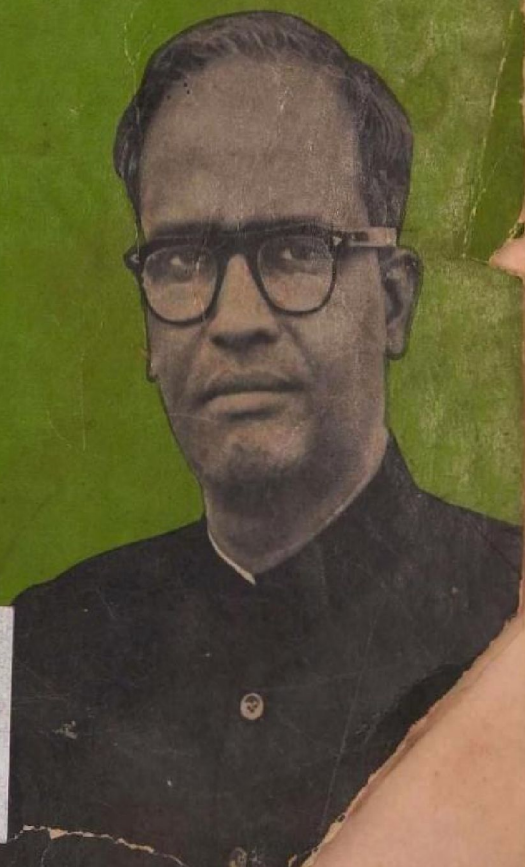


Dr. Mu.Va.



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DR. MU. VA.

(Collection of research papers on Dr. MU. VA.)

Editors

S. V. SUBRAMANIAN

A. A. MANAVALAN

உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
TAMIL STUDIES**

MADRAS-20



DR. MU. VA.

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FOREWORD

Great was Dr. M. Varadarajan as a teacher, as a scholar, as a writer and as an administrator; but greater was he as a man.

What distinguished him from other scholars was this quality in him, namely, that he never allowed himself to be confined within the exclusive academic circle. Whenever he sensed any danger to his mother-tongue or some injustice to the ideals he cherished, he did not hesitate to come out of the academic campus and to raise his voice of protest. It is this quality that endeared him to the people.

When Hindi was sought to be imposed on the people of Tamil Nadu, he boldly joined the ranks of those who voiced their strong protest against it. When the boundaries of Tamil Nadu were sought to be restricted, he readily joined hands with those who fought for our rights. Hence, he was held in esteem by the people of Tamil Nadu as a leader of their culture and heritage.

He was steeped in the Sangam literature not only in its literary excellence but also in the noble and universal ideas enshrined in it. And to those ideas he gave expression in his writings which arrested the attention of the people.

He was an original thinker and we see in his writings a rationalistic approach to the many problems of life. Had he

lived longer, we would have had many more of his works of enduring value to the future of our country. But, that was not to be.

Dr. Varadarajan never sought after any office. He always considered official positions not as an end in themselves but only as a means to render service. As the Pro-Chancellor of the Madurai University, I know what persuasion was required to make him agree to continue as Vice-Chancellor of that University for the second term.

In short, he was an embodiment of culture that is required of a great teacher.

I am happy that this volume has been brought out by International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, and I congratulate the authors of the several articles of deep study and scholarship. I hope that this publication is just a beginning in the study of Dr. Mu. Va. as a writer, teacher, scholar, and above all, as a man.

Madras

1-10-75.

V. R. NEDUNCHEZHIAN

PREFACE

Dr. M. Varadarajan, popularly known as Mu. Va. is one of the towering personalities of the 20th century literary figures. He is very well known throughout the country far and wide through his writings. He was a prolific writer and his writings cover almost all departments of Tamilology viz. Tamil literature, linguistics, culture, etc. His research articles are very widely appreciated and unanimously accepted as well founded and well documented.

His demise at not a very ripe age is quite unfortunate. He was the first Honorary Director of the International Institute of Tamil Studies from its very inception in 1971 and has striven hard to place it on a secure footing with ambitious research projects. The International Institute of Tamil Studies has lost in his demise an able Guide in the truest sense of the term.

The present volume containing some 20 research papers on his works and personality is published in token of our sincere love and regard to Dr. Mu. Va. I appreciate and thank all the scholars/contributors for their co-operation in this regard.

DR. S. AGESTHIALINGOM

Honorary Director

International Institute of Tamil Studies

Adaiyaru
22-9-1975

EDITORIAL NOTES

Though I had been long before an avid reader of Dr. Mu. Va's books, it was only during 1950-1953 when I was a student of Tamil at Annamalai University that I had the opportunity to meet him. But those meetings were few and far between and of the nature of one between a student and a professor. My acquaintance with him became more and more personal after my becoming the Head of the Department of Tamil in the University of Kerala. As Member of the Boards of Studies of the Universities of Kerala and Bangalore I had many more opportunities to move with him closer and closer.

While at Bangalore, he never allowed me to stay anywhere but in his house. Again though he was not in the habit of visiting the theatres, he was kind enough to accompany me to some Kannada films. These are not great things in themselves but they show Dr. Mu. Va's kindness towards me in even such mundane condescensions.

His greatness was of such magnitude that he would introduce me to great scholars and other dignitaries as the Head of the department of Tamil in Kerala University while introducing himself as such in the University of Madras. This would put me in great embarrassment as I was and am nowhere in comparison with him either as a scholar or as a man, though in my heart of hearts, I was his student, not a bonafide, but after the fashion of *Ekalaivan*. This endearing quality of

Dr. Mu. Va. is the key-note of his personality. I was very frank in expressing my opinions which may not be agreeable to him, but yet he would lend a patient hearing and would correct them, if necessary, as a father would do his son's, not as a professor.

One would generally expect a drastic change in the behaviour and treatment of people when suddenly elevated to higher posts. They would soon develop distinctions and would like to keep the distance always even to close friends, and thus become a highbrow. I never experienced any such change in Dr. Mu. Va's behaviour after his becoming the Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University nor did any one of his close associates experience any such change. Dr. Mu. Va. as professor and best counsellor to his students, and good friend to his friends remained the same till his end. Even after his becoming the Vice-Chancellor, he complied with my request to continue as the member of Board of Studies of the Kerala University. He never thought that it was infra-dig to sit with other members of the Board who were mostly his students or of such station. He was quite unassuming and yet asserted his opinions whenever occasion demanded. He was very soft and tender but, however, very firm in his principles and practice.

He was the first Honorary Director of the International Institute of Tamil Studies from its very inception till his end in 1974. This Institution was his last endeared child and was drawing sustenance from him. The Institute has lost in his demise a very good guiding star and an encouraging champion of its cause. It is to pay homage to his illustrious memory that the Institute has planned to bring out a volume of research papers on his works.

I am very glad and proud to be able to bring out this in token of his services to the cause of Tamil and Tamilians. This is a very humble token, no doubt, yet, it would go a long way in ennobling our ideas and ideals by our sincere and sustained association with his ideas and ideals enshrined in his works, on which almost all the articles in this volume revolve.

S V S

The International Institute of Tamil Studies planned in November, 1974 just a month after the much bereaved demise of Dr. Mu. Va. to bring out a volume of research articles on his works. The Institute consequently requested scholars from all over India and abroad to contribute articles for the same. Such requisition was the result of our earnest wish that proper representation of scholars in Tamilology would be much fitting in view of Dr. Mu. Va.'s interests in various fields, and his academic contacts with various personalities. But we were not that much fortunate to have fair representation of scholars as we had envisaged, in spite of our repeated requests to almost all the scholars in Tamilology.

Articles sounding more of a souvenir are published in the Journal of Tamil Studies No. 7 which is Dr. Mu. Va.'s commemoration Volume. Articles that deal mostly with his works are collected together and published in the present volume. Photos collected from out of the three albums with the kind permission of the members of Dr. Mu. Va.'s family, have been added to this volume that they may enhance its usefulness.

There are 21 articles in this volume and they are arranged not in any rigid order but in a way conducive to understand his works in a better light. The first article is a rapid survey of Dr. Mu. Va.'s life while the second one is by one of his seniormost students reminiscing the hours and the events of great interest spent with Dr. Mu. Va. as a Professor of Tamil. Articles 3 to 6 (vide contents page) deal with Dr. Mu. Va.'s novels, 7 with his short stories, 8 his letter writing, and 9 and 10 with his dramas. His biographical writings are discussed in article 11 and his style in 13. Articles 12, 14 and 20 are reminiscential in nature. Articles 15, 16 & 17 view him as a humanitarian in life and letters, an essayist and a revolutionary respectively. Dr. Mu. Va.'s Prefaces to other writers are discussed at length in 18, while 19 attempts to assess Dr. Mu. Va.'s achievements as a Literary critic. The last article 21, is an annotated bibliography of Dr. Mu. Va.'s works.

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An Index to the subject words and phrases is added at the end.

The views and opinions found expressed in these papers are not necessarily those of the Institute but only of the individual authors'.

Our intention to release this volume on the day of his first anniversary i.e. on 10-10-1975, has subjected us to some difficulties with regard to its printing, etc., and hence our request to the readers to bear with us if they light on any errors or discrepancies in regard to transliteration, etc., and to pass them on to us for future rectification.

A A M

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors are very much grateful to Dr. Navalar Nedunchezhiyan, Minister for Education, Tamil Nadu and Chairman, Board of Governors, International Institute of Tamil Studies, for his valuable Foreword to '*Dr. Mu. Va*'.

They are thankful to Dr. S. Agesthalingom, Honorary Director for his Preface to this volume.

Their thanks are due to all the contributors who kindly complied with their request by sending their papers in time to this volume.

Much help and assistance have been received from many of their colleagues and the editors thank them profusely.

The editors are happy to acknowledge the help rendered by the Macmillan India Press, Madras, in printing this volume admirably well in very short time.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION USED

Vowels—உயிரெழுத்துக்கள்

Short—குறில்

a — அ

i — இ

u — உ

e — எ

o — ஒ

Long—நெடில்

ā — ஆ

ī — ஈ

ū — உ

ē — ஏ

ō — ஒ

ai — ஐ

au — ஔ

·i — க்

Consonants—மெய்யெழுத்துக்கள்

Hard—வல்லினம்

Soft—மெல்லினம்

Medium—இடையினம்

k — க்

ṅ — ங்

y — ய்

c — ச்

ṇ — ண்

r — ர்

ṭ — ட்

ṇ — ண்

l — ல்

t — த்

n — ந்

v — வ்

p — ப்

m — ம்

ḷ — ழ்

ṟ — ற்

ṇ — ன்

ḷ — ள்

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THE LIFE OF MU. VA.

*Dr. C. Balasubramanian**

Introductory Remarks

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

Infancy and Education

In his boy-hood, Mu. Va. the protagonist of this biographical sketch was fostered with tender care and boundless affection by his loving grand mother who used to call him by his pet name *Tiruvēṇkaṣam*. Mu. Va. also maintained such an equal affinity with her till her death and even in his maturity, he used to talk of her with much pride to his close friends recollecting some of the unforgettable events of his boy-hood days in her house. This warm hearted attachment finds very

*Reader, Dept. of Tamil, University of Madras, Madras-5.

powerful and moving artistic expression in *viṭṭalāyā*?, where he transmutes all the personal experiences into an impressive short story which is like an exquisite melancholy poem in prose. Mu. Va. was a sedulous and hardworking type even from his boy-hood. His penchant for Mathematics and powerful recollective power enabled him to score good marks in subjects like Mathematics. Besides the optimistic guidance and encouragement that were bestowed upon him by his high school teacher Thiru *Tiruvēṅkaṣattaiyar* succored him to become a resourceful student. Mu. Va. never failed to acknowledge the helps kindly rendered by this teacher in his salad days and used to recall those helps with much gratitude even in his later days when he enjoyed good reputation throughout the country.

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

One day, while his teacher Tiru. *Murukaiyya Mutaliār* was teaching Tamil prosodical rules to the VIII standard pupils, Mu. Va. happened to see one of his friends keeping with him a book on Tamil prosody (*Tapparuṅkalakkārikan*). He immediately borrowed that book from him, copied the whole book without omitting even a single line and memorized almost all the *cūtrās*. With the thorough knowledge acquired through this practice, he started writing Tamil verses on *kaṭṭaṭaikka-*

littuṛai metre even from the eighth standard and taught *yāpparuṅkalakkārikai* to many students later days.

Tiru. *Murukaiyya Mutaliyār*, his teacher used to teach saivite doctrines and hymns to the villagers every evening in the village temple. With his acceptance, Mu. Va. attended his classes regularly and studied saivite works like *nālvar nāṇmaṇimālai*. Yet he could not completely alienate himself away from his sincere affinity to Mathematics and hence he took Mathematics and science as optional subjects in the IX standard. Later, he got through the S.S.L.C. examinations with 98% marks in Mathematics. The teacher who taught Mathematics blessed him to become a good engineer or a mathematician in future. But, on the contrary, the unquenchable thirst for Tamil literature that was deeply rooted in his heart even from his infancy got victory over the inner struggle between science and art in his later days.

Mu. Va. in the Office

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

Literary Interests

Mu. Va. was always highly cheered in the midst of his good friends. Among them four may be worth mentioning. They are Tiru. *Tāmōtara Mutaliyār* of *Tiruppattūr*, *Kuppucāmy Mutaliyār* of *Pōrūr*, Tiru. *Kantacāmy Mutaliyār*, a Tamil

teacher and professor *Yōgacuntaram*, the former Head of the Department of Tamil, Voohreese College, Vellore. Mu. Va. with the company of these inspiring friends used to visit the *Javātu* mountains which sumptuously feasted his eyes with its indescribable beauty, everlasting charm and varieties of vegetations. He maintained this kind of unending organic relationship with nature till his death.

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

Post Marital Life at Tiruppatūr

In 1935, Mu. Va. wedded *Rātā Ammayār*, the daughter of his uncle *Gāraṅkapāṇi*. The wedding ceremony was celebrated in a very simple manner. His uncle gave him Rs. 50 to buy the necessary garments for the wedding function. Mu. Va. bought a dhoti, a shirt and a towel and refunded the remaining amount to his uncle himself. He used to wear *kadhi* and followed the simple Gandhian way of life. One day, while he was in the government service, he had to hand-over an official message to the district collector. His friends frightened him that the collector would not like to see a government servant bringing an official message wearing *kadhi*.

(since India was under the British rule). But Mu. Va. was little bothered about that and went to the collector with the same dress.

Though he served as a teacher with a low income, he led an honest and charitable life. When Tiru. *A. S. Shanmuga Mutaliyār*, a wealthy man of this area offered him some garments as a remuneration for taking private tuitions to his children, Mu. Va. received it as a token of his courtesy and respect for him and firmly sent words that he should not send such presentations thereafter. In 1935, he passed the vidvan final examinations with first rank in the state and was awarded Rs. 1000 by the *Tiruppanantā! maṣam*.

Mu. Va. And Tiru-Vi-Ka

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

Life at Madras

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

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. November-1939 | (a) <i>Kuṣantaippāṭṭu</i> (b) <i>Kaṭakattamiḷ ilakkaṇam I & II</i> (c) <i>Shakespeare Kavitaikaḷ I</i> |
| 2. 1940 | (a) <i>Shakespeare Kavitaikaḷ II</i> (b) <i>Paṭiyāṭavar paṭumpāṭu</i> (c) <i>Kaṭakacciṟukataikaḷ I-III</i> |
| 3. 1941 | (a) <i>Kaṭakattamiḷ ilakkaṇam III</i> |

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

Mu. Va. as a Writer

The style of Mu. Va. is very simple, elegant and clear as the writer himself. Every sentence is pregnant with clear and profound thoughts. He would tell even complex and obscure matters in a simple and attractive manner. In the year 1948, his famous literary production *Tiruvaḷḷuvar allatu Vāḷkkai Viḷakkam* came to be published though it was written a few years back. In 1944, he published his first fiction *pāvai*. His famous novel *Kaḷḷō Kāvīyamō* enjoyed renowned fame later days. After this book saw the print in 1947, the powerful creative talent and craftsmanship of Mu. Va. began to spread all over Tamil nad and began to attract the attention of the people. In the meantime, he was appointed as honorary Reader for the years 1944-46 in the Madras University. In those days he published *Ovaccēti*, *Kaṇṇaki* and *Tamiḷ neṇcam* the three important landmarks in the critical study of the Tamil literature. In 1945, he submitted a dissertation on Tamil verbs and got his M.O.L. degree. He went back to

the Pachaiyappa College in 1946 and undertook research on Sangam literature under the title 'The Treatment of nature in Sangam literature' and got his Ph. D. degree for that from the Madras University. In the same year he was promoted as Professor of the Tamil Department after the death of *Mōcūr Kantacāmy Mutaliyār*, the former Professor of the same department. *Mōcūr Kantacāmy Mutaliyār* had a high respect and veneration for Dr. Mu. Va. and even when he himself was the Head of the Tamil Department, he used to handover all the responsibilities to Dr. Mu. Va. As insisted by him Dr. Mu. Va. started wearing coat and turban with a spot of wafer of red sandal paste on the forehead in the College hours.

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

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

When the Independent day was celebrated in a pompous manner in the year 1957, a body of persons including some illustrious personalities like Dr. P. V. Rajamannar, the Chief Justice of Tamil nad and Dr. *A. L. Mutaliyār*, the former

Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University were appointed by the State Government to select three meritorious and eminent artists for *iyal*, *icai* and *nāṭakam* respectively and honour them by giving great recompenses for their services. Dr. Mu. Va. won the prize for *Iyal* and K. B. Sundarampāḷ and Pammal Sambanta Mutaliyār won the prizes for *icai* and *nāṭakam* respectively. Dr. Mu. Va's explanatory and critical commentary of *Tirukkuraḷ* was highly commended by a large circle of inquiring Tamil readers and more than 8 lakhs of copies were sold.

As a Tamil Professor in the Madras University

Dr. R. P. Sethu Pillai, a well known orator and a dexterious Tamil scholar was the Head of the Department of Tamil in the Madras University who worked in that capacity till the beginning of the year 1961. When he was admitted in the General Hospital owing to his ill-health, he requested Dr. Mu. Va. to accept his offer of the Professorship after his death. Though Dr. Mu. Va. was reluctant, he could not easily refuse the request of that eminent scholar and took up that job from July, 1961. Many young scholars registered under him for the M. Litt. and Ph.D. titles and got through with success. Among them Messers. *Murugaratnam*, V. T. *Balasubramoniam Tillainātan*, Miss. Rajalakshmi and Mary Devapakkiam were conferred with M. Litt. degrees and Messers. *Murugaratnam*, M. Israel, Sacivally, Devadatta, V. T. *Moṇickam*, Nāku, R. Dhandayutam, R. *Janārttanam*, V. Gnanasigamani, M. Selvarajan and A. Nagalingom were guided by him for Ph.D. degrees. Dr. R. Seenivasan and C. Balasubramaniam of the Pachaiyappa College, who got M. Litt. degrees under him successfully completed their Ph.D. theses under his private guidance. His dynamic vocation in the University as a research guide was a hindrance to his writing career. His prose fiction *Akal Viṭakku* won the Sakitya Akademi Prize for the year 1962. His three important creations *aramum araciyalum*, *Kaḷḷō Kāvīyamō* and *Viṭulalayā?* won the Tamil nad government prizes for their super eminence and subtle craftsmanship.

Character and Personal Habits

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

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

He used to get up exactly at 5 A.M. in the morning and wander in the garden beholding the vegetations. Then he used to take bath in the cold water and spent a few minutes in meditation. The regular breakfast time would be 7.30 A.M. and lunch 1 P.M. He won't take coffee and used to go to bed at 11 P.M.

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

As Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University

He took charge as Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University on February, 1971 after Dr. T. P. Meenakshi sundaran an erudite scholar in Dravidology. Dr. Mu. Va. implemented the correspondence course for the first-time in the history of the Madurai University which enabled even the students who are unable to acquire higher education to obtain it at least

through an indirect method. The Vooster University of America conferred on him the D. Litt. degree. He was the first Tamil scholar who got such a honorary title from a foreign University. Though he was disinclined, his service period was extended for another three years from 1974. The continuous toil in the office weakened his health and after the wedding of his youngest son on the 4th September 1974, he became very weak. On the convocation day of the same year in the Madurai University he had a heart attack. Yet, he neither sought the help of doctors nor took any rest. From 29-9-1974 he was almost continuously on the bed of sickness. In spite of the persuasions of his wife, sons and close friends, he refused to take English medicines and started affirming his faith on naturopathy as an effective restorative for vital diseases. On the previous day of his irreparable demise, he felt that he was betrayed by his naturopathy. Though given good treatment in the General Hospital under the direct supervision of ministers, the soul of gentleness and profound scholarship that served very much for the uplift of the Tamils was snatched away from the bereaved Tamil people by the cruel hands of death.

DR. MU. VA.—A PROFESSOR

*Prof. M. R. P. Gurusami**

உவப்பத் தனிக்கூடி உன்னைப் பிரிதல்
அனைத்தே புலவர் தொழில்.

—குறள். 40-4.

You meet with joy and part with deep regret
Such are the thoughts that scholars will beget

—Translation by Kasturi Srinivasan
(Bhavan's Publication)

Teacher of Teachers

It is a heavenly gift bestowed upon a few to come into contact with noble and gifted TEACHERS.

All those who drift into the teaching profession cannot be considered teachers. For a majority of 'teachers', their occupation is just like any other mechanical job. For a very few divine servants of humanity, TEACHING is a holy service which demands their full devoted attention. Such TEACHERS are perhaps one in a million or even rarer. Dr. M. Varadarajan, better known as Mu. Va. in the Tamil arena, was one such divine teacher. How unfortunate it is to be asked to write about this TEACHER OF TEACHERS in the past tense. It has been a divine gift to have had his

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sacred blessings as a student; but that very divine contact has now transformed me into a pathetic creature unable to sustain the loss of that GREAT TEACHER. The magnitude of this tragedy is felt even after so many months of his departure to his heavenly abode; I do not know when my mind will reconcile itself to the inevitable separation so cruelly thrust upon us by his death.

Professor par Excellence

It was not a contact of a student with his teacher within the four walls of a class room; for students of Prof. Mu. Va. their contact with him was much more; it was a contact for LIFE. He was not only a teacher in the ordinary sense of the word; once a youth was fortunate enough to be his student, he would have soon realised that he has been brought into the divine presence of a person who will be his friend, philosopher and guide in every sense of the expression.

To me and to the many hundreds of students Mu. Va. was more than a teacher; he was our intellectual father, shaping our personality. Teachers who pin themselves to the syllabus are of course sincere to their task; Mu. Va. was definitely a teacher in the true sense of the word; he will be simple in terminology, clear in exposition and definite in his expression. His explanations in the class room will make even the dull student to become clear in his lessons and the students' power of comprehension will definitely improve and mastery of the subject was a surety in his class room. But is that all that is expected of a TEACHER? If this is all that is expected from a teacher the human element may well be dispensed with; the massive buildings and elaborate institutions devoted to education are expensive and unnecessary luxury if they are not able to produce a Mu. Va.; if only explanation to certain lessons is aimed at by these institutions, it is enough to engage some mechanism to read well-written guides. Through coming into contact with teachers like Mu. Va., we, his pupils have learnt not only the depth of Tamil language and literature, but also the higher values of life that go to make the inner personality; we have learnt more through his practice than his preaching. He was a Professor par excellence; he

was more than a Professor to those who were fortunate to be led into the inner life of this scholar-philosopher.

In the Classroom

I remember the first day when he stepped into my class in the year 1940. I was a student in the Pachaiyappa's College. It was Mu. Va. who was the first staff member to handle our Intermediate 'D' Group Class. The book to be taught was *Tāpparunkalakkārikai*. Most of us were raw, though fresh, from the High School. In those days Tamil students were considered to be unfortunate ones; it was years of sincere and earnest efforts of Mu. Va. and fellow-teachers of his team that earned a name for the Pachaiyappa's College; students used to say that even the stair-case steps of Pachaiyappa's will sing sweet and melodious Tamil. (பச்சையப்பர் கல்லூரிப் படிக்கட்டும் பைத்தமிழ் பாடும்.)

This position of pride was earned for the institution not through cheap publicity pranks but through the concerted efforts of Mu. Va. and others of the Tamil Department of our Alma Mater. In the very first period when Mu. Va. began to teach *Tāpparunkalakkārikai*, we became conscious that we were in the presence of a born teacher. In one hour, he was able to give the gist and the contents of the book; he refreshed us with the lessons of prosody supposed to have been learnt at the High School. In that one hour, he drove us to the madness of composing *venṇā* verses. I still remember my efforts at composing *venṇā* and the awe and surprise expressed by students of other subjects as to the capacity of the Tamil students in trying to compose poems. It may look trivial today; but, for a fresher from the school to feel confident to write poems at that time was really something to feel proud of. What else could have instilled that confidence in us except the masterly handling of the subject by Mu. Va.

That very first day we felt confident that *Tāpparunkalakkārikai* is the easiest of all the books to be studied. This confidence was really noteworthy because in those days there were people to discourage us by pointing out the heavy syllabus for Intermediate 'D' Group; this sort of negative force was there till the very end of our Hons. Course, but the

elegant personality, paternal care and his ever-lasting encouragement stood us in good stead throughout. It must be noted here that the maternal affection of Prof. M. Kandasami Mudaliar, and the able teaching of and expert guidance from other teachers were there to encourage us on our onward march. But, for us Mu. Va. was the central figure.

Characteristics of an Ideal Teacher

In *Nannūl*, we find some aphorisms that explain the traits of an ideal teacher. Let me try to explain a few points from them.

An ideal teacher is like Mother Earth, a mountain, a balance and a flower.

Why should a teacher be compared to Mother Earth etc.?

The magnitude of the earth is awe inspiring; it is imperceptible in magnitude; earth is capable of firmness and immeasurable patience; we can expect to get returns from her according to our efforts. A teacher, to a student, is one who inspires, one who is above the comprehension and evaluation of the student, one who is firm in his principles and one who has immeasurable patience. A student is benefited through his teacher in the direct proposition of his efforts at studies. A teacher's personality is like that of a magnificent mountain that rises above the earth in its effort to touch the very heavens; to one who sees to the mountain from a distance it seems to be very very near to him; but when he undertakes to reach the mountain he finds himself in a travel which seems to be ever-lasting; all the while the sight of the mountain encourages him by seeming to be very near. Even after reaching the mountain one can never evaluate the wealth it contains; neither can he comprehend the magnitude of the towering height. The mountain is stable. The riches of the mountain is a treasure that never dwindles. A teacher, likewise, is easy to be approached; a student feels confident that he can go to his teacher whose personality rises above the worldly surroundings and peeps into the heavenly heights of higher values. In spite of the immeasurable, stable, fertile scholarship and towering personality, a teacher attracts the student and instills in him confidence. The student feels quite at home when he approaches his

teacher and at the same time fully realises the magnitude and the never ending—ever growing—personality of his teacher.

I have given above only a few points of the explanation noted by the author of *Nannūl*.

Mu. Va. was a teacher fully qualified to be cited as an ideal example for all the points enumerated by St. *Pavananti*.

Outside the Class room

He was Mother Earth and a Himalayan Mountain. Mu. Va. as a man, as a scholar and as a philosopher had immense value to be earned by his associates through proper and sincere efforts. Anybody who knew him would have known that Mu. Va. was the very personification of patience.

His towering personality in his field is rare and very few can stand comparison to him. In spite of the immense respect commanded by him from all quarters, he was the simplest of men to be approached by anybody, not to speak of his students. To his students, whether in the class room or outside, he was always ready to let them into the depth of his knowledge and the height of his scholarship. It was the experience of his students to have realised that they can never evaluate Mu. Va. the teacher. Such was Mu. Va., the unpretending scholar-saint.

Preparing notes for the text-books is itself a hard work; but Mu. Va. will never allow his students to prepare elaborate notes. He showed his own notes for *Tāpparunkalakkārikai* which was just a tiny slip. From the very few hints, a student must be able to recall the full details in the book. For this mini-hints, one must prepare notes, and notes to the notes and finally from the mini-notes the mini-hints must be prepared. He was a guide to his students in this respect. This sort of preparation of notes was a necessity in those days when the stress was more on memory than on critical approach. In spite of this restriction of examination methods through his instruction in the class and guidance outside the class room, Mu. Va. equipped us to face the world with our critical and analytical approach. This was something more than a syllabus-oriented scheme of instruction. He could foresee a

future which was not be satisfied with mere quotations from literary and grammatical works.

We hear very often that there should be an educational system which offers opportunities to youngsters based on their aptitudes. This praise worthy principle is still a dream in our set-up; we have to go a long way before we can put this into practice and proclaim to the world that we are a progressive nation in education. But, within the frame work of our highly restricted syllabus—and that too with the old syllabus of the forties—Mu. Va. found a way out to develop our personalities according to our aptitudes. We had amongst us writers, orators, organisers and budding politicians; each of us can, in this day, recall to our mind the endearing way in which Mu. Va. shaped us through his convincing conversations and persuasive arguments.

He was always soft but never flinching in his firmness; he was as soft as a flower and firm as a diamond. This dual personality in our Professor, has enabled us to understand the great leaders of this nation. He was, as I have noted earlier, our friend, philosopher and guide. Very many of his students will gratefully recall his wise and well-meaning words of guidance.

We find a note in the Radhakrishnan Commission Report on Higher Education that teachers who are well acquainted with the life outside the class room and those who by this knowledge guide the youths are popular among the students. This is yet another aspect which was partly responsible for Mu. Va. to have proved a successful and popular Professor. Through his class room lectures and through his elegant writings, Pachaiyappa's College attracted very many youths to study Tamil under him.

Mu. Va. was to the earlier sets of students their father; yes, they called him 'APPA'. If he were only a professional Professor, their affection could have never found such an endearing expression.

Caikam — His Choice

Though Dr. Mu. Va. was quite at home in any field of language study—grammar, literature, criticism, philosophy



Dr. Mu. Va. with the Makers of Tamil Nadu



A Genius with an Intellectual Giant



With our Chairman Dr. Navalar Nedunchelhiyan



With the Chancellor and the Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaigner M. Karunanidhi

or linguistics—he would lose himself when he handled *Caṅkam* Literature. His teaching of *Akanāṇūru*, as far as I am concerned, is an experience never to be forgotten. Judging by any standards, Mu. Va. can never be thought of for his musical talents; he was not a musician. But whenever, Mu. Va. lost himself in the subject matter of literary pieces, his students will be enwrapped in a melody from their beloved Professor's voice. How very sweet it is to recall, even years after, the melodious and captivating tone of Mu. Va.!

In a trance the whole class will be far above physical existence whenever the melody of Mu. Va. rang through the class room. Even after my student days, I have had the singular fortune to hear him sing the songs of *Caṅkam* Classics, *Tāyumaṇavar* and poems of *Rāma Tīrtar*. Alas! the loss.....no words can express!

Counsellor and Guide

Once, he had an occasion to go through some composition note-books which I had corrected with utmost care. The red pencil has had a free play in an anxiety to point out all the mistakes. Mu. Va. after going through some of the note-books, asked me in his usual soft tone, 'Don't you want your students to take a lively interest in Tamil?' This was a veritable shock to me! It was only with that noble aim I had taken pains to point out all the mistakes. But Mu. Va. in his own inimitable way pointed out my mistake. 'If you are going to point out all the mistakes, the student will lose all confidence and will come to the conclusion that there is no possibility of his learning Tamil. Do point out mistakes but not to an extent of frightening the young boys who are victims of a society that does not recognize the prime importance of Tamil.' If he were only a Professor, he would have confined himself with the class room teaching. That contact for me was over long back in 1945. But his guidance as a teacher was available to me, as to everyone of his students, till the last day of his supreme life.

Tamil Muse bereaved

There is no end to this reminiscent attitude.

நனில்தொறும் நூல் நயம் போலும் பனில்தொறும்
பன்புடை யாளர் தொடர்பு.

—குறள். 79-3.

With deeper learning, greater delights gain
With noble friendships, greater good attain

—Translation by Kasturi Srinivasan

What is said in this *Kuṛaḷ* for friendship holds good for contacts with great personalities. As we dive deep into a study of their greatness, we find that we are yet to realise much more of their nobility. There is no end to my writing about my Professor Mu. Va.

Our beloved Professor M. Kandasami Mudaliar, used to refer Mu. Va. as *Mōlavar* (மூலவர்). Perhaps he was thinking not only of Mu. Va's complexion. Professor Kandasami Mudaliar perhaps intended to imply that Mu. Va. was the deity in the sanctum sanctorum of the Tamil Muse.

To me, to-day, that temple of the Tamil Muse is empty; the *Mōlavar* is no longer there!

DR. M. VARADARAJAN AND SOMERSET MAUGHAM AS NOVELISTS: A SAMPLE STUDY

*Dr. V. Sachithanandan**

An Attempt

No serious attempt has been made to study the literary indebtedness of Dr. M. Varadarajan (1912-1974) to Western writers, though he has discussed the thoughts and works of many of them in his fictional and other writings (1). Among the British authors, Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and Somerset Maugham (1874-1966) may be said to have been his favourites. (2). At least two of his novels remind educated readers of Maugham. There are similarities of plot situations between *Karittunṭu* (1958) and *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), and *Malarviṭi* (1950) and *Mrs. Craddock* (1902). This paper is a comparative and more specifically a congeneric study of aesthetic parallels between *Malarviṭi* and *Mrs. Craddock* in terms of plot, character and theme, based on the similarity of an episode in the two novels—a married woman's passion for a boy.

Mrs. Craddock and Malarviṭi

Almost half a century separated the publication of *Mrs. Craddock* and *Malarviṭi*. But the ethos which shaped them seems

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to be substantially the same. The landed gentry in a corner of England between the years 1890 and 1900 and the middle and lower middle class Tamil people in and around the city of Madras on the eve of India's Independence after a century and a half of British rule were an essentially conservative people who clung desperately to their age-old customs, habits and beliefs, resisting changes with their characteristic smugness. The English land-owning class, who had long been enjoying power, had already begun to yield their place to the new moneyed class whom they still looked down upon with snobbish contempt. The winds of change in free India had started shaking violently the social and cultural moorings of a tradition-bound society known for its complacency and prudery. For either community figuring in the novels, it was the end of an era and the beginning of an agonizing adjustment to momentous changes.

Mrs. Craddock has a neatly devised plot which in its progression of action may be divided into three parts: Bertha's determined pursuit of her man Edward whom she traps by her wilful passion, her subsequent emotional frustration and disillusionment brought about by her husband's cold responsiveness and her passionate affair with her young cousin, Gerald abruptly ending in her 'freedom' won through the accidental death of Edward. The complementary characters in *Malarviṭi* are *Kāñcaṇai*, the aging but attractive wife of the District Collector, *Celvanāyakam*, a rake turned reformer and the silent but deceptively calm *Nākaṇātaṇ*, an orphan boy brought up by the Collector and married to the beautiful and intelligent *Malarviṭi* who provides the novel with its misleading title (3). It has a complex plot contrasting the romantic affair of *Muttaiyaṇ*, the narrator and *Sāvitri* with the unhappy lives of three pairs: the marriage of convenience between *Celvanāyakam* and *Kāñcaṇai*, the clandestine relationship between *Kāñcaṇai* and *Nākaṇātaṇ* and the broken life of *Nākaṇātaṇ* and *Malarviṭi*. As the love story of *Muttaiyaṇ* and *Sāvitri* progresses with almost the inevitability of fate because of their comparative innocence and startling sincerity, the liaison between the Collector's wife and her ward has an injurious impact on their families, wiping out one of them and leaving the other in

ruins. *Celvanāyakam* dies under suspicious circumstances and *Kāñcanai* commits suicide; *Malarviṭi*, who leaves her husband at the height of the scandal, is widowed by the wilful death of *Nākañātan* as a soldier. There is a sharp and poignant parallel between youthful romance ending in marriage which Mu. Va. considers as the safe foundation of domestic life and physical lust which is both self-destructive and socially harmful. Where the Tamil novel has a highly moralistic tone and is somewhat preachy, a typical characteristic of Mu. Va's fiction, *Mrs. Craddock* ridicules openly the pretentious hypocrisy of Victorian morality inherited by the Edwardian society of the novel and presents the story of Bertha as a witty illustration of the words of La Rochefoucauld:

Between two lovers, there is always the one who loves and the one who allows oneself to be loved.

The one who loves is always in the wrong. (4)

The love story, ironically called the triumph of love in the preface to the novel, is presented with bold candour, unusual for the times.

Techniques of Narration

Maugham and Mu. Va. use different techniques of narration. At the beginning of the twentieth century, English fiction had reached a high level of sophistication in plot and characterization, but still far from the complexity of vision and expression seen later in the novels of Woolf, Joyce, Lawrence and Conrad. Maugham was conventional in adopting the omniscient author's third-person narrative mode. The problem of the author of *Mrs. Craddock* was not artistic but ethical: how to combat or circumvent the prudish tastes of his readers in presenting the aggressive passion of an able-bodied woman for an unemotional man, followed by her more scandalous involvement with a boy. Maugham solved the problem, or rather he cut the Gordian knot, by taking the unprecedented step of handling his theme with frankness and wit, for which he paid a heavy price (5). Mu. Va's readers in the fifties were as finical as Maugham's Edwardian audience where sexual mores were concerned. Without taking any professional risk as Maugham

had done, Mu. Va. found a neat solution to the vexed problem in the very choice of his narrative technique: indirect and cautious reporting of the sordid affair between *Kāñcaṇai* and *Nākaṇātaṇ*. *Malarviṭi* is the earliest of his novels in which the narration is done in the first person entirely by a single character, *Muttaiyaṇ* (6). Narrator cum participant, he opens the story of the novel with a visit to Collector *Celvanāyakam* through whose good offices he is appointed Ticket Examiner. *Kāñcaṇai*'s beauty, dignity of appearance and artistic talents (Her fine paintings adorn the walls of her house) create in him a most favourable first impression. His indebtedness to the Collector and subsequent emotional attachment to his patron are devices used by the novelist to enable the narrator to keep in touch with the developments in the house of *Celvanāyakam*. Even his profession of Ticket Examiner is technically functional, for in his official capacity he accidentally overhears passengers discussing and commenting on the goings on in the Collector's family.

Mu. Va. handles the first person narrative technique with increasing confidence and sophistication after *Muttaiyaṇ*'s first meeting with *Kāñcaṇai* and *Nākaṇātaṇ* by employing a whole group of characters, both friends of *Muttaiyaṇ* like *Aṇṇāmalai*, *Maṇi* and *Malarviṭi* and strangers on board trains to report to him directly or indirectly the growing criminal intimacy between the lovers. At first he receives the unhappy news with his inherent moral diffidence which slowly develops into ambivalence in the wake of thickening rumours and persistent reports and ends in his acceptance of the bitter truth when confronted with incontrovertible facts. The narration of the illicit relationship alternating between *Muttaiyaṇ*'s moral hesitancy and the open censure of the affair by his friends serves a double purpose, moral and aesthetic. It keeps the novelist on this side of caution in handling the sexual theme out of respect for the delicate scruples of his readers which he cannot afford to outrage. Simultaneously it keeps the readers in a state of emotional suspense about the true nature of the relationship between the Collector's wife and her boy friend. Mu. Va's complex use of the narrative mode tends to make the authorial intrusion covert, having enough freedom for him

to manoeuvre the readers out of their moral prejudices. By contrast, Maugham is handicapped by his own choice of the third-person narration and tries to offset the effect by wittily ironical and philosophical authorial comments:

- (i) With swinging steps Bertha returned to the house [after meeting Edward], and, like a swarm of birds, a hundred amorettes flew about her head; Cupid leapt from tree to tree and shot his arrows into her willing heart; her imagination clothed the naked branches with tender green and in her happiness the grey sky turned to azure. . . . (pp. 16-17).
- (ii) Irony is a gift of the gods, the most subtle of all the modes of speech. It is an armour and a weapon; it is a philosophy and a perpetual entertainment; it is food for the hungry of wit and drink to those thirsting for laughter. . . . (p. 196).

Characters

In his preface to *Mrs. Craddock* Maugham says that for creating the characters of his novel, he took as his models persons whom he had known in real life, but the exception was Bertha's aunt Miss Ley 'founded on the portrait-statue of Agrippina in the museum at Naples' (p. 8). Since it is 'a subtle and even masterly study of a certain female temperament' (7), the women characters sound more convincing than the men, with Bertha towering over everyone else in the story. It is an exaggeration to say that other characters are mere abstractions (8). Edward, more a type than an individual, is a satirical portrait of the gentleman-farmer and Miss Ley is an impressive character. Even Gerald, with his outrageous love-making, is made amusing by a few debt but cynical strokes.

Mu. Va. was very fond of putting into his novels persons and places he had known in life. *Celvanāyakam*, one of his favourite characters, was modelled on a loveable gentleman known to the novelist intimately (9). Broadly speaking, many of his fictional characters are more abstractions than personalities, because like Bernard Shaw he uses his characters as

mouth-pieces to discuss and put forward his views of life (10). It is a truism that dialectical rendering of the speeches of fictional or dramatic characters deprives them of their realistic traits and reduces them to ideational caricatures. *Celvanāyakam* has escaped any such decimation into an abstraction because of a strong core of realism in him. His passage from a lectureship at Pachaiyappa's College to the Department of Revenue as an officer is a reversal of Mu. Va's own experience, first as a clerk and then as Professor of Tamil. *Celvanāyakam's* Tamil scholarship, his love of particular Tamil works as *Cilappatikāram* and *Peṇṇin Perumai* and his devotion to Tamil mystics like *Tāyumāṇavar* and *Rāmaliṅkar* are some more points of resemblance between the character and its creator, though the fictional and the real can never be equated. None of the other characters with the exception of *Kāñcanai* leaves a firm impression on the mind because Mu. Va. rarely describes their physical features. Their moral and mental attitudes constitute their individualistic traits. It is almost impossible to identify them by tricks of speech or idiosyncrasies of expression, as they all use a learned diction with an admixture of the Madras dialect, as Mu. Va. was by choice a novelist of the Madras city.

The character types that are common to *Mrs. Craddock* and *Malarviṭi* are husband (Edward and *Celvanāyakam*), wife (Bertha and *Kāñcanai*), boy lover (Gerald and *Nākaṇātan*) and choric commentator (Miss Ley or Aunt Polly and *Maṇi*), the last two voicing their cynical views of human follies and foibles and keeping alive our interest in the development of the plot situation.

Edward and *Celvanāyakam* are as different from each other as a country pumpkin from a cultured gentleman. Edward is a gentleman-farmer, as he is derisively called by his social superiors, whose education is formal, a narrow-minded patriot with an assinine pride in his knowledge of *English* music confined to music hall hits and the national anthem and a dull conservative in politics with the most commonplace ideas about government and people. The only saving grace in him is his efficient management of his wife's Court Ley estate which earns for him the title of being the best squire in the country.

Celvanāyakam is an intellectual, a high-ranking administrator, an aesthete with a deep knowledge of poetry, painting and music and a man of refined feelings and progressive views. Edward's amazing self-assurance in all matters, private and public, is quite a contrast to the gentle manners and sophisticated tastes of *Celvanāyakam*; Edward is young, energetic, healthy and every inch a male animal:

He was the very picture of health. The winds of November were like summer breezes to him, and his face glowed with the pleasant cold. His cheeks were flushed and his eyes glistened; his vitality was intense, shining out upon others with almost a material warmth. (p. 15)

Celvanāyakam is middle-aged and suffers from indifferent health. He is suspected of having lost his manliness because of his dissipated youth. Where Edward makes a precious present of his virginal self to his young and healthy wife, an emasculated *Celvanāyakam* enters into an uneasy partnership with an extremely attractive and virile woman (11) and perhaps tries to compensate for the loss of their emotional life by playing the progressive husband. Edward's manliness does not contribute to marital felicity, as he is cold and unresponsive to the demanding Bertha. His emotional defect is less injurious to domestic stability than the contempt of the overbearing male for the weak female:

Women are like chicken. Give 'em a good run, properly closed in with stout wirenetting so that they can't get into mischief and when they cluck and cackle just sit tight and take no notice. (p. 83)

What ruins the life of Edward and Bertha is not only physical but also social and temperamental incompatibilities. Edward is a crude product of provincial culture with built-in inhibitions mistaken for individual excellence by their owner. Bertha had spent her childhood in half a dozen countries wandering about the Continent and having tasted cultural and moral freedom, she has grown into a self-willed and self-possessed girl. Love to her is a primitive religion to

which husband and wife should surrender with orgiastic abandon. To Edward it is a necessary evil which should rather be treated with tolerant humour than with any seriousness. He is an insipid moralist with unimaginative notions of good and bad, often throwing his virtues in her face and Bertha is an emancipated woman free from inhibitions of all types. In short, husband and wife are by temperament and upbringing polar opposites, a fact recognized only by Bertha's aunt: '... for Bertha ... the book of life is written throughout in italics; for Edward it is all in the big round hand of the copy-book heading' (pp. 96-97). When they read the book together, as they should, it is a macabre experience and their marital life collapses like a house of cards.

The incompatibility between *Celvanāyakam* and *Kāñcaṇai* operates at more than one level. The marriage of a physically impotent man to a woman in the full bloom of health and beauty is a parody of life. He is contented with what he earns as an officer and his charity affects the family budget. His wife, blind to the nobility of his disposition, would prefer to see him turn a trader and make a fortune to satisfy her craving for a life of ostentatious luxury (p. 12). His genuine love of arts borders on the spiritual, as is evident in his passion for the music of devotional poetry and his love of painting, especially on holy subjects (p. 328). Her passion for painting is both a means to a sordid end, the fulfilment of her lust and an antidote to emotional frustration. *Malarviṭi* makes a shrewd comment on the frightening schism between husband and wife:

To that lady art is not an end in itself but a means to physical love which is for her the highest form of experience. To him there are greater aspirations like grace and *dharma*, though he does not look down upon profane love, which he values as the basis of these aspirations. (p. 285).

Through his reformistic zeal and moralism *Celvanāyakam* seeks expiation for a dissipated youth. *Kāñcaṇai*'s devotion to the womanly virtues of chastity and fidelity, which she never fails to extol at social gatherings which she has the privilege

to address as the Collector's wife, is the vincer of respectability cloaking her questionable character.

The narrator *Muttaiyan's* earliest reference to the classic profile of *Kāñcaṇai's* body reminiscent of the Western woman's faith in physical culture (pp. 14-15) may be treated as an initial point of comparison between her and her English counterpart Bertha. When *Muttaiyan* first meets *Kāñcaṇai*, she is thirty-five, middle aged according to Indian standards, but she has managed to retain the freshness and vitality of youth. When Bertha falls in love with Edward, she is only eighteen and is full of vim and vigour. She uses her charms rather aggressively to conquer a dumb ox of a man who turns out to be a bitter disappointment for Bertha because he is as cold as the Arctic. *Kāñcaṇai* is saddled with a valetudinarian-husband in whose company she can find only 'consolations of philosophy'. *Nākaṇātan* enters her household when she has reconciled herself to an ever-lasting life of emotional starvation. Their physical proximity to each other, their frequent excursions abroad obviously encouraged by a guilt-ridden husband and her own passionate self venting itself through pastel and palette are the more extenuating circumstances for *Kāñcaṇai* than those in which Bertha carries on with her adolescent cousin. But like Bertha she takes the initiative in the seduction.

Bertha's meeting with Gerald, the incredibly young philanderer, is accidental and what begins as a harmless flirtation soon develops into a serious affair in a psychologically convincing atmosphere. However, Bertha is not placed in a hopelessly tragic situation like *Kāñcaṇai*. In love she is as hungry as the sea and gets no physical satisfaction out of a man who thinks that love has its proper place in life like eating, drinking and sleeping, and like everything else it must be taken in small doses and not quaffed to the detriment of one's health. With more than a decade of emotional frustration ending in the detestation of the man she loved and married, she runs into her handsome cousin, a born seducer, before his scandalous affair with an elderly French maid has grown cold. Age and experience fail to act as a restraint on her and she virtually seduces the boy whose passive role must be a new experience

to him. The seduction ends in an anti-climax because of the dramatic return of Miss Ley to her flat, when she makes an astounding discovery: 'upon my word . . I don't believe you can put a woman of seventy for five minutes in company of a boy of fourteen without their getting into mischief' (p. 219).

With the accidental but welcome death of Edward, Bertha gains her 'freedom' at the end of the novel. She may rebuild her future on a firmer foundation, if she meets a man more suited to her temperament, though she would never repeat her costly mistake of making an impulsive choice. Here, of course, the English woman of the Edwardian era was more fortunate than the Tamil woman on the eve of India's Independence. The latter belonged to a patriarchal society which would not permit her to remarry on the death of her husband. She was condemned to lead a life of humiliation and shame until death came to her relief. If a woman committed a sexual irregularity, she was socially ostracized, irrespective of her marital status and punished like Hawthorne's scarlet woman. *Kāñṇaṇai* committed an unpardonable sin in the eyes of society which was always ready to condemn the sinner without caring to explore the causes of sin and seek remedies. Her suicide in the novel is shrouded in mystery. *Maṇi* sees in it a retributive punishment for her sinful life (p. 322) which perhaps included poisoning her husband, an idea treated with characteristic ambiguity by the novelist. For a sinful woman belonging to a community governed by a rigid moral code, there is no future. Hence, *Kāñṇaṇai* commits suicide and ironically seeks 'freedom' through death.

Nākaṇātan is a bloodless character who follows *Kāñṇaṇai* like a faithful dog. He is reduced to a silhouette, as his activities are reported and never dramatically presented. Constantly held in leash by *Kāñṇaṇai*, he is a passive victim of seduction. By comparison Bertha's seduction of Gerald is more picturesque, as philandering is second nature with her cousin. At an incredibly young age he stumbles upon a private discovery that woman, irrespective of her age, is meant to be seduced and he begins to put it to practice with an assiduousness worthy of a Don Juan. Though he needs very

little encouragement from the still attractive Bertha, her passionate nature puts down his usually aggressive posture.

The Choric Voices

The choric voices of the two novels, Miss Ley, the 'harmless' (?) maiden aunt who is allergic to love and marriage and *Maṇi*, who is happily married, are both wordlywise, witty, shrewd and unemotional. They also share a talent for observation and a hearty hatred of all forms hypocrisy. *Maṇi* is more than a commentator; the innocent *Muttaiyaṇ*'s mentor, he helps him to marry *Sāvitri*. Miss Ley, who does not have 'the smallest desire to exert authority over anybody' (p. 12) plays an active role only once, when she physically prevents Bertha and Gerald from having an affair in her London flat. *Maṇi* has two obsessions in life, money and woman, and Aunt Polly's pet aversion is marriage. *Maṇi* repeats *ad nauseum* his theory that we do not live in an age of social reforms, but an age which worships Mammon. In many of his novels Mu. Va. pits an idealist and pragmatist against each other (12). In *Malarviṭi* *Muttaiyaṇ* is the idealist with a distressingly romantic view of life and *Maṇi* is refreshingly practical-minded and exposes sham and hypocrisy by his witty comments. Compared to the sobriety of his observations, Miss Ley can be outrageously funny in ridiculing human weaknesses:

- (i) Bertha must certainly show you [Edward] our chickens. They interest me because they're very like human beings; they're so stupid. (p. 33).
- (ii) Bertha is merely the female attracted to the male, and that is the only decent foundation of marriage; the other way [marriage as a holy institution] seems to me merely pornographic. (p. 43).
- (iii) The fact is that a few women can be happy with only one husband. I believe that the only solution of the marriage question is legalized polyandry. (p. 228).

Such witticisms are in the tradition of the comedy of manners (13). *Maṇi*'s criticism of society is more substantial, especially when he attacks fatalism and superstition, the ingrained

prejudices of the Indian, irrespective of regional and cultural affiliations. Miss Ley is so much devoted to her maidenhood that she cannot forgive a woman for 'committing' marriage. *Maṇi* is less self-opinionated. A conventionally married man with an abiding faith in arranged marriages, he does not hesitate to encourage *Muttaiyaṇ* in his idyllic romance with *Gāvitri*.

It is generally agreed that the 'factors which strongly influence Bertha and her vision of Craddock are themes which Maugham turns to so often—bondage to passion, bondage to illusion and bondage to an unsatisfactory mate'(13). Physically attractive, intensely passionate and highly wilful by nature, she makes a lightning conquest of Edward and expects him to return her love with the same ardour. The burning fire in her sends her into ecstasies over the Edenic virtues of her husband and she imagines a return to the prelapsarian state, ironically, through knowledge of marriage:

He was the man and she was the woman, and the world was a garden of Eden conjured up by the power of passion. But greater knowledge brought greater love. Little by little, reading in Edward's mind, Bertha discovered to her delight an unexpected purity: it was with a feeling of curious happiness that she recognized his extreme innocence. (p. 77).

In his wild and virginal nature she likens him to the Hippolytus of Phaedra (p. 82). But he turns out to be Hippolytus in another sense, in his repugnance to sexual passion, and she is the rejected Phaedra, a sorry change which one does not notice at once. She continues to hug the illusion of marital happiness amidst the stress and strain of her blind love for Edward, until the death of her child creates an emptiness in her, an emptiness which her husband's callousness of feeling turns into abhorrence for him. She subjects Edward's character to the scrutiny of her deadly analytic faculty, an atavistic quality she shares with her aunt, and reduces it to an ugly caricature of man and husband. The resultant indifference to his existence instead of freeing her from bondage to an unsatisfactory mate sends her into the arms of Gerald with scan-

dalous haste and shocking irresponsibility. Only Edward's sudden death brings her freedom or relief without happiness.

Imagery

There is a limited use of imagery in *Mrs. Craddock*. Maugham's description of Court Leys seems to anticipate the emotional instability of the couple living in it:

Built in the reign of George II, it seemed to have acquired no hold upon the land that bore it; with its plain front and many windows, the Doric portico exactly in the middle, it looked as if it were merely placed upon the ground as a house of cards is built upon the floor, with no foundations. (p. 14).

That Bertha's domestic life is like a house of cards is confirmed by a similar observation of the novelist after one of her bitter quarrels with her husband: 'Suddenly she abhorred him, the love that had been a tower of brass fell like a house of cards'. (p. 139).

The image of the beeches tells the same tale. As an ancestor of Bertha, 'Unpractical as the Leys had been, had planted six beeches in a hedgerow' (p. 51), so she is guilty of being unpractical in choosing her cold-blooded tenant as her marital partner, ignoring her social and temperamental incompatibility with him. As she has 'planted' her affection in the wrong heart like the beech trees planted in the wrong place, it invites destruction like the cutting down of the trees.

Another significant image is the eccentric appearance of Bertha at dinner in a magnificent gown, 'as though she were going to a great ball' (p. 241), with all the family jewels adorning her still beautiful person. There is a telling parallel between the bejewelled Bertha and the prosperous Court Ley estate under Edward's stewardship. Behind the facade of the family diamonds and pearls there is a broken heart, as the prosperous Court Leys houses a ruined family.

Love of woman (including its secondary association with marriage), love of money (both in its literal sense and in its larger sense of pelf) and love of art (with particular reference to painting) are the major themes of *Malarviji*. The first two

are extensively treated in many of Mu. Va's novels which, like all fiction of the fifties, are redolent of reformistic spirit (14) and the last is the distinguishing feature of a few novels like *Malarviḷi* and *Karittuṇṇu* (1958). In *Malarviḷi* the three themes are neatly tied together through the character of *Kāṇcaṇai* whose lust, greed and passion for painting define the thematic pattern of the novel on two levels: story and dialogue. Her emotional and aesthetic proclivities trigger off the action of a major episode and provoke a wide discussion of the themes of the novel between *Muttaiyaṇ* and his friends.

Dialogues

The core of the discussion may be found in a couple of dialogues between *Muttaiyaṇ* and *Maṇi*, the interlocutor, who has categorical opinions on lust and greed which, according to him, constitute the foundations of society. Man's interest in the fair sex is more enduring than his greed because unlike money the value of woman is not affected by depression and therefore she has always been the absorbing theme of movies, music, painting and poetry. Without her, the arts are like the shadow bereft of the substance (p. 73). Lust is god-made and cupidity is man-made. The former is a biological phenomenon which will wreck the happiness of only individuals whereas the latter ruins whole families and communities (p. 87).

Symbolic Representation

Maṇi's philosophy of life, particularly his comments on the relations between man and woman, is illustrated in the novel through the symbolic use of books and paintings. One of the favourite Tamil classics of *Celvanāyakam* is *Akanāṇūru* which is an idealistic celebration of the erotic life of ancient Tamils, an ideal which is hopelessly inaccessible to the Collector. Another is a modern classic in prose *Peṇṇin Perumai* (The Exaltation of Women) which articulated the progressive-minded husband's belief in the emancipation of women. But on a symbolic level it is an ironical reference to the wife's betrayal of the very ideals of womanhood which the book preaches and *Celvanāyakam* practises.

Mu. Va. makes a more powerful use of *Cilappatikāram* on the same level. It is a gift book presented to *Malarviṭi* by *Kāñcaṇai* on the occasion of her marriage to *Nākaṇātaṇ*. A more ominous present she could not have chosen, as it is the story of a wealthy merchant, who, instead of practising his profession as dharma enjoins on him (the right use of his riches), invites disaster on himself and his innocent wife by his inordinate passion for dancing and music expended on a dancing girl. The story of *Kāñcaṇai* is a grim parody of *Cilappatikāram* with an unchaste woman as the protagonist and a terrible illustration of *Malarviṭi's* words: Art is like a knife with both creative and destructive potentialities (p. 294). *Kāñcaṇai's* penchant for pelf has no desirable effect on her philanthropic-minded husband and she induces *Nākaṇātaṇ* to try his hand at trade, the capital for the costly experiment drawn from the hard earned money of the Collector. The experiment is fateful and wipes out a whole family and drives *Nākaṇātaṇ* into the wilderness of guilt and death. One of *Kāñcaṇai's* victims is *Malarviṭi* who receives from her tutorial instruction on *Cilappatikāram* with tragi-comic effect. *Nākaṇātaṇ's* hapless wife absorbs the spirit of the epic so deeply that she accepts her sufferings brought upon her by others with stoic endurance. With perfect equanimity she reconciles herself to her new role—another *Maṇimēkalai*, a girl of innocence and nobility whose sufferings are vicarious. The quirks of fortune have deprived her first of her happiness and then of her husband, leaving a bleak future of self-denial, in short a transition from the life of *Cilappatikāram* to the life of *Maṇimēkalai*, as *Malarviṭi* herself expresses it with an inimitable sense of humour born of her tribulations.

Cilappatikāram appears unobtrusively on the visual level of symbolization. A famous scene from the classic in which *Mātavi* sings before *Kōvalan* accompanying herself on her *yāl* is the subject of a painting by *Kāñcaṇai*, the third in a series admired by *Muttaiyaṇ* in the Collector's house (p. 134). The first represents a domestic idyll of a husband relishing his food and his wife smiling beatifically at the sight. The second describes a lover and his beloved lost in sweet contemplation, evoking an ominously romantic response from the onlooker, *Muttaiyaṇ*,

as though the lovers were to ask themselves: 'Who are you? Who am I? How did we come to know each other? Strange are the ways of life!' (p. 27). The three paintings seem to have a sequential but ironical significance on the temporal progression of the life of the Collector and his wife. The first picture is an illusory conception of domestic felicity which has eluded them. The questions of *Muttaiyaṇ* in response to the second painting have a romantic aura about them on the surface level. But for the husband and the wife who own the painting the questions have an ominous sound reminding them of the unbridgeable emotional chasm between them. The scene from *Cilappatikāram* spells out subtly the reason for the fissure in their domestic harmony—*Kāñcaṇai*'s deliberate exploitation of her love of art for a lustful end.

While all the three paintings have been signed by the artist *Kāñcaṇai*, her picture of *Tāyumāṇavar*, the mystic saint, does not bear her signature (p. 284). The absence of the signature and the subject of the painting are meant to remind us of the aesthetic gulf between the husband and the wife. *Kāñcaṇai* is a hedonist who seeks sensual fulfilment through the exercise of her art because she is a slave to her passions. But to *Celvanāyakam* art is a noble means of reaching higher perceptions involving the use not of the senses but of the soul and to him *Tāyumāṇavar* is a prototype of this superior quest.

Besides the three signed paintings of *Kāñcaṇai*, one more warning to the reader from the novelist not to take at its face value the domestic life of *Celvanāyakam* and his mate comes through the use of nature imagery. During his second visit to the Collector's house, *Muttaiyaṇ* sees a servant chasing a mongoose from a bed of tomato plants which *Celvanāyakam* is fond of (p. 34). The master would love to tend the plants himself, but he is a busy official, and the servant is unsuccessfully engaged in protecting the plants against destruction. The image has erotic overtones which cast aspersions indirectly on the manliness of the head of the house and hints at the consequent threat to his sexual happiness from external sources.

A closer and a broader study of *Malarviṭi* and *Mrs. Craddock* may yield more aesthetic information on the nature of the two novels. But by deliberate choice this paper has confined

itself to a limited area of critical investigation based on the similarity of an episode in the two works, though the possibility of its transmission from *Mrs. Craddock* to *Malarvi* cannot be ruled out.

Notes

1. Dr. M. Varadarajan (herein after called Mu. Va.) wrote ten novels, two collections of shortstories, fifteen volumes of literary criticism and four collections of miscellaneous essays, all in Tamil. He is also the author of *Ilakkō Afika*, *Treatment of Nature in Ancient Tamil* (his doctoral thesis) and several research papers on Linguistics, all in English.
2. His *Aṭṭar Bernard Shaw* (1948) is a lively introductory essay in Tamil, a mixture of biography and criticism. A solitary reference to Maugham is found in his preface to the first edition of his novel *Kaṭṭō? Kāṇṇamō?* (1947). He himself once said that his favourite writers were 'Dickens, Somerset Maugham, Hemingway, Tagore, Kāṇṇēkar and others'.—'Ilakkiya Cantippu', *Tieṇam* (March 1971), p. 54.
3. *Malarvi* cannot be treated as the protagonist, as she is not the main spring of action. The novel seems to be a kind of *bildungsroman*, with the innocent *Muttaiyag*, the narrator growing up through his gradual understanding of life by aesthetic involvement in the story of *Kāṇṇai* and *Nāṇṇai* and his emotional involvement with *Sāṇṇi* whom he marries at the end.
4. Quoted in the original French of La Rochefoucauld by Miss Ley, one of the characters in *Mrs. Craddock* (London: Penguin Books, 1967) and translated by me. All quotations are from this edition and are paginated parenthetically in the text of the paper.
5. In his 1955 preface to the novel Maugham states that *Mrs. Craddock* was 'thought extremely daring and was refused by publisher after publisher' (p. 5) until he agreed to remove the passages likely to offend his readers. The unexpurgated edition was published only in 1938.
6. For reference to the earlier novels, see Era. Mohan, *Doctor Mu. Vaviṇ Nāṇṇai* (Madurai: Sarvodaya Ilakkiya Pannai, 1972), p. 6.
7. St. John Adcock quoted by Robert Lorin Calder, *W. Somerset Maugham and the Quest for Freedom* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p. 60.
8. According to Laurence Brander, *Somerset Maugham: A Guide* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1965), Miss Ley is the only interesting character (p. 15). But most critics of Maugham have voted for Bertha.
9. Era. Mohan, 'Eṇ Aṇṇṇaiṇṇaiṇṇai Dr. Mu. Va.', *Kalaimaṇṇai* (December, 1974), 434-436. Mu. Va. does not identify the prototype of *Celuvāṇṇam*.
10. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam, 'The Novelist of the City of Madras', *Tamil Culture*, X. 2. (1963), 1-18.

11. When the curtain goes up, *Celoanāyakam* is past the prime of life and *Kāṇṇagai* is thirty-five. But she has managed to retain a youthful beauty (p. 14). All textual references are to *Malarvīḷi* (Madras: Pari Nilayam, 1969) and are paginated parenthetically either in the text of the paper or in the notes. English translation of quotations from the novel is mine.
12. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam, p. 8.
13. Robert Lorin Calder, p. 62.
14. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam, p. 4.

DR. MU. VA. AND HIS NOVELS

*Dr. R. Dhandayudham**

Introduction

Dr. M. Varadarajanar (1912-1974), popularly and affectionately known as Dr. Mu. Va., was a prolific writer and a versatile scholar. He has eighty books to his credit comprising novels, short stories, plays, essays and works on literary research, literary criticism and linguistics. From being a lecturer in Tamil, he rose to the position of Professor of Tamil at Pachaiyappa's College in 1946. The year 1946 seems to be the turning point in both his educational and literary careers. His first books in print appeared in this year and it became a continuous stream for the next fifteen years. He left Pachaiyappa's College in 1961 to occupy the Chair of Professor of Tamil in the University of Madras and then rose to the high academic position of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madurai. The fifteen years of his professorial position in Pachaiyappa's College is the most fruitful period of his literary career. It was marked by the publication of most of his major works. *Kuṟaḷ Kāṭṭum Kātalar* (1968), *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru* (1973), *Nalvāḷvu* (1973) and *Iḷango Adigal* (1967) are the only four books that were published after 1961. In addition to his academic and administrative duties which occupied most of his time, his health also seems to have been one of the major

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reasons for not engaging himself actively in writing after 1961.¹

Dr. Mu. Va. was an erudite scholar, an original social thinker and a devoted artist. *Caṅkam Literature*, *Tirukkuraḷ* and *Cilappatikāram* have had greater influence on him and have in fact moulded his thinking and provided him with a background for his creative writings. The description of nature found in one of *Aiṅkurunūru* poems could be seen in the *Kurippu* to *Kaḷḷō? Kāviamō?* with his own interpretation.² This enables the reader to understand the novel in a better way. The characterization of Anavar in *Kayamai* could be better perceived only if we understand the thoughts of Tiruvalluvar on 'Kayamai', found in the threshold of the novel.³ His other novels also bear ample evidence to show his keen interest in classical Tamil literature. The works of Tayumanavar, Pattinattar and Ramalinga Swamigal have also influenced him a great deal. Among the modern poets, he had a great respect for Bharathi. He used to read the works of Rabindranath Tagore, Gandekar and Swami Ramathirtha with great interest and the writings of these great personalities helped him a lot in shaping the characteristics found in his novels. Among Western authors, Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, C. E. M. Joad, H. G. Wells, Pearl S. Buck and Somerset Maugham have influenced him to a great extent in his social thinking.

He was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi and a disciple of the great Tamil scholar Thiru Vi. Ka. He always tried to find solutions to all the problems created by the complex society in which he lived from the lives of these great men of the era. The acceptance of a simple way of life, a better understanding of the God's purpose and the need to live in tune with nature are the triple solutions suggested in his novels.

The Novel and the Modern Age

The human instinct for artistic expression is common to all ages but the form it obtains varies from age to age. The artist in each age attempts to find a form whereby he can appropriately 'objectify or dramatize his understanding' of his own time. In other words, 'to be true to his art a man must be true to his age. He must use the resources it presents to him.'⁴ In this way, the history of literature itself seems to be 'the history

of ideas and of their scientific and artistic forms.⁵ There are similarities between the art of two periods but in addition to the similarities, the art of each period has also a character peculiar to it.⁶

The Novel seems to be the literary form of the modern age. It is frequently described as the 'epic of common life.'⁷ In contrast to the epic, the novel delineates the day-to-day life and novelists succeeded, from time to time, in depicting various aspects of contemporary society. It is of common man and for the common man. Therefore it is also described as the 'epic of democracy'. Henry Burrowes Lathrop, in his work on '*The Art of the Novelist*', points out the supremacy of the novel as follows: 'It is the most free, the most flexible, the most various form of literature; it offers the highest possibility for the exhibition of character independent of circumstance, and thus it exalts the worth of the individual human soul. It offers the freest play for the humorous observation of the eccentricities of life and the panorama of society. Thus it may offer the most tonic and bracing of social philosophies. It gives the opportunity of a minutely accurate psychological truth; it may be the most scientific of imaginative writing.'⁸

Dr. Mu. Va. was aware that the novel was the genuine literary representative of the modern age and only through this most popular form that he could advocate his social philosophies to the common man. Though the evolution of the novel in Tamil as a literary *genre* dates back to the late nineteenth century, little attention was paid by Tamil scholars to this new literary form. V. G. Suryanarayana Sastri and Maraimalai Adigal were the two exceptions, but they maintained their elevated literary style in novel writing too. Dr. Mu. Va. entered the field of novel writing only after these two Tamil scholars, and he is now mainly recognised as a master-craftsman in the field of Tamil social novels. He is a rare combination of intellectualism and creative ability. Instead of confining himself to the emotional element in literature, he introduced a balanced outlook with considerable success. His racy, chaste style appealed to the mass of Tamil youth and made them think and to act according to their thoughts.

Dr. Mu. Va. and his Novels

Dr. Mu. Va's creative ability found expression in short stories, plays and novels, although he is always known chiefly as a novelist. The reason does not only lie in the number of works in each literary *genre* but also in his keen interest in writing novels. Of all the creative literary *genres*, he loved the novel most. He was very reluctant to accept the Vice-Chancellorship of Madurai University for the second time. He gave three reasons for his reluctance to continue in office—rest, health and the desire to write novels. In his inaugural address at 'Akilan Seminar', the first of its kind to be held on a living author in Indian universities, he expressed his passionate interest in writing novels and his plans to write at least four novels after his retirement.⁹ Even when he became seriously ill and the heart beat was abnormal, he asked for pen and paper exclaiming 'My heart speaks to me. O' how beautifully it speaks! I want to record its speech and write a novel on it.'¹⁰

Dr. Mu. Va. never believed in serialised writing and only two of his novels—*Pāvai* in *Lōkōpakāri* and *Anta Nāl* in *Tamiḻ Muracu*—have appeared in serial form. One cannot read Dr. Mu. Va's novels for its story interest alone which is generally centred around suspense. Even in instances where he introduced suspense, he never completely succeeded. For example, Venkatesan in *Kayamai* appears before the jury in the disguise of a peasant and introduces himself to them.¹¹ This seems to be inappropriate when the whole set of laws is changed and where consciousness is respected more than anything else.

Dr. Mu. Va's first novel, *Centāmarai*, appeared one year before the year of Indian Independence, in 1946. In fact, this novel ushered in his literary career. *Ki. Pi. 2000* (1947), *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* (1947), *Pāvai* (1948), *Anta Nāl* (1949), *Malarciḻi* (1950), *Peṇṇa Maṇam* (1951), *Alli* (1952), *Karittuṇṇu* (1953), *Kayamai* (1956), *Paḷiyum Pāvamum* (1956), *Neñcil Oru Muḻ* (1956), *Akal Viḷakku* (1958), and *Maṇ Kuṭicai* (1959) followed *Centāmarai*. *Vāṭṭa Malar* (1961) was his last novel. The period 1946–61 was the most fertile period in his life as

a Novelist and it was initiated by his first novel and the end of this period was marked by his last novel.

Among these fifteen works, *Ki. Pi. 2000* is utopian in nature. In *Paḷiyum Pāvamum*, the reformist aim of the novelist predominates and it seems to be a work of fiction rather than a novel. One of H. G. Wells' novels induced him to write *Maṇ Kuṭicai* and the influence of that novel is clearly evident throughout the novel. The remaining twelve are indeed serious works of novel literature.

Dr. Mu. Va. was aware of the changing pattern of life and the increasing problems created by it. He was a keen observer of the society in which he lived in and his novels are indeed 'honest reflections of his vision and philosophy of life'. His novels deal with as many human problems as possible but the problems relating to youth, middle class family life, the study of women in Tamil Society and the conflict between material and human values predominate more than others. As a novelist, he sympathises with society and always approaches the problems with sincerity of purpose and clarity of mind.

Novelist with a Purpose

While analysing Dr. Mu. Va's novels it is also important to understand the underlying purpose of his writing novels and to whom they are directed. He is described as a 'novelist with a purpose'¹² and he never believed in the dictum 'art for art's sake'. In one of his interviews, he clearly expressed the view that 'Life should not be viewed as a mere pastime. In the same way, the life depicted in all artistic creations should not be viewed as pastime. Lovers of art could easily be divided into two groups. The first group loves art, for it is a pastime while the second group uses it as an instrument for their social or moral upliftment to find new ways or directions in their daily routine of life. I belong to the latter group and that is why I always try to instruct in my novels.'¹³ Dr. Mu. Va. shared the Johnsonian view 'that the aim of all writing was instruction.'

Dr. Mu. Va. tries to expose the evils of modern society but while exposing, he never blames any individual. Instead, he always attempts to find out the root cause. In his introduc-

tion to *Malarvi* he clearly states this: 'It is rather a general attitude to point out a few evil and wicked people and blame them for all the evils in society. It is also the convention of epics and dramas. But to investigate the root cause for their wickedness and harshness is the way of the intellect. There is no need for the intellect to blame some thing but to find out the cause and its solution'.¹⁴ One of the characters of *Alli*, *Aravazhi*, also expresses the same opinion. According to him there is not much use in increasing the number of jails and courts unless we are able to find out the root causes of all crime and evil.¹⁵ It is further revealed by the 'two books' in *Alli*—entitled 'who is at fault' and 'what is at fault'—and here the novelist takes an opportunity to elaborate.¹⁶

According to Dr. Mu. Va., certain conditions prevailing in society are responsible for the increase in evil and injustices and this finds expression in *Karittun̄ṣu* in an appealing manner: 'Do you know what we jointly do to others? First of all we make the virtuous, poor; then we make them to become merciless and cruel; and finally evil and unjust. Thus we turn the uncorrupted and civilized members of the human race to become evil unjust'.¹⁷ Even though it is very clear that these conditions cause much harm to society as a whole, he never propagates bloody revolution. He has a strong belief in God and love for humanity. Therefore, he advocates a 'silent revolution', of which Meykandar in *Maṇ Kutiṇai* echoes this view: 'we will endeavour our very best to correct the world and let us contribute our share to it. If the greed for money and self-praise disappear from the world, it will pave the way for the betterment of society where there can be neither worry nor anxiety. To achieve this let us develop our knowledge and advocate the path of virtue. We cannot expect immediate results. So let us not worry, about the consequences. In anticipation of future welfare, let us perform our daily duties today properly. Let us scatter good seeds wherever possible. Even if it is not possible, let us at least prepare the ground. It is our bounden duty to do so'.¹⁸

Dr. Mu. Va's novels have a wider readership especially among those who wish to think and develop their potentialities. A majority of these is made of youths. Dr. Mu. Va. himself

admitted that he was writing for the youth: 'While writing novels, I do not consider in the beginning for whom I am writing. Once I start writing, my concentration will be only in giving an art form to my imagination. Only after finishing the novel I begin to think for whom I am writing it. Generally speaking I write for my compatriots, in particular to the youths who wish to develop their thinking and imaginative faculties.'¹⁹

Themes

Dr. Mu. Va. was a true, sound and sympathetic observer of life. He never went out of everyday life for the subject matter of his novels. As Emile Zola points out, every novelist is equally an observer and an experimentalist. 'The observer in him gives the fact as he has observed them, suggests the point of departure, displays the solid earth on which his characters are to tread and the phenomena to develop. Then the experimentalist appears and introduces an experiment, that is to say, sets his characters going in a certain story so as to show that the succession of facts will be such as the requirements of the determinism of the phenomena under examination call for'.²⁰ This is very true of Dr. Mu. Va.

He had clearly understood the causes for the problems that we are facing today and he never tried to escape from them. Through Maykandar in *Maṇ Kuṭicai*, it is indicated that 'Man can lead as simple a life as the birds. But he has increased his needs together with his problems in the name of civilization. Everybody has his own share in the outcome. Whether we like it or not everybody has his share in both the sun and the rain. Likewise, we have an equal share in both the needs and the problems. Family, and other factors of life are not so simple as they used to be. This is the fundamental reason for all the increase in needs and problems. When our share of responsibilities knocks at the door, we must be prepared to accept and shoulder it. It is our duty to do so. Neither worry nor blame will be of any use.'²¹

Throughout his life, Dr. Mu. Va. had a fine opportunity to move among youths of different levels of society. As a result, he was well acquainted with their problems. Having

lived for several years in Madras, he was quite familiar with the problems of middle class Tamil society. As a social thinker and philosopher, he approached these problems with sympathy and understanding. This resulted in his writing of novels.

Dr. Mu. Va. has utilized a variety of themes for his novels. *Centāmarai* is based on various aspects of love. *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* depicts the social injustice done to women. *Karittunṭu* throws light upon an artist's life. *Alli* is built around the problem of sex. In *Akal Viḷakku* and *Vāṭā Malar*, he deals with the prevailing attitudes and problems of youths. *Peṇṇa Maṇam* portrays the problems of poor people, with the compassion of a mother. *Malar Viḷi* delineates how avarice and false pretence result in utter disaster. *Neñcil Oru Muḷ* sketches the place of circumstance in human behaviour and how it affects the opposite sex. *Kayamai* is entirely different from all these novels. In this, the corruption prevalent in political and official circles is excellently depicted.

Form and Technique

Dr. Mu. Va. was very conscious of his subject matter as well as the range of a novel. He always attempts to present his thoughts within the limits of novel writing and for this he has used various techniques. Technique, in a work of fiction, includes everything and the uses of technique are well explained by Mark Schorer in his essay, 'Technique as Discovery': 'when we speak of technique, then we speak of nearly everything. For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and, finally, of evaluating it. And it follows that certain techniques are sharper tools than others, and will discover more; that the writer capable of the most exacting technical scrutiny of his subject matter will produce works with the most satisfying content, works with thickness and romance, works which reverberate, works with maximum meaning.'²² It helps the novelist to organize the material in such a way as to give a complete panorama of life. In short, we may say 'the

difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art is technique.²³ At the same time, it should also be remembered that too much employment of technique will result in 'self-conscious writing and stillborn characters.'²⁴

Dr. Mu. Va. has employed various techniques in the structure and form of his novels. He was more than a story teller and had a definite message for society. So, the problem before him was how to combine these two aspects within the framework of a novel and as a result he employed different techniques in his method of telling a story, his etching of a character, and in his expression of a view point.

By employing these techniques, Dr. Mu. Va. was able to achieve an appropriate form for his ideas and thoughts. In fact, 'form is the objectifying of idea, and its excellence, it would seem, depends upon its appropriateness to the idea.'²⁵ There is also a test to find out the appropriateness of form and the answer lies in analysing how far the novelist has utilized his material and how far does he succeed in his task. Percy Lubbock, who finds difficulty in defining the meaning of form, finally states that 'the best form is that which makes the most of its subject'.²⁶ Dr. Mu. Va's novels make the most of their subjects. His 'devoted fidelity to every technique', which is mostly needed to every work of art,²⁷ made it possible for him to achieve an appropriate form.

Plot

A novel is based on a story and a story consists of events. While differentiating the events in a story and a novel, E. M. Forster writes as follows: 'we have defined a story as a narrative of events, arranged in their time sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality.'²⁸ The plot in a novel aids the novelist to carry out his story artistically together with his ideas and message to the society.

In Dr. Mu. Va's novels, the story value is lesser and, therefore, there are only very few events and incidents. In other words, they are loose in construction and each event is pregnant with ideas and thoughts. If we analyse *Alli*, for example, we can better understand this. *Alli* narrates the whole story and through her the novelist focuses various aspects of sex at various

levels. There are only few events in this novel. The marriage between Alli and Subburattinam; the difference of opinion; separation; Alli's life in Bangalore and the pathetic death of Subburattinam, are the few important events in this novel. This further could be divided into two parts: the first part consisting of Alli's marriage and separation, and the second part, her life in Bangalore. The book 'who is at fault' is a turning point, and on the whole, the story moves very slowly. As the author's intention is to picturise the different aspects of sex, he has included in his plot, the stories of Aravazhi, Inbavalli, Somu, Syamala, Parameswari and others. The stories of these people are loosely connected with the main plot and the purpose behind the stories is very clear. Apart from this, the diary of Somu, Alli's medical notes and the letters to Alli²⁹ run to several pages which, from an ordinary point of view could be viewed as pure didacticism. But if we analyse further, we can better understand the importance of these pages. In addition, it also reveals the novelist's attempt in finding different techniques to express them. As a result, the first one is expressed in the form of a diary; the second one in the form of notes and the last one in the form of letters. In the same way, Mohan in *Karittunṇu* narrates his story, while Nirmala does the same through a lengthy letter. As a novelist, his concentration on the development of plot construction is very apparent and this could be understood by a comparison of his first novel *Centāmarai* with his last novel, *Vāṣā Malar*.

While discussing the difference between a story and a plot, E. M. Forster points out one significant difference: 'If it is in a story we say "and then?"' If it is in a plot we ask "why?" That is the fundamental difference between these two aspects of the novel.'³⁰ The 'why' in Dr. Mu. Va's novels is very philosophic and has a very wider and deeper meaning. To understand this, it is very essential to understand fully the purpose of his writing and in fact, this 'why' seems to be the dominating force behind his writings.

Characterization

While discussing the relationship between plot and characterization, Anthony Trollope states: 'A novel should give a picture

of common life enlivened by humour and sweetened by pathos. To make that picture worthy of attention, the canvas should be crowded with real portraits, not of individuals known to the world or to the author, but of created personages impregnated with traits of character which are known. To my thinking, the plot is but the vehicle for all this; and when you have a vehicle without the passengers, a story of mystery in which the agents never spring to life, you have but a wooden show'.³¹

In Dr. Mu. Va's novels, the vehicle of plot is fully packed with passengers and they are really 'impregnated with traits of character'. Though they represent almost all levels of society, most of them belong to the middle class. They are individuals with a social consciousness and a capability to think. Mohan, Arulappan, Kuzhandaivel, Velayyan, Venkatesan, Kannappar, Alli, Mangai, Kanchanai, Selvanayagam, Nirmala, Mangayarkarasi, Thenmozhi and other major characters belong to this group.

Dr. Mu. Va. was aware that the world is a mixture of both good and evil³² and evil beings are more cautious than the good ones.³³ He was also aware that the society increases the sufferings and therefore man tries to escape from them.³⁴ Therefore, he created man as he was, amidst the problems and perplexities of contemporary life.

Apart from these characters, Dr. Mu. Va. has also created characters like Aravazhi, Kamalakkannar, Murugaiya and Meykandar and they represent the moralist in Dr. Mu. Va. It is often said that they are not portrayed like other characters and so they fail to draw our attention.³⁵ It is true that they are rare in contemporary society, but it would be totally untrue to view them as unrealistic. We need not go too far to search for them and Dr. Mu. Va. was himself a living example. In fact, these characters truly represent the novelist himself. As the novel is not a 'sermon in disguise' and the author's intrusion in a novel is always criticised, 'the modern novelist has to create the means by which he will speak'.³⁶ Dr. Mu. Va. has created these characters to speak on behalf of himself. In order to understand them fully, first of all, we should raise our own levels of maturity and understanding.

Dialogue

In all Dr. Mu. Va's novels, dialogue holds a prominent place. He employs this as a powerful instrument to express his views and thoughts. Instead of portraying a character through his actions and inner conflicts, he always prefers to portray them through their speeches. On the surface, one may think that it is comparatively an easier task to fill the pages with dialogue. But, indeed, it is one of the most difficult tasks in fiction writing. The chances are greater for a novelist to go out of hand, and if he does so, then it will destroy the whole structure of the novel. Gustave Flaubert, in his *Correspondence*, points out the difficulties he had faced in writing dialogues while creating *Madame Bovary*.³⁷ Anthony Trollope, in *An Autobiography*, has also discussed the difficulties in handling dialogue: 'It is so easy to make any two persons talk on any casual subject with which the writer presumes himself to be conversant! Literature, Philosophy, Politics, or Sport may thus be handled in a loosely discursive style; and the writer, while indulging himself and filling his pages, is apt to think that he is pleasing his reader. I think he can make no greater mistake. The dialogue is generally the most agreeable part of a novel; but it is so only so long as it tends in some way to the telling of the main story. It need not seem to be confined to that, but it should always have a tendency in that direction.'³⁸

Dr. Mu. Va. is very cautious while handling dialogue and he always seems to exercise a control over it. The conversations in his novels are balanced and his characters' discussions range over wide fields such as 'Capitalism, Socialism, Marxism, Gandhism, educational methods, education in the mother tongue, the education of women, arranged marriages, bribery and corruption, omens and superstitions, housing in city, the beggar problem, personal and social hygiene, unemployment, organised religion and the abuses in temple worship, the evolution of a happier society and the temporary triumph of evil.'³⁹ The discussions, in many instances, extend to several pages. It is as though one is listening to a radio-play.⁴⁰

The novelist while handling dialogue, should also be careful about the participants. While discussing this, Anthony

Trollope indicates that 'the writer may tell much of his story in conversations, but he may do so by putting such words into the mouths of his personages, as personages so situated would probably use'.⁴¹ Dr. Mu. Va. is aware of this and nowhere in his novels can one find a dialogue which fails to give an impression of probability.

Point of View

Dr. Mu. Va. has employed as many varieties of view points as possible and in this, he stands unique in the history of Tamil novel writing. Point of view, in a general sense, 'refers to the person or narrator through whose eyes we observe the action of a story'.⁴² But the term has still a deeper meaning in which it is viewed as 'not only as a mode of dramatic delimitation, but more particularly, of thematic definition'.⁴³ Points of view, in Dr. Mu. Va's novels belong to this category.

Dr. Mu. Va. has experimented several possibilities of internal and external points of view and his novels bear ample evidence for this. In *Pāvai*, *Perṛa Maṇam* and *Kayamai*, he has employed external point of view. The other novels have internal points of view in which one or more characters narrate the story.

In employing an internal point of view, Dr. Mu. Va. has done wonderful experiments with this technique. In this point of view, the novelist has an opportunity 'to delegate his most primitive responsibility' to one of his characters. Instead of being the agents to the novelist's overall design, the characters become autonomous while delegating the responsibility.⁴⁴ In *Alli*, *Neṇcil Oru Muḷ* and *Maṇ Kuṣicai*, the major characters themselves narrate the story. Characters in one way or other related to the major characters, narrate the stories in *Malar Viḷi*, *Karittuṇṇu*, *Akal Viḷakku* and *Vāḷā Malar*. The shifting of view point in a novel is considered to be a herculean task⁴⁵ and Dr. Mu. Va. has successfully experimented with this in *Centāmarai*, *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* and *Anta Nāḷ*. By using these different modes of story-telling, Dr. Mu. Va. has achieved considerable success and he has also made it possible to express his philosophy of life in a variety of ways.

The Novel of Ideas

Like the novels of Aldous Huxley, Dr. Mu. Va's novels can also be classified under 'novel of ideas'. In a 'novel of ideas', the author's ideas and thoughts predominate more than the aspects of a story. It is true that 'all literature has a social or moral or religious purpose' because every artist 'has something that he has got to say to the largest public possible'.⁴⁶ So, it all depends upon how the novelist wants to express his purpose.

There is no doubt that Dr. Mu. Va's purpose is a moral one. It seems there is a difference of opinion among the novelists and critics regarding the moral element in a work of fiction. Somerset Maugham is quite against it and according to him, the aim of the novelist is not to instruct but to please.⁴⁷ But D. H. Lawrence holds a different view. 'The essential function of art' writes D. H. Lawrence, 'is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral'.⁴⁸ Henry Burrowes Lathrop is also of the same view and according to him 'there is in every novel something, call it an idea or a point of view, or a tone of temper,—something in the way of reflection, a judgement and preference, explicit or implicit, and distinguishable from the narrative itself'.⁴⁹ He further says that 'a doctrine, then, commonly a doctrine of ethics, may be expected in a novel, sometimes explicit, sometimes manifest in the theme of the book, sometimes implied in the speeches of the characters, or in the incidental words of the author'.⁵⁰

Dr. Mu. Va., as stated before, has a definite purpose in writing novels. He never attempted to express his views in the form of essays or sermons. He always tries to exhibit them in different artistic ways within the limits of the novel. For this, he has employed several techniques such as creating a 'mouth-piece' character, utilizing dialogue to its maximum and applying different view points. Even within the view points, he changes from time to time, where he feels it to be necessary. If we analyse *Alli* this would become clear. The whole story is narrated by Alli. Somu, her brother, has been utilized by the novelist to expose the problems of sex relating to youths.

As a sister, Alli is in a difficult position to analyse her brother's feelings. At this critical juncture, Dr. Mu. Va. introduces an internal view point within an internal view point—in the form of a diary.⁵¹ This solves the problem in a very successful and artistic way. The novelist has utilized letters, notes etc., in the same way to avoid using the same technique. He never tries to demonstrate, even though his is a definite purpose. Instead, he reveals it through the personification of a character or through the manifestation of the events or through the implication of the speeches of the characters.

Conclusion

Though Dr. Mu. Va. narrowed down his range to a particular area and to a particular class of people, his thoughts and views are universal. If we closely observe people in any part of the world, we will come to know that the inner feelings remain the same while there may be some minor differences in the outward expressions. Dr. Mu. Va. tries to grasp these common aspects of human nature and to picturise them in his novels. This aspect of his artistic nature gives his novels a sense of universality. In fact, his study of man in contemporary circumstances as against his general nature, seems to be his creative force and original contribution.

While contrasting the general view that an artist reflects the life of his time, William Van O'Connor opines: 'It is hardly an exaggeration to say that we do not know what kind of world we live in until we have experienced it through the coherent and meaningful configurations of our most original and perceptive artists'.⁵² This is true and it is no exaggeration to say that only after experiencing in the coherent and meaningful configurations of an artist like Dr. Mu. Va., we can better understand the nature of the world in which we live in.

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இந்த வரலாறு சுவாமிமாரல் எதிர்ச்சி கூடாதே என்ற அச்சம் தோன்றியது”.

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28. Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the Novel*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1970, p. 93.
29. *Alli*, pp. 111-126; 171-77; 262-70.
30. Forster, E.M., *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 94.
31. Trollope, Anthony, *An Autobiography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1924, p. 116.
32. *Kayamai*, p. 148.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
34. *Malarvi* pp. 46-47.
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36. Gregor, Iam & Nicholas, Brain. *The Moral and the Story*, Faber & Faber, London, 1962, p. 253.
37. Flaubert, Gustave, Quoted in *Novelists on the Novel*, pp. 292-94.
38. Trollope, Anthony, *An Autobiography*, pp. 217-218.
39. Thani Nayagam, Xavier S., *The Novelist of the City of Madras, Tamil Culture* Vol. X, No. 2, p. 9.
40. M. Ramalingam will compare this to the listening of a film sound track in a radio. —*Puṇaikatai Vaḷam*, pp. 53-54.
41. Trollope, Anthony, *An Autobiography*, p. 218.
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FEMALE CHARACTERS IN DR. MU. VA'S NOVELS

*Selvi C. V. Geetha**

'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world,' goes the old saying. Women have always played a prominent role in history. Novel is regarded as the mirror reflecting society and contemporary life with all its merits and demerits. The delineation of characters and their proper portrayal in novels is a sinequonon for assessment of characters in novels.

In early Tamil novels women were very often portrayed as the good, humble and meek housewives. But today their field of activity has expanded considerably in that they figure in the fields of politics, education, etc. Women's liberation move has resulted in their occupying prominent positions in these arenas.

Characters in general can be analysed in two aspects. When the characters are analysed in the light of social problems discussed such an analysis becomes a social one. If on the other hand characters are analysed with reference to their delineation, nomenclature, structural role, etc., then the method becomes one with the view of techniques. Dr. Mu. Va's women characters are approached in this article from both these angles.

Dr. Mu. Va. has written altogether thirteen (13) novels.¹ Of these four (4) bear the names of women as the title, e.g.

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Centāmarai, Pāvai, Alli and Malarviṭi. The total number of characters in Dr. Mu. Va's novels is hundred.

When a character is the key figure or has a prominent part in the story then the character is said to be the main character. When a character has a subtle role it is regarded as a sub-character. The rest of the characters in a story may be termed as less important but significant characters. Thus the characters may be divided into main characters, sub-characters and less important characters, based on the parts played in the story.

The main characters six in number are as follows:

Maṅkai — *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?*

Alli — *Alli*

Vaṭivu — *Neṅcil oru mu!*

Munīyammā — *Peṇṇamaṇam*

Pāvai — *Pāvai*

Nirmalā — *Karittuṇṇu*

The twelve sub characters are as follows:

Imāvati, Vaḷḷi, Pākkīyattammā — *Akalviḷakku*

Malarviṭi, Kāṇṇaṇai — *Malarviṭi*

Iṇṇavalli — *Alli*

Guṭarviṭi — *Vāṭāmalar*

Meṇmoḷi — *Kayamai*

Vijaya, Pārvaṭi — *Neṅcil oru mu!*

Tēṇmoḷi — *Peṇṇamaṇam*

Ponṇi — *Karittuṇṇu*

The minor characters, fourteen in number are as follows:

Karṇakam, Maṇimēkalai, Attai — *Akalviḷakku*

Sahasambal, Sarojini — *Peṇṇamaṇam*

Vacikaram — *Kayamai*

Shyamala, Dr. Parameswari — *Alli*

Savitri — *Malarviṭi*

Kaṇakā — *Vāṭāmalar*

Chandra, Kindra, Geetha and Aṇṇukkaraci — *Neṅcil oru mu!*

The rest of the characters are less important and insignificant.

Characterisation in general

Character is part and parcel of fiction. Basic element of the novel is characters and it is around the characters that the story is spun. Characterisation is done by introduction, naming and finally development.

Introduction

When the reader meets the character for the first time the introduction of the character takes place in the novel. Introduction may be done preliminarily, i.e. just the name of the character alone may be mentioned, the character need not come into the scene or it may be vice versa.

Dr. Mu. Va. generally gives a picture of the character. He seldom gives the name of the character at the time of introduction. He mentions the name only if it is needed. He does not give importance to Physical appearance or tress during introduction of his woman characters. He is more interested in revealing the character's nature. Though of course there are a few exceptional cases as in *Akalviṭakku* where he describes *Imāvati's* dress and ornaments. Here he widely differs from other novelists like Naa Parthasarathy, T. Janakiraman and Akilan who take pains in giving a picturesque description of the characters', physical appearance and dress in all its glory.

In *Neñcil oru muḷ* we come to know the character's name (*vaṭivu*) only in the sixteenth page. There is no formal introduction, as the main character here is narrating the story. So is the case in *Alli* and *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?*

In *Kayamai*, *Vaṭikaram* is mentioned in the first chapter itself. Her nature and the type of woman she is, are gradually revealed in the succeeding chapters by her colleagues. Only in Page 61 we meet *Vaṭikaram* face to face.

In *Karittunṣu* though *Nīrmalā* is the heroine, we are not introduced to her at all. We only get limited information about her till we read her letter to *Kamalakkannan*.

Naming of characters

Naming of a character is a common trait but it becomes interesting in Dr. Mu. Va's novels as he names his characters with a purpose. His characters are named after their nature.

Regarding this Dr. Mu. Va. says that, 'the characters are born in my mind. When I have to name them, one of the dominant features of their character influences me. So the name happens to reflect their character',² e.g. *Kuṇamālai*, *Maṅkai*, *Ponmuṭi*, *Meṇmuṭi*, *Thēṇmuṭi*, *Guṭarvīṭi*, *Vaciṅkaram* and *Sahasambal*.

Maṅkai: *Maṅkai* literally means a lady. Dr. Mu. Va. names the heroine of *Kaḷḷō?* *Kāviyamō?* as *Maṅkai*. *Maṅkai* reveals well how a true Tamil woman behaves. *Maṅkai* is portrayed as a model of virtuous Tamil woman.

Vaciṅkaram: (*Kayamai*) means the ability to attract and draw things to itself. Here the bearer of this name succeeds in drawing the attention of the people she wants on her side. So the name suits her.

Sahasambal: (*Perramaṇam*) one capable of screening herself and painting a pure picture by her charm. Here too the name is apt.

Kuṇamālai (*Antanāḷi*) is full of virtues as her name signifies.

Similarly the other names suit the respective characters.

Development of the characters

The development of character takes place as the story unfolds itself. The reader comes to know more about the character. The author may portray it either, 'directly or analytically, indirectly or dramatically.'³ Dr. Mu. Va. uses both these methods.

Development or growth of the character may be revealed by the conflict,

- (i) between the character and the society
- (ii) between the character and her family, and
- (iii) within the character herself.

Dr. Mu. Va's characters usually fight either against themselves or against the chaos of the family.

The development of a character may be cited by symbols. But Dr. Mu. Va. seldom uses this method. His characters are mentally portrayed rather than physically, for they live in an acsthetical world.

Malarvīṭi is introduced as a young girl on the threshold of marriage. She is fresh from college. Then we see her as the

wife of *Nākanātan*. Her marriage is a failure. But she tries to tide over the situation. She is compared to a deer in the beginning. But she is portrayed as one weighed down with worries.

Later we see her as a student in the Teacher's training centre. Then she becomes a teacher. She slowly changes and Dr. Mu. Va. reveals the transformation, by a symbol. While in College she is always seen reading *Cilappatikāram*. But at the end of the story she says she has passed the stage of reading *Cilappatikāram* and is now reading *Maṇimēkalai*. Thus her mind slowly atunes from family life to that of a saint.

In *Karittuṇṇu*—*Nirmalā*'s character too undergoes remarkable changes.

We first meet her as the wife of Professor *Kamalakkannan*. Her character is not revealed fully here. We learn from *Tiruvēṇkaṭam*, who narrates the story to us that she is a learned woman. Though not a Tamilian she is well versed in Tamil. She lives a quiet life. But for twice (i) When *Tiruvēṇkaṭam* and *Kumarēcan* meet her with her husband in the beach⁴ and (ii) When *Tiruvēṇkaṭam* shows her the paintings at her home⁵, we do not have occasion to see her.

We come to know about her only through her letter which is a better portrait of her character. She is very much interested in society life. She indulges in extravagance at the expense of her husband. Marriage meant nothing to her. Family life had little meaning to her. She is not bothered by her conscience when she snatches Mohan from Madhuri. But when Mohan meets with an accident she doesn't visit him. She acts selfishly. She leaves her home and tries to become economically independent. She meets Professor *Kamalakkannan*. Mutual attraction results in her becoming the Professor's mistress, though not legally married.

Due to her friend's influence she starts reading *Tirukkuraḷ*. It influences her greatly. Her conscience so long asleep starts pricking her. She is reminded of her unjust and ungrateful acts towards Mohan. Ironically she sees him now, lame and poor. She realises fully the result of her act. She leaves the house, without telling the Professor, in search of peace. But she leaves behind a letter explaining the reasons for her sudden

disappearance. She is prepared to rejoin the Professor if he is prepared to accept her.

Thus here we see a selfish and a snob character transformed into a penitent lady of desirable traits under the influence of good books and company.

Vaṣṭu is forced to marry *Akōr*—a widower. He has all the vices one can think off. *Vaṣṭu* is an educated girl and is full of high ideals and dreams. *Akōr* repels her. She is unable to adjust herself to him. She leaves the house without telling any one. On the way she meets her old lover *Palarāmaṇ*. In a moment of old time memory she loses her chastity. This disloyalty to her husband starts pricking her and the reformation starts. She tries her best to be of service to her husband. She becomes patient, more considerate and understanding. This touches the heart of *Akōr* and they become an understanding couple.

Vaṣṭu gives birth to a son. (except her no one knows that it is *Palarāmaṇ*'s child) Years pass. *Akōr* dies. Her son falls in love with *Aṇṇaraci*. To her annoyance *Vaṣṭu* realises that it is with *Palarāmaṇ*'s daughter. She stops the marriage. She is heart-broken and is in great agony.

She comes under the influence of *Aṇṇāḷi*, a teacher turned philosopher. By his guidance she turns a social worker. She starts an orphanage. Her transformation is complete.

Alli though a main character does not undergo much development in her personality. She is more a flat character.

Alli, *Vaṣṭu* and *Malarviḷi* are all students when we first meet them. But *Maṇkai* is a poor servant girl. By dint of hard-work she gets educated. Later she becomes the mistress of the house where she was once a servant. But fate separates her from her husband, and daughter. She leads a lonely life till she joins them again. In the meantime she gains knowledge and wisdom.

A character's nature may be clearly shown by contrast. Dr. Mu. Va. succeeds in doing this.

In *Kayamai*—*Vaṇikaram* and *Meṇmoḷi* differ widely. Dr. Mu. Va. stresses the difference between them in physical appearance, dress and nature. He points out the differences

himself and through other characters whenever they are seen together in the office.⁶

In *Maṅkupicai Rēvati* stands out from *Maṅkainallāḷi* by her impertinence and haughty behaviour. Dr. Mu. Va's characters can be classified as mothers, housewives, widows, lady love and friends.

Mothers. In Dr. Mu. Va's novels mothers' affection and sacrifice are highly respected. His novel *Perṛamaṇam* describes the pathos and agony of a mother. In *Kallō? Kāvīyamō?* too we see *Maṅkai* craving and beseeching her daughter. In *Pāvai* also the mother's of *Paḷaṇi* and *Pāvai* are full of blind affection. Almost in all the novels we have the portrayal of mothers.

In *Malarviḷi Nākanāḷaṇ's* aunt is described as a Goddess when she tells her husband how she has sacrificed her sleep and all comforts for the past fourteen years for her children.

In *Perṛamaṇam* (1) *Muniyammā* sees her lost son for a split second in the cinema theatre⁸ and (2) when she sees him again in the road⁹. It is really touching.

In *Akalviḷakku Chandran's* mother dies when he deserts his home. In *Pāvai Paḷaṇi's* mother falls ill and is in the death bed when *Paḷaṇi* leaves his home.

Almost all the mothers Dr. Mu. Va. has created are superstitious to the core. They have implicit belief in all ceremonial and astrological matters. Their sole aim in life is to see their children well married and firmly settled in life.

Dr. Mu. Va. shows the difference between educated mothers and uneducated ones. *Maṅkaiyarkkarci* and *Ponmuḷi* illustrate this.

Housewife

One of Dr. Mu. Va's themes is the problem of family life to-day. He vividly portrays the reasons for the failure of happy family life and the remedy for it. According to Dr. Mu. Va. the wife should obey the husband without questioning. She should surrender herself completely to him. In short Dr. Mu. Va's model of a wife is *Kaṇṇaki*.

Dr. Mu. Va. feels that a wife is a true life companion and she should adjust herself to the breadwinner's resources. It is due

to the failure in achieving this that Nirmala of *Karittun̄ṣu*, *Kāñcaṇai* of *Malarviṭi*, *Kaṇakā* of *Vāṭāmalar* and *Rēvati* of *Maṇkuṭicai* all fail in their life battle.

Dr. Mu. Va. brings home his point by contrast characterisation. He portrays three types of wife's (i) A loving wife. *Pon̄ṇi*, *Pon̄muṭi*, *Mañkai*, *Muṇiyammā*, *Kamalam*, *Kalaivalli*, *In̄pavalli*, *Kuṇamālai*, *Cuṣarviṭi* and *Tēṇmoḷi* are all examples of a loving wife. It is noteworthy here that except *Tēṇmoḷi* the rest of the women characters are uneducated.

Pon̄ṇi, *Muṇiyammā*, *Kamalam* all surrender themselves completely to their husbands. Their world is their husbands'. So they don't yearn for the things beyond their reach. Their life is smooth. *Kuṇamālai* though a loving wife unfortunately doesn't get a proper husband. So her life is miserable. Similar is the case with *Vaḷḷi* (wife of *Chandran*). So here it is evident that happiness in a family is the result of mutual understanding.

Cuṣarviṭi learns in childhood that if one wants to have peace of mind and happiness, one should learn to obey before commanding. She strictly adheres to this and she has no trouble, whereas in *Akaviḷakku*, *Maṇimēkalai* suffers in the beginning. She is not able to adjust herself until *Pākkiyattammā* opens her eyes.

Materialistic desire for the unwanted pomp and show is often the cause for disaster. If either the wife or husband becomes a victim to this vice then there is no peace in the family. Either of them or both should adjust and patiently correct the other. In *Alli* we see *Alli*'s husband *Cuppurattiṇam* being a snob. In *Karittun̄ṣu* Nirmala indulges in extravagance when she is Mohan's wife. In *Maṇkuṭicai* *Rēvati* hurts her husband's feelings and her desire for social respect is so blind that she almost breaks her marriage. In *Vāṭāmalar* too *Kaṇakā* seeks divorce just to be a society woman.

In *Perramanam* Sarojini digs her own grave by her wasteful spending and desire for glamour.

Dr. Mu. Va. wants a housewife to be simple and free from all desire for gold ornaments and superstitious beliefs. So he stresses the need for it in his novels. In *Antanāḷi*—*Pon̄muṭi* slowly changes herself from a crazy woman for gold to a simple

woman. As *Arumugam* says the world should not come in between the husband and wife.

3. Quiet and Conservative

While showing the modern educated housewife on one hand like *Tēnmoḷi*, *Kāñcanai*, *Vaṭivu* and *Malarviḷi*, on the other hand Dr. Mu. Va. describes the old types too, e.g. *Nāku—Karit-tuṇṭu*, *Pūñkoṭi—Vāṭāmalar*, *Kayarkañṇi—Akalviḷakku*, *Maṅkayarkkaraci—Pāvai*, *Vaḷḷi—Akalviḷakku*.

Here they are very superstitious, religious and ceremonial. It is lack of education and worldly knowledge that makes them act thus.

Ladylove: Love is part and parcel of men and women. It is universal. Dr. Mu. Va. has created some really good women lovers. But they are not like the common lovers usually seen in Modern novels.

In *Peṇṇamaṇam* *Mānviḷi* is the lover of *Muttaṇ*. She is illiterate and poor, but full of love. She is prepared to do anything for the sake of *Muttaṇ*. She is simple.

Savitri of *Malarviḷi* is in contrast to *Mānviḷi*. She is poor, but fairly educated. She wishes to continue her studies. Her lover *Muttayyā* helps her in doing so. She is afraid to talk to him openly in the beginning and in the public. Whereas *Mānviḷi* though she respects public opinion mixes freely with *Muttaṇ*. But once *Cāvittiri* becomes economically independent she becomes bold.

In *Akalviḷakku* *Kaṇpakam* and *Vēlu* love each other. But they never go beyond the pale. They don't meet or write to each other. But later *Vēlu* offers her to his friend *Mālaṇ*.

Mathuri is mentioned as the lover of Mohan in *Karittuṇṭu*. But we don't get any information of her except from *Nirmalā*.

In *Kayamai*, *Menmoḷi* is the personification of *Kaṇṇaki* and of all good virtues. She is simple, meek and being poor naturally frightened. But when the need arises she acts boldly and is prepared to die for her love *Nallayyaṇ*. She declares her love openly and garlands him just as they come out of the Jail.

Pāvai, Dr. Mu. Va. declares, was written exclusively to point out that even to-day love is natural and that it followed the traditional rules and regulations.

Friend: Friendship makes the world go round. Dr. Mu. Va. stresses the need for true friendship in his novels. For friendship seems to be divinely bestowed on man. Next to family life and social evils he stresses the importance of friendship. His characters as Dr. Thani Nayagam says always harp about old school and college day friendships.¹⁰ In *Alli*—Dr. *Parameswari* and Dr. *Alli* are good friends. Dr. *Parameswari* stands with *Alli* through thick and thin. Similarly *Alli* helps her friend *Inpavalli* in conquering herself.

Malarviṭi and *Savitri* become good friends in *Malarviṭi*.

Pārvati and *Chandra* are thick friends in *Neñcil oru muḷ*. By *Pārvati*'s good influence *Chandra* turns out to be a good reformer, and leads a simple life despite her mother's persuasion.

But Dr. Mu. Va. has not portrayed friendship between women to the same extent he has done in his men characters.

Harlots: *Vacikaram*, *Sakasambal*, *Saralambal*, *Shyamala* and *Ammu* all betray the evil aspect to which they fall a prey.

Vacikaram is well created by Dr. Mu. Va. and gives us a picture of a harlot. Before we meet her we are well aware of the type of woman she is. She is a sadist. She has absolutely no scruples. She thrives at the expense of others. But Dr. Mu. Va. shows us where and how such a life will end. *Vacikaram* is murdered by her own boss. (Officially and personally)

Sakasambal is one of those women whom we meet in everyday life. The present day society gives room for such people. Though married, she lives as the wife of another man with the consent of her husband, just to eke out extra money.

Saralambal is another prostitute who double crosses her bread earner (*Kaṇakaliṅkam*).

Ammu is a minor character in *Kayamai*. Through her Dr. Mu. Va. shows us how downtrodden a woman can be, lacking in fidelity.

Thus Dr. Mu. Va. shows that these women have no scruples and are a disgrace to society and to femininity.

Kāñcaṇai is a bit off the beaten track. She is educated and is an artist. She lives happily with her husband *Celoanāyakam*. But she is sophisticated. Her greed for money drifts her away from her husband. Her mad desire for money drives her

to the extreme end so much so that she has illegal intimacy with *Nākanāṭaṇ*, her adopted son. Later she commits suicide. (or is murdered by *Nākanāṭaṇ*) Her art is the cause for her untimely and tragic death.

Nirmalā in *Karittuṇṇu* starts her life as a glamorous woman. She acts like *Kāñṇai* but gets reformed. So her life is saved.

Widows: *Pākkīyattammā* of *Akalviṭṭakku* is a young widow. She brings up her brother. Her father is not of much use to the family. She sacrifices her life. She suffers from the superstitious belief of the society. She is banned from social life. She gets her brother married. Trouble starts for her when her father dies. Her brother dances to the tune of his wife and ill treats her. She is heart-broken but doesn't lose heart. She devotes her time to teaching young children. She spends the money she earns in buying good books. She becomes a voracious reader. She finds solace in books.

Inṭavalli of *Alli* is also a young widow. She tries to forget her worries by teaching young children. She falls in love with *Aṟavāṭi*. But he does not respond to her. He advises her to continue her teaching and to lead a life like *Maṇimēkalai*. *Inṭavalli* slowly reconciles herself and becomes an able nurse and a teacher.

Ponṇi is also a widow. Dr. Mu. Va. doesn't encourage *Inṭavalli's* remarriage, but allows *Ponṇi* to marry Mohan again. *Ponṇi* has a son also.

Attai is also a widow. *Ponṇuṭi*, *Vaṭivu*, *Vijayā* all become widows in the course of the story. But their normal life is not very much affected.

Noble Souls

Vaṭṭi of *Akalviṭṭakku* is a pathetic character. She is married to Chandran—a sex maniac. She tries her best to change him but doesn't succeed. She is ill-treated and abused by her husband. But she bears everything patiently. She commits suicide when her suffering becomes unbearable.

Kuṇamālai too suffers like *Vaṭṭi* patiently until death relieves her.

Pārvati remains a spinster to serve society. She comes under the influence of *Aṟavāṭi* at an early age. She heeds to his

advice. She discards all ornaments and costly costumes. She leads a simple life and takes up teaching.

Minor but Significant Characters

Vijayā is remarkable for her scheming ability. She falls in love while young, becomes a mother. But her lover deserts her. Later she meets *Swarupanathan* and he marries her. She comes to Madras from Burma. Her husband dies. She brings up her children Chandra and Kindra. Vijayā is rich and educated. She is forward in outlook. She wants her daughters to choose their husbands by mixing freely with men. Kindra is like her mother. She has many friends and many illegal intimacies. But Chandra stands out not by comparison but by contrast.

Evolution of characterisation in the novels

In *Centāmarai* (1946) Dr. Mu. Va. has not portrayed the character well. He has used the novel more as a medium to preach to the society.

His second novel *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* has just two main characters. Here the characterisation is fairly good. *Pāvai* (1948) is merely a love story so here again there is no proper characterisation is seen. *Antanā!* (1949) is more like his first novel. Many characters narrate the story and so it is more in bits rather than a fully painted picture.

Malarviṭi (1950). There is definitely a change here in Dr. Mu. Va. as a novelist. He succeeds in portraying *Malarviṭi* and *Kāṇṇai* well.

Peṇṇamaṇam (1951) reveals the pathos and agonies of a mother only to some extent. Hence the characterisation is incomplete.

Alli (1952) Dr. Mu. Va. gives more importance here to the theme. So the characters are in the back ground. *Alli's* character does not undergo any remarkable change. She is more of an idealist.

Karittunṭu (1953). *Nirmala's* character is fairly well drawn. But again it is not complete.

In *Kayamai* (1956) he has portrayed the characters realistically. *Vacikaram* is better drawn than *Meṇṇoli*.

FEMALE CHARACTERS IN HIS NOVELS

Neñcil Oru Muḷ (1956) is the novel in which Dr. Mu. Va. has characterised his women characters well. *Vaḷivu*, *Vijayā*, *Pārvaṭi*, *Chandra* and *Kindra* are all very well pictured.

In *Akalviḷakku* (1958) *Pākkīyattammā*'s character is best drawn among the women characters.

In *Maṅkuṣicai* (1959) the female characters are not given much importance. So there is no proper development of any characters except of course the hero of the novel—*Meṇṇappaṇ*.

Dr. Mu. Va. has portrayed *Tāṇappaṇ*'s character well in *Vāṣāmalar* (1959). Women characters are as usual in the background.

Thus when one analyses all his novels one can see that women occupy only the second place in his novels as far as the delineation of characters is concerned. Dr. Mu. Va.'s novels are novels of ideas rather than novels of characters e.g. *Maṅkuṣicai*, *Alli*.

Perṇamaṇam and *Neñcil Oru Muḷ* are the two novels in which women are the main characters. Though of course *Malarviḷi* too can be mentioned here.

Among all his novels *Neñcil Oru Muḷ* is the best in characterisation of women characters. *Vaḷivu* is the best main character portrayed by Dr. Mu. Va. Similarly *Pākkīyattammā* and *Vijayā* are the best sub-characters portrayed by Dr. Mu. Va.

Dr. Mu. Va. has definitely matured as a novelist from *Cenṭamarai* to *Vāṣāmalar*. This can be clearly understood when one reads his first novel and his last. The growth starts slowly in *Maṅkai* develops in *Malarviḷi* and is complete in *Vaḷivu*.

Dr. Mu. Va. has created social characters. He uses his characters as models to improve the society. His characters *Vaḷivu*, *Tāṇappaṇ* point out this fact.

Influence of Tamil Literature on Dr. Mu. Va's characters

Of the many classics of Tamil language *kuṛaḷ* and *Cilappatikāram* were the two that enjoyed a prominent place in Dr. Mu. Va's novels. Almost all novels contain references to these.

These books are shown to influence his characters to a great extent. *Nirmalā* is transformed remarkably by reading the

kuṛaḷ. *Pākkīyattammā* and *Inṇavalli* are similarly changed by reading good books. *Malarviḷi*'s life is based on literature. In *Kayamai*, *Meṇmoḷi* makes it her habit to read a chapter from the *Kṇṛaḷ* and *Cilappatikāram* daily. *Kaṇṇaki* is her model.

Ponmuṭi manages to bring the *kuṛaḷ* with her when she deserts her home during the evacuation.

Sāvitri too wants to read the *kuṛaḷ* and other literary books. *Tēṇmoḷi* and *Kāñcaṇai* read a lot.

Besides the *Kuṛaḷ* and *Cilappatikāram*, the *Caṇkam* literature, Thiru Vi. Ka's works, Vivekanandar's books and Swami Ramatirtar's works influence Dr. Mu. Va's characters.

'Reading maketh a full man'—Dr. Mu. Va's characters prove this.

Problems facing women

Dr. Mu. Va. vividly describes in his novels the troubles and toils women have to undergo. He stresses the need for more freedom and for women's education.

In *Akalviḷakku Imāvati* behaves as a good friend of Chandran. But he fails to understand her attitude. He takes it for granted that she is in love with him. His life is spoiled and wasted by this one mistake. Through *Imāvati* Dr. Mu. Va. stresses the importance of a broader outlook on women. A man and woman need not mix just for the sake of sex. There can be other thoughts also. At the same time it is interesting to note that Dr. Mu. Va. does not favour or support co-education. He is against it.

Dr. Mu. Va. stresses another important problem facing women to-day, in all his novels. The Dowry system forces many women to remain unmarried. It affects the poor and middle class families the most. *Vaṣivu* is forced to marry *Akōr* a widower simply because she is not rich enough to offer the dowry the other alliances demand.

In *Akalviḷakku Vēlu*'s sister *Maṇimēkalai* marries a man less educated than her just because she is unable to meet the educated youth's demands.

Dr. Mu. Va. condemns the system of dowry. He sadly points out the fact that even education has not wiped out this evil. For *Alli* is educated by her father to become a doctor.

But even to marry an educated girl, men demand money. *Cuppurattinam* is an Engineer but follows the old path. He demands a car and sovereigns of gold to marry *Alli*.

As Dr. Thani Nayagam says Dr. Mu. Va. 'utilises the changing pattern of the social role of woman and declares she will be equal to man and enjoy a true freedom and marry on equal terms once she can be economically independent.'

This is evidenced by *Maṇi* in *Malarviṭi*. *Savitri* falls in love with *Muttayyā*. But she is reluctant to acknowledge it as she is poor. But once she becomes economically independent, she declares her love for *Muttayyā* and freely moves with him.

Dr. Mu. Va. is considerate with the working women. He compares working women and the less illiterate housewives to walking in the muddy sand and on the beach respectively. Walking in a muddy place is difficult and one is prone to fall. But on the other hand walking in the sand is easy and smooth. So if working women happen to go astray society should sympathise with them.

Dr. Mu. Va. gives a new explanation for chastity viz. '*Karpu*'. Olden days' definition for '*Karpu*' is of no use to-day. 'As long as one is loyal to her husband while living with him that will do.'¹² His characters *Nirmala*, *Vijaya*, *Vaṭṭu* and *Ponni* are all created to stress this point.

Dr. Mu. Va. supports divorce. According to him marriage is a friendly contract. As one is entitled to part from a friend if they don't see eye to eye. Similarly one should have the freedom to part from the husband. *Alli* differs widely from her husband's views. She is unable to dance to his whims and fancies. So she leaves him.

In *Akalviṭakku Karpakam* leaves her husband, but once he turns over a new leaf she rejoins him.

Thus Dr. Mu. Va. throws light on the problems of women and gives suitable solutions to solve them.

The Woman Dr. Mu. Va. aims at

'Child is the father of man'. Woman is the maker of children. So women's role in the society is all important. A good deal depends on this and a heavy responsibility rests on their shoulders in moulding the characters of future generation.

Realising this Dr. Mu. Va. stresses the desirable qualities in a woman and the need for it.

Dr. Mu. Va. mentions five types of woman in *Kayamai*, through a character Venkatesan, in the novel.¹³ This classification may be taken as Dr. Mu. Va's personal view.

(i) To housewives of olden days, whose world was confined to their family, their husband was their God. They were under his control. They found happiness in the kitchen and cradle. e.g. *Kayarkañṇi* and *Nāku*.

(ii) Women who wanted to work and who were at the same time conservative wanted to live a simple and happy family life like their ancestors. They lived a life of an amphibian, having more attachment to family life than to the outside society life e.g. *Tēṇmoḻi*, *Nirmalā* (as *Kamalakkañṇan*'s wife), *Vaṭṭu*, *Vijayā*, *Alli*, *Malarviḻi* and *Ponmuṣi*.

(iii) The women under this category lived as wives with men because they happen to be married. They were forced to live together as there was no other alternative. Though family women, their interest was more on society life. These women were the reverse to the previous type. They are more attached and attracted to outside life. e.g. *Kindra*, *Kāṇcaṇai*, *Nirmalā*.

(iv) Some girls were forced to live as spinsters. Some rejected marriage willingly. Most of these ladies were afraid of society and public opinion. They lead a chaste life. e.g. *Pāroati*, *Paramēcuvāri*.

(v) But some girls who were unmarried just didn't bother about their character or morals. They lead a carefree life. They have no code of ethics for them, e.g. *Vaṭṭikaram*, *Sakasambal*, *Saralambal* and *Annu*.

Dr. Mu. Va. always suggests the teaching profession especially of the primary level to all his women characters. It may be because he feels that women are the best suited ones for the post. In *Alli*, of course, he has created women doctors and nurses. But almost all his characters turn their attention to the teaching profession to get solace.

Dr. Mu. Va. wants women to come out and take the vital role to reform society. He stresses this through *Tēṇmoḻi*. *Arulappan*'s letters to *Tēṇmoḻi* show this. Women shut them-

selves in the kitchen. They should not remain in a world of their own. They should travel widely and improve their knowledge. They must have contacts with all; only then they can improve the society.

Dr. Mu. Va. wants his women to be simple, free from the craziness for jewels and glamour. In *Antanā!* he stresses this well through *Ponmuṭi*. He earnestly points out the superstitious beliefs and blind religious faiths of women. He points out the evils and stupidity of the same through his characters. He wants his women to read good books and to be patient. He wants them to be stubborn and fight for a novel cause.

Dr. Mu. Va. limits his characters to a certain extent. So some of the characters reappear in more than one novel.

e.g. *Tēṇmoḷi*—*Kallō? Kāvīyamō?*, *Perramaṇam*, *Centāmarai*—*Centāmarai*, *Karittuṇṇu*, *Alli*—*Alli*, *Neñcil Oru Muḷ*.

Dr. Mu. Va. tries to reform Tamil Women by his novels. This is portrayed vividly in all his novels. His novels strive to reduce their suffering and to promote better understanding between man and woman. It is due to this that he freely discusses the delicate matter of sex in *Alli*. *Alli*'s book '*Eṭu Kurram*' serves as an eye opener to woman and man.

Dr. Mu. Va. the great literary critic, with high educational ideals has striven his best and given us the prosterity an appraisal of women which will stand the test of time. He has thus carved a nitche for himself in the social and literary fields which will survive for centuries, fresh and ageless.

Notes

| 1. Name of the Novel | Names of the Characters |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Centāmarai</i> | <i>Centāmarai</i> , <i>Tilakam</i> , <i>Centāmarai</i> 's sister, <i>ṇṇakkō</i> 's mother, <i>Marutappaṇ</i> 's wife, <i>Tilakam</i> 's mother. |
| 2. <i>Kallō? Kāvīyamō?</i> | <i>Maṭkai</i> , <i>Aṇṇam</i> , <i>Tēṇmoḷi</i> , <i>Kōtai</i> , and <i>Maṭkai</i> 's aunt. |
| 3. <i>Pāvai</i> | <i>Pāvai</i> , <i>Pāvai</i> 's mother, <i>Paḷaṇi</i> 's mother, <i>Kamalam</i> , <i>Pāvai</i> 's aunt, <i>Maṭṭayarkkurai</i> . |
| 4. <i>Antanā!</i> | <i>Pogmuṭi</i> , <i>Kuṇṇamalai</i> , <i>Vāṇi</i> , <i>Paṭmānati</i> and the girl who reforms <i>Nilamṭham</i> . |
| 5. <i>Karittuṇṇu</i> | <i>Nirmala</i> , <i>Poggi</i> , <i>Nāku</i> , <i>Kumaresan</i> 's mother and <i>Madhuri</i> . |

6. *Akaiṣṭakka* *Imāveti*, her sister and mother, *Kaṇṇakam*, her mother, aunt, *Kaṇṇakāṇṇi*, *Maṇimākalai*, *Pakkiyattammā*, *Vaṭṭi*, *Vēla*'s mother, Ooty woman.
7. *Peṇṇamaṇam* *Muṇṇamma*, *Tēṇṇōṭi*, *Sarōṇi*, *Mūṇṇi*, *Sakasāmbāl*, *Kamakshi*, and *Kandan*'s boss's wife.
8. *Alli* *Alli*, *Iṇṇavalli*, *Śyāmala*, Dr. Mallika Alai, *Aṇṇaṇṇi*'s wife and Dr. Parameswari.
9. *Nenṇil Oru Muṭ* *Vaṭṭu*, her mother, *Vijaya*, *Kindra*, *Chandra*, *Geetha*, *Aṇṇaraci*, *Pārṇati*.
10. *Maṇṇuṇṇai* *Rēṇṇati*, *Pandyan*'s wife, *Maṇṇainallaṭ*, *Kesavan*'s wife, and daughter, *Meyyappan*'s daughter, old woman in his home and his mother-in-law.
11. *Kayamai* *Vaṇṇikaram*, *Swarnam*, *Meṇṇōṭi*, her mother, driver *Kandan*'s wife, *Saralambal* and *Ammu*.
12. *Malaruṇṇi* *Malaruṇṇi*, *Savitri*, *Kāṇṇaṇṇai*, *Kalaiṇṇalli*, *Muthia*'s mother and *Savitri*'s mother.
13. *Vāṭṭamalar* *Caṭṭaruṇṇi*, *Kanaka*, *Poṇṇkoti*, *Cheyar*'s mother and *Tāṇṇappan*'s stepmother.

2. Page 37. *Vijṇalikkuppiṇ Tamil Naṇṇalkaṭ*. C.L.S. Publication, First edition — 1974 Editor—Pakkiyamuthu.
3. p. 146. An introduction to the study of literature — W. H. Hudson.
4. *Karittuṇṇu* — M. Varadarajan p. 67.
5. Ibid — p. 162.
6. *Kayamai* — M. Varadarajan p. 140–150.
7. *Malaruṇṇi* — M. Varadarajan — p. 71.
8. *Peṇṇamaṇam* — M. Varadarajan — p. 130.
9. Ibid., p. 133.
10. Tamil Culture June 1963.
The Novelist of the City of Madras—Xavier S. Thani Nayagam p. 16.
11. Ibid., p. 4.
12. *Karittuṇṇu* — M. Varadarajan p. 239
13. *Kayamai* — M. Varadarajan p. 26–28.

MALE CHARACTERS IN DR. MU. VA'S NOVELS

*Thiru Deva Sangeetham**

Among all the aspects of novel, it is character that determines the work-manship and the popularity of a novelist; and it is that aspect of fiction that allures the hearts of the readers. A reader may forget the plot, the narrative aspect and the architectonic aspect of a novel but he cannot forget a lively character that one may come across in a novel. That is why Maren Elwood has rightly said 'There is something more important than plot, something that gives meaning and significance and life to plot. That something is character.'¹ Therefore, the life of the novel is characterisation. As Hemingway has said a successful novelist always creates living people, and people not characters.² To create such kind of living people he fixes his imagination on particular persons and produces them in a realistic fashion.³ A novelist's success in characterisation necessarily depends upon his faculty of graphic description. A skilled artist is specially known by his power of judicious selection and accumulation of facts of persons in life, significant details and organising them in types in such a way as to stimulate the imagination of the readers by his masterly touches. David Daiches⁴ has suggested three methods of presenting characters in fiction viz. (1) Physical appearance; (2) Personality and habits of mind and (3) Psychological aspects. Any one

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of Dr. Mu. Va's novels would provide a good example of the first category. But the best and suitable example can be quoted from his '*Kayamai*'. While describing the physical appearance of Anavar, the protagonist, the author says:

'The black dense mustache in his moloto coloured face and his cropped head with grey hairs here and there shining like white silver wires patently showed his age. Those who happen to see him can easily understand that his age was not below forty and not above fifty. Though he was a Bachelor of Arts, there was not a symptom of politeness either in his face or his person. His voice also was boorish in accordance with toughly-built body. His look also was rude.'⁶

Thus he gives a fairly adequate sketch of Anavar and the circumstances in which he is placed. Yet we do not know Anavar completely. A full understanding of his nature comes only after we have watched his reactions to the events which grow to the warp and woof in the fabric of the story. When one considers the second method one can see, a mere graphic description of physical appearance will not constitute a *character in perfection*. The 'inner-man' of the character should be adroitly visualised by the novelist. It is through that aspect the character can be well introduced to the readers. For this purpose the novelist must be clever enough to penetrate deeply into the habits of person in the novel. He must thoroughly study their disposition and behaviour. Many of the characters in Mu. Va's fictions have been presented in this way. Dr. Mu. Va. furnishes all the details of the habits and personality of his characters either by the direct or indirect method. A few examples can be cited from his *Akalvijakku*. The nice discussion⁶ that takes place between Velayyan, the narrator of the story and Imavathi the girl-friend of Chandran reveals a good deal of truth about Chandran's head and heart. The third method viz. the psychological aspect, according to J. W. Beach deals with how the character feels in a given situation, how he or she reacts to a particular predicament.⁷ This can be seen in the life of Chandran in *Akalvijakku*, Thanappan

in *Vāṭāmalar*, Arulappan in *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* Anavar in *Kayamai* and so on.

Dr. Varadarajan depicts his characters with perfect impartiality and objectivity. But it does not mean that he has not his own choice in presenting certain characters to sow the seeds of his philosophy of life. By means of a large number of men and women chosen from various walks of life, such as the upper class, the middle class, the lower class; of industrial life, commercial life, artistic life, clerical life and pedagogical life, he gives a panorama of human life. His characters are representatives of Tamil men and women of the twentieth century. They live in Tamilnadu, travel in Tamilnadu, quarrel and fight in Tamilnadu. In this connection a brief statement to refute certain misunderstandings of a few critics with bias may not be out of place. While no one to-day would dispute Dr. Mu. Va's place as a successful novelist there still remains a considerable doubt as to whether he is a good craftsman in the true sense of the word. Dr. K. Kailasapathy states quite emphatically that the characters of Varadarajan have no blood and bone, but they are the representatives of human thoughts.⁸ Thus he generalises the characters as the embodiment of human thoughts. It is not the purpose of this paper to challenge some of his remarks or to define the nature of the characters, but, to indicate Dr. Mu. Va's best creation and presentation of men in his novel as created by this learned author.

Even the most casual reader of Dr. Mu. Va's earlier works will be aware that he is reading something fundamentally different from, say, the novels of Kalki or Jayakanthan. There is little interest in the elements of form and structure. The characters portrayed are sometimes entirely different from all the characters of other novelists. Some of them do not develop and the plot is minimal. What we have in their place might be described as a highly charged dilectic of ideas shaped in the form of a moral tale. Therefore the novel for him is nothing in itself, it is a vehicle for more important matter, a sugaring of the pill of social instruction for a large new eager readers. Hence his characters are somewhat different from the characters of others.⁹ To say that they are different is not

to say that they are merely mouth-pieces of the novelist or preachers in his fictions. They live with us, move with us, talk with us and we feel as if we have met them somewhere. Thus they are very close to the life. Dr. Mu. Va's Chandran, Velayyan in *Akalvilakku*, the crippled pavement artist, Mohan in *Karittunju*, Thanappan in *Vāṣāmalar*, Anavar in *Kayamai*, Palani in *Pāvai* are the heart-winning characters. They are the beings of blood and flesh as we are. Age cannot whither them. A detailed account of his characters will be dealt with ahead.

The male characters of Dr. Mu. Va. can be classified into three categories on the basis of their significant roles in the novels. First of all, there are the protagonists of the novel who play a leading role in its action. Secondly, there are characters of secondary importance who closely move with the main characters and derive interest and significance from their contacts playing only a subordinate part in the development of the plot. Thirdly there are the didactic characters who do not have much significance as far as the main action is concerned.

The Heroes in Dr. Mu. Va's Novels

In his thirteen best novels only six of them have heroes in the true sense of the term. The other seven novels have heroines. Therefore, numerically Dr. Mu. Va. created more heroines than heroes. All of them are like ordinary human beings, easily susceptible to ordinary joys and sorrows and easily over taken by human passions. No doubt, they are gems but with some limitations. Each one of them explains the spectrum of human life, the conflict in life, the problem of day to day life. Most of his novels are written without a villain. But the various conflicts between good and evil, between human passions and moral problems have occupied the place of a villain and thus the mental attitude of the protagonists is manifested through the impact of the conflicts of both internal and external.

The concept of Heroism in Dr. Mu. Va's Novels

The heroism in Dr. Mu. Va's novels is not of a martial spirit. Dr. Mu. Va. glorifies the heroic qualities of patience,

forbearance and endurance displayed by persons in fighting the great battle of life. As the great poet Milton¹⁰ has said to fight the ills of life with fortitude or to offer oneself as a martyr to a good cause is any day nobler and more heroic than the slaughter of men on the battlefield. Dr. Mu. Va. is terribly drawn towards these duals in life. Meyyappan in *Man Kuficai* is the best suitable character to illustrate this type of heroism. Meyyappan, a poor humble man, is oppressed by a rich wicked knave. He undergoes an imprisonment of six years for a false charge filed by Kesavarayan. For this reason Meyyappan is hated by many including his own wife. As a true follower of non-violence and a man of forbearance, he endures all these troubles and difficulties. The author's concept of heroism is again seen through such characters as Nallayyan, Venkatesan and others in *Kayamai* who work in a Taluk office. The hero of the novel, Anavar, who is a Head-clerk of the office treats them cruelly. He hears whatever is reported against these people by Vaceekaram, an undesirable woman, working in the same office and having illicit contact with Anavar. Nallayyan a strong-willed young man hates all these atrocities of this Head-clerk and seeks interview with the officer and pleads for justice. Knowing this the Head-clerk cleverly manoeuvres for Nallayyan's dismissal. Nallayyan forbears it and at last Anavar is put into the jail for a murder case. Thus virtue overcomes vice through forbearance, and long sufferings.

Chandran in *Akalvilakku* is the well-known tragic-hero of Dr. Mu. Va. At the outset of the novel, he is introduced as a good-looking little lad with a rare combination of brain and beauty. Through fascinating look, handsomeness, above all by his sharp mind he attracts each and every one who is not even directly connected with him. It is that kind of personal magnetism that made the old fruit vendor to give him an extra fruit and the school inspector to admire and praise him in the class room. With all these Chandran dies an untimely tragic death. As Shakespeare's tragic heroes have some tragic flaws for their degradation, Dr. Mu. Va's Chandran is also having some black-spot. As has been already said, he is a gem but with a black-spot. There are three reasons for the

degradation of Chandran's life. Through the minor characters and the incidental touches of the novelist some reasons can be cited for his ruin. The first reason is his impatience and hastiness. This tragic flaw is cited at several places. Throughout the novel we see him as an impatient boy who has no far-sight. Uxoriousness in Chandran can be cited as the second reason for his ruin. In other words, Chandran mistakes all sorts of love shown upon him by others as lust. It is that kind of misunderstanding that made him to take Imavathi's sisterly affection as sexual love for which he leaves the hostel and discontinues his studies and thus ruins his life. In the latter part of his life he leads an abominable life. As it is well said truth sits upon the lips of dying Chandran; he confesses all his lusty behaviour one by one at the end. Here one should not fail to appreciate the novelist's art of characterisation. The novelist does not fail to tell us the love affairs of Velayyan who also is not far from being destitute of that appetite. Like Chandran, he too loves Karpakam sincerely and honestly, but when he hears that she is espoused to Malan he feels like Chandran but he does not go to that extent of ruining his life. Thus, he too undergoes such kind of trials and temptations. But he overcomes the temptations. The novelist puts both the characters (Chandran and Velayyan) in a single 'test-tube' and gives two different results. The third reason for Chandran's degradation can be cited as the superiority complex. Throughout the novel we see him scarcely caring for others suggestions. We see his bosom friend Velayyan pointing out Chandran's mistakes several times. But Chandran never inclines to hear him. Thus a young towering and forceful personality ruins his life due to impatient and impetuous qualities.

As Edmund Fuller has well observed 'Our time has been described variously as an age of anxiety, an age of schism in the soul, a time when man suffers not only from war; persecution, famine and ruin but from *inner problems* fully as terrible: despair, a conviction of isolation, randomness, meaninglessness in his very existence.'¹¹ Therefore the modern man's problems and conflicts are not much of external but internal. It is this type of internal conflict that centres round

Dr. Mu. Va's novels. As he has rightly said 'Man lives more by heart than body'.¹² Therefore, the plots of Dr. Mu. Va's novels are very much influenced by the internal conflict of the principal characters.

The life of Mohan, the crippled artist, in *Karittunju* is a quotable example. The latter part of his life in Madras appears to be full of internal conflicts. He never reveals to any one his past life with Nirmala. But the novelist reveals it to us through the letters of Nirmala, and the artist's conversation in the jail. Mohan's life, in addition to the external conflicts such as starvation, etc., is filled with the internal trouble of his past life.

Among the main characters Anavar in *Kayamai* occupies a different position. In the very beginning of the novel he is well introduced by his external appearance. In the course of the story his violent nature, dictatorial tendencies and heavy-handed politics are well portrayed. His characters can be very well estimated from the discussion with his friend Kanakalingam. Though he appears to be strong and undaunted he has the least command over his passions. After murdering Vaceekaram, the lady clerk he proves himself a coward; he weeps and acts as an innocent child. His intelligence is combined with cunningness; he is all vigilance but his vigilance is a mixture of cruelty and brutality.

Like Chandran, in Dr. Mu. Va's novels, Thanappan in *Vāṣāmalar*, is a towering personality. At the outset of the novel he is introduced as an intelligent young lad ill-treated by his step-mother. The earlier part of his life is hard and the ceaseless ill-treatment of his step-mother makes him leave the home. After leaving the home he witnesses the true picture of life—a wide world in the Madras city. The City life moulds him and makes him understand the truth of human life. Thanappan decides that things could be achieved only by force but not by forbearance and patience. With this motto he raises his life to a high level and becomes a bigshot in his native town. In spite of all his vigilance and intelligence Thanappan's life becomes a failure. At the end of the novel we see him as a repented gentleman. He realises all his mistakes and gives up all the unrighteous ways; we see him following truth and

justice. The acquaintance of truth-loving people like Murugayya and Kulandai Vel changes his life. Though repented he dies a miserable death at the end.

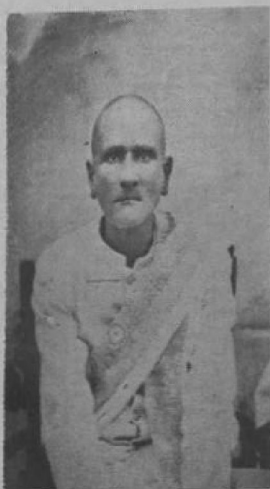
As many reasons have been cited in the fall of Chandran, a couple of reasons can be cited for Thanappan's ruin. He has all the best qualities, but they are mixed with wrong notions. Secondly he has a sympathetic, generous heart but he fails to show it to proper person. His intelligence is surpassed by sympathy that is why he fails to understand the conspiracy of his wife who gave him the poison. In brief, we see in him the ebb and flow of human life.

The Minor Characters

The minor characters of Dr. Mu. Va. are sometimes astonishingly real and sometimes are presented to us in part by tricks of characterisation. They are drawn from every walk of human life with a rare exception of high class family. Dr. Mu. Va. has chosen his own range in portraying his characters; hence, though we see a number of characters the variety appears to be meagre. The characters are drawn both from urban and rural areas and most of them are from middle class families. In characterisation Dr. Mu. Va. has given an emphasis on the middle class people. Because he hailed from the same class—the middle class, the class which scrapes along, propped up on the one hand by a thread bare respectability and on the other by the spectre of starvation.

The minor characters of Dr. Mu. Va. can be classified into four groups, namely, (a) The Ideal characters, (b) Odious characters, (c) The Intellectual characters, and (d) Servants and other common people.

The ideal characters are quite different from the moral characters. Therefore one need not confuse these ideal characters with his didactic characters, because his moralists (didactic characters) directly come to the platform and preach the morals; they have a little significance to the plot of the novel, whereas his ideal characters have actions and passions and their contribution to the plot is immensely great and inevitable. In other words these characters and the plot are inseparable, the plot grows and develops out of their actions and passions.



Jan 2

Grandmother and Parents



Adorning the Gold Medals



With family members



With a former colleague, Professor K. Anbazhakan

As Edwin Muir has well observed 'the given qualities of the characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters and thus everything is borne forward to an end.,¹³ Under this group fall Velayyan in *Akalviḷakku*, Kulandai Vel in *Vāṭāmalar*, Kannalagan in *Neñcil Oru Muḷ*, Nallayyan in *Kayamai*, Sandalingam in *Akalviḷakku*, Nagappan and Arumukam in *Antanāḷ*. Through all these characters the philosophy of the novelist is beautifully presented. In other words they are not exploited to preach the gospel of the novelist. They have a definite position in the plot. Their actions and passions have an impact over the plot. The mind and soul of the main characters are manifested through their comments and conversations. They are not controlled by the novelist. They reveal themselves through their speech and action. These people often speak of the greatness of *Tirukkuraḷ*, *Gilappatikāram* and in general glimpses of the Tamil literature. Through their rich conversations the readers are introduced to so many books. A proper and suitable interpretation of these books is beautifully given through their conversation. Especially *Tirukkuraḷ* is widely appreciated and neatly interpreted.

Dr. Mu. Va. is equally skilled in portraying his odious characters. Under this category fall Agore in *Neñcil Oru Muḷ*, Subburathnam in *Alli*, Kanakalingam in *Kayamai*, Nagu in *Malarviḷi*. Among these odious persons, we see some of them repent at the end. Though they repent they never fail to reap the consequences. To their every action an equal and opposite reaction is given at the end of the novel. Their secret thoughts and deeds are neatly painted and to reveal the secrecy the novelist has adroitly adopted some suitable techniques such as revealing through their diaries and letters. Thus the cross-section of the abominable heart is skilfully presented.

Prof. Kamalakannan in *Karittuṇṇu*, Collector Selvanayakam in *Malarviḷi*, Prof. Narendrar in *Maṇ Kuṭicai*, Prof. Arulappan in *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* and Kannappan in *Pāvai* can be considered as the intellectual characters. Each one of them have some eccentric feature. They are drawn with high modernity. One who comes across these characters will never fail to

understand the author for his modernity in thoughts and contents. Dr. Mu. Va. reveals some surprising revolutionary thoughts through these characters. For example in *Karittun̄ṭu* Prof. Kamalakannan explains the importance of chastity as follows:

‘Not leaving the one to whom a woman is already married but at the same time living with another man is wrong. It is enough if a woman is faithful to a man as long as she lives with him. That is chastity.’¹⁴

Thus a new definition, according to the modern social order is formulated.

In the last classification fall the servants, gardeners, beggars, house-keepers, villagers, nameless-crowd and non-descripts. There are characters in his novels who are incapable of surprising us. But this wide range of characters show how rich and varied the author’s experience of life is! Among these characters many of them are immortalized either by their single deed or by their mere appearance.

Didactic Characters

Dr. Mu. Va’s didactic characters are not always equally real. Some of them are somewhat broadly painted portraits of his conceptions and are not acceptable to us as they are. They seem to be constructed on a formula rather than from actual knowledge of men whom we see in the world with flesh and blood. In *Neñcil Oru Muḷ* and *Alli* we have Aravazhi, in *Maṇ Kuṣicai* we have Meykandar, and in *Kaḷḷō? Kāvīyamō?* we have Murugayya, playing the didactic role. These didactic characters are truth-loving, and justice-fearing persons. They are simple living and high thinking people and they always like a rural simple life. In them we find a spontaneous generous heart, a simple frankness, a sincere sense of goodness and dispising all the superstitions and miracles preached by the religious leaders. They preach truth and humanism as religion. In a nutshell the religious conception is ‘Service to humanity is service to God.’

They are very strongly individualized but not drawn at length. They are drawn in a convention different from the one used for the main-characters. They remind us of the characters, of Huxley and H.G. Wells. The verbal clashes of these didactic characters replaces the dramatic qualities of the novels. In brief, they are portrayed with social conscience rather than with artistic conscience. Once their ideas are formulated each character responds automatically with a predictable set of notions. In portraying these characters, the interest of the novelist is centred on their mental attitudes, the character-idea rather than on social-behaviour. But in novel of ideas as Peter Bowering has well observed 'the novelist must write about people who have ideas to express.'¹⁵ Dr. Mu. Va. who has written more number of 'novels of ideas' has employed these didactic characters to convey his philosophy. That is why they are flat. As Edwin Muir has observed 'the flat character is the only one which could serve the purpose of the novelist of character; that it is his necessary vehicle for conveying one kind of vision of life.'¹⁶ In these characters we see more ideas and clashes of ideologies than passions and actions. And also we see the author is veiled in their personality. But to a novelist who writes 'novel of ideas' and who sees the human folly as the product of abstracting intellect, the didactic characters are the suitable vehicle.

However, keeping in view the above analysis, with an exception of the didactic characters, we find the characters of Dr. Mu. Va. amazingly alive, full of blood and full of breath. They are real and life-like. They are not confusing; they can easily be distinguished. They are artistic triumphs. They are drawn psychologically and really with economy and precision.

Notes

1. *Character Make Your Story*, p.1.
2. Nancy Hale: 'The Realities of Fiction', p. 93.
3. Robert Liddle: 'A Treatise on the Novel', p. 98.
4. 'The Novel and the Modern World', p. 12-15.
5. Dr. M. Varadarajan: 'Kayamai', p. 4.
6. Dr. M. Varadarajan: 'Akaijalakku', p. 212-216.
7. J. W. Beach: 'The Twentieth Century Novel', p. 25.

8. Dr. Kailasapathy: ' *Tamiḻ Nāval Ilakkiam* ', p. 230.
9. ' I am a type of a fellow. Therefore the persons I come across in the novel may belong to some type; there is no wonder if they are so. Only those who like to while away the time like me will fall in line with me in this regard.' An article by Dr. Mu. Va. in the book ' *The Man in the Modern Tamil Literature* ' p. 2.
10. ' The better fortitude
of patience and Heroic Martyrdom
Unsung.'
—John Milton: ' *Paradise Lost* ' Book IX, pp. 31–33.
11. Edmund Fuller: ' *Man in Modern Fiction*, ' Preface xvii
12. Dr. M. Varadarajan: ' *Nenai Oru Muḻ* ', p. 179.
13. Edwin Muir: ' *The Structure of the Novel* ', p. 40.
14. Dr. M. Varadarajan: ' *Karittuḻḻu* '
15. Quoted by Peter Bowering in ' *Aldous Huxley as a Study of the Major Novels*. ' p. 6.
16. Edwin Muir: ' *The Structure of the Novel* ', p. 26.

DR. MU. VA.—THE SHORT STORY WRITER

*Thiru G. John Samuel**

The Spirit of his Age

The great revolutions of the world and the enlightened and revolutionary thoughts that emerged from the minds of some epoch-makers, the waves of the renaissance and the new spirit kindled by it that spread like a whirl-wind throughout the world, the new inventions of scientific truths that even shook the fundamental faiths of the greatest religions that were deeply rooted in the minds of the people, the aspiration for a global civilization and a passion for social justice, the new literary theories that were expounded by the remarkable literary-heads of Russia, America, England and France and the optimistic and encouraging guidelines given to the new creative writers and to the coming critics—all these things beat on India's shores and awakened her from her agelong slumber as a result of which a new spirit of youth began to breathe in her ancient limbs. The clash between the Eastern and the Western outlooks provoked in her a new religious, social and literary awakening and she cannot but respond to that new spirit which emphasised humanism. The intellectually alert young generation thirsting for this new knowledge with a new zest and spirit stimulated by the currents of the renaissance has to be fed according to their tastes. The greatest responsibility fell

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on the heads of the new writers who like Emerson felt that 'the millions that around us are rushing into new life cannot always be fed on the sere remains of the foreign harvests'¹ and they started exploring and experimenting with new forms, new themes and new genres in their native language with the help of the new knowledge they gained.

Dr. Mu. Va.

One outstanding personality among them was Dr. Mu. Va., the greatest Novelist, Dramatist, Essayist, Critic, Linguist Philosopher and one of the erudite Scholars that this century has produced. With the fecundity of his imagination and profound artistic perception, great fictions were created and ancient fragmented plots were developed into new plays. Aesthetic performances of the Ancients were approached with a critical and creative mind and his analytical mind gave new interpretation to old philosophical dogmas and accredited literary theories. In short, he tried to fill the various literary gaps by his profound scholarship and aesthetic mind and started marching through the intellectual arena like a soldier through an open field. With his wit and humour, opulence of imagination, considerable amount of negative capability, deep analytical mind, intellectual activity and stirring will, simple but sensuous and clear way of expression, he has established a new epoch that may very well be called the age of Mu. Va. In him, emotion and thought were harmoniously blended and there was a balanced reconciliation between head and heart and this classic mode found powerful expression in all his creative works. My purpose in this short monograph is to elucidate his artistic personality from various angles through the seventeen short-stories that appeared in two small volumes.

Some Hints on Short Story

It is an accepted fact that our's is an age of prose where even the novel is defined as an epic poem in prose² and the short-story a single narrative poem rendered in prose style.³ The immense vogue of the short-story in this age is the result of many co-operating causes such as the rush of modern life and

the enormous development of magazines, in which a large portion is afforded for tales.⁴ Though the short-story cannot exhibit life in its variety and complexity like novels, it can at least show human life in a few relationships and circumstances. This concentration upon a particular aspect of character may leave a powerful impression about them on the reader's minds. Similarly the subject of a short-story must be one that is very impressive and exhilarating and that can be powerfully and artistically developed within a prescribed limit though we cannot formulate any rigid rules for this. As W. H. Hudson suggests 'It should impress us as absolutely clear in outline, well proportioned, full enough for the purpose, yet without the slightest suggestion of crowding, and within its framework complete.'⁵

This short but powerful and popular literary genre entered into Tamil literature after the advent of the westerners, though its elements were already found in old Tamil lyrics.⁶ The American Edgar Allan Poe, the French Balzac and Maupassant, The Russian Gogol and Turgenev, the English Joyce are some of the chief exponents of this genre. In Tamil literature, V. V. S. Ayer, Putumaipittan, Ku. Pa. Rājakōpālan, Ki. Vā. Jakanātan, Akilan and Jayakāntan have made considerable contributions in this field.

Mu. Va's Short-Stories in General

Though the manysided genius Dr. Mu. Va. cannot be hailed as a great and talented Short-Story writer, we cannot refute the fact that some of his characters and stories have stamped their footprints deeply on the sands of time. Most of his stories are endued with certain purpose and hence the actual and realistic representation of human life is little lacking in them with the exception of some stories where he stands peerless as a writer of general human nature. As a strict moralist like Samuel Johnson, he shares with him the classic dictum that the end of every art must be to 'instruct by pleasing'⁷ which he has suggested in the preface of *Viṭṭalāyā?*, a collection of his short-stories. For attaining this end, even probability is little violated, climax slightly weakened⁸ and though this didactic purpose is fulfilled, they failed to attract

our attention as good pieces of art. But some of his excellent stories where satirical and narrative elements reach their pinnacle¹⁰ stand as testimony to his mastery in this field. Romanticism and realism are proportionately blended in stories like '*everkurram*' and the good amount of negative capability he possesses is apparent in the characterization of some of his characters like *Amāvācaiyaṛ*. All the seventeen stories are textured as first person narratives and the narrator who is a central figure makes us feel that all the stories are separate episodes and incidents he has encountered in various occasions. The stories like *akkaraipaccai* reminds us of the stories of Maupassant where the tone is materialistic and realistic.¹¹ Such stories do not seek to draw its reader's affections sympathetically to its characters. Yet the treatment is clear and logical and it is cleverly climaxed.

Unity of Action

It is highly emphasised that the unity with which a short story is developed must begin with the first sentence and be preserved to the last.¹² In Mu. Va's tales every detail promotes the single aim of the the story and the characters and incidents are quite convincing in the setting chosen for them with the exception of a few.¹³ Since everything elaborate between the climax and the ending will weaken the effect of the story, Dr. Mu. Va. tries to avoid everything superfluous and redundant and subordinates the separate parts strictly to the whole. But he does not attain this effect in *Viṭṭalayaṅ*? where, he unnecessarily brings a communist fellow who starts discussing at length about madness and its consequences with the narrator.¹⁴ The canvas chosen for this story covers a long period from the childhood of the narrator to his maturity. In this tale the first episode where the narrator narrates one reminiscence of his boyhood is loose in structure and unnecessarily elaborate though it is in tune with the final effect to a lesser degree than it could be.

Yet how Dr. Mu. Va. is conscious about the unity of action is obvious from a short tale *cupariṅ nakaippu*. This short piece deeply broods reflectively like a prose lyric turning on

a single theme. Like the tales of Tchekhov, this story tends to have no sharp ending and a significant plot¹⁵ though its details are realistic. Its separate little episodes are all parts of the incidents of a funeral procession, each a picture in itself, yet the impression that they are inseparable parts of a whole is made by organically linking them with the mainplot which makes the tale an excellent one in texture. The tone of this story is tragic and it is a moving meditation on the transitoriness of youth, the vanity of human dreams and aspirations, and the heartfelt dislike of death as a negation of life as well as the Dark Reality of our mortal duration in this earth. In this setting he presents ordinary people moved by ordinary concerns and passions of life, and its consequences agony, frustration, jealousy and hatred. This is a 'tragic comic view of life of the Shakespearean kind, in which the normal humorous realities, sometimes crude, sometimes pathetic, sometimes ironic, are inseparable from the passion and beauty'.¹⁶

The author in this story tries to give a pen picture of modern society that has lost all its glorious traditional values of the ancient life but still carrying with it the institutional and superstitious elements. For emphasising this social degradation and showing how man is leading a psychologically isolated life in a crowded city caring little for the symbiotic relationship, mutual love and organic comradeship, he brings some eight episodes within the frame of a funeral procession. The story begins with a proverbial note where the narrator is conversing with his friend about the excessive fascination that women attach to jewels. His friend assures him that he is going to bring up his only small daughter in quiet a contrary way to ordinary women in this regard. This episode is followed by another one which runs in a counter way where, after a few days, the narrator hears the loud lamentation of the mother and sees his friend weeping for the sudden and early demise of his only loving daughter. Tears gush forth from the eyes of the bereaved faces that gathered there. The third episode presents the funeral procession in motion and the intensity of this tragic feeling is softened by the intervention of the superstitious beliefs of one man who follows the corpse with a chicken with the superstitious conviction that this attitude may

prevent the death of another. The narrator intervenes like an epic voice and pities that the cruel hand of death has done away with one innocent infant whereas the brutality mingled with the superstitious belief of this man is going to destroy another life. Then we have a short passage where the author portrays the responses of various people towards the death of the child. Then we see a man in the crowd accusing a dead dog for polluting the atmosphere and a male dog running on the way without caring for the corpse of the dead dog. The author then shows a rooster doting a hen. This is followed by another episode where we are introduced to two teen-agers who out of infatuation started exchanging sweet smile and romantic words. This is again followed by the conversation of two participants in the procession who began to pass over some satirical comment on the young lovers.

Then we see the narrator as an ordinary man who begins to feel jealousy on seeing a small boy tasting a mango fruit on the roadside without inhibition. This is followed by another episode where two men in the crowd are very much worried whether they can get the entrance ticket for the newly released film on marriage. The narrator turns his attention towards the bereaved people and shows that the pathetic feelings deeply rooted in their hearts do not vanish till now. The narrator with his subtle artistic skill shows a lamp burning on its own accord without caring for birth or death and says that on hearing on the voice of an old lady who is very much interested in preparing meals for the participants in the procession, the flame of the lamp bends slightly as if it is laughing at her.

Though the plot is simple, this story is logically and artistically developed so as to achieve the final effect that I have suggested earlier. The harmonious blending of all the episodes enhance and ennoble the main theme. The opening scene which at the outset appears as an irrelevant episode also helps to enhance the tragic tone of the second episode. The narrator who is a central figure acts like Tiresius of the 'waste land' in witnessing, criticising and narrating all the incidents. The flame of the lamp also is a symbol standing for the detached and materialised society. *Antamanam Varumā*,

Kuraṣṣai Oli, *Iyaṛkkai Pollātatu* are some of his other best tales where this unity of action is preserved to a higher degree.

Characterisation

As the canvas of a short-story covers only a limited area, it is very difficult to present characters in their full perspective. Yet as Granville-Barker suggests elsewhere, 'the creative artist sets himself to turn its very limitations into strength,'¹⁸ the success of an artist lies in transcending the limitations and transforming them into merits. Dr. Mu. Va's characters are throbbing with life and they are actual flesh and blood human beings existing in the real world. Yet in stories like *evarkuṛṛam*, he has not shown that 'negative capability' which enables a writer to project himself into a set of characters of diverse natures and dispositions, vitalised by his own energy, yet endowed with the will and character of their own. This resulted in the creation of some of his goodnatured heroes who are actually cast in the mould of his own personality and are alike. The hero of *Valumvāḷi* and *Antamaṇam Varumā* bear witness to this. With the exception of such rare occasions, he always keeps his personages more distinct from each other. Since his humanity is as varied as the human race, his men and women are drawn from every walk, age and station and hence it is very difficult to find hyperbolical or aggravated characters. In this respect his characters are level with men.

Some of his characters linger long in the memory and they are more effective than the living people. *Amāvācaiṇār* is an example for this. This story is dominated by the character of one seventy year old man whose character is presented in a realistic and humorous way through his mannerisms, speech and actions. He is a blameless man yet his business is scandal mongering and his vocation is humorously portrayed as—'His house is the broad-casting station. He is the daily, weekly and monthly magazine to the villagers. The people in the hamlet are his reporters and his mouth is the publishing department'. This is followed by the realistic presentation of his physical appearance—'tall in stature, strong in body, sharp in look, shining teeth, broad forehead with *tirunīṭru* on it'. At night he transcends himself to a divine life and

used to sing religious hymns and talk at length about the transitoriness of youth, the mutability of the world and the mortality that is imposed on humanity. At day break he descends to the earthly life started discussing the rise of price of the commodities like oil, pepper, rice etc. This humorous portrayal is tinged with a tragic note when the narrator finds him dead suddenly.

Some of his characters are presented through parallelism and contrast. In *kurattai oli*, the character of a magnanimous lady who even prepares to give her own milk to the small hungry dogs is brought to light by presenting a rich lady who blames the dogs for disturbing her sleep. It is very difficult to find malevolent villains and in most of his stories the degenerated and diseased society in general and some of its members in group play the role of villain.¹⁹ Women characters play only a minor role. In *everkurram* he presents the psychological aspects of two young girls in a symbolic way and his deep psychological perception reaches its pinnacle in the portrayal of a husband and wife in *Iyarkai pollātatu*.

Pathos and Humour

As a humanitarian he has a tragic-comic view of life as suggested earlier and this is apparent in the skilful way of blending pathos and humour in his tales. His typical story is like an April (June) day of sunshine and showers, so deeply in its texture blended with humour, humanity, tenderness and pathos. The solemn gravity and philosophical purblindness are tinged with a good amount of humour which is a healthy and vigorous protest against the tragic burden of life. This is clearly revealed in tales like *kaṣṣāyam vēṇṭum*, where the author criticises satirically the city people who never respond even to the 'still sad music' of the suffering humanity and to the desperate voice of the beggars by associating this with the merciless subjects of the tyrant Macbeth²⁰ who never even respond to the tolling of a death-knell.

Yet what is remarkable in his humorous sketches is the genuine sympathy and this is obviously seen in the story *viṭṭalayā*, where the affection of an old grand mother towards her grandson finds humorous expression while at the same time

evoking some sympathetic feeling in the minds of the readers. The fact that Dr. Mu. Va. had a keen eye for detecting the comic side of even the most solemn function or behaviour and could find ample materials for fun even in a funeral is quite apparent from *Cuṭariṇ Nakaippu*.

Though these two incongruous things are happily and artistically mated in stories like *etaṇḍō pēciṇār*, it finds classic expression in *viṭutalayā*? In the first portion of this story, the author humorously portrays how the old women in the story makes her grand-children weep out of anger and laugh out of delight. But in the second portion where he narrates the madness of the old woman, wistful regrets and delicate imaginings combine together and make this final portion an exquisite melancholy poem in prose. The intensity of the pathetic feeling is further increased when the narrator associates the madness of the neglected old woman with the madness of the neglected King Lear and the consoling words of his friend who says 'Madness knows no worry and your grandmother has attained a tranquil and serene state of mind through her madness. On seeing the madness of Lear, another king (Gloucester) was jealous of him since madness liberates man from suffering.'

This is followed by the pathetic portrayal of the mad woman's actions and songs that are the results of the recollection of her past blissful homely life with her children. The narrator wonders that the blind life knows no restriction for the spontaneity of its imagination and says that if her brain never fails, she will surely transcend the blind Milton and *Virarākava Mudaliār*. Humour of this kind is a sweet and tender flower plucked from the thorns of a sorrow-tinged heart and this kind of tender humour which trembles on the brink of tears follows each other like light and shadow.

Then we have the last tragic scene where at midnight the narrator hears the lament of his mad grandmother crying 'Tiruvēṇkaṣam! Tiruvēṇkaṣam! where are you.' When he rushes to her confinement, he sees the mad woman banging her head on the wall saying 'Oh teacher! teacher! where is my little boy! I sent him along with you with the hope that you will return him home safely'. The narrator whips the tears

that is gushing forth from his eye and the blood that is coming from her head.

The Theme

His tales contain one and only one informing idea and this is worked out to its logical conclusion with absolute singleness of aim and directness of method. He does not deal with supernatural things that are beyond the reach of men. The themes of his stories range from the earthly human life to austere philosophical speculations. The thematic treatment of most of his stories are sociological and individual whereas some are psychological and philosophical. For example, the author who always opt for a simple Gandhian way of life gives concrete and artistic shape to this abstract philosophy through the portrayal of one man who is simple yet honest, poor yet charitable, aged and frail in physic but strong in psyche. The tragic life of a neglected woman and the cruelty imposed upon her by her malignant aunt forms the theme of *Iṛanta Cīrappā*. The theme of *Amāvācaiyār* is individual and typical in which the author exposes the complex and splitted personality of an old man with an earth creeping mind who plays the role of a philosopher and a moralist before the villagers.

In *Vāṭum Vāṭi*, the author presents an ideal and noble man whose boundless magnanimity excuses a thief who made his wife almost nude in his attempt to steal her sari. The theme of *akkaraipaccāi* also is an individual one where the infirmity of a man and its tragic consequences are presented skillfully. The immense love of a loving grandmother towards her grandson and of a notorious criminal to his friend form the theme of *Viṭṭalāyā?* and *tēnkāy tuṇṇukā!* respectively. *Vāi-tīrakkamāṣṣēṇ* is a mild satire on a fickle and useless money-minded man who serves as a tool for the malpractices of the so called sophisticated men.

The social ferment in Tamilnad especially in Madras city is the theme of most of his short stories. The second story in the collection of *Kuṛaṣṣai Oli* deals with a social theme which is treated in a humorous and symbolic way. The author through various arresting snapshots tries to show the moral, humane and the spiritual degeneration of the modern society in a

typical Eliotean way.²¹ The other story *ellōrum camam* is woven upon a didactic and sociological theme which the title itself suggests. The theme of *ulakampoy* is purely philosophical in which the author tries an answer to the question whether the world is an illusion or not. The only love story *evarkurram* is built upon the theme that the contented and firm mind is the living temple of God.

Didactic Purpose

Like the ancient classic writers of the East and the West, Dr. Mu. Va. also believes the function of every art must be edifying humanity through delight. He is not a professional philosopher but an artist and so the moral lessons are not preached but presented implicitly without affecting the charm of his tales. His tales provide scope for a perpetual enquiry into the patterns of morality as practised in society at the same time exploiting the principle of pleasure. But in stories like *amāvā-caiyār*, *ellōrum camam* and *etaiyō pēciṇār*, the author instead of presenting some moral lessons merely satirizes the acquired follies like the hypocritical attitude, etc., which is found in individuals in particular and society in general. In some of his tales like *kuṟaṭṭai oli* and *vaṭum vaḷi*, the generosity and magnanimity of some people are idealized and presented in a glorious way with the implied suggestion that the readers must aspire to lead such a noble life. Though the intellectual function of imparting knowledge is less in the philosophical stories like *ulakam poy* and *iyarkai pollātatu* they are a continual enquiry into the nature of life at the intellectual and emotional levels. From this one can come to the conclusion that his tales 'strengthens and cultivates the faculty of imagination which is the organ of moral nature in man by replenishing it with the pictures of ever new delight'²² and not through direct ethical preaching.

The Narrator and the Narration

The dramatist can develop his plot and characters through dialogue whereas the story writer has to develop them through his powerful narrative skill. So the success of a short story

lies not in presenting a variety of thrilling incidents, but in the powerful narration and the artistic way of blending imaginative backgrounds with it. When this is cleverly done in his tales we notice that Dr. Mu. Va. has a painter's eye for detail and picturesque effect. But we are never given description for description's sake. External details are used as painters to character. This is obvious from the poetic description of the two old mountain peaks in *antamaṇam varumā?* which is associated with an old man in the village who is leading a Gandhian way of simple and charitable life.

Dr. Mu. Va's stories are textured as first person narratives where the narrator himself is a character. The narrator who is a central figure in all his stories is cast in the mould of the author's own personality. The narrator is a scholar, a revolutionary, a philosopher and a moralist who employs realistic parables as his medium, and he hates above all cruelty, malice, selfishness, and all the means of materialism. He has a cat like keen eye which looks deeply into the heart of things and portrays people in their proper perspectives. For powerful portrayal, he mingles humour and wit, ironic and poetic and this makes every story a masterpiece of suggestive brevity. He selects incidents, scenes, sometimes allusions, and often he enters into philosophical speculations. In *ulakampoy* (the world is an illusion), he begins his story with the argument why the vedantist Bharathi does not accept the vedantist doctrine that the world is an illusion and brings an episode within the frame of this story which implicitly suggests the answer that the world is not like a dream and hence not an illusion. His narrative skill reaches its height in *vaḷum vaḷi*, where he gives a pen picture of a beautiful woman lying half naked on the open ground with the one end of the sari in her hand when two other girls try to conceal her nudity with the help of a sari.

The narrator assumes various roles. In *antamaṇam varumā?* he is a civil servant; in *cuṭariṇ nakaippu*, he is a social reformer; in *iṇanta cirrappā*, he is a loving brother; in *vaḷum vaḷi. ellorum camam* and *yāro teriyātu*, he is a magnanimous way-farer; in *ulakam poy*, *iyarkai pollātatu* and *etaiyō pēciṇār*, he is a philosopher and in *everkurram*, he is a lover. In his voice, we hear the tune of the author and the personality of the narrator reveals the

personality of the author himself who deeply feel things and get the deepest truths out of them.

The Beginning and the End

It is over emphasized by the critics that the first sentence of the short story like the opening scenes of Shakespearean dramas must implicitly or explicitly convey the theme. Peter Westland says 'it must be serious if it opens a serious story, comic if a comic story follows it'.²³ We cannot take the cannons of these critics as accredited rules to evaluate the stories of Dr. Mu. Va. since many of his stories begin not with a serious tone whereas they end with deep tragic notes. *antamaṇam varuṇā* and *viṣṭalaya* bear witness to this. The stories like *tēṅkāy tuṇṇu* has an arresting start and end yet the story is lacking in charm. But the beginning sentence of *elayō pēciṇār* itself tells that the story is dealing with some philosophical speculation. There is no connection to the theme and the beginning of *Guṭariṇ nakaippu*. Regarding the end, the artistic ending is the inevitable one and this is achieved in his tales. Among the seventeen stories seven stories have tragic ending. Though some of his stories end in a comic note, they are actually tragedies since the tone is tragic and the final prosperity is wrought out of adversity.

The Philosophical Stories

Among the seventeen stories, only two can be taken as philosophical tales in the strictest sense of the term (*iyaṛkai pollātatu—ulakam poṇ*). While the second one is a discussion on the vedantic philosophy, the first one with its various harmoniously blended episodes deals with an interesting problem about life and death. It starts with the narration of the tragic death of a beautiful young girl who had drowned in water. On his way home, the narrator sees a man cutting down the branches of a Maringa tree (*Hyperanthera maringa*) with the hope that it will sprout again. Then at home he finds his damaged clock repaired.

The narrator now associates all these happenings with the drowned girl and comes to the conclusion that only humanity has no redemption from death (damage) whereas the damaged tree and the mechanical object can be restored. He wonders

how cruel is nature which is very partial in its nature and has imposed a great limitation on humanity.

His wife started giving a convincing reply to him. She says 'neither the wall clock nor the tree develops a sense of identity and individuality whereas man asserts his individuality and superiority over all the creations on earth. So God has imposed great restrictions and limitations on man who tries to violate the divine law (wholeness). He feels the sense of oneness only before the cruel hands of death which also is a divine law of God. This justification become bogus when his wife repeats those words of her husband (nature is indeed very cruel) when the hare which she brought up died out of the hottest stroke of the cruellest sun. This appears to be a short and beautiful lyrical poem of the Frostian type.²⁴ After developing such a philosophical argument, the author implicitly reveals the psychological fact that when there is intense grief one cannot philosophize or rationalise the grief of loss.

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THE SHORT STORY WRITER

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DR. MU. VA. AS A LETTER WRITER

*Dr. V. Veerasami**

Letter Form

For the development of Tamil literature many writers have contributed elaborately in a new kind of literary production namely letters addressed to both imaginary and real persons. Letter-writing in a familiar form used from the days of *Iṭṭāṅkō Aṣikaḷ* and *Tiruttakka Tēvar*.¹ Lord Siva's letter to *Cēramāṇ Perumāḷ* is still a model letter for its content and style.² Another letter from Lord Siva to *Umāpati Cīvam* to release one *Cāmpāṇ* from his Bonds. Poet *Kāḷamēkam* introduced himself by his letter in poem to the court poet *Atimatura Kavi. Aṣṣāvatāṇam Caravaṇapperumāḷ*, *Antakakkavi Virarākava Mutaliyār* and *Aruṇācalakkavirāyar* write poetic letters to receive gifts from the local philanthropists. Even in the beginning of the 20th century *Subramaniya Bharati* has addressed two different kinds of poetic letters to the Zamindar of *Eṣṣayapuram*.³ But eminent Tamil scholars like *Maṟaimalai Aṣikaḷ* used this letter-form to write his novel *Kōkilāmpāḷ Kaṣṭāṇkaḷ*.

Like Lord Chesterfield who is treating manners and social amenity deliberately seeks a form of expression which is the perfection of tact, good order and savior faire Dr. M. Varadarajanar (Mu. Va.) has popularised the letter-form in Tamil Nadu. Since he has a fascination for this species of writing we have the opportunity to read 52 letters in his novels.⁴

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After Independence, Indians gained political freedom but not social and economic freedom. Many scholars and philosophers tried to change the old order. Unemployed young-men are frustrated with the social order and their education. The labourers in factories and the agrarians in lands look at this changing period from a different angle. Mu. Va. attempts to represent the emotions of the young men through his letters to his mother. It is a surprise to note that Walpole's first correspondent was his mother.⁵ *Anṇaikkū* (*Eṭil's* letters to his mother, 1948), *Naṇṇarkkū* (Nampi's letters to his two friends, 1949), *Tampikkū* (*Vaḷavan's* letters to his younger brother *Eṭil*, 1949), *Taṇkaikkū* (*Vaḷavan's* letters to his younger sister, 1950) are addressed to imaginary persons. But *Yān Kaṇṇa Ilaṅkai* (1950) is the only book containing letters addressed to a real person the son of the author, *Arasu*. So far two scholars had presented papers on these five works of Mu. Va.⁶ One of the papers attempted to analyse the facts of Mu. Va.'s letters from the point of view of the imaginary characters.

Unity among the Tamils

In the first series of Mu. Va's letters⁷, we find, *Eṭil* a young gentle man going from his native town to Madras city to study in a College. This new atmosphere taught him many a lesson. Truly they were the real political pictures of Tamil Nadu during the first three years after Independence. Newspapers and orations of the politicians visiting his college associations, strew new political ideas in his mind. He closely observed the unity among the Non-Tamil students like Malayalis and Andhras. When he wanted to follow their example by preaching unity among Tamil students and kindling the Tamil spirit in them unfortunately everybody laughed at his 'crooked' chauvinism.

So the young mind was forced to think about the real weaknesses of the Tamil society. Boldly it pointed out unlimited hospitality and non-attachment to Tamil language, as the basic defects. According to him the Tamils felt ashamed to live as one community. They had sympathy with every other people except of course their own.

So *Elil* preferred the division of the old Madras Presidency consisting of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam areas. Many political parties were not in favour of linguistic states. If a nation wants to exist it must change according to time and environmental conditions. Otherwise it will disappear at any moment. He wanted to establish his language and people on safer grounds by adopting such scientific ways and means. At every stage he tried to escape from the political nets.

Poverty the Root Cause

During that period many newspapers and magazines in Tamil Nadu wrote against the formation of Tamil State. Having no faith in their propaganda he condemned them as agents spreading superstitious ideas among ignorant people. Apart from this kind of danger, he found out another one. People who wanted to amass wealth were dangerous by instigating antogonism and ill feelings against the formation of linguistic states and they were ready to throw the blame upon the religion. In order to protect their savings, properties and ornaments, everybody wanted to construct strong-rooms with iron-lockers. But they were against taking safety measures to protect their own language and culture. After finding out that the root cause for all these was poverty, the young mind tried to abolish it.

Gandhiji's Tragic End

When all these processes of thinking were going on, Gandhiji's assassination came to him as a sudden shock. Even in the midst of mourning and wailing at Raj-Ghat he could identify Gandhiji's life with *Vaṭṭuvar's* Sacred *Kuraḷ*. He strongly believed that true religion had not killed Gandhiji but political madness did it. His sorrowful eyes never failed to see the influence of Tamil-mind and dress on Gandhiji. He was able to trace the hand of Tamil literature and life in shaping the personality of that great soul.

By that time common people thought that religious enmity had assassinated Mahatma. But his young noble mind as a true son of this ancient land was able to recognize the foot-prints of the true religion and culprits hiding behind religious

garb. There too he found the same to be the root cause. He did not like the lip service to eradicate the difference between rich and poor. In order to remove the religious differences the quick remedies offered by the youngman were common labour and equitable distribution of the national production. The existing social and political institutions were acting against the people getting their basic facilities. Witnessing such atrocities the young mind openly declared that Gandhism was the most suitable remedy to get real freedom in every field of life.

Gandhian Ideals

This is the first clarion call of the author propagating Gandhian ideals for the future prosperity of Tamil Nadu as well as India. Still the author raises doubts regarding the mentality of the youngsters falling an easy prey to so-called revolutionary words and phrases. The cautious young gentleman warned the older generation to be careful about the fast-approaching dark clouds and requested them to replace the old machinery of exploitation. He suggested them planned economy through cooperative methods. This alternative suggestion to replace the old order raises many questions which are answered by the author in his second series of letters 'To his friends'.

Generation Gap?

When the old generation was not for the division on political grounds younger generation supported the view to live with selfishness—a selfishness based on the bedrock of 'Virtue'. The Tamils easily became friends with everybody. This kind of unrestricted mingling with unknown people would end in suffering. Their enemies carefully read their minds and were alert enough to prepare schemes against them. So the young mind wanted to adopt scientific methods and rational views to lead a safe and progressive life. Our sympathetic approach in general gave an upper hand to our enemies. In order to protect ourselves, the young gentleman preferred to construct fences on our sides. If the right time to live in universal brotherhood arrived, he promised that he would be the first man to smash those fences.

Thus Mu. Va. emphasises the force of Time through the vision of *Eṭil*. He says that the history of Tamil Nadu is under the control of Time. At present everybody is able to visualize the fading past and developing future. Though he gives respect to old traditions he agrees to follow some modern principles in order to survive. Wherever the old principles help to strengthen our hand he recommends them. In this way he bridges the old and young generation through the letters of *Eṭil*.

On Co-operation

Introduction of the co-operative methods needs explanation. So Mu. Va. begins his second series of letters of Nampi.⁸ Out of nine letters, Nampi wrote four to his friend *Vaḷavan* (Set I: 1, 2, 4, 9) and five to *Eṭil*, *Vaḷavan*'s younger brother (Set II: 3, 5, 6, 7, 8). Thus he gives two dimensional effect by corresponding to two persons at different levels. Since *Vaḷavan* and Nampi are classmates, sense of equality and intimacy is noticeable in the first set. On the other hand it is easy for us to notice the argumentative nature of Nampi to convince *Eṭil* of many problems, in the second set.

Nampi being a village agriculturalist observes the village life in many directions. He too believes in 'Virtue' like *Eṭil* and wants to reorganize the present village society by strenuous and selfless efforts. When these letters were published, we must keep in mind that anti-religious and social reformation movement in Tamil Nadu was at its height. Nampi openly said that the efforts to abolish superstitions were useless. Having faith in Gandhism, he wanted to follow those principles in every aspect of life. He was against the gorgeous decorations in the sacred temples. Above all he mercilessly blamed the present corruptible system of election.

In support of *Eṭil*'s opinion he noticed the change in hospitable nature of the villages. Their business mind wanted to pile up money even by illicit means. Language, art and culture had no place in their lives. The covetous people used the name of God and other good labels in order to save their skin. Having no faith in such people he expected the rule of

the nobles in which village would be the centre for any plan of progress.

Eṭil's questions were sharp but inexperienced. So Nampi tried to answer in detail. Even though *Eṭil* doubted the righteous path to succeed, Nampi insisted on his following the same path of great people. When young people lost hope in education not providing them employment, he argued on both sides of useful and useless education. He found fault with the modern student for they had no courage to follow either the ancient ways or the modern ones. He agreed that the present day examinations cheated the students. Instead of this kind of burdensome examinations he advocated the Semester System in education as followed in American Universities. Later when Mu. Va. became the Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University he had plans to extend this new system from the post-graduate level to the graduate level.

He discouraged the young mind to think unnecessarily high about their past valour and courage in Tamil Nadu and prosperity and fertility of their land. Now his presumption has come true. It is a surprise to note that the author had cautiously mentioned about Tamilian's right to Cauvery waters in the year of 1949.⁹

Utopia and *Valluvam*

When the business people in towns enjoyed all sorts of facilities like communications and transport developments, agrarians in villages had no protection even in the famine period. If that was the case it would be impossible to think for farmers about vacation, medical provisions and accommodative arrangements which were enjoyed by government servants. Naturally under these circumstances modern students were fascinated by the government jobs instead of going and serving in villages. The colourful town life had attracted the young minds from villages. But still Nampi stood for the benefit of villagers because he had no faith in the modern intellectuals who were always self-centred. So he appealed to the diligent young men to understand the present society. Small houses and simple uniform for all, came first to create the spirit of equality. He reflected the ideas of 2000 A.D. of Mu. Va.¹⁰

For a particular period Nampi wanted to introduce compulsory village work in the educational system. Then only they could continue their higher education. He cursed the money-making mentality which could ably spoil the whole atmosphere of the society but hoped to promote the present society by civilized culture of *Vaḷḷuam*.

In this collection of letters the centre of attraction has been shifted from linguistic state problem to village economy, and future education. Co-operation and prohibiting the animal menaces against the traditional beliefs are suggested by the author in detail. Steps to replace the old degenerated educational system are shown to promote the humanity against warmongers. Here the author's economical view points intermixed with the political ideas.

Basic Defects

There must be some basic defects in the Tamils' life though they possess many good qualities. First they must know their defects. *Vaḷḷuvar* also advises to take care of our own mistakes. On his basis *Vaḷavan* wrote letters to his younger brother.

First thing we have to notice in *Vaḷavan*'s letters is that he himself is afraid to face the real situations in life. Like Plato in fear, expecting chances to escape from Dionysis II¹¹. Family responsibility made *Vaḷavan* blunt. So he thought that good people must become strong so as to keep their good standards. Without difficulty we find Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest in his letters. Against his will *Eḷil* wanted to become a dictator of this country in order to promote Tamil language and culture. But *Vaḷavan* did not encourage his brother to indulge in day dreams. Young people like *Eḷil* blindly believed the party men and their mouthorgans. Many of them in Tamil Nadu wrote against the development of the regional languages when great thinkers and poets like Nehru, Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore supported all national languages in India.

According to *Vaḷavan* castes and religion were the real enemies to our society. He said that people were interested in performing the rituals meaninglessly. Slowly they were ready to commit murders and destroy the whole order of the

society as a religious duty. So *Valavan* warned his younger brother about those false notions and wrote a very short but effective letter in which he traced the historical background for the language affection of the Tamils and Andhras. Such historical truths will rarely be available in Mu. Va's letters. His forethought faced the acid test and the present history is on his side.

Above all other things, he advised young Tamils to realize the fact of being a minority among other Indian Nationals. Without that consciousness he felt, it was very difficult for the Tamils to unite for a common cause. In addition to this he could detect another defect in the Tamils for their backwardness i.e., finding fault with others. Without any reservation he pointed out that the Tamils, though they spoke high about their valour and victory, were coolies and beggars in the foreign countries and in the native cities like Bangalore and Bombay. He also criticized the rich Tamils in foreign countries for not building educational institutions and hospitals to help the natives of those lands.

It is the usual custom among the old Tamil scholars and the present reformist to praise old vanity. Contrary to this, *Valavan* boldly pointed out the faults of the Tamils in order to remove the false masks. He preferred the fountain head of knowledge but discouraged the religious differences and racial enmities. Traces of Gandhian ideals can be found in *Valavan's* letters as the support to purchase the indigenous articles, patriotism and a mind to serve.

Easily we can see the difference between the anxieties of *Eṭil* and *Valavan* regarding the formation of the linguistic states. Though the two brothers wanted to reach the same goal the elder one was very particular in selecting the proper method because he was proud to identify himself as an unknown warrior in the Gandhian peace corps. His matured mind has the capacity to find out the fundamental defects in the social and political fields. His foresight regarding many national problems is remarkable.

Social Problems

Leaving the political problems aside, *Valavan* took up social

problems related to the other sex. Mu. Va's writing has never escaped from the influence of Bernard Shaw. His letters to younger sister resemble 'The Intelligent Woman's guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism' by Shaw.¹² Subramania Bharati's poem on 'Modern Woman' offered new themes to his followers in Tamil literature.¹³ Mu. Va's guide Thiru Vi. Ka. also wrote a book on 'The Glory of Women.'¹⁴ These two Tamil scholars' influence on Mu. Va. can be seen through the pages of these letters.¹⁵

At first *Valavan* requested his younger sister to study the biographies of famous ladies and epic stories like *Gilappatikāram* which would be her companion for life. He advised his married younger sister to perform her family duties first. According to him the guiding star to a modern girl was 'Love'. It was the usual habit of many persons to restrict the activities of their wives but in due course they would give all rights to the ladies. If they know this strange life-secret, ladies would adjust in the early days of their married life.

In our social condition it would be peculiar to note *Valavan*'s pleading for separation among the couple for a particular time. For this purpose only he referred an incident from the autobiographical notes by H. G. Wells.¹⁶ From this point of view he gave a new interpretation to the efforts of the lady-companions in *Caṅkam* Classics. He advised her to settle her family disputes by giving up some of her rights to her husband. This kind of attitude towards life may look old fashioned but *Valavan* felt that we should be ready to take all the beneficial things available from the past. In support of his view he pointed out the custom of marrying the younger girls to the older boys. According to him the physical condition of both sexes was the scientific reason to continue this custom.

He wanted to keep chastity in high order even though he felt the present society would not give respect to this. Though frustration in married life and divorce would affect our family system, he suggested his sister to submit herself to her husband. Since everyone, like businessman, editor and political leader, would prefer to keep faithful followers under him, in family life also man prefers a submissive wife. In future, the institution of marriage may fail to continue but even at that time

our sex will seek the help of the other sex. This kind of general nature of the humanity was taken into consideration to solve the family problems by *Vaḷavaṇ*. So he was very keen in asking his sister to follow a compromising attitude.

He considered extravagance in life as a great sin which spoiled the minds of the poor to commit evil deeds, for example bribery in many forms polluted the whole social atmosphere. In order to escape from these sins, he had ardent faith in law which would remove the present evils and reshape the future society.

On Women

Females became an easy prey to silk sarees and jewelleryes and induced their husbands to receive costly 'gifts'. In some cases ladies were bold enough to commit many crimes without the knowledge of their husbands, because their inferiority complex compelled them to lead a luxurious life. Knowing all these facts *Vaḷavaṇ* requested his sister to fix a limitation to her dress and ornaments.

Then he gave a detailed explanation regarding his concept of beauty. He had an opinion that feminine beauty withered away at the age of thirty. So in order to keep her beauty he advised his sister to take light food only. In addition to this kind of food habit he wanted limited manual labour and physical exercises which would protect their physical beauty. Though the author had preached manual labour in his previous collections we find him writing against hard labour and heavy meals in these letters.

In the illorganized society the girls were not able to live a comfortable life. So their charm and beauty became commercial objects in the name of prostitution. He disliked to blame the prostitutes because he strongly believed that our society was the main reason to misuse them. This kind of mental attitude clearly reveals his basic approach to solve the social problems. At the same time he never failed to observe the status of rich and poor ladies. He knew that rich ladies without doing any work were seeking pleasure by a leisured walk along the beach and that the poor women were unable to find

even food in spite of their hard labour. Such social inequality was hated by *Vaḷavan*.

Though the world, he felt, underwent many difficult processes to become one family, the human mind still kept the old beliefs and relationships. Knowing this fact, many families were capable enough to keep the bondage on a business basis. On the surface level they were the members of the same family but in the under-current their minds were willing to keep ties only as business partners. So *Vaḷavan* was able to picturize the internal and external structure of the family in our country and advocated the traditional principles for personal benefit and the modern principles for social benefit. Many rationalists might object his views regarding his attachment to traditional principles. Regarding the personal life of the man our ancient saints and sages conducted many experiments with life and collected all their knowledge in the books like the *Kurāḷ*. So *Vaḷavan* boldly recommended the sound principles to be followed in the personal lives of men and women.

Domestic Felicities

When considering the family expenditure many women viewed seriously about little things without caring for great losses. Though they were thinking themselves to be efficient in running families, this attitude would not help either to save money or time. With a broader outlook *Vaḷavan* recommended the English way of life to allow a marginal wastage in family expenditure. Family life was not a petty shop to *Vaḷavan* but a super-market in which he preferred the emotional control to bring up the children in good condition. He did not allow harsh words and cruel punishments within the boundaries of the family life. If the ladies themselves became slaves to their bad habits the children had the chances to learn them. So he prescribed bright face, gentle look and sweet words of the ladies as the real medicines to cure the problematic children.

It was possible for the couples to observe the mistakes of their partners because they had lived together for a long time. But their tendency to point out others' faults would not help to strengthen the family life. He preferred the personal talks to an open accusation. Further he wanted to change this atti-

tude by finding the interests of the partner so as to learn the things in which the other had interest. Then she would be a real helping partner to her husband in his leisure time.

As an advancement in practical life, *Vaḷavaṇ* clearly described seven graded principles to get success in married life. Above all, love for husband came first. Then (i) children, (ii) parents of the couple, (iii) friends and relatives, (iv) fame and name, (v) recreation and (vi) civic consciousness, came in this order, to be looked after in the family life. Success in family would nourish the good qualities in the hearts of the ladies to think about the progress of the poor, development of the environment, simplicity in life and self-criticism. Among them *Vaḷavaṇ* listed self-criticism as the best medicine to remove one's own faults to lead a successful family life.

This method of self-criticism is a common tonic prescribed by Mu. Va. for both social and political problems. It shows his faith in individual rather than in society.

Travelogue

The author himself corresponds with his son in *Yāṇ Kaṇṇa Ilankai* in which he wants his correspondent to read him with ease and pleasure. Though Thiru Vi. Ka's essay on his visit to Ceylon¹⁷ has a strong influence on Mu. Va's mind he depicts his feelings and experiences in the letter form giving a long conversational effect. For the first time in Tamil Literature we have the opportunity to read to the experiences in an aircraft. The author identifies his own experience with that of H. G. Wells.¹⁸

His thoughts while flying are peculiar to note. Past culture completely overpowers him when he looks at the Tamil landscape. The great rivers like Mississippi and Ganges are not equal to River *Pālāru*, because the experiences of the younger days induced him to think high about his native river. The mere sight of Cauvery is enough for him to go around the colourful scenes of *Cilappatikāram*. *Vētāraṇyam* on the seashore tells the legendary stories of Saivaite Saints. He never forgets the beautiful Marina Beach and magnificent High Court buildings in Madras wherever he goes. So he compares Colombo beach with the banks of a lake.

When he stands before the beautiful waterfalls in Ceylon he blames Niagara Falls. He praises the natural beauty of Ceylon for offering him limitless knowledge from innumerable books within a day's time. Bathing experience in the seven hot springs at Kanya will ever be green in his memory. Thus he forgets himself as a child before Nature's miracles.

His balanced views on the Sinhalese and the Tamils are remarkable. According to his observation the Sinhalese are somewhat lazy but they like to eat the tasty dishes prepared in the hotels of the Tamil Muslims. Even though the rich people want to divide these two races, ordinary citizens have no such enmity towards the Tamils. On the other hand they are grateful to the Tamils who worked for the prosperity of Ceylon. The brain of Ceylon, the author feels, is the Tamil race in *Yālpāṇam*. Thereto his eyes never missed to see the degraded position of the Tamil labourers. This kind of remark is also available in *Vaḷavan's* letters to his younger brother. As a true *Vaḷavan* at heart he admires the simple dress of the Tamils and the Sinhalese.

As a common man he criticizes the rituals and rich decorations in Buddhist and Hindu temples. He painfully noted that the people were interested in worshipping Buddha's tooth and bones but not following his principles. With the same spirit he condemns the cruel and unholy sight of the priests in Lord *Murugaṅ* temple at *Katirkāmam*. Thus he spares no religion.

The Writer's Personality

Among the five books of letters the author's personality is vividly revealed only in *Tāṇ Kaṇṭa Ilaiṅkai*. His sincere love to *Vaḷḷuvar* and Saint *Tāyumanāvar* can be seen from the beginning of his journey. Openly he proclaims that he is a Gandhian before the customs officials in Ceylon airport. Such open declarations are very rare in Mu. Va's works. He is a teetotaler who goes to such an extent to avoid coffee and tea. Though he hates to travel in buses he likes to take baths for a long time in rivers and springs. During this journey he offers his own conclusions regarding the death of King *Pāri*. *Ārumuka Nāvalar's* translation of Bible and the Tamils' destructive and

constructive work at *Anurāṭapuram*. He concludes that the Three Great Tamil Kings had no hand in the death of *Pāri* because no such reference is available from *Caṅkam* Literature. Many mistakes in the Bible translation compelled him to say that *Nāvalar* had not translated it. *Anurāṭapuram* was destroyed by Tamil kings. So he condemned their Imperialistic attitude. At present the Tamil sculptures are helping to reconstruct the dilapidated monuments. This kind of constructive work is praised by the author.¹⁹

Through this book we are able to know about Mu. Va's likes and dislikes, habits and beliefs. Though this is a small window it is possible for us to look into his mind.

When *Eḷil*, a college student, wrote his letter he preferred his similes from cinema, insects like butterflies and leech from his lessons, and classical anecdotes from *Āti Manti* and *Āṭṭan Atti* from the *Caṅkam* Works.²⁰

In Nampi's letters we have the opportunity to see his village mind in every simile. Naturally field, rain drops, flood, plough and mushroom are used as similes to expand his ideas.²¹ Since he studies in city with *Valavaṇ* his mind in competitive spirit has an attraction to horse and cycle races. When he wants to explain his ideas to young *Eḷil* he particularly uses the race simile. Most of the people think that villages have no contact with the outer world. So in Nampi's letter, well is used very often with its tortoise and frog.²²

Valavaṇ rarely uses similes in his letters to *Eḷil*. His observation regarding the modern articles like radio, lorry and old articles like cart is remarkable, and he prefers them as similes in his letters. His long tailed simile about the touch-stone resembles a parable.²³

We know that the same author writes these letters but he uses the apt similes suitable to the background of the imaginary characters. As a writer Mu. Va. copiously uses the child and mother image. During his Ceylon travel he remembers the Madras bus journey with irony. Next to Mother and Child image, birds and animals occupy a prominent place in his letters.²⁴

Young mind in Mu. Va's letters has a fascination towards West. Instead of leaving old classics and ancient great men he

respected the modern architects. Even in *Pūṅkuṇṇār*, a *Caṅkam* Poet, he saw a political Einstein. Balance is maintained by Nampi because he wanted to utilize the words of great men for his practical purposes. For the benefit of human welfare he wanted to kill goats and monkeys to protect vegetation and crops. Ethical and philosophical ideas could be seen in his mind with rational views.

He wanted to convince the young minds of the great principles preached by *Vaḷḷuvar*, Gandhiji and Vivekananda. Examples from the lives of friends and adages were profusely used in the letters to the ladies because they are influenced more by their environment and old culture.

In all the five books of letters *Vaḷḷuvam* and Gandhism are used by Mu. Va. as a Life Force to solve social, political and spiritual problems of this country.

(I am indebted to Dr. T. B. Siddalingaiah the Director of Correspondence Course, Madurai University for his suggestions in preparing this paper.)

Notes

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23. *Taṇṇikk* (Mu. Va.) pp. 19, 49, 34.
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DR. MU. VA. AS A DRAMATIST

*Dr. R. Sreenivasan**

Dr. Mu. Va. is more popular in his novels than in his dramatic works. Only a few plays were written by him. They are: 1. *Maṇaccāṇṇu*, 2. *Kātal enikē?* 3. *Mūṇṇu Nāṭakaṇkaḷ*, and 4. *Pachaiyappar*. These are the four plays written and published by him.

1. *Maṇaccāṇṇu*: This is a collection of four One-Act plays entitled (1) *Maṇaccāṇṇu*, (2) *Kimpaḷam*, (3) *Ēmāṇṇam* and (4) *Poṇu Nalam*. These four plays were written by him to be enacted by College students. He mentions in his foreword to the book: 'kallūri kālakaṇkaḷil naṭippataṇku eṇṇu yāṇ avoappōtu eḷutiya nāṇku ōraṇka nāṭakaṇkaḷiṇ tokutiye iṇṇūl. nāṭakamāka naṭitta iḷaiṇaṇkaḷiṇ ārvamum ūkkamumē iṇṇūl veḷivarak kāraṇāmaka amaintaṇa.'

The stage plays are different from the plays enacted in the Colleges. They are expected to be of a high order and intended for an intellectual audience. There was good reception for these plays and they were mostly staged in Pachaiyappa's College where he was serving as Professor of Tamil. The author of this essay had the privilege of directing these plays and giving training to the students.

1. *Maṇaccāṇṇu*: Gandhian ideals do make men think and repent for their misdeeds. *Čenkoḷuntu Mudaliar* is the father

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of Thiruvenskadam, a College student. Gandhiji's portrayal adorns the house and in the name of Gandhiji he gives donations to public causes and preaches Gandhian ideals, but he carries anti-social activities and makes huge profits by hoarding rice bags. His son revolts against his father and he follows the Gandhian ideals in practice also. He does not like the ways and means adopted by his father in making money. Disgusted with his father he stays at the hostel and later realises the mistake of leaving the parents in distress and comes back to the house and rejoins his father. His father corrects himself and is satisfied with his normal earnings and does not aspire to earn by hoarding and black marketing.

Everyone is having his own conscience and should not be forced to correct himself. He must be given time to mend his ways. That is the theme of the story; Conscience is the title given to the play. The father externally admires Gandhiji and his portraits but not his teachings. The son is completely following the teachings of Gandhiji and hence the conflict between the father and the son. The father realises his mistake. The son also retraces his steps and adjusts himself for the environments. In the average life one cannot expect to follow Gandhiji in total. The social and economic set up is such that one should compromise with evil also.

The main characters in the play are the father and the son. There is an interesting character Prakaspati who is comic in his actions and speech. Light humour is created by the introduction of this character.

2. *Kimpalam*: Muthusamy is the hero of the play and he is a clerk in the Taluk Office. He has passed his B.A. in First Class and could not get a better job. Another classmate of him who passed in third class rose to the position of a higher officer due to influence and pull. He is honest and straightforward. In spite of his poverty and pressing needs his hands are clean and does not stoop to taking bribes. His friend Thirumalai often tempts him to receive bribes, but he stands firm. The rich merchant who is highly influential finds that Muthusamy is an hindrance to him from getting favours in the Taluk Office, and wants to oust him from his job and makes use of Thiruvenskadam to prepare a false petition against

Muthusamy and he succeeds in his attempts. Muthusamy loses his job. Thirumalai turns out a traitor and does harm to his friend Muthusamy. Later he repents for the action. But it is too late.

Here the author stresses that without adjustment and compromises one cannot get on in the world which is filled with corruption and nepotism. This is a problem of life and unless one is prepared to compromise with evil one cannot get on in this world. This is realism and the author indirectly hits at the ways and means adopted by the rich to get their ways and the whole social set up should be changed. No individual can be above corruption is the theme stressed in this play. This is more or less same like the play *Maṇaccāṇṟu*, Conscience. Both these plays are not placed on high ideals. Man has to live somehow in this world. This is a bold attempt to stress that one has to adjust to the evils in the life. The so-called high moral principles have no value in this capitalistic world where money alone counts. The rich are able to purchase talents and character by their power and money.

3. *Ēmāṛṛam*: Here also the rich people are very careful in their dealings with others. The heroine of the play *Mangalam* makes use of her classmate who is brilliant in his studies and who comes first in the class. Everyone misjudges that there is love between these two. The father of the boy is also upset by their close movements and contacts. *Mangalam* actually writes love letters and induces him to part with his notes and makes use of them and gets through in the University Examination. Every one is surprised that she marries a rich fellow with no higher education. This is also a fine play and opens the eyes of the young in their dealings with the rich. The rich do not care for qualifications in the educational field and the so-called love for them is only a convenience. Education is only an ornament for them and not essential. Here also there is no respect for human values and money plays its dominant role in the social life and shaping of individual's life also.

4. *Potunalam*: This is the last play in this collection, this also is more or less like the plays *kimpaḷam* and *Maṇaccāṇṟu*. No individual is the hero of this play. The play stresses the need to do public service and like Gandhiji it can be stressed

through religion. There the youngsters who are members of an association try to mend the ways of the people but without success. The treasurer is tempted to utilise the public money for his personal good. He has a mental conflict and is not able to decide. Even the members who try to mend others also become victims of circumstances.

In all these plays the individuals have no respect and cannot live an honest life. The rich pull the wires and the poor are struggling from hand to mouth and the so called high moral values and social justice have no meaning in real life.

The themes are realistic and depict the middle class life which is caught in between high values and naked realities.

Man lives to make adjustments and carry on the struggle. Opportunism is stressed and there is no other way than to adjust to the surroundings. The social change has to come from above both in the political and economic set up. The individuals by themselves cannot bring any high revolutionary changes.

The events move slowly and depict the human mind as such, and the style is simple. These plays are worthy of acting on the stage. They are more for instruction and teaching than for entertainment. The plays of entertainment are only for the stage and for the hour. These plays will be read in future also and remain a literature by themselves like his novels.

5. *Kātal Enkē?*: This collection contains three plays all dealing with problems connected with marriage. The first play *Kātal Enkē?* analyses the minds of modern youths who are sincere in love but quickly change to the extreme when higher offers are shown to them. The so-called sincerity, love, affection, admiration for beauty and qualities vanish before money. The hero of the play changes his mind and marries a girl with ugly look just for money. So the author wants to impress that love has no place in modern set up; so also gratitude has no place with the youth of today. A boy is brought up educated and given all the facilities to grow up. But he does not want to marry the girl of the man who was responsible for his position in life. The father of the girl is disappointed with him and the author wants to prove that there is no gratitude with the youth of today. So also in the play there is no

goodness as such. Every one acts with motive only. All the three plays deal with the same theme in different angles. There is no much change in the characters, methods or treatment.

After reading these plays one becomes desperate and depressed. Almost all the plays go to prove that the modern youth is not steady and becomes victim of circumstances and easily tempted. Money alone plays a dominant role in their judgment. All of them deal with the middle class families and after reading these plays one becomes better informed and also feels that he must adjust to the surroundings and then only he can come up. No idealism is impressed in these plays except the author's desperateness at the affairs and ways of these middle class people.

There is no entertainment value in these plays. The instructive value is also on the negative side. Human values are not stressed and only the importance of money is shown. After reading these plays one learns to live like the heroes of these plays and will learn that these are the ways of living. Only the bad side of life is depicted in these plays and hope is not created in them.

The main theme of all these plays is that the modern youth lays more importance on money than human values. The sufferings and privations undergone by the middle class girls are stressed in these plays.

His theory that College girl students do not look beautiful and their charm is lost by the strain they undergo through education cannot be fully accepted. They are given a mental discipline in the College education. We cannot expect the girls to get married in their teens. They must have some vocation and training in life. They must be given proper education and must stand on their own legs. They need not depend on men. All their sufferings are due to their dependence on the earning of men. The trends are now changing, women occupy a better place now.

The College girls have not lost their charms due to education. His theory cannot be accepted in total. What does he want them to do? They cannot remain in the houses. Marriage is a problem. Marriage alone should not become the problem.

They must learn to live independently like men. The trend is now changing and they work hard and compete with men in all spheres, and that is the only way out for the problems discussed by the author.

Repetition is found in these plays and the same problems find place in all of them, but with slight changes. Especially in the series *Kātal Enkē?* The work consists of three plays viz. *Kātal Enkē?* *Kaṭamai Enkē?* and *Naṇmai Enkē?* These three plays more or less treat the same theme of marriage. Marriage is not a theme which is the outcome of love or of a biological necessity but becomes a commercial contract according to him. These three plays stress the same idea that man is commercial minded and sets aside the human values and prefers money to love, gratitude and goodness. These cannot be taken as universal truths; there is exaggeration in the statements.

Literary Plays

Another work entitled *Mūṇru Nāṭakaṇkaḷ* deals with the literary themes. They are (1) *Iḷaṅkō* (2) *Tilakavatiyār* and (3) *Viṇ Kaṇavu*.

Iḷaṅkō: *Iḷaṅkō* is the title of the first play and the contrast in his life and teachings are shown first and the play justifies his stand. He being an ascetic praises the marriage life; He is above sectarianism and gives prominence to all religions. He is the brother of Chera King but he praises all the three rulers and always speaks of Tamil country as one. These high qualities are stressed in this drama, and more or less it is a criticism on the work of *Iḷaṅkō*. His personality and ideals are analysed and shown in the drama. This fine literary play shows his good imagination and his desire to bring out goodness in the human mind. Dr. Mu. Va. stresses in the play the qualities of tolerance, the ideal married life and the concept of one Tamilnadu. This is a good attempt and is the best among all his plays.

Tilakavatiyār is just a dramatisation of the life of *Tirunāvukkaracar*, the Saivite Saint and his sister *Tilakavatiyār*. The elder sister of *Nāvaracar* completely devotes her life to the ser-

vices of God, and changes her brother to the path of service. She was fixed for the marriage but the bridegroom lost his life in the war. She never married any one else and she would have given up her life but for bringing up her brother who lost the father and the mother early. She was to him the father and the mother and she taught him the discipline of service to God and his temples. This story is well dramatised in the second play.

The third play is entitled *viṇ Kaṇavu* (empty dream). This is not much impressive. The Chola ruler vainly dreams that there should not be any war in this country. He realises this truth only at his death bed. We cannot change the history of the past and we have no control over the events of the past and the teachings that wars should have been avoided is just a wishful thinking and an empty dream. The author himself has given his verdict that this is a vain dream.

All these three literary plays deal with the past and have a moral bearing. The first one speaks of unity of Tamilnadu and the last one stresses the same truth. The play *Tilakavatiyār* stresses the virtue of service.

Pachaiyappar is a play written by Dr. Mu. Va. He has collected data and biography of the benefactor Pachaiyappar and dramatised it. The play has no dramatic value as such. It cannot be acted or can be read with interest. It is not having any entertainment value. This is just a documentation of the various data collected by him.

There is no biography as such on the life of Pachaiyappar in Tamil and this fills up the gap. Through drama the real persons in the form of characters speak and move. The real persons are given the garb and colour of dramatic characters and this was written by him to propagate the service rendered by the great benefactor Pachaiyappar.

Only Pachaiyappa's College gave him a warm reception and allowed him to grow. Almost all his creative writings were written by him only when he was a Professor. The author wanted to be grateful to the Institution which brought him up and only with that purpose this play was written.

Dr. Mu. Va. did not try to entertain the readers by his plays. They are highly instructive and carry some messages.

If he had written a full drama we could have had the opportunity of studying him as a dramatist, in its truest sense. But his plays are all One-Act plays only and highly intellectual. Only novels gave him the scope to express himself fully and so he is more honoured and cherished as a writer of novels than as a dramatist.

MANIFESTATION OF PATHOS IN DR. MU. VA'S PLAYS

*Dr. A. N. Perumal**

Dr. Mu. Va. an erudite Tamil scholar of the twentieth Century has contributed much to Tamil Language and literature by his deep thinking and vision. In the field of Tamil drama he has contributed ten one act plays published in three volumes and a long play entitled as *Pachaiyappar*. Out of these eleven plays, three sourced out of Tamil literature, seven pertaining to social themes and the longer one created as a biographical sketch. *Dr. Alli* is his novel dramatised by another and so it is not included in the purview of our observation.

In fact, drama is an artistic representation of real life which, of course, is an admixture of human joys and sufferings. The dramatist has added both these elements in his dramatic creations in concordance with the natural life quite suitable to the stimulation of the created situations. It is our concern here to deal with the manifestation of pathos in Dr. Mu. Va's plays.

Sources of Pathos

Pathos is the complete perversion of the human heart by the emotion of pain, of the dissolution of the mind out of pity arising from an object under sight or a sympathetic situation. If an occurrence which is seen, is such as to make one weep

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the inner conscious state is one of sorrow.¹ Ordinarily depression is caused by mental worries, squalor or even by a particular type of disease. Surendranath Shastri feels that, grief is a particular emotion in the form of affliction caused by the death of some dear kinsmen or due to some serious loss.² This statement is true to a certain extent considering the nature of pathos.

Tolkappiyar states that, inferior situation, loss, suffering and poverty are the four sources of pathos.³ This *cuttiram* itself seems inadequate to specify all the sources of pathos. There are persons who sympathise with others out of affection or out of human consideration and therein feel sorry for the affected. If, in 'suffering', Tolkappiyar has included self-suffering as well as the suffering of the mind of others provoked by pity, this statement can be accepted as one very near to perfection. Jacobs asserts with reason that there seems to be no reason to doubt that moods of tragedy have ensued everywhere upon injury, serious illness or death of a person with whom one has identified oneself or who constitutes a valued possession or extension of oneself.⁴ If we try to consider widely the pathometry in real life, we find this explanation also suffering from some limitation. Not only the suffering of the dear or near ones but of anyone or also of any being provokes pity or the feeling of pathos out of human consideration.

In order to estimate clearly the manifestation of pathos in Dr. Mu. Va's dramas, it would be necessary to consider individually the situations that create the physio-revelation or *meyppāṭu* of pathos. For the succinct understanding of the pathetic elements in a play, generally, three factors have to be considered. They are:

- (i) the sympathetic feeling of a character on seeing the pains and worries of another.
- (ii) the pains and worries caused to a character both physical and mental.
- (iii) the feeling of the audience witnessing the pathetic scenes.

If anyone thinks of neglecting the last one, the estimate of pathos in a play would certainly be incomplete.

No doubt the audience possessing a clear perception can identify the feelings of the characters and share with them. There is nothing more real, threatening, terrifying and inescapable than the feelings consequent upon our uncontrollable process of identification of self with a person who has just endured a mutilation or agonizing pain or with a corpse of a person who is kin or some sort of surrogate kin.⁶ It is an innate quality of the human beings to feel sorry over the pains of others. This is also a situation of pathos resulting out of sympathy. As already pointed out they may be out of affection or of human consideration.

Pity out of Affection

We have to witness in *Tilakavatiyār* a scene full of pathos as soon as the screen is raised. The heroine is introduced as lachrymatory feeling the unbearable weight of a heavy loss in her family. Her father and mother have been devoured by death one after another leaving *Tilakavatiyār* and her little brother as orphans. She has to shoulder the responsibility of bringing up her brother which increases her heart felt sorrow. Her dear friend *Pūṅkoṭi* is there to console her by sharing her grief and burden. Of course, both of them are loaded with the weight of sorrow. But the nature of their mental pain differs greatly. *Tilakavatiyār* suffers the irreparable loss of her lovable parents while *Pūṅkoṭi* feels worried at the pitiable plight, her dear friend has been pushed into. In fact, the former is a swelling pool of sorrow in which the latter drinks as a mark of friendly relation. If so, we may very well infer that the strength and validity of feeling in them differs in some respects. The sorrow of *Tilakavatiyār* sources out of her heavy loss caused by the passing away of her parents, and so it tenders out of love and affection. But regarding *Pūṅkoṭi's* feeling it is an outcome of her relationship with her loving friend, who is bereaved.

Out of Human Consideration

Sympathetic feeling from different sources would give forth to pathos. In *Iṭaṅkō* an envied hermit named *Aintavillān* is

seen speaking ill of *Iṭṭāṅkō*, the great poet and a true recluse. When the foul words fall on the ears of *Iṭṭāṅkō*, without the least perturbation, he frankly expresses his sympathy for the hermit's ignorance. As observed by Akolkar, sympathy naturally leads to forgiveness and tolerance that come out of understanding and also develops into intelligent cooperation.⁶ Though the words of the hypocritic ascetic trouble the mind of *Iṭṭāṅkō*, he feels more for the envious hermit. There is peace and tranquillity in the mind of the great poet and through his behaviour he proves well his firm belief in universal fraternity. He behaves in the like manner even with the *Pāṇṣiyan* king when he speaks and acts cruelly and unjustly against him. Jealousy is a poisonous snake, says the great poet, that would endanger the peace of the country and the prosperity of its language. (p. 15)

In one of the scenes of *Tilakavatiyār* the villagers are seen highly sympathetic and moving at the death of *Kalippakaiyār* in the war. Really they pity for the bereaved family besides feeling the loss incurred by the country through his death. Their words of sorrow infect *Pūṅkoṭi* who passes that way. As soon as the sad news fall on her ears, she is caught up by a sudden feeling of awe and woe and rushes fast screaming all the way. The commiseration of the villagers issues out of human consideration. But in *Pūṅkoṭi* it is out of affection for a friend. It may be noted that the same incident of pathos, causes different reactions in different persons according to their relationship with the affected.

Muttuccāmi, the hero of *Kimpaḷam* worries about his father's reference that his first class in the degree examination is lower than the third class of another by considering, in his ignorance, that three is greater than one. Since there is bond relationship the ignorant reference is being sympathised or else in repugnance, something worse may happen in this context.

In *Pachaiyappar* the servants of *Rāyar* are seen sympathising over the sorry fate of the widowed *Pūcci Annā!* who is left out helpless with three children to be brought up. As human beings endowed with sympathetic feelings the servants express their pity for the suffering lady.

Pathos out of Pain

Pathos aroused by pain may be divided into mental and physical. The sources that spring out of pain varies according to situations.

Mental Pain

Kaṭamai Enkē? exposes Nallacivam and *Anṇammā* as worried parents feeling annoyed over their inability to get their daughters married in their proper age. When the father happens to read the news of suicide of an unmarried girl he correlates the flashing news with the position of her daughters and develops a terror in his mind about an imagined catastrophe in his family. He cannot but call his wife and shares his feeling most impatiently. Mere anticipation of something awful drives the man to the feeling of terrible fear and tremendous pain. In the seventeenth scene of *Pachaiyappar*, the hero is seen much worried about the impending troubles that may occur regarding the partition of his property. He worries much and hurries to draft a will.

Disappointment gives rise to sad situations. *Naṇmai Enkē?* introduces *Anṇumuttu*, as an educated lad hunting after jobs. The parents openly express their dissatisfaction to keep their son idle at home without an employment. He has applied for many posts but very much expects an order from one in Bombay. But to his heart-break he receives a negative reply as a result he is torn by grief. In *Kātal Enkē?* the parents of *Maṇṇappaṇ* want their son to marry soon a rich lady of their own choice while he has promised in private to marry another girl. He feels it difficult to fall in line with his parents and speaks contrary to their expected desires already designed with the glow of imagination for future prospects. The reaction of the son counter to their expectation makes them sad. The play ends in utter despair of all the characters. *Maṇṇappaṇ* disappointed all by his strong desperate determination to marry a very rich but blind girl. A sorrowful atmosphere spreads over the whole scene.

Parting is certainly a sad affair. *Maruṇnikkiyār* is brought up under the sweet care and tender nursing of his sister *Tilaka-*

vatiyār after the death of their parents. When he becomes young and energetic he actively participates in the affairs of *camana* religion and goes away from his sister to a far off place. *Tilakavatiyār* cannot bear the parting of her brother. From then onwards she begins to hate every thing worldly. Likewise the departure of pachaiyappar without a word to his mother and sister provokes their feeling of remorse. Situations like these are represented by Dr. Mu. Va. in their true depiction so powerful to move the audience.

It is a fact that when one's prestige is affected, the feelings are tormented. In *Emāṛram* when *Tēvarācar* sees a college girl entering his house freely to mingle with his son he cannot control his feelings. But for the timely advice of his friend, he would have disturbed the peace and progress of his son who is appearing for the examination. Since the father is forced to keep asunder by the incident he grieves much within. As this man feels his prestige affected, he takes it heavily.

When pachaiyappar is at *Taṇcāvūr* he is highly esteemed and much consulted. His reputation kindles the jealousy of many and so they aim their guns to below down his prestige. The venomous machinations have their temporary effect and he is called back, with injured honour and pained heart pachaiyappar returns to Madras. He feels so intensely that it affects his health very much.

In *Potunalam* a vendor of herbs stealthily sells rice for a high price without the notice of the police. A social service volunteer knows his trade and advises him to do an honest work. The dealer pitiously tells his tale of distress. Because of gnawing poverty he suffers hell at home. Besides he tells with feeling, that it is not at all possible to get a job to serve honestly. The poor life spent by pachaiyappar's mother has been detailed in another play. The dramatist calls everyone to think and makes their hearts melt with sympathy for the sufferings undergone by this mother. Most willingly everyone may cooperate with the feeling of this poor character and sympathise for her sorrowful destiny. Struggling with poverty she has to bring up three fatherless children.

Loss of any kind is a means of trouble and worry. Undoubtedly the death of kith and kins gives unbearable grief. The

deaths of *Tilakavatiyār's* parents in a short interval, the death of pachaiyappar's father leaving him to be born posthumus and the demise of pachaiyappar are a few of the most pathetic events which find place in the plays of Dr. Mu. Va. When *Muttuccāmi*, the hero of *Kimpaḷam* receives a telegram that his sister's son is dead, it is left to our imagination to consider the powerful current of intense feeling emotionally aroused. This situation which causes pathos has been powerfully dramatised with subtle artistic perception.

In *Iḷaṅkō* the dramatist tries well to give a clear picture of the deluge that ruined the city of *Pūmpukār*. The havoc caused by the cataclysm moves *Iḷaṅkō* very much and he enquires the fishermen about the terrible devastation with a deep sense of sorrow for the loss of a great city which once stands with glory and grandeur.

The loss of money also worries a person. The playwright depicts a scene in *Potumalam* where the village *maṇiyakkāraṇ* receives bribes from the villagers and then the Revenue Clerk from the *maṇiyakkāraṇ* and so on. It is cleared out that in each case the loser feels sorry where as the gainer feels a sense of pomp and power.

It is shown in one of the scenes of *Maṇaccāṇṇu* that a servant is threatened by his master with power and authority. Since the former feels his subordination and inability to withstand the power of the latter, he begins to weep in order to escape dismissal. He is humiliated by the master and so he finds himself helpless. *Rājēntiraṇ I*, the hero of *Vīṇkaṇavu* imagines about his heroism of the past and compares it with his present position when he is old and feeble. He has lost all his vigour and energy and finds himself too infirm to move. Since he thinks of himself as a misfit, he feels worried and troubled. Nothing can give him peace except death. The same feeling is brought out in 'pachaiyappar' when *Pūcci Ammaḷ*, the poor widow finds herself helpless to get her two daughters married.

In *Iḷaṅkō* the *Cēra* king feels his failure in duty to spread Tamil when he has dominated other countries besides the whole of Tamilnadu. When *Iḷaṅkō* reminds of it, he feels very much worried and receives the words as the painful

piercing of a pointed lance. The more he realised the more he feels sorry for his failure and at last by the intensity of extreme pathos he falls down fainting.

Physical Pain

Physical suffering also creates pathetic situations. The powerful king *Rājēntiraṇ I*, is shown in his sick-bed, suffering much to earn the pity of all especially his wife. But when he is mentally worried he cannot feel the pain of his illness. Mental worry overcomes physical pain. When he is relieved of the mental worries he begins to feel his physical pain. This emotional situation is caricatured very finely in accordance with the reality of life for which the dramatist deserves appreciation.

The scene of despair depicting the suffering of *pachaiyappar* in his illness will certainly make the audience weep. This scene is created quite naturally and most sympathetically. In *Maṇaccāṇṇu* the scenes, in which the illness of *Civakkoḷuntu Mutaliyār* is developing stage by stage and growing in giving pain to him in every stage, are presented in a realistic way. Besides the reactions of his wife and son over his sufferings are clearly shown on the stage as in life, which is quite compatible with human psychology.

Potunalam stages a scene in which the social service volunteer *Āravāmutaṇ* receives two severe blows on his cheek as heavy returns for his advice, to a disturbed rich merchant, not to spit and to throw rubbish on the public path. The weight of the blows makes him rub his cheeks unflinchingly since they throb with great pain. How much he suffers is openly revealed on the stage.

There is a slight reference of hunger and its attendant suffering; in the dramatic piece *Potunalam* through the words of the street vendor in his reply to the advice of the social service volunteer not to do malpractice in his trade. So much we have evaluated the sources of pathos in the plays of Dr. Mu. Va.

Conclusion

It is to be noted that the dramatist pours the pathetic feelings

in a way, sometimes sudden and serious and sometimes expected and feeble, as according to the stimulated situations. In *Tilakavatiyār* pathetic incidents are inserted one after another so that the feeling roused accumulates to a level of unbearable grief. As it is clearly let out, if pathos is raised to its maximum the victim may even forget to feel the pangs of sorrow. *Tilakavatiyār* is seen greatly affected by the successive incidents of pathos and in the height of feeling she appears like a portrait before her friend. In her desperate mood she says that there is nothing to be grieved at thereafter (p. 59). Through her words the playwright relates that when we reach the bounds of sorrow we cannot find anything to feel beyond (p. 60). If we try to explain the fact in another way it may be that in such a situation the height of feeling is being rationalised. As Dryden states, grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain; they are quickly up and if the concealment pours unexpectedly in upon us, it over flows us.⁷

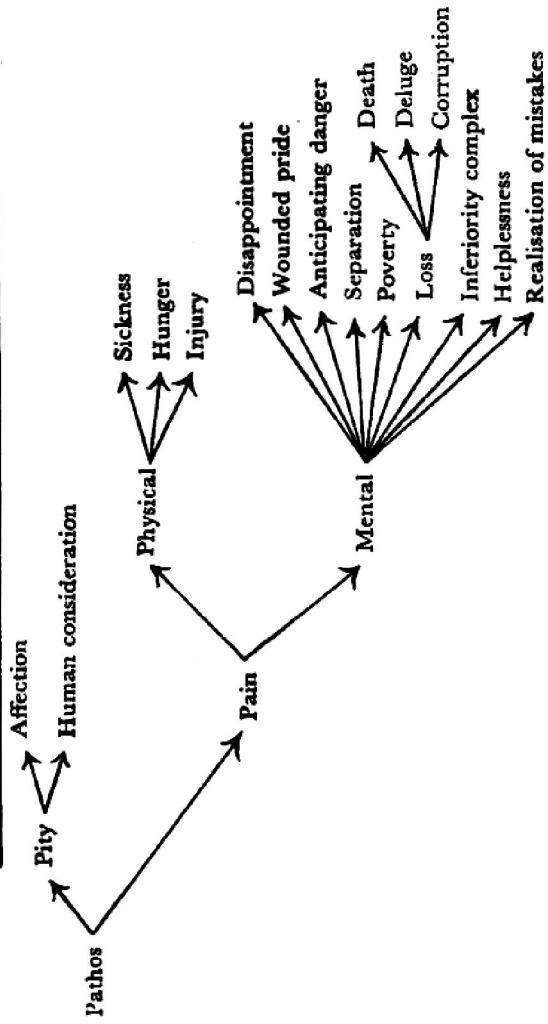
Aṭiyārkkunallār states that the expression of sorrow is a torrent of tears tinged with excessive grief.⁸ The existence of despair is generally judged by tears and sighs and also pensiveness.⁹ The grief stricken characters of Dr. Mu. Va. are seen to be sighing and heaving with heavy breath, shedding tears, wailing, wiping the eyes with the hand and fainting as according to the tremor within, in response to the nature and intensity of the pathetic situations the characters are put in.

Dr. Mu. Va. has efficiently introduced the sentiment of pathos in his plays so as to consider its manifestation as an art conditioned by the rules of psychology and general human nature.

Notes

1. Charles H. Judd; Educational psychology, (1939), p. 106.
2. Surendranath Shastri: The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama, (1961) p. 250
3. Tolkappiyam, *Meṃpāṭṭiyal*, Cuttiram No. 5.
4. Melville Jacobs: Pattern of Cultural Anthropology, (1964) p. 250.
5. Ibid.
6. V. V. Akolkar: Social Psychology (1953) p. 92.
7. Dryden: 'An Essay on Dramatic Poesy, English Critical Texts, Ed. D.J. Enright and Ernest De Chickera, (1968) p. 83.
8. *Aṭiyārkkunallār* Commentary to *Cilappatikāram*, *Kātai* 3, Line 12.
9. Surendranath Shastri, The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama, (1961) p. 233.

SOURCES OF PATHOS IN DR. MU. VA.'S PLAYS



PLAYS OF DR. MU. VA.

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Kind</i> | <i>No. of Scenes</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1. | <i>Iḷaṅkō</i> | Literary | 7 |
| 2. | <i>Tilakavaiyār</i> | „ | 7 |
| 3. | <i>Viṇkaṇavu</i> | „ | 3 |
| 4. | <i>Kātal Eṅkē?</i> | Social | 5 |
| 5. | <i>Kaṭamai Eṅkē?</i> | „ | 3 |
| 6. | <i>Naṇmai Eṅkē?</i> | „ | 9 |
| 7. | <i>Maṇaccāṇru</i> | „ | 7 |
| 8. | <i>Kimpaṭam</i> | „ | 8 |
| 9. | <i>Ēmārram</i> | „ | 7 |
| 10. | <i>Potunalam</i> | „ | 6 |
| 11. | <i>Pachaiyappār</i> | Biography | 21 |

DR. MU. VA'S BIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS

*Dr. Mrs. Saalini Ilanthirai**

0. Dr. Varadarajan was a prolific writer and he has given us books numbering over a hundred. His writings range from scholarly expositions of ancient Tamil classics to fiction and drama. Though, Dr. Mu. Va. was essentially an able and ideal teacher of classical Tamil poetry, his standing as a writer of fiction and prose cannot be minimised. His contribution to Modern Tamil includes some of his biographical sketches also.

0. 1. The important ones among his biographical writings are 'Kaandhi Annal', 'Arignar Bernard Shaw', 'Kavignar Tagore' and 'Tiru. Vi. Ka'. Though classed under one group, the last one is basically different from the other three books. This book is a collection of occasional articles which the author wrote on the life and writings of Tiru. V. Kalyana-sundaranar while the remaining three relate the life story of the subjects in a somewhat cogent manner. Yet, none of them can be called a biography in the true sense of the term.

0. 2. As we have already pointed out, Dr. Varadarajan was primarily a teacher,—an ideal teacher of classical literature. As a teacher, he seems to have developed a sort of explanatory and analytical way of telling things. This tendency is very

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much in evidence in almost all his writings. His biographical writings too are not an exception to this. And therefore, they lack the creative aspect, very much essential in a biography.

1. 0. It should however be borne in mind that Dr. Mu. Va. did never claim that he wanted to write a biography. In his book on Gandhiji, he says, 'There are hundreds of books that narrate his (Gandhi's) life story in the biographical pattern; and therefore I have not ventured to write this book in that manner. This is just an attempt to explain the way in which a world famous man led his life.'¹ Again, when he wrote his book on Bernard Shaw, he was fully aware that a small booklet of that size would not do full justice to the life and achievements of a man of Shaw's stature; yet he contended that as there was no other book available in Tamil on Shaw's life he wanted to publish the short sketch called 'Arignar Bernaatshaw' to fill in the gap.²

1. 1. 1. The book on Gandhiji (Kaandhi Annal) has been divided into five parts, namely purity (தூய்மை), Service (சேவை), progressiveness (முற்போக்கு), feeling (உணர்வு) and the basis (அடிப்படை). In the first chapter Dr. Mu. Va. analyses Gandhi's approach to ideal life. He stresses that because Gandhiji had the utmost purity of thought, he was able to discern the truth from falsehood and the ideal from hypocrisy and that is how he was able to stick to a particular pattern of life which made him unique and great. In respect of each and every aspect of life, he says, Gandhi had his peculiar method of approach and adherence which made his life complete and perfect.

1. 1. 2. In chapter two (Service), Gandhiji's overwhelming desire for service to the poor is analysed in detail. Some instances in his life have also been given to substantiate this fact. For instance, an instance is quoted where Gandhiji is reported to have stopped his speech in the middle when he was narrating the sorrows of the tillers of the soil in this country. It is said that because of his overflowing emotion he trembled and fainted in the course of his lecture.³ The other qualities like understanding and respective others' feelings, dislike for

pomp and show and a sort of self denial have also been analysed in detail and attributed to him in this chapter. The third chapter, 'Progressiveness' also analyses progressiveness as understood and practised by Gandhiji. Gandhiji, according to the author, was a religious man; but he was not a believer in the traditional religious practices. Gandhiji's dogmatic belief in the method of nature cure has also been touched upon in this chapter.

1. 1. 3. The fourth chapter tries to clarify Gandhiji's definitions of good and bad. It is said that Gandhiji measured everything by two (ideals) yard sticks namely, truth and non-violence. He was prepared to accept anything if it was based on truth and if it would not result in the suffering of anyone. The third guiding principle (yard stick) he used was his conscience. Whenever he was not able to come to a decision on a particular issue, he simply kept quiet and expected his inner-self to make the decision.⁴

1. 1. 4. The last chapter discusses the basic quality in Gandhiji, which was the basis for his greatness. Here again the author contends that it was Gandhiji's individuality in his approach to each and every item of life that made him lead the particular and unique kind of life he led. By way of explanation the author says that Gandhiji was convinced that whatever one says he should be able to practise in life. If Gandhiji's approach to life, religion, politics etc. was entirely different from that of the others, it was because he uttered only those ideas that he could practise in his life. He did not think that a man's thought and experience could be something different from his life. This way Gandhiji could identify his basic thoughts with the deeds that were inspired by them.

1. 2. The books on Rabindranath Tagore and George Bernard Shaw run more or less on the same lines. Here the author narrates in brief the life story of these two greatmen from their birth to death. When we go through these books, we feel that these two books are but two pieces of appreciative narrations of the subjects. In the life sketch of Tagore, his birth, early childhood, schooling and private study form the first chapter. His histrionic talents, achievements as a poet, patrio-

tism, short and sweet family life and his experiments in the fields of arts and education have been given in chapter two. Chapters three and four deal with his achievements like the establishment of Shantiniketan, his foreign tours and winning the Nobel Prize etc. Chapter five gives a short analysis of his personality, character and his writings. His ideal of universal brotherhood and his association with Gandhiji, with quotations from his letters and other writings, have also been given in this chapter.

1. 3. The book on Bernard Shaw (Arignar Bernaat Shaw) devotes a good number of pages to clear the misunderstandings prevalent among many people about certain characteristic mannerisms of Bernard Shaw. For instance, Dr. Mu. Va. says that many people considered Shaw as an eccentric and that is why they were very much afraid to associate themselves with him. His explanation to this is that Bernard Shaw's behaviour at times was very harsh not because he wanted to be harsh but because he believed that the English people would not care for anything said in the sober traditional manner; and that is why he preferred satire and humour to the other modes of writing.⁵ In another place, Dr. Varadarajan says that Shaw's peculiar approach to life and things were reflected not only in his behaviour, but also in his thoughts and writings. This he says in justification of Shaw's peculiar and at times pungent words and deeds.⁶

1. 4. As already mentioned, the small book on Tiru. Vi. Ka. is basically different from the books discussed above. This contains nine articles on various aspects of Kalyanasundaranar's life and achievements. Tiru. Vi. Ka. was generally known as 'Tamil Tenral' or the gentle southern breeze. His ways of life, his approach to various problems, his mode of expression, his ideas and ideologies—all bear witness to his gentleness. These essays discuss his contribution to freedom struggle, Tamil Journalism and the greatness of his thoughts. The last article in this book ends with the following statement: 'Tiru. Vi. Ka. was not a machine; neither was he a kite. He was a skylark; a skylark with a tender body, beautified by a charming scholarly face. He was a skylark that belonged to

the Tamil Country. That skylark delighted itself in going round the sky of "Samarasam". That was a skylark that invoked the heavens for a rain of Social welfare."

2. Dr. Varadarajan was a man of vast learning and high ideals. As a teacher he was closely connected with the youth of the Tamil Country. He knew in detail the desires and attitudes of the modern youth. As a responsible citizen and as a teacher well versed in his profession, he had laid down certain basic principles for the ideal growth of the younger generation. One such principle was that young people should understand and appreciate the great personalities among their ancestors and predecessors. The biographical writings, Dr. Varadarajan has left behind—the ones we had analysed above,—clearly show that he believed that a discussion on the greatness of these men will instil a thirst in the minds of the young for greater achievements in life. Though these are not elaborate biographies, they have a place among the biographical writings in Tamil—that is, these provide some basic material for the writing of authentic and elaborate biographies on these subjects as these will, in many ways, be helpful in understanding some of the intricate episodes in the lives of the great persons. They not only serve as pieces of interesting reading, but also give us the satisfaction of going through great and elevating thoughts. The style is so simple that even people with very limited education can understand and appreciate and be highly benefitted by these writings. That, perhaps, is the important contribution of Dr. Varadarajan to Modern Tamil Biographical writing.

References

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2. Dr. M. Varadarajan: 'Arignar Bernaatshaw, Madras 1963 Preface.
3. *Kaanthi Annal* page 36.
4. *Ibid*, page 70.
5. *Arignar Bernaatshaw*, page 56.
6. *Ibid*, page 100.
7. Dr. M. Varadarajan: *Tiru. Vi. Ka.*, Madras, 1962, p. 64.

DR. MU. VA. THE WRITER

*Akilon**

Lo, here in the form of letters some of the tender hearts are throbbing on my table. A part of the letter of Dr. K. Meenakshisundaram says: 'I feel very much for the loss of that respectable gentleman. When I hear the news everything stands still. It is impossible for me to take a mouthful of food. That grand personality is not with us. Oh, how many days we have chatted for hours together in the Marina Beach. Love in him for humanity was immeasurable'.

Here is another sobbing voice of a young bird Thiru S. Venkataraman, a budding research scholar doing research on my short stories in the Madurai University. A celestial being who lived with us has gone for ever. For the past one week my heart has become still. I remember the powerful words of that famous Russian writer M. Sholokhov: 'The Golden Eagle carried her young ones under her wings. Whenever they were not able to fly high she helped them often to fly with her.' Like that Golden Eagle Dr. Mu. Va. our beloved Vice-Chancellor supported and encouraged the young scholars like me. Today we are like the motherless young ones.

Let us hear another moaning note of Thiru R. Mohan a young scholar living in the same nest. He has published a book on Mu. Va's Novels. His letter goes on like this: 'It is possible for us to be with innumerable writers, professors and

*Novelist, AIR, Madras.

Vice-Chancellors in the future. But will it be possible for us to have a grand personality like Mu. Va. whose heart was tender like a flower, but unyielding in ways and means other than those of righteousness! What he adopted in day to day life are the torch bearers to the younger generation. After hearing the news of the sad demise of Dr. Mu. Va. different kinds of persons expressed their sorrows in different ways. To those who have had personal contact with him or to those who have known him through his books only Dr. Mu. Va. is one among the members of their families. He lives in their hearts like his *Aravāṭi* (A character in his novels) a calm philosopher.

When I looked at the flowing crowd to his house at Amainta-karai to pay homage to him and the number of scholars, artists and ordinary men who came to attend his last journey, I was rather perplexed. At the same time I had a little solace because this rare opportunity revealed to me the fact that our people had not forgotten our noble writers. It is a fact that Mu. Va. had a fascination for flowers. How much pleasure would it have been for him if he just opened his eyes on that day!

Everybody knows that man will gather in Madras only to the political demagogues and popular cine stars. On the contrary people took part in the last journey of a person who was never after pomp and glory. It was a great crowd consisting of intellectual giants, noble minds, professors, writers, poets, students, officials in responsible posts. Because this was the last opportunity for them to have an abiding glance of his loving face. People rushed from the Madurai University, from Delhi and from the far off towns and villages.

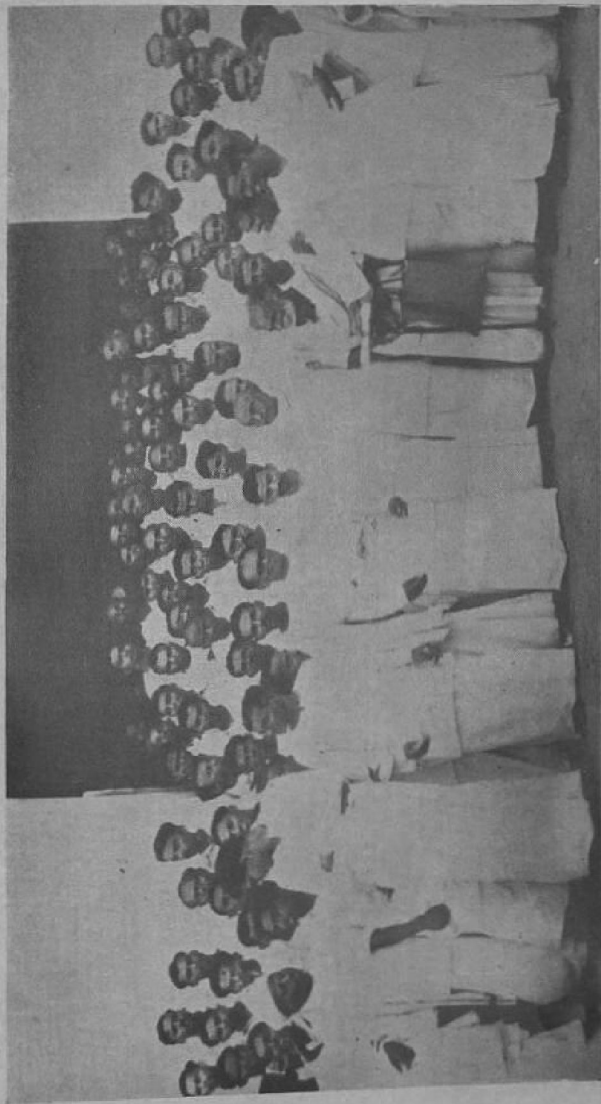
In Mu. Va's personality there are many phases like writer, Tamil Professor, Vice-Chancellor, Artist, Thinker, Ideal Man, Man of experience, family head and above all a good friend. He has however nourished only one phase of them. That is I had the good opportunity to hear his very ideas he proclaimed at the inaugural function of a seminar on my literary works conducted by the Madurai University on the 9th September 1974. On that occasion he spoke as: 'Mere practice and hard working nature will not create the creative writers. I believe that creative talents are achieved only by a few people with



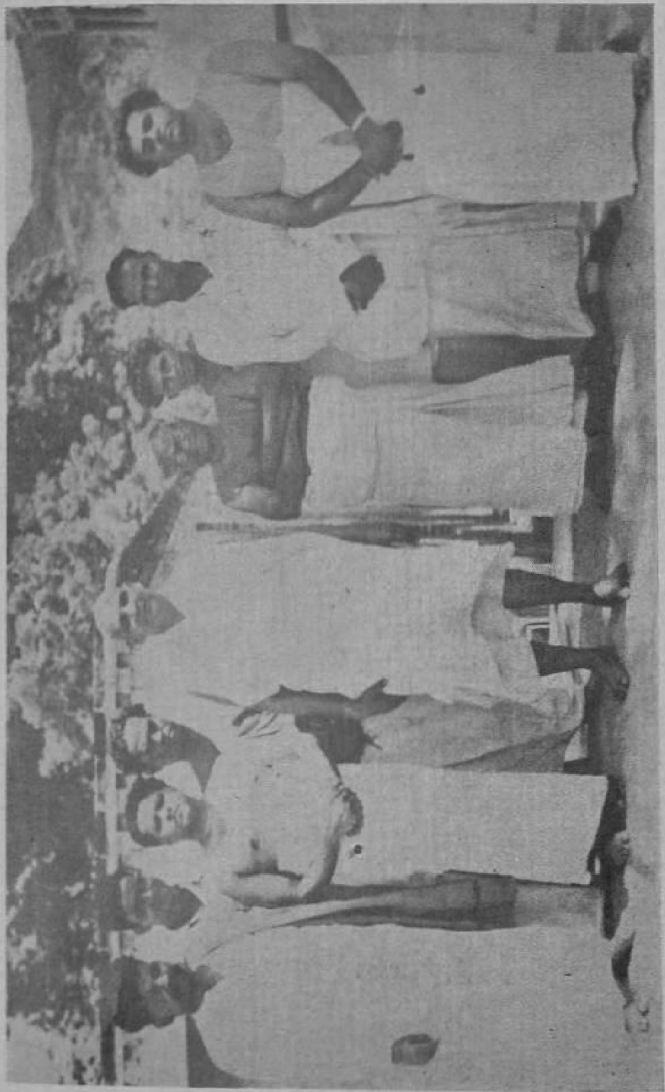
King of Letters, with Queen Elizabeth II



With the former Chief Minister, Mr. K. Kamaraj



With Thiru Vi. Ka., Ma. Po. Sivagnanam and Dr. R. P. Sethupillai



With Swami Sivananda Saraswathi

the Grace of God. A handful of educated and degree holders are engaged in writing. Before them, many people without degrees had engaged themselves in this field. Even now such people are still continuing their work. I consider the creative writers are the chosen ones. Society must utilize them in a proper manner. I myself prefer to go to a lonely place in order to write my future novels rather than to stick to an administrative post like the Vice-Chancellorship. Only in writing I have the perfect mental satisfaction in life.'

Let us see Mu. Va. as a novelist.

Though he became a novelist just a few years earlier than 1950, the annus mirabilis of Mu. Va.—are the fifties. Many college boys and girls like Mu. Va. and read his novels and praised him. They went to the bookshops and purchased his novels. Though at that time I was also introduced to our people as a short-story writer and a novelist, I myself was one among those readers of Mu. Va. and bought his books. Then only I came to understand that he too was a reader of my works. Though we were not known personally to each other we cherished a kind of mental acquaintance for five or six years.

I had a fascination for his novels like *Malar Viṭi*, *Kaḷḷō Kāvīyamō*, *Karittuṇṇu*, *Akal Viṭakku*, *Kayamai*, and *Neñcil oru muḷ*. We had difference of opinion about the central ideas of some novels. But there is no doubt his artistic talents attracted me. I loved his individuality, abilities suitable to be a writer and unquestionable personality. Really I met an original thinker in his stories.

It is a pity that the world of Tamil writers never considered him a writer in his earlier period. Above all it threw dirty water upon his literary works. On the other side his own Tamil colleagues looked at him with a doubtful eye. They advised him to restrict himself with his elaborate commentaries to the ancient classics like some of his contemporary Tamil Scholars. But he entered into the new field of Tamil Prose. By this kind of new adventure he was attacked by both the modern writers and the old Tamil Pandits.

Madras Tamil Writers Association under the chairmanship of Kalki, invited me from Tiruchirapalli in 1953 or in 1954

to read a paper on Tamil Novels. Many novelists like Kalki, Devan and Ka. Na. Su. attended the meeting held at the Mahajana Sabha Hall.

When I read that paper I mentioned about Mu. Va. (From my memory I am writing these lines.)

'In one way or other we can call Mu. Va's *Karittun̄ṭu* as a novel with social outlook. In the novel there is a close relationship between the family problems and social way of life. His style is modern. He names his characters in a new way. He handles his novel themes and plots with a modern touch. Really his modern approaches to these aspects attract me. He has observed the same city of Madras which is already seen by many of our fellow writers. His individual talent lies in his sympathetic approach towards the poverty stricken huts and kuppams of the poor people who are neglected by our society.'

After the meeting was over some of the writers looked at me as if they were looking at a new creature. Some said openly that Mu. Va. might be a near one to me. Actually so far I had no chance to meet him. So I searched him in that crowd. After enquiries I doubted very much whether the invitation of the annual function of the Writers' Association had reached him.

Mu. Va's literary approaches and methods in his well planned creative life were completely different from those of his contemporary writers. So writers and publishers did not support him and recognise him as a writer in his earlier days. But it was for the very same new approaches that millions of readers started reading him.

Some of the publishing houses turned down his earlier novels. Then Mr. Chellappan of Pari Nilayam came forward to publish them but even his publishing house was not in a sound financial position. So Mu. Va. pledged the jewels of his wife Radha Ammaiyar to publish his first novel. Many of us do not know the painful days of Mu. Va's earlier period. It resembles the life of Bernard Shaw about whom Mu. Va. himself has written a book in Tamil.

At last he declared a victory over poverty which crossed him in his artistic and worldly life. Though he started his life as an ordinary clerk he studied Tamil and then he progressed

his path step by step which led him to become a veteran Tamil Professor and in the end he decorated the chair of Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University.

He did not, I honestly believe, write novels for minting money. Seeking inner pleasure in writing novels was his aim. But money came to him through his novels. Even if he did not get money he would have continued his writing. Since he wanted to lead an independent life without expecting income from his writing he served as a teacher. There also he attained the respectable place only by his pure merit.

Until this time there is no proper understanding between the modern Tamil writers and Tamil Departments in various universities. Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaram cut the ice and sowed the lively seeds of modern literature first in the Annamalai University and then in the Madurai University. Dr. Mu. Va. as the Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University continued the same steps with more courage. He gave a new apparel to the present Tamil Department. We must remember at this time that it was Mu. Va. who permitted Dr. Dhandayutham an energetic young man to submit his thesis on 'Tamil Novels'. It was due to his genuine effort that for the first time a collection of modern Tamil short-stories was prescribed as text books to the Pre-University Course students in the University of Madras.

Now the writings of the twentieth century Tamil Writers are being selected for research in the three Universities. It is really a change in the literary atmosphere in Tamil Nadu. The College students and teachers are studying the modern literature with interest and trying to evaluate them critically.

Nobody can belittle the services rendered in this field by Mu. Va.

As a crowning ceremony among such progresses the Madurai University has conducted a seminar on the creative works of the present writer for four days from 9-9-1974 to 12-9-1974. I wondered the way in which the seminar was conducted. Only after the passing away of Mu. Va., the main architect of that seminar, the memories of those days took an inexplicable momentum in my mind. Prof. Muthu. Shanmuganar, Teachers, and students worked continuously day and night for the success of the seminar. I can never forget the love

showered upon me by them. The leaders of various sessions like Thiru K. V. Jagannathan, Thiru K. Rajavelu, and Thiru N. Parthasarathi were honoured in a suitable manner. The graciousness of Mu. Va. in honouring Thiru K. V. Jagannathan by going over to the railway station to give a send off shall be ever fresh in my mind.

The four days which I spent with Mu. Va. in the Madurai University Campus—just one month before his death—will ever be green in my memory. We enjoyed those days in many ways taking part in parties, discussions and in taking long excursions through the woods and books. He has converted the whole dry land at the foot of the *Nāga Malai* Hills into green avenues and groves of coconut, mango, guava, neem and banyan trees. Now I am able to hear not only the heavy sighs of the teachers and students but also those of the thousands of green trees and twisting creepers in the campus of the Madurai University.

He always remembered his 'teacher' Thiru Vi. Ka. who has moulded his career in many ways. So, Mu. Va. helped to build a high school in memory of his 'teacher' and has offered the income from some of his books. Indeed his own words which are applicable to him:

'He does not want to lead a licentious life.
He tries to follow a good life with a goal.
He is not only a man of good ideas but also
a man of abilities to translate them into action.'

He has created a calm nonviolent revolution through love at the very bottom of the human minds. Even now he has that ability to kindle that fire through his pages.

I wish that the Almighty may shower solace and courage on the members of his family to withstand such an irreparable loss.

Translated from Kalaimagal, Nov. 1974 by Dr. V. Veerasami, I.I.T.S. Madras.

STYLE OF DR. MU. VA.

*Dr. Pon. Kothandaraman**

‘Literary style is one of those words (beauty and form are others) that are eminently useful and popular but just as eminently unattached to any precise meaning. Various people have used it to mean various, and sometimes contradictory things; and most of the definitions that have been set forth are vague or else, if rigorously attacked, seem to offer less than the whole truth. The meaning of the word is elusive.’

—Papers on Literature p. 71.

Any sensitive reader of Tamil can easily perceive the styles of Maraimalai Adikal, Thiru. Vi. Ka., Mu. Va., C. N. Annadurai and a few others. Also he is able to differentiate the styles from one another and appreciate them. It is true that the study of style is not provided with rigorous methodology; but it is one of the most interesting fields with immense scope for the brilliant and talented students of literature and linguistics.

1. *What is style?* In general, the way of doing things is what we call style and it ‘may be investigated, both as deviations from a norm and as a system of coherent ways or patterns of doing things.’¹ Since our main concern is literature, what we mean here by style is literary style. The material for a

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literary work of art is obviously language. Therefore, a student of stylistics cannot dispense with the study of language.² Moreover the linguistic approach to stylistics is the most promising one which enables us to make a formal analysis rather than an impressionistic one.

1. 1. *Language and man:* Language is capable of giving different expressions for the same content and it is also capable of giving new sentences including deviations from a norm which have never appeared before in the language. According to his linguistic skill a man is free to choose an expression suitable to the context. Style is concerned not only with language but also man. In other words, when we deal with the style of a writer it involves his mastery over the language, his attitude towards what he writes about, his taste in innovations, etc., too.³ When we choose a book or a passage for stylistic analysis that book or the passage becomes the object of our study and the object which is obviously linguistic material needs linguistic approach. Though the style involves the personality of the writer, only the linguistic aspect is discussed in this paper.

2. *Aspects of style:* As already mentioned, this paper is confined to the linguistic aspects of style. Therefore, by aspects of style we mean the linguistic aspects.

2.1. *Phonological Aspect:* Some writers are successfully employing rhymes and alliterations not only in poems but in prose, too.

2.1.1. *Mōnai:* Read the following lines and note the alliterations.

“அப்பரும் ஓளரங்கசீபும் அரசு வீற்றிருந்த அணிநகரம் அவன் கோலமாயிற்று.”

டாக்டர் சா. பி. சேதுப்பிள்ளை, அகையும் கலையும், ப-ம். 65.

In the above sentence, the vowels, அ, ஆ and ஓள produce a kind of auditory experience, called *mōnai* in Tamil, which might be roughly called alliteration in English. Tamil prosodists have made a detailed analysis of *mōnai*.⁴

2. 1. 2. Etukai: Read the following lines and note the rhymes.

“ ஏற்றமும் தோற்றமும் வாய்ந்த யானை கையெடுத்து
வணங்குகின்றது ”

டாக்டர் ரா. பி. சேதுப்பிள்ளை, அகையும் கலையும், ப-ம். 34.

The auditory experience created by ஏற்றமும் and தோற்றமும் is called *etukai* in Tamil and it may be called *initial rhyme* in English. Tamil prosodies elaborately deal with *etukai* as well.⁵

2. 1. 3. Onomatopoeitics/Onomatopoeia: Words formed in imitation of sounds and feelings are called onomatopoeitic words. Some writers are able to create wonderful effect by using onomatopoeitic words. Read the following lines and note how the onomatopoeitic words are used.⁶

“ ஆச்சரியத்தால் அவனுடைய விழிகள் பிதுங்கின ; ஒரு நிமிஷம் அவனுடைய இதயம் படபடவென்று அடித்துக்கொண்டது. மறு நிமிஷம் அது டக்கென்று நின்றுவிடவே கிழவன் பொத்தென்று கீழே விழுந்து விட்டான்.”

விந்தன், மூல்கைக் கொடியான், ப-ம். 111.

Such phonological features, no doubt, form part of the style of certain writers such as Dr. R. P. Sethupillai, Dr. C. N. Annadurai, Mr. Vintan and others.

2. 2. Sandhi Aspect: The sandhi rules in Tamil are very much complicated. What was obligatory in sandhi in Sangam Tamil is absent or optional in Modern Tamil. The sandhi rules have been slowly changing in the history of Tamil. If the historical dialects are found mixed in a passage, one and the same sandhi rule may apply in certain cases and it may not apply in certain other cases. Notice the following items.

| A | B | |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>pālai</i> | <i>pālinai</i> | ‘ milk ’ (accusative case) |
| 2. <i>nūlkaḷ</i> | <i>nūṛkaḷ</i> | ‘ books ’ |
| 3. <i>makkaḷukku</i> | <i>makkaḷku</i> | ‘ to the people ’ |
| 4. <i>vantiḷḷāṇ</i> | <i>vantiṛṛāṇ</i> | ‘ only if (sb. or sth.) comes ’ |

The words in columns *A* and *B* are equally right. The differences found in them are mainly due to sandhi.⁷ Moreover, the words in column *A* as such are more common than them in *B*. Such sandhi differences also must be taken into account in the study of style.

2. 3. *Lexical Aspect*: Use of loan words and archaic words is an interesting area of this lexical aspect. Coining new words and nativization of foreign words may also be dealt with in the lexical aspect.

2. 3. 1. *Loan Words*: Some writers prefer to use the loan words as they occur in the parent language. Here they are confronted with another problem concerning how to use the native script to represent foreign sounds. Use of diacritical marks, some suitable modifications in the native script, etc., have to be dealt with in connection with the problem of representing foreign sounds. In certain cases, some writers use foreign words, phrases, clauses and even sentences in foreign script while they write in their native language.⁸ Such instances must be properly and carefully handled in the stylistic analysis.

2. 3. 2. *Archaic Words*: In a sense use of archaic words may be considered as reborrowings from early works. Any way they cannot be included in the loan words (2.3.1) for they are all native words. They also should be treated under lexical aspect.

2. 3. 3. *Coining New Words*: Some writers coin new words according to the phonemic structure of the native words. New compounds to mean foreign concepts and objects may also be treated here.

2. 3. 4. *Nativization*: Foreign words may be nativized according to the phonemic structure of the native language. Pavananti, a Tamil grammarian prescribes certain rules to nativize sanskrit words.⁹ His treatment of Tamilization is a very good example of nativization.

2. 4. *Syntactic Aspect*: Syntax which may be reasonably considered as 'a central determinant of style'¹⁰ is the most important aspect. Transformational Generative model (TG)

the only linguistic theory which is capable of giving systematic account for different expressions for the same content with which a student of stylistics is mainly concerned. TG accounts for different expressions of the same content in terms of specific rules and such expressions may be called syntactic alternatives or 'transformational alternatives'¹¹ Moreover, the ambiguity caused by constructional homonymity can be explained in a better way by TG. While choosing a syntactic alternative, the writer chooses it in such a way that it does not mean anything other than what he intends to mean unless he deliberately employs ambiguous construction. In this regard, the TG is incredibly useful to account for the syntactic alternatives or constructional synonymity and syntactic ambiguity or constructional homonymity.

2. 5. Semantic Aspect: In certain cases, the role of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms is certainly important in constituting style. The metaphor, simile, metonymy, figures of speech, etc. may also be treated under semantic aspect.

2. 6. Punctuation: Even mature writers do not perfectly agree in punctuation. That is, in certain cases every writer agrees whereas in certain other cases even the same author does not seem to be consistent. Any way, punctuation might also be considered in the study of style.

2. 7. Unity: In addition to the aspects we discussed above Unity is an indispensable aspect in the study of style. There are two types of Unity namely, paragraph Unity and sentence Unity. Paragraph unity is constituted mainly by using appropriate connectives which show the logical connection between adjacent sentences, whereas sentence unity, is formed by using suitable conjunctions, coordinate or subordinate, which conjoin words, phrases, clauses and sentences accordingly.¹²

From a different point of view, good style is said to have the essential qualities such as simplicity, brevity, clarity, strength and rhythm and harmony.

3. Style of Dr. Mu. Va.: In the light of the foregoing theoretical framework, I would like to show how the style

Dr. Mu. Va. (Mu. Vavian style) might be analysed. For the present analysis I have chosen a few passages from the following works of Mu. Va.

1. பாவை: a novel which is one of his early works.
2. காந்தி அண்ணல்: a biography of M. K. Gandhi in whose philosophies Dr. Mu. Va. had a firm belief.
3. கல்வாழ்வு: his last work published during his life time which is a collection of essays.

It is not possible to present a complete analysis even for the extracts presented here. Hence only a few essential points are made in the rest of this paper. The numbering of the sentences for easy reference is mine.

3. 1. பாவை: (1) அன்றெல்லாம் பாவை கடுக்கமும் அச்சமும் அற்று முழுமையும் வீரமே வடிவாய் விளங்கினான். (2) இளங்கோவடிகள் எழுதிய கண்ணகியோ ஊழியிறுதியில் கூத்தாடும் உலகன் னையோ என்னுமாறு சில வேளைகளில் வீறு பெற்றான். (3) தெருக்கதவின் தாழ்ப்பாளை நெருங்கிச் சென்று உற்றுப் பார்த்தான். (4) தூணின் பக்கத்தே வந்து உட்கார்ந்தான். (5) எழுந்து சென்று அண்ணாசாமியின் சொக்காயைப் பார்த்தான். (6) அவன் மூங்கிலில் மடித்துப் போட்டிருந்த வெள்ளாடையும் மேலாடையும் கோக்கினான். (7) மீண்டும் தூணருகே உட்கார்ந்து தன் கூத்தல் பின்னலை மூன்றுக்குக் கொணர்ந்து புரட்டிப் பார்த்தான். (8) தலைபைத் தன் இரு கையாலும் தடவிப் பார்த்தான். (9) பெருமூச்சு விட்டு வாடினான். (10) மீண்டும் ஊக்கம் பெற்றான். (11) எழுந்து திறப்பில் செருகியிருந்த அறிவாளை எடுத்துத் திரும்ப அங்கேயே அவ்வாறே வைத்துவிட்டான். (12) சின்னம்மாவிடம் வலியச் சென்று பேச முயன்றான். (13) “தங்கைக்குத் தலை வாரட்டுமா?” என்று கேட்டான். (14) சின்னம்மா தலைபகைத்து, “செய், போ” என்று கடுகெடுத்தான். (15) பொழுது எவ்வாறோ போயிற்று.

டாக்டர் மு. வ., பாவை. ப-ம். 110-111.

3. 1. 1. Let us consider first the phonological aspect in the passage. Even though அ is found to recur in sentence (1), the recurrence does not produce desired auditory effect. Therefore, this sort of recurrence cannot be considered *mōṇai*. In sentence (2) இளங்கோவடிகள் and எழுதிய form *mōṇai* and

ஊழியிறுதி and உலகன்னை form another *mōṇai*. In sentence (8) the recurrence of த forms *mōṇai*. In sentence (11) அங்கேயே and அவ்வாறே produce a sort of *mōṇai* effect. In sentence (13) the recurrence of த forms *mōṇai*. In sentence (15) பொழுது and போயிற்று form *mōṇai*. The *etukai*, *mōṇai*, etc. are not too much in the passage hence it is simple and excellent. The onomatopoeic word கடுகடு in imitation of sound and feeling is appropriately used in sentence (14) as a verb. The passage is found to have agreeable rhythms. The phonological aspects discussed here are, among other things, responsible for the rhythm and harmony or readability of the passage.

3. 1. 2. As mentioned earlier the sandhi system in Tamil is very much complicated. If a writer wants to be strictly faithful to the rules of rigid sandhi system, he has to sacrifice readability. On the other hand, if he wants to ignore sandhi rules at random his writings will be ambiguous and unclear, hence he will have to sacrifice clarity. Mu. Va. was never too rigid nor too free regarding sandhi rules. He has chosen the middle path in an exemplary way which I consider excellent.

If the author were to rigid in observing sandhi rules he would have written, for instance,

ஊழியிறுதியிற் கூத்தாடும் (2)
கூத்தற்பின்னல் (7)
இறப்பிற் செருகியிருந்த (11) and
தலையசைத்துச் செப்போ வென்று (14)

respectively instead of

ஊழியிறுதியில் கூத்தாடும் (2)
கூத்தல் பின்னல் (7)
இறப்பில் செருகியிருந்த (11) and
தலையசைத்து 'செய், போ' என்று (14)

If the author were too free to ignore sandhi rules he would have written, for instance.

அன்று எல்லாம் (1)
இளங்கோ அடிகள் (2)
ஊழி இறுதியில் (2)

தெரு கதவின் (3)
 நெருங்கி சென்று (3)
 உற்று பார்த்தான் (3)
 சொக்காயை பார்த்தான் (5)
 மடித்து போட்டிருந்த (6)
 வலிய சென்று (12) and
 தங்கைக்கு தலைவாரட்டுமா? (13)

respectively instead of

அன்றெல்லாம் (1)
 இளங்கோவடிகள் (2)
 ஊழியிறுதியில் (2)
 தெருக்கதவின் (3)
 நெருங்கிச் சென்று (3)
 உற்றுப் பார்த்தான் (3)
 சொக்காயைப் பார்த்தான் (5)
 மடித்துப் போட்டிருந்த (6)
 வலியச் சென்று (12) and
 தங்கைக்குத் தலை வாரட்டுமா? (13)

It is worth mentioning here that a study of sandhi system in Mu. Va's work will certainly help us standardize the sandhi in Modern Tamil.

3. 1. 3. Mu. Va. has always preferred native Tamil words in his works. When he could not find native words he coined new compounds which may be easily understood by any native speaker of Tamil, or he Tamilized the foreign words according to the Tamil phonemic structure. When he found it difficult to do so he has rarely used the non-Tamil scripts ஜ, ஸ, ஷ, etc. to represent foreign sounds such as in பெர்னாஷா (Bernardshaw).

In the extract under discussion Mu. Va. seems to have coined the new compound உலகன்னை (2) to which the Sanskrit compound *lokamata* corresponds. A highly literary word வீறு (2) is introduced here which any native speaker can contextually understand. The synonyms சொக்கு and பார் are carefully used in different contexts. In sentence (7) Mu. Va. introduces கொணர்ந்து, the verbal participial

form of **செனார்** which is rather archaic. It occurs in such a way that it does not affect the understandability of the sentence. The word **செ செ** which is originally an onomatopoeic word is rightly used as a verb in sentence (14).

3. 1. 4. The subject **புனை** occurs in sentence (1) while it is understood in the following sentences right through (13). Although it is possible to combine all the thirteen sentences and thus to make one lengthy sentence, the author did not do so for he wanted to describe the quick and thoughtful actions of the girl, **புனை**. In this passage the author has dropped not only syntactically recoverable items such as the subject **புனை** in sentences (2) through (13), but also contextually understood items such as **அவளுக்கு** in (15).¹³ Since the passage describes mostly the thoughtful movements of **புனை** it is found to have full of verbs. In sentence (6) one would expect the objects with the case marker **-ai** for it is obligatory when the object is preceded by a relative participle.¹⁴

3. 1. 5. The phrase **உற்றுப் பார்** (3) and the word **சேர்த்து** (6) are said to mean the same thing. In order to avoid tedious repetition mature writers use such synonymous alternatives.¹⁵ The author compares **புனை** with **சௌந்தரி**, the heroine of the epic **சிவப்புகாரம்** and with Sakthi in sentence (2). By skilfully describing the thoughtful actions of **புனை**, the author enables the reader to understand what she has in her mind. The author has told us the secret through the sentences which describes only the actions of **புனை**.

3. 1. 6. Punctuation does not create any special problem in this passage.

3. 1. 7. The paragraph under discussion is a good example of paragraph unity which consists of several examples of sentence unity, too. It may be noted here that the paragraph unity is maintained in the passage without any sentence connectives such as *therefore, however*, etc. The emphasis in the passage is on **புனை**. The structure of the paragraph is simple; hence paragraph unity is easily formed in an excellent way. In the paragraph, observes Peter Westland, unity requires that there shall be only one main theme and one main idea.¹⁶

துணிந்த தியாகம்

3. 2. காத்தி அண்ணல்: (16) ஒருவர் ஒரு காளில் ஒரு காழிகை நோம் தற்கொலைக்குத் துணிந்திருக்கலாம். (17) ஒரு நாள் முழுதும் அந்த மனநிலை நீடிக்க முடியாது. (18) அது போலவே, ஒருவர் ஒரு காளில் ஒரு காழிகை நோம் உயிர்த்தியாகம் செய்யத் துணியலாம். (19) திடீரென்று அந்தத் துணிவு தோன்றி அரிய பெரிய செயல் களைச் செய்யுமாறு தூண்டிவிடலாம். (20) ஆனால் எண்ணிப் பார்க்க நோயிருப்பின் அந்தத் துணிவு உடனே மாறிவிடும். (21) ஒரு செயலும் செய்ய முடியாத தயக்கம் அதனை அடுத்துப் பிறக்கும். (22) ஆனால் பலநாள் எண்ணிப் பார்த்தபின், ஒரு துணிவுடன் உயிர்த் தியாகம் செய்ய முன்வருவதும், முன்வந்தபடியே கொள் கையையும் நோக்கத்தையும் மாற்றாமல் பலநாள் வரையில் அந்த நெறியில் துணிவோடு தொண்டாற்றி உயிரைப் பண்பமாக வைத்து நாட்களைக் கழிப்பதும் மிகமிக அரியவை ஆகும். (23) காந்தியடி களின் வாழ்க்கையில் காணும் உயிர்த்தியாகம் அப்படிப்பட்ட பெருஞ்சிறப்பு உடையது. (24) பலமுறை உண்ணா நோன்பு கொண்டபோதெல்லாம் இந்த உயிர்த்தியாகம் இமயம்போல் ஒங்கி நிற்பதைக் கண்டோம். (25) ஆயினும் வங்காளக் கைத்தில் குதித் துத் தனியே உலாவி அந்த முதிய மெல்லிய உடலைத் தளராத தொண்டுக்குப் பயன்படுத்திய அஞ்சாமையில்தான் உலகம் அளந்து காண முடியாத இமயத்தைக் காண்கிறோம். (26) வரலாறு கண்ட தியாகப் பெருந்தியாகத்தைக் காண்கின்றோம்.

டாக்டர் மு. வ., காந்தி அண்ணல், ப-ம். 35.

3. 2. 1. In sentences (16), (18), (22), (23) and (24) *mōnai* is successfully formed in various ways. The common phrase அரிய பெரிய forms a kind of *etukai*. The onomatopoeic word திடீரென்று is used here to signify the appearance a sudden emotion. These are worth noting features in the phonological aspect which is mainly responsible for rhythm and harmony.

3. 2. 2. As already stated the middle path is rightly chosen regarding Sandhi in this extract too. In accordance with his style of sandhi பெருஞ் சிறப்புடையது seems to be preferable to பெருஞ்சிறப்பு உடையது (23).

3. 2. 3. The words காந்தி, இமயம், தியாகம் and வங்காளம் are Tamilized words which form part of his style. Though there are two Tamilized forms namely, வங்கம் and வங்காளம் meaning Bengal, he has chosen the latter. The fact that வங்காளம் is phonemically closer to Bengal may be the reason why he chose it. Mu. Va. carefully differentiates கொள்கை and கோக்கம் (22) the confusion of which is a common error.

3. 2. 4. There are two types of negative relative participles in Tamil namely, *ceyṛē* type and *ceyṛēta* type. Except in compounds such as உண்ணு கோப்பு (24), Mu. Va. uses the latter type, or instance ஒரு செயலும் செய்ய முடியாத தயக்கம் (21), தளராத தொண்டு (25), அளந்து காண முடியாத இமயம் (25) and வரலாறு கண்டறியாத பெருங் தியாகம் (26). Except in novels and short stories, it is not safe to drop any word in a sentence unless it is a syntactically recoverable item. May be due to oversight or slip அவர், syntactically not recoverable, is dropped in (24).

3. 2. 5. The whole passage explains உயிர்த்தியாகம், 'sacrifice' and classifies it as (1) sudden one and (2) planned and sustained one. The latter one is considered the most excellent and it is compared to the Himalayas.

3. 2. 6. It seems almost futile to frame any hard and fast rules regarding the use of semi-colon, colon and full stop. There may be several ways to punctuate a passage, but the ways cannot be infinite. Therefore, standardization of punctuation should be possible.

3. 2. 7. The extract under discussion emphasises on sacrifice, to be more specific, sacrificial tendency or nature. The momentary sacrifice and the sustained sacrifice are contrasted with each other. The sustained sacrifice as of Gandhi's is considered excellent and it is compared to the Himalayas. The structure and Unity in the paragraph show the excellence in Mu. Va's art of writing.

3. 3. நல்வாழ்வு. (27) சின்ன உடம்பை வைத்துக்கொண்டு பரந்த உலகிற்கு ஒன்றும் செய்துவிட முடியாது என்பது உண்மை தான். (28) சிறு குடும்ப அளவில், சிறு சிறு சுற்றுப்புறத்த

அளவில் மட்டுமே ஒவ்வொருவரும் தம் உடம்பால் உழைத்துச் சிறு தொண்டு செய்ய முடியும் என்பதும் உண்மைதான். (29) ஆனால் மனம் விரிவு உடையது, பெரியது. (30) மனத்தால் எண்ணும் எண்ணம் ஆற்றல் உடையது. (31) பலர் சேர்ந்து எண்ணும் எண்ணங்களே உலகை மாற்றி அமைக்கும் வல்லமை உடையவை. (32) மனத்தால் எண்ணும் எண்ணத்திலாவது குறுகி சிர்கத் தேவை யில்லை. (33) உலகத்தைத் திருத்திச் செம்மைப் படுத்தும் திட்டங் களுக்கு உதவும் எண்ணங்களைப் பெருக்கலாம். (34) மனத்தைச் சிறு வட்டத்தில் குறுக விடாமல் பரந்த உலகமாகிய வட்டத்தில் விரிவாக உலவ விடலாம். (35) அவ்வாறு உலவும் மனத்தில் தன் தேவை, தன் துன்பம் இவை சிறியனவாகத் தோன்றும். (36) பொய், பொருமை முதலான தீமைகளுக்கு இடம் இல்லாமல், அன்பு, இனிமை முதலாய பண்புகள் வளரும். (37) அமைதியும் இன்பமும் பெருகும்.

டாக்டர் மு. வ., கல்வாழ்வு, ப-ம். 83

3. 3. 1. In sentences (27), (28), (33), (35), (36) and (37) we find various kinds of *mōṇai*. In sentences (28), (31) and (35) we find some sort of *etukai*. These *etukai* and *mōṇai*, though not essential in prose, certainly improve the quality of readability.

3. 3. 2. When compared with the sandhi in the other two extracts (3.1. and 3.2.), the sandhi in this extract (3.3.) seems to move towards a simpler system where certain sandhi rules cease to operate. For example we find மாற்றி அமைக்கும் (31) instead of மாற்றியமைக்கும் and இடம் இல்லாமல் (36) instead of இடமில்லாமல்.

3. 3. 3. We can hardly find colloquial words in Mu. Va's writings. In this extract we find one rare instance, சின்ன (27) which is considered colloquial though found occasionally in writing. In sentence (36) the variants முதலான and முதலாய meaning the same thing are used; probably the author wanted to avoid repetition in the same sentence.

3. 3. 4. In the extract under discussion sentence (32) must be carefully considered.

(32) மனத்தால் எண்ணும் எண்ணத்திலாவது குறுகி சிர்கத் தேவையில்லை.

This sentence seems to have violated certain essential syntactic rule. Consider the following sentences.

(அ) மனத்தால் என்னும் எண்ணத்திலாவது குறுகாமல் இருக்கலாம்.

(ஆ) மனத்தால் என்னும் எண்ணத்திலாவது விரிந்து விற்கலாம்.

The particle ஆவது in எண்ணத்திலாவது requires an affirmative finite verb. Dr. Mu. Va's mastery over language is unquestionable. Any human being is liable to make such error. When the writer goes through his manuscript with great care such errors can be easily corrected.

3. 3. 5. In sentence (29) விரிவு உடையது and பெரியது seem to mean more or less the same thing. Both are used in (29) probably for the sake of emphasis.

3. 3. 6. As in other cases, punctuation is clear and it helps the readers one way or the other.

3. 3. 7. The emphasis in this extract is on the greatness of human mind. Mu. Va. contrasts the body with the mind and in turn, mind with the world. The structure of this paragraph is rather complex when compared to the other two. The paragraph Unity and sentence Unity in the first two extracts are certainly better than the present one.

4. 0. *Mu. Vavian Style*: Dr. Mu. Va. who wrote more than 80 volumes of books in various fields such as novels, short stories, essays, biographies, literary criticism, linguistics, etc., is a fore-most writer and a revered scholar in Tamil Nadu. He has formed an excellent style of his own in prose. His style has the essential qualities such as simplicity, clarity, brevity and readability. Hence Mu. Vavian style can unquestionably be considered best representative of the 20th century prose.

Notes

1. See 'Phonological Aspects of Style' in *Style in Language*, p. 109.
2. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in the *Theory of Literature* clearly express as follows:

'Stylistics, of course, cannot be pursued successfully without a thorough grounding in general linguistics....'

Theory of Literature, p. 177.

3. I would like to quote a few lines from *Papers on Literature-Models and Methods*, p. 77.
 'To know the style well and to ask what it reveals is therefore to get to know the man better.'
4. For a detailed discussion on *etukai* and *mōgai*, see *Advanced Studies in Tamil Prosody*, and *Tamil Prosody through the Ages*.
5. See note 4.
6. See *Pulamai* Vol. 1, No. 3. p. 52.
7. See 'Sandhi' in *Studies in Tamil Linguistics*, pp. 56-73.
8. There are several instances of this kind in *Alli*, a novel by Dr. Mu. Va. They are not analysed in this paper for lack of space.
9. See *Nannul Nūṟpā* 146-149, and also *A History of Tamil Language*, pp. 175-79.
10. 'Generative Grammars and the concept of Literary Style' in *Linguistics and Literary Style*, p. 276.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
12. I would like to quote here what Louis T. Milic says about connectives in his essay 'Connectives in Swift's Prose style.'
 'Good writers must always be concerned about the appropriateness of their connectives'
 Linguistics and Literary Style, p. 244.
13. Strictly speaking, a perfect grammar does not allow us to drop any item in a sentence if that item is not syntactically recoverable. There may be a few exceptions in stories and novels.
14. In modern Tamil when a noun functions as object of a sentence, the accusative case marker is obligatory (1) if the noun refers to a human being and (2) if the noun is preceded by a relative participle. This rule sometimes fails to operate in the language of Mu. Va.
15. The following is a principle proposed by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge in their essay 'The Graces of Prose.'
 'The same word should not be so often used in the same sentence or paragraph that it becomes tedious.'
 —Modern Essays on writing and style, p. 241.
16. *Literary Appreciation*, p. 195.

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DR. MU. VA.—A FEW REMINISCENCES

*Thiru M. Navaneethakrishnan**

A tall willowy figure; the face reflecting the still clearness of a mountain lake; eyes radiating brilliance; the look which compels the guilty to shy away; the willingness to guide even the most ignorant; an innate kindness reflected in the eyes; the ready smile untouched by guile, the aversion for hypocrisy, the calm unruffled nature even when attending to the most taxing problems—this is the sketch the mind's eye sees, when one thinks of Dr. Mu. Va.

I have known and respected him as my teacher, admired him as a great Tamil scholar and as the Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University. More than all this, he had ever been my well wisher.

He led an exemplary life; he was a mine of all virtues. He was like a banyan tree, whose root was wisdom, leaves love for humanity and supporting roots good manners. Like the banyan tree he sheltered all who came to him for help.

Gandhian in Thought and Action

He was a Gandhian in thought and action. Even when he was hard pressed for time, he never refused to meet people, who came to him for help. One day I called on him at his house around 8.00 P.M. He had been attending an important meeting. When he reached home it was already 10 P.M.

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He had to leave for some other place by 3.30 in the morning. There were three including me waiting to see him. Even then he did not show any impatience in his words. After sending off the other two men, he turned to me and asked softly, 'Why did not you phone to me that you were coming; I would have told you to come some other day, so that we could talk a little leisurely' when I left the house it was already 11.30. He was willing to sacrifice even his rest for the sake of others.

Sympathetic and Patient

I have never seen him use harsh words. Even when people behaved in an infuriating manner, he never lost his temper. Even if his patience was tried, he would only say pleadingly 'Please, don't....'. His humanity expressed itself in his sympathetic approach to people; his culture in his manners. He never returned evil for evil.

He treated everyone with difference; even his servants were treated with respect. He addressed even people much younger to him in respectful plural. If people wronged him he never abused them; at the most he would say 'he is not good' (*Pollātavan*).

Photographic Memory

He had a photographic memory. He could remember names, dates and incidents very clearly. He took personal interest in everyone. He remembered the names of everyone in my family, including my 96 year grandmother living in my native village. He remembered even the folk song, my grandmother recited to him some time back. He has often surprised me by recalling dates and incidents unfalteringly. He never forgot anyone introduced to him. He was always willing to listen to the problems of others and try to solve them as if he belonged to their family.

Humour

He had a good sense of humour. He refrained from hurting anybody. During the Seminar on Akilan's novels held in the University, he offered me what he called 'bone soup'. Being a vegetarian by birth and principle, I refused it. He

went on insisting that I must take it. I couldn't understand why he should force me to drink it. Seeing my consternation he smiled and said, 'I had a cup myself; Mr. Ki. Va. Ja. had some; Why not you?' Only then I understood that he meant — '*Elumpukku Valimai tarum muruṅkai* soup' and not '*Elumpāl ākiya* soup'.

He had a great respect for Gandhi, Vivekananda, Thayumanavar and Ramathirthar. Like Thayumanavar and Ramathirthar he was an ascetic. He was as simple as Gandhi and as strong willed as Vivekananda. Even when his heart was giving him trouble, he attended the college functions and the convocation as planned. He never allowed physical discomfort to interfere with his work.

When we went to Pondicherry to attend the Tamil Teachers' Conference, he slipped and fell in the bathroom. His knee was badly hurt. But he didn't want anyone to make a fuss over it. He said that it was only a slight hurt. I realised his seriousness only when he was not even able to walk without limping. I forced him to show me the wound and let me dress it. I was shocked to see that the knee was badly swollen. When I looked up at his face, I saw the same smile there. He never wanted to share his suffering with others.

Friend, Philosopher and Guide

He had been a friend, philosopher and guide to countless families like mine. That is why when the furies of nature cruelly snapped the string of pearls—Dr. Mu. Va's life—the scattered pearls found their refuge in the eyes of all the Tamilians.

DR. MU. VA. AS A HUMANITARIAN

*Dr. S. Balachandran**

Dr. M. Varadarajan known as Dr. Mu. Va. in Tamil Nadu, occupies a unique place in the world of Tamil writers. As a writer he was one of the most powerful thinkers and an expert exponent of great ideas and ideals. He produced all his writings not on the basis of 'art for art's sake' but for the redemption of the human society, thanks to his own imagination and fine architectonics. Whatever he produced, whether it was a novel or a short story or a biography or an interpretation of ancient poetry, he was always particular in refining the human sentiments and polishing the emotional complex. According to his concept of art and writing, it is the greatest responsibility of the writers to contribute towards the building up of the humanitarian culture. He was himself a symbol of all good human qualities and a very great humanitarian. Himself being a humanitarian, he has, in some of his writings, given a few clues for us to find out his own humanitarian aspect of life and thinking. In the following passages let us define the term 'Humanitarian' and find out a few important examples in Mu. Va's writings that reflect his humanitarian outlook.

According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, the word 'humanitarian' as adjective, means 'having concern for or helping to improve the welfare and

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happiness of mankind'; as noun, means, 'a person actively engaged in promoting human welfare and social reforms, as a philanthropist.'¹

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, the word 'humanitarian' means: 'one who professes in humanism (Religion of Humanity), visionary philanthropist.'² On this basis, I take the word humanitarian to mean one who is a lover of his fellowmen and is having a deep concern for the welfare and the benevolence of the human society.

Dr. Mu. Va. was a great believer in the universal welfare of the human society as a whole. As he was in his life, so was he a humanitarian in the world of his writings.

His sensitive mind never allowed him to indulge in finding fault with others or for abusing others. He was ready to understand and appreciate the finer qualities of men and women, of his friends and relatives, of the students with whom he was moving for a major part of his life, but ever hesitated to speak about their bad qualities. Even in public meetings, on no occasion, he talked ill of others, or, expressed his emotions against those who differed from him in thought or action, in a vigorous manner. This was because his heart was full of the milk of human kindness.

Coming to his world of letters, we find that he advocates the 'Religion of Humanity' by which he wanted to invoke the spirit of philanthropy in the minds of his readers. Running through the pages we understand that he deals with the subject in two ways. Firstly, he, in his biographical writings, expresses his thought explicitly. Secondly, he infuses through his characters the humanitarian attitude and approach.

In the succeeding paragraphs, let us examine his writings which show him as a great humanitarian.

Single Unity and Purpose

Since Dr. Mu. Va. was having a powerfully strong humanitarian attitude, his writings expressing his quest for the human welfare, assume an equally powerful dynamic quality. At any particular phase, his idea of the human welfare takes

possession of his mind and finds a beautiful expression. In no two phases of his writings do we find a contradiction of expression of his good will towards the human society.

All the ideas reflecting his attitude towards fellowmen, assume a single unity and purpose. In this respect, we, as the readers, find a harmonious pattern. Thus we are to realise a unity running through the diverse expressions of the diverse characters of his writings.

Spirit of Service

Writing about Gandhiji, Dr. Mu. Va. mentions that Gandhiji was a symbol of service and had an abnormal courage to sacrifice even his life for the cause of the human welfare. For example, when there was a terrible chaos and disorder in Bengal once, Gandhiji was working there without any guard or tool of defence. It was this undaunted courage of his spirit of sacrifice that made him ever serve the human society and which earned for him an immortal fame.³

Dr. Mu. Va. is very much impressed by the coordination of word and deed of Mahatma Gandhiji and he creates the same impression upon the mind of the readers. While we travel through his letters and thoughts, we are reminded of the writings of Louis Fischer: 'By doing at all moments what he thought right and not what he thought expedient, or comfortable, or profitable, or popular, or safe, or impressive, Gandhi eliminated the conflicts in his personality and thereby acquired the power to engage in patient, peaceful conflicts with those whom he regarded as doing wrong. He took words and ideas seriously and felt that having accepted a moral precept he had to live it. Then, he could preach it. He preached what he practiced.'⁴

Dr. Mu. Va. makes *Meykaṇṣār* of his *Peṇṇamaṇam* say in the temple discourse that *Tirunāvukkaracu* was having a tool called *Uḷavāram* (grass-cutter) which symbolized the life of service for others; that Gandhiji was having the charka which also pointed to the principle of selfless service; that men can find out the salvation for all human problems only through love and service of which *Tirunāvukkaracu*, Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji stood examples.⁵

In the drama Doctor Alli, *Aravāḷi*, who embodies in himself all finer qualities of human culture, speaks to Alli that when he saw *Inṇavalli*, a very simple girl with no ornaments, he was reminded of *Maṇimēkalai*; and in the present context of the human world, if many women live like *Maṇimēkalai*, the world of women folk would be reformed; the world of men folk also would be refined.⁶

It is to be noted here that *Maṇimēkalai* is the heroine of the Tamil Epic called *Maṇimēkalai* and she is highly honoured for her simplicity of life and sincerity of service for the poor and sick, for the down-trodden, for the deaf and blind.

Mu. Va., while writing to Aracu, says that he feels very much proud of writing a letter from the Vivekananda Sabha of Colombo, the place wherein Swami Vivekananda landed after spreading the spiritual glory of India in America, a country noted for its immense material glory. He does not look upon as a hero, one who, by his gun or sword kills thousands of men in a battle field; he looks upon as a hero only that person who stands for noble ideas and, by his selfless service, uplifts the welfare of thousands of men and women.⁷

Sympathy for the Good that suffer

Mu. Va. often talks about the conflicting forces in the human world. On one side, he finds the good forces and on the other, the bad ones. Good men as well as bad people are thriving to make a living. He puts the idea like this: 'Since long ago, in the forest, as tigers and foxes live, deers and hares also live.'⁸ Thereby he sums up the constant struggle between the divinity of the human society and its beastliness. People who are gentle and kind and who hesitate to indulge in immoral activities, are squeezed and tortured and even killed by those who are arrogant, atrocious and utterly inhuman. According to Mu. Va. this is not a good order of the human society. He sympathises with all his compassion for the good people that are destined to suffer under the tyranny of a few wicked fellows.

The human society should be founded on such an order in which goodness is not punished and badness does not win.

Whatever a man does, that should contribute towards the total well being and culture of the human society. Mu. Va. thinks that only to achieve these great ideals, *Tiruvalluvar* wrote an ethical book; *Ilāṅkō Aṭikaḷ* composed his epic; *Āḷvārs* and *Nāyaṇmārs* sang the glory of the Divine; *Tāyumanāvar* gave the message of Truth; *Ramalinga Swamikal* got saturated in God; Mahavira advocated Non-violence; Buddha taught compassion for the living things; Jesus lived for love. Mohammed Nabi proclaimed the monotheistic worship of the Lord. Tolstoy disliked life in extravagance. Karl Marx opposed to Capitalism; Gandhiji protested against accumulation of machinery. Everyone of these great people did his best contribution towards the total world thought and culture only because of goodwill towards the human society.

Respect for the Individual

Mu. Va. like Bernard Shaw, has always preserved a high degree of honour and respect for the living force in a human body. That force should be properly maintained, organized, developed and channelized through different aspects of knowledge and wisdom. It is because of this attitude that he never expressed his violent emotions against any individual. However bad a person may be, he should be properly instructed as to how to rectify himself. Such a disposition on his part was mainly due to his respect for the individual. That is why he accepts that it is the greatest of all sins to spoil the living force of a man, by putting him in a jail.¹⁰

He makes one of his characters talk about Gandhiji in the following sense:

Great men like Gandhiji did never believe in dictatorial attitude towards others. They more believed in the principle of freedom for others. They neither became slaves nor tried to make others slaves. Only those who give equal right for others, deserve to be called as 'men'. But, unfortunately, we can find only people acting like dogs which start to bark at us when we get frightened but go away when we stare at them and throw a stone. Once we begin to act with an antagonistic spirit, people who oppose us, become silent.¹¹

'aith in Forgiveness

Dr. Mu. Va. hates the habit of one's displaying enmity against his fellow beings. Man is helpless before the machines but ventures to do harm to men around him. When he comments on some of the important ideas of George Bernard Shaw, he exposes into humour the ruthless nature of man. He says: 'No man is ventured to destroy a machine even though it cuts off one's legs and hands. But a man gets very angry and even tries to kill another man who had done a small mischief or crime.'¹²

He thinks that one should make more friends and not enemies. One should not indulge in evil activities even if his enemies have done mischief. In *Maṇaccāṇṇu* the friend of *Tiruvēṇkaṣam* says: To rectify even the enemies is a Gandhian way of life.¹³

It is the attitude of Mu. Va. that we should dislike the bad qualities of man and not the man himself.¹⁴

Thoughts on Individual Obligations for the Human Welfare

Dr. Mu. Va. thinks that man's obligations in day-to-day activities should be mainly concerned with the thoughts of the welfare of the human community and should contribute towards its total well being. In his play, *Kaṣamai Enṇē* we come across a woman by name *Aṇṇammā* who is more interested in ceremonials and the external ornaments of the Lord *Vēṇkateṣvara*. When this woman talks about the cruelties of the dowry system, *Kamalanāṭar* replies thus: 'Madam! You cannot put the blame on the world outside alone because you yourself worship more the gold than the God of the Temple. Suppose a woman with learning and culture comes to you in a cotton sari of Rs. eight, and with no gold chains, would you honour her? No. At the same time, if a woman comes with no knowledge and culture but with diamond ring and ornaments and in silk sari with all pomp and glitter, you would stand up and honour her with folded hands. Acts like this done by individuals like you, cause the total degeneration in the society.'¹⁵

By this dialogue, Dr. Mu. Va. makes the readers feel that all the activities of men and women should be centred around the welfare of the entire human society. Since he is a well wisher of mankind, he, as a humanitarian, has introduced such dialogues.

Anything that is against the welfare of the human society is to be condemned. One, who is getting bribes, is doing evil to the society. Mu. Va. makes Muttu in *Maṇaccāṇṟu* say that instead of getting bribes one can die of hunger.¹⁶

On Thiru V. Kalyanasundaranar

The chief characteristics of Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaranar who was a great humanitarian of Tamil Nadu, known as Thiru Vi. Ka. are referred to by Mu. Va. when Mu. Va. writes about Thiru Vi. Ka. in the most touching manner, we are able to sense the humanistic emotions of Mu. Va. also. Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaranar had a very gentle nature, was soft and mild, and never did any evil to anybody, even to his enemies.¹⁷

Mu. Va. points out that Thiru Vi. Ka. had great love for Thilakar and Gandhiji. Once Thiru Vi. Ka. had the chance of translating the speeches of Gandhiji. Thereafter Gandhi would refer to Thiru Vi. Ka. as a translator. Thiru Vi. Ka. is said to be one who has seen Gandhiji as an embodiment of love; as an embodiment of Truth; as an embodiment of tolerance. And, hence, he made an appeal to the British people not to judge Gandhiji by the legal laws of man; but by the divine laws of Jesus Christ.¹⁸

Aspiration towards Universal Love

Mu. Va. seems to have been interested in reading the songs of Ramalinga Swamigal who aspired for the establishment of New Order where all human beings would be living in perfect peace and where all their actions would be governed by love and compassion. And he has made one of his characters in *Kayamai*, *Nallayyan* recite one of the songs of *Tiru aruṭpā* the meaning of which runs as follows:¹⁹

After a careful and thorough consideration of all facts, I have come to the conclusion that the heart of the man who feels

without any kind of refraction of mind, all souls are equal to his own and all have the equal right and will to live as he wants to live, and holds it to be his foremost duty to see them all live in happiness, is the place wherein my Lord dances in His Immaculate, miniature Form of Supreme Intelligence. I am very much inclined to serve at the feet of such benign men, of pure knowledge.²⁰

Compassion for the Poor and Sick

On another occasion, Mu. Va. refers to the remarks of Gandhiji that he could not talk about God before the poor people because bread was to them God. And unless they are provided with food for the stomach there is no possibility of talking about God. He also quotes the *Kural* couplet that there is no use of one's knowledge if he does not care for the sufferings of others.²¹

Mu. Va. does not fail to refer to the service of Gandhiji for the downtrodden, because working for the lower classes of the human society is the best expression of one's humanitarian attitude. He says that Gandhiji looked upon those temples wherein Harijans could not enter, as snakes ant-hill and that is why Gandhiji once said that there was no God in the Hindu temples.²²

When he concludes his book entitled *Gandhi Anṇal* with the sayings of the Mahatma about Truth and God, about Service and Sacrifice, he, like Romain Rolland, inspires us with the idea that 'Gandhi makes himself the orchestra leader of his oceans of men.'²³

Quest for the betterment of the Human Society

Dr. Mu. Va. also gives his idea of how the human society should be cleansed of all the parochial and petty differences of caste and creed, colour and race. He thinks that dying for the differences of external religions, is utter foolishness. This idiotic and foolish part of the human society should be eradicated and the society be reconstructed on the two great principles of simplicity and sincerity, which would, ultimately, lead towards the total welfare of the human society.

Appreciating the Religion of Man

Dr. Mu. Va. insists that the sectarian religion should not stand in the way of the total human welfare. Beyond the differences of religion, man should be given the primary importance. In this respect, he believed, like Rabindranath Tagore, in the 'Religion of Man'.²⁴

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DR. MU. VA. AS AN ESSAYIST

*Selvi. Annie Thomas**

Dr. Mu. Va. a scholar well known to the Tamil Populace has contributed his share to Tamilology through his essays also.

The essay, a modern literary genre, is 'a composition of moderate length, usually in prose, which deals in an easy cursory way with the chosen subject and with the relation of that subject to the writer.'¹ Of the three varieties of prose, viz., descriptive, explanatory or expository and emotive, the essay belongs to the first type.²

Hudson explains it as follows, and it may be taken as a somewhat clear definition: 'essay, same as assay means a trial of a subject, or an attempt towards it and not in the least a thorough and final examination.'³

This general outline of the essay is far too wanting in itself to include the various varieties of meritorious essays of Dr. Mu. Va.

As a form of writing, the essay is used extensively by Dr. Mu. Va. They can be grouped as below in view of their contents. (1) literary essays based on one or more verses of the classics and other literatures (*Maṇal viṣu, Naṇṇinai viruntu*, etc.) (2) essays on language and linguistics (*Eṭuttin katai, Moṭik kaṣṣuraika*), etc.) and (3) essays on general topics (*Kalvi*,

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Maṇṇi matippu etc.). This article deals with the essays of the third type alone.

Dr. Mu. Va. is a born essayist, being able to write on any subject with penetration and sympathetic understanding and tackle the problems with utmost skill and care and come to reasonable conclusions. He puts down his thoughts and ideas in an amiable, amicable, appreciable way so as to bring the reader into its folds and make him think further in that line. Thus he not only expresses his thoughts, but also sharpens the reader's power of thinking. No overdoing and no lack of explanation is found in his doing this. He is a talented writer having an inclination towards the upbringing of society and reforming the systems of education and government rule. Not only in his essays but in other prose works also, this aspect is revealed.

The eleven works⁴ under consideration are all collections of his essays published in magazines and journals. In some collections, the periods of composition are given, though not very exactly.⁵ As the exact period of writing the essays, or the first publication of the essay collections were not available, the evolution of the author's thought, as a whole, is not attempted at in this paper. Even then, we may roughly say that he dealt with different aspects of education in his former essays and with political speculation in the latter ones and with social and philosophic ideas and ideals in even later ones.

According to Peter Westland, 'the only legitimate aim of the essay is to give pleasure. If it has any other aim, it becomes a moral lesson, or a sketch or a story or some other definable and established kind of literature.'⁶ But, when we consider the essays of Dr. Mu. Va. we find that they are neither written by the author to pass time, nor intended to be a pastime for the reader. The aim of the author in writing these essays and the intentions behind are revealed by his notes given as preface to a few collections.⁷

The subjects treated, the manner of expression and the way of concluding with morals also hold concrete proof to the above fact. So we must consider these essays not only as descriptive prose but also as explanatory and propositional ones.

Structure

The essay collections are named after the first essay and by the common or major subject matter dealt within or idea stressed in it.⁸ The latter is sometimes the title of one of the essays (other than the first) found in the book also.⁹

The compilation of essays into different volumes is done with planning and apt selection and not collected at random. Articles on connected subjects or different aspects of one subject are classed together in one volume. As the compilations might have naturally been done at different periods, more than one book deals with a particular subject or its aspect. A few collections are formed on basis other than the subject, like the form of expression or exposition and mode of narration.¹⁰

These essay-works range from 35 to 214 pages having 5 to 34 essays in them.¹¹ On the average, majority of the collections have 10 to 12 essays in about 100 pages. In total there are 185 essays in approximately 1400 pages.

Content

According to Robert Lynd, an essay can be on something, anything and even on nothing. But Dr. Mu. Va's essays are all close packed with grave subjects, great ideas, didactic material and philosophic matter. The subjects and aspects dealt with by him are various and varied. As we have noted earlier, education, society, philosophy and politics form the basis of these essays.

Education and its different aspects are given much consideration and dealt with descriptively. A complete work, named *kalvi* having 27 essays in total is allotted for this subject. Other volumes have a few essays in this field. From the bare necessities of literacy through the different set backs and problems in the systems of education, medium of instruction, schools, teachers and examinations, to the highlights of learning, the author gives apt explanations, and the genuine discussions lead to possible remedies. These reveal the personality of Dr. Mu. Va. as an efficient educationalist and considerate reformer, who has entered the field and viewed it from all the angles and studied in person the different spheres of education.

Being a linguist and a lover of Tamil, the author studies the language problem of our country in connection with education as well as society. The lack of love towards and facilities to learn through our mother tongue Tamil, bilingualism, trilingual basis and burdened multilingual study are all dealt with at length. The work *Molipparru* is worth mentioning in this context.

Regarding society, he has extensively studied its various aspects and characteristics. The society, its unity and diversity, the individual as a member of society, rights and duties of a citizen, defects and deeds that degrade and form a decayed diseased society, the need for reform and maintaining a high standard, room for equality and liberty, social events, customs and superstitions are a few of the many aspects handled by Dr. Mu. Va. The tillers and farmers who form the back bone of the society are given enough thought in the essays. Not only for the betterment of society, but also for the flourishing growth of our country, agriculture and happy as well as contented agriculturists are basic and primary. The essayist has given due consideration to the women folk who form a prominent part of society. The collection *Peṇmai Vāḷka* has all its 12 essays on women, their position in Tamil society, aspects of equality, love and matrimony, and modesty and liberty.

Just as he dealt with matters regarding society and social life, Dr. Mu. Va. has given enough thought to politics, peoples' rule and problems regarding them. The basis of a smooth-government—unity, equality, impartiality, freedom of thought, selflessness etc., the government by the people, handling the enemies, serving the populace, abolition of party politics that breeds hero worship and blind faith, eradication of present election systems, regional classifications on the basis of language in our country—are all studied descriptively with deep concern and discussed with fore thought. *Nāṭṭupparru*, *Araciyal Alaikal*, *Aramum Araciyalum* are complete works on this subject.

Apart from these subjects, the writer meets with more in thought matters on man's worldly life, his future and the connected philosophic characteristics. The inner qualities—mental strength, culture, self control, faith in goodness, virtue

etc., broadmindedness, clear thinking—that form a perfect person and mould a perfect life, the bad qualities that mar a good quiet life—ego, selfishness, indiscipline, laziness, competition, non co-operation, corruption, slavery, servility—and result in chaos, the place of truth and falsehood and the unwanted praising and blaming on the part of the populace are some of the few connected subjects discussed elaborately by Dr. Mu. Va.

A member of society, the author has handled with ease, other common problems like comforts to lower class railway passengers and temple entrance to low caste folks.

In toto, we may say that Dr. Mu. Va. has written three major types of essays in these collections: (1) One for the school going child—the essays in *Kannuṭaiya Vāṭu*. These are mere informative ones on Our Country, festivals, postal system and similar others and instructive ones on cleanliness, greatness of literacy and such others. (2) Another for the common man, the literate public—the essays in *Kuruviṭṭōr*. These are more in the form of a skit with a thick sugar coating of imaginative texture to attract the attention first and then give the bitter pill—moral advice. (3) The third one is for the learned and intelligent public and the understanding thinkers who can perceive the reformer behind the words. This last variety covers a wide field and has comparatively more essays.

Expression

Distinguishable forms of expression seen in the above classification of essays are also worth mentioning. Those of the first type are given in a very simple style, as a conversation between a school boy and an illiterate man. The author succeeds in showing that an educated boy is capable of imparting knowledge to an older person. The author himself is in the boy's clothing and answers the man's questions, and without adding his colour smoothly gives proper advice at suitable places.

The second variety has affinities towards the first one in the aspect of conversation. Here, objects of Nature are shown to converse with and listen to the author. In one out of the eleven essays, the author's friend deciphers a dog's barking.¹²

It seems that the author uses this form as a technique to give expression to his thoughts and ideas. Here we are reminded of Montaigne who preferred the intonation of a pretentious conversation. When revealing that the human being is far meaner than the animals and objects he despises and when pointing out his injustice to Nature, the author figures himself as that human being, so as to prevent direct impact on the reader. Though the aim is to impart advice, the apt manner of giving it, shapes into this form of expression. Stepping off from the tradition of ending an essay with a moral, Dr. Mu. Va. gives it concealed and contained in these essays. This takes away from the reader the feeling that he is perusing a didactic literary piece.

The third one is more direct than the above two. The subjective tendency and personal touch found in the above are only partially present here, though according to the critics, a true essay is essentially personal.¹³ This personal touch is revealed by certain expressive characteristics in his essays. Using of first person in the narration is an important one. In a few contexts, the whole essay is given in this manner; in others, the anecdotes or incidents used in the course of the essay reveal this autobiographical aspect.¹⁴ Other than this direct method, we experience a personal touch in certain other environments also. When he puts forth an idea, the manner of expression and the approach to the subject help us to perceive this. The absence of quotations and explanation of other people's views make the reader feel so. And also, as he preached what he practiced, his individual personality is revealed in his essays making them relevantly subjective. Another point to be noted here is that a certain contexts the essayist includes the reader and at certain other points addresses him, thus revealing his own presence.¹⁵

Majority of the essays that fall under this third category are objective in character. Third person is used in the narration of these essays, thus avoiding the personal touch. These are didactic ones instructive in intention. In this manner, the author keeps a respectable distance from the reader, who may not very well appreciate or expect a moral lesson.

In general, the essays of Dr. Mu. Va. extend from two to

thirty-five pages, though majority of them are contained in about five to ten pages (a page has between 125 and 150 words).¹⁶ The characteristic of brevity is found in some, while others are longer and elaborate. These remind us of Bacon, whose essay consists of a few pages of concentrated wisdom, with little elaboration of the ideas expressed and, of Macaulay and Herbert Spencer whose essays are really small books.¹⁷ All the available long essays are on politics and are given together in one collection, viz., *Aṛamum Araciyaalum*.

Presentation

These essays are named on different basis: (1) the subject matter (2) the anecdote that forms the core (3) simile used (4) phrase handed (5) starting phrase (6) proverb or idiom that comes handy in explanation (7) question that is answered at length, etc.¹⁸ Two different essays have the same heading, viz. *Naṭunilaimai*.¹⁹

In presenting his views in an interesting manner, the author illustrates them with ample examples and anecdotes. Most of these anecdotes and incidents seem to be and are shown to be the author's own experience in life. Rarely they are handled as the experience of a third person or as a general happening. It is not easy for us to distinguish the real one and the imaginary.

Articles such as *Putumeruku* (U.P.) are very light, reminding us of Addison's. *Kaṣci Araciyaal* (A. Ar.), *Cāṭṭai* (N.P.) and such others are descriptive in nature. *Vēru Vaṭi Illaiyā* (M.M.) *Camutāya Nōykal* (M.M.) and the like are really discussions. *Kuṟai Pulappaṭumā* (U.P.) *Tōlvi Yārukku* (A.Al.), etc., are explanatory in character. *Mutal kāraṇam* (M.M.), *Veṟi* (A.Al.) and similar ones have an expository tendency. Those like *Peṭṭiyum Cāviyum* (U.P.) *Kārrāṭi* (A.Al.) etc., are illustrative in feature. *Munṇērram* (P.V.) *Nalla Camutāyam* (M.M.) and many such are evaluative ones. *Potumai Aṛam* (N.V.) *Urimaiyum Kaṭamaiyum* (N.V.) *Aṭimai Vilariku* (P.V.) etc., are instructive, while those like *Uyyum Vaṭi* (M.M.) *Ēṇ inta tayakkam* (K) *Aṭimai Manappāṇmai* (M.P.) are accusative having a questioning attitude. Rarely a few are enumerative like *Viḷakkīṇ iru!* (K).

There is variety in starting the essays also. Some commence

with a question; others with a verse of few lines. In some an anecdote or an imaginary or common incident forms the start. A few that shape into conversations, start with an addressing.²⁰ But most of them begin abruptly, showing no idea of what is dealt with in the essay. Mostly the ideas are not introduced at the very beginning.

As the author proceeds with the subject, a few characteristics of the body of an essay are revealed. Clarification of the matter with apt sub headings is seen in a few.²¹ Rarely some articles are sparingly sprinkled with rare quotations. In some respects, the whole body is constructed in the form of an anecdote or an incident used as a peg to his deliberations. In certain others many anecdotes are handled successively. (P.76 M.M.; P.73 K). In one such case, the author sums them up later and studies them in such a way as to help him with the subject discussed (P. 31 N.P.). Similarly on certain other occasions various examples are given to prove or clarify one point.²² Stanzas and lines of verses are also handled by Dr. Mu. Va. to execute the same purpose.²³

Being instructive in aim the essays mostly end in moralizing vein, indirectly or directly by quoting a moral. A strong criticism or a caution is quite common at the end of the articles. Rarely they come to a stop with a verse, a quotation or a question revealing the aim. A solemn wish in the form of a blessing or benediction also comes at the close of an essay.²⁴

Style

A few prominent points may be noted regarding the style of these essays. We have already mentioned about the conversational aspect and the illustrations with anecdotes and similar ones. The system of successive handling of questions and answers is seen now and then (P. 120 N.P.). Numbering the points so as to give clarity is another aspect.²⁵ Usage of phrases like *eṣuttukkāṭṭāka* (=for example—P. 68 M.M.; P. 73 K.) and *vaittukkoḷvōm* (=let us consider—P. 138 M.M.) exhibit another factor of the style of the essays. Just as in the conversations of his fictions, Dr. Mu. Va. uses colloquial words like *ēmpā*, *vēṇṭā*, etc., in the essays also. In total we may say that the language handled is simple, clear and effective.

Dr. Mu. Va. has given very many valuable suggestions in his essays. He expects the reforms to come into practice and give results immediately or at least in the near future, lest it may be too late. A few of the suggestions have really come into force, in his own time. The introduction of semester system in education, starting Tamil medium classes in colleges, abolition of Hindi as a compulsory language in schools, etc., hold proof to the realization of his objectives envisaged through these pages.

We find the essayist as a philosopher, a man of morals and an ethist; an educationalist and a linguist. He is a well informed politician who has not entered that field, but questioned its defects (P. 80 N.P.), and a patriot, who had staunch belief in the greatness and superiority of the Tamils (P. 120 N.P.).

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Verse—*Uṟuṟiyāḷu* (A.AI—11)
Address—All articles of K.V.
21. All the essays of A.Ar. are such.
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Quotation—*Payyapṟṟu uṟaiṟṟu* (M.P.)
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REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS OF DR. MU. VA.

*Dr. Maa. Selvaraasan**

Revolution means a fundamental change in everything. Any superficial change cannot be called as revolution. Any school of thought, organisation or an institution or anything that exists in society if it brings a total transformation in the society, only then we call it revolution. The great revolutionary of Tamilnadu, *Periyār E. V. Rāmasāmi* describes revolution thus:

‘What is revolution? A thing when it changes from its customs and usages that too. When the change takes place in an upside down transformation, it can be revolution.’¹

Here it is important to point out that what was the thought on revolution of the author about whom the article deals:

‘Let us note the word revolution [in Tamil *Puraṭai*]. The word literally means: turn over, undergoing a change. Since this word used to signify great events that were the cause for great political change it acquired a sense of political significance: therefore now the word gathered a new sense of meaning which it did not have in olden times.’²

Therefore, we notice that many have pointed out that revolution means a fundamental change.

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Was *Mu. Va.* a revolutionary? Was he a person who had revolutionary ideas that could solve the problems of the society? Whether he has infused revolutionary ideas in his books is itself a question to be raised! It is not a question that can be easily answerable.

Those who observed *Mu. Va.*'s solemn appearance could not even imagine that he was a revolutionary. From his brilliant face of smile and peace one can't read the slightest appearance of revolution. But revolution is not something that takes its shape in the outward appearance.

Mu. Va. has the intelligence to look into any matter of the society at its depth. He will not arrive at a conclusion looking at things superficially. Any problem that falls on his alert mind, deep analysis will surely find a right solution.

There is no doubt in the fact that *Mu. Va.* is an outstanding thinker. Those of us who read his books will realise the fact that in the universal concepts that take their form in his thinking, many revolutionary ideas are inherent. It should be made clear whether *Mu. Va.* the social thinker is a revolutionary or a reformer. We can state that he is a social reformer with revolutionary ideas.

The time during, when *Mu. Va.* was ushering in as a writer was a time when some old problems were passing out, but at the same time new ones were evolving. The people had their independence, but still they were to struggle through many issues. Independence, as such, through brought out a political change in the whole country, but in the daily life of the people no radical change was brought-out. Under these circumstances *Mu. Va.* thinks about the society. In the thoughts expressed as a result of this thinking one can find many revolutionary ideas.

Mu. Va. has not even given a little place to the emotion of anger. Since he knew that anger will kill knowledge, he did not give room to it. But even he after having watched the corruptions and wickedness in the society gives expression to his emotion in anger in the following words.

'Dead bodies must be hanged in the streets: only then, this country can be saved.'³

This is not a mere emotional expression of anger at the society's condition; let us not be deceiving ourselves by thinking so; but we can say this thought took form at the height of wisdom. In this thought we can feel the pulse of the saying of Mao.⁴

Mu. Va., the literary master wanted to see real total change in the social, economical and political structure of the society. We must know that he directed his writings towards that good.

In the individual's life, the old path may be mostly good; this I appreciate through experience; there is no total good in it, but mostly! But there is real need of reformation in most of the social, economical and political spheres. In these aspects, there are many shortcomings in our forefathers' path. Further, after the scientific growth, our forefathers' path has become almost useless. It is the failure in not bringing out the necessary reformation in it, that has resulted in wide spread growth of corruption.⁵

By the above statement we notice that *Mu. Va.* is pointing out the changes that must immediately take place in the country in political, economical and social fields.

As far as politics was concerned, *Mu. Va.* aspired for democratic rule. But he explains a lot to remove the ignorance of the people in democratic values. He feels that we are not really enjoying the democratic rule of life. He strongly rebukes the present day democracy. The party system and the election method are real enemies of democracy, he felt.

'It will take sometime for the world to realise that party system is an obstacle to democracy.'⁶

Thus he predicts that in the future there will come a time when the party system, will be unnecessary for democracy. Further he declares,

'We should realise that only when the rule of the party and the rule of money disappears from the arena that there will be real democratic rule.'⁷

By this statement, it is clear that in his thinking, in the present method of election under the basis of political party system,

there is no equality of right among the masses. This idea appears to be indeed revolutionary.

Mu. Va. wants to protect the individuals right; but he believes that it is impossible by party election in the following words:

The basis of democratic government is the equality of right. Election destroys the individuality of man; oppresses the conscience. It increases the party feeling and class discipline. Therefore in any organisation that grows out of election only the party right live predominantly; individual freedom could not be there; In that condition equality of right becomes meaningless.⁸

He further rebukes the same position:

'Certain capable leaders, by carefully taking away the individual's rights from many, and make them just like signal posts and thereby killing their individual conscience attain to high offices. But in this endeavour the public life of the people is spoiled. The countries do not prosper; but only the parties prosper.'⁹

He is worried that honest people could not win in this election.¹⁰

Mu. Va's desire was that the rule of good people must continue. For this he suggest the method of election by discretion or propriety. He states,

'That discretionary election that helps for the righteous cultivation of conscience and thereby paves the way for productive work must spread throughout the world.'¹¹

'When will the discretionary election that would help to cultivate the growth of knowledge, love and the election according to will come to be practiced in this country'.¹²

We wonder whether the discretionary election and election according to will can come to this country in the present circumstances. But *Mu. Va's* thought that it would be possible to have such elections through the Gandhian way might be a possibility. *Mu. Va.* believes strongly that the elections conducted under the basis of money and constituency paves

the way for corruption and ruin. He is convinced that by them 'that rule, authority and influence and all these will not easily come to those aspire for truth and good.'¹³

Even if a good man is put in a tempting position it is doubtful whether he would be honest in his job. Therefore he suggested,

'That if a person is elected for the second term and the electorate found him useless and if they don't want him to continue, then, the people who elected the particular person must have the right to recall such a person.'¹⁴

Mu. Va. thinks that in the democratic system it is a new path. Only when this clear right is given to people 'that people will be in a progressive position to change their political leaders like changing coolies.'¹⁵

Mu. Va. likes the society where there is no economic warfare. He emphasises the society where there is no money hunting¹⁶ and that in it socialistic pattern must blossom. He states,

'If one can work one can live. In the social system there should be the conviction that only people who could not work are to worry about life. But we do not have such a social system.'¹⁷

By this we note the kind of society that he desires for the country. Further he says.

In the society, the state of people who have no food for tomorrow, no work, no income should be changed. There should be the atmosphere that for all those who are born in this country, the assurance of prosperity of life should be there. And this is the best way to magnify the value of the land.¹⁸

From the statement above, we clearly see his view on communism. Because of this bias he had in communism, he declared that any party that comes to power in future should accept this ideology of communism.¹⁹ He feels that the various political parties that have the common economic philosophy of communism must have come together and worked and that if they have done so then communism would have

come into the country long before; but since the various parties fought between themselves they only strengthened capitalism.²⁰

Mu. Va. explains that the society must be set up in such a way that there is no money play. He clearly shows how the money-mindedness vex the society. In the society where money is overcome human life will be peaceful and blessed. Note his words:

Big fish swallows the little fish and grows. It is wickedness. Some deceive many and become rich and this is wickedness. One man starves and the other eats luxuriously. These are the devils that vex the society. The basic reason for all these diseases in the society is the ups and downs in the economy of the country because of money competition.²¹

Mu. Va. thinks though money is created by the government, but it is the poor people who produce its real asset.²² Then the poor does not enjoy it; instead it fills the iron-safe of the rich. The present society values not the real labour but money. Because of this there is a disproportionate growth in the society; the gulf between the rich and the poor becomes wider and therefore there is no place for truth and honesty in the society. These differences must be eliminated. Then, what is the way for it?

If the need of money is reduced and its rule is reduced and like the barter system if the labour change of value comes then everybody will be reformed.²³

The question is, is it possible? The labour change of value is the real revolution.

Mu. Va. was a learned and refined scholar. He was a professor who spent most of his life among students. Therefore he had the best opportunity to understand the problems of their education and life. He felt that the present day education spoiled both their mind and body. He had expressed his thoughts that would produce revolutionary changes in the field of education. He says:

The present day education does not create sympathy on the poor in the minds of students. It does not kindle them to observe how the society is keeping the downtrodden and the

poor. Whatever be the condition of others. I must live a life of plenty and prosperity is the kind of selfish attitude that our present day education is instilling in students.²⁴

Mu. Va. has the revolutionary mind that wanted a change in the structure of the society so as to have equality among people and that education must aim at achieving this object.

The path, *Mu. Va.* shows in education is that it must change in such a way to be useful to life. He writes:

In these days the college students study late until night and spoil their health. These education and examination systems must be changed. We should have the education that goes hand in hand with life. The value of education just by turning page after page must be reduced.²⁵

In the present educational system, examinations is given first place. Examination appears to be the norm of educational qualification. *Mu. Va.* had well studied the defects in examination systems and its burden upon the students. He remarks:

Why should they create and insist this burden on memory. When it is not either directly or indirectly useful?²⁶

It is indeed worth to consider this question carefully.

Today's problem is whether the students should have examination or not. As far as examination is concerned *Mu. Va.* wanted a great change in its present method. He thinks that if one change the examination system according to the culture of the country we would indeed achieve very good progress.²⁷

There is a question whether religion is necessary for human life. Revolutionaries like Lenin thought that religion destroys man's knowledge. But *Mu. Va.* believes that real religion helps life. But he also points out that people are often enchanted to think ceremonialism is religion. His idea is that we should not be deceived by outward show.

Consider the following thoughts of *Mu. Va.*

'One who thinks that society is God's family and forgets at least a little of himself and renders some help to others is a believer in God. One who always thinks of himself and lives a self-boasting life is an atheist.'²⁸

'Scientific facts are not made known by stories. Likewise religious facts are not necessarily to be made known by miracles.'²⁹

'The contents of the Puranas are not things that really happened.'³⁰

'Ceremony and worship are steps established for higher spiritual paths.'³¹

'People believe that blind life is the path to heaven.'³²

These are few of *Mu. Va.*'s revolutionary thoughts on religion.

He desired simplicity in everything. He was Gandhian in this principle. He was of the conviction that marriages must be simple and without enormous expenditure. Think of the following ideas:

'For a marriage ten people on the bridegroom's side and ten on the bride's side will do.'³³

'The foolish habit of sending wedding invitations to everybody and compelling them to attend the marriage must be given up.'³⁴

'There should be the conviction that people can marry in any month and in any day.'³⁵

If these ideas are practiced in life they will produce great revolution in our country. They are innumerable families in our country who spend lavishly in marriages and become great debtors. They toil so much to repay the debts and in the end they are frustrated in life. Therefore, the above thoughts will be healing balms if practiced in the society to families who spend money unnecessarily for the false worldly honour. He says:

'Only the concerned people must get together to solemnise a Wedding; it should be considered as a crime and uncivilized to call for a big gathering'.³⁶

We can say that *Mu. Va.* in his own life mostly attempted to follow this principle. If marriages of near relatives and dear friends took place in a far off distance he avoided attending

them. For the marriages of his own household he sent invitations to those living at a very long distance and yet he had the courage to write to them not to attend.

Mu. Va. welcomed the lovers family life without performing marriage rites. He has said,

‘ Without marrying a man and woman can lead a family life and thereby they can show a new path ’.³⁷

He strongly believed that in the latter days people will lead this kind of family life.

‘ In the future lovers will hesitate to even hear about public marriage; in due course of time marriages will lose importance; the friendship of men and women will flourish.’³⁸

Mu. Va. propagated the Tamil culture abroad. But in one of his novels he has showed the breaking of a marriage and its consequent divorce. He had been emphasising throughout his life that in family life the marriage partners must follow the given and take policy with maximum-forbearance. It is indeed revolutionary on his part to give this much freedom to the extent of divorce. He writes,

‘ If people from outside insist me that I should continue to cultivate my friendship with a person with whom I don’t like to be a friend, think, how I would feel it? But it is still more torturing to ask a husband and wife who does not have unity of mind, to live together.’³⁹

Mu. Va. insists that once the minds were broken then there is no point in not entertaining divorce. He also rebukes the society that does not readily help lawfully for separation.⁴⁰ His justification for divorce is acceptable. He writes to say:

‘ Family was established to share and reduce the burden of each other. But instead of that if the family would aggravate that sorrow and leads to endless misery then it is much better to disperse it.’⁴¹

Mu. Va. strongly condemns the corruption and bribery in the country. He clearly states the ways and means of overcoming this evil. They are like the medical treatment, the

doctor who diagnoses the disease and finds out its origin and then treats disease. Only in a communist society where there is no worry over economic need, we can get rid of bribery, corruption, caste and other evils of the society. What he says in the following words is quite appropriate and acceptable.

‘There should be prosperity of life for all. For all those who work there should be food and other things; but it should be only to their need; if the society will be convinced that the demand will be met according to desires, then there will not be people who want to go to the fort of protection of castes to meet their demands. Then the corruptions that live in these forts will have no life. These are the best means to get rid of corruptions.’⁴³

Mu. Va. liked simplicity. He abhorred luxury. He had pointed out that he would very much appreciate people who make laws to prevent luxury life in a poor country like India.⁴³

He felt that luxurious life is a crime. He declares,

‘to be poor and simple are not crimes. To swindle and cheat others, and to lead extravagant life out of the wealth acquired without toil is really crime.’⁴⁴

Mu. Va. appeared to be a calm gentleman. His writings may not kindle zest and excessive zeal. But they have the inherent power to persuade us to think of the evils in the society. In every problem, *Mu. Va.* wanted to see progressive thoughts. He never prescribed medicine for external use and escape. His knowledge was so deep and penetrating that he analysed the problems at their depth. He had foreseen the coming of communist society. Note his words:

‘The farmers and workers must be instructed in politics. Through the eye of time one must view that one day farm and work are going to attain important place; we must think about it; and we must speak about it.’⁴⁵

In the new society that he wants to establish he states:

‘All those who are born in this country should have the assurance of economic welfare through definite opportunities of work.’⁴⁶

He says that there should be definite provision for food, clothing, housing, recreation and work.⁴⁷ Anything that opposes these needs should not live. There is no power that can resist the masses. Again to quote his words:

‘The toiling labourers starve and poverty strike them. For cheaters and deceivers who treasure silver and gold prosperity and plenty of proud life. There is starvation on one side and luxury on the other. Can we call it fate? If that is so then do not the workers have the hammers that would break its head and throw it away? Do not the learned have pen in their hands?’⁴⁸

By raising these questions we can say that *Mu. Va.* clearly shows the class difference and publicly calls for revolution to attain communism.

Notes

1. ‘What is revolution’, *uṅmai* (monthly), *Tiruccirāppaḷḷi*, 14-8-1971, p. 3.
2. *Ilakkipattiṇṇu*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 2nd edition 1965, p. 220.
3. A conversation with A. A. Maṇḍāḷaṇ.
4. Karnow Stanley, *Mao and China, From Revolution to Revolution*, Viking Press, New York, 1972, p. 162.
5. *Taṅkaikku*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 8th edition 1966, p. 48.
6. *Nāttupparṇu*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 1st edition 1956, p. 91.
7. *Uḷakappārāḷu*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 1st edition, 1962, p. 142.
8. *Uḷakappārāḷu*, p. 137.
9. *Aṇamum Araciyaḷum*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 1st edition, 1957, p. 117.
10. *Naṇṇarkku*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 7th edition 1967, p. 128.
11. *Aṇamum Araciyaḷum*, p. 137.
12. *Naṇṇarkku*, p. 128.
13. *Naṇṇarkku*, p. 128.
14. *Uḷakappārāḷu*, p. 38.
15. *Maṇṇiṇ Matippu*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 1st edition 1962, p. 199.
16. *Naṇṇarkku*, p. 67.
17. *Naṇṇarkku*, p. 41.
18. *Maṇṇiṇ Matippu*, p. 11.
19. *Malārcciḷi*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 7th edition 1969, p. 24.
20. *Araciyaḷ Alaikaḷ*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 4th edition 1962, pp. 33-34.
21. *Nāttupparṇu*, p. 31.
22. *Anṭaṇḷ*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 6th edition, 1964, p. 186.
23. *Kayamai*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 3rd edition, 1969, p. 315.
24. *Paḷiyum Pāvamum*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 4th edition 1973, p. 16.

25. *Antanāḥ*, p. 123.
26. *Maṇḍukīcai*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 2nd edition 1964, p.
27. *Kalvi*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 1st edition 1956, p. 118.
28. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, *Pāri Nilaiyam*, Madras 1, 3rd edition 1963, p. 322.
29. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 323.
30. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 336.
31. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 412.
32. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 412.
33. *Paḷiyum Pāvamum*, p. 5.
34. *Paḷiyum Pāvamum*, p. 12.
35. *Paḷiyum Pāvamum*, p. 12.
36. *Aṟamum Araciyaḷum*, p. 97.
37. *Malarviḷi*, p. 158.
38. *Maṇḍukīcai*, p. 220.
39. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 475.
40. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 477.
41. *Neñcil Oru Muḥ*, p. 480.
42. *Maṇṇiṇ Matippu*, p. 89.
43. *Taṇkaikku*, p. 37.
44. *Maṇṇiṇ Matippu*, p. 118.
45. *Araciyaḷ Alaikaḥ*, p. 91.
46. *Kayamai*, p. 105.
47. *Kayamai*, p. 106.
48. *Antanāḥ*, p. 194.

DR. MU. VA. AS A WRITER OF PREFACES

*Thiru K. D. Thirunavukkarasu**

The great revival of Tamil learning under the influence of Western education and the discovery of *Caṅkam* literature started in Tamil Nadu during the twenties of this century. It has taken thirty to forty years to blossom as a finest flower in the garden of Tamil Culture. The movement that gave a new impetus to the regeneration and rededication of the Tamils to their cherished ideals and values of their hoary past is called the Renaissance. This great surge swept through every phase of life—politics, music and drama, art and architecture, religion and philosophy and social change—bringing the fullest flow of literature that any period has produced.

Savant of Tamil

Dr. Mu. Varadarajan was the child of Tamil Renaissance who has become a savant of Tamil scholarship and an embodiment of Tamil Culture. He gave a new orientation to the ideals and aspirations of ancient Tamils in the context of the present day needs.

Dr. Mu. Va. was a many sided personality. He was first and foremost a teacher. Then he was known to the world as a powerful writer in Tamil. Besides these he was a novelist, a linguist, an essayist and a great humanitarian. He lived as a 'marking stone on the road of humanity.' He served as

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a torch-bearer of Tamil wisdom not only to the nook and corner of our country but also to the men of letters and educationists of the west.

He has made a major contribution to the development of Tamil language and literature in this century than any other scholars or writers of Tamil Nadu. His name and fame as an erudite scholar, a prolific writer and a cultured gentleman spread throughout Tamil country in the fifties of this century. So, a large number of authors who wanted to publish their poems, short-stories, novels, dramas or research works turned to him for his inspiring and ennobling advice and encouragement in the form of introduction or preface to their works. Hence, he had to oblige them and very often introduced them to the public for the first time. In his forty years of public service, he has contributed more than one hundred prefaces to the writings of native and foreign scholars of Tamil language and literature.

Mu. Va's Views on Preface

His views on preface and on the art of writing prefaces are fresh, thought provoking and based on traditional views. He observes:

If there is a book it is good that it must have an introduction. In ancient times, there was a convention of introducing a book with a preface. Our earliest Tamil classic *Tolkāppiyam* has a preface penned by *Paṇampāraṇār*. Our ancestors considered a literary piece without a preface as an insignificant one and regarded it as 'superb painting to a stately edifice, as great towers to a great city and as jewels to a fair damsel, so is a preface (an ornament) to a work.'¹

Dr. Mu. Va. elucidates the tradition with great care and consideration. He says that preface can be written by the author himself. In some cases, a person (a class-mate, a teacher or a student) who has known very intimately to the author can give an introduction.²

The art of writing preface is not an easy endeavour. The writer of a preface could not accept or approve all the statements

or views expressed by the authors. So, the writer of prefaces would indulge for the excuse of the author for pointing out the defects and blemishes and in a few cases pronouncing his difference of opinion. However, it is not charitable on the part of the preface-writer to ignore the merits and magnifying the defects alone. First he should give due recognition to the merits of the works and then point out the short-comings in a mild language. Dr. Mu. Va. says that there are some people who used to correct the prefaces that are based on critical and unbiased study and interpolate some matter according to their own whims and fancies. He remarks that there are some writers who could not tolerate the defects pointed out in the preface to their works. They will omit the particular passage which they dislike from the preface when it is published. He feels sorry for the act of those who could not face criticism boldly. He expresses that we must develop the mental attitude to receive any criticism.³

Varieties of Preface

A number of terms are used in Tamil to represent 'Preface'. *Muṇṇurai* and *Mukavurai* are the common Tamil equivalents for 'Preface'. *Arimukam* conveys the meaning of 'Introduction'. *Aṇinturai* literally refers to the richly ornamented preface. *Pārāṭṭurai* is the appreciative preface and *Matippurai* is 'critically evaluative Preface'. These terms will throw light on the various methods adopted in writing prefaces in Tamil. In course of time, a healthy convention has evolved in writing the prefaces. *Muṇṇurai* and *Mukavurai* can be written by the authors as well as others who are pleased to introduce them. But *Aṇinturai*, *Pārāṭṭurai* and *Matippurai* are usually contributed by those who are not authors.⁴ We must bear in mind this subtle difference which will give a clear picture of the methods of writing prefaces.

The Contents of a Preface

According to the grammarians of Tamil, a (special) preface should contain the following details: (1) Name of the author, (2) Origin of the work, (3) The country in which it is used, (4) The name of the work, (5) Its merits and form of metre,

(6) The subject matter of the work, (7) Persons qualified to study it, (8) The benefits that can be derived from the study, (9) The time or date in which the work is composed, (10) The assembly before which it was read and by whom it was sanctioned and (11) The aim of the publication.⁵

Dr. Mu. Va. leaving the unnecessary and irrelevant details which are not appropriate to the modern days, has adhered strictly to the tradition of the Tamils.

The need for a Preface

The important role and enduring values of preface have been understood and appreciated by the scholars of the world. It has been acclaimed that 'A good preface is as essential to put the reader into good humour, as a good prologue to a play, or a fine symphony to an opera, containing something analogous to the work itself; so that we may feel its want as a desire not elsewhere to be gratified. The Italians call the preface "the sauce of the book"; and if well-seasoned, it creates an appetite in the reader to devour the book itself.'⁶

This observation about 'Preface' tells clearly the various aspects, i.e.; the form, method and scope of a preface. If we put it in a nutshell, we can say that a preface serves as an introduction and at the same time expresses the cream of the subject-matter.

From the prefaces of Dr. Mu. Va. it appears that he has a clear vision about the aspects and values of a preface. Very often he follows the principles of indigenous scholars in writing the 'Prefaces'. But at the same time, he indirectly adheres to the views of Western scholars also, i.e., to receive criticism without any violent reaction and hence to express as the preface writer feels.

List of Literary Studies

We can classify the 'Prefaces' given by Dr. Mu. Va. to various writers under the following headings of literary studies:

- (1) Preface to Children's Literature,
- (2) Preface to the Critical Editions of Tamil Classics,
- (3) Preface to the Critical Studies in Tamil Literature,
- (4) Preface to Dramas,

- (5) Preface to Historical Studies,
- (6) Preface to Musical Compositions,
- (7) Preface to Novels,
- (8) Preface to Poetry Collections,
- (9) Preface to Short-stories,
- (10) Preface to Studies in Literary Criticism,
- (11) Preface to Studies in Nature Cure,
- (12) Preface to Studies in Tamil Musical System,
- (13) Preface to Travelogues,
- (14) Preface to Treatises on Grammar and
- (15) Preface to the Works in English.

Though this list is not exhaustive, it shows that his fields of interest were wide and colourful.

Significance of the Nomenclature

Before we analyse the various aspects of his prefaces, we must know the significance attached to the terms that he has used to imply the meaning of a preface. *Aṇinturai* (அணிந்துரை) *Aṇimukam* (அறிமுகம்), *Āciyurai* (ஆசியுரை) *Kalaikkaviyurai* (கலைக்கவிபுரை), *Cirappurai* (சிறப்புரை), *Pārāṣṭurai* (பரராட்டுரை) *Matippurai* (மதிப்புரை), *Māṇpurai* (மாண்புரை) *Mukavurai* (முகவுரை) *Muṇṇurai* (முன்னுரை) and *Vāḷtturai* (வாழ்த்துரை) are the terms which have been used by Dr. Mu. Va. I have my own doubt about *Āciyurai*. It is found only in one book.⁷ I believe that this title might have been added by the author to the preface written by Dr. Mu. Va.

We can say that most of the prefaces which have the heading *Muṇṇurai* and *Mukavurai* are given to his elders or contemporaries who are well known as great scholars. For the works of Rao Sahib K. Kothandapani Pillai, *Muttamil Kāvalar* K.A.P. Viswanatham and Justice S. Maharajan and for the works of some others he has given *Muṇṇurai*.⁸ To the very fine work of Thanjai S. Ramaiyadoss, on *Tirukkuraḷ* which he has set to Carnatic music, Dr. Mu. Va. has given *Mukavurai*.⁹ He very rarely uses *Aṇimukam*, only to one of his colleague's work and of a devoted student.¹⁰ *Aṇinturai*,¹¹ *Pārāṣṭurai*,¹² *Āciyurai*¹³ and *Vāḷtturai*¹⁴ are given to the literary compositions and studies of his students as well as to those of his friends. He has given

matippurai, *māṇpurai*¹⁵ and *Cirappurai* to some senior savants of Tamil language.¹⁶ There may be one or two exceptions to this method of providing prefaces. But most of the prefaces are written on the lines which we have indicated above.

These ten kinds of prefaces are in the prose form whereas *Kalaikkaviyurai* and a couple of *aṇinturais* are given in the form of verses.¹⁷ Even the title *Kalaikkaviyurai* appears to be appended by the author of *Tiruvalluvar Piḷḷai-t-Tamil*.

Basic Principles

From a study of Dr. Mu. Va's prefaces, we can deduce the following principles which he has adopted in them. First he points out the significant features of the work. Secondly he introduces the author. Thirdly he refers to the points of agreement. Fourthly he pays tributes to the author. Finally he extolls the author's attempt and appeals to the public to encourage the author to enrich our mother tongue by writing many more literary works. Very rarely we find him giving a thrust at any work that he introduced. This is due largely not to curry favour with but to encourage the author as a fellow-writer. Such was his humane attitude towards his fellow-authors.

A Short Survey of the Prefaces

Now let us analyse the import of these important and interesting prefaces item by item cited above.

1. *Aṇinturai*

Aṇinturai is the common term which Dr. Mu. Va. has used as caption for his prefaces. More than forty prefaces are called by this name. In his preface to one of his old student's novel *Kātal Tūṇkukiratu* (காதல் தூங்குகிறது), Dr. Mu. Va. begins with a discussion about 'Good Books' and then introduces the theme of the novel and the author:

We never think about the authors when we read some books. We don't worry to know about them. But, when we read some other books, we are inclined to think about the authors several times. We are anxious to know many more things about them. We feel very much fascinated by

their rich experience. The reasons for this amazement are the artistic pleasure which we derive from reading the books of those authors and the sense of gratitude which we wish to express. Such books are the great books and they will have the everlasting influence over many generations. They are the 'Books for Ever'.

Thiru G. Rajavelu's novel *Kātal Tūṇkukiratu* belongs to this superior category. This novel portrays the inherent qualities of good and bad people. The delineation of the characters reveals the vast and rich experience of the author. The values of right thinking and good manners and the evils of unrighteous thinking are clearly explained and it has been expressed in a lucid style throughout the novel. The penetrative quality of searching the depth and breadth of human heart is an essential trait for a good novelist. This important trait appears to be the inherent quality of the author of this novel.¹⁸

This introduction not only gives us some clues to understand the art of preface writing accomplished by Dr. Mu. Va. but it also gives us some glimpses of the mind and thought of Dr. Mu. Va.

2. *Arimukam*

Arimukam is nothing but the method of introducing the author and his work. Two decades ago Dr. Mu. Va. gave a valuable introduction to the work of his intimate friend and colleague Prof. A. S. Gnanasambandan. Let us observe how he introduces his friend.

If Tamil language should achieve this superior status, first we must forget the habit of manipulating the difference of opinion into a dreadful 'bogey' and at the same time we must develop our mental attitude to seek pleasure in finding out the truth. Secondly, we must realize that not only the creative arts but studies and the art of criticism are also essential (for the welfare of mankind).

These two aims are enshrined in this Tamil scholar Thiru A. S. Gnanasambandan, who has devoted his life for the study and propagation of Tamil literature through his writings

and eloquent speeches for the last so many years. In his writings, one can taste the cream of the mind and thought of Western scholars. In his thought provoking lectures, one can catch his high spirit and enthusiasm in his method of elucidating the glories of Tamil literature. Young students of Pachaiyappa's College who are studying in the B.A. Hons. (Tamil) class are very fortunate in relishing these two kinds of pleasures at once. This book (*Ilakkiyakkalai*) is the result of the service rendered to them by this scholar which would now turn to be a boon to others.¹⁹

3. Āciyurai

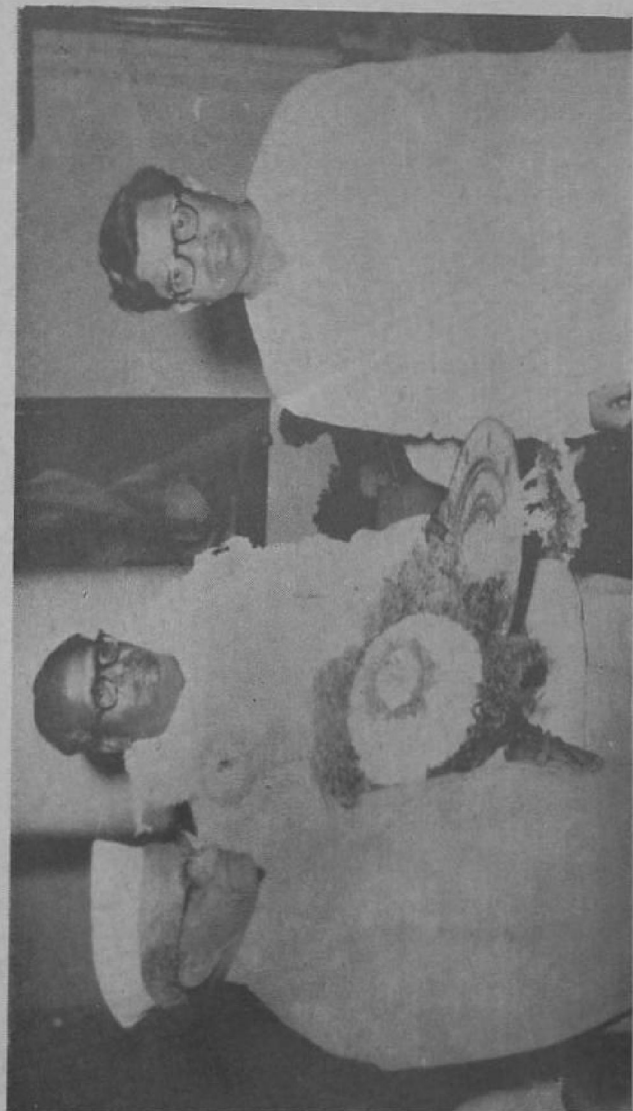
This kind of preface may be called as ' Blessings oriented Preface '. There is no difference between *Vāṭṭurai* and this in meaning. We can cite only one preface under this heading:

Dr. S. V. Subramanian is the head of the department of Tamil at the Kerala University. We are all well aware of the fact that under the able guidance of Dr. S. V. Subramanian that department produces a number of research works in different fields. I am very much pleased to note that this work *Cilampil Meyppāṭukaḷ* (Artistic expression of Emotions in *Cilappatikāram*) by Thiru J. G. N. Dawson as a dissertation submitted for M. A. Degree Examinations, as one of such departmental publications. I congratulate the scholar for the first part of this book being a study of *Meyppāṭṭiyal* in *Tolkāppiyam*. He has analysed and interpreted them in the light of various illustrations. Then he has given a brief survey of several types of Artistic expression of emotions found in *Cilappatikāram* with classifications and explanations. I wish him that his service to the cause of Tamil should prosper more and more in due course.²⁰

This is one of the shortest, simple and elegant prefaces of Dr. Mu. Va.

4. Kalaikkaviyurai

A preface in the form of verse can be called *Kaviyurai*, which literally means ' Poetic-preface '. The attribute ' *Kalai* ' implies the meaning of artistic grandeur, which is based on



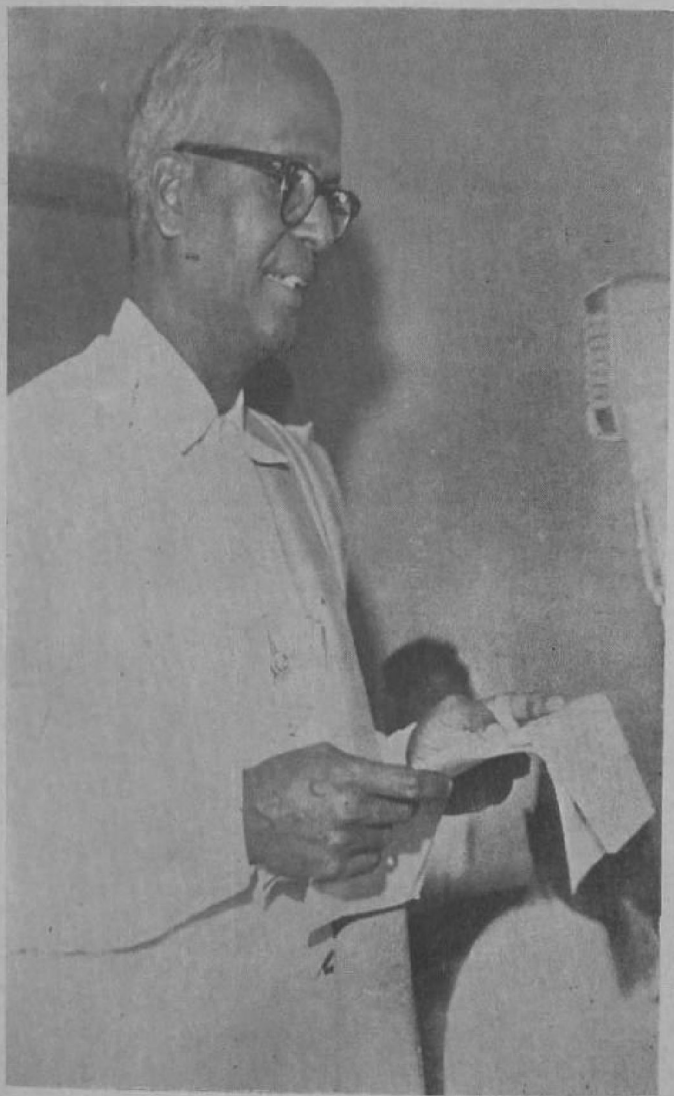
Award for Literature.
With Mr. A. J. John, the Ex. Governor and Thiru C. Subramaniam, Finance Minister



With the delegates to the First International Tamil Conference at Kuala Lumpur



With Kamil Zvelebil, A Czech Scholar in Tamilology



The Voice of Virtue

the rhythm and diction of any language. These traits form the source of mellifluousness of our Tamil language which could not be translated into any other language. So, we can cite the original version of the preface:

பாலொத்த நற்றமிழில் பால்முன்றில் அறத்தினொடு
 பாகுபெறு பொருளும் ஆய்ந்தே
 பான்மைவளர் காதல்எனும் பண்பினையும் தெளிவாக்கும்
 பயன்மிக்க தமிழ்மறை யதாம்
 காலத்தை வென்றகுறள் ஞாலத்தி னுக்கருள்செய்
 கனிவாயின் வள்ளுவன் மேல்
 கற்றவர்கள் உளமுருக மற்றையவர் மனத்தெனியக்
 கருதரிய பிள்ளைத் தமிழாய்ச்
 சாலச்சி றப்புடைய னூலைத்தக் தருளியவன்
 தண்டமிழ்க் கவிதைவல் லோன்
 சாற்றரிய நாவன்மை மாற்றரிய உரைவன்மை
 சான்றோரின் நெறியின் வன்மை
 மேலத்து நாட்டவரின் கோலத்தின் அறிவான்மை
 மேவுபால சுப்பிர மணியம்
 மெய்ம்மைபுறு வாசகத்தின் செம்மைபெறு மணியாக
 மேன்மைபுறு புகழோங் கவே !

21

There is another preface in the form of verse to a collection of poems about our late lamented Chief Minister *Ariinar Anna*,²² which deserves special mention here.

5. Cīrappurai

This kind of preface may be called as 'special Preface'. But in practice, there is no difference between the other forms of prefaces cited above or to be discussed later.

6. Pārāṭṭurai

Pārāṭṭurai very often appears to be indetical with *Aṇinturai* and *Muṇṇurai*, but it explicitly ends with a note of appreciation or congratulation. In his preface to *Kaviyir Kaṇavu*, a drama by the famous poet S. D. Sundaram, our Professor first introduces the play and the author to the readers and then dilates

upon the techniques, theme and artistic merits of the play. Then he concludes:

Thus, this drama *Kaviyīṇ Kaṇavu* has done a great service in awakening our people from the age long slumber. This kind of service is immeasurable. The service it will render in the future is also adorable.²³

In this preface, he uses the term *Pōṛṛattakka*, which gives the meaning of appreciation as well as congratulation.

7. Matippurai

This kind of preface will reveal the respect and reverence of the writer of the preface either to the work or to the author of the book. Besides this, there is a consensus among the scholars that it serves as an unbiased evaluation of the book. We are all well aware of the fact that all types of prefaces are more or less in the form of evaluatory observations to those works. In the case of Dr. Mu. Va's *Matippurais*, these two aspects of this type of preface are blended together and presented in a harmonious form. From a cursory glance at the prefaces appended to *Uṇavu Maruttuvam* (Medical care through Food) by S. Kandaswami Mudaliar²⁴ and *Muppatu Kuraḷiṇ Meypporuḷ* (The Real Meaning of Thirty Verses of *Tirukkuraḷ*) by Thiru A. Ku. Adittar,²⁵ one can easily understand the high regard which he has for the works and the authors of those works.

8. Maṇpurai

This term implies that this kind of preface is very highly valuable. This title might have been given by the author²⁶ himself.

9. Mukavurai

This type of preface serves as an introduction. We have referred earlier to the views of Dr. Mu. Va. in writing this form of preface. There are only two prefaces written by our Professor under this title.²⁷

10. Munṇurai

There is no real difference between this type and the other one which is referred above. Dr. Mu. Va. has written many

of his lengthy prefaces under this heading. His *Munnurais* appear as an essay of three or four pages. They deal with the various aspects of the original work taken here for study.²⁸ They also give scope for discussion and room for expressing his own views. Most of the *Munnurais* are given to studies on *Tirukkura!* and *Carikam* classics. Now let us have a bird's eye view of the shortest *munṇurai* given by Dr. Mu. Va.

Tirukkura! is one of the masterpieces of World literature. So many centuries have passed away. Changes in the sphere of politics, religion and society have taken place on a large scale from the time of the composition of *Tirukkura!*. But the *magnum opus* of *Tiruva!luvar* still lives with us and serves us as an unfailing guide in all walks of life like the wise advice of our elders who are really our well-wishers.

It is indeed natural that a lecture about this great work attracts the heart and mind of innumerable people, when the lecturer happens to be a matured scholar and great orator; there is no surprise about the manifold values and importance of the meeting.

Thiru K. A. P. Viswanatham is a gifted speaker who can talk about anything with great interest and enthusiasm. He will give a fine shape to abstract ideas and inspire the audience with questions and answers. So, his speech will serve as a feast to the public and induce them to attend in large gatherings.

It gives great pleasure to note that the learned lecturer has ignored the rubbish tales about *Tiruva!luvar* as mere legends. He appreciates the idea embedded in the similes of *Tiruva!luvar* by way of explaining them by interesting episodes. When the relationship between the officers and the citizens, the etiquette and manners to be adhered by the people are expressed with the words of *Va!luvar*, and the hearts of the audience knows no bounds.....²⁹

Then he pays tributes to the organisation which has taken interest in publishing the lecture delivered at one of its functions. He concludes his preface with his congratulation to the organisation and an appeal to the public to extend their patronage to the organisation.

From a glance at this *munṇurai*, we are able to understand and appreciate the characteristic features of Dr. Mu. Va's prefaces.

11. *Vāṭṭurai*

Vāṭṭurai is nothing but the blessings oriented preface. It is very often given to the beginners in the art of composing creative literature and to those who undertake systematic study of any subject or classic for the first time.³⁰

These are the important types of prefaces in Tamil which our revered professor used to give for the works of Tamil writers. It is interesting to note that he has given a thought provoking preface to the collection of short stories called *Anṇapūraṇi* by *Kā. Sri. Sri*.³¹ For the Tamil version of Hindi epic *Kāmāyaṇi* by *Jayashankar Prasād*, Dr. Mu. Va. has given a valuable introduction. *Kāmaṇ Makaḷ* is the transcreation in Tamil by Jamadagni, one of the patriots of Tamil Nadu who took active part in the Freedom struggle.³²

Prefaces in English

From a survey of Dr. Mu. Va's prefaces, it appears that he has given only a few prefaces in English. After assuming the office of Vice-Chancellor at Madurai University, he had the opportunity to give prefaces in English for the works written in English. Before this, to my best of my knowledge and belief I think that he has given only one preface in English.³³ One important feature of these prefaces is that they are given under the title of 'Foreword' only. There is no vast difference in the form and method of presenting his ideas in the Tamil and the English 'Prefaces'.

His foreword to Mrs. Jaya Kothai Pillai's studies on the 'Educational system of the Ancient Tamils' deserves special mention here. It can be cited as an excellent model for his art of writing prefaces:

The ancient Tamils had many cultural, social and political institutions. There are many evidences in Tamil literature to show the interest evinced by the ancient society in the educational field. The author, Mrs. J. K. Pillai, M.A.,

M.Ed., has culled all these evidences and presented them here in a very interesting form. She has clearly brought out the aims and ideals of the ancient Tamils and has given all the available particulars in regard to their conceptions and curriculum. A separate chapter has been devoted to women's status and their education.

The author has aptly shown how in those times temples served as formal mass media. Her approach to the subject is scientific and the treatment scholarly. I hope this valuable work will serve as a source of inspiration to all interested in education.³⁴

From the study of prefaces, we can even estimate the character and personality of the preface-writers. Here is no need or necessity to hide his personality, aims and ambitions or likes and dislikes. In Dr. Mu. Va's prefaces we get better scope for the study of his personality than from any of his writings such as novels, short stories, dramas etc., The following extracts from his prefaces will clearly help us to have some glimpses of his personality:

Tamil

Tamil is one of the most ancient languages of the world which is still spoken and used for all purposes of communication. It belongs to the Dravidian family of South India and has a hoary literary tradition of 2000 years old. It is found to be a useful vehicle of modern thought as well.³⁵

Drama

Drama is one among the Fine Arts which has a healthy development in our country. But, the drama, one of the literary genres does not appear to have had such a growth. There are many people who seek pleasure by visiting very often the play houses but there is only a few people who wish to enjoy a drama by reading it. Drama is one of the many literary forms like epic, novel, short stories and essays etc., when it develops on the same scale like other forms of literature, then it would be of immense help to the enrichment of a language.³⁶

Ancient and Modern Systems of Education

In olden days people had plenty of leisure and peace of mind. Hence, there was ample opportunity for the patient and detailed study of Fine Arts. Ours is an age of 'sick, hurry and divided aims'. Hence, there is no time and opportunity even for a desultory reading. To study a few selected books continually for so many years is the method adopted in ancient educational system. Reading some selected portions of a number of books without concentration and hurrying for some other books are the result of modern education.³⁷

The importance of historical outlook

Tamil literature has a hoary past. It has a continuous history of about thirty centuries. Hence, a student of Tamil literature must know the history of it. We can study literature with great benefit only after acquiring a clear perspective of the chronological order of those works. One can get great pleasure from tracing the development of the art of imagination and the methods of elucidating the ideas embedded in similes. We can also feel benefited when we understand how the mind and thought of the poets have developed through the ages. Hence, the knowledge of history will help us to find pleasure in the study of literature.³⁸

Your Duty

Tamil has enriched you and you should reciprocate it.³⁹

In one of his letters to a research scholar, he specifically states that he has given a large number of prefaces than George Bernard Shaw had. He also feels sorry for spending half of his very scanty leisure⁴⁰ in writing prefaces.

We can infer from his own words cited above that he has devoted a considerable time in his everyday life in studying, evaluating and reviewing the writings of his younger generation and the scholars who have already gained reputation. His sympathetic approach and the kind encouragement to the writers of Tamil have induced them to place him on a high pedestal in their hearts. Thus he has become the beacon light to the students and scholars of Tamil Nadu.

NOTES

1. *Varadarajan, M., Nūlkaṣukku Aṟimukam*, in *Noolagam*, July 1974, p. 5.
Most of the ideas expressed in this essay by Dr. Mu. Va. are based on the traditional views of the grammarians.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
5. *Naṇṇūl*, 47, 48.
6. *Disraeli, Benjamin, Collected works* Vol. I, OUP: 1927, p. 292.
7. *Dawson, J.G.N., Cilampil Meyppāṭṭal* Nagercoil, 1973.
8. *Mutaṟ Kuṟaḷ Uvamai*, Madras, 1965.
Vaḷḷuvarum Kuṟaḷum, Madras, 1953.
Oḷicceḷvam, Madras, 1962.
9. *Tirukkūṟaḷ Icai Amutam*, Madras, 1961.
10. *Gnanasambandan, A.S., Ilakkiyakkalai*, Madras, 1954.
and *Srinivasan, Miṇṇūṟ, Maḷaikkāṇavukal*, Madras, 1965.
11. *Tamiḷ Ōviyaṇ, Aḷakiṇ Alaikaḷ*, Madras, 1968.
12. *Muthuswamy, E. S., Kātal kāvīyam*, Madras, 1971.
13. *Dawson, J.G.N.*, op. cit., No. 7.
14. *Perumal, G., Inṇa Vēḷḷam*, Madras, 1966.
15. *Pacumpon Kilār, Oru Nūṟu Uvamaik Kuṟaḷ*, Palayampatti, 1970.
16. *Adittar, A. K., Muppatu Kuṟaḷiṇ Meypporuḷ*, Madras, 1968.
17. *Balasubramaniam, K. M., Tiruwaḷḷuvar, Piḷḷai-t-Tamiḷ*, Trichy, 1968.
and *Aṇṇaracāṇ* (Ed.), *Kaviṇar Neṇṇil Aṟiṇar Anna*, Madras, 1969.
18. *Rajavelu. G., Kātal Tūṇṇukkiṟatu*, Madras, 1950.
19. op. cit. No. 10.
20. op. cit., No. 7.
21. op. cit., No. 17.
22. *Ibid.*,
23. *Sundaram, S.D., Kaviyaṇ kaṇṇavu*, Madras, 1973.
24. *Kandaswami Mudaliar, S., Uṇṇavu Maruttuvam*, Madras, 1957.
25. op. cit., No. 16.
26. op. cit., No. 15.
27. op. cit., No. 9.
28. op. cit; No. 8 and refer *M. Shanmuka Subramaniam's Kuṟaḷ Kūṟum Caṇṇaṇṇi*.
29. *Viswanatham, K.A.P., Vaḷḷuvarum Kuṟaḷum*, Madras.
30. *Arunachalam, A., Vaḷḷuvar Vakuttu Poruḷ Vāḷvu*, Tiruchendur, 1969.
31. *Kā. Sri.Sri. Aṇṇapūraṇi*, Madras, 1951.

32. *Jamadagni, Kāmaṣ Makal*, Madras, 1957.
33. *Siddalingaiah, T.B.*, ABC of Tamil, Madras, 1968.
34. *Jeyakothai Pillai*, Educational System of the Ancient Tamils, Madras, 1972.
35. op. cit; No. 33.
36. *Perumal A. N.*, *Pagimōḷi*, Nagercoil, 1969.
37. op. cit. No. 8(i).
38. *Balasubramaniam, C.*, *Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāḷu*, Madras, 1959.
39. *Mohan, R.*, *Tāṅ Kaṇṇa Mu. Va.*, Madurai 1975.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 174-75.

DR. MU. VA. AS A LITERARY CRITIC

*Thiru A. A. Manavalan**

Criticism of any art is as old as its creation. None the less Literary criticism on *formal* lines is much younger. Even in Greece which has perhaps the oldest recorded literary criticism on formal lines, literature proper was at least some ten centuries older than its criticism. The literary activities of the Tamils is no exception to this.

Simultaneous to the Tamil Renaissance in the latter part of the Nineteenth century, Western impact on the literary activities of the Tamils proved much beneficial. We see two types of scholars engaged in the field of literary criticism. They were journalists and academics.

Dr. M. Varadarajan (1912-1974) was one of such academic critics. His career as a literary critic can be said to begin in the late forties of this century. He was an erudite scholar, a comprehensive reader and a man of finer sensibilities. On top of that, he was humane and a moralist. All these traits have their bearings upon his critical writings.

This paper is only an attempt at viewing Dr. Mu. Va. (Mu. Varadarajan) as a literary critic and assessing his achievements as such. It has two main divisions, Mu. Va. *the literary critic* and Mu. Va's *views of Literary Criticism*.

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I

The Literary Critic

Definitions of a literary critic and of his nature, aim, etc., are numerous. However there cannot be any disagreement if one observes that the critic's work lies between the work of art/literary work and the audience. The differences of opinions crop up only in the manner in which the work is interpreted to the audience. The difference in the nature of the work as well as in the audience shall be largely responsible to the modifications effected in such exposition. The other two co-ordinates, namely the author and the Nature of the work do not play as much role as the other two. It is, therefore, enough to limit our definition to exclusively these two, i.e., the work and the audience.

The work remaining constant, there has been shift of emphasis through the ages with regard to the audience. Aristotle spoke to poets and would-be-poets; Sidney spoke to critics; and Dryden spoke to the common readers. Dryden's audience continue to be the same to date.

In this light of change in the audience, aims and principles of literary criticism also have undergone many changes accordingly. With such wider audience in view, we can consider the essential nature and duties of a literary critic. Three kinds of opinions in the form of definitions stand out before us.

- (a) 'Elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste'¹
 - 'Promote the understanding and enjoyment of literature'.....
 - 'the critic may on occasion be called upon to condemn the second-rate and expose the fraudulent: though that duty is secondary to the duty of discriminating praise of what is praiseworthy'²
- (b) 'the critic's task is to judge a work on its merits, to decide what is good and what is bad, to relate it to the society in which he lives'³
- (c) critic's symbol is the *torch* not the *sceptre*.⁴

All these opinions focus on the audience. Put together they mean to say:

The critic should aim at the *elucidation of the work of art* in such a way that the work's *beauty* with the attendant *pleasure* (enjoyment) is communicated to the audience. In so doing the critic's role is that of a lamp (torch), a *guide* and not that of a pedagogue (sceptre). The net aim is *to show how* a work of art should be understood and enjoyed (correction of taste).

We shall see below how far Dr. Mu. Va. has fulfilled these duties of a literary critic through his critical writings.

His Works

Three kinds of writing constitute the large body of Dr. Mu. Va's Literary criticism. They are his books, essays and Prefaces to the works of other poets, novelists, dramatists and critics. (Particulars of these are appended at the end of this paper.)

His critical books which are 24 in number fall under two categories, namely books *on* literary criticism (3) and books *of* literary criticism (21). His essays, and Prefaces to others' works belong to the latter category.

Books on Literary Criticism

Ilakkiya Tiraṇ, *Ilakkiya Marapu* and *Ilakkiya Ārāycci* are the three works dealing with literature and literary criticism. The first two are academic in nature and purpose since they are improvised notes on the relevant subjects delivered to the students of Tamil Honours. The discussions are heavily documented with quotations from European scholars/critics who are invariably recommended and referred to as references in the syllabi of the universities. These books have been and are to date the mainstay for a student of literary criticism in Tamil. No student can afford to ignore or bypass these works without the attendant loss in his pursuit. The very fact that even after the lapse of roughly two decades, no attempt seems to have been successful either in replacing them or in surpassing is a proof of their usefulness and quality.

But, however, the views of the author in the course of the arguments are so shot into the texture of the discussions that it

is very difficult if not impossible, to distinguish them from those quoted.

Ilakkiya Ārāycci is, on the other hand, highly useful to understand the stand of Dr. Mu. Va. in many respects with regard to Literature and Criticism. No estimation of Dr. Mu. Va. as a critic can dispense with reference to this collection of critical essays. More clearly than the above two, this book serves as a general introduction to literary criticism in general. It is more personal in appeal and propositional in approach.

Books of Literary Criticism

His works of literary criticism are 21 in number (No. 4 to 24 in Appendix - A) These may be classified into two kinds in view of the intended audience. *Iḷaṅkō Aṟikaḷ*, *Ōvacceyi*, *Mā-tavi* and *Mullaittiṇai* are lectures given at the universities of Madras and Annamalai and hence intended for a discriminating audience. *Koṅkutēr Vāḷkkai* was his presidential address in 1949 to a homogeneous audience of the Karantai Tamil Academy, Tanjavur. Nos. 6, 8 and 11 in Appendix-A belong to this kind of audience. These eight books are his brilliant pieces of literary criticism.

Series like *celvam* and *viruntu* and his other works like *Naṟai Vaṇṇi*, *Maṇal Viṣu*, etc., are intended mainly for general audience. Thirteen works (nos. 12 to 24) belong to this category. This classification in view of the audience is not hard and fast, for some may be equally applicable to both kinds of audience. For example, *Kaṇṇaki* may be read and re-read with profit by any one. *Pulavar Kaṇṇir* is an excellent study of the elegiac poems of the *Caṅkam* Age which is common to both kinds of audience. Nevertheless, this classification stands us in good stead for the purpose of analysis.

Tiruvalluvar allatu Vāḷkkai Viḷakkam

This work exhibits a bold critical feat wherein blend the aspects of textual and descriptive criticism. His change in the order of the books of the *Kuṟaḷ* from *Aṟam*, *Poruḷ* and *Inṇam* to *Inṇam*, *Poruḷ* and *Aṟam* is now received with appreciation. But at the time when he dared this change, it was considered revolutionary by those who approved of such change, and lite-

rary heresy by those who had a strong affiliation to the tradition of the commentators. Thiru V. Kalyanasundaranar (better known as Thiru Vi. Ka.) was one of those who admired the change and he favoured the work with his preface. This is an elaborate work bringing out in full the virtues of the *Kuraḷ* as a Book of Life, on Life and for Life.

Övacceyti

This is an exhaustive and exhilarating study of a poem in *Akanāñūru*; exhaustive in interpretation and exhilarating by relieving Dr. Mu. Va. of the emotional stress (see his introduction to this work). This book extending upto 175 pages is a successful attempt at resolving the puzzle created by an old commentary to this poem of 28 lines.

Traditional lines of poetic idioms as prescribed in *Tolkāppiyam* and found followed in the works of the *Caṅkam* period and in the *Kuraḷ* are closely adhered to in elucidating the authentic import of this poem. The nature of *Caṅkam* poetry is such that without reference to the poetic conventions of that period and to the other works of the period, it would be very difficult and in some cases quite impossible to get at the meaning. The frontiers of literary criticism have to be crossed, but not too far to become non-literary in such elucidation. That is why Dr. Mu. Va. brings in numerous parallel passages from other contemporary works. The tools of literary criticism viz., analysis and comparison are thus amply made use of in this study. This enquiry is conducted so elaborately that several aspects of criticism such as analytical, historical, social and descriptive, have gone into the discussion.

It is clear from such exposition that to Dr. Mu. Va. the entire collections of the *Caṅkam* works constitute one poem with *organic unity* the parts of which are to be understood in their relation to the *whole*. It is in this perspective that this fifth poem in *Akanāñūru* has been interpreted and its import elucidated. A critical introduction to the study of the *Caṅkam* poetry, this work serves as a model of a critical study of the *Caṅkam Poems*.

Koṅkutēr Vāḷkkai

This is another work of such extensive study with a difference. This work of 72 pages aims at the possible and probable explanation of a short poem of five lines in *Kuṟuntokai*. This study helps to remove some cardinal misgivings as to the poem's emotion, by clearing away a cloud of shrouds of religious and mythological interpolations and other superinductions to the poem. He takes it to mean what it should, by placing it in the conventional context of the *Caṅkam* works and thus relieves it of the irrational hangings tagged on to during the Middle Ages.

Apart from the interpretation, the poem is used as a peg to express his views with regard to poetic composition, imagination and the personality of a poet. This is, therefore, more useful to gather Dr. Mu. Va's critical theories and principles.

If *Ōvaceyti* is a sample of his masterly elucidation of the texts, *Koṅkutēr Vāḷkkai* bears testimony to his critical faculty in the highest sense of the term. For he has treated this poem as a neat allegory (pp. 40-70) to explain the poetic art, which, of course, the author of this *Caṅkam* poem could never have thought of. Besides the perennial and intrinsic interest, the allegory might have some topical interest also and hence Dr. Mu. Va's special emphasis on the personality of a poet (pp. 40-45) in relation to his fellow poets. Again the same allegorical vein is continued to express his views with regard to the function of a literary critic (pp. 56, 62, 68), and the essential qualities that go to make a literary critic. It is probable that the partial and hence extreme views of the contemporary criticism would have warranted such dilatation upon the nature of a literary critic.

Ṭāṅkō Atikai

This is as deep and penetrating a study as *Ōvaceyti*. The epic poet is shown to be a person with strong Tamilian spirit, a connoisseur of Arts and a sage. It is in a way an attempt to visualize the personality of the epic poet with the help of his work. *Mātavi* and *Kaṇṇaki* are the other two works on *Cilappatikāram*. This trio forms an excellent exposition of this first Tamil epic which is adjudged by him as the supreme exam-

ple of how an artist or a poet should create a literary work of everlasting appeal to humanity.

Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature

This is a brilliant study of the *Caṅkam* works which earned him the first Ph. D. degree in Tamil in the University of Madras in 1947. Being a thesis it is heavily documented with quotations and yet is a standing proof to his critical powers.

His works intended mainly for the general audience include the series *celoam* and *vinuntu* and works like *Naṭai Vaṇṭi*, *Maṇal Viṭu*, *Kuraḷ Kāṭṭum Kāṭalar*, etc. The series deal with the explanation of the poems of the *Caṅkam* anthologies like *Akanāṇūru*, *Kuruntokai* and *Narriṇai*. These works are mainly intended for popularising the ancient Tamil texts among the lay readers. The method of presentation, the lucidity of the style and the spirit of Tamil culture are blended in such a way that they read like absorbing stories of the most pristine people at the height of their civilization and culture. That is why not only the lay reader but also those who have already studied them were/are attracted to read them again.

Correction of Taste

The very aim to correct the taste of the audience may not be desirable to some critics in whose view the critic should introduce the reader to a literary work and assist him to read for himself and not to read for him. The main import of such argument is that the critic should not prejudice the reader's judgement by forcing his own on him. In personal life Dr. Mu. Va. followed this attitude and never forcibly thrust his views and opinions of any sort on anyone who had an occasion to meet him or whose lot it was to be associated with him for long. But in his writings he was very firm that the taste of the people should be corrected and in doing so he would be even harsh. For example, he is not sympathetic to the view, 'Art for money's sake' and calls it 'a disease'.⁵ He even thinks it a duty of the artist and the critic to correct the taste of the people in life and literature as well.

Dr. Mu. Va's correction of taste lay in the very selection of the works, an understanding and enjoyment of which he promoted

to a very large extent. It was an era when anything and every thing was viewed through the spectacles of religion and that too highly saturated with myths, legends and inane superstitions. Literary pursuit was no exception to this blurred vision. Only puranas, sathahas and other such religious pills coated with some literary devices in some petty genres had their sway during that period, say up to the dawn of this century.

It is in such a milieu thick with religious bigotry that Dr. Mu. Va. preferred, of course, under the benign influence of Thiru Vi. Ka. the *Caṅkam* classics, the *Kuraḷ* and *Īlappatikāram* to the purely or even pseudo-religious texts. It is not wholly true or tenable that he was a naturophile and un-religious, if not irreligious. The probable reason is that apart from his genuine literary interest there was the Tamil Renaissance entering its cultural phase craving for that and only for that which is Tamilian in origin and outlook and condemning that which is non-Tamilian or anti-Tamilian. This cultural tide marshalled by the Dravida Kazhakam and manoeuvred to social and political success later by the Dravida Munnetrak Kazhakam, had a sweeping influence over all sections of the society. Even those who could not sympathise with its political expediency gradually accepted the merits of the ancient works which this tide was putting to demagogic use. It was at this juncture that Dr. Mu. Va. appeared on the literary scene in the city of Madras the centre of such activities.

Elucidation

Dr. Mu. Va. seems to have recognised the force of this tide which was responsible for the onset of popular enthusiasm in their ancient language and literature and for inducing a keen thirst to read and understand them. So he quenched this thirst in two ways: by writing critical works to an intellectual audience who had till then paid very little or no attention to these ancient works and by popularising them. Though Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyyer was publishing these ancient texts one by one from out of the dilapidated palm leaves, and though westerners like Dr. G. U. Pope had started appreciating these works by translating them into English with great interest, these works were not familiar to a large number of native scho-

lars and even to the professionals. Dr. Mu. Va's critical works did a great service to the cause of ancient Tamil works by weaning away the native scholars from purely religious works which have little value as literary works. And this change in the literary taste of the intelligentsia has been brought about by Dr. Mu. Va. quite persuasively through his lectures to the students, and his fellow-teachers and scholars. And these lectures were later on collected and put into book form so that the range of audience was extended and the use of the discussions made permanent.

The Great critics do not contribute: they interrupt

How did Dr. Mu. Va. bring about this change? Not through verbal advocacy for such works, but by explaining the literary excellences of these ancient works through his books wherein we find no condemnation of the works which he did not prefer. George Watson thinks, 'the great critics do not contribute: they interrupt.'⁶ Dr. Mu. Va. interrupted the contemporary opinions with regard to literature and its use and such interruption was not condemnatory in tone but sublimatory in view. Dr. Mu. Va. interrupts only to contribute and contribution need not necessarily mean continuation of the existing opinions which Watson seems to intend when he makes this statement. Contributions may be made either by adding something more to or altering the order of the existing conditions of the things, opinions, etc. Dr. Mu. Va. thus contributed to Tamil literary criticism by his *interruption*.

Popularisation of Cilappatikāram

His works intended for the common reader are largely responsible for spreading the beauty and richness of the *Cankam* works, the *Kural* and *Cilappatikāram*. By writing character-study series he has dispelled many uncharitable critical views of some works and their characters. For example, *Cilappatikāram* was not held worthy of study since it was composed by a Jain monk. Moreover the characters *Kaṇṇaki* and *Mātari* were understood as two poles far apart with the result that *Kaṇṇaki* was elevated to the *Heaven* by deifying her to various stages of hierarchy such as goddess of Chastity, *Māriyamman*, *Kaṇṇi*,

kāṭi, *Durgha*, etc. Satisfied with such honour, people started continuing their own way of life without learning anything from her story. In the general opinion, she was too ideal and good to be followed by human beings and hence her deification. It is this kind of attitude that Dr. Mu. Va. wanted to change. To him she was only a human being endowed with superb feminine traits and domestic virtues, to be studied, understood and emulated. This he wanted to convey and hence his work, *Kaṇṇaki*. Dr. Mu. Va. says in its preface: 'It is this interest then that has urged me to write this work in order that every one should understand and recognise the great virtues of *Kaṇṇaki*.'

In regard to *Mātavi*, the other extreme point of view was being entertained. That is, she was a harlot, the meanest of them, responsible for snatching *Kaṇṇaki*'s husband away from her, for the loss of his honour and wealth and for all the troubles that ensued. His work *Mātavi* is an excellent study into her character, an impartial analysis of her merits and demerits. This work has revealed her virtues and relieved her of all the false allegations levelled on her. Dr. Mu. Va. points out her defects, too; but they are exonerated in the light of her virtuous life which is shown to be as pure and principled as that led by *Kaṇṇaki*. Dr. Mu. Va. is among other scholars, largely responsible for redeeming her from the infamy of relentless criticism and carving out a niche for her. The fact that dialogues or arguments are held at times to decide who was more chaste and virtuous, *Kaṇṇaki* or *Mātavi* is a proof of her being elevated to the station of a lady of virtues, a change brought about by Dr. Mu. Va.

There are, of course, other scholars like T. P. Meenakshisundaran, Ma. Po. Sivagnanam, Kalaigñar Mu. Karunanidhi, etc., who have done yeoman service to the cause of *Cilappatikāram*, but yet Dr. Mu. Va's contribution and service in the form of lectures and books to different kinds of audience are quite considerable. His audience, the students and through them to a still wider audience, and the audience of his novels through which also he had preached the significance of *Cilappatikāram* was very very large and recurring, and hence his increased share of contribution.

The Kural and the Caṅkam Works

Dr. Mu. Va's works on the *Kural* and the *Caṅkam* classics have also helped the general audience a lot to understand and enjoy them. His short commentary to the *Kural* is very popular. The fact that nearly a million copies of the *Kural* with this commentary had been sold is a pointer to the magnitude of the usefulness of this commentary and of his service in propagating it to such a wider audience. His popular works on the *Caṅkam* classics are also equally useful in communicating the beauty of these literary gems to the common reader. Dr. Mu. Va. cherished the conviction that literature which neglects to appeal to the common reader will have shorter life and savourless existence,⁸ and therefore nourished it with his writings like the series *celbam* and *viruntu* and works like *Maṇal Vitu*, *Naṭai Vaṇṭi*, *Tamiḻ Neṅcam*, etc.

In doing so, Dr. Mu. Va. does not simply describe or appreciate their beauty, but relates their message and import to the present day life and shows how these works can healthily influence our aims and ways of life. In the course of such elucidation of these texts one can observe what kind of works Dr. Mu. Va. is not in sympathy with. That is all. He never denounces any work, because he never chooses any work that is not praiseworthy.

The Language of Dr. Mu. Va's Criticism

The language and style of Dr. Mu. Va. as far as these works are concerned is quite simple, lucid and yet clear. It is this lucidity of style and felicity of diction in contradistinction to those of his great contemporaries, that endeared him to an ever widening audience. Simplicity of style and clarity of thought is the characteristic trait of Dr. Mu. Va's personality as a writer and a man as well.

By promoting thus better understanding and enjoyment through elucidation of the ancient Tamil literary works and correction of the taste of his audience, and by judging their worth and significance in virtue of their relevance to the present society, Dr. Mu. Va's critical works certainly claim for him the label, *a good literary critic*; a *Torch* to the tower of the ancient Tamil classics.

II

Views of Literary Criticism

Dr. Mu. Va. was a creative writer and a literary critic as well. It would neither be unfair to him nor would we be far away from truth if we consider that he was more a creative writer than a critic. It is true that the number of his critical works (24) outnumber his creative works (15). But such numerical strength alone would not suffice to decide the propensities and hence the predilections of a personality as that of Mu. Va. Even his critical writings seem to have been inspired not so much by his critical interest to evaluate them as his deep joy at his pleasantly being in the association of great creative minds like those of *Vaḷḷuvar* and *Iḷaiṅkō Aṭikal*. Just a month before his much bereaved end he revealed his intention* to get away from the office of Vice-Chancellor in order that he might resume creative writing wherein lay his heart's content.⁹

His views of Literary Criticism are all the more significant in that they emanated from a mind which was at once creative and critical. Being cognate, therefore, they are valuable to recognise the creative and critical dimensions of Dr. Mu. Va's personality. An attempt is made in the following pages to put down his views with regard to Art, Literature, Poet, Criticism, etc. They are not found expressed under such classified heads but expressed in the relevant contexts in the course of his elucidation of the works of his choice, except those drawn from *Ilakkīyat Tīraṇ* and *Marapu*.

Art

The appeal of Art to human minds is everlasting since the primary emotions bodied forth in it are the same from the very infancy of the human race.¹⁰ The art, therefore, which is in close resemblance with the experience of life shall have the merit of standing the test of time.¹¹ Thus it should help build and preserve the culture out of which it springs.¹²

Art is of great service to humanity. It pleases the normal mind and purifies the corrupted one. Familiarity and use, and the fever and the fret of the world simply blind our senses

*The translations from Tamil of Dr. Mu. Va's views are by the author.

to the beauties around that we have eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear and hearts that do not feel. It is Art that rectifies these blunted sensibilities and restores their powers.¹³

Art is impersonal in that it can be neither harmful nor useful of its own accord. The results of art wholly rest with the user as is the case with any kind of instrument. Art should not be subordinated to any sort of design, say religious propaganda, etc., but it is not correct to say that it should not have any motive. Every artist has cherished some ideals and aims, and these would certainly find a place in his creations. The point is that the treatment of emotions or ideals should be artistic. If not, however ponderous or profitable the ideas may be, they would lose the label, art.

Art is not for Art's sake; it is for life. The best use of Art is to entertain by instructing, to delight by promoting higher sensibilities and to please by precepts.¹⁴ The concept, 'Art for money's sake' is a modern epidemic and very dangerous as it draws sustenance from selfishness.¹⁵

Literature

Of the many forms of Art, Music and Literature are superior to the rest; of these two, literature is superior to music in that while Music appeals to our feelings and instincts alone, literature nurtures our intellect besides nourishing the feelings. This is why Literature is able to delight us while reading, singing and even thinking of it without the text before us, whereas Music can feast our ears only when we hear. In short Music is aural while Literature is visual, aural and above all intellectual in appeal and hence its permanent interest beyond the pale of time and space.¹⁶ Literature is, therefore, the best of all the forms of Art.¹⁷

Though Dr. Mu. Va. attaches special significance to the intellectual appeal of the art of Literature, he does not think that it is one packed with ideas and information or that it is something conceived of fancy without relevance to Life. It is not a dictionary of the best thoughts. Artistically speaking, Literature proper is that wherein the primary Emotions are best represented through Imagination in a beautiful Form. Ontologically speaking, it is the fruit of the present experience

and seed of the life to come.¹⁸ It is, therefore, the presence or absence of the emotions, imagination and the form on the one hand and that of its relevance to life on the other that should govern our decision as to which is the best piece of Literature.¹⁹

To Dr. Mu. Va. as to most of the modern critics, Literature is an artistic form of emotions and is *Organic* like any other beings. He considers, therefore, that rules and theories should not either in the form of Tradition or in the form of critical analysis, hinder its natural growth.²⁰ This opinion of Mu. Va. is best manifest in his discussion of a *Caṅkam* poem in *Ōvacceyti*.

Since he lays more emphasis on its relevance to Life, Literature of any form, he thinks, should be able to delight both the scholars and the lay readers; delight the scholars by artistic and intellectual merits, and the lay readers by human interests such as primary emotions, instincts, good story, etc. Literature which neglects to appeal to the common reader will have shorter life and savourless existence.²¹ His citation of the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha to prove his opinion is quite relevant.

Literature to him is, therefore, one that springs out of Life, guides the human beings through life in the form of beacon lights to erring vessels, and thus is one meant for making one's life a pleasant and fruitful sojourn.

Poetry

Though Literature includes all forms of creative writing through the verbal medium, poetry is the chief representative of the literary art. Dr. Mu. Va. is quite alive to this opinion, though himself was a novelist and not a poet. If Literature is, he says, a mountain range, then Poetry is its peak; if it is a huge tree Poetry is its tallest branch. This is so because its emotional appeal and artistic beauty is far more superior to those of other forms of Literature.²²

His descriptive definition of Poetry that emotion is the soul of Poetry, imagination its body, and, rhythm and rhyme its attire,²³ gives us a clear idea of his views of Poetry. His emphasis on the emotional content of Poetry is that of a creative writer and that of a critic. But, however, he does not sympathise with the view that it should administer to emotions and

feelings and corrupt them, as Plato had charged Poetry with. Dr. Mu. Va. holds firmly that Literature or Poetry that serves as a pastime is not a good one. That which corrects one's emotions and leads him to a better life is good.²⁴ He is Aristotlean in this respect. He says, therefore, that we need no more of the art or literature that is intoxicating in effect.²⁵ How ethical he is, is well brought out when he pronounces that Poetry which describes the mind and not the body is what we require; the former is great and the latter base.²⁶ It follows then that Dr. Mu. Va. is not sympathetic to the view that Poetry should not have any *design* upon the audience. In this respect Dr. Mu. Va. is with the classicists.

He is more or less in agreement with most of the major critics with regard to the difference between Poetry and Verse. Poetry and Verse are not, he opines, antithetical to each other in form, but in content. Imaginative representation of emotions is what makes a verse Poetry. Bereft of this nature, a verse cannot be poetry in virtue of its verse form alone.²⁷

With regard to the subject matter of poetry he is on the side of the Romantics who attached little importance to its being great or small. Mu. Va. observes that the subject matter of Poetry may be anything small or great, commonplace or grand. It is the exuberance of the poet's experience of life and of his imagination that transforms a commonplace into a grand subject, and its absence a grand subject into a commonplace.²⁸

Literary Forms

The emotional content makes poetry *beautiful* whereas the *form* which in his opinion is its dress, makes it a good piece of art. So the artistic success of a poet squarely rests with the suitability and efficacy of the *form* he chooses.²⁹ Besides being ornamentals the metre, rhyme and rhythm which vary according to the emotional variation, help the reader to willingly suspend his disbelief and enter into the world of Poetry to partake of its emotions.³⁰

Dr. Mu. Va. ascribes two important reasons to the rise of *novel* as a form of literature in this century (in Tamil).

(1) The celerity with which it can be read and enjoyed is quite becoming of this winged-age.

(2) Whereas the other forms like poetry and drama are conditioned by so many conventions and rules, this form (*novel*) is free from such restraints, and hence its free and flourishing growth and propagation.³¹

Epic is an artistic treasure chest in verse-form when the form of prose was not developed to such use. *Novel* is such an artistic chest in prose-form when it has reached its proper development. This is the difference between the two forms.³² Dr. Mu. Va. seems here to have attempted an incomplete distinction between the forms, epic and novel. He might have held in mind only the variety of characters, voluminous size of the forms and the emotional interest portrayed when he makes this distinction. It is to be noted that the longevity of a literary work depends as much on the emotional contents as on the form of expression. Mu. Va. himself has, it is gratifying to note, expressed that form is very significant to any art. Without proper form no expression can become art; and no literary work without form will last long.³³

Folk songs have, in his opinion, influenced the form and theme of many poets in Tamil to relax their style. *Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ* is cited to have started using this form in his epic. Folk songs were responsible for the creation of many literary conventions. Citing the fewness of songs in *neytal* (pining in love) convention in the works of *Caṅkam* classics, Mu. Va. thinks that this aspect of love was not deep-rooted in the folk songs of the maritime region and its inclusion into the five-fold aspects of love was only the grammarian's attempt to make the classification complete.³⁴

Aim

Dr. Mu. Va. is a staunch supporter of didacticism and propositionalism in art and literature. The poet should have some aim to achieve through his creation. The loftier the aim the grander his art. He attributes such lofty aims to have been the cause of immortality of some great works. *Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ* and *Cāṭṭaṇār* composed their epics with the propagation of certain messages in aim.

There are some books which play great role in influencing the minds of the readers; dispel their misgivings as to the end

of a virtuous life and that of a vicious course; comfort them when they are in distress; correct their conscience when thwarted by dilemmas; guide them through thick and thin, and lead them ultimately to the path of virtue. It is such lofty ideal or aim of the poet that raises the art of poetry/literature to a grand level, and ensures everlastingness to such works.³⁵ Dr. Mu. Va. is out and out a classicist in entrusting the art of poetry with such heavy, though healthy responsibilities. John Keats would be shocked with such palpable design of Poetry.³⁶

Poet

On poets too, Mu. Va. speaks in the same vein. He attaches much importance to the poet's personal life. Greatness of a literary work, and its characters is dependent on the greatness of the personality of the poet. For he says, *Iṭṭhō* was able to create sublime characters like *Kōvalan*, *Kaṇṇaki* and *Mātavi* because, he was sublime and sagacious. Only great poets can create great characters; grand artists alone can produce grand works.³⁶ Poets of the stature of *Iṭṭhō* would never indulge in sensual description while depicting the physical beauty of a heroine. They would rather depict the spiritual (mental) beauty at length. Even if physical beauty is aimed at that will be achieved by a few delicate strokes and by poignant suggestions.³⁷

Dr. Mu. Va. is very serious about the poet's virtues. He would not allow a great poet to have blemishes in his character like envy, hatred, etc. Stretching the allegory of the bee in *Koṇkutēr Vāḷkkai*, he says that great poets do not bear enmity towards each other nor do they envy each other. He does not believe the anecdotes connected with rivalry between poets like *Kampar* and *Auvaiyār*, between *Pukaḷēnti* and *Oṭṭak-kūttar*.

It appears from the forgone passages that the poetic personality of a poet should not be different from his personality as a man. In stressing the absence of such personality gap, Dr. Mu. Va. makes it appear impossible or incompatible to portray what would not be worthy of his personal qualities.

But there seems to be some conflict of opinion when he says

that the poetic personality of *Iṭāṅkō* was not intervened by his saintly personality in life. He cites in support of this latter view the depiction of the life of huntsmen (in *Cilappatikāram*) which involves the description of killing, meat-eating and waylaying others. These are things which *Iṭāṅkō* as a Jain monk would have shirked even thinking.³⁸ But, however, he thinks that the poetic personality of a poet may be different from or may be only one phase of his total personality.³⁹

Inspiration

Though Dr. Mu. Va. can be said to have classical views of poetry and its use, he is quite romantic when he expresses his views of Inspiration which the great Romantic poets of the West depended upon while the Neo-classicists derided it.

The moments of inspiration, though very few and far between, are the best moments of his existence. For in such a state of mind he is god-like and with such divine power he creates works which the posterity will not willingly let die. A medium, an instrument of Art, he creates by losing his identity. He is like the flute that gives out sweet melody when the wind passes through.⁴⁰

In such moments surcharged with intense emotions, reasoning and intellect do not interact; imagination and emotions have full play.⁴¹

Only those who are endowed with such visitations could create good works of art; others could not. Their strife at poetic composition is futile. They can at best be good in versification which could glitter with rhymes and other such verbal acrobatics; but never can be called a work of art. It is, therefore, inspiration that makes a great poet what he is.⁴²

It wrings our hearts to read his inaugural address to a seminar just a month before his sudden end. Speaking of creative writing he says, 'Creative writers are made not merely in virtue of their toil and moil, of severe academic drills and exercises, but, I believe, only by virtue of God's grace.... I am led to deem that such gifted writers are favourites of god, the chosen few. Society should make good use of them.... I feel absolutely gratified only when I am engaged in the art of creative writing.'⁴³ It may be that God has sanctioned his

wish so soon after his expression of it that he has joined the favourites of God, the chosen few to pursue his creative writing.

Conscious part of the art

Though Dr. Mu. Va has held such views of inspiration, he lays proper emphasis on the part of conscious effort of the poet also. That is, even though the emotional content and the total comprehensive vision of a literary work can be had through inspiration, the art of expression of such vision has to be learnt and practised. He is of the opinion that mastery of a language is quite essential to express one's ideas or emotions in that language. This mastery is to be achieved only by repeated learning and practice. Without such mastery, Poetry is not possible.⁴⁴ Effective employment of metre and rhyme to heighten the poetic beauty depends, therefore, on one's conscious effort.⁴⁵

Thus Mu. Va's views of inspiration are healthily balanced with his reasonable opinions of the conscious effort in the art of poetic composition.

Imagination and Fancy

The Golden Age of Tamil Literature is the period (*Canikam*) where the literary conventions were strictly observed. In Mu. Va's opinion, imaginative literature alone can preserve the literary traditions of a language by making use of them.⁴⁶ His views of the difference between Imagination and Fancy are explanatory in nature. He does not enter into their operational distinctions. He makes it clear by wealth of demonstrative pieces from literary works. He distinguishes them in view of their effect and use. Fancy can make a piece of literature, he observes, more appealing, but it cannot be more than a pastime, whereas imagination can be instructive and can play a great role in cultivating the mind, though a bit less appealing. In the former entertainment value is more; in the latter enlightenment.⁴⁷

History cannot be Poetry; Poetry can never be mistaken for History. They are two different products with different ends in view. In what respects do they differ? Mu. Va's opinions make this point clearly understood. History differs from poetry

not because it is concerned with real facts, but because it treats the facts with cold reason in prosaic manner. Poetry deals with not only imagined ideas and characters, it also deals with real incidents and facts, but treats them imaginatively. The treatment is, therefore, what matters in both the spheres.⁴⁸

Literary Criticism

Literary aesthetics or enjoyment is by far better, nobler and more lasting than that received through the senses. This pleasure is made possible through literary discussions, deliberations and thus through literary criticism. Hence its significance.⁴⁹ Literary appreciation and enjoyment requires sustained interest in art and literature, and proper drills and exercises. It is literary criticism that helps the reader to develop these special skills.⁵⁰

Dr. Mu. Va. does not deny the use of historical and biographical facts and the aspect of analytical criticism. But, however, they should not, in his opinion, influence the reader's enjoyment of a literary work or the critic's sense of judgement. They can guide us to the entrance and only till the entrance where it should bid goodbye, leaving descriptive criticism in full charge of further exploration into and exposition of the works concerned.⁵¹

He has contributed very much to the fact that aesthetic judgements are never final. For the one characteristic beauty or aspect considered to be the best by one critic may be considered to be least poetical or artistic by another critic. A defect in one's judgement may be adjudged as a supreme virtue in another's. Dr. Mu. Va. adds that such differences should be there in a society which wants to have its research activities proper prosper day in and day out.⁵²

Literary Critic

Nobility of character and action is the touchstone used by Mu. Va. in his consideration of Art, Literature and Literary criticism. It is, therefore, quite natural that he expects the literary critic to be such a personality. The critic should be a man of wider and deeper experience of life, besides being a widely and deeply read scholar. Mu. Va. is with T. S. Eliot

in this respect and in his stress that the critic should also be a man of convictions and principles. He prescribes rather that the critic should have a healthy and cultured mind, for only such people are capable of understanding the significance of great works.⁵³ Not only that much; only such people can interpret and elucidate the greatness of such works to their less fortunate brethren (the readers) and only such critics of noble mind can cultivate nobility in the minds of the people and make them noble so as to understand and enjoy great works (cp. T. S. Eliot). This is indeed a great service by the critics to the society.⁵⁴

No work can be entirely free from blemishes and no work is wholly defective without having any sort of excellence in any part. A critic should be able to distinguish these as such. And in the final phase of judgement the critic should evaluate the work in entirety, not in parts and pass his remarks in proportion to the merits or demerits.

To achieve this quality of judgement the literary critic should be impartial and fair to the work under investigation. To be free from bias, prejudice and partiality is, of course, very difficult for a human being; it is divine. But the critic should strive hard to achieve this divine nature at least at the time of judgement. Then only fair judgement is possible.⁵⁵

It is very clear from the foregone pages that the qualitative requirements of a good literary critic desired and recommended by Dr. Mu. Va. do reflect his own critical personality. His views do not prefer to him any particular label. He is at times with the great Romantics; at times with the great Classicists, not by way of elusion but by way of inclusion of all that is good for the purpose. In short, his views are *Mu. Va. vian*.

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11. *Ārāycci*, p. 60; *Ōvaccēyiti*, p. 11.
12. *Ōvaccēyiti*, p. 107.
13. *Tiṇṇaṇ*, pp. 34-35.
14. *Ilakkō*, pp. 143-144; தமிழ் ஒளி பக். 44.
15. கலை கலைக்காகவே, p. 35.
16. *Konkūṭēr Vāḷkkai*, pp. 32-33.
17. *Tiṇṇaṇ*, p. 45; *Ārāycci*, pp. 47, 106.
18. Radio Talk, (30-3-1950) on Somalay's *Amerikkāvaippar*.
19. சிறந்த இலக்கியம் பக். 24-26.
20. *Ārāycci*, p. 127.
21. *Neṭuntokai Viruntu*, Preface, p. 3.
22. *Tiṇṇaṇ*, p. 54.
23. *Kuṇṇutokaic Celvam*, Introduction, p. 4.
24. *Konkūṭēr Vāḷkkai*, p. 48.
25. அகத்துறை, p. 111.
26. „ „
27. *Tiṇṇaṇ*, p. 51.
28. „ p. 63.
29. „ p. 180.
30. „ p. 198.
31. தணலில் தங்கம், முன்னுரை.
32. குறிஞ்சி மலர், முன்னுரை.
33. திருப்பள்ளியெழுச்சி பக். 78.
34. *Annals of Oriental Research* 1970, pp. 1-17; 1969, pp. 1-6; சங்க இலக்கியம் பக். 54.
35. *Ārāycci*, pp. 33, 94, 96, 184.
- 35a. Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, 3 February 1818.
36. *Ilakkō Afikai*, p. 127; *Ārāycci*, p. 62; குறவின் செய்தி, முன்னுரை.
37. „ pp. 138-139.
38. „ p. 132.
39. „ p. 94.
40. *Ārāycci*, p. 194.

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41. *Tirāṇ*, p. 297.
42. *Ārāycci*, p. 195.
43. Inaugural address to the seminar on Akilān's works.
44. *Tamiḻ Neṇcam*, pp. 45-46.
45. *Tirāṇ*, p. 203, 206, 256.
46. அகத்துறை p. 109; காலநேதாழும் தமிழ், கலைக்கதிர், மார்ச்சு 1968, p. 15.
47. *Ōvaccēyti*, p. 107.
48. *Ārāycci*, p. 13.
49. Introduction to *Ārāycci*.
50. Preface to *Ilakkiyamun Vimaricāṇamun*.
51. *Ārāycci*, pp. 8, 9, 49, 189.
52. „ p. 10; *Koṇkutēr Vāḷkkai*, p. 70.
53. *Koṇkutēr Vāḷkkai*, p. 47.
54. „ p. 57.
55. *Ārāycci*, pp. 198, 199.

APPENDIX—A

CRITICAL BOOKS OF DR. MU. VA. REFERRED TO

| | | | | |
|------|---|-----|------|------|
| I. | 1. <i>Ilakkiya Ārāycci</i> | IV | Edn. | 1967 |
| | 2. <i>Ilakkiya Marapu</i> | II | „ | 1968 |
| | 3. <i>Ilakkiyat Tirāṇ</i> | II | „ | 1965 |
| II. | 4. <i>Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ</i> | III | „ | 1973 |
| | 5. <i>Kaṇṇaki</i> | I | „ | 1950 |
| | 6. <i>Koṇkutēr Vāḷkkai</i> | I | „ | 1955 |
| | 7. <i>Māṭavi</i> | IV | „ | 1967 |
| | 8. <i>Mullait Tiṇai</i> | III | „ | 1964 |
| | 9. <i>Ōvaccēyti</i> | IV | „ | 1963 |
| | 10. <i>Tiruvalluvar Allatu Vāḷkkai Viḷakkam</i> | VII | „ | 1967 |
| | 11. <i>Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature (In English).</i> | II | „ | 1963 |
| | 12. <i>Ilakkiyak Kāṭcikaḷ</i> | II | „ | 1968 |
| III. | 13. <i>Kuṟaḷ Kāṭṭum Kāṭalar</i> | I | „ | 1968 |
| | 14. <i>Kuṟuntokai Celvam</i> | II | „ | 1958 |
| | 15. <i>Kuṟuntokai Viruntu</i> | I | „ | 1953 |
| | 16. <i>Maṇal Viṣu</i> | | | 1965 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| 17. <i>Naṭai Vaṇṭi</i> | III | Edn. | 1964 |
| 18. <i>Narriṇai Celvam</i> | I | „ | 1958 |
| 19. <i>Narriṇai Viruntu</i> | I | „ | 1953 |
| 20. <i>Neṭuntakaic Celvam</i> | II | „ | 1957 |
| 21. <i>Neṭuntakai Viruntu</i> | II | „ | 1957 |
| 22. <i>Pulavar Kaṇṇir</i> | II | „ | 1963 |
| 23. <i>Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāru</i> | I | „ | 1972 |
| 24. <i>Tamiḻ Neṇcam</i> | X | „ | 1973 |

APPENDIX—B

CRITICAL ESSAYS OF DR. MU. VA. REFERRED TO

1. அகத்துறை, கவிச்செவ்வியம், முதல்வர் பேரா. ரா. கிருஷ்ணமூர்த்தி அவர்கள் மணிவிழா மலர், கோவை, 1970, பக். 103-116.
2. இருவகை வளர்ச்சி, தமிழ் வரலாற்றுக் கழக மலர், சென்னை, 1969, பக். 3-5.
3. உணர்வும் கற்பனையும், கலைமகள் தீபாவளி மலர், 1958, பக். 537-539.
4. உயர்ந்த உள்ளம், கலைமகள் தீபாவளி மலர், 1962, பக். 531-533.
5. கலை கலைக்காக, கலைமகள் தீபாவளி மலர், 1967, பக். 33-35.
6. காலநேரமும் தமிழும், கலைக்கதிர், மார்ச்சு, ஏப்ரல்-மே, 1968.
7. சங்க இலக்கியம், திராவிட மாணவர் முன்னேற்றக் கழகம் பொது மாநாட்டு மலர், சென்னை, 1970, பக். 51-57.
8. சிறந்த இலக்கியம். கலைக்கதிர் பொன்விழா மலர், 1974, பக். 24-26.
9. தமிழ் இலக்கியத் திறனாய்வு—இரண்டாவது உலகத் தமிழ் மாநாடு விழா மலர், சென்னை, 1968, பக். 47-50.
10. தமிழ் ஒளி, மலையாளப் பல்கலைக் கழகத் தமிழ்ப் பேரவை, இதழ் ஆறு, 1966-1967, பக். 44 (பேட்டி) (மேற்கோள், யான் கண்ட மு. வ. பக். 39)
11. தன்னலம் இல்லாத துயர், கு. மதுரை முதலியார் 70-ஆம் ஆண்டு சிறைவு விழாச் சிறப்பு மலர், சென்னை, 1969, பக். 46-48.
12. திருப்பன்விபேழுச்சி—இரண்டாவது உலகத் தமிழ் கருத்தரங்க சிகழ்ச்சிகள், மூன்றாம் தொகுதி, (Ed. V. I. S.) பான்டிச்சேரி, 1971, பக். 72-80.



With Dr. T. P. M. and Sethu Pillai



With Chairman (V.C.) of the College of Wooster (U.S.)



An artist with artistes



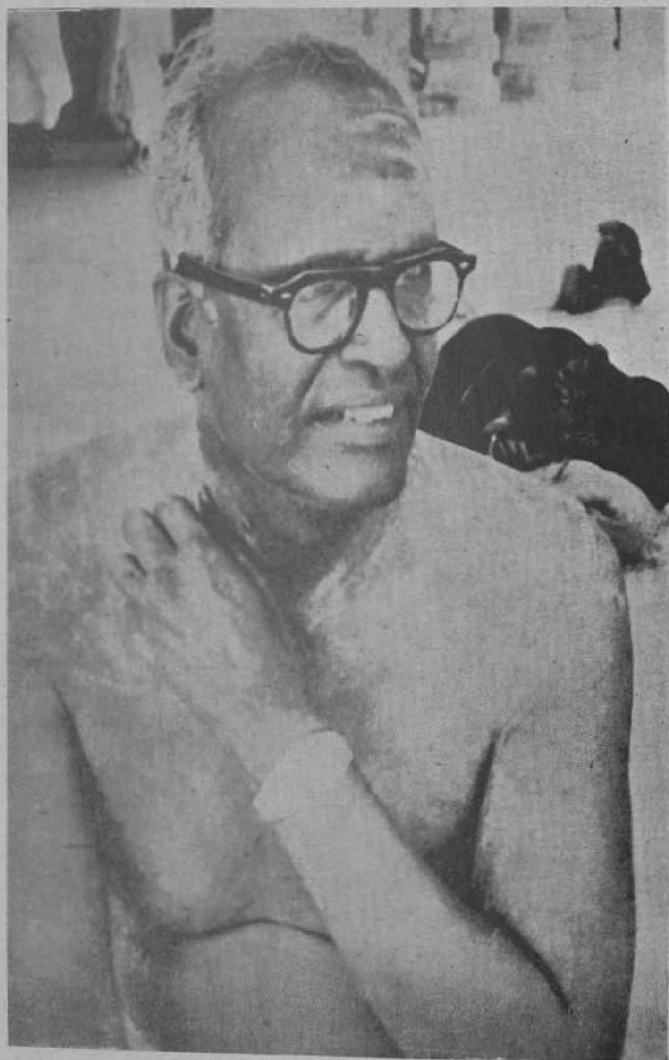
Lighting the Lamp of Learning



The Vice Chancellors — Yesterday and Today



With one of his disciples



At the feet of Lord Muruga at Tiruchendur

LITERARY CRITIC

13. படைப்பிலக்கியம், மதுரைப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் நடந்த 'அகிலனின் கதைகள்' பற்றிய கருத்தரங்கத்தின் தொடக்க விழா உரை; 9-9-74.
(கலைமகன் 1974 நவம்பர், அகிலனின் கட்டுரைகள் (பக். 386) இருந்து பெற்றது.
14. புறக்கணிப்பு, Tamil Culture IX (1961) 3, 263-270.

I am thankful to Thiru S. Venkataraman, Department of Tamil, Madurai University for referring me to some of Mu. Va's articles in Tamil and English.

ENGLISH

- A type of Apostrophes in Sangam Literature, Proceedings of Third International Conference, Paris 1970, (pp. 91-96).
Glimpses of Tamil Literature, Madras Information, January, 1955.
Influence of Folklore on Tamil Literature, Annals of Oriental Research, 1970, (pp. 1-17).
Literary Theories in Early Tamil—Ettuttokai, Tamil Culture XII (1966) 2 and 3, 127-138.
Also published in the Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Kuala Lumpur, 1966, Vol. II, pp. 44-54.
Neytal (Pining) in Akananuru, Annals of Oriental Research, 1969, pp. 1-6.
The analytic tendency in Tamil, Annals of Oriental Research, 1957.

APPENDIX—C

CRITICAL PREFACES BY DR. MU. VA. CONSULTED FOR THIS PAPER

1. *Ilakkiyamum Vimaricanamum*—by P. Kothandaraman.
2. *Kātal Tūṅkukiratu*—by K. Rajavelu.
3. *Kuṟaliṇ Ceyti*—by P. Arunachalam.
4. *Kuṟiṇci Malar*—by N. Parthasarathy.
5. *Nāval Ilakkiyam*—by M. Ramalingam.
6. Review of the book '*Amerikkāvaippār*' by Somalay, in All India Radio on 30-3-50.

Dr. Mu. Va. has in all written Prefaces to more than hundred books and only those which directly bear upon this essay are appended here.

APPENDIX—D

ENGLISH CRITICAL TEXTS REFERRED TO IN
DR. MU. VA'S WORKS

- ABERCROMBIE, L. Principles of Literary Criticism.
The Epic.
The Idea of Great Poetry.
- ALDEN, R. M. An Introduction to Poetry.
- ANATOLE FRANCE. Quoted on p. 49, *Ilakkiya Arāycci*.
- ARNOLD, MATHEW. Essays in Criticism. Second Series.
- BALL, A. H., R. Ruskin as Literary Critic.
- BATES, H. E. The Modern Short Story.
- BERGSON, HENRI. Laughter.
- BLUNDEN, EDMUND. Nature in English Literature.
- BODKIN, MAUD. Archetypal patterns in Poetry.
- BOSWELL. Life of Johnson.
- BOWRA, C. M. Heroic Poetry.
- BRADLEY, A. C. Oxford Lectures on Poetry.
- BRANDES, G. Main Currents in 19c. Literature.
- BROWN, S. J. The Realm of Poetry.
- BUCH, G. The Social Criticism of Literature.
- BUTCHER. Harvard Lectures.
- CAUDWELL, CHRISTOPHER. Illusion and Reality.
- CHAPLIN, CHARLIE. Remark quoted on p. 146, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
- CHAPMAN, J. A. On Hamlet.
- CHAPMAN, J. C. On Poetry.
- CHARLTON, H. B. The Art of Literary Study.
- CHURCH, RICHARD. The Growth of the English Novel.
- COLERIDGE, S. T. On Elegy. Shakespearean Criticism.
- COOMARASWAMY, ANANDA. The transformation of Nature in Art.
- COWPER, WILLIAM. Letters.
- DANTE. Quotation.
- DAWSON, W. J. The Makers of Modern English.
- DIXON, W. MACNEILE. Tragedy.
- ELIOT, T. S. The Three Voices of Poetry.
The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.
- EMERSON. Nature.
- FELKIN, F. W. The Craft of the Poet.
- FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE. Quoted on p. 153, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
- FYRE, N. Anatomy of Criticism.
- GREG, WALTER, W. Pastoral Poetry & Pastoral Drama.
- HAZLITT, WILLIAM. Essays and Lectures on English Poets.
The spirit of the Age.
- HE HAAS, C. E. Nature and the Country in English Poetry.
- HUDSON, W. H. An Introduction to the study of Literature.
- HUNT, LEIGH. On Poetry.
- HURST, H. NORMAN. Four elements in Literature.

The entries in the above list include only those works cited in the body of his critical writings, analysed in this paper. Creative works by European writers and Indian authors (like Tagore) which he would have studied many times over are not included here. The list is helpful to understand the magnitude of his comprehensive reading.

LITERARY CRITIC

- IRVING, WASHINGTON. On Pastoral poetry.
- JOAD, C. E. M. Counter Attack from the East.
Guide to Modern Thought.
- JOURNAL OF THE MADRAS UNIVERSITY. Humanities
XXX.
- JOYCE, JAMES. Quoted on p. 158, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
- JUNG, CARL. On Archetype.
- KALE, M. R. The Meghaduta of Kalidasa (translation).
- KEATS, JOHN. Letters.
- KEITH, A. B. A History of Sanskrit Literature.
- KUPPUSWAMI SASTRI, S. Highways and Byways of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit.
- LANDOR. Imaginary Conversations.
- LAWRENCE, D. H. Quoted on p. 153, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
- LOCKYER, SIR NORMAN AND WINIFRED, L. Tennyson As a student and Poet of Nature.
- LOWES, J. L. Convention and Revolt in Poetry.
- LUCAS, F. L. Tragedy.
- LYON, P. H. B. The Discovery of Poetry.
- MAUGHAM, W. S. A Writer's Note Book.
- MEENAKSHISUNDARAN, T. P. A History of Tamil Literature.
- MILL, JOHN STUART. On Liberty.
- MOLL, E. G. The Appreciation of Poetry.
- MOORMAN, FREDERIC, W. The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry.
- MURRY, J. M. Discoveries.
The Problem of Style.
- NOYES, ALFRED. Some aspects of Modern Poetry.
- PALGRAVE, FRANCIS, T. Landscape in Poetry.
- PEACOCK, THOMAS LOVE. Memoirs of Shelley.
- PEARSON, HESKETH. Dickens.
- PLATO. The Republic.
- POE, EDGAR ALLEN. Quoted on p. 164, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
- PRESCOTT, F. C. The Poetic Mind.
- QUILLER-COUCH, A. Adventures in Criticism.
- RAMACHANDRA DIKSHITAR, V. R. Studies in Tamil Literature and History.
- READ, HERBERT. Wordsworth.
- REYNOLDS, SIR JOSHNA. Our Art.
- RICHARDS, I. A. Principles of Literary Criticism.
Practical Criticism.
Science and Poetry.
- RICHARDSON, DOROTHY. Quoted on p. 158, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
- RIDLEY, M. R. Poetry and the ordinary Reader.
- SANKARAN, A. Some aspects of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit.
- SHAIRP, J. C. Aspects of Poetry.
Poetic Interpretation of Nature.
- SHAKESPEARE. The Two Gentlemen of Verona.
The Merchant of Venice.
A Mid Summer Nights Dream.
- SHAW, GEORGE BERNARD. The Dark Lady of the Sonnets.
- SHELLEY, P. B. A Defence of Poetry.
Ode to the Westwind.
The Skylark.
- SPENSER. The Shepherd's Calendar.
- TAGORE, R. Sadhana.
- TENNYSON. Enoch Arden.
In Memoriam.
The Brook.
- THOMPSON, JAMES. Seasons.
- TOLSTOY. What is Art.
- TRELAWNY, E. J. The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

TUCKER, T. G. The Judgment and Appreciation of Literature.
 WALTER PATER. Quoted.
 WESTLAND, PETER. Contemporary Literature.
 Literary Appreciation.
 WILLIAMS, R. Drama from Ibsen to Eliot.
 WILSON, J. B. English Literature.
 WINCHESTER, C. T. Some Principles of Literary Criticism.

WOODBERRY, G. E. The Inspiration of Poetry.
 WOOLF, VIRGINIA. Quoted on p. 158, *Ilakkiya Marapu*.
 WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM. Preface to Lyrical Ballads, Sonnets, Ode to Duty, The Wanderer, etc. Prefaces & Essays on Poetry.
 YOUNG, EDWARD. Conjectures on Original Composition.

APPENDIX—E

DR. MU. VA'S TAMIL EQUIVALENTS TO ENGLISH LITERARY AND CRITICAL TERMS

aesthetics

alliteration

analytic stage

applied literature

associative imagination

astrology

astronomy

comedy

content

contrast

creative imagination

criticism

didactic literature

dogmatic criticism

dramatic irony

dramatic monologue

"

dramatic novel

dramatic poetry

dramatic representation

dramatic soliloquy

dynamic arts

elegy

empathy

கலைப்பதிற்ருரிய கவச்சித் தன்மை.

மோனை.

பகுறினா.

சார்பு இலக்கியம்.

இயைபுச் சுற்பனை.

சோதிடம்.

வானநூல்.

இன்பியல் நாடகம்.

உள்ளு.

முரண் (நாடகம்).

படைப்புக் சுற்பனை.

திறனாய்வு.

நீதி நூல்.

விதிவழி ஆராய்ச்சி.

நாடகக் குறிப்பு முரண்.

ஒரு சுற்று நாடகம்.

நாடகத் தனிமொழிப் பாட்டு.

நாடகப் போக்கு நாவல்.

நாடகப் பாட்டு.

நடித்துரைத்தல்.

நாடகத் தனிமொழிப் பாட்டு.

இயங்கு கலைகள்.

கையறுநிலைப் பாட்டு.

கற்பனை செய்வும் திறன்.

Collected from his works on and of Literary theories and criticism.

epic
epic of art
epic of growth
erratic or eccentric criticism
extensive study
fancy
folk literature
form
hero
historical criticism
hymn
impersonal poetry
impressionistic criticism
inductive criticism
inspiration
intensive study
interpretative imagination
judicial criticism
laments
linguistics
lyric
metre
mimetic art
narrative
narrative poetry
novel of action
novel of character
objective poetry
panegyrics
parallelism
pastoral poetry
pedantic style
personal poetry
philosophy
physiology
pilgrim's progress
plot
poetry
prose
prose-poetry
psychology
pure literature
realism

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காவியம்.
கலைக் காவியம்.
வளர்ச்சிக் காவியம்.
தவறான ஆராய்ச்சி.
அகல உழுதல்.
வெறுங்கற்பனை
வாய்மொழி இலக்கியம்.
வடிவு, வடிவம்.
தலைவன்.
வரலாற்றுமுறை ஆராய்ச்சி.
பக்திப்பாட்டு.
ஒன்றிப்பாட்டு.
உணர்ச்சி வழி ஆராய்ச்சி.
கண்டுணர்முறை ஆராய்ச்சி.
அகத்தெழுச்சி.
ஆழ உழுதல்.
கருத்து விளக்கக் கற்பனை.
தர மதிப்பீடு ஆராய்ச்சி.
கையறுநிலைப் பாட்டு.
மொழிபியல்.
தன்னுணர்ச்சிப் பாட்டு.
யாப்பு.
ஒப்புமைக் கலை.
எடுத்துரைத்தல்.
எடுத்துரைப் பாட்டு.
நிகழ்ச்சிகள் மிக்க நாவல்.
பண்புநலன் விளங்கும் நாவல்.
ஒன்றிப் பாட்டு.
பாடாண்பாட்டு.
நாடக இணைவு.
முல்லைப்பாட்டு (ஆயர்பாட்டு?)
கடுநடை.
ஒன்றிய பாட்டு.
மெய்யுணர்வு.
உடலியல்.
பரதேசியின் முன்னேற்றம்.
கரு.
பாட்டு.
உரைநடை.
வசனகவிதை.
உளவியல்.
நேர் இலக்கியம்.
உண்மை மிகுந்தது
உண்மையியல் (அ) உன்னது
புனைதல்.
நடப்பியல்.
உண்மைப் பாங்கு.

reflective poetry
 representative art
 rhythm
 ”
 rime
 romanticism
 ”
 ”
 ”
 satire
 satiric poetry
 standard or normal criticism
 static arts
 stream of consciousness
 style
 subjective poetry
 sympathy
 synthetic stage
 tragedy
 unity of action
 unity of place
 unity of time
 verse
 villain

மெய்யுணர்வுப் பாட்டு.
 ஒப்புமைக் கலை.
 ஒலிநயம்.
 ஒரு வகை நயம்.
 எதுகை.
 கற்பனையில் மிதப்பது.
 கற்பனையில் (அ) இல்லை
 புனைதல்.
 கற்பனைப் பாங்கு.
 கற்பனையில் மிதக்கும் இலக்கியம்.
 அங்கதம்.
 எள்ளற்பாட்டு.
 நேர்மையான ஆராய்ச்சி.
 நிலைக்கலைகள்.
 நனவோடை முறை.
 நடை.
 ஒன்றிய பாட்டு.
 ஒத்துணர்வு.
 தொகுநிலை.
 துன்பியல் நாடகம்.
 செயல் ஒருமை.
 இட ஒருமை.
 கால ஒருமை.
 செய்யுள்.
 கொடியவன்.

A BLESSED SOUL

*Thiru G. Rajavelu**

He was noble while alive but nobler in his death. He was dauntless unperturbed when death silently entered his chamber and stared at him face to face. He was not only a learned scholar but also throughout his life a practical philosopher. His rich and fertile fancy did not make him a coward. He was soft but fearless. He was humble before good but fiery before evil. His wits encircled with his radiating smile never deserted him till his end.

Many people know him as a great Tamil scholar who enriched the Tamil Language by his fertile pen in writing thought provoking novels, heart-searching short stories and foresighted essays. He practised what he preached and never swerved from the righteous path. He was a Social Reformer. It was however, his daily rite to rise up from his bed after reciting a few hymns from Thevaram and Thayumanavar. He was deeply immersed in Sangam Literature but also rote modern prose. His style was simple and direct aiming at the society in order to cleanse it and make it a thinking and moving society.

He used to say very often that a Tamilian's intelligence is not in any way inferior to any other in the world and as an individual he can compete with any man and come out successful. To strengthen his point he used to cite the eminent sons of Tamil Nadu like A. R. Mudaliar, A. L. Mudaliar, C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Rajaji, V. L. Ethiraj and Kamaraj. But

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Tamils as a race cannot rise as one man and compete with other nationalities of the world. So he preached that tolerance should be practised by each and every Tamilian and eschew jealousy and petty-mindedness. Then only the Tamilian as a race can conquer others and carve out their right place in the world.

Many artists forget themselves whenever they witness a beautiful and a captivating thing appears either on the horizon or in a dale; in a forest; or in a garden; in an orchard or in a lovely cottage.

Mu. Va. was a keen observer of nature and his sense of observation is rather something striking and unique. One early morning I was with him watching a pair of squirrels hopping and tossing up and down. There were ripe seetha fruits in his garden. The two squirrels bit nearly fifty fruits but neither he disturbed them nor allowed me to drive them away. His wide opened eyes looked admirably while they nibbled the fruits and well nigh spoiled them. All through, he was very interestingly watching the squirrels' various posture. Such was his keen observation and his mind never bothered about the fruits.

It is a sad fact but I feel that it is worth to record here. Many people envied his wealth and wanted to sully his name and stain his popularity. Those people did not know his myriad sleepless nights while he was fully engrossed in writing novels and other literary works. One day he was rather going on working in the night and my watchful eyes became tired at 2 a.m. and I slept. Suddenly I heard a thud of noise and I woke up abruptly. The night lamp was burning brightly as it was at the time of my sleeping but I missed his presence in the chair. I came out of the room and found him while he was managing rise up from a fall. His ceaseless writing throughout the day and night exhausted his frail health and while he was going to bath room he could not manage himself: His feet tottered and slipped and suddenly he fell on the ground. This will speak volumes and volumes about his perseverance which earned him both fame and wealth. He was a living example for the 'Kural'

“ஆக்கம் அதர்வினாய்ச் செல்லும் அசைவிலா
ஊக்கம் உடையான் உழை”

(Wealth will ask for a way to come to the man and unfailing energy).

This precept, he practiced with unfailing energy till he came to the final end of his pilgrimage.

In his public life Mahatma Gandhi was his guiding Star as Appar, Thayumanavar and Swami Ramathirth were his spiritual guides. He was not content about the welfare of his friends but knew the minute details of his friends', entire family like the Mahatma. He was sincere and true to his friends. He treated his affluent as well as his poor friends alike. His philosophy never permitted him to go after fame and when the American University conferred on him the D. Litt. degree he did not reveal it to Public but confided it to his very close friends and requested them not to divulge it to public. Such a great soul his was.

God had endowed him with good blending of qualities which are pleasingly contradictory to each other. He had a weak and indifferent health but a strong and sustained stamina. His oriental studies did not deter him from acquiring western knowledge. He was a perfect artiste but not emotional. He was a loving husband and an affectionate father but highly interested in public welfare. He crusaded against the evil in politics but never became a politician. Khadi adorned his slim and tall body till his death but he never became a congressman. He was deeply religious and spiritual but never ostensible. He was humble but firm. He was soft but strict.

His last days were tragic and glorious. For him duty was first and others came second. As Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University, he not only planned the structure of the buildings but also frugally constructed them beautifully. He christened the avenues with names like 'Vepa Mara Pathai', 'Kondrai Mara Pathai' and so on.

When he was sitting in the convocation hall with the Ministers for State and Centre Dr. Nedunchezian and Prof. Nurul Hasan beside him, the fatal heart attack occurred. Very bravely he continued to sit in the hall risking his very life. He put on a serene face suppressing his anguish and agony without telling the grave incident to anybody. He presided over the second day convocation and boarded the

train for Madras the same day. He was a naturopathy throughout his life and when his sons and friends noticed his visible failing health, they requested him to take allopathic medicines and injections. He stoutly but politely refused with a smile and stuck to his naturopathy. He said 'naturopathy saved my life for more than 25 years and I cannot forsake it at this time'. But fate deemed it in a different way. He was slowly losing his health but astonishingly keeping his wits bright.

He kept a smiling face when the icy hands of death snatched him away. He proved a real philosopher who does not flicker at the time of the dooms day. His silence and detachment interpreted eloquently the meaning of the Kural:

“இடுக்கண் வருங்கால் நகுக அதனை
அடுத்தூர்வது அ..தொப்பது இல் ”

(If troubles come, laugh, there is nothing like that to press upon and drive away sorrow).

I feel the Kural survives through his last days.

Like a blossoming lotus, his face was blooming even at the time of his last days. Let his glorious spirit rest in peace. Who else can achieve this blissful end without a blessed soul ensphered.

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*Thiru R. Muthukumaraswamy**

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Literary Criticism

2. *Ilakkiya āraṇycci*: Ed. 1, May 1953, Ed. 4, 1967, p. 176, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Literary beauties are perpetual ones and are revealed through criticisms. Critical essays written to explain the literary beauties are found in this book.

3. *Ilakkiyattiṇaṇ*: Ed. 1, January 1959, p. 340, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

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*Librarian, Maraimalai Adigal Library, Madras-1.

4. *Ilakkiya marapu*: Ed. 1, March 1960, Ed. 2, 1968, p. 208, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

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Caṅkam Literature

5. *Maṇaḷ viṭu*: Ed. 1, November 1948, Ed. 4, 1954, p. 64, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Introduces selected poems from *Caṅkam* literature with brief introduction for each poem.

6. *Mullait tiṇai*: Ed. 1, August 1962, Ed. 3, 1964, p. 90, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

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7. *Naṭai vaṇṇi*: Ed. 1, February 1956, Ed. 3, 1964, p. 100, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Life has many stages. Love-making is a stage of sweet memories. These memories are enshrined in *Caṅkam* poems. Description of Fifteen of such poems finds place in this book.

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Tamil Literature is full of fine literary scenes which will be ever perpetuated in the minds of the scholars. A

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few such scenes, taken from *Caṅkam* works like *Kuṟuntokai*, *Narṟiṇai*, etc., are profusely illustrated. These are descriptive.

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11. *Narṟiṇai viruntu*: Ed. 1, November 1953, p. 128, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Introduction to the study of *Narṟiṇai*. A selection of 77 poems with brief introduction to each poem which facilitates the reader to read and enjoy the poems.

12. *Narṟiṇaic celvam*: Ed. 1, November 1958, p. 192, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Descriptive introduction to the selected poems of *Narṟiṇai*, with the aim of inducing the general reader to read the full text.

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questioning the existence of the natural odour of womanist hair. The full episode and the poetical beauties) of this poem are clearly interpreted in this work.

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An elucidation of 77 poems selected from *Akanāṇūru*. Each poem is preceded by a short and illustrative introduction. Helps as a guide to the lay reader.

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Novel based on the ideological conflict between the two main characters *Meyyappaṇ* and *Meykaṇṭaṇ*, the former with the view to condemn the evil at its face and the later with a soft corner for the evil-doers to allow them to repent for their actions.

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Collection of essays, short stories, poems on the importance of education. Describes the woes of the illiterates and advocates the cause of Adult education.

66. *Kaṇṇuṣaiya vāṭvu*. Ed. 1, November 1945, Ed. 3, 1959, p. 103, Madras, Saiva Siddhantha Works Publishing Society.

Eleven short essays on different topics like Education. Our country, Best food, etc., written to cultivate the reading habit among the children and the neo-literates.

Linguistics

67. *Moṭi Nūl*. Ed. 1, June 1947, Ed. 7, 1974, p. 304, Madras, Saiva Siddhantha Works Publishing Society.

Text-book on Tamil linguistics written when it was first introduced in the university of Madras for the B.O.L. Hons. The various fields of Linguistics, such as Phonetics, Syntax and Semantics, are explained in easy style for the students.

68. *Eḷuttin katai*. Ed. 1, August 1952, Ed. 4, 1966, p. 39, Madras, Pāri Nilaiyam.

Scripts are the basic needs of the written language. Each language has its own script. The origin and development of Hieroglyphs, Arab, Chinese and Tamil scripts are traced down in a simple style for the children.

69. *Collin katai*. Ed. 1, August 1952, Ed. 4, 1966, p. 47, Madras, Pāri Nilaiyam.

Word is the significant part of the language. Without words languages cannot exist. The origin and usage of the words are explained in story form for the children.

70. *Moṭiyin katai*. Ed. 1, December 1952, Ed. 4, 1966, p. 44, Madras, Pāri Nilaiyam.

On the origin and development of language. Language is the sign of civilization. A detailed account of all the world's chief languages is given.

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Collection of essays on various grammatical aspects in Tamil. Author has shown keen interest in noting minute differences in Tamil grammar and explains them in an understandable manner.

72. *Moṭi varalāru*. Ed. 1, November 1954, Ed. 5, 1972, p. 444, Madras, Saiva Siddhantha Works Publishing Society.

Written specially for students of Linguistics and Literature. A study of the history of language. All the aspects of its history are dealt with in an elaborate manner.

Education

73. *Kalvi*. Ed. 1, 1956, Ed. 3, 1967, p. 144, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

27 articles stressing the importance of education, which is considered as supreme wealth that makes the country rich. The modification in the educational system, the position of the Teachers in the Society are discussed in these articles.

Travel

74. *Yān kaṇṇa Ilankai*. Ed. 1, June 1950, Ed. 5, 1971, p. 128, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

A travologue in which the author describes his sweet experiences he had during his tour of Ceylon in 1950. The social and political conditions are also dealt with. The book is written in letter-form.

Psychology

75. *Kuṭantai*. Ed. 1, 1954, Ed. 4, 1964, p. 93, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Bringing up children is an uphill task for the parents. To foster them one must know Child-psychology. The basic principles of it are explained in this book.

Biography

76. *Kānti aṇṇal*. Ed. 1, April 1948, Ed. 7, 1967, p. 100, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Biography of Mahatma Gandhi, written with the main aim of explaining his principles Purity, Service, etc., and insisting all the Indians to follow his teachings.

77. *Kaviṇar Tākūr*. Ed. 1, 1949, Ed. 11, 1967, p. 79, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Biographical sketch of Rabindranath Tagore. His services to the cause of Bengali language and literature and to the political wake-up of India are portrayed in a vivid manner.

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80. *Aṇṇam araciyaalum*. Ed. 1, February 1945, Ed. 5, 1964, p. 137, Madras, *Pāri Nilaiyam*.

Collection of articles stressing the need of ethical principles in political and public life.

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