caste groups dowry system is common. Except among the most cosmopolitan urban elite groups, marriages are still arranged by parents with the prior consent of the bride and groom. A woman achieves full adult status when she gives birth to her first child, preferably a son. Should she become a widow her status is greatly lowered. Divorce and the remarriage of widows are forbidden in most of the Hindu groups. While woman's traditional role requires her to be a passive follower of her husband's wishes, as in all cultures this is subject to constant negotiation.<sup>21</sup> The status of woman is improved by the Hindu

succession act of 1956, which gives the enhanced rights of inheritance in family property.

Within the general framework of the extended family, details of such matters as kinship structure, marriage customs, family rituals and the selection of a marital partner vary tremendously.

Dravidians are thought to have preserved features of a way of life developed before the coming of the Indo-Aryan speakers into India. For example, large groups of people in what is now called Kerala, in accordance with a custom believed to have been indispread in the south, still trace their descent in the maternal line, and the head of the household is not the father but the mother's brother, whose property is inherited by his sister's son. Throughout South India marriage with the mother's brother's daughter is permissible or preferred, and marriage between a man and his sister's daughter occurs. A puberty ceremony held for girls in the south is unknown in the north. A pattern of village organisation that exists in the south makes possible marriage within the village, whereas in the north the village is usually exogamous.<sup>22</sup>

## CASTE SYSTEM

The social structure of Dravidians is embraced in the caste system, which arranges mankind in a hierarchy of groups of different worth. Caste is hereditary and nontransferable according to Hinduism. The caste system prescribes regulations concerning marriage, eating and many other phases of life, though these restrictions have often been modified or discarded by civil law. In theory, each caste has a separate social function or occupation, but in practice this rule has never been strictly enforceable.<sup>23</sup>

## FOOD

The Dravidians are mainly rice-eaters. Sāmbār, rasam and Curd or butter-milk are taken along with rice. Potato, beans, carrot, cabbage, etc., are the side dishes. On special occasions a kind of sweet dish known as pāyasam is served.

After taking meals, occasionally they chew betel leaf and areca nut.

In Urban areas, people favour the eatables, idli, dōsai, pūri, etc. and the drinks coffee, tea or milk. In rural areas people take rice. Now-a-days almost all the villages are being urbanized in this respect. Especially youngsters are fond of tiffin in the morning. It may also be mentioned that there are people in villages who usually take Kanji in the morning. Idli, vaḍai poṅgal, uppumā, pūri, chappātti, dōsai etc., are the tiffin items. Idli, chaṭṇi and sāmbar are more common items.<sup>24</sup>

### DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

As far as the clothing is concerned Dravidian men wear dhoties and shirts and ladies wear sarees and jackets. Men use trousers and shirts too, though not very commonly. Young boys use shorts and shirts. Young girls wear tāvaṇi, pāvāṭai and jacket. Some orthodox men adore themselves with turbans as do Muslims.

Ladies use a variety of ornaments. Generally men wear wrist watch, rings, etc. In rural areas some people wear earrings, wrist-chains, etc.

Almost all the people in the rural areas are agriculturalists and agricultural labourers. The urban areas are inhabited by office-workers, coolies, business people and other professional people.<sup>25</sup>

### FESTIVALS

Poṅgal, and Deepavaḷi are the most celebrated festivals in Tamil Nadu. Onam and Dasarā are the important festivals in Kerala and Karnataka respectively. There are also several other festivals.

### TRIBES

In the heavily forested hills are small, scattered tribal groups who speak the language of the area but live a primitive life. Their economy is based on food gathering and on the

sale of forest products. The Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh include a small group who live a very primitive, seminomadic life in the hills of Amrabad. Their principal diet of wild tubers and fruits is supplemented by grain, which they cultivate in small patches; they have not adopted the plough, and their implements are the digging stick, axe, bow and arrow and knife. The Todas present another contrast to the typical South Indian way of life. They are found in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu. In physical appearance and dress they stand out from the surrounding population, and the architectural style of their temples and dwellings is distinctive and probably archaic. Their economic and religious activities closely interwoven, center around their herds of buffalo. They are one of several matrilineal peoples in South India and practice polyandry.<sup>26</sup>

Thus this paper has presented precisely some of the salient features of the Dravidian culture and civilization. If a deep field-study is taken up by a team of scholars, then full picture can be presented which is a great desideratum.

### FOOTNOTES

1. S.K. Chatterji, *Dravidian*, Annamalainagar, Annamalai University, 1965, p. 9.
2. S. Agasthalingom, *Ulakamoḷikaḷ* (5th Part): *Tirāviṭa Moḷikaḷ*, Madras, Pari Nilaiyam, 1676, p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, Madras, University of Madras, 1956, p. 7.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
6. S. Agasthalingom, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
9. P. Kothandaraman, *A Background Introduction to the Tamil Speech Community*, NCERT scheme Monograph, Mimco., p. 2.
10. *Encyclopaedia Americana*, New York, Americana Corporation, 1969, Vol. 14, p. 766.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 766.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 768.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 769.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 769.
15. P. Kothandaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
19. *Encyclopaedia Americana*, p. 769.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 769.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 769.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 769.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 770.
24. P. Kothandaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
26. *Encyclopaedia Americana*, p. 770.

## THE LIFE OF MU. VA.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In days of yore, *Toṅṭaināṭu*, a part of the ancient Tamil land was celebrated by the Tamil bards as a land of scholars. Mu. Va., the illustrious son of the Tamil renaissance of this century hailed from *Vēlam*, (which is near the Wallajpet railway station) a small village of the ancient *Toṅṭaināṭu*. He was the son of *Muṇucāmi Mutaliyār*, a wealthy man from a decent agrarian family. He wedded *Ammākkāṇṇu ammāḷ* and they had three children, Mu. Va. being the second child and the only son. When he happened to abide in *Tiruppattūr* due to some commerical affairs, his wife gave birth to *Mu. Varatarājan* on the 25th of April, 1912.

## INFANCY AND EDUCATION

In his boyhood, Mu. Va., the protagonist of this biographical sketch was fostered with tender care and boundless affection by his loving grand mother who used to call him by his pet name *Tiruvēṅkaṭam*. Mu. Va. also maintained such an equal affinity with her till her death and even in his maturity, he used to talk of her with much pride to his close friends recollecting some of the unforgettable events of his boyhood days in her house. This warm hearted attachment finds very powerful and moving artistic expression in *Viṭutalaiyā?*, where he transmutes all the personal experiences into an impressive short story which is like an exquisite melancholy poem in prose. Mu. Va. was a sedulous and hardworking type even from his boyhood. His penchant for Mathematics and powerful recollective power enabled him to score good marks in subjects like Mathematics. Besides the optimistic guidance and encouragement that were bestowed upon him by his high school teacher *Tiruvēṅkaṭattaiyar* succoured him to become a resourceful student. Mu.

Va. never failed to acknowledge the helps kindly rendered by this teacher in his salad days and used to recall those helps with much gratitude even in his later days when he enjoyed good reputation throughout the country.

Mu. Va. read a Tamil weekly named *Navacakti*, published by Thiru. Vi.Ka., an eminent scholar and elocutionist of Tamil nadu, when she was under the British reign. Mu.Va. was highly enthralled by his enchanting simple and sensuous style. He read it regularly and started memorizing some of the important poems quoted there frequently. This magazine had exercised its influence strongly on his mind and brought out two great transformations in his personality. Firstly, the arrogant and conservative religious dogmatism began to lose its force yielding place to religious tolerance and the noble qualities like meekness and humility began to dominate the whole being of the humanitarian Mu. Va. Secondly his rational and inquiring mind which was shaped by the English education began to develop patriotic feelings and nostalgic attachments towards the Tamil language and literature and in course of time he began to feel that the Tamil is his soul and all.

One day, while his teacher *Murukaiya Mutaliyār* was teaching Tamil prosodical rules to the VIII standard pupils, Mu. Va. happened to see one of his friends keeping with him a book on Tamil prosody (*Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai*). He immediately borrowed that book from him, copied the whole book without omitting even a single line and memorized almost all the *cūtrās*. With the thorough knowledge acquired through this practice, he started writing Tamil verses on *kaṭṭalaikkalitturai* metre even from the eighth standard and taught *Yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* to many students later days.

*Murukaiya Mutaliyār*, his teacher used to teach saivite doctrines and hymns to the villagers every evening in the village temple. With his acceptance, Mu. Va. attended his classes regularly and studied saivite works like *Nālvar nāṇmaṇimālai*. Yet he could not completely alienate himself away from his sincere affinity to Mathematics and hence he took Mathematics and science as optional subjects in the IX standard. Later,

he got through the S.S.L.C. examinations with 98% marks in Mathematics. The teacher who taught Mathematics blessed him to become a good engineer or a mathematician in future. But, on the contrary, and unquenchable thirst for Tamil literature that was deeply rooted in his heart even from his infancy got victory over the inner struggle between science and art in his later days.

### MU. VA. IN THE OFFICE

As soon as he completed his S.S.L.C. examinations in 1928, he was appointed as an office clerk in the income-tax department. The industrious nature, promptness and punctuality in the works assigned to him and the honest way of dealing things soon won for him name and fame in the department and he was highly appreciated by his higher authorities. He soon got the post of a clerk in the revenue department which was very well known in those days by the name *āpkāri*, where there are more chances for malpractices like bribery etc. Yet the material prosperity earned through unnfair means could not divert the mind of Mu. Va. which was fed with the traditional ideals and righteous ways of life of the ancient Tamils. His perpetual toil in the office weakened his health gradually and so he resigned this government job to restore his health and returned to *Vēlam*, his native village.

### LITERARY INTERESTS

Mu. Va. was always highly cheered in the midst of his good friends. Among them four may be worth mentioning. They are *Tāmōlara Mutaliyār* of *Tiruppattūr*, *Kuppucāmy Mutaliyār* of *Pōrūr*, *Kantacāmy Mutaliyār*, a Tamil teacher and Professor *Yōgacuntaram*, the former Head of the Department of Tamil, Voohreese College, Vellore. Mu. Va. with the company of these inspiring friends used to visit the *Javvātu* mountains which sumptuously feasted his eyes with its indescribable beauty, everlasting charm and varieties of vegetations. He maintained this kind of unending organic relationship with nature till his death.

The unhealthy Mu. Va. once went to Vellore to see his friend *Yōgacuntaram*, who was doing his intermediate course



in the Voohreese College. In his room, he happened to see a book with the title *The Oneness of all diseases* written by a great German naturopathist named Dr. Hume. Mu. Va. incentively studied the methods of the naturopathy prescribed there for the remedial maladies of vital and healed his disease (*iḷainōy*) through that way. The period between 1931 to 1934 of his stay at *Vēlam* was more remarkable in his life since in this period he started studying Tamil literature with more devotion and enthusiasm. There was a provision during that time that any one can sit for the Tamil Vidvan examinations without being a regular student in any institution and Mu. Va. using this provision took the preliminary examinations and got through it with creditable success. *Nāidu*, the *āpkāri* contractor of *Tiruppattūr*, helped him to get the post of Tamil teacher in the Municipal school of the same place where he studied in his boyhood. As a teacher, he rendered yeoman services with a delighted and contented heart.

#### POST MARITAL LIFE AT TIRUPPATTUR

In 1935, Mu. Va. wedded *Rātā Ammaiār*, the daughter of his uncle *Cāraṅkapāṇi*. The wedding ceremony was celebrated in a very simple manner. His uncle gave him Rs. 50 to buy the necessary garments for the wedding function. Mu. Va. bought a dhoti, a shirt and a towel and refunded the remaining amount to his uncle himself. He used to wear khadi and followed the simple Gandhian way of life. One day, while he was in the government service, he had to handover an official message to the district collector. His friends frightened him that the collector would not like to see a government servant bringing an official message wearing khadi (since India was under the British rule). But Mu. Va. was little bothered about that and went to the collector with the same dress.

Though he served as a teacher with a low income, he led an honest and charitable life. When *A. S. Shanmuga Mutaliyār*, a wealthy man of this area offered him some garments as a remuneration for taking private tuitions to his children, Mu. Va. received it as a token of his courtesy and respect for him and firmly sent words that he should not

send such presentations thereafter. In 1935, he passed the vidvan final examinations with first rank in the state and was awarded Rs. 1000 by the *Tiruppanantāḷ maṭam*.

### MU. VA. AND THIRU. VI. KA.

In those days Thiru. Vi.Ka. who was very well-known by the attribution *Tamilttenṇal* used to give public speeches in the villages of North Arcot District. His sharp brilliant eyes never failed to have a glance at Mu. Va. who was a regular visitor and the two greatmen who became friends often forget themselves in lively conversations. In his autobiographical notes it is apparently seen that Thiru. Vi.Ka. used to call Mu. Va. as the Bernardshaw of the Tamil nadu. In the year 1936, a son was born to him who was named *Tirunāvukkaracu*.

### LIFE AT MADRAS

When he got his B.O.L. degree, his friends encouraged him to take up a good job in colleges. Getting a recommendation letter from *Macilāmaṇi Mutaliyār* of *Vēlūr*, Mu. Va. came and saw Mr. *A.L. Mutaliyār*, the then member of the Governing Board of the Pachiayappa Trust. With his help, he entered in the Pachiayappa College as a Tutor in the Department of Tamil and started his city life from 1939. He soon got the acquaintance of V. Subbaiah Pillai, the patriarch of the Saiva Siddhanta Publishing House and started writing some valuable articles in the Tamil Journal *Centamiḷ*. Some of his literary works saw the light of the day through the Saiva Siddhanta Publishing House successively in three years.

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|------------------|--|
| 1. November-1939 | (a) <i>Kuḷantaippāṭṭu</i>                    |
|                  | (b) <i>Kaḷakattamiḷ ilakkaṇam I &amp; II</i> |
|                  | (c) <i>Shakespeare Kavitaikaḷ I</i>          |
| 2. 1940          | (a) <i>Shakespeare Kavitaikaḷ II</i>         |
|                  | (b) <i>Paṭiyātavār paṭumpāṭṭu</i>            |
|                  | (c) <i>Kaḷakacciṇukataikaḷ I-III</i>         |
| 3. 1941          | (a) <i>Kaḷakattamiḷilakkaṇam III</i>         |

When the B.O.L. (Hons.) course was started for the first time in the Pachaiyappa College in the year 1942, Mu. Va. got the chance of teaching Philology and History of Tamil Language to the students. Due to the lack of adequate books in Tamil language for those new subjects, he had to study many books on Linguistics which were published in English and to teach them through Tamil. This formidable Herculean task motivated him to render three books on those subjects namely *Molinūl*, *Molivaralāru* and *Molīyiyal kaṭṭuraikaḷ* in Tamil which are considered even today as three monumental works on modern Linguistics especially in Dravidology.

### MU. VA. AS A WRITER

The style of Mu. Va. is very simple, elegant and clear as the writer himself. Every sentence is pregnant with clear and profound thoughts. He would tell even complex and obscure matters in a simple and attractive manner. In the year 1948, his famous literary production *Tiruvaḷḷuvar allatu Vāḷkkai Viḷakkam* came to be published though it was written a few years back. In 1944, he published his first fiction *Pāvai*. His famous novel *Kaḷḷō Kāvīyamō* enjoyed renowned fame in later days. After this book saw the print in 1947, the powerful creative talent and craftsmanship of Mu. Va. began to spread all over Tamil nadu and began to attract the attention of the people. In the meantime, he was appointed as honorary Reader for the years 1944-46 in the Madras University. In those days he published *Ōvacceyti*, *Kaṇṇaki* and *Tamiḷ neñcam* the three important landmarks in the critical study of the Tamil literature. In 1945, he submitted a dissertation on Tamil verbs and got his M.O.L. degree. He went back to the Pachaiyappa College in 1946 and undertook research on Sangam literature under the title 'The Treatment of nature in Sangam literature' and got his Ph. D degree for that from the Madras University. In the same year he was promoted as Professor of the Tamil Department after the death of *Mōcūr Kantacāmy Mutaliyār*, the former Professor of the same department. *Mōcūr Kantacāmy Mutaliyār* had a high respect and veneration for Dr. Mu. Va. and even when he himself was the Head of the Tamil Department, he used to handover all the responsibilities to Dr. Mu.

Va. As insisted by him Dr. Mu. Va. started wearing coat and turban with a spot of wafer of red sandal paste on the forehead in the College hours.

He skilfully headed the Tamil Department for thirteen years subsequently from 1948. In those days he published many books. During summer holidays he used to go to Ootacumund or some other beautiful villages and write many novels. His characters were drawn from every walk, age and situations of life. His fictions became very popular among the populace and his idealities and reflections were highly admired by them as a result of which he earned respect and enough material prosperity. He built a good house yet the house-warming ceremony was celebrated in a very simple manner. Most of the participants of the function were the labourers to whom Dr. Mu. Va. paid double the amount of that weekly wages as rewards to honour their services. He hated luxury and found solace and happiness only in a humble life and solitude.

In 1952, he got a big prize for his literary productions. When the Fifth Tamil Conference was held at Tenampet, Dr. Mu. Va. delivered an inspiring talk on Sangam literature in the presence of *Naṭēca Pillai*, a minister of Ceylon, who presided over the evening functions. The minister introduced Dr. Mu. Va. before the intellectually alert audience as a scholar-writer who deserved to Nobel prize for literature in Tamil nadu.

When the Independent day was celebrated in a pompous manner in the year 1957, a body of persons including some illustrious personalities like Dr. P. V. Rajamannar, the Chief Justice of Tamil nadu and Dr. A. L. *Mutaliyār*, the former Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University were appointed by the State Government to select three meritorious and eminent artists for *iyal*, *icai* and *nāṭakam* respectively and honour them by giving great recompenses for their services. Dr. Mu. Va. won the prize for *Iyal* and *K.B Sundarampā!* and *Pammal Sambanta Mutaliyār* won the prizes for *icai* and *nāṭakam* respectively. Dr. Mu. Va.'s explanatory and critical commentary of *Tirukkura!* was highly commended by a large circle of inquiring Tamil readers and more than 8 lakhs of copies were sold.

## AS A TAMIL PROFESSOR IN THE MADRAS UNIVERSITY

Dr. R.P. Sethu Pillai, a well known orator and a dexterious Tamil scholar was the Head of the Department of Tamil in the Madras University who worked in that capacity till the beginning of the year 1961. When he was admitted in the General Hospital owing to his ill-health, he requested Dr. Mu. Va. to accept his offer of the Professorship after his death. Though Dr. Mu. Va. was reluctant, he could not easily refuse the request of that eminent scholar and took up that job from July, 1961. Many young scholars registered under him for the M. Litt. and Ph. D. titles and got through with success. Among them *Murugaratnam*, *V.T. Bālasubramaṇiam Tillainātaṅ*, *Rajalakshmi* and *Mary Dēvapākkiam* were conferred with M. Litt. degrees and *Murugaratnam*, *M. Israel*, *Sacivally*, *Dēvadattā*, *V. T. Māṇickam*, *Nāku*, *R. Dhandāyutam*, *R. Janārttaṅam*, *V. Gnāṇasigāmaṇi*, *M. Selvarāsan* and *A. Nāgalingam* were guided by him for Ph. D. degrees. *Dr. R. Seenivasan* and *C Balasubramaṇian* of the Pachaiyappa College, who got M. Litt. degrees under him successfully completed their Ph. D. theses under his private guidance. His dynamic vocation in the University as a research guide was a hindrance to his writing career. His prose fiction *Akal Viḷakku* won the Sakitya Akademi Prize for the year 1962. His three important creations *Aramum Araciyalum*, *Kaḷḷō Kāviyomō* and *Viḷulaiyā?* won the Tamil nadu government prizes for their super eminence and subtle craftsmanship.

### CHARACTER AND PERSONAL HABITS

As a humanitarian, Dr. Mu. Va. was an infinitely polite man and was very cordial and genial spirited towards his friends and students. He was profoundly spiritual and learned and rendered yeoman services to the student community in their pursuit of knowledge. He established a High School on the name of his intellectual and spiritual guru Thiru.Vi.Ka. at Shenoy Nagar as a mark of his respect and admiration for him. He gave Rs. 11 thousand and the copy right of four of his book as donation.

He was very fond of victuals like *iḷli* and *tōcai* and used to take them with much relish. He had a high appetite for daintiness. *Karuṇaikkīḷaṅku poriyal* (*Dracontium polyphyllum*) and potato were some of the side dishes he liked very much. After the age of fortyfive, he used to take *cappātti* as supper. He relished fruits like grapes, apple, orange, banana and papaw very much.

He used to get up exactly at 5 A. M. in the morning and wander in the garden beholding the vegetations. Then he used to take bath in the cold water and spent a few minutes in meditation. The regular breakfast time would be 7-30 A. M. and lunch 1 P. M. He won't take coffee and used to go to bed at 11 P.M.

*Appar tēvāram*, the works of *Rāmatīrttar*, *Rāmakrishnar*, *Vivēkānanda*, the hymns of *Tāyumāṇavar* and *Ramaliṅgar* were some of the native works he used to study regularly. Somerset Maugham, Bernardshaw and Bertrand Russell were some of his intellectual companions of the West. In short simplicity, gracefulness and service were his special qualities.

#### AS VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE MADURAI UNIVERSITY

He took charge as Vice - Chancellor of the Madurai University on February, 1971 after Dr. T. P. Meenakshi sundaran, an erudite scholar. Dr. Mu. Va. implemented the correspondence course for the first-time in the history of the Madurai University which enabled even the students who are unable to acquire higher education to obtain it at least through an indirect method. The Vooster University of America conferred on him the D. Litt. degree. He was the first Tamil scholar who got such a honorary title from a foreign University. Though he was disinclined, his service period was extended for another three years from 1974. The continuous toil in the office weakened his health and after the wedding of his youngest son on the 4th September 1974, he became very weak. On the convocation day of the same year in the Madurai University he had a heart attack. Yet, he neither sought the help of doctors nor took any rest. From 29—9—1974

he was almost continuously on the bed of sickness. In spite of the persuasions of his wife, sons and close friends, he refused to take English medicines and started affirming his faith on naturopathy as an effective restorative for vital diseases. On the previous day of his irreparable demise, he felt that he was betrayed by his naturopathy. Though given good treatment in the General Hospital under the direct supervision of ministers, the soul of gentleness and profound scholarship that served very much for the uplift of the Tamils was snatched away from the bereaved Tamil people by the cruel hands of death.

## ‘JAYA JAYA SHANKARA’: A REVIEW

Jayakānthan's novel, 'Jaya Jaya Shankara', differs in many respects from his usual writings and hence it has created a tingling sensation among critics. He usually deals with social and sexual problems in a superb manner. But in this novel his focus is on the Hindu religion and its importance as a movement for the welfare of Indian Hindu society.

The primary theme of this novel is how to eradicate untouchability. According to Jayakānthan, Brahmins and Harijans do not mean two different sects, but they mean two different concepts on the basis of which untouchability exists. To eradicate this cruel curse of untouchability, he advocates that the subjects who belong to the concept of Harijans should be elevated to the concept of Brahmins. This elevation ought to be the basic aim of Hinduism and it is also essential for the very existence of the religion.

Unlike the other novels of Jayakānthan, the present novel has a real living saint, Swami Shankaracharya as one of its characters. This character forms the nucleus of the novel. Swamiji is depicted as the chief protagonist of Hinduism without whom no social and cultural reforms are possible. He considers a Harijan as his teacher and worships him as his God.

Swatantra Dēvi is a Brahmin lady who is very calm and at the same time very firm in her principles. She is more or less similar to the 'modern girl', of poet Bhārathi. She leaves the quarters of Brahmins along with her father and settles amidst the Harijans, where she gets married to a Harijan, and leads a respectable and admirable life.

Sadāsive Iyer, a true Gandhian, as against his elder brother who is an orthodox Brahmin, strives hard to root out



untouchability. He collects people in the Harijan quarters by beating the drum and he leads Harijans into the temple. He lives in the Harijans' quarters.

Ādhi, a Harijan, is the chief character in this novel. He is the boyhood-friend of Swami Shankaracharya. He has a sound knowledge of things and he is the soul of self-respect. When he is asked to join the movement of entering the temple, he refuses: "Can we go to that place where we are not liked? Can we touch those who do not want us to be touched?...Is there God only in the temple?" (p.26). Later he becomes the prime disciple of Sadhāsiva Iyer who voluntarily comes to dwell in the quarters of Harijans. He acquires the Vedic knowledge. He becomes the husband of Swatantara Dēvi. Through his lips, Jayakānthan proposes the following solution for the eradication of untouchability: "How many temples are there in India? Are they buildings which get saturated with the dust of time? Let men of action in hundreds start from that temple. Let it be decided later whether these Brahmins should get married or should become ascetics. But, they all should become true Brahmins, at first. To this venture, I dedicate my child as the first member. You have built a temple here, by the side of which an ashram should be established...and this ashram must develop the Brahminism as well as the Vedic life as the flesh and blood of our social life". (p. 64).

Thus each and every character of this novel is engraved in the hearts of the readers.

The novel is written in a lucid style. As it centres around religion a high philosophic flow is maintained. It echoes the maturity and the unique personality of its author.

Right from Gandhiji many have struggled for the eradication of untouchability. For many, untouchability can be eradicated by raising the social, economic, political and educational status of the so called untouchables and also by the intercaste marriage (between Brahmins and Harijans). Religion, especially, the Hindu religion, is the root-cause of untouchability. Diamond cuts diamond. So Jayakānthan

takes up the powerful weapon, religion, to eradicate untouchability. This is indeed a bold approach.

Jayakānthan declares Swami Shankaracharya as the father of Hindu religion and culture. He believes that untouchability can be eradicated only by Swamiji through religion. The source of inspiration of this novel is the following statement by Swami Shankaracharya.

“...People will have a sense of taste, if wits and journalists begin to write with all their heart for the enrichment of human soul. The writers should have the sense of duty to elevate their ownselves and their readers. In this manner, writers should have the unique objective of rendering true service to the enrichment of soul, world, peace and prosperity”.

# 8

## MAHARISHI'S 'NATIYAIT TĒṬI VANTA KATAḶ' — A REVIEW

The novel under review, *Natiyait Tēṭi Vanta Kaṭal* 'the sea that came searching the river' by Maharishi, one of the trend-setters in the domain of Tamil Fiction, is a bonus issue published along with *Ānanda Vikoṭan*, a popular weekly on the eve of Deepavali, 1978.

Chandrasēkar was a sound scholar in Economics. He used to write books on Economics and his books were being published by a book firm at Delhi. He was in need of an assistant who could write down when he would dictate. Rāmabadran recommended Sumitrā for the post of assistant to Chandrasēkar. Sumitrā accepted this assignment.

Chandrasēkar was a wealthy man. He owned many companies. He asked the whereabouts of Sumitrā. She said that her parents were no more, and Rāmabadran was her father's friend and legal adviser. Chandrasēkar was very much impressed by the work and attitude of Sumitrā who also had high regard for him.

Kailāsam was the Personal Assistant to Chandrasēkar. He was actually looking after all the companies owned by Chandrasēkar. He was under the good confidence of his boss. Therefore he took advantage and became more or less a dictator.

Sumitrā saw Kailāsam going upstairs with a Doctor. This led her to follow them with eagerness. There she saw a woman lying sick on a bed being attended by the Doctor. Kailāsam on seeing Sumitrā there burst into fury. He shouted that her duty was to remain only in the downstairs. Hurt Sumitrā came

down. On one day when there was none in the house went upstairs and met the woman. In due course both of them became friends. She learnt that it was Anubamā, the wife of Chandrasēkar. Anubamā was leading a miserable life. Her life almost became scattered by many a shock. A child born to her was not physically proper and it was being brought up in a nursing home. Though Kailāsam was objecting Sumitrā to meet Anubamā, their friendship became thicker and thicker as days went on.

In the meantime Sumitrā got acquaintance with one woman by name Sankari, who had been the Personal Assistant to Chandrasēkar for sometime. Kailāsam used the serpentine beauty of her to carry out his plots against the family of Chandrasēkar who fell in love with her. On understanding the acquaintance of her husband with Sankari, Anubamā fell into a great shock which also led her to sick bed. Kailāsam under the disguise of a well-wisher separated Anubamā from her husband. He also arranged to take snaps of Chandrasēkar and Sankari when they were physically close to each other. He later used these snaps to threaten his boss indirectly and bribed a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs in order to stop publishing them in a yellow journal. On another occasion he arranged Sankari to be in the close association of Pilot Madhusūdhnan. Chandrasēkar was also arranged to have a sight on this. Thus driven on the cliff of distress, Chandrasēkar diverted her by giving a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs which ultimately went into the hands of Kailāsam. All these were clearly learnt by Sumitrā through Sankari. She also came to know that the child of Chandrasēkar and Anubamā was living with Sankari.

With the good company of Sumitrā, Anubamā was recovering day by day. She used to serve her husband by this time. She was gradually regaining his affection for her. On knowing the fact that her child was with Sankari she met her and asked for her child. Sankari denied. So a struggle burst out. As a result, Sankari rolled down on the staircase and passed away. When Anubamā was about to take her child, there came Kailāsam. He deceived her and took her

child with him. He asked her to go in a taxi which was driven by Madhusūdhanaṅ. Thus they were kidnapped

Chandrasēkar was by this time aware of all the villainy of Kailāsam. In spite of that he was prepared to forgive him provided he would return his wife and child safely.

Sumitrā concealed the truth that she was the wife of Kailāsam. She met him and requested him personally to return Anubamā and her child to Chandrasēkar.

Kailāsam being shot by Madhusūdhanaṅ due to personal enmity that developed recently out of financial dealings fell on the knee of Chandrasēkar and passed away. Sumitrā now became a widow. The departed family reunited. Sumitrā was happy to see the sea (Chandrasekar) that came searching the river (Anubamā). There ends the novel which is pregnant with passion, compassion, suspense, sacrifice, and characterisation.

The novel appears to be more or less a movie and appeals very much to the readers. The lucid and simple style through which the story is narrated is appreciable. The development of incidents in a proper sequence and description employed in the novel are superb. To put it in a nutshell, this novel by Maharishi is a welcome addition to Tamil noveldom.

## MODERNITIES IN MODERN TAMIL LITERATURE

Tamil is a language with a hoary past and heavenly heights. It is now having a happy combination of the ancient and modern literature. The ever flowing deep stream of Tamil literature assumes different colours according to the changing needs of the cycle of time reflecting ambitions and aspirations of the Tamil people. These changing colours catch the tunes of modernities with new shades and trading on new grounds. It is a fitting vehicle reflecting the minds of the people young and old.

In short, we can name the modern period as an age of Prose, which is but a consequence to the advent of the European scholars in general. It caught speed surprisingly to our satisfaction, thanks to the printing press, dailies and periodicals.

### POETRY

*Bhārathi* who lived in the beginning of the present century proclaims that it is our duty to produce poetry, serve the country and not to be indolent even for a second :

நமக்குத் தொழில் கவிதை நாட்டிற் குழைத்தல்  
இமைப் பொழுதும் சோரா திருத்தல்.<sup>1</sup>

He also says that composing poetry is his duty and his wish is to safeguard the nation with his poetic fervour and talent.

என்றன் பாட்டுத் திறத்தாலே  
இவ் வையத்தைப் பாலித்திட வேண்டும்.<sup>2</sup>

He composed hymns, full of devotion and national songs rousing intense national spirit. The love of Tamil and the

spirit of independence for women found their proper place in his poems. We can see clearly the richness of poetry in his *Kaṇṇaṇ pāṭṭu*, the modern trend in his *Pāñcāli capatam* and the imaginative power in his *Kuyil pāṭṭu*.

The poems of *Kavimaṇi Dēsika Vināyakam Piḷḷai* are very simple and pleasant.

உள்ளத் துள்ளது கவிதை—இன்ப  
உருவெடுப்பது கவிதை  
தெள்ளத் தெளிந்த தமிழில்—உண்மை  
தெரிந் துரைப்பது கவிதை<sup>3</sup> .

He says: 'It is poetry that emerges from the heart; it is poetry that takes a pleasant form; and it is poetry that declares the correct and human fact in crystal Tamil'.

As denoted by himself in the above stanza, the following is an example of the simplicity and pleasantness of his poetry.

வட்டமாயுன் கழுத்திலே வானவில்லை ஆரமாய்  
இட்டமன்னர் யாரம்மா யானறியக் கூறம்மா  
பவளக்காரத் தெருவிலே பவளம்காண வில்லையாம்  
எவரெடுத்துச் சென்றவர் எனக்கறிந்து சொல்வையோ?<sup>4</sup>

We can paraphrase the above lines thus: 'Who is the monarch that adorned the rainbow around your neck as a garland? Can you tell me this clearly? It is said that there is no coral in the coral merchant street; can you kindly let me know who had taken them away?'

*Nāmakkal Rāmaliṅgam Piḷḷai*, a national poet, of the Gandhian epoch, had composed many good poems which inspired the freedom spirit among people. Simple descriptions and suitable similies are specialities of his poems.

In describing the heroine of his poetical work *Avanum Avalum* he says: 'If we compare her to a deer, she has no bewilderment; if we compare her eye to a fish, the black hue in a fish is very meagre; if we compare her sweet words to honey,

cloy has no place in her words; and if we compare her forehead to the crescent moon, the rest of her face will become dark' :

மான்என அவளைச்சொன்னால் மருளுதல் அவளுக்கில்லை  
மீன்விழி உடையாள்என்றால் மீனிலே கருமை கொஞ்சம்  
தேன்மொழிக் குவமைசொன்னால் தெவிட்டுதல் தேனுக்குண்டு  
கூன்பிறை நெற்றிஎன்றால் குறைமுகம் இருண்டு போகும்.<sup>5</sup>

A motor car with its head-light put out ; a horse-carriage (jutka) of which the braces have given way ; (broken) fountain pen in which the ink is dry ; and an old man who has lost his walking stick, are some of his favourite similes.

*Bhārathidāsan* was a poet of recent times. He composed songs on Tamil, freedom of women, love, social reform and glory of ancient Tamil culture, etc.

His ardent love for Tamil—his mother-tongue—may be seen clearly from the following lines of his poem :

கனியிடை ஏறிய சுளையும் முற்றல்  
கழையிடை ஏறிய சாறும்  
பனிமலர் ஏறிய தேனும் காய்ச்சும்  
பாகிடை ஏறிய சுவையும்  
நனிபசு பொழியும் பாலும்—தென்னை  
நல்கிய குளி ரிள நீரும்  
இனியன என்பேன் எனினும் தமிழை  
என்னுயிர் என்பேன் கண்டீர்.<sup>6</sup>

' The pulp (*cuḷai*) which developed in a fruit ; the juice which abounded in a fully grown up sugar-cane ; the honey obtainable from a cool flower ; the sweetness of a well-boiled sugar, syrup ; the milk which a cow gives in abundance ; the sweet and cool juice of a tender cocoanut ; all these things are sweet, yet I feel that Tamil is sweeter, dearer to my life (than all those things)'.



Simplicity also is his main aim in composing songs :

முழுமை நிலா அழகு நிலா  
முனைத்தது விண்மேலே—அது  
பழமையிலே புதுநினைவு  
பாய்ந்தெழுந்தாற் போல<sup>7</sup>.

He says in one of his poems :

‘ O Conch : proclaim to the world that our life and wealth is Tamil, the Tamil which will never fade’<sup>8</sup>

We can see the delightful and essential ideas of the Sangam literature in the songs of *Kaṇṇadāsan*; *Muḍiyarasan* presents Tamil consciousness through his poems; suitable similes are found in the verses of *Suradā*; and musical harmony gets its due share in the songs of *Tamiḷaḷakan*.

At present some modern poets are averse to prosody. *Pudumaippittan* and *Pichamūrthy* are notable among such poets. *Pudumaippittan* says in one of his poems :

காளான் குடை நிழலில்  
கரப்பான் அரசிருக்க  
வேளாண் குடியூரின்  
வெள்ளெருக்கு முட்டருகே  
கள்ளி தலைதூக்க  
காட்டெருமை புறத்தேறி  
சிட்டுக் குருவியவள்  
சிங்காரப் பாட்டிசைத்தாள்.<sup>9</sup>

Cockroach holds its Durbar under the shade of the umbrella like mushroom; the Indian tree spurge peeps its head near the bush of white calotropis gigantea in the agricultural hamlet; the maiden house-sparrow, sitting on the back of a wild buffalo sings its embellished song’.

There is a mass of pretenders who pose themselves as lovers of literature who do not pay any heed to a poet in his life time but praise him to the skies after his death : *Pudumaippittan* issues a strict warning to them :

இத்தனைக்கும் மேலே இனி ஒன்று; ஐயா நான்  
 செத்ததற்குப் பின்னால் நிதிகள் திரட்டாதீர்  
 நினைவை விளிம்பு கட்டி கல்லில் வடித்து வையாதீர்  
 வானத்து அமரன் வந்தான்காண் வந்ததுபோல்  
 போனான்காண் என்று புலம்பாதீர்  
 அத்தனையும் வேண்டாம் அடியேனை விட்டுவிடும்<sup>10</sup>

‘Above all these, Sir, I say one thing ; don’t collect funds for a poet after his death ; don’t inscribe his memoirs on a marble with fine bordering ; don’t weep over him saying that a Devan had come down and gone as swift as he had come. I don’t want all these things ; please leave me alone.’

Some poets, at present, compose verses in the name of ‘Modern poems’ ; one among such poets says in a verse :

பொருட் பாலுக்காக நான்  
 காமத்துப் பாலை விற்கிறேன்—இந்த  
 அறத்துப் பால் ஏன் அழுது புலம்புகிறது?<sup>11</sup>

‘I am selling my love for money ; why the moral codes abuse me? Out of poverty I have no other go but to become a prostitute ; but it is a pity that the people who do not help me any way, abuse me as a courtesan’.

The emphasis is on the sense of feeling, ideas, and imagination in such poems, than it is on *form*.

## PROSE

Though Tamil prose is very ancient, it witnessed a great development only after the advent of the European Missionaries. *Tolkāppiyam* provided a definition of prose here and there ; but the commentary on *Iṟaiyaṇār kaḷaviyal*, and the commentaries written by *Iḷampūraṇar*, *Cēnāvaraiyar*, *Nāccinārkkiniyar*, *Parlmēlaḷakar* and *Pērāciriyar* are the best examples for the style of ancient prose.

*Saint Ramaliṅgar* of the 19th century helped much for the development of Tamil prose. His prose works such as, *Maṇu-muṟai kaṇṭavācakam*, *Jivakāruṇya olukkam* and *Uṇmai neṟi* etc. and the prose works of *Ārumuga Nāvalar* of Nallūr in Jaffna, enriched

the Tamil prose. The learned Professor *V. K. Sūriyanārāyaṇa Sāstri* calls *Ārumuga Nāvalar* as an adept prose writer.<sup>12</sup> *Gnāṇaratam* of poet *Bhārathi* may be considered a renaissance of Tamil prose.

*Maṛaimalai Aḍigaḷār* was the founder of the Pure-Tamil movement. The prose style of *Thiru. Vi. Ka.* is refined, clear simple and pleasing ; and the sentences are short. He made Tamil prominent both in platform oration and in newspaper writing. He proved well that the political and all other ideas could be clearly expressed in simple and elegant Tamil. The following passage may throw light on the style of *Thiru. Vi. Ka.*:

கண்டிக்குச் செல்லும் வழி நெடுக இயற்கை  
அன்னையின் திருவோலக்கமின்றி வேறென்ன இருக்  
கிறது? எங்கணும் மலைகள், மலைத்தொடர்கள், மலைச்  
சூழல்கள், எங்கணும் சோலைகள், சாலைகள், செடிகள்,  
கொடிகள், நீர் நிலைகள், இவை யாவும் ஒன்றோ  
டொன்று கலந்து அளிக்கும் காட்சியன்றோ கடவுட்  
காட்சி.<sup>13</sup>

‘There is nothing but Nature’s grandeur on the long way to Kaṇḍi. Everywhere we see mountains, mountain ranges, mountain slopes, groves, roads, bushes, creepers and paddy plants ; there are also streams, rivers and tanks—the sight which is mingled with all these things is very pleasant to look at.’

The style of *Collin Celvar* ‘possessor of the wealth of words’ *Dr. R. P. Sethu Piḷḷai* may be described as rhythmic prose, by using the best words in the best place in the best order. He would use phrases and even parts of sentences from the ancient Tamil literature, in his writings, so as to beautify his style. The style of *Dr. Mu. Va.* is very simple and clear ; and it enables the reader to understand clearly even the hard and complicated ideas.

The style of *Dr. C. N. Aṇṇādurai*, otherwise popularly known as *Aṇṇā* is a happy combination of rhyme and delight. For Example :

விண்ணும் மண்ணும் அதிக வெறியாட்டமாடிவரும்  
 விரோதிக் கூட்டத்தைக் கண்டும் கலங்காத வீரனையும்  
 தன் வேல் விழியால் வீழ்த்திய வனிதா மணிகளின் கதை  
 சரிதத்தில் ரசமான சம்பவம்<sup>14</sup>

'The seduction by the penetrating looks of Roman damsels on heroes who are undaunted by the orgies of events which quail the earth and heaven are enthralling to read in the history of Rome.'

## SHORT STORY

Short story is a literary form, which has witnessed the rapid growth since the beginning of this century. Vast developing mechanised life of men, wonders of the scientific inventions, improvement of printing press and the progress of Journalism have all contributed much for the growth of the short stories. It takes four or five years for the sale of thousand copies of a book; but more than four lakhs of copies of some weeklies are sold out within a short span of time. This fact leads us to conclude that the people are satisfied with the reading of newspapers and magazines alone. It is certain that almost all the weeklies are progressing well with short stories.

Dr. Mu. Va. says that any one of the following points such as an unforgettable incident, suitable environment, delightful scenes, some closely entangled minor incidents, personal character of an individual, any minor experience, a success in one's life, any complication arising out of misplaced sympathy, may be the basis of a short story.<sup>15</sup> Short stories may be divided into three groups: (1) a short story which is specific by its basic factor or central theme; (2) a short story which is based on the exemplary character of a person; (3) a short story developed from the magnanimous consciousness of an individual. A short story should be of such a length that it should be read between half an hour and two hours.

Though it is called a short story, it is a product of rare art. In its short form itself it undertakes all sorts of restrictions. A short story should be so interesting as to be read at a stretch; it should produce a particular effect; and above all the incidents

and characters should be cast in such a manner as to produce that particular effect.

'The development of character, this forward development of time, have always been and perhaps will be the pulse and soul of the novel. But in the short story, time need not move, except by an infinitesimal fractions; the characters themselves need not move; they need not grow old; indeed there may be no characters at all.'<sup>16</sup>

In some of the short stories, the basic factor will be distinctive; in some other stories, we can see incidents which can show the veneration of the characters. The basic factor of stories will vary from country to country. There should be a completeness in every story and it should give full satisfaction to the reader. There should be at least one connecting theme in every story.

The beginning of a story should rouse the desire and imagination of the reader and make him eager to look forward to the next development. *Akilaṅ* says that there is a base for a short story in one of the *Kalittoki* vereses<sup>17</sup>

It may be said that the beginning of the short story can be traced only from 1927. *Maṅgaiyarkkarasiyiṅ Kātal* by V. V. S. Iyer was published in this century. Thirty years later, after the publication of the first novel, *Piratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram* in 1876, Tamil short stories began to flourish. V.V.S. Iyer in his introduction to the above writes: 'It is my opinion that the stories should be written full of poems and there should be no difference between the mood and physical experience.

*Mādhavaiāh*, the author of *Kucikar Kuṭṭik Kataikaḷ* comes next. Originally these stories were written in English and were published in the '*Hindu*', an English daily; then they were translated into Tamil. Social reform was the main aim of these stories. In 1933 *Maṅikkodī*, a Tamil journal was published but it ceased publication in 1936. Among the short story writers, *B.S. Rāmaiāh*, *Pichamūrthy*, *Pudumaippittan*, *Ku. Pa.Rā.*, *Mouni*, *Si.Su. Chellappā* and *Chidambaram Subramaṇiyam* are worth mentioning.

Regarding *Pudumaippittan*, it may be said that he handled the regional Tamil suitably in his writings and he was called as *sirukatai mannan* 'the king of short story'.

The next author is *Kalki*. Some of his short stories became really long stories. Richness of imagination and description are the special features of his writings. We should mention three among the living authors. One is *Akilan*; the other is *Vintan*, while the third, who holds the banner aloft among short story writers, is *Jayakānthan*.

There is an organisation called *Ilakkiyac Cintanai* 'the literary thought' and it holds regular meetings on the last Saturday of every month. The merits of the short stories published during the month are discussed at the meetings and the best story gets a prize; and a remuneration also is paid to the best reviewer. Two volumes named *Pinnani* and *Kanavuk Katai* are published by this organisation. The review was commenced by *Akilan*.

## NOVEL

If a man writes his own life itself, it will become a novel. Perhaps, the short stories have occupied the place of *tanippāḷ-alkaḷ* 'love-verses' and the novels have occupied the place of epics.

As mentioned earlier writing of novel in Tamil began in 1876 since the publication of *Piratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram* by *Vēdanāyagam Piḷḷai*, a District Munsif at Mayūram. He had mentioned his novel as *Vacana Kāvīyam* 'Prosaic epic'. It may be found that it is the social history of that time. This novel had been written with a view to impart instructions in a delightful way.

*Kamalāmapāḷ Carittiram* by *Rājam Iyer* was the next publication (1896). This was first published as a serial-story in *Vivēka Chinthāmaṇi* between 1893 and 1895. The philosophy of life with a rural background is the special feature of this work. The creation of characters and the entanglement of the story are really appreciable.

In 1898, *Mādhavaiāh* wrote his *Padmāvathi Carittiram*. Afterwards *Pāṇḍiṭ Naṭēṣa Sāstri* and *T.M. Ponnusāmy Piḷḷai* emerged as novelists. The social life and official routine are well portrayed in *Dīnadayālu* of *Paṇḍiṭ Naṭēṣa Sāstri*. Another Novel, *Tikkarra iru Kuḷantaikaḷ* by the same author was the first novel with detective features. The novels by *T.M. Ponnusāmy Piḷḷai* were generally adaptations of English novels. *Vaḍuvūr Duraisāmy Iyengar*, *Āraṇi Kuppusāmy Mudaliyār* and *T.K. Ranga-rāju* wrote their novels with materials adapted from English novels.

*Va. Rā.* was always noted as 'Writer *Va. Rā*'. 'His refined writing was very much appreciated by *Dr. Aṇṇā* (*C. N. Aṇṇā-durai*). His work *Kōtāit Thīvu* is a specimen of his best imagination. *Sundari* as to who can hinder the smell from Jack-fruit or the sweet smell of blossomed jasmine. From this question, he elucidates some specific ideas of social reforms. *Ka. Si. Venkaṭaramaṇi*, who had the love of rural-life, Gandhism and simplicity, wrote *Murugaṇ or Uḷavaṇ* and *Kandaṇ oru Dēsa Baktāṇ* and these may be said as the two ripe fruits of this Gandhian era.

*Kalki*, who belonged to *Māyūram* in *Tanjore* district, worked under *Thiru. Vi. Ka.* at first and then under *Rājāji* at *Thiruchencode*. *Thiyāgabūmi*, *Sōlai malai Iḷavarasai*, *Makuḍapathy*, *Kaḷvanin Kātali* are some of his earlier novels. After working for some time in *Āṇanda-Vikaṭaṇ* he started the *Kalki*, his own publication. In the word 'Kalki', 'Kal' stands for *Thiru. V. Kālyāṇa-sundaraṇār*; and 'Ki' stands for *Krishṇamūrthy*, his own name. *Pārttipaṇ Kaṇavu* was his first historical novel. *Kalki* was an able writer who would compel the reader to complete the book at a stretch and his writings would be enjoyable even for a lay man. His novel *Sivakāmiyiṇ Sapatam* contains about a thousand pages and it is most noted for its cohesion. The characters of *Sivakāmi* and *Nāganandhi* are always memorable. *Ponniyiṇ Selvaṇ* which contain more than two thousand pages, well describes the golden age of the *Chōla* period. *Nandhiṇi*, a character of *Ponniyiṇ Selvaṇ* is an immortal one.

*Alai Ōsai* is his social novel, which is based on the Indian Freedom Fight. Throughout the story it is closely connected

with the freedom fight. He (Kalki) himself writes: "When I read Alai Ōsai once, it came to my mind that if any one of my books could survive for more than hundred years, that could be Alai Ōsai alone."

The very beginning of his novels would be attractive; and his style would make anything to be the life-thread of the story. For example:

“ஆதியும் அந்தமும் இல்லாத பரம்பொருளைப்போல், அந்தச் சாலையும் எங்கே ஆரம்பமாகிறது எங்கே முடிவாகிறது என்று தெரிந்துகொள்ள முடியாததாயிருக்கின்றது.”

(The beginning and ending of that road was unknown like that of Almighty who has neither beginning nor ending.)

“சாலை வடதிசை நோக்கித் திரும்பிய முடுக்கிலே ராகூம் பேட்டை கிராமத்தில் தபால் சாவடி எழுந்தருளியுள்ளது. அதன் தூணிலே கட்டித் தொங்கவிடப்பட்டிருந்த தபால் பெட்டி, திக்கற்ற அநாதையைப் போல் பரிதாபமாகத் தோற்றம் அளித்தது.”

(When the road turned towards north at the corner, there is the village Rāgumpēt where stood a post office, and the post box which hung on a pillar appeared stranded like an orphan).

Here we should mention *Dr. Mu. Va.* We can say that if Kalki has inculcated the desire for reading novels among the people, Dr. Mu. Va. inculcated the habit of buying novels. Some ten years ago, the novels of Dr. Mu. Va. only were given as marriage presents. In his novels, the series of ideas are given in the type of a letter than in the form of a connected story and it is sought more to impart knowledge than give pleasure. If we can say that Kalki's novels are comparable to *Rāmāyaṇam*, Dr. Mu. Va.'s novels are comparable to *Cilappatikāram*.

In the literary grove of Dr. Mu. Va. we can find flowers, unripe and fully ripe fruits. Please note the titles of *Kaḷḷō Kaviyamō* and *Kayamai*. The former corrected the moral rectitude of a husband and his wife, and the latter brought out all the possible official blunders. The title *Kayamai* itself is really a revolutionary one.



We can mention next, among the story writers, *Akilaṅ*, *Jayakānthaṅ*, *Chāṇḍilyaṅ*, *Kōvi Maṇisēkaraṅ*, N. Pārthasārathy, T. Jāṇakirāmaṅ, *Jagachirpiyāṅ*, *Māyāvi* and *R.V.* etc.

*Akilaṅ* began his writing career at about his fifteenth or sixteenth year, and his first novel *Peṅ* brought him the first prize of Nārāyaṇasāmy Iyer endowed by *Kalaimaga!* for the best novel.

*Akilaṅ* received letters from his readers asking him whether he can write a novel without a woman character. The reason for this question is that more than one heroine appear in his novels.

In his *Pāvai Viḷakku*, *Dēvaki*, *Seṅkamalam*, *Gowri* and *Umā* are circling round the hero *Thaṅnikāchalam*, an ideal writer. No reader can forget, *Rōhiṇi*, a character in his *Vēṅkaiyiṅ Maintaṅ* who was dangling between love and vindictive enmity.

*Jayakānthaṅ* is a revolutionary writer. He exposes suitably all the secrets of life, crookedness of the society and the impediments of mind. The ideas presented by him induce the reader to look at life with a modern outlook. The growing present society portrays the future society. Cohesion and the proper ending give life to his stories.

The novels of *Chāṇḍilyaṅ* are filled with Sanskritic pleasant moods; his efforts are vast and he is trying to connect history with literature.

The novels of *Jāṇakirāmaṅ* depict the typical traits of *Thanjāvūr*. It will take sometime for the reader to understand the usage of words and the nature of the story. *Mōka Muḷ*, one of his novels is a perspective of the mental attitudes of a lad who loves a girl, ten years elder to him.

There is a social complaisance in the novels of N. Pārthasārathy and the characterisation is high. *Aravindaṅ* and *Pūraṇi* in *Kuriñci Malar* are unforgettable characters. In the same way, no reader can forget *Satyamūrthy* and *Bhārathi*, the

unsuccessful young lovers of *Pon Vilanku*. His style has enriched Tamil; but, at present in his novel *Satya Vellam* he uses numerous English phrases in their original forms. The readers are unable to understand why an author who can write chaste Tamil, is writing a rhythmic Tamil intermingling it with English words and phrases. They are under the impression perhaps his political feelings may gradually swallow his Art.

*Tattuvam*, a novel by *Kōvi Maṇisēkaraṇ* is a modern creation and it is admirable. It centres round the mental conflicts of male and female. The central idea of the novel is, that one should not make his wife an object to be tested. Historical novels written by him are all based on correct historical datas. Among his books, *Sempiyaṇ Selvi*, *Cēraṇ Kulakkoḍi* and *Mayiliraku* are worth mentioning.

*Vintan's Pālum Pāvaiyum* describes heart-throbbing realism of the world. *Aṇaiyā Viḷakku* of *R. V.* is a revolutionary one. *Vira Pāṇḍiyaṇ Maṇaivi* of *Aru. Rāmanātan*, *Thillāṇā Mōhaṇāmpāl* of *Kalaimaṇi*, *Thiruchirrampalam* of *Jagaciṇṇiyaṇ* and *Malarkaḷ* by *Rājam Krishnamurthy* are worth mentioning among other books.

Among the detective novels *Kāṭṭuppākkam Kaṇṇammā* and *Badrakāḷiyiṇ Naḍamāṭṭam* are worth mentioning. At present, the novels have more emphasis on sex and these mushroom novels will ruin the society. Time alone should adjudge such books.

## DRAMAS

The term *nāṭakam* may be divided into two parts as *nāḍu* and *akam*; that means to see a thing through the country side. This was the definition given by late *T.K.S.*; hence the drama is mirroring the occurrences of the country. *Dr. Mu. Va.* says: "One should take much effort to write a Drama, for it needs the talent of story writing and the ability to make the characters speak for themselves with real feelings."

We can see the antiquity of the Tamil drama, by the statement that a book named *Mativāṇar Nāṭakat Tamil*

was one among the old Tamil Works now lost. It is said that the verse in *Kalittokai* contain portions of dramas. *Cilappatikāram* is called as a dramatic epic. The following may be mentioned as an introduction to dramas: *Rājarājan Nāṭakam*, *Kuṟavañci*, *Paḷḷu*, *Rāma Nāṭakam*, *Nantaṅār*, *Sumati Vilāsam* written by *Āḷwārappa Piḷḷai* and *Koṭṭiyān Kāraṅ Katai* etc.

Saṅkaradās Swāmigal, who was born at Tuticorin in 1867 and who died at Pondicherry in 1922 was an early writer of Tamil Dramas. It is said that he would write both the dialogue and the songs as well for a drama in one night and that too without even a single correction. He wrote more than forty dramas such as *Ciṟutoṅḍar*, *Vaḷḷit Thirumaṇam*, *Sathi Sulōchana*, *Maṇimēkalai*, *Apimaṇyu Sundary* etc. He trained the actors well but with strict discipline.

*Pammal Sambanda Mudaliyār* is praised as the "Father of Tamil Dramas". Once the actors in Tamil Nadu were called, with contempt, as *Kūttāṭikaḷ*. But Sambanda Mudaliyār worked for the eradication of this bad name and secured a dignified status and proper place for them in the society. Though he was a Puisne Judge, he himself acted in dramas. He was the founder of the *Suguṇa Vilāsa Sabhā* in 1891. There was no Sabhā which did not stage '*Maṅōharā*'. He wrote *Maṅōharā*, *Sabāpathy*, *Lilāvathy Sulōchana*, *Vētāḷa ulakam*, *Kaḷvar talaivaṅ* etc.

Sadhāvadhāṇi Krishnasāmy Pāvalar wrote the following dramas: *Katarin Verri*, *Pathi Bakthi*, *Bombay Mail*, *Dēsiyak Koḍi* etc.

*J.Y. Raṅga Rāju* was the author of *Rajāmbāḷ*, *Chandrakānthā* and *Ānanda Krishṇaṅ* etc.

T. K. S. Brothers founded the *Shaṅmugānandā Sabhā* and *C. Kaṅṅaiāh* introduced new devices in the screens and scenes set up. The dramas conducted by *Nawāb Rājamāṇickam* were always welcomed by public.

The following is a brief list of some authors with dramas written by them :

Ku. Sā. Ki.	Andamān Kaiti
Ethirājulu	Avvaiyār
„	Maṇitaṇ
Jivā	Uyirōviyam
Kalki	Kaḷvaṇiṇ Kātali
Aru. Rāmanāthaṇ	Rāja Rāja Chōlaṇ
Ki. Ā. Pe. Vi.	Tamilc Chelvaṇ
Na. Pāṇḍuraṅgaṇ	Siddhar Makaḷ
Akilaṇ	Vāḷka Inbam
B. S. Rāmaiāh	President Pañcāksharam
„	Therōṭṭi Makaṇ
„	Nālu Vēli Nilam
K. Bālachandar	Nīrk Kumīḷi
„	Server Sundaram
„	Etir Nīccal
„	Meḷukuvarthi
„	Iru Kōḷukaḷ
Sakthi Krishnaswāmy	Kaṭṭa Pommaṇ
Akilaṇ	Vēṅkaiyiṇ Maintaṇ
Sundaram	Vietnām Viḷu

*Maṇōhar* introduces many new devices in the field of stage dramas regarding the scenes and other such things.

At present, many amateur dramatists are rising up and their aim is to please the people; the dialogue is an ordinary type of talk and it is mixed with a number of English words and phrases. Their aim is to achieve immediate success. However we can state that the art of drama has gained ground to some extent and that the people have much desire for drama and are willing to lend their helping hand.

## NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

As noticed earlier the growth of Tamil Prose was promoted by the advent of Europeans and there was a considerable development in Tamil prose, short story and novels. The freedom movement helped the improvement of the regional languages. The field of newspapers and magazines, improved very much by its close contact with English language. At the beginning, Bhārathi was working in the daily papers called 'India' and 'Swadēsamitran'.

*Sentamil*, a monthly published by Madurai Tamil Sangam, helped the improvement of Tamil grammar and literature. *Tamilp Polil*, a monthly publication of Karanthai Tamil Sangam helps very much the critical study of grammatical and literary works and inscriptions. *Sentamilc Celvi* published by the South India Saiva Siddhantha Works Publishing Society, is doing marvellous literary work. However, the sale of these literary journals is not encouraging, for they are not following any modern business technique.

Among other literary magazines, *Maṇikkōḍi*, *Kalaimakaḷ* and *Ponni* are note worthy. The contributors to *Maṇikkōḍi* were called as *Maṇikkōḍi Eluttāḷar*, that is writers of *Maṇikkōḍi*. From this we can understand the merits of the writers of short stories and novels.

*Kalaimakaḷ* has all along been publishing admirable short stories and novels and it preserves a tradition in grammatica and literary Tamil. *Ponni* encouraged and created a group of non-brahmin Tamil writers; but it ceased its publication since the resignation of Murugu Subramaṇiyam as its editor. It introduced some new poets in the name of the 'Tradition of Bhārathi Dāsaṅ'. Thillai Villāḷaṅ, T. K. Srinivāsaṅ and N. Pāṇḍuraṅgaṅ are some of the best writers introduced by *Ponni*.

*Kuyil* by Bhārathi Dāsaṅ and *Kāviam* by Suradā were published as poetical magazines. *Mullaic caram* by Poṅṇaḍiyāṅ and *Suradā* by Suradā are current poetical magazines.

## WEEKLIES

*Kalki* is published in its former style, but *Ananda Vikāṭan* is following the via media by combining the past and present. *Kumudam* is increasing its sale by publishing contributions which suit the taste of its readers.

*Dinamaṇi Katir*, may also be included in this series. *Kalaik Katir* is published as a Tamil Science Magazine and *Mañjari* on the lines of Reader's Digest; but the sale is very limited. *Saraswathy* by Vijaya Bāskaraṇ, and *Eḷuttu* by C. S. Chellappā, ceased publication due to their poor sales. The children's magazines also are sailing in the same boat. *Pūñcōlai*, *Karumpu* and *Kaṇṇaṇ* ceased publication for the same reason. *Kalkaṇḍu*, originally a children's Tamil magazine changed to Weekly Juice. However, these magazines cater to the needs of the hour and readers contribute to their growth.

## DAILIES

*Tinaṭ Tanti* inculcated among laymen the habit of reading newspapers. The style in *Dina Maṇi* even today is mixed with Sanskrit and English words. *Tamiḷ Nāṭu* which was published in simple Tamil ceased publication with heavy loss. *Murasoli* is published in rhythmic Tamil. In short, the newspapers tend to lower the standards; really it is their duty to work for the uplift of the public.

## CONCLUSION

In general Tamil is improving, but the writing should have life; it should be comprehensive and perpetual. However, there is possibility to believe that the future world of Tamil writing will do and achieve something great in all dimensions.

## FOOTNOTES

1. *Bhārathiyār Kavitaikaḷ*, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
3. Kavimaṇi, *Malarum Mālaiyum*, p. 18.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
5. V. Rāmalingam Piḷḷai, *Avaṇṇum Avaḷum*, p. 3.
6. *Bhārathidāsan Kavitaikaḷ*, Part I, p. 87.
7. *Icaiyamutu*, Part I, p. 26.
8. *Bhārathidāsaṇ Kavitaikaḷ*, Part I, p. 100.
9. *Putumaippittaṇ Kavitaikaḷ*. p. 54.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
11. *Katampam*, p. 9.
12. Quoted : C. Balasubramaniyan, *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru*, p. 254.
13. Thiru. Vi. Ka., “*Eṇatu Ilaṅkaic Celavu*”, p. 9.
14. C. N. Aṇṇādurai, *Rōmāpuri Rāṇikaḷ*, *Preface*.
15. Mu. Varadarajan, *Ilakkiya Marapu*, p. 164.
16. B. E. Bates, *The Modern Short Story*, p. 19.
17. Akilaṇ, *Kataikkalai*, p. 24.

## EXPERIMENTS IN MODERN TAMIL POETRY

Tamil Language has a long literary tradition. The intellectuals have got every right to be elated about the grand edifice of Tamil literature. The ancient Tamil grammarians had never been the obstacles for any metrical experiments. But traditional scholars do oppose modern experiments which to them seem to be a betrayal of the glorious tradition. Apart from such a notion, it is to be remembered that the present century is the age of science and renaissance wherein the explosion of knowledge is predominant. As a result, new changes bloomed in all walks of life. Modern literature, under study, is one among such spheres where many a forces have their due impact and influence. This paper attempts to present a bird's eye-view of the Free-verse, prose-poems and other metrical experiments in modern Tamil Literature.

Before actually entering into the subject, it is obvious to know about the grounds on which emerges the modern poetry.

As mentioned already, the modern era is wholly responsible for opening new vistas in human thought. Many ancient poets have written on the moon, and the modern poets also. But, naturally the thought and imagination about the moon do differ from the two sets of the poets. This is due to the development of knowledge through the ages. Similarly every field has developed. New vocabularies, new coinages have increased. In such a circumstance the modern poet finds it difficult to depict the content in the old form.

The change in the social life is a major factor to be considered. The land being ruled by kings came to be ruled by Nawabs, zamindars, etc. and then by the foreigners like the British. Later, after the struggle of the Independence move-



ment, the country became independent. Doctrines like Gandhism, Marxism, atheism have their impact on the society. The poet has to echo these new philosophies and hence he has in intension to choose a new form for effective communication.

Grammar of any living language differs and changes from time to time. Similarly the prosody also changes. Many think that the new poetry doesn't have any grammar at all. It is not true. It has its own grammar, which, of course, may not be the same as that of the tradition. Several pieces of literature that followed the traditional grammar do lack the poetic appreciation. For example, some of the *ulā* literature in Tamil have been composed with the faith to the traditional grammar. They do not create any sense of aesthetic appreciation. They are just like the frames of the portraits where there are no pictures at all. On the contrary, in the new poetry (though it may have deviated from the tradition), the content and communication form the nucleus. The modern poet feels that the ancient prosody is the iron-curtain between himself and to whom he writes. So he has to follow his own grammar to communicate.

Prose had never been so predominant as at this age. It is a historical fact. After the invention of the modern printing press, and the advent of journals and periodicals, the pens of the wits began to flow freely beyond the walls of prosody. The modern era is thoroughly different from the age of the cadjan-leaves which preserved the literature in verse form, the units of which were useful for the mnemonic purpose. Such memorisations and oral exercises are out of date now. The literature at present is in a position that it need not be got by heart at all. So the rhymes and other metrical units of the tradition are of not so much importance as they were. The impact of prose is the worth mentioning factor that paved way for the development of the new poetry.

From the historical point of view, it is clear that man had been a slave for a long time. After independence, his chains were broken (though not fully). Being a free bird, he flies as if

he likes. Under such a situation, he wants to go in a novel way. This trend in him has caused the creation of new poetry.

Due to the scientific developments, the system of mass media had developed. The radio, television, film, newspaper, journal, etc., the developed mass media, are of immense use to communicate even to a common folk. Education has also reached almost all. Literature had been enjoyed only by scholars. But the situation has changed now. Literature is now enjoyed by all irrespective of the class, creed, caste, etc. So a sort of poetry which is more or less near to the folklore flowered which has led to the development of new poetry.

The above mentioned are some of the important factors that form the grounds of the development of new poetry. The western influence like Walt Whitman, Eliot and others is conspicuous.

New poetry is denoted by a number of terms like verse libre, blank verse, naked poetry, prose-poetry etc., in the west. Likewise, in Tamil also *putukkavitai*, *vacaṇa-kavitai*, *uraiṅṅai*, *coṅkōlam*, *uraiṅṅai*, *nirvāṇa-kavitai*, *viṅṅunilaippā*, *pēccunilaippā*, etc. are used to denote the same. The comparative study of these terms reveal that the notion in the mind of the poets as well as the critics who call the new poetry so, in the west as well as in Tamil are almost one and the same. As far as modern Tamil literature is concerned it is very difficult to draw a demarcation line between the Free-verse and the prose-poetry. They overlap each other.

Whether new poetic works belong to prose-poetry or Free-verse, the journals add fuel to the fire of creativity in the modern wits. *Maṅikkōḍi*, *Saraswathi*, *Ilākkiyavaṅṅam*, *Eluttu*, *Kacaṅa tapāṅa*, *Nāḍai*, *Vāṅṅampāḍi*, *Cataṅgai*, *Pirakṅṅai*, *Jayanthi*, *Kānnadāsaṅ*, *Tāmarai*, *Dīpam*, *Cemmalar*, *Kaṅṅaiyāli*, *Nāna-ratham*, *Terukkūttu*, *Aṅṅam* are some of the journals in Tamil which kindled the poetic fervour in the wits, served as the perennial source of inspiration, and displayed the new poetry in a striking manner. The modern poets united themselves in different groups and developed the literary movements.

In this context, special mention must be made about the Vāṇampāḍi Movement. Many priceless journals containing Free-verse were also published. All these led to the increase of the quantity (partly quality also) of the new poetry. Poets who wrote poems in the traditional way also have shifted to write in the novel way.

The evolution process of the new poetry underwent three stages in Tamil. The pioneer of the new poetry is still debatable. Some are of the opinion that from Poet Bhārathi (1882-1921) originated the new poetry. Bharathi wrote only prose-poetry. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Bhārathi's prose-poetry influenced Pichamūrthy and it is he who declared open the era of new poetry. In 'thirties and 'forties, Pichamūrthy, followed by Ku. Pa. Rājagōpalaṅ, Vallikkaṅṅaṅ, etc. were responsible to make the ball rolling well. These writers concentrated only on breaking the barriers of prosody. Their orientation on the content was less. This was the first stage. In the second stage, after 1945, the new poetry began to evolve further and to grow in all dimensions. Darumu Sivarāmaṅ, T. S. Vēṅugōpālaṅ, Vaidīswaraṅ, Maṅi, Sundararāmasāmy, T. K. Duraisāmy, Gnāṅakkūttāṅ, etc. contributed liberally. The present stage is the third stage in which N. Kāmarāsaṅ, Mīrā, Abdul Rahmāṅ, Abi, Kalāpriyā, Siṅpi, Puviyarasu, Mēttā, Gaṅgaikoṅḍāṅ, Akkiṅiputtiraṅ, Sakthikkaṅal, etc. are contributing devotedly. They have introduced a number of poetic techniques. The focus on the content and form as well is well seen. Among the writers of the new poetry, many are working as teachers in the colleges.

It is quite interesting to note the trends of the new poetry. The content and communication of the new poetry create the aesthetic appreciation in the reader. Mostly social consciousness of the poets blows the literary horn.

Some of the new poems are in riddle form :

We bought in the night  
Still it didn't dawn  
Siṅpi

The cot of our house  
 Brought forth the cradle  
 Vaidyalingam

Some of the new poems offer the visual form like the 'Pendulam' of John Updike:

Q  
 U  
 E  
 U  
 E  
 there is heavy rush  
 Eḷil Mutalvaṅ

A mode of versification in which there is antithesis of words or ideas dominates in some of the poems :

We sell the nudity  
 To buy our clothes  
 N. Kāmarāsaṅ

If boons become the curses  
 What for here the penance?  
 Abdul Rahmāṅ

Titbits like poems with pungent criticism of the society have appeared:

Since she is not pretty  
 She becomes my (younger) sister  
 Kalāpriyā

Imagism is one of the features of the new poetry:

I see the evening twilight  
 Something is burning in the midst  
 Of the fire of the rays; It's nothing;  
 It's the corpse of the sun  
 Bāṅuchandraṅ

Symbolism is also predominant :

The crops that die  
To guard the fence

A. Raṅganāthan

Many new poems centre around the sex. The way in which it is dealt is a matter of deep consideration. Let us consider the following examples :

*Addressed to the Lady love*

Look at the sky  
Let the sun cool;  
Look at the earth  
Let the deserts cool;  
Look at me also  
Let my heart also cool.

Mīrā

I translated your tears  
which became the poem;  
I translated your smile  
which became the music

Mēttā

I married a cabret dancer  
She denies to remove her clothes  
without music

Nīlamaṇi

Of the above three cited, the former two are of realism. The last one is of vulgarism. It is awful to note such shameless perversion which should certainly be rooted out. Prostitute or Prostitution is the theme of many poets. Here also the treatment of the theme should serve a noble social cause.

The flow of metaphorical, figurative and catching expressions is quite striking. Let us see the following titles:

Black Flowers  
 Dreams + Imaginations = Papers  
 Boat comes  
 Tear-Flowers  
 Milky way  
 Tongues of the silence

Also consider the following expressions:

Songs of the dust

Mēttā

Veenas of fire

Tamilaṅbaṅ

Incarnations of silence

Abdul Rahmān

Prisoner of the poverty

Inkulāb

Garland of tears

Mīrā

Numerous expressions like these adorn the new poetry.

Social justice is the emphasis made through many of the new poems, e.g.:

Their sweat becomes the sea  
 Wherein the life of some becomes the boat

Tamilaṅbaṅ

In the cool ponds of the earth  
 The exploiting people swim  
 We, the earthquake, will awake  
 And put fire to those ponds

Inkulāb

**CONCLUSION**

The scope of this paper is very limited and it has presented only a bird's eye-view of the modern Tamil Poetry. Universities in Tamil Nadu have prescribed some of the new poems for M.A. course. Research Studies are also being made.

The new poems struggle for existence. The fittest of them will survive against the tides of time.

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