AESTHETICS OF THE TAMILS

BY
T. P. MEENAKSHISUNDARAN

The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute
for Advanced Study in Philosophy
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS
1977

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GENERAL EDITOR
Dr V. A. DEVASENAPATHI

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FOREWORD

The Department of Philosophy was started in the University of Madras in September 1927. In August 1964 it was raised to the status of a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy by the University Grants Commission. From 1976 it has come to be known as The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy.

Since its inception in 1927, this Department has kept in view two major objectives: (1) the study of Indian systems of thought and (2) the study of other systems of thought. Last year the Department arranged for a course of special lectures in furtherance of these objectives.

Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaranar very kindly agreed to deliver five lectures on Social Philosophy and one on Indian Aesthetics. The present volume contains the substance of his lecture on Indian Aesthetics.

As part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Department, the special lectures delivered at this Institute are brought out as Golden Jubilee Publications. The Institute is grateful to Dr Meenakshisundaranar for permission to publish his lectures in the Golden Jubilee Series.

The Institute wishes to thank the Government of Tamil Nadu, Dr Molcolm S. Adiseshiah, the Vice-Chancellor, and the other authorities of the University of Madras for the financial aid given for these publications. The Institute is appreciative of the interest evinced by the University Grants commission in upgrading the parent Department into a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, financing it for ten years and for its subsequent and sustained interest in the progress of the Institute.

The Institute is grateful to Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri for laying the foundations of the Department on sound lines and to Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, former Director of the Institute for building up the Department over a period of three and a half decades by his devoted services.

The General Editor wishes to thank Professor Tirugnana-sambandhan for editing the content of the lecture and his colleague, Dr S. Gopalan for editing it so as to make it uniform with the other Golden Jubilee publications and for seeing it through the Press ; and the Rathnam Press, for the prompt and neat execution of the work.

V. A. DEVASENAPATHI.

PREFACE

Here is a talk on Tamil Aesthetics delivered at the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy of the Madras University. This has to be studied along with the lectures on Indian Aesthetics by Professor Thirugnanasambandhan. Even then my lecture will remain incomplete. Aesthetics is not only the study of the qualities perceived in the works of art but also the study of the mind and emotions in relation to the sense of Beauty. Only a few points could be referred to in a single lecture. This therefore comes with the apologies of the author.

My thanks are due to the authorities of the University and to Dr V. A. Devasenapathi, the Director of the Institute.

Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaran

AESTHETICS OF THE TAMILS

Even at the outset we would like to suggest that perhaps aesthetics has not been a separate discipline in the Tamil land. We have, however, the conception of *beauty*, of 'sundara', discussed elaborately by Rāmānuja and his disciples whilst they were commenting on the songs the of the Āḻvārs. The Absolute is omnipresent but the human mind is attracted only by things which are beautiful. Therefore in the beautiful images and elsewhere, Rāmānuja feels, God incarnates. God is everywhere and the Āḻvārs are naturally drawn towards this beauty. But beauty is in nature as in art. But when Tirumankai Āḻvār sings of God as but a cup in his hand, he is attracted by the beauty in the image which is as it were a cup ready to serve him as he likes. The beauty in the artistic image is not beauty which, for instance, exists everywhere in nature. There is a difference between beauty which we see in the rainbow in the sky and in the rainbow in a painting. Beauty could be seen in the blue sea and beautiful mountains with ice-caps and in women. All these are found in nature. But the beauty which is found in the image is to a certain extent the creation of man. We are reminded of Iqbal who addresses God and compares the human creation with the creation of the Lord. He throws out a challenge and says that man's creation is much better. "God, you have created the ores, but man has "created" by refining them into beautiful metals like gold and silver and out of them he has made ornaments. You have created forests, wild forests, but man creates the garden." Therefore Iqbal suggests that man has been inspired by God to improve the creation of the Lord Himself. When we are talking of aesthetics we are concerned with this creation of man though the basis is creation of God; This is therefore given a special name, 'art'.

The beauty in nature is not realised by everyone. Even the man who admires and reveres the beauty of an ocean at times

curses it. He does not always see the beauty in it. Therefore the experience of natural beauty goes on varying from man to man and varying from time to time even in the same man and therefore we do not know what the standards are with which we can judge beauty in nature. But the art creations, the creations of man, follow certain standards, and that is why it is possible for us to speak of objective criticism of art, though as the basis of all criticism there is the sudden experience. It is true, there is no unanimity about the standard or the scale of value. Therefore the science of aesthetics is concerned with arriving at a standard for this creation of man either in terms of literature or in terms of dance and music or in terms of sculpture or architecture or in terms of painting. These are all the arts of man. After all it may be that man is holding the mirror upto nature. A man paints the rainbow, the rainbow is there in nature. But the rainbow painted by man is something unique. We have all seen rainbows. But man the artist has seen it from a coign of vantage and he sees therein a new vision which he translates into the picture before us. We do not know what the purpose of a rainbow is, or of the cloud or of the sea. But the artist seems to make these things come alive with a purpose which he seems to suggest through his work, so that by seeing his art we get some inspiration. There is in us an upsurge, and there is a kind of a new life in us. While seeing the work of art we stand changed, we stand as though reconverted, re-transformed. This elevation of our spirit, our life and our experience is the aesthetic experience.

A similar experience may be got from seeing nature as well. It is said that sometimes Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to see the beautiful cloud and realise its cosmic significance, looking in and through it the Absolute, and go into a trance for hours together. But for ordinary mortals like us, probably the significance of a rainbow or the moral implications of it, not only the beauty but the living principles behind it, are clearer in the work of art rather than in nature.

This experience of art is the aesthetic experience. Ramakrishna's example may make us understand this. To use the language of

modern psychologists like Maslow, it is a kind of a peak experience. There is a harmony, a calmness, an inward joy in that inner silence, a commingling of the seer and the seen, a pure awareness. This does arise not only from joyful representations like joyful dance or happy union. The fall of tragic heroes through catharsis or purging us of all our passions, brings in us, the peak experience of a majestic and solemn silence. It is not beauty alone but ugliness also, when revealing the inner vision, as in the wild dance and horried feast of the ghosts around Kāḷi on the battlefield of a *paraṇi* or in the songs of Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, that create in the end, this aesthetic experience. It is *ānanda*; not the tumultuous joy we ordinarily experience, but an inward peace, the restful calmness of the erstwhile everwandering mind. Aesthetic experience of *rasa* is like the experience of Brahman. That is what the great exponents of *rasa* maintain.

That is why Rāmānuja says that in the image, the Absolute incarnates. That is a specific field of worship. According to the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, there are five aspects of God, there is the Para aspect of Vaikuṇṭha, there is the *vyūha* aspect of five forms, there is the *vibhava* aspect of the ten avatāras, of the *antaryāmi* aspect or being inside everything and also the *arcāvatāra* aspect, the incarnation of the Absolute in the *Arcca* or image. This last, forms a very important aspect of not only the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy but also Viśiṣṭādvaita ritual and religion. It is the philosophy of idol worship in other branches of Hindu religion. Therefore, we look upon art as man's creation. The Advaitins, to emphasise that the effect is not different from cause, usually say "All right I will take the gold; and you may take the ring, if it is separate." The ring is inseparable from the gold. But the manifest gold, though coming out of the Absolute has a particular significance only for man, because through that Art creation he is elevated to the state of the Absolute. He thinks it is his creator; in reality it is an *avatāra* of God: He removes the impediments; and then the Absolute reveals itself in the maniest. It is this manifest aspect of it which comes to us in these art creations; but the beauty and the wonder of it is that when we see this manifest aspect, we are uplifted as it were, to be the Absolute.

We get the vision of the Absolute in the manifest thing. Whatever it be, whether it is music or *rāga*, that is, kalyāṇi or Śaṅkarābharaṇa, that is sung, if we are *sahṛdayas*, i.e. if our hearts have been trained to be in tune with the spirit of the music, then we realise the experience. Usually we think, it is the *rasa*, the sweetness of the music, the joyful experience of music that arises there. When we are thus experiencing something beautiful in art, to that extent, we are really experiencing the *ānanda* aspect of Brahman. Therefore, even in the philosophy of beauty, there is the spiritual basis, which is not often referred to in discussions of artistic beauty elsewhere.

What should be the Tamil term for aesthetics? The Tamil Professor Gnanasambandam has coined the term *Murugiyal*. *Murugu* is beauty, *murugiyal* is the science of beauty or aesthetics. We prefer it, because the spiritual significance is implicit in it. *Murugu* is not only the manifest artistic beauty, *murugu* is also the Absolute. Therefore, though we may be talking in terms of the artistic beauty, the inspiration, "the why", the end and aim of it all, is really *murugu* i.e. the Absolute.

The Tamils have called art '*Tamiḻ*'. *Tamiḻ* seems to have too many meanings and implications. One is that *Tamiḻ* is love, idealised love; the other meaning is "art" as in *muttamiḻ*. We have the term *muttamiḻ* i.e. the *three tamils* and they are the fine arts. *Muttamiḻ* is *iyal-tamiḻ*, *icai-tamiḻ* and *Kūttu-tamiḻ*. Kūttu is dance, not merely drama. Music is *icai-tamiḻ*. Then we have *iyal-tamiḻ* which is literature and related arts.

There is a statement by a Siddha, who is called Kutambai-C-Cittar. He says,

முத்தமிழ் கற்று முழங்கும் மெய்ஞ்ஞானிகட்கு
சத்தங்கள் ஏதுக்கடி குதம்பாய், சத்தங்கள் ஏதுக்கடி.

It is addressed to 'Kutambāi' a woman, who is wearing ear-rings. It may be, it is addressed to the mind or even to the *Śakti*, the manifest aspect of the Absolute. He says, "why bother about all these noises, all the book-learning is nothing but noise; all the lectures too, are verily noises. Why bother about noises?

They are of no consequence to those who are humming with joy after having realised the *muttamiḻ*; the *muttamiḻ* are the three Tamiḻs. These are the three arts. The Tamiḻ people have not spoken in terms of the sixty-four arts etc., but all the arts have been grouped under the three headings, *iyal*, *icai* and *kūttu*. '*Kūttu*' is the perfect expression of the body. When a man has realised that mental perfection, every behaviour of his is artistic. Similarly, when a man has reached perfection of his voice and speech, then it becomes musical. Everything, every sound which comes is so musical, so orderly, so sweet; it is a symphony; it is a harmony. Similarly, *iyal* is the purified perfection of his thought, the sweetness of the thought. He expresses himself in an artistic form. There are three aspects of man, speech, intellect and body; all the various arts can be brought under these three headings. We may suggest another interpretation. Man has got three aspects, the aspect of the intellect, the aspect of feeling and the aspect of will, *jñāna*, *icchā* and *kriyā* śaktis. The *icchā śakti*, is a feeling, is the very form of music. It is feeling expressing itself in music. The *kriyā śakti* is action expressing itself in dance and *iyal* is *jñāna śakti* expressing itself in literature and related arts. The three aspects of Tamil are the three artistic expressions of perfection.

Education, as Tiruvaḷḷuvar contemplates it, is of two kinds and both are necessary for man. He has conceived of an integrated 'scheme' of education.

There is no divorce of science from the humanities or the humanities from the sciences.

எண்ணென்ப ஏனை எழுத்தென்ப இவ்விரண்டும்
கண்ணென்ப வாழும் உயிர்க்கு.

"*Eṇ eṉpa ēṉai eḻuttеṉpa ivviraṇṭum*
Kaṇ eṉpa vāḻum uyirkku."

A child when it goes to the infant standard learns *eṇ* and *eḻuttu*. *Eṇ* is something quantified. Science quantifies everything from an objective point of view. Therefore, *eṇ* is mathematics and *eḻuttu* is what we write and describe and what we paint and what

we sculpture. All humanities are therefore *eḻuttu*. These two, science and arts, are the two eyes of man. One cannot see rightly with one eye. Of course, the one-eyed man also can see. We realise, however the three dimensions because of the two eyes. The left hemisphere of the brain deals with analytical thinking, i.e, science. The right hemisphere deals with synthetic thinking, the vision of the whole, i.e., the arts. For being a perfect man, both the hemispheres should work, not one alone. It is possible to conceive of human beings as scientists or artists and there are many with only one eye, but theirs is not a perfect vision. Therefore, if we want perfect education, we must have not only quantified knowledge but also artistic experience. But science also, imaginatively conceived, becomes intuition of great men like Einstein. To them it is a compelling experience. Their theory and confirming experiments are but the objective manifestations of the inner vision or the intuitions experienced. Therefore science or arts, has to become an inner experience, an intuition—not something objectively separate from us, but an intrinsic part of our own being. Science has to become 'Tamiḻ'. That is why the Siddha says that if we experience these three aspects of art under which come all kinds of art, we get the experience of beauty; experience of not only the manifest aspects of this art but also the experience of the *Summum bonum*.

Therefore, the Siddha seems to realise the inward nature of these artistic expressions. We shall not go into the details of the various arts, where painting and architecture may be included within the three Tamiḻs.

What is happening in the arts? Music is not merely the voice of the heart and mind, but also of the refined ear. Literature is not merely thought but it is full of emotions and will; when we read it we also "hear" and get feelings enough to act. Dance is the finest expression of body and the *kriyā śakti*. But yet it is the expression of mind as thought and heart as feeling. All the three aspects are there in each one of these; only one aspect is predominant and the other aspects find their expression only through the predominant aspect. Education of the five senses in

varying degrees along with the various aspects of our mind come in but we shall not go into the details of it here.

The people who were in the Tamiḻ land thus identified Tamiḻ itself with the artistic expression of the various aspects of the mind, and considered that perfection itself cannot find expression in and through the arts.

About the dance and music of the ancient Tamiḻs, we can quote from *Cilappatikāram* and Nighantus and they will be mere word without the life of experience. Therefore, let us confine ourselves to literature.

Literature is called by Tolkāppiyar *ceyyuḻ*. *Ceyyuḻ* to-day means poetry, as contrasted with prose. But Tolkāppiyar does not use it in that sense. *Ceyyuḻ* is literary creation, whether it be metrical composition or non-metrical composition. The term *ceyyuḻ* is important. It also corresponds to the ancient name of the rhetoric or poetics in Sanskrit. The root of this word is *cey*; '*uḻ*' is only a suffix, which makes it a verbal noun "something done", not what is in nature. That is what we are concerned with here. That was what we were emphasising when we were contrasting beauty in nature as against beauty in artistic creation. It is this that Tolkāppiyar emphasises when he terms it *ceyyuḻ*. 'Ceyyuḻ' is man's creation. Here is the art of literature. *Ceyyuḻ*, is verse or *kāvya*—the creation of a kavi. This, he says, is something created by man. It is not 'iyaṟkai' but *ceyaṟkai—ceyaṟkai* not in the sense of being artificial but as something coming from man's mind and not from nature itself.

When we see a rainbow painted by a painter, we are not counting the number of shades of colour. We have an experience of a rainbow. There are indeed the colours violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, red and orange. But when we see the rainbow as painted, it is not any one rainbow. It is one rainbow which has appealed to the mind and heart of the painter as imagined by him out of many, as having great significance and this, he has translated into the form with facets of colour.

Thus, the artist's experience is not that of patches of violet, blue, indigo etc. but of a united whole. It is a unit. There are parts and for the purpose of analysis, we speak of the yellow colour, orange colour, red colour, green colour etc. But this is for analytical purpose but it is not actually there isolated. Suppose we refer to a man and talk of his nose, ear etc. as if they were separate. For the purpose of analysis, we may definitely speak of the eye, the ear, and all that. They are not existing as things in isolation. If separated, they lose their importance, their significance. Suppose, the doctor operates and takes out an ear because of some problem with the organ. Then the "ear" is no longer the ear. Therefore, an analysis even for the limited purpose, spoils the unity, significance and beauty of the whole. But unfortunately, when we want to understand, we have to go on dissecting in this way. It is a necessary evil and we cannot escape from it as long as our capacities are limited in this human existence. But we must understand that even when we are analysing the truth, it is an organic whole. The relationship between the parts and whole is not like the relationship between the parts and whole of a table or a chair. That artistic relationship is something of a relationship between body and mind or soul. We call such a relationship an organismic relationship.

Tolkāppiyar refers to the various 'parts' of *ceyyuḷ* as *uṟuppu*, emphasising the organic nature of the verse form of expression of the inner experience. These can be analysed systematically from the points of view of phonetics, prosody and syntax. And we may also speak of the content, the ideas behind it, the letters and the sounds, the duration of sounds, how they combine into words, then into lines and how the lines combine. All these represent the outward aspects and are analysed by the critic. But when there is an idea it has to be expressed in terms of sound and words in literature, and in terms of patches of colour, in painting. We rely upon these natural things here of the word, the sound, the colours and so on. But they are merely vehicles of something coming from within, the experience of the artist. It is wrong to speak of a vehicle and a rider—the form and the content as though they are distinct; for, the truth is the content

takes the form even as gold takes the form of a ring. We have the words. We refer to the dictionary and we find their meanings. But even that does not represent the inner experience. We have to go deeper down ; yet these are the moulds for the experience which are necessary as long as we are in this world and we depend upon the means of communication available in society. But we do refer to the vowel, the consonant, the pause and so on. This is merely the phonetic aspect. But while analysing a verse, we can mechanically say that a poet is using more vowels or more consonants and using particular kinds of consonants. When Cūrpanakai comes transformed as a beautiful lady, Kampan's description floats on liquids and nasals. When he describes the war, we hear the roar. Plosives predominate. Late Manicka Naicker proved all this quantifically. Take for instance :

> " *Ammaiyē appā oppilā maṉiyē aṉpiṉil viḷainta āramude*
> *Poymmaiyē pēcip poḷudiṉaniccurukkum*
> [*pulaittalaippulaiyaṉēṉṟaṉakkum*
> *Cemmaiyē yāya civapātam aḷitta celvamē civaperumāṉe*
> *Immaiyeyunnaic cikkeṉappiṭittēn eneeluṉṭaruḷuvatiṉiyē.*"

We see the preponderance of the nasals, the vowels and the liquids. We can count them. We see the preponderance of certain sounds, the labials in the 'Appā'. P is a voiceless stop. It is being softened. Then we get palatals i's, c's. We can analyse and point to the preponderance of certain important sounds and that might give us the spirit of the whole song. It is possible phonetically to analyse and point to certain sounds which are recurring. But that does not give us the whole meaning of it, though it does give us a clue.

What is important is that we have to 'go behind.' Therefore Tolkāppiyar speaks of one organ of the literary composition as *nōkku* which suggests that. And he observes that one who starts with the analysis of the sounds into vowels and consonants, *mātrā* etc., and goes on to see the line and the other aspects of prosody, can get the deeper implications of the literary piece. Coming together of these various sounds, etc. have a *nōkku*, a purpose and these are chosen to express the experience. They are given in

various permutations and combinations because the soul as it were takes the suitable body of the inner form. Therefore, he emphasises these as *uṟuppu*, but emphasises through *nōkku* that they serve the inner vision of experience. Nose and ear have a purpose and significance only in relation to the whole man so that he can smell and hear.

They have got a purpose whatever be their form and anatomical structure and physical appearance. They have meaning and significance only because of their service to the man. Similarly all these various organs of literary composition have a meaning, have a purpose, because of the inner message which the poet expresses as he had conceived in his vision of nature and life. And he gives us the words, the syntax etc. Of course the words must be connected. It may be, there is a word in the beginning of a song; and it is connected with something at the end. All these, the syntax, the construction, etc. are also important for showing how a particular thing is emphasised. Suppose there is the ordinary sentence "Nān cītaiyaikkaṇṭēn". That is the sentence which Hanūmān should have uttered to Rāma, when he returned from Laṅkā after having seen Sītā. But because Rāma is not interested in hearing the word 'Sītā' and is pining for her and wants to know whether she exists or not, Hanūmān has to first of all emphasise that he had seen her; not only that she exists but that he had seen her in flesh and blood with his own eyes. Therefore Hanūmān begins by saying 'Kaṇṭēn'. There the 'have seen' predicate which has to come at the end of a Tamil sentence is put at the beginning. He does not want to say merely 'Sītā', because there may then be a doubt whether he had seen her probably as a consort of Rāvaṇa. Therefore he adds as object 'the jewel of chastity'. The words form the real vision of Hanūmān and what he saw (Sītā), he wants to express in those words to Rāma. Therefore everything—the way in which the words are arranged—is guided by that inner inspiration and vision.

We have various aspects of the love and other types of poetry. In early Tamil, *poetry* was in terms of a monologue, where every verse is a speech of a particular person. It was dramatic to that extent.

We have to know who speaks it, for whom it is addressed and under what circumstances. Is he remembering what he describes as a past action? Or is he visualising something of the future or is he referring to the present? The time aspect of the speech is therefore important. In this way Tolkāppiyar enumerates many organs of a literary composition. We are not going into all the details. There is the aspect of sentence, the aspect of subject-matter and the various conventions; but all these are merely organs of the one unit of literary composition in which each one of them finds a place, a significance and inspiration known to the inner vision. It is his message, message which the artist is expressing through these various aspects of verses. This is the organic conception of art with reference to literature. But this idea, that everything finds its place and significance in relation to the whole which is the artistic creation, is important.

It is common knowledge that the unknown is explained in terms of the known. This is the importance of analogy. Therefore Tolkāppiyar has a place for *uvamam, upamā*. '*Upamā*' cannot be translated as merely *simile*. Anything which can be explained by any figure of speech is in a sense *upamā*. As Appayyadīkṣitar says, there is virtually only one figure of speech and that is *upamā*. Just as a lady can consecutively take on various roles in a drama, what is called *upamā* takes the form of various other figures of speech. In a metaphor we leave off the explicit suffixes of similarity and suggest an identity. Appayyadīkṣitar tries to explain the other figures of speech also as merely variations of *upamā*. ("*Vēṟupaṭavanta uvamattōṟṟam*, the altered forms of *uvamam*" says Tolkāppiyar.) This has to be understood in the light of Appayyadīkṣitar. Therefore *upamā* is brought in for clarifying ideas but not as we use *upamānapramāṇa* in philosophy. That would be a scientific way of using *upamā*. But in poetry *upamā* is used to tune up the emotional set-up, the cognitive set-up and the mental attitude of the reader to receive the message of the poet, and hence various aspects of *upamā* are referred to. These have been growing in numbers. We have, to start with, a few only being mentioned in *Tolkāppiyam*. In the nikhantus, we have a longer list. When we come to Daṇḍi, we find a more com-

prehensive analysis. *Taṇṭi Alaṅkāram* is merely a translation of Daṇḍi's *Kāvyadarśa*. In another Tamil translation of the work (which is perhaps not too well-known), Buddhamitra emphasises that *alaṅkāras* as the body and the *guṇas*, constitute the life of poetry. There were two schools in regard to the number of *guṇas* —the Vaidarbhī and Gauḍī schools. Hence we see that the Tamil work is an improvement on Daṇḍi. It must be emphasised here that Daṇḍi was in the court of Rājasimhapallava in Kancheepuram. When he draws a distinction between *tokai nilaicceyyuḷ* and *toṭar nilaicceyyuḷ* the Sanskrit commentator himself gives the "Dravida-sanghātan" (which perhaps refers to the Sangam literature consisting of *Ettuttokai* and *Pattuppāttu*) as an illustration for 'tokai'. Therefore Daṇḍi must have had an intimate knowledge of Tamil literature. The influence of Daṇḍi's work on the Tamil writers is evident from the fact that even though some other Sanskrit writers have dealt with the figures of speech the Tamils have not taken note of them, but swear by Daṇḍi. The fact that others did not come over and live in the Tamil land might have also contributed to this predicament of their works not having been accorded recognition. For instance, though Appayyadīkṣitar was a Tamilian, his *Citramīmāṁsā* etc. were not translated probably because of their not taking note of Tamil ideas. There were translations of *Candrālokam* and of *Kuvalayānandam* in the 19th century, and of *Dhvanyālokam*, as (*Toni Viḷakku*) in the 20th century. These were known only to a few scholars and hence Tamil critics have been referring only to Daṇḍi.

Here the spiritual significance of the Kāvyas needs some reference. The difference between *mahākāvyas* and other *kāvyas* that we find in the Tamil literary tradition is highly suggestive. While the former deal with all the four *puruṣārthas* the latter do not contain such a fully developed exposition but deal with one, two or three only of the four values.

After enumerating the various figures of speech, Daṇḍi ends with the *Bhāvika aṇi. Pāvikam eṉpatu kāppiyappaṇpe*!' is the Tamil translation. The intrinsic nature of *kāvya* is understandable from the term *bhāvika*. Hence, after analysing literature into

various figures of speech, he gives us this explanation of *bhāvika* at the end. It is here that we see the organic theory of a *kāvya*, whether it is a *khaṇḍa kāvya* or *mahākāvya*. *Bhāvika* provides a synthetic vision. After having torn asunder all the aspects of figures of speech, it puts them together and makes them a live whole. The examples given in the commentaries are: the *Rāmāyaṇa* which emphasises the duty of a son to a father; and the story of Harischandra which emphasises the importance of truth. Without objecting totally to these examples we may concede that the Epic on the one hand and 'the story of Truth', on the other contain something basic, something which gives life to them. What needs to be emphasised is that 'morals' as envisaged by the authors are not 'preached' but take the form of the *kāvya*. We have to take the clue to explain in a gross way the organic unity. We have to read the whole of *Harischandrapurāṇa* and the *Kampa Rāmāyaṇa* in its entirety, if we are to appreciate the organic unity of the messages and the inspiration of the authors.

People have been improving on Daṇḍi by including more and more number of figures of speech which started in *Tolkāppiyam* as variations of *upamā*. Tolkāppiyar emphasises another aspect of poetry, viz., the artistic aspect. According to some, art is an expression of a message. According to others, it is an expression of emotion. Others emphasise the right attitude which is created in the 'readers' and this may be dwelt upon at some length. When we read the *Rāmāyaṇa* we find that Rāvaṇa is killed. Rāvaṇa is a multi-faceted personality. But why should there be this sacrifice is a problem which arises in our minds. A sacrifice of a personality so great, so full of higher aspects of life and yet he has to be removed mercilessly, as though he is a poisonous weed. This is the problem of every tragedy. Kampan does not make Rāvaṇa merely an embodiment of all evils. Except for the only weakness of passion, one cannot blame him for anything else. He was a great devotee (*bhaktā*). He was deeply concerned with the welfare of his own citizens. Everything beautiful, everything great, everything worthwhile, was brought to Laṅkā for being enjoyed by the citizens of that land. But still because of this one passion—

weakness, which corrodes culture or civilisation, he has to be weeded out. Exploitation, racial jingoism and sexual passion symbolise the inner hollowness of the outward grandeur of a great personality. We have to read the whole of it. Kampan mourns the death of Rāvaṇa in the form of Maṇḍodarī, who mourns the death of her Lord. There we hear the voice of Kampan. Maṇḍodarī does not complain. Through her, the poet gives us the inner significance of the scheme of nature. Therefore, one has to read the whole of that organic unit called the art creation of Kampan to realise the significance of all of it. Hence, there is no use of maintaining that the intellectual aspects of literature are more important. Some scholars might say that *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam* is great or that *Cilappatikāram* is significant because there are descriptions about the way in which precious stones can be valued and the ways of building *gopurams* are found in them. This cognitive element has indeed a value when it becomes integral. But that alone does not make for an artistic creation. One may admit that these form a kind of brick which the architect of a poet uses in raising the beautiful *gopuram* of a *kāvya*. Everything comes coloured by his beautiful emotion and a grand attitude is inspired. What kind of attitude is that? When we once read the *Kampa Rāmāyaṇam*, our mind is not silent. We find Kampan shaping our attitude, the proper attitude which we should exhibit whenever a 'tragic' thing happens in the world.

As Richard has pointed out, this is one of the values of literature. The poet makes it interesting and in the end there is a perfect 'conversion' of the mind, a 'transformation' all through the reading of a *kāvya*. If the poet is not able to do it, he does not deserve the name of a poet. Hence there is a cognitive element and there is also an emotional element and they transform the individual's attitude towards life. An artistic creation is not something which one does for whiling away one's time. It has a deep significance for human life for it creates in man the proper emotional set-up. Therefore when people refer to poetry as emotion or cognition or will, they are giving only a part of the truth and not the whole truth.

We have our emotions, the raw emotions. The poet *qua* poet attempts to convert the emotion into a sentiment. *Rasa* is a poetic sentiment. In an actual life-situation, as for example a man losing his son and weeping, there is an explosion of emotion. He is so overpowered by his emotion. But what happens in a *kāvya* is that the raw material of emotion gets 'ennobled', the emotion being taken to a higher sphere of objectivity. It ceases to be a mere subjective feeling. It is an emotion but it has been objectified and universalised so much that when we read in the *kāvya* about the sufferings at the loss of a father or son, we find that the poet has raised these feelings to such an extent that everyone sees the reflection of his own sorrow in the poet's description. That was perhaps why Wordsworth emphasised the fact that poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity, not in the explosive way in which it is actually experienced. This objectification must, however be there without the unique feature being lost. Emotions becoming poetic sentiments are, in the Tamil tradition of *Tolkāppiyam* called *meippāṭu*. *Meippāṭu* literally is the inner emotion as exhibited in our gestures. The gulping of the throat, the sweating, the tears—all these are the visible signs, the expressions of emotion. What underlies it is a *bhāva*, a *kuṟippu* in Tamil. Tolkāppiyar adopts an 'objective' rather than a subjective approach towards *meippāṭu*. *Rasas* have not been completely analysed and explained in *Tolkāppiyam*, though its author refers to four different sources for each one of the eight *meippāṭus*. *Rasa* or *meippāṭu* is not mere emotion. Man has, as has already been pointed out, *jñana*, *kriyā* and *iccha śaktis*—cognition, conation and emotion.

When the mind is completely developed and has analysed the finer aspects of the heart, the feeling aspects come to the fore; the three aspects of cognition, conation and emotion are synthesised in the finest feeling of *rasa* which is the residue left and enjoyed as the experience of calmness. This kind of treatment is found nowhere else. There are but clues for a theory of *rasa*, but we do not think our commentators have succeeded in explaining that theory in full. Of course *rasa* is known from the days of Bharata, but it is curious that this treatment of *rasa* should be found in

Tolkāppiyam, reminding us of the emphasis on *rasa* by those great men of Kashmir like Abinavagupta. In *Tolkāppiyam* there are certain aspects of the theory. We all know that when we see a drama, 'emotions' and other expressions first arise in the actors. How these are 'transferred' to the audience, is a problem which the commentators of *Tolkāppiyam* have tried to attack. But we need not go into those details here. Suffice it to point out that the cognitive element in poetry and drama consists of various aspects of speech, words, grammar, syntax and other 'conventions'. When some one refers to a cow, a 'generalised thing' is visualised. But what the poet has to do is to make it experienced and enjoyed by his readers. There is, in addition, analogy (*upamā*). It is a great alchemy with which the poet (or a dramatist) 'converts' ordinary words and by putting them together, he transports the reader (or the audience) to an inner world of experience which he himself has while writing poetry or visualising a dramatic situation.

Rasa is the soul of poetry (*rasātmakam kāvyam*). *Dhvani* or suggestion makes for the experience of *rasa.* The experience of pure awareness is in a sense our reality and we hark back to it as a *pratyabhijña.* The hero and the heroine i.e., their acts and experiences as *uripporuḷ* within the background of time and place, the *mutaṟporuḷ* and the changing nature including men and their physical and cultural activities as *karupporuḷ* enriching the reality of their story, bring home to us their experience.

Dhvani leads to *rasa.* In this context it is useful to refer to another kind of *upamā* which is very predominant in Saṅgam literature and to which Tolkāppiyar gives an important place. It is called *uḷḷurai uvamai.* It is *upamā* which is implicit and which is not something mechanical or artificial. Let us illustrate by picturising a hero who has, or at least is suspected to have, extra-marital relationships. This has to be expressed. When he seeks the company of the heroine, the companions of the heroine have to hint at the extra-marital relationship. They should feign ignorance of it and yet a valid protest has to 'registered'. But it should not be in a scandalous, unseemly, uncivilised or uncultured

way. Therefore the hero's land is described: "You know you have a beautiful land; there are beautiful tanks full of leaves with a central lotus and on the borders of the tanks, you have all kinds of wild bushes of small flowers with atoms of nectar or honey, and the bull comes there; it comes and plays on the small flowers there, then jumps and makes the whole tank muddy and later comes to enjoy the lotus." This is a description of a beautiful rural area where there are tanks, lotus etc. But there is something more significant here. The hero is reminded of his extra-marital relationship. He is a sturdy man; he is a hero no doubt i.e., he is magnificent as a bull. But the 'bull' forgetting all signs of culture goes to the thorny and tiny flowers, the prostitutes, and then comes to spoil the calm tank, the home of the heroine and makes it muddy and confused, and creates all misunderstandings. Lastly he comes to the lotus flower i.e., the heroine. The nature of the bull and the hero's nature are 'compared'. It is an implied simile; the simile is not patent at all. But the description implies it. Since the lady cannot openly and crudely point to the weakness of the hero, recourse is had to this kind of a 'cultural protest'. It is evident that in the analogy the bull stands for the hero, the lotus stands for the heroine, the tank stands for the home and the tiny flowers stand for the prostitutes. This is *uḷḷurai uvamai.* Unless this is understood, one can never understand Saṅgam literature; for it is full of this kind of *uḷḷurai uvamai.* But it is something algebraic.

But, however important and significant *Vyaṅgya* or implication may be, it should be reiterated that *dhvani* is the very soul of literature. *Dhvani* is also called *iṟaicci*; it also has an indirect meaning. In a mathematical generalisation like "One plus one makes two", the 'one' may be a dog or a God. The formula will apply. Here is a symbolism, *uḷḷurai uvamam,* one standing for something. Metaphor really so called is not symbolism; as the word implies, it is a 'going beyond'. For instance, sky and a "diamond" connected as sky-diamond is neither sky nor diamond nor a combination of the two, but something beyond these, the star twinkling like a diamond in the sky. A new creation arises in poetry. In a vague sense this happens even in

perception. For example in the perceptual experience of a mango, the impression fades into our memory and, when later an yellow patch is seen the mango also is 'seen' or 'recollected'. This is harking back or *pratyabhijña.* This is *dhvani* or *iṟaicci.* It is rather difficult to distinguish between *iṟaicci* and *uḷḷurai uvamam.* Perhaps a distinction could be drawn by referring to *uḷḷurai uvamam* as algebraical and artificial and visualising the meaning of *iṟaicci* by roughly translating it into *dhvani.* The contrast is between an 'implied meaning' and a 'whole meaning'.

One heroine cries that the hero has not come as he had promised to. Especially when we remember the Tamil conception of premarital love, the tragic circumstances under which the heroine cries becomes clearly understood. When the heroine cries, the question as to why exactly the heroine talks of the waterfalls when 'her man' has 'deserted' her arises. "Look at the mountain of the hero which is nearby," "*Ilangum aruvittē, Ilangum aruvittē.*" "Oh! what beautiful water falls there!" The idea that is expressed here is that the whole of nature seems to be against her. Nature seems to be purposely enriching the country, rewarding 'him' for his faithlessness. Rains shower in abundance and flow there! This is the anguish of the separated heroine. There is no question of algebraical application at all here but a *suggestion* which seems to be the heart and soul of the verse.

There is something more. If the heroine feels that he had deserted her, according to the theory of love, she must die on the spot. There is a beautiful exposition of this theory of love, in Nakkīṟar's commentary on *Iṟaiyanār Akapporuḷ.* According to that theory, if the heroine is convinced that the hero has left her, then she should die on the spot. But when a heroine is portrayed as still living and making all protest, the idea behind the portrayal can be understood by examining the further implication, viz., that though Nature seems to be on the surface against her, there must be some purpose behind it; and may be it is suggestive of some good that may happen to her; this is pointed out by the heroine's companion while consoling her. The clear suggestion here is that she should wait in patience till the whole situation becomes clear.

Here again we base our interpretation on the objective reference to the mountain and other things. Even as we have interpreted in an earlier reference to the bull, tank and the fields, here is the inscape. Therefore the landscape, as A. K. Ramanujam put it, gives us the inscape. It gives us a picture of the inner feeling, the experience, of the heroine. It is important to remember here that the poet places himself in the position of a heroine and utters these lines all alone. Therefore, *dhvani* is implied meaning *not* in the sense of satires. The implication itself is the very soul of the verse. If we miss it, we cannot understand the verse. Thus we have the various ingredients, sentiments, feeling elements, cognitive elements and also attitudes which help us in appreciating the heroine's predicament. The *dhavani* theory speaks of the *mukhya dhvani*, primary *dhvani* and the *gauṇī bhūta dhvani*, the secondary *dhvani*. The latter is of a lower status. What analysts and interpreters say is that poetry is 'given' and the reader is made to understand the conclusion. Not everything is made clear. *Dhvani* must operate. If we ourselves interpret the *dhvani*, then that *dhvani* poetry deserves to be referred to as 'secondary'.

Analysis is helpful in enjoying variety. But to speak of inferiority or superiority, of primaries and secondaries in classics, is misleading, though of some use in studying minor poetry. Classic poetry is that which is perfect; and valuation is impertinent, though tastes may vary. Is a perfect diamond more valuable than a perfect emerald or a saphire, whatever may be their value? Each is perfect. We can classify them as emerald and diamond but we cannot compare the Absolute. One may prefer an emerald and another a diamond. Even so, in classic poetry. Saṅgam poetry consists of such classic verses chosen and collected as anthologies. It seems to us worthwhile to dwell at some length on a verse of *Akanānūṟu*. The hero speaks and expresses his plan of leaving his lady love to go abroad for gathering wealth for the upkeep of the family. He has gone abroad many times and everytime he wanted to leave her, before telling her about his plans, he had been extra sweet and there had been an extra dose of loving embrace. Therefore, now when he says: "My honey", "My life", etc., the heroine is reminded of the past experience and

thinks that it is all a preparatory step to inform her of his proposed stay in a foreign land. All that state of loving, over-ripe kindness, she is not prepared to 'put up' with. She therefore puts on a kind of wry face—(*amariya mukattāḷ*). She does not explode and cry out, for that would not be the behaviour of a cultured woman. Therefore she expresses the heaviness of her heart by the heaviness of her foot. She moves very slowly (*meṉmela iyali*) and her feet make deep impressions on the ground (*nilam vaṭukkoḷā*). Her exceedingly beautiful feet become red. She draws nearer. The sharp teeth blossom into a smile. But it is clear that it is a forced one. There is a vacuum in her heart. All that smile and coming near happen because culture has become her second nature. She realises what his intentions are. Even before the realisation is complete, certain reactions in her show what is passing in her mind, what she wanted to express to him.

She had been told in detail about the dreary and deathly desert he passed through on previous occasions—the desert which he has to pass through even now. She imagines the details and actually experiences the miseries in herself, not necessarily as *he* experienced them, but as a mother with a child would experience. Hence in a sense, *her* experience was more terrible and more deadly than even that of her hero. Her identity with him is so complete that his experience becomes hers, in the most exaggerated way in the present. When his decision to go on the task of earning in a distant land is fully reflected in her mind, her reactions clearly reveal her thought—her not agreeing to his setting out on that 'task'. Her reactions reveal her tragic experience, clearly imagining every detail of the desert. Perhaps the desert was once a cultivated land, but it has now grown old in the perfect beauty of terror. Similarly on the hero's way there is a mountain. One has to climb up on one side and descend on the other. There rocks receive the full anger of the burning sun. They crack and crackle. The pointed ends of the broken bits have become blunt. They seem to hide their piercing edges—a wolf in a sheep's skin. What dissemblance still further strengthened by nature! There is also a lofty dark slab of rocks, so very much

like a chess board on which gamblers play their dice. On the slab are gooseberries, lying scattered. The crystal-like fruits simulate the dice. If misled by the floor of green crystals of gooseberry, one is bound to walk across the stones with their sharp piercing crowns and have their toes pierced. This kind of suffering and cruelty reaches its perfection in the pathways of the forests and mountains where there is not a drop of water.

The heroine must have been told of certain details regarding the crystal-like beautiful and sweet gooseberries and of their being strewn like dice. She makes use of that analogy to describe the hero's attempts at amassing wealth and suggests that it is like going after a will–o'–the–wisp. The gooseberry merely hides and misleads the unwary only to make the toes bleed. The comparison to dice further suggests that the hero's attempt is a gamble, a futile journey of a dried up heart which makes others bleed. Wealth is necessary but wealth alone does not give happiness. The endless pursuit of material wealth, regardless of the loving wife and the blooming child, is worthy only of a Midas.

Thus the description given of the arduous journey of her hero has made her 'experience' the suffering. She seems to tell the hero that his thinking of going beyond the desert amounts to his feeling that life at home is but a cruel passage through a wasteful desert.

Though she has not made such a speech, her ideas are clearly apparent from her expressive face. The message of the painting is clear. And there she is leaping to life with the tragic message. She thinks of something that might happen and embraces her child. Tears roll down her cheeks and hide the pupils of her eyes. The child has been lovingly adorned with a laurel of flowers born of pure and clear water, woven symmetrically.

She smells the tiny crown of the child affectionately and heaves a deep sigh. Lo! The beautiful and glorious fresh morning flowers on the crown of the child have lost their gem-like beauty. The implication is that she feels she will die. The heat of suffering dries up the flower.

The hero must have stopped and we could have understood that he has given up his journey. The verse would then be an example of primary *dhvani*. But the poet proceeds to make the *dhvani* clearer, for the hero says "This lady of shining bangles even when we are by her side suffers like this. If we depart she will not live. Oh mind! Having seen the withering appearance of the flowers on the crown of the child, we have given up all journey." This is making the *dhvani* a secondary one.

Further if the hero had not spoken those concluding words, the verse could have been considered as the speech of the heroine's companion. Hence the importance and significance of this speech of the hero needs to be reflected about. Here is a hero—a great personality—a man of firm resolve and great ideals. Without his speech we will be witnessing the working of the heroine's mind and we might not have thought of the hero. When this is made the speech of the hero, we see the 'mental dialogue', between the hero and the heroine. The invincible citadel of the heart and mind of the hero—the heart which is full of love for the child and the suffering world at large for benefitting whom he decided on the venture in a distant land—this citadel is slowly capitulating to the deep love of the heroine. The hero confesses to his mind, his giving up his firm resolve. Without the concluding remarks we could not have got at the high ideals of the hero. Seen in this light, every line makes us visualise the hero's feelings and thoughts.

The concluding remarks make us read the deeper *dhvani* portraying the hero. In this way, the verse illustrates the primary *dhvani*. It is not *śoka rasa* but the *karuṇā* and *vīra* of the self-abdication of real heroism born of love. That is important here, reminding us of *Bhīṣma* and the Buddha. Iḷango of *Cilappatikāram* speaks of *karuṇai maṟavan*.

We have thus briefly surveyed some aspects of Tamil aesthetics. The philosophy of *arcā* or image as the philosophy of the beautiful, of art as created by man, is aesthetics. In regard to the number of arts, we referred to the philosophy of *muttamiḻ* and its comprehensiveness. Passing on to literature, we noticed the importance

of the term *ceyyuḷ* as emphasising human creation. We found the importance of the conception of *nōkku* as leading us to appreciate the theory of organismic unity of poetry. We explained the importance of *upamā* as the source of all figures of speech. We tried to understand the popularity of Daṇḍi in the Tamil land, the idea of *guṇas* and the significance of *bhāvika*. We were surprised that Tolkāppiyar in the extreme South and Abhinava Gupta in the extreme North of India should have emphasised the *rasa dhvani*. The term *meyppāṭu* was found to represent the objective approach. We saw that *rasa* is an intrinsic joy different from what we ordinarily call joy, since this arises after experiencing tragedy. Beauty in art similarly is something different from what we generally call beauty, since this arises when reading even a perfect representation of ugliness. We passed on to consider implied meanings. Symbolism is transcended in poetry. We go beyond what is said by the poet to his inner self. *Uḷḷurai uvamai* has taken the first step. *Iṟaicci* is the perfection of this, "reaching the beyond". We also tried to understand *dhvani*. We found the limitations of all analysis since art is a synthesised vision of the whole. We attempted to explain this and also the experience of art through the study of a verse from *Akanāṉūṟu* of Saṅgam literature.

We hope that this brief survey would have brought out some aspects of the deeper significance of the aesthetics of the ancient Tamils, which was grounded as much on the psychological analyses of personality as on the ethical-philosophical ideals of life.

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