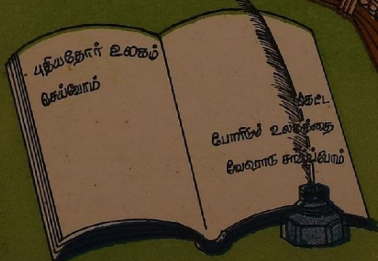
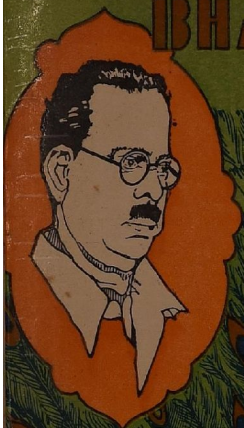


IBHARATIHASAN

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

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MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY

BHARATIDASAN CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

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**MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY
MADURAI**

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PREFACE

Bharathidasan (1891-1964) is a great Tamil poet of the 20th century. His birth centenary is celebrated this year. He is a poet of first order in Tamil. He touches a new high in poetic emotion and imagination. The diction and techniques of his poetry are not only varied but also enriching his poetic vision. The subjects of his literary work are all under the sun, but the Tamil language, culture, land and society are aglow with his passion. The purpose and message in his poetry shine in the light of his belief in a new social ideology and order based on rationalism, reform and progress. But he also respects tradition. Thus he is both traditional and modern. There is a strong content of realism associated with his age, people and society on the threshold of modernism. Bharatidasan is thus seen a poet *par excellence*.

It is unfortunate that Bharatidasan is not much known outside Tamilnadu. India is multi-cultural and multi-lingual sub-continent though a single political unit. The language barrier is very much alive today. The Indian polity suffers very much due to this 'mutual unintelligibility'. Bilingualism and translation are the ways to overcome this barrier. There are Indian economy, Indian Railways, Indian education and so on; but no Indian literature and not even one poet who can be called Indian. There is, therefore, the necessity of introducing the great literatures through a common language.

The National Forums like Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, National Book Trust and others are all

divided houses. All-India Trusts like the *Jñāna Peeth*, encourage creative writers in all Indian languages by instituting huge prizes. But all these efforts suffer from lack of materials for evaluation and estimation of literary personalities of various languages. It is the dire need of the Tamil scholarship to introduce the Tamil poets and writers in a critical perspective at the All-India Forums.

The World Literary forums also are not fully made aware of Indian creative writers, mainly due to the absence of materials and translations in international languages like English. How then can we expect Indian writers to win recognition and get awards like Nobel Prize?

Mutual understanding among various linguistic groups is the *sine qua non* of national integration which is the desideratum in Indian polity. This is possible when the literary treasures are made available in the *lingua franca* of India, possibly English.

This work *Bharathidasan : Critical Perspectives* is a humble effort in that direction.

A two-day Seminar on this topic was organized to mark the Bharatidasan centenary. Learned Professors of English and Tamil presented papers. They are collected and published in this book form. The purpose of the publication is to introduce Bharatidasan to the English-knowing readers of India and other countries. (Much on him has been said in Tamil.)

Bharatidasan is a uni-lingual writer. This small volume of papers deals with many aspects of the poet's literary achievement, namely, techniques, forms, content and ideology. The Editors are thankful to the Professors who have contributed these valuable papers.

But this is a small and inadequate introduction of Bharatidasan. He is a multi-faced personality: a poet, fiction-writer, dramatist, actor, politician, social reformer, and journalist. It is hoped that a comprehensive treatment of Bharatidasan will appear in the course of time in order to assess him as an integrated personality.

The Department of Tamil Studies of Madurai-Kamaraj University approached the University Authorities for allocation of University Grants Commission funds for the organization of the Seminar and the Govt. of Tamilnadu for the publication of the papers. Both gracefully sanctioned the necessary amount. The Tamil Dept. thanks both the University and Tamilnadu Government, for their kind gesture. It is particularly thankful to the Vice-chancellor Prof M. Lakshmanan a scientist, keenly sensitive to literary enjoyment whose mighty, encouragement to this effort went a long way in the successful conduct of the seminar and this publication.

T. Murugarathanam

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

அ	...	a	க	...	k	ஜ	...	j
ஆ	...	ā	ங	...	ṅ			
இ	...	i	ச	...	c	ஷ	...	ṣ
ஈ	...	ī	ஞ	...	ñ	ஸ்	...	s
உ	...	u	ட	...	ṭ	ஹ	...	h
ஊ	...	ū	ண	...	ṇ	க்ஷ	...	kṣ
எ	...	e	த்	...	ṭ			
ஏ	...	ē	ந்	...	n			
ஐ	...	aī	ப்	...	p			
ஒ	...	o	ம்	...	m			
ஓ	...	ō	ய்	...	y			
ஒள	...	aṣ	ர்	...	r			
ஊ	...	?	ல்	...	l			
			வ்	...	v			
			ழ்	...	ḷ			
			ள்	...	ḥ			
			ற்	...	ṛ			
			ன்	...	n			

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Tamil Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University, places before the world of Tamil scholarship this collection of research papers read at the Centenary Seminar of the Tamil 'poet of revolution' Bharatidasan. A distinguishing feature of these papers is the spontaneous co-operation between the members of both the English and Tamil faculties all over Tamil Nadu to explore the aesthetic possibilities of the hitherto unexplored aspects of the genius of the poet from the comparative angle. Mention may be made of Bharatidasan and Frost, Bernard Shaw, Byron, Burns and the familiar topic of humanism which analyses dispassionately some of the sensitive areas in the aesthetics of the great poet.

'Puralcik Kaviñar' is not a conventional sobriquet conferred on Bharatidasan unaesthetically. There is a surprising parallel between Bharatidasan and the element of Jewishness in the poetry of the distinguished American Ezra Pound one of the pioneers of modern British and American poet, T.S.Eliot, the other pioneer who paid a great tribute to his poetic genius in an Italian line borrowed from Dante's Divine Comedy, 'The greater craftsman,' an allusion to Pound's obstetrical handling of 'The Waste Land,' defended his antipathy to the Jewish culture by saying that his aversion to Jewishness belongs to the world of the poet and not to the man. I elaborated this point years ago in my article 'Bharatidasan: Poet as Rebel' contributed to Indian Literature, Special Number, covering the regional poets.

That brings the vexed problem concerning the relationship between the poet and his readers. This problem of belief

discussed by such stalwarts as I. A. Richards has been seriously dealt with by Prof. P Marudanayagam of the Pondicherry University in his learned paper. As Coleridge put it neatly, "that willing suspension of disbelief" on the part of the reader will save him from the predicament. An ideal reader is one who leaves behind his coloured perspective and reads and enjoys the poet qua poet, without mixing him up with the man. The conventional critical blunder at the expense of Bharatidasan has been redeemed by the younger generation of comparatists mentioned above. Their wide perspective brought into their critical exercise also confirms the identity of the Madurai School of Comparatism.

We are not to rest on our oars after bringing out this collection of papers. Much more has to be done. It is a sad but true fact that no authentic edition of the works of Bharatidasan and Bharati has been so far produced, according to the principles of textual criticism developed in this century by Fredson Bowers of the United States and W.W. Greg of Britain. They have raised the level of the authentic edition of any writer, according to their learned perspective to perfection. Their motive is to place at the hands of the critical readers the works of a writer, what he has *actually* produced, his exact punctuation and spelling including his eccentric habits. No doubt, Bharati Piracurālayam brought out the writings of Bharati, based on his manuscripts, though the art of textual criticisms was unknown then. Later the Government of Tamil Nadu authorized a group of learned scholars to edit the poet's works. Unfortunately, their work is not meticulous. To give an unhappy instance, they have meddled with the titles which Bharati had given to certain poems and changed them. I have expressed my anguish in an essay on Bharati included in the Bharati Centenary Volume of the Annamalai University.

I do not want this editorial carelessness to overtake Bharatidasan. The genuine but lasting tribute which admirers of one of the greatest of modern Tamil poets can pay, is to bring out the collected works of Bharatidasan on the pioneering model of the editions of *American Writers*, CEEA, brought out in this century by the fruitful co-operation of the American Government and the Universities. This dream can only be realized, if the Government of Tamil Nadu undertakes this noble task, possibly with the co-operation of Madurai Kamaraj University

One word more! The article in this book, I have been guilty of writing, I must confess that my treatment is severely limited, possibly to provoke the young scholars to explore the potentialities of the comparison between Bharati and Bharatidasan. The streak of dissent in the poet of Pondichery is stronger than in the elder poet. The same may be true of feminism or rather 'femmenism', a recent addition to American critical parlance, because of the younger poet's radical social concern for the widow in his society, an element that is surprisingly absent in Bharati's works. His nature poetry is one step ahead of Bharati's genre because it is motiveless touching upon pure poetry, unlike the other's which is Vedantic. Propriety demands that instead of turning this editorial note into an intimidating essay, I should leave the rest of the comparison to the budding comparatists around me.

The successful conduct of the seminar and the printing of this book would not have been possible but for the silent and effective work of Dr. T. Murugarathanam, Professor and Head of the Department of Tamil Studies.

Fellow of Tamilology
M. K. University

V. SACHITHANANDAN

BIO-DATA OF BHARATIDASAN

- Born on** : 29-04-1891 as Kanaka Subburatinam.
- Parents** : Kanakasabai & Ilakkumī Ammaiyār.
- Education** : Pulavar (an oriental title) - Learnt the rudiments of traditional learning under Maha Vidwan P. A. Periasami and the renowned scholar Bangaru Pathar and won the title in 1908.
- Married** : Paḷaniammāl in 1920.
- Profession** : For 38 years a Tamil Teacher from the age of 18 to 55.
- 1909** : For the first time appointed as a Teacher at Neravi, a village near Kāraikāl.
- 1918** : Comes to have close association with Bharati, which lasted almost a decade in Pondicherry.
- 1919** : Arrested and jailed for over a year on a charge of treason against the Govt. of French India.
- 1920** : Participated in the National Satyagraha movement.
- 1921** : (i) Birth of his first daughter, Saraswati, when Bharati died in Madras.
(ii) Suspended from service as a Teacher for two years because of political interests.
- 1922** : Assumed the pseudonym, "Bharatidasan" and contributed poems, essays and stories to journals like *Dupleix* and *Kalaimakal* both published from Pondicherry.

- 1924 : Composed an elegy on Lenin.
- 1926 : 'Sri Subramaṇḍiyar Tutiyamutu' (Sweet Prayer to Sri Subrahmaṇḍya)
'Cañcīvi Parvatattin cāral' (On the Sanjeevi Hill—Slope) - assumed editorship of *Putuvai Muracu* (The Drum Beats of Putuvai).
- 1928 : Joined the Self-Respect movement launched by Periyār E. V. Ramasami.
- 1929 : Contributed to *Kuṭiyaracu* (Republic) and *Pakuttarivu* (Rationalism). —Wrote an unusual poem on Family planning
- 1931 : Published in *Putuvai Muracu* (Putuvai) (5-1-31) a cluster of poems, 'Cuyamariyātaiccutar' (The Flame of Self-Respect) under the Pseudonym *Kiṇṭalkāran* (The Satirist).
- 1933 : Participated in a conference of atheists at White's Memorial Building, Madras on 31-1-33 and made a decisive choice on his intellectual affiliation.
- 1934 : Staged his drama, *Iraṇḍiyan* (Hiraṇḍya) in the poet's conception the incomparable hero—under the presidentship of Periyār and published it in 1939.
- 1937 : *Puraṭcikkavi* (The Revolutionary Poet) - Film script of 'Bāḷamaṇḍi' after 'The Thief of Bāghdād' prepared by the poet for T.K.S. Brothers.
- 1938 : *Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ* (Poems of Bharatidasan)- On the eve of its publication hailed by Periyar E.V. Ramasami as the unrivalled poet of the Self-Respect movement.
- 1941 : *Etirpārāta Muttam* - (The kiss that came unsought) — cover design of the publication by the famous Bengali artist, Roy Choudhri.

- 1942 : *Kuṭumpa Viṭakku* (The Home Lamp) first in the series)
- 1943 : *Pāṇṭiyan Paricu* (The Gift of Paṇḍiya)
- 1944 : Publication simultaneously of *Iruṇṭa Vītu* (The Dark House), *Kātal Ninaiivukaḷ* (Love Poems), *Nalla Tīrppu* (A Fair Judgement) and *Alaḷin Ciriṭṭu* (Where Beauty Smiles)
- 1945 : Tamil Iyakkam (Tamil movement)
- 1946 : Inauguration of *Mullai* periodical at a convention of Tamil scholars, presided over by Naṭṭar Somaṣundara Bharatīyār, activated by 'Aṇṇā'. The title "Puraṭṭik Kavi" was formally conferred upon him. Retired from service.
- 1947 : Release of the monthly *Kuyil* (Koel Bird), *Putiya Ātticūṭi* (An ethical work)
- 1948 : The *Kuyil* banned; started as a daily—*Kātalā Kaṭamaiyā* (Love or Duty?), *Mullaik Kāṭu* (The Jungle of Mullai Flowers), Anti-Hindi Lyrics, *Kātal Mēṭṭumīḷikaḷ* (Sea Bubbles); the last translated into French and published from Paris.
- 1955 : Member of Legislative Assembly of Pondicherry
- 1959 : *Bharatidasan Nāṭakaṇṇaḷ* (Playlets of Bharatidasan), *(Kuṇṇicittittu)* (The Isolated Mound), *Picirāntaiyār* and *Vaḷḷuvar Uḷḷam* (The Mind of Vaḷḷuvar : Commentary on Tirukkuraḷ)
- 1963 : Film script by Bharatidasan on the life of Bhāratīyār.
- 1964 : While he was at Madras, busy preparing the film on Bharati's life, died suddenly on 21-4-64.
- 1969 : Sahitya Akademi Prize for *Picirāntaiyār* (The Poet Picirāntaiyār).

CONTENTS

1. Pāntiyan Paricu : A Cirtical Note
— Prof. Palany. Arangasamy
2. Nationalism and Internationalism in the Poetry of Bharatidasan and Robert Frost
— Dr. V. Ayothi
3. Humanism in the Poetry of Bharatidasan
— Dr. G. R. Balakrishnan
4. Imagery, Symbol and Myth in a Few Poems of Bharatidasan
— Prof. K. Chellappan
5. Paradox of Identity : Bharatidasan and Walt Whitman
— Dr P. Balachandran
6. Regionalism in Burns and Bharatidasan
— Dr. M. Elamaram
7. The Theme of Exile in Byron and Bharatidasan : A Study
— Dr. M.D. Jeyabalan
8. Bharatidasan's *Revolutionary Poet* & Bilhaṇa Legend
— Dr. C. Kanagasabapathy
9. Bharatidasan as a Romantic Poet
— Prof. S. N. Kandasamy
10. Bharatidasan and Wordsworth As Nature Poets
— Prof. A.A. Manavalan
11. Nector in Dewy Flowers : Doctrine in Bharatidasan's Poetry
— Prof. P. Marudanayagam
12. Social Consciousness in Bharatidasan
— Prof. Meenakshi
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13. Aesthetics of Bharatidasan
— Dr. Padma Srinivasan
14. Iconoclasts As Feminists : A Comparative Study of Bharatidasan and Bernard Shaw
— Dr. S. Ravindranathan
15. Bharati and Bharatidasan
— Prof. V. Sachithanandan
16. Bharatidasan and D. H. Lawrence On the Theme of Darkness
— Dr. T. Vaithamanithy

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PĀṆṬIYAN PARICU : A CRITICAL NOTE

— PALANY. ARANGASAMY

Bharatidasan's '*Pāṇṭiyan Paricu*' revolving on a feud between two chieftains, could rightly be called a 'Secondary *Kāvya*'¹ as it lacks the customary massiveness in the depiction of mountains, oceans, nations and seasons. The short duration of the story is also among other reasons to be cited. All the four hundred stanzas of Tamil '*viruttam*' metre roughly equivalent to blank verse in English, are of eight lines each.

The poet had planned it in prose and later on, gave it up in favour of verse; the reason being as he himself says in the introduction² that any subject-matter could precisely be brought out in poetical form. He mentions that he is particular in couching his minor *Kāvya* in a simple style to enable even an ordinary literate to comprehend the poem. Such a frank prefatory statement about the diction of his choice is unusual among the poets. With the solitary exception of William Wordsworth, very seldom has a poet

spoken about the poetic diction he has chosen. Nor has anyone openly expressed that his literary output is meant for mere literates. Such forthright statement about one's own diction and about the audience whom he expected to serve, in a way reflects the social and literary outlook of this revolutionary Tamil poet. Undoubtedly, he has made up his mind that whatever he produces should reach the society at large. This society-oriented literary outlook is diametrically opposite to that of the modern, English poet T. S. Eliot and his mentor Ezra Pound who deliberately wrote 'only for the chosen elite of the society'. It is heartening to note that the Tamil poet has the laudable aim of passing on his poetic output even to an average Tamil - knowing person,

If one were to compare Bharatidasan with T. S. Eliot, it would result in the comparison of the two incompatibles. T. S. Eliot introduced himself as a classicist in literature, royalist in politics and Anglo-catholic in religion³. The Tamil poet is also a classicist, drunk deep in ancient Tamil classics but his is an absorption and it goes well with the lucid passages unlike the English poet who is known for his literary reminiscences from his learning that is basic to his poetry and a hurdle to the reader. But Bharatidasan wanted that he must be understood by everybody but Eliot is determined to be a 'cerebral poet' or as Hugh Kenner calls him an 'invisible poet'. Eliot's talent is to ingest the materials of others⁴ whereas the Tamil poet's is to digest, for a palatable presentation. The Tamil poet is a democrat in politics as the first two short plays in the first volume of his poems prove and also a rationalist in religion. Moreover Bharatidasan is technically perfect, thematically sound and rhetorically mellifluous in a number of his poems. Apart from the fact that these two were contemporaries, the fact is they were very well recognised in their respective literary domains.

The story of '*Pāṇṭiyan Paricu*' is about a rivalry based on jealousy, prestige and mutual suspicion between the minor kings of Katir Naṭu and Vēja Naṭu. One who exploited this rivalry and created misunderstanding between the two, is none other than the brother-in-law of the king of Katir Naṭu significantly named *Narikkaṇṇan*. In the melee of the battle that ensued he as the commander-in-chief of Vēja Naṭu, unknowingly stabbed the king of Katir Naṭu to death and subsequently the queen who is his own sister. His motive behind this heinous crime is to make the orphaned princess marry his idiotic son. But the wheel of fortune is not favourable in its movement. Annam, the princess is taken away from the palace by an old mistress who protected the princess in a cottage that is beyond access. A valuable chest containing jewels and royal documents is luckily in the custody of an idealistic marauder Vēlappan. The protection of this chest and the unmasking of Narikkaṇṇan conclude the *Kāvya* with a solemn marriage arranged between Annam and the son of the grand old mistress who had chaperoned and protected the princess.

Had the poet been resourceful, he could have taken this *Kāvya* to filmdom as it is sumptuous, thematically and structurally with spicy villainy interlaced in the episodes. He is also said to have been toying with the idea⁵ of doing so, but this indecision saved him from as much bitterness as R. K. Narayan is reported to have experienced when his *Guide* was filmed. However, even a casual observer could discern that dramatic suspense is a consistent device in the *Kāvya*.

If the post-Sangam epic poet *Iṇankōvaṭikaḷ* has done the revolution of elevating a commoner to be the hero of his epic, no less is the contribution of Bharatidasan. He has made the son of a house-maiden marry Annam, the princess of the royal family. 'The social imbalance in

the custom-ridden society is thus undermined. As John Dryden says, "None but the brave deserves the fair."⁶ Vēlan, the valiant hero joins himself with the fair princess Annam.

Bharatidasan associated himself with the self-respect movement of Periyār E.V.R. as far back as 1928. It is but natural therefore that the impact of the ideals of iconoclastic Periyār is sporadically found in this minor *kāvya*. In the theistic tradition of the Saiva cult, God Siva is spoken of as *Mātorupākan*, the one half himself and the other half his Divine Consort. This is being critically commented upon in a subtle manner by the poet in *Iyal* No. 87. The subtlety lies in the total rejection of the very concept that there could be one part of the male being endowed to a female. The life of a man could be called perfect, if he is the complement in all aspects of normal human being. If a female takes one half of the male being how could the being of a male be perfect? It is illogical and rather incomprehensible according to the poet.

Superstition is totally condemned by the poet in many a place. In *Pāṇṭiyan Paricu* a phantom is introduced for the purpose of frightening the commoners. Once this has been spoken, the commoners of the region generate wild rumours about it and thereby convert its fictitious nature into stark reality. The poet has chosen a female character *Nīli* to condemn this superstition in a forthright manner. The female character has been made a mouthpiece of the poet to denounce superstition.

It seems customary on the part of the poet to choose a female character to advise a male especially in getting rid of superstitious beliefs. Identically in the first volume of his poems, the poet has chosen a brisk and talented damsel *Vaṇci* to indict her lover *Kuppan* against his foolish

notions about the supernatural events⁷. This appears to be the poet's way of cherishing the feminine talents and upholding the rights of women. These facts anticipate the modern trend of women's emancipation.

Shakespeare and a number of Elizabethan playwrights have sought the supernatural machinery as catalytic agency. The ghosts and phantoms appear and disappear either for precipitating a change or for warning the evil and guiding the noblemen and women. The dramatists didn't bother whether the supernatural beings are factual or fictitious. Though one could sustain the argument that the playwright had a belief in them, one cannot take this argument too far. But the Tamil poet is categorical in condemning this notion. It is all a figment of imagination. A belief in supernatural being is a mere absurdity.

"In Tamil-land, mother-land, a golden soil
That led an intellectual life in the apex of yester years
It's strange that the word 'Phantom' had crept in." (57)

says the poet, much earlier than Abraham Kovoor proved scientifically that there is no ghost or phantom at all.⁸ Bharatidasan is unequivocal in outrightly condemning the foolish belief.

Disguise has been a time-honoured literary device effectively handled by Shakespeare, the Elizabethan playwright. In his hands, this device gives room not only for many amusing incidents but also embarrassing situations especially when the ladies appear in the garb of males. Many an event in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* make this point clear. Though such an effective handling of the device is not found in Bharatidasan, disguise, as in '*Paṇṭiyan Paricu*', has been resorted to by an old woman

and the heroine Annam. As the poet is adept in delineating heroism, valour and dignity, he makes these female characters equestrienne in their disguise. The only difference between the Elizabethan playwright, and this modern Tamil poet is that the former has made use of this technique more for humorous situations than for heroic exploits and the latter for heroism only. At one instance, Annam, the heroine rides on horseback and boldly goes through the column of soldiers and cuts off the head of the villainous Narikkannan.

.....As the fruit

That falls off from the palm tree

Narikkannan's head with matted hair

Has fallen off because of the sabre stroke of

Annam. (74)

No creative writer, however much resourceful, can escape the impact or the influence of his predecessors either of his own tongue or of alien literatures with which he is acquainted. Bharatidasan being a monolingualist cannot inherently have had the impact of either English or Sanskrit elements. Many a literary echo which we find in him, go back to the ancient Tamil literature only, and the rest belongs to the innovative and creative talent of the Tamil poet himself. Echoes from the Sangam and mediaeval literatures abound in all the poems of Bharatidasan.

In the use of similes and metaphors, Bharatidasan is by all means an adept with proven excellence. He has an inventive skill in selecting similes and images from every aspect of day-to-day life. The similes in Bharatidasan are in a class by themselves unlike the far-fetched and long-tailed similes that one comes across in mythologies. They are life-like and natural. In the portrayal of characters and situations and in the depiction of natural landscapes, Bharatidasan may be called a skilful master. The picture

of a sleeping damsel in a lateral position, the poet portrays as follows :

Putting her head down on the flowery hand
 Burying her bewitching smile on the sweet lips
 She, like the *yāl* of a musical adept, lay down on
 the ground. (63)

Modern English poets like Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath and Philip Larkin have uncanny similes like that of a ship scissoring the sea, Australians talking like tinopeners and the surface of the Pacific ocean reflecting like sheets of plate - glass.⁹

Similar modern examples can be drawn from Bharatidasan as noted below :

- (i) A maiden decked with flowers is like a *Punnai* tree walking with a moss of flowers (76)
- (ii) His mind is as darkened as the ignorance of the illiterates (53)

The silver moon on the bluish sky or otherwise known as lunar sphere is customarily compared to the charming face of a lovely young maiden and vice-versa. It is not uncommon to come across mythological over-tones in portraying the moon goddess, variously as Cynthia, Diana etc. Bharatidasan's comparison though not in this minor *Kāvya* is quite natural, lucid and apt.

Hiding full shape behind the bluish garb,
 Oh! Crescent, you peep out with your illumined face!
 If shown your entire beauty, will this world
 Go crazy and die in its abundance of love.
 Are you the unique flower blown in the grave
 of the sky?

The pitcher of immaculate silver, fountain of
delicious manna?

The red-sparkled sun appeareth in the moon, dipped
Into the sea, deprived of its bright fire
To become a mass of luminiscent cold!¹⁰

Wordsworth compares the movement of a boat to a swan that glides along the smoothly-flowing waters of river Derwent in *Prelude* Book I. The now extinct swan seems to be universal, as the Tamil poet speaks of it as follows. Annam and *Nili* were

Sailing on the boat, singing rare songs
The boat on the surface of the river gently ran
As gently as the white swan that glideth along. (52)

Common literary devices, at lexical and semantic levels such as oxymoron, recurrent rhyme and pathetic fallacy are found sporadically in this secondary *Kāvya* wherever the oxymoron retained its significance and suffered not even in rendition, the transliteration is not done in the chosen examples noted below.

(i) Can this little mind tolerate the big botheration?

(ii) aṭi vaittān kaṭṭir nāṭṭil | neṇṇil vaittān
aḷivaittān viḷivaittān urimaivēril
Kuṭivaittān oṭivaittān nāṭṭil | eṇkum |

(iii) The firmament laughed | virtues felt ashamed.

Bharatidasan's patriotism can be dubbed neither universal nor national but region-oriented due to his devoted and long-standing alignment with a political party in Tamil Nadu. However, his love towards Tamil and language is in no way lesser than what has been highlighted by

Sir Walter Scott — 'One who does not say that this is my own, my native land, will die unwept, unhonoured and unsung'¹¹.

Vēlan, an energetic and brainy young man in '*Pāntiyan Paricu*' swears in the presence of Annam,

Let the day of my demise be a festive tide,
If only there is an iota of benevolence
Through me, to my father and mother who gave me birth
And to the Tamil land that has begotten the human-kind. (55)

With a few characters as his mouth-piece, the poet overtly voices his appreciation of communistic principles! On the basis of similar expressions favouring this political ideology, one could safely infer that the poet would have aligned himself to communism but for the rationalistic policies that swept him away in the early thirties of this century.

The wealthy man creates the robbers
It's the communist who counteracts robbery (17)

Ironically the poet lived in an age when communism was deemed to be a panacea for all ills, political social or economic.

To indicate the ancientness of the story and also perhaps to avoid anachronism, to which even reputed writers are vulnerable. Bharatidasan refers

- (i) to flintstone with which the old woman makes fire in the jungle; (82)
- (ii) to the conventional four-fold divisions of ancient army such as chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry. (1)
and quite interestingly

- (iii) to the habit of commoners in burying their wealth underground for the fear of foes and dacoits. (17)

At length, the present writer is puzzled whether the poet is at fault in referring to the *nocci* grove on the apex of the mountain. The green-coloured *nocci* plant is aquatic and hence its reference on a rocky terrain appears to be a fallacy. The division of this minor *kavya* into *iyals* is rather disorderly and unbalanced. [The poet has probably completed the writing of the whole poem and then only divided them into *iyals*.

Excepting these very few negligible blemishes this literary work is commendable. It sustains its viability by withstanding the differing tastes of the public.

[The bracketed number following the quotations from Bharatidasan indicate, the 'Iyal' number from *Pāṇṭiyan Paricu*. Translation of Tamil poetical passages are mine. Unbracketed numbers indicate the references.]

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NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM IN THE POETRY OF BHARATIDASAN AND ROBERT FROST

Dr. V. AYOTHI

It is true that Bharatidasan (1891-1972) has treated themes on Tamil Nadu, Tamil Society and Tamil Language enthusiastically in several of his poems. This has misled some people to think that he is a regional poet with a narrow vision. But his poetry bears ample testimony to the fact that he has universal outlook and his broad vision includes not only his nation but also the nations of the world. Robert Frost (1874-1963), is also generally regarded as a regional poet for his depiction of the life and characters belonging to the rural areas of New England and New Hampshire. But, in fact, he looks much beyond that region to human life in general and he has combined in his poetry the local with the universal. His poems like those of Bharatidasan are full of wisdom and contain universal outlook.

Bharatidasan appeals to the people of his nation and the world to get united and live together. His poem

"Ulakam Unnutayatu" ('The World is Yours') can serve as a good illustration here :

Demolish the wall between your home and that of
your neighbour ;

Remove the curtains amidst streets,
Unite the nations and march ahead ;
Ascend the mountain sky-high,
Ascend higher and ascend further ;
Behold the people of the earth !
Behold the expanse of your kind !
Behold the battalion of your brethren
Rejoice at the sight of the ocean of humanity
Which has engulfed you as its kin.
Extent your wisdom into an endless expanse
Broaden your vision and devour the people
Merge with it making a confluence
And cry joyously : "I am the ocean of Humanity".¹

The wall is a traditional symbol for anything that divides. Bharatidasan and Robert Frost bestow "a measure of impressive vitality" on this traditional symbol. In his poem 'Mending Wall' Frost expresses that he does not want walls that separate people and nations and he believes.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall ;

"But his neighbour is of the opinion that

Good fences make good neighbours."²

With the juxtaposition of these two views, we are provoked to ponder over a bigger and pertinent question : Should the world be divided by walls and boundaries?

The broad-minded poet realises that divisions are unnatural and unnecessary. Nature herself is against the idea of erecting artificial barriers among people, regions and nations. Therefore the liberal and modern-minded speaker

of the poem explicitly says that walls must be dismantled. Referring to the traditional and orthodox views of the neighbour who insists on maintaining a boundary wall, he humourously remarks:

"He is all pine and I am apple orchard
My apple tree will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him."³

But the neighbour refuses to change his stand. He wants to follow the traditional rule that in order to live as a good neighbour there must be a fence, a line of demarcation which should be honoured by both the parties. So he is seen straining himself to mend the wall that has fallen:

"I see him there
Bringing a stone firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old - stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go beyond his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."⁴

Though the stand of the neighbour is conservative and unprogressive, yet it has got its own justification, and it has been presented most realistically.

Both Bharatidasan and Frost desire that the geographical frontiers of different nations must fast disappear and the whole mankind must become one great family. Dividing walls must be brought down and unification must be promoted. Nations are interdependent as individuals are. Parochial, regional, communal, linguistic and other such considerations must give way to the growth of nationalism and internationalism. The walls may represent metaphorically the cold wars and the eventual power struggle in the arena of international politics.

The broadened vision of Bharatidasan is aesthetically expressed in one of his poems written for children which is worth quoting here :

"Many are the flowers and many their scents
Yet no religions have they ;
Many are the animals and many their colours
Yet no differences among them ;
Many are the waters and many the lands
Yet no castes have they ;
Many are the tunes and many the melodious songs
Yet no fire of enmity ;
Many are the mountains and many the gorges
Yet no stupidity in them ;
Many are the waters and many the deep seas
Yet no sects they know ;
Many are the people and many their languages
And discrimination they have ;
Yet they have ruined themselves
All due to caste, sect and religion." ⁵

Bharatidasan in a subtle and ironic way exposes the folly of human beings. His words sound like prophesy because today, as rightly pointed out by him, in the name of caste, sect and religion we construct walls between men and nations. It is really a pity that in recent years communal clashes have marred the unity of our nation.

Bharatidasan has become an institution and he very much deserves the honour heaped on him by the people. When China declared war against India over the border issue, he, stoutly Indian cause and wrote many poems throwing overboard all regional sentiments. Through his inspiring songs, he appealed to all Indians to unite and resist the march of the Chinese. Through his poems like *Cīnāvai Eṭirppatu Tamiṇar Kalamai* (Fighting

the Chinese is the Duty of Tamils) he awakened the Tamils by telling them that the Chinese have always been posing a threat to Tamil culture.

Bharatidasan was unduly accused of promoting regional sentiments and was called 'a propaganda artist.' When an artist decides to educate and guide people, propaganda becomes a necessity. Bharatidasan's regionalism may be considered in the light of broader sympathies. He strongly fought for the liberty of the nation and at the same time upheld the freedom of the individual. In his poem *Viṭiya Viṭuttalai Viṭivattu Ennāl* [When Will be the Dawn of Distant Liberty?] he writes:

Liberty is neither given nor received;
 It is got at the cost of million lives.
 V.O.C. Vanchi, Va.Ve.Su. Bharati
 And other such revolutionaries of the struggle;
 Tilakar, Gandhi, Bagat singh, Sarojini's family,
 E. V. R., Singaravelanar, Jeeva—
 All honourable men with self-respect—
 And many more in thousands and thousands
 Mindful of their duty to the nation alone
 Did their precious lives sacrifice to free the nation.
 Alas, that freedom is now in the clutches of fanatics
 The Dravida Nadu may perish!
 Religious bigotry and casteism shall rear their ugly
 head!
 Communal clashes shall several lives devour!
 Language feuds may brew;
 Socialism will never dawn;
 Secessionists, entanglement, enmity and hatred
 In all regions may thrive;
 The untold misery of the poor and the suppressed
 May plague the nation terribly.⁶

Bharatidasan participated in the Indian Freedom struggle. He was with the radicals of the National Congress till he joined the Self-Respect and Social Reformist Movement of Periyar E.V.R. He rescued one Madasamy from the police in Pondicherry. He did send a pistol concealing it in an idol to Vanchinatan with which he was to shoot down a collector. (Mannar Mannan, *Dinamani Katir* dt. 5 April 1979) He hailed the leadership of Gandhi and sold *khaddar* clothes. Through several of his poems, he made the people realize the urgent need for a unified struggle against the English.

In his short poem *Cutantiram (Freedom)*, Bharatidasan emphasises the need for freedom. In this poem the lives of two parakeets are juxtaposed: one enjoying a free life and the other caged and crying all the time 'akka akka' (the vocative for elder sister) which is genally taught as the first word while teaching it to speak). The poet ironically and humourously questions the bird: "Do you think that freedom is a piece of ginger or pepper, for your elder sister to come at your call and handover it to you."⁷

In another poem entitled '*Viṭṭalai Vēṭkai Uyirṇ Iyazkai*' (Love of Liberty is the Law of Nature), a free black dog refuses to share the life with a domesticated white dog living in a rich man's house. The black dog stands for the Indians while the English are represented by the white dog.

Robert Frost has expressed almost similar sentiments in his patriotic poem, *The Gift Outright*, inspite of its historical perspective

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,

But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by.
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realising westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become."⁸

The land of America was already in existence much before the people who constitute the modern American nation went there and settled finally. Massachusetts, Virginia and other important states were in existence even before the vast land was colonized. For a long time the colonists regarded themselves as the owners of the land but they were not possessed by a sense of belonging to the country. After sometime the colonists realized that the affection which they have been withholding from the country of their adoption made them weak but soon after they had surrendered themselves to their land; they felt great strength in themselves. After surrendering themselves to the land of their adoption, they started advancing more and more towards the western part and they gave themselves outright to the land known as America or New England. Frost makes it clear that a total surrender to the nation one belongs to is essential. This sense of belonging alone can promote nationalism.

When the late president Kennedy took up office at the White House in 1961, Robert Frost was called upon to recite this most famous song at the inaugural ceremony.

The sonorous and inspiring voice in which this poem describing the complete identification of the American people with their land was delivered, produced a nationwide effect equivalent to the Inaugural speech to the youthful President Kennedy. Both stood together as two symbols of the American nation—one the statesman, the other the poet. And as the reputation of President Kennedy, who on account of his deep humanism and love for the freedom of the whole human race, had travelled all over the globe, the influence of Robert Frost as a poet was not only confined to America, but had spread in other English-speaking and English-knowing countries of the world, and touched the heart of one of the greatest apostles of peace that the modern world has produced, the late Prime Minister Nehru who had dedicated his life to the service not only of his people, but of the whole human race. After his death, it was discovered that on the office table of Jawaharlal Nehru, there lay a piece of paper bearing the following four lines (written in his own hand) from Robert Frost's most explicated poem, 'Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening' :

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep.⁹

Perhaps in his last months, when the burden of age and ill-health was falling heavy on him, there came a temptation to relax a little in the midst of some beautiful natural spot away from human habitation. These lines of Robert Frost must have reminded the late Prime Minister Nehru that his promise to build a strong and prosperous India had to be redeemed to the fullest extent, and that therefore he must give the last drop of his blood for the service of the nation and go on working with untiring zeal

for good of his country, because a stupendous work lay ahead of him to be accomplished before the final curtain was drawn on his earthly life. The poem conveys thus an idea which has universality of application while portraying a local scene. It is suggested that one must always think of one's duty to one's nation and should never fail to contribute one's share to the growth of the spirit of nationalism. We are also reminded of our duty to our fellow citizens. Kennedy and Nehru have demonstrated the extent to which selfless service can foster national and international integration.

Frost's love for humanity echoes in several of lines of Bharatidasan. Both emphasise the need for service to the humanity. Such a service must be based on an unshakable faith in human nature. In his poem "*Māṇīṭa Cakti*" (Human Power) Bharatidasan says

"With the help of human nature
One can rule over the world
And that we have already seen
Hence, brother, believe in human nature.
If you have heard of any force
Equivalent to that of human nature
Please tell me..."¹⁰

Bharatidasan's concern for the entire mankind made him to ponder over the various political and social happenings of the world. As a well-wisher of humanity, he has expressed his reactions to such happenings very freely and boldly in unequivocal terms. The various revolutions that took place in the 19th century and in the earlier part of the 20th century gave Bharatidasan an optimistic hope in the power of the common people. The French Revolution put an end to monarchy in 1798. The American Revolution of 1775 resulted in the birth of a free America. The

Russian Revolution of 1917 brought the autocratic Tzarist regime in Russia to an end. The significance of all such Revolution lie in the demonstration of the power of the people in the making of a government and a nation. Revolts and revolutions are the means followed by people to establish the form of government they prefer and to ensure liberty and equality.

Bharatidasan found fault with the Americans for unnecessarily interfering in the growth of Vietnam which had just started progressing after obtaining freedom from the French. He had the firm view that a country must belong to its people and that other countries have no right to meddle with its progress. He criticised the capitalistic tendencies which were ready to destroy small nations like Japan :

The bomb that fell in Japan
will, without fail, the world destroy-

Bharatidasan cautioned. He did not even spare Russian Communism. In "*Varicai Ketta Ruciya Nāttu*" [The Dishonourable Russia], he criticized the country for spending enormous amount of money on space research; he suggested that the amount could as well be utilized for promoting the welfare of the poor. He also criticised the Russian government for its recommendation that women need not marry.

Even earthquakes which took the lives of many people and destroyed properties did not escape the poet's concern. In *Kuvettāvil Kūṭṭhkolai* [Mass Murder in Quetta], he gives a pathetic account of the havoc caused by an earthquake. In his poem *Kuṭiyānavan* [The Farmer], Bharatidasan writes about Hitler's role in the Second World War. He sympathizes with the nations which were invaded by Germany-Belgium. Poland, France and Russia.

Bharatidasan and Robert Frost concentrated their attention on certain regions in order to study more accurately and thoroughly human life which is basically the same in all regions, climes and ages. Thus their regionalism did not in any way stand in the way of their wider human outlook and therefore their poems have universal appeal.

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'HUMANISM' IN THE POETRY OF BHARATIDASAN

Dr. G. R. BALAKRISHNAN

1. Humanism, as an attitude to life, concerns itself with Man and his welfare here, in this worldly life. Viewed historically, it has emerged as a reaction to religious exploitation of Man. When religions fail to win man's attention, humanism tends to flourish as a consequence. Religion, looking upon man as an inevitable potential sinner, enjoins upon him to seek spiritual redemption by patterning out his earthly life in such a way that he deserves God's mercy and celestial abode after death. In other words, religion believes in a soul, existing independent of the body with an immortality to aim at. Humanism, on the other hand, looks upon man as an innately good-natured being, but turning bad and evil, under the influence of such social surroundings. Once the vicious conditions are removed, the society becomes an assembly of good individuals, working harmoniously towards the common goal of temporal happiness, beyond which there can be no greater end to accomplish. To put the basic tenets of

humanism in the words of Sri S. Radhakrishnan, "For humanism man is the highest type of individual in existence and the service of man is the highest religion."

2. Bharatidasan's humanism is delightfully manifest when it persistently attacks those social evils which, he believes, impede the progress towards the achievement of happiness for humanity. To Bharatidasan, the first social evil, deserving vehement criticism, is the exploitation of the poor and the ignorant in the name of religion. The poet is convinced that religion has given room to vicious divisions among people such as, broadly speaking, the ruling class and the ruled or the upper and the lower castes. One cannot fail to realize how deep-rooted is his aversion for the caste-systems of the four-fold social structure, deriving its authority from the religious works such as the Vedas. Admittedly, the most ancient concept of the four-fold social structure took into account the four major inevitable occupations of a society, namely, protection, education, commerce and manual labour and assigned attendant tasks to four different groups of people with social well-being as the only common goal, without any implications of superiority and inferiority of professions. But, in course of time, the profession-based social divisions turned into a rigid birth-based caste-system. Efficiency for a position in social administration was largely associated with birth in a caste, denying to an out-sider the possibility of acquiring the same efficiency through talent and training. Such an easy facility to a social right through inheritance led to exploitations of all kinds, particularly of the low by the high in the society. With the passage of time, it resulted in a condition when society was rife with superstitions, caste-quarrels and mutual distrust. No wonder, such a fragmented society would not be able to fight foreign domination. In *Cañcivi Pārvatattin Cāraḷ*, the hero and the

heroine, *Kuppan* and *Vañci* take some herbs growing on the *Cañcivi* mountain. Under the effect of the herbs, they would be able to understand westerners as if the latter spoke in Tamil. One of the speeches they happen to listen to, is by an Englishman. He is dispelling apprehensions of a fellow-Englishman that their rule might end there and they may be driven out of India. And the long encouraging speech of the coloniser, in a grim irony, describes the society, bringing out the social maladies :

Oh my brother: Don't be afraid. We will not lose this land. 30 crores people live there, but the divisions among themselves will be the same number. All of them are therefore separate individuals when will they be ever united, single-minded to fight us? Very popular myths only to promote divisions! Epics, conducive only to encourage internecine caste quarrels! "Body will decay; relatives will die; reject pleasures; deny prosperity; and this wretched world is a lie, therefore, go to Heaven," thus the cynical Vedantas tell them, when one attempts to remove social injustice. Religion and caste with all their divisions and sub-divisions, lapses in justice and lapses in ethics, all kinds of superstitions, if they can remove all these things, perhaps they can drive us also from their land.²

The speech, being attributed to an Englishman, intensifies the feeling of helplessness, possibly, the poet might have experienced when he found his contemporary society, plagued by superstitions and weakened by exploitations. One can see that Bharatidasan traces all social evils, ultimately, to relentless exploitations of religious belief by a section of the people who are alleged to be spiritual superiors, endowed

with unfailing knowledge to guide the rulers and the ruled together to merit God's mercy in the life to come, both here and hereafter. The poet's surging resentment against this mean misuse of the religious belief seems to grow intenser from poem to poem, from expression to expression. To arrogate superiority to oneself on the score of the religious knowledge, (presumably possessed through inheritance) is to humiliate the fellow beings for their helpless ignorance and inevitable dependence. To capitalize indiscriminately on a situation the social structure has given one is not only to ridicule the trust the fellow beings have placed in him but also to exhibit scant respect to the very social organisation which has made him possible. Above all, to preach religion but not to practise it in the real sense of the term is to rouse moral indignation in the ignorant. To be insistent on the sacred happiness of the unseen gods above but to be complascently insensitive to the abject misery of the very much seen fellow beings around is to provoke and push the suffering at last into justifiable disbelief and desirable revolt. All these sentiments get a memorable expression in a poem called "வாழ்வில் உயர்வு கொள்" (Possess Self-Dignity in Life). He addresses his fellow citizen :

Possess self-dignity, my comrade! you will,
then, destroy your misery and obtain respect
and progress. If a Brahmin says he is superior,
tell him, all people are equal in this world.
If any wicked man says that the suffering are
low, hesitate not to spit on his face!^a

He warns his brother that they should not be foolish enough to part with money for things like temple renovation:

They may come to your very doors, seeking
money for temple-renovation or some temple-

festivals; they are, remember, hypocrites.
Do not consider them even as human beings;
you should give, my brother, only to those
poor who are so hungry that they cannot
even open their mouth but only squeeze
their stomach to show their starvation. To
them, you should be willing to give, with
a tender feeling of a mother, even your flesh as well.⁴

3. The poet's anger almost turns into a rage when he ponders over those people who live on the labour of the others; particularly, he could not reconcile himself to the idea of a group of people, the High-class individuals, excusing themselves from labour under the pretext of propagating religious spirit. Any wealth or time, spent to support things like monasteries or mutts, he believes, is an inexcusable waste. When there is so much to ameliorate the life of the people, what wisdom it is to squander wealth on those who say that this world is an illusion? Sustained efforts to bring happiness to one and all without discrimination must be undertaken by all the members of the society. And Bharatidasan has unequivocal faith in the powers of the human beings alone. Man must be determined to build paradise about him, unclouded by superstitions and undeterred by difficulties, to construct a new world where there will be neither exploitation of any kind nor any kind of superstitions to their infamy and discredit. He sings the glory of the human powers with confidence :

With the sword of humanism and with your two
strong arms to wield it, even the skies will
be yours; trust humanism and life will triumph.

Is humanism just grass? or a word to refer
to a lifeless wood? It has lived in forest
and conquered the seas as well!

If one fails to value humanism, his very own life will detest him. Humanism is a firm rock : standing there, with complete Equality to all and with Reason in your eyes, look at the entire world in all its directions ! Life's only strength is the chariot of Humanism.⁵

4. Equality is another pillar of the Bharatidasan's humanism. Apart from the popular affirmation that all men are equal, Bharatidasan emphasizes the equality between men and women. Women are far from being inferior creatures destined just to propagate and be passive. Contemporary social customs, drawing authority from religion, condemned women to an unenviable position in society. Education was denied to them; ancestors' wealth was divided among sons. For women, to claim equality with man is to profane human relationship and invite biting social censure. Bharatidasan's humanism, a boon to womenfolk in particular, gave them the human dignity. It did not belittle man but it gave becoming merit to woman. In *Kutumba Viṭakku* one of the more popular works of the poet, the heroine pleads for a better life for women :

To run a family, to bring up children, to protect the world, to perpetuate education itself, woman must have education !

Women without education are a wasted land where grass may grow but not good children ! but, women with education are fertilized field ! Should I say that the field will yield intelligent people?⁶

Women are not to be confined to kitchens, nor cooking is to be confined to women only. Women can do all essential works men perform and men should learn to cook as well. Cooking is not just preparation of food, but making

life itself possible. The pleasure of life is preparing food and feeding people with love and happiness. And the poet, through the heroine, hastens to add :

The convention has imposed cooking on women as their inevitable duty ; it considers women only are fit for cooking. If this convention is to be removed, women must be given education at once.⁷

Championing the cause of women cannot, necessarily, be complete if it fails to advocate widow's remarriage. Equality between man and woman, one of the fundamental tenets of Bharatidasan's humanism, envisages not only common potentialities in terms of physical and intellectual works but also endowment of common emotions and feelings with inherent craving for gratification. Established religion tacitly sanctioned greater freedom to man. Immodesty on the part of man in demanding gratification for his desires was misnamed as manliness; but, on the part of woman, it was looked upon as base shamelessness. A widower can marry without loss of dignity; he enjoys social sanction to boot. But a young widow is prohibited to marry again. Bharatidasan cannot tolerate this inhuman treatment of the young widows. Finest of lyrical poetry has burst out from him while advocating widow's re-marriage:

We spear the heart of a woman in its centre in the name of widowhood ; fair justice we do not know and we torture the young widows thus. Seeking pleasure here is the natural character of life's instinct but we fail to know it.⁸

Eloquence attains aesthetic grandeur with an irresistible appeal when he sings of the misery of widowhood :

Have you turned blind to the misery of the womenfolk?
Have you lost your eyes? Have you lost your powers
to think?

If a woman has lost her companion, what harm is done
here to you, O, you, who claim to know what life is,
if she gets another companion?.⁹

The poet warns the world that if the suppressed women gather force to revolt against merciless discrimination, no power on earth can stop them. No wonder, this chivalrous poet sternly disapproves of child - marriage as well.

5. To conclude, major ideas in Bharatidasan's humanism have been briefly dealt with. It will be proper to say that Bharatidasan's humanism is very close to what is known as Marxist humanism. For Marx, "man is his own creator in the sense that all objective reality (including man's own reality) is simply the product of his own labour."¹⁰ To quote the inevitable one from the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*: "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness."¹¹ Marxism considers religion as man-made, a social superstructure, like politics and art. There is evidence in Bharatidasan's poetry to prove that the poet, without hesitation, subscribed to Marx's idea of religion. Another significant similarity between the two is determination to end exploitation of man by man in the name of religion. Again, their noble concern for the suffering humanity in general is the very corner-stone of their philosophy. Above all, the place of pride they accord to labour in their scheme of things indicates their supreme faith in the powers of man and immense dignity they attach to labour. They believe that Man can and will re-build, re-form the society in such a way that

Man will be legitimately proud of being man. In short, "humanism becomes social policy which, by purposeful planning of production, prepares the soil for the ideal of the person at one with himself and in harmony with others—the "total" man".¹²

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IMAGERY, SYMBOL AND MYTH IN A FEW POEMS OF BHARATIDASAN

Dr. K. CHELLAPPAN

According to literary theorists like Wellek, romanticism is characterised by imagination as well as a concept of organic nature which is revealed through abundant nature imagery and the use of symbol and myth as primary determinants of poetic style. Bharatidasan, the great revolutionary bard of the twentieth century Tamilnadu can be called a romantic in view of his lyricism, glorification of the natural passions of simple folk as well as his use of the language of the common man. Though he does not see anything transcendental in the human reality he accepts the human reality as complete in itself, and in this as well as his naturalism, he is closer to the French Romantics. But he is also comparable to the British Romantics particularly in his use of nature imagery and symbols, and though he does not accept myth in the ordinary sense, he subverts them and sometimes creates a counter myth of Man based on rationalism and Tamil. The purpose of this paper is to study his imagery, symbols and making subversion of myth in three of his early poems *Cañcivi Parvatattin*.

cāral (The slope of the *Cañcīvi* Hill), *puratci Kavi* (The Revolutionary Poet) and *Aḷakin Cirippu* (The laughter or Testament of Beauty) which contains his mature vision of beauty and truth.

In *Cañcīvi Parvatatin Cāral* (The Slope of the *Cañcīvi* Hill) an early narrative poem of Bharatidasan, dealing with the love of *Kuppan* and *Vanci* in the slope of the *Cañcīvi* hill we do not see so much of imagery, but nature provides a setting to the human love. The poem begins and ends with the description of the slopes in all nature's abundance and this is brought out with references to all the five senses - the songs of the koel, the dance of the peacock, the moist breeze of the flower, the fountains and trees, and the fragrant flowers. Later life is portrayed as a river and words are described as a mountain. When *Kuppan* finally realises his folly, he is alive to the natural wealth of the land. Immediately he admires the glory of the setting sun and there is a corresponding ~~this~~ upsurge of love in his heart. When he communicates this to *Vañci*, he suggests the slopes for love making. The poem ends by repeating the description given in the beginning, "like Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes*,² with which it has so much in common - but now, the culmination of that harmonious kingdom of nature is their love.

But there are more symbols than images in this poem. The whole setting is symbolic of the sensuous richness of love. More specifically, the slope stands for the lovers' union. The herb stands for the reasoning power, which is again linked with human love. In *Vañci* there is a synthesis of reason and love, and that is why she asks for the herb as a prelude to love. But *Kuppan* who symbolises superstitions and death instincts first demands love without the herb and is later afraid of love making also. *Vañci* on the

other hand believes in love, reason and labour. She virtually and intellectually resurrects and revitalises the hero through "the herb" and offers her love.

The poem can be said to evolve a counter myth of reason and love. Here the heroine demands the herb as a price of love, and the hill is not a place of supernatural power but a scene of natural beauty which promotes reason and love. The herb which *Vaāci* wants to get in the hill is unlike the herb of the Ramayana myth which gives them the power to listen to the speeches of people from other parts of the world. Even though this can be associated with supernaturalism the poet makes it natural as it is only an extension of man's perceptive ability. He subverts the mythical to the human by using this ability only to show the humanistic values of the West to *Kuppan*. The hero of this poem, unlike the mythical heroes, is an average human being who in the beginning is unwilling to go up the hill because of his fear and passion. The juxtaposition of the mythic tale of Hanuman's carrying the hill with the above human walking up the hill for the herb superficially links the human with the mythical. He equates myth with fact, illusion with reality - which makes both comic. But finally the heroine shows the myth to be an illusion, and both return to reality. The poem thus ends up with the subversion of the myth and its subordination to the human values of reason and love.

In *Puraṭci Kavi* (The Revolutionary Poet) the poem after which the poet himself is called the Revolutionary Poet, we find a powerful human drama made up of a number of lyrics. There is more of nature imagery in the poem, though humanised. The moon is described by the poet in highly sensuous terms. There is a hidden human metaphor when he says that it shows only its face hiding its body in the garb of the blue sky as it is afraid that this world will

perish because of its intensity of love if it sees the whole body. He describes it as the single flower of a grove, a silver milk vessel of pure whiteness, the fountain of ambrosia and the red sun of the morn which having sunk into the sea had lost its fiery quality and become a cool beam of light. The final image compares the joy of the discovery of the moon to the joy of the poor who searched for a few crumbs but discovered a large quantity of white rice. He brings out the ethereal beauty of the moon in terms of concrete human and physical reality.

The poet's reference to the moon in a series of images suggests an imageless truth, and he even says that the beauty of the moon and (indirectly) of *Amutavalli* is beyond words. In fact *Amutavalli* is the reality or Shakti which vitalises the words of the poet and we can say that Bharatidasan suggests that the revolutionary spirit is the result of the union of Tamil and human values or creative imagination and the spirit of action. *Amutavalli* stands for life force or appetite for life whereas the poet in the beginning stands for the denial of life. This is similar to, but not identical with the relationship between Prometheus and Asia in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Prometheus stands for reason not vitalised by creative imagination³ but symbolised by Asia, and when he is united with Asia he recovers his full being. Whereas Prometheus fights against the tyranny of Jupiter, and love triumphs over Necessity in Shelley, here we find love triumphing over the social barriers, and both together fighting against tyranny. An important difference between Bharatidasan and Shelley is more metaphysical ^{more shelly is} whereas Bharatidasan humanises or socialises the problem of evil. The dim link with the Dravidian myth of Siva being vitalised by the Mother Goddess takes the shape of the human mother or Tamil as Mother. The archetype of *Amutavalli* in Tamil literary tradition is *Kannaki*.

In *Puratci Kavi* Bharatidasan subverts a Sanskrit tale to portray the power of love and reason symbolised in Tamil which leads a revolution. Again like Shelley he rediscovers the source of strength in woman and she not only imitates love and becomes the generator of strength in man but leads the revolution. Whereas the original Bilhana story accepts and in a way perpetuates the caste system and hierarchy, Bharatidasan uses it to reassert the power of the common people who revolt against casteism and kingship. Like Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound*, he also unchains "syncretic mythographs" which symbolise "a domineering system" in order to generate a new revolutionary "reach toward new possibilities of human being⁴." But one word of caution: Whereas Bharati was directly influenced by Shelley and even called himself "Shelleydāsan" or the devotee of Shelley, Bharatidasan does not seem to have had much direct access to Shelley. But the fact that he was Bharati's devotee would make us believe that he must have been indirectly influenced by him. Whereas Shelley's hero fights a spiritual war against the tyrannical God, and leads to the regeneration of the entire mankind, Bharatidasan's hero is content with the change in a particular kingdom through revolution though he universalises the problem in his speech. Again Bharatidasan does not resort to myths as Shelley and Bharati do, though both of them also modify them.

The role of *Amutavālli* in *Puratci Kavi* is also comparable to that of *Pāñcālī* in Bharati's *Pāñcālī Capatam*. It is *Amutavālli* who first offers love and when the King orders that the poet must be executed, like *Pāñcālī* she questions that. But whereas *Pāñcālī* questions only the legal propriety of Dhuriyodhana's act, Bharatidasan's heroine *Amutavalli* questions the very concept of Kingship and leads a revolution. She provokes the people to rise against the system,

demolish the very system and leads to a government of the people and for the people. It is not the lonely fight of a hero or heroine against a king, but a people's war against tyranny.

Whereas Bharati also speaks of the recovery of women's active force, he still portrays *Pāñcālī*, a woman of royal family, as dependant on men and she also identifies herself with the will of Lord Krishna, Bharatidasan's heroines are humble women and they identify themselves not with God, but *the people*. Here we see Paramatma only in the mind of the common people, and thus the divine is completely humanised - brought down to Earth to merge with the dust. The *denouement* takes place due to the interference not of God but of people.

Aṭakin Cirippu abounds in Nature imagery - the rising Sun seen as a jewel, the flood of life, the grove etc. The poet is fond of the imagery of light and taste. He describes the rising Sun more than once in terms of the imagery of taste. He says that the grove of the shore will display the ripe fruit of the rising Sun (p.8). There is a Keatsian intensity of sensuous richness in the synaesthetic imagery in which he describes the sun to be opening the jackfruit of darkness and putting inside the pulp of light.

The image of growth is linked with the sky as well as the shore (8).

But the most distinct characteristic of his imagery in general, in *Aṭakin Cirippu* in particular is the humanisation of natural aspects. The very first poem dealing with the principle of beauty refers to the light in the eyes of the child as well as of the lamp, in the curve of the finger of the damsel weaving a garland of flowers, and above all in the majestic gait of the peasant who walks with the plough

on his shoulder. Here Bharatidasan not only humanises but also democratises the very principle of beauty, and extends the horizon of the poetic beauty in Tamil. The peasant is a favourite image of Bharatidasan. While he refers to the song of the peasants in the poem on the river, he calls the Sun an agriculturist like Shakesphere in *Hamlet*⁵ who grew the plant of life in a barren universe. In another well-known human imagery he likens the variety of the red petals of the lotus to the cheek and eyes of the child, the lips of the bride quivering with joy on seeing her lover and finally, in a modern image he compares a petal to the heart of the wicked. Bharatidasan speaks of the stars as the blisters of the sky consequent on its daylong watch over the atrocities of the wealthy against the labouring class. His cloud also laughs like Shelley's at one stage,⁷ the dark clouds invade⁸ the day sky-the lightning is like the flashing sword and the rattling thunder is the laughter of the same clouds. Dame Nature finally celebrates the triumph by showering the flowers of rain on earth. In this poem as well as the poem, *Tenṟal* or Southern Breeze, we find there is also myth making as in Shelley's *The Cloud*.⁶ He links the breeze with all that is human-the child, the woman, and finally with Tamil. He demythicizes and naturalises Tamil by linking it with *Potikai* and *Tenṟal*, but without reference to Agasthyar. In this process Tamil and *Tenṟal* become symbols of a way of life; embodying the principle of renewal and regeneration. Both *Tenṟal* and Tamil are cultural as well as personal symbols.

To conclude, the three poems of Bharatidasan chosen for our study show his predilection for imagery which is dynamic and humanised and he also fuses more than one sense experience as Keats does. Though there is a Shelleyean love for the images of light and the skies, he concretises them in relation to human experiences or on other sense. Some of the recurrent images and characters

become symbols eg. *Tenral*, *Tami*, Moon, the revolutionary poet. *Amulavalli* etc. In all the three, there is either demythologisation and/or the creation of a natural or human myth in place of traditional myths. This is part of his revolutionary humanism based on the celebration of natural and human values which is central to the romantic faith in the finite, though most of the British Romantics not only see the infinite in the finite but, make the finite itself something of God. To Bharatidasan man is complete in himself and he needs no transcendence.

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PARADOX OF IDENTITY : BHARATIDASĀN AND WALT WHITMAN

R. BALACHANDRAN, 'BALA'

The spirit of Renaissance and revolt merge in the poetry of *Bhāratidāsan*, the Tamil bard of revolution, and Walt Whitman, the American prophet of Renaissance. Bharatidasan symbolises the spirit of Tamil Nationalism which emerged as a cross current of Indian Nationalism; he is also considered as a poet whose concept of Tamil resurgence contributed to the theoretical and ideological constructs of the Dravidian movement in the early years of this century. Again Bharatidasan is seen as a revolutionary who sang to kindle a transformation of this world towards a new and just tomorrow. True to his model, Bharati, Bharatidasan started his poetic career as a nationalist and a spiritualist but soon departed from the footsteps of his mentor to become a spokesman for Tamil Nationalism and atheism. Whitman is today recognised as one of the voices of the American Renaissance. His *Leaves of Grass* reveals a personality, colourful and various: Whitman is seen as a spiritual democrat, an Oriental visionary, a poet of uninhibited love,

a user of unpoetic words, and also as an utter egotist Bharatidasan too has been variously interpreted as a through humanist, an ally of communists, a staunch atheist, and an arch parochialist. Whitman and Bharatidasan belong to two different nations and to two different traditions, one in the making and the other with a great past; and they took to writing when their countries were undergoing tremendous changes. Whitman lived at a time when in his country the average man was a farmer turned businessman; Bharatidasan lived at a time when the average man of his nation was uneducated, poor, and bound by the shackles of poverty, ignorance, and inequality. One lived in a land which was feeling its identity as a race, which integrates and includes many races, while the other was sensitive to the multiplicity and individual identity of the races of his land. A comparison of the two interestingly reveals their individual mind and their social roles in a better light.

Leaves of Grass is a profound and lovely drama of The Self. The poet celebrates his self and sings the "*Song of Myself*." The Self, who is the protagonist in the poem, also reveals himself as an ironic realist; and it is true that Whitman's intense and spiritual sense of individuality is asserted in the poems and he is quite convinced that "Nothing, not God, is greater than one's self," but the poet also sees within his self the vast multitude :

One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
 Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.
 Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
 Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for
 the Muse,
 I say the Form complete is worthier far,
 The Female equally with the Male I sing.
 Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
 Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
 The Modern Man I sing.¹

The poet celebrates his self and sings himself but the song turns out to be the song of the life immense. of man and woman, of all passions and actions ; the syllables of his song articulate the words 'Democratic' and 'En-Masse'. Like an Oriental mystic he feels the cosmos within his self, but like a true humanist and realist, he identifies himself, with the whole of humanity, and chooses "to speak at every hazard" with "original energy."

Whitman described himself as "a kosmos. of Manhattan the son. "Bharatidasan identifies his self with all humanity. In his poem "The world is Yours" the poet admonishes the Tamils : "Look at the vast expanse of humanity! and loudly declare, "I'm this ocean of humanity !" Bharatidasan declares that the wole of humanity is his brotherhood and puts his hands around its neck and becomes one with it. just as Whitman is of Manhattan son and of the cosmos at once, Bharatidasan is a Tamil and a world citizen at the same time. One may consider this paradox of identity, but there is a deep seated unity in both the poets in their attitude to the role of the Muse. Whitman's *Song of Myself* includes "the varied carols" of mechanics the carpenters, the masons, the boatman, the shoemaker, the woodcutter, the ploughboy, the hatter and the deckhand. Bharatidasan highlighted the sufferings of the women, the workers, and the lay man holding on to his faith and superstitions. He portrays his heroes and heroines as valiant men and women who deliver the masses from the miseries of caste, creed, and poverty.

The poet loves animals, blrds, and plants and flowers, and his humanism finds eloquent expression in his nature poetry, as we can find in his *Aḷaḱin Ciriḱḱu*. Bharatidasan neither mythifies this world, nor does he speak like a mystic; his poetry exists only at the human level and considers everything for the sake of humanity.

The treatment of love in the poems of Whitman and Bharatidasan reveals the essential unity among the poets beneath the strikingly different attitudes and treatment. Both the poets have no inhibitions in talking about the physical aspects of love. But in the case of Whitman, love and comradeship are looked upon in their biological and functional character. In Bharatidasan love is not a theme by itself it is an aesthetic device, a technique as well. His love poetry attempts to portray the natural union between man and woman but ultimately they become motives and gateways to pass on to superior roles. Bharatidasan's narrative poetry in general and also other poems included under the heading 'Love' reveal a simple but well-designed pattern. The poems begin with the meeting of the lovers which in turn takes them to the realization that the bliss of union is not assured unless the intervening dangers that raise their heads in the garb of caste, creed, inequalities in social positions or the age-old shackles binding the womenfolk are overcome. The will to overcome the hurdles is suggested, (as Chellappan and Selvarasan rightly point out,) by the woman, and finally the man rises to the occasion and acts. The final union of lovers is hailed as a victory for the values for which Bharatidasan speaks—the greatness of love, the equality before law, the creation of a casteless society, negation of God, and Democracy. Ultimately what began as a love poem ends as a poem on a public theme. Love is portrayed as an impelling and subliming force to act for the good.

Whitman's treatment of love is personal, very often taken to the sensual plane, and the comradeship the poet describes tends to give the impression that this is unnatural and morbid. Whitman speaks of the legitimate needs of the body, 'the body electric'; and he considers the physical union divinely granted. With lyrical intensity the poet talks of sex "containing all, bodies, souls, meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations, songs, commands,

health, pride, the maternal mystery..."² The mere sensations of physical touch gives a new identity to the poet, his "flesh and blood playing out lightning strike what is hardly different from myself" He finds no barriers between man and woman, and in highly suggestive symbols and images portrays uninhibited love. To Whitman love and comradeship are the "base, / and finale, too; for all metaphysics."³ To Bharatidasan love and sex are agents for a change for the better; to Whitman love and sex are needs that please the soul, "but these please the soul well." In fact it is claimed that Whitman played an important role in making sex a possible subject for American literature. Both Whitman and Bharatidasan write in a style highly sensitized, and they transform everything into a consciousness. While Whitman is satisfied with the portrayal of this consciousness Bharatidasan very often deviates to construct his concepts from his consciousness. To poets, woman is a catalyst for the generation of passions. Whitman and Bharatidasan fall apart in the treatment of woman in their poetry : the former subordinates woman, and the latter liberates her. The woman that we meet in Whitman is reduced to a submissive function. As D. H. Lawrence says, "she is no longer an individual being with a living soul. She must fold her head and submit to her functioning capacity - functions of sex, function of birth."⁴

Whitman's voice speaks :

It is I, you women, I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable, but I love you,
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you.
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for
these States,

.....

I shall look for loving crops from birth, life, death,
immortality,
I plant so lovingly now.⁵

We find Whitman 'giving himself' to women, and even his noble desire to people the new States of America with great sons and daughters cannot obscure the fact that his women are poor "wombs and muscles."

In Bharatidasan woman is more equal than man. As Chellappan remarks, man in Bharatidasan's poetry is assigned a subordinate role, "and man divorced from the creative sources—or Sakti—is helpless like Prometheus Bound."⁶ Hence we find in "Puraticcavi" that it is Amutavalli who takes the initiative both in love and in the rebellion. she is the first to point out to the King the rights of ordinary citizens. Again in *Viratay* the mother helps the hero to overthrow the oppressor. In *Tamilacciyin Katti*, the heroine wreaks vengeance upon the villain. In *Cañcivi Parvatattin Cara* while the hero lives in his fearful world of fantasy, the heroine stands for reason and affirms the life on this earth. Educated and liberated woman is Bharatidasan's ideal and hence he assigns a dual role to his woman: to share her person with her beloved, and to make her man suitable for a better world by releasing his bonds.

Great poets are makers of their language. Both Whitman and Bharatidasan wrote in a language extending and energising its possibilities. Bharatidasan did not experiment as much as Whitman, but his language is new, strong and powerful. What is important to him is not his creation of language but the creation of an attitude to the Tamil language in the hearts of his people. Whitman had an active vocabulary of more than 30,000 words and his choice of words made his poetry 'transcendent and new'. Whitman felt that he spoke not just for America but for all the workers of the world. He did not think that the poet has to use only the words that are listed in a dictionary. He questioned, "Word! Book-words! What are You?." He got the language

of his poetry from the lips of men and women. The "Substantial words are in the ground and sea", he commented. He was the poet of the modern man and hence he attempted to express the consciousness of the modern man, the city man. Hence it is claimed that more than Blake or Baudelaire, Whitman made the city poetically available to literature.⁷ Whitman writes in a style, as if he wanted to get beyond the limits of language. In the opinion of a famous linguist Sapir, he appeared to be "striving for a generalized art language, a literary algebra."⁸

If Whitman was a creator of a new language to articulate his consciousness, Bharatidasan attempted to create a consciousness for the Tamil language. He strives to create an attitude to the role of Tamil. In India language means much more than a medium. The spirit of the Vedas is felt more in the rhythms of Sanskrit *slokas* than in its semantic exposition. Tamil is not a new language like English, but an ancient one with a great treasure house of literature to be proud of. Such a language cannot be subjected to corruption or subordination. Tamil Nationalism survives only by retaining the elevated pedestal for the language. Hence we find that Tamil by itself becomes a theme in Bharatidasan's poems, and danger to Tamil is portrayed as a dominant motif. Bharatidasan pours iron and steel in denigrating the imposition of an alien culture which refuses to look at Tamil on par with Sanskrit. The role assigned to Hindi as a unifying factor in India by the nationalists is resented by the poet; the dominance of Telugu at the cost of Tamil in the world of music is pointed out; the presence of non-Tamils even in the newly popular cinema medium is spurned by the poet. Hence we find his heroes fighting for the cause of the Tamil language. His revolutionaries, like *Utāran Puratccikkavi*, are scholars in Tamil. *Utāran*, the Tamil poet and grammar teacher, in his passionate address to the masses proclaims that he is not afraid of facing death, but

feels sorry for the likely comment that here was a man who had to die, for he was a Tamil scholar, for the king's daughter loved him and his Tamil. Again in another poem the hero refuses to marry the woman with whom he falls in love on learning that she speaks Telugu. In short we can say Bharatidasan took up the cause of creating a consciousness towards the language of his poetry while Whitman created a new language within the language of the nation to portray his consciousness of the world.

Whitman proclaims that he is in the house of his self and sings about himself, but he brakes open the barriers to feel the body and soul of the vast multitude outside, and ultimately his song becomes the song of not one self but the song of the modern consciousness. Similarly Bharatidasan journeys out into the "ocean of humanity" with broad ideals, and when he has to return home, he chooses his own land and language that will make him proud and happy. There is nothing parochial in Bharatidasan's 'home - coming' as everything is not selfish in Whitman's song of his self. What seems to be a paradox at the surface, reveals the reality in the art and ideas of the two poets.

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REGIONALISM IN BURNS AND BHARATIDASAN

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Robert Burns (1759-1796), English rustic poet from Ayrshire, Scotland and Bharatidasan (1891-1964), greatest Tamil poet after Bharati can be compared on many grounds. There are several striking similarities between the poems and songs of the one and those of the other in the thought-content, attitude, and style. One of the common points between the two poets is the predominant regionalism.

Burns is generally acknowledged to be the national poet of Scotland. Bharatidasan is often termed the poet-laureate of the Tamil regional nationalism. Both Burns and Bharatidasan are usually criticized to be simply 'provincial poets' because of their passionate love of their native land; but understandably enough, the very same characteristic nature in their poetry makes others glorify them as 'national poets'. Whether it is a sign of staunch parochialism or spirited patriotism is to be carefully studied.

Matthew Arnold's comments on Burns' poetry is well known :

"The real Burns is ofcourse in his scotch poems. Let us boldly say that of much of this poetry, a poetry dealing perpetually with Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners a Scotchman's estimate, is apt to be personal. A Scotchman is used to this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners; he has a tenderness for it; he meets its poet half way. . . . But this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet, not for him when it is not a partial countryman who reads him; for in itself it is not a beautiful world, and no one can deny that it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world. Burns' world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion and Scotch manners, is often a harsh, a sordid, a repulsive world"¹.

The same line of argument applies to Bharatidasan for, much of his poetry deals perpetually with Tamil food, Tamil religion and Tamil manners. He too is known for his 'regional nationalism'². He almost worships Tamil and glorifies everything connected with Tamil. His hero rejects a beautiful girl simply because she is an alien.³ Bharatidasan considers songs in Telugu, Hindustani and in languages other than Tamil to be insipid and unpleasant⁴. His subsequent delight at hearing a Tamil song can match that of Burns' in "Cotter's Saturday Night" :

The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame.⁵

Before a comparison is attempted between Burns' Scottish regionalism and Bharatidasan's Tamil regionalism, a

note of clarification is to be made about Bharatidasan's use of Tamilnadu and Tamilian on the one hand and *Drāviṭanāṭu* and Dravidian on the other. Although *Drāviṭanāṭu* generally refers to the whole of South India including the present states of Karnataka, Andra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Pondicherry and Kerala and though Bharatidasan himself has laid down, in some of his poems and songs,⁶ the boundaries of *Drāviṭanāṭu* as Bengal in the North, (hence, including Orissa) and the three seas on all the other sides,⁷ he practically made no specific distinction between *Drāviṭanāṭu* and Tamilnadu in his poems.

That Bharatidasan was a close follower of *Periyār* E. V. Ramasamy is a well-known fact. *Periyār* himself often equated *Drāviṭanāṭu* with Tamilnadu. Quoting dictionaries and historians, he categorically stated, 'Tamilnadu and *Drāviṭanāṭu* are one and the same'.⁸ In fact, one of his speeches is printed with the heading "Tamilnadu for the Tamilians" and there is a sub title *Drāviṭanāṭu* for the Dravidians" in parenthesis.⁹ Bharatidasan puts forth the same idea in one of his poems. He states :

"Is it *Drāviṭanāṭu* or Tamilnadu ?
Which will you redeem ? This is
A big question raised by some.
They forget a simple fact :
Drāviṭanāṭu is the same as Tamilnadu.
Tamilnadu is nothing but *Drāviṭanāṭu* !
Those redeeming *Drāviṭan* redeem Tamilnadu
Those redeeming Tamilnadu redeem Dravidam".¹⁰

The seeming contradiction between the meanings of these two terms will vanish if *periyār's* line of using them is properly understood. '*Drāviṭan*' is the antonym of 'Aryan'. The party founded by *Periyār* (by modifying, or rather renaming, the South Indian Liberal Federation, popularly known

as the Justice Party) in 1944 is called the Dravidar Kalakam. The word 'Dravidar' stands for 'non-Brahmin' or 'non-Aryan'. Also, the name of the present Tamilnadu was then 'Madras Presidency'. It was a composite state including parts of Kerala, Andhrapradesh and Karnataka from Mangalore in the west to Ganjam District in the East. These linguistic states came into existence only in 1956. 'Tamilnadu' as the official name, came into its being only on 14th January 1969, owing to the strenuous efforts of C. N. Annādurai (popularly known as *Arigūnar Anna*), a former lieutenant of *Periyār*, who had by then become the Chief Minister of the state.

Burns as well as Bharatidasan reveals their love of their 'native land's even in the title of the books. Burns' desire for 'guid black print' was fulfilled by their issue of the Kilmarnock edition of his Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect (1786). The later contributions of Burns are found in The Scots Musical Museum (1787-1803) edited by James Johnson and A Select, Collection of Original Scottish (Sic) Airs for the Voice (1793-1818) edited by George Thomson. All these titles contain pointed references to some 'SCOT' element. Bharatidasan's poetical works with the titles *Tamiliyakkam* (The Tamil Movement) *Tirāvitar Tiruppātāl* (The Beautiful songs of the Dravidians), *Tamilačciyin Kattī* (The sword of a Tamil woman), *Tirāvitar Puraṭci tirumana tittam* (The plan for the Dravidian Revolutionary Marriage) stand in the same manner. A volume of his poems collected and published posthumously bears the title *Tamilukku Amutenru per* (Tamil is the name of Ambrosia) which is the opening line of one of his popular songs.

Not only do the books bear such titles, a large number of individual poems are given such captions. Fifteen such 'Scotch' captions¹¹ are found in Burns including Scotch Drink, Scottish (sic) Ballad, Scots Ballad, Scots Prologue,

Scotch Song and Scottish Song. Bharatidasan's *Tamiḻiyakkam* is completely on the need for a vigorous movement for the improvement of the Tamil language in various fields. Also, every volume of his poems has a section on Tamil. In his *Alakin Cirippu* (The Laughter of Beauty), he includes, Tamil as one of the objects of beauty. In addition to these there are more than hundred poems with Tamil as a part of the caption.

Each of these two poets was proud of his native land, its food and its manners, and tried to glorify the ancestors of his own soil. Sometimes these poets went to the extent of condemning those who did not feel such a pride. Their love of native land makes them personify it into a woman. Particularly, Burns' use of such a personification is remarkable.

Just as 'mother-tongue', 'motherland' is a quite common expression in Tamil. Tamil is traditionally spoken of as a perennial maiden without old age, "*Tamiḻp̄p̄āvai*" ("The doll like little girl, Tamil") is an expression used by *Iḻankō* in his *Cilappatikaram*,¹² an epic of the second century. The birth, childhood and gradual growth of maiden Tamil is sung in figurative language by *Varantaruṅṅār* in the fourteenth century.¹³ Sundaram Pillai (1895-1897), author of the poetic drama *Manonmaniya* (1891), calls Tamil a Goddess and mother giving birth to the Dravidian languages including Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu. In spite of having become a mother, she retains her eternal youth, according to his song¹⁴.

Bharati (1882-1921), whose poetry and personal contact influence Bharatidasan to such an extent that the latter's Pseudonym has come to stay throwing his real name (Kanak Cuppurattinam) into oblivion, sang several songs treating India or *Bhāratam* as mother. "*Bhāratmātā*" (Mother India)

is a recurrent expression in his poems.¹⁵ "*Tamiḷṭṭāi*" (Mother Tamil) is one of his poems. Her father was Lord Siva and her teacher Akattiya. In that poem, Tamil the mother even addresses her sons the Tamilians to keep her alive by going abroad and bringing all literary treasures from everywhere.¹⁶ Bharatidasan extends it still further and almost exhausts it by abundant and repeated use so much that his readers can not think of Tamil without the image of mother.

Bharatidasan hails Tamil as his 'mother' innumerable times in a number of poems. He seems to be intensely passionate. The stridency is predominant in his poem perhaps because of his linguistic threat to his language and the Anti-Hindi agitations which he enthusiastically supported. His concept is that all the Tamilians from one single family whose cementing force is mother Tamil. Language identity is more than that of the land. Comparatively a few poems personify Tamilnadu or *Drāviṇāṭu* in this manner and they are not so well-known as those on Tamil.

'*Annai Arikkai*' (The Mother's declaration)¹⁷ is an exhortation by the mother. The concluding lines are very thoughtful :

Once I ruled over the world; the art of government taught I;
Now in fetters am I; won't you set me free?
Let my hand hoist the flag of republic;
Grant me this request : Awake and arise;

The poem 'Velka' (Let it win)¹⁸ is an address by the son to his motherland. He enlists her glories and asserts that she is sure to win a wide area by her sweetness. The poem opens as follows :

O my motherland ! My dear Tamilnatu !
Thou has fertile lands with tall trees ;

Coconut and banana rise sky-high ;
Wet lands are rich with golden crops !

The poet is sensuous in his highly Romantic description.

Yet another poem is similar in form, but quite different in mood. "*En Tāyē?*" (O, My Mother)¹⁹ is also an address by a son to his mother, Tamilnadu. He is in despair, because his brothers do not recognize their own mother and her greatness. The poem is an expression of his dejection, ending with the question :

O thou, my Mother, art a slave; Northerner is my master;
Why should I live without changing this, O my Mother?

There are poems referring to '*Drāvidam*' as motherland. One is an address by a Dravidian to another Dravidian, his elder brother.²⁰ He requests his brother to rescue their mother and get back her power to rule. Another poem reiterates the poet's love to his mother land. '*Drāvidam* gave birth to him and so he takes a vow to raise her to power and glory.'²¹ Similar is the sentiment expressed in yet another poem with the only change that this identifies 'Tamilnadu' to be the mother instead of '*Drāvidam*'. 'My mother must be rescued from the cunning wild beasts and be freed from the fetters bound by the North', asserts the poet.²²

On the other hand, this kind of personification of Scotland seems to be new. Burns' love of Scotland makes him imagine it as a woman. He begins his 'Address to Edinburgh', apostrophizing its capital with tenderness as,

Edina ! Scotia's darling seat !²³

The same tone runs through the poem and the first stanza is repeated at the end. Scotland and its capital are glorified. Edinburgh too is personified as a woman with great

men and women as her sons and daughters. Similarly, the three concluding stanzas of 'Cotter's Saturday Night' sing elaborately of Scotia and glory.²⁴ Some extracts can be seen :

From scenes like these, old SCOTIA'S grandeur springs,
 That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad ; ...
 O SCOTIA ! my dear, my native soil !
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent !
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health and peace and sweet content ! ...
 O never, never SCOTIA's realm desert,
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard

"The Author's Earnest Cry and prayer, to the Right Honorable (Sic) and Honorable, the Scotch representative in the House of Commons"²⁵ by Burns deserves a special reference in this regard. It is directed against the government's interference with the liberties of whisky-drinkers and producers. Late in 1785, the Scottish liquor-trade began an agitation against the excise laws, which were then so strictly enforced as to drive many distillers away from business. Since it was widely believed that the London trade was behind the sudden severity of the excise officers, the cause of John Barleycorn could be presented as that of the whole of Scotland.

The poem 'humbly' conveys 'a simple Bardie's prayers' to the representatives of his country. In the course of the poem, Burns bids the M.Ps. "Paint Scotland greetin owre her thrissle" her pint-measure "as toom's a whistle", while wicked exciseman break up her stills and smugglers and podgy vintners pick her pouch. The allegorical picture continues till the end. In the last stanza, the poet 'addresses the country, "SCOTLAND, my auld, respected Mither!".

"Scotch Drink"²⁶ glorifies Scotch Whisky, The Poet prefers this native drink to wine or brandy. He is unhappy

about the Scots who take to drinks from other countries. One who drinks brandy sends 'auld Scotland's cast to her warst faes' says Burns. The personification is seen also in "Scotland drew her pipe an' blew", a line from "A Fragment"²⁷.

A reference to 'Scots Ballad'²⁸ is fitting here. The critics are able to find symbols in the song and interpret suitable. The 'bonie lass of Albanic' is a symbol for enslaved Scotland the 'false usurper' is England. Behind the song's mock-medieval trappings one senses a real contemporary yearning of national liberation²⁹.

But, Burns shows that this sort of allegory or personification can be taken to an extremely narrow limit. In a poem addressed "To W.S., Ochiltree", Burns refers to 'Auld Coila'³⁰. He says, "She's gotten Bardies O' her ain" and "Nae poet thought her worth his while, / To set her name in measur'd style". By Coila, Burns means Kyle, his native district of Ayrshire. There are other poems also with references to Scotia and Coila.

Just as Burns praises the food and drink of Scotland in his "John Barleycorn" and "Scotch Drink", Bharatidasan does not miss an opportunity to praise the native food prepared and sold at Thanjavur railway station. He says, *Tamiḻan Uṇavē Tamiḻarkku Amiṭtu* (The Tamiḻian food is the Ambrosia to the Tamiḻs.³¹ "Take food prepared by a Tamiḻian in order to pave the way for the liberation of Tamiḻnadu", concludes the poem, amply demonstrating Bharatidasan's zeal for anything and everything associated with Tamiḻ. To Bharatidasan, every aspect of Tamiḻ culture and life appears supreme and delectable. He believed that modern Tamiḻ culture would flourish and derive its native strength by being inspired by its ancient counterpart. That

is why he rewrote in modern Tamil *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*, the twin-epics of the past, in spite of his dislike for the irrational, superstitious and religious elements in them. He wrote a drama on *Picirāntaiyār*, a Tamil poet of the cankam age. Also, he rewrote several love-poems of the cankam Age³², and every now and then referred to the ancient Tamil Kings. Bharatidasan's attempt to render a new interpretation to *Tirukkuraḷ* is very remarkable.

Burns too did his best to perpetuate Scottish culture and tradition. His 'Halloween'³³ abounds in customs and habits of rural Scotland. Burns himself had to append a series of explanatory notes. "To a Haggis"³⁴ suggests a gathering of Scottish friends, often males only, to share a meal of haggis, perhaps to celebrate the end of harvest³⁵. Burns' contributions to the Scots Musical Museum and A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs are remarkable in perpetuating the Scottish folksongs. Also one can easily imagine his affinity for the name of Robert Bruce and of Wallace. His sympathy for Mary Queen of Scots is nothing unusual.

This spirit drove Burns to write "Scots Verse", which does not belong to the context of the English literature that was contemporary with him. The differences between the Scot and the English languages imply differences of life as well as conversation, different kinds of communities. Burns's "Scots Verse" is that of a poet very consciously alive in his contemporary local world - which was not, however, the world either of his English urban or his English provincial contemporaries.³⁶ Burns' preference of Scottish dialect to normal English was a kind of nationalist literary reaction. It was against the desire of the Scottish "literati" to make their writings uncontaminated by what they called 'Scotticisms.' Burns could have conveniently accepted the canons of the 'literati' and made his bow as a poet in neo-classic English. Although he did not rush headlong to the extreme to produce

only vernacular poetry. Burns, in his own way, succeeded in giving to the Scots vernacular the status of a full literary language.

However, many have experienced this difficulty of the dialect in Burns' poems and expressed it. Even Goethe found it an obstacle for the assimilation of Burns' poetry. An attempt to translate Burns in to English has been made in order to help the English-speaking readers who struggle with a dialect which looks and reads like a foreign language.³⁷

It is really interesting to note that Bharatidasan also had different strata of the Tamil language in his poems: a high literary language which appeals only to scholars, a simple language blended with Sanskrit words but akin to the spoken and, a sort of middle language, simple but free from foreign sounds and words. There is no question of dialectal variations here. It is only a difference in diction and style.

Bharatidasan was a scholar in Tamil who had composed songs in the literary style even before he met Bharati. Bharati's influence brought him down from the "ivory tower" mentality and made him a modern poet. Bharatidasan's poems and songs of this period are known for their simplicity and vigour but contain a lot of direct and indirect Sanskrit sounds, letters and words. Even "*Dāsan*" in his name was written with an alien letter denoting the foreign sound (sa). Examples can be multiplied. This tendency lasted in Bharatidasan for about twenty - five years.

Bharati died in 1921. *Periyār* E. V. Ramasamy left the Congress Party in 1925 and his Self-respect (Dravidian) movement rose to prominence. By 1928 Bharatidasan was attracted to this vigorous movement. The imposition of Hindi;

in 1938 caused a storm in the State. The Anti-Hindi agitation united the Tamil people for the cause of their mother-tongue and led to the Tamil revivalism. Even after the imposition of Hindi was withdrawn by the end of the same year, the fire of love for Tamil continued to burn. Rajaji, the then Premier of the Madras Presidency, had said that learning Hindi or Sanskrit was one and the same.³⁸ Therefore the need for rescuing Tamil from the "clutches" of Sanskrit was felt. The identity of Tamil as a classical language was stressed. Already there was a silent move for that, started by V. G. Suriya Narayana Sastri (ironically enough, a Brahmin who changed his name as "*Paritimār Kalaiñār*" in "pure" Tamil). This sort of flushing out the Sanskrit words from Tamil was vitalized by Maraimalai Atikal (1876-1950).³⁹ Many followed his example and started chastening Tamil by eliminating Sanskrit and other foreign words from speech and writing.

The Dravidian Movement supported this kind of change. This "pure Tamil" movement spread fast and had its own impact on Tamil prose and verse. Such a movement was much needed then and is valuable even today. It is no wonder that Bharatidasan fell headlong into the movement. His love of Tamil was very profound. He dedicated the second part of his *Kutumba Viṭakku* (1944) to Maraimalai Atikal. His *Tamiḻiyokkam* (1945) is the poetic credo of the "pure Tamil" movement. Now he had to follow the principles laid down by himself. He tried to do it in two ways. Wherever possible he eliminated Sanskrit letters and words from his poems already published and attempted some kind of substitution.⁴⁰ He chose only "pure Tamil" words for his future poetry. Also he defended his use of some words, generally supposed to be of Sanskrit origin.⁴¹ His attempt was to give a higher literary status to Tamil.

A few interesting points are to be mentioned here. Bharatidasan's mentor *Periyār* E.V.R. and his lieutenants like Arignār

Anna were opposed to Sanskrit but were not so very keen to choose "pure Tamil" words for their use in speeches and writings as Bharatidasan was. The poet never thought of changing his own assumed name "Bharatidasan" which was a compound of two Sanskrit words. It was perhaps because of his unshaken devotion to Bharati-

It is true that Bharatidasan wrote quite a number of poems pointing out the political domination of the Northerners on the South pleading for the separation of Tamilnadu (or Dravidanadu). However it seems to be a passionate extension of the regional nationalism mentioned already, as it stood only at the level of a slogan. Tamil nationalism is a general phenomenon pervading the twentieth-century literature as a part of Tamil revivalism. Rev. Dr. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam has elaborately analysed it in his article "Regional Nationalism in Twentieth Century Tamil Literature."⁴²

Even Bharati who is undoubtedly acclaimed to be the greatest exponent of Indian nationalism in Tamil could dwell upon the concept of Tamilnadu as a distinct linguistic entity with a historic past which included an overseas empire, and a historic propagation of commerce and culture in South East Asia. The concept is clothed in unmistakable terms :

"On uttering the term 'Tamilnadu', honey flows into my ears! ...
Of all languages I know, there's none sweeter than Tamil...
Of all poets I know, there's none in the world
So great as Kampan, as *Vaṭṭuvān* as *Iṭṭankō* ...
The epic, *Cilappatikāram*, shines like a precious garland
around Tamilnadu"⁴³

Nāmakkal Rāmalinkam Pillai and *Tēcika Vināyakam Pillai* who are known for Indian nationalism have also sung of Tamilnadu and Tamil culture.⁴⁴

Bharatidasan was the greatest exponent of Tamil nationalism in poetry. An entire section in his second volume of poems is devoted to "*Drāvitānāṭu*". He affirms that Tamilnadu has been hidden in India.⁴⁵ He appeals, in several poems, to the Tamil youth to rescue Tamilnadu.⁴⁶ His mentor *Periyār* E.V.R. observed the Indian Independence on 15th August 1947 to be a "mourning" day, for Tamilnadu was put under the North Indian rule. The "Independence" was only a "made over" of the country from the British to the Northerners, according to *Periyār*. Bharatidasan expressed the same idea in an allegorical poem.⁴⁷ A colt which feels joyful at being released from the (British) cart is chided by the mother-horse, as the (North Indian) bridle is choking the throat. Bharatidasan's "*Cankē Muḷanku*" is considered to be the "Nation" anthem by the "regional nationalists".

In the same way, the central core of Burns's political thought was his exploration of the Scottish predicament; he 'belonged to a nation which had lost its independence. 'Such a parcel of rogues in a nation'⁴⁸ is a powerful anti-union nationalist song. The sentiments expressed in it are the traditional antiunion ones, as voiced by the critics of the Union in 1707. The displeasure comes out in strong terms even at the opening :

'Fareweel to a' our scotish fame,
Fareweal our aecient glory,
Fareweel even to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story!

The agony expressed in the closing part of the song is equally strong :

But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold;
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

Of such songs, by far the best known is Robert Bruce's "March to Bannockburn."⁴⁹ It is in the form of Bruce's rhetorical address to his heroic followers. Whether Burns intended it to be so or not, it is a kind of national anthem, addressing the whole Scottish people. The concept of nationalism is completely fused with that of freedom. The song begins forcefully :

Scots, wha hae wi' WALLACE bled,
Scots, wham BRUCE has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed, -
Or to victorie. -

The ringing tone of the song continues till the end which is equally powerful :

By Oppression's woes and pains !
By your sons in servile chains !
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free !
Lay the proud usurper low !
Tyrants fall in every foe !
LIBERTY's in every blow !
Let us DO - OR DIE !!!

But, inspite of his sentimental love for Scotland, Burns' patriotism could never be questioned. Though he did express sympathy with the French revolutionaries and rejoiced over the capture of the Bastille, when France assumed an attitude hostile to Britain, his patriotism was in a flow at once. And his patriotism had been from his earliest years one of the strongest sentiments of his heart, not a sentiment so much as a passion. Burns was one of the battalions of volunteers raised in Dumfries, as others were elsewhere over the United Kingdom, to repel, if need were, any hostile

attack of "haughty Gaul". And, though some of the "respectables" objected to the enrolment of the bard, he soon became the most popular man in the battalion; and voluntarily became their poet-laureate.⁵⁰ His song was potent enough to stir up a spirit of defiance and self-reliance in a whole people. Some extracts may be seen :

Does haughty Gaul invasion threat,
 Then let the louns bewaure, Sir, ...
 O, let us not, like smarling tykes,
 In wrangling be devided, ...
 Be BRITAINS still to BRITAIN true,
 Amang oursels united : —
 Who will not sing, GOD SAVE THE KING
 Shall hang as high's the steeple :
 But whiie we sing, GOD SAVE THE KING
 We'll ne'er forget THE PEOPLE :⁵¹

Similar to Burns, Bharatidasan reveals his patriotism at the threat of foreign aggression. Even earlier Bharatidasan contributed much to the Indian freedom movement. This has been analysed in detail by Dr. Ira-Illavaru.⁵² Bharatidasan's patriotism glowed in full at the time of the Chinese aggression in 1962. Should an army of a neighbouring country, however idealistic that country may be, threaten to pollute the soil of a free nation by making a descent on its borders for any purpose whatever, then the heart of every patriot is up in arms. The internal differences are buried deep when one is animated by the same feeling which pervades millions of bosoms. Five of Bharatidasan's poems dealing with the Chinese aggression of India have been anthologized.⁵³ One is a clarion call to the youth to meet the challenge.⁵⁴ Another is an outburst of anger against the Chinese.⁵⁵ The third is a junxtaposition of the Chinese and the Indians on various details.⁵⁶ Yet another is a logical and historical

analysis of Indians, participation only in minor wars for a long time and it ends with an appeal to the Indians to show their valour.⁵⁷

The poet comes out in full in the remaining poem⁵⁸. This poem was written for an All India Poets' Meet in Bombay. It is a fairly long piece of 126 lines. It is in the form of a dialogue between a couple – a sort of catechism. The woman asks for the name of the country spreading between the Himalayas and Cape Kumari in the north-south, edged by the seas on the other directions. Her fiance names the land *Nāṭvalantou* (the ancient Tamil word for 'India'). He then explains how the name came and points out the prevalence of illiteracy in India. In the course of the dialogue the man speaks :

There may be many religions in India;
They may even multiply still further.
Religions are different from people;
Religions are like outer garment of people;
Look into the people covered by the garment;
They are all children of this vast mother-land.
Once you learn this, unity will be maintained;
Riots will leave for ever.
We are multi-religious;
We are multi-million.
If we say we are one-
who can foolishly advise separation?
The Heads of those religions?
NO. Are they not of gracious heart?
Nationality is a golden chariot;
Should it not move smooth? Speak.
Once we know "All are citizens
Of this Nation", the chariot can land safe.

The poem continues further. The poet warns against the divisive forces and proposes freedom and development of all

languages. Finally he stresses the importance of emotional integration "when a citizen in the Himalayas coughs, another from Kanyakumari (the other end) should rush to him with medicine. what comes to one is that comes to everybody else. The Himalayan border is rescued. Look: The Chinese shed tears of blood and run away!" After giving the ways and means of preserving the national integration the poem hails the land and comes to a conclusion.

Thus Burns as well as Bharatidasan pleaded for a political set up preserving the individual identity, based on the past history, of the region where he lived. As the poets questioned the unity of their nations, their views were considered to be "anti-national" But whenever there was a threat to the security of their nation, they rose to the occasion and stood by the rulers. Their patriotism is undoubted.

Were they simply "local" or "regional" poets? Burns and Bharatidasan, the so-called "local poets", are able to transcend their local boundaries. No doubt their writings made them the proper representatives of their native countries. That is why each of these two poets is looked upon as a prestigious symbol of his language and linguistic region. But love of one's region need not make one parochial or hamper one's interest in humanity at large. Burns and Bharatidasan have set themselves free from the narrow boundaries that limit them. They could achieve this by means of their powerful portrayal of humanity at its elemental passions, their presentation of intense love of life, their emotional expressiveness, their sincere, un-orthodox revelation of what they feel and their tremendous achievement of lyrical grandeur.

Burns and Bharatidasan reveal their love of humanity by evincing keen interest in the international affairs. In the days of Burns when there were only limited facilities for communication with distant countries, he could only know

about his neighbouring countries. He expressed his sympathy to the oppressed in France and America. Burns' career as an excise-man was in danger when an inquiry was instituted to probe his political conduct in supporting the French revolution. There were reports which state that he purchased four carronades and "sent the guns, with a letter, to the French convention, requesting that body to accept them as a mark of his admiration and respect. The present, and its accompaniment, were intercepted at the customs house at Dover."⁵⁹ Burns' "Ode (For General Washington's Birthday)"⁶⁰ is remarkable for his love of liberty and sympathy to the American struggle for freedom. "The Tree of Liberty"⁶¹ can be placed side by side with this, though some critics are doubtful of his authorship.

In a larger degree, Bharatidasan reveals his interest in the international affairs and expresses his unequivocal sympathy to the oppressed and the suffering, irrespective of the country to which they belong. He composed poems on the French Revolution,⁶² the earthquake in Quetta,⁶³ the Atomic disaster in Japan,⁶⁴ the Vietnam War,⁶⁵ the death of Lenin,⁶⁶ and Hitler's attempt to capture Russia.⁶⁷

As a consequence of their interest in the international affairs, Burns' and Bharatidasan insist on the value of man-power and human dignity. Particularly 'Burns is often remembered as a bard of 'Honest man' cult. So much does he stress on the due honour and respect to be shown to an honest man simply for his man-power. An unforgettable stanza from Burns reads ;

Is there, for honest poverty
That hings head, and a' that;
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
Fot a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that'

The rank is but the guinea's stamp,

The Man's the gowd for a' that.

The worth of a man is effectively pointed out in this highly musical set of lines. The rank of man is like the added impression on the basic metal which stands for the basic man. The rank can be attributed to any man at any time, but the rank alone cannot make a man. Therefore one need not be ashamed of being poor, enough if he is honest. Yet another highly rhythmic stanza forms almost a declaration of "honest man" cult :

A prince can mak a belted knight,

A marquis, duke, and a' that;

But an honest man's aboon his might,

Guide faith he mauna fa' that

For a' that, an a' that,

Their dignities, and a' that,

The pith o' Sense, and pride of worth

Are higher rank than a' that.⁶⁸

The strong words bear testimony to Bharatidasan's "Human Power"⁶⁹ which takes almost the same pride. The poet glorifies the "basic" man as a man and attributes all achievements to that "man-power" which can never be ignored. The poet states :

It is by the power of man - a lot

Rule over the world we see.

Trust in Human power - with

Its strength lead your life on earth! Brother.

"Humanity" is a powerful sword - Take it along

With your strong shoulders-

Even the sky will salute you - confidence

In this will brighten your life!

Bharatidasan expresses such a conviction on the triumph of "Man" and "Man-Power" that he can win the whole world, with that invincible power. He continues

So long as Man lives here - And
Undertakes actions in the world
Have you ever heard - of
Any other power greater? Tell me.
Is mankind a mere grass? - or .
A synonym for lifeless wood?
Once that lived in jungles - later
The same conquered even the sea!

This broad view of Burns and Bharatidasan should never be missed when the critical canons are applied to them. Returning to the question of Arnold's comment on Scotch drink, Scotch religion and Scotch manners in Burns' poems, Walter Raleigh could meet him on equal terms: "if he (Arnold) added, as in fairness he should have added that it (Burns' poetry) deals with Scotch love, the fallacy would, have been apparent".⁷⁰ Walter Raleigh's emphasis is that Burns treats in his poems themes that are beyond regionalism. Burns' appearance as a regionalist is only up to a certain point. Love is, for example, not restricted to a particular region. it is a universal phenomenon. So when Burns, as well as Bharatidasan deals with several themes, felt, experienced, and imagined by people all over the world - such as love, family life, humanism, and patriotism they come very close to any man or woman of that mood.

Burns and Bharatidasan, though enthusiastic about their region and language, never lack an eye to see and a heart to feel. They speak to all men everywhere; they speak for others. What Burns or Bharatidasan thinks and feels millions all over the world think and feel sometime or other in their lives; but he says more than they do and says it more brilliantly too. Such a poet is the voice of a million inarticulate hearts.

Their love of humanity at large appears in yet another recurrent theme in both of these poets: Universal brotherhood.

A pair of lines by Burns is oft-quoted in this regard:

That Man to Man the World O'er
Shall brothers be for a' that.⁷¹

This conception occurs in the title, "Epistle to Davie, a Brother poet"⁷² and a job-seeking poor man is referred to as one "who begs a brother of the earth to give him a toil" in "Man was made to Mown, A Dirge."⁷³ Examples are numerous.

Bharatidasan is equally interest in an all embracing brotherhood. His "*cahōtaratvam*" (Fraternity)⁷⁴ sings of equality and fraternity in emphatic terms. There are many poems by Bharatidasan addressed to elder brother or younger brother. A tone of intimacy and equality is such maintained in poems. This way of address does not restrict his audience. Instead it proves that he considers everyone his brother. Sociableness and fellow-feeling go with such a brotherhood. Community living on equal terms is the usual ending of almost all the story poems of Bharatidasan.

In this regard, Burns' "Love and Liberty-A Cantata" (The Jolly Beggars) ⁷⁵ has attracted the attention of modern scholarship. It is not a mere Bacchanalian gathering of worthless individuals, as it appears to be. It is a mark of much-needed sociableness among men of all strata. There is presented a cross-section of the society. David Daiches remarks that the poem appeals to "humanity's 'unofficial self' (to employ the useful phrase coined by George Orwell) to a degree extremely rare in literature."⁷⁶ Labourers and small farmers dreamed their inevitable dreams of irresponsible freedom, in which beggar and crime seemed preferable to eternal struggle to make both ends meet. To sympathize with such outcasts and to make them the theme of poems demands a daring. Burns is known for that daring. This poem was an outcome of his personal experiences in an inn.

On the other hand, Bharatidasan visualizes an ideal world along the lines of traditional Tamil concept. "Every place is my place and every one is my kin" is an expression by Kaniyan *Pūṅkunṇāṇār* in the Cankam Age. That tradition has been followed by almost all great Tamil poets. It is no wonder that Bharatidasan has written a number of poems, treating world as a family. "Ulakam Unnuyir, Unnuyir 'Ulakam'"⁷⁷ (The world is your life and your life is the world) "*Ulakappan Pāṭṭu*"⁷⁸ (The song of world - man), *Ulakam Unnutaṭaiyatu*⁷⁹ (The world is yours), "*Ulaka Orrumai*"⁸⁰ (The world Unity) and "Putiya Ulaku Ceyvūm"⁸¹ (Let us make a New world) are some of the most remarkable among them.

"Ulakam Unnuyir, Unnuyir Ulakam" conveys the idea of Kaniyan *Pūṅkunṇāṇār*. "*Ulakappan Pāṭṭu*" centres round the allegorical concept of the world as the macrocosm of man. There is a violent advocacy for an egalitarian society. "*Ulakam Unnutaṭaiyatu*" preaches "one world" idea very clearly. The wall that divides one house from another should be pulled down. So too the divisions between a street and another, and ultimately even the national boundaries should be done with. The poet says: "All human beings are born with you-your own race. Join them. Immerse yourself into the sea of humanity. Call yourself a part of the Human sea. Let there be no inequality. Eat when the world eats. Dress yourself making the entire world get dressed. I tell you: possession is common to all."

"*Ulaka Orrumai*" condemns parochialism. Chauvinism is categorized into three: the selfish narrow-mindedness confining to one's own family; the parochialism praising one's native town; and military 'chauvinism' going on a war to defeat another nation. Bharatidasan compares the minds of the three types of persons with mustard seed, pigeon-pea and a dried leaf-cup. The poet glorifies only a broad mind which encompasses the entire human race. He calls it, "the

pure heart, the loving heart and the motherly heart treating all alike".

'Putiya Ulaku Ceyvōm' reads:

Come let us a new world create
 Uprooting this wicked, war-hating world
 And communism in all directions propagate
 Holding it sacred to us, dear and great.
 Let us soak our hearts, in the stream of love, not hate
 And fight possessive thoughts which life stagnate
 Let us all our energies recuperate
 And laugh at private ownership as out- of- date
 Starvation is only when Nature fails to operate ;
 Otherwise everyone will eat and relish.⁸²

In these lines, Bharatidasan has summarized almost all the preachings of noble thinkers. It is a far-sight into the future of the world, an ideal world of tomorrow. It is obvious that Bharatidasan raises himself to idealistic principles. So did Burns with the limitations laid down by his age.

The national individuality of Burns' world was not an obstacle to his international fame ; on the contrary, Lafargue witnesses that he was among the favourite poets of Karl Marx.⁸³ He is well-enough to be quoted in Japanese works not dealing specifically with literature. For example, Hosui Muto quoted "Nae man can tether time nor tide" from "Tam O' Shanter" in a work entitled *Human Economics* (1902).⁸⁴ The same can be said of Bharatidasan. The only difficulty is the lack of translation of his works. So far, some of his works have been translated into French, Russian, Slavic, Hindi and Telugu. Only a very few short poems have been translated into English. The remarks of Dr. Kamil zvelebil, the reputed Czech Scholar show great promise : "Your (Bharatidasan's) work is undoubtedly the peak of Tamil Lyrical poetry in the first half of our century"⁸⁵.

Therefore Burns and Bharatidasan are to be seen on a higher plane. Lowell called Burns, "a citizen of a country of which we are all citizens, that country of the heart which has not boundaries laid down on the map".⁸⁶ So too is Bharatidasan. In Lowellian reckoning, both Burns and Bharatidasan are - "citizens of the World".

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8. *Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ*, 2. 93
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11. *Bharatidasan, Panmaṇi-t-tiraḷ*. Madras: Muttamiḷ-c-celvi Achakam, 1964. 106
12. There are two songs with the same caption, "Scottish Song."

13. *Vēttuva Vari*. 48
14. His poetic preface to his father Villiputtūrār's poetic rendering of Mahabharata into Tamil, known as *Villipparatam* is elaborately dealt within in an article found in M. Raghava Iyengar's *Ilakkiya-k-Katturaikaḷ*, Raghava Iyengar: 1952
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16. Perhaps he got this idea from "*Vantē Mātaram*". His three songs have this title. The poems and songs below deal with this idea; "*Pārata Mātā*;" "*Enkaḷ Tāi*;" "*Veri Koṇṭa Tāi*;" *Pārata Mātā Tiruppaḷḷi* Iḷṭucci; "*Pārata Mātā Navarattina Malai*;" *Tāyin Maṇikkoti*. (Mahakavi Bharatiyar Kavitaikaḷ. Madras: Sakthi Kāriyalayam. 17-36
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32. Panmaṇi-t-tiraḷ. 279-80. It is interesting to note that the food that the poet talks of here was only vegetarian. Bharatidasan, who was widely known to have a preference for non-vegetarian food, here praises a simple vegetarian "Tamil food."
33. Such poems are found in Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ 2 & 4, Tēnaruvi, panmaṇi-t-tiraḷ and Icaiyamutu, 2.
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THE THEME OF EXILE IN BYRON AND BHARATIDASAN - A STUDY

Dr. M. D. JAYABALAN,

The theme of exile in literature takes many forms. Harry Levin in his admirable essay on 'Literature and Exile' discusses the problem at great length, giving a panoramic view of the literary exiles down the ages. The term 'exile', figuratively used, begins to include all kinds of separation, real and imaginary, physical and mental.

If exile was wilful and real with Byron, it was conceptually so in the case of Bharatidasan. Unlike Byron who lived abroad the major part of his creatively productive years, and died there, Bharatidasan was a sweet-stay-home; and in that sense he cannot be called an exile. But he was a cultural exile with nostalgic feelings for the ancient, native Tamil culture and way of life from which he as well as the contemporary Tamils had been exiled.

Aryanization of the Tamil society was a cause for the downfall or even gradual loss of the native culture. Bharatidasan felt himself an exile in his own native land, even as "Poe - by Baudelaire's interpretation - was a foreigner in

his own country, wholly alienated from a culture which was rapidly becoming one vast counting-house."²

Bharatidasan grieved that the Tamils were not living their own cultural life. The identity of the primordial Tamil culture was on the wane ever since it came into collision with another powerful culture, namely the Aryan.

The unearthing of the Cangam literature in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century corroborated such a contention. Harking back to the early Tamil literature, Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaram (1901-1980) remarks :

The discovery of Cangam literature, so very different from late Tamil literature, made the younger generation of Tamilians proud of their past. The publication of the inscriptions still further made them conscious of the glory of their heritage, which in turn inspired them with a great hope for their future. This made the present condition of their country, where they were second class citizens, much more poignant.....

In this context, the Self-Respect Movement headed by *Periyār* E.V. Ramasamy encouraged the militant Tamils to identify themselves as a distinct race i.e. Dravidians. In addition, the archeological findings at Harappa and Mohenjodara provided scope for the belief that the original inhabitants could have been Dravidians. Though it remains an unresolved question in history whether the Harappans were Dravidians or not, the Tamils of the present believed it to be so. This surmise further strengthened their belief that the Dravidians had all along suffered under the Aryans, right from the Vedic times to this day. The descendants of the Aryans were the Brahmins who occupied the highest rank in the social ladder, and have been directly or indirectly responsible for the perpetration of '*Varnāśrama Dharmā*' (casteistic division of society into four classes). The redressal of the situation seemed to lie in de-Aryanization.

In support of the argument it may be pointed out that the secular nature of the Cangam literature was superseded by myths and *purāṇas*, under the patronage of Brahmins. An unintelligible phenomenon in the history of Tamil literature is that myths began to gain literary status as late as the tenth century, whereas in any literature it might only be natural to expect them in the early years of its growth. Scholars do not seem to have investigated this point and given a reasonable answer.

An expatriate to his indigenous culture, Bharatidasan grappled with the problem and tried to evoke and bring home the glory of ancient Tamil life; hence, his all too pervasive adoration of Kings of the past who patronised the Tamil poets and nurtured the language; and so is his love of language. This attitude exercised a lasting influence on his writings; and his determination to write only secular poems after the year 1925 is directly attributable to it.

Until the discovery of the poetry of the Cangam Age Bharatidasan was not aware of certain facts about the glory of Tamil; and, therefore, neither the sense of his being a cultural exile nor the longing to recapture the spirit of the ancient Tamil mode of life did present itself to him.

With Byron, however, the idea of conceiving of himself as an exile occurred to him even as early as his continental tour in July 1809, and he is delighted to style his hero of the pilgrimage, Childe Harold as "self-exiled".⁴ when Byron cast off the thin veil that had separated him from the Childe, and soon after his return to London in 1811, when he was lionized by the London society following the publication of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (Cantos I & II in March 1812) that made him famous overnight, he did not foresee that he was again to bid adieu to England in 1816. He was, this time, hastened out of England by social ostracism

that trailed behind the controversy over his separation from his wife Anne Isabella. During both the times when he was away from England, nostalgia was under-current in his thoughts, though he wore before the public the mask of Anglophobia. Harry Levin opines that Byron might have confessed as the home-coming Cowper did "England, with all thy faults I love thee still"; and the more Byron renounced England, the more English he seemed in spite of his frequent temptations to belong to other nations.⁵

Byron's self-consciousness of his own position as a self-exile enabled him to sympathize with earlier exiles—both literary and political—such as Tasso and Dante. He was naturally drawn to them, and, therefore, wrote *The Lament of Tasso* and *The Prophecy of Dante*; certain characters in his poems and plays also owe their origin to the same feeling.

Besides Childe Harold, Manfred, the eponymous hero, is remarkable in that he elects to exile himself from the haunting memories of some mysterious crime and inexpiable guilt, by seeking oblivion.

Don Juan, "shipped off from Cadiz" by his mother, is himself another proscrip-t. Fortune tosses him from place to place, throws him from person to person, but never brings him back to his native land; nor had Byron any plan to bring him home. Werner was the outlawed son of Count Siegendorf who lives for long in hiding before he returns to power. The Two Foscari offers the wonderful instance of Jacopo Foscari, twice exiled for venality and for complicity in murder, being brought back from exile on a charge of treasonable correspondence, only to be sentenced to third and perpetual exile. He dies of grief at the dreadful thought of having to leave Venice for which he had intense love.

Excommunication is the punishment 'Mazeppa' suffers when his intrigue with the wife of a local magnate is detected; he is bound naked on the back of a wild horse of Ukraine, which was then loosened and lashed into madness.

Pirates are, in a sense, exiles from society, and they live in seclusion. They are the central characters of *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, and *Lara*. Selim, cousin of bride of Abydos, is shown in the end to be a pirate chief. Conrad, the corsair, a man of many vices and one virtue, is again a pirate chief living in an island. Lara is his alter-ego.

The archetypes of expatriation are Adam and Eve. Themselves the earliest of exiles, they were soon to banish their firstborn son Cain. Eve perceives the parallel situation — perhaps, the irony, too — when she heaps all the curses on Cain in the end: "May all the curses/Of life be on him: and his agonies/Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us. From Eden,..." (*Cain* III. i. 421-24). Adah, Cain's sister and wife, chooses to "divide thy burthen with thee", and go with him a self-exile. *Heaven and Earth* treats of the ironical marriage between the sons of God and the grand 'daughters of Cain', who were banished from God's grace. The angels themselves decide to flee God's Kingdom.

The list of exiles from Byron is complemented by a similar list from Bharatidasan. The two great epics of the Indian classics, namely the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* offer to the Indian readers the archetypes of political exiles: the *Pāṇḍavas* driven away to the forests by their cousins, the *Kauravās*; and Rama banished from his country, unfortunately by his own father, to go into the forest for fourteen years. But they do not seem to have had any appreciable influence on Bharatidasan in his portrayal of exiles, as they had on other Indian writers. *Virattāi* (The Brave Mother) presents to us an instance of political exiles. *Kāṅkēyan*, the General of the Armed Forces, contrives to keep the King of Manipuri

shut up in a secret place, and separates the boy prince Sudarman from his parents, thus denying him the advantages of nurture, relegating him to nature's care; Queen Vijayā leaves the court and goes to the forest under constraint.

But for this single instance, in most other cases banishments are shown to occur on sociological grounds. In *Kāṭalmēḷ kumīḷikaḷ* (Bubbles on the ocean), the love between *Semmaḷttirai* (The King's natural brother) and Ponni (King's sister-in-law) and between Vaiyattirai (King's son) and *Minnoḷi* (a flower-vendor's daughter) is vehemently objected to by the King on account of incompatibility. Ponni and Vaiyattirai are incarcerated for ever, while *Semmaḷttirai* is turned out of doors.

Such banishment from heart underlies *Etirpārātamottam* (The unexpected kiss). The feud between the two families of the lovers *Ponmuṭi* and *Pūnkōtai* would not allow them to marry. *Ponmuṭi* is sent to North India on business with other pearl merchants. *Pūnkōtai* is kept indoors. She, however, makes good her escape and goes after *Ponmuṭi* in hope of joining him. When she finally meets him and kisses him, he falls dead, slain. If exile is indirectly imposed on *Ponmuṭi* it is voluntary with *Pūnkōtai*. The death of the lovers alone helps to reconcile the two families even as the death of Romeo and Juliet ends the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets.

Kuppamma of *Tamiḷacciyin Katti* (The sword of a Tamil woman) suffers banishment from heart when her husband Timman is cunningly snatched away from her. Similar banishment occurs twice in *Kaṇṇaki purāṭcikkāppiyam* (Kaṇṇaki, a Revolutionary Epic) a work modelled on *Cilappatikāram* of Ilankō: first, when Kōvalan leaves his wife Kaṇṇaki to herself and begins to live with Mātavi, a courtesan; and again, when he deserts Mātavi and returns to Kaṇṇaki, to soon become a self-exile when he decides to leave for

he neighbouring Pāndya kingdom in the hope of starting a business. Like Byron's Adah, Kaṇṇaki chooses to go with him an exile from her relations and country.

Mātavi's daughter Manimēkalai, the protagonist of Bharatidasan's *Maṇimēkalai Veṇṇpā* (quartrains on Maṇimēkalai) are-rendering of Cattanar's *Maṇimēkalai*, exiles herself from her youth and the attendant joys and sorrows, and remains an exile in her home town.

Self-exile might also take the form of 'yaṭakkiruttal, -literally sitting facing the north (the direction being usually associated with the land of death and the Kingdom of Yama) -an ancient mode of fasting unto death, after severing all types of relation with mundane world. Growing discontent with his son's behaviour, kōpperuñcōlan renounces the world and seats himself in the northern side of the town to die of starvation, despite the plea of every one around not to persist. A voluntary exile is *Picirāntaiyār* who joins the starving king and dies with him. To highlight the strong friendship between two persons who had never met in life is the theme of *Picirāntaiyār*. Both the king and the poet were historical personages who lived about nineteen centuries ago, in the Cangam Age.

Bharatidasan's sense of being a cultural exile was accentuated, time and again, by the policy of the Indian Government to introduce Hindi as the official language of India. He regarded it as an initial step towards undermining the very foundation of Tamil culture, since it would relegate Tamil language to a secondary place. The language of a people is their very breath; and any attempt to tamper with it arouses their resentment. Bharatidasan's involvement in the anti-Hindi agitations, and his songs on the subject are the direct expressions of a mind, pining over the neglect of Tamil, and its cultural heritage. In the multi-lingual context of Indian politics, a sense of urgency and immediacy worked

to elicit from him the largest number of poems stressing his allegiance to Tamil, as perhaps it did not do so with any other Indian poet.

A part of Bharatidasan's attempt to lead the Tamils back to their paradisaical past is to glorify the past and the poets—men of his own calling. A similar tendency may be seen to be operative in Byron, too. Byron languished over the relegation of the Greeks and their culture under the Ottoman overlordship. The sympathy for the cultural exiles like the Greeks and for the Italians who had fallen from their ancient glory, drew forth from Byron a number of poems. *The Prophecy of Dante*, besides singing of the exile, remains a political poem with Dante as a symbol of liberty appealing to the new Italy to throw off the Bourbon yoke. The prophecy of Dante and *The Lament of Tasso* are in the spirit of idealizing poets. Tasso, the Italian poet of the sixteenth century, confined in the hospital of St. Anna with imputed madness, could recall in his prisoned solitude his princess and assert the indomitability of the mind, even as Dante declares it in the line: "They made an exile—not a slave of me".⁶

The ultimate question now arises: What do Byron and Bharatidasan try to drive home to the readers through the treatment of the theme of exile? They could recognise that there are a few individuals and groups of people widely at variance with the social and political norms accepted by their respective societies. The poets need not be construed to be championing the cause of the outcast, but that they are attempting to focus the attention of the society to the existence of such people, thereby, opening the eyes of the society to the foibles and lapses not only of the outcast but also of the society itself. If the society could become self-analytical and critical, then, perhaps, the outsiders could find accommodation in the society.

Byron and Bharatidasan present to us the problem of the exile by idealising the past and the poets of the past. They have expatiated on political and social exiles. In addition to the literal use and figurative extension of the theme of exile, Bharatidasan is distinctly different from Byron in identifying language as the highest expression of culture and store-house of human values; hence his zeal to restore Tamil to its glorious position. The theme of exile, with its implication of the loss of one's rights and separation from the loved ones, is evocative of pathos, and it is exploited by Byron and Bharatidasan to establish an easy rapport with the readers in presenting their arguments.

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BHARATIDASAN'S 'REVOLUTIONARY POET' AND BILHAṆA'S LEGEND

Dr. C. KANAKASABAPATHY

Bharatīdaśan's 'Revolutionary poet' does not have an exordium from which we can find out the source of the narrative poem. From a passing introductory remark we know the source 'Bilhaṇīyam', a Sanskrit work, is the original work from which 'Revolutionary poet' has been adapted.

In this note which seems to have been written by Bharatīdaśan himself it is mentioned that 'Revolutionary poet' is an adaptation of the original Sanskrit work.² But the name of the original Sanskrit work known as 'Caurapancasika' presumably written by the Kashmiri poet Bilhaṇa in the eleventh century is not mentioned in the short note. The name of the Sanskrit work is not 'Bilhaṇīyam' in the Sanskrit language. 'Bilhaṇīyam' is the Tamilized form of the name of the work. The author's name has been written with the Tamil suffix 'eeyam'.

Since the original Sanskrit name of the poem is not referred to in the note it can be understood that Bharatīdaśan might not have read the original Sanskrit poem him-

self. The Tamil poet might have come across the story of the love song in hearsay.

The English writer Gertrude Clorius Schwebell who has translated the Kashmiri song of Bilhana says in his foreword that there are several versions of the original Kashmiri love song and that the South Indian recensions, especially, are quite different.³ Bharatidasan should have heard the South Indian recension orally.

During the time of the Maṇikōṭi Short Story writers the oral recension of the story of Bilhana was prevalent in Tamil Nadu. This is evident from the short drama about the legend of poet Bilhaṇa written by Putumaippittan. Later on the story of the Tamil film 'Bilhaṇan' was based on the oral legend of Bilhaṇa. No manuscript is available now to prove the existence of the legend on Bilhaṇa in a Tamil version.

Only Bharatidasan wrote a narrative poem on the life of Bilhaṇa. His is not a translation of Bilhaṇa's work entitled 'Caurapancasika'. In his narrative poem he has not ventured even to make the poet Bilhaṇa recite the same love poem just before the time of his facing the gallows.

The English translator observes in the foreword that there are legends, obviously based on the contents of the poem, namely 'Caurapancasika'. Bharatidasan's narrative poem is based only on the story part of the legend and not on the fifty love poems of Bilhaṇa.

According to the legends found in the Northern and Southern parts of India Bilhaṇa was a poet who in love with the daughter of a king. It was found out and he was condemned to death by the king. This love trend is a common feature in all the different versions.

The Northern legend has it that Bilhaṇa was a Brahman poet. It further states that Bilhaṇa wrote his love poem in prison. The English translator says that this is not found in the Southern version.

The South Indian recension has a happy ending whereas the North Indian legend ends with the death of the poet. There are scholars who argue that the poem has an open end, leaving the rest to the imagination of the readers. They suggest that the poet was sentenced to death.⁴ In the end Bharatidasan follows the Southern version.

Even among the South Indian recensions there are dissimilarities. According to one legend, Bilhaṇa sang his fifty love poems to the hangman and immediately the hangman went to see the king and recited to him the love songs of the poet. When the king heard about the love of this daughter for the poet he forgave Bilhaṇa and gave him his daughter in marriage.⁵ According to another version, the king himself overheard the love songs of the poet and so he was very happy and he arranged for the marriage of the lovers.⁶

Though Bharatidasan brings out the happy ending in the narrative poem he adds to it the theme of revolution of the people that broke out in the kingdom and that the king abdicated his throne, paving the way for a republic. Moreover the love between Bilhaṇa and the princess was cherished by the people.

Another point of departure from the North Indian recensions is found. The poet is said to belong to Kashmir. Bharatidasan changes the birth place of the poet to TamilNadu and makes him a Tamil poet.⁴ He does not mention the name of Bilhaṇa in any place of his poem. He changes the poet's name into Uthāran. Likewise he calls the princess

Amṭavalli instead of Yamini Purnatilaka. The king is not given any name by the Tamil poet. The name of the king in the Northern legend is Madanabhirama.⁸

The English translators have confessed that they found some words and meanings pertaining to the Indian conception of female beauty to be untranslatable.⁹ For example, the descriptions such as 'a line of thin hair across the nose', 'the princess' mouth filled with camphor and betel and 'her body bent under the burden of heavy breasts and bulging hips' have been translated freely by the European translators. Bharatidasan ignores such descriptions of female beauty since he does not want to make his poems sensual.

The English translator remarks that the European scholars followed the mode of European romanticism in their translations and embellishments of Bilhaṇa's 'Caurapancasika'.¹⁰ Indeed Bharatidasan has sublimated all these in his narrative with his idealised conception of romanticism.

The North Indian recensions show that Bilhaṇa is a Brahman. In those recensions there never appears any rift between the 'Varṇas' of the King and the poet. Only the King's writ runs and so he becomes an irate father.

The delightful legend about the poet Bilhaṇa runs like this :

'Bilhaṇa was a grammarian, born to Jyeshthakalasha and Nagadevi. He was born in Kashmir. He completed his education in grammar and poetics. While on a pilgrimage in South India, he was honoured with the office of Vidyapathi by the Chalukya King Vikramaditya VI Tribuvanamalla (1076-1127). He was received at the court of King Krishna of Dahala and he spent some time in the court of Karnadeva of Anhilvad.¹¹

From this biographical note it is evident that the poet Bilhaya's life has been associated with South Indian courts and thereby it has been popular as a legend in many parts of South India.

The reliable legend about the poems gathered from the distinct recension is as follows :

'Bilhaya fell in love with his pupil, the princess and was found out and condemned to death. On his way to the gallows he recollected the tender episodes of stolen pleasure, of quarrel and reconciliation, of intense yearning and deep realisation. Moved by the sincerity of love, the king relents and the lovers unite'.¹²

This legend of Bilhana was adapted by Bharatidasan in his narrative poem called 'Revolutionary Poet' with an alteration at the end.

In the oral legend of Bilhaya it is said that the princess is the pupil of the poet. This is adapted by Bharatidasan in his narrative poem.

Bilhaya was identified by the oral recitors as the hero of the legend. He is also said to be the author of the poem called Caurapanchasika known as 'The Thief's Fifty Stanzas'. The poet stole the love of the princess and composed the fifty erotic stanzas, each beginning with the words 'Even now I remember', in which he describes with intense ardour the joys of love he experienced.¹³

This part of the legend is also followed by Bharatidasan in his narrative poem.

In the fifty four stanzas of the poet Bilhaya there are references to the incidents of love experience between the poet and the princess.

way to Republics. The French Revolution initiated this kind of change. The legend of Bilhana might have been viewed as a revolution in the nineteenth century. Hence the popularity of the story of Bilhana in India.

The North Indian recensions of the legend of Bilhana depict the king as the most powerful person and the Brahman as a weakling. This explains the nature of punishment given by the king to Bilhana. The South Indian recensions portray the king as a person, belonging to the highest varṇa and the poet to the lowest. Bharatidasan has followed the South Indian recensions and has come forward to expose the traditional antagonism between the king and the poet, belonging to the highest and the lowest varṇas. His admiration for the French Revolution and his reformist ideas about the uplift of the people belonging to the lowest varṇa in the context of rationalism are the primary causes for the creation of his narrative poem entitled 'Revolutionary Poet'. Thus Bharatidasan has added on the theme of revolution to a traditional love poem.

Keith has mentioned the following agreement between the Kashmir and South Indian versions :

'The poem is asserted to have been composed to record a secret intrigue with a princess. Discovered by the king, the poet was sentenced to death and led out for the purpose, but his recitation of the glowing verses, in which he called to his memory for the last time the joys of their secret union, induced the king to relent and permit Bilhana's marriage to the princess.¹⁸ Thus far there is agreement.'

This interpretation of Keith seems to be contrary to that of the other European scholars. The Southern version of the legend of Bilhana is quite different from Keith's interpretation.

So we cannot come to the conclusion that there is agreement between the Kashmir and South Indian versions.

The commentator Rama Tatkavagica insists that the poem is an appeal by the prince Sundara of Caurapalli when condemned to death by Virasinha for his intrigue with Vidya.¹⁹ According to this version of the legend there arises no difference between the King and the poet as they belong to the same Royal varṇa.

The commentator also refers to another version of the legend. Bilhaṇa made no claim to royal intrigues. He portrayed the love of a robber chief and a princess, placing the robber in a delicate situation, which is similar to his own himself. The poem makes it clear that the heroine was a princess and refers to the poet's hour of death.²⁰ This version is dissimilar to that of the South Indian legend.

There is another version which treats the poet as a *Kashmīrian* who lived in a Southern court.²¹ Though this version is different from that in the Southern India there is a possibility to think that Bilhaṇa has been gradually associated with the Southern area and also with the royal courts in the Southern Kingdom.

The characterization of the princess as an emancipated woman is the unique portrayal of Bharatidasan. *Amuṭavalli* revolted against the king's order of punishment to Bilhaṇa. So she was also sentenced to death along with the poet. This revolutionary feminist portrayal of the princess cannot be considered as the comparative technique of adaptation, but belongs to that of originality.

By comparing the various recensions of Bilhaṇa legend we come to conclude that Bharatidasan's 'Revolutionary Poet' possesses the elegance and power of original creation.

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BHARATIDASAN AS A ROMANTIC POET

Prof. S. N. KANDASWAMY

Introduction

This paper attempts to bring forth the romantic aspects of the poems of Bharatidasan in the light of the principles, evolved from the poems of Western Romantic poets. Before proceeding to deal with the subject, a brief sketch of the early phase of the poet's literary career is presented in order to apprehend the background of his steady growth as a Revolutionary and Romantic poet.

Evolution of the Poetic career

The poet's real name is Kanaka Subburatinam. He was born on 29-4-1891 in Pondicherry to the parents Kanakasaba Mudaliar and Lakshmi Ammaiyar. His father was a rich merchant and was religious - minded. His elder brother Subbarayan was good in astrology. But Bharatidasan studied Tamil out of interest and stood first in the Pulavar examination held in his state, at the young age of seventeen. He commenced his career as a Tamil teacher in French India. His poetic talent was fashioned by two great movements.

one at the national level and the other at the regional level.

The Indian National Movement under the dynamic guidance of great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, tired for the independence of India from the shackles of foreign rule. Mahakavi Subramanya Bhāratīyār plunged into the freedom struggle with all vigour, aroused the patriotic fervour (-which was dormant in the minds of the masses and also the elite), with his powerful poems on national themes and finally was forced to take asylum in the French territory of Pondicherry where the British rule could not penetrate. It so happened that Subburatinam at the age of eighteen (1908) was introduced to Bharati in a marriage function of Venunayagar family, after he recited some of Bharati's poems in a melodious voice. At the behest of Bharati, he spontaneously brought out two emotional and devotional poems on the Divine Mother Shakti, commencing with "எங்கெங்கும் காணினும் சக்தியடா!" (-Wherever you behold you witness the presence of Divine Mother)¹. The audience including Bharati was spellbound, admiring the creative genius of the budding poet. With a view to popularize his poetic skill, Bharati himself took the initiative of sending these songs to the then largely circulated Tamil daily, Swadesamitran at Madras, with the note that these were composed by Kanaka Subburatinam of the Literary Circle of Subramanya Bharati. Thus the close relationship between these two poets was stabilized. Out of devotion, Kanaka Subburatinam called himself Bharatidasan (-the disciple of Bharati) as a mark of respect to his literary mentor, who himself styled as Shelleydasan, as a token of high regard to the English Romantic poet. With regard to Bharati, he is not remembered by his pen-name. Whereas Bharatidasan is remembered only by his pen-name.

Subburatinam who was by nature pious, composed lyrics on the Tamil God Muruga the presiding deity at Mayilam,

These devotional lyrics were subsequently published in the collection under the title, "ஸ்ரீ மயிலம் சுப்பிரமணியர், துதியமுது" (1925). These songs bear ample testimony to his poetic calibre in composing songs known as *Kirttanai* and *Cintu* which were models for the successors. Even in this devotional book, there is one song seeking the grace of Muruga for the liberation of India.

Due to the influence of the Indian National Movement and the association of Mahakavi Bharati, Bharatidasan composed many a patriotic poem to generate National awakening. The National leaders discarded the foreign goods and pleaded with the people to buy the locally made products. The songs of Bharatidasan on such themes were published in small booklets under the titles, "சிறுவர் சிறுமியர் தேசிய கீதம்", "கதர் இராட்டினப்பாட்டு", etc. and they gained popularity. His patriotic fervour was so intense as to make him carry the Kadhi cloth on his shoulders hawking in the streets of Pondicherry.

The advent of the Self-Respect Movement, founded by Periyar E.V.R. effected a remarkable change in the mental outlook of Bharatidasan. Though Tantai *Periyār* was initially a staunch supporter of the National Movement, he could not bear the discrimination among various castes, exhibited by the learned members of the same organisation. The incident at the Gurukulam of V.V.S. Aiyar separating the Brahmin students from others was well-known. This shocking incident provoked the feeling of E.V.R. and some of his colleagues and resulted in the formation of the Self-Respect Movement which in course of time was identified with the Dravidian Movement, protesting against the supremacy and dominance of the so-called privileged upper class. The main objectives of this social revolutionary movement were to eradicate the caste system, to establish social equality, to reject totally the authority of the Vedic institutions, to

repudiate the traditional beliefs and superstitions and to regain the lost glory of the Tamils. These revolting ideas made an indelible mark in the mind of the young poet Bharatidasan who felt the urgent necessity to toil for the social and economic freedom of the Tamils, rather than to work for the Indian liberation from the yoke of the British rule.

His association with Tantai *Periyār* effected a turning point in the literary career of the poet. Nevertheless, Bharatidasan remained throughout his life to be a faithful disciple of Bharati, the National Poet though he differed in many respects from his mentor. Bharatidasan subsequently became anti-Vedic and championed the cause of the Dravidians, detaching from the main stream in order to secure a right place for them. That does not mean that he was shortsighted and parochial. There are poems which reveal his expanded vision and intense humanism that embrace the whole of human kind as fellow-brothren. He was also influenced by the Communist ideologies, because of his political mentor Tantai *Periyār* who visited Russia and brought with him fresh thought.² One more force that shaped his thought has been the Pure Tamil Movement organized by the great scholar-cum reformist *Maṟaimalai Aṭikal* who worked for the revival of Tamil culture and strongly advocated to eschew Sanskrit words and to use only pure Tamil words both in speech and writing. His influence on the poet is noticed clearly in his poetic work, '*Tamiṟiyakkam*'. He has dedicated a part of *Kuṭumpa Viṟakku* to the Tamil savant as a mark of respect.

The Epoch of the Poet

The first volume of his poems was released in 1938 and received the appreciation of not only the members of the Dravidian Movement but by many of the orthodox and

traditional scholars and pundits, creating an excitement and making a landmark in the history of Tamil poetry. Yet, in some quarters, the poet had to face criticism and objection. However his contribution to the Modern Tamil literature is considerable and commendable. The other anthologies of his poems and literary creations such as *Kuṭumpa Viṭakku*, *Etirpārāta Muttam*, *Tamiḷācciyin katti*, *Pāṇṭiyan Paricu*, *Tamiḷiyakam* etc., are highly regarded as vital contribution to the enrichment of Tamil. His original poems on Nature found in the book *Aṭakiṇ Cirippu* possess permanent poetic value, deserving a supreme place among the world literature on the subject.

Bharatidasan is not only a poet but a great musician and musicologist. His musical compositions on social themes especially found in the collections entitled "*Icai Amutu*" are the best specimens of the modern Tamil music. His dramatic works such as *Irāṇiyan Allatu Inaiyarru Vīraṇ*, *Picirāntaiyār*, etc., bear enough evidence for his creative genius in the domain of drama. His contributions to the field of film require special mention. His prose writings in the journals and his commentary on *Tirukkuraḷ* are models for modern Tamil prose. As a journalist, his poetic magazine 'Kuyil' was very popular as a medium of propaganda and also as a nursery for the young poets. His multi-faceted contribution to the progress of Modern Tamil literature has been admired and appreciated by the literary historians. From the biography written by his son, Thiru. Mannar Mannan, we come to understand that the poet [was also a good painter-artist.

After the advent of Bharatidasan, we witness a fresh literary period which may be rightly called "the Epoch of Bharatidasan". Hundreds of poets both budding and blossomed were inspired and influenced by him. They imitated his style and expression, imbibed his ideas and principles and

echoed his voice.³ They constituted a separate and unique poetic school of Bharatidasan. Even the platform orators, social reformists and active members of the regional political parties profusely quoted his potential poems to awaken and to arouse the socially retarded and politically ignored Tamils. They hurled the poems against the social upheavals.

The tone and texture of poems of Bharatidasan considerably vary not only from the traditional poems of the by-gone poets, but also from those of his contemporary versifiers. In various respects, his poems are unique and marvellous. The themes, diction, style, language, the techniques of expression, imagination, emotional aspect and other poetic devices are fresh and original. They furnish to a larger extent the requirements of what in the west is called the Romantic poetry.

Among the literary movements that shaped the structure and substance of the English literature, the Romantic movement has been considered very significant. Some of the general aspects of this literary movement are being outlined, so that the application of the principles to the poems of Bharatidasan may be viable.

The Romantic Movement

The word 'romance' being a derivative of the Old French word 'romanz' originally meant "the speech of the people" or "the vulgar tongue" in contrast with the written form of literary Greek or Latin.⁴ The word, 'romantic' has been used in the sense of 'adventurous, emotional, or fanciful'. In its extension of meaning it denoted the literary movement and its advocates characterized by some special features.⁵

Prior to the advent of the Romantic movement, Neoclassicism was dominant among the writers of the 17th century Europe. They were guided by the principles as

enunciated by the classical scholars Aristotle, Horace, Quintilian and Longinus. But, the Romantics were of revolutionary character. They did not accept the orthodox way of thinking and dogmatic views. They never cared for the established rules.

They were free birds. They added importance to the creative power of imagination and forcible expression of emotion. They treated nature to be the manifestation of the Almighty. With the help of imagination, they were able to realise the ultimate reality.

Romanticism supplanted the old narrow intellectual attitude and visualized a wider outlook which recognized the claims of passion and emotion and the sense of mystery in life, and in which the critical was replaced by the creative spirit, and wit by humour and pathos.⁶ The romantic poets had expanded vision and presented the mysteries of life in a passionate language and delineated the aspects of life with a sense of humour and sympathetic touch.

French Revolution-the background for Romantic Movement

It is often said that the Romantic movement was originally formed by the Schlegel brothers in Germany towards the end of the 18th century. But, actually the French revolutionary forces contributed much for the germination of the romantic literary movement. Romanticism aimed at revolution not only in the sphere of literature and art, but also in philosophy and politics.

Victor Hugo (1802-1855), great French author championed the cause for '*the liberation of literature*' that formed the essence of Romanticism. Our poet Bharatidasan has in one of his poems mentioned his name and his contribution to the revival of democracy in France. In another poem, he has quoted one of his thoughts about the transcendent nature

of life. Being a citizen of French India the poet should naturally have acquired at least some knowledge about his views on literature.⁷

However, the publication of *The Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798 actually inaugurated a new chapter in the literary history of the Romantic movement. The poems of Blake are considered to be both romantic and metaphysical. These poets were followed by Byron, Shelley and Keats.

Before Bharati

Before the advent of Bharati, the Tamil field was occupied by the Tamil scholars and poets. The country was politically and socially suppressed. Among the poets who exhibited social concern, Saint Ramalingar comes first. There is a remarkable change in his religious outlook. He protested against the dogmatic views and preached compassion and universal brotherhood. Through religion he aspired for a social change. His devotional lyrics are bone-melting songs marked by simplicity of language and felicity of expression. His contemporary, Vedanayakam Pillai, the first Tamil novelist, was also a good poet, interested in the progress of women and social welfare. His polished style and easily understandable language heightened the dignity of his poems. Similarly Gopalakrishna Bharati and others composed poetry in a simple language, intelligible even for the common people.

But these poets ploughed the ground for the cultivation of a fresh form of literature both in content and structure, waiting for the arrival of Bharati and his disciple Bharatidasan.

Due to the restraint of time and want of place only one chief Romantic feature, i.e., the glorification of Nature has been studied here. The remaining aspects of Romanticism are reserved for a separate paper to be worked out shortly.

Bharati and Bharatidasan - A difference

With the arrival of Bharati, the horizon of creative poems was widened and poems on Nature were written with the sense of aesthetics and ethical bearing. Though he is original in many of his Nature poems, he has also been influenced by the Vedic seers on the one hand, and the Western poets like Wordsworth, Shelley and others on the other.⁸ However the poems of Bharatidasan on Nature are something extraordinary and unique. They do not have adequate parallels either in Tamil or in English. He has been the first among the Tamil poets to glorify the various manifestations of Nature in a whole poetic work. In the preface to his immortal piece of artistic creation, *Aḷakin Ciriṭṭu*," the poet rightly claimed that through this creation he anticipated the scholars to give up the habit of imitating poems in Tamil and other languages. He expressed his intention that the Tamils should develop their faculty to keenly observe the beauty in all the visible objects and to penpicture their own aesthetic experiences. From this account, it is understood that the poet who has condemned plagiarism completely, is quite natural to be original in the delineation of Nature.

Nature Poems

"*Aḷakiṇ Ciriṭṭu*" is a rare piece of art containing poems on sixteen topics. The introductory poems on 'beauty' reveal the concept of beauty as conceived by the poet. Sea, breeze, forest, hill, river, lotus, sun, ether, papal tree, doves, parrot, darkness, small village, city and Tamil form the subject matter of the subsequent poems. Each one of them has been depicted in ten poems whose metrical form is the flexible *Aḷucīr Ācīriya Viruttam*. The poetic style is delightfully relaxed.

One may raise a question about the validity of calling the poems of Bharatidasan on city and Tamil to be poems

on Nature. It is sufficient if we say that the readers will be easily convinced that they have natural bearing.

In his other volumes, there are many poems on Nature on many aspects. These poems are not the outcome of his bookish knowledge. They are emanated not from bookish knowledge but from the very source of his creative power. They represent the Romantic aspect of the poet with regard to his association with Nature.

Personification of Nature

Like Shelley, Bharatidasan is an avowed atheist. But when he beholds the beauty of Nature, he is thoroughly transformed to communicate his aesthetic experiences in mystical and meaningful language. He does not content to mention Nature merely in its naked form and name. He personified Her in the most adorable and endearing language in the various ways of personifying Nature.

Nature As Goddess (இயற்கைத் தேவி)

The destitute and desolate woman entreats :
 "Oh Goddess of Nature I It is you
 That has endowed on me youthfulness
 And Sensations and sweet life to enjoy."⁹

Here the poet has clearly indicated that the animating principle in the organic beings is derived from the force of Nature that has been identified as Goddess.

Nature As Mother (இயற்கை அன்னை)

The poet describes the beauty of the Moon in poetic diction :

"Oh Moon I
 Are you the gift of Mother Nature who painted
 In the space with life-beauty

Bringing all the loveliness
Without any leakage or scattering
Adding lustre and coolness ! " 10

Here again, the poet in his ecstasy gets into mystic rapture. As a result, he treats the moon to be a child of the Mother Nature in whose creation he has noticed full perfection.

In his collection of poems, entitled "குயில் பாடல்கள்" he has again adored Nature as Mother.^{10a} In *Ajakni Cirippu*, he has personified Nature as a Damsel (இயற்கைப் பெண்ணாள்).¹¹

In holding Nature as Goddess and Mother, the poet should have contemplated that Nature is synonymous with Prakriti, the Primordial Matter as envisaged in the Sankhya system which according to the poet was originated in the Tamil land. It is the Eternal Mother "Principle out of which the perceptible world is evolved.

In this context, let me recall the poems on Shakti, sung by Bharatidasan, when his revered Guru inspired him to sing. These poems reveal the dynamic power of Nature known as Shakti and Mother, existing everywhere. The language of personification does not cease with Nature alone; it also continues to express the individual object of Nature.

3. Personifications of Natural objects

The flower garden is personified as a damsel. The poet has adduced adequate reasons for personifying the grove as a beautiful girl. The various limbs of the girl are from the flora and fauna existing in the garden. Her lips are the lotus-petals; her musical richness comes from the beetles humming in the flowers; Her delicate touch is due to the

breeze; her blue eyes are the kuvaḷai flowers; her smiling white teeth are the jasmine flowers; her elegant gait is from the Annam (duck like birds.) Her dance is from the peacock. Her body is the fertile sprouts. With these enchanting personality, the poet was enslaved by the garden - Damsel (சோலை அணங்கு).¹² In one of his poems he names the flower-garden a temple where the peacock beautifully dances spreading its tails.¹³

The poet has written many a poem on space and ether (ஆகாயம், வான் sometimes erroneously identified with sky). In one place, he narrates the rapturous flight along with his sweet heart to the peak of the space where the two exchanged kisses and enjoyed to their heart's content. Then they opened their brows in the residence of the Goddess space (ஆகாய வாணி).¹⁴ The space is limitless and endless and provides place for all evolutes and emanations, as mentioned in some other poems by the same poet on space. Hence, it is proper that he has personified it as Goddess. *vāṇi* also means sound which is the property of Space or Ether. But, here when he used 'ஆகாயவாணி வீட்டில்', it meant Goddess. *vāṇi* in a specific sense denotes the Goddess of Learning as evidenced from the line,¹⁵

“வாணி அமைத்திட்டாள் நற்கவிதை!”

There are many more personifications of the Natural phenomena as the poet has been a mystic or a pantheist at least when he deals with themes on Nature as is the case with the Western Romantic poets.¹⁶ The metaphorical usages such as Tīcāimakaḷ - (the Damsel of the Compass), 1-56, Kiḷakkuppen - கிழக்குப் பெண் (the East as Girl), “மாலைப்போதென்னும் அன்னை” (Evening As Mother), “பொதிகை அன்னை” (The Hills Potigai As Mother), இருட் பெண்” (Darkness As a Woman), “நீல முக்காட்டுக்காரி நிலாப் பெண்ணாள்” (Moon - As Damsel enveloping her frame

with blue sky), ‘குன்ற மங்கை’ (Hill as Maid), கடற் பெண்ணாள்” (Sea as Lady), “ஆற்றுத்தாய்” (River as Mother), “அழகு என்பாள்” (Beauty as Goddess) etc., bear evidence to his keen insight, close observation and creative skill, besides vouchsafing to his mystical vision.

To the poetic eye, most of the aspects of Nature seem to possess feminine qualities and hence personified them to be a Goddess, a Mother, a Damsel or simply a girl. With regard to Sun, the poet treated it to be a Male principle, again in conformity with the traditional views current in this country. There are many epithets in his poems to glorify the many-sided greatness of the mighty luminary viz., the Sun. The following are worth considering :¹⁷

Epithets	Literal meaning
1. Ceṅkatirōṇ	He who radiates red rays
2. Cuṭarkkōmāṇ	The bright monarch
3. Maṇṇan	The king
4. Oṟiyiṟ celvan	He, the Possessor of Brightness
5. Virikatirc Celvan	The Rich Man who spreads His rays of light.
6. Pakalōṇ	He, who creates the day.
7. Veyyōṇ	He, who is scorching, or He, who is liked.
8. Uḷavan	One, who ploughs the darkness.

All these personifications of the Natural Phenomena indicate the dichotomy of Male and Female principles for which the appropriate attributes and cosmic activities have been identified by the poet.

Describing nature in the language of personification is a peculiar feature with the English Romantic poets. It does

not mean that Bharatidasan has already acquainted with them. It is suggested that the poetic experiences are universal, since they transcend the limits of language, region, race, religion and time.

Wordsworth used to behold with his eyes fixed on the objects, disclosing the fact that a Nature poet should meditate with single-mindedness. The main aim of the Romantic poets is to get at the root of our existence and to describe the same experience in poetic language so as to enable others to receive the same benefit.

If we study the Nature poems of Bharatidasan, it is evident that he has evolved a concept of Eternal Beauty being the essence of the existing Nature. Further he has conceived Nature to be a Supreme power that is the life force for the organic and inorganic objects that constitute the whole Universe. He felt deliberately the limitations of our ken of thought and power of sense organs in beholding the expanded Nature.¹⁸

The concept of Natural Beauty

From the poems of Bharatidasan, his conception of Natural Beauty could be evolved. He has clear ideas about the Beauty that he has experienced with the help of his poetic vision. The eternal presence of the everlasting beauty in the Natural phenomena, the benefits on its realization and the necessity to develop one's inner faculty to learn the mysteries of the beauty are understood from his poems.

The title, 'Aḷakin Ciriḷḷu' that has been given to the poems on Nature suggests the aesthetic sense of the poet. When he observed keenly the objects of Nature, he felt that they are nothing but beauty which laughed in the form of lotus, moon, sun, etc. The word 'Ciriḷḷu' meaning laughter

is used to indicate the mood of happiness even in other poems of the same poet. He personifies utter darkness as a lady whose laughter assumed the form of Luminous Moon.¹⁹ To him the flower-garden is the manifestation of the Nature's laughter:²⁰ "While the child laughed the earth laughed! the either laughed!"²¹ These are a few examples to illustrate his aesthetic and artistic expressions concerned with the brilliance of beauty.

The first three poems of Azakin Cirippu constitute one unit dealing with the presence of beauty in the external world. Bharatidasan is a realist: Beauty exists in all the objects that are perceptible to sense-organs. He visualises beauty as a Damsel and witnesses Her presence in the Rising Sun, in the spate of Sea waters, in the groves, flowers, sprouts. She has revealed Her presence all over.²²

The poet continues to present the other objects of attraction where he has encountered with the principle of Beauty:

"She is the brightness in the eyes of the little child."

She smiles in the luminous lamp which the poet calls 'Tiruvijakku,' literally meaning the beautiful lamp, but the prefix of the word 'Tiru' connotes many meanings out of which 'Divinity' is the most appropriate meaning which is also in consonance with the cultural tradition of the Tamils.

The Damsel of Beauty also dances in the pretty movements of the finger-bent of the lady who piles up the fragrant flowers to make a garland. She enjoys the fresh gait of the cultivator who bears the plough his sturdy shoulder and strong back. She fixed the poet's eyes on the body of the fertile harvest land! Thus she migrated to his heart making him happy.²³

The poet beheld the Compass, the space and its innumerable containers. He glanced at the movable and those that stood and felt the presence of Beauty that offered him immense joy. The poet exclaims that the Beauty is the essence in all the essential things. She is youthful and could not be subjected to decay due to antiquity. One must behold with a sense of craving. Then only one can feel her presence everywhere. The poet believes that if the Beauty becomes our possession, there is no agony.²⁴

COSMIC VISION

The great poets generally possess a cosmic vision. Bharatidasan is not an exception to this rule. He is capable of conceiving the cosmic form of Nature. His Nature poems furnish enough evidence for his creative genius in presenting the cosmic forms of Nature with a sense of reality. Let us quote some illustration.

When he describes both the violent and silent activities of the wind, a cosmic picture is elegantly drawn. He beholds crores of planets known as 'aṇṭam', (— literally meaning that which has the oval shape, and this is confirmed by modern science also) rotating in the wide expanse where the wind is dancing! The wind (in the form of tempest) turns the mighty rock into heaps of dust and also (in the form of breeze) 'passes through the soft *Aniccam* flower unnoticingly. Thus, the malignant and benign aspects of the cosmic wind are beautifully described by the poet.

The tempest reminds one the terrific form of *Kāṭi*, while breeze represents the benefic and peaceful form of *Shakti*. Since *Tenṇal* has been described to be the daughter of Mother Potikai Hills, this sort of elucidation stands valid.

The poems on Sun also reveal the mysteries of the great luminary that dispels the darkness and inspires the living beings. The poet sings:²⁵

"Long live Oh Sun!

You plant your crores of luminous hands in the sea!
In the space expand your crores of hands upon
The mountains, jungles, villas, lakes, rivers and the like
Completely enwrapping them with your light!"

The poet imagines that if the sun light becomes extinct, the stars in the space would resemble like the different seeds losing their identity. He personifies the sun to be a ploughman who has cultivated life, when the world was barren.²⁶ This personification is fully meaningful. A ploughman cultivates the land and then raises crops. So also the Sun is held responsible for the cultivation of various species in the atmosphere of Nature. The poet has used a rare word 'pāṭi' which conveys many meanings. Pāṭi, the primordial matter was accepted in the Sankhya system, the only philosophy reliable to the poet, forms the source of the evolved empirical world. Only after the emanation of the sun, different types of lives were evolved. Here again, we see the poet both romantic and philosophic in the portrayal of the sun, which has been described to be the root to the green crops and a blanket for the biting cold.²⁷

In another poem, the poet engages in contrasting the littleness of human kind with the vastness of the wide space and asks us to think over this glaring difference, the realisation of which would enable the human beings to abandon their arrogance of speaking high and low among themselves. His comparison of the earth to an young Koyya and man to a small ant on it, is on really romantic exposing littleness of mankind as against a big entity.²⁸

Poems on Dankness

The poems on darkness are wonderful creation with artistic perfection. Even a cursory glance of these poems

may tempt one to boldly say that no poet has made so fascinating Penpicture on Darkness as our poet has drawn. As a realist he admits the existence of darkness as a separate entity. It has its birth along with space.²⁹ It fills the whole atmosphere (- எவ்விடத்தும் நிறைவுற்றாய்). The poet treats both the object and its shadow as real. So he proclaims that if there is object, the positive presence of its shadow is inevitable. The darkness he considers, is the shadow of the natural phenomena. He illustrates its existence in the empirical objects with which we have daily contact.³⁰ In the particles of milk the poet finds the presence of darkness. In the two sides of the projecting beautiful nose, in the edge of the fish-like eyes, in the middle portion of the ears of a girl, its presence is sensed. It is the directing force revealing the index of woman's face. Its significance is better known only by a painter!

It resides beneath the petals of the lotus flower. For each and every petal, it forms the block, the absence of which will destroy the beauty of the lotus. It is the principle of Beauty in all things existing everywhere.³¹

The poet's descriptions of darkness reveal his mystical and metaphysical bent of mind. In a picturesque language he presents the majestic cosmic personality of darkness, which seems to be an angel or a damsel to the poetic eye :

With her blue stone-like wings she envelops and embraces the whole of mankind and entire kingdom of different species that get tired after day-long activities, finishing supper, ready to repose. This kind of rest is essential to recoup living beings to be fit for the next day work. Hence, this act of the darkness is hailed as a symbol of loud affection, just like a mother caressing her child for a sound sleep. So, the poet expresses his gratitude (-as

if a sole representative of the innumerable species) to the darkness.³²

Since he has personified the darkness as a damsel (இருட்டுபெண்), the various dresses and ornaments to suit her gigantic personality are to be visualised. These constitute additional beauty to the Lady.

She grows from earth to ether to the wonder of all! The poet glances at Her splendid body. In conformity with the worldly women who change their dress often, the Darkness also alters Her attire frequently. Her dress in the day time is the golden saree! (- Thus the sunlight is personified). Her night dress is the saree, made up of ornamental white silk! (Thus the moonlight along with the stars is personified)

When the Damsel turns her body and flower-like eyes towards the poet, he beholds in Her tresses of black hair a dazzling diamond head ornament known as Villai, (-the circular moon is thus personified) usually worn by a rustic girl.

The meeting with the Damsel of Darkness, makes the poet become sensuous and his heart is confused. Finally it leads him safely to the sacred presence of his own wife (மனைவியின் திருமுன்).

On going through the descriptions on Darkness, one may raise a rational question about the possibility of the existence of Darkness not only in the moon-lit night but even in the scorching day time. The Romantics are against rationalism and they are wedded to creative imagination and sensuous emotion. Hence, Bharatidasan as a Romantic poet never bothered about the rational background of his descriptions.

One more answer is worth mentioning. In Saiva Siddhanta, Darkness is not a negative aspect but a positive reality existing even before the sun, in a concealed form. Its absence does not mean its negation. Both the light and darkness are treated to be physical realities. The possibility of the influence of his study of Saiva Siddhanta works in his formative period is not excluded in penning these poems.

Communion with Beauty

The Nature has a personality, soul, language and power of expression. It has attraction and enchantment, bewildering the beholder. It seems that Bharatidasan shares the same sort of aesthetic experience of Endymion. Keats sings thus: ³⁴

"A thing of beauty is joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness....."

Similar expressions in the poems of Bharatidasan indicate similar experiences which are common to the great poets who go up from the ordinary earthly existence. Some illustrations are sufficient.³⁵

1. "As I beheld the beauty, I experienced great pleasure."
(அழகுதனைக் கண்டேன்; நல்லின்பம் கண்டேன்)
2. "Oh breeze! as usual, you gave me joy"
(வழக்கம்போல் இன்பம் தந்தாய்)
3. I got the visual pleasure
(காட்சியின் இன்பம் பெற்றேன்)
4. I lost myself; I live in the sphere of pleasure
(என்னை நான் இழந்தேன்; இன்ப உலகத்தில் வாழ
ஒற்றேன்).
5. The flowers in multitudes resemble hundreds of
emerald-like birds, offering insatiable Dance of Beauty!

6. The red-buds of the Lotus, shining like beautiful lamps
alleviated my agony, offered great feast to my eyes-
7. Oh the Moon, the milk-foam of pleasure, cool lamp !
I lost myself since I absorbed in your beauty !
8. Though the Nature belongs to a dim past,
It creates new scenes ! Consume them Oh brother !
9. Grove ! grove ! grove !
To enjoy is my business.

In one context, the poet delicately describes that even if the breeze removes the ladies' dress (that conceals their secret organs), they will not remove it, thereby suggesting that they are overwhelmed by the pleasure due to the touch of the breeze.³⁶ The poet expresses that the rare form of breeze is imperceptible, even each of its small movements excites him with enormous joy.

These portions reveal the inexplicable enjoyment that the poet has experienced during his communion with Nature.

He is aware of the limitations of the senses. He says that a simple survey of the spate of water is not possible for the heart with the two wings of the eyes; it requires one crore wings and hence the heart withdraws³⁷.

The beauty is abundant in the hills. The pastoral woman, the Moon has sprinkled the butter in the hills. The poet accosts : "Oh brother ! Consume all the beauty to your possible extent", thereby indicating the imperfectness of our sense-power, not in a position to drink complete joy.³⁸

Bharatidasan is a hedonist, and hence he calls the pleasure out of sexual union to be "பேரின்பம்" i.e. great pleasure, differing with what others meant by the term-

There is another role of the poet, i.e. the mystic, which has been hitherto unnoticed, when he indulges in unusual communion with Nature. Let us quote one or two examples from his poetic creations to justify that the poet's super experiences with Nature constitute one type of Bridal Mysticism. In a higher plane, where he has treated the Natural object to be a female principle, he remains a passionate lover, embracing and enjoying the Beloved Nature to his heart's content.

1. In many places, the poet personifies the *lingua franca*, Sweet Tamil to be a Mother, a virgin and also a beautiful girl. But, there are contexts where he personifies Tamil to be his beloved wife, "*Pattinī*".³⁹ This shows the worldly reality that one's love grows to the maximum, when it is directed only to his sweet wife. All else is subordinated.

The poet says that the Potikai Hills, the Mother gave birth to two daughters, the first one is *Tenral* (i.e. breeze), the next one is Tamil. The former offers pleasure to his physical body, while the latter provides him with inner joy. He declares that this experience cannot be forgotten by him even in his dreams.⁴⁰ This experience suggests that the poet has the two personified consorts one fulfilling the external and the other furnishing the internal joy.

Though the poet hated mythology, knowingly or unknowingly, he has indicated a myth about the Potikai Hills, which is supposed to be the abode of the Sage Akastya, who held a Cangam there, nurturing the Sweet Tamil. Further, the same Hill being the birth place of "*tenral*" breeze is at least as old as *Cilappatikāram*.

2. In his poems entitled, '*Tamilkkātal*' very clearly he has presented a mystic union with two types of personified consorts.⁴¹ When the poet, being the lover had planted his

shoulders on the body of the Damsel Garden, in the dais (Tirurai), his chaste consort Centamil (செந்தமிழ்ப்பத்தினி) with fish-like eyes stealthily came there! She poured out into his heart all the Bliss-beautiful, to be collectively offered by the garden, bright space and the company of peacock-like pretty girls, and pulled him touchingly! In the light of indescribable rapture and ecstasy, the poet's expression is lyrical and mystical.

In most cases, it is the fair sex that approaches the poet, That shows the lady-love finding a suitable and most qualified partner, indicating the accomplished and perfected love of the poet. Some examples will do : ⁴²

1. 'அப்பூஞ்சோலை — என்னத்
தன் வசம் ஆக்கிவிட்டாள் ஒருநாள்'
2. 'என்றன் செந்தமிழ்ப் பத்தினி வந்துவிட்டாள்'
3. 'வழியொடு வந்த நீயோ வழக்கம்போல் இன்பம்
தந்தாய்,
4. 'மீண்டும் நீ புணர்ந்தாய் என்னை !'

The last passage requires some elucidation. The word, 'புணர்ச்சி', in the poetic and mystic language, connotes a sublime union of the Lady Breeze with the Lover Poet. It has been a customary practice of the Breeze to embrace the Poet and endow him with immense pleasure.

This kind of union is possible only when the existence of the personal self and the Universal self in the Nature is accepted and the realisation of the mingling of the former with the latter is attained. Hence it is evident that the poet has gone beyond the level of realising the mere fascination of the external beauty of Nature, and experienced a spiritual union.

Nature As Teacher :

There is one more characteristic feature of the Nature poems of Bharatidasan, worth mentioning, i.e. the imparting of wisdom to the observers.

Among the Romantic poets Wordsworth was unique in the interpretation of Nature. He realised that like the human beings the Natural phenomena such as the trees, plants, birds, animals etc., have sensations which are communicated in a language peculiar to each one of the species. Since from his early days he was intimately associated with the rural atmosphere, especially in the Lake landscape, he had developed an unusual craving for Nature. He believed that one could learn more from Nature than from the barren leaves of the books. Hence he gives the following advice;

"Up! Up! my friend, and quit your books...
Come forth into the light of things
Let Nature be your Teacher."⁴³

The lessons imparted by Nature are meant only for those who have special preparation to receive them. That is why he advises thus: ⁴⁴

"Come forth and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives."

Nature unfolds Her mysteries only for those who approach Her with honesty and devotion.

In Bharatidasan, there are many a penpicture of Natural objects, indicating some sort of wisdom to be learnt by the human beings. His poems on 'Rainbow' are worth mentioning. He imagines that 'Rainbow' is poetry written by the (poetess) space.⁴⁵ This metaphorical expression speaks volumes of the aesthetic sense and artistic skill of the poet. To him, rainbow with the fascinating multicolours

resembles a beautiful poetry, the author being the space herself. In some other poem, the poet Bharatidasan has personified space as a Goddess, i.e., 'ஆகாயவாணி'. *Vāṇi* also is a synonym for the Muse, or Goddess of Learning. So, when he sings, "விண்ணமுது கவிதையாம் வானவில்" we can easily identify that 'விண்' should be 'ஆகாயவாணி' then only the poetry will be complete and perfect. He knows well the nature of Rainbow. Though it is charming and beautiful, it is transient. It exists for a while and goes out of existence. Keenly observing this evanescent quality of the colourful Rainbow, the poet feels that it conveys a message to the people at large, a lofty philosophy to the temporal existence (i.e. *Nilaiyāmai*).

It is really wonderful that even the hedonistic poet Bharatidasan was struck with the concept of the transitory nature of the empirical existence. It is essential to note that the same concept in one form or other is advocated from the days of *Tolkāppiyar* to instruct the people to perform the possible goods deed within the short span of time. Hence, the Rainbow of Bharatidasan imparts an ethical teaching, centering on the concept of transience, accepted by all systems of Indian philosophy both Vedic and Non-Vedic, except the *Cārvākas*.

In contrast to the beautiful Rainbow, the ugly crow also catches the sight of the poet. He observes perhaps somewhere in the hinder-garden of his residence, that the crow accosts its fellow-beings to partake the paltry food, scattered over the ground. From this fraternal attitude of the crow, the poet draws a lesson that the human beings should emulate the exemplary bird.⁴⁶

The pretty doves are the attraction for the poet. He describes their beauty in a realistic language. He keenly observes the behaviour of the doves. They also live in pairs, leading a life of contentment. They too partake their

food of grains without any quarrel. The blind custom of discriminating beings into high and low is not existent among them. They fly in the air with a sense of joy. Their gaits are majestic to be learnt even by the rulers (kings).⁴⁷

Even in conjugal life, they preserve morality. The poet advocated re-marriage, if any one of the partners died. So, he mentions that the same is followed among the doves. The poet is practical and he witnesses in the society that some male members exercise force and vehemence to seduce and rape the fairsex. This wrong course of action is also found with some of the doves and the poet thinks that even among the immaculate doves, some immoral elements are mixed and they should have learnt from the bad people to compel a female dove, to sexual gratification.⁴⁸ Here, we come across a different type that is imparted. It is not from the side of Nature. Nature is spoiled due to the bad conduct of the people. The poet goes to say that in Nature everything is perfect and if there is any imperfection, it is due to the imperfection of human beings, thereby assailing the base instinct ingrained in some people with a view to correct them to lead an ethical life. It is not certain that in the English Romantic poetry, such a reversal of learning i.e. Nature learning from people (-not for good) is noted.

With regard to feeling and sharing, the family of doves teaches a lesson to the humanity. The parent doves of the little one set an example to others for the excellent affection to be shown towards children.⁴²

In one of the poems on darkness, the poet deliberately stated that the darkness imparts the wisdom that everyone should have purity.⁵⁰ Darkness clouds our knowledge resulting in ignorance leading to untold miseries. To eradicate ignorance, one should develop purity which gives wisdom.

In the poems of Bharatidasan, there are many more examples to illustrate that Nature provides knowledge for

one who watches and receives. For want of space, only one example may be given.

Projecting one's ideas to be the activities of Nature has been considered to be one of the salient features of the Romantic poetry. Bharatidasan is not an exception to this. To substantiate, an illustration from his 'Aḷakin Ciriṭṭu' is presented here :⁵¹

The poet beholds the space in the night. The innumerable stars are twinkling in the sky. To his vision they are not stars, but pimples. How has this happened? The poet gives an interpretation to this awful sight :

"All these who work hard happen to be the poor ! If they Demand their rights, they are inflicted with untold pains By the mean people, who happen to be the rich ! On seeing this wretched condition, the suppressed Emotions of the expanded space burst forth to be Pimples !"

Here again, we notice that the inanimate space has been portrayed to have feelings and powers to witness the class-conflict, and sympathise with the working class. The poet has projected his feelings through the space-imagery. His compassion remains always with the labour class. He despised and detested the inhuman attitude of the capitalists. He wants a society where the working people get their due place.

Here is an instance to note that among the factors that moulded the poet's personality, the communist ideologies actually played a considerable role.

Another aspect of the Nature poems reveals the transformation of Love of Nature into Love of Humanity. This aspect is said to be dominant in the poems of Wordsworth. The same is prominent also in Bharatidasan.

Humanism

Bharatidasan is a lover of human beings. Among the different manifestations of Nature, he considered that man is the apex.⁵² His love of Nature was developed side by side with his love of mankind. He loved the most suppressed people, the labourers the artisans like the carpenter, weaver, potter and others. His special sympathy was for the abandoned woman. There are many objects for poetry which, according to the poet invited him, to treat them in his artistic creations. In the poems on *Tamilpēru*, the poet has enumerated elaborately those objects of attraction :

The brook and lotus flowers, the groves, fields and the blue sky, the gentle breeze, the peacock and the annam birds, the emerald like sun etc., appeared in the vision of the poet entreated him to delineate their beauty. Not only these objects of Nature, but the beautiful girls who resemble the dancing peacock demanded the poet to describe their soul-deep love. The hero's hill-like shoulders, that carry the weapons asked him to paint their prowess.

Such objects came in multitudes. But, the poet, though a lover of Nature and admirer of beauty and heroism, melted on seeing the pitiable plight of the Tamils⁵³ This is a clear indication for the humanism that the poet exhibited towards his fellow beings.

Even the characters such as *Vañci*, Kuppan and others in the narrative poems such as *Cancīvi Parvatattin Cāral*, *Nallamuttu Katai*, *Tamiḻacciyaḻ Katti* etc., bear evidence to his love of mankind.

His revolutionary poems on equality and treternity are the outcome of his deep concern with the humanity.⁵⁴ Here in, the influence of the revolutionary French writer Rousseau is felt.⁵⁵

His excessive interest in the washerman induced him to proclaim that he would be supported only by his donkey that carried the clothes for cleansing, and not the unknown God.

The poet addresses his brethren thus

"Oh Comrade! See the hungry poor people who have no vital power even to open their mouth! For them, you should be prepared even to part with your flesh *with the love of a mother*.⁵⁶ Such a statement comes from the depth of his heart and his personal life also justifies his compassion to the neglected people.

The lengthy *akaval* poem entitled, 'உலகம் உன்னுடையது' is a classic example of the expanded vision of the poet who treats the entire humanity to be one unit in which there is neither difference nor discrimination.

In one of his poems, he says that the heart should be drenched in the river of kindness⁵⁷

The poet presents the various stages in the process of psychical development. He identifies many types of consciousness in the human beings. One who has mustard-like heart cares only for his own family. Those who possess the pulse-like heart would admire their own village. Bigger than that is the coconut heart that aspires to use its force to disturb other territory. People with mango-heart would indulge in quarrels. But, there is the most evolved magnificent heart, being the embodiment of maternal love, pure and big, that treats all the people of the world to be one, and where it exists there is no warfare since there is no selfish motive.⁵⁸

The poet draws from the nature the gradual similes such as mustard, pulse, coconut and mango to compare the

condition of the people with the different types of heart and finally concludes that the heart of a universal mother above all bestows bliss.

The intense love for the entire humanity assumes various forms of expression in the lofty poems of Bharatidasan.

It is proper to recall that the English Romantic poet Wordsworth, being a humanist attached much importance to the rustics leading precarious life. The portrayal of the solitary-reaper, the leach gatherer, Michael, the shepherd, the beggar and others reveals the poet's sincere love of mankind.⁵⁹

This kind of giving prominence to ordinary people out of love seems to be a departure from the deep-rooted tradition of singing the glory of rulers, chieftains and the rich. This aspect is considered to be one of the features of the Romantic poetry.

Conclusion

As a result of our study carried out in this article, the following findings are worth mentioning :

1. The Romantic aspect as noticed in the Nature poems of Bhāratidāsan is not due to his bookish knowledge or acquaintance with the Western Romantic poetry. It is a natural outcome.
2. He is original in the delineation of Natural phenomena.
3. Personification of Nature in general, Natural objects in particular--being one aspect of Romantic poetry is predominantly found in the Nature poems of Bharatidasan.
4. He describes Nature both in its terrific and benign forms.

5. There is some kind of Divinity in the nature poems of our poet.
6. The personifications of the Natural phenomena indicate the dicotomy of Male and Female principles for which the appropriate attributes and cosmic functions have been ascribed.
7. The poet has evolved his own theory of Beauty.
8. The poet's expressions are in many places both mystical and metaphysical, besides being romantic.
9. He has developed cosmic vision to behold the cosmic beauty.
10. He has direct communion with Beauty.
11. He is a realist accepting even the reality of Darkness.
12. He is against Rationalism at least when he is absorbed in the description of Nature.
13. There is clear indication for the poet's leaning towards Bridal Mysticism.
14. Though he hated mythology, he indirectly accepted the Akasthya Myth, when he stated that Tamil is the daughter of Potikai Hills.
15. 'Nature as a Teacher' is attested by his poems on Nature.
16. His love of Nature and love of Humanity have a simultaneous growth.

References

1. There is a different version with regard to the origin of these poems. Accordingly, the poet composed these poems during one of his visits to the residence of Subramanya Bharati, his Guru.

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2. To his journal. *Kuṭiyarasu*, M. Singaravelar, one of the free thinkers of Tamil Nadu and an exponent of Communism, contributed thought-provoking articles, the study of which nurtured the thought of the poet.
3. "என்நடை தம்நடை என்யாப்புத் தன்யாப்பு என்று
இந்நாள் எழுந்துள பாவலர் தம்மை
எண்ணினால் இருப்பவர் தம்மில் நூற்றுக்குத்,
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12. Bharatidasan, *Aḷakiṇ Cirippu*, PāriNilaiam, Madras(1987),
36.
13. Bharatidasan *Kavitaikaḥ*, Vol. I, 96
14. Tēnaruvi, 94
15. Bharatidasan *Kavitaikaḥ Vo-II*, Pāri Nilaiam, Madras (1987)
123.

16. Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ Vol. I, 20
17. 1. 'Ticai makaḷ', Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ, Vol. I, 56
 2. Kiḷakkuppen, Aḷakin Cirippu, 35
 3. Mālaippōtennum Annai, ,, 59
 4. Potikai Annai, ,, 13
 5. Irutpen, ,, 51
 6. Nīla mukkāṭṭukkāri Nilāpenṇāḷ, Aḷakin Cirippu, 21
 7. Kunra Mankai, Aḷakin Cirippu, 20
 8. Kaṭarpenṇāḷ, ,, 9
 9. Āṇṇuḷṭāy, ,, , 25
 10. Aḷaku enpāḷ, ,, , 5
18. 1. Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ, Vol. I, 56
 2. Aḷakin Cirippu, 30
 3. ,, , 32
 4. ,, , 32
 5. ,, , 35
 6. ,, , 36
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20. Bharatidasan Kavitaikaḷ, Vol. I, 20
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WORDSWORTH AND BHARATIDASAN AS POETS OF NATURE

Prof. A.A. MANAVALAN

INTRODUCTION

Bharatidasan (1891-1964) has treated Nature elaborately in his poems. His love of Nature and his picturesque description of the objects of Nature are deep and deliberate. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was also a poet of Nature in every sense of the phrase. This similarity of being poets of Nature suggests some validity of comparison of these two great poets in this aspect.

Nature has been the subject matter of poetry from the very infancy of poesy. There has scarcely been any poet in any language who has not sung of Nature in one or other form. But we do not call them all as poets of Nature. In the history of English Literature, for example, almost all poets, great and small, have sung of Nature. but the critical scholarship has labelled only a particular group of poets as poets of Nature, and Wordsworth is one of the greatest

of them. This means that there are certain reasons for such nomenclature. It holds good with regard to Bharatidasan also. There have been many poets from the Cankam age till the dawn of this century who have treated Nature in their poetry. But there is yet a special reason for calling Bharatidasan as a poet of Nature. It is specifically in this aspect that Wordsworth and Bharatidasan are comparable to each other.

HARMONY BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE

To Wordsworth, Man and Nature constitute a single harmonious bond. He believes that the mind of Man is animated by the same spirit which informs all natural phenomena. The external visible beauty of Nature is only a sensuous manifestation of the all - pervasive divine spirit. By contemplation of and in communion with Nature man can realise this divine spirit. This he describes as follows :

And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused.

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns

And the round ocean and the living air

And the blue sky, and in the mind of Man

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts

And rolls through all things.

(‘Tintern Abbey’ 95-104)

Nature to him is therefore, not merely objects of joy, but She is the anchor of his purest thoughts, the nurse, the guide, the guardian of his heart and the soul of all his moral being.

Bharatidasan is also a great lover of Nature, He is very much delighted in the company of Nature. He could sing :

BEAUTY

I see all the directions,
the sky, the many many things
That are packed on our earth
the moving and the still things
I see beauty everywhere
and am filled with joy
It is she that endows
interest to all the things
Age cannot wither nor custom
stale her eternal youth
Look with desire and you will
find her everywhere
There is no misery when
absorbed in beauty.¹

We can see here that the poet's reaction to the beauties of Nature is purely sensuous. He does not perceive any innate harmony between himself and an object of Nature. His powers of perception and description are superb, but they are employed to a different purpose. The reason for such a perceptual difference is to be sought in their concepts of Nature and Man, in combination and in isolation as well.

That Bharatidasan does not view the objects of Nature in Wordsworthian sense is understandable from his poem on 'Makkal Nilai' (state of humanity), where he sets the images of a bird and a squirrel in contrast to Man and deplores the sordidness of the latter.² Some of the poems in *Smile of Beauty* also record a similar contractive attitude of the poet towards Nature. For example he sings :

Like the lotus fanning out its petals
Sit and eat the doves in a circle;

No cuts, no thrusts we find in their lives
 No compulsion to eat in isolation, no' the high and low
 superstition.³

This poem shows the differential nature of the human world from that of the non-human. This confirms his dichotomous view of Nature.

SPIRITUALISATION OF NATURE

In accordance with his view of Oneness of Man and Nature Wordsworth cherishes the belief that every object of Nature, animate and inanimate, is just a different form of manifestation of Wisdom and Spirit of the universe. He therefore spiritualises the objects of Nature. For example he sings. "To the Cuckoo"

Shall I call thee bird
 Or but a wandering Voice?
 . . . thou art to me
 No bird, but an invisible thing
 A Voice, a mystery.

Again the incidents of stealing the boat and snatching away the bird which belonged to another boy are unique expressions of Wordsworth's attitude to Nature. Let us hear him about the latter.

moon and stars

Were shining o'er my head; I was alone
 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
 That was among them. Sometimes it befel
 In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
 O'erpowered my better reason and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toils
 Became my prey; and when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills

Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod. (Prelude I, 321-32)

Wordsworth does not simply describe the beauty of Nature. As a poet of description of Nature Wordsworth can be easily surpassed by many poets. With special reference to *Aḷaḱin Ciriṭṭu* (Smile of Beauty) and to some stanzas in *Puraṭcikkavi* Bharatidasan is by far the better as a poet of description. The effect of such description on the audience is catching. Nature for Wordsworth on the other hand is not inanimate, not simply sensuous but is permeated by a soul or spirit. Nature then is a spiritual entity for him as for Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nature's outward beauty is only the visible symbol of the indwelling divine spirit.

One may cite in this connection some passages by Bharatidasan where he describes objects of Nature in human terms. The following stanza from *Puraṭcikkavi* describing the absorbing beauty of the moon is an example:

Covering up your person in full
 With your garments, the blue hued sky
 You expose only your glittering face called moon
 What woe will befall you
 If you expose your beauty in full
 Would this world perish
 Ravished by love? (4)

But this is only a case of personification. The song '*Enkenḱu Kāṇinum Cakṭiyatā*' smacks of such spiritualisation but even here the poet does not seem to relish such a belief. The fact remains therefore that while Wordsworth's description is the result of a deep-rooted faith, Bharatidasan's is only a poetic device. A romantic poet lives by the faith

he upholds and not by reason or intellect. We know too well that Bharatidasan could not tolerate such a faith in Nature. There is a similar situation in his song of '*Vānampāṭi*'.

... on the high sky

Keep (you) on pouring your melody? and the native Tamils
Keep on(for ever) devouring your song as if "*Tenpāṅku*" (5)

Even though the lines may suggest certain transcendental tone, the poet does not mean it. The phrase a few lines above "You wouldn't believe" Would ensure this, what he suggests may be an idea of generic singular. The joy he feels from its song is also not of any far reaching transcendental influence as that of a nightingale to John Keats, but a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings stimulated by the sweet song of a '*Vānampāṭi*'

EDUCATION OF NATURE

Both Wordsworth and Bharatidasan speak of lessons to be drawn from the objects of Nature but with a difference. While such education of Nature, is quite individual and mystic to Wordsworth, Bharatidasan applied it to social amelioration of his day. Such a difference may be ascribed to their respective social milieux.

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE

As poets of description of Nature, Bharatidasan is by far the better poet. Wordsworth is accurate in his descriptions; he enjoys it and receives peace and strength; but he could not enable the reader to do the same unless he is also of the mystic temper. But on the other hand Bharatidasan's descriptions which are not only accurate, but highly intoxicating and ecstatic are so objective that any reader with a slight fair for imaginative follow-up can share the poet's thrills and joys. The following example may prove this:

The moment I look at you O Moon !
My heart is flooded with feelings
And I find no words to paint it,
However hard I search for...
I behold you with both my eyes;
I am brightened and throw off darkness,
I shake of sufferings all and feel elated beyond limit
I am cooled in and out and am free from irritations all;
My heart becomes full with love
And it ripens to grow and touch the heavens
I lost myself mingling with your beauty. (6)

DIVINE REALITY KNOWN THROUGH NATURE

Mysticism is an essential element of Wordsworth's poetry. Since he believes that there is a pre-existing harmony between the mind of man and Nature, he could in a beatific moment intuitively realise the divine Reality in the objects of Nature. The ordinary mountain echo is also a hint sent from the world beyond sense and time :

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar
Listen, ponder, hold them dear
For of God-of God they are.

Such a belief is derided by Bharatidasan when he sings :

Lord Murukan they saw
Lord Vēlan they perceived
In these flush, green and stately hills.
Insane phraseology, empty doctrines. (7)

Wordsworth is able to achieve such a power of realisation when he is in the company of Nature. He believes that in such a company he is relieved of this worldly burdens and finds himself in a blessed mood. For Bharatidasan on

the other hand Nature is a treasure chest of inexhaustible joy affecting him pleurably; a scenic tonic against man-made human ills. There it ends.

References

1. Translation of the following poem by Dr.P. Parameswaran , Smile of Beauty 10-11.

திசை கண்டேன், வான்கண்டேன், உட்புறத்துச்
செறிந்தனவாம் பலப்பலவும் கண்டேன் யாண்டும்
அசைவனவும் நின்றனவும் கண்டேன் மற்றும்
அழகுதனைக் கண்டேன் நல்லின்பங் கண்டேன்
பசையுள்ள பொருளிலெல்லாம் பசையவள் காண்
பழமையினால் சாகாத இளையவள் காண்
நசையோடு நோக்கடா எங்கும் உள்ளாள்
நல்லழகு வசப்பட்டால் துன்ப மில்லை.

(அழகின் சிரிப்பு, அழகு)

2. அணில் ... சதிக், கூச்சல் குழப்பங்கள் கொத்தடி
மைத்தனம் கொஞ்சமும் இல்லை அங்கே.
மனிதர் கெட்ட, வஞ்சகம்சேர் சின்ன மானிடச் சாதிக்கு
வாய்த்த நிலை இதுவோ. (பா.க., 62-63.)

3. Translation of the following by Dr.P. Parameswaran, Smile of Beauty 71-72.

இட்டதோர் தாமரைப்பு இதழ்விரிந் திருத்தல் போலே
வட்டமாய்ப் புறாக்கள் கூடி இரையுண்ணும்; அவற்றின்
வாழ்வில்
வெட்டில்லை குத்துமில்லை வேறுவேறு இருந்தருந்தும்
கட்டில்லை கீழ்மேல் என்னும் வழக்கமில்லை.

(அழகின் சிரிப்பு, புறாக்கள்)

4. Translation of the following by A. Dakshinamurthy, Poems of Bharatidasan. 4.

நீலவான் ஆடைக்குள் உடல் மறைத்து
 நிலாவென்று காட்டுகின்றாய் ஒளிமுகத்தைக்
 'கோலமுழு தும்காட்டி விட்டால் காதற்
 கொள்ளையிலே இவ்வுலகம் சாமோ ?

(புரட்சிக்கவி)

5. Translation of the following by the author-

உயர்வானில்

பாடிக்கொண்டே யிருப்பாய் ? பச்சைப் பசுந்தமிழர்
 தேடிக் கொண்டே யிருப்பார் தென்பாங்கை உன்பால்

(வானம்பாடி)

6. Translation of the following by A. Dakshinamurthy, poems of Bharatidasan. 5.

உனைக்காணும் போதினிலே என்னுள்ளத்தில்
 உறியரும் உணர்ச்சியினை எழுதுவதற்கு
 நினைத்தாலும் வார்த்தை கிடைத்திருவதில்லை ...
 உன்னைஎன திருவிழியாற் காணுகின்றேன்
 ஒளிபெறுகின்றேன் இருளை ஒதுக்குகின்றேன்
 இன்னலெலாம் தவிர்கின்றேன் களிகொள்கின்றேன்
 எரிவில்லை, குளிர்கின்றேன் புறமும் உள்ளும்
 அன்புள்ளம் பூணுகின்றேன் ; அதுவும் முற்றி
 ஆகாயம் அளாவுமொரு காதல் கொண்டேன் ...
 என்னையிழந்தேன் உன்னெழிலில் கலந்ததாலே,

(புரட்சிக்கவி)

7. முன்பு கண்ட காட்சி தன்னை
 முருகன் என்றும் வேலன் என்றும்
 கொன் பயின்றார் சொல்வர் அஃது
 குறுகும் கொள்கை அன்றோ தோழி

(பாரதிதாசன் கவிதைகள், காட்சி இன்பம்)

Translation by the author.

NECTAR IN DEWY FLOWERS: DOCTRINE IN BHARATIDASAN'S POETRY

Prof. P. MARUDANAYAGAM.

Bharatidasan, who lived for seventy three years, has to his credit numerous lyrics, narrative poems, essays, short stories and dramas. Love, nature, Tamil, women, political and social problems and contemporary events became his favourite poetic subjects. Whatever topics he chose, he never shied away from expressing firmly his principles relating to them. He had his own unshakable convictions about religion, God, the Aryan and Dravidian races, the future of Tamil and Tamilnadu, Capitalism, Communism and the status of women. Not all his beliefs were of the same hue from the beginning to the end of his career, nor did they receive equal importance in his writings. The major events of his time and his own mental and poetic growth did bring about a sea-change in some of his ideas. But at no time did he attempt to hide his current beliefs or to suppress the past ones. He was not a philosopher, nor a politician; nor an anthropologist, nor a theologian, nor a lawyer, nor a linguist; he was a full-fledged poet. It is,

therefore, improper and futile to examine the validity of his ideas on race, religion, language and society. As readers and literary critics of his poetry, we should be concerned with the degree of success he achieves in converting his doctrines into poetry. Does his philosophy become poetry or remain as philosophy preventing us from experiencing his poetry? It is good to examine his poetry from this point of view especially at a time when those who accept his ideas, admire his poetry and those who hate his beliefs, reject it.

A few leading Western critics such as Coleridge, I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot and Herbert Read have made an in-depth analysis of the complex question of poetry and belief though they have not been able to arrive at unanimous conclusions. The problem of the relationship between poetry and belief can be viewed from two different angles. Should a poet have faith in what he says? The common opinion is that no poet will versify an idea which he does not believe. But there have been poets who have made such attempts in some poems atleast. Wordsworth, for example, in his poem Ode on the Intimations of Immortality, has given a poetic garb to Plato's theory of pre-natal existence. On being asked if he believed in the unChristian doctrine, he is reported to have replied that he was only interested in transforming it into a poem. But the more important question, about poetry and belief is if the reader should have faith in the doctrine embodied in a poem in order to appreciate it. Whereas many might have thought in the past that such a belief on the part of the reader is essential, now there are critics who aver that it cannot be a pre-requisite.

Coleridge, particularly interested in the nature of poetic experience, felt that at the time of reading a poem one achieves "a willing suspension of disbelief". Discussing the subject

in "The Study of poetry" and "Literature and Science" Matthew Arnold argues that poetry has to serve as a kind of objectless religion which can give us the emotional satisfaction without demanding the commitment. Poetry says what it says only provisionally in order to inculcate sufficient make-believe belief to produce the emotional effect which our psychological needs have a right to demand of the poetic occasion. Arnold makes it clear that the poet need not fear any clash between the seeming beliefs in his poem and either the truths of science, the seeming beliefs presented in other poems, or the beliefs of his reader.

Tending to locate the poem in the reader's response to it, I. A. Richards claims that it is not what the poem says but what it is that counts. In his *Science and Poetry*, he argues that poetry is effective because it is composed of "pseudostatements", which may be entertained in a way different from unpoetic statements which can be referred to empirical evidence. The poem's value is to be found in the nature of the right response to it.

"For it would seem evident that poetry which has been built upon firm and definite beliefs about the world: *The Divine Comedy* or *Paradise Lost*, or Donne's *Divine Poems*, or Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, or Hardy's *The Dynasts* must appear differently to readers who do and readers who do not hold similar beliefs. Yet in fact most readers, and nearly all good readers, are very little disturbed by even a direct opposition between their beliefs and beliefs of the poet. Lucretius and Virgil, Euripides and Aeschylus, we currently assume, are equally accessible, given the necessary scholarship to a Roman Catholic, to a Buddhist and to a confirmed skeptic. Equally accessible in the sense that these different readers, after due study, may respond in the same way to the poetry and arrive at similar judgements

about it. And when they differ, their divergences will commonly not be a result of their different positions with regard to the doctrines of the authors, but are more likely to derive from other causes - in their temperaments and personal experience."¹ According to him, we are neither aware of a disbelief nor voluntarily suspending it while reading poetry. The question of belief or disbelief, in the intellectual sense never arises when we are reading well. If it arises either through the poet's fault or our own, it means we have for the moment ceased to be reading poetry and have become theologians or moralists or others interested in a different type of activity.

In T.S. Eliot's view, the poet borrows his beliefs from his environment and in the poem deals with how it feels for one to hold them. He need neither create his beliefs nor defend them. His concern is not with the beliefs themselves but with their emotional equivalents. In his essay on Dante, Eliot asserts that "there is a distant pleasure in enjoying poetry when one does not share the beliefs; analogous to the pleasure of 'mastering' other man's philosophical systems". But his prejudice against Shelley becomes evident when he unconvincingly argues that beliefs must be fairly mature and that when we read Shelley, "the puerile" beliefs obtrude upon us and block our attempt to read the poetry sympathetically as poetry. Eliot's dichotomy between the beliefs in the poem and the poetry in the poem is not acceptable to Allen Tate and Cleanth Brooks, who contend that, the beliefs should be held in the context and should not present themselves out of context as ideas.

It will be fruitful to examine Bharatidasan's poetry in the light of these observations. In his case, we can be certain that he expressed in poetry only what he believed absolutely. His ideas might have been borrowed from Periyār

E.V. Ramasamy, Karl Marx, Bharati and other thinkers, but when he gave them a poetic rendering, he was inspired by his unshakable faith in them. He claimed that to be a propagandist was his duty as well as right :

"To propagandize one's findings
Is the prerogative of man;
Other creatures are denied
This honour unique
Absolutely, nay, unquestionably."²

He believed that a man who sacrifices his principles because of fear, or for the sake of self-aggrandisement is a beast, lower than the lowest of beings. In his case, therefore, what matters is to find out where and how he succeeds in converting doctrine into literature.

One of Bharatidasan's basic beliefs is that in Tamilnadu the Brahmins, a minority community, lead a happy life at the expense of the majority who have for a long time been kept under subjugation by wily means. He never hesitates to express this whenever he gets an opportunity. In *Kurñcittittu*,

Sivanandan says : "See me punish those
That do dare to denigrate the Brahmin :
Of Brahma's creations Brahmins are the best.
First they came from the four-faced creator ;
From his shoulder came the ruling clan ;
Infamous was the birth of merchant from waist ;
Aren't you, treacherous Tampirān, a low - born
Lout coming as you do from Brahma's leg ?
Retaliates Tampirān in anger redoubled :
"Can the face be a fair place of birth, fool ?
Will shoulder be a life - giving womb, villain ?

"Others shall move round them like mill-cattle, my
friend!"

"What did the good-hearted Jesus great say? my
fiancee!"

"Oh! 'the temple means a heart filled with love,
my friend!"⁵

The poet's belief that the Hindus and Christians constructed temples and insisted on idol-worship just to exploit the masses finds poetic expression in a series of questions and answers exchanged between a wise lady and an innocent man. He achieves disinterestedness and objectivity by admiring Christ and praising his words. Though a number of rhymes and alliterations are used in this melodious piece, almost all the words are carefully chosen and do the task entrusted to them. The strategy he employs to attack Hinduism indirectly by holding it responsible for the ills of the Christianity as practised in India pays rich dividends.

Another favourite notion of the Tamil poet was that the Northerners who came to the South and settled here indulged in a concerted move to suppress the grandeur that was Tamil. He would not fail to mention this even in his poems on natural scenes. In *Kuzhiccittittu*, he writes,

The foxes that speak
Tamil mixed with Sanskrit
Don't know the northern tongue
Nor do they live by it.
They that claim it
As their mother tongue
Live by Tamil alone;
The dogs that can't survive
By the northern tongue
Why should they bark Tamil words?

In the north, none exists
 Supporting Tamil ; but
 To welcome, to cherish
 The northern word here
 In the land of Tamils
 There are Tampirāns of mutts
 And cowardly Pandits of
 Pure Tamil obsessed with
 Rice for their stomachs.⁶

In such places, the poet's indignation is evident; but it does not find a poetic garb. When he calls the lovers of Sanskrit 'foxes' and 'dogs,' his argument loses its force and persuasive power.

In a short poem called "Oh, moon" (Nilavē) he presents the same argument successfully.

Oh! moon! tell me what happened in the past!
 Tell me the truth!
 Didn't mother Nature foster you and Tamil felicitous
 Feeding with milk?
 Did not Tamil help the northern tongue?
 Is it just to be dumb?
 Did not Tamil rule the sea-surrounded earth?
 Or was it the tongue of refugees?
 Oh, moon! tell me what happened in the past!
 After the advent of the Aryans,
 What did they do, what stealthy deeds,
 To root out the gold that was Tamil?
 This is what I ask you.
 Oh, moon! tell me what happened in the past!⁷

The poet is of the view that all the facts about attempts to dump Tamil in the past have been suppressed. Only the moon should have known the truth! All the traces

of evidence have been wiped out. The poet's love for Tamil, his anger at the harm done to it, his agony, disappointment, frustration, and helplessness caused by the situation are all fused together and the poem becomes a moving one, achieving a pathetic grandeur and never turning sentimental. Whereas his vehemence fails to produce the desired effect in many poems on Tamil and its detractors, his grief expressed in a subdued manner in this short poem does it.

Though Bharatidasan had composed poems on Lord Subrahmanya in his early years, he became an atheist after coming into close contact with the Dravidian Movement and started writing anti-god and anti-religious pieces. This idea is also expressed in a fearless manner. In a poem called, "God has a tail" he says,

The God invisible is a black monkey
 with a hook tied to its tail,
 From where hangs the donkey named religion
 to whose tail the miscreant called caste
 Clinging like a bat fires crackers ;
 this is the view of theist gluttons.
 Before the world is burnt up
 if the tail is cut off
 The God will lose his load;
 the endless fires of caste and religion
 Will be destroyed for ever.
 This is my view.
 Oh, my very prosperous nation ! ^a

The atrocities perpetrated by religionists in the name of God are mentioned here in a humorous manner. But we are not able to derive any sublime aesthetic experience from the poem. The "black monkey," "donkey" and the "mischievous boy" have not helped the poet achieve the poetic effect aimed at. Even the widely admired poem

'God disappeared' cannot claim unqualified success. The old argument that there should be one who has created everything and the old reply that then someone should have created God are repeated in this poem where the protagonist heroically declares that he is not frightened of God. The ironic outbursts here and there do not add much to the total poetic effect.

If we look genuine poems embodying atheistic ideas we should go to the twin songs entitled, "A Lullaby for the Male Child" and "A Lullaby for the Female Child." In the first, the poet sings,

Declaring that every event is His deed
they swallow others' possessions,
As if they were sweets delicious,
assuring others of God's protection,
Asking them to sweat and labour
till they drop down dead.
To show these wastrels the might
Of men's—shoulders be your mission;
Sleep, my honey; my Tamil pura, sleep.⁹

Bharatidasan's choice expressions here enable him to expose successfully the self-centred religionists who deceive the gullible majority. In the second poem, a general attack on the common superstitions is followed by a denunciation of the caste system leading to a subtle condemnation of the blind faith in God.

You, a box of Camphor, whose fragrance
drives away the foul smell of folly!
A lady great, a lamp bright
which dispels the darkness of caste!
The holy humbugs turn the knife
in the wounds of the innocent;

You are born to slay them shedding
 fire from your eyes !
 Joy incarnate ! you have come
 to uplift women incorrigible
 With blind belief in divinity ! Image of reason !
 You are to be a revolutionary
 To end the shameful cowardly faith
 in all being God's deeds.
 You will reject the practice of funding
 the gang of plotting gourmands
 In a place mistakenly called temple !
 Being ashamed of those wooing cowardung as God,
 Sleep, my darling ! with a smile you sleep ! ¹⁰

Choosing one of the least sophisticated literary forms the lullaby, which is not suspected to offer scope for propaganda, the poet, by subtle means, has been able to give poetic shape to his pet notions regarding God, religion and exploitation in the name of God by unscrupulous men in a manner that will put even sincere religionists to shame.

When he writes about the Aryan - Dravidian differences, attacks God and religion, expresses his love for Tamil, when he eulogises communism and socialism, when he advocates widow - remarriage or castigates child - marriage, we do come across many poems in which "the palpable designs upon the reader" are too evident. But then it cannot be denied that he has penned a considerable number of poems in which through the use of profound techniques, very often a series of glowing metaphors, doctrine is presented as "felt thought in the proper emotional context". This is the reason why critics as varied as Professor K. Swaminathan, Pi. Sri, Va. Ra., Thiru. Vi. Ka. and Jeevanandam could experience his poetry intensely and speak of it with equal gusto.

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SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN BHARATIDASAN'S POEMS

Prof. MEENAKSHI MURUGARATHANAM

INTRODUCTION : SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN LITERATURE

Social Consciousness is a term widely used in the field of literary criticism in Tamil Nadu during the twentieth century. Several pieces of literary products popularly approved and appreciated are condemned as not worth the name by a small group of literary critics. It is ironical since the criticism against popular literature is that it functions against the interests of the society while the society itself seems to favour it. Does this mean that society is not able to distinguish between good and bad, or, that it is not concerned about the future of its own literature and countrymen? To some extent this is true since as Sir Winston Churchill seems to have remarked on an occasion, people are in a sense comparable to a thread or a string that has to be led by a needle or hand if it has to reach any destination. It also implies that it can be drawn in the

See papers by G.R. Balakrishnan, Ilamaram and Ayothi—Ed.

direction of the hand that holds it. This remark and the subsequent implication obviously are not meant to degrade the intelligence of the people but rather to point out the gullibility, vulnerability and feasibility of the emotions of the mob that can effectively be handled by a clever and clear-headed statesman. Since literature is an equally powerful weapon, the gullible readers can easily be drawn towards the values portrayed in it. These are the two factors - the power of literature and the average readers' emotional feasibility—that awake the cry for social consciousness in literature, lest literature should drag the society into degeneration.

MOTIVATION BEHIND BHARATIDASAN'S WORKS

Bharatidasan belonged to the milieu that suffered political and social perturbation and was motivated to work for the betterment of the society. His aim became all the more precise and poignant due to the influence of the Self Respect Movement. Except for a very few pieces that were written during the rudimentary stages of his evolution into a poet, all his works are products of social consciousness.

THE PURVIEW OF THE PAPER—UNIQUE FEATURES OF BHARATIDASAN'S POEMS

Social consciousness is a term that covers a wide range of topics and many of the 20th century Tamil poets can claim to possess it in their works. So, only those features which are strikingly individualistic and which to a certain extent can be claimed as unique to Bharatidasan are presented here.

SIMPLICITY AND VARIETY OF THEMES

The very first factor to be mentioned is the wide range of the topics. His choice of themes are not restricted to the popular, commonly coveted social themes. Most of

the poets labelled as writers with social consciousness write mainly and mostly about poverty, social injustices, the atrocity of the haves over the have-nots, corruption, evils of dowry system, subordination of women and other such widely talked about and much publicized social evils. But Bharatidasan's views are so firmly rooted on the ground that ordinary mundane things form the subject matter of his poems. The long list includes the cartpuller, the shepherd, the weaver, the tiller, the factory worker, the blacksmith, the wood cutter, the flower vendor, the basket weaver, the postman, the hill tribesman, the hand pounder, the painter, the stringhopper vendor, the evils of coffee and tobacco, libraries, journals, film industry, Tamil stage, the condition of indigeneous music, etc. In one piece he has even enlisted the articles to be carried while going for a tour. Even pumpkin, and the habit of chewing betel leaves have found a place in his poems.

RATIONALISM

The factor that stands foremost in the works of Bharatidasan is rationalism. It is the force that motivates him, the axis that connects his themes and the thread that unites his thoughts. He asserts that irrational writings can achieve nothing.

“உள்ள பகுத்தறிவுக் கொவ்வாத ஏடுகளால்
எள்ளை அசைக்க இயலாது” .

சஞ்சீவி பர்வதத்தின் சாரல் 2

His characters not only voice his opinions but also act accordingly. In one of his poems entitled 'Marriage in the Mango Grove' when the hero *Kuppan* proposes marriage, the heroine *Vaici* reveals the fact that she is a widow. She explains that she was married at a very early age and has

lost her husband. She asks *Kuppan* whether he has the courage to marry her. Kuppan is left with a dilemma. His love for Vañci encourages him to marry her. But his mind conditioned by the traditional views hesitates to plunge into action. He thinks of the possible reactions of his relatives and neighbours to such a marriage. He knows that he may have to lose the ancestral property and may even be turned into an outcast for disobeying social customs. But such thoughts prevail in his mind only for a short time. He is convinced of the appropriateness of marrying a girl whom he loves and the foolishness of avoiding a marriage of mutual love and jilting a girl for no fault of hers. In this piece we find a very practical situation wherein a conflict arises between social custom and personal opinion. The hero's inability to come to a sudden decision is only human and his faltering and wavering are only natural and realistic. The significant factor is that he decides to marry her not out of lust or any other selfish motive but purely on a rational analysis of the situation. To decide at once would have been an impulsive act. To have backed upon the marriage would have been cowardice and total inconsideration of the feelings of the girl. But he does neither. He calmly thinks, weighs in his mind the pros and cons of the marriage and then comes to a decision. He condemns the practice of letting the youth of child-widows wither in the heat of social customs.

Only such a rationalistic approach to social problems can bring a lasting and stable change. Impulsive and thoughtless plunge into the forward current solely on emotional grounds will not only gradually lose momentum and turn into a temporary act but will also end in repentance and repulsion. Any social change needs a conviction arrived at after calm thinking and a rationalistic approach. If all the forefathers who framed the laws of social ethics had been rationalistic, many of the present social injustices would not have come into vogue.

EQUALITY OF SEXES

It is again the spirit of rationalism that demands equal rights for men and women. Bharatidasan is indignant towards the society that denies the right of remarriage to widows when widowers are not only sanctioned the right but also encouraged and at times even forced by his "well wishers" to remarry. He states that just like a man so also a woman, must be allowed to remarry :

துணைவி இறந்தபின் வேறு துணைவியைத்
தேடுமோர் ஆடவன்போல் - பெண்ணும்
துணைவன் இறந்தபின் வேறு துணைதேடச்
சொல்லிடுவோம் புலிமேலே

‘கைம்மைப் பழி 2

Sex discrimination is a social injustice but it will be understood and avoided only if the person concerned, be it a man or woman, thinks and acts rationally. Blind faith in religion and strict adherence to social taboos will prevent even an otherwise intelligent, understanding and sympathetic person from comprehending the social problem in the proper perspective. Bharatidasan regrets that people who care for and look after the needs of pet animals and birds are deaf, dumb and blind towards the sufferings of the widows :

கூண்டிற் கிளிவளர்ப்பார் - இல்லத்தில்
குக்கல் வளர்த்திடுவார்
வேண்டியது தருவார் - அவற்றின்
விருப்பத்தை அறிந்தே,
மாண்டவன் மாண்டபின்னர் - அவனின்
மனைவியின் உள்ளத்தை
ஆண்டையர் காண்பதில்லை - ஐயகோ
அடிமைப் பெண்களியே.

— கைம்மைக் கொடுமை

Similarly his poems on the atrocity of child marriage, marrying a young girl to a very old man, a father having no reservations against enjoying marital life when his widowed young daughter is pining over her loss at the same house are all evidences of his social consciousness based on rational thinking.⁴

FAMILY PLANNING FOR MARITAL PLEASURE

Again it is his rationalistic views that motivate him to write poems that advocate family planning. Herein we find a mingling of social consciousness and an inclination towards enjoyment of sex. Not only the consequences of having too many children to support but also the human nature seeking sexual pleasure is behind his advice to limit the family to suit one's resources. As usual he places before the readers solid and sound arguments. What is wrong in it? Let us find a way to prevent pregnancy but continue to enjoy sexual pleasures. Why do men beget children? To die? To suffer? Is it an evil to prevent unwanted pregnancy and children?"

காதலுக்கு வழிவைத்துக் கருப்பாதை சாத்தக்
கதவொன்று கண்டறிவோம் இதிலென்ன குற்றம்?
சாதலுக்கோ பிள்ளை? தவிப்பதற்கோ பிள்ளை?
சந்தான முறை நன்று. தவிர்க்குமுறை தீதோ?
-- தவிப்பதற்கோ பிள்ளை?

This may be shocking to the traditional minds soaked in the views that praise renunciation and advocate sex only for procreation. But though it may be detested on personal and religious grounds, yet it cannot be questioned on humanitarian or rational grounds.

THE CONCEPT OF FATE CONCEIVED AS A BARRIER

His spirit of rationalism is such that it does not spare even Gods and religion. In fact he is not as much against Gods as against the idiocies and atrocities committed in the

name of God and religion. He is furious to note the concept of Fate standing in the way of social commitment. On one side God's omnipotence and immense grace are praised. On the other side poverty and sufferings are accepted as one's fate written by God according to one's doings in the previous birth. The concept of Fate lends a helping hand to shun the duties and avoid one's social commitments to the fellow human beings. All religions preach ecumenical sharing of resources but in practice men sit tight-lipped with clenched hands when others suffer, blaming their fate ! Bharatidasan is so infuriated at this attitude that he fumes : 'If it is God's will and order that one should toil carrying clothes on donkey's back whereas one should enjoy the riches acquired by force, then who is it who helps the toiling man to progress? God or the donkey?'

உடைசுமந்த கழுதை கொண்டு
 உழைத்ததோர் நிலைமையும்
 உடைமை முற்றும் படையை ஏவி
 அடையும் மன்னர் நிலைமையும்
 கடவுளாணை யாயின் அந்த
 உடைவெளுக்கும் தோழரைக்
 கடவுள் தான் முன்னேற்றுமோ தன்
 கழுதை தான் முன்னேற்றுமோ?

—தளை அறு!⁵

POINTS TO PONDER

He is not satisfied with picturising the problem or even presenting a solution. He goes a step further and presents his conclusions arrived at after rational thinking. What is more, he also gives training to the inquisitive and enthusiastic minds by posing several questions in a poem. The full length of the poem is sprinkled with questions put in couplets containing contradictory values. 'Is it good to live peacefully or to fight? Is it correct to live united or diversified

by castes? Which is more desirable? Donating money to build up education or build temples? Which is love? Charity at the doorstep or wasting money in religious institutions?"

சாதியால் உலகம் தழைப்பது நன்றா?
சமயபேதம் வளர்த்தே தளர்வது நன்றா?
மாந்தரிற் சாதி வகுப்பது சரியா?
மக்கள் ஒரே குலமாய் வாழ்வது சரியா?
கோயிலுக் கென்றே கொடுத்திடல் அறமா?
கோடி கொடுக்கும் கல்வி தேடிடல் அறமா?
வாயிலில் வறியவரை வளர்த்திடல் அன்போ?
மடத்தில் வீணிற் பொருளைக் கொடுத்திடல் அன்போ?
- ஆய்ந்து பார்! ⁶

An absorbing mind will definitely be sowed with the seeds of rationalistic thinking on reading his poem.

PRAISE OF HUMANISM

His unshakable faith in man—the underlying spirit of Renaissance and Romanticism—is the culmination of his rationalism. In a poem addressed to a younger brother, he says, "We have seen people ruling the world with humanity. Have faith in humanity. The sword of humanity and the shoulders that hold it can conquer Heaven. This faith will enrich your life."

மானிடத் தன்மையைக் கொண்டு—பலர்
வையத்தை ஆள்வது நாம் கண்டதுண்டு.
மானிடத் தன்மையை நம்பி - அதன்
வன்மையினாற் புவி வாழ்வு கொள் தம்பி
மானிடம் என்றொரு வாளும் - அதை
வசத்தில் அடைந்திட்ட உன்னிரு தோளும்
வானும் வசப்பட வைக்கும்—இதில்
வைத்திடும் நம்பிக்கை வாழ்வைப் பெருக்கும்
—மானிட சக்தி ⁷

OMNIPRESENCE OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

This spirit of rationalism that is all pervasive in his poems is the factor that makes his social consciousness unique, new, impressive and fruitful. The resultant other factors are modernism, social reform, nationalism, democracy, and love for language, which render contemporary social and utilitarian value to his works.

IN LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THOUGHTS

Even his outbursts over the degradation of Tamil and his enthusiastic call for its upliftment is the result of the contemporary social problem, namely, the destruction of indigenous culture and lack of equal opportunities for the regional languages. His staunch faith in the self-respect ideology is also based not on emotional grounds but on rationalistic analysis of the social injustice that denies equal opportunities to the members of the society.

IN NATURE POEMS

Even while speaking about Nature, his mind is set upon the welfare of the society. In his poem on peacock he remarks that Nature bestowed a long neck for the peacock but a very short one for women who are otherwise as beautiful as a peacock so that they cannot peep into the neighbouring houses out of curiosity. Though his intention is to make a dig at woman's nature, yet he does not stop with that. He observes that the narrow mindedness and gossiping tendency of women are the result of their being confined to homes and not allowed to broaden their mind and outlook by mingling with the outside world:

புலிக் கொன்றுரைப்பேன் புருஷர் கூட்டம்
பெண்களை ஆதிப் பெருநாள் தொடங்கித்

திருந்தா வகையிற் செலுத்தலால் அவர்கள்
சுருங்கிய உள்ளம் விரிந்தபா டில்லையே

—மயில்*

IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Even in his songs for the children and youngsters his concentration lies in the upliftment of society: "Eat when you feel hungry. Have taste in music. Think of your country. Help the poor. The liar is a coward. The encroacher is a bandicoot. Only that person who cares for the welfare of the entire world is an intelligent human being."

பசிவந்த போதுணவுண்ணு - நீ
பாடிடும் பாட்டினிலே சுவைநண்ணு
வசித்திடும் நாட்டினை எண்ணு - மிக
வறியவர்க்காம் உபகாரங்கள் பண்ணு
பொய்யுரைப்போன் பயங்காளி - பிறர்
பூமிசுரண்டிடுவோன் பெருச்சாளி
வையக மக்கள் எல்லோரும் - நலம்
வாய்த்திட எண்ணிடுவோன் அறிவாளி
— பிள்ளைக்கு நீதி*

IN PICTURESQUE SPEECHES

Even in his similes we come across his concern for the toiling masses that are alienated from the fruits of their labour. In his minor epic entitled "The Revolutionary Poet", the hero says, "The emotion that springs in my heart on seeing you, surpasses portrayal in words. Consider the happiness of the poverty-stricken hungry souls, who ordinarily fail to get a mouthful of gruel even after hard work, on happening to see a potful of cooked rice. Only that joy can be compared to mine on seeing you."

உனைக் காணும் போதினிலே என்னுளத்து
ஊறிவரும் உணர்ச்சியினை எழுதுதற்கு
நினைத்தாலும் வார்த்தை கிடைத்திடுவதில்லை
நித்திய தரித்திரராய் உழைத்துழைத்துத்

தினைத்துணையும் பயனின்றிப் பசித்த மக்கள்
 சிறிதுகூழ் தேடுங்கால் பானை ஆரக்
 கனத்திருந்த வெண்சோறு காணும் இன்பம்
 கவின்நிலவே உனைக்காணும் இன்பம் தானோ
 —புரட்சிக்கவி 10

THE BEAUTIFUL BOWL—AESTHETICS IN LITERATURE

The temple is primarily a place of worship. But the builder takes great pains not only to maintain its sanctity but also to make it beautiful. The home is mainly a living place. But the features are planned not only for dwelling purpose but also for comfort, happiness and enjoyment. The vase is a container of flowers, but serves that purpose better only when it is shaped beautifully. The door is meant for privacy and security but a plain panel is a rarity when compared to the carved and engraved doors of various materials. These examples show that human nature delights in creating beauty even in objects of utility. No wonder Art is made to serve both the purposes! A balanced and nutritious meal turns all the more appetising and tasty with appealing colour and flavour. Similarly, instructions are devoured by the heart with delight when given in the form of Art. In case of Bharatidasan's poems also, the surprising factor is that in spite of being mostly propagandastic in character his works do not lack the aesthetic beauty essential for literature. The reason is, art is a matter of heart and the source and destination of the stream of Bharatidasan's themes are human hearts.

FOUNDATION OF AESTHETICS—EMOTION AND IMAGINATION

The main factor that distinguishes art from other fields is the presence of emotion and imagination, the major resources of aesthetics. Bharatidasan's poems are packed

with emotions appealing to the common man, particularly to the proletariat who form the major portion of the society. His songs can ignite the fire of emotion; can electrify the minds into action; and can draw the reasoning minds towards resolution and they are soaked in thought-provoking and emotive epithets. The poems entitled, 'The Tilted balance,' 'The world is yours' and, 'The Altar' are good examples.

Dig a pit, Go down into it
Go down! Go down!
You insect, that falls down and down!
Bow down your head! Lower your face!
Stand with drooping shoulder and lips.
Constrict the lowly mind, body and spirit.
Lick your food and call it good!
Stoop, Stoop, Stoop lower than a dog,
Bend and lick the floor.
Constrain yourself like a tortoise within its shell
You small insect, You filthy toad!
Cry, bemoan, fear, bend, blabber
Oh blot of utter darkness!
Oh granule of shattered nerves!
You are a man—not clay
Awake! Arise, and think!
Raise your shoulders, lift your face,
Straighten your moustache in upward gaze.
Light up the world in the glow of your eyes
Beam with laughter and lead the world
Upward climb, up! up! up!
Stand aloft and view the world below
Peer at the world's people
Peer at the human expansion
Peer at your brethren battalion
Enlarge your wisdom, Expand,
Engulf the people with a broadened outlook
Lead the world! Lead all alike!

பள்ளம் பறிப்பாய், பாதா எத்தின்
 அடிப்புறம் நோக்கி அழுந்துக ! அழுந்துக !
 பள்ளந்தனில் விழும் பிள்ளைப் பூச்சியே,
 தலையைத் தாழ்த்து ! முகத்தைத் தாழ்த்து !
 தோளையும் உதட்டையும் தொங்கவை ! ஈன
 உளத்தை, உடலை, உயிரைச் சுருக்கு !
 நக்கிக்குடி ! அதை நல்லதென்று சொல் !
 தாழ்ந்து தாழ்ந்து தாழ்ந்த நாயினும்
 தாழ்ந்து போ ! குனிந்து தரையைக் கௌவி
 ஆமையைப் போலே அடங்கி ஒடுங்கு !
 பொட்டுப் பூச்சியே, புன்மைத் தேரையே,
 அழு ! இளி ! அஞ்சு ! குனி ! பிதற்றுக்
 கன்னங் கருத்த இருட்டின் கறையே,
 தாங்கும் நரம்பின் தூளே ! இதைக் கேள்;
 மனிதரில் நீயுமோர் மனிதன் ; மண்ணன்று !
 இமை திற ! எழுந்து நன்றாய் எண்ணுவாய் !
 தோளை உயர்த்துச், சுடர்முகம் தூக்கு !
 மீசையை முறுக்கி மேலே ஏற்று !
 விழித்த விழியில் மேதினிக் கொளியெய் !
 நகைப்பை முழக்கு ! நடத்து லோகத்தை !
 ஏறு விடாமல் ! ஏறு மேன் மேல் !
 ஏறி நின்று பாரடா எங்கும் !
 எங்கும் பாரடா இப்புவி மக்களைப்
 பாரடா உனது மானிடப் பரப்பைப்
 பாரடா உன்னுடன் பிறந்த பட்டாளம் !
 அறிவை விரிவு செய் ! அகண்டமாக்கு !
 விசாலப் பார்வையால் விழுங்கு மக்களை !
 “புவியை நடத்து பொதுவில் நடத்து !”

— உலகம் உன்னுடையது !!

THE TILTED BALANCE

To live and to enjoy?
 All have equal right
 When many without food grumble
 Is it just that a few enjoy and swindle
 When will the whole world happily live ?

THE ALTAR

If the poor report, pangs of hunger
 'You are a sinner' points the finger !
 Religious dogmas are extended straight
 If argued against, they'll call it a fight !
 If you stand expressing your grief and pray,
 "It's all God's test," they'll say !
 By wealth they'll win over your will
 By evil preachings they'll daily kill !

வாழ்வதிலும் நலம் சூழ்வதிலும் புவி
 மக்களெல்லாம் ஒப்புடையார் !

... ..

கூழுக்குப் பற்பலர் வாடவும் சிற்சிலர்
 கொள்ளையடிப் பதும் நீதியோ - புவி
 வாழ்வது தான் எந்தத் தேதியோ ?

— சாய்ந்த தராசு 12

பாதிக்குதே பசி என்றுரைத்தால், செய்த
 பாபத்தைக் காரணம் காட்டுவார் - மத
 வாதத்தை உம்மிடம் நீட்டுவார் - பதில்
 ஒதி நின்றால் படை காட்டுவார்
 வாதனை சொல்லி வணங்கி நின்றால் தெய்வ
 சோதனை என்றவர் சொல்லுவார் - பணச்
 சாதனையால் உம்மை வெல்லுவார் - கெட்ட
 போதனையால் தினம் கொல்லுவார்.

— பலிபீடம் 13

Anyone who reads the passages quoted above is bound to get emotionally involved in the poet's aesthetics!

DIRECT ADDRESS

His technique of writing in second person that results in rendering the effect of direct addressing of the readers, goes a long way in making the poem highly readable and

interesting. It helps the readers to identify themselves with the protagonist, who is a proletariat. Here is an example :

To cultivate you,
Oh, beautiful orchards,
How many comrades
Shed blood in your roots !
Shedding fear they'll rise together
No more begging hereafter
A happy life on one's own valour
This is our word of honour :

சித்திரச் சோலைகளே உமை நன்கு
திருத்த இப் பாரினிலே - முன்னர்
எத்தனை தோழர்கள் ரத்தம் சொரிந்தன
ரோ ! உங்கள் வேரினிலே
கிலியை விடுத்துக் கிளர்ந்தெழுவார் இனிக்
கெஞ்சும் உத்தேசம் இல்லை—சொந்த
வலிவுடையார் இன்ப வாழ்வுடையார் இந்த
வார்த்தைக்கு மோசமில்லை

—நீங்களே சொல்லுங்கள் ¹³

A PROPORTIONATE MIXTURE OF OPPOSITES

A harmonious blending of artistic and scientific temperament, ideal and practical life, emotional and intellectual themes, imaginative and pragmatic outlook, in short a balanced view of life based on rationalistic thinking forms the nucleus of his outpourings and hence his poems are full of social consciousness as well as aesthetic beauty.

CAPTIVATING WORDS

His strong diction is a factor of additional attraction to the readers. Laying bare the hidden truth, pointing out unflinchingly at the source of social problems and filled with satire and sarcasm they are not words but sharp swords.

Oh Landlords, listen to my words
 Just and fair, ere you own your lands
 To draw water. to make fire by,
 to reach the air and the sky
 Why let everyone? why do you snatch
 the welfare of the rich?
 One piece is grabbed, four still are there
 If that too is grabbed, it is only fair!
 The richman's pot belly and the riches are there
 Let the labourer die, who does care?
 "The breeze, the sky, the water, the fire
 All the four elements are free to all.
 So also land" if a senseless man claims
 To defend you, great heads are there!
 What do the poor have? only their chappals!
 Oh Great Mother land', Do you hear?

நிலமானும் மனிதரே நிலமானுமுன் எனது
 நேரான சொற்கள் கேட்பீர்
 நீர் மொள்ளவும் தீ வளர்க்கவும் காற்றுதனை
 நெடு வெளியை அடைவதற்கும்
 யாருக்கும் உரிமை ஏன்? பறிபோகலாகுமோ
 பணக்காரர் நன்மையெல்லாம்?
 பறித்திட்ட நிலம் ஒன்று பாக்கியோ நான்குண்டு
 பறித்துத் தொலைத்துவிட்டால்
 நலமுண்டு பணக்காரர் வயிறுண்டு தொழிலாளர்
 நஞ்சுண்டு சாகட்டுமே!
 நற்காற்று வானம் நீர் அனல் பொதுவடைந்ததால்
 நன்செய்யும் பொதுவே எனத்
 தலையற்ற முண்டங்கள் சொன்னாற் பெரும் பெரும்
 தலையெலாம் உம்மில் உண்டு
 தாழ்ந்தவர்க் கேதுண்டு காற்செருப்பேயுண்டு
 தகை கொண்ட அன்னை நிலமே

AUDACIOUS OUTPOURINGS

His moral courage and convictions result in such audacious emotional outbursts that the enthusiasm turns contagious and the reading causes intellectual revolutions in the benevolent spirits :

Is it fair to call the lazy as 'Saints' ?
 There are people who steal before our eyes
 Our countrymen honour them as hermits !
 There are people who write foolish things
 Our people respect them as poets
 To utter the first letter of their names
 The intellect will vanish into darkness.

உழைக்காத வஞ்சகர்தம்மை - மிக
 உயர்வான சாதுக்கள் என்பது நன்றே
 விழித்திருக்கும் போதிலேயே - நாட்டில்
 விளையாடும் திருடரைச் சாமிஎன்கின்றார்
 அழியாத முடத்தனத்தை - ஏட்டில்
 அழகாக வரைந்திடும் பழிகாரர் தம்மை
 முழுதாய்ந்த பாவலர் என்பார் - இவர்
 முதலெழுத் தோதினும் மதியிருட்டாகும்.
 — வாழ்வில் உயர்வு கொள் 10

EVER-TRUE PICTURES

His righteous indignation at the degradation of Tamil films is painfully true even today :

Not a single film reveals Tamil's greatness
 Not a single picture consists of lofty ideals
 North Indian dress ! North Indian music !
 Telugu songs, in the voice of Tamils !
 Sanskrit slogans, English orations,
 Unspeakable Hindustani ! obscene dances !
 Apart from these in a film altogether
 Ammāmi and Attimpēr are the only Tamil terms

Gods, Cardboard Crowns, paper flower orchards
 Imitation pearls, breath-taking shows.
 Bestowing blessings, Lord Shiva comes and goes.
 To the chaste womenfolk, sufferings come and go.
 With loud background music, love and sorrow follow.
 Saints and temples form the essence of the show.
 Film producers, the heartless leeches
 Benefit by sucking the blood of poor creatures
 Due to the destructive producers' whims.
 The heart that once craved for films
 Now thinks it is better the devil disappears.

ஒன்றேனும் தமிழருமை உணர்த்துவதாயில்லை
 ஒன்றேனும் உயர்நோக்கம் அமைந்ததுவாயில்லை

.....

வடநாட்டர் போன்ற உடை வடநாட்டார் மெட்டு
 மாத்தமிழர் நடுவினிலே தெலுங்கு கீர்த்தனங்கள்
 வடமொழியில் ஸ்லோகங்கள்! ஆங்கிலப் பிரசங்கம்
 வாய்க்கு வரா இந்துஸ்தான் ஆபாச நடனம்
 அடையும் இவை அத்தனையும் கழித்துப் பார்க்குங்கால
 அத்திம் பேர் அம்மாம் எனும் தமிழ் தான் மீதம்
 கடவுளர்கள் அட்டை முடி காகிதப் பூஞ்சோலை
 கண்ணாடி முத்துவடம் கண் கொள்ளாக் காட்சி
 பரமசிவன் அருள் புரிய வந்து வந்து போவார்
 பதிவிரதைக் கின்னல் வரும் பழையபடி தீரும்
 சிரமமொடு தாளமெண்ணிப் போட்டியிலே பாட்டுச்
 சில பாடி மிருதங்கம் ஆவர்த்தம் தந்து
 வரும் காதல்! அவ்விதமே துன்பம் வரும் போகும்
 மகரிஷிகள் கோயில்குளம் - இவைகள் கதாசாரம்
 இரக்கமற்ற படமுதலாளிக் கெல்லாம் இதனால்
 ஏழைகளின் ரத்தத்தை உறிஞ்சியது லாபம்
 படக்கலை தான் வாராதா—என நினைத்த நெஞ்சம்
 பாழ் படுத்தும் முதலாளி வர்க்கத்தின் செயலால்
 படக்கலையாம் சனியொழிந்தால் பேரதுமென எண்ணும்,
 —தமிழ்நாட்டில் சினிமா 17

Are we to boast of the everlasting contemporaneity of Bharatidasan's themes or to lament over the unchangeable social evils?

SENSE OF HUMOUR

It is a matter of pride and rejoice that such a burning spirit has not lacked a sense of humour. In one of his poems entitled "Why didn't Jesus Come" he says that in a Church the pastor announced that the woman davotees must not wear any ornament and should attend the mass in simple attire. Gents and ladies together detested the church as poison and did not turn up. The pastor reviewed the situation, made a reappraisal of his order and announced that not only the head, ear, nose, neck, arm, chest, fingers and toes but besides these eight also the eyelashes, lips and tongues can be adorned to the wearer's content and that a mirror would also be placed in the church to view oneself. At once the church was thronged by the congretation decked in full. But Alas, "Jesus did not turn up. Oh, my dear nation of Bharat!"

In another poem entitled "The God vanished" he portrays an imaginative dialogue between the protagonist and the God. "It was midnight. All the inmates of the house were asleep. I traversed without any difficulty and reached the world of thoughts. I saw someone approaching. That person loudly exclaimed several times: 'I am God. I am God.' I told him, 'Well, some say there is a God and some others say there is none. I am not bothered in the least.' He said, 'If there was a wall built, then there must be a builder of that wall. Look at the world and understand that I am the creator.' I in turn demanded, 'oh! Mighty God! If it be so then who created you? Show me.' I could not see him any more."

Apart from all these features and factors that make his poems interesting and worthy of reading, one more factor that makes them also popular and praiseworthy is the appropriate blending of the theme, metre and diction of the respective poems.

MELTING MELODIES

His literature was for common man. The general trend of his days was such that the poems were composed by, meant for and listened by ordinary man. Throughout the history of Tamil literature we find a common trend, *ie. whenever* a deep and radical change was expected and planned for, the poets chose popular metres, simple diction and musical renderings. Bharatidasan has chosen themes that are applicable to, can be understood and enjoyed by, common man. His easy diction goes straight to the heart.

The poems are such that either the affected can read them subjectively moved by the emotion portrayed, or, one who is interested in the social problem depicted in that piece, can make use of them to rejuvenate, to propel, to initiate, the sleeping mob. This quality renders *liveliness*, immediacy and spontaneity to the poems. They can be used as dynamites to shatter the rocks of age old views and build a new spring of progressive ideas.

CONCLUSION : SOCIO—AESTHETIC POETRY

In short, the driving force behind his creative talent was his social awareness. The political and social conditions were the propellers. His spirit of rationalism was the fuel. Restricted Nationalism and Modernism acted as wings. The acceleration was given by the self-respect movement. The destination reached was a literature with social consciousness and aesthetic beauty mingled together in proper proportion.

AESTHETICS OF BHARATIDASAN

(With particular reference to The Smile of Beauty)

DR. PADMA SRINIVASAN

In his short preface to his collection of lyrical poetry *The Smile of Beauty* (அழகின் சிரிப்பு), Bharatidasan says: "All nature is beauty. That beauty smiled as lotus, moon, sunbeam and so on The Tamils should learn the art of identifying beauty in the perceptible things and portray that perceived beauty, in their own words. Imitation, native or foreign, should be curbed." He also declares that his 'lyrical ballads' are in simple diction, each poem comprising ten stanzas with hexametre. *The Smile of Beauty* has individual poems on Beauty, Sea, Breeze, Forest, Hillock, River, Lotus, Sun, Sky, Banyan Tree, The Doves, the Parrot, Darkness, the Town, the City, and of course, his favourite subject the Tamil language. The introductory poem, 'Beauty' unlike the others, has only three stanzas and is an exuberant celebration of beauty.

The poet, in his preface, makes use of two words; கண்டவாறு—as perceived, and தாமேயாக—by itself or

by themselves. Prof. Kanakasabapati finds an implied meaning in these two words: a skill to perceive the beauty and a talent to poeticize the perceived beauty. "As it is," tries to paint it "as seen by him." The ambiguity of these two words, says the critic, does not yield to either a romantic, or a realistic or any other exposition.² Such an ambiguity provides ample opportunities for further scrutiny. Hence, this paper is an attempt to find out the aesthetic methodology adopted by Bharatidasan for his, *The Smile of Beauty* by using the western aesthetic conventions.

The word 'aesthetic' is from the Greek 'aistheta' meaning 'things perceptible by senses'; 'aisthetes' denotes, 'one who perceives'. Gradually, the term aesthetic has come to signify something which pertains to the criticism of the beautiful or the theory of taste. The word, Aestheticism which appeared during the nineteenth century, denoted a movement, a cult, or a mode of sensibility. It is "not merely devotion to beauty, but a new conviction of the importance of beauty as compared with—and even in opposition to—other values ... came to stand for certain ideas about life and art—ideas which ... presented a new and serious challenge to more traditional and conventional ideas."³ The movement confers the status of autonomy to art and asserts that art need not serve any other purpose than its own ends. To the aestheticians, art is an end in itself; it should not be didactic, politically committed, propagandist or moral and it need not be evaluated by any other non-aesthetic criteria.

Aestheticism can be treated in three applications:

(1) as view of art

(2) as a view of life, and

(3) as a practical tendency in literature and other arts.

As a view of art, aestheticism corresponds to the doctrine

of 'art for art's sake,' to the movement known as Parnassianism. The practitioners took up many non-personal themes from history, science, philosophy, nature or contemporary life. The cult of poetry was a religion to them; they respected the traditional forms, discarded instruction and settled for delight alone. Walter Pater, the nineteenth century English aesthete, endorses this view, when he observes that art is always "striving to be independent of the mere intelligence, to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject or material."⁴

Bharatidasan is undoubtedly a Parnassian who copiously borrows subject-matter from every walk of life, makes poetry his religion and shows due respect to the ancient poetic structure. But, his concept of art for 'art's sake' seems to encounter a slight variation when he occasionally yields himself to a didactic note. In the opening hymn of *The Smile of Beauty*, the poet luxuriates in the beauty revealed in every aspect of creation. He readily shares this supreme joy with his fellow-men and ends the poem with a categorical pronouncement that there is no suffering, if only you are captivated by Beauty. Beauty, the young belle, cannot wither; nor custom stale her. Such an evergreen Beauty can be seen in the soft splendour of the dawn, on the jubilant dancing surface of the sea, in the irradiance of a flooding light, in the groves, flowers, tender plants and in all those tactile things that impart immense happiness. She is seen spread out as ruby-red dusk in the west and manifests herself as silent beauty in the lone path fringed with huge banyan trees. At the same time, she is found amidst the assembly of parrots that chirp and sing and dance on those trees.

Such an immaculate Beauty blessed him with poetry. Beauty not only reigns in the Vastness of Nature, but also mingles subtly with the human beings. The wondrous

sparkle at the corner of the baby's eye, the rhythmic ballet of the garland-maker's fingers, the proud gait of the farmer with his ploughshare, the golden abundance of the field; all are Beauty's exuberant manifestations. This 'she' has penetrated the poet's being, settled there and made him rich with happiness. The crescendo heightens as the inebriate poet sings: 'I saw her on all the four corners of the world, on the wide sky, on everything, everywhere, on all those animate and inanimate. I saw happiness when I saw her. I saw her fresh in all those that throb with life.' Such an ecstasy is too much for the poet; he has to share this burden of pleasure with his fellowmen. He calls: "O my dear brother! see! She is around you! Train your eyes to spot her! Because, if you surrender to her, your suffering ceases spontaneously."⁵ The poem ends almost with a spiritual message to the suffering humanity that this all-pervasive beauty dispels the dark shadow of suffering. The subjective experience of the poet leads him to introspection; rather, beauty gets herself settled in him, draws him to her motherly lap and nurtures him with the milk of kindness. The Votary of beauty turns to be a humanist. The pure, edifying aesthetic delight itself becomes a forceful message. What Pater says of Wordsworth is true to our poet also: "To him every natural object seemed to possess more or less of a moral or spiritual life, to be capable of a companionship with man, full of expression, of inexplicable affinities and delicacies of intercourse."⁶

The second implication of Aestheticism as 'a view of Life' refers to taking life in the spirit of art and taking art for the betterment of life. The beauty of life, its variety and its dramatic spectacle deserve aesthetic appreciation. To quote Pater again: "While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon, to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes,

strange flowers, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend.⁷ Though the constant flux renders only fleeting sensations, it can also cultivate a quickened, multiplied consciousness, an experience at once intense and varied. Art adds most to such an alert sensitivity. Pater upholds the supremacy of poetic passion: "High passions give one this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, political or religious enthusiasm, or the 'enthusiasm of humanity' Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moment's sake."⁸ This 'Contemplative Aestheticism', as it is called, points to the fact that art must be valued for the immediate impression it affords and not for any after-effects. Then it assumes more moral/spiritual implications, for, ultimately it is the appreciation of people around us. Pater affirms that this is the only course available to mankind to embrace the whole life. He declares: "To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life."⁹

One can identify easily the contemplative aesthetic activity of Bharatidasan in *The Smile Of Beauty*. The rejuvenating throb, the simmering joy and the profound ecstasy stretch out to embrace the entire humanity; then only the contemplative activity gets strengthened. In fact, in his intense aesthetic realization, Bharatidasan converts human beings as similes and metaphors, for his supreme enjoyment of nature. For instance, the poem, *The Sea* celebrates the beauty of the sea with all its variety. The rhythm of the dash of the tides, their reverberating sound and their fast retreat remind the poet of the buoyant, full-spirited school-youth :

The fringed border of the broad sea
At the town's eastern side

Stretched out sand-bed, as mongoose ;
 The dashing waves, like the school-youth
 Rise and fall, rollick and roll.
 See, my brother, see !¹⁰

The dancing waves that rapidly rush towards the shore are seen as the jubilant youth thronging the portals of their schools with deafening noise. At the stroke of the bell, they all withdraw totally to their respective class-rooms. The three words—rise, fall and roll (ஏறும், வீழும், புரண்டும்)—at once juxtapose the incessant activity of the sea and the boisterous activity of the youth. The simile also indicates the creative ability of the poet, of amalgamating disparate experiences. The poet continues to delight us with his aesthetic / artistic experiences, not forgetting to use human metaphors. The calm beyond the tides is likened to the calmness of the society after a revolution. The sea at dawn takes a bath in the yellow showers of the sun and wears an exquisite golden dress. In the night, she removes this gaudy apparel, and goes in for a delicate pearl-like night-dress. The moon-blanching sea with its white foams compel the poet to personify the sea as a comely, young girl.

The Breeze is another splendid poem that rejoices at the breeziness of the tender wind. The poet rues that the people have not at all realized the truth of this mighty Zephyr, who can at once scatter a mountain to pieces and caressingly traverse the soft flower petals. The surprised poet tells the breeze : "I don't see you; but, your movement, even the slightest one, does thrill me!" His immediate analogy is the mother's love. We do see our mothers; but do we 'see' the love? Such a love binds all lives together. The motherly breeze, without any discrimination, embraces all. The sweet Zephyr is no more his mother who cuddles him. She is now the mischievous lass, disturbing his work. The poet presents a pleasant drama to us :

I was writing; there
 You saw the scribbled paper;
 You came there; as usual,
 Gave me love and joy;
 "Why did ye lift the paper?"
 I asked; you said,
 "I dusted it!" Once again
 You gave me love."

To become a poem, the poet probably avers, it needs the cleansing touch of nature. Love should be reciprocal to induce a creative act.

Almost all poems in *The Smile of Beauty* are replete with images that are pregnant with meaning. The Poem *The Forest*, apart from its lively bird and animal images, presents yet another drama that casually brings in the poet's favourite subject—his mother-tongue. His chance encounter with a hunter in the forest makes him learn the Tamil names of the birds.¹² He blesses this 'Tamil-man' who is no more a tribal, but a man of knowledge, the poet's 'guru' who has had his training in the concaves of the forest. The hedonistic aesthetic contemplation of the poet is an affirmation of his sensuousness, and not his sensuality.

The third aspect of Aestheticism, as a practical tendency in literature and art, is a movement to be away from didacticism or from formulating a philosophy of life. The tendency is to stray into the realms of antique or exotic fancy, to place the sensuous, particularly visual imagery, on a high pedestal and to deliberately suppress the subject-matter. The last effect is achieved "by subordinating the precise use of language to the quasi-musical evocation of mood, and by highlighting stylistic and formal devices not merely as appropriate to the matter in hand, but as intriguing in themselves."¹³

One can find these factors aesthetically operated and skilfully executed in *The Smile of Beauty*. The antique and the exotic are evoked in terms of sensuous imagery. The poem *The Hillock* is an epiphany of visual images, packed with a sensuous drama. As the sun sets in the west, the 'hillock-wench' becomes pale and panicky. She stretches out her lean and lanky hands, pathetically calling her beloved

The Sun sets;
The hillock-wench pales; stretches out
Her young, lanky bamboo-hands and
Wails, "O my dear! come, come!"
The shrieking birds echo!
The elephant marches to its den. There
The howling conch of the jackal
Sounds, "Darkness! darkness!"¹⁴

The mourning of the girl seems to reverberate the hillock with booming sound that provokes different responses. The 'Bhaya bhava' or the emotion of fear has been skilfully demonstrated. But the wench has to wait only for two hours to enjoy the splendour of the moon. And how was the hillock, shrouded with darkness? The poet happily dwells in a modern conceit, a favourite one also: The hillock was like a gold-heap behind a dark curtain and the darkness itself was as meaningful as the Tamil words! As the dainty Diana glides over the sky drawing her blue-veil, darkness runs away, helter-skelter. She sportively sprays the white butter that she has churned, over the hillock. Now, the hillock bathed in the buttery moon beams, stands, fearless. What a marvellous sight is this! The poet calls his brethren at once, "come and taste this beauty!" And the rack of clouds that cross the hillock reminds the poet not only of the fermenting palm-wine, but also of the servile minds that fret and fume. The usual practice of the

bards is to glorify the majestic mountains. But, an ordinary hillock has drawn the attention of our poet and receives an exquisite treatment in his hands.

This paper will be incomplete without the mention of Bharatidasan's treatment of an exotic theme, *The Darkness*. Prof. Kanakasabapati observes : "To sing about Darkness only, is something new; for the poets sing together, both light and darkness."¹⁵ We know that darkness itself has been treated as a metaphor by many poets. In the first stanza of the poem, darkness is imaged as a blue-winged bird that softly enfolds the wearied mankind. The poet heartily thanks this darkness, the clarion-call of love. Now, Bharatidasan, as is his usual practice, exalts in a plethora of images, the predominant one being the image of a vivacious girl. Even darkness is not presented in its gloomy, gruesome aspects, but in its benign form. Darkness, the charming, petite young girl, extends her wondrous form, from the earth to the sky. She dons herself in different coloured dresses. If her morning wear is a golden sari, her night dress is an embroidered, delicate white silk. A dramatic spectacle follows, as the poet engages in a dialogue with the sun :

"whither are you?"
 Asked I the Sun, one day.
 "To beat the darkness," he said;
 "Quick, quick, my brother!"
 There he chased ye;
 Ye gone, he thought!
 Thou, all surrounding flood!
 Is'nt the Sun a whirling midget?¹⁶

This eidetic Cosmic image of darkness of the poet suggests that darkness is beyond all time and space; the principle of time is within it and is a mere nothing. From

this cosmic experience, the poet suddenly drops to the ephemeral reality. He has now a woeful, but a romantic tale to narrate to this dark-wench. She, indifferent to his passion, turns her head the other side. Oh, what a beauty! That dark, knotted hair adorned with the sparkling diamond-moon sharpens his passion. And lo! the disturbed poet turns to look at his human wife -- how thou art unlike this dark darling!¹⁷ Though the poet is aware of the omnipresence of the darkness, his imaginative play catalogues the most unthinkable things about the location of darkness. For instance, this twin-sister of the sky is all-pervasive, within the pot and in each and every atom of the milk in the pot. She is there in both the nostrils of the pretty nose, in the corner of those fish-like eyes, in the ear's centre and sides; and a painter identifies her, as she shadows a lovely face. The natural objects too are not bereft of subtle darkness. Lying at the bottom of every Lotus petal, she plays hide-and-seek; without this sport, the beauty of the Lotus withers. Hail Darkness! says the poet, You are the beauty in the beautiful things!¹⁸ S. T. Coleridge calls this kind of imagination, 'primary' and holds it to be "the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."¹⁹ The primary imagination, says Coleridge, operates through the secondary one which co-exists with the conscious will, and is different from the primary imagination, "only in *degree* and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead".²⁰ The aesthetic delight in the celebration of darkness naturally leads the poet to a philosophical enquiry :

Wisdom is light. Yeal yeal

Ignorance is darkness. Yeal yeal

Ignorance I'll make wisdom.
Will wisdom make ignorance? ²¹

This unusual, rhetorical question is a poetic-anti-thesis to the Upanishadic dictum, *tamasoma jyotirgamaya*, let there be light from darkness, a deliberate reversal that wisdom can never give birth to ignorance. In other words, darkness is no more ignorance as it preserves the seed of wisdom. Bharatidasan's optimistic declaration seems to be that since darkness is all-pervasive, wisdom too is all-pervasive. It is only the darkness in the human minds that refuses to identify this resplendent Sophia.

Bharatidasan does not seem to hold on to this Reality for long. In a sudden twist of thought, he pulls down his poetic extravaganza to this ephemeral existence. As said earlier, the poet is much delighted to be with his fellow-men, nor can he abstain from preaching simple morals. The epistemology does not interest him; what he needs is an empirical knowledge. The physical darkness teaches him yet another lesson : cleanliness is all, as he realizes the value of this 'good darkness'. The ambiguity of this statement is quite interesting in the context, as the term 'cleanliness' connotes not only the physical cleanliness and hygiene but also the mental/spiritual cleanliness to realize Truth. *The Darkness* is the typical example of the third aspect of Aestheticism, namely, the practical tendency in literature and art.

Bharatidasan's *The Smile of Beauty* is a satisfactory testimonial to the aesthetic principles so far discussed. His decision to portray Nature 'as seen by himself' has been carried out perfectly, but with a difference. Even in that unusual state of mind, the poet remains a humanist; he does not allow himself to be drifted away from his humanism to high philosophic enquiries. He stands, rooted

deep and fast, on his dear earth and loves to be nurtured by her natural beauty. He and his brethren are the children of this beauty, nature. Coleridge's definition of a poet is most befitting to Bharatidasan: "That gift of true Imagination, that capability of reducing a multitude into unity of effect, or by strong passion to modify series of thoughts into one predominant thought or feeling—those were faculties which might be cultivated and improved, but could not be acquired. Only such a man as possessed them deserved the title of *poeta* who *nascitur non fit*—he was that child of Nature, and not the creature of his own efforts."²² *The Smile of Beauty* is the product of such a mind, with a cohesive pattern, which might be called, 'Humanistic Aestheticism'.

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All translations are mine.

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ICONOCLASTS AS FEMINISTS : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BHARATIDASAN AND BERNARD SHAW

Dr. S. RAVINDRANATHAN

"The Comparative study of themes, motifs and types in different literatures would throw light on why particular writers choose particular themes and motifs and how these items are dealt with in different periods. Thematic studies encourage contrastive studies of different societies and epochs and even the individual talents of writers. They lead to the discovery of how the problems of societies and groups are transformed into literary characters which are both typical and individualistic like protagonists of great literary works".

Bharatidasan, an iconoclast and rebel began to write poetry at a time when poetry was meant for devotional purposes. But then, he wrote poetry without an invocation even to "Goddess of Tamil". That Bharatidasan was a

V. Sachithanandan, "Comparative Literature: Definition, Scope and Method," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. I, No. 1, (Sept. 1983), pp. 54-55.

revolutionary was not a mere accident. He was a revolutionary by temperament and attitude. To break conservatism and to invent new things were his aims. He would not accept anything just because it had been in vogue. He fought against injustice in any form—economic inequalities, caste discriminations, religious controversies, suppression of women and so on. How is it that 'Kanakan Subburathinam' became 'Bharatidasan' and Bharatidasan came to be known as 'Revolutionary Poet'? How did this transformation happen? Bharatidasan was not a born-rebel either. He too started as a conservative, ignoring modernity and rationalism. His association with Bharatiar also did not result in any major break. Till he was thirty he wrote poems in praise of God.

It is his association with Periyār EVR which resulted in Bharatidasan becoming a rationalist and a member of the Self-Respect Movement. Only after listening to Periyār at Pondicherry did Bharatidasan stop celebrating Divali and began to write poetry exposing the cruelty of untouchability. It was his association with the Self-Respect Movement that made his approach sociological rather than political.

It is Bharatidasan's fight against the suppression of women that inspired this writer to compare Bharatidasan and Bernard Shaw. After all, Shaw was an incorrigible Feminist, an iconoclast and a rebel too. Shaw (1856-1950) and Bharatidasan (1891-1964) were contemporaries, though belonging to two different cultures. Having had a long career, Shaw was never apparently consistent. But if one talked to him about his inconsistencies, he would say that he was always improving. This is the case with Bharatidasan also. Contradictions are bound to be there in a constantly improving mind, but one should be able to distinguish between growth and inconsistency.

Both Bharatidasan and Shaw can be effectively studied from a sociological view-point. Both have reacted vehemently against the society which was morally, socially and politically corrupt. Though they belong to two different cultures their response is identical regarding the suppression of women. Hence the present study, comparing Bharatidasan and Bernard Shaw as Feminists, for after all, as Dr. Chellappan rightly declares, "The purpose of Comparative Literature is not so much to encourage an easy internationalism or propagate a comfortable though narrow nationalism, but to promote an awareness of literature as a total form in which each is part of the others."

Shaw was always sympathetic towards women. Once he said, "I am always sorry for the woman who comes across a man for the first time: it was hell for Eve and . . . Charlotte. It was male conceit to make the crucified one a male. what will happen when women see through men and refuse to marry?"² This statement of Shaw's was not unwarranted. The condition of women before the war was pathetic. Getting married was the only avenue open for them then. As Ivor Brown observes:

The careers open to women of his own class and of wealthier families during Shaw's youth in Dublin and his early years in London were narrowly confined. The principal occupation was marriage. For the daughter of a wealthy or moderately prosperous family that was the expected and often the only prospect. Her business and that of her contriving mother was to find a husband of satisfactory income and approved status.³

The war of 1914-18 brought in a welcome change resulting in the liberation of women in England. Women could no

longer be denied, the rights they demanded. The suffrage, which was grudgingly given to women was symbolic of the rise in the status of women. Better education and wider opportunities enabled the women to advance and win recognition on their own merits, in society.

Bharatidasan visualized only such an improvement in the status of women in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. But it was not to be. The contemporary scene was quite pathetic and as a sensitive sociological writer, Bharatidasan responded to the social taboo treating women as slaves. Ma. Selvarajan graphically pictures the pitiable condition of women in Tamil Nadu :

Women were generally treated as commodities for pleasure. It was insisted that their life's purpose is to beget children and to obey men. There were a lot of restrictions to govern them. Men, the family and the society exploited women to the maximum possible. Facilities for education were rare for them. It was believed that social life and new awakening were not meant for them. They have always lived as slaves with a lot of restrictions and without any sense of freedom.⁴

Jayakantan, while presenting this pathetic scene explains its reason as well. He attributes this predicament to male-chauvinism, which even education and employment have not cured:

Today an average Tamil woman is equal to man in terms of education and employment. But still she is controlled by this society as though she is a prisoner. She is guarded both by ignorance and scandal. She is allowed to proceed in between. If she tries to be independent even to a small

degree, ignorance and scandal will torture her. She is made to be always conscious of these two. Neither the society nor her family tries to save her from these. On the other hand, if all she falls a victim to ignorance and scandal, the society finds solace by burning her to ashes.⁵

It is against this male chauvinism Bharatidasan was fighting and as Feminist he draws the attention of the people to the cautions made by his fellow Feminist Shaw:

O people of this country!
Listen to what
The Great George Bernard
Shaw says
The one who helps the man
for a
Successful life is the wife
It is she who disciplines him
It is she who purifies him.

புலிப்பெரியான் ஜார்ஜ்
பெர்னார்ட் ஷாவுரைத்த
பொன்மொழியைக்கேளுங்கள்
நாட்டில் உள்ளீர்
“உவந்தொருவன் வாழ்க்கை
சரியாய் நடத்த
உதவுபவன் பெரும்பாலும்
மனைவி ஆவான் !
அவளாலே மணவாளன்
ஒழுங்கு பெற்றான் ;
அவளாலே மணவாளன் சுத்தி
பெற்றான்! ”

(Bharatidasan's Poems, p. 105)

Hence, the point of comparison between Bharatidasan and Shaw is basically as Feminists. But then their response to the problems of women is different from each other, because the problems of the women in the East and the West are basically different. Bharatidasan had to fight against a barbarous society which burnt widows alive. Widows remarriage was not a possibility. They were socially out-caste. They were not treated equally with other women. Bharatidasan had to fight against this social injustice vehemently. In England, widowhood is only a passing phase, not a serious social menace and naturally Shaw does not

talk about such problems. That is why one finds Shaw concentrating on man-woman relationship in the socio-economic background—of course, presenting the whole problem with a philosophical dimension. He talks about women whose life's ambition is to get married. He also talks about women who want to be employed and who do not want to be married. Bharatidasan does not create women characters who are either employed or want employment. This is so perhaps because women-employment is a very recent phenomenon in Tamil Nadu and job opportunities for women here have not improved their social status either. The thesis of this paper is the theme of Feminism which is universal and and how Bharatidasan and Bernard Shaw present it contextually and variously.

II

The world of Bernard Shaw has an important place for women. "He honoured women, showing in his plays that they were not only to be loved, but respected, even feared."⁶ The biological urge for creation assumes in Shaw, a philosophical dimension. According to the Shavian Life Force Theory, woman is the primary wooer in the evolutionary process. Woman is creating and forming the race, preoccupied with the future human race, whereas man, required only for a brief period in the biological process is to concentrate on intellectual and social problems. Fearing to lose him, woman keeps man in domesticity by showing feigned interest in his intellectual and social pursuits. While ordinary man yields to this ensnaring of woman, the genius escapes to fulfil his higher function assigned by the Life Force.

The contemporary sociological conditions must have convinced Shaw of the need for women taking the initiative in love affairs, getting married being the only avenue open for them during those days. Shaw was convinced that

economic independence was needed to make the sexual relations between men and women decent and honourable. Hence, his antipathy towards marriage as an institution which makes woman inferior to man. It is against this male conceit and the system of marriage Shaw was fighting. He wanted woman to be independent, so he even suggested that divorce should be granted for the mere asking.

The Shavian woman is a paradox by herself. If she is to fulfil her primary duty, according to the Life Force theory, she has to pursue man and has to depend on him at least for biological reasons whereas Shaw would very much prefer woman to be independent of man socially and economically. In Shaw's plays one finds both types of women convincingly portrayed. Shaw's women like Vivie Warren, Eliza Doolittle and Joan are independent while women like Blanche, Raina, Gloria and Ann Whitefield are pursuing women, fulfilling the dictates of the Life Force. But as an artist Shaw has created both types of women as individuals, making use of his acute observation and fertile imagination.

Gloria of *You Never Can Tell*, for example, is a subtle pursuing woman. In the affair between Gloria and Valentine, she has to take the initiative. [Summoning all her courage, she takes away her hand from her face and puts it on his right shoulder, turning him towards her and looking him straight in the eyes. He begins to protect agitatedly.]

Gloria : be sensible : it's no use : I havent a penny in the world.

Gloria Can't you earn one ? other people do.

Valentine (half delighted, half frightened) I never could: you'd be unhappy. My dearest love: I should be the merest fortune — hunting adventurer if —

[Her grip of his arms tightens: and she kisses him].

[*The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*, p. 216,]

It being one of the characteristic Shavian love scenes, the discussion of money tries to remove any idea of romance. But one could feel that romance is not completely absent here.

This scene reminds one of Bharatidasan's poems about a lover's soliloquy which is suggestive of the fact that in Bharatidasan too, woman takes the initiative: As Cilampoli Cellappan explains :

She has to make him realize that she is in love with him. She does it symbolically. She corrects her dress, when he looks at her. When she crosses him, she deliberately dashes against him. She sings when he is nearby. Not only that She kisses his dog when he is around. He looks at all these things and confirms that she loves him.

The Poem reads as follows :

If she does not love me
will she laugh with me?

Why should she walk slowly
before me

Why should she correct her
dress?

Why should she kiss my dog
when I am around?

If she doesn't love me
Why should she smile at
me?

என் மேல் ஆசை இல்லா
விட்டால்
எனைக் கண்டு சிரிப்பாளா?

அன்ன நடை நடப்பாளா? என்
முன்னே முன்னே வருவாளா?

தன்னுடை திருத்துவாளா?

என் நாய்க் குட்டிக்கு முத்தம்
அவள்

என்னெதிரே கொடுப்பாளா? -
அவளுக்

கென்மேல் ஆசை இல்லா
விட்டால்

எனைக் கண்டு சிரிப்பாளா?

Love Poems of Bharatidasan,

(Madras : Pūmpukūr Piracuram,
1977), p. 41.

If Gloria reminds one of this love-scene in Bharatidasan, another love-scene in Bharatidasan reminds one of Ann in *Man and Superman*, who says, "There's no such thing as a willing man when you really go for him", (*Plays* p. 339). In a poem entitled "The Slopes of Saccāñivi Hills", (சஞ்சீவி பர்வதத்தின் சாரல்) *Vaṇci* makes Kuppan not only a slave to her by her advances but also educates him in life. The basic concept is that woman entraps man and educates him and in a romantic mood man does not hesitate to accept it. while Shakespeare's Antony does not mind sacrificing the Roman Empire for the sake of Cleopatra, Romeo is "at home" only in the company of Juliet (Act II Scene III). The authorial comment in Bharatidasan's poem is equally emphatic of this magic charm:

When a young man is enchanted by the wink of the girl
Even a mountain looks a trifle for him.

கண்ணின் கடைப்பார்வை
காதலியர் காட்டிலிட்டால்
மண்ணில் குமரருக்கு மாமலை
யும் ஓர்கடுகாம்.

(*Poems of Bharatidasan, part 1 p. 4*)

While Romantic poets like Shakespeare and Bharatidasan romanticise the sociological phenomenon of man-woman relationship, the puritanic Shaw rationalizes it adding a philosophical dimension. All the same a careful and critical reader does identify traces of romanticism even in a Shavian love-scene. The point of interest here is that Bharatidasan has not only identified this phenomenon of the woman taking the initiative in spite of the discouraging sociological conditions like modesty and fear complex, but also has demonstrated it in his poetry.

In a thought—provoking critique of Bharatidasan's love-poetry, Dr. Mohan explains how the poet has sometimes followed the tradition, sometimes changed the tradition, some-

times extended the tradition, and sometimes created tradition, thereby underscoring the tradition and the individual talent in the poetry of Bharatidasan. While women like *Pāṅkōtai* and *Vāñci* represent the pursuing women, the house-wife in the "Lamp of the Family" glorifies the role of successful woman in a domestic atmosphere. The detailed pen-picture of "one-day incident" remains one, of the fact that a woman to be successful should come out of the kitchen. The house-wife actually takes care of the present, past and the future. Her concern with the parents relates to the past. Her concern with the husband—helping him even in the business—relates to the present, while her preoccupation with the children indicates her concern with the future. Bharatidasan is emphatic of the fact that a successful house-wife has to play many roles at a time and the husband's success largely depends on the talents of the wife. Shaw's *Candida* makes this point clear in no ambiguous terms.

Candida... When there is money to give, he gives it;
When there is money to refuse, I refuse it.
I build a castle of comfort and indulgence
and love for him, and stand sentinel always
to keep little vulgar cares out. I make him
master here, though he does not know it,
and could not tell you a moment ago how
it came to be so ... (*Plays*, p. 151).

Shaw creates a *Candida* to show the effective role of women in the success of man. Bharatidasan does it in the "The Lamp of the Family" Part I. But he does not stop there. He writes another work perhaps a sequel to the other one, "The Lamp of the Family" entitled "The Dark House" wherein he explains how the laziness, idiocy and belief in superstition on the part of a house-wife would result in chaos and death.

If Shaw and Bharatidasan—both being feminists and iconoclasts have responded almost identically to the social menace of suppression of women, they have done so artistically as well. As artists, they create characters which are convincing within the frame work they create. One cannot miss the propagandist tone in both of them.

Nor could one miss the artistic qualities which blend with propaganda.

One good instance is the way in which both the writers name the characters. Comparing Shaw's naming of his characters with Jonson's, E. E. Stokes explains the role of names in effective characterization:

The naming of characters in both Jonson and Shaw is of great significance in understanding individual characterization as well as the larger symbolic purposes of the plays. In the works of both dramatists, the characters' names frequently indicate the qualities they are supposed to represent. Such names as Edward Knowell, Brainworm, George Downright, Wellbred, Justice Clement, and Roger Formal in Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* may be compared with names from Shaw like Lady Britomart and Andrew Undershaft in *Major Barbara*; Captain Shotorer, Lady Utterword, Mrs. Hushabye, and Mazzini Dunn in *Heartbreak House*, Miss Flavia Chavender, Hippney, Basham (a policeman), and Barking in *On the Rocks*, and Sir Orphens Midlander, Signor Bombardone, and Herr Battlex in *Geneva*.⁸

Bharatidasan makes use of names in an equally effective way. In his work, it is not that the names just suggest character though it is generally so. For instance, names like Ānti, Aḷakan, Kuppan and Cuppan represent common men. What is interesting is even idiotic people—the names suggesting personality—improve during the course of the

poem. For example, in 'Nallamuttu Katai' (The Story of Nalla Muttu) the man Vellaiappan is not good or innocent as the name suggests. He looks innocent perhaps because his wife is idiotic as her name Maṇḍāṅkatti (clay) suggests. Her consulting the astrologer along with her husband and his fooling them is a fine piece of social satire. During the course of the poem Maṇḍāṅkatti is exposed to life—her husband "takes a concubine, her son, who is a rebel and an activist in the anti-Hindi agitation, marries a girl out of love and the poem ends with the committed declaration of Maṇḍāṅkatti that she doesn't want her husband and she will fight for the prestige of Tamil :

When Tamil is in danger

is my life dear to me ?

I don't need my husband

I don't need relatives;

—properties too

Down with Hindi ! Down with
Hindi

Long Live Dravida Nadu !

Long Live Tamil !

இன்பத் தமிழுக் கின்னல்
விளைக்கையில்
கன்னலோ என்னுயிர் ?

கணவனும் வேண்டேன் ;

உற்றார் வேண்டேன் ;

உடைமை வேண்டேன் ;

இந்தி வீழ்க ! இந்தி வீழ்க !

திராவிட நாடு வாழிய !

அருமைச் செந்தமிழ் வாழிய
நன்றே !

"Nallamuttu Katai" Poems of Bharatidasan, Vol.III,
(Madras : Pūri Nilayam, 1987) P. 147.

Again as in Shaw a few minor characters in Bharatidasan are gifted with extraordinary intelligence. Commenting on the Shavian minor characters the present writer observes elsewhere,

They are sometimes choric, often directional.

Through them, Shaw is able to satirize the society. They provide comic relief also.

What is most important is that they have

their own points of view and they are gifted
with an enviable common sense....¹²

The same comment can be applied to some of the minor characters in Bharatidasan. For example in a poem entitled "Kaṭal Mēl Kumiṭikaḷ" (Bubbles on the Sea), a girl by name Minnoḷi, a daughter of a florist, talks sociology which is astounding;

The poor are not educated—Nor	ஏழையர் கற்றது மில்லை—
have they facilities for that	கல்வி
They get just porridge—They are	எய்திட வும்வழி இல்லை
content with sleep and work,	கூழை அருந்திக் கிடப்பார்—
Where is the chance for	தம்
efficient speech?	கூரையில் தூங்கி எழுந்தே
When is it possible for such	பாழும் உழைப்பினில்
people	ஆழ்வர்-நல்ல
to go up in life? said	பாங்கினில் பேசுதல் எங்கே?
Pāvai.	வீழும் நிலைகொண்ட
	மக்கள்-எந்நாள்
	மீளுவர்?" என்றனள் பாவை.

("Bubbles on the Sea" *Poems of Bharatidasan*, Vol.III,) 28

If Shaw is convinced that man is the male of the species while woman is the female, he is emphatic that Men and Women are equal. A Bharatidasan's play "Kuṇṭukkal" demonstrates this in the Tamilian context. Kaṇṇappan, the hero of the play, provides a list of duties in domestic life where the husband can and should share the work with the wife

When the wife cleans the house	குறடு கழுவிக்கே கோலம் போடு கிறாள் மனைவி,
Why can't the husband clean the vessels?	தவலை துலக்கித் தண்ணீர் போடக் கூடாதா கணவர்? ' '
When the wife takes care of the cattle	மாடு கறந்து தீனி வைக்கிறாள் மனைவி, கூட இருந்து
Why can't the husband assist her by bringing water?	குடிநீர் கொள்ளக் கூடாதா கொழுநர்?
When the wife prepares the food	இட்லி அடுப்பில் எரிக்கின் றாளே மனைவி,
Why can't the husband help her?	தொட்டுக்கொள்ளத் துவையல் அறைக்கலாகாதா துணைவர்?
When the wife is busy in the kitchen	சாறு கூட்டித் தவிக்கிறாளே துணைவி, சோறு
Why can't the husband assist her?	கொதிப்பதைக் கவனித்தால் என்ன துணைவர்?
When the wife washes the clothes,	அழகாய்த் துணியைத் துவைத் தாள் மனைவி, பிழிந்து
Why can't the husband dry them up?	வெயிலில் பிரித்தால் என்ன துணைவர்?
When the wife suffers so much	மனைவி படும் பாடெல்லாம் பார்க்கும் கணவர்
Why can't the husband help a little?	கடுகளவுதவி செய்தா லென்ன?

This is also perhaps what Shaw meant when he said "Home is girl's prison, woman's workshop". What both writers attacks is male chauvinism and what they aim at is to cure society completely of it.

However, the painful fact remains that woman is not yet free in the real sense of the term either in the East or in the West. Terms like "Women's Theatre". 'Women's Movement', still remain. Both men and women are yet to become totally aware of the just need for equality of women. As such Miles emphasizes the need for women's Theatre in the present context:

we want to foster a climate that gives equal acceptance to women who choose theatre as the means for questioning and interpreting the world—for, by their choice, these women will contribute not only to theatre but also to society.¹¹

The fact that American women have to fight for the rights in the theatre world even in the present day is sickening. This holds good for her economic position as well. This makes the theme of the Feminist Movement universal thereby making the points of view of both the writers taken for serious discussion universal.

III

The comparative study of Bharatidasan and Shaw does not suggest that one is inferior to the other. A study of influence reveals the comparable qualities of two different cultures rather than establishing that one writer is indebted to the other. Explaining the significant role of the influence study in comparative literature, J. T. Shaw observes:

The influences upon an author of a literature should be studied for understanding both. Such studies should take into account what qualities were taken, what were transmuted, what were rejected. The centre of interest should be what the borrowing or influenced author does with what he takes, what effect it has upon the finished literary work. The study of direct literary relationships and literary indebtedness can be indispensable to understanding and evaluating the individual work of art, not only for placing it in the literary tradition, but also for defining what it is and what it essentially attempts and for determining wherein it succeeds. . . .¹²

Considering Shaw and Bharatidasan as feminists one can identify the thematic similarity while the treatment tends to be different. While Shaw confines himself to and concentrates on the socio-economic rights for women, Bharatidasan deals with other aspects as well. While most of the questions Shaw has raised have been solved—voting right, equal job opportunities, easy regulations for divorce—the fact remains that total equality has not been achieved. Shaw would only blame the women for the situation.

The prevalent condition in Tamil Nadu is still worse. While the Tamilian woman is reconciled to the helpless predicament with a sense of resignation, man finds it convenient and comfortable. The complex culture, the various religions, the unquestioning faith in fate, the implicit faith in the caste system which is said to be divinely ordained—all these factors have made the feminist movement here an impossibility. But as a tireless crusader and iconoclast Bharatidasan has not only fought for socio-economic rights for women but also has exposed the unique and humiliating situations a Tamilian woman has to face. He is not just a pessimist to present the helpless predicament passively but an optimist who sees through the problem and offers solutions as well. For example, he makes Vañci observe

Do you deny
freedom of speech [to
women?

பெண்ணுக்குப் பேச்சுரிமை
வேண்டாமென்கின்றீரோ?

Do you think
women can be treated like
dirt?

மண்ணுக்கும் கேடாய் மதித்
தீரோ பெண்ணினத்தை

Till supression of women is
cured

பெண்ணடிமை தீருமட்டும்
பேசுந் திருநாட்டு

It is difficult to achieve
freedom for the nation.

மண்ணடிமை தீர்ந்து வருதல்
முயற்கொம்பே.

(Poems of Bharatidasan, part. I p. 3)

The implicit suggestion is that women should fight against male-chauvinism. They should get educated first to become aware of their predicament. Bharatidasan has forcefully and elaborately written on widowhood and child-marriage. According to him, widowhood is more torturous than Sati. He is quite sad about the helplessness of such unfortunate women :

When a man is dead, nobody
bothers to care for his
wife's feelings.

Oh! she is really a slave.

மாண்டவன் மாண்ட பின்னர்-
அவனின்
மனைவியின் உளத்தை
ஆண்டையர் காண்பதில்லை-
ஐயகோ
அடிமைப் பெண் கதியே.

(Poems of Bharatidasan, Part I. p. 109).

As in the case of Shaw, most of the ills Bharatidasan is fighting against, have been legally checked. Child-marriage is legally banned today. Widow-remarriage is legally possible today. But the question is whether the basic attitude of the society has changed. The answer will be negative both in the West and in the East. Only in this context of want of change in the attitude, both Shaw and Bharatidasan become relevant for they have responded to a universally social evil. As pointed out earlier, their attitude to the problem is similar though their presentation is different, owing to different social cultural milieu. What is significant is, a Tamil poet having been born and having lived in a very conservative atmosphere and an Irish writer who has had all the experience of the world have responded identically to an universal problem. That is how great men think alike irrespective of their time and places. This is so because of the universal nature of human predicament. Hence the need for studying literature with the concept of literature as "a transculture, translanguage, and transnational phenomenon". Underscoring the unique quality of the universality of literature Dr. Mu. Va. observes :

Differences are apparent only among the mediocre. The differences are not that apparent among the fully learned. That is why great artists wherever and whenever and in whatever environment they are born they have identical qualities. Kapilar, Tiruvaḷḷuvar, Iṭṭikō, Kampan, Bharati, Vālmīki, Kālidās, Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Pushkin, Tagore and others appear to have transcended the differences of time, place and environment. . . .¹⁴

One would like to add the writers treated in this paper.

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BHARATI AND BHARATIDASAN

Prof. V. SACHITHANANDAN

This comparison between two of the greatest of modern Tamil poets who are the founders of the Tamil poetry of the twentieth century technically does not belong to the discipline of comparative Literature because the two poets belong to the same literature and the comparative study does not come under the concept of comparatism, as it has been laid down by the International Comparative Literature Association. (ICLA), a widely authoritative body of scholars respected all over the world, particularly in Japan, China and India who are the major constituents of Asia.¹

The latest theoretical position may be of interest for local scholars whose dogged insistence that two writers who belong to Tamil literature also fall within the scope of comparative literature. At the meeting of the American European Comparatists at the Princeton University recently under the auspices of the American Comparative Literature Association, the definition of comparative literature underwent

a slight change². If Bharati and Bharatidasan, to give a local example, are compared, it does not come within the orbit of comparative literature. But if the influence of French Revolution on these two Tamil poets is subjected to a scholarly analysis, it falls within the scope of comparative literature.³ It may be noted that the changing perspective sticks to the basic definition of comparative literature: a comparative study of the aspects of two different literatures.

With this brief introduction a suspicion may arise in the minds of the scholars here whether I deviate from the basic norms of comparative literature. With an emphatic 'no', I may add that though the present study of Bharati and Bharatidasan does not fall within the scope of comparative literature, it does not hesitate to use the techniques involving comparison of certain ideas, themes, characters, and also general to clarify my intellectual attitude to the two great poets.

An interesting intellectual trend in Tamil Nadu is the narrow gap between a populist movement and a critical movement and scholars closely associated with the dreams and aspirations of the people and the trend is articulated in the public seminars marked by speeches and not the reading of carefully prepared papers and now the seminars are faithfully telecast. And the Madras Television is over enthusiastic in the wake of Bharatidasan centenary in putting up recently a dramatic skit by boys. Bharati dressed in a familiar white turban and a black shiny coat, with no physical sign of his trade mark poverty in his dress and Bharatidasan in a bedraggled dress emphasizing the noble tradition that he is a 'sisya' of Bharati and with no plot development in the telecast. The audience, if there is one or more critical members in it, is taken by surprise when Bharati holds a dialogue with Va. Uu. Chidambaram Pillai whose stage dress is too remote from the moustache and the

easily recognizable turban and then the poet addresses a cringing Bharatidasan to recite his poem and the most familiar opening lines of his first composition is heard: “எங்கெங்கும் காணினும் சக்தியடா.”⁴ Then Bharati threatens to send it to his news paper at Madras ‘Swadesamitran’ with the recognition that the new poet belongs to பாரதி கவிதா மண்டலம் or Bharati’s poetic circle. Then the Television version abruptly evaporates into thin smoke with the vague impression that Bharatidasan has distinguished himself as the follower of Bharati by his name and also his first poem.

Tamil people of the future separated by centuries from the telecast may create myths regarding the literary relations between the two great poets, myths centering on the most famous line in all Bharatidasan’s poetry, எங்கெங்கும் காணினும் சக்தியடா. I would venture to say that there is a narrow gap between the popular estimate and the critical belief.

I would begin with an evaluation of Bharatidasan’s first poem whose most significant thematic word is சக்தி. Let me repeat the poem:

எங்கெங்கும் காணினும் சக்தியடா! தம்பி
எழுகடல் அவள் வண்ணமடா! - அங்குத்
தங்கும் வெளியினிற் கோடியண்டம் - அந்தத்
தாயின் கைப்பந்தென ஓடுமடா - ஒரு
கங்குலில் ஏழு முகிலினமும் வந்து
காச்சனை செய்வது கண்டதுண்டோ? - எனில்
மங்கை நகைத்த ஒளியெனலாம் - அவன்
மந்த நகையங்கு மின்னுதடா?
காளை ஒருவன் கவிச்சுவையைக் - கரை
காண நினைத்த முழு நினைப்பில் - அன்னை
தோளசைத் தங்கு நடம்புரிவாள் - அவன்
தொல்லறிவாளர் திறம் பெறுவான் - ஒரு
வாளைச்சுழற்றும் விசையினிலே - இந்த

வையமுழுதும் துண்டு செய்வேன் - என
நீள இடையினின்றி நீ நினைத்தால் - அம்மை
நேர்படுவாள் உன்றன் தோளினிலே!

In the absence of what is unfamiliar here, textual criticism which concentrates on the proper scientific editing of a literary text, I accept this verse as the one exactly written by Bharatidasan without the intervention of the compositor in the printing press.

The thematic word in this poem is சக்தி in the sense that it establishes the structure of thought. Its variations are 'மங்கை', 'அன்னை'. These three words establish the vital link with the whole range of Bharati's poetry. சக்தி has a profound spiritual meaning for Bharati whereas Bharatidasan uses it in a material and a secular sense. சக்தி to Bharati who is well versed in Sankara's hymn on Sakti, *Soundarya Lahari* ⁵ (Waves of Beauty) who worships her as primal energy, the source of power of both the universe and the world of gods and also another prayer song, *Lalita Sahasranamam* ⁶, Sakti with a thousand names usually recited often in a Brahmin household. If Sakti is primary energy to Bharati, to Bharatidasan it means potential power without which humanity cannot function. If the Tamil words சக்தி and மங்கை are connected it gives two different interpretations, a spiritual meaning that shapes Bharati's imaginative conception of Sakti as the Mother Goddess and even Bhārata Mātā and the same word tempts the materialist in Bharatidasan to consider the woman as the embodiment of all the material power in the world. while Bhārati deifies woman, or worships her as Mother Goddess, a psychological replacement for the loss of his mother in his childhood. Va. Raa (V. Ramaswami Iyengar) who lived with Bharati during the days of his 'exile at Pondicherry aptly says:

தன் தாயைப் பற்றி பாரதியாருக்கு நல்ல ஞாபகம் இருந்த தில்லை. அந்த வகையில் தமக்கு அனுபவம் நிறைந்த பூர்த்தி யாக விருக்கவிலையே என்று அவர் மனம் வருந்துவார்.

அண்டை வீட்டுக் குழந்தைகளுக்கு இருந்த தாயின் சலுகை தனக்கு இருந்ததில்லையே என்று மனம் வாடுவார். தாயார் இந்த உலகத்தைவிட்டுச் சீக் கிரமாக அகன்றதாலேயே, பாரதியார் சாகுமளவும் குழந்தையாகவே இருந்து வந்தார். நேற்றய தினம் பிறந்த குழந்தையும் பாரதியாருக்கு அம்மாதான். வயதுக் கணக்கு அவருக்கு தொந்திரவு கொடுத்ததே யில்லை. 'அம்மா அம்மா' என்று அவர் தம் பாட்டுகளில் கூவி அழைத்திருப்பதை நீங்கள் எல்லோரும் படித்திருப்பீர்கள்.

Bharati confesses his acute loss of his mother in his poetical autobiography:

என்னை யீன்றெனக் கைந்து பிராயத்தில்
ஏங்கவிட்டு விண்ணெய்திய தாய்.....³

If we look into the devotional poems of Bharati, Sakti is the common theme of these poems. Lakshmi and Saraswati are the manifestation of Sakti and hence his love (காதல்) is addressed to Lakshmi, Saraswati and Sakti. The songs on *Kaṇṇamma* are indications of Yoga. According to it, of all the organs of the human body, 'Kaṇ' is called a tyāgi because it cannot wear jewels unlike the sister organs. But at the same time it can see the sister organs wearing the jewels and enjoy the sight of it. This has been elaborated by me in my thesis *Whitman and Bharati A Comparative Study* published by Macmillan & Co., (1980). Even the hymn to the Goddess of Beauty (அழகுத் தெய்வம்) is an esoteric poem, in the sense there is a hint that it is addressed to Sakti and associated with Sakti cult called the "Serpent' Power" a term coined by Sir John Woodroffe, the first English translator of the sanskrit texts on *Kuṇḍalīnī* Yoga or the Serpent power. According to it, at the base of the spinal column of every man rests the spiritual energy or Sakti coiled like a serpent. By Yogic practices, it is aroused from its sleep and then the Yogic power moves from the 'mūlādhāra' to the brain through seven lotuses or imaginative centres and reaches the brain which is called a lotus with

a thousand petals and the philosopher Sankara says that the final union between Sakti and Siva takes place in the brain endowing the practitioner with miraculous powers. Sri Ramakrishna with the help of a guru who came from nowhere, a woman, practised this yoga. I remember an exchange of views published in *The Walt Whitman Review* in the seventies when an Indian scholar detailing the influence of Indian thought claimed that one of the greatest of American poets Walt Whitman was influenced by the Kuṇḍalini Yoga in his famous poem, *Song of Myself*. I refuted it in the same journal by marshalling arguments from Sir John Woodroffe's book, *The Serpent Power*. When the power moves towards the brain, passing each centre of lotus the practitioner experiences colour vision and there is no indication of colour vision in Whitman's longest poem, *Song of Myself*. Kuṇḍalini Yoga is now taught to our countrymen in Salem district near Nūmakkal and also in Kashmir by a Yogi called Gopalkrishna. The scholar who started the debate on the association of the Serpentpower with Whitman is prof. C.K. Nambiar, who studied at Cambridge. So Kuṇḍalini Yoga is part of a critical discussion, not beyond readers.

Bharati's *Ālakutteivam*, is not Keatsian in its attitude to beauty and love. The title is apparently inspired by Sankara's hymn to Sakti in *Soundarya Lahari*. It is significant that the poem has been included in 'வேதாந்தப் பாடல்கள்' 'The opening stanza runs thus :

மங்கியதோர் நிலவீனிலே கனவிலிது கண்டேன்
வயது பதினாறுக்கும் இளவயது மங்கை
பொங்கிவரும் பெருநிலவு போன்றவொளிமுகமும்
புன்னகையின் புதுநிலவும் போற்ற வரும் தோற்றம்
துங்கமணி மின்போலும் வடிவத்தான் வந்து
தூங்காதே யெழுந்தென்னைப் பாரென்று சொன்னாள்.
அங்கதனிற்கண் விழித்தேன் அடடாவோ! அடடா!
அழகென்னும் தெய்வந்தான் அது வென்றேயறிந்தேன்.⁸

Because Bhārati gives an esoteric or hidden interpretation to the poem on the Goddess of Beauty, its poetic value is enhanced. The poem describes a dream, the intermediate stage between waking and sleeping and the dream may be described as a vision, with deeper meaning of a poet. Briefly, it describes with an economy of words his meeting with a sixteen year old girl and he puts a vital question to the girl, "Which is greater தவம் or யோகம்?" Obviously the nature of the question cannot be addressed to a teen-aged girl and she replies with an intelligence far beyond her age that both தவம் and யோகம் mean the same thing. The rest of her answer is an indication of the non-duality at the level of existence to one who believes in Vedānta. The atmosphere in which the poet meets the girl is moonlight, a clue to the inner meaning of the poem. According to Kuṇḍalinī Yoga or the serpent power, the psycho-spiritual energy which rests at the mūlādhāra, the lotus with a minimum number of petals four, the energy or Sakti the goddess, moves to the top of the head, the cerebral centre or the thousand petalled rose whose centre or the pericarp is the, centre of the moon. That is why in this type of Yoga, the moonlight is considered to be sacred or mysterious, associated with Parāsakti. The word 'நிலவு' which is repetitive in Bharati's poem, helps us to associate the sixteen year old girl with Sakti, a very profound theme in Bharati's poetry. According to Sri Lalita Charitra, the gods and the devas made a fervent request to Sakti to remain for ever young, a sixteen-year old girl and it was granted.⁵ It is significant that the several forms of Parāsakti are described as 'teen-aged girls'. The moonlight atmosphere, the heroine of the poem described as sixteen year old girl and the type of serious question on the relationship between தவம் and யோகம் may help the reader to identify the girl in Bharati's poem and so 'அழகுத் தெய்வம்' may be called a divine poem not necessarily associated with the usual concept of beauty. If we relate the theme of Sakti in Bharati's poetry to the religious sentiment, that

separates Bharati widely from Bhāratidāsan. Bharati, being a Vedantist, takes Sakti in the tradition established by religion. Bharatidasan, being a materialist, takes it to mean unusual power at the empirical level and endows it with woman who rises above man whereas Bharati's Sakti the divinity, basks in spiritual glamour. Bharatidasan's Sakti means material power of which woman is an embodiment. This comparison superficially may appear to widen the gap between the two poets in their handling of the theme of Sakti. But looked at philosophically, Sakti is the embodiment of the essence of power in the universe whereas Bharatidasan's Sakti, the embodiment of woman, is the resting place of all the material power. In other words, woman is symbolic of material power at the sociological level and Bharati's Sakti, the resting place of all the power of the universe. Briefly, Bharati's Sakti is divinity whereas Bharatidasan's Sakti is woman. If we repeat the opening line of Bharatidasan's poem, எங்கெங்கும் காணினும் சக்தியடா 'woman is extolled to the top of human society.

I have associated Bharatidasan with the concept of materialism. It has no pedestrian meaning but is linked with rationalism which is at the core of *Periyārism* which invites comparison with Bertrand Russel's philosophy. It is beyond the scope of this paper and demands separate and more serious treatment. The rationalism of Periyar profoundly affected Bharatidasan. Since the great poet hailed from the French-dominated Pondicherry, I suspect that his rationalism may have a link with the French rationalism that emanated from thinkers like Rousseau and Voltaire. In the absence of substantial documentation of the education of Bharatidasan, I would venture to find a link in the well-known periodical *Dravida Nadu* to the article written several years ago by Anna, 'வாஸ்டேர் வீசிய வெடிகுண்டு'. Without dwelling at length on the impact of French thought on Bharatidasan, I may draw your attention to the different approaches of

Bharati and Bharatidasan to the slogans of the French Revolution - liberty, equality and fraternity. Bharati being a vedantist, turns the three principles into the broadest Vedantic principles, applicable to the sentient world. In all living beings, human and animal, he sees the same law of spiritual equality⁹. But in Bharatidasan it has been turned into social equality which has a thematic significance in his poems. Therefore, Bharati's concept of a classless society has its roots in Vedanta and in Bharatidasan it is pragmatic though it touches upon social radicalism, abolition of all class distinctions. Admirers of Bharatidasan may say that his social philosophy is rooted in his dislike of *Aryānism*. His anti-Brahminism is treated as a critical stick to beat him with. 'சஞ்சீவி பர்வதத்தின் சாரல்' may not be palatable to a section of Tamil readers, like many of his poems, for example, 'சைவப்பற்று' and 'ஏசுநாதர் ஏன் வரவில்லை?'. Bharatidasan is a poet of dissent to which great value is attached in western criticism. His bitter attack on the priestly class may be defended on the analogy of T.S. Eliot's defence of his guru Ezra Pound. Eliot and Pound laid the foundations of modern American and British poetry. Pound hated the Jews so violently that he always referred to a member of the community by an abbreviation, 'sob' as he uses it in his greatest poem *The Cantos*. Eliot said that Pound's hatred is not personal, for his hatred is not part of his private world, but of his poetic world. The same aesthetic measure may be applied to Bharatidasan. His anti-Brahminism belongs to the poet and not to the man. That accounts for an incident in his life. Years ago, I believe it is *Ananda Vikāṭan* that noted that he visited Matunga, Bombay, on the invitation of the Tamil Sangam and was hosted by a Brahmin family. This distinction between the artist and the man is vital for Tamil readership, for the absence of it warps its critical estimate.

Bharatidasan's poems on nature are a distinct contribution to Nature - poetry in Tamil going back to Sangam

poetry. Modern readers may have been affected by their admiration of Wordsworth's poems of Nature whom he treated as a profound moral teacher with a message for the poet. In his poem '*Tintern Abbey*' which is usually called his Testament of Nature, he says:

Those beauteous forms,
Through a long absence have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blindman's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the flood, and felt along the heart,
And passing into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration...¹⁰

Unlike Wordsworth to whom Nature is a moral teacher and reveals profound secrets of the world of the living and unlike Bharati who holds a Vedantic conception of Nature, to Bharatidasan Nature is a manifestation of visible beauty to a perceptive mind. At the height of his sensitivity, from the realm of the imagination, it is a delight to see him blending the familiar aspect of Nature with a Jamesian point of view or rather the point of view of the observer:

உனைக்காணும் போதினிலே என்னுளத்தில்
ஊறிவரும் உணர்ச்சியினை எழுதுதற்கு
நினைத்தாலும் வார்த்தை கிடைத்திடுவதில்லை.
நித்திய தரித்திரராய் உழைத் துழைத்துத்
தினைத்துணையும் பயனின்றிப் பசித்த மக்கள்
சிறிதுகூழ் தேடுங்கால், பாணை ஆரக்
கனத்திருந்த வெண்ணோறு காணும் இன்பம்
கவின் நிலவே உனைக்காணும் இன்பம் தானோ!

So sings Utāran in '*Puratcik Kavi*'. The poet in him articulates the imaginative conception of the external aspects of Nature, followed by this quoted passage which expresses

the inner craving of the poor people. It reveals the persistent tendency of Bharatidasan to blend the poetic view with the social perspective.

Another major theme in his poetry is love which is disarmingly human and associated with traditional society, the prisoner of customs and beliefs which militate against what we call to-day youthful love, uninhibited, without elderly interference. In this highly emotional drama which is repetitive in his poetry drawing an innocent boy and girl, Bharatidasan boldly introduces a third entrant—a widow. Among modern Tamil writers he is the greatest champion of the cause of women because the widow is not a character in Bharati's poetry of love which is esoteric and mystical.

For want of time, I have not been able to deal with the aesthetic possibilities arising from a Comparative perspective. I hope the younger generation of critics would continue the work and fill up the aesthetic gaps.

References

1. The holding of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) at Tokyo with coming year 1991 is tribute to the remarkable development of the recent academic discipline in Asia, according to Prof. Henry H.H. Remak in a letter to the writer.
2. Seminar Papers of the American and Hungarian Colloquy Princeton 1988.
3. I have deliberately given a local example as a parallel to the French Influence on two Italian writers.
4. It is the opening poem staring the reader in the eye in any collection of the poet's poems. It is a pity that

no authentic edition of Bharatidasan's poems has come out based on the principles of textual criticism. The same is the fate of Bharati.

5. See *Soundarya Lahiri-Bashyam* Ed 'Anna' Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Matt 1979. It is a popular Tamil edition with a Sanskrit text accompanied by Tamil notes.
6. *Lalitha Sahasranamam* with Bhaskararaya's commentary. Trans. R. Ananthakrishna Sastry. Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1975. This edition has been reprinted in England and the United States.
7. Va. Ra. [Va. Ramaswami Iyengar] *Mahakavi Bharatiar*. 1944. Madras: Saktikariyalayam, 1956. 18.
8. T.V.S. Mani & Seeni-Viswanatan. Ed. *Bharatiar Kavitaikal*. Madras: Vanavil Piracuram, 1980. 101.
9. See V. Sachithanandan "Vedantic Mysticism". *Whitman and Bharati: A Comparative Study*. Madras : Macmillan, 1978.
10. John Frederick Nims ed. *The Harper Anthology of Poetry* New York: Harper & Row, 1981. 248-249.

BHARATIDASAN AND D. H. LAWRENCE ON THE THEME OF DARKNESS

Dr. T. VAITHAMANITHY

Our renowned Tamil Poet Bharatidasan¹ and the English novelist-critic-poet D. H. Lawrence, of established eminence of the early part of this century, seem to have strong comparable aspects when they bring out their poetical effort in an unconventional way, on the theme of darkness.

This study is limited to just two aspects:-

- (i) the intensity of vision pictured in the poems chosen; and
- (ii) the radical dissent the poets register in their poetical efforts.

1. Kanaka Subburatnam is the name of the poet. In his admiration for his preceptor-poet, he styles his name as "Bhāratidāsan". This pseudonym means that he follows in the foot steps of his master. Hence the naming, of "the Bharati School of poetic tradition".

*Aṭaḱin Ciriṭṭu!*² (*Where Beauty Smiles!*) is a collection of Bharatidasan's poems, which brings out this Tamil poet's characteristic sensibility in registering the sights and sounds of nature, "the mighty world of eye and ear". But, the might is seen by the poet as the underlying principle of beauty, in those animate and inanimate objects of nature, as admitted by him in the brief introductory note.³ This collection includes a poem entitled 'Iru!' (இருள்) meaning 'Darkness', which lures us with its content and unconventionality of approach to compare it with the poem⁴ "*Bavarian Gentians*" of the English novelist-poet D.H. Lawrence, of this century. The latter's poem is said to have been written by him in the last phase of his life and creative activity.⁵ The original title of this poem has been, "*Glory of Darkness*" and later it has got changed to this present title. These two poems of the Tamil and English poets taken up for discussion here, thus have the same theme, the glory of darkness. Also, the intensity of vision in both the poems, compellingly invites us to compare them. But it is equally fascinating to note that the mode of contemplation on the theme—common to both—is one of radical dissent, though they seem to differ in their reflection.

The poem 'Iru!' has ten stanzas, each one of eight short six-footed lines (*azucīrviruttam*). The first eight stanzas are in the form of an address to Darkness personified. In

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2. "அழகின் சிரிப்பு" — The title in Tamil brings out the idea of beauty bursting forth, in terms of cheerful looks.
 3. *Aṭaḱin Ciriṭṭu* — Foreword by the author, "Kaviñār Kūṟukizār".
 4. Gentian: "A plant of the genus *Gentiana*,
It has blue flowers."
 5. The poem is said to belong to the group called *Last Poems* (1933) (Also called *Death-poems*).

the ninth and tenth stanzas, there is a generalisation. The two concluding lines of the tenth stanza addressing Darkness again, capture the poet's wonderment, caused by the greatness of Darkness.

'Bavarian Gentians' is an impressive poem running to some twenty seven lines, and has a mythological frame work. The poet gives his own interpretation of the perennial Greek myth of Persephone, the lovely daughter of god Zeus and goddess Demeter. In the classical legends Greek goddess Demeter accounts for the fertility of the earth and is the protectress of marriage and social order. Pluto, the Greek god of the underworld, a world of darkness perfect, abducts Persephone, to make her the queen in his dark region. When discovered by Demeter, the gods arrange that Persephone be allowed to return to the surface of the earth, for a part of a year.

Lawrence interprets this Greek myth to suit his object of glorification of darkness, a realm he seems to pleasingly equate with death. The poet becomes a lonely resolute figure seeking his way into that "sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark", guided by the blueness bright, of the flower, Bavarian gentians.

The intensity of vision that is strikingly parallel, in the poems may be noted first :

In the Tamil poem, stanzas 4 and 5 make us feel darkness as a physical presence, in the personified address. The poet speaks :

O, you, Madam Darkness,
affinitive to thieves, (coming out in the nights)
Would you listen, to a tale of mine?
Here it is :
All my children were fast asleep

Lawrence's poem speaks:

.....down the darker and darker stairs
 where blue is darkened on blueness
even where Persephone goes, just new from
 the frosted September
to the sightless realm where darkness
 is awake upon the dark
and Persephone herself is but a voice
 or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
of the arms Plutonic, and pierced with
 the passion of dense gloom....

The darkness of underworld sheds thickly its darkness upon Pluto and his bride and the seeker continues to journey into that unknown dark realm, lovingly beautiful, which lures him. In the Tamil poem, the vision of the Madam Darkness, hastens the poet to the sacredness of his wife's presence standing close to him even as Persephone goes into the open Plutonic arms of darkness. In the former, no wrong is made, no offence is committed, though there is a suggestion of the temptation for stealth. But, the experience of "being pierced with the passion of dense gloom", as Lawrence calls it, is felt.

Another striking parallel is in the description of the beauty of the lotus flower of the Tamil poem and that of the flower Bavarian gentian of the English poem. The Tamil poet addresses Darkness;

'You are seen to lie underneath every petal
in the multi-petalled lotus flower
and you make the fringe for every fresh green leaf
and preserve its beauty of form
If only you didn't (do that)
the beauty of lotus will die.
Yes,

You, lovely one, that stands close everywhere
 You are the principle of beauty in everything."

The poet feels that the lotus flower, which in Tamil literary tradition is an emblem of purity, enlightenment and beauty, gains its lustre, light and definition from the darkness that surrounds it in every way and lies under every petal. But for this darkness, the beauty of lotus is dead. To hold such a view is really unconventional. But the poet experiences this quality of darkness to be its real glory. In the English poem this is matched by the poet's description of the violet coloured flower :

"Bavarian gentians, big and dark, only dark,
 darkening the day-time torch like with the smoking
 blueness of Pluto's gloom....."

Again it is referred to as "torch flower of the blue smoking darkness". With this flower as the torch, giving out bluish darkness, as if it were light, the poet-seeker goes "to the sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark."

The Tamil Poet Bharatidasan admires darkness as the principle of beauty, filling everywhere and everything. Therefore, Darkness is not only beautiful in itself, but the cause that beauty is in other objects and sights of nature. He notes this darkness fills either side of a rising shapely nose, and the eye-corners, of a charming lady. It is darkness again which fills the centre of the ear and the sides of ear-lobes and generates streaks of that blueness, on the face of a woman and enables us to identify at once the pregnant woman, who signifies the fullness of life. And, this greatness of darkness, the poet notes, is very well known to painters, who work out the shadows in order that they may bring to light what is to be portrayed as beautiful.

To the English poet D. H. Lawrence, darkness has a mystic charm and he would like to journey happily in that realm, without end perhaps. Like the Greek gods going in search of Persephone, the bride lost by Demeter, to Pluto the ruler of the dark world, "pierced with the passion of dense gloom", he would like to be led by the blue flower into that darkness.

In both the poems this unconventional admiration for and love of darkness is remarkably analogous.

Another important ground of comparison lies in the radical dissent, these poets make. Radicalism indicates a tendency to demolish all the institutionally established values and to allow reason to dominate in the examination of all aspects of life. This quality is revealed by both the poets.

Bharatidasan, had become a sceptic by the time he came to write the poems in the collection referred to above and he opposed Hindu rituals and practices that failed to satisfy his reasoning. Towards the close of the poem 'Inu' there is the following generalisation, leading to a pregnant query :

Knowledge is light - Yes, yes.
 Ignorance is darkness - Yes, ... yes.
 Ignorance may lead to knowledge.
 Will knowledge ever make ignorance?..

அறிவென்றால் ஒளியாம், ஆம் ஆம்!
 அறியாமை இருளாம், ஆம் ஆம்!
 அறியாமை அறிவைச் செய்யும்;
 அறியாமை அறிவால் உண்டோ?

These lines seem to make an unconscious reference to a stanza in the poetical work '*axanericcāram*' (The Essence

"Iru!" But in the last stanza, the poet gives an example of an experience which makes us think deeply.

It is as follows:

At the dead of night, a boy is stung by a scorpion,
 There is no light; a lamp is the bad need.
 Groping in the darkness, people search for match box.
 To their dismay they learn, it has got
 locked inside a cupboard. To add to their
 misery, they do not find the key of the cupboard.
 In the meanwhile, some eight people
 are stung by the scorpion
 and they run here and there,
 writhing in pain and groaning all the while "

Then the poet says that the experience teaches the lesson :

"Cleanliness is certainly a necessity."

"கட்டாயம் தூய்மை வேண்டும்"

Here, the expression (தூய்மை) *tūymai* apparently meaning cleanliness of person and physical environment, has also the connotation, "purity" included in it. It is the purity of mind, say, ethical contemplation—according to "*āṇanericcāram*" poem⁸ that leads one to gain heaven. So in the unconscious realm of the poet's mind, along with the earlier said references this expression too seems to be working.⁸ Purity not merely cleanliness—accounts for a worthy life. That is a lesson taught by darkness, to the poet. Thus the

8. The '*āṇanericcāram*' poem in reference, is certain to find a place in a study for the Tamil Pulavar course, the poet has passed through and later he himself has been teaching to others, preparing for a similar course. Naturally, this learning, lying in the subconscious, surfaces at the moment, when the poet brings out the lines cited above.

dissent that the Jain - persuasion makes with the earlier vedic sayings and dictates, agrees with the poet Bharatidasan's sceptical attitude and gets unconsciously pronounced in the poem.

The English poet, 'D. H. Lawrence is similarly seen as opposed to Christian tradition and most of the established values of the past. But he is eager to have a continuum, from pagan elements, to satisfy his inner psyche and mixes the pagan symbols with select Christian ones (as in this poem the references to Michaelmas and Persephone myth).⁹ This radical dissent Lawrence, is eager to show, results in his surrendering to the myth he uses in the poem. This approach very well parallels the dissent that Bharatidasan registers, as a sceptic, but unconsciously relies on the earlier poet, Munaippāṭiyār's expression of it in the poem of *aṭanericcāram*. (For Munaippāṭiyār's poem dissenting with Upanisads, see notes).¹⁰

What has inspired both the poets to bring out these two poems, discussed here has the common-ground, their sensibility, which perceives (the principle of) beauty, in an unconventional way.

9. "... it again shows Lawrence's characteristic synthesis of Christian and Pagan symbols. (for Lawrence, of course, religion was not a matter of revolution or of distinction between the old and the new — for instance, Paganism vs Christianity — but rather of a continuation of the old and into the new". "Voyage of oblivion", George A. Panichas. *Critics on D. H. Lawrence : Readings in Literary Criticism* Ed. W.T. Andrews New Delhi : Universal Book Stall, Indian Rpt. 1990. 117.

10. *Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad* (1-3-28) has the following message :

From the unreal lead me to the real
 From darkness lead me to light
 From death lead me to immortality.

In this verse, unreality, darkness and death are equated against reality, light and immortality. In place of 'darkness, we may use the word 'ignorance'. The word 'light' may be replaced by 'knowledge'. Still they mean the same. Knowledge is really enlightenment. The reality enlightens what is what and leads to immortality. This scriptural idea where ignorance leading to knowledge appears to have taken the meaning, as found in the poem of '*azanericcāram*', with no apparent reference to any other transcendental state, except heaven. The value that is required to be cherished in order to gain a place in heaven, for an individual, is spoken as an ethical one depending on one's righteous conduct and in this sense, it is dissenting with the Upanisad message or perhaps makes a departure from it.

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இருட்டறையில் உள்ளதடா உலகம்! சாதி
 இருக்கின்ற தென்பானும் இருக்கின் றானே!
 மருட்டுகின்ற மதத்தலைவர் வாழ்கின்றாரே!
 வாயடியும் கையடியும் மறைவ தெந்நாள்?
 சுருட்டுகின்றார் தம்கையில் கிடைத்த வற்றைச்
 சொத்தெல்லாம் தமக்கென்று சொல்வார் தம்மை
 வெருட்டுவது பகுத்தறிவே! இல்லை யாயின்
 விடுதலையும் கெடுதலையும் ஒன்றேயாகும்.

எல்லார்க்கும் எல்லாம்என் றிருப்ப தான
 இடம்நோக்கி நடக்கின்ற திந்த வையம்;
 கல்லாரைக் காணுங்கால் கல்வி நல்காக்
 கசடர்க்குத் தூக்குமரம் அங்கே உண்டாம்.
 இல்லாரும் அங்கில்லை; பிறன் நலத்தை
 எனதென்று தனியொருவன் சொல்லான் அங்கே!
 நல்லாரே எல்லாரும் அவ்வை யத்தில்
 நமக்கென்ன கிழியட்டும் பழைய பஞ்சாங்கம்!

பாண்டியன் பரிசு — பாரதிதாசன்

ரெயின்போ பிரிண்டர்ஸ், மதுரை-1.

260