

Manicka Vizhumiyangal

SPEECH & WRITINGS OF
Dr. V.SP. Manickam

16

THE TAMIL CONCEPT OF LOVE

16

'Aham' and 'Puram' are the earlier extant Tamil classics. Eight Anthologies (Ettuttokai) and Ten Idylls (Pattupattu) are accepted as Sangam Literature. They were sung by 473 poets, 2381 poems in it of which 378 poets sung 1862 Aham poetry, shows the attractiveness of Aham. The systematic treatises on 'Aham' and 'Puram' which is 'PORUL' in peculiar it exist only in Tamil. Of these Aham is superior to puram in many respects love of man and woman, its subject matter, shaping analogies of poetic thought. attracted the large number of Sangam poets. It is natural, not a wonder.

V.Sp. Manickam

1917 100 Years 2017
Century Celebrations
release



Tamilmann

Manicka Vizhumiyangal



தமிழ்மண் பதிப்பகம்

2, சிங்காரவேலர் தெரு, தியாகராயர் நகர்,
சென்னை - 600 017.
தொலைபேசி : 044-24339030
செல்பேசி : 9444410654

MANICKKA
VIZHUMIYANGAL- 16

(A commemorative publication of
centenary celebrations)

○ **The Concept of Tamil love**

- 1962

Author

Mootharinjar Chemmal

V.SP. Manickanar

Publisher

G. Elavazhagan

Manicka Vizhumiyangal - 16

Author

V.Sp. Manickanar

Publisher

G. Elavazhagan

First Edition : 2015
Pages : 8+272=280
Price : 260/-

Published by

Tamizhmann

No. 2, Singaravelar Street,

T.Nagar, Chennai - 600 017.

Ph: 24339030, Cell: 9444410654

E-mail: elavazhagantm@gmail.com

-
- ◆ Paper : 16.0 G Maplitho ◆ Size : 1/8 Demmi ◆ Font : 11.5
 - ◆ Pages : 280 ◆ Binding: Perfect ◆ Copies : 1000
 - ◆ Book Design by : G. Chitra ◆
 - ◆ Wrapper Design : B. Hari (Harish) ◆
 - ◆ Printers : Venkateswara Offset, Thousand Lights,
Chennai - 600 006. ◆
-



‘Mootharinjar Chemmal’
V.SP. Manickanar

(A commemorative publication
of centenary celebrations)

Born 17.04.1917 – Death : 24.04.1989

FOREWORD

Amidst all sections of different Tamil societies, Nattukootai Nagarathar Community is the leading one which protect and keep the traditional style of Tamil culture even to day. Dr. V.SP.Manickam, who did lifetime researches and put forth several valuable and clear thoughts about the welfare of the nation, language, society, education and mainly Tamil literature, is the greatest son given as gift to the world by Nagarathar Community.

As a mark of respect and with a view to honour the great Tamil scholar Dr.V.SP. Manickam at the time of his Centenary Celebrations, our Tamil Man Pathippagam took initiative in publishing all his famous writings for the benefit of the entire Tamil world. Accordingly all the renowned writings of Dr.V.SP.Manickam have been properly collected and grouped together into 18 books and published with the name titled as '**MANICKA VIZHUMIYANGAL**'. It is essential to mention here that all the writings and research works of **Dr.V.SP.Manickam** are purely in relation with Tamil concept. He only brought to the lime light the new concept in Tholkappiam as well as the different old concepts in the writings of Bharathiar. He, being the best commentator, did several researches on commentators of Tamil literature. He did meaningful explanations for Tholkappiam and Thirukkural.

Praising the efficient literary works of Dr.V.SP Manickam, Thiru.S.Meyyappanar of Manivasagar Pathippagam says as follows:-

“Out of the writings of Dr.V.SP.Manickam, ‘Tamil kathal’ speaks about his research efficiency, ‘Valluvam’ reveals about his knowledgeable thoughts and ‘Kambar’ stands for his poetic genius. These books are always taken as guide for many of the Tamil researchers”.

For the existing Tamil Research Field, to grow further in the right direction, the writings of Dr.V.SP.Manickam prove to be an exclusive area of study and operation for the researchers. The strength of belief in principles followed by Maraimalai Adigal and the writing style with social cause established by Thiru. Vi.Ka, the combination of both have been very much seen in the writings of Dr.V.SP.Manickam, which the people who study the books of Dr.V.SP.Manickam will come to realise easily.

Our Tamil Man Pathippagam, with an aim of promoting Tamil culture in all possible ways, is in the process of publishing Tamil books of great authors then and there for the benefit of Tamil readers and set an example in the history of publication as one of the pioneers in publishing quality books of writers. Accordingly, we, Tamil Man Pathippagam, also feel proud for getting an opportunity towards publishing all the books of Dr.V.SP.Manickam during the period of his Centenary Celebrations, grouped together under a single name “Manicka Vizhumiyangal”. Really by publishing the great works of Dr.V.SP.Manickam to the entire Tamil world, we get fresh energy and new air of spirit and on this occasion we take an undertaking that we will commit to maintain Tamil ethics in all our incoming book publications by keeping due standard for the benefit of Tamil readers.

Our gratitude goes to:

1. The founder of Manivasagar Pathippagam Late. Thiru.S.Meyyappanar, who did so many services for Tamil language and who took initiative in publishing many of the writings of

Dr.V.SP.Manickam initially. We convey our gratitude to him in the fond remembrance of Dr.V.SP.Manickam.

2. Pari Nilayam , Chennai and Selvi Puthaga Nilaiyam, Karaikkudi , both did the publishing works of certain writings of Dr.V.SP.Manickam and submitted to the Tamil world. The same we recollect and convey our gratitude to them at this juncture.

3. On the other hand all the family members of Dr.V.SP.Manickam supported us in all possible ways in releasing the books. To specify in particular, our thanks goes to Mrs.Thenral Alagappan and Dr. Mathari Vellayappan, daughters of Dr.V.SP.Manickam, who were the main cause for the publication of Manicka Vizhumiyangal to the Tamil world and we extend our gratitude to them for their support in fulfilling the above task.

4. Further, we also convey our regards to the Tamil Dept and the Management of M/s Ganesar Arts and Science College, Melaisivapuri, for having established the greatness of Dr.V.SP.Manickam.

G. Elavazhagan
Tamillmann Pathippagam

**Supporters for the publication of the books
'MANICKA VIZHUMIYANGAL'**

DTP by:

Mrs. G. Chitra	Mrs. Kayalvizhi
Mrs. Hemalatha	Mr. D. Rathinaraj
J. Jeyaseeli	

Book Designed By: Mrs. G. Chitra

Wrapper Designed By: B. Hari (Harish)

Proof Corrected by :

Mrs. Thenral Alagappan	Mr. T. Arumugam
Mr. Ka. Karuppaiya	Dr. S. Subramanian
Mr. M. Rasavelu	Mr. Naga. Chockalingam

Final Proof Corrected by : Dr. Mathari Vellayappan

Other Supporters :

R. Parameswaran, K. Maruthu, V. Mathimaran

Printers :

Venkateswara Offset, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600 006.

In general, we hereby convey our regards for the Tamil scholars who had given us various information then and there and for those who supported wholeheartedly towards publication of the group of books under the banner Manicka Vizumiyangal

The Tamil Concept Of love

First Edition 1962

Published by The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works
Publishing Society, Tirunelvely, 1962

PREFACE

I deem it my sincere duty to present before the scholars of the world the noble principles of Aham Literature whose origin is as old as Tamil language itself and whose influence on all kinds of Tamil literature of all periods is incalculable. An elementary knowledge of Aham is indeed essential even for a beginner in Tamil. Without its study, Tamil culture and civilisation will be a sealed book.

Love is no doubt the common theme of any literature in any language. The selective nature of the love-aspects, the impersonal and algebraic form of the characters and the universal and practical treatment of the subject are the differentiating points of Ahattinai.

What is the impulse behind the creation of Aham literature? The unity of the family is the bed-rock of the unity of the world. The achievement of that conjugal unity depends upon the satisfaction of the sexual congress between the rightful lovers in youthhood. Dissatisfaction unconsciously disintegrates the family. There will be few problems in society, religion and politics, if family life is a contented one and the husband and wife pay high regard to each other's sexual hunger. Therefore sex education is imperative to every young man and woman before and after marriage.

How to educate them? The ancient Tamils saw in literature an effective and innocent means for instructing boys and girls in sexual principles and sexual experiences and with

that noble motive created a well-defined literature called Ahattinai with inviolable rules. I hope the study of this book will be highly useful for promoting good relations between young lovers, whatever their race and nationality may be.

I am grateful to the authorities of the University of Madras for their kind permission to publish my thesis ("Love in Sangam Poetry") submitted by me for the Ph.D. Degree in 1956.

My thanks are due to my colleagues Lieut. U. Bala Subramaniam M.A., and Thiru R. Sarangapani M.A., M. Litt. for their assistance in publishing this book.

I shall always cherish the selfless service of the Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society for coming forward to publish my work.

'KATHIRAKAM'
Karaikudi-2
15-5-1962

V. Sp. MANICKAM

TRANSLITERATION

a-அ	au-ஒள	p-ப
ā-ஆ	ḱ-ஃ	m-ம
ī-இ	k-க	y-ய
ī-ஈ	ṅ-ங	r-ர
u-உ	c-ச	l-ல
ū-ஊ	ṅ-ஞ	v-வ
e-எ	ṭ-ட	ḷ-ழ
ē-ஏ	ṇ-ண	ḷ-ள
ai-ஐ	t-த	ṛ-ற
o-ஓ	n-ந	ṅ-ன
ō-ஔ		

ABBREVIATIONS

Tol. Tolkapiyam.

Aham Ahananuru.

Nar. Narrinai.

Kurun Kuruntogai.

Ain. Ainkurunuru.

Kali. Kalittogai.

Pari. Paripatal.

Puram. Purananuru.

NOTE ON REFERENCES

1. Serial number of the suttirams of grammatical works is given when quoting their authors.
2. Serial number of the suttirams of the 'iyal' or the page of the editions is given when quoting the commentators of grammatical works.
3. The stanza number is given in the case of poetical works.
4. The number refers to the page in the case of prose works.
5. To avoid confusion, in most cases the abbreviations for line (l), page (p), stanza (st) and suttiram(s) are given.

CONTENTS

	Page no
PREFACE	3
TRANSLITERATION	5
ABBREVIATIONS	6
NOTE ON REFERENCES	7
INTRODUCTION	11
Chapters	
I. An Analysis of Ahattinai	25
2. The Evolution of Ahattinai	68
3. The concept of Ahattinai	108
4. The characteristic of Aham Poetry	148
5. Aham Poets of the Sangam Age	164
6. Conclusion	253

TRANSLITERATION

Tamil Development

1. History of the Pure Tamil Movement
2. Renaissance of Tamil
3. Development of Tamil Research
4. Script Reform in Tamil

Linguistics

5. An Introduction to the study of Tolkappiyam
6. A phonological study in Tolkappiyam
7. A psychological approach to Tamil Syntax
8. The present tense marker

Literature

9. The Library Heritage of the Tamils
10. The worldiness of Tirukkural
11. A Religious approach to Tirukkural
12. Literature and physical exercise

History

13. The age of Tolkappiyam
14. Some thoughts on Pallava History
15. The Chettiar community - its contribution to religions
16. The ancient history of the Nakarattars
17. Dravidian Comparative Literature

The Tamil Concept of Love

INTRODUCTION

“Love(Ahattinai) in Sangam Poetry” is the subject under investigation in the following pages. Eight Anthologies (Ettuttokai) and Ten Idylls (Pattupattu) are generally accepted as Sangam Literature.¹ These are the earliest extant Tamil classics. They were sung by 473 poets of whom 378 treated the theme of Ahattinai. They consist of 2381 poems of which 1862 are aham poetry. It is rightly said by scholars acquainted with many languages that the systematic treatises on Aham and Puram which go by the name ‘Porul’ are peculiar, and exist only in Tamil. Of these two, Aham is superior to Puram in many respects; for love of man and woman, its subject matter, in the words of Professor C.H. Herford,² “is the natural religion of the poet, one of the perennial springs of poetry and one of the shaping analogies of poetic thought.” Therefore its attractiveness to a large number of Sangam poets who are characterised as wordly-minded is no wonder.

Tolkappiyar, the ancient Tamil grammarian, has devoted four chapters to the description of Ahattinai whereas Purattinai is treated in only one chapter. It is said that Kapilar, the greatest of the Sangam poets, composede Kurincipattu, an Aham poem, to initiate Prakattan, an Aryan king, into the Tamil poetry. It is because he thought that the masterpiece of

Tamil genius was the creation of Ahattinai and that Aham poetry should be taught at first to a stranger to impress upon him the independent nature and greatness of Tamil. The colophon of Kurinchippattu runs as “Ariya arasan Pirakattanait Tamil arivittarkup Patiyatu.” Here Tamil stands for Ahattinai. The identification of the name of the language with one of the many kinds of literature it possesses unambiguously proves the peculiar and superior position that Aham poetry occupies in Tamil.

*“Tallap porliyalpin tantamilay vantilar
Kollarik kunru payan.”* (Pari; 9)

Thus Kunramputanar shows his high regard for the subject of Aham in Tamil. The account given by the commentator of Iraiyanar ahapporul that the Pandiyan king who grieved over the loss of Porulatikaram was satisfied with the discovery of the treatise. Iraiyanar Ahapporul also points out the superiority of Aham over Puram. That in the study of Tamil research, priority should be given to Ahattinai will now be clear from the antiquity, the number of poems and poets, and the peculiar nature of the subject. Dr. Varadarajan and Rev. Thaninayagam who have made devoted study of the treatment of nature in Sangam Poetry have explained that nature is not the main theme in Sangam classics and that it is subordinated to be the appropriate background of human behaviours, especially of human love.

II

As the title of this thesis indicates, Sangam Poetry is the main source for my investigation. Of the total of 2381 poems of Sangam Literature, those of Aham class are 1862 as noted below:

Ahananuru	400	poems	(infull)
Narrinai	400
Kuruntogai	401
Ainkurunuru	500	(including two lost poems)	
Kalittogai	149	poems	(in full)
Paripatal	8	poems	out of 22
Pattuppattu	4	poems	out of 10

	1862		

The first three anthologies, Ahananuru, Narrinai and Kuruntogai are similar in the manner of collection. They contain poems of hundreds of poets on all turais of Aintinai. Their main difference is the number of lines in their verses. The length of the stanzas of Ahananuru varies from 13 to 31 lines, Narrinai from 9 to 12 and Kuruntogai from 4 to 8. The variation in length has some influence on the handling of the subject-matter. In Ahananuru, one may note that mutarporul (place and time) and karupporul (fauna and flora) occupy a greater portion of a poem than uripporul (the love-aspect). To present a theme with a perfect background, poets have to compose many lines of verse. Therefore this anthology has numerous poems in which the parched region through which the hero passes for earning wealth and the pastoral region through which he returns home are elaborately described.

The length of Aha-nanuru is necessary for treating some themes. For example, the theme 'the mother's lament over the eloped girl' has necessarily to portray the tenderness of the daughter, the hard tract she is to cross and the sorrowful feelings of the mother and her care in nourishing her daughter. Moreover, poets who are inclined to introduce historical incidents will write poems of many lines. This is obvious

from the verses of Paranar, Nakkirar, Kallatanar and Mamulanar. In Narrinai, we see the balanced treatment of mutarporul, karupporul and uripporul. The length of a verse in Kuruntogai (4 to 8) will permit a poet to give prominence only to the aspect of love, disregarding the other two, for uripporul cannot be neglected in an Aham poem, however short it may be. In this connection it is well to remember that mutarporul and karupporul find no place in the couplets of Tirukkural treating of the love-theme. From this we may infer that the more the lines of an Aham lyric the greater will be the scope for natural or historical description.

Ainkurunuru and Kalittogai are compositions of five authors each. They contain poems in bulk on a regional basis. The four hundred stanzas of Ahananuru too have been arranged on this basis in a curious way by its skilful compiler. The length of the verses in Ainkurunuru ranges from three to six lines. Like Kuruntogai, this anthology also touches upon love-aspects mainly. Yet the treatment of love themes in Kuruntogai is more varied and interesting, because it is a collection of poems sung by about 206 authors. Among the five Aham anthologies, the turais or the contexts of the poems of Ainkurunuru have been well written by a great scholar. His minute and brief explanation enables us to understand the minds of poets and teaches us the method of approaching Aham literature.

While the aforesaid four anthologies have poems dealing with only the Aintinai, division of Ahattinai, Kalittogai may be credited with having odes of all the three divisions of Ahattinai. The peculiar rhythm of the Kali verse tends to picture with high emotion the happy and unhappy feelings of Aham characters and their pleasant conversations. The theme 'wedding a girl after subduing the bull' finds a place only in

Kalittogai. Some themes like veriyattu (the spirited dance) and the mother's distress over the eloped damsel, are not treated in it.

Paripatal is a collection of 22 stanzas dealing with religion, love and sporting in the Vaiyai river. In it, eight Aham lyrics are found. Their numbers are 6,7,10,11,12,14,16 and 20. The length of these varies from 32 to 140 lines. Such length is fitted to portray in detail the cheerful play of the lovers in the first freshes of the Vaiyai. The theme of many paripatals is marutam.

The four Aham Idylls in Pattupattu are Mullaippattu, Netunalvatai, Kurincipattu and Pattinappalai. The number of their lines is between 101 and 301. Kurincipattu gives the picture of the Kalavu or clandestine course in a narrative. The portions devoted to Aham elements in the other three idylls are insignificant. Descriptions foreign to the main theme occupy a major part in them. According to Naccinarkkiniyar, Netunalvatai is not an Aham song. This is the view universally held even now. Why I consider it an Aham poem is explained in this thesis while studying the author Nakkirar.

III

In his voluminous book "History of the Tamils" Professor P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar has attempted to study the Aham classics mostly from the historical point of view. Dr. U.V. Swaminathaiyar, the great scholar and editor, has devoted some pages (65-82) to the study of this subject, under the caption 'nularaycci' in his edition of Kuruntogai. Though his approach to the subject is limited, because of the illustrations being only from this anthology, a student of research in Tamil

is much indebted to him for his erudite editions of many Sangam classics. Palantamilar Nakarikam by Professor K. Subramania Pillai and Pantaittamilar inpiyal valkkai by the Tamil scholar Ilavalaganar touch upon the subject of Aham, with a view to explaining the stanzas of Tirukkovaiyar, a later treatise on love. Dr. M. Varadarajan has recently written some valuable books, like Netuntogai Viruntu, Kuruntogai Viruntu etc., mainly confining his exposition to the particular anthology. A collection of speeches on every Aham classic has been brought out in book-form under the titles Kalittokaic corpolivukal, Ahannanurrc corpolivukal and the like. The motive for these publications is to popularise the Sangam works. Elements of research are found only in the speeches of a few. These speeches are incomprehensive in the study of a poet, or of a turai, or of a tinai, as the speakers are required to deal only with a particular class of poems in a particular anthology. In spite of the incomplete or uncritical treatment of the subject in the past, I must confess that I have come across some suggestions in them which I have acknowledged in the foot-notes.

A notable contribution to the encouragement of research in Sangam Literature was made by the selfless association, Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam, by the publication of a handy edition entitled 'Sanga Ilakkiyam' comprising Eight Anthologies and Pattuppattu. In this edition Sangam poets are arranged in the alphabetical order, and poems of a poet scattered in various anthologies are collected and given in one place under his name. This edition renders help in the study of poets. Yet in the course of the research I deeply felt the want of suitable editions for the special study of the Aham classics. There must be an edition, in which poems relating to each Aham theme should be brought

together, another edition with poems relating to each character under the sub-divisions of Kalavu and Karpu, and a third in which poems should be arranged on the physiographical basis, like Kurinci, Mullai etc. These editions will inspire students to study Ahattinai from diverse points of views.

IV

The chief points of approach and study in this thesis are:-

1. For the first time, all the available Aham poems of the Sangam age numbering 1862 are subjected to investigation by one person to make the study comprehensive and thorough.

2. To be precise and minute, the number of poems each course (Kalavu or Karpu) or each turai has, is calculated. This calculation is made in regard to the poems of individual poets too.

3. The Aham poetry of the Sangam age is the earliest extant specimen of Ahattinai in Tamil. To know the essentials of Ahattinai by way of illustration, we rely entirely upon this body of poetry. A clear knowledge of Aham poems requires a clear knowledge of Aham fundamentals and vice versa. Therefore, the analysis, evolution and concept of Ahattinai are inevitably dealt with and poems of Aham classics are quoted to support the findings.

4. Tolkappiyam, the earliest extant grammar, will naturally play its role in a detailed investigation of Aham literature. Therefore, some suttirams of Tolkappiyam relevant to this thesis are quoted and explained.

5. The great commentators of Tolkappiyam have given numerous references in their works to the grammatical and literary aspects of Ahattinai. They are quoted and criticised where necessary.

6. The approach in this thesis to the subject is mostly psychological, as the theme of Ahattinai is love. A study of the psychology of sex is therefore imperative to a student who has selected a subject like 'love' for research. My idea in giving quotations from the books on sex of the western authors is not to find in Aham poetry all the principles advocated in them, but to point out how the essential principles of the sexual life on which Aham literature is based, are still acceptable to modern sexologists.

7. As the psychological approach is the main line of this research, the literary value of Aham poetry is not much discussed here. Even in the study of Aham poets, attention is bestowed upon their talent in bringing out the sexual feelings of the characters.

8. Again the study of nature in Aham poetry is made only in places where the fundamentals of Aham subject and the peculiarities of Aham poets need elucidation.

V

A summary of the contents of the six chapters of the thesis is given below:-

1. The first chapter makes a general survey of the various love-themes to be treated in Ahattinai. The kalavu and karpu courses of Aintinai with their sub-themes or turais are mentioned and illustrated from the Sangam poems. Mention has been made of the turais belonging to Kaikkilai and Peruntinai. The number of poems each turai has in the entire

Aham literature and the names of poets who have described particular turai in the main are generally given. That the division of Ahattinai into seven is based, not on regional differences, but on the differences of the sexual behaviours of lovers, is proved. The use of 'Ahattinai' as an equivalent to 'Aintinai' is shown an erroneous. That the foundation of Ahattinai is solely laid on the union of the hearts of lovers is signified.

The reason for the introduction of the male and female companions is explained. The salient features of the themes "veriyattu" (spirited dance) and 'alar' (public gossip) are brought out. The unique position of the theme "arattotu nirral" (revelation with virtue) is illustrated. It is disclosed that the fear of the heroine to face her mother is the main cause for elopement. That the treatment of the wedded stage (karpu) was as much favoured as that of the clandestine stage by the Aham poets is emphasized. It is stated that the creation of the turais 'Vayil nertal and vayil maruttal' shows the disapproval of the lewd course of the hero by the poets.

2. The second chapter aims at the study of evolution of Ahattinai on the social, geographical and psychological grounds. It is explained that the Sangam literature is reliable and sufficient to study the topic in question. It is positively proved that a worldly conception of life characterised every thought and action of the ancient Tamil nation. I have categorically stated that sexual passion, the subject matter of Ahattinai, is of a piece with the worldly ideal cherished by the Tamils. The statements that society supplied the bulk of the materials for the edifice of Aham literature, that the kalavu course was widely prevalent and received the imprimature of the Tamil society, that the idea that every karpu life should be preceded by kalavu course is un-Tamilian, and that the

traditional line of marriage enjoyed no mean and despicable position in society as well as in the minds of lovers, are amply borne out. It is shown that karanam was a sign showing the passing of a girl from virginity to wifhood and that removing of the anklet and wearing of flowers constituted the karanams in ancient society of Tamil land.

That the ancient Tamils had developed a keen sense of geographical outlook on all matters connected with their mundane life, that religion and caste played no part in the evolution of Ahattinai, that inhabitants of the desert had no place in Ahattinai as heroes and heroines, and that the Sangam poets failed to describe the sea voyage in Palaittinai, inspite of the extensive maritime activities of the Tamils, are all illustrated with suitable quotations from Sangam literature. It is made plain that the ancient Tamils approached the activities of natural objects with the background of love or human passion and that nature has become part and parcel of their love-psychology. This chapter ends with the declaration that the nucleus of Ahattinai was supplied by the background of the psychology of the Tamils, and that the background of the Tamil society, the Tamil land and its climate supplied the material to it.

3. The third chapter purports to bring to light the concepts of Kaikkilai, Peruntinai, Aintinai and Ahattinai. It is stressed at first that Kaikkilai and Peruntinai are entitled to claim the same status as Aintinai, as they belong to Ahattinai and that there must certainly be a common unifying factor to bring all the seven conducts under the generic term 'Aham'. The views that the concept of Kaikkilai is to bring into relief a passing mental phenomenon of the masculine sexual

character born of confusion of condition, that it throws no mark of disgrace the characters involved, that it is an abortive form of Ahattinai, and that it is a tinai with only one situation (turai) are all explained in detail. I have strongly refuted the interpretation that Peruntinai is the manifestation of violent love. I have substantiated the view advanced by me that all the four turais of Peruntinai are not independent and that they owe their existence to some themes of Aintinai. That the concept of Peruntinai which describes some extreme sexual acts is to stress the importance of the value of the sexual union even among the mutual lovers, and that this tinai is an excessive form of Ahattinai are made out.

The statements that Aintinai is the best and normal form of Ahattinai, that the love-themes of this division are simple, mild, sweet and noble, that Aintinai does not profess to deal with all sorts of sexual relations arising from the normal and abnormal phenomena of human beings, that no chance is given for extremity at any point in Aintinai, and that it takes notice of the state of the body, mind and heart of both sexes only from the time, when they begin to feel sexual excitement mentally and physically, are all elucidated with copious illustrations. I have taken considerable pains to expound the structural principle that Aintinai is a collection of isolated situations happening in the lives of mutual lovers in various circumstances and at different periods. The inclusion of the theme of 'Prostitution' in Aintinai is elaborately argued and socially justified. That the concept of Ahattinai is the treatment of normal sexual love in its universal aspects, and that union of hearts in sexual life is the fundamental quality of Aham are explained and emphasized.

4. The fourth chapter brings to light the characteristic of Aham poetry. That the nature of the subject matter and the manner of its expression go together by the name 'Aham', and that even a trivial deviation either from the basic theme of Ahattinai or from the grammatical characteristic of Aham poetry will exclude a poem from the Aham class are explained from all points of view. The characteristic, of 'no-naming', its significance and the ordinary meaning of the term 'Aham' and its appropriateness to name this literature are dealt with in this chapter. Incidentally, the existence of a Tamil Academy in ancient days and its role in the creation of Aham literature are pointed out.

5. The fifth chapter attempts to study the compositions of Aham poets from the principles put forth in the previous chapters. A brief classification of Aham Poets, according to the number of Aham poems they composed, is given. The reasonable question, whether a literature like Ahatinai with so many implacable restrictions and limitations in theme and in treatment does not clip the wings of poets and suppress their poetic inspiration and original thinking, is elaborately examined and it is declared that faithful adherence to the canons of Aham grammar has resulted in the universal appreciation of the originality of all the Aham poets, "Love poetry depends upon a certain delicate balance between convention and freedom and is not likely to exist in its best form where this balance is upset in either direction" is the deliberate statement of Bertrand Russell.³ The works of the Aham poets of the Sangam era are the best illustrations of this poetic principle.

It is hard to mention any principle for the selection of only 30 poets out of 378 for treatment in this chapter. Want of space is the main consideration. I do not like to prolong

this theme which has consumed more than a hundred pages. It is stated at the beginning of this chapter that the number of poems does not count much for measuring the talent of a poet of the Sangam epoch, as the pattern of education of those days gave an intellectual equality and a certain standard of perfection, to all who came into its fold. Therefore, I have selected some poets whose total number of Aham poems is below one digit. As it is not fair to make selections from among the authors of numberless poems, they are all included. An exception is made to this principle too. For example, Mamulanar is an author of 30 Aham poems. His treatment of Ahattinai is marred by the frequent mention of historical incidents. As this aspect is discussed while studying Nakkirar and Parinar, Mamulanar is omitted. Though this chapter is confined to the examination of thirty poets. I should like to point out that. in the course of this thesis, many other poets are referred to by name.

6. In the concluding chapter, stress has been again laid on three important points: (1) sexual love, (2) freedom of women and (3) sex-education. The points that the Sangam epoch valued physical pleasure, that the word 'Kamam' signified physical passion and that Aham literature describes poetically the varying sexual phenomena of mutual lovers are elucidated. Emphasis is again laid on the fact that the ancient Tamil society respected women and gave them freedom in matters of love. It is pointed out that the main figure in Ahattinai around which all other figures revolve, and the chief quality to which all other qualities are subordinate, are the heroine and here faithfulness to her husband. Finally it is made clear that the motive for creating a special literature with love as its sole theme by the Tamil genius, is to educate both sexes in the art of love. It is also made clear that the perfect physical

enjoyment by the husband and wife is the guiding principle in the treatment of love for the Aham poets of the Sangam age and that sex education is a means of soul education.

I should like to claim that this thesis is original in all respects. The subject under investigation is comprehensively and systematically treated for the first time. Approach to and analysis of the subject, collection of materials, expositions and conclusions are new attempts. I am happy to quote the last paragraph of the introduction written by Hans Licht to his 'Sexual life in the Ancient Greece', as it reflects my idea of the purpose of my thesis.

“The reader will now have learnt enough of the Greek gospel of Hedone (sensual pleasure) to be able to consider in following chapters the most important manifestations of Greek culture from this point of view. He will, then, make the acquaintance of a people which, certainly like no other, made sensuality the basis of life, but which knew also how to combine this sensuality with higher ethics and thereby created a culture of life which mankind will admire until the end of all time.”

Foot Notes

1. Vide Sanga Ilakkiyam: Introduction, p. XVI Samajam Edition.
2. Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage and other essays, p. 152.
3. Marriage and Morals, p. 62.

CHAPTER I

AN ANALYSIS OF AHATTINAI

A critical study of Ahattinai in ancient Sangam Literature traditionally, literarily, ethically and psychologically will raise many complicated questions. (a) What is the definition of Aham? If Aham poetry is love poetry, what accounts for preferring the term 'Aham' to 'Katal'? Are they synonyms? Does the definition of Aham, by commentators of Middle Ages and scholars of modern times, fully and faultlessly convey its meaning? (b) Is the classification of Aham into seven divisions (tinai) acceptable? Do we not find the enumeration itself faulty? In a total of 1862 Aham poems in Sangam classics, Kaikkilai and Peruntinai are supposed to have been dealt with only in four and ten poems respectively. What is the reason for their negligence by Sangam poets, even though they belong to Ahattinai? Is it true that the entire Tamil literature falls under two categories, Aham and Puram? (c) What are the factors that contributed to the evolution of Aham Poetry in Tamil? Who is responsible for enunciating so many conventions and rules of Ahattinai? Is it a product of a great individual, or a fruit of collective and co-operative enterprise? If it is a peculiar form of literature and thoughtfully framed by the plan-minded Tamil genius, what is the conception underlying such an idealised form of poetry? What justification can we find for the treatment of the immoral and lascivious conduct of the hero, who hunts after

prostitutes, leaving his chaste wife desolate? (d) Does not a form of literature, with so many conventions, act as a barrier to the free play of poetic imagination and genius? To what extent have the Aham poets of Sangam Age followed the rules of Aham down by Tolkappiyar? Do we perceive any difference in the treatment of Aham?

It is easier to go on raising a torrent of such questions than to find answers for them. A genuine attempt will be made in the following pages to meet as many questions as possible; for a clear theoretical interpretation of Ahattinai is necessary for a correct literary interpretation of Aham poems in Sangam classics. Moreover Sangam literature along has fortunately preserved the earliest Aham poems in Tamil. A critical study of the Aham poems will naturally entail the study of Aham fundamentals. Therefore, the first three chapters will deal with the analysis, evolution and concept of Ahattinai based on Sangam literature.

DIVISIONS OF AHATTINAI AND THEIR BASIS

Ahattinai is of seven classes, viz: 1. Kaikkilai, 2. Kurinji, 3. Mullai, 4. Marutham, 5. Neytal, 6. Palai and 7. Peruntinai. The middle five classes are termed as Aintinai en bloc. What is the basis of these divisions? It is said that one-sided or unreciprocated love is meant by Kaikkilai, mutual love by Aintinai, and violent or abnormal love by Peruntinai. If the kind of love is taken to be the criterion, Ahattinai should have only three divisions. Moreover to be in harmony with Kaikkilai and Peruntinai which are descriptive. Aintinai should have the nomenclature as Anputtinai (tinai of mutual love). It is proved positively that the different stages of love treated in ancient Tamil Poems represented the different regional landscapes of the Tamil Country.¹ Though the mountainous

and pastoral tracts subjected to the excessive heat during summer are set as the back ground of Palaittainai,² Kaikkilai and Peruntinai have no region at all.³ Therefore the allotment of region as the basis of tinai, is unacceptable. They are the seven aspects or conducts of love (uripporul) to be thought of separately. This is obvious from the numerical term 'Aintinai' given to Kurinji, Mullai, Marutam, Neytal and Palai, even though they are one, in point of mutual love. Here the different mental states of the lovers have been taken into account.

There are differences of opinion among commentators with regard to the interpretation of Kurinji, Mullai etc. One school of scholars holds the view that they are the names of flowers, characteristic of each region and that they were employed, in course of time, to express the love aspects attributed to each region. Ilampuranar, the oldest commentator, has given his opinion clearly under Suttiram Tol: Porul: 5⁴ The commentators of Iraiyanar Ahapporul, Naccinarkkinyar, Prof. S.S. Bharathi and Ilavalakanar hold the view that these terms meant at first only aspects of love and later came to indicate flowers or lands.⁵ Though the two schools are at variance as to what the primary and secondary meanings of these words are, they are at one in accepting that they have both the meanings i.e. flowers and love-conducts of each region. Therefore I arrive at the conclusion that the enumeration of seven tinais of Aham is decidedly based on the psychological and emotional feelings or conducts of the lovers, irrespective of the mutual, or lustful, or unrequited passion.⁶

As each tinai (division) of Aintinai was conceived as a separate entity, it was possible for poets of Sangam Age to compose poems, not on the whole of Aintinai, but on a single

love-aspect of Aintinai. Perunkatunko attained the title 'Palai Patiya' mainly because of his poems on separation (palai). Authors of numberless Aham poems in Sangam period have broadly treated of only one aspect of Ahattinai, like union, separation, patience, grief or love quarrel. Moreover even poems that do not contain any reference to mutal or karu things, but contain only uripporul, we call Kurinji, Mullai and so on; for, the essence of tinai is love-conduct (uripporul). What I discussed so far is the common basis for the division of Ahattinai into seven classes. Though the definition and meaning of Aham deserve the first claim on our attention. I have purposely postponed its study to a later stage, when discussion will be easier and conclusion clearer.

AHATTINAI AND AINTINAI

The superiority of the middle Aintinai⁷ (Natuvan aintinai) over Kaikkilai and Peruntinai in all aspects, needs no great argument. Tolkappiyar, the earliest author par excellence of Ahattinai, mentions the contents of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai, in two small suttirams⁸ at the end of the chapter and concludes with an indifferent note, as 'Kaikkilaik kurippe' and 'Peruntinaik kurippe.' The word 'kurippu' (hint) makes it clear that the author considered that they are not subjects fit and flexible for elaboration. Therefore Tolkappiyam treats of Aintinai out and out, as if they were Ahattinai. In spite of its common appellation, the first chapter Ahattinai iyal of 55 suttirams deals with the poetic conventions and rules of Aintinai in fifty suttirams. The other four Aham chapters Kalaviyal, Karpiyal, Poruliyal and Meyppattiyal are true Aintinai iyals.

The love theme of Aintinai is morally good, universally acceptable, humanly possible and poetically fit the

imagination. In view of its noble traits, the Sangam poets followed the footsteps of their great predecessor Tolkappiyar and composed poems on Aintinai, giving almost an insignificant and mean position to Kaikkilai and Peruntinai. To me in this thesis, there is no other course than to humbly follow their example. Nevertheless, it is well to remember⁹ and that to define them, as if they are one, is incorrect. There ought to have been some compelling reason for the impossibility of exclusion of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai from the rank of Ahattinai. Suffice it to mention here, that their inclusion covers the topic of Ahattinai fully. Tolkappiyar invariably makes use of this term, when he desires to denote all seven divisions: 'Ahattinai marunkin alavutal ilave' (Tol. 1000), 'Ahattinai marunkin ariltapa unarntor' (Do. 1001) are clear instances. He never uses this comprehensive term for 'Aintinai'. We are given to understand in such unambiguous lines, as makkal nutaliya Ahan aintinaiyum (Tol. 999), 'anpotu punarnta Aintinai' (Do. 1037) that Aintinai is a major and lovable part of Ahattinai, and not the whole of it. The first suttiram of Iraiyanar Ahapporul, a later treatise on the subject runs rightly as 'Anpin Aintinai kalavenap patuvatu,' but not as 'Ahattinai kalavenap patuvatu'. Kambar, the great epic poet, has cautiously set the word in the line 'Aintinai nerialavi'¹⁰ thus extricating himself from the term Ahattinai, which includes also Kaikkilai and Peruntinai divisions. True to the ancient tradition, I am inclined to investigate the Sangam poems of these two inferior classes too, wherever possible, in spite of the paucity of material.

AIN TINAI (Mutual Love)

Having said something in apology of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai, we shall now directly proceed to detail the love-

incidents of Aintinai or mutual love affairs, which almost constitute Ahattinai. These incidents will be narrated, as the Sangam Aham poems present them to us with the necessary quotations and critical explanations. Aintinai is clearly divided into two broad parts, Kalavu course (pre-nuptial love) and Karpu course (post-nuptial love). The Kalavu incidents are as follows:

KALAVU

(Clandestine stage)

1. Iyarkaippunarcci (Union through Destiny)

Frist Meeting: A grown-up young girl goes along with her maid to the millet fields, at the instance of her parents, to drive away the parrots which come in groups to feed on the ripe corns.¹¹ A yough goes out a hunting in the rugged hills accompanied by his ferocious hound.¹² The lad, in the course of his hunting, comes to the place where the innocent lass is doing her duty. Prompted by no erotic urge, he ardently inquires the group of ladies on his way, about the course which the tusker wounded by his arrow has taken.¹³ Their inborn modesty prevents them from mking any sign of reply to his query. In the meanwhile, the fiery eyes of the youth and the chief maiden begin to react and speak to each other passionately.¹⁴

CAUSE OF LOVE

This is a case of love at first sight. A poet aptly speakes of it, as 'eye-produced fierce love' (kan tara vanta kama olleru).¹⁵ The view that the exchange of looks will result in the exchange of hearts between lovers is erroneous. The right

interpretation is that the union of glances is an index of their union in heart. Thought-word (kurippurai)¹⁶ is the correct expression used by Tolkappiyar to denote this communication. How two individuals of opposite sex are passionately united together at the first glance, still remains an insoluble question. We simply answer, 'Love is the unifying factor. What is love? Kenneth Walker in the Physiology of Sex readily confesses the incapacity of the science to solve the problem in the following passage: "From the very start we must admit our inability to put forward any satisfactory theory of sexuality. All that scientists can do is to observe and describe certain objective phenomena that are associated with the psychic state known as love... Following the reception of a number of visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile impressions from a woman, a man is filled with sexual desire and at the same time, certain changes take place in his body. Then follow a number of activities that culminate in physical union. Does this explain to us the nature of love? Certainly not. It merely describes a sequence and physiological events associated with that emotion".¹⁷

Biological interpretation, as the scientist admits, does not unravel the mystery, as to why a certain man or woman should fall in love with a certain woman or man, inspite of their daily meeting with innumerable persons of the opposite sex. That this is a problem to be meditated upon has been realised by our ancestors. Plato held that in the beginning man and woman were one inseparable entity and that, being divided by the wrath of the gods in two, they are longing for union again.¹⁸ This view is analogous to the Indian mythological representation of Siva, as a form of half-man and half-woman, 'Umai oru pakan' or 'arthanareeswaran'. "By the force of the great unifying destiny, well-matched hero and heroine will

meet each other,” so says Tolkappiyar¹⁹ Pericattanar and Ammuvanar of the Sangam Age have employed the same word ‘pal’ used by Tolkappiyar in a similar context, as ‘pal varaintuamaittal allatu’²⁰ and ‘ankum akkumo valiya pale’.²¹ Motacananar, in whose name only a solitary poem is found in Sangam Literature, seems to have penetrated into the question deeply. Lovers need not belong to distant places. They need not be entirely new or unfamiliar. It is natural for a young boy and a girl, who have hitherto seen each other many times, one day to cast and exchange a passionate and piercing look between them. Motacananar has given his view on the nature of love, in the following Kuruntogai poem.²² “This boy and this girl had seized each other’s locks of hair and fought a harmless childish fight, paying no heed to the intervention of their nurses. That was the spectacle during their childhood. O, Destiny! (pal) now you have presented them united, like two garlands of soft flowers interspersed together. You are really good.” This is the statement of the people who happen to watch the lovers during elopement.

Ilampuranar, the oldest of the annotators of Tolkappiyam, whom I am happy to cite frequently as he is reputed to have interpreted the author’s view correctly, has given a wonderful explanation under Tol. Porul. 90 thus:

ஒருவரையொருவர் கண்டுழியெல்லாம் புணர்ச்சி வேட்கை
தோற்றாமையின், பாலதாணையான் ஒருவரையொருவர்
புணர்தற் குறிப்போடு காண்ப.

(“oruvarai oruvar kantuli yellam punarcci vetkai torramaiyin, palatanaiyan, orivarai oruvar punartar kuripotu kanpa.”)

He partially refutes the theory of love at first sight. His conclusion is that the function of destiny is not to make two

individuals of opposite sexes meet together, but to cause them to look at each other with passion at the first meeting, or at any one of their meetings. This union effected through the agency of destiny is generally understood by the term 'Iyakaippunarcci' (union by nature or destiny). But the term found in Tolkkappiyam and Iraiyanar Ahapporul²³ is Kamappunarcci. I like this term, because the destiny reveals itself and begins to play only when the lovers attain maturity for sexual congress, even though they are preordained to unite. Two other Tamil scholars, worth remembering at this juncture, are Nakkirar and Peraciriyar to whom the commentaries of Iraiyanar Ahapporul and Tirukkovaiyar are respectively ascribed. They have discussed the topic of the first union with the pros and cons.²⁴

ULLAPPUNARCCI (mental Union)

Whatever may be the view taken by poets, philosophers and scientists, regarding the origin of love, the foundation of Ahattinai in general and Aintinai in particular is solely laid on the union of hearts between lovers from the very beginning.²⁵ Aham poems of all classes are rooted in this first mental union which rightly called 'ullappunarcci' (union of hearts). Nothing should be said by Aham poets against this; anything can be built up by them on this.

MEYYURUPUNARCCI (Physical Union)

Physical consummation will be the next step which the lovers who have reached sexual age are naturally tempted to take. Lovers bound in heart will not hesitate to follow their natural instinct, given favourable opportunities. Loyalty or chastity does not begin for the lovers with the first embrace. It has already begun with their mental attachment. As the commentator Nakkirar pointed out, mental longing is itself

part and parcel of bodily union.²⁶ The love-smitten hero and heroine know no fear and seek no postponement of further actions with the consultation of their parents. It is not an immoral feature in the furtive stage, for the lovers who are one in soul but two in flesh, to enjoy physical happiness.

*“Mayital malaikkan maa yolotu
peyum ariya maraiyamai punarcci”* (Aham; 62)

Thus a lover recalls to his mind his first clandestine union with a beautiful brunette of tender and cool eyes - a union not cognizable even by spirits. Another lover who experienced the joy of embrace thinks that it is only an outward sign of their inner communion. Sexual union yields enhanced pleasure and immense satisfaction to the parties who possess the ideal virtue of mental attachment. Therefore the said lover aptly concludes the union with his loves as ‘anputai nencam tam kalantanave’²⁷ at the end of the act. All the incidents so far narrated fall under the category of ‘Iyarkaippunarcci.’

2. ITANTALAIPPATU (meeting at the same place)

Hoping that they can meet again as they did the day before by accident, the passionate lovers go to the place of the first meeting. The heroine whose passion becomes greater once roused by the gentle touch of the hero, is already there, in no mood to sport with the maids or weave the flowers into wreaths.²⁸ The hero addresses her in divine and affectionate language and tries to drive away her inborn modesty by delicate approach. He derives satisfaction at the prospect of having union after sunset.²⁹ Only three poems³⁰ under this category are found in the whole of the Sangam Classics. None of them has any reference to the physical act. This absence of reference and the technical term ‘Itantalaippatu’³¹ given to this category, unlike the terms of other categories,

Iyarkaippunarcci, Pankarkuttam and Toliyirkuttam which contain the expression of union, lead us to conclude that the purport of the second meeting is to subdue their mental feverishness born of the first experience of the previous day and to feast their eyes by another not-delayed sight. Anyhow, this comparatively insignificant meeting has a value of its own, as showing that their union is not the result of merseasonal sexual instinct, but is the effect of inborn, ever-growing and life-long affection towards each other.

3. PANKARKUTTAM (Union through the help of the male companion)

The hero is subsequently met by his friend. Discovering some unusual change like sleeplessness in him,³² the friend questions him about his sickness. The hero assumes no sense of modesty and majestically narrates his love affair.³³ The companion takes him to task, brings home to him that his new course does not become his prestige and nobility³⁴ and makes an appeal to him not to think of his beloved.³⁵ O, my dear friend, certainly I have no desire to prolong my life even for a minute, after I could enjoy just once the ecstasy of clasping the small and soft breasts of the little girl who is daily captivating my heart, with her fine plaited tresses and broad shoulders.³⁶ Thus the love-lorn hero pours out his passion and beseeches his companion's sympathy and aid for the continuance of his life. Friendship knows no denial of help. Realising the blindness of the love³⁷ and the restlessness of his friend's mind,³⁸ the companion sets out to the place mentioned by the hero and brings a report to him of her arrival there.³⁹ Once more bodily union is the result of this meeting.

Sangam literature possesses nearly twenty seven poems under this category, of which two are put in the mouth of the

companion,⁴⁰ the rest being more or less the reply of the hero. It is to be noted here that Milaipperum Kantanar has composed two poems⁴¹ recording the difference of opinion held by the hero and his friend regarding the nature of kamam or passion. The two poems begin with the same lines, as 'kamam kamam enpakamam'. All poems relating to Pankarkuttam are exceptionally appealing and instructive. They reveal psychologically the impatient attitude of men enslaved by the bewitching look of their beloveds.⁴²

The introduction of the male companion as one of the characters in the literature of Aintinai has two benefits. In 'Twelfth Night' Cesario commissioned by Duke Orsino not only meets Olivia, the object of his master's love, but makes a long discourse to her, of his long desire. Such a function is out of the pale of the conception of Ahattinai. Here, the hero's friend sees the heroine but is not seen by her.⁴³ Even if she happens to encounter him, she will take him for a passer-by because of her utter ignorance of her lover's companions. He plays the role of a reporter, by intimating to the hero the arrival of the heroine at the expected place. Yet the hero is benefited by this introduction in two ways. Firstly, he is given an occasion to unfold his new rapturous experience of love and to let out the overwhelming passion which is gnawing his heart to a trusted friend.⁴⁴ The excellent way to bring to normal the high emotional temperature in pleasure or in pain is to pour out one's own heart in words to one's confidant or confidante. This is the reason why under this category nearly 25 poems are in the name of the hero. Secondly, the companion is given an opportunity to understand how he should behave with his friend in future. He deliberately ceases to accompany the hero as before and sets him free to meet his love, as and when he likes. To become a faithful hearer of

the vehement and overflowing expression of the hero and to become not an intruder in his further love-affairs, the male companion is introduced at first in the scene; when he has served his purpose, he disappears for ever from the scene.

The place of meeting on all the three occasions mentioned above in Iyarkaippunarcci, Itantalaipattu and Pankarkuttam is the same. If so, why should not the hero himself repair to the place again as he did earlier and what is the necessity of sending his companion to have a glance at her? The friend mocks at the hero for his fascination, attributes his spell to foolishness⁴⁵ and tries to dissuade him from further actions. The hero emphatically retorts and enthusiastically hints at the charm that moved him to passion: “Friend, you will not remonstrate with me, if you yourself look at her joyous glance cast from the collyrium-painted eyes in her lovely and bright countenance eyes, which in radiance and freshness, excel the lily flower caused to blossom by the bees.⁴⁶ With a view to convincing his companion that his choice of love is a right one and that his conduct is an irresistible consequence, the hero sends him to find out whether the heroine is there.

4. TOLIYIR PUNARCCI:

(Union through the aid of the Maid)

A series of meetings between the lovers will take place after the entry of the heroine’s maid into the scene. The importance and indispensability of this character can be easily gauged, from the fact that out of 882 Kalavu poems in Sangam literature, nearly 842 i.e. 95 per cent come under the category of Toliyirpunarcci, while only 40 poems, i.e. 5 per cent are distributed among the three categories mentioned hitherto. To mention all the incidents relating to the female companion

will therefore be cumbersome and unwieldy. Some important aspects are worth mentioning here.

To meet his lady-love at all time by accident or even with his companion's assistance is not practicable for the hero. Society gives men freedom of movement. The movement of young girls is conditioned and they are the object of their parents attention.⁴⁷ When she goes out, she is followed by the maid. The hero discovers the great friendship that binds the heroine and her playmate⁴⁸ and decides to himself that the right person whose favour he should seek for the extension of the period of clandestine meetings is the maid. She is a constant impediment. Unless they let her understand their love and enlist her whole-hearted support, further meetings are impossible. Her innate modesty does not allow the girl to divulge her love. The audacious hero appears one day before the maid - when she is with the maiden and discloses his contact with the maiden directly or indirectly. He expresses his passionate longing for immediate union with the heroine and entreats the maid with majesty yet humility⁴⁹ to favour him. This act on the part of the hero is called *irantu pinnirral* or *kuraiyural*⁵⁰. The maid who realises the secret relationship already formed between them is cautious in trying to understand the heroine's heart. She narrates in ambiguous words many situations, real⁵¹ or imaginary⁵², to the lady and waits to see her reaction. The sense of feminine modesty is too delicate⁵³ for any lady or even for the mother⁵⁴ of the heroine to ask a question of her, or to seek a reply from her on the topic of love. To rely on a single source to see through the working of the mind of a shy girl is unsound. According to *Tolkappiyam*, there are seven sources⁵⁵ from which the lady companion may truly find out whether her mistress has already experienced sexual joy. The sources are 1. fragrance, 2.

appearance, 3. conduct, 4. taste of food, 5. tendency to conceal, 6. movement and 7. loneliness.

Matal Reference

Having known the real intention of the lady, the maid⁵⁶ and night⁵⁷. Unlike till now, the venue changes and it is fixed by the maid. These rendezvous are called 'Pakarkuri' and 'iravukkuri'. Even after the knowledge of the maiden's love-relation, the maid-in-attendance intentionally postpones the acceptance of the hero's overture of love or presents of leaf-garments⁵⁸ in order to try his constancy and also to impress upon him the value of attaining her mistress. This delay kindles the fire of love in him. The exasperated and unrestrained hero threatens the maid to have recourse to "the frightful mounting of the uncouth palmyra chariot attached to the horse-shaped, saw like stalks⁵⁹, with the wreath of unblossomed erukku⁶⁰ (*calotropis gigantea*) on his chest, along the streets⁶¹. This uncivilised custom is called 'matal erutal'. A Sangam poet Matankiranar has sung only two poems⁶² and those two on this minor theme. Hence his name is preceded by the title 'matal patiya'. On the whole in Sangam literature, matal subject is treated only in nine stanzas⁶³, so far as the division of the pure Aintinai is concerned. For the division of Peruntinai this theme is dealt with in four poems in Kalittogai. The difference in the treatment of matal ma (palmyra horse) between Aintinai and Peruntinai is a fundamental one. The mere reference to resort to such an act by a lover is made in Aintinai⁶⁴ but the actual riding is treated in Peruntinai⁶⁵.

Trysts during Day and Night

With the helpful attitude of the female friend the secret course escapes an abrupt ending. By virtue of her capacity as

a servant, the maid has a greater freedom of movement and is in a position to ascertain and suggest the time and place suitable for their meeting. Yet she has her own limitations. Secrecy in love has no asylum in this world; for, social, environmental and psychological forces never stop attacking, until it joyously or painfully reveals itself to the public eye.

The first obstacle that puts an end to their meeting in day time is the ripening of the millet corn⁶⁶. With the finish of the harvest, finishes also the duty of the damsel in the field. The hero is desirous of having nightly meetings at all costs⁶⁷. Places of such meetings cannot be arranged beyond the boundary of the lady's home⁶⁸. Exploiting the good tradition of hospitality; the hero sometimes enters into the interior of the house (under the pretext of being a guest)⁶⁹. Lovers at the initial stages of love have no idea of the difficulties in store for them nor have they any idea of the might of love to surmount any obstacle. Experience teaches them the strength of love and the utility of such strength. Like a ferocious boar, the hero takes no notice of any fatal danger and meets his love, swimming across the frightful and rapid currents of a jungle river which runs dragging even the ruttish elephant⁷⁰. The heroine ties up her tinkling anklet so as to make it silent⁷¹ and goes out by means of a ladder in the dead of night, when her father who is equal to Murugan (the war God of the Tamils) is strength and ire remains at home⁷².

A female companion is introduced in Aintinai, not, in my opinion, to aid the furtive course of the lovers, but cut short that course and induce them to get married as early as possible. The unsatiated passion blinds the young couple to the sequence of consequence. The maid, being in a detached position, thinks out the impending dangers and finds out ways and means to avert them. She fully realises her responsibility

in bringing about their marriage and takes pains to impress⁷³. The view of Bernard Shaw⁷⁴ that marriage remains practically inevitable; and the sooner we acknowledge this, the sooner we shall set to work to make it decent and reasonable' is a favourite principle with the ancient Tamils; for they knew well that the alternative to marriage would be clandestine irregularities in society. That is the reason why a female associate finds a firm place and plays a bigger part in Aintinai and why more than half of Kalavu poems in Sangam poetry treat of the theme of marriage, technically called 'varaivu' in a variety of forms.

The perilous path infested with wild animals to be traversed by the hero in the thick darkness of night is a constant source of fear to the maid⁷⁵. The heroine also shares her painful feelings with the sorrowful expression that her heart, forsaking her in desolation, has gone to support the staggering feet of him who passes through the track full of delusive pits at night in the cold season⁷⁶. The maid hints to him their fear and asks him to go over to the kantal grove in day time⁷⁷. We are afraid of public gossip because of your visit with the wild hound to the village in mid-day. Our apprehension is greater, as you come alone in the midnight along the path where the fierce tiger is moving restlessly, having escaped death from the clutches of the long-trunked elephant⁷⁸. These suggestive words of the maid and her frequent alteration in the trysting time and place will convey to the hero their (the heroine's and the maid's) desire for marriage⁷⁹. The unfavourable circumstances to the secret course are also favourable to their endeavour. Parinar, one of the greatest of Sangam poets, has pathetically enumerated the manifold impediments in the uneven path of love in secrecy, as if spoken by a lady in anguish in prolonged

solitude. The long poem of 23 lines may be summarised as follows⁸⁰: There are no festivals to keep them awake: yet the people of this restless village do not go to bed. Even if the village with its fertile and busy streets becomes inactive, the caustic tongued mother will not sleep; even if the mother who keeps strict guard over my movement happens to close her eyes in sleep; The village watch men with thier eyes which know not sleep are moving quickly everywhere. No sooner do the young guards with glittering lances fall asleep than the dogs with bent tail begin to bark; when the dogs with pointed teeth cease to bark, the moon, appearing like the sun in the broad heaven, spreads its effulgent rays unclouded⁸¹. If the moon withdraws its rays by setting behind the hills, the harsh sounding owl which preys upon the house-rats unsympathetically hoots during midnight when the spirits are free to move about. Supposing the round eyed owl remains silent, the domestic cocks will raise their voice indicating the approach of the dawn. On the favourable day when all things are at rest, he who used to come daily does not turn up. O maid, our secret course has myriad obstacles like the impassable defensive forest of Tittan”

Veriyattu

In the meantime the mother or the nurse feels distressed to see the heroine waning everyday. Ignorant of the real cause of her emaciation⁸² the orthodox mother attributes it to the deity of the region, Murugan, and invites the officiating priest called ‘velan’ to cure the girl of the malady. In a place ritually decorated for the purpose, the velan invokes the presenece of Murugan by offering the red millet mixed with ram’s blood⁸³ and plays a spirited dance designated ‘veriyattu’. He diagnoses the girl’s sickness by means of kalanku (moluca beans) and says that she is possessed by the hill deity

(Murugan)⁸⁴. To ascribe her mental affliction to some other curious cause is unbearable and dishonourable⁸⁵ to a chaste girl. This is an occasion for the heroine to show her resentment at the improper act and also to reveal her love-relation with a hero of her choice, in plain or suggestive terms.

An old female diviner invited by the mother and nurse is singing a long poem touching the several hills wherein Lord Murugan resides. When she makes mention of a hill to which the hero belongs, the wise maid opportunely intervenes and ardently appeals to the diviner to stop there and go on repeating the same lines referring to that mountain⁸⁶. The daring interference will induce the mother to guess the reason for the maid's special interest in a particular hill and find out the person who is the cause of her daughter's grief. This occasion will be also utilised by the maid to press the hero on the point of marriage, insinuating that veriyattu is unfair to his honour⁸⁷.

As the theme of 'veriyattu' involves a struggle between the high ideal of chastity and the age-long custom of society, Sangam poets had a partiality for this subject. A poetess Kamakkaniyar has earned the title 'veripatiya' for in all the three poems in her name, the subject matter is 'veriyattu'⁸⁸. Kapilar in ten poems⁸⁹ as a group portrays the strong reaction by the maid and heroine to the unbecoming dance. On the whole in Sangam literature, there are nearly 40 stanzas by 22 poets on this theme. In all these, the victory of truth over falsehood is observed.

Alar (Public gossip)

An indispensable and interesting element in Aintinai both in kalavu and karpu⁹⁰ is the female society of the village. Women by nature have a subtle desire to probe into the love

affair of a girl by hook or by crook and delight in gossiping over it covertly or plainly. The beginning and growing stages of the scandalous talk are called ‘ampal’ and ‘alar’ respectively. The feminine tendency gives Aham poets a chance to describe women as ‘ampal mutur alarvayppentir⁹¹’ and ‘alarvinai meval ampar pentir⁹²’. Alar has many salient features. Sometimes the heroine resents it, as it prevents the union eagerly expected⁹³. Sometimes she blames the women-folk, as their idle talk leads her mother to keep a strict watch over her movement⁹⁴. On the whole, the heroine and the maid welcome it. A lady-love of the pastoral region really feels happy when the village people associate her name with a shepherd of her choice⁹⁵. Alar stands as an insurmountable obstruction to the lovers and induces them to plan in terms of marriage. The hero, unmindful of the public rumour⁹⁶, wants to continue the secret course for some more time.

The maid now ascribes her insistence on marriage to the public aspersion, as though she is not unwilling to prolong the kalavu⁹⁷.

The only character in Aintinai showing strong repugnance to the birth and spread of scandal is the mother or the nurse of the heroine. The old lady considers it impertinent on the part of the village folk, to speak publicly of the conduct of her girl which involves the status and prestige of the family⁹⁸. No doubt the mother rebukes, beats her daughter sometimes and casts a vigilant look over her conduct on hearing the rumour⁹⁹. Yet she loses her temper to hear the loose talk of the public on this delicate matter and questions herself, “What right have these evil-mouthed and gossiping women to come here and report to me the act of my daughter so often. Is it not wise for them to keep quiet, saying, “Let the mother come to know this by herself, whether she likes it or not?”¹⁰⁰

Rival proposal for Marriage (Notumalar varaivu)

In his excellent dissertation “Shakespeare’s Treatment of Love and Marriage” Prof. C.H. Herford says that the course of love rarely runs smooth; but rival suitors proposed by parents are quietly resisted or merrily abused, never even¹⁰¹, and thus points out the normal occasion for the forceful manifestation of chastity. The custom of marriage in Tamil society requires that the party that wishes to get a girl married should send grey-haired elders¹⁰² to obtain the consent of her parents. Knowing beforehand of their arrival, the parents will accord a hearty welcome to them and begin to talk over the wedding. Sometimes it so happens that the party is none other than that of the hero of the girl’s choice¹⁰³.” This rare coincidence fills the heroine and the maid with great joy. Thus the clandestine course is deprived of the enthusiasm of romance and becomes dull and insipid.

The heroine is always in constant fear that the request by the hero will be rejected by her parents¹⁰⁴. Sometimes her heart - rending suspicion becomes true. It is foolish and cowardly at this juncture for her to dread the parents and to hide the pre-marital union from them. passion without courage is like knowledge without action. True and pure passion carries with it sufficient boldness to disregard any difficulty from anywhere. The lady and her maid put their heads together and let the elders realise what transpired without their knowledge. “He who cured now the hue of separation (pacalai) of this black girl is the person of the seashore where the tidal waves go on bending the huge branch of the nalal tree with its short leaves¹⁰⁵”. This is the timely revelation by the maid of their daughter’s independent relation with the hero whose claim to her hands in unwittingly disclaimed by her family.

The maid sometimes divulges the secret in plain terms by saying that it is good to give the girl to him, when the hero of the hill himself desires wedlock; for the girl's affliction is never on the decrease¹⁰⁶. Having got information, the father and brothers of the heroine whole-heartedly and wisely decide to give her in marriage to that faithful hero¹⁰⁷.”

When their daughter attains marriageable age, the parents without the least idea of her clandestine love, welcome the proposal by others to wed her to a suitor other than the hero. Herein lies the greatest danger to the life of chaste girl. Veriyattu or the attribution of lover-sickness to a supernatural being is deemed by her as a spot on her chastity; but society takes no such view. On the other hand, the contemplation of marriage to another boy, viewed practically, is a threat not only to the very life of a devoted girl, but to the noble idea of karpu or loyalty itself. Once such an occasion arose, the girl seems to have resorted to fast. To an inquiry from the nurse about her reluctance to drink even milk, the maid frankly replies that ‘the maiden with bright forehead will drink milk, if it is offered by the hero of the cool shore¹⁰⁸. To avoid such an extreme course, the shrewd maid employs different ways from the very beginning of her association, to impress upon the hero the necessity of his marrying the heroine, before their secret love becomes known. The theme ‘varivu kataval’, the technical expression for ‘urging the hero to marry’, has to its credit hundred of poems in Sangam literature. I am tempted to quote the following small verse full of suggestive meanings as a typical illustration to show the fear and anxiety of the sagacious maid in regard to marriage:

“சிறுநனி வரைந்தனை கொண்மோ பெருநீர்
வலைவர் தந்த கொழுமீன் வல்சிப்
பறைதடி முதுகுரு கிருக்கும்
துறைகெழு தொண்டி யன்னவிவள் நலனே”

(Ain:180)

The purport of this poem is to press the hero whose intention is to delay it, to speedy marriage. The implied meaning of the description that the disabled ole cranes are looking at the fish-prey placed by the fishermen on the coast of Tonti is that the aged people of other family have come to the girl's house to have a talk over her marriage. Pointing out the impending danger, the maid advises the hero to secure her hand in marriage at once.

REVELATION WITH VIRTUE (Arattotu nirral)

Here 'aram' stands for chastity, the chief feminine quality. Hence this topic is much favoured by many Sangam poets. The means of arattotu nirral i.e. letting the parents know the secret with firm adherence to chastity, will be resorted to by the heroine and the maid as a last recourse, when no other way becomes possible or fruitful. Feminine modesty will not permit the girl to uncover the secrecy in love, unless her chastity is in jeopardy¹⁰⁹. She and her companion will conceal the love affair and strive after marriage, by directing the hero to make all arrangements for it, as if to show that nothing was done without the elders consent. "O, hero of the sky-embracing hill, why should you not attempt to marry? Your lead will result in the celebration of the traditional wedding by our elders who are in blissful ignorance of your sexual union, in those echoing slopes of the mountain where pepper vines are growing and deer in group are leaping up¹¹⁰" In this way the maid exhorts the hero to cut short the secret course and think in terms of marriage¹¹¹. Tolkappiyar, therefore, legislates that there is no right on the part of the maid directly to resort to virtuous revelation (arattotu nirral) of her own accord, when such is not the lady-love's intention¹¹². In one of the Kali Odes, the heroine entreats the maid to reveal her chaste love so that she will attain lasting fame in the fleeting

world¹¹³. It is obvious from this rule that the occasion for the treatment of the theme in question will generally arise, when the course of Ahattinai touches perilously the fringe of chastity. Such frightful occasions are rightly and in order mentioned by Naccinarkiniyar, as marriage to a stranger (notumalar varaivu) and divine dancing (veriyattu)¹¹⁴. As many as 51 poems are devoted to the delicate theme of arattotunirral with its minute details. The world 'delicate; should be noted in this connection; for not only has the chance for arattotu nirral some restrictions, but the process of revelation is inhibited by some psychological conditions. The maid will give out the secret to the nurse (the maid's mother) who, in turn, will speak of it to the heroine's mother, from whom the father and the brothers of the girl will get the news by inference¹¹⁵. Kapilar, the well known Sangam poet, has portrayed the subject in one of his long Kali Odes with dexterity and feeling¹¹⁶. The unique position of the theme arattotu nirral in Aintinai may be appraised by the fact that this poet who composed Kurinjippattu of 261 lines, with the purpose of teaching (the greatness of) Tamil to the Aryan King Brahattan, has selected this theme as a proper and interesting subject.

ELOPEMENT (Utanpokku)

The Scene of romance in the Aham poetry becomes visible to an average reader, only when the running away of the hero with the heroine takes place. It is an erroneous idea to hold that the elopement is the next step to be relied upon by the lovers, when arattotu nirral fails to produce the desired effect. The correct theory is that only one of the two, i.e. arattotu nirral or utanpokku will be the denouement of the love-drama in the clandestine stage of Aintinai. A mother regretfully laments the act of the girl and distressfully points

out that “the elopement was unnecessary; for we would have united her in marriage with him. had she informed us of it before hand¹¹⁷”. The sponsor of the movement is not the hero who has a voluptuous liking for the prolongation of the furtive course¹¹⁸. It is the maid, who is in a position to know the inner workings of the mind of both the hero and the heroine and to judge the environmental attitude conducive to further continuation of the love affair, that puts into the heads of the lovers the idea of elopement. Out of sheer fear to face the parents and to tell them the truth convincingly, this way is suggested by the maid and sought by the heroine¹¹⁹. By way of persuading the mistress to elope, the discerning maid explains the dilemma thus: “Our parents are celebrating the ceremony of betrothal or vatuvai (to a stranger) with happiness. The hairy-chinned hero has consented to take my advice. you would do well to accompany him through the hard path where the female elephants are fleeing at the sight of the tiger in group, infuriated by the sense of disappointment at their prey, i.e. male elephants having escaped.¹²⁰” This is a clear instance of the girl’s and the maid’s timidity to oppose the action of her parents in the case of ‘notumalar varaiivu’ or rial marriage. The strong public rumour which closes all the doors to the young couple’s meetings also contributes its share towards utanpokku. The sincere mother of an eloped girl finds fault with the village for the unsympathetic attitude¹²¹.

The main reason that figures passim in this connection is the dread of the daughter to encounter the mother who is her sole guardian. “The unrighteous mother ceases not caning me in view of the open scandal. Let her live along in her house. I am determined to happily drink the little water remaining in the foot-print of the huge elephant, accompanying my lord along the rugged mountainous path of distant country¹²²”.

Thus the revolutionary change in the mind of a love-affected girl towards her own mother finds its reflection in the speech of the maid at the time of elopement. The plain speech of a well-informed mother whose agony knows no bounds after the girl's elopement, is proof of the above statement, i.e. lack of courage on the part of the heroine to face her mother in person. She says, 'My daughter quitted this place leaving me in this desolate house and followed the young hero of tinkling anklet and glittering long spear, along the desert of many hills, with the wrong assumption that her life here would become uneasy, if I came to know of the secret,' and remarks with affection: "How I wish to be their host in their sojourn in a village in order to demonstrate that I am not a mother so cruel as she thought¹²³".

The elopement of the lovers and the consequent lamentations of the mother (*makat pokkiya tai irankal*) are found to be resourceful topics for poetic imagination. Many Sangam poets have entertained a partiality for these related themes, with the result that they are touchingly treated in 122 poems (i.e. one seventh of the total kalavu poems) with a depth of psychological acumen. Among 28 poets who composed verses on this subject, Kayamanar is entitled to the first place, for he has evinced a special interest in it and has exclusively devoted all the 20 poems excepting two¹²⁴ to it, which are scattered in the three Aintinai anthologies, Ahananuru, Narrinai and Kuruntogai. To that honoured place, belongs yet another poet Otalantaiyar, the author of one hundred little stanzas relating to Palai or separation in Ainkurunuru, whose treatment of the themes of the eloped couples and the sorrowful searching mother in 35 poems in varied and pointed¹²⁵.

In the foregoing pages a broad analysis has been made of the four stages¹²⁶ of the kalavu or clandestine course in

Aintinai, citing necessary illustrations from the Sangam classics and giving the number of poems dealing with some themes. Mention has not been made here of the themes like 'allakuri' (failure of nocturnal meeting by wrong sign) 'varaivitai vaittup porulvayir pirital' (the hero's departure to earn wealth for marriage) etc., to avoid tediousness. Even the themes mentioned above have received different and distinct treatment, according to the creative power of poets. All these will be dealt with in due place.

Of the Sangam Aham poets numbering 378, those who composed the kalavu course are 238. Of these, 145 poets have exclusively sung on 'kalavu'. Of 41 poems of this course, the names of the authors have been lost. To the total number 882 of Kalavu poems, the following twelve poets have made notable contribution:

Kapilar 182	Nakkirar 17
Ammuvanar 82	Nalluruttiranaar 16
Otalantaiyar 38	Marutan Ilanakanar 16
Paranar 33	Nallantuvanar 16
Uloccanar 27	Orampokiyar 15
Kayamanar 21	Peri Cattanar 14

KARPU (Married Stage)

Kalavu is a means to an end. It is a right means only when it ends in Karpu, but karpu need not always be preceded by kalavu. The view held by Bertrand Russell that romantic¹²⁷ is also the view of the

ancient Tamil Society. At any rate, the secret or eloped lovers must be united by marriage and become husband and wife, before they are accepted by their parents or by society. This is one of the important and inviolable principles in Aham. The general custom of *karpū*, according to Tolkappiyar, is the hero's acceptance of the lady, from the right persons in the appropriate manner with due ceremony¹²⁸. Knowing beforehand that the form of marriage will be subjected to endless modifications, elaborations and complexities from time to time but that the substance of marriage, as an institution, will remain for ever unchanged¹²⁹, the wise grammarian has not committed himself to any particular act of outward ceremony, but contented himself with the plain statement "karanamotu punarak kolakuri marapu," leaving it to be interpreted by posterity so as to suit its own time. In the next *suttiram*,

*Kotuppor inriyum karanam unte
punarntutan pokiya kalai yana* (Tol: 1088)

He insists on the necessity of social or public ceremony, as a marriage is a great social institution, whatever may be the form it assumes.

The society which lays no impassable obstacle in the way of the romantic lovers getting married, but at the sametime brings pressure upon them to marry, may be credited with having honoured the sacred institution of marriage-an institution which keeps society alive and organic. Ancient Tamil society deserves such praise, as its attitude towards marriage was too liberal to prevent the entry of secret lovers into its fold. To a question of the hero who married the girl during the course of elopement, the maid gladly replies that she has already announced the news of the marriage to her mother, having heard it from the mouth of the girl¹³⁰.

Of the two divisions of Aintinai, karpu is a stage of perfection to be aimed at by every human being, though its resourcefulness for poetic cultivation is second to that of the kalavu division. This does not mean that of the kalavu division. This does not mean that it held or should hold an inferior position as a theme for poetry. The moral side of it will suffice to capture the minds of poets to whom imagination is an alluring means to an ideal end. The fact that there are 966 poems on karpu course sung by 233 poets, as against 882 poems on kalavu course by 236 poets in the Sangam classics, bears testimony to the above statement. Of 233 poets, those belonging exclusively to karpu course are 140. The names of the authors of 28 poems are unknown. The notable contributors to karpu part are eleven in number:-

Peyanar 104	Ammuvanar 45
Orampokiyar 94	Paranar 29
Otalantaiyar 65	Mamulanar 25
Palai patiya	Auvaiyar (a poetess) 18
perunkatunko 60	Nakkirar 16
Marutan Ilanakanar 58	Ilankiranar 15

Separation of Wealth (Porulvayir Pirivu)

The lovers, after marriage, enjoy a voluptuous life with¹³¹. This state of life cannot continue for a long time; for wealth is indispensable to run a household with all obligations. Hence the separation of the hero from the heroine becomes a mundane necessity. It is a biological fact that man is more sensual than woman. Yet the many duties enjoined on him gradually turn the course of his thought and reasoning, away from sensuality. According to

Tolkappiyar, the chief characteristics of the hero are nobility and will-power¹³². As money makes the performance of one's obligations easier, separation for wealth (porulvayir pirivu) has had an extensive treatment at the hands of the Sangam poets. Here is a poem by Irikon Ollaiyayan Cenkannan, depicting the struggle between pleasure and duty and the latter's victory over the former¹³³. "Those who cannot leave the broad region of the big and soft breasts with golden hue will be satisfied with staying at home, seeing with their own eyes the penury of their friends, the sufferings of their kith and kin and the prosperity of those who are away from their wives. This shameful thought kindled in my mind a fiery yearning for wealth day and night. Abating such a fire by the showers of energy, I have come here crossing the desert."

To live a life of uninterrupted pleasure¹³⁴, to maintain the family with no belmish and with no one's help¹³⁵, to support the friends and relatives in their straitened circumstances¹³⁶, to make new acquaintance with the neighbours¹³⁷, to help the poor¹³⁸, and to subdue. The recalcitrant enemies¹³⁹ seem to have been the objectives of acquiring wealth. The desire for fame and the sense of shame have also been instrumental in the furtherance of the above objectives. There are several kinds of separation¹⁴⁰ viz., to earn wealth, to protect one's subjects, to wage war against one's enemy, to be a mediator, to pursue higher studies, to seek pleasure with prostitutes etc. Among them, separation for wealth is common to both Kalavu and Karpu.

Delay in Departure (Celavu alunkal)

It is exceedingly difficult for the hero to set out for his task with the consent of the heroine. She is too ignorant¹⁴¹ to think that there can be separation between lovers. The husband

who realises the feminine frailty employs sweet methods to let her know the possibility of parting, by implication. One of the pleasant devices interestingly described by many poets is the overflowing fondness¹⁴² displayed by the hero, in the nights before his journey. He is perplexed to see her mental affliction even when he is with her, in anticipation of separation¹⁴³. The maid argues with the hero about the wisdom of departure against the wishes of the heroine and deprecates the value of wealth, in comparison with the pleasurable union in youth¹⁴⁴. Herein lies a debatable subject to be eloquently handled by the poets, as to the comparative greatness of wealth (valamai) and youth (ilamai). This dispute is logically and charmingly portrayed by Palai Patiya Perunkatunko in Kalittogai. Knowing as he does the melancholy of the lady-love, the hero finds no other way than to put off his departure to a later time. This is technically called 'celavu alunkal'. The implied meaning of this term is that, after convincingly assuring the wife of his early return, the hero will shortly start on his purpose¹⁴⁵.

Pangs of Separation

“From an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the pleasure of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of the pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself”. This truth of which so fine an exposition is given by Shelley¹⁴⁶ in his “A Defence of Poetry”, accounts

for the existence of nearly two thirds of karpu poems on Separation or Palai. The loneliness and its attendant tantrum on the part of the wife afford potential opportunities for the poets to enliven the Karpu poetry of Aintinai, which otherwise will be uninteresting and unimaginative.

The Advent of the Season (Paruva Varavu)

Many situations relating to the general theme of Palai are created in Aham literature to augment the sorrowful mood of the heroine born of loneliness. One of them is the advent of the season, most probably winter¹⁴⁷ or early summer¹⁴⁸, fixed by the hero for returning home. The sight of the season is enough for the longing woman to conclude, that her loving husband may be so deeply engaged in his endeavour to accumulate wealth that he has no time to think of his promise¹⁴⁹. The desolation of the heroine at the sight of the season (Talaivi Paruvam kantu arramai) is sympathetically described in nearly 58 poems. This gives rise to another series of poems (Toli arruvittal) wherein a genuine attempt is made by the maid to comfort and console the miserable lady, with reasonable and unreasonable¹⁵⁰ arguments. The conversation with the maid turns the lady's mind from the thought of her husband for a while, and alleviates her grief to a certain extent. There are about 26 stanzas relating to the turai or theme 'the maid consoling the lady'.

The return of the hero

Though it is considered unmanly for the hero who is away, to think of his sweet-heart in season and out of season, occasional recollection in the midst of his work is altogether unavoidable¹⁵¹. The coming of the season reminds him of his promise to the lady. He recalls to his mind the impatient and inconsolable sorrow of the heroine, by the delay in his

return¹⁵². To avoid such a state, the hero is very anxious to go home, like the farmer who, with a pair of oxen hurries to plough his small piece of land before the moisture dries up¹⁵³. Sometimes he sends word to her by a messenger, about his arrival in order to soothe the distressed wife, whose tender eyes are disfigured by the pale colour¹⁵⁴ (pacalai).

In this theme alone, ‘the hero’s exhortation to his charioteer, after completion of the task’ (vinai murriya talaivan terppakarku uraittatu), there are as many as 44 poems, expressive of his eagerness to meet his beloved before the night-fall, and embrace her lovely arms with extreme happiness born of reunion after long separation. The only poem by Pandiyan Pannatu Tantan deals with this theme and is sung in the name of the hero. The hero who is happy with the lady-love by his early return addresses the cloudy season in a blissful mood thus: “O! great cloud, may you live long. It is time now for you to rain; for , with an air of self complacency born of the accomplishment of my work, I have reached this girl and rested myself on the support of her soft and tidy tresses fragrant with the fresh kuvalai flowers¹⁵⁵.” Another lover compares the sweetness of his lady-love to the sweetness of achievement of one’s undertakings¹⁵⁶. The various situations associated with the advent of the seasons and the home coming of the hero have been skilfully dealt with by Peyanar in Aingurunuru under “Mullai” part.

Seeking the Company of Prostitutes (Parattaiyir pirivu)

The introduction of “separation for harlots” in Aintinai has agitated the great Tamil scholars of all times and sporadic attempts have been made by many, in defence of such a theme. While commenting upon this kind of separation in his critical

study on Kuruntogai, Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, the greatest of modern scholars and editors in Tamil, states convincingly that every thing described in literature need not have a moral propriety and may be taken as faithful portrayal of life in the world¹⁵⁷. Some pages will be devoted to the study of this question in this thesis at a later stage. That the theme of forsaking one's wife and seeking the company of harlots' is a problem entitled to an elaborate discussion will be clear, when one takes into account the existence of no less than 279 poems relating to this topic, out of 966 in Karpu course. These poems are classified under the division Marutam.

Two situations predominantly treated in 'Marutam' are the consent or refusal by the heroine or the maid, to admit the hero who seeks entrance into his house, after his relation with concubines (vayil nertal and vayil maruttal). The creation of these 'turaish' points out on the face of it that the lewd husband forfeits the right of entrance into his own home at all times and makes himself so low as to request permission to enter, as if he were a stranger. A wife who disapproves of the immoral trait of her husband tells the maid ironically that "the relationship between him and her is not marital, but parental and that quarrelling with him is therefore out of question¹⁵⁸."

Orampokiyar and Marutan Ilanakanar may be easily classified as Marutam poets, because of their varied and extensive treatment of it. It is to be observed that most of the Marutam poetry, by Paranar, one of the greatest of the Sangam poets, has more historical than literary value¹⁵⁹. All the three poems¹⁶⁰ attributed to the post Ilankatunko treat of one and the same situation, i.e., refusal to admit the hero (vayil maruppu). On this score, he may be entitled to the distinction "vayil maruppup patiya" like 'matal patiya Matankiranar' and

‘veri patiya kamakkaniyar’; but from the general and comprehensive title ‘Marutam Patiya’ given to him, I presume that like Palai patiya Perunkatunko, Ilankatunko too might have sung poems on all aspects of Marutam. To remark that they are lost to us will be of no surprise to the students of the history of Sangam literature.

Important situations in karpu course have been so far mentioned. Situations like “wife’s accompanying the husband” (utanpokku, and the harlot’s speech (parattai kurru) will be investigated in due course.

KAIKKILAI AND PERUNTINAI

Having analysed with illustrations the kalavu and karpu courses which constitute Aintinai, it is time for us, to know something of the contents of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai. The enumeration of seven Ahattinai in Tolkappiyam commences rightly with Kaikkilai¹⁶¹; yet its exposition is given by Tolkappiyar at the end of the chapter along with Peruntinai¹⁶², just to show their inferior status in Aham. In an Aham poem are described two or even three turais (themes) belonging to kalavu and karpu courses¹⁶³. In this thesis the first turai has been taken for granted as the basis for arriving at all conclusions¹⁶⁴. The commentators of Narrinai, Kuruntogai, Ahananuru and Aingurunuru have at first annotated the poems, according to the first turai. It seems that Kalittogai had no turais written, when it was compiled. The great commentator Naccinarkkiniyar was burdened with the double task of finding out the turais and explaining the odes accordingly. I feel unhappy to state that some turais in Kalittogai have been written by him so as to suit his twisted interpretation of Tolkappiyam. Therefore a slight deviation from the above principle becomes necessary, so far as some of the poem in

Kalittogai are concerned. Moreover it is to be borne in mind that all the poems on both Kaikkilai and Peruntinai are contained in this anthology.

The meanings of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai are subject to great controversy. A clear knowledge of the comprehensive meaning of Ahattinai will throw much light on many complicated questions including Kaikkilai and Peruntinai. Leaving the subject to be discussed in the third chapter, I shall simply give the contents of these two tinai, as conceived by me.

Kaikkilai

“A man falls in love with an immature girl (mistaking her to be a girl of maturity) and becomes incurably afflicted. He continues to describe his relation with her as good and as bad, and feels gratified by his own passionate speech, despite the absence of any response from her”. The Kaikkilai division in Ahattinai deals with the one and only situation mentioned above. To imply the lack of variety of themes, Tolappiyar has cautiously used the phrase ‘pullit tonrum kaikkilaik kurippe¹⁶⁵’. Of all the Aham classics, Kalittogai along has four poems¹⁶⁶ on Kalikkilai, three by Kapilar and one by Nalluruttiranar.

Peruntinai

This division consists of four situations: viz. 1. the hero’s actual riding the ‘matal’ chariot when he is unable to secure the object of his love; 2. protracted separation so as to lose cream of youth without sexual enjoyment; . the lady’s pining away beyond consolation and 4. any venture resorted to by the heroine due to excessive lust. There are ten poems¹⁶⁷, only in Kalittogai, relating to this theme, by

Nallantuvanar. Among them. four poems describe masculine Peruntinai and six feminine Peruntinai.

It is a question to be inquired into, or at any rate to be mentioned here why all poems of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai in Aham classics are in Kali verse and why such poems are not composed in 'Ahaval' verse and are not found in other anthologies, Ainkurunuru, Kuruntogai, Narrinai and Ahananuru. I am of opinion that a minute study of all the turais written in these anthologies will show at least the existence of a few poems in Ahaval verse also, on these two insignificant tinais¹⁶⁸. But this fields deserves independent study and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Foot Notes

1. S.K. Pillai, The Ancient Tamils, Part I: p. 43.
2. Tol; 954, Cilappatikaram, Kathai XI, II, 63-6.
3. Tol : 947
4. Tolkappiya Porulathikara arachchi, p. 24;; Palantamilar Nakarikam p.13; Studios in Tamil Literature and History p. 273.
5. Iraiyanar Ahapporul, p. 25, Tol; Porul; 5. Nacciparkkiniyam. Prof.S.S. Bharathi. Tol. Aham, Preface p. 3, Ilavalaganar, Ahattinai Iyal Vilakkam, p. 87-89 footnote.
6. Vide Tamil Lexicon Vol. I, Ahattinai is simply defined 'as a mental experience of lovers.'
7. Tol : 947
8. Ibid; 995, 996
9. Tirukkovaiyar, St. 4 Commentary.
 “அகத்திணையின் கண் கைக்கிளை வருதல் திணை மயக்கமாம்”
 Here the word Ahattinai is wrongly used in place of Aintinai.
10. Araniya Kantam; Curpanakai St. 1
11. Kurinjipattu; 11. 38-9,
12. Aham; 28, 1-7
13. Aham; 388, 11. 11-3

14. Aham; 48.
15. Kuran; 305
16. Tol; 1441.
17. The Physiology of Sex, p. 43-4.
18. Of. Hans Licht, Sexual Life in Ancient Greece p. 307.
19. Tol; 1038.
20. Kurun; 366.
21. Ain; 110
22. Kurun; 229.
23. Tol; 1443; Iraiyanar Ahaporul; 2.
24. Iraiyanar Ahaporul; p. 33-35. Tirukkovai; St. 7.
25. Tol ; 1042.
26. Iraiyanar Ahaporul; p, 40.
27. Kurun ; 40
28. Nar; 155.
29. Ain; 197.
30. Nar; 39, 155, Ain; 197.
31. Tol ; 1443.
32. Ain; 172
33. Kurun; 95.
34. Nar; 160.
35. Ibid; 201. 'உள்ளல் கூடாது'
36. Kurun ; 280.
37. Ibid ; 78
38. Ain ; 17
39. Ibid ; 174.
40. Kurun ; 78, 204.
41. Ibid ; 136, 204.
42. Kurun ; 184.
43. Tol ; Porul 102. Naccinarkkiniyam :
 "தோழியிற் கூட்டம் போலப் பாங்கள் உரையாடி
 இடைநின்று கூட்டாமையின்".
 Tol ; Porul 498. Peraciriyam : "தன்வயிற் பாங்கள் அவள் வயிற் பாங்க செய்யான்".

44. Kurun ; 58
45. Kurun ; 78. “பெரும் பேதைமைத்து”
46. Aham ; 130
47. Aham; 12
48. Kurun; 222
49. Kali; 47.
50. Tol; 1182
51. Kali; 60.
52. Aham; 32, Tol; 1059, ll. 5-6. ‘மெய்யினும் பொய்யினும் வழிநிலை பிழையாது’
53. Ain; 205.
54. Aham; 203, l.6.
55. Tol; 1059, ll1-4.
56. Aham; 228.
57. Kurun; 345, ll. 5-7.
58. Ain, 187,
59. Kurun; 173.
60. Ibid; 17.
61. Ibid; 14.
62. Kurun; 182, Nar: 377.
63. Nar; 146, 152, 342, 377; Kurun; 14, 17, 32, 173, 182
64. To; 1047, “மடல்மா கூறும் இடனு மாருண்டே”
65. Ibid; 996, “ஏறிய மடற்றிறம்”
66. Nar; 259, 313.
67. Ibid; 122.
68. Tol: Porul: 131, Naccinarkkiniyam.
69. Kurun; 292.
70. Aham; 18, ll. 1-6.
71. Aham; 198.
72. Ibid; 158, “எந்தையும் இல்லனாக”
73. Kurun; 324.
74. Preface to ‘Getting Married’, p. 182
75. Aham; 318; ll, 1-4.

76. Ibid; 128, ll. 11-15.
77. Ibid; 128, l. 16, “பகல்நீ வரினும் புணர்குவை”.
78. Ibid; 118.
79. Tol; 1155, “வரைதல் வேட்கைப் பொருள்”
80. Aham; 122.
81. Cf; Kurinjippattu; ll. 240-41.
82. Ain; 242.
83. Aham; 22.
84. Ain; 249.
85. Ibid; 248; “நன்றாலம்ம நின்றவிவள் நலனே” (நலன் - chastity)
86. Kurun; 23.
87. Ain; 245, “கெழுதகை கொல்”
88. Aham; 22, 98, Nar; 268.
89. Ain; 241-50.
90. Tol; 1107, “களவும் கற்பும் அலர் வைரவின்றே”.
91. Nar; 143.
92. Aham; 203.
93. Nar 203.
94. Ibid; 62.
95. Kali; 105, l. 62, “இன்னவுவகை பிறிதியாது”
96. Kali; 60, l. 28.
97. Aham; 118, l. 6. “பகல்வரிற் கவ்வை யஞ்சுதும்” This statement by the maid should not be construed that she consents to his visit, in day time, were there no alar.
98. Aham; 95.
99. Nar; 149.
100. Aham; 203, ll. 1-6
101. Shakespeare’s Treatment of Love and Marriage p. 19.
102. Kurun; 146.
103. Ain; 300. Kali; 1(4, ll. 73-5)
104. Ain; 230.
105. Ain; 145.
106. Ibid; 258. “வரையுமாயின், கொடுத்தன மாயினோ நன்றே”

107. Kali; 107 “அப்பொய்யில் பொதுவற்கு அடைகூழ்ந்தார்”
108. Ain; 168.
 “தண்ணந் துறைவன் நல்கின்
 ஒண்ணுதல் அரிவை பாலா ரும்மே”
109. Tol; 1058. “நாணிணும் செயிர்தீர்காட்சிக் கற்புச்சிறந்தன்று”
110. Aham; 112. “மணப்பருங் காமம் புணர்ந்தமை யறியார்
 தொன்றியல் மரபின் மன்ற லயர”
111. Kali; 52, ll. 21-2.
112. Tol; 1151.
113. Kali; 54. “மன்னா வுலகத்து மன்னுவது”
114. Tol; Porul. 206, Naccinarkiniyam.
115. Tol; 1082, 1083.
116. Kali; 39.
117. Ain; 379.
118. Ibid; 6
119. Aham; 7 “தன்சிதைவு அறிதல் அஞ்சி”
120. Aham, 221. “வதுஐவ யயர்ந்தனர் நமரே”
121. Ain; 372.
122. Kurun; 262.
123. Aham, 203, ll. 8-18.
124. Nar; 324. Kurun; 9.
125. Ain; 371-380 மகட்போக்கியவழி தாயிரங்கு பத்து.
 381-390 “மஉடன்போக்கின்கண் இடைச்சுரத் துரைத்த பத்து.
 391-400 “மறுதரவுப் பத்து.
126. Tol; 1443.
127. Marriage and Morals, p. 64.
128. Tol; 1037.
129. Havelock Ellis: The History of Marriage in Psychology of Sex; Vol. II,
 p. 507.
130. Ain; 280. “வரைந்தனை நீயெனக் கேட்டியான்
 உரைத்தனென் அல்லனோ அஃதென் யாய்க்கே”
131. Tol; 1091.

132. “கரணத்தின் அமைந்து முடிந்த காலை
நெஞ்சுதளை யவிழ்ந்த புணர்ச்சி
The simple meaning of these lines has been mythologically interpreted by Naccinarkkiniyar. The old commentator Ilampuranar’s interpretation is correct, though brief.
132. Tol; 1043. “பெருமையும் உரனும் ஆடுஉ மேன”
133. Aham; 279.
134. Kali; 11.
135. Aham; 155.
136. Ibid; 93 “கேள் கேடுன்றவும் கிளைஞர் ஆரவும்”
137. Ibid; 93 “கேளல் கேளிர் கெழீஇயினர் ஒழுகவும்”
138. Ibid; 53.
139. Aham; 231.
140. Tolkappiyar has not enumerated the kinds of separation in one suttiram as the authors of Iraiyanar Ahapporul and Nampi Ahapporul have.
141. Aham; 41. “நம் பிரிபு அறியாநலன்”
142. Kali; 4. “கழிபெரு நல்கல் ஒன்றுடைத்து”
143. Aham; 5, ll. 27-8.
144. Kali; 15, ll. 24-6.
145. Tol; 1130.
146. A Defence of Poetry, pp. 44-5.
147. Ain; 411-20 கிழவன் பருவம் பாராட்டுப்பத்து.
148. Ibid; 341-50 இளவேனிற் பத்து.
149. Aham; 235.
150. பருவமன்று: பட்டது வம்பு என்றல்
151. Ain; 441-50 பாசறைப் பத்து.
152. Aham; 144.
153. Kurun; 131.
154. Ain; 477.
155. Kurun; 270.
156. Nar; 3, “உள்ளிய வினைமுடித்தன்ன இனியோள்”
157. Kurunthogai; நூலாராய்ச்சி, P. 79 “இப்பரத்தையிற் பிரிவு உலகியலையே கருதி அமைந்தது போலும்”

158. Kurun; 93.
159. V. Venkatarajulu Reddiar, Parinar, p. 34.
160. Aham; 96, 176. Nar; 50.
161. Tol; 946, “கைக்கிளை முதலா”
162. Ibid; 995, கைக்கிளை; 996 பெருந்திணை.
163. For example: Aham; 126 1. உணர்ப்புவயின் வாராலுடற்கண் தலைமகன் தன் நெஞ்சிற்குச் சொல்லியது. 2. அல்ல குறிப்பட்டு அழிந்ததாஉம் ஆம. 3. தோழியைப் பின்னின்ற தலைமகன் தன்னெஞ்சிற்குச் சொல்லியதாஉ மாம்.
164. Dr. U.V.S. Kuruntogai Introduction p. 6.
165. Tol; 995
166. Kali; 56, 57, 58, 109
167. Kali; 138 - 147.
168. Kurun; 78 for Kaikkilai. Aham; 135, Kurun, 31, 325 for Peruntinai.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF AHATTINAI

The origin and growth of Aham poetry can be clearly traced in the literary canons of Tolkappiyam and in the literary works of the Sangam epoch. It is true that the bulk of the literature written during the early stage of Ahattinai and prior to Tolkappiyam has been irretrievably lost to us. Those works, if extant, would have given us abundant material to trace the formative period of ancient Tamil poetry which culminated in the systematic treatment of Ahattinai. But Tolkappiyar and the Sangam poets, to whom the literature now extinct was certainly available, may be supposed to have preserved in their compositions enough matter for our study. Moreover the life led by the people of the Sangam age could not have been considerably different from that of the previous age. In the distant past, only imperceptible and insignificant changes took place in the customs and manners of a people. Survival of several ancient habits is still to be found in modern society, despite the rapid strides of scientific progress¹. I write this to point out that the Sangam literature, though comparatively later in origin, will supply fundamental material for the study of the subject in question. As Aham poetry of all themes at any time is basically rooted in certain elements, a historical interpretation of Ahattinai is attempted in this thesis.

The value of Sangam literature

It is an irrefutable conclusion that no Sangam poem can be assigned to the beginning stage of the development of Tamil language and literature or even to the period of the third century B.C., the probable age of Tolkappiyam. The original statement² of Prof. P.T.S. Iyengar that the so-called Sangam Odes obey strict metrical rules and exhibit a highly complicated scheme of literary convention becomes increasingly vivid and forcible when we look historically into the several components that form an Aham poem.

That these Sangam poems were composed only after the principles of Aham grammar were evolved is obvious from the occurrence of many Aham grammatical terms in the (lines of) poems themselves. The following may be quoted: (i) “arattotuninrenai”³ (ii) “pakarkuri”⁴ (iii) “cerittanal”⁵ (iv) “alunkuvar celave”⁶ (v) “pinnilai muniya”⁷ (vi) “manai marantirunta”⁸ (vii) “nalamtantucenme”⁹ (viii) “kalavittuk kaikol karpu”¹⁰ etc. This explanation should not be taken to mean that any conclusion arrived at on the authority of Sangam classics in regard to the evolution of Ahattinai is not based on original sources. On the contrary, it is implied that these classics are original in essence or nearest to the original; for they have fairly adhered to the grammatical rules of Ahattinai deduced from the earliest literature of the evolutionary period.

The conception of life of the ancient Tamils

The evolution of Ahattinai requires a triple study of the society, anthro-po-geography and the psychology of the ancient Tamils. None of them plays a lesser role than the others. Before expounding the social, geographical and psychological factors in the formation of the Aham poetry, a

distinctive and basic ideal pervading all things touched upon by the early Tamils is worth recording. They believed in the existence of this world in which they lived¹¹, in the full growth of material civilization¹², and in living a prosperous and virtuous life in this world¹³. They built and moulded society, after their own conception of life.

Material civilization does not mean immoral or improper civilization, for it needs for its growth a stable society in which the majority of the people do their duties with moral consciousness. This aspect manifests itself in every poem of Sangam literature, be it Aham or Puram. The lives of the ancient poets and the bards are striking illustrations; for even in times of dire need they are reluctant to beg of anybody by false flattery and at the cost of their self-respect¹⁴. Any achievement with no ethical background was relentlessly condemned by all.

The worldly progress of a society with a firm attachment to high moral ideals with naturally result in the progress of spiritualism. Materialism without morality means destruction; spiritualism without morality means hypocrisy. Therefore the early Tamils laid great emphasis on the moral aspect in all walks of life. Moreover, spiritualism is an end in itself. That end can be attained only through right means. The right means as conveyed by Tamil genius are the conjugal bliss of lovers, the proper maintenance of one's household, earning wealth and helping the needy relatives and others, sympathetic outlook, purity in thought, word and deed, doing one's duty to the nation particularly in war, attaining glory in life-inshort, a proper and prosperous living on this earth where we are born.

This worldly conception of life characterises every thought of the ancient Tamil nation. An immoral husband is

forced to return home by his baby playing in the street. The lady who knows the cause of her husband's good conduct happily says to the maid. "The popular adage that the noble parents who beget children with spotless qualities, loved even by their enemies will live a glorious life in this world and attain the bliss of the other world too, became true in my¹⁵". The poet Mocikiranar who escaped the punishment of death for his improper act, but received sympathetic and noble treatment by the grace of the Chera king Irumporai eulogizes him "O, victorious king, this action of yours (i.e. your fanning me gently, instead of cutting me into pieces with your sword) is the result of your clear comprehension of the principle that none but those who achieve reputation in the world will enter into the great heaven¹⁶. Thus great value is attached by the ancient Tamils to the life that one leads, and to the actions that one does in this world. While expounding the philosophy of the Tamils, Prof. P.T.S. Iyengar writes; "The Tamils accepted the seen world and were satisfied with the joys of the living present. The ineffaceable sex urge and the delirious joys of fighting, love of women and hatred of enemies respectively called Aham and Puram, were enough subjects for their songs. "The early Tamil poets were of the earth, earthy; they revelled in concrete images of the actualities of life, as men know it" and "the Tamil temperamen was optimistic with regard to the seen world¹⁷" K.N. Sivaraja Pillai in the course of the analysis of the three separate and successive period in the evolution of Tamil literature, makes clear the dominant and guiding motive that inspired the Sangam poets. According to his learned study of the poems composed during the Sangam period which he calls the Naturalistic period, "man's life and his surroundings are dealt with in their most elementary phases and man's physical wants and sensuous enjoyments are the only themes which evoke the Tamil Muse¹⁸.

The subject matter of Ahattinai

Sexual passion or love is the subject matter of Ahattinai. It is but natural for a people whose ideal of life is firmly rooted in this world, to choose an emotion¹⁹ so universal, congenital and over-powering as passionate love which alone is capable of satisfying one's heart, brain and senses alike-the sovereign thrones in the human body²⁰-as the best theme of Ahattinai. In this connection it is well to remember that this worldly conception is also responsible for the origin of Puram poetry the theme of which is mainly heroism. Of the two great divisions Ahattinai and Purattinai in Tamil, the former enjoyed a high position in the literary field, as it offered immense scope for the display of one's intellect and fancy. That is why we find some love poems in venpa metre attached even to the long Puram poems in Pattuppattu.

The third chapter of Tirukkural, the greatest work in Tamil is entirely devoted to Aintinai; for, the author Tiruvalluvar might have thought that he would be failing in his duty as a writer in Tamil, if he did not include the masterpiece of the Tamil genius reflecting its conception of life. The influence of Ahattinai with its matter and forms on the religious and ethical works of later periods is incalculable. I have always felt that the way of expression of Bhakti in the highly devotional songs of the Nayanmars of Saivism and the Alwars of Vaishnavism would be different, but for the adoption of the worldly features of Ahattinai. The novelty, superiority and popularity of the hymnal literature in Tamil is due to the happy blend of spiritual love with the literary form of human love.²¹

1. The Social background

I have indicated in the study made just now that the central theme of Ahattinai is of a piece with the worldly ideal

cherished by the Tamils. To make this nucleus of Ahattinai into a concrete form of literature, a mass of materials should be gathered. These materials also should be of worldly character to agree with the main theme. Analysing the classification of literature, W.H. Hudson explains clearly that “literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it” and concludes rightly that “it is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language²²”. To say that literature grows directly out of life is tantamount to saying that it grows out of society; for it is society that gives birth and life to all human institutions; that represents in full and varied thoughts, aspirations, hopes, beliefs, customs and manners of its members and that requires government, religion and morality for its existence and growth. I am therefore inclined to hold the view that the bulk of the materials for the edifice of Aham literature might have been supplied by society. This view is strengthened by the fact that we have to depend entirely upon the Sangam classics (most of which belong to Ahattinai) as an invaluable source of information for reconstructing the social life of the Tamils at the dawn of the Christian era.²³

Kalavu

Kalavu course was widely prevalent in the ancient days²⁴. A girl who is harshly treated by her mother longs for a better treatment, and feels envious of the good fortune of other young girls living with mothers who would not take them to task for encouraging secret lovers²⁵. A nurse who is disappointed in her attempt to find out the eloped girl remarks in distress that the number of bridal pairs other than her own, whom she comes across in the course of her search, exceeds that of stars²⁶”. These statements are clear proof of the wide

prevalence of kalavu course and consequent elopement in Tamil country.

The Tamil society-approved of kalavu as the best means to express one's own choice in the matter of passion²⁷ and encouraged it. There were many heroic festivals for the youth to assemble²⁸ and display their valiant feats, in the presence of young maidens. The annual feature of the pastoral region was the setting free of wild bulls, to be subdued by the heroes who sought the hands of young shepherdesses in marriage. These girls were allowed to witness the spectacle, sitting on lofts²⁹. Tunankai was a kind of dance in which maidens had the liberty of embracing the heroes of their liking³⁰. Because of the close contact between the participants, tunankai was called talu (தலு).³¹ Ancient society provided ample opportunities in the form of festivals and dances, for the assemblage of young men and women and for encouraging kalavu course.

There is no instance of the village women severely disapproving the secret course of young lovers. What they did was to interest themselves in the lovers activities, and try their best to make others know that a particular girl was the wife of a particular person³². The public rumour (alar) was never inimical to kalavu. Its aim was not to separate the lovers from each other, but to disclose their relation to the persons concerned and to the people at large³³. When the parents got to know the choice of their daughter and arranged for the public wedding, the 'alar' ceased, as it produced the desired effect³⁴. Or when the chaste girl found no other way than to accompany her lover through the waterless path during the horrid summer, the women of the village, who were hitherto the agency for originating and diffusing 'alar', became their sympathisers and grieved over their unhappy lot³⁵.

The statement that the kalavu received the imprimatur of the Tamil Society will be amply borne out, by the sympathy showered on the young couples by all kinds of people. During elopement on their way, the lovers sit under the dotted shade of the maram tree, eating the 'nelli' (emblic myrobalan) fruits. The strangers who witness this lovely scene are said to have expressed their view, that these lovers who are firmly united like the pair of the long-feathered and short-legged markanril birds, deserved our compassion and hospitality³⁶. The sad nurse, in the course of her weary pursuit to find out the eloped girl, meets the holy sages and is consoled by them, with the simple truth that the highest virtue of a girl is to follow the footsteps of her noble husband³⁷. These illustrations indicate the social approbation to the clandestine course and the kind and encouraging treatment enjoyed by the innocent lovers.

The only persons who lose their temper at the information of the secret love are the members of the heroine's family. The parents' indignation should not be interpreted as repugnant to the kalavu course³⁸. It is against the mentality of their daughter who dishonoured them by exercising her own initiative, instead of leaving it to them to choose a husband for her. There is no evidence to cite that the annoyed parents protested against the choice of their daughter or proposed a rival suitor against her lover. Do we find any Aham poem dealing with the theme that the girl is advised by her elders to desert her lover, for reasons of his inferiority in status, wealth etc., and change her mind towards another person selected by them? No parent is said to have revolted against the institution of kalavu, because of the audacious conduct of their daughter. It is too much to expect from any sensitive and responsible parents that they should greet the tidings of the love affairs of their artless girl gladly.

Their first reaction will naturally be one of displeasure and hot temper. The emotional excitement of the family members and its natural abatement are pictures quely described by Kapilar:-

avarum, terikanai nokkic cilainokkik kanchentu
 orupakal ellam urutteluntu ari
 iruvarkat kurramum illaiyal enru
 terumantu cayttar talai. (Kali : 39)

The wise judgement by the concerned family itself, that there is nothing wrong in the acts of the hero and heroine is a decisive proof of the kalavu course having enjoyed moral support in the ancient Tamil land³⁹. The conscious recognition by the mother of the elopment of her daughter to be a righteous course in the lines “araneri ituvenat telinta enpirai nutal kurumakal⁴⁰” may be taken as an additional proof of the above conclusion. Kalavu in Ahattinai is not a creation by poets. What they actually witnessed in the life of the people constituted a valuable material for the stucture Ahattinai⁴¹.

Karpu

The relation between kalavu and karpu calls for a deep study. As is often emphasized, kalavu is a means and karpu is an end⁴². To hold or advocate the view that every karpu life should be preceded by the kalavu course, and the kalavu is the one and only means to be gone through for marriage is un - TAMILIAN. “Karpenap patuvatu kalavin valitte” (15) - this suttiram of Iraiyanar Ahapporul is wholly untrue, as it does not reflect the real view of society. I think that the following lines from the pen of Bertrand Russell may be safely taken, as fully expressing the motives of the Tamil Society, for encouraging and recognising the clandestine course and at

the same time for not giving exclusive prominence to it, and for not legislating that all marriages should be the outcome of romantic love. "I believe myself that romantic love is the source of the most intense delights that life has to offer. In the relation of a man and woman who love each other with passion and imagination and tenderness, there is something of inestimable value, to be ignorant of which is a great misfortune to any human being. I think it important that a social system should be such as to permit this joy, although it can only be an ingredient in life and not its main purpose."

"Marriage is something more serious than the pleasure of two people in each other's company; it is an institution which through the fact that it gives rise to children, forms part of the intimate texture of society, and has an importance extending far beyond the personal feelings of the husband and the wife. It may be good - I think it is good - that romantic love should form the motive for a marriage, but it should be understood that the kind of love which will enable a marriage to remain happy and to fulfil its social purpose is not romantic, but is something more intimate, affectionate and realistic"⁴³

There are two ways for karpu life, viz., the kalavu or clandestine means and the 'Marapu' or traditional means⁴⁴. The elaborate treatment of kalavu may be justified as it psychologically and poetically offers immense scope for such a handling, Kalavu as a theme in the hands of poets is potential and resourceful and surpasses all other themes, in addition to the moral support it has. This does not in the least set aside the orthodox course of parental choice as inferior. As a theme, 'Marapu' course has no place in Ahattinai, or if I am permitted to say so, it deserves no place in any kind of literature.

A child born within one year after marriage will not be a source of great pleasure and wonder to the partents; for there is no ardent longing for it. But a child born after prolonged expectation and extensive pilgrimage is celebrated to have been born, by the grace of God and by the penance of the aged parents. Are we inclined to conclude, by comparison, that the belated birth of a child because of its fitness for poetic treatment is morally better than the birth of a child not long after marriage, because of its absence of poetic value?⁴⁵ A comparative study of the subjects treated in literature of all times will make the point clear that all themes adopted for literary pursuit need not be morally sound, and all things needed for happy life need not be poetically aesthetic. It is therefore no wonder that the Sangam poets did not compose any poem on the unimaginative and passionless theme of marriage proposed by the parents.

The ancient Tamil society accepted the two courses as the right passage to married life. The theory that there existed only kalavu course leading to karpu has no foundation⁴⁶. Were it true, the struggle painfully described between the passionate lovers and their parents becomes totally untrue. Nowhere in Tolkappiyam and Sangam literature do we come across any remark that karpu through kalavu is superior to the karpu effected through the parents or elders. In Aham poetry, we find that, despite the social sanction to kalavu, the lovers are afraid of society and the family. The maid leaves no stone unturned to urge the hero, to marry the heroine in the traditional way (tonriyal marapu) long before the divulgence of their secret relation⁴⁷. She even goes to the extent of admonishing him that 'when there is every opportunity for marriage and the permanent enjoyment of conjugal bliss, it is not befitting to one noble like you, to long for the

censurable union⁴⁸. A careful study of the majority of kalavu poems put into the mouths of the heroine and the maid reveals their efforts and eagerness, to bring about an early marriage, completely screening the kalavu course. This is referred to in Tolkappiyam, as 'Patamai varaital'⁴⁹ which certainly means matrimony through the parents' efforts (tamarir perutal). Every stage in the progress of kalavu affairs like veriyattu, arattotu nirral etc., mirrors the growing anxiety and conscious endeavour on the part of the female characters to have a wedded life in the traditional process, with the consent and blessing of their parents, either by guarding the secrecy⁵⁰, or if that is impossible, by plainly disclosing it⁵¹. Even the family whose daughter has eloped is earnestly desirous of her early return with her lover so that she might be married in the usual way.⁵²

The foregoing examination will make us realize that the traditional line of marriage enjoyed no mean and despicable position in society as well as in the minds of the lovers. I have so far adduced illustrations from the Aham portions of Sangam literature. The facts of history connected with real personages also lend support to our view point. Kapilar, one of the few celebrities of the Sangam Age is, we all know, a poet of love cent percent dealing with the subject of clandestine union and its aftermath. Paradoxically enough, he was charged with the responsibility of finding suitable royal husbands, for the two miserable daughters of his royal patron, Pari, after his valiant death in war. He approached first Viccikkon and then Irunkovel, two chieftains of that time, and requested them very politely to marry the girls in the normal form of marriage. The concluding lines in his request "yan kotuppak konmati"⁵³ and, "Yan tara ivaraik konmati"⁵⁴ are reminiscent of the defining words of karpu, "kotaikkuri

marapinor kotuppak kolvatu”⁵⁵ in Tolkappiyam. From this actual incident in the life of a great poet, we come to know that kalavu was not the only means to karpu or wedded life and that there was the ordinary form of marriage (kotuppak kollal). If this form was held in low esteem in society, Kapilar certainly would not have done an act derogatory to the noble and royal position of his bosom friend.

So far as my study of Sangam classics is concerned, I do not mark any discrimination shown by the poets between the two groups of lovers Clandestine lovers getting normally married and lovers joined by the parents decision. Kind and wise parents will always wish for the happy life of their children and will certainly take note of their choice in the matter of marriage. The parents decision, therefore, need not always be contrary to the wishes of young minds. The underlying vein of Aintinai, irrespective of the means leading to the married status, is that the couple should have the union of hearts and the sense of co-operation and the sense of duty. This all-prevading ideal of the Tamil genius has been ably portrayed by Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist, in one of his sonnets as follows:

*“Lte me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds”.*

(Sonnet CXVI)

Cilappatikaram, the first Tamil epic of the post-Sangam period, describes the marriage of Kannaki with Kovalan, as proposed by their parents⁵⁶. Ilanko, the royal author of the epic, leaves no doubt in the minds of the readers, as to the absence of any previous meeting between the bridal couple. It is purely a traditional form of wedding arranged by the mutual consent of their parents⁵⁷. This does not deter the

author from freely using the words Katalan and Katali in his work⁵⁸. Though their life ended in tragedy by the irrevocable force of destiny, Kovalan and Kannaki certainly enjoyed perfect conjugal bliss for a few years after marriage⁵⁹. Nobody dares to criticise the author of *Cilappaikaram*, for not introducing a scene at least for an exchange of looks between the hero and the heroine, as the great Kamban has done in his *Ramayanam*. One may explain that it is not proper for the author writing an epic based on historical facts to do so, when the marriage was held in the traditional manner. It is well to remember that he has introduced many Kathais, after the fashion of *Ahattinai* and *Purattinai*. The purpose of making this brief mention of *Cilappatikaram* in this chapter is to justify my statement that society bestowed the same status on all married lovers, unmindful of the nature of their marriage.

Some may argue that the hero of a love-marriage will always remain faithful to his wife and that the traditional marriage will be ineffective in checking his lewdness. I am sorry to admit that there are many poems in the *Marutam* class of *Ahattinai* dealing with the unfaithfulness of the husbands who were once romantic lovers⁶⁰. The reason for the infidelity may be found in the nature of the romance itself. In the words of Kenneth Walker, “romance endows the love-object with many qualities that it does not possess, colours it with the hues of the rainbow, and projects upon it feelings that may not be there. So long as the loved one is unattainable, these romantic embellishments may be maintained, but marriage is quite likely to shatter them⁶¹. The commentator of *Iraiyanar Ahapporul* is of opinion that “there is the wordly *karpu*, not arising from the *kalavu* course and that it has not much value”⁶². We will not object to this statement, if it is made only with reference to the value of wordly *karpu* as a theme of poetry. If it is meant by him that wordly *karpu* has

no honourable place in society, the points explained in the previous paragraphs will suffice to repudiate his view.

Karanam (Rituals)

The well-known meaning of the word 'karpu' is chastity or loyalty to the husband. But in the relative terms 'kalavu' and 'karpu', karpu has a technical sense. It is broadly interpreted as married life and its related aspects⁶³. Marriage does not give birth to chastity. It is a latent feminine quality. Its appearance is strongly felt in the kalavu course. We come across the following expression in the clandestine stage too.

"Karpotu punarnta kauvvai" (Tol: 986)

"Iranta karpinatku evvam pataranmin" (Kali: 9)

"Anra karpir canra periya" (Aham : 198)

In this chapter we are concerned with karpu - the married state.

A historical survey of the definition of karpu has something new to reveal to us. In suttiram 1087, Tolkappiyar makes mention of two points with reference to karpu; viz. karanam or rituals, and the hero's receiving the hands of the heroine from the right authority. In the next suttiram 1088, the author emphasizes the indispensability of Karanam at the cost of Kotuppor or the right authority, during elopement⁶⁴. To make his idea clear he has affixed the sign of the instrumental case⁶⁵ to karanam as 'karanamotu purnara' (1087) It is interesting to know that there was a time when giving away a girl by the persons entitled to do so was considered karpu, and that karanam which was a later innovation superseded the former simple function of karpu. The reason for the introduction of karanam is stated by Tolkappiyar himself as follows:

Poyyum valuvum tonriya pinnar

Ayyar yattanar karanam enpa

(*Tol. 1090*)

This important *suttiram* has tempted every writer to interpret it in his own way. My humble opinion is that these different interpretations are not faithful to the text. What is meant by *poy*, *valu* and *karanam*? Is it possible to avert *poy* and *valu* by the mere institution of *karanam*? If it is explained that *karanam* is the cementing force between the married couples, are not the great principles like ‘*anpotu punarnta Aintinai*’⁶⁶ ‘*onri uyarnta pal*’⁶⁷ at fault? It is said that falsehood and unrighteous acts were found among the lovers⁶⁸ and that insincere lovers who enjoyed the *kalavu* course sometimes lied that they knew nothing of these girls and dishonestly wished to marry other girls. I do not mean that these unholy incidents could not have occurred in those times⁶⁹. What I emphasize is that no untoward and unfaithful incidents between the so called lovers are taken into account, in the simple love theme of *Aintinai*. How to story of *Aintinai* has been cautiously constructed will be shown in the next chapter.

The evolution of *karnam* and its paramount importance in the initial stage of the wedding ceremony are fundamental points to be pondered over. Suppose a girl is given in marriage to a person by her parents in public. That she is married will be known, only to those who witness the wedlock and those who hear that news from others. There exists no outward sign differentiating a girl just married, from a girl yet to be married. The *karpū* which constitutes the only form of presenting a daughter by her parents will certainly not prevent an innocent youth from directing his passion towards her. It is this deceptive appearance of a woman after marriage that is meant by *Tolkappiyar* as ‘*poy*’. The *poy* or illusion will naturally induce an ignorant young man to take further steps, for his

love being reciprocated by her. This improper act is connoted by the word 'valu'. From the simultaneous reference to these two words 'poy' and 'valu', we are led to understand that the idea of instituting karanam did not germinate in the minds of the elders, so long as the strange lover did not attempt to translate his erroneous thought into action. That is to say, society discovered the folly of the absence of a sign to a married girl, only through the attempts of new lovers.

The sign of marriage or karanam was thought of, not because a lover deserted his sweet-heart or a wedded wife succumbed to the overtures of love of another person, but because society realized its duty not to allow any opportunity inimical to feminine chastity. The concept of chastity was so rigid and minute that to give room for a person other than her husband to cherish a lady in his heart was considered a slur cast on her virtue. As monogamy and chastity were strictly enjoined on women kind, the institution of karanam came into existence and prominence.

The necessity of karanam in the ceremony of marriage was recognized ever since the time of Tolkappiyar, though symbols of the married state of a woman seem to have been different, at different periods in Tamil country. Now we see that the tali is universally accepted as the marriage sign, by the castes in our land. In some parts, in addition to the tali, rings (minci) are worn on the second toe of the bride. Today the advocates who plead for the equality of women with men, object to the tying of the tali round the neck of the bride, interpreting it as a sign of bondage of the wife to her husband. The history of the evolution of karanam explained in the previous paragraphs will easily show the irrationality of the modern interpretation.

I do not like at this juncture to enter into the unfruitful discussion of the question of equal status and freedom for woman in ancient society, for, the conception of equality and freedom in modern days has a wider and more comprehensive meaning, and is internationally interpreted with the advancement of science and a broad outlook. When we base our line of argument on the conception of life and family held in Tamil society in those far-off days. evidences are not wanting to prove the high social prestige and freedom enjoyed by women, on an equal footing with men. The terms kilavan and kilatti, talaivan and talaivi, katalan and kathali etc., are illustrive of the above point. So fas as the jurisdiction of the family is concerned, that the lady wielded an exclusive authority may be borne out from the terms manaivi and illal, which have no corresponding words for the husband. The themes ‘vayil vental’, ‘vayil nertal’ and ‘vayil maruttal’ proclaim the unquestionable right exervised by the wife even over her husband in order to safeguard the prestige of the family.

Marriage confers the right of managing all household duties on the wife. That the right of castigating the immoral husband is not excluded from the lady is evident from the⁷⁰. Therefore we may assert that tali or any other sign is not a mark of servitude. To hold these signs as marks of chastity is also wrong, for chastity is not born of marriage⁷¹. The right interpretation of karanam is that it is a sign of marriage, a sign showing the passing of a girl from virginity to wifehood.

The ceremony of removing the anklet

What was the karanam that was in practice in the Sangam age? Tolkappiyar was content with the statement of the

important of karanam. Sangam literature has many a reference to the ordinary custom of wearing anklets (cilampu) by girls from their childhood. A heroine is said to have suppressed the tinkling sound of her anklet, in order to meet her lover at night⁷². During the elopement, the onlookers particularly make mention of the two anklets adorning the feet of the heroine⁷³. This sign of virginity used to be invariably removed, before the function of marriage. As the removal of the anklet was an important function in marriage, it received a special name as 'cilampu kali nonpu'. The absence of any reference to the ceremony such as 'cilampu ani nonpu' leads us to infer that the anklet worn by a girl during her childhood, for the sake of beauty and with no implication⁷⁴, came to be recognised as the sign of virginity after maturity, and that marriage required its removal to signify her new life.

As society demanded the removal of the anklet, even if the marriage was held during elopement⁷⁵, the *suttiram* of *Tolkappiyam* 'kotuppor inriam karanam unte' should be regarded, not as enunciating a compulsory rule on society, but as representing the prevalent custom of society. One of the profound concerns of the mother was that her eloped daughter should return home to get married, so that she would not be deprived of the honour and pleasure of celebrating the 'cilampu kali nonpu'. Thus we may safely conclude that the absence of the anklet implied the loss of virginity by marriage and the function relating to its removal became karanam.

Wearing of flower (kuntal malar anital)

The removal of the anklet was not the only karanam prevalent in ancient days. There might have been many more karanams in different parts of the Tamil country, which might not have entered into the body of literature. So far as my

study through the Sangam classics goes, I happily note another important karanam, much practiced in marriage. It is said that a lover adorned the braided tresses of his lady-love with a wreath of fresh kuvalai buds, and that the wearing of the flower made the villagers cast a suspicious look at her⁷⁶. It is also said that the searching question put by the mother about the glowing fragrance of the locks of hair caused the elopement of her daughter⁷⁷. A maiden of herdsmen's community narrates an incident, in which the 'mullai' flower presented by her lover and hidden in her tresses, accidentally fell before her mother who was too bewildered to inquire into the matter and to show her anger, and suddenly left the place⁷⁸. All the above citations point to one important custom that wearing of flowers was forbidden to virgins.

This statement may appear rather curious and revolutionary, unless some more evidence is produced to support it. A lover is much pleased with the cleverness of his beloved who so manipulates her movement and appearance, as not to give even the slightest indication to the parents about her secret course. When in company with the hero at night, she adorns herself with fragrant flowers of several kinds, and when the time comes for separation, she carefully drops the flower and arranges the dishevelled hair. The word 'utirttu'⁷⁹ clearly reveals that the girl is afraid of wearing flower before marriage.

*“Peypotu ariyat tankulaiyul etilan
Kaipunai kanni mutittalenru yayketpin
Ceyvati lakumo marru.”* (Kali: 107)

From the lines, we understand that, “the mother cannot brook the news that her daughter audaciously tied the flower garland strung by a stranger to her tresses, which hitherto knew not

the decoration of flowers. The phrase ‘pey potu ariyat tan kulai’ amply bears out that the hair of the virgins was unadorned with flowers. From the innumerable illustrations found in the Sangam Anthologies, showing on the one hand the repugnance to the use of flowers by unmarried girls, and , on the other, the prevalence of the abundant use by married ladies, we arrive at the conclusion that wearing flowers was one of the karanams adopted in ancient Tamil Society. A maid who delightfully witnesses the wedding ceremony between the clandestine lovers blesses the hero for his rightful act of adorning the heroine’s plaited tresses with flowers, as a part of the marriage ceremony⁸⁰. The karanam seems to have been called ‘kuntal malar anital’. I presume that that a girl secures the right of wearing flowers by means of marriage is implied in the following lines of the oft-quoted poem of Ahananuru which describes at length the celebration of wedding:

*“Nirotu corinta irital alari
Pallirun katuppin nellotu tayanka”* (Aham: 86)

From the foregoing detailed analysis, we may conclude that the idea of differentiating a married girl from an unmarried one was the reason for the evolution of karanam, and that the absence of the anklet and the decoration of flowers constituted the negative and affirmative signs of marriage or karanams in the Sangam epoch.

One may raise the question why there was no karanam for an unmarried man. It was because, in my opinion, society allowed the man to have more than one wife if he liked and it did not question his virtue. There is an ethical view that one should not covet another’s wife, but no rule relating to coveting another’s husband is formulated. The point is that no sign of marriage was considered necessary for the husband, as he was entitled to polygamy.

The elaborate study hitherto made under the general heading 'the Social Background' will strongly argue for the theory that, not only the broad base of Ahattinai like Kalavu and Karpu, but also each and every ingredient that went into its edifice, like veriyattu, alar, utanpokku, karanam etc., has been evolved from the organisation of society itself. That is to say, the structure of Aham literature at the time of its origin was in no respect different from that of the Tamil Society. Therefore the comment by the annotator of Iraiyanar Ahapporul, on the origin of Ahattinai that "it is a fabrication is toto" may be disregarded as baseless⁸¹.

2. The Geographical background

Of the three factors that contributed to the making of Ahattinai, physical environment comes next for our study. It is true that anything that may be said under this head can be traced in the background of society; for \, it is society that is the ultimate recipient of all influences, whatever quarters they may come from. Yet only such points as have a direct bearing on the geographical conditions will be dealt with in the following pages.

The impact of fourfold region

To mention that the Tamils of old had divided their land into four distinct regions, i.e. mountainous (kurinji), pastoral (mullai), agricultural (marutam), and littoral (neytal), according to the physical configuration, may appear uninteresting and trite, to the student of the Sangam classics nowadays; for, any writer on any aspect of ancient literature cannot but refer to this fourfold division. It is one thing to know the fact; but it is altogether a different and difficult thing, to study the amount of influence these regional

divisions exercised upon the life of the people and the evolution of literature. In making a pointed reference to the influence of the physiography on Tamil culture, Prof. V.R.R. Dikshitar opines that the Tamil social organisation which had its distinctive characteristics born of environment, as anthropography holds, is unique in having realized the five different stages of human life in prehistoric times⁸². As each region was a compact area, capable of supplying all articles necessary for its inhabitants, Tolkappiyar calls it 'ulakam'⁸³ like katurai ulakam' etc. That the ancient Tamils had developed a keen sense of geographical outlook on all matters connected with their mundane life may be seen in their religion, ethics, kingdom, etc. The deity ascribed to each tinai was itself the product of its environment. In the chapter on the 'Religious Interpretation of Nature', Rev. Thani Nayagam writes: "Since the knowledge of God developed among them in their first habitat, the hills, their worship and theogony were coloured by the environment in which they lived. Thus they called Murugan, even in his aspect of the Supreme Being, "Lord of the hill", (Malai Kilavon) for probably at the time they knew only of the hills as places of habitation"⁸⁴.

Auvaiyar, the greatest of the Samgam poetesses expresses a universal truth in the following terms: "O, land, you may be an agricultural tract or a pastoral territory or maritime place or hilly country. Your goodness will not be measured by your physical form. You are good only if your (male) citizens are good. The names given to Tamil kingdoms,⁸⁵ like tennatu and kutanatu, and Tamil kings, like tennavan and kutakko and the names given to innumerable towns and villages of Tamil Nad will testify to the geography-consciousness of the Tamil genius⁸⁶. It was really considered as the highest form of encomium for a king, to be praised as

the owner of the four-fold regions⁸⁷. This geographical outlook is in conformity with the characteristic ideal of the Tamil nation elucidated in the beginning of this chapter.

The absence of the influence of castes and religions

Students of the history of Tamil literature will have certainly observed the big part played by castes and religions in the evolution of great and small Tamil works, from about the 6th century after Christ, for society divided itself into castes and religions and people developed a rigid attitude of viewing all matters from a caste and religious outlook. In *Civaka Chintamani*, Kovintan a headman of the cowherd community, offers his daughter Kovintai to Civakan, a kshatriya by caste, in return for his victory over the former's enemy. In this connection Kovintan cites the marriage of Murugan with Valli, a girl of the hunters community, and of Tirumal with Nappinnai, a girl of the shepherd community and earnestly advises Civakan not to think over the difference of castes⁸⁸ (*kulam ninaiyal nampi*).

In *Ramayanam*, Raman, in a satirical mood, points out the difference of caste between him, a kshatriya and *Curppanakai*, a woman of Brahmin caste (according to the genealogy explained by her) as if it stood against his desire to marry her⁸⁹. In *Tiruvempavai* of *Tiruvacakam*, young saivite girls pray to Siva, expressing their firm desire that only "your devotees should be married to us and that our breasts should be forbidden from embracing the shoulders of men other than your devotees⁹⁰.

In the dramatic poem *Pallu* dealing with the life of the *Palla* caste, it is said that the *Pallan* will have two wives, one professing Saivism and the other Vaishnavism⁹¹. The above typical illustrations will plainly show the great influence caste

and religion exercised upon the themes of love and marriage in the post-Sangam works.

There was no caste system in the Sangam days⁹². Religion too played an insignificant role in the normal work of society. As this was the position, there could not have been any supply of material by religion and caste, for the evolution of Ahattinai. In the Sangam Age people were divided and called, according to the dwelling places or the occupations those places chiefly provided⁹³. In the words of Prof. V.R.R. Dikshitar, the Tamil Society in the prehistorical period 'expanded itself and a division of classes was distinguished based on profession in one and the same region⁹⁴. Therefore heroes and heroines in Ahattinai are named after their regions, like Verpan, Koticci etc., or their occupations like ulavan, ulatti, etc. No region or occupation was held in low esteem. In most cases, lovers belonged to one and the same region⁹⁵. Interregional marriages were very few⁹⁶ and might have been held in the border areas. Lovers in towns and cities have also been mentioned in Aham poetry.⁹⁷

The pastoral or 'mullai' tinai seems to have possessed peculiar customs unknown in other tinais. These singularities have been vividly portrayed by Nalluruttirana in his 'Mullaikkali'. There were three classes in the herdsmen's community viz., 'Pullinattar' tending goats and sheep, 'Kutam cuttinattar' tending cows, and 'Kovinattar' probably tending buffaloes; but no discrimination was shown in marriage relation between these classes.⁹⁸ Girls would marry only those heroes who subdued the bulls set for the purpose. This preliminary condition called 'eru taluvutal'--a condition that strikes at the root of free love--was much in vogue, among herdsmen in ancient times so that poets dealing with Mullaittinai found no other way than describe this function,

though cautiously, lest their poems should fail to be a true portrait of society. Mullai people were ardent devotees of their regional deity, Tirumal. Many of the poems in Mullaikkali, unlike the poems of the other four regions in Kalittogai, end with an invocation to that deity. It is said that a flower wreath worn by a hero fell on the hair of a shepherd girl, on the occasion of the driving away of bulls, and that the girl's parents decided to give her in marriage to that hero, interpreting the incident as the graceful revelation of the divine Tirumal.⁹⁹

The influence of summer on Palaittainai

According to Tolkappiyam¹⁰⁰ the Tamil land surrounded by seas on three sides was divided into four regions. The word 'nanilam' has this significance. But the term 'Aintinai' in Aham grammar denotes the five different aspects of love conduct, as explained in the previous chapter. Of these, the four love aspects Kurinji, Mullai, Marutam and Neytal have their own regions, because the Tamil country has such landscapes and Palai has no region of it sown, for the simple reason that there is no desert in Tamil Nad. Since there is no allocation of land to Palai, no people can specially be mentioned as desert-dwellers. This is the reason why inhabitants of the desert found no place in Ahattinai as heroes and heroines, and no part of the desert was set as the background for the meeting of lovers.

In Palai poems, only the incidents of separation of the lovers of the four regions are described. It is true that Palai has no regional influence on Ahattinai; nevertheless its seasonal influence on it is incalculable. Though Tamil Nad has no desert proper at all times, it has a long and hot summer, capable of turning mountainous and pastoral tracts into desert-

like appearance.¹⁰¹ The summer and the temporary change of appearance of the region were found as sufficient resources, for the display of imagination by the makers of Ahattinai. One of the seasonal influences on society was that a good number of inhabitants of Kurinji took to pillage during summer and were a source of fear to the travellers. Poems of Palaittainai deal with pathos on this danger, as one of the causes for the lady-love's grief over her husband's separation¹⁰².

It is a fact that within the limits of Tamil Nad, no desert is seen, but in many Palai poems, reference is made to the hero's crossing the desert (of permanent nature) outside its northern boundary, Venkatam.¹⁰³ The word Venkatam itself means 'burning desert', vem+datam. Tolkappiyar who adopted the principle of treating, only the things of the Tamil-speaking country¹⁰⁴ has mentioned only the types of regions and seasons as found within Tamil Nad. In doing so, he assigned the hottest period, viz., summer to Palai as its season, and refrained from assigning any region to Palai.

Absence of reference to voyage

Tamils of old undertook long journeys not only by land but also by sea.¹⁰⁵ Their maritime enterprise was natural; for, the Tamil land is bounded on all three sides, east, west and south by deep waters. This peninsular aspect has found abundant expression in Sangam literature.¹⁰⁶ Tolkappiyam refers to the sea voyage in the phrase "munnir valakkam" in the chapter on "Ahattinai"¹⁰⁷. It will be a great disappointment, to the student of the history of the Tamils, to know that in spite of the extensive commercial contact with the countries of the Middle East and Far East, Sangam poets dealing with the theme of Separation or Palai completely ignored the sea

voyage and its description. The only exception is the poet Marutan Ilanakanar. Though he is the author of 74 Aham poems, he treats of the voyage, only in a single stanza¹⁰⁸. The first line itself commences with a clear reference to sea travel as “ulaku kilarntanna urukelu vankam”, and the next five lines describe the voyage. There is a poet named Alankuti Vankanar, but his poems contain no reference to the seas, in spite of

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

¹⁰⁹. So writes Rev.

Thani Nayagam to prove the appropriateness of the dreary and desert-like region during the midday of summer, as the natural setting for Palai poetry. It is evident that this kind of description based on aridity and barrenness of land is not possible with regard to voyages.

The influence of the rainy season on Mullaittinai

Life the summer season which had a predominant influence in the evolution of Palai poetry, the cloudy season

(kar) had a big part in the evolution of Mullai Poetry. This season is invariably depicted as the fitting background for the theme of the home-return of the hero (vinai murriya talaivan mintu varal). The term 'vinai' in the phrase 'vinai murriya talaivan' signifies 'war'¹¹⁰. The assignment of the rainy season to Mullaittinai was not artificial, but was based on a traditional custom. In those days, belligerent kingdoms of Tamil Nad, as a rule, stopped waging war with the advent of the seasonal rains. The cessation of war was necessitated by practical difficulties caused by the rains to everyone of the four divisions of an army, i.e. infantry, cavalry, chariots and the elephant force. That is the reason for the frequent reference to warlike activities and warriors in poems on Mullaittinai, and for the expectant wife's longing for the early sight of the rainy season the season promised by the warrior-husband for his return home.

3. The background of Psychology

What I mean by psychology in this connection is the peculiar bent of mind of the Tamilians which was responsible for the birth of Aham literature. The contribution of the society of the Tamils and the environment of Tamil Nad was the supply of material for the construction and growth of Ahattinai, while the nature of the mind of the Tamil people was responsible for the supply of the nucleus or central theme of Ahattinai. A few examples with explanation will make the point clear.

It is often expressed by all modern writers that the Tamils had a very close contact with nature and that their minute knowledge of nature and the fauna and flora is revealed in every line of Sangam classics. It is well to remember that the inhabitants of any part of the world, like the Tamils,

centuries ago, lived next to nature and learnt a lot from the book of nature. Nature or environment does not exercise the same influence on all men who come under its sphere. It is conditioned by the working of the minds of individuals. The diversity of the influence of nature is due to the psychological difference of men. What is worth studying is, not the co-existence of men with nature, but the psychological basis of the people, upon which nature depends for its working and the kind of thought people were accustomed to derive from the observation of things in nature. When we earnestly study the psychological background underlying the diverse descriptions of nature in Aham poetry, a distinctive quality of the mind of the ancient Tamils becomes manifest.

Nature as the background of human behaviour

The Tamils did not love nature for nature's sake. It may be confessed that they viewed it from the utilitarian point of view. That is why we do not come across in the whole of Sangam literature, be it Aham or Puram, any single poem depicting the nature of things such as flower, river, sky and so on, from the aesthetic point of view, like the poems, Daffodils, the Cloud. To a Skylark, To Night etc., in English literature. The credit for the statement that no poem in the Sangam age deals with nature or with aspects of nature as a theme goes to Dr. Varadarajan. In his thesis, "The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature", he states that "There are no descriptions of Nature for their in isolated, artistically composed pictures"¹¹¹ Nature of all kinds was made to serve as the background of human behaviour. Only such things in nature as were found to be utilised for the poetic theme related to the life of human beings attracted the attention of the Sangam poets. It is not necessary for me to deal in detail with the different uses to which nature was employed by the poets

and the people. Suffice it to point out emphatically that the background of nature i.e. Mutarporul and Karupporul was prescribed by Tolkappiyar¹¹² and adopted by the Sangam poets, only for the love-aspects or Uripporul of Ahattinai, and not for the theme of Purattinai viz., heroism, munificence, eulogy, etc.

Its insignificant influence on non-love aspects

The above difference of treatment between love and all other human behaviours in Tamil poetry will lead one to observe that there might have been an intimate relationship of the elementary passion of sexual love with nature, so far as the Tamil race was concerned. A cowardly man may be said to have been excited to heroism, at the sight of a struggle between an elephant and a tiger. A passer-by who looks at the pouncing of a jackal on a goat may be said to have realized the necessity of compassion in life. The sight of the transient life of the winged white ants (iyal) may be said to have inculcated the idea of the transitoriness of this world, in the mind of a man searching after truth. A spirit of selflessness may be said to have suddenly sprung in a person who happens to hear the incessant cry of a crow inviting its kind to have a share of its prey. Things in Nature do not seem to have roused the kinds of feelings mentioned above, in the minds of the ancient Tamils. It may be presumed that they were not accustomed to meditate upon nature on the lines just referred to. That is why, in Puram literature, no theme had the benefit of being set with the appropriate background. In that literature we find the frequent use of nature only in similitudes or in the reference to the manners and customs of society.

Its prominent influence on love

In Ahattinai or strictly speaking, in Aintinai, nature has profoundly influenced the thoughts and feelings of lovers.

Each theme or turai has some kind of communion with an aspect of nature. In short, nature has become part and parcel of the love-psychology of the ancient Tamils. A hero sees in nature, not its beauty but the beauty of his lady-love. “I saw the peacock dancing like you, the ‘mullai’ flower blossoming like your fragrant forehead, the deer casting a timid look like you, and came in a hurry solely to meet you”¹¹³, so speaks a happy hero who has just returned home. A lover who returns after earning wealth for the marriage expenses happens to see enroute a mango tree with young leaves. The leaves remind him of the brown colour of his heroine. He begins to address the leaves and praises them for their good luck, in having the same hue as she¹¹⁴. A householder who is unwilling to part with his wife again in search of money recalls an incident in his previous journey. The appearance of the moon at the top of the hill in the desert provoked a sense of pride in him, and he congratulated himself on having a beautiful full moon-a moon with the tilakam-marked forehead in his own mountainous country¹¹⁵. Thus things in nature excite the hero to think of his heroine.

Heroines console themselves, or their maids console them, by saying that their husbands will not stay long in the foreign countries and that, if they do so, the touching scenes they happen to see, will certainly induce them to return home. This method of consolation based on sound psychological insight has been laid down as a rule by Tolkappiyar.

Anpuru takuna iraicchiyut cuttalam

Vanpurai vakum varuntiya polute

(Tol: 1176)

There are hundreds of poems dealing with the themes “talaiivi arruval enpatupatakkural” and “toli arruvittal”, in all of which figure the male elephant and its mate¹¹⁶, the staf and its mate¹¹⁷,

the bull and its mate,¹¹⁸ the dove and its mate¹¹⁹ and the lizard and its mate¹²⁰. In Aham poems dealing with other themes, in addition to the animal mates mentioned above, we see the frequent occurrence of the koel, anril, sparrow, beem, boar, monkey and their mates. In the famous eleventh Kali Ode, the maid consoling the heroine repeats what she heard from the hero, about the lovely features of the forest he had to cross. He said that he would witness the male elephant waiting to quench its own thirst, only after feeding the she-elephant with the little, water rendered muddy by the baby elephant, the dove fanning its kind mate with its soft wings, in order to abate the fatigue caused by the excessive heat, and the buck protecting the drooping doe under its own shadow, because there is no other shade. The implication of mentioning the affectionate behaviours of the beasts and birds is that they will be a constant reminder for the hero abroad of his fond wife and induce him to go back soon.

A wife feels sorry to think whether her husband will come back, having gone half-way, seeing things remindful of her, but the female companion explains to her that he will continue his travel and fulfil the task necessary for the well-being of the household, for in his path he will see the action of the tusker which bends and breaks the branches of yah tree with its long trunk and feeds its huge herd¹²¹.

The seasons like the rainy season, winter and early summer, the eventide, its disappearance, pitch darkness, the effulgence of the moon, the sight of the chain of clouds, the bellowing of the cow, the tintinnabulation of its bell, the summoning of the anril bird, the calling out of the koel, the screaming of the dove, the buzzing of the bees the chirping of the lizard, the sound of the flute, the mild smell of the white 'mullai'; flower etc., have their plain and subtle

influence on the heroines only in Aham aspects or love-relations.

*Pirivila pulampi nuvalum kuyilinum
 terunir keliiya yarunani kotite;
 Ataninum kotiyal tane matanin
 Tuittalai yitala painkuruk kattiyotu
 Pittikai viravumalar kolli rovena
 Vantucul vattiyal uraitarum
 tantalai ulavar tanimata makale*

(Nar: 97)

In these lines the lady throws the blame on things in nature, for her incapacity to endure the separation of her husband; for, the embrace of the cuckoo with its mate makes her long for such an embrace with her hero; the flood in the river invites her to sport with her hero; and the selling of the fresh seasonal flowers by the girl sadly reminds her of the absence of her husband, with the result that she is not in a mood to purchase the flowers in abundance and adorn her tresses. Thus we clearly understand the lady's interpretation of Nature in terms of love.

Under the study of 'The background of Psychology' what I should like to emphasize is that the ancient Tamils approached the activities of natural objects with the background of love or human passion¹²². They tried to see in the character and conduct of the birds and beasts their own love-affairs. Only such things in nature as had a close resemblance to human behaviour attracted their attention. An Aham poet, Ilanakanar reveals the sagacity of a female monkey which, after its secret union with a male one in the hilly side, attempts to adjust its loose dishevelled hair, by looking at its reflection into the deep transparent water of the mountain pool¹²³. Another Aham poet, Katuntol Karaviran describes with implication the self-immolation of a female monkey which, unwilling to lead a

despicable life of widowhood, entrusted her children to her relatives and committed suicide by falling from the top of the highest mountain.¹²⁴

Ullurai

The best and predominant use of Nature may be seen in the artistic device of 'ullurai'. Ullurai is a kind of implied simile devised for exclusive use in Aintinai. It is arranged from the fauna and flora of any region, technically called 'karupporul'. The explicit meaning of 'ullurai' will be something of the behaviour of the bird or the beast or the tree or the creeper. To express this meaning is not the notion of the poet. For him 'ullurai' is a means to an end. In order to express emphatically an idea relating to the love theme, Aham poets freely resorted to the poetic device 'ullurai'. They were faithful in their descriptions of nature in ullurai, if nature conveyed the inner meanings they had in mind. Sometimes they allowed themselves the liberty of arranging and adjusting the course of the things in describing nature, so as to convey the implied meanings¹²⁵. This independent attitude on the part of the ancient Tamils is expressive of their conception that nature should play or should be made to play a subordinate role in relation to love theme or Ahattinai. Thus it is clear that the Tamils allowed Nature to exert its influence upon themselves in their own psychological attitude.

Nucleus of Ahattinai

As the result of the foregoing investigation, the three main factors that contributed to the evolution of Ahattinai may be comprehended. Love (kamam or katal) the theme of Ahattinai, is the natural contribution of the psychology of the Tamils. To expect any other contribution from those whose

minds are filled with the vein of love is not proper. No further proof is required for the theory that the peculiar piece of literature, like Ahattinai, will originate only among the race of people who perfected themselves, by seeing the worldly things through the medium of sexual love. Thus the nucleus of Ahattinai having been supplied by the background of the psychology of the Tamils, the materials, small and big, were supplied by the background of the Tamil society, the Tamil land and its climate.

Foot Notes:

1. Cf. K.M. panikkar; A survry of Indian History, p. 2.
2. History of the Tamils, p. 150.
3. Kali; 39.
4. Nar; 258.
5. Nar; 258.
6. Kurun; 135, Ain; 427, 428.
7. Nar; 349.
8. Aham; 189.
9. Nar; 395.
10. Pari; ll. 42.
11. Puram; 165. “மன்னா வுலகம்”
12. Pattinappalai: 218.
13. Ibid; 42.3
14. Puram; 205.
15. Aham; 66.
 “இம்மை யுலகத்து இசையொடும் விளங்கி
 மறுமை யுலகமும் மறுவின் றெய்துப
 செறுநரும் விழையும் செயிர்தீர் காட்சிச்
 சிறுவர்ப் பயந்த செம்மலோர்”
16. Puram; 50.
 “இவணிசை யுடையோர்க் கல்லது அவணது
 உயர்நிலை யுலகத்துறையுள் இன்மை”
17. History of the Tamils, p. 154.
18. The choronology of the Early Tamils, p. 8.
19. Palantamilar Nakarikam, p. 4.
20. Kurun; 70. Cf. Kural; 1101.
21. Tiruvalluvar Nulnayam, p. 86. Cf. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 275.

22. An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 10.
23. Pattuppattu; General Introduction; p. 2; by J.V. Chelliah.
24. Lectures on Kalittogai, p. 3.
25. Kurun; 246. “அலையாத் தாயரொடு நற்பா லோரே”
26. Ibid; 44. “பலரே மன்ற இவ்வுலகத்துப் பிறரே” In this context, “பிறர்” means “other young couples”. Catching this meaning, the author of Tirukkovaiyar has composed the stanza (244) beginning with “மீண்டாரென வுவந்தேன்”.
27. Pari; 9, l.14. “காதற் காமம் காமத்துச் சிறந்தது”
28. Kurun. 31.
29. Kali; 103.
30. Kurun; 31.
31. Maduraikkanji; 160.
32. Ain; 113: “துறைவற்குப் பெண்டென மொழிப”
33. Aham; 70. l. 7.
34. Ibid; 70, ll; 817.
35. Aham; 189. “ஊரிழந் தன்றுதன் வீழ்வுறு பொருளே”.
36. Ain; 381.
37. Kali; 9: “அறந்தலைப் பிரியாவாறு மற்றதுவே”.
38. Cf. Lectures on Ahananuru: Presidential Address, p .16.
39. Tamil Varalaru, Vol. I. p. 106. The author’s conclusion that Kalavu is immoral is based on wrong interpretation of certain texts. The meaning of “பிழை மணம்” (Cilappatikaram Kathai XXIV) is the unrighteous proposal of a girl to a person other than her lover (notumalar varaivu). When we take into consideration the foregoing stanzas in the context wherein a line runs as follows, “அயல் மணம் ஒழி அருள் அவர் அணம்” the poet’s idea will be clear. To interpret it as immoral kalavu is wholly untenable. Tol. Porul, 487, Ilampuranam. “இது தீமை பயக்கும் களவன்மை கொள்க”.
40. Ain; 371; Nar; 143: “இளையோள் வழுவிலள்”
41. Tiruvalluvar Nulnayam, p. 87. Cf. Tolkappiya Porulatikara araicci, p.7.
42. Pari; ll, 40-1.
 “மாமயி லன்னார் மறையிற் புணர்மைந்தர்
 காமங் களவிட்டுக் கைகொள் கற்பற்றென”
 Lectures on Kalittogai, p.4.
43. Marriage and Morals, p. 62-3.

44. Tol; 1444; “மறை வெளிப்படுத்தலும் தமரிற் பெறுதலும்”
45. For the discussion of subjects fit for Art, vide ‘Oxford Lectures on Poetry’ by A.C. Bradley, p. II.
46. Tolkappiyap prurulatikara araicci, p.12.
47. Aham; 112, ll.15-16.
48. Ibid; 112, ll.11-12: “பழியொடு வருஉம் இன்பம் வெஃகார்” Tol; 1-59
49. Tol; 1085.
50. Kali; 41, ll. 42-4
51. Kurun; 734:
 “எந்தையும் யாயும் உணரக் காட்டி
 ஒளித்த செய்தி வெளிப்படக் கிளந்தபின்”
52. Ain; 394, 399; Aham; 195.
53. Puram, 200.
54. Ibid; 201.
55. Tol; 1087.
56. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p .285.
57. Cilpathikaram, Kathai: I. “அவரை, இருபெருங்குரவரும் ஒருபெரு நாளான் மணவணி காண மகிழ்ந்தனர்”.
58. Ibid, passim: “காதலற் பிரியாமல்” “காதலிகண்ட கனவு” “காதலன்தன் வீவும் காதலிநீ பட்டதூஉம்”.
59. The Physiology of Sex-by Kenneth Walker; “It would appear that even when the romantic link is entirely lacking such marriages often prove stable” p. 99.
60. Kurun; 203; Aham; 266, Ain; 22, 23,72, 73, 74.
61. Physiology of Sex, p. 99.
62. Iriyanar Ahapporul, . 124. “களவின்வழி நிகழாதேயும் உண்டு உலகக்கற்பு; அஃது இத்துணைச் சிறப்பின்று”.
63. Tol; 1444; Puram: 163; “பன்மாண் கற்பினின்கிளை”
64. Tol; Porul: 141. Ilampuranam and Naccinarkkiniyam; “கற்பிற்குக் காரண நிகழ்ச்சி ஒரு தலையாயிற்று”.
65. Tol; 574.
66. Tol; 1037.
67. Tol; 1038.
68. Palantamilar Nakarikam, p. 95. Tolkappiyap prurulatikara araicci, p. 9.

69. Aham; 256.
70. Tol; 1091.
71. Ain; 6, note by the commentator:
“எதிர்ப்பட்ட ஞானரே கற்புப் பூண்டொழுகுகின்ற சிறப்பை நோக்கி”.
72. Aham; 190. Cf. Puram; 85: “அஞ்சிலம்பு ஒலிப்ப ஓடி”
73. Kurun; 7. “தொடியோள் மெல்லடி மேலவுஞ் சிலம்பே”
74. Aham; 219.
75. Ibid; 385.
76. Aham; 180.
77. Nar; 143.
78. Kali; 115.
79. Kurun; 312: “கூந்தல் வேய்ந்த விரவு மலருதிர்த்து”.
80. Ain; 294: “பின்னிருங் கூந்தல் மலரணிந் தோயே”.
81. Iraiyanar Ahapporul, p. 30. “இல்லது” Cf. Tol; Porul; 53: Naccinarkkiniyam.
82. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 178. Cf.. Chapter I “The Geographical basis of the ancient culture of the Tamils” in “The History of the Tamils”.
83. Tol 950.
84. Nature in Ancient Tamil poetry, pp. 68-9.
85. Puram; 187.
86. Cf. Urum perum, by Dr. R.P. Sethu Pillai.
87. Cirupanarrupatai: 151, 169, 186, 267.
88. Civaka Chintamani; St. 482.
89. Kamba Ramayanam; Curppanakai, St. 49.
90. Tiruvempavai; St. 9, 19.
91. Vide Mukkutarpallu.
92. The Tamilian Antiquary, No. 6, p. 10.
93. Tol; 965.
94. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 180. Cf. General Introduction Pattupattu - J.V. Chelliah.
95. Kurinji lovers, Nar; 102, Mullai lovers, Kali 101. Marutam lovers, Aham; 156. Neytal lovers, Ain; 199.
96. Aham; 140.

97. Kurun; 31; Aham; 35.
98. Kali; 107, ll. 1-4.
99. Kali; 107, ll. 31-35
100. Tol; 947.
101. Cilapathikaram; Kathai XI: l. 66. “பாலை என்பதோர் படிவங் கொள்ளும்”
102. Kali; 4, 6, 15; Aham: 127. Cf. Aham; 337.
103. Aham; 31, 127, 211, 265.
104. Tol; Payiram.
105. Cf. Cilappatikaram, Kathai II: 1.7.
106. Puram: 9, 13, 382.
107. Tol; 979.
108. Aham; 255.
109. Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry, p. 147.
110. Aham; 44, 74, 104, 164.
111. The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature p. 404.
112. Tol; 948.
113. Ain; 492.
114. Ibid; 365.
115. Nar; 62.
116. Kurun; 307.
117. Nar; 256.
118. Kali; 20, l. 21-2.
119. Kurun; 79, 285.
120. Kurun; 16.
121. Kurun; 255. Cf. ibid; 213.
122. An Introduction to the study of Literature. Appendix II “on the Treatment of Nature in Poetry” p. 331.
123. Nar; 151.
124. Kurun; 69.
125. Aham; 46, Kali; 66.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF AHATTINAI

Some important questions involved in Ahattinai were not touched upon in the previous chapters, for the simple reason that to discuss them, after the study of the analysis and evolution of Ahattinai, would be appropriate. One such complicated question is about the meanings of the expressions Aham, Kaikkilai and Peruntinai. An incorrect explanation of the suttirams on Kaikkilai and Peruntinai in Tolkappiyam, handed down for generations from the epoch of the commentators, has led many a scholar to write much that is inconsistent with the subject of Ahattinai. In this thesis, unfortunately, I have been forced to question and face some age-long traditions still held in respect by a school of reputed scholars. But a student who has taken the field of Ahattinai as his special study will be failing in his duty if he does not bring some important aspects of the subject into the picture, for fear of being misunderstood or out of deference to his superiors.

Since a minute study of the Sangam literature cannot be divorced from a frequent reference to the essentials of Ahattinai, we should know at least the true significance of some important Aham terms. Moreover, the different interpretations put on one and the same suttiram by the commentators of Tolkappiyam and the later grammarians who have followed the commentaries more than the text of

Tolkappiyam, baffle any sincere student of the Sangam works¹. An intelligent reader will choose one of the interpretations of the annotators or will try to interpret the suttriram a new, so as to be faithful to the author, keeping the general sense of the text in mind. Therefore any discussion, in this thesis about the correctness or otherwise of other's theories should be considered from this point of view.

THE CONCEPT OF KAIKKILAI

At the end of the first chapter, I have simply given the meanings of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai, as understood by me. To know their correct import, one should always bear in mind that it is to the class of Ahattinai that Kaikkilai and Peruntinai, like Aintinai, belong. To consider Ahattinai as a class of anomalous divisions is not rational. No doubt every one of the seven conducts of Ahattinai is entitled to be sung as a separate theme; yet there must certainly be common unifying factor to bring all of them together, under the generic appellation m'Aham'. No doubt Kaikkilai and Peruntinai cannot enjoy the same high position given to Aintinai; yet their enumeration along with Aintinai and their inclusion in the group of Ahattinai will give them a claim to a high status.

It is surprising to know that Tolkappiyar has not composed any suttirams to give the definition of the terms, Aham, Kaikkilai, Peruntinai and Aintinai. There are suttirams specially composed for Kaikkilai and Peruntinai; but in them, only the situations or human actions to be treated under these two tinai are mentioned. This is the position in the case of Aintinai too. Therefore we have to infer inductively the definition of tinai, from the description of their situations given in Tolkappiyam and treated in Sangam literature. Again, we have to proceed with the same inductive method to find

out the definition and significance of the common expression 'Ahattinai'. All these bespeak the difficulty facing an attempt to enter deeply into the subject. We cannot blame Tolkappiyar for not defining the terms employed in his work; for in his days when Tamil had attained a high literary standard, these terms might not have required definitions; or their definitions might have been found in other's works; or Tolkappiyar might have desisted from such an attempt, being conscious of the impossibility of giving a definition representing the comprehensive meanings of these essential terms.

Kamancala ilamai

The opening lines of the suttiram on Kaikkilai run as follows:-

"Kaman cala ilamaiyol vayin

Eman cala itumpai yeyti:

(Tol: 995)

The phrase 'kaman cala ilamayol' is subject to two different interpretations. It may mean 1. either that a youth gets excited at the sight of a girl and woefully comes to know her state of immaturity, as there is no reaction on her part, or 2. that he directs passionate love towards a girl, knowing beforehand that the object of his love is not mature. That the latter meaning is not connotated is obvious from the fourth line of the same suttiram 'Colletir peraan' signifying the disappointment of the young man, at his love not being reciprocated by that girl. Kaikkilai does not describe a love affair between a young man and a little girl, say, seven or eight years old. It purports to treat of the ignorant behaviour of an innocent youth towards an unsophisticated girl nearing maturity.² Like the sign or karanam instituted to distinguish a married girl from an unmarried, there is no sign of distinction between a mature girl and a girl who is on the eve of maturity.

This deceptive appearance is the background for the evolution of Kaikkilai. It is also responsible for misleading a youth to seek a girl unsuited for courtship. He lovingly describes the beauty and limbs of the girl, as he would describe those of a mature girl³. As soon as he realizes the unfitness of the object for a love affair and also his foolishness, he in soliloquy, humorously criticises his own behaviour. Here ends the matter or the theme of Kaikkilai.

Confusion of condition

This kind of kaikkilai is a comedy of errors born, not of sex-confusion or confusion of identity forming the plot of many Shakespearean dramas, but of confusion of condition. It is a kind of human error imputing no guilt to the persons involved. The realisation or disclosure of errors produced by confusion will at last give everyone a sort of pleasure and delight. A hero of kaikkilai at the end of his childish love affair concludes: “You (the girl) are not guilty; your parents who permitted you to leave home are also not guilty. It is the king who is at fault; for, he should announce by tomtom your departure from the house, as he used todo in the event of a mad elephant being out to quench its thirst in a tank⁴. This pleasing effect is also mentioned by Tolkappiyar in the phrase ‘colli inpural’.

Mental phenomenon

Like a one-act drama, Kaikkilai is a tinai having only one situation. To attempt to develop this tinai from the situation mentioned is against the conception of Ahattinai. Even to insinuate that the girl reacted adversely is out of place. As the very name Kaikkilai indicates, it is purely one-sided. The expressions “matamaiyan unaratay” and “collinum

ariyatay”⁵ point to the utter lack of sexual response from the girl. We say Kaikkilai is one-sided, as though it is common to both sexes. Then one may argue that a woman also may love a boy and that such relation is entitled to be called Kaikkilai. As there is no social background to countenance such a view, it may be simply discarded. Kaikkilai of Ahattinai exclusively belongs to the male sex.⁶

The theory has been advanced that the custom of loving or marrying immature girls might have been in vogue in ancient Tamil land⁷ and that the division of Kaikkilai owes its existence to that custom. Were it the custom in society and were the intention of Tolkappiyar to honour it by forming a separate tinai, he would have certainly developed the theme, evolved many turais and finally made mention of the marriage. It would have also given Tolkappiyar an opportunity to link Kaikkilai with Aintinai or to develop Kaikkilai into Aintinai, when the girl is grown up. There is nothing wrong in literature portraying the different love-relations to be found in the actual life of the people; for the chief characteristic of literature is the interpretation of life. How the literary works of the Greek scholars faithfully exhibit the different love-types prevalent among the Greek has been thoroughly brought out by the eminent scholar Hans Licht in his “Sexual life in Ancient Greece”. It is no secret that the true descriptions of the life of different kinds of hetarae in Tamil Nad are found in the Sangam literature too⁸. Therefore nothing could have prevented Tolkappiyar and Sangam poets from plainly mentioning a union between a youth and an immature girl and developing it as a poetic theme, if such a love relation really existed in Tamil society.

In this connection I should like to note that among the Tamils, marriage usually took place between grown-up

couples. In the Sangam anthologies, nay, in the whole of Tamil literature, no single reference can be produced against this universal custom. Though Tolkappiyar does not mention definitely any age fit for marriage, the *suttiram* “Pirappe kutimai” (Tol: 1218) requires that lovers, among other things, must be in a position to enjoy sexual happiness. According to poetic convention, the hero will be 16 years of age and the heroine twelve years old. This age cannot be said to be too early considering the tropical climate of South India where people reach puberty sooner than those living in cold regions. The implication of this convention is not that lovers should not be above or below the prescribed age, but they must be mature.

From what has been observed so far, it is obvious that Kaikkilai has no social background and does not reflect any aspect of social custom. The concept of Kaikkilai is to bring into picture a passing mental phenomenon of the masculine sexual character born of confusion of condition or deceptive appearance. This kind of mental change, on the part of the males pertaining to Kaikkilai of *Ahattinai* still exists, and will exist for ever. It is needless to point out that Kaikkilai does not in the least affect the purity of the hearts of the persons concerned; for, the fault is to be thrown on nature which is responsible for the confusion. What the Tamil genius wishes to convey by the division of Kaikkilai is that, before puberty,

.....⁹
and that unless this preliminary condition relating to physical and psychological changes is fulfilled there can hardly be union of heart leading to ‘*Aintinai*’. While explaining the relationship between physical urge and love, Oswald Schwarz observes: “Although totally different in nature, sexual impulse and love are dependent on, and complementary to each other. In a perfect fully mature human being only, this inseparable fusion of sexual impulse and love exists.”¹⁰ It is well to remind

ourselves of what has been already observed on the subject of “ullappunarcci” (Mental union)”- “The foundation of Ahattinai in general and Aintinai in particular is solely laid on the union of hearts between lovers from the very beginning. Aham poems of all classes are rooted in the first mental union which is rightly called ‘ullappunarcci’. Nothing should be said by Aham poets against this; anything can be built up by them on this.”¹¹

Abortive form

Here arises an intricate question as to the propriety of the place of Kaikkilai in ahattinai, when the chief characteristic of Aham is ‘ullappunarcci’. My explanation is this that Kaikkilai is not opposed to or at variance with the fundamental point of Aham, and that there is the probability of Kaikkilai becoming Aintinai, if the girl, one of the parties attains maturity. Kaikkilai does not deprive the youth or the immature girl of his or her right, to become once again a true lover (i.e. when the girl is grown-up) or to make a new choice; for the insignificant and unavoidable incident of Kaikkilai leaves no trace of it on them and throws no mark of dishonour on their moral character.¹² The absence of ‘ullappunarcci’ or mental union is not due to want of any good qualities in the persons concerned, but due to the physical immaturity of the girl. The immaturity of the girl is the chief feature to be noted in Kaikkilai. All these points might have appealed to the ancient grammarians for bestowing the status of Aham on Kaikkilai. Truly speaking, Kaikkilai may be said to be an abortive form of Ahattinai.

Kaikkilai of other kinds

The commentators of Tolkappiam have shown us the existence of various kinds of Kaikkilai in Tamil literature.

To discuss all of them here will be of no great advantage. Yet for the sake of clarity, it is my duty to record the huge difference between Kaikkilai of Ahattinai and Kaikkilai of other kinds. Man or woman may be the person who loves in¹³. They will always be grown-ups. In these Kaikkilais too, no response will be expressed from the opposite sex, true to the significance of the term; yet persons both male and female figuring in them are capable of responding to sexual stimulus. Moreover, the characters of these Kaikkilais never cease thinking of the object of love, in spite of their realization of the impossibility of its attainment. It is indeed a disgrace, if one's love is not noticed and reciprocated by another who is old enough to feel the sexual urge. The life of Nakkannaiyar, a Sangam poetess and daughter of Perunkoli Naikan serves as a striking illustration of the above criticism. Her poems belonging to Kaikkilai are included, not in Aham classics but in Purananuru¹⁴ because these Kaikkilais strike at the root of Ahattinai, i.e. ullappunarcci. In them, the prospect of mental union is completely ruled out. We shall have occasion again to refer to the poems of Nakkannai in Chapter IV. The chief point to be reckoned in these Kaikkilais is the unnoticed, unrequited and ever-growing lust of a grown-up person. Therefore, Kaikkilai of other varieties may be said to be diametrically opposed to Kaikkilai of an immature girl and to Ahattinai. Because of these strong differences, it is pleasing to note that on Kaikkilai of Ahattinai has been conferred the honour of being named a 'tinai', as is evidenced in the enumeration of seven tinais,¹⁵ and that Kaikkilai of other kinds is merely mentioned as one among the many turais of Purattinai in Tolappiyam.¹⁶

THE CONCEPT OF PERUNTINAI

No manifestation of violent love

In giving my own interpretation of Peruntinai at the end of the first chapter, I am greatly influenced by the fact that Peruntinai is a part of Ahattinai. Commentators and writers on Peruntinai usually say that it is a violent union or forcible manifestation of passion. The following is the explanation given to it by one such writer: “The Peruntinai is the third great division of ahatinai of the Tolkappiyam. This division treats of unequal love matches and their evil consequences. This is also of different varieties. Some of them are, first, for a lover to go in for a lady more aged than himself; secondly, the forcible seizure of a lady by one who meets her by sheer accident, with a view to satisfying his carnal lust; and thirdly, to violently love a certain lady who is not only unwilling to return his love but sternly refuses in spite of all overtures on his part. The last form of love is so violent on the part of the lover that he threatens her with his resolution to give up his life.¹⁷” With minor differences, the above explanation may be taken as reliably reflecting the view of all writers on the subject.

The adjective ‘perum’ in Peruntinai has been variously interpreted in the commentaries. According to Ilampuranar, ‘perum’ means ‘general’ because it is this kind of love that is mostly prevalent in the world¹⁸. Naccinarkkiniyar explains that Peruntinai signifies the biggest tinai; for of the eight kinds of marriage referred to in the scriptures, four, viz. Brahman, Prajapatyam, Aridam and Deyvam belong to Peruntinai¹⁹. S. Bharatiyar is of opinion that Peruntinai, the ordinary meaning of which is the great conduct, now expresses euphemistically the mean or lewd aspect of passion²⁰. A

student of Tamil who understands that even the Kaikkilai of mature persons, a kind of true love, though unreciprocated, and the theme of 'makatparkanci' (in which parents vehemently refuse the request of warlike chiefs to give their daughters in marriage) have been regarded as belonging to Puram poetry by the grammarians and commentators alike, cannot comprehend the propriety of giving so high a status as Ahattinai to the theme of violent and forcible union with a woman against her will.

A lot of confusion arises, when one completely identifies Ahattinai with Aintinai,²¹ one of its divisions, and excludes with complacency the other two divisions Kaikkilai and Peruntinai from Aham class. Some scholars like Naccinarkkiniyar and Narkaviraca Nampi have gone to the extent of giving a new name like 'Ahappuram' to these two divisions²². An unconscious propensity to read into the lines of Tolkappiyam and Sangam literature the ideas which had entered into the society of the Middle Ages, due to the strong forces of religion and caste, is in no small measure responsible for complicating things otherwise easy to understand.

Association of Peruntinai with Aintinai

I strongly believe that nothing of the nature of violence or physical force is manifest in Peruntinai, as conceived by Tolkappiyar and the Sangam poets, and that the general principle of Ahattinai, i.e. "ullappunarcci" does not in the least suffer by the inclusion of Peruntinai in its fold. As we know, Aintinai, the largest division of Ahattinai, has hundreds of subthemes or turais. But the scope of Peruntinai, in respect of turai, is very limited. That only four turais are earmarked for this division is definite from the unambiguous line

“ceppiya nankum peruntinaik kurippe”²³. I should like to put forth the view that these four turais of Peruntinai are not independent of Aintinai, and that they owe their existence to some themes of Aintinai. Before substantiating the view now advanced, it is worth mentioning at first that the function of Peruntinai is to describe four kinds of excessive or intemperate behaviour of the hero and heroine of Aintinai. The first turai “eriyā matarriram” commencing the suttiram of Peruntinai offers a clue to associate the themes of Peruntinai with those of Aintinai. To be precise, certain ideas are said to belong to Aintinai so long as the lovers keep those ideas, within the limit of their thought and speech. When the lovers, unable to confine themselves within the due limits, resort to action which proclaims to the public at large their excess, these ideas become the subjects of Peruntinai. Therefore, the adjective ‘perum’ connotes the overstepping of certain limits enunciated in Aintinai, by the lovers of mutual union. Please compare the adjective ‘perum’ with the following: perunkarru, perumuccu, perumitam, perunkotai, perumpeccu, perunkanci and peruvanci.

(1) Eriya matarriram (actual mounting matal-chariot)

In Aintinai, the hero is permitted to say that he will take to matal-riding, in the event of the recalcitrant heroine’s female companion refusing to effect his union with his beloved. It is common knowledge that the reference to this contemptible means is not made to force the heroine to consent to his passion, for, they are already united, but to force the maid to aid in their love-affairs. In Peruntinai too, matal-riding is not undertaken by the hero, to compel an unyielding girl to submit to his lust; for, his appeal for justice is made before a group of learned men²⁴ who will of course

uphold the right of a girl, to make her own choice in the matter of love. This is not a case of violence or intimidation on the part of a man towards a woman. What happens is that, after the first meeting, the hero has no occasion to see her and develop his love-relation. In other words, there is nothing of the sort of Itantalaipattu, Pankarkuttam and Toliyirkuttam, the regular courses to be found in Aintinai.

The love-smitten hero finds no outlet to lessen or satisfy the passion kindled by her fascinating beauty.²⁵ It seems that the parents scenting a mental change in her, keep a strict guard over her movement and prevent her going out. Thus finding no ray of hope to have even a look at her, the hero catches at a straw, mounts a matal-chariot-a means recognised by society-and proclaims to the villagers his relation with a particular girl, with the determination to attain his objective of love. A minute survey of the four Kali Odes²⁶ relating to the matal incident will lead us to infer that it is the parents of the heroine who form a stumbling block for the union of lovers, and it is their obstinacy that drives the faithful hero to resort to matal-driving.

*“Poruntatar porval valutikku aruntirai
Polak kotuttar tamar”.* (Kali: 141, ll. 24-5)

These two important lines saying that the relatives or parents gave their daughter in marriage to the hero sitting on matal chariot, as the enemies of the Pandiyan king skilled in warfare paid him their tribute, plainly indicate the opposition on the part of the parents in this matter. Here, there is nothing to doubt the affection of the girl towards the hero. The phrases “anpuru kilaviyal”²⁷ and “tirunilaikku otta kilavi”²⁸ bear testimony to their mutual affection. Thus it is clear that this aspect of Peruntinai ‘eriyā matarriram’ is in consonance with the general characteristic of Ahattinai, i.e. ullappunarcci

between lovers. Because of the uncommon behaviour of the hero necessitated by the stubborn attitude of the girl's parents, the treatment of matal riding comes under the category of Peruntinai.

(2) Ilamai tir tiram (Waste of youthfulness)

Marriage brings with it some responsibility for the young couples. Enjoyment of sexual pleasure and accumulation of wealth rarely go together²⁹. One can work hard and amass riches only in the energetic period of youth. Likewise it is during the exciting period of youth one wants sensual gratification. To reconcile these two aspects (ilamai and valamai) at the beginning of the married state, a balanced outlook is necessary. It is a biological fact that the duration of sexual vigour in women is shorter than that in men. Therefore, in Aham Poetry, the heroine is often pictured as expressing a great desire for physical union and as not consenting to the hero's departure for earning wealth. With a view to giving due respect to her sentiment, the hero puts off his journey to a later day (celavalunkal). For happiness in marriage, according to Bertrand Russell³⁰, there must be a certain similarity in regard to standards of values between husband and wife. The wife must allow the husband to go to far-off places and earn money and fame. The husband must understand the subtle desire of his wife, even though she does not say everything in plain terms. A hero returns home earlier with the money earned and expresses his aversion towards wealth and his fascination for her beauty³¹. The maid congratulates the lady on her wisdom in voluntarily giving consent to the hero's departure for acquiring wealth³². These are the salient characteristics of Aintinai lovers.

Suppose a hero, ignorant of the advantage of having a balanced attitude, as required by Tolkappiyar, in respect of

the two points in question, resolves to make a fortune at the expense of sensuous enjoyment. He sets out on his distant travels and never thinks of home, until the wished-for fortune is made. He may be said to have violated the healthy principle laid down in Aintinai. Aintinai allows a husband to part from his wife, for a fixed period in order to procure money for the purpose of running a household. Separation for any number of years in the prime of youth is out of the pale of Aintinai; for sexual pleasure is part of marriage. Youth is a temporary thing to be availed of by men and women during its short existence³³. A man who is extremely fond of wealth cannot be said to have no affection towards his wife. Yet his excessive desire for riches is detrimental to the normal course of conjugal bliss. Thus 'ilamai tir tiram' means protracted separation, with the loss of youth. No Sangam poet seems to have composed any verse on this aspect of Peruntinai. Yet, in many Aham poems, drifting to this tendency by men is alluded to. "The object of his love is wealth" (Porule katar katal) is the pungent reply of a heroine to a consoling maid³⁴.

The two meanings given to 'ilamai tir tiram' by almost all the commentators are that the hero is older than the heroine or vice versa, and that the married pairs indulge in continuous sexual moral excellence³⁵. I do not mean that these kinds of union are acceptable or are not found in Tamil society. My argument is that irregular and inelegant subjects like these were not contemplated under the concept of Ahattinai, while planning this kind of literature by ancient Tamil scholars. As the discovery of this structural principle opens up new vistas to the original interpretation of many aspects of Ahattinai, this theory may be kept in mind in studying Aham poems.

(3) Terutal olinta kamattu miku tiram (lust beyond consolation.)

This theme is a further proof of a close link between Peruntinai and Aintinai. In Aintinai, the wife is depicted as unable to sustain the pangs of separation. The sight of the mating birds and beasts, the cold winter, the pleasant evening and other touching incidents stir up her restrained passion. It is true that she sometimes appears inconsolable, at the sight of the season stipulated by the hero for his home-return (paruvam kantu alital). But she is never described as having lost control over her senses and as abusing her husband in public for leaving her alone. In spite of exciting surroundings and the highest degree of sexual feeling, she is ultimately pictured to have comforted herself, or to have been consoled by the maid, with various sound or unsound grounds.

Peruntinai treats of the uncontrollable sexual urge of a married woman in separation. She is beyond consolation and reasoning. She is not ashamed of proclaiming to the world the circumstances by which she is driven to this intemperance. She exclaims with no sense of modesty that she is overpowered with passion and that it cannot abate, unless it is gratified by the embrace of her husband. She appeals to the spectators, not to laugh at her desolation, but to render help in finding out his whereabouts.

Six poems³⁶ relating to this aspect of Peruntinai in Kalittogai furnish us with valuable particulars to understand the reason for feminine immodesty. As a rule, newly wedded couples should not part with each other for a considerable period and be separated by great distance. The immediate separation after marriage, before the satisfaction of the sexual thirst, or before the birth of a child, will consciously or

unconsciously affect the brain and heart of the heroine, more than those of the hero. This argues the importance of sex education for the grown-ups.

*“Purivunta punarcciyul pullara mattirai
Arukuvittu oruvarai akarralin”.* (Kali: 142)

Thus the condition of being separated, before the fulfilment of the sexual appetite is stated by the frustrated young girl as the cause of her extreme conduct. It is curious to learn that the ancient society did not view the incident seriously, but sympathised with these desolate women. The public did not stigmatize them as immodest and indecent. It is admitted that a girl of this situation will regain the lost modesty, when the husband returns and embraces her shoulder³⁷. As emphasised before, this aspect of Peruntinai conforms to the essential trait of Aham. That there is no question about the mental harmony of the lovers is evident from phrases like

*“Nalam perral nallelil marpanaic carntu”*³⁸
Mayavan marpin tiruppolpaval cera” (Kali: 145)
“Katalan manra avanai varakkantu” (Do: 147)

(4) Mikka kamattu mital (daring act of the lustful heroine)

This theme is so interpreted as naming Peruntinai ‘a division manifesting rape’. I am at a loss to know wherein the sense of violence lies in the phrase. Any interpretation of an uncultured and offensive nature should be avoided, when the words of the text do not justify it. The general subject under discussion, the preceding and succeeding order of ideas, and the ordinary meaning of the doubtful words should be the criteria to judge the import of a line in question. Here Ahattinai

is the general topic. There is no problem about the meaning of the preceding line “terutal olinta kamattu miku tiram”. It refers to the heroine in separation and her inconsolable and passionate condition. Of the three words, ‘mikka kamattu mital’, ‘mital’ ordinarily means strength or boldness³⁹. Were the word atal (அடல்) used in this connection, it could be interpreted as ‘to seize a woman by force’. This theme should, in the absence of such a word, be understood to mention, only the bold act of the heroine glowing with passion.

Next the question arises, “What is that bold act”? Tolkappiyar does not give clear expression to it. No poem in Sangam literature deals with this aspect of Peruntinai. By inference, it will be possible to discover what that act may be. In Aintinai, the heroine of the clandestine⁴⁰ and married states⁴¹ is permitted to speak out that she is desirous of going to her husband’s locality and meeting him in person. In Peruntinai, her actual travelling to his place for the purpose of satisfying her own growing passion is taken for treatment. An indirect reference to this feminine boldness is found in an Aham poem:

Neripatu kavalai nirampa nilitai
Velli vityaip pola nanrum
celavu ayarnticinal yane (Aham: 147)

Thus a deepy afflicted wife pours out her anxiety to go in search of her husband, as Velliviti actually undertook the journey in her life.

Because of the parents intervention in the union of lovers, the hero’s undue partiality for material prosperity and his unduly prolonged separation, the characters of Aintinai are driven to resort to some excessive actions. The concept of Peruntinai, by the treatment of these extra ordinary themes,

is to bring out in full relief the importance of the value of the sexual union, even among the mutual lovers.

THE CONCEPT OF AINTINAI

While Kaikkilai and Peruntinai are respectively the abortive and excessive forms of Ahattinai, Aintinai may be regarded as its best and normal form. Were a woman asked about the number of children she has borne, she will of course mention those now alive, with her; at the same time, to give a full picture of her motherhood, she will be inclined to hint at the miscarriages and the children gone mad or astray. A similar approach is to be made for the inclusion of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai into Ahattinai. It is on Aintinai we have to rely to understand the true and clear perspective of Ahattinai. Kaikkilai begins and ends with the single theme of futile passion. Peruntinai is limited to excessive passion in four situations. The turais or situations of Aintinai are innumerable⁴². Any number of situations is allowed to be created in Aintinai by a special rule.⁴³

Mutarporul, Karupporul, Ullurai and other requirements for composition are mainly employed only in the treatment of love-aspects connected with Aintinai. Above all, different kinds of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai, apart from those of Ahattinai have been contrived by poets and grammarians of a later period. Aintinai is a group of divisions exclusively belonging to Ahattinai. Therefore these two terms are freely employed as synonyms. The foregoing remarks will suffice to maintain the view that there is nothing wrong in accepting or assuming the concept of Aintinai as the concept of Ahattinai. It is worthwhile for us to remember that the significance of Ahattinai becomes more vivid and receives additional strength, by comparing the concept of Aintinai with the

concepts of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai, for they induce us to analyse Ahattinai, from the affirmative and negative lines of research.

The norm of love in Aintinai

Impossibility of the birth of love for want of physical maturity is signified in Kaikkilai. The undesirable consequence of want of adequate sexual satisfaction is expressed in Peruntinai. In Aintinnai we are pleased to see the treatment of the happy life of young lovers in whom passion, and sense and intellect are united in sound equilibrium.

“Inpamum porulum aranum enranku

Anpotu punarnta aintinai”.

(Tol. 1037)

In these lines the unparalleled greatness of Aintinai with its immeasurable goodness is brought out by Tolkappiyar. I am greatly indebted to Professor C.H. Herford for his original treatise “Shakespeare’s Treatment of Love and Marriage”. Many reference in this essay provoked my thought in the direction of comparing and contrasting the love aspects of Ahattinai. Summing up the Shakesporean norm of love with exquisite dexterity, he writes: “Love is a passion, kindling heart, brain and senses alike in natural and happy proportions, ardent but not sensual, tender but not sentimental, pure but not asceitc, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. His lovers look forward to marriage as a matter of course, and they neither anticipate its rights nor turn their affection elsewhere. They commonly love at first sight and once for all”⁴⁴. I am struck with wonder to know how the pattern of love conceived by Shakespeare

exactly reflects the concept of Aintinai maintained by Tolkappiyar and the Sangam poets. As admitted by Professor Herford, exceptions to the normal form of love are also to be found in Shakespeare for special dramatic purposes⁴⁵. In Aintinai, no deviation from its normality is allowed. Strictly speaking, a poem dealing with a love-theme, even slightly offending the rules of Aintinai will be disqualified from entering into the division of Aintinai. Thus the limitation imposed on poets in the treatment of subject-matter in Aintinai and also in Ahattinai should be carefully noted.

Limitation of the subject matter

A critical examination of the love-incidents in Aintinai will show how simple, mild, sweet and noble they are. Every action has the potentiality of being developed into a tragic or a comic situation. The hero may be said to have forsaken the girl at the command of his parents, or at the sight of another more handsome and more affluent girl. The hero, after the contact with the maid, may direct his passionate thought towards her. The male companion who goes to see the arrival of the heroine at the bidding of the hero may fall in love with her. A new love affair may develop between the companions of the hero and the heroine. A series of suspicions and intrigues may confuse and vitiate the relations of these four characters. Knowing beforehand the appointment of nightly meetings, a scoundrel may attack the hero on his way, appear himself before the maiden and force her to yield to his lust at the point of the sword. At the same time, the assaulted hero may hasten to the spot and rescue her from the ruffian. These kinds of plots can be created from the love aspects of Aintinai. Any treatment of such themes will be outside 'Aham'.

In Aintinai, the death of lovers or any other characters and the consequent lament over the loss should on no account be treated. The ways through which the hero comes for nocturnal trysts are full of risks. He may be attacked by the tiger or the elephant or the boar. He may be swept away by the floods. During elopement, one of the lovers may be doomed to death and the other may also die of grief.

*“Nanimiku curattitaik kanavanai ilantu
Tanimakal pulampiya mutu palai”* (Tol: 1024)

Thus Tolkappiyar alludes to the tragic death of the husband and the deplorable condition of the unfortunate lady in the midst of the desert. There are four elegiac poems in Purananuru⁴⁶ relating to this theme. The incident may also happen the other way. The wife may die on the way leaving the husband to bemoan her death. Tolkappiyar and the Sangam poets liked to elegize only the mourning of a woman, for its resourcefulness of pathos. These remarks will show that the ancient Tamils were not so foolish as to believe that lovers would not die in travelling, and they they set apart such kind of bereavement to be treated not in Ahattinai but in Purattinai.

It may be said that the chaste girl commits suicide when a rival suitor is forced on her by the parents, or that both the hero and the heroine drink poison with the hope of being united in the next world or in the next birth, unable to resist the adverse forces. To hint that the heroine of the clandestine stage is gravid before marriage is also inopposite.

In Karpu stage, the hero may lose his life while crossing the desert by the attack of fierce animals or due to the scarcity of water or in his fight with the desert dwellers. He may squander all his earnings by dallying with prostitutes and return home empty-handed. Because of love sickness, the

expectant wife may eventually grow feeble and die. I am mentioning all these fanciful situations only to point out, how it is possible to develop every simple theme of Aintinai as a thrilling; sensational and complicated subject fit for novel and fiction. But they have no place in Aintinai. The frame or subject matter of Aintinai is rigid and limited. To be an Aham poet, one must confine oneself to the treatment of this⁴⁷. The problem whether the restraint in poetic theme helps or hinders the free play of the faculty of imagination and the power of creation will be dealt with in Chapter V on “Aham poets of the Sangam Age”.

The nature of the poetic theme of Aintinai

It is now clear that Aintinai does not profess to handle all sorts of sexual relations arising from the normal and abnormal phenomena of the human beings, and their reactions on the structure of society. It has wisely selected for its treatment very simple, soft, prosaic and pure situations connected only with ideal lovers. Its shrewdness is further revealed in having selected the family members of the girl as its other characters. In Aintinai, no tragic event or unhappy ending will ever happen. Kalayu describes a traditional struggle between the daughter and her kind parents in the choice of her lover. Senator Brabantio who, as an act of necessity and with parental affection, ultimately yields to the choice of his daughter, the loyal Desdemona and in the presence of the Duke solemnly proclaims,

“Come hither, Moor:

I here do give thee that with all my heart

Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart

I would keep from thee”

is a typical illustration of the final defeat of the parents in this domestic conflict⁴⁸. The theme “eriyā matarriram” in Peruntinai implies this fight.

In Karpū stage, the lady picks a quarrel with her husband for his lewd pursuit. This will not lead to hostility or tragedy; for she realises her loyalty to him in all adverse circumstances and her maid prays for his return to constancy⁴⁹ and a life of happiness and prosperity⁵⁰. As no outsiders are allowed to take any great part in these love-incidents, nothing like a crisis or intrigue or catastrophe comes for poetic treatment. No chance is given for extremity at any point in Aintinai. About the tragic element in Ahattinai, Prof. P.T.S. remarks:- “Palaittinai, poetry of the dry desert, was born in connection with the very long separation incidental to the predatory life of the inhabitants of the dreary stretches of the sandy plain; hence the pangs of long separation became the subject matter of Palai poetry; this was the nearest approach to the tragic muse which the early Tamil temperament could stand, for tragedy as such was prescribed from the dominion of the Tamil muse”.⁵¹

The chosen period for the treatment of Aintinai

Aintinai takes notice of the state of the body, mind and heart of both sexes, only from the time when they begin to feel sexual excitement mentally and physically. It continues its treatment as long as the lovers possess physical stamina and sexual hunger. It says nothing of the period before maturity or when the sexual vigour is on the wane. It does not teach the lovers how they should conduct themselves in old age. Any theme in Aintinai should be studied with reference to sexuality as well as mutuality. “By all these divisions Tolkaṭṭiyar implies the utter futility of the human passion”,

thus Ilampuranar has expounded the concept of Ahattinai⁵². Truly this conclusion is a travesty of things. It is the outcome of the religious fanaticism that views all sexual intercourse as a sin and woman as a temptress. Unfortunately it is a fact in history that when religion was in the ascendent, the bodily pleasure and the fair sex were treated with the utmost contumely.

We know that Tiruttakka Tevar, the Jain ascetic, undertook the composition of the great epic Civaka Chintamani, with the sole aim of inveighing against physical passion and the female sex and of exalting celibacy and asceticism. That is why Civakan, the hero of the epic is depicted as having married eight wives, realised empirically the insignificance of the pleasures of the flesh and finally led a life of renunciation. The following words by Havelock Ellis, "If our own and our fellows bodies seem to us intrinsically shameful or disgusting, nothing will ever really ennoble or purify our conceptions of sexual love. Love craves the flesh and if the flesh is shameful the lover must be shameful⁵³, are expressive of the vehement attitude shown by the Tamil scholars in the post-Sangam period towards the sexual pleasure. It is therefore no wonder that Ilampuranar so understood the concept of Ahattinai.

Reference has already been made to the wordly conception of life of the ancient Tamils⁵⁴. Tolkappiyar finds in the love of Aintinai the content of pleasure, wealth and virtue. The respect by the husband for the sorrowful feelings of his wife is expressed by the word "arul" in Aham literature. A heroine views her husband's departure from her for seeking wealth, as an act forsaking good qualities like grace and kindness⁵⁵. To the people of the Sangam epoch, woman was a better-half and a partner in life of varied fortunes, and sexual

love was the fountainhead for the full and harmonious development of the spiritual, mental and physical aspects.

Theme representing society in general

The learned commentator of Iraiyanar Ahapporul has given the following suggestion about the evolution and concept of Aintinai, “illatu iniyatu nallatu enru pulavaral nattappattator olukkam”⁵⁶. According to him, Aintinai is a fictitious invention of scholars for the good of the people. Among these points, one is open to severe objection i.e. it is pure fiction (illatu). It is true that the world or society is not fully represented in Aintinai. But what it represents is to be seen in the world. We must accept that all the situations do not occur in the life of one set of lovers. This does not mean that they are spurious. When we take into account each and every situation individually, there is nothing supernatural or superhuman in it.

Who said that Aintinai is a story narrating the life-course of a couple of lovers? Tolkappiyar says definitely that it represents not any individuals but the entire society, as is obvious from the line “makkaḷ nutaliya Ahanaintinai”⁵⁷. Here the word “makkaḷ” denotes society or human beings in general. What Tolkappiyar wishes to emphasize is that Aintinai is a collection of isolated situations happening in the lives of lovers in general, in various circumstances and at different periods. In his preface to the “Kural” V.V.S. Aiyer makes a reference to the structural aspect of Aintinai as “describing an isolated situation and containing a delicate analysis of one of the hundred varying moods of the lover’s heart”⁵⁸. Tolkappiyam does not give the incidents one by one in the order of their occurrence and we do not form the impression that Aintinai is a sequence of events connected with a pair of lovers. On the other hand, it gives them only in the form of

utterance (kurru) by each character like hero's speech, heroine's speech, etc., to express the different moods, feelings, emotions, passions of the lovers⁵⁹. This may be the reason for conceiving the love aspects-union, separation, patience, pining away and sulking as five different tinais.

A knowledge of the constitution of Aintinai in particular, and Ahattinai in general will throw new light on the composition of Sangam Aham poetry. Sangam poets know that the subject of Ahattinai, consisting, as it does, of a number of isolated elements, was not suitable for a long poem or epic. Therefore, no poet has attempted to compose a long poem comprising all the situations. Pattupattu has four aham idylls with lines noted against each:- Mullaippattu 103, Netunalvatai 188, Kurinjippattu 261, Pattinappalai 301. In Paripatal, the length of the eight stanzas of Aham theme ranges each from 32 to 140 lines. Kalittogai contains 149 odes, each ranging from 11 to 80 lines. Excepting 161 poems listed above, 1701 verses to be found in the other four great anthologies, viz., Ahananuru, Narrinai, Kuruntogai and Ainkurunuru vary from 3 to 31 lines. It should be clearly noted that in each one of the Aham poems, the total number of which is calculated to be 1862, irrespective of its length, only one situation is treated. Take, for example, the longest of Aham poems, Pattinappalai of 301 lines. Only five lines⁶⁰ are devoted to the subject, the contemplated separation of the husband from his wife, the rest being devoted to the description of Kavirippattinam and to the valour of Tirumavalavan, the Chola king. This argues that the theme of Ahattinai is too rigid and conventional for elaborate treatment.

The view that Ahattinai is not intended for continuous treatment receives additional strength from the manner in which the poems of Ainkurunuru and Kalittogai are composed⁶¹. It is but natural for a poet who writes hundreds

of verses at a stretch, to treat a theme in a narrative form. Five different authors are said to have composed hundred verses each in Ainkurunuru. It does not occur to any one of them to give a description of Kalavu and Karpu course of Aintinai, from the beginning to the end, as we find in the treatise of Kovai of the later period of Tamil literature. One interesting exception to the frame work of Aintinai has been noticed by the old commentator of Ainkurunuru. Under the caption “Tontippattu”, Ammuvar has devoted incidentally ten poems out of a hundred, to describe the kalavu course in succession. It occurs to me that the exception is the outcome of the design adopted by the authors of Ainkurunuru to handle a subject with its variation in tens.

The foregoing study brings to light two important truths that Aintinai is real, in the sense that its aspects are found scattered in society in general and that, keeping the nature of the theme in mind, Aham poets have taken isolated and unrelated situations at random for treatment. This conclusion should not be interpreted to mean that the ancient Tamil geniuses were opposed to the kinds of literature like epic, narrative, fiction, etc., and to the treatment of love-story not included in Ahattinai.

The popular belief that Tamil has only two divisions of literature, Aham and Puram, is erroneous. It is true that these two divisions attracted the attention of the Tamil Grammarians, and that they enunciated special rules for poetic composition, with a view to preserving and propagating the peculiar characteristics of Aham and Puram. Tolkappiyar has mentioned eight kinds of literature under the general title “Vanappu” in Ceyyuliyal or the chapter on Composition⁶². Some of them are said to have been based on materials like past history, old story and new events in metrical form. No

detail has been given about their construction. We may presume that poets enjoyed full freedom in the choice of the matter, form and use of words, characters, place and time, so far as these kinds of poetic composition were concerned. It should be noted that Aham and Puram poetry which merited strict and elaborate rules were not included in these eight kinds. A minute survey of Ceyyuliyal, the biggest of all the twenty seven chapters of Tolkappiyam, will demonstrate the fact that there were several literary works dealing with several topics, apart from Aham and Puram literature.

The theme of 'prostitution' in Aintinai

I do not propose here to trace the origin of prostitution in Tamil Nad or to discuss the polyerotic manifestation of masculine sexuality. My only concern in dealing with this aspect is to question the propriety of the treatment of the hero's concubinage in Aintinai. It is a reasonable question, for Aintinai does not attempt to picture all kinds of regular and irregular sex relations manifest in human beings and it has with restraint selected a handful of love-aspects refined and simple. The subject of the hero's hunting after harlots is therefore likely to appear against the well-regulated, self-controlled and artificial structure of Aintinai. Shall we conjecture that this subject is introduced to enliven and increase the aesthetic value of the Aham theme, ordinarily dull and insipid, by giving a lively opportunity for poets to describe picturesquely and domestic quarrel between husband and wife? This view does not appeal to me. First of all, there is no need of sustaining the trend of poetic interest, as Ahattinai is not a continuous story. Secondly, if it were the idea of the Tamil grammarians that the subject-matter of Aham should inherently contain thrilling and emotional elements in order to arouse the poetic taste in the readers, they might have

resorted to more appealing incidents (some of them have been already suggested by me) than the uncivilised theme of prostitution.

Shall we hold, as many do, that this theme is included in Aintinai with a view to bringing out the unchanging loyalty of the wife and her connivance at the improper act of her husband⁶³. This too is not satisfactory. I do not deem it proper that for the display of the wife's fidelity, her husband should be made unfaithful or his infidelity should be employed as a means. Should we accept the view that the hero's separation in search of prostitutes affords a good opportunity for the wife to play the coquette and enhance the pleasure of embrace and that the love aspect (utal) of Marutam is badly in need of such separation⁶⁴. This view encourages the lewd course of men and belittles the aspect of Marutam which is a preliminary requisite for close embrace. It is absurd to think that the wife will allow her husband to seek after harlots, so that she will have a chance for feigning bouderie or love quarrel.

A woman is by nature shrewd enough to make a mountain of a molehill in the art of courtship and she does not need any real cause to quarrel with her hero. It is true that the wife always casts a suspicious look on her husband's character because no rigid chastity is enforced on him by society. It is also true that men who understand the value of women's charming pettishness do not make much of their misunderstanding. The wife's fancy about the infidelity of her husband is temporary. It is also a felicitous means leading to physical consummation. It alone deserves to be called love-quarrel. But no wife will be so foolish as to avail herself of the libertinism of the husband for picking a pleasant quarrel. Therefore the argument that the hero's laxity forms a fruitful source for the wife's conquest is not tenable⁶⁵. Some of the

curious explanations that the hero's contact with public women makes him realise the finer and endearing qualities of his lady-love, that it is unbecoming of the hero of chivalry, to disregard the ardour of women who hopefully love him⁶⁶, and that the hero, not of his own accord but only to please his parents, decides to indulge in prostitution, knowing that these girls are allotted by his parents themselves before marriage as his share befitting his rank and position⁶⁷-are not worth discussing.

After discounting the various theories of others concerning the concept of prostitution in Aintinai, it remains for us to probe into the matter from the realistic point of view. To begin with, we must boldly admit that prostitution was widely prevalent in ancient Tamil land, that society was favourable to the existence and growth of prostitution, that having courtesans for the sole purpose of frequent sexual intercourse constituted a normal feature of the life of married men, that the wife, on account of the rule of monogamy and for other reasons, used to suppress her resentment and finally put up with her husband's profligacy so long as he did not forsake her and that, because of the wife's adjusting mentality and the light outlook of society on prostitution, no serious rupture occurred in the harmonious relations of married couples.

A thorough study of the *suttirams* relating to harlots in *Tolkappiyam* and the poems of *Marutam* in *Sangam* literature reveals an astonishing truth that women treated in them were not like the whores living in brothels and occupying the lowest rank in the social position of *filles de jole* and that they were women of high rank like *Matavi* in *Cilappatikaram*, well-versed in music and dance, skilled in pleasurable pastime and possessing many good qualities of virtuous wife⁶⁸ and respecting the hero⁶⁹ not for his wealth but for his company

and refinement. They showed respect also to the hero's wife and took great delight in seeing, embracing and adorning her son⁷⁰. They accompanied the hero for sport in the freshes of Vaiyai or Kaviri in public. They seem to have been allowed to live with the hero even in the battle field⁷¹. Instead of condemning the extra-marital activity of the hero, Tolkappiyam teaches him that he should return from the houses of prostitutes and should not part from his lady-love for twelve days after her menstruation⁷² (the period biologically suited for conception). Viewed from the background of the ancient society, it is clear as daylight that the part played by prostitution in the love-affairs of married men was significant and illustrious.

In other countries and other parts of India, religions and temples gave birth to the institution of prostitution. We may trace it to the same sources in Tamilnad after the 6th Century A.D. when great temples were constructed. The unimportant role played by religions in the Sangam epoch is well-known. There was no separate building or fund for religions. Devotees worshipped their deities under the umbrageous pandal of big trees. Therefore, the existence of religious or temple prostitutes in the Sangam age was out of the question. On the other hand, they grew directly out of society for catering to the sexual needs of married men. Society allowed them to use their charms for monetary gain and the husbands to purchase them for enjoyment, without disturbing the foundation of family unity. Only when they exceeded the limit and reduced the organisation of the family to ruin, did society and the neighbours take necessary steps to maintain the stability of the family. History tells us how Pekan one of the great chieftains and renowned patrons of the Sangam days, was completely engrossed in the spell of a harlot in Nallur and how the four poets of Sangam celebrity

approached and entreated him to return home and to wipe off the sorrowful tears of his own wife⁷³. The points to be noted in this incident are that the poets did not describe his behaviour as immoral or improper and that they would not have even approached him, had he not completely forgotten his home.

Ancient society did not consider a married person seeking after prostitutes within the limit mentioned above as unrighteous or evil, as it seriously considered the coveting another man's wife as sin and vice. Analysing the normal justification of prostitution, Havelock Ellis observes that "the social necessity of prostitution is the most ancient of all the arguments of moralists in favour of the toleration of prostitutes"⁷⁴. This may be the reason for Tirukkural placing "piranmanai nayavamai" (non-coveting of another's wife) in the section "Virtue", and "Prostitutes" (varaivin makalir) in the section "wealth". A comparative study of these two chapters will reveal that the great author, Tiruvalluvar, conceived adultery as dangerous and sinful, and concubinage as folly and waste of money. The enumeration of prostitutes along with drink and gambling⁷⁵ again elucidates the point that they are considered as bad habits leading to waste of money, waste of energy and loss of fame. Literature grows not out of ethics but out of society. It selects its theme from society. It is answerable only to society for its treatment of different subjects. Unlike ethics, it considers with sympathy and sincerity the behaviour of men and women.

In the light of the exposition hitherto made and from the outlook of ancient Tamil society, the theme of prostitution in Aintinai should be interpreted. The chief points to be thought over are (i) the wide prevalence of prostitution in Tamil country, (ii) society's tolerance of it, (iii) the

significant role played by the prostitutes in the development of culture and the fine arts, (iv) the enduring affection shown by them to men who seek after them and their families, and above all (v) the hero's love and respect for his wife and vice versa and their traditional tolerance with the noble objective of maintaining the unity of the family at all costs.

It is well to remember that Aintinai, as usual, treats of this theme also with certain limitations. No element disturbing the mutual relations of the husband and wife or the peace of the family is allowed to enter into Marutattinai. The turais request or refusal or consent to admit the licentious hero into his own home (vayil vental, vayil maruttal, vayil nertal) are introduced to appease the agitated mind of the heroine, to set right the hero by making him realise the reaction of his wife and finally to bring them together with a sense of duty and unity. Again Aintinai has not committed itself to treat of all kinds of public women. Tolkappiyam earnestly describes the prostitutes of Aintinai as "equal to the wife"⁷⁶, and brings to light their attachment to the lady-love and her son. They are not described as 'porut pentir' (women who love the hero for his wealth) in Tolkappiyam and Sangam literature. 'Kamakkilatti' is the general name given to them⁷⁷. In Marutam poems, no reference is made to the offer of money as price for the prostitutes, or to the dissipation of fortunes. On the other hand, in some of the Kali odes, it is said that the harlots beautified the hero's son with valuable jewels. It will be interesting to know that they are occasionally called 'the mother of the hero's legitimate son'⁷⁸ and 'the sister of the hero's wife'⁷⁹.

What a big part the prostitutes might have played in the normal life of married couples will be easily understood by the place which they have occupied, or which has been given to them in Aham grammar and Aham poetry. Tolkappiyam

mentions the prostitute as one of the characters in the karpu stage.⁸⁰ It bestows an equal distinction on her, by composing a *suttiram* on the circumstances in which she is entitled to speak, on the analogy of the hero's speech, the heroine's speech, the maid's speech and the nurse's speech. The existence of more than one third of *Aham* poems in *Karpu* course on the topic of 'Parattaiyir pirivu' or the love-aspect of *Marutam* argues the popularity of the theme at the hands of the *Sangam* poets and its peaceful effect on society.

The inclusion of the theme in question in *Ahattinai* from the social point of view and from its structural point of view is quite right. Yet a slight alteration in the assignment of the theme will be more welcome. I should suggest that the theme is fit to be included in *Peruntinai* rather than in *Aintinai* as at present. There are married men who are ever loyal to their wives and who do not even think of prostitutes. It is well known that a Chola king, by name, *Nalankilli* asseverated that, if he failed to inflict a heavy defeat upon his enemies, his failure should be deemed as equal to the disgraceful act of his embracing the breast of unkind prostitutes⁸¹. Do we not make a distinction in *Ahattinai* between a wife in separation who modestly restrains her passion and another who impassionately proclaims in public her excessive lust? The behaviour of the former is treated in *Aintinai* and the act of the latter is assigned to *Peruntinai*. Likewise a difference is desirable in the assignment of the behaviour of a loyal husband and a licentious husband.

In this connection how *Tiruvalluvar* cautiously treats of the subject of *utal* or love-quarrel is worth noting. He might have discovered the incongruity of dealing with the practical side of prostitution in the division of *Aintinai*. He therefore completely omitted the theme of the hero's actual hunting after prostitutes in the section 'Love'. This omission is

commendable, for, the author in the former section ‘wealth’ has vehemently condemned sexual intercourse with prostitutes. Yet Tiruvalluvar whose study of human psychology is thorough and piercing, has wonderfully manipulated the temporary suspicious tendency of women over the polygamous nature of men and the lovely reaction of the sane husbands to it, in the chapter ‘pulavi nunukkam’ (the fitness of bouderie). I am of opinion that Aintinai should confine itself to the treatment of the imaginary thought of the married couples in respect of prostitution⁸², as conceived by the author of Tirukkural, and that actual prostitution on the part of the hero should be left to be treated in Peruntinai-a division of Ahattinai intended for the treatment of any excessive behaviour of the ordinary lovers, as explained under the ‘Concept of Peruntinai’.

A GENERAL CONCEPT OF AHATTINAI

It has been pointed out that Kaikkilai, Aintinai and Peruntinai are respectively the abortive, normal and excessive forms of Ahattinai. The rationale for the adoption of the theme of prostitution has been elaborately discussed and it has been shown that the theme was in harmony with the concept of Ahattinai. Whatever may be the forms and their significance, these seven divisions are basically rooted in the fundamental characteristic-the union of mutuality and sexuality-of Ahattinai. Aham, in its strict sense and fulness, deals with those love-aspects wherein the physical contact with mental union, is involved. This principle of Ahattinai is negatively and affirmatively reflected in its seven divisions in due proportions. Aintinai, by virtue of its normality and by the fitness of elaborate treatment, may be conclusively said to have predominantly embodied the concept of Ahattinai.

Universal outlook

It remains now for me to touch upon the universal concept of Ahattinai to present a broad view of this kind of literature. Unlike Purattinai the main theme of which, heroism, belongs only to men of bravery or warriors, Ahattinai, by the universal nature of its theme, love, belongs to all human beings, male and female. This does not mean that all sorts of love to be found in the universe are treated in Ahattinai. What is meant by the statement that it is universal is that sexual pleasure based on mutual affection is essential to every man and woman, desirous of happy domestic life. Ahattinai does not take into account the status, rank, wealth, education, occupation, religion, etc., of the people and pronounce that only those who possess such and such requirements of worldly needs are entitled to become the hero or the heroine of Aham poetry.

Choice of characters

In Mullaippattu and Netunalvatai, queens are pictured as being plunged into grief over the absence of the kings,⁸³ Commanders-in-chief, or warriors figure as lovers in most of the poems of 'Mullai' part in Ainkurunuru⁸⁴. A poet has chosen an officer in government service as the hero of a theme in Mullaittinai.⁸⁵ Hunters, shepherds, farmers, fishermen and their womenfolk, the ordinary inhabitants of the four regions naturally play a great role as heroes and heroines in most of the Aham poems. Saleswomen of buttermilk⁸⁶ and salt⁸⁷ are the chief characters for some poems. Some poems in Kalittogai depict the love-affairs of menials⁸⁸. The prosperity or the poverty of the lovers does not receive any prominence in Ahattinai, as its principle is based on the mutual and sexual love of human beings.

Rich as well as poor lovers indiscriminately occupy a high place in Aham poems. A hero of the clandestine stage is said to have been so poor as to lead a mean life with the possession of only one cow⁸⁹. A girl whose parents are in affluent position is praised for completely identifying herself with the straitened circumstances of her husband⁹⁰. A poem describes the wavering mind of a householder who fears the cruelty of poverty and the affliction of separation⁹¹. It is well-known that a woman in love likes even a poverty-stricken life with her lover⁹². All these illustrations go to prove that high or low positions of men and women in society, wealth, occupation, etc., have not much value in the treatment of love-aspects in Ahattinai. Anyone is eligible to become a hero or heroine of Aham-love. As this not-too-hard condition alone is to be fulfilled, the universal outlook of Ahattinai is easily comprehensible.

Foot Notes

1. For the nature of different commentaries of Tolkappiyam, vide 'Advanced studies in Tamil Prosody' by Dr. A. Chidambaranathan Chettiar, PP. 3-4.
2. Pari; 11, ll. 135-136. "மகள் மேம்பட்ட கன்னிமை கனியாக் கைக்கிளைக்காமம்".
3. Kali; 58, ll. 1-4.
4. Kali; 56, ll. 30-35.
5. Kali; 56, ll. 58.
6. Tol. Aham; Bharathiyar, P. 185.
7. Tolkappiyap Porulatikara Araycci, p: 15.
8. Lectures on 'Ahananuru' P. 24.
9. Tol. 995. "காமஞ்சாலா இளமை"
10. The Psychology of Sex, p. 21.
11. Ante, p. 31.
12. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam, p. 64. "காமஞ்சாலா என்றதனால் தலைமைக்குக் குற்றம் வாராதாயிற்று"

13. “ஆண்பாற் கைக்கிளை பெண்பாற் கைக்கிளை”
14. Puram; 83, 84, 85,
15. Tol; 946; “எழுதினை என்ப”.
16. Tol; 1035.
17. Studies in Tamil Literature and History pp. 274-275.
18. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam. p.6
19. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, pp. 405.
20. Tol. Aham, Barathiyar, p. 188.
21. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam. p. 27.
22. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, pp. 173, 177. Nampi Ahapporu., S. 240, 243.
23. Tol. 996.
24. Kali; 139, // 1-4.
25. Ibid; 138, //5-7.
26. Kali; 138, 139, 140, 141.
27. Kali; 138, / 77.
28. Kali; 141, / 23.
29. Nar; 16: “புணரிற் புணராது பொருளே பொருள்வயிற்
பிரியிற் புணராது புணர்வேஞ்
30. Marriage and Morals, p .115.
31. Ain; 355.
32. Nar; 24.
33. Kali; 12, / 12.
34. Aham; 53.
35. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam. 66.
36. Kali; 142-147.
37. Kali; 147. “நூணு மெய் நிற்ப”
38. Kali. 142.
39. Tamil Lexicon.
40. Ain; 114, 237. Kurun; 322. Tol. 1058.
41. Kurun; 11. Aham; 309.
42. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, p. 170.
43. Tol. 990.

44. Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage p. 18.
45. Ibid. P. 11.
46. Puram; 253 - 256.
47. Cf. Ovacceyti, p. 163.
48. Othello, Act I, Scene iii.
49. Ain; 4.
50. Ibid; 3.
51. History of the Tamils, P .67.
52. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam, p. 6.
53. The valuation of Sexual love, p. 118. in Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. 11.
54. Ante, pp. 49-51.
55. Kurun; 20.
56. Iraiyanar Ahapporul, p. 30.
57. Tol; 999.
58. The Kural; Preface, p. XXXVI.
59. Valluvar Kanda Natum Kamamum, pp. 187-190. Prof. T.P.M.
60. Pattinappalai, 218-220; 300-1
61. Kapilar, by V.Venkatarajulu Reddiyar, p .81.
62. Tol. 1492.
63. Lectures on Kalittogai, Presidential address. p. 13.
64. Iraiyanar Ahapporul. p. 214. Tirukkovai, 'Parattaiyir pirivu; Commentary, p. 354. "தலைமகளை ஊடலறிவித்தற்குப் பிரிதல்".
65. Dr. U.V.S. Kuruntogai, நூலாலராய்ச்சி p. 79. "தலைவியின் ஊடலுக்குக் காரணம் வேண்டுமென்பதற்காக இப்பரத்தையிற் பிரிதல் அமைந்தது என்பது அத்துணைச் சிறந்த காரணமாகத் தோற்றவில்லை"
66. Tirukkovai; 'parattaiyir pirivu' p. 3545.
67. Iraiyanar Ahapporul; p. 214.
68. Aham; 16, 376, 396; Nar, 150.
69. Kali; 82
70. Ibid; 84.
71. Tol; 1120.
72. Ibid; 1132.

73. Puram; 143-147.
74. Prostitution; p. 282; in Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II.
75. Kural. 920.
76. Tol; 1098. “மனையோள் ஒத்தலின்”
77. Ibid; l. 14.
78. Kali; 82, 84. Aham; 16
79. Tol; 1092, ll. 16,30.
80. Tol; 1147.
81. Puram; 73.
82. Ain; 97.
83. Cf. Kali, 26, 31.
84. Ain; 441-460; 481-500.
85. Kurun; 242.
86. Kali; 108.
87. Aham; 140, 390.
88. Kali; 62, 94, 110, 112 (for the correct view of Tol. 968 vide the commentary of Peraciriyar pp. 849-851).
89. Kurun; 295. Cf. Aham; 369.
90. Nar; 110.
91. Aham; 123.
92. Kali;18.

CHAPTER IV THE CHARACTERISTIC OF AHAM POETRY

In the foregoing three chapters our attention has been directed to the study of the subject matter of Ahattinai in its three aspects, viz., analysis, evolution and concept with illustrations from Sangam literature. How the content of Aham is restrictive, selective, isolated and universal has been explained. The term 'Aham' has two distinct elements, the matter already defined and the characteristic, now to be discussed. Even a trivial deviation either from the basic theme of Ahattinai, or from the grammatical characteristic of Aham poetry will exclude a poem from the Aham class. This characteristic is not accidental, but a corollary of the subject matter itself.

Tamil Academy

Before coming to the point, a reference to an important aspect in the History of Tamil language and Literature is worth making. The account given by the Commentator of Iraiyanar Ahapporul of the existence of the three Tamil Sangams, their duration, their location, the number of poets and patrons and the output of literary works has been subjected to severe criticism by all writers on the history of Tamil. Opinions of the scholars vary on the interpretation of the fabulous length of the Academies totalling 9990 years, the incredible number

of learned poets amounting to 8598 and some other details. Yet the truth of the existence of an organized Academy or Academies for the growth of Tamil language before and after the Christian era is maintained by almost all great writes, to wit., Professors M.S. Purnalingam Pillai, M. Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar, K.N. Sivaraja Pillai, K. Srinivasa Pillai, V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, K. Subramania Pillai, Maha Vidwan M. Raghava Iyengar.

One more valuable source of information in this regard is furnished by the study of Ahattinai. I am of opinion that, to conceive the forming of Ahattinai, there must have existed a great body of scholars belonging to the four regions and to the various strata of society. That body must have taken into account the regional songs and folk songs then in vogue and the manners and customs prevalent all over the Tamil country and peculiar to every region, before contriving the general edifice of Ahattinai. As Shelley aptly put it, 'All high poetry is infinite'. To be so, the theme taken for poetic treatment should also be infinite¹. No other theme is so human, divine, universal and eternal as love. It is therefore no wonder that this theme has been adopted for Aham poetry by the Academy of the Tamils whose universal outlook is clearly visible in the oft-quoted line 'Yatum ure yavarum kelir'² (Every village is my native village and all are my kith and kin).

Unless there were an assembly of learned men, the prescription of some and the omission of other aspects of sexual love for treatment in Aham poetry, as explained in the previous chapter, would not be possible. Ahattinai could not be the creation of one man; for should it be so, however great a genius he might have been, the universal adherence to the strict principles enunciated in Ahattinai by all poets of the Sangam Age was too much to expect. The technical terms

with broad meanings to be used in Aham as well as Puram must have been coined not by an individual but by a group of men. Tolkappiyam was not the first book in Tamil written on Ahattinai. From the beginning of the first chapter on 'Ahattinai Iyal' the author repeatedly refers to the authority of his predecessors and always makes mention of them in the plural, like "elutinai enpa" 'enmanar pulavar', 'pulamaiyore' etc.

The impulse behind the mild nature of Ahattinai

Everybody would like to know what impulse induced the Tamils to conceive a literature like Ahattinai, with a theme mild, pleasant and unmingled with any notion of death. Were they a race of people afraid of death and adverse consequences? The creation of Purattinai, a kind of literature as a counterpart of Ahattinai, is a sufficient and satisfactory proof of the war-like tendency of the Tamils. That they preferred heroic death in battlefield with sword-cuts on their breast to dying at home by disease is proverbial. A comparative study of the subjects of Ahattinai and Purattinai will bring out the truth that these two great divisions were conceived simultaneously as twins and that it was a body of literary men that was responsible for judiciously assigning the gentle theme of love based on mutuality to Aham, and the robust theme of heroism based on enmity to puram. The grammar of Purattinai did not consume much of the energy of the Academy; for no restriction in the treatment of Puram aspects was found necessary. After all Purattinai has no universal ideal. It purports to say or narrate to a great extent the mode of warfare by the Tamils and the feats exhibited by them in the exuberance of heroism. Because of the nature of the treatment of the Puram subject, most of the particulars in Purattinai fell into desuetude and only serve as materials for the historical study of the life of the Tamils.

The genius of the Academy finds its full expression in the delicate construction of Ahattinai. That Academy thought, I suppose, that home life should be so described as to evoke a pleasant and gentle feeling in the minds of men who ever took pleasure in fighting and never cared for their own lives and those of others in hostility. The arbitrary exclusion of the element of the idea of death or any other horrible occurrence from the literature of Ahattinai may be profitably contrasted with “tokainilai”, a sub-theme or turai of Purattinai, wherein is stated the total destruction of the kings of opposite³. That institution not only eschewed any unpleasant element in the theme of Ahattinai but introduced many dramatic elements for its composition. It is therefore that Ahattinai, unlike Purattinai, is aptly named ‘pulaneri valakkam’ or poetic usage⁴. The purpose in making mention of the existence of the Sangam in ancient days and in making a contrast of Aham with Puram is to declare that Ahattinai richly deserves a systematic study, as it is the fruit of a coordinated and intelligent effort of a learned body and that a great deal must have been the motive for such a well-planned undertaking.

The characteristic of ‘no-naming’

After pointing out the organisation which gave literary shape to the many ideas rooted in Ahattinai, we shall now see what the characteristic of Aham poetry is.

‘Makkal nutaliya Ahan aintinaiyam

Cutti oruvarp peyarkolap perar’.

(Tol: 999)

The first line refers to the source of Aintinai and the second line to its treatment. The meaning of this suttriam of great significance in Ahattinai is “Poets are not allowed to associate the love-aspects of Aintinai pertaining to all people, with the

proper name of a particular person”. In other words, characters of Aintinai, men and women, should not be mentioned by any individual name, real or imaginary. The implication is that the hero, heroine, their companions, mother and nurse, father and brothers, prostitutes and all other characters figuring in Aintinai should be called by the general names of the region or village, like natan, turaivan, uran etc., or by the occupational names, like ulavan, ulatti, ayan, aytti, etc., or by the sex-denoting names, like atavan, nampi, peruntakai, cirumi, toli pentu etc., or by the demonstrative pronouns avan, aval and avar.

In this connection there is a point worth explaining. According to this suttiram, it appears that the principle of impersonal characterisation is laid down only in Aintinai, and not in Kaikkilai and Peruntinai. This is not true. A specific mention of the strict obedience by poets to this principle becomes necessary in the case of Aintinai wherein lies the great temptation of going astray from the concept of Ahattinai. As pointed out before, Kaikkilai and Peruntinai have altogether only five turais (one plus four) and Peruntinai treats of the incidents only of the characters belonging to Aintinai. I write this only to stress the importance of composing a separate suttiram for Aintinai to bring home the inviolable rule to the poets. That this ‘no-naming’ is applicable not only to poems in Aintinai but to poems of the whole class of Ahattinai is unambiguously pronounced in the next suttiram.

Purattinai marunkir poruntin allatu

Ahattinai marunkin alavutal ilave.

(Tol: 1000)

Ilampuranar explains under this suttiram that it is intended to make the above rule applicabe to others hitherto not applied

(eitatu eitivittal), that individual names will not occur in the divisions of Kaikkilai and Peruntinai of Aham class too and that the subject of Ahattinai or Ahapporul will be general and not personal in character. This explanation is correct, as it fully corresponds with the concept of Ahattinai. It is needless here to discuss the incorrectness of the interpretations of these two suttrams by other commentators⁵.

The significance of the omission of proper names

We know that Ahattinai treats not of the amorous career of an individual with his or her success or failure and that it has confined itself to the description of certain selective isolated amatory incidents to be found among the people in⁶ To mirror the diffused nature of the Aham theme, it is ordained that Aham poetry should affix no names to its characters. It would be correct, one may suggest, had it been said that these separate love incidents should not be linked with each other so as to appear in the form of a story and that no single individual should be mentioned to be the hero or heroine of all of them. We may ask, what is the harm of associating a single love aspect with a personal name, true to the nature of the theme? We may reply by putting another query. What is the idea of choosing some unconnected incidents in place of a long continuous love-story relating to the life of one set of lovers from the beginning to the end?

As a result of our intensive study two essential points in Ahattinai emerge. The first point is as follows: The life of any young couple will not supply many incidents of a mild nature. It will in most cases be a course of mixed happiness. To make a collection of pleasant amorous situations for treatment in Ahattinai, we have to pick them up here and there from the lives of lovers of varying moods and status. Narration

of incidents is not the method of Aham poetry. One cannot present the different mental actions and reactions of several heroes and heroines on a particular love-phase, if he attempts to produce a continuous story of a hero and a heroine. It is possible for Mamulanar to compose 13 poems to describe the different feelings of many ladies on a similar situation like the separation of their husbands, because description of lovers' moods or states of mind affected by one or more situations is the motive of Ahattinai. On this basis Kayamanar's treatment of a single theme or turai 'the lamentation of the mother or nurse over the elopement of the girl in 17 poems is justified. It names are attached to the Aham characters, critics will attempt to compare and contrast heroes and heroines with a historical sense, giving no prominence to the psychological aspect of the many ways in which a particular situation in love influences the human being of varying conditions. To avoid continuity in Aham theme and to lay stress on the psychological states of lovers, in the treatment of Aham poetry, separate love-incidents with no personal or historical characters should form the theme of any Aham lyric.

The second point is the ideal of Ahattinai. Ahattinai resolutely sets its face against the entrance of any historical element with reference to characters into its fold. That is to say, no incident should be attributed to real persons and though an Aham poet may take for treatment an actual scene witnessed by him in the life of a lover, it is his duty, by virtue of his belonging to the Aham class, to divorce that scene from the name of that person in order to generalise it. As in Drama, so in Ahattinai, the poet completely identifies himself with his characters and says and should say everything in the names of the hero, the heroine, the maid, the mother, the nurse, the prostitute and so on. He cannot stand apart from his poetry

and pass judgment upon them. No person other than the characters which are also conventional will be allowed to play a part, big or small, in Aham. But there is a marked difference between the literature of Drama and that of Ahattinai in regard to the characters. In Drama, the characters have names real or imaginary. The dramatist does not simply mention them as the hero, or the heroine, or the villain of the play. Every action should be related to particular individuals, like Orlando and Rosalind, Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona. Ahattinai completely rules out any name real or imaginary being attached to any of its characters. As Tolkappiyar worded 'Kilavon mena', 'kilavol ceppal', tolikku uriya, cevilimena, kamak kilattiyar mena, the common terms of characters will do in Ahattinai. As pointed out before, outsiders are not taken as characters in Aham course which is purely a family affair. When family members speak among themselves, only terms of relationship or affection are usually employed and to call one's father, mother, husband and wife by their names is ordinarily considered awkward.

Sex Education

Now we shall attempt to discover the ideal behind the 'no-naming' characteristic or behind the elimination of the personal or the historical element in Aham part. Ahattinai is primarily intended to impart sex-education to young men and women. That literature is a wholesome means for this purpose has been accepted by Havelock Ellis. Emphasizing the spiritual initiation of youths into manhood and womanhood, he says "This cerebral initiation commonly occurs to the youth through the medium of literature. The influence of literature in sexual education thus extends, in an uncalculable degree, beyond the narrow sphere of manuals on sexual hygiene, however admirable and desirable these

may be. The greater part of literature is more or less distinctly penetrated by erotic and auto-erotic conceptions and impulses; nearly all imaginative literature proceeds from the root of sex to flower in visions of beauty and ecstasy The youth becomes acquainted with the imaginative representation of love before he becomes acquainted with the reality of love..... All literature is thus, to the adolescent soul, a part of sexual education⁷. His is a general statement on all literature. In other kinds of literature, many extraordinary, criminal and supernatural love themes are generally adopted for the heightening of poetic imagination. To give pleasure to the readers is their aim. The goal of Ahattinai is conceived in a different way. No theme is introduced for the poet's own sake. That it describes the normal sexual instincts is very clear from the five love-aspects, union, separation, patience, suffering and sulking. It brings to light in hundreds of ways the masculine and feminine sexual characteristics. It teaches the husband and wife how they should respect each other's sexual desire and always insists on the perfect mental union in the act of close physical embrace. It brings home to everyone the value and importance of sexual gratification and initiates one also into the art of love-making. That the objective of Ahattinai is sexual education is corroborated by Meyppattiyal, a chapter in Tolkappiyam wherein the author details the subtle physical expressions during the actual intercourse of lovers⁸.

To enlighten the people in sexual matters, historical elements will prove a handicap. In matters of heroism, munificence, patriotism, scholarship and the like, reference to historical personages will be a fruitful method to induce people to follow their examples. But love is the most delicate of all human emotions. To touch upon all the sexual behaviours even of civilised and intelligent lovers will not be

pleasant and will sometimes smack of indecency. Any lewdly comic treatment will tend to besmirch love and sex. It will appear more unpleasant and more indecent, if such naked and rude treatment is associated with personal names. Personal reference in matters of sex will produce a bad effect and sex education will be a failure. To make sex education universal, sound and effective, examples must be general in character. The concrete should be rendered into the abstract. Biographical incidents should be rendered philosophic. Realizing the bad psychological result produced by sexual lessons with a personal back-ground, the Tamil genius has laid down the strict rule that characters of Ahattinai should be kept nameless by poets. The Suttiram (999) already quoted is suited for all the inferences. The first line 'makkal nutaliya Ahan aintinai' has a double meaning: (1) Aintinai signifying or representing the people at large (2) Aintinai intended for the people at large.

That the naming of characters in literature is a problem and that it has agitated some great thinkers may be understood from what follows. While making a distinction between a historian and a poet, Aristotle says: "Poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do, which is the aim of poetry, though it affixes proper names to the characters"⁹. From this extract the insignificance of adding proper names to characters in poetry whose outlook is universal becomes clear. By way of discarding one of the imputations that "poets give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and so, not being true, proves a falsehood", Sir Philip Sidney

vindicates that “Their naming of man is but to make their picture the more lively, and not to build any history, painting men, they cannot leave men nameless¹⁰. I should like to point out that there is in Tamil a kind of literature, Ahattinai where poets paint men without names and avoid any possibility of constructing history, in order to make the application of the truth of poetry to all human beings. Ahattinai requires no defence in this aspect, as the imputation does not touch upon it.

A confusion likely to arise from the statement that history has no place in Ahattinai, may be now cleared up. If one reads Aham poems even in a haphazard and desultory way he will be amazed to see the innumerable historical references in them. But it is well to understand that they have no direct bearings on the theme of Ahattinai. The rule does not forbid any historical information being employed as similies or as part of descriptions of a country, in the capacity of ‘karupporul’ in the body of Aham poetry¹¹. Taking this allowance, Sangam poets have freely used historical allusions to enhance the value of their Aham lyrics. Some poets like Paranar and Mamulanar seem to have regarded Ahattinai as a means to give prominence to some great historical occurrences. The implication of the rule is that the theme of Ahattinai and its characters should be pure and free of historical significance.

Love aspects in other kinds of Tamil Literature

The influence of Sangam Aham literature on the later works in Tamil is too great for reckoning. Great epic authors, Ilanko, Tiruttakkadevar, Sekkilar and Kambar have deftly shaped the love parts in their poetry on the model of Ahattinai. In the second Kathai of Cilappadikaram, Kovalan, after his first experience of physical enjoyment with Kannaki goes

on praising in voluptuous terms her peacock-like tenderness, swan-like gait and parrot-like prattle. This portion is reminiscent of the theme 'nalam parattal' in Ahattinai. In the twenty seventh Kathai, the author has purposely described the patient waiting of the queen in Vanci, the capital of the Chera country, during the separation of her lord Senkuttuvan who had gone on an expedition of North India.

It is superfluous here to quote illustrations from every epic to prove how the course of love of the heroes and heroines has been pictured by the poets with a keen knowledge of Ahattinai. In many places in these works, for the sake of brevity and elucidation, commentators have pressed into service the technical terms of Ahattinai, like iyarkaippunarcci, nalamparattal, nayappu, arrutal, arramai, etc., and in some places quoted Aham suttirams of Tolkappiyam. I write all this to guard against a misunderstanding that all these love portions in epics are entitled to be called Ahattinai. No doubt the heroes and heroines of the Tamil epics are mutual lovers and most of the aspects of Ahattinai may be found in their love course. Yet two insurmountable objections, the continuity of the incidents which is the characteristic of epic poem and the associations of particular names, stand in the way of our accepting those love parts into the domain of Ahattinai.

Aham poets

That the poet has no separate place allotted to him or her in Ahattinai has already been mentioned. Poets need not always describe the love-incidents in the life of others or imaginary situations. They themselves may be good and emotional lovers and are at liberty to describe their own affairs. It is said of Shelley that his life and works are indissoluble. Referring to Shelley in connection with the

romantic movement, Bertrand Russell observes thus: “It was the obstacles to his desires that led him to write poetry. If the noble and unfortunate lady Emilia Viviani had not been carried off to a convent, he would not have found it necessary to write *Epipsychidion*; if Jan Williams had not been a fairly virtuous wife, he would never have written the *Recollection*”¹². The tendency to compose verses for the expression of one’s own love, if he is a poet, is found in the Sangam age. A poetess, Nakkannaiyar falls in love with Kopperunarkilli, a pugilist and receives no response from him. She is filled with a violent desire to embrace his vicuorious shoulders in the wrestling field; but her modesty is a hindrance. Grammar requires that the three stanzas¹³ by her should be assigned not to the class of Aham but to that of Puram, for self-expression and individual consciousness are out of place in Ahattinai.

“Though the essence of lyrical poetry is personality”, writes Hudson, “it must yet be remembered that the majority of the world’s great lyrics owe their place in literature very largely to the fact that they embody what is typically human rather than what is merely individual and particular, and that thus every reader finds in them the expression of experiences and feelings in which he himself is fully able to share. In such cases we do not have to put ourselves in the poet’s place because he has already put himself into ours”¹⁴. Thus an Aham poet must completely identify himself with the characters and should not give any sign of personal reference in his composition. Because of this compositional characteristic, it is said of Sangam poetry that “it has a personality of its own representing the group mind and the group personality of the *canam* age”¹⁵.

All the Sangam poets excepting Nakkannaiyar seem to have had a partiality for Aham characteristic and disguised

their selves with reference to personal experiences in matters of love, for the sake of universal application. The Aham poems of Atimantiyar and Vellivitiyar are clear instances. Both of them seem in their life to have plunged into deep grief over the separation of their husbands and left home in search of them. There is no doubt that their poems owe their birth to this personal grief. Yet these female poets have composed their poems in language untainted with personal tinge so that they are classified as Aham poems. It is unfortunate and undesirable that the unfeminine acts of Atimanti and Velliviti, in the exuberance of mental affliction, have been used as similes respectively by Auvaiyar¹⁶ and Paranaar¹⁷ in their Aham poems, when the doers were not desirous of disclosing their own action in their own verses. It is more unfortunate to see that Vellivitiyar herself referred to Atimanti in one of her verses¹⁸. It is true that but for these references in others poems, the origin of the poems of Atimanti and Velliviti, like those of other Sangam poets, will be a sealed book to us. At the same time we should admit that a knowledge of the historical background decreases the universal value of the poems of these two poetesses.

An intelligent student of Aham literature will never think of relating the love themes handled by a poet to his life. The 'no-naming' principle of Aham poetry is a glorious device for inducing the poets to register their own peculiar experiences too in the field of amorous career, without fear of censure and a sense of shyness, for the benefit of humanity. Love is a forceful passion congenital to all human beings. Poets are not exceptional to it. The love-affairs of poets who are endowed with the power of high-flown imagination and breadth of vision will realistically be more emotional, interesting and instructive. Therefore we may take for granted

that at least a good percentage of Aham lyrics must have preserved the experience of love inspired poets.

The meaning of the term 'Aham'

The term 'Aham' simply means, in my opinion, home¹⁹. The birth of love gives birth to the rise of this institution. This meaning is justified by the fact that only persons attached to the family are chosen to play in this literature. Any other meaning will appear pedantic and far fetched. I have already point out that Ahattinai is a peculiar kind of literature artificially created by a body of learned men. It is no mistake to assume that that body after great discussion must have chosen a term capable of expressing at least the fundamental qualities of Ahattinai. One of such qualities is the importance of union of hearts, as if they were one between lovers²⁰. The term may be taken to express this quality also, as 'heart' is one of the meanings of the word 'Aham'. It has another meaning 'self'. Every one is entitled to think over Aham poetry in terms of self, as no historical element is present in it. This is the implication of the ideal of Universality referred to by me.

Foot Notes

1. A Defence of Poetry. p .41.
2. Puram; 192.
3. Tol. 1017. "இருபெரு வேந்தர் தாமும் சுற்றமும் ஒருவரும் ஒழியாத் தொகைநிலை" cf. Puram; 62.
4. Tol; Porul; 56; Ilampuranam: "புறப்பொருள் உலகியல் பானன்றி வாராமையின் அது நாடகவழக்க மன்றாயிற்று"
5. Naccinarkkiniyar, Bharathiyar and Ilavalakanar.
6. Cf. "The Theory in Tolkappiyar" by Prof. T.P.M.. in Tamil Culture, vol. I. No.2.

7. Sexual Education, pp. 89-90 in Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II.
8. Tol; 1206-1211.
9. Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, p .43.
10. An Apologie for Poetrie, p .36.
11. “அகத்திணைக்கண் சார்த்துவகையான்
வந்தனவன்றித் தலைமை வகையாக வந்தில”
12. Marriage and Morals, p .61.
13. Puram; 83, 84, 85.
14. An Introduction to the study of Literatue, p .97.
15. “The Theory of Cankam Poetry” by Prof. T.P.M. in Tamil Culture vol. 1. No. 1.
16. Aham; 147.
17. Ibid; 76, 135, 222, 236.
18. Ibd; 45.
19. Tol; 1097: “அகம் புகல் மரபின்”
20. Cf. Tirukkural; 920: “இருமனப் பெண்டிர்” Tirukkovai; 7: “இருவரள்ளங்கனும்
ஒருவேமாறு கரப்ப”

CHAPTER V AHAM POETS OF THE SANGAM AGE

Sangam poets and Sangam poems, both in Aham and Puram, are calculated respectively to be 473 and 2381. Among them, Aham poets and Aham poems are 378 and 1862 respectively. Of them, there are 23 poetesses who have composed altogether 97 Aham poems. Ninety-five poets including nine poetesses have not sung any Aham aspect, that is, their treatment of the theme is confined exclusively to Puram class. Of the 378 Aham poets, those who composed poems exclusively on Aham are 301 and on both Aham and Puram 71. 145 poets have treated of only kalavu course, 140 poets only karpu course and 93 poets both kalavu and karpu.

Classification of Aham poems

Kind of theme	No. of poems	No. of poets
Kalavu	882	238
} Aintinai	} 1848	authorship unknown for 41 poems.
Karpu	966	233
		authorship unknown for 28 poems.
Kaikkilai	4	2
Peruntinai	10	1

**Classification of aham poets according to the
number of poems they composed**

No. of Aham Poems.	No. of Aham Poets.
1	242
2	51
3	22
4	10
5	5
6	6
7	3
8	6
9	5
10	2
Bet. 11-20	7
“ 21-30	2
“ 31-40	4
“ 61-75	3
“ 100-200	5

The above list shows that the number of Aham poets in whose name poems range from one to nine are 357. It can be easily understood that the poets who composed poems exceeding a hundred are none other than those of Ainkurunuru.

The literary standard of the Sangam Poets

Any critical student of the Sangam literature will subscribe to the view that the number of poems does not count much for measuring the poetic talent of a poet of those days and that an intellectual equality and a certain standard of perfection in language and diction have permeated throughout the Sangam poems whether they are composed by Kapilar, an author of the greatest number of poems or by Bramatatam, an Aryan king and the author of a single poem supposed to be the student of Kapilar¹. “The influence of the Sangams on Tamil literature was very beneficial. The censors took great care to separate the wheat from the tares among poetical compositions and preserved the dignity of the literature. They allowed no slang or vulgar words to creep into the poems submitted for their approval. Their rigid adherence to canons helped the production of good and flawless poems, though they there by crushed poetic freedom and originality²”. In this way Prof. M.S. Puranalingam Pillai tries to account for the similarity of the works of Sangam literature in the choice of words, in the mode of expression and in the treatment of themes. This may be partially true. Considering the achievement in the art of poetry of not a handful of poets but of all numbering nearly 500. I am inclined to suggest that the pattern of the educational system of the Sangam epoch might have been such as to inculcate into the minds of the students the good principle of treating only noble theme for the benefit of society and adopting purity of words and style for the orderly growth and preservation of language. As every poet is great in his own way, and as the number of Aham poets is about 400, the choice of some of the for treatment in this chapter is a dilemma. Space does not permit me to say at least something of all aham poets nor does it allow me to say all things even of the poets selected for the purpose. My

intention is to choose only the poets who have mostly interested themselves in the treatment of the love-aspect or uripporul of the characters and to study their poems only with reference to Aham elements. That is to say, the treatment of nature or mutarporul and karupporul in Aham poetry will not be much commented upon in this chapter.

Originality of the Sangam poets

It will be no surprise if one questions whether a literature like Ahattinai, with so much implacable restrictions and limitations in theme and in treatment does not clip the wings of poets and suppress their poetic inspiration and original thinking. The question could not be easily and satisfactorily answered, were the Aham literature of the Sangam age not available to us and were only the Aham grammar of Tolkappiyam with us. It seems that the very literary conventions and legislations which are, in our view, the stumbling block for the freeplay of the imagination have been a flawless source of poetic animation and a resourceful field for originality. We know only the limitations, the one side of Aham grammar; but how within them lies the immense scope for great poetical activities we have yet to know. In analysing the poets attitude towards conventions, John Livingston Lowes places them under three categories:- (1) those who passively accept conventions, (2) those who accept and colour them with freshness by the touch of their genius and (3) those who completely reject them³. The Sangam poets may be said to belong to the second category. The same author proves with many illustrations that originality is independent of invention and that it is rather the gift of seeing and seizing the latent possibilities of familiar things⁴. If we accept this meaning given for originality, every Aham poet may be undoubtedly credited with the gift of originality.

Love, the theme of ahattinai itself, is a subject perennially affording scope for the exercise of varied originality. Though poets of all times in all countries have treated all aspects of love, nobody will say that love has lost its freshness for creation and become a hackneyed and conventional subject. So long as there are human beings, human passion also will be subjected to poetic treatment with new vigour and with a new flash of vision. Any aspect of normal love will be enough for a genius to explore new beauty and reveal its trilling secrets.

Secondly, unrestrained freedom is given to poets in the selection of situations or turais for treatment. In a continuous story like the epic, the poet is bound to take up such situations as are unfit for poetic imagination, for the sake of harmony and symmetry. No such difficulty is forced upon Aham poets, as Ahattinai deals with unconnected subjects. Ahattinai provides an outlet for the passionate feelings of the poets in the general name of characters. They may compose poems only on the love-incidents in which they find inspiration and pleasure or to which the winds of inspiration direct them. Again there is no restriction in the choice of characters. A poetess may describe the feelings of a hero and a poet those of a heroine, if they like.

Thirdly, the rule that a love theme or uripporul should be presented with the appropriate background affords immeasurable opportunity for the display of a poet's versatile genius. The supreme test of the greatness of an Aham poet lies in his minute knowledge of Nature and in his power of artistically and appropriately handling Nature for the embellishment of Aham elements. Due to the elaborate treatment of Nature, poems of Ahananuru are longer than those of Narrinai, Kuruntogai and Ainkurunuru. But for the setting in

of the natural backgrounds with historical similies in Aham poetry, the unique position which the Sangam classics now enjoy in the domain of Tamil literature will be a questionable one. As Tolkappiyar has noted many exceptions⁵ to the rules governing the use of mutarporul and karupporul, Aham poets even before his time seem to have not strictly followed the grammar in this point and to have enjoyed a partial freedom in the choice of the fauna and flora for describing the love-aspects. It is well to remember that no poet ignorant of Nature could flourish as an Aham poet and might be considered fit for composing an Aham poem. With all the restrictions, the perennial theme of Ahattinai, the isolated character of Aham subject and the portrayal of Nature as its background are vital points for a real genius to exhibit his originality and to present his poems with imagination and beauty. I sincerely believe that the universal appreciation of the originality of the Sangam poems was due to the faithful adherence to the canons of Aham grammar by all Sangam poets.

1. Antar Makan Kuruvalutiyar

Kuruvaluti, son of Antar, is an author of three Aham poems dealing with only kalavu course. All of them are in the name of the maid who addresses the hero in different contexts. The poet has a liking for the description of the meeting places by day and by night. His portraiture of the growing beauty of the young girl is minute and precise, as is evident from the following lines referring to the curly lock of hair easy for plaiting, the golden complexion of the body and the shooting breasts with nipple causing the bodice to give way:

*“Pinnuvita neritta kuntalum ponnena
akattu arumpiya cunankum vampuvitak
kannuruttu elutaru mulaiyum”* (Aham: 150)

The sagacity of the maid is revealed in her request that the hero should spend all the day with them in sporting and bathing in the mountain pool and that he should visit their village during the night too. It is usual for Aham poets to mention that journey in the night is dangerous due to darkness and the movement of tigers in search of prey and consequently that the heroine and her companion are always in fear of danger to the hero's life. Here the maid suggests that the path will be full of moon-light, that the danger is an illusion for there is no tiger on the way, but only tiger-like flowers of the Venkai tree and that therefore, the hero can stay with them till night-fall⁶. In another poem the shrewd maid gives clue to the hero that there is a sand-hill near their village and that during the nightly visits he can park his cart there without fear of disclosure.

2. Ammuvar

Ammuvar is a poet with 127 Aham lyrics in his name. He has treated kalavu course in 82 poems and karpu in 45. To his credit, his poems are included in the four anthologies, Ahananuru, Narrinai, Kuruntogai and Ainkurunuru. The assignment of his poems to the Aham character is as follows:- Heroine 56, maid 43, hero 17, prostitute 10 and mother of the heroine 1.

Ammuvar is an Aham poet throughout. No poem in Purananuru is found in his name. He may be given credit for having not only written his poems in the name of many characters, but treated of many situations both of kalavu and karpu. I should like to observe that the best examples for the beginning stages of kalavu course, like Iyarkaippunarcci, Itantalaipattu and Pankarkuttam, exist in his Neytal part of Ainkutunuru. Of all the Aham poets, it is he who has attempted

to produce in ten poems, i.e. in 40 lines, the scattered situations of Aham theme in an orderly form in a nutshell. The origin of Kovai literature in later times may be traced to Ammuvar's poems. Not only that. In his poems for the first time in Tamil literature, he has concatenated the ten stanzas in metrical sequence which gave birth to the production of many short and long poetical compositions in the form now called "Antatittotai". That Ammuvar is an original thinker and contributor to the development of Tamil literature is thus proved.

Ammuvar is unequalled in the accurate knowledge of the 'neytal' or littoral region and its fauna and flora. It is characteristic of him to picture the different aspects of love with 'neytal' backgrounds⁷, thus breaking the unrealistic poetic convention that union should be treated in the background of the mountainous scenery, sulking of the agricultural tract and patience of the pastoral territory. His presentation of the natural background is justified, for in reality the scene of all the love acts excepting separation⁸ or palai is one and the same region. In this he seems to be more realistic than most of the Aham poets.

Ammuvar has made the young girls of the community of salt-makers the heroines of two of his poems⁹. He describes a love incident between a girl hawker and a hero who is enamoured of her graceful and sweet voice. She cries out that salt, will be sold for paddy in equal measure. The word in Tamil for salt is 'uppu'. It admits of paronomasia, as sweetness if one of its meanings. The youth in a jolly and sportive mood questions her about the price of the 'uppu' (sweetness) of her body, as he is not concerned with the price of the common salt 'uppu'. These lines in the text are:

*“nellum uppum nere urir
kolliro venac ceritorum nuvalum
avvanku unti amaittolai nin
meyval uppin vilai yeyyam”* (Aham: 390)

It is generally known that word-play is foreign to Sangam genius. Yet this poet has once again revealed his originality in making puns upon words against the normal literary trend of his time.

The heroines of his poems are characterised as firm and resigned and intelligently submissive. It is said that a lady-love, overwhelmed with grief on account of her parents proposing to give her in marriage to some stranger, abstains from any kind of food as a mark of protest¹⁰. A husband returns from the house of the prostitutes and the moment she glances at him on his arrival, the wife forgets her resentment and pours out her deep fidelity in words of incomparable felicity.

*“immai mari marumai ayinum
niyakiyar yem kanavanai
yanakiyar nin nencu nerpavale”* (Kurun: 49)

In these lines, she evinces her ardent desire that in all subsequent births he must be her husband and she his wife who with her sweet temper would please his herat. This noble declaration from the mouth of a seperated wife will certainly correct the unfaithful course of a thoughtful husband and he will surely think of no public woman. The same feminine ideal is again expressed by the poet in a different context. To the consoling maid, the sad lady speaks steadfastly that she does not fear death but she dreads the possibility of forgetting her lover due to the change of birth after death, as is clear from the lines,

*“Catal ancen ancuvai cavin
Pirappup piritakuvatu ayin
Marakkuven kollen katalan yenave”* (Nar: 397)

3. Allur Nanmullaiyar

Nanmullaiyar of Allur is one of the renowned poetesses of the Sangam age. Of her ten Aham lyrics, two are of the kalavu course and eight of the Karpuru course. The subject mainly treated by her is ‘marutam’ or separation for prostitutes. The heroine is the character of seven poems. The very name of her village, Allur is employed as a simile to the once prosperous life of the heroine.¹¹

As a native of agricultural place, as is evident from the phrase “pinta nellin allur”, her treatment of ‘marutam’ things to form the poetic device ‘ullurai’ is natural and pertinent. To indicate by implication the hero’s burning search for new harlots every day by immodest means, it is figuratively said that a buffalo, getting disgusted with its stall, breaks the strong shackles by night, removes the thorny fence with its horns and gluttonises the fresh lotus flowers in the tank, to the disturbance of the fishes in it. As I explained in the second chapter under the division ‘The background of Psychology’,¹² it is clear that the karupporul (things pertaining to ‘marutam’ region) is so arranged by Nanmullaiyar as to convey the meanings of Aham aspect. The handling of the ‘marutam’ theme by a poetess proves the freedom enjoyed by Sangam poets in the choice of Aham turais; yet it is a truism that the love psychology of women can be truly understood in poems of female characters when sung by poetesses, as the love poems by poets can faithfully reveal the psychology of men. The little stanza beginning with ‘kukkoo enratu koli’¹³ by this poetess, unique in the entire Aham literature, discloses a

sensuous woman's anxiety veiled by feigned modesty, to have an unrelaxed embrace with her husband and her mental affliction at the intervention of menstruation.

4. Alankudi Vankanar

Vankanar of Alankudi is a poet of six Aham lyrics all on 'marutam', three in the name of the kept-mistresses and three in the name of the confidante of the wife. The artistic contrivance 'ullurai' is best fitted to be adopted by poets dealing with the theme of prostitution, the nature of which requires refined treatment. Knowing this, Vankanar has formed 'ullurai' in five poems.

In his composition, the prostitute assumes equality with the wedded wife and speaks, in derogatory terms, of her oldness caused by begetting children. She attributes the cynical attitude of the wife to her loss of youth and to her envy of the young girls now loved by her husband¹⁴. It is interesting to know that the prostitute tells the hero that he always lives in her heart and that she has no life without him. These words expressive of fidelity from a courtesan prove what I said in the third chapter, regarding the moral rectitude of the courtezans in general.

In Aintinai, the maid is really a mouthpiece of the lady-love when she addresses the hero. It is therefore fitting to interpret the words of the companion, as reflecting the mind of the housewife. The poet Venkanar has depicted the heroine as sensitive to the unbrindled dissolute course of the husband and at the same time as concious of her two-fold responsibility in maintaining the household and in begetting legitimate progeny-a responsibility to which the prostitute is not entitled.

“..... avarum
 Paintoti makalirotu ciruvarp payantu
 Nanri canra karpotu
 Empatatu atal ataninum arite” (Nar: 330)

The third line refers to the noble household education. One of the meanings of the word ‘Karpu’ is education or knowledge, as is obvious from the line “veliril karpu”¹⁵ in another poem of this poet. How the concept of life of a Tamil wife two thousand years ago was similar to that of a Greek Lady will be seen in the following extract:-

“When the Greek woman had become a mother she had attained the object of her life. Then two tasks were allotted to her, which she considered the highest imaginable—the management of domestic affairs and the bringing up of her children, of the girls until they were married, of the boys until the awakening of the spiritual individuality of the soul. Thus marriage became for the Greeks a means to an end, the means of acquiring a legitimate generation to come after them, and an organized and trustworthy management of household affairs. The kingdom of the wife involved the complete control of domestic affairs, in which she was absolute mistress”¹⁶.

5. Alamperi Cattanar

Cattanar has eight poems in his name, four belonging to kalavu and the other four to karpu. He has mainly treated of grief or irankal both of the hero and the heroine and exhibited his talent for setting the same theme in the appropriate background. The sound of the birds separated or united has obtained frequent treatment in his poems. The lady is pictured as acutely affected by hearing the solitary calling

of the dove¹⁷ and the heron to¹⁸ their mates and the pleasant voice of the anril with its mate on the stems of the palmyra adjacent to the house¹⁹. The hero too is said to have responded to the sweet murmuring of the mated anril²⁰. From his poems we learn that seasonal influence on the mental aspects of the main characters was described in kalavu course too.

6. Itaikkatanar

Itaikkatanar has composed nine Aham stanzas all of them with the pastoral background. The chief character mainly figuring in his poems is the hero. His treatment of the two related themes-the lady's restlessness at the sight of the rainy season and the hero's address to the charioteer-does not deserve our appreciation. A special feature of this poet, whether it is praiseworthy or blameworthy is the repetition of the same lines in different poems of his. For example,

*“Mullai canra karpin
Melliyar kurumakal uraivin ure”*

are the concluding lines of two of his poems²¹. This repetition of lines combined with lack of variation in Aham theme leads us to form a poor opinion about the talent of Itaikkatanar. But he has an accurate knowledge of the fauna and flora of the 'mullai' region during the cloudy season, and of the manners and customs of the shepherd community. And his description of mutarporul and karupporul, rather than uripporul is original and apt. His six poems of Ahananuru contain altogether 104 lines, of which 85 lines are devoted to the study of Nature. The separated husband and wife in his poems are in no hasty mood to reunite. They are characterised as having complete control over their passion.

7. Ilankirananar

Ilankirananar is one of the reputed geniuses of Palaittainai and exclusively an Aham poet. Of his 16 poems, 15 are of karpu course. The only kalavu poem by him mentions the ecstasy born of the first embrace. The subject he has chosen for treatment is the hero's address to his heart. He has such a degree of mastery in the handling of the particular phase of Palai theme as to introduce a novelty into every one of his poems and to remove the feeling of monotony to the readers.

In one poem, the hero who parts from the heroine, after first union in Iyarkaippunarcchi, tells his own heart about the coolness and beauty of her sweet-smelling tresses wherein he lies during enjoyment²². In another poem the hero, in a state of mental torture brings home to the heart earnestly desirous of earning wealth, the contrast between the pleasurable life he is leading at home on that day and the untold suffering he is to experience on the morrow in the desert²³. In a third poem, the hero, after a few miles journey recalls to his mind the resentful words of his sweet heart the day before, and sadly comments upon the gradual disappearance of the sight of his village where she lives²⁴. In a fourth poem, the hero, in the middle of his travel, requests the heart which was so adamant as to respect his argument about the superiority of pleasure in the company of his wife over wealth, to desist from thinking of her broad shoulders²⁵. In a fifth poem, the hero plainly forbids the heart to depart for a second time, as he is now practically acquainted with the whimsical mood and unsteady manner of his heart²⁶. In this way, Ilankiran enlivens the theme with varying contexts and different psychological interpretations.

According to the salient rule of Ahattinai, the hero should not be described as mentally distressed with the

passionate thought of his beloved, while engaged in any work away from her. To escape from such a rule and bring out the relative suffering of the husband in separation and thereby to present a complete picture of the palai theme in every line of his poems, the poet has chosen the period before the hero embarks upon his work abroad or after its execution. How the hero, in a meditative mood, compares his own depth of feelings with that of the heroine in loneliness is charmingly and diversely demonstrated by the poet in many of his compositions. The wife in his poems wishes her lord a happy and prosperous return²⁷ and makes only an appeal to him not to prolong his stay abroad²⁸. The inconsolable mourning of a stag with the young ones and its fasting without drinking water and grazing on grass at the sudden death of its kind mate caused by the violent arrow of the cruel hunters and the greedy act of the eagle in seizing the remnant of the foul flesh of the wild cow (maraiya) to feed its mate for relieving its fatigue born of delivery²⁹ are appropriate backgrounds set by Ilankiranaar to heighten the gloomy aspect of the palai theme.

8. Ilantevanar

There are four Aham lyrics in Sangam classics composed by Ilantevanar, of which three are found in Ahananuru in the name of the heroine of the kalavu course. The address by the girl direct to the hero in kalavu stage is uncommon, but it is a characteristic of the writers of turais for all Aham poems to attribute the speech to the maid, even though it can really be attributed to the heroine. Here such a course is not possible because of the manner of treatment of the theme and the use of words in his poems by Ilantevanar. He has treated only the theme of nightly meetings in all the

three kalavu poems. He has strictly followed the rule of Aham grammar in describing the harsh cold season and midnight as the appropriate time for Kurinci.

The heroine is characterized as bold and audacious and as plain and sensual. When all the members of the family are asleep, she steals away from the house and waits long for the lover, leaning on a certain tree and unmindful of the biting North wind³⁰. She sarcastically expresses her disapproval of his coming in the dark with a glittering spear through the thick forest full of rutting elephants.³¹ She longs for early marriage to have fearless and uninterrupted pleasure and to attain the ideal of motherhood, as is implied in her reference to the pleasant sleep of the female elephant with its first young baby and with the male elephant gently touching it (wife).³²

“matappiti

Malaitaval cilampir katuncul inru

Kalaitin yakkai vilaikaliru taivara

Valaiyam cilampir runcum”

(Aham; 328)

9. Uloccanar

Uloccanar is an author of 32 Aham lyrics of which 27 come under the category of kalavu course. His main character is the maid or toli. Uloccanar, like Ammuvanar is a poet who knows intimately the life and customs of the fisherfolk and the karupporul or the vegetable and animal kingdoms of the maritime region, but his choice of themes, unlike Ammuvanar’s is limited and of a similar nature. He may be regarded as a poet excellent in the treatment of the kurinci theme in the background of ‘neytal’ scenery.

In the littoral tract, there are not many natural hindrances to the trysts of lovers. The only obstruction spoken

of by the poet is the attack of the strong shark on the legs of the chariot-horses of the hero³³. But as an irritating and painful impediment, the poet refers to public gossip or ‘alar’ in abundance in most of his verses, with varying effects. It is only his poems that clearly state the murmuring and open stages of rumour, what are technically called ‘ampal’ and ‘alar’.

*“Cilarum palarum kataikkan nokki
Mukkin uccic cuttuviral certti
Marukir pentir ampal turra”* (Nar: 149)

In these lines the nature of ‘ampal’ is correctly described. It merely consists of physical expressions, like communicating the news from one to another through the suspicious side-glance, and by touching the nose with the forefinger. Sometimes the women in groups used to speak among themselves of the love-affair of the girl in a subdued and mild tone, like the murmuring of the cranes in assembly.³⁴ The never-stopping ‘ampal’ and ‘alar’ are mentioned by Uloccanar as responsible for disclosing the secret course particularly to the mother of the girl, for the mother’s chiding, caning and imprisoning the daughter³⁵, for the unhappy return of the chariot in the night without meeting³⁶, for the elopement³⁷, for urging the hero to marry³⁸, and for bringing the clandestine course to a successful end³⁹. In a poem of the karpū stage, reference is made to the birth of ‘ampal’ when the forlorn wife is not immersed in grief.⁴⁰

In Uloccanar’s poems, the female companion plays a big part at every possible opportunity. As the obstacles are few, the maid assists the loves to prolong the kalavu course. The poet characterizes the heroine as more sensual than the hero.⁴¹ Therefore the maid invites the hero as a guest in the night and discloses the existence of a thicket suitable for secrecy.⁴² Her cleverness is manifest when she instructs the

hero that he should pose as a stranger coming from a long distance with the result that her parents will earnestly request him to stay for the night with his attendants⁴³. She finally advises the hero to get married due to the vigilance of 'alar'. Some of the poems describing the mental affliction of the heroine in the furtive course are very pathetic. Even for a day not to see the sight of the chariot or to hear the sound of its bell will be enough for the maiden to be absorbed in deep sorrow. To her, the pleasant sea-shore, the grove adjacent to it and the village appear as desolate as the desolation of her own heart.

Because of the age-long and strong influence of religion, the little girls of Tamil Nad used to play in their own imaginative and childish way, constructing temples, installing deities and worshipping with offerings of things gathered here and there. Here is a description by Uloccanar of the kind of play adopted by the girls of the Sangam days:

*“Ciruvi nalal tentoy ollinar
Nerilai makalir varmanal ilaitta
Vantar pavai vanamulai murrattu
Onporic cunankin aitupatattaam”* (Nar: 191)

The little playmates make girl-like dolls with prominent breasts out of sand under the nalal trees and the trees in bloom shed upon the breasts the heap of pollen dust so as to give them a golden colour, what is called in literary parlance 'cunanku'. In these lines we get a glimpse of how the ancient Tamil society trained its young girls in the fields of love even from childhood.

10. Okkur Macattiyar

Macattiyar of Okkur is a poetess in whose name there are seven Aham lyrics dealing entirely with karpu course. She

is renowned for artistically expressing the sentiments of the husband and wife living apart. Excepting a poem which is on the 'marutam' aspect, all the other six are devoted to the 'mullai' theme. It is interesting to note that the word 'mullai'; repeats itself in those six poems. I should like to observe that the only objective poem by this poetess in Purananuru has also the turai 'mutinmullai' the theme of which is to describe the heroic manifestation of a housewife born in the warrior tribe.

Twelve characters are enumerated as entitled to speak in Ahattinai⁴⁴, of whom the hero and his companion, the heroine and her companion and the nurse and the prostitute naturally occupy a prominent place. There are some characters whose role is insignificant and on whose names few poets are inclined to compose poems. In the entire karpu poetry of Aham literature, three poems are utterances (kurru) of 'Ulaiyar' or the neighbours of which two are sung by Macattiyar and one by Katuvan Mallanar. The neighbours who witness the happy return of the hero observe that the mistress of the house will now have the opportunity of entertaining guests :

"Viruntum perukunal Polum" (Aham; 324)

"Virunter Perranal tiruntilai yole" (Ibid; 384)

This utterance refers to a custom peculiar to Tamil society. The ideal of wedded life is hospitality.⁴⁵ When the husband is out, friends and strangers will rarely visit and as a rule will not stay and chances for entertaining guests are almost nil.⁴⁶ His return with the charioteer and sometimes with the attendants gives the wife an immediate opportunity for feeding the guests with delicacies. In a poem by Itaikkatanar, a poet of 'mullai' theme, the hero recalls to mind

the delight of his wife, in receiving guests even beyond the late hours of night⁴⁷. That the Tamil society bestowed an equal status on all men, irrespective of their kinds of occupations is obvious from the fact that the driver was considered as a guest of the family of the hero and that later, after alighting from the car embraced the former and let him into the house⁴⁸.

Unlike Itaikkatanar, Macattiyar seems to have been endowed with high powers of imagination. The heroine is waiting for the home-coming of the hero who has gone away in quest of wealth. He has not come; but the rainy season fixed by him as a limit has set in. To the disappointed wife, it appears that the season with the blossoming white ‘mullai’ as teeth laughs disrespectfully at her futile expectation and questions cynically as to the whereabouts of her husband who values wealth more than enjoyment:⁴⁹

*“Melliyal arivai ilvayin nirit
Ilimin enranin molimarun ticine
Vanvalan kiyarkai valiput tinaiyo
Manuru vakanin manamput tinaiyo
Uraimati valiyo valava. (Aham; 384)*

This is a good illustration of the poetic resource of Macattiyar. The warrior - hero who reaches home within the shortest possible time wholeheartedly admires the laudable abilities of the charioteer for his quick driving in this manner: “Getting into the chariot I know: I know not how I arrived here. I am perplexed when you ask me to descend. Was the horse that you fastened to the chariot the wind or your mind?”

II. Otalantaiyar

Otalantaiyar is one of the five Aham poets, the number of whose poems exceeds a hundred. Like ammuvar he is an

Aham poet in toto. His poems may be distributed among the characters as follows: heroine 35, maid 25, hero 19, mother of the heroine 13, onlookers 7, foster-mother 2 antanar or sage and neighbour one. Kalavu course is treated in 38 lyrics and karpu course in 65. Except for the male companion or pankan, all other characters of kalavu course have a place in his composition. In Karpu course, only the hero, the heroine and the maid are exclusively treated. Although his treatment of themes and characters is wide and varied, he is brilliantly original and outwits all other Aham poets, in the handling of the subject utanpokku or elopement and in the exhibition of the lament and desire of the mother of the eloped girl. One who studies the palai part of Ainkurunuru will have no doubt about the fertility of Aham literature (with all its conventions and restrictions)/ for the poems of this group are full of imagination, elaboration, beauty and variation.

A few turais or themes given below will provide this:

1. The maid asks the eloped girl just returned, what happened when her brothers pursued them, and the girl tells her the truth and blesses the mountain which served as a shelter for the hero to hide himself. (Ain: 312)

2. The hero extols his sweetheart who, without concern, is weaving the plucked flowers into garlands on the way of elopement, and the girl covers her eyes blushfully when the hero again begins to praise her. (Do. 361)

3. The eloped couple sojourn for the night in a village and the womenfolk of the place feel sorry for them. This gives an occasion for some persons (kantar) to pronounce an opinion. (Do. 382)

4. In the midst of the journey, the heroine gathers fine flowers for herself and her doll from the boughs bent by the hero, and this incident is commented upon by the spectators.
(Do. 383)

5. The eloped girl requests the wayfarers to let her unrighteous mother know about her happy journey with the lover.
(Do. 385)

6. The maid advises the hero who seeks her help for making the lady-love agree to the proposal of this departure for wealth.
(Do. 302)

7. Owing to the delay of the arrival of the husband, the wife sends her own heart as messenger and addresses the companion, worried at the procrastination of the heart itself.
(Do. 317)

8. The hero soliloquizes when he suddenly feels cool and comfortable in the scorching heat of the desert, because of his remembrance of the good qualities of his beloved.
(Do. 322)

9. The maid tells the truth to the housewife who is anxious to know whether her husband is able to reach the destination, overcoming the temptation of returning home caused by the fragrant mountain scenery on the way.
(Do. 331)

10. The hero blissfully talks to the wife about the experience of his travelling, when he felt the desert long and short respectively, in his outward and homeward journeys.
(Do. 359)

The qualities of the head and heart of the forlorn mother of the lady are portrayed with gusto by Otalantaiyar in Ainkurunuru. The last thirty poems (371-400) the masterpieces of the poet deserve study at a singly sitting, to have a broad idea of his profound scholarship in the art of Aham poetry. The mother does not find fault with the girl, but defends her act of following the foot-step of the lover and praises her for the sanity of her judgement.⁵⁰ She feels sorry not for the girl's pursuit, but for her lack of courage to disclose the matter to her parents.⁵¹ She is extremely grieved, remembering the tender age of the daughter and her crossing the risky desert.⁵² The sight of the playthings once associated with her darling and now abandoned by her is a frequent cause of lament for the aged mother.⁵³ She attributes the elopment to the paly of destiny and in wrath pronounces a cruel curse upon it.⁵⁴ She prays that the cool shower should make pleasant the parched region to be traversed by her daughter. The ancient Tamils, like those of today, superstitiously believed that the crying of the crow is an indication of the visit of guests to one's house.

The agonized mother, therefore, begs the black crow to caw indicating the return of her daughter with the youth, and assures it that in return for its kindness, she will feed it and its relations with grains mixed with raw meat on gold dishes⁵⁵. She longs for the honour of celebrating the actual marriage in her house, even though the preliminary function of removing the anklet (cilampu kali nonpu) takes place in the hero's house⁵⁶. It will be exceedingly interesting to one who knows the traditional prejudie still to be found between the mothers of the married couples, to come across the following harsh words put into the mother of the heroine by the poet:

“Ninaittorum kalilum itumpai yeytuka....

Ampamai valvil vitalai taye”

(Ain: 373)

“Poyval kalaiyai inra taikke”

(Do. 399)

How the treatment of Aham poetry is realistic and illustrative of the custom of the Tamil society is explicit from the characterisation of the mother.

12. Orampokiyar

Orampokiyar is one of the five poets in Ainkurunuru. The number of Aham lyrics written by him amounts to 109. He occupies the third rank in the output of Aham songs, while the first and second go to Kapilar and Ammuvanar respectively. Kalavu themes are treated in 15 poems and karpu themes in 94. The number of poems in the name of each character is as follows: the maid of the heroine 45; the heroine 42; the prostitute 12, the hero 8, the mediator 1 and the maid of the prostitute 1.

Orampokiyar distinguishes himself as a poet of ‘marutam’ theme in the main. Almost in Karpu stage, he has dealt with the lewd conduct of the hero and its related topics. Few poems in Sangam classics make mention of the maid of the courtesan, but in no poem of any other poet does that⁵⁷ maid figure as a character and get a chance to speak. In this aspect, Orampokiyar may be said to have increased the number of characters entitled for utterance or kurru in karpu course. (Ain. 79)

I highly appreciate the skill of Orampokiyar in making much use of ullurai or implied simile in not less than 50 poems; for, of all the themes, that which invariably requires a polished and modest treatment is the theme of prostitution. From the aesthetic point of view, the value of ‘ullurai’ is needless to emphasize. As ullurai is formed out of natural object, it provides both the background and similitude in Aham

poetry. At the same time, ullurai brings out the all-round knowledge of the poet and his keen observation of the similarities and dissimilarities in the sexual sphere, between animals and human beings. Therefore, Aham poets like Orampokiyar who have employed 'ullurai; on a large scale deserve our high estimation. What is more praiseworthy is that Orampokiyar has the poetic gift of forming ullurai in more or less two lines in Ainkurunuru, as we know, the shortest of the Sangam anthologies in the length of lines. I should like to cite two ullurais to show that noble ideals of the wife are contained in them.

*'Putta karumpir kaytta nellir
Kalani uran'* (Ain: 4)

*'Karumpunatu pattiyir kalitta ampal
Curumpupaci kalaiyum perumpunal ura'* (Do. 65)

It is said that the mistress brings forth children for the preservation of the race, like the plant that yields paddy, and that she entertains guests like the lily feeding the bees. Thus a wife whose husband hunts after prostitutes is extremely proud of her two functions, procreation and hospitality that are not assigned to courtezans by society. The diverse behaviour of the crab⁵⁸, the crocodile⁵⁹, the otter⁶⁰, the crane⁶¹, the turtle⁶², and the buffalo⁶³, have been figuratively used to represent the extravagance of the amorous license of the hero.

The hero, after marriage is generally pictured by the poet as one whose immoral activities are almost limitless. "Is it he who imitated the licentious quality of the bee of vice versa? Who is the imitator"? so exclaims and admires a kept mistress⁶⁴. As he goes on seeking new girls time after time, his debauchery is intolerable even to the prostitutes once espoused by him⁶⁵. He falls into the company of the public

women, soon after marriage.⁶⁶ A theme describes the frustration of a wife, whose husband just returned from abroad, seeks the pleasure of the concubine's company⁶⁷. A hero, devoid of any sense of shame, returns home with signs indicating his wrong sexual relation⁶⁸. To bring out in full relief the fact that he is powerless to check his excessive lust, in spite of his best intention, Orampokiyar has introduced some themes, in which the hero is said to have realized his folly, vowed not to continue the former course and in practice failed to keep his promise.⁶⁹

In many poems, the heroine is characterized by the poet, as woefully sensitive to the growing laxity of her husband. The maid asks the lady about her uneasiness when her husband is near, pointing out to her her calmness when he was away. "It is his being near yet out of sight that is the cause of my eyes shedding tears like the flowers of the rainy season", is the reply of the wife⁷⁰. A lady love worried at the conduct of the hero who comes late, having been all day long with concubines bitterly remarks, "Your so called mistresses are pure of heart and fragrant in body, unlike us who look like devils in appearance, as a result of producing children"⁷¹. An irritated and learned lady tells her husband in harsh words that his course of life is childish and that he becomes a laughing stock to those who come to know him.⁷² A wife of subtle feeling is unwilling at any cost to reembrace the chest of the hero polluted by the touch of harlots.⁷³

*"Ceyyol ninkac cilpatam kolittut
 Tamattu untu tamiya rakit
 Temolip putalvar tirankumulai cuvaippa
 Vaikuna rakutal arintum
 Ariyar amnavaktu utalu more"* (Aham: 316)

These are the piercing words of the maid to an impertinent lady who is in no mood to sink her quarrel with her lord whose disloyal activities are never in decrease. The maid brings home to the lady as a warning, the indigent and wretched life some wives are leading with their emaciated children, due to their implacable attitude towards their husbands unfaithfulness. How the economic consideration is one of the factors contributing to the stability of the family is alluded to in these lines. Again this poem of Ahananuru brings to light the poet's inclination to picture the three main Aham figures, in an extreme of emotion in their own sphere of action within the limit of Aham rules.

13. Auvaiyar

Auvaiyar is a famous poetess of the Sangam age known to the literate and illiterate in Tamil Nad, due to various reasons, to mention all of which is uncalled for here. Her reputation generally rests more on her Puram poems than on her Aham poems; for, the number of Puram stanzas sung by her exceeds that of her Aham lyrics and some of them are very popular. Yet I should like to observe that she is by no means inferior to any poet of the Aham class in the treatment of Aham subjects too. Her Aham poems are 26 as against 33 of the Puram class. Kalavu course is treated in 8 poems and Karpu in 18.

Auvaiyar has described many love aspects. Yet description of the agonized state of the girl, both in kalavu and karpu, is most noteworthy. The heroine is often pictured as having an excess of sexual hunger. "My heart becomes heated to think of him; forgetfulness is beyond my capacity. Passion is as high as the sky. The man with whom I am acquainted is certainly not a perfect gentleman"⁷⁴. These are

the expressions of a wife in long separation. It is to be inferred from a poem that the hero went away without informing his wife, because of the difficulty of getting her consent to his separation⁷⁵. A maid ridicules the proposal of the hero for parting from his beloved, and pities him for his utter ignorance of her intensive grief, even if separated for a day.⁷⁶

Under the impulse of the unrestrained passion the wife is described by the poetess as strongly desiring to go to the place of her husband.⁷⁷

*“Velli vitiyaip pola nanrum
Celavayarn ticinal yane”* (Aham: 147)

*“Alinir minpeyarn tankavar
Valinataic ceral valitticin yane”* (Do. 303)

In this context Auvaiyar is tempted to make mention of an episode in the life of Velliviti, another poetess of her age. From the simile “alinir min peyarntanku” in the second quotation, we understand that the lady-love compares her relationship with her husband to that of fishes with water and that it is therefore fitting for her to leave the house in search of her husband, like the fishes quitting the waterless tank. The characteristic feature of Auvaiyar is to deal effectively with one and the same mentality of the heroine either to accompany her husband⁷⁸ to his destination, or to go by herself to the place where he is. The strong sexual feelings of the wife in long isolation are emotionally brought out by the poetess in the following metaphor which has no parallel in the whole of Aham literature.

*“Talaivarampu ariyat takaivaral vataiyotu
Mulaiyitait tonriya noivalar ilamulai
Acaivutai nencattu uyavut tiraniti
Uror etutta ampal ancina*

*Arak katal avirtalir parappip
 Pulavar pukalnta naril perunmaram
 Nilavarai yellam nilarri
 Alararumpu ulppavum vara tore” (Aham: 273)*

The imagery is that immodesty is a big tree originated from the shoot of love with overwhelming grief as its large trunk, with murmuring scandal as its branches, with insatiable passion as its spreading leaves and with open scandal as its fragrant flowers. The theme of this poem is the speech of the separated wife in a state of mental depression (arivu mayakkam). I am of opinion that some of the poems⁷⁹ by Auvaiyar may be assigned to Peruntinai rather than to Aintinai, as illustrations of the theme “terutal olinta kamattu miku tiram”.

14. Katuvan Mallanar

Katuvan Mallanar has four Aham lyrics in his name. It may be said to his credit that Mallanar has described the nature of the four regions as the background of his four poems. Sangam poets used to compare the public scandal spread in connection with the growing lewdness of a hero, to the thunderous uproar of the warriors victorious in battlefield⁸⁰. It seems that a despicable fellow denied his secret relation with a young girl of Kallur and that a powerful body of learned men, after trying the witnesses, severely punished him by fastening him to the big branch of a tree and putting a heap of lime on his head, when the public made a loud clamour.

*“perumpeyark kallurt
 Tirunutar kurumakal aninalam vavviya
 Arani lalan ariyen enra
 Tiranil vencul arikari kataay
 Muriyar perunkilai ceriyap parri*

Nirutalaip peyta nanrai
Virucal avaiyattu arppinum perite". (Aham: 256)

Mallanar has used this unhappy love-incident, instead of a historical one, as a simile to the open gossip (kavvai) born of the dissolute act of a husband. Here two points are worth remembering. Firstly the incident in question has occurred in an Aham poem, not as a theme but as a simile. It cannot be treated as a theme because as we know, desertion is prohibited as a subject of Aham poetry. Yet as it is a love episode, unlike Auvaiyar and Parinar, Mallanar makes no mention of the names of the unfortunate girl and her meanlover, thereby extending the application of the 'no-naming' characteristic to all kinds of love-relations. Secondly, the existence of the court of justice with executive power (virucal avai) to inquire into the disputes of love-matters and to pronounce judgement is clearly evidenced in this poem. The place of court is called 'manram'⁸¹ and the judges canror⁸². It is said that the hero who failed to receive the hands of his beloved in marriage would appear before this court, mounting the palmyra horse, and present the cause of his affliction. This reference illustrates the way in which the Tamil society of old maintained the normal course of love-relations with no serious disturbance.

15. Kantarattanar

Kantarattanar has sung eight Aham lyrics, three on Kalavu themes and five on Karpu themes. The role of the heroine's mother in Kalavu course is prominent and she is a favourite character with many poets. But her part, after the marriage of her daughter is insignificant and only three poets Kantarattanar, Kallatanar and Nakkirar have mentioned the mother once each in a similar context, when the heroine is unable to bear the separation and when her expression of grief

gives birth to public gossip. Kallatanar and Nakkirar merely allude to the sorrowful feelings of the mother as in the lines,

“*Annaiyum aruntuyar urranal*” (Aham: 209)

“*Annaiyum amara mukattinal*” (Do. 253)

On the other hand, Kantarattanar gives a full picture of her critical attitude towards the gossiping public:

“*Curampala katantorkku irankupa ennar*
Kauvai mevala raki ivvur
Niraiyap pentir inna kuruva
Puraiya vallaven makatkenap paraii
Nammunarntu ariya kolkai
Annai munnaryam ennitar patale”⁸³ (Aham: 95)

The wife who at first agreed to the departure of the husband becomes pale and feeble, unable to bear the pang of separation. This furnishes an opportunity for the praying womenfolk to laugh at her folly in consenting to his separation, without realizing her capacity to put up with it. At this juncture the mother of the heroine takes the critical women to task, with the remark that such a kind of public structure is not graceful towards her daughter, as it is natural for a wife to sink under sorrow when her husband is likely to go across many a hazardous desert. The daughter, moved by the good attitude of the mother whose anger is not against her for her inconsolable state, but against the village women for their unmerited criticism, tells the maid that her sorrowful appearance in the presence of a mother so affectionate as she is, is not proper. A distinct difference is found here in the treatment of the character of the mother in kalavu and karpu. Poets treat her as a main speaker in the kalavu course, while in Karpu her speech is indirectly alluded to in the utterance

of other characters, as is evident from all the three poems just referred to.

Kantarattanar has described his chief characters as well-balanced. The hero and the heroine appreciate each other's feelings, the feeling of the former to earn wealth and that of the latter to enjoy pleasure. The husband does not wish to labour under the notion that his wife has the fortitude to bear separation⁸⁴. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the wife is unwilling to stand in the way of his enterprise. She is patient upto the time promised for his return. Even when the assured season sets in, she is not bewildered, but simply lets the maid know the advent of the rainy season as in the lines,

*“Aniyakol vali toli manaiya
Talvil nocci yulvana malarum
Mavval maccinai katti
Avvalavu enrar antucey porule”* (Aham: 23)

In these lines, the dramatic expression of the hero about to start, not with words but with sign, by pointing to the ‘mullai’ plant, reveals the poetic talent of Kantarattanar.

16. Kapilar

Kapilar may be said to be one of the greatest, nay, the greatest of the Sangam poets in many respects. His greatness is due not only to his extra-ordinary gift of poetic resources and the largest individual contribution that he has made among the Sangam poets, but also to his lifelong and faithful association and friendship with Pari, the greatest of the Tamil Patrons. We know about the life-history of only a few of the ancient poets, and that too only in a haphazard way. Among them, we have distinct and varied information about the life of Kapilar. As a man he was very popular with the poets of his

day, and they have spoken highly of his noble disposition in their own verses⁸⁵. No incident known to us is antipathetic to his life course. All these combined enable us to have a distinct impression of the poet, before we begin to study his works. Here we are concerned only with his Aham lyrics numbering 197 scattered in all the Sangam works (Ettuttokai and Pattuppattu) excepting Paripatal. Of them, kalavu course is treated in 182 poems, karpu in 12 poems and kaikkilai in 3 poems.

I do not accept the theme given by Naccinarkkiniyar to the Kali Ode 62, as an illustration of Peruntinai. In his opinion, it belongs to Peruntinai as the lovers are menials and the nature of love is characterised by violence. The universal outlook embracing all true lovers of different callings, as explained at the end of the thrid chapter will prove his first argument as fallacious. The following lines of the Ode in question have misled many a commentator and scholar to advance the theory that Peruntinai speaks of violent love:-

*“maiyl matiyin vilanku mukattarai
Vauvik kolalum aranenak kantanru”* (Kali: 62)

The expression ‘vauvik kolal’ has been interpreted as violent seizure. This ordinary meaning is questionable in the literature of Ahattinai, where the word ‘kalavu’ the simple meaning of which is theft has a righteous significance. It is a matter of common sense that lovers’ parlance should be viewed psychologically and not literally; for, of all the human sentiments it is the sexual passion that easily lends itself to emotional colouring and to the use of extraordinary terms. Because of this principle, we take note only of the intensely sorrowful spirit Aham poetry, wherein poets used to say that the wife would die of grief the instant the husband left her

and set out for earning wealth and so on⁸⁶. Therefore, the sexual interpretation of 'vauvik kolal' is the fiery desire of a lover to have an immediate union with his sweetheart, not waiting for her approval. The poem under discussion, it should be remembered, describes a charming conversation of garrulous lovers designed to kindle the wild fire of love before union. That no idea of force is involved in this amorous incident is easy to comprehend, from the concluding lines of the poem which point out their association in the former birth and the natural longing of the lady for physical consummation:

*“pantunam
Verallam enpatu onruntal avanotu
Marunto nence namakku”.*

It seems to be the characteristic style of Kapilar to employ verbs of a forceful nature, to express the vehement sexual urge of the hero, as is evident in many of the poems:

“Avan vauvinan muyankum mattiram” (Kali: 47)

“Valaimunkai parri naliyat terumantittu” (Do: 51)

“Narantanaru irunkuntal encatu naniparri” (Do. 54)

This explanation will prove that no poem on the subject of Peruntinai was composed by Kapilar.

Kapilar is a poet par excellence in the treatment of the kalavu course with the background of mountainous scenery. His poems deal with almost all the situations of the furtive stage. He is found to have developed a special inclination for the themes leading to marriage. That is why he has chosen the theme “arattotu nirral” (sticking to fidelity) for Kurincippattu to teach the Aryan king, the beauty of Tamil. It is true that in conformity with the nature of Aham subject, all

the 261 lines of this idyll are centripetal towards the one theme “arattotu nirral”; yet it cannot be gainsaid that Kapilar has related the kalavu stage from the beginning almost to the end in a single poem, thus giving a chance for critics to charge him with the breach of the fundamental law of Aham. It may be presumed that, by sheer force of circumstance, a continuous narration of the kalavu course became obligatory on Kapilar; for it would be cumbersome for the poet to collect individual lyrics of different authors relating to every single aspect of secret love⁸⁷ and uninteresting for Prakattan, a novice in Tamil language to learn and grasp the quintessence of Ahattinai. This defensive argument is partially acceptable⁸⁸. What appears to be true is that he has a propensity to describe the central theme of a poem with its past incidents. Certainly this amounts to a narration. The Kali Ode 39 is illustrative of this proposition. It is another Kurincippattu in miniature and narrates the kalavu upto the prospect of marriage in 51 lines, in a manner more thrilling and sensational than kurincippattu.

Kapilar spent all his life in mountains; for, all his patrons Pari, Pekan, Kari and Selvakkatunko were rulers of hilly territories. It is therefore no wonder that his knowledge of the fauna and flora of the Kurinci region is deep and accurate, and that the natural setting for every theme in his poem is varied and original. A novel and realistic feature of his poetic composition is the introduction of folk songs like Kuravai song and Vallai song to express the diverse opinions of the lady and her maid about the conduct of the hero, by way of conversation⁸⁹. It seems to me that the mention of the names of kings and patrons and their activities in Aham lyrics is a means to show the poets gratitude to them in a novel way. There are some poets who have exceeded the limit in introducing historical element in Aham poetry, under the

pretext of love theme. In spite of his ripe friendship with many kings and his direct participation in the political arena, Kapilar cannot be said to have availed himself much of Ahattinai as an outlet of Purattinai. His references to Pari, Kari and others are very few and brief⁹⁰. This is because his mine of information about the kurinci region is so wealthy as to draw any number of similes, imagery and other rhetorical embellishments, from among the things belonging to mountains. Unlike the authors of Mullaippattu, Netunalvatai and Pattinappalai dealing with the Aham themes in Pattuppattu, Kapilar is able to compose his Kurincippattu of 261 lines with no Puram aspects, and strictly within the limit of the natural objects appropriate to the theme.

The assignment of 197 Aham lyrics by Kapilar under each character in each course is as follows: in kalavu, maid 124, heroine 41, hero 16, mother of the heroine 1; in karpu, heroine 6, maid 4, hero 1, prostitute 1, and in Kaikkilai, hero 3. This classification reveals that the treatment of kalavu themes with the maid as the chief influential character is the pattern of Aham composition generally preferred by Kapilar. It is true that he has devoted only 12 poems to karpu part. But it should not be forgotten that the sentiments with which many of his kalavu poems are charged are similar to those in karpu course, for he has resorted to the two kinds of separation—the hero's absence for a while for fear of public rumour (oruvalittanattal) and his separation for a few months holding the marriage in abeyance (varaivital vaittup pirital)—and pathetically described the sorrows of the heroine of the clandestine stage.

*“Varuvatu kollo tane varatu
Avanurai mevalin amaivatu kollo...
Kunrukelu natanotu cenra ennence”* (Ain: 295)

Thus in kalavu course a distracted girl, deeply afflicted by the prolonged delay of her lover, speaks of the loss of her heart. In a poem of Narrinai⁹¹, it is the heroine that takes the trouble of consoling her maid who feels sorry for helping the hero in his love conduct and is overwhelmed with grief at the sight of the heroine's impoverished shoulder and pale complexion due to the delay in marriage.

*“Naruntan cilampin narukulaik kantal
Konkun vantir peyarntu puramarinin
Vamputai virarkavin konta
Anpi lalan vantanan iniye”* (Ain: 226)

In this poem the maid informs the heroine that the unkind hero who forsook her to the loss of her incomparable beauty, like the beetle which abandons the fragrant kantal (Gloriosa superba) after consuming the honey in it, has now comeback. Everybody will agree with me when I say that this poem, in word and sense, may be taken to deal with the return of the licentious husband in karpu course. But the colophon or turai given under this runs ‘the saying of the maid to the maiden when the hero who parted suspending the marriage for a time, arrives after undue delay’. These few instances culled from many poems⁹² will disclose how the poet has treated kalavu theme to the extreme, and attempted to cover what he has lost by not composing many palai and neytal poems on karpu themes.

Kapilar is very original in describing his characters as daring and adventurous. His ripeness in age and experience does not in the least prevent him from describing enthusiastically, how young men and women would act and say under the spell of Cupid. On the other hand, it seems that his high intellectual powers, vast experience and command of language are made to serve the poetic composition of

kalavu themes. Unmindful of the darkness and the downpour of heavy rain and undaunted by the presence of her hot-tempered father at home, the young girl, adorning herself with bright flowers climbs down the ladder with no noise, and after meeting her waiting lover outside, returns again with the help of the ladder. When the nurse tells the maid plainly the next day that she witnessed the girl ascending and descending the ladder at night, the indifferent and mischievous retort of the maid is⁹³: O! mother, do you not know the movement of deities in our garden in the shapes and forms they like? There are some dreams in which things appear as in reality to the sleeping persons (thereby attributing what the nurse saw to a dream). This little girl will tremble when there is no light. the mere hooting of the owl will frighten her. Moreover, will she who is so feeble-minded and faint-hearted dare to do an act so audacious and venturesome as the one you mention, when her father resembling Murugan in valour and anger is at home”? The cleverness of the maid is revealed in exploiting the traditional beliefs of the mother. Women are by instinct sharp enough to invent new stories, on the spur of the moment in matters of love. They know how to hide their love affair, and when and in what manner to reveal it. Kapilar has noticed the presence of mind and quick-sightedness of women generally. His power of penetrating the recesses of the hearts of lovers and tapping new sources in Aham theme is again manifest in a poem (51) of Kalittogai. A boy who in his childhood played with a little girl and hurt her feelings, by trampling on the sand house built by her for play, by pulling down the flowers on her hair and by snatching away her ball, one day goes to the house of the girl when she is with her mother. He stands outside the house and asks for water to drink. As instructed by the mother, the daughter brings water in a clean vessel. On seeing her alone, the hero seizes her

bangled hands and presses them. Perplexed, the girl cries out “Oh, mother, see what he is doing”. The mother comes agitated and shouting. To her, the girl calmly and dextrously says that he made hiccup while drinking. The sympathetic mother gently touches his back to stop the hiccup, when the wicked hero by his piercing glance and biting smile captures her heart. These two illustrations bring out the tactics by which a maid defends her mistress’s act, and a heroine her lover’s act, thus revealing the poetic genius of Kapilar.

A poet who deals with the kalavu course in the main and treats essentially the themes relating to marriage or ‘varaivu’ will naturally give for the maid a big part to play, in the affairs of the secret lovers. The companion is characterised by Kapilar as the bosom friend of the heroine. She says that her life is united with that of the mistress, like the two-headed bird of one soul⁹⁴. She advises the hero to get married early, expostulating with him that the revelation of the secret will cause the heroine to die and that, after her friend’s death, she (the maid) also will not live⁹⁵. The trust reposed in the maid by the lady is true and firm so that the heroine does not interpret literally her statement,⁹⁶ such as that the here one day swung the swing when she (the maid) was on it, and that she purposely fell on his breast and that he took and embraced her with gracefulness.⁹⁷ It has been repeatedly emphasized that certain themes should not be treated in Ahattinai. Yet Aham grammar allows false statements by trusted friends like the maid, for the benefit of those who hear them⁹⁸. It is definitely admitted by Tolkappiyar that improper ideas in the treatment of Aham poetry should not be criticised, if they are of service to Aham theme⁹⁹. This view on poetics by the ancient Tamil grammarian Tolkappiyar may be compared to the similar view put forth by Aristotle. analysing the criticisms

relating to the poets art, the Greek author observes, “Any impossibilities there may be in his descriptions of things are faults. But from another point of view they are justifiable, if they serve the end of poetry itself-if they make the effect of some portion of the work more astounding.¹⁰⁰

How the maid used to associate herself with life of the heroine is understandable, from a poem of Ainkurunuru which mentions the tears falling down the cheeks of the maid and wetting her breast, as she is unable to see the sorrows of the lady during the brief separation (oruvalittanattal) of the lover¹⁰¹. Kapilar characterizes the maid as cautious and conscious of her duty. She is very anxious to bring about the marriage, before the discovery of the kalavu course.

*“Potiyavil vaikarai vantuni kuraikuri
Vatuvai ayartal ventuval ankup
Putuvai polumnin varavumival
Vatuvainan otukkamum kankuval yane”* (Kali: 52)

In these lines, the maid emphatically points out that it is the responsibility of the hero to take the initiative for marriage so that she will have the delectable occasion, to see him and his sweetheart conducting themselves as strangers to each other at the function.

The maid’s joy knows no bounds when the hero gets the consent of the heroine’s parents for marriage. She feels as happy at the prospect of the wedding as a whole people would feel, when tanks and lakes are replenished with water, after a prolonged spell of drought.¹⁰²

17. Kayamanar

Kayamanar is a poet of 22 Aham lyrics of which 21 are devoted to kalavu course. His favourite theme or turai is the

passionate expression of grief of the mother or nurse, over the elopement of the girl, one of the best aspects of utanpokku. Themes of elopement are said to belong to Palaittainai, even though the lovers are not in separation. This is because they cherish the constant fear of being separated by the girl's relatives who pursue them.

*“Itaiccura marunkin avaltamar eytik
Kataikkontu peyarttalín”* (Tol: 986)

Thus Tolkappiyar mentions the actual pursuit and its effect. Otalantaiyar¹⁰³ and Perunkatunko¹⁰⁴ of Palai fame tell us how the valorous hero hides himself for the sake of the love of his sweetheart, when her parents or others approach them in the midst of mountains or forests. The elopement in kalavu course need not always have the background of desert and scorching summer and midday prescribed for palai. It is true that many poets including Kayamanar have adopted the description of the arid zone and its attendant hardships, to show the resolution of the girl to put up with any amount of difficulty for the ideal of fidelity. The mother is generally pictured as increasingly sorrowful to think that her well-born and well-bred daughter has to cross waterless regions, with rugged mountains full of wild animals during the hottest season¹⁰⁵. But there are innumerable poems of Utanpokku in which the pleasant early summer has received a predominant treatment¹⁰⁶. Therefore, we may conclude that poems on elopement are classified as palai division, irrespective of the background of the regions and seasons, for the simple psychological reason of the lovers' apprehension that they may be followed and separated by the kith and kin of the heroine. In karpu course, more reference to utanpokku (the accompaniment of the wife with the hero) is considered as palai, not on the ground of uripporul but on mutarporul and

karupporul, that is, on the description of nature. As far as I understand, there is no poem in the Sangam classics in which the actual accompaniment of the lady is treated in the karpu course.

In discussing the isolated nature of Aham subject, mention has been made of Kayamanar's treatment of a single theme from different angles. It is said that a girl hesitates to elope, because of the kindness of her mother who will be unable to bear her separation, and of the intrepidity of her brothers who may overtake her and her lover¹⁰⁷. A mother feels extremely sorry that her daughter has eloped not for any other cause but for dreading her¹⁰⁸ and curses herself that her hand that beat the girl severely must suffer, like the punnai tree destroyed in wrath by Anni.¹⁰⁹ In many poems, Kayamanar pathetically contrasts the luxurious life led by the heroine in her early years, with the uneasy life she has now to undergo in treading the waterless path and drinking muddy water.¹¹⁰ The mother prays that the desert to be traversed by the tender daughter with her brave lord might have the benefit of cool and incessant rain, the narrow path might be studded with sand (not stones) and the atmosphere might be refreshing and pleasant¹¹¹. Everything associated with the girl becomes a source of sadness for the mother:

*“vaikalum
Aranir uttip purappor
Yarmarrup perukuvai aliyal niye”.* (Aham 383)

Thus the mother sympathises with the ‘vayalai’ creeper which is now withering in the absence of its young gardener.

We generally understand from a study of the Sangam classics that the parents of the hero readily approve his choice without much ado. There is no reference to his father; but in

her speech the mother of the heroine makes mention of the mother of the hero, only to blame her. It is said that his mother gladly decorates the house to welcome the son with his wife after their elopement. The distressed mother of the lady too is very eager to welcome them to her house and asks the soothsayer to foretell, whether the hero will come to my house straightaway to stop the flowing sorrowful tears from my eyes or to his house.¹¹²

*“Empol
Peruvituppu uraka mato
Kontutan poko valitta
Vankat kalaiyai inra taye”.* (Nar: 293)

Like Otalantaiyar, Kayamanar too has given expression to the anger of the heroine’s mother who calumniates the hero’s mother, for giving birth to such a hard-hearted son who has forced her little daughter to elope with him.

18. Kallatanar

Kallatanar has composed nine Aham lyrics, of which eight belong to Palaittinai of Karpu course. He has a tendency to introduce in Ahattinai as many historical incidents as possible. His poem 209 of Ahananuru is an evidence of this. A peculiar feature of his treatment of palai is that the lovers think of each other’s qualities in separation. A hero is extremely happy in the midst of the desert and says in a contemplative mood that the excellence of his beloved whose fair and cool eyes comparable to the bright and fresh ‘neytal’ flower is so high as to make him think of her, even from such a long distance.¹¹³ A pining wife tells the maid that she is incessantly thinking of her husband’s traits¹¹⁴ (nalum ninaival matu avar panpu).

There are some poems¹¹⁵ in the Aham class of Sangam literature in which the maid consoles the mistress by pointing out to some augury. “That he will return home soon is sure because the cranes begin to fly; the flowers in the bush begin to bloom, due to the humming of the bees, and the bangles in the shoulders begin to be tight”, so predicts the maid in Kallatanar’s poem.

The wife is generally described by Kallatanar as patient and consolabel. Though her husband does not return in due time she requires at least a message from him for the alleviation of her misery¹¹⁶. The husband himself knows the forbearing attitude of his beloved. To him she is an embodiment of modesty and fidelity as described in the matchless lines,

*“Nanotu mitainta karpin vanutal
Antim kilavik kurumakal
Mentol peranacaic cenra yennence”* (Aham: 9)

Her virtues and her sense of household duty are a source of inspiration to him and he is impatient to embrace her physically. He is pictured by the poet as having mentally united with the girl, touching her plaited tresses and bangled hands in the eventide. The high imaginative power of Kallatanar has expressed itself in the following three lines constructed in the dramatic form:

*Kaikaviyac cenru kanputaiyak kurukip
Pitikkai yanna pinnakam tintit
Totikkai taivarat toyntanru kollo”* (Do:9)

19. Kalarkkiran eyirriyar

Eyirriyar is one of the twenty three Aham poetesses in whose name there are eight poems of which seven belong to

karpu course. She has not sung any Puram aspect. Her treatment of Palaittainai is unique. It has been already pointed out that Auvaiyar has described the uncontrollable passion of the wife in separation and her eagerness to travel to the place where her husband has gone. The wife in Eyirriyar's poems does not think of travelling in spite of her unrestrained grief, but tells the North Wind that it is not becoming of it to torment her alone and that it should set out with its biting teeth to his place to set him free from the engagement and to remind him of her loneliness¹¹⁷. It is natural for poets of Palaittainai to depict pathetically the parched region and the burning heat and the anxiety of the wife over the journey of her husband across these paths. Eyirriyar is distinguished as a poetess setting the agricultural region and the cold season as the background of the palai theme of separation. She has a special liking for the chill north wind (vatai) which is pleasant for the lovers in embrace and unfavourable for those in loneliness. In all eight poems including one in the kalavu course¹¹⁸ the north wind and its harsh influence on the tender-hearted wife are sympathetically set forth.

“Kotait tinkalum panippol

Vataip perumpanikku ennalkol enave” (Nar: 312)

Thus the husband himself is said to have realised the sensitiveness and frailty of his beloved to the north wind and taken his mind to task for urging him to set out in search of wealth. The chief character figuring in seven lyrics of Eyirriyar is the heroine and to bring out the climax of the lady's restlessness at the advent of the stipulated season the poetess compares in a novel way the blossoming karuvilai creeper with drops falling to the tearful eyes of the forlorn wives :

Katalarp pirinta kaiyaru makalir
Nirvar kannir karuvilai malara (Aham; 294)

20. Kaval Mullaipputanar

Mullaipputanar is a poet of Palaittinai in karpu course. He has sung eight Aham lyrics of which five are the speeches of the wife. The poet, as is natural to the palai theme, describes the scarcity of water, the mirage, the frustration of the animals and the fearful appearance of the desert in seven out of eight poems. In one poem¹¹⁹ the maid, by way of consolation, reminds the heroine of the hero's statement before his departure that she might also accompany him, as the desert had then had the benefit of rains and its consequent coolness.

The wife is characterised as consoling and consolable. She thinks that her husband's separation is due not to any lack of kindness on his part towards her but to the indispensability of making wealth and that realisation that the poor cannot support their dependants and lead a joyous life along with their kith and kin is the impelling force for him to part from her;

Tannayantu uraivort tankit tamnayantu
Innamar kelirotu emurak kelii
Nakutal arrar nalkurn toreana
Mikuporul ninaiyum nencam (Aham: 21)

She solaces herself by recalling to her mind his pleasant sleep on her fragrant tresses¹²⁰. Though the poet describes the calmness of the wife after the husband has set out, he faithfully presents her mental affliction before his departure and her attempt to prevent it. She compares the ensuing loneliness with the little calf forcefully separated from its mother by the unsympathetic shepherds.¹²¹

21. Kutavayil Kirattanar

Kirattanar of Kutavayil is an author of 17 Aham poems of which five are on Kalavu and twelve on Karpuz. In Karpuz, Palaittinai is his main subject. That the poet is prone to introduce historical elements into Aham as similes or in description is evident from eight poems. His own town Kutavayil is mentioned in two poems: in one¹²², the general beauty of the heroine is compared to the prosperous town as in the line “tan kutavayil annol”, and in the other¹²³, the weeping eyes of the tender girl are said to appear like blue lilies of the rainy season in the ditch of Kutantaivayil belonging to the Cholas.

The mother is vigilant when the girl attains maturity. She suspects her activities but dares not question her. When the girl elopes, the mother regrets her folly in not keeping her daughter within the precincts of the house¹²⁴. Another mother is said to have prevented the girl from plucking ‘neytal’ flowers in the backwater, thereby giving no chance to her of meeting her lover outside¹²⁵. It is interesting to know that the maid who urges the hero to get married early points out that any sign of embrace in the body of the heroine will be immediately discovered by her searching mother and that the result will be her being prevented from going out of home.¹²⁶

The heroine is featured by the poet as desirous of accompanying the hero in both kalavu and karpuz courses. Her courage in crossing the rugged paths during elopement in the furtive stage may be said to have given strength to follow her husband in the married stage. The hero is not willing to take her along with him. As though he were willing to do so, he speaks of the not-too-hard desert¹²⁷ and of the pleasure he would derive from her company¹²⁸. The wife’s pertinacity in

not consenting to his departure without her is so great as to make the hero decide to set out even without her knowledge. After his separation the wife realizes her stubborn attitude and his resoluteness and its effect.

*“yam tamakku
Ollem enra tapparku
Colla takaral vallu vore”.*¹²⁹ (Kurun: 79)

22. Kunriyanar

Kunriyanar has sung 10 Aham lyrics with no puram poetry. He may be said to have composed poems on all tinai's excepting Mullaittinai. He is able to portray seasonal backgrounds suitable to the themes. His six poems on kalavu purport to treat of marriage (varaivu). There is no speech of the hero in this course.

The poet depicts the hero as desirous of prolonging the secret union with no attempt to get married early. The girl thinks always of the impending danger to her lord on the way at night. The maid plainly says that his night journey will give pleasure only to his enemies¹³⁰. The girl does not like the attribution of her love sickness to some other supernatural elements and considers it as a stain on her life¹³¹. The eagerness of the heroine to hear the sound of his chariot in the night when the female anril bird cries out for its mate, her disappointment at his absence, her ecstatic delight on hearing the expected tinkling and the subsequent sleeplessness are all pathetically brought out by the poet:

*“Vayavuppetai yakavum panat kankul
Manram polum inamani netunter
Vara tayinum varuvatu polac
Cevimutal icaikkum aravamotu
Tuyilmaran tanaval toliyen kanne”* (Kurun: 301)

Thank is to the unnecessary continuation of the clandestine stage, the girl grows thin and her bangles become very loose. She fears that this melancholy appearance will disclose her secrecy to her parents. To the distressed mistress the maid says in soothing words, “Let him stop his coming so as not to aggravate the deterioration of your health. Let us purchase and wear little bangles suitable to your withering hands to avoid disclosure, as they are available locally”¹³². The parents place no impediment on their daughter marrying the man of her choice:

*“Yanum katalen yayumnani veyyal
Entaiym kotiiyar ventum
ampal urum avanotu molime”* (Kurun: 51)

In this way the undisputed support for wedlock from all quarters is plainly mentioned by the dutiful maid. As I said before, it is the longing of the youth for the emotional enjoyment of the chandestine union, as enjoyment the like of which cannot be obtained in the married state-that is the main reason for his postponement of the marriage.

23. Nakkirar

Nakkirar is one of the great Sangam celebrities well-known for his independent spirit and for his pious composition, Tirumurukarruppatai. As poets of Aham, Nakkirar and Parinar cannot be classed with Kapilar, though the names of these three poets are generally mentioned together, for, the historical consciousness of Nakkirar and Parinar curbs their imaginative power. As for Nakkirar, in 15 out of 17 poems of Ahananuru sung by him are found historical references to the three renowned sovereigns of Tamil Nad and its chieftains.¹³³ While comparing the fragrant forehead of the heroine to the blossoming flower he says that the tarn

in which the flower blooms belongs to the generous Pari of swift-footed horse who, acting on the advice of Kapilar renowned for his truthfulness, surmounted the economic blockade, by training the sparrows to fetch corns of paddy from a long distance and defeated the kings of elephant force¹³⁴.

Netunalvatai of Nakkirar deals with the different influences of the North wind on the languishing queen in the palace and on the kindhearted king in the war camp at midnight. In this poem of 188 lines, Aham elements are contained only in a few lines. Like Mullaippattu of Napputanar and Pattinappalai of Uruttirankannanar the other Aham idylls in Pattupattu, Netunalvatai too devotes a good portion to Puram elements. As J.V. Chelliah rightly observes, Netunalvatai's popularity is due to the wonderful penpictures of the cold season at the beginning of the poems and to the novel description at the end, of the king who attends on the wounded animals and soldiers in the camp at dead of night and speaks soothing words to them.¹³⁵ With all its predominant influence of Puram elements, the great poet has attempted to present Netunalvatai as a pure Aham poem in essence. There is no doubt that he had in mind the Pandiyan king, Netunceliyan and his royal lady as the hero and the heroine of the poem; yet he carefully guards himself against giving any particular reference to them and cautiously employs only words of a general character relating to king, queen and palace, lest his should not be classified as Aham:

“Nalimalaic cilampir cilampum koyil” (l. 100)

*“Pitukelu cirappir peruntakai allatu
Atavar kuruka arunkati varaippin”* (ll. 105-6)

“Cilarotu tiritarum ventan” (l. 187)

The very nature of the title 'Netunalvatai', like the other three idylls of Pattuppattu, Mullaippattu, Kurincippatu and Pattinappalai indicates the intention of the poet to compose it as an Aham poem. It is an achievement for history-minded Nakkirar to write a long Aham poem with no personal allusions. Contrary to the idea of the poet Nakkirar, the commentator Naccinarkkiniyar has considered the idyll Netunalvatai as a love-poem (not an Aham poem) the hero of which is a historical personage, Netunceliyan, and accordingly has given historical interpretations to some lines¹³⁶. A line, "vempu talai yatta nonkal ekkam" (l.176), supposed to contain a personal reference to the margosa emblem pertaining to the Pandiyan dynasty is cited by the annotator for the justification of his argument that this poem is not Aham¹³⁷. It is a mistake to suppose that the flowers of the neem adorned the head of the lance as an indication of the Pandiyan kingdom. In my study of Sangam literature, I have not come across any reference to the custom of tying the royal emblems to the weapons or the elephantry or the cavalry. What we understand from many poems is that only the king or his warriors used to wear the flower emblem. On the contrary, there are poems referring to the Tamilian custom of using the margosa when soldiers received wounds in fighting¹³⁸ in order to protect them from evil spirits at night. The line in question 'vempu talai yatta nonkal ekkam' occurs in a similar context when the king goes to inspect and cheer the wounded soldiers during the night¹³⁹. Therefore I strongly hold that the mention of the neem flowers has nothing to do with the hero of the poem and that Netunalvatai fully conforms to the principle of Ahattinai. It is these considerations that led me to assign this poem to Aham class as against the view of Naccinarkkiniyar.

Nakkirar is an author of 33 Aham poems including Netunalvatai of which 17 and 16 belong to kalavu and karpu

courses respectively. He has characterised the hero as desirous of earning riches and the heroine as applauding his effort. The hero's object of amassing wealth is to support his dependants, to feed his relatives, to make new friendships, to subdue the haughty tone of his enemy, to derive joy at the sight of the happy countenance of the destitutes who receive his bounty and to acquire name and fame¹⁴⁰. The wife is said to have understood the purpose of his separation. In spite of her knowledge that his separation will tell upon her health, she sensibly wishes that he should earn precious wealth in the shortest possible period and that he must be free from sickness in his distant sojourn¹⁴¹. In *Netunalvatai* alone the husband is the king-warrior and here too the nurses who please with soft words the grieved queen pray that he should return early and victoriously.

In both courses the hero and the heroine are said to have equal desire for sexual enjoyment. The hero who has lost his heart at the sight of the beauty of the glowing haired, big-shouldered and soft-breasted girl longs for immediate union at all costs¹⁴². Unmindful of the gloomy night and incessant downpour, the hero of the clandestine course is waiting near the home of the beloved for embrace¹⁴³. Perceiving the subtle desire of the modest heroine, for the continuation of the sexual congress, the maid candidly requests the hero not to return but to go over to their home with all his attendants for stay at night¹⁴⁴. The husband, in the wedded course, after the successful ending of his journey, turns his mind towards his lonely and patient wife and his haste to meet her is compared by the poet to the hurry of a farmer who is in possession of only one pair of oxen to plough his small bit of arable land as soon as it gets moisture.¹⁴⁵

A noteworthy feature of Nakkirar's composition is the description of the physical beauty of women:

*“Kiliyenac
Ciriya milarrum cevvaip periya
Kayalena amartta vunkan puyalenap
Purantal piraliya pirankukural aimpal’
Minner marunkur kurumakal”.* (Aham: 128)

In these lines, the rosy lips, the collyrium-painted eyes, the plaited locks of hair and the slender waist of the lady are felicitously compared to the parrot, the carp, the cloud and the lightning. It is Nakkirar who makes frequent mention¹⁴⁶ of the custom of adorning the forehead with tilakam—a beautiful circular mark adopted by women after marriage. While comforting the lady by pointing out that her battling eyes will be ever remembered by the hero in separation, the maid portrays in graphic terms the heroine's broad shoulders, tender breasts, lively complexion, hanging locks of hair, moon-like face with 'tilakam' on it, and precious ear-rings.¹⁴⁷

Another notable feature of his poetry is the realistic description of the preliminary requisite for union. He has devoted 15 lines to present the exquisite workmanship of the ivory bedstead in the apartment of the palace on which the disconsolate queen is lying. In the entire Sangam literature, this is the only reference to the bedstead in the lovers chambers. He again presents artistically before our mental eyes the nature of the bed (cekkai) itself. The bed contains a mattress and pillows made of pure white nice down of mated swan and abundant 'mullai' buds are strewn beneath them¹⁴⁸. Over the mattress, a white sheet cleanly washed is spread. Thus fineness, purity and fragrance characterize the material of the lovers' bed. In other poems too the poet brings out the daintiness and odour of the bed as in the lines,

“*Nurai mukantanna menpun cekkai*” (Aham: 93)

“*Palpun cekkai*”. (Do: 389)

Nakkirar may be credited with having described in plain words the preliminary aspect of the union of married couples by day and by night. Sulking or courtship (utal) is an essential stimulant for the perfect enjoyment of sexual union. Each of the senses, touch, smell, hearing, vision and taste, has its part to play in courtship and that the Tamil genius has fully realized the importance of this preliminary phase which is called ‘tumescence’ by sexologists, is clear from the technical terms utal, utal nimittam and punartal nimittam. A minute survey of every detail of Aham poems from the point of sex-psychology will give a student such rare wealth of knowledge as would enable him to write a separate volume. In this thesis, only references of a general nature will be occasionally made to the human method of arousing sexual excitement:

“*nerikural*

Cantar kuntal ularip potanintu

Tenkamal tirunutal tilakam taiiyium

Pallital etirmalar killi verupatta

Nallila vanamulai alliyotu appiyum

Peruntol toyyl varittum ciruparattu

Ancen ciratip panci yuttiyum

Erpuran tantu nirpa rattp

Palpun cekkaiyir pakalum ninkar

Manaivayin iruppavar” (Aham: 389)

How the passionate hero, desirous of union in the daytime, gently touches the limbs of the beloved from top to toe is realistically brought out by the poet in this long quotation. The husband who is at home combs her curly hair, adorns it with flowers, decorates her bright forehead with ‘tilakam’,

sticks the pieces of different flowers with pollen on her youthful breasts, draws figures on her broad shoulders probably with sandal paste and paints her tender feet with cotton dyed with lac. By means of tactile impressions, the hero generates a strong sexual urge in her before physical activity. In another poem the union at night is alluded to. The home-coming hero in the midst of his return journey thinks of the prospect of pressing hard his wife's breasts in the soft bed in the bright light:

*“Nurai mukantanna menpun cekkai
Nivanta palli netuncutar vilakkattu
Nalanke lakam punvatup porippa
Muyankukam cenmo”*

(Aham: 93)

The reference to the presence of a lamp during nightly union is found only in this poem of Sangam period¹⁴⁹. It is to be said in praise of Nakkirar that he intentionally pictures his hero as markedly sensual only when he is in company with his wife, or when he has successfully completed his work. That is to say the hero will completely forget the home when at work. With a view to expressing the ideal life of a husband when at home and at work, the great poet Nakkirar has composed the poem (383) of Ahananuru and the idyll of Netunalvatai. Commenting on the latter¹⁵⁰ Dr. S.S. Bharathi reveals one of the eternal truths in Aham literature. He observes: “In his love-lorn lonely camp life, even when he was merely vegetating under the winter weather which entailed a truce of his battling ardour, he (the hero of the Netunalvatai) did not turn his heart with any single thought to his most loved queen who was pining for him in the distant capital, feeling forlorn in the midst of a multitude of loving maids and coaxing mothers and of royal pomp and unparalleled luxury of the peerless palace of the far-famed Pandians. Such was the

standard of devotion to public duty that it eschewed and tabooed all distractions of every kind which might lead to any dereliction, that was the ideal of the Tamil savant in time of yore. Never once is any hero to be found in literature as inclining to, and much less indulging in love musings in camp, not at least till the campaign ends and the men are free to revert to their personal loves”.

24. Nallantuvanar

Nallantuvanar is one of the five authors of Kalittogai. The Neytal part containing 33 Kali odes is his masterpiece. Besides, he has composed four Aham poems, one in Ahananuru, one Narrinai and two in Paripatal. Among the Sangam poets, Nallantuvanar easily wins the first rank in the treatment of irankal or the desolate grief born of the lack of sexual enjoyment. Poets like Ammuvanar and Uloccanar who have also predominantly sung on the Neytal division, have not restricted themselves to the treatment of the love-aspect (irankal) allotted to Neytal. That is to say they dealt with many love-aspects of Ahattinai under the background of Neytal or littoral region. Their poems are called Neytal simply because of the kind of natural description in them. Nallantuvanar’s Neytal lyrics are truly Neytal, both in the treatment of the subject-matter and in the description of appropriate settings. Again Nallantuvanar has an exclusive right to recognition for composing poems illustrating the division of Peruntinai. But for his ten stanzas, we must avow that the correct understanding of the lofty significance of Peruntinai will ever be an insoluble problem to the student of Tamil literature. In the third chapter on “The Concept of Ahattinai”, I have made full use of these Peruntinai poems and elucidated the implication of the inclusion of Peruntinai as one of the divisions of Ahattinai.

Nallantuvanar's treatment of the Neytal theme or the pining of the heroine both in kalavu and karpu courses is surprisingly extreme and may be sometimes said to touch the grammatical boundary of Peruntinai. The only distinguishable difference in the treatment of this uripporul between Aintinai and Peruntinai is that the heroine of Aintinai is also unbridled in her passion but her most cherished modesty does not allow her to proclaim it in the eyes of the public.

There are two kinds of modesty which receive frequent mention in Aham poetry and which are called nan or nanam (an expletive suffix 'am' added to nan) by one and the same word in Tamil. Nan, in one sense, means the feeling of shyness, a feminine characteristic indispensable for creating the masculine passion. Havelock Ellis rightly observes that "the women who is lacking in this kind of fear is lacking also in sexual attractiveness to the normal and average man".¹⁵¹ It is needless to point out that a literature the theme of which is the sole treatment of sexual love will certainly make the maximum use of the bashful and reticent attitude of the charming women for the delicate description of the preliminary phenomena of courtship, coquetry and union. Nallavurkilar, a Sangam poet has beautifully brought out the part played by feminine modesty in the first experience of physical ecstasy and has shown how the concealment of the face with her garment was instrumental in maddening the hero's mind.¹⁵²

Nan, in another sense, is shame to do a thing of evil. It is not related to sexuality but to the morality of human beings in general. Chapter 102 of Tirukkural speaks of this sense of virtuous blush essential for every man or woman to lead an honourable life, as against the physical blush worthy of the

fair sex.¹⁵³ In Aham literature, it is to this kind of modesty or sense of honour of the hero that the maid appeals when he is indifferent to marriage in the kalavu course¹⁵⁴ or when he forsakes his wife in company of prostitutes in karpu course¹⁵⁵. Nallantuvanar has prudently touched upon the subject, viz. how the heroine of the furtive and wedded courses keeps intelligently this sense of general human modesty, without letting her sexual passion be known to the public and how the characters of Peruntinai are lost to shame and proclaim to the public their uncontrollable passion for union.

Nallantuvanar characterises his hero as inordinately eager for prolonging the time of the kalavu course and putting off the marriage. For a poet who is inclined to express the desolate feelings of the heroine in the clandestine stage, the only theme suitable for treatment is varaivu nittippu or the delaying of wedding. As a rule, the girl will be averse to continuing the secret union. She consciously or unconsciously thinks of marriage, to be free from the fear of her parents and of the public. The longer the delay for public wedding, the greater will be her affliction. It is therefore, no wonder that all the 16 poems of kalavu by Nallantuvanar deal with 'varaivu nittippu' with minor differences.

*“Kantavar illena ulakattul unaratar
Tankatu takaivinrit tanceyyum vinaikalul
Nencarinta kotiyavai maraippinum aripavar
Nencattuk kurukiya kariyillai”* (Kali. 125)

In these famous lines the maid severely criticises the conduct of the hero, by pointing out to him that he should not behave like this because nobody knows his secret relation with the girl, and that is a union to which his inner conscience itself is an honest witness. She emotionally appeals to his sense of honour that his irresponsible attitude towards an

innocent girl who lost her virginity due to his relation is a spot on his noble parentage, virtue and name. She compares the hero who is in virtue and name¹⁵⁶. She compares the hero who is in no mood to marry, to a worshipped deity metamorphosing into an oppressing demon¹⁵⁷. She charges him with ingratitude and sharply remarks that his forsaking the girl after consuming her beauty resembles the abandonment of the receptacle after drinking its contents, say, milk¹⁵⁸. She reproves the hero that, knowing fully well that the act of marriage will end all her sufferings, he behaves cunningly like a physician who hides his best knowledge of medicine from a patient.¹⁵⁹

*“Naninakol toli naninakol toli...
Anap pariya alavan alaipukuum
Kanar kamalnalal viyeyppat toliyen
Meni citaittan turai”*

(Kali. 131)

Thus the poet figuratively attributes the hiding of the crab in the mud-hole at the sight of the heroine to its being ashamed of the unrighteous behaviour of the chief to whom the sea-shore belongs.

Nallantuvanar is eminent in the selection of the natural background fit for the ‘neytal’ theme. The ‘taravu’ parts of many of his Kali odes have nothing to do with the subject matter. But the central or talicai parts are incomparably superb in the expression of the overwhelming anxiety and agony of the mistress and her maid. There are six Kali odes¹⁶⁰ in Karpu course in which the wife in long separation refers to the evening and charges it with cruelty and injustice. She opines that only ignoramus will call the closing of the day evening and gives an Aham interpretation that it is a period which deprives the love-lorn women of their life:

*“Valilai makalir uyirpoti avilkkum
 Kalai yavatu ariyar
 Malai yenmanar mayanki yore”* (Kali. 119)

She views the eventide with the bright crescent moon as the dreadful laughter of Yama or the God of death. She really feels the absence of her husband to enjoy the cool atmosphere of evening, and considers the influence of the evening to be as cruel as the act of an unsympathetic hunter who discharge his arrow towards the breast of a deer, seeing with his own eyes, its being washed away by the rapid current.¹⁶¹ She blames that the evening is not alike in its influence on all. It oppresses more and more those who are already afflicted in the extreme by the separation of their husbands and gives pleasure to those who have the goods fortune of unrelaxable embrace with their lords. In this way the poet¹⁶² characterises the heroine in loneliness as envious of the wives in union.

It is from the pen of a poet like Nallantuvanar who is surpassingly skilful in the art of poetically giving expression to the sorrowful mood of the heroines of Aintinai that we can expect the treatment of the themes of Peruntinai. It is natural and easy for this poet who is inclined to deal with the excess of emotions of the character in the ‘neytal’ theme just to enter into the line of Peruntinai from the border of Aintinai. As explained in the third chapter, the poet in his Peruntinai composition, treats only of the immodest act of a lover in kalavu course and of a wife in karpu course. That is to say his treatment of Peruntinai is within the limit of Ahattinai. If he had described the love of a youth towards an unwilling girl, or the passion of a wife towards a person other than her husband, his poems will not be classified as Aham. From his poems of this division which are not easy to

compose, we understand that Peruntinai does not transgress the fundamental principle of Ahattinai-union of hearts, but it is devoid of the chief trait of Aintinai modesty.

*“Onnutal ayattar orankut tilaippinum
Munnunai tonramai muruvalkontu atakkittan
Kanninum mukattinum nakupaval penninri
Yavarum tankural ketpa niraivenpal
Miyuyar tonra nakaa nakkanke
Puvuyirt tanna pukalcal elilunkan
Ayital malka alum”* (Kali: 142)

These lines, by contrast, bring to light the immodesty of a wife, who was modest till her husband left her. Unable to control the increasing physical passion, the heroine who used to control even the mild smile not exposing her teeth and who used to express it only in her countenance and eyes, now bursts out into a loud laughter exposing all her teeth to the public, speaks out noisily before all and weeps with eyelids full of tear-drops. She addresses the crowd and explains the reason for her change. She requests the sun, the moon, the sea, the wind and some other insignificant things, to find out the whereabouts of her husband and help her to have union with him. As the mood of the lustful woman is not constant, the poet has composed the Peruntinai lyrics in an incoherent manner, so as to reflect the unstable and uncontrollable mind of the character. She speaks of her union with the lord in a dream and her disappointment as the loss of physical embrace¹⁶³. She proclaims her loyalty to him in spite of his unjust separation.¹⁶⁴ She praises him for his perfect knowledge in the art of love.¹⁶⁵ She desires to quit this world where her husband is not found, and join him in heaven¹⁶⁶. She childishly threatens the sea that she would dry it up if it does not indicate the place of his sojourn¹⁶⁷. She cries out in

frustration to extinguish the whole earth by fire born of her weeping eyes, if ubiquitous air does not reveal his hiding place¹⁶⁸. Sometimes she is conscious of her extreme behaviour, unworthy of a house wife and retorts on the ridiculing folk, by pointing out their good luck in not being attacked by the sexual urge.

“Makalir,

Tolcernta Mantar tuyarkura nittalum

Nilcuram pokiya vallaivan talittalum

Ulceytu iravum pakalumpol veraki

Vilvarkan tonrum tatumarram nalattul

Valvarkat kellam varum”

(Kali: 145)

The above lines from the mouth of a love-affected wife are instructive and interesting, as they generalize the bright and dark sides of a wedded woman in this world where union and separation are natural like day and night. These public harangues by a woman on the matter of her personal relations with her wedded man are truly immodest and unfeminine. It is said by the poet that a Peruntinai lady will wipe off the ‘tilakam’ on the forehead and the whole of her body will turn pale of pacalai.¹⁶⁹

25. Nalluruttiranaar

Nalluruttiranaar is one of the five authors of kalittogai, whose composition is the Mullai part consisting of 17 Kali odes. No poem is found in his name in other Sangam classics. I am happy to note that the genius of this poet is entirely different from that of other Aham poets. He is more realistic than poetic. He has pictured the actual life of the shepherds of the pastoral region with reference to love, He has wonderfully linked the customs and habits of the pastoral people with the principles of Ahattinai. For example, the

custom of the herdsmen is to marry a girl to a hero who subdues the fierce bull set free for the purpose. It means that the girl should compulsorily wed a man who does so, even if she does not like him. This certainly strikes at the fundamentals of Ahattinai. It seems that Nalluruttiranaar wishes to build the structure of Ahattinai on the foundation of the ordinary life of the rustic people. As a sort of adjustment, he describes how the hero and the heroine are united in heart, before the subjugation of the bull.¹⁷⁰

It is generally known that the subject matter (uripporul) allotted to 'mullai' is the patient state of lovers in separation. Poems of 'mullai' in Sangam literature, usually deal with themes like the grief of the wife at the sight of the season, the maid consoling the matron, the hero addressing the charioteer at the completion of the task etc. The 'mullai' part of Kalittogai differs widely from the ordinary line of adopting themes and chooses only those themes which can be fitted in with the social manners of the 'mullai' people. Kalavu is the only course treated in all these 'mullai' poems, excepting in one which belongs to Kaikkilai. Yet the absence of variety of turais is easily discernible. Just as some poets have treated largely of historical matter in Aham poetry, Nalluruttiranaar has written this Mullaikkali only to represent the society of the pastoral inhabitants. He is more social than Aham-minded Poems 1 to 7 are mainly devoted to the description of the festival of 'bull-subduing'. The rest describe the pleasant and unsophisticated conversation of the lovers.

The opportunity for the meeting of lovers is different according to the custom of each region. A lover will meet the girl in Kurinchi when she guards the millet field from the parrots.¹⁷¹ In Neytal region to keep watch over the fishes spread for drying up is the time for the lovers' meeting.¹⁷²

The sale of the products of this region like fish and salt is¹⁷³ In Mullai, Nalluruttiranaar frequently mentions the sale of buttermilk by the girl¹⁷⁴ and the grazing of the cattle by both sexes of the shepherd community¹⁷⁵ as the normal opportunities for the lovers' contact.

The conversational parts of Mullaikkali faithfully reflect the native and unsophisticated mind of the pastoral inhabitants even in matters of love. A lover charges the girl with the stealing of his heart and the employing of it as a slave, to which she retorts, "Of what use is your heart to me? Will it carry food to my brother who is in the pasturage? Or will it give the milk-pail to my father who is in the stall? Or will it graze the calves in the millet field, the work now my mother is doing?"¹⁷⁶ When a youth obstructs a girl in the street, she sharply remarks, "I am instructed by my relatives not to talk with you." The loquacious hero gives a twisted interpretation to the instruction and informs her "Your relatives advised you only against speaking to me, not against embracing me;"

"Collalompu enramai yanri yavaraini

Pullalompu enratu utaiyaro"

(Kali; 112)

The girls of the shepherd community do not show any anxiety over the hardships their lovers have to undergo in the act of subduing 'the bulls with fatal horns.' On the other hand, they take delight at the sight of the wounds received for their sake on the chest of their lovers. A heroine invites her maid to join in her singing of the beautiful chest of her hero which bears the sign of bravery.¹⁷⁷ Another heroine is eager to foment the chest wound of her lover with her warm breasts.¹⁷⁸ While selling the butter milk, she likes to hear nice word from the mouth of the public that he who subdued the bull is the lover of this girl.¹⁷⁹ It is said that a shepherd maiden will

not touch the lad of her choice even in the next birth, if he fears to embrace the sharp horn of a destructive bull.¹⁸⁰ The implication is that she will not be sorry for the loss of the life of her lover in the fight with the bull in this birth, but be happy and patient to hold him in her arms in the succeeding birth. In these ways, the firm attachment of the girls of this community to the custom of their society in marriage is clearly brought out by Nalluruttiranaar. It is well to remember that the poet, inspite of the introduction of a popular custom belonging to 'mullai' region, has strictly followed the general nature of themes to be adopted in Ahattinai, and has not said that the lover of particular girl failed or died in the attempt of overcoming a bull, or a person other than her choice succeeded in the subjection of the bull and claimed his right to marry her. I am happy to note that the poet generally pictures the parents as wise and pious and as willing to marry their daughters to their lovers.

*“Mannima carranin kulaiyul eravan
Kannitan titta tenakkettut tinnitat
Teyvamal kattir rivatkena ninnaiyap
Poyyil potuvar kataiculntar tantaiyotu
Aiyanmar ellarum orunku”* (Kali; 107)

Thus the interpretation by the persons concerned of the incident, in which the hero's garland accidentally fell on the hair of the girl, while subjugating the bull in the field as auspicious is responsible for the unanimous decision to give her in marriage to that hero.

26. Paranaar

Paranaar is one of the renowned Sangam celebrities. Like Kapilar, he has been popular among poets. He has sung 62 Aham poems of which 33 and 29 are respectively of kalavu

and karpu courses. 34 poems of his are in Ahananure, 16 in Kuruntogai and 12 in Narrinai.

In the course of this thesis, mention has already been made of the historical nature of Parinar's Aham poems. In 51 out of 62 stanzas this aspect is clearly found. All his poems in Ahananuru excepting two¹⁸¹ are studded with historical facts, and love aspects are relegated to an insignificant position. Any reader who casually looks into his Aham lyrics will easily estimate him as more a historian than a poet. There are some among the Aham poets who are also history-minded. Parinar tops the list of these poets. Description of nature in poetry is subjected to criticism, when such description is far-fetched and not related to the love themes in any way. More so the abundant historical materials in Aham poetry as in the poems of Parinar, are out of place. Merely to show the beauty of the heroine or the prostitute, he has mentioned, by way of comparison in seven 'poems¹⁸², the various renowned places with their rulers like "Matti kalaaranna em ilamai," "Kuttuvan Marantaianna en nalam," etc., Merely to effect a comparison with the public gossip (alar) born of the hero's delay in marriage, or his lewd behaviour after marriage, the poet has referred in six poems¹⁸³ to the thunderous uproar of the victorious people in the battle field. He has given some interesting anecdotes in the life of Nannan, Minili, Attanatti, Atimanti, Atikan, Ay, Akutai in his Aham poetry, sometimes with repetition.

I strongly hold that, with the aim of introducing his historical knowledge in the poetic form, Parinar has composed Ahattinai and that this wrong approach did not allow him to use his imaginative power; for, the tie that binds the long historical portions with the part of Ahattinai in his poetry is slender. This criticism should not be constructed, as

indicating that Parānar has utterly failed in his attempt to write poems on Ahattinai. What I mean is that the innumerable historical references do not allow the student to apply his mind to the relevant parts of Aham poetry and that the study of history in his Aham poetry.

The selection of love-themes for treatment by Parānar reveals his literary talent. He is able to deal with one particular aspect of Aham, with different psychological approaches. He has composed nineteen poems in which the hero of the kalavu or karpū course speaks to his heart in various contexts. He may be credited with having taken for treatment some rare themes which are not generally thought of by many poets. The turai allakuri (the futile return of the hero on account of wrong sign) is described in seven lyrics. The hero's soliloquy after enjoying the nightly meeting is related in six stanzas. The prostitute's speech in the hearing of the friends of the heroine is the theme of five poems. The wife's merciless attitude to the dissolute course of the husband and his melancholy remark also are treated by Parānar.¹⁸⁴ In this connection I should like to observe that Parānar has selected a rare love-theme like makatparkanchi in Puram poetry too and has sung six poems on it.

The notable figure in Parānar's Aham poetry is the hero. His overpowering sexuality is manifest in both courses. In the kalavu stage, he desires to have daily meeting. He compares his sensuality transcending the limit of modesty to the inundation which destroys the bank constructed by salt.¹⁸⁵ He personally tells the heroine about his unrestrained carnal desire and asks her for nightly meeting.¹⁸⁶ He excretes his heart to die when he cannot meet his lady-love, after a long tedious journey at night.¹⁸⁷ The two related feelings viz. the excessive distress born of disappointment at the absence of

the heroine at the appointed place on some days, and the increasing pleasure born of nightly unions as expected on some other days are pathetically and voluptuously brought to light by Parānar in many of his Aham poems. The frustrated lover thinks highly of the heroine as an unattainable divine beauty. That he cannot easily secure the hands of the girl in marriage is alluded to by the poet in a poem of Narrinai.¹⁸⁸

The romantic conception of the high value of his love-object is a source of increasing mental exultation for the lover in his Ahattinai. It seems to be a characteristic of Parānar to select the nightly trysts for treatment and to describe the sorrowful or blissful reaction of the hero to the consequence. The hero attaches great importance to the arrival of his rare beauty in the night and specially mentions her act of coming, in many poems by the verbal participle “vantu”. He expresses his sense of gratitude to her for cleverly coming out of her house, without the knowledge of the inmates and for satisfactorily gratifying his sensual appetite, and praises her head and heart in apt words like,

*“Ancilam potukki ancinal vantu
Tuncur yamattu muyankinal peyarvol
Anra karpir canra periyal
Amma arivaiyo allal
Curmakal mato ennumen nence”* (Aham; 198)

The sensuality of the heroine is rarely touched upon by Parānar. She plays a passive role in sex behaviour and does not give expression to her voluptuous eagerness. She does not create and kindle a passionate urge in him by her alluring charm. Some of the poems of Parānar lead us to infer that the frigid and indifferent attitude of the wife in matters of sex is responsible for the husband’s debauchery. An intelligent maid points out to the hero the incapacity of her broad-

shouldered friend to enrapture her lover's mind by fascinating feminine devices:

*“Anittakai yallatu pinittal terrap
Peruntol celvattu ival”* (Nar; 270)

An annoyed heroine finds it difficult to the lewd course of her husband and relentlessly speaks out that he is her enemy and that it is impossible for her to forget his present conduct: “Pakaivan manyan marantu amaikalane”¹⁸⁹ Another heroine of the same view is said to have emphatically told her husband that she will not touch his polluted chest and that it is futile for him to approach her¹⁹⁰. Thus the wife's refusal to forgive and forget is especially touched upon by Paranar. This lack of femine quality is, in my opinion, the result of the want of sensuality.

27. Palai Patiya Perunkatunko

Perunkatunko is one of the five authors of Kalittogai in whose name there are 67 Aham poems, of which 7 and 60 are respectively on kalavu and karpu courses. He is given the title “palai patiya” because of his artistic treatment of the sorrowful feelings of the heroine, in separation or about to be separated. It is well to remember here that Otalantaiyar, the author of the palai part of Ainkurunuru has introduced many characters in his kalavu poems and touchingly treated the sentiment of the distressed mother of the eloped girl. In Perunkatunko's poems, the hero, the heroine and the maid figure exclusively. No poem is composed by him as the speech of the mother, though she is indirectly referred to in a famous Kali ode attributed to the ascetic with the trident-staff.¹⁹¹

A palai poet will naturally select the theme of elopement; but his genius will express itself in the creation

of some interesting incidents in the course of elopement. In his poems on utampokku, Perunkatunko has introduced some lively elements. The hero desires that his sweet-heart should go before him so that he can have a delightful sight of her gait characterised by diffidence and softness and her well-formed back. The lady does not move, but bends her head in bashfulness with a bewitching look. The hero too refuses to move further. Both of them sit there for the day and the lovers quarrel ends with no victory to either party.¹⁹²

*“Vatinavil ampin vinaiyar ancatu
Amaritai yurutara nikkinir
Emaritai yurutara olitta kate”* (Nar: 48)

In these lines, the manifestation of the hero’s bravery, when attacked by the sturdy robbers of the desert, and of his humility when pursued by the relatives of the girl during elopement, is shown by contrast.

Perunkatunko is an upholder of the principle that the greed for wealth should be subordinated to the desire for conjugal enjoyment. In his master piece, Palaikkali, he depicts a struggle on this principle between the husband and the wife. The husband thinks more of accumulation of riches, of course for good purposes than of the company of his wife. His eagerness for wealth at the expense of physical pleasure is characterised by noble principles. He realizes the indispensability of wealth to do many good acts in this world and also likes to do such deeds from his earnings. In fact, he is totally unwilling to content himself, with property he has had by inheritance, as evident from the lines.

“Ullatu citaippor ularenap pataar” (Kurun : 283)

“Ullanku uvattal cellar” (Aham; 11)

The lines

*“Vinaiye atavarkku uyire vanutal
Manaiyurai makalirkku atavar uyirena
Namakku uraittorum tame”* (Kurun;; 135)

bring out the divergent attitudes of the husband and the wife in life. The maid is the favourite character with this poet. He has purposely given the maid a prominent part in his many poems for ennobling the objective of sexual enjoyment when lovers are youthful, with no eager thought of money-making. Here is a passage from the pen of Bertrand Russell who has also discussed this topic like Perunkatunko and seems to agree with him in the main;¹⁹³

“In the modern world, however, love has another enemy more dangerous than religion and that is the gospel of work and economic success. It is generally held especially in America, that a man should not allow love to interfere with his career, and that if he does, he is silly. But in this as in all human matters a balance is necessary. It would be foolish, through in some cases it might be tragically heroic, to sacrifice career completely for love, but it is equally foolish and in no degree heroic to sacrifice love completely for career. Nevertheless this happens, and happens inevitably, in a society organized on the basis of a universal scramble for money.” After pointing out the life of a typical business man and his wife in America, the author observes:- “In this way the lack of sexual satisfaction both in husband and wife turns to hatred of mankind disguised as public spirit and a high moral standard. This unfortunate state of affairs is largely due to a wrong conception of our sexual needs.”

What is wealth to the lovers? The maid answers the

question. She centres her argument on the transience of youthfulness. When the hero points out the increasing pleasure that will accrue from the possession of wealth, she retorts that freshness of youth and sexual appetite will not wait for him, and counsels him not to while away the vigorous period which should be intelligently utilized for the pleasant embrace of the fragrant breasts of the girl. She attributes his coldness towards sexual enjoyment, to his utter ignorance of the existence of the physical states, like old age and death. Again she brings home to him the uncertainty of the time required for money-making, by the satirical statement that wealth does not lie in a place in a heap so as to be carried off by anybody in no time. She cites the happy family life of the poor people who do not part from their wives in the prime of youth, and emphatically concludes that that is commendable in which the lovers are ever in union, adjusting themselves alternately with the only dress they have. For, the amount of youth lost is lost for ever.

*“Tannakar vilaiyak kutin
Innural viyanmarpa atumanum porule”* (Kali: 8)

*“Kavavukkai vitapperum poruttirattu
Avavukkai vitutal atumanum porule”* (Do: 14)

Thus the maid teaches the hero the kind of wealth which should be consumed before its evanescence. Perunkatunko does not object to the earning of money, but his contention is that a thing should be consumed in its freshness. He expresses this principle through the character of the maid, as in the lines,

*“Valamaiyo vaikalum ceyalakum marrivan
Mulainirai muruvalar ayattul etuttaynta
Ilamaiyum taruvato iranta pinne”* (Kali: 15)

28. Peyanar

Peyanar is one of the five poets of Ainkurunuru. 105 Aham lyrics are extant in his name. No poem is sung by him on the Puram aspect. His favourite subject is the ‘mullai’ aspect. I do not consider him as a poet par-excellence in the treatment of this theme. He is very orthodox in the way of dealing with the patient state of lovers and its related topics. It cannot be compared with Itaikkatanar who excels in the presentation of the pastoral background and Nalluruttiranaar who does not adopt the traditional approach of the ‘mullai’ theme. A complete study of the ‘mullai’ poems in Sangam classics reveals that the ‘mullai’ theme, unlike other themes pertaining to Kurinci, Neytal, Marutam and Palai tinai, does not afford much potential scope for Aham poets for variation and elaboration: for, the feeling that this tinai is to describe is the lovers’ patience and endurance—a feeling which, though good, is devoid of enthusiasm and inspiration.

Peyanar, in his mullai part, takes a family with a child for treatment. His lovers have no clandestine relationship. That is to say, they are married by their parents in the traditional manner. It seems to have been the Tamilian custom for the nurse to visit the heroine in the house of the hero, to know personally, how the newly-married girl managed the household and led a joyous life with her lord.¹⁹⁴ Peyanar chooses one such occasion of the nurse’s visits, after the birth of a child to the girl. The ten poems relating to this theme may be said to be his masterpiece in Ainkurunuru. “The perfect and complete marriage in its full development is a trinity”, so observes Havelock Ellis¹⁹⁵. Peyanar realistically pictures the oneness of trinity in the first ten stanzas. In one stanza he portrays the male child lying between its parents¹⁹⁶. In another, the husband is pictured as hugging his wife while

she is suckling the child¹⁹⁷. In a third, the wife is said to embrace her husband, the child being in his arms¹⁹⁸. In some other poems, the child is described as delighting its parents by its wobbling walk and by crawling over its father's broad chest while the 'mullai' note from the lute of the artiste called Panan adds to their joy.

Payanar has composed his Mullai hundred of karpu course more or less as a sort of continuation¹⁹⁹. In the first ten poems he describes the pleasant life of the family with the first born child. After a few years' enjoyment the warrior-husband parts from his wife for war. When the rainy season sets in, the season fixed by him for his home-coming, he who is in the camp, contemplates the sorrowful state of his mistress. The wife too expresses her uncontrollable feeling to the maid who consoles the heroine, by pointing out that the delay is due to the prolongation of the war, and not to the lack of kindness of her lord towards her. Then the husband and the wife in separation exchange messages through the aid of panan. As soon as the war is over, the hero urges the charioteer to drive the horse as fast as he could, even using the goad²⁰⁰. In the last ten poems the rejoicing of the hero, the heroine and the maid is brought out. The ending would have been more appropriate, if Peyanar who, with a realistic view, introduces the child as an important member of the family in the beginning of his Ainkurunuru, had described the happiness of the child too, at the sight of its father, on his return from the battle field.

The hero is the prominent figure in Peyanar's Ainkurunuru. The poet describes him as a warrior throughout. It is said in many poems that he returned home earlier than the time fixed by him. He who comes thus before the rainy season wishes to sport in the new freshes along with

his wife. He congratulates himself on his early arrival to enjoy the company of his beloved, like the male elephant embracing its mate in the garden, full of sweet-smelling flowers and humming bees²⁰¹. Peyanar tries to picture vividly, how a hero of high rank who is deadly to his enemy is kind towards his family. The hero desires that the war should come to an end before the advent of the rainy season. When it is prolonged, he imagines the distressed state of his wife. When the war is about to finish, he sends a messenger to inform her about to finish, he sends a messenger to inform her about his return. On the way, he experiences a hallucination about his wife and on reaching home describes it to her to prove his kindness²⁰².

*“Konraip puvir pacanta vunkan
Kunraka netuncunaik kuvalai polat
Tolkavin perrana ivatke”.* (Ain: 500)

Thus the maid points out to the hero that his return even late, restores the beauty of the heroine’s eyes. They had lost their odour like the withered konrai flowers, but now they have regained their former kuvalai like charm.

29. Marutam Ilanakanar

Ilanakanar is one of the five great authors of Kalittogai. His masterpiece is Marutakkali consisting of 35 odes. Besides, there are in his name, 23 poems in Ahananuru, 4 in Kuruntogai and 12 in Narrinai. Of these 74 stanzas, 16 and 58 belong respectively to the kalavu and the karpu courses. A survey of his compositions reveals his ability to deal with any aspect of five tinai in a masterly way.

*“Akalilai naval unturai utirtta
Kanikavin citaiya vankik kontutan
Talai veralai viltunaik kituum*

*Alavar katti narpar rituvena
Ninainta nencamotu netitupeyarn tone” (Aham: 380)*

In these lines, the poet describes how the young hero of the furtive stage is ashamed of verbally expressing his passionate love to the maid, and how he implies it by alluding to the affectionate behaviour of a male crab which carries the ‘naval’ fruit to its female in the hole. It is of absorbing interest to know that Ilanakanar who profusely treats of the profligacy of the hero in Marutakkali must have thought of picturing him, as very modest in the secret course:

*“Centarp painkili munkai enti
Inruvaral uraimo cenricinor tirattena
Illavar arital anci mellena
Malalai incor payirrum
Nanutai arivai”.* (Aham: 34)

The wife in separation trains her parrot to repeat the words “the hero abroad will return today”, for hearing such words will alleviate her distress. While training it, she intentionally speaks, in a low tone, being ashamed of the inmates hearing those lovely words. These two illustrations from Ahananuru depicting the modesty of the hero and the heroine will be useful for a student to form a good opinion of Ilanakanar, before he enters into a study of the poet’s Marutakkali.

Marutakkali of Ilanakanar describes the immodesty of the lewd husband and of the harlots of alluring qualities. The hero is said to hunt after new prostitutes every time²⁰³. His insatiable sensuality is likened to the sea that can never be filled up even by the ever-flowing rivers²⁰⁴. The number of prostitutes espoused and forsaken by him is sufficient to constitute the population of a village²⁰⁵. The signs of the hero’s physical union with harlots are plainly mentioned in this Kali.

The chest of the hero shows the bite of the teeth, the scratch of the nail and the impression of the bangles of the prostitutes. His chest diffuses the fragrance of the sandal paste and highly scented flowers worn by them. It proclaims his immorality, for he comes wearing in a fit of confusion, their garlands. His dress reveals his lewdness, for its border has been torn while dancing with prostitutes in ‘tunankai’. He plays with them in the water and enjoys the concert conducted by them and returns home only early in the morning. The bard, the charioteer and some others help the licentious course of the hero.

Marutakkali is not all pornography; for the main figure in it is the faithful heroine. The unswerving faithfulness on the part of the wife is brought to light, by contrast, with the unfaithfulness of her dishonest husband. She is not ignorant of his disloyalty. She is not too foolish to think that man is by nature oversensual and that therefore her husband’s behaviour is justified. She resents his act every time. She makes up her mind that, when he comes home, she should not have any more contact with him. Yet her fidelity to him does not depend upon his fidelity to her. It is absolute.

*“Kataiyya ninmarpu toyalam ennum
Itaiyum niraiyum elitonir kanin
Katavupu kaittanka nencennum tammotu
Utanval pakaiyutai yarkku”* (Kali - 77)

Thus the sight of the husband melts her hard heart and she instantly embraces his defiled chest forgetting all her previous resolutions.

The husband’s lewdness should not be interpreted as unfaithfulness to his wife. It is to be attributed, partly to his over sexuality, and partly to the connivance of society at such

conduct of men. The immoral hero is afraid of entering his house as usual and facing his wife. He utters a lie to her that he knows no public woman. When she points out the various signs of debauchery on his person, he begins to swear or to prostrate before her. He requests the maid to speak conciliatory words to his sulking wife. He sometimes takes a guest to his house, so that his dutiful wife will have no opportunity to quarrel with him. Sometimes he steals into the house and lies in the bed along with his child, as if he is asleep.

*“Viruntetir kollavum poyccul ancavum
Arumperar putalvanai muyankak kanavum
Ankavintu oliyumen pulavi”.* (Kali: 75)

The natural disappearance of a lady’s resentment due to her husband’s tricky acts is mentioned in this passage.

A deep study of the poems of the ‘marutam’ class in Ahattinai will convince us of the importance of children in a family, not only for a happy and prosperous life but for the harmony of the husband and wife who pick quarrels, due to misunderstanding and intolerance. We have already seen in Peyanar’s poetry the picture of a family with a child. Ilanakanar vividly describes the child as an effective instrument for its parents to sink their differences. It is generally understood that the husband begins to seek the company of prostitutes when his wife conceives²⁰⁶. It is reasonable to mention in literature that the child is a link for the happy reunion of its parents. A poet, Cellukkocikan Kannanar, in his only poem, describes the part played by the child, in preventing its father from going to the brothel and in compelling him to return to his own house, by its tottering walk and uncompromising childish attitude.

The lewd hero, in Ilanakanar's Kali odes, finds in his son a successful means of pacifying his sullen wife. The wife too finds in her darling solace and comfort. When the hero takes the baby in his bosom, she scornfully tells him not to touch the child; for "the ignorant son will defile" by saliva your chest fragrant with the sandal paste of the prostitutes; he will seize and throw the pearl necklace of your chest adorned by them and he will pull and tear the flower wreath of your head tied by them"²⁰⁷. The Kali odes 82 to 85 are unique in Aham classics, as they, as in a short play, describe the stroll of the son with the aid of the maid, the hero's harlots affectionately adorning him with jewellery, the mother's different interpretations to such offerings and her advice to her innocent son.

*"Kunra iruvaraik konma ivarntankut
Tantai viyanmarpir payntan aranilla
Anpili perra maken".* (Kali: 86)

The statement that the son of the unrighteous and unfaithful hero sprang upon his father's chest on sight, like the cub of tiger jumping towards a hill, signifies the wife's reconciliation with her dissolute husband.

The poetic genius of Ilanakanar cannot be easily judged unless we attempt to study his Marutakkali, with a biological and psychological background. The description of the lasciviousness of the hero is in some poems real and in some others imaginary. This two-fold treatment in his Kali has not been so far understood by many scholars. The feminine sexual character needs some sort of courtship before union. The wife by instinct resorts to some means to have a lively and frivolous conversation with her husband. One of the best and most harmless means, according to the Tamilian mode of life, is the attribution of lewdness to men. A Tamilian will not take

seriously such imputation when it comes from the mouth of his sweetheart during pleasurable time. He will view it as a feminine device for heightening the sexual impulse and try to plead guilty by words and acts.

*“Manaivi uyarvum kilavon panivum
Ninaiyum kalaip pulaviyul uriya”* (Tol. 1172)

The surrender of the husband to his wife and the latter’s superiority in matters of courtship are pointed out by Tolkappiar. “Last but not least, we must not forget that a normal sexual union requires the same amount of surrendering and abandonment on the part of the man. And sex pathology shows that the incapacity, or rather the unwillingness of men to surrender or abandon themselves is

208

With this scientific and practical knowledge Ilanakanar has composed eleven Kali poems 87 to 93 and 95 to 98. The wife assumes that her husband is unfaithful²⁰⁹. This assumption is part and parcel of love-affairs and has nothing to do with the morality of men. For, Tiruvalluvar, the great moralist who utterly condemned licentious conduct has written a chapter “pulavi nunukkam” (the finesses of bouderie) all the ten couplets of which are based on the supposed misbehaviour of the hero. In the light of the foregoing explanation, we should approach the kali poems mentioned above. The following is a fine illustration: “Who is this man who dares to touch my locks of hair? Your behaviour is rude and unjust. Do not step into my house. Go out, “is the speech of a ladylove to her husband. “your action resembles the fighting of the two heads with each other of a one-souled bird. Please save my life” so pleads the intelligent hero. When the wife does not accept his explanation for his absence, he tells her with all humility that there is no way for

an innocent person, when the king falsely attributes crimes to him and unrighteously punishes him.

*“Poyppa viteem enanerunkin tappinem
Enrati certalum untu”.* (Kali: 89)

The wife thinks that if the argument continues, he may cleverly confess the alleged wrong and fall at her feet instantly. Here the surrender of masculine personality before the tender woman is alluded to. As an explanation of his absence, the hero points out that he went to worship gods, to witness the fight of the quails, to ride the horse and to see the sight of a new elephant. The passionate heroine interprets them as his prostitutes and attributes womanly appearance to such gods, quails, horses and elephants figuratively. These poems are characterised by light conversations of the faithful lovers who prepare themselves by the exchange of charming words for perfect physical congress.

30. Vellivitiyar

Vellivitiyar is one of the reputed poetesses of the Sangam age. There are 13 Aham poems in her name. She has not sung any Puram subject. Kalavu and karpu courses are treated in 5 and 8 poems respectively. The single unhappy reference by Auvaiyar in her poem²¹⁰ to an episode in the life of Velliviti prevents a student from studying Velliviti's poems purely from the point of Ahattinai. Velliviti, the learned wife, unable to bear the separation of her husband, departed to join him in his far-off place. Auvaiyar has cited this incident as a simile, as it was well-known to the people at that time. A critic finds in her Aham poems the reflection of this biographical element²¹¹. These poems may be held to have been composed, before her journey in search of her husband.

Velliviti pictures her characters in the excess of their sorrowful mood in both course. In kalavu, both the hero and the heroine appear highly sensual. A lover plainly tells his admonishing friend that his passion knows no bounds and cannot be subdued. He compares his uncontrollable feeling to the butter the melting of which cannot be prevented by a dumb person with no hand, in the heat of the sun on the²¹². The girl too expresses her unrestrained passion and likens it to the flood that destroys the small sand bank.²¹³ A mother undertakes a long journey to see her eloped girl and her power of sight becomes dim as she keenly observes the passers-by.²¹⁴

The karpu lyrics clearly reflect the search of this poetess for her husband. The wife in unduly long separation desires to make a vigorous search in the nooks and corners of the country or the village or the house of every family. The theme “kamam mikka kalipatar kilavi” (a speech in the excess of sexual appetite) is dealt with by Vellivitiyar in three poems.

*“Ennotu porunkol ivvulakam
Ulakamotu porunkolen avalamuru nence”.* (Nar: 348)

Thus the wife describes her inner struggle, as a fight between herself and the whole world. She cannot tolerate the waste of her youthful beauty with no advantage either to her lord or to her, like the milk falling on earth, with no use to the calf or to the milkman. The pathetic feeling of the sensual wife is realistically pictured as,

*“Enakkum akatu ennaikkum utavatu
Pecalai uniiyar ventum
Titalai alkulen mamaik kavine”.* (Kurun: 27)

Foot Notes

1. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 55.
2. Tamil Literature, p. 18.
3. Convention and Revolt in Poetry, p. 60. Cf. 'Marapum Ilakkiyavalarcciyum' in 'Munpanikkkkam' by Dr. A. Chidambaranatha Chettiar.
4. Ibid; p. 76.
5. Tol; 957, 958, 964.
6. Aham; 228.
7. For union, Aham; 280, 370; for sulking, Nar; 307; for patience, Kurun; 318; for grief, Kurun; 125.
8. Aham; 35; Nar; 76, 397.
9. Aham; 140, 390.
10. Ain; 168.
11. Aham; 46.
12. Ante. P. 91.
13. Kurun; 157.
14. Aham; 106.
15. Aham; 106.
16. Sexual life in Ancient Greece, p. 18, Cf. Nar. 370.
17. Aham; 47.
18. Nar; 338.
19. Nar; 303.
20. Ibid; 152.
21. Aham; 274, Nar; 142. Cf. Aham; 304, l. 13. With Aham; 374, l. 13.
22. Kurun; 116.
23. Aham; 225.
24. Aham; 239.
25. Ibid; 361.
26. Aham; ll. 12-18.
27. Aham; 2299. "āwškh©L âU*Jf khñjh ã<bryî"
28. Ibid; 239: "ÚŁÉ ušĒnuh"
29. Aham; 3.

30. Aham; 58.
31. Aham; 298.
32. Tol: Porul: 225: Naccinarkkiniyam.
33. Aham. 190, 300.
34. Aham; 100.
35. Aham; 20, 190: Nar; 149.
36. Nar; 191, 203.
37. Nar; 149.
38. Ibid; 223, 354.
39. Aham; 400: “ešfsî mfy”
40. Kurun; 175: “iušnf< njhÊ”
41. Nar; 64, 223.
42. Ibid; 331: “jk® jkuçahç brçî« cilænj”
43. Aham; 300.
44. Tol; 1446, 1447
45. Tirukkural, St., 81.
46. Cf. Cilapatikaram, Kathai IVI. “ÉUªbjâ® nfhLY« îHªj v<id”.
47. Nar; 142; “mšÈyhÆD« ÉUªJtÇ< ct;F«”.
48. Aham; 384.
49. Kurun; 126.
50. Ain, 371.
51. Ibid, 379.
52. Ibid, 374.
53. Ibid, 375.
54. Ibid, 376.
55. Ain, 391.
56. Ain; 399.
57. Nar; 10; Ain; 37-40.
58. Ain; 21
59. Ain; 41.
60. Ain; 63.
61. Ain; 70.

62. AIn; 81.
63. Ain; 95.
64. Ain; 90. k>æe< kh©Fz« t©Lbfh© ldbfhš
t©o< kh©Fz« k>æe<bfh© lh<bfhš”
65. Ibid; 42.
66. Ibid; 58; 83.
67. Ibid; 15.
68. Ibid; 48.
69. Ibid; 18 31.
70. Ain; 19.
71. Ibid; 70.
72. Ibid; 85 Cf. Ibid; 91.
73. Ibid; 63.
74. Kurun; 107.
75. Ibid; 43.
76. Nar; 129.
77. Aham; 303.
78. Aham; 11; Kurun; 15.
79. Aham; 147; 273, 303, Kurun; 102.
80. Aham; 36, 116.
81. Kali; 141.
82. Ibid; 139.
83. The modern annotators of Ahananuru have interpreted this poem as though it belongs to kalavu course. Their misunderstanding may be due to the reference of mother in it. Cf. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkinyam, p. 142.
84. Aham; 191.
85. Aham; 78; Puram; 53. 126 ,174; Patirrupattu: 85.
86. That the lewd hero will prostrate himself before his wife (atimel viltal) is another instance. To say about the mother’s beating her daughter is of similar nature.
87. In the first chapter, the ‘Analysis of Ahattinai’ incidents of Kalavu and Karpu are given in the form of a tale. It is well to remember that, in presenting them as a story, illustrations are produced not from a single poem or from a single author, but from many poems of different authors, faithful to the nature of Aham subject.

88. Cf. Venkatarajulu Reddiar; Kapilar; pp. 15, 81.
89. Kali; 39, 40, 41, 42, . 43.
90. Nar; 253; Kurun; 198, 312; Nar; 77, 291, 320; AHam 238; Kurun; 100.
91. Nar; 339.
92. Ain; 215, 223, 234, 252; Kali 44, 53, Kurun; 38. 17.
93. Aham; 158.
94. Aham; 12.
95. Kali; 52, ll. 20-21.
96. The implication is rightly brought out by the commentator of Narrinai under poem 25.
97. Kali; 37.
98. Tol; 1059 “பொய்யினும் வழிநிலை பிழையாது”
99. Tol; 1163.
100. Aristotle, On the Art of Poetry, p. 87.
101. Ain; 232.
102. Aham; 42.
103. Ain; 312.
104. Nar; 48.
105. Kurun; 356, Aham; 397.
106. To wit: Aham; 295, 99, Nar; 9, 202.
107. Aham; 259.
108. Aham; 321.
109. Aham; 145.
110. KURun; 356.
111. Kurun; 378.
112. Aham; 195.
113. Aham; 83.
114. Aham; 171.
115. Ain; 218; Kurun; 260, Nar. 245.
116. Aham; 333.
117. Aham; 163.
118. Kurun: 261.

119. Nar; 274.
120. Aham; 391.
121. Aham; 293.
122. Aham 441.
123. Nar; 379.
124. Aham; 315.
125. Nar; 27.
126. Aham; 60.
127. Aham; 129.
128. Aham; 345.
129. Cf. Kurun; 43.
130. Kurun; 336.
131. Nar; 117.
132. Kurun; 117.
133. Cf. The History of poets of Narrinai by Pinnathur Narayanaswami Iyer and Nakkirar (p. 84) by N. M. Venkatasamy Nattar.
134. Aham; 78.
135. Introduction to Netunalvatai in Pattupattu.
136. Netunalvatai, II. 105, 188.
137. The Preface to Netunalvatai by Nachinarkkiniyar, “அடையாளப்புக் கூறினமையின் அகம் ஆகாதாயிற்று”.
138. Puram; 281, 296.
139. Netunalvatai, II. 171.-177.
140. Aham; 93, 389.
141. Aham; 205, 227.
142. Kurum, 280.
143. Kurun; 161.
144. Aham; 120, 310, 340.
145. Kurun; 131.
146. Aham; 253, 389 Cf. Tirumurukarrupatai, I. 24. “திலகம் தைஇய தேங்கமழ் திருநுதல்”.
147. Aham; 253.
148. Netunalvatai. II. 130-135.
149. Cf. Tiruppavai, St. 19 “ஈஃஃஃ”

150. Introduction to Netunalvatai, pp. 7-8.
151. Studies in the Psychology of Sex vol. I. The Evolution of Modesty, p. 1.
152. Aham; 86,
153. Tirukkural; St. 1011.
154. Nar; 72, Kurun; 265.
155. Aham; 116.
156. Kali; 135.
157. Kali; 132.
158. Kali; 133.
159. Kali; 129.
160. Kali; 118- 120, 129, 130,134.
161. Kali; 120.
162. Kali; 118.
163. Kali; 142, ll. 33-36.
164. Kali; 142 ll. 48-49.
165. Ibid; 143, ll. 31-35.
166. Ibid; l, 44.
167. Ibid; 144, l. 45.
168. Ibid; 144, ll. 43-44.
169. Kali; 143: “நன்னுதல் நீத்த திலகத்தள்” “மேனி மறைத்த பசலையள்”
170. Kali; 102. ll. 7-8; 105; ll. 66-69.
171. Nar; 147, 383, 389.
172. Aham; 20.
173. Aham; 320, 140.
174. Kali; 106, 108, 109, 110.
175. Kali; 108, 110, 112, 113, 116.
176. Kali; 108, ll. 30-33.
177. Kali; 104, ll. 63-64.
178. Ibid; 106, ll. 34-36
179. Ibid; 106, ll. 43-45.
180. Kali; 103, ll. 63-64. Cf. Ibid; 106, ll. 40-42.
181. Aham; 178, 367.
182. Aham; 6, 186, 376, 396. Kurun; 258. Nar; 260, 350.
183. Aham; 116, 226, 246, 266. Kurun; 328, 393.

184. Nar; 260. Kurun; 19.
185. Aham; 208.
186. Aham; 198.
187. Aham; 258.
188. Nar; 356.
189. Nar; 260.
190. Aham; 196.
191. Kali; 9.
192. Aham; 261.
193. Marriage and Morals, pp. 97-98.
194. Kurun; 167
195. Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Vol. II. Art of love. p. 508.
196. Ain; 401.
197. Ain; 404.
198. Ain; 409.
199. Lectures on Ainkurunuru, p. 221.
200. Ain; 481.
201. Ain; 416.
202. Ain; 418.
203. Kali; 74, ll. 10-11.
204. Kali; 73. ll. 19-20.
205. Kali; 68. l. 7.
206. Nar; 40.
207. Kali; 79.
208. The Psychology of Sex, P. 128.
209. Kali; 87. l. 91. l. 6.
210. Aham; 147.
211. Nallicaippulamai Melliyalarkal, p. 16. by R. Raghava Iyengar.
212. Kurun; 58.
213. Kurun; 149.
214. Kurun; 44.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

A critical and thorough study of the earliest extant Aham poems of the Sangam age made in the foregoing five chapters, will prove that the fundamental human element on which Ahattinai is based, is 'love'. By 'love' I mean 'sexual love', Oswald Schwarz rightly points out, "love in its strict sense and fullness must involve physical contact as well. Sexual love alone fulfils this condition and all other forms of 'love' are defective forms or better, just metaphors".¹

Katal and Kamam

There are two words "katal" and Kamam" in Tamil, the meanings of which are worth defining, "katal" has been employed in Aham poetry, to denote the kindness between all sorts of relatives including the husband and wife². Now its meaning has gradually enlarged to express all kinds of love, like love of God, love of language, love of country and love of humanity. It has become a synonym with "anpu" and "parru". Whatever the extension of its significance, the general idea implied in the use of "katal" in any place is the mental attachment between the being that loves and the object of love. This word relates merely to mind, irrespective of physical contact. This is plain from the use of 'katalan' and 'katali' for the hero and heroine. The use of these terms to denote lovers is very appropriate, as mental union or ullappunarcci is the chief characteristic of Ahattinai.

The word 'kamam' is now understood to mean a reckless indulgence of the sexual impulse. In the Sangam epoch normal physical passion was meant by 'kamam'³. The bodily union of the lovers is called 'kamakkuttam' by Tolkappiyar⁴. Tiruvalluvar names the third part of Tirukkural kamattupal and makes frequent use of the word 'kamam' in it⁵. A true perspective of the high value of Aham poetry can hardly be had by one who holds the word 'kamam' as offensive and human sexual passion as bestial. How 'kamam' came to denote a sense of degradation in the Middle Ages when religion an asceticism held sway may be understood from the analogous shifting of the sense of the word 'lust' in English as explained by Havelock Ellis:

“In the early use of our language ‘lust’ ‘lusty’ and ‘lustful’ conveyed the sense of wholesome and normal sexual vigor, now with the partial exception of ‘lusty’, they have been so completely degraded to a lower sense that although it would be very convenient to restore them to their original and proper place, which still remains vacant, the attempt at such a restoration scarcely seems a hopeful task. We have so deeply poisoned the springs of feeling in these matters with medieval ascetic crudities that all our words of sex tend soon to become bespattered with filth; we may pick them up from the mud into which they have fallen and seek to purify them, but to many eyes they will still seem dirty. One result of this tendency is that we have no simple, precise, natural word for the love of the sexes”⁶, Mental affection without bodily relation is platonic or spiritual; bodily relation with no mutuality is brutish. Love is a compound of two distinct elements, mental and physical. There is no one word in Tamil denoting these two elements, ‘Katal’ simply means attachment and ‘kamam’ passion.

*“Katar kamam kamattuc cirantatu
Viruppo rottu meryuru punarcci”.* (Pari: 9)

Finding no word to express the two essentials of Aham theme, Kunramputanar has cleverly coined a new phrase ‘katarkaman’⁷ by combining the two related words ‘katal’ and kaman. The second line clearly gives the meaning of the phrase, as bodily union based on mutual liking.

The value of sexual love

Aham classics do not treat directly of the mental union of lovers; for it is the play of destiny, but they fully describe the sexual aspects of those who are united in hearts. In other words, the purport of Ahattinai is to show the varying sexual phenomena of the mutual lovers. The stress in Aham poetry that the hero and heroine should unite in heart has a motive behind; only then, their sexual life will be happy and perfect. Thus the emphasis on the physical pleasure should be noted by readers of Aham literature.

In no Sangam poem passion or kamam is despised. It is true that the male companion or Pankan derides the new course of his friend as he hears of it from him. The companion’s intention is not to belittle the physical passion but to admonish the hero, not to be misled in the name of love; for kamam will blind a lover to direct his erotic thought towards a person who does not realize its value.

*“Notak kanre kamamyavatam
Nanrena vunarar mattum
Cenre nirkum perumpe taimaitte”* (Kurun: 78)

A passionate lover depreciates sexual union as “poyye kamam”⁸ when a period is wasted without pleasure.

<i>“Payaninru manramma kamam”</i>	<i>(Kali: 142)</i>
<i>“Kanavin nilaiyinrar kamam”</i>	<i>(Do: 145)</i>
<i>“Araicinum anpinram kamam”</i>	<i>(Do: 146)</i>

Thus a disappointed heroine of Peruntinai whose husband parts from her shortly after marriage criticises passion as futile, illusive and cruel. The above remark should be taken in a negative way, as bringing out the enhanced value of sensuality.

The main character in Ahattinai

A literature, the object of which is the treatment of sexual behaviours of human beings, cannot but show respect for women in general. Indeed in the Sangam epoch, there was no superiority or inferiority of sexes. The Tamils regarded man and woman as two different beings of the class “uyartinai” or rational beings. They, as the Greeks did, entrusted the management of the family and the bringing up of children to woman, while work outside came to be the responsibility of man. Monogamy and chastity were strictly enjoined on woman for the uninterrupted continuation of family life and for the procreation of good and pure progeny. Thus society depended upon the consciousness of women of their responsibility for its stability and existence. This dependence would be a farce, if the parents forced their own choice of bridegrooms upon their daughters. Therefore society gave freedom to women to select their life-partners and compelled others finally to consent to their choice. Kalavu poems are illustrative of the freedom enjoyed by women in matters of sex⁹. We have already seen how the parents, the beighbours, the sages and the hero bowed their heads in reverence to the noble quality of chastity. We have also seen that a girl after

her association with a youth keeps her loyalty at all costs, even disregarding her parents and experiencing any amount of hardships. Therefore the main figure in Ahattinai around which all other figures revolve, and the chief quality to which all other qualities are attached are the heroine and her chastity.

Her loyalty and sense of duty are vividly portrayed in Marutam poems, when the husband seeks pleasure in the company of prostitutes. Her resentful heart is said to become soft at the touch of the lewd lord, like the soil wearing away when it rains¹⁰. To the request of the maid that she should cease quarrelling with the dissolute hero, the wife replies that she has no time left to do so, as she is fully engaged in entertaining guests.¹¹ When the maid speaks ill of the hero, the matron who cannot tolerate any innuendo about her lord intelligently retorts “It is not graceful for us who are burdened with manifold duties of household”.

“Itumar revano toli

Tirumanaip palkatam punta

Perumutu pentire makiya namakke” (Kurun: 181)

There are some poems¹² in Aham classics in which reference has been made to the price paid by the hero to her parents for marrying the heroine¹³. One may say that this custom points to the conception of women in Tamil society as property. We all know that nowadays in some communities, parents receive large sums of money, not for their daughters but for their sons. By this, are we going to conjecture that sons are the properties of the parents? The customs relating to money-matters in marriage have nothing to do with the conception of sex. They point to a human tendency which exploits the lack of equal number in both the sexes in the population of a society. Speaking comparatively, the offering of bride-price is not wholly condemnable; for, parents of

strained circumstances too ought to marry their daughters. They cannot long keep them at home. They need money for conducting the marriage. The theme “the hero’s separation for earning money for wedding” (varaivital vaittup porulvayir pirital) in the clandestine stage shows that poor lovers are also entitled to treatment in Ahattinai:

*“Nalancal vilupporul kalanirai kotuppinum
Peralarum kuraiyal ayin aranterintu ...
Perunirk kuttam punaiyotu pukkum
Patuttanam panintanam atuttanam iruppin
Tarukuvan kollo”.* (Aham: 280)

Thus a lover realises the impossibility of attaining the object of his love, by giving costly presents and evinces a desire to serve her father, a fisherman, in order to win his heart. A shepherd girl discloses that her community will not as for any price if the hero embraces the horns of the bull, as he does the breasts of his beloved¹⁴. It is significant that the offering of the girl in marriage is usually mentioned by the word ‘kotai’ meaning ‘gift’.¹⁵

In this connection there is another problem worth elucidating. In poems of the marutam class, the birth of a male-child comes for exclusive treatment. This does not mean that the birth of female child is an unhappy event. The son becomes a resourceful material for poets to treat the Marutam theme interestingly, and for the sulking mother to derive consolation at the sight of the son resembling her husband. She sometimes by hint blames the son for his father’s immorality¹⁶. To say that the harlots of the hero are fond of his son, instead of his daughter, will be natural. All these considerations justify the treatment of male child in Marutam poetry. Likewise it should be remembered that in Palai poetry dealing with the elopement or utampokku, the daughter

receives exclusive treatment. The tenderness, fragility, timidity and the luxurious nourishment of the little girl afford immense scope for the overwhelming lament of the mother and the nurse. In poems of elopement, nothing is said of the grief of the hero's mother. It is unmanly for the hero to say that his mother is distressed to think of her son traversing the waterless zone full of wild animals. This explanation will clearly show that Aham literature gives rightful prominence to male or female characters in places fit for poetic imagination, and that there is no question of the superiority of one sex over the other.

Sex-education

At the end of this thesis, I should like to emphasize the new theory that I have put forth in the fourth chapter, and to which I deem it necessary to revert again. I truly believe that the motive for creating a special literature with love as its theme by the Tamil genius is to educate both sexes in the art of love. All things that go into the making of Ahattinai support this theory. All the Aham poems numbering 1862 of the Sangam age give us abundant reliable materials for elucidating the theory. The implicit adherence to the canons of Ahattinai by all Aham poets of this age whose number is 378 points to their realisation of, and support to the noble ideal behind the systematic structure of Aham poetry.

Tamil scholars of different schools have unanimously expressed the view that there is no place in Ahattinai for the treatment of love relating to heavenly or supernatural or imaginary beings¹⁷. In the ninth Paripatal, the envious quarrel between the two wives of Lord Murugan, the deity of Kurinci region, is picturesquely related. But this mythological description is outside Aham. Aham poetry is a poetry of human

sexual love. It is purposely devised for the realistic portrayal of the sexual life of human beings. The entry of the elements of mythological and legendary characters into the subject matter of Ahattinai is carefully prohibited by Tolkappiyar and the Sangam poets. In dealing with the sexual impulse of mankind too, Aham poetry eschews love-aspects which are abnormal, irregular or peculiar to individuals. In fine, the theme of Aham literature is the simple course of love common to the ordinary people of all times. The ingenuity shown in the restrictive selection of the subject-matter itself pronounces that sex-education is the ideal of Ahattinai. That is why, no love theme is adopted merely for the sake of poetry and interesting themes which may vitiate the aim are completely omitted by Aham poets. The Tamil genius found in poetry a proper and easy medium for initiating the youths in the art of love. In doing so, Sangam poets picture emotionally all normal sexual aspects relating to human psychology based on biology and sociology. They do not touch upon the anatomical and physiological details, lest poetry should become a manual.

Perfect sexual enjoyment is the key-note of the treatment of love in Aham poetry, Literary legislation, natural description, poetic imagination etc., have this end in view. Monogamy is the only kind of marriage recognised in Ahattinai:

“Virinir utikkal ulakam perinum

Aruneri yayar makalirkku

Iromanam kututal illiyalpu anre”

(Kali: 114)

Thus Nalluruttiranaar expresses in plain terms the greatness of the institution of monogamy. The shocking nature of notumalar varaivu (rival proposal) should be viewed from the monogamous angle. The heroine’s expression of constant fear

of the hero's life, when he comes through the dangerous path in the darkness during the secret course, or when he has to traverse the desert to earn wealth in the married state should also be viewed from this angle.

Even from the physical point of view, apart from the social and economic consideration, monogamy appears as the best of all marriage forms. Western writers on sexual education do not question its superiority and convenience so long as the husband and wife are united. "If the bonds of marriage are recognised as final and irrevocable, there is no stimulus to the imagination to wander outside and consider that a more ecstatic happiness might have been possible. In order to secure domestic peace where this state of mind exists, it is only necessary that neither the husband nor the wife should fall outrageously below the commonly recognized standard of decent behaviour, whatever this may be" is the considerate statement of Bertrand Russell¹⁸. It is a matter of common sense that a man or woman who has been married before does not obtain from the physical relationship of the second marriage, the amount of pleasure enjoyed in the first.

The sexual behaviours or *uripporul* of *Ahattinai* are of five kinds viz., union, separation, patience, suffering and sulking. The latter four aspects are mainly described to make the union of separated lovers more ardent and pleasurable. Though unbroken intimacy will not affect the mutuality of the young couples, it will certainly blunt the keenness and freshness of their passion. To take the hero away from the heroine, various kinds of separation are dealt with in *Aham* classics. In the class of poems relating to the theme '*vinai murriya talaivan pakarku uraittatu* (the hero's speech to the charioteer, after the completion of the work) the hero's fresh

enthusiasm to meet his beloved at home is vividly brought out. A lady who experiences an intense pleasure on the night on which the hero returns, suddenly feels the day-break on hearing the cock crowing. She childishly thinks that the advent of dawn is due to its cry and curses it to become the prey of the wild cat:

*“Katunavaip patiiyaro niye netunir
Yanar uranotu vatinta
Ema intuyil etuppi yoye”* (Kurun: 107)

Like uninterrupted association, sudden separation and prolonged absence too will be disastrous to the normal sexual course of married couples. This aspect is brought out in poems of Peruntinai by Nallantuvanar.

It is fully recognized by Aham poets that the season of the year and time of day have their influence of the sexual instinct. It is true that the allotment of land and time to each sexual behaviour in Aham grammar is artificial. Some poets, as shown in the fifth chapter, have described all sexual topics in one and the same landscape. Yet the appropriateness of such allotment to a particular mood is not questionable¹⁹. Lovers will really enjoy an unrelaxed embrace without fatigue, if the pleasant night of the cold season, the period fixed for kurinci is available²⁰. There are innumerable subtle references in Aham poetry to the technique of love making, a knowledge of which will be useful for men and women to augment the pleasure of union. The use of flowers and sandal paste is frequently mentioned in poems of union as an effective stimulant of sexual joy. That the Tamil society had perfectly understood the unrestrained influence of smell on sex is evident from the custom of wearing only a few broken flowers by wives in separation.²¹

*“Tempay yonpu narumpala ataicciya
Kuntal mellanait tunci” (Aham: 308)
“Konkumukait tanna kuvimulai yakattu
Intuyil amarntanai” (Aham: 240)*

The fragrant tresses and growing breasts of the girl serving as a soft pillow for the hero in a happy mood are mentioned in the above lines.

A searching study of Aham classics will introduce a reader to the different psychology of the sexes. Sangam poets describe the sexual impulse of man and woman and their thought and speech on the basis of their distinct characteristics.

*“Noyalai kalankiya matanali polutin
Kamam ceppal anmakar kamaiyum
Yanen,
Penmai tatpa nunnitin tanki...
Enna makankol toli tanvayin
Arvam utaiya raki
Marpanan kurunarai ariya tore” (Nar: 94)*

A passionate girl of the clandestine course tells her maid that when agitated by sexual impulse it is fitting for a man to disclose his urge in words, but her feminine modesty does not allow her to do so and that the hero who does not by himself understand the feelings of those who are smitten by his broad chest is not a gentleman. It is always the hero who is described as starting the love-making in Aham poems. As soon as he meets the lass in the millet field or in the sea shore or on the street, he begins to make some inquiry. When the girl and her maid are reticent, he pours out voluptuously pleasing words:

*“Aivakai vakutta kuntal aynutal
Maiyir oti matavir numvayp
Poyyum ulavo”.* (Aham: 48)

The hero, at the sight of the companion voluntarily discloses his new experience and plainly begs his friend to help him to meet his beloved again. It is the hero who showers words full of sexual significance on his lady, before and after the physical joy.²² All these expressions point to the masculine characteristic of forwardness and taking the initiative in sexual conduct. The hero attracts his lady at all times by his alluring speech, just as she attracts him by her lovely movements.²³

On the other hand, modesty colours the sexual feeling of women. The heroine does not voluntarily let out her association with the hero even to her bosom friend, the maid. The maid too dares not to ask the girl about her gloom. She tries to guess it indirectly. The fear of the mother to question her daughter has been described before. There are nearly 30 poems dealing with a theme in which the maid who consents to the request of the hero intimates it to the heroine (talaimakarkuk kurai nernta toli talaimakalaik kurai nayappak kuriyatu). In all these lyrics, the maid cautiously proceeds to inform the girl how the hero approaches her and expresses his desire to her. The reason for the maid's prudence is that the heroine will become more shy to think that her secret course is discovered by the maid and that it is her own modesty that has induced her lover to reveal their love to the maid.

*“Annan oruvantan antakai vittennaic
Colluncor ketti cutarilai”.* (Kali: 47)

In this way, the maid impresses upon the girl the eagerness of the hero for a meeting.

A woman wishes at heart that her husband should infer her sexual urge, inspite of her prudery and that her modesty should be availed by him, as a means of intensifying the joy of the sexual act. The sexual life of inexperienced young couples will be married for ever, if the lover misconceives the passive attitude of his girl as frigidity and coldness and his entreaties to her as disgraceful to his manhood. In Kali, 128 Nallantuvanar reveals the desire of a girl that her lover should submit himself to every humiliating act during sexual enjoyment. In Kurincippattu, Kapilar describes the delight of a girl of the mountain region, when the youth embraced her, paying no regard to her modesty.

*“He stood still there not daring her to touch
She prompted by her modesty and fear
Attempted flight, but he prevented this*

..... 25

A find insight into the subtle feelings of his wife is necessary for the husband to make sexual life a success. A contented sexual life is the index of the happy blend of many fine qualities. Discontent and lack of sexual enjoyment will impair the happiness of married life. A wife criticises the separation of her husband in the pursuit of wealth in the prime of youthfulness as the discarding of feeling and affection²⁶. Tolkappiyar, the great Tamil grammarian and sexologist finds in Aintinai, bliss, wealth and virtue.²⁷ Sexual life is a part of spiritual life and sexual education is a part of soul education. All these citations and explanations will corroborate the statement that the aim of Ahattinai and the composition of Aham literature of the Sangam Age is the enlightenment of men and women in matters of sex. A realisation of this truth will, I hope, give a fillip to the study of Sangam works which, in turn, will be useful for mankind to live an enlughened and prosperous life in this world.

Foot Notes

1. The Psychology of Sex, P. 105.
2. Ain; 195, Nar; 241, 237; Aham; 275, 310.
3. Aham; 28 “மெய்யிற்றுரா மேவரு காமம்”
4. Tol; 1037.
5. Cf. “Valluvar kanta natum kamamum” by Prof. T.P.M. p. 153.-154.
6. The Valuation of Sexual Love in the Studies of the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II.
7. Cf. Pari; 6 “காதலங் காமம்” Nar; 389 “அன்புறு காமம்”
8. Kurun; 32.
9. A Defence of Poetry, p .183.
10. Aham; 26.
11. Nar; 280.
12. Aham; 280, 390; Ain; 147; Kali; 103.
13. Cf. Sexual Life in Ancient Greece, p .23.
14. Kali; 103.
15. Aham; 282; Ain; 300; Nar; 393.
16. Kali; 86.
17. Tol. Porul 54. Naccinarkkinyam.
18. Marriage and Morals, p. 110.
19. Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry, Chapter. VI
20. Kurun; 270.
21. Nar; 42.
22. Cf. Cilappatikaram, Kathai II. “கோவலன் கூறும் ஓணர் குறியாக் கட்டுரை”
23. Aham; 136,
24. to wit; Kali; 47., 50; Aham; 32.
25. J.V. Chelliah’s translation.
26. Kurun; 20.
27. Tol; 1037.

Dr. V.S.P. Manickam - He who stood by his wisdom

We might have come across many scholars of Tamil, but none of them have the unique singularities that V.S.P. Manickam had. His sharp intellect, original and indigenous way of contemplating things the interpretation of the text in an unbiased way, the courage, that threw away all the unjustifiable commentaries and interpretations written by most famous and celebrated dignitaries, and above all his unwearying love of Tamil, mark his grandeur and lofty height of scholarship.

From the dawn of twentieth century, most of the critics of Tamil literature, applied the western rules of criticism to Tamil literary texts and interpreted what they could do in their light. A bulk of literature that belongs to the centuries earlier to Christian era, and several centuries before the birth of English, French and other western languages could have no justification to be viewed from the same angle of vision and with the same set of rules of criticism, V.S.P. Manickam knowing fully well that the classical period of Tamil literature was of a hoary past and it was of the birth when several countries did not emerge from the expensive oceanic surface. He clearly declared that Tolkappiam, the grammatical treatise most ancient among the available stock of Tamil works is the only authority and fundamental basis of all literary creations of that age. This is strongly advocated by V.S.P. Manickam

and he is of strong opinion that Tolkappiam drawn from long Tamil tradition., stood unshaked through all centuries and even today it is the armour to protect against all intrusions and infiltrations of alien influences.

Many scholars in Tolkappiam have existed before V.S.P. Manickam, but he is of a different calibre. The other scholars followed the either Ilampuranar's or Naccinarkiniyar's or Cenavaraiyar's or Perasiriyar's or Theivacilaiyar's commentary and selecting one among them they discarded others. But V.S.P. Manickam in his exhaustive study and research of Tolkappiam found out that all the commentaries in certain places did not echo the real meanings of the sutras. He insisted an honest impartial and unbiased interpretation will bring out the real meaning of the texts.

V.S.P. Manickam's 'The Tamil Concept of Love' is a monumental work in the research of the classical Tamil literature. Tolkappiam when describing the inner urge of love of a youth states thus:

To a damsel to whom love does not abound
The youth getting unimpounded distress
By praising and blaming

And composing the common features of himself and her.

Telling her for not a reply
But rejoicing in his own
Is of one side love note

In this the youth approaches the damsel himself and utters exuberating love words to her. She did not reply. All the commentators said that she had no passion towards him.

But V.S.P. Manickam said she had not attained puberty and no matured mind to accept or deny his love.

This is purely of men's affair and the youth concerned will know that she is not the person for his anguish. Certain verses of Kalitokai provides good example for this. In the same way the unbounded love (Perunthinai) is also interpreted as an unsuitable love by others. V.S.P. Manickam has clearly meant that is a love that rarely surpasses the convention and the expression in both hero and heroine excels the traditional way.

A clandestine love and the family life, the two major divisions in agam poetry have distinct way of expressions and Tolkappiam has laid down fitting rules for the composition of a poem. Most of the verses in Cankam classics adhere to these. But there are also exceptions where a few poets do not follow the convention of agam in their poems. In the agam poetry the name of the hero, heroine should not be mentioned, as it is the matter of strict privacy. Avvaiyar, Parinar and Vellivedhiyar by the way of simile have exposed the love of other poets by mentioning their names. This attitude of publicizing the privacy of others is vehemently condemned by V.S.P. Manickam and he says that, this is not inkeeping with the Tamil agam tradition. Nobody else had chided this attitude like Dr. V.SP. Manickam, who points out the great poets like paranar and others had not depicted agam convention properly.

V.SP. Manickam's research on the Tamil verbs and usages is a guiding work for all grammatical researchers to be done in the future. How the positive and negative meaning took place in verbs had been analysed in his work. The appellative and conjugative nouns and these functioning the active and

passive voices. The subjunctive mood, infinitive mood and imperative mood are all brought forth extensively in his research.

His collected papers exhibit his untiring study and research of multifarious subjects.

His book, the 'Glimpses of Tamilology' is the collection of articles by many scholars and he has edited it. In this, his article entitled 'psychological approach to Tamil syntax' shows how great poets purposely transgress ordinary grammatical rules to depict psychological mind set of the characters concerned.

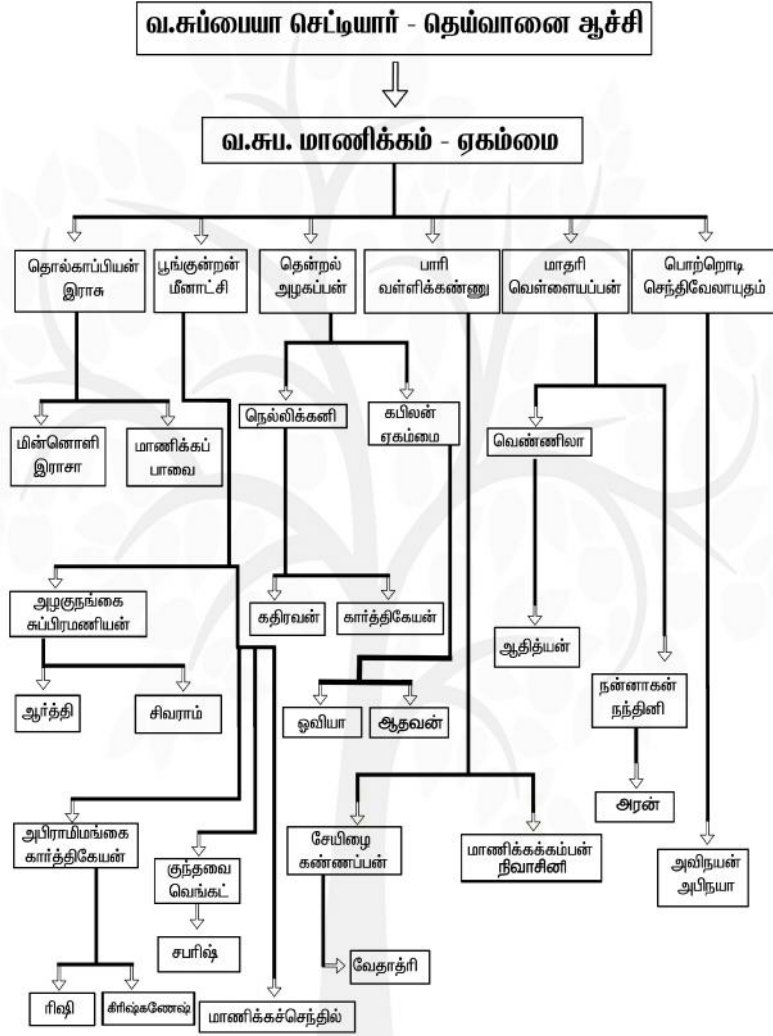
Professor V.SP. Manickam is a puritian in the style of language, a Gandhian in principles of life, indigenous in research, a strict adherent of tradition and above all humanistic in behaviour.

Future researches of Tamil language and literature should refer professor V.SP.Manickam's research works through which they can realize that this professor has contributed much and they could rightly be called archaeological excavations of the classical stock.

His English books have to be viewed by all the Indian and foreign scholars which may trained them for a deep insight and inquisitive inquiry which will bring forth new concepts and theories of approach.

Dr.K.V. Balasubramaniam,

Former Professor of Tamil University,
Thanjavur - 10.



Notes