THE SRI LANKA JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA
JAFFNA SRI LANKA
AUGUST, 1978

THE SRI LANKA JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

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The Sri Lanka Journal of South Asian Studies is a publication of the Faculty of Arts (formerly Faculty of Humanities) of the University of Jaffna (formerly the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka).

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INDIA	Rs. 20-00 per year
PAKISTAN & BANGLADESH	Rs. 25-00 per year
OTHER COUNTRIES (postage included)	£ 2-00 / $ 5-00

THE SRI LANKA JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA,
JAFFNA, SRI LANKA.

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Vol. I, No. 2
AUGUST 1979

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HINDU PROTESTANTS:
A Comparative Analysis of Three Indian Reform Movements

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I

INTRODUCTION:

THE term "reform movements" will be used to describe movements that sprang up in India prior to, or independent of the struggle for political liberation from Britain. There were many such movements, some of ephemeral duration and some of longer duration, but the focus of this paper will be on three rather influential ones: The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Dravidian Movement. The former was founded by Rammohan Roy in Bengal and became a very influential movement in Northwestern India and provided the impetus for the founding of the Indian National Congress. The Arya Samaj, founded by Dayananda Saraswati was influential in the Punjab, and to some extent in Western India. The Dravidian Movement, consisting of three separate but connected organizations, the Justice Party, the Dravida Kalagam and the Dravida Munettra Kalagam, had its base in Madras, in Southern India. In spite of the diverse origins of these three movements and in spite of the fact that the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj were interested in religious reformation, whereas the Dravidian Movement was essentially secular in its aims, it will be seen that they had a number of common elements. It is proposed then to examine these movements in a comparative light and see what these common elements were and discuss their significance.

The significance of these elements, it seems to us, is that all three were fundamentally responses to the colonial experience and these responses constituted an attempt to create a "rational" and secular India – rational in the sense in which Max Weber used the term in his many writings.

Gerth and Mills, Weberian scholars as well as his translators, assert categorically "the principle of rationalisation is the most general element in Weber's philosophy of history". This principle was supposed to have influenced the "rise and fall of institutional structures, the ups and downs of classes, parties and rulers that implement the general drift of secular rationalisation ...The extent, and measure of 'rationalisation' is (thus) measured negatively in terms of the degree to which magical elements of thought are displaced or positively by the extent to which ideas gain in systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency." 1958 : 51) Weber tried to document this philosophy of social change by his monumental study of the religious, political and economic institutions of various cultural spheres in the history of the world. The application of this concept of rationalisation, though initially used to describe specific features of a culture like bureaucracy, eventually came to encompass a comprehensive array of phenomena. Herbert Luthy, though disposed to disagree profoundly with Weber on many aspects of his theses, gives us an admirably neat summary of the phenomena to which Weber's philosophy of history applies. Writing of the impact of this rationalisation process on Western society he observes :

> "Not only its economical system, but also its juridical system, its political structure, its sciences and its institutionalised techniques, its music and its architecture impregnated with the mathematical spirit, its moral principles and its life styles, are all included. Economic culculation, work discipline, the depersonalisation of exchanges and social relationships are only the significant, the exterior signs which represent pars pro toto, the totality of this type of civilization. Weber's key word is 'rationality' : a rationality which pervades all spheres of social behaviour, the organization of work and the enterprise, as well as positive sciences, law, philosophy and art, the state and politics as well as the behaviour of the private individual. A rationality which was impelled forward by its own dynamism was able to shatter or overcome all the forms of resistance offered by the prerational elements of human nature : magic and tradition, instinct, and spontaneity". (1970 : 18—19)

If it was such a comprehensive process, and came to full fruition with the Protestant Reformation in Europe—which according to Luthy "made a clean sweep of all the irrationalities, obscure magic, symbolic or mystical ingredients, superstitions, holy images, rites and traditions"—it was by no means a process that was completely novel or confined entirely to Europe. In discussing Hindu civilization, Weber also finds that latter day Hinduism was in many respects more "rational" than earlier forms and seems to detect that rationalisation as a process was occuring in India as well, though the radical transformation represented by Protestantism and Capitalism and not to be India's lot. In the progressive decline of orgiastic practices, and in the rise of orthodox Brahminism Weber saw a

consolidation of this process in so far as they represented a fundamental departure from animistic, magical and ecstatic forms. (Weber, 1958 : 137—162)

However, the question we want to raise in this study is the manner and style in which this process continued in the socio-religious sphere in the wake of the British conquest of India. This conquest, initially beginning in Eastern India—Bengal, finally worked itself to include the Southern region of India—Madras, the Western, and Northern regions as well. Though various segments of the interior also came under British suzerainty, these regions were the ones that came under the greatest cultural influence of the British. British administrative, educational and religious influence was keenly felt in these regions—an influence that was militant in its assertions of British supremacy and zealous and aggressive in its claims for Christianity as the one and only religion. The religious as well as the socio-political classes who were dispossessed by the arrival of the British were indeed waiting to be organized into some kind of response to the militancy of the foreigners.

Due to many reasons, this response came in the form of religious movements—the most important reason undoubtedly being that it was one area that the British political authorities were not likely to look upon with distrust. As such, it could take place without any need to be surreptitious and at the same time resist the attempt by the British—inspired missionaries to convert the Indians en masse into a populace of good Christians and loyal subjects. Scott, 1953 : 18) However that may be, religious movements of a pronouncedly reformist character and bearing the obvious influence of Christian and Western thought and constituting in many ways responsive correctives to the ridicule and criticism made of the local religion by the Christian missionaries, arose among the Hindus of Bengal and Punjab and Bombay, while a more or less secular movement—though with certain resemblances to the other two—arose in Madras. It is this response by the Hindus that we have called Protestantism, albeit Hindu Protestantism, because like the European form, they were essentially rationalising movements culculated to enhance and consolidate various tendencies that were set afoot by the British once they conquered India. Hence they could well be called Hindu Protestants; it does not refer to a body of theological doctrine however, but to a whole complex of phenomena that Max Weber included in the term in his work, **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.** Protestantism—in all its manifestations in Europe, then, was the embodiment of the spirit of rationality and the Hindu reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represented then a kind of Hindu Protestantism.

It is proposed to give a brief sketch of the historical setting of these movements, their programmes, doctrines and organizational and leadership strategies separately and then provide an analysis of the way in which the elements common to the movements can be considered a departure from traditional Hinduism and represented radical moves towards rationality.

II

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ:

The Brahmo Samaj emerged in the 1820's during a period of intense antagonism between the Hindus and Christian missionaries. Rammohan Roy was one of the founders of this movement. He was born to an orthodox Brahmin family and developed an early interest in Hindu thought, as well as in those of other religions. His study of the Hindu scriptures, particularly the Vedas, led him to conclude that Hinduism as practised by his compatriots was alien to the Vedas and that the latter day Hinduism was replete with many evil and corrupt practices. (Heimsath, 1964 : 11) The belief in a multiplicity of Gods and idolatry, he held, was alien to the religious doctrines of the ancient texts and advocated a return to a strict monotheism. These interests led him to seek the help of Christian missionaries (Bell, 1933 : 21), and initially established a kind of Hindu-Unitarian alliance which however did not prove a success. In 1928 Roy, along with some of his friends, started the Brahmo Samaj.

This was a period of intense missionary activity and the Hindus were generally very defensive regarding their religion, social organization and educational system. Roy attempted to organize Hindu reaction to these trends without however surrounding either the self-respect or identity of the Hindus. The main objective of the Brahmo Samaj was to "teach and to practise the worship of the one supreme, undivided, eternal God". It allowed entry to "all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction and rejected the offering of 'any sermon, preaching or discourse prayer or hymn...in worship' ". (Farquhar, 1967 : 35) In his attempt to counter the Christian offensive however he felt he had to develop a coherent intellectual stance on a number of issues and an examination of his thought reveals that he made a valiant attempt to come to grips with them. Mainly, it could be said now, that he attempted to synthesize the rational and ethical elements from all religious, particularly Christianity and Hinduism. Faced with the "superstitions" and the "immoral" practices of popular Hinduism on the one hand, and seeing distinctly how the basic tenets contained in the Hindu texts differed, he sought to find a plain man's solution. (Farquhar, : 36) He took the theistic elements common to all religions and declared them to be the original truths of Hinduism and the universal religion on which all men could unite. Prayer was abandoned in the Samaj of his day and a deistic conception of God was accepted. Another important element in Roy's teaching was the rejection of the notion of Karma and the transmigration of souls, though they are crucial to the entire Hindu system of thought Farquhar, : 38), as depicted in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. It is in his attitude to the role of the Brahmin in Hindu religion and society, that Roy showed his true reformist bent : he rejected the Brahmin as a necessary intermediary between God

and devotee and further went on to repudiate all forms of idolatry, animal sacrifice and caste distinction. Writing in his Magazine, Rammohan Roy said :

> "We reject idolatry in every form under whatsoever veil of sophistry it may be practised—either in the adoration of artificial or natural or imaginary object. The divine homage we offer consists solely in the practice of **Daya** or benevolence towards each other, and not in fanciful faith or in certain motions of bodily organisms in a pulpit or before a temple".

He recommended that the Samaj accept a congregational form of worship instead of the standard Hindu practice of offering "pooja" through a priest. Besides these, Roy and his Brahmo Samaj crusaded against the custom of Suttee (widow-suicide) and female infanticide. Roy believed that a new Hindu society must be created on the foundations of these social, political and religious reforms. (Heimsath, : 14)

After Roy's death in 1833, the Samaj began to decline until 1842 When Debendranath Tagore took over. He soon reorganized the movement and became the **Acharya** or minister. A monthly called the **Tattvabodhini Patrika** was started along with a "Vedic School" to train Brahmo missionaries. The latter were to combat the Christian missionaries who were winning numerous converts at this time in the Calcutta region. Tagore also drew up in 1843 **The Brahmo Covenant**—a list of vows to be taken by everyone on becoming a member of the Samaj and introduced a brief form of prayer and adoration called **Brahmopasana.** Under the Tagore leadership, the Brahmo Samaj moved away from the dry deism of Ram Mohan Roy. Great stress was placed on religious experience and though social reform was accepted, Tagore's intense devotionalism did not lead the Samaj, at this juncture of its history, into reformist activities with any urgency.

However, a group within the Samaj was getting restless with Tagore's preoccupation with spiritualism. In 1862 a split occurred in the Samaj and the conservatives calling themselves the Adi Brahmo Samaj broke away from the Radicals who retained the title Brahmo Samaj. (Farquhar, : 89) The conservatives led by Tagore were afraid that spiritual religion would be sacrificed to the new passion for social reform. The radical Samaj was lead by Keshab Chandra Sen and contained many of the younger and Western educated segments of the Samaj. Sen was also deeply influenced by certain elements of Christianity. (Sen. 1904)

Since the newly formed Samaj of radical reformers lacked rules and procedures, Sen selected theistic texts from Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Islamic and Chinese sources and published them under the title of **Slokasangraha** to be used in the services and proceedings of the Samaj. (Farquhar, : 46) A number of other new practices were introduced—some of them drawn from the Bakthi cults that were flowering in Bengal at this

time. For example, choral singing and singing in the streets in praise of God were introduced. This was designed to extend the influence of the Samaj to a section of the Hindus other than the Westernized and English-educated one. In addition, the Samaj sponsored various social reformist measures among which were moves to emancipate women and admit them to modern forms of education. They also invented a form of clothing that was considered more 'formal" and suitable for social intercourse. Keshab Chandra Sen consulted medical opinion about the appropriate age for marriage and advocated sixteen as the lower-age limit. This was, of course, meant to stop the widespread custom of child-marriage. He also invented a new form of the marriage ceremony, without an officiating Brahmin priest and this was given legal recognition in 1872. (Heimsath, : 92) Since the institution of marriage and its ceremonial initiation by a Brahmin was central to the Hindu conception of family, husbandly obligations and wifely duties, this was an important challenge not only to religious institutions, but also for the sanctity of the Brahmins and the institution of the caste system. The Brahmo Samaj rejected the caste system along with the religious primacy of the Brahmin and Sen even succeeded in persuading Brahmin members of the Samaj to abandon their "sacred thread". The abandonment of caste principles was further emphasized when the Samaj appointed Sen, a non-Brahmin as "Acharya". Sen in his address on Social Reformation in India in 1863 said :

> "The Samaj does not seek to destroy caste as an institution distinct from Hinduism by setting up a purely secular movement to oppose its law and principles. It seeks to establish the equality of men on religious grounds and this indirectly abolishes caste distinctions". (Pal. 1930 : 82)

However, Sen insisted on a fundamental difference between the Hinduism as it was practised then and the true religion of the ancient Hindus which he found to be more acceptable insofar as it was neither "unscientific" or "irrational" in character. In pursuing these concerns, he advocated the acceptance of individual conscience and reason against imposed authority. He argued that individual reason and conscience should be able to determine what is true and rational, right or wrong, without the intervention of outside authority. In addition, Sen advocated that the principle of inherited authority and power in religious matters conferred on Brahmins be abandoned and that a democratic process be instituted for the management of religious matters.

In his later years Keshab Chandra Sen began to move further in a mystic direction and at one time tried to integrate the Hindu Trident, the Christian Cross and the Crescent of Islam as the symbol of a Church of the New Dispensation. By this time, many of the members of the Samaj were tired of Sen's oligarchic ways as well as his mysticism and broke away to form yet another organization called the Sadharana Brahmo Samaj (The ordinary Brahmo Samaj) (Farquhar, : 55). This organization tried to

maintain a fidelity to the original philosophy of the Brahmo Samaj, though it found it difficult to overcome the presence of Sen in Bengal until his death in 1884.

The sphere of influence of the Brahmo Samaj extended from Peshawar in the North to Travancore in the South of India, from Baluchistan in the West to Assam and Burma in the East. In the first ten years after Rammohan Roy's death, (1834—1843) under the leadership of Pandit Vidyavargish, there was only one unit in the Samaj. In the next fourteen years (1844—1857) under the leadership of Debendranath Tagore, the number rose to 14, all in Bengal. In the next twenty years, under the joint leadership of Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen (1866—77), 72 Samajas were established all over India. In the next eighteen years after the establishment of the Sadharana Brahmo Samaj, the number rose to 197. (Farquhar, : 71)

III

THE ARYA SAMAJ

The Arya Samaj differs both in style and to some extent in philosophy as well, from the Brahmo Samaj. The sphere of influence of the Arya Samaj included the Northwest Frontier Province, Oudh, Punjab and the United Provinces of pre-partition India. It was founded in 1875 by Dayananda Saraswati (Heimsath, : 113) and wielded a substantial influence for a long time after that. The Arya Samaj, was under the direct influence of one leader—Dayananda Saraswati, for a long time, and bore the stamp of his biography and personality very deeply, that one way of sketching the philosophy of the movement is to examine the life of Dayananda Saraswati. (Singh, : 1903) Born in 1824 in the princely state of Kathiawar, he had no exposure to Western education. From a very early age however, he had begun to question idol worship and the significance of orthodox Hindu rites which finally resulted in his leaving the home in search of a Vedic teacher with a critical approach to orthodoxy and doctrine. In 1860 Dayananda Saraswati became a disciple of a blind guru named Virajananda who was the source of most of Dayananda Saraswati's latter teachings. His teacher and he himself came to regard the Vedas of ancient India as the true version of Hindu philosophy and the fundamental source of Hindu wisdom. This in effect challenged the existing Hindu practices in many ways and Dayananda Saraswati was not reticent in denouncing the latter as superstitious and priest-ridden nonsense. (de Bary, et al, 1960 : 629) He abandoned various rituals and habits that went with his earlier Siva-worship and declared himself a devotee of God, recognizing Siva as only one of the many names of the Supreme Being. By 1866, he launched a campaign against idolatry, religious rituals like bathing in holy water, pilgrimages, etc., and denounced various religious texts as either immoral

or irrelevant, for example **The Bhagavata Purana** of the Vaishnavites. (Farquhar, : 115) He considered it his duty to engage the defenders of Hindu orthodoxy in public debates and following the practice of the Christian missionaries, opened schools to teach Vedic scriptures and Sanskrit, but neither of these was successful. Consequently, he began to appeal to the people directly, both by means of lectures and books, stressing repeatedly the utter futility of idol worship and pointed out that there was no sanction for it in the Vedas. (de Bary, et. al., : 635) In 1872, Dayananda Saraswati came into contact with certain Brahmo Samaj leaders, including Keshab Chandra Sen and made two alterations in his approach : he began to speak in the everyday language of his audiences—Hindi, and began to clothe himself in normal clothes instead of the yellow robes of a holy man that he had adopted a few years earlier. (Farquhar, : 109)

Soon after, his fame and influence began to spread, especially in the Punjab. He had also, by 1870, begun to have his ideas systematised and organized after the initially confusing attempts to confront orthodox Hinduism. Following the example of the Brahmo Samaj, he established the Arya Samaj, but with a view to propagating what he believed to be the true Vedic religion. What were the elements of this purported Vedic religion, in Dayananda Saraswati's view? Central to his religious thought was his belief in a dualistic universe, recognizing a dichotomy between mind and matter and a separation between God and the human soul. (Bharadawaja, 1915) The **advaita** philosophy of Sankaracharya, as well as the neo-vedantist one propagated the view that the physical world is an illusion (Maya) and the objective of all should be to achieve the Maya-negating consciousness "Moksha"—the final release from worldly desires and cares, and union with the omniscient Brahman. (de Bary, : 277) Dayananda Saraswati attacked all facets of this doctrine and held that the world we know by sense perception is real and that the objects and matter existed independently of our consciousness of them and that any attempt to establish the contrary was futile. The separation between mind and matter was real because "had He not created the world separate from Himself, how could He have been able to award souls their desires and how could they reap the fruits of their deeds—good and evil—done in previos cycles of creation?" (Dayananda Saraswati, 1882, : 250) According to Dayananda, matter existed before the creation in an elementary and eternal form and human souls were not part of God but were separate and had unique destinies in terms of their deeds in earlier incarnations. (Upadyaya, 1955 : 384—93) Thus, man could not escape confronting the reality of the world as well as the reality of good and evil by taking refuge in a philosophy which claimed worldly existence and the world itself as illusory. Dayananda Saraswati however accepted the doctrine of transmigration and Karma with the proviso that emancipation could be achieved by "obedience to the will of God, disavowal of sin, bad company, the

promotion of public good, even—handed justice, righteousness'' (Bharad waja, : 279), and not by sublimating bodily needs and existing in a state of pure consciousness. Predestination was now rejected and emancipation as a release from the cycle of incarnation became a matter of the human soul striving in the ''right direction''.

Having established the reality of this world and the way in which it had to be confronted, Dayananda Saraswati added a new dimension to his teachings. Individual virtues - social work, charitable activities, were expected of his followers and a concept of ethics was introduced in the conduct of everyday activities which were hitherto governed by custom and tradition. (Bharadwaja, : 317) For example, many such customs related to caste, marriage, food, clothing, etc., and they were all denounced and their abandonment recommended. In their place ''good conduct,'' ''reasonable activity,'' that would produce the public good was recommended. The basis of conduct, Dayananda Saraswati stressed, should be **reason** and not blind adherence to ancient tradition.

On the issue of caste, Dayananda Saraswati attempted a compromise as well as to make a departure from the current thinking and practices. His acceptance of a Hinduism based on the Vedas led him also to accept the fourfold classification of the people - the **Varna System**- but he insisted that it was not birth that entitled one to membership in any given varna, but life-style and conduct. (Heimsath, : 120) This was a firm, but subtle rejection of the existing caste system with its numerous sub-divisions and its hierarchy and rigidity. Dayananda Saraswati in effect wanted an open class system and argued that anyone, provided he could achieve the necessary qualifications could enter any caste. Various other aspects of Hindu social order came under his scrutiny. He denounced child marriage and supported equal rights and educational opportunities for all, including women. (Farquhar, : 121) He also advocated that widows be permitted to remarry, denounced animal sacrifice at temples as an absurd and degrading practice. He also suggested that Western science and the scientific approach be learnt and cultivated. He encouraged foreign travel and contact with foreigners, which was contrary to the position of the orthodox Hindu leadership at this time. (Bharadwaja, : 317) Dayananda Saraswati denounced the latter, mostly priests, as hypocrites who wanted to keep their followers in ignorance because their own livelihood and power depended on such ignorant followers. He recommended that instead of being frightened by the Westerners and their customs and religion or being taken over completely into a conversion, Hindus should accept the liberal and rational aspects of Western civilization on a selective basis. Dayananda Saraswati himself admitted to an admiration for the Englishman's ''energy'' and work habits and argued that if the Hnidu religion was not willing to be reformed, it was going to be overwhelmed. Nevertheless, he was fanatically opposed to any surrender to alien religions, Chritstianity or Islam, and made no secret of his antagonism. He scoffed at the claims

of the Bible and the Koran as revealed testaments and upheld the Vedas as timeless revelations from a divine source. (Heimsath, 1964 : 122)

During all this intellectual and organizational work, Dayananda Saraswati, it should be noted, rarely commented on the political situation in India, although he favoured the transfer of power to Indians. His main concerns were in the social and religious areas and he attributed political subjugation to the degenerate and weakening practices of Indian society.

In tune with his reformist attitude, Dayananda Saraswati adopted modern techniques of spreading his philosophy. He emulated the Brahmo Samaj leaders and organized a Samaj of his own, used newspapers and periodicals, schools and study groups as the instruments of his propaganda. However, he could not make common cause with the Brahmo Samaj because of the latter's denial of the authority of the Vedas and their closeness to Christianity. (Heimsath, : 125) Hence, a separate organization was called for and it was created in 1875 in Rajkot. Following this, many other Samajes were created in Ahemadabad, Bombay, Patna, Ranchi and even Calcutta. An Arya Samaj emerged in practically every city that Dayananda Saraswati visited and presented his challenge to Hindu orthodoxy. In the next decade, branch organizations erupted in Lahore, Amritsar, Surdaspur, Rawalpindi, Mulkan, Meerut, Delhi, Roorki, Cawnpore and Lucknow. (Singh, : 363—66) During this period, the tenets of the Samaj were simplified and reorganized, and a great deal of freedom was given to the local chapters.

The official creed of the Samaj followed closely the teaching of its founder. It rejected all orthodox rites and rituals, idol worship, etc. but retained the Vedic custom of fire-sacrifice as a means of purifying the air! The Hindu form of ancestor worship known as **Sraddha** was condemned (Farquhar, : 121) as were pilgrimages to the holy places of India as superstitious and worthless practices.

The Arya Samaj also developed a more or less coherent system of ethics and among the usual stress on truthfulness, honesty, courage and steadfastness, it also stressed hard work. On the question of widow remarriage, the Arya Samaj was not willing to go as far as its leader : they permitted widows to remarry if their marriages were not consummated. This was designed to help the many children who were married off and then became widowed before beginning to live with their husbands. The other widows however were not permitted to marry by the Samaj, but very considerately, it allowed them a sexual life outside of legal marriage! (Farquhar, : 122)

Hindu social and religious life is to a very great extent dominated by ceremony and in the case of the domestic affairs, ceremonies presided over by the Brahmin was mandatory. The Arya Samaj made attempts to either do away with some of the ceremonies or simplify them. A Vedic ceremony

was resuscitated and recommended to the faithful: the Havana ceremony, consisting of the "offering" of butter and incense to a fire and singing of a verse from the Vedas and a sermon in the Hindu language. An observer of the time who witnessed such a ceremony declared "It was just like a Protestant Service and totally unlike any Vedic observance". (Farquhar, 1967 : 123) The women had their own separate, but equal service conducted by a lady and it was claimed that the women attended in large numbers.

The death of Dayananda Saraswati dealt a serious blow to the work of the Samaj, but the movement had sufficiently institutionalised itself and it survived. However, it began to acquire a conservative and intolerant attitude in the aftermath of his death. The Samaj's relationship with the other religions began to deteriorate, to finally emerge as a militant hostility, particularly towards the Muslims. (Jones, 1967 : 44) The modern methods of propaganda and communication introduced by the leadership was skillfully used to arouse mass interest in the goals of the Samaj and it began to attract a large following, though of a somewhat diluted nature.

The leadership of the Arya Samaj passed on to Guru Datta who stressed the religious nature of the movement and elevated Dayananda Saraswati to the position of a saint and his writing to that of sacred texts. (Lajpat Rai, 1891 : 29) He made his own contribution to the Arya philosophy by a reinterpretation of the past of the "Aryans"—an interpretation much at variance with Western scholarly opinion. An **upadeshak** Samaj to train "Arya Ministers" and a Vedic journal to publicise Arya views were started in 1888 (Lajpat Rai, : 34) During this period, another leader of the Samaj Munshi Ram also started active proselytising and propaganda, (Jambunathan, 1961) street processions accompanied by devotional singing and challenges to the Christian missionaries to participate in public debates, etc. It was also during this period that active converts from Islam were sought by the doctrine of "Suddhi" or "purification". (Jones, : 47) It was argued that the contemporary Muslims were after all descendents of Hindus who were forcibly converted and hence they could be brought back to the true religion after the proper rites of purification. This, of course, was to anger the Muslims and was destined to be a bone of contention for years to come. This was later broadened to include the reconversion of Christians to Hinduism as well as "purify" the outcastes and bring them into the fold of the caste system. All of this, of course, was contrary to the tenets of traditional Hinduism and was anathema to the Hindu orthodoxies of the day. The conversion ceremony had obviously been introduced to counter the work of proselytization by the Christians, Muslims and Sikhs, though at this time the Christians were the main proselytizers. From 1891 onwards, regular reports of Suddh ceremony began to appear in the Samaj periodicals. Initially Brahmin priests were used to perform these rites, but soon the Samaj developed its own purificatory ceremony to legitimise conversion. (Jones, : 48)

Tension and conflict between the conservatives and radicals in the Samaj came to head in 1893, with the former gaining control of the educational institutions, while the radicals captured the provincial organization and numerous branch offices. (Lajpat Rai, 1965 : 46—72) The radicals reorganized themselves as the Arya Prathinidhi Sabha and set about the business of converting people—particularly Muslims, outcastes and Christians, to its faith. It withdrew its support of the educational work of the Samaj and used its funds to systematically organise missionary work. Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan were geographically divided into circles with officers in charge and salaried ministers. The ministers were to aid the local Samajes in holding public debates, and in conducting Suddhi ceremonies. Another leader of the Samaj at this time Pandit Lekh Ram added another dimension to this anti-Islamic stance : he organized cow protection societies—(Jambunathan, 1961 : 24) (since the Muslims were beef-eaters it was not calculated to bring harmony between Hindus and Muslims)—and mounted a propaganda against the Ahamadiya Movement of the Muslims. This was indeed a very curious move, because the Ahamadiyas were essentially trying to achieve the same modernisational goals for the Muslims that the Arya Samaj was trying to do for the Hindus. In fact, from 1888 onwards, the Arya Samaj's self-conscious militancy and proselytizing intolerance brought about a great deal of tension among the various religious groups—the Samaj was, in fact unsparing in its attacks against the Christians, Muslims, Orthodox Hindus and Sikhs.

This aggressive policy, however, brought about a split in the Arya Samaj with various radicals advocating this spirit of militancy and the conservatives stressing the religious and educational responsibilities of the Samaj. In keeping with these views, Lajpat Rai and Hans Raj took charge of the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic college movement. They followed closely the techniques used by the Christian missionaries and there is no doubt that these activities greatly enhanced the popularity of the Samaj.

THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT:

Another important secularising force in the religious and social life of India was the Dravidian Movement in which is included a number of different organizations. Its initial, and at times principal goal was to challenge the supremacy of the Brahmins in the social, economic and political life of Southern India. This movement did not begin however till the second decade of the twentieth century. South India was relatively free of the social ferment that was created in Bengal and the Punjab by the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj and Heimsath argues that the "true reason for less social rebellion in Madras was the caste structure in peninsular India, which provided for a distinct social dominance of the Brahmin caste over low castes comprising the bulk of the population." (Heimsath, 1964 : 111) The Brahmins took advantage of their background in learning and intellectual pursuits to pursue the new English education that had become available and once this was achieved, scrambling for positions in

government service. Heimsath observes that the Brahmins who comprised the majority of university graduates could scarcely afford to advocate any fundamental social change since this would undermine their own power and position. In Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra, it was precisely these segments of the Western educated population that generated the religious and intellectual ferment that created the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. In Madras, however, they were mostly concerned with producing loyal and capable administrative and professional men—and they were also mostly Brahmins. These segments then were dominant in the traditional social order and were also vying to become dominant in the newly emerging colonial order. The non-Brahmins began to resent this development and felt that they were being shunted from positions of authority and power rather arbitrarily by a strongly entrenched Brahmin hegemony. The drive for political power, administrative position and economic security produced then a serious breach in relations between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins. This breach was exacerbated by Annie Besant's insistence on the greatness of the Hindu Brahminical past. This made her, and the movement she was to found, the movement that was to be the root of the Indian National congress in the south, suspect in the eyes of the non-Brahmins. (Irschick, : 51) They saw in all her work - particularly with regard to the demand for Home Rule - a maneuvering for the establishment of Brahmin supremacy. If Home Rule was granted, what part would the non-Brahmin Tamils play in the future administration of Madras Presidency? In the view of the non-Brahmins, only a small part, if at all. The movement for Home Rule was mainly in the hands of Brahmins and this led to the formation of the South Indian Liberal Federation to challenge the activities of the Home Rule movement. This later changed its name to that of the Justice Party. This was indeed the beginning of what could be termed the Dravidian Movement—it would later develop schisms and splinter into different sections, though maintaining a certain ideological intergrity. In the early days, the movement was supported by the non-Brahmin landowners, educated middle classes of Madras and some untouchable groups. They maintained a pro-British stand in politics insofar as the anti-British movement in Madras at this time too was led by Brahmins. It is significant that both those who benefitted educationally and politically from the British rule as well as the leaders of the early anti-British movement were Brahmins.

However, it is not so much the political history of the Justice Party and its offshoots that we want to focus on, but the reformist tendencies that were touched off by the anti-Brahmin movement. It did not take the Dravidian leadership long to see that it was the magico-religious ideological and institutional base of South Indian society which enabled a Brahmin to claim and exercise special powers. (Hardgrave, 1966 : 214) The Dravidian leadership then launched a massive attack on these bases and produced numerous documents and argumentations against the Brahminical version of Hinduism. Some parts of this were pure conjecture, some fact, but all

were contrived to de-mythologize the Brahmin and identify him as an intruder from the North who came with an alien and essentially non-rational philosophy and seduced the South. (Chetty, 1932) In place of the alien Sanskritic tradition and "Ayran" religion, the Dravidian leadership posited Tamil tradition and a Dravidian religion which was monotheistic and had no place for the caste system: polytheism and the caste system, along with many other religious practises were identified with the Brahminical Hinduism imported from North India. European scholars and researchers into Tamil - its history and tradition, G. U. Pope, Father Beschi, and Rev. Robert Caldwell lent considerable support to these claims. Among the Dravidian scholars, Somasundaram Pillai (1855—1897) claimed "most of what is ignorantly called Aryan philosophy, Aryan civilization, is literally Dravidian or Tamilian at bottom". (Irschick, 1969 : 283) He went on to challenge the authenticity and the interpretation of the **Ramayana** and regarded it as a biased work written with a view to glorify Aryan culture and debase Dravidians by casting them in the role of enemies of the righteous Rama. This questioning of a sacred text was very signifigant and was really the harbinger of several other such challenges to come. The leadership of the Justice Party rapidly incorporated the prevailing cultural theories about the Dravidian civilization into their platform. Addressing the Justice Party confederation in Madras in 1917, Tyagaraja Chetty said "the genius of Dravidian civilization does not recognize the difference between man and man by birth.....It is the Aryans who have introduced this birth distinction, which they have elaborated into the system of Varnashrama Dharma with its concomittant evils". (1932) Another early leader of the movement, Tangavelu Pillai refused to employ Brahmin priests and asserted the superiority of the ancient Tamil to Aryan civilization (**Hindu**, Madras, December 21, 1925).

In the course of the reinterpretation of history, tradition and literature, current religious practises also come under scrutiny. The Dravidian leadership sought to substitute Saiva Siddhanta philosophy for the Brahminical religion and idolatry. This philosophy was contrary to that of Sankaracharya's advaita view and insisted on the separations between the Supreme Spirit and the human soul, whereas, as indicated earlier, Sankaracharya defined the human soul as a part of the supreme one. A Saiva Siddhanta Society was established in 1886 to popularise the Dravidian religion. The attempt to regenerate the religion of South India was extended eventually to the social sphere. It was claimed that the Dravidians "are outside the fourfold division of the Aryan caste" and the Tamils were exhorted to reexamine their identity. Irschik observes that "the Tamil Vellalas were indeed of all the non-Brahmin caste Hindu groups, the ones most anxious to shed the Sudra designation. And since they formed the backbone of the Justice Party, their social and political resentment were closely intertwined". (1969 : 295) It is apparent that the caste-ridden society of South India was responsible for the emergence of caste-politics. The entire movement, although provincial and in the main committed to the

existing political realities, nevertheless through its ideological and institutional challenge to the Brahmin order unleashed a variety of forces that were to become significant in the years to come. However, with its eminently parochial platform and program, the Justice Party, the forerunner of the Dravidian Movement, was soon submerged in the great wave of Indian nationalism.

The most notable Dravidian leader to emerge in the aftermath of the Justice Party was E. V. Ramasamy Naiyakar who gave a different twist to the advocacy of Dravidian regeneration. In 1925 he organized the "self-respect movement", designed for the upliftment of the Dravidians and seeking to expose the tyranny of the Brahmins and the deceptive methods by which they controlled all spheres of south Indian life. (Hardgrave, 1965 : 26) He publicly ridiculed the Puranas (Hindu scriptures) as fairy tales, not only imaginary and irrational, but grossly immoral as well. Influenced in his philosophy by Robert Ingersoll and having translated much of his writing into Tamil, Naiyakar attacked religion in India as a tool of Brahminical control. He carried on an active campaign in an effort to rid the people of orthodox Hinduism and wean them away from religious ceremonies requiring the priestly services of a Brahmin. He denounced caste observances, child marriage, enforced widowhood and attacked the laws of Manu, the entire Hindu social fabric of caste, and described it as "totally inhuman." The Laws, Naiyakar pointed out were designed to secure the supremacy of the Brahmins and ensure their unquestioned authority. (Hardgrave, 1965 : 26) In order to spread his views, he founded a journal in Tamil called **Kudiarasu**, which was followed soon after by many others. In 1937 when an attempt was made to impose Hindi as a required subject in the schools, an opportunity was provided for Naiyakar to become a popular leader of the anti-Hindi campaign. (Devanandan, 1960 : 9) He followed this by forming a political party called the Dravida Kalagham. The object of the DK was proclaimed to be the achievement of a sovereign, independent "Dravidian Republic" which would create casteless society - an egalitarian society of Dravidians. Naiyakar severed his ties with the British (which had been assiduously cultivated until now) and the DK openly declared itself to be opposed to the political subjugation by the British. Most of the philosophical doctrines of the earlier Dravidan movements found expression in the new DK and it sought to actively propagate these views. Campaigns to advocate widow remarriage, inter-caste marriages, abandonment of religious practiees calling for Brahmin priests, idolatry and other orthodox ceremonies, belief in sacred texts, etc., were carried out throughout Madras. The members and leaders of the DK cultivated a public atheism and were vehement in their denunciation of organized religion and its socially oppressive features.

The movement grew and prospered under Naiyakar's leadership and attracted a number of talented young men, among whom were many actors and playwrights, as well as a number of scholars. (Hardgrave, : 221)

Yet, the DK continued to be organized along quasi-military lines, with Naiyakar, now called with the appellation "Periyar," "The Big One," as a sort of demi-God of the Movement. Many of the younger men began to resent this and soon intellectual differences began to manifest themselves as well. The most noteworthy such difference was the attitude towards Indian independence and the attitude the DK was to adopt towards the newly established Congress government in New Delhi. Naiyakar had asked Jinnah for assistance in establishing a Dravidastan along with Pakistan but the latter had merely brushed it aside. (Baliga, 1957 : 117) Naiyakar started an agitation against the transfer of power to the Indian National Congress and the progressive wing of the DK under the leadership of C. N. Annadurai broke away and formed the Dravida Munetra Kalagam — the Dravidian Progressive Federation in 1944. (Harrison, 1960 : 123)

The DMK was, in many ways, a continuation of the broad Dravidian Movement and hence inherited the basic philosophy and program of the progenitors, particularly from Naiyakar's DK. It also introduced a number of changes in all areas of policy and organization. Annadurai's first move was to weld the DMK into an effective political movement greatly expanding the activities of branch organizations and by 1960 the membership jumped to 175,000. The base of the party had been expanded to include lower class city-dwellers, the rural proletariat as well as many segments of the middle classes and students. The Justice Party and the DK were mainly supported by the prosperous landowning class, the newly emergent civil servants of the British government and various commercial interests. The DMK however began to appeal to the masses and oriented its entire program and propaganda to enlist the support of the common man, including the outcastes and the untouchables. The leadership of the party remained in the hands of the writers and journalists, who, according to Hardgrave, used the communication media as the catapult to political power. He further observes that "through its broadly-based and hierarchically structured organization, its series of anti-Hindi agitations and through its propaganda and political campaigns, the DMK sought power through exploitation of the symbolic paraphernalia of language and nationality which is bringing a new awareness of wider association and common interest to the formerly inert masses of Madras." (Hardgrave, : 31) Annadurai himself was a writer, actor, playwright and producer of plays and used his dramaturgical talents with great ingenuity and effectiveness to bring the masses to the feet of the DMK. He politicised the theatre and claimed that "A revival in the theatre is very, very essential. It is a good index to the new awareness in the country. A good theatre will indicate how people shall live in the future". (Sivathamby, 1971 : 212—220) The thematic content of the plays glorified Tamil culture and held up Brahminism as the cause of all political, social, cultural evils of the day. The political plays of the DMK excoriated "the North Indian," "Aryan" and Brahminical "conspiracy" and suggested solutions that were favourable

to the DMK's program, while the plays which took religion as a theme showed the ineffectiveness of idol-worship and religious devotion. In addition to the theatre, the Tamil film industry also threw its support to the DMK. (Perinbanayagam, 1971 : 201—211)

Annadurai and his associates were quite willing to work in the film industry : apart from the larger financial rewards, the cinema permitted them to take their philosophy to a much larger public. Throughout the early fifties and sixties, the DMK provided much needed talent to the South Indian cinema and in turn, the party acquired a powerful new medium for the propagation of its views. The medium of the cinema—to which many of the earlier plays of the DMK were also converted, became a cheap and readily available instrument to reach the remotest corner of Madras and it played a vital role in popularising the DMK philosophy.

In fact, an examination of a few of the plays reveals clearly the social content of the DMK philosophy. (Sivathamby, 1971) The plays ostensibly dealt with the usual themes of love, loyalty, betrayal, etc., but the underlying thrust of the development of the plays was to assert some definitive aspect of a philosophy. An obvious example of this was the rewriting of the epic poem Ramayana, where the roles of heroines and villains were reversed. The demon Ravana of the earlier version, now identified as a Dravidian, becomes a just and noble king, traduced by "Aryan" power. However, it is in the treatment of contemporary themes in the plays that the DMK's attitude to the caste-system, the Hindu scriptures, idol-worship, women's emancipation became evident. In the celebrated works of Annadurai called **Velaikari, Kathal Jothi** and many others, caste lines were disregarded in love and marriage, widows not only remarried, but asserted their personalities and took roles of leadership. The villains were not only unscrupulous Brahmins, but also landlords. Another of the DMK leader-writers, Karunanidhi also wrote plays with similar themes. These themes were not confined to plays however. In the daily activities of the party, women were encouraged to take leading parts and widows were encouraged to remarry with the DMK leaders often officiating at the "Reformed" ceremonies. The other aspects of the DMK philosophy were realised in the organization of the party and the untouchables even began to refer to themselves as the "original Dravidians" thus openly attributing their degradation in caste-status to Aryan influence and denying the validity of the Brahminical system that relegated them to outcaste status. These aspects of the DMK philosophy constituted parts of a common theme that will be taken up for analysis later.

COMMENTARY:

These three movements were widely separated in geographical terms and in the case of one, the Dravidian Movement, separated also in terms of time. Nevertheless, all of them could be considered in a comparative framework and their similarities and differences examined. Perhaps the

first aspect that strikes one about these movements is that they were in many ways unique in the recent history of India: they were systematic attempts to change religious doctrine, ritual practices as well as the norms and patterns of social relationships between members of different castes, different religions and between the sexes. The impact of European ideas and institutions was very pronounced in leading to this development. Chandavarkar, a prominent leader of the Prarthana Samaj, an offshoot of the Brahmo movement, established in Bombay, observed that English education "was accomplishing silently what no law could have accomplished—unsettling people's minds, raising controversies—and thus forwarding the cause of social progress." The ideas that were being desseminated through the medium of the English language were those of the then nascent English liberalism—Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. In particular, the notion of a rationally ordered society and some of the concepts of utilitarianism—reasoned inquiry and social contentment seem to have found their way into the philosophies of these movements. A second influence, and certainly of equal importance, on these movements was that of the Christian missionaries. Ronald Scott, writing on the Indian reform movements observed that modern Indian religious and social reform has been in large part a response to the challenge of Christian doctrine and to "the conception of human personality as expressed primarily in the Christian religion". (1953 : 18) Chandavarkar, interestingly enough, observed that the Christian missionaries were the cause of the religious and social awakening of which "the school of 'Hindu Protestantism' of the present day is the result." (1911 : 43—45) Lajpat Rai, commenting on the Arya Samaj observed that its network of social service organization, as well as the very structure of the Arya Samaj itself was an imitation of the Christian missionaries.

These comments provide testimony to the fact that the members and leaders of these movements were themselves aware of the sources of the changes they were advocating, as well as the implication of these changes. Whatever the sources of the changes advocated by these movements, how best can we prosecute our thesis that they were all part of a general movement towards a more rational social, religious and institutional order in Indian society? In a very broad sense, the many changes that began to emerge and then accelerate in the Indian subcontinent after the arrival of the British—from the administrative machinery, the system of railways, the political framework to the more recent thrust towards economic development, as well as socialism can be subsumed under the rubric of rationalism. However, we are interested in the rational content of the three movements that we have sketched.

RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE:

Let us examine the developments in thought and action that the three movements represented. The disenchantment with Hinduism and the traditional mode of life raised numerous questions about the manner in which both could be transformed. The survey of movements presented

earlier reveal that the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Dravidian Movement rejected the orthodox interpretation of Hinduism and sought to establish a new system of ideas based on some notion of rationality. In the Brahmo Samaj, this meant intergration of Upanishadic philosophy with Christian notions of individual responsibility, in the Arya Samaj, it became a complete rejection of institutional Hinduism and a revival of Vedic Hinduism, while in the South, this meant the rejection of Brahminism, and the resurrection of the Dravidian past, defined by its advocates as more rational a system. The official statement of the Brohmo Samaj declared that there is only one God, who is spirit, infinite in power, omnipresent, eternal and blissful. The human soul is immortal and responsible to God for its doing. This was a fundamental departure from the traditional advaita school of Sankara. Maharishi Tagore of the Brahmo Samaj turning away in despair from the Upanishads commented "If the worshipper and the object of worship are one, how can there be any worship?" If as advaita philosophy believed "I am he" and "Thou art That," then how was individual progress to be achieved? How can one prescribe a code of individual morality, equality and responsibility? He concluded therefore that "this universe was not dream stuff, neither is it an illusion, but it exists in reality."

Dayananda Saraswati's notions were indeed strikingly similar to these views. He, too, asserted that the world we knew was real and not an illusion and had to be confronted. The final emancipation of the soul, he held, could be achieved only by disassociating from sin and the moral conduct of the personal life. In the case of the Dravidian Movement, it was completely athesitic and swept away in one large step, the doctrines of the advaita that were the substance of contemporary Hinduism: the world was real enough for them and it was the individual's responsibility to face it and make it work for him. What did this mean in the terms of the thesis of our paper?

The thesis of advaita philosophy was that one should experience identity with the Universal Being, since one was a part, along with others, of the universal self. However, once the principle of separate identity between God and self was accepted, they were no longer to be known as mere aspects of a single entity, but could be regarded as distinct and separate. This was in essence a discovery of the individual and he or she was, in fact, released to an existence of his own and endowed with freedom of will and made to confront God on his own. He or she also has to establish the proper relationship with the universe and God and on the basis of individual reason, instead of predetermined caste duties. In fact, Roy and the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj had rejected even the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, as well as that of Karma. This meant that the individual was in control of his own destiny and by living righteously and striving continuously, he could achieve meaning and fulfilment in life.

Dayananda Saraswati however did not go so far as to reject the doctrine of transmigration, though he had released the individual from the grips of destiny. The fierce antagonism that the Dravidian Movement, particularly its later phases, adopted towards organized Hinduism manifested itself also in the assertion of individual responsibility and personal rights. In their plays and tracts, a constant theme was the overcoming of adversity and misfortune, by defying religious prescriptions and predestined roles. Hence, they did not have to fashion a subtle creed, as their northern brethren did, to combat the prevailing **advaita** philosophy: they merely burnt the religious texts and wrote anti-religious substitutes. In all, however, the attempt to convert what Weber called an other-worldly orientation to a this-worldly orientation was evident. (Weber, 1922 : 262—274)

A further aspect of the philosophical content of these movements was to assert insistently that the individual was the unit of society and that ultimately he was responsible for his own conduct and destiny. The implications of this—and the stress on this-worldly asceticism, to the thesis of this paper are obvious. However, to what extent these views took hold of the masses—or at least of influential elites and the consequences to the socio-economic and political life of India after these movements gained their influence, must remain for investigation on another occasion.

RITUAL: TEMPLE AND DOMESTIC:

Hinduism, as it was practised then (and now and for long centuries), was bound with innumerable details of observance that ritual can be said, generally speaking, to have taken the place of conviction. Even before the modern movements sprang up to eradicate it, there were many earlier attempts to modify Hinduistic rituals. The most noteworthy of them, of course, was Buddhism. In fact, the daily round of life of the Hindu was a pattern of involvement with various rites from morning till evening, and these rights were in turn intermeshed with the structure of the social and economic life of the people. Hence, a change in these rituals was essentially an attempt to alter the pattern of power and activity in the society. The simplification of the marriage ceremony was accomplished by eliminating the Brahmin from the ceremony and eliminating the Brahmin meant challenging the hierachical arrangement of castes that was represented in Hindu domestic rituals. Besides the change in ceremony of marriage, various other changes in domestic life were recommended by the various reform movements. The Brahmo Samaj was perhaps rather extreme in this regard, but in their programmes were included changes in the eating habits and relationships between men and women and changes in the general Hinduistic character of family life. This kind of family life was more or less minutely organized as stages in an individual's life—sixteen in all, if he survived to old age. These were called **Samskaras** and each stage represented a transition from one set of goals, duties and obligations to another. To live according to these prescriptions was enjoined on the Hindu; it was his **Dharma**. However, for us, the important aspect of

this phenomenon is that the system was sanctioned by Brahminical ideology and a Brahmin priest perforce officiated at each of the sixteen transitional ceremonies. The challenge to Brahminism meant an abandonment of these rites of transition and the corresponding liberation of the individual from the obligation—duty structure established for a different socio-economic order. For example, Hindu males were now free to postpone marriage, the creation of a family, etc., until such time as they were graduated from the new schooling system and obtain gainful employment, instead of having to do it at the time prescribed by Brahminical edict.

In the temple, too, the Arya Samaj in particular advocated many changes in the ritual structure—all in the direction of simplification or rationalisation, while the Brahmo Samaj of course accepted a religion without idols and hence the elaborate ceremonialism of Hindu ritual was abandoned. The Dravidian Movement on the other hand, being atheistic, was by definition opposed to religion and religious ritual and advocated its complete abandonment, while at the same time recommending the desacralisation, and at times even the profanation of the Brahmin and his books. The Brahmin, in his dealings with the people as an intermediary to God, was secure in his position as usually the only one who knew Sanskrit.—Sanskrit being the language in which Hindu rites were performed. The movement to accept the vernacular as a medium of religious discourse as well as the language of choice by various reformers—particularly by Dayananda Saraswati and the Dravidian movement—once again tended to desacralise the Brahmin and dissolve his special claims to religious power as well as for secular power and prestige. In the same vein, one may mention that the three movements preached the futility of such standard Hindu practises as pilgrimage to sacred centers and ancestor worship.

Besides being rationalising activities by themselves, the denial of the efficacy of such practises also tended to minimise the significance of the Brahmin priests, because these rites required their services. In fact, nearly all the anti-ritual activities of the reformers seemed calculated to end priestcraft in the everyday life of the Hindus. Needless to emphasize here, such an attitude could only result in at least initiating an erosion in the strength of the hierarchy that was implicit in the larger and smaller aspects of Hindu civilization. The final emblem, so to speak, of all these tendencies was the adoption by the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj of the congregational form of worship—a form that stressed the **Community** of the membership and had no inherited priestcraft. This is not to say, of course, that the Samaj did away with all ritual: for example, they had the **Sudhi** ceremony (where an ex-Hindu was "purified" and brought into the Samaj) and the Havana ritual of feeding the fire. However, these ceremonies were not performed by a Brahmin priest and any Samaj member could do it: the social structure of the ceremony had changed.

SOCIAL REFORM:

The orthodox Hindu philosophy had very little to say with regard to the organization of society—except for the Laws of Manu, which were essentially codification and legitimation of Brahminical rights and privileges, as well as the Brahminical vision of the good society. This philosophy had very little to say about individual rights and responsibilities and everything was ordered by an appeal to tradition, codified or not. This also meant that neither the elite nor the others were to be held accountable for their actions, evil, exploitative or not. The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Dravidian Movement issued direct challenges to this view. Intellectual self examination—and the example of the Christians brought home to the leaders the importance of taking measures to change inimical and exploitative institutions and to render help to those in need and adopt a creed of equality of all individuals. The doctrinal acceptance of individual responsibility also meant that a public standard other than the traditional wisdom of Brahminism, was available to judge people's accountability. In any case, all these considerations lead to all three movements engaging their efforts towards the abolition of caste duties and privileges and initiating moves to emancipate women. The woman's lot in India was certainly no better than it was in various other patriarchal societies and in many respects worse. The compulsory suicide of widows was considered an essential duty of a woman and many women were indeed persuaded to die on their husband's funeral pyre. However, the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj declared their opposition to it, and was able to persuade its adherents to abandon it, just as the British were persuaded to make it illegal. Along with this came the advocacy of widow remarriage—widows were not permitted to remarry, even if they survived the attempts to make them commit suicide—child marriage was prohibited and the practice of female infanticide abolished. Interestingly enough, the Brahmo Samaj consulted western medical opinion before recommending sixteen as the proper age for girls to marry. The example of Christian missionaries prompted the reformers in Bengal and some in the Punjab to open up schools of their own since the schools started by the Christians had become an insidious instrument to conversion. The schools also became avenues for the emancipation of women and ostensibly of the lower castes—they were both rendered eligible for modern education. However, in the case of the lower castes, this programme was not carried out in full—it was a programme more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Theoretically, in any case, the three movements professed and to a large extent enforced a belief in personal conduct and individual responsibility as the essential criterion by which power and privilege in the society was to be conferred.

ORGANIZATION:

In developing a programme and movement designed to challenge the traditional forms of religion and society, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Dravidian Movement, often found that they were unable to totally liberate themselves from certain traditionalist aspects. For example, in the case of the former two, most of the leadership did come from a Brahminical elite and all three movements had to often contend with autocratic elders who were unwilling to share their power and responsibility with younger members. Nevertheless, it could be asserted that a decisive attempt was made by all three movements to develop bureaucratic type and more or less democratically based organizations. Rules, constitutions, covenants and declarations of principles were created and lists of membership and ceremonies of initiation into membership were common. These organizations purporting to be substitutes to religious ones, as well as constituting a challenge to them, were to be managed by rules and regulations arrived at by means of reasoning and pragmatic considerations. In addition to being a rational step in itself, this meant also an attempt to substitute personal qualities as a means to success and position in these organizations rather than caste-membership or inherited claims to wisdom and knowledge.

In personal life, too, rules of conduct—"ethics"—were introduced and these were intended as substitutes for caste and religious principles. These rules were to govern interpersonal relationshipsbetween men, between men and women, between members of different castes, with foreigners, etc., as well as in the discipline and conduct of everyday life.

The methods of propaganda and proseletysing adopted by the movements were also novel and certainly a deliberate imitation of the successful Christian missionaries. Public meetings, proseletysing tracts, debates with those opposed to the views of the respective organizations, parades, and in the case of the Dravidian Movement, the burning of sacred Hindu texts, and most impressively, the creation of an entire medium of propaganda through the theatre and later on of the cinema. The decision to adopt these techniques as well as the choice of an every day prose form, as opposed to the literary Sanskrit of traditional Hindu texts were factors of great relevance to our theme. These items—the plays, the movies, were in form and content direct challenges to the classical literature which were, of course, interpreted and held in awe by the Brahmin as unchanging vehicles of inherited wisdom. The use the Dravidian Movement made of the prose form in countless tracts, as well as the literary items it produced—novels, stories, movie and play scripts, also gave a great impetus to the emergence of a modern and flexible prose in the Tamil language. (Sivathamby, 1971 : 212—220)

CONCLUSION:

It will be seen that the three movements that we have discussed were making attempts, deliberately and thoughtfully to change Hindu India in a direction that is consistent with the notion of rationality as described by Max Weber in various of his works and summarised in an earlier part of this study by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, and Herbert Luthey. However, it must be pointed out that the impact of these movements was not massive and that the full benefits of more rational religious life and personal life were reaped by an elite, though, of course, the masses did enjoy some of the benefits. The striking aspect of these three movements though was that none of them, despite their advocacy of this-worldly orientations and personal achievement, was able to promote the spirit of capitalism and entrepreuneurship among its members to any substantial degree; at least, there is no evidence of members of these movements becoming capitalists and entrepreuneurs: they rather became political leaders in social and civic matters. The entrepreuneurship remained in the hands of the traditional merchant groups and castes—the Parsis and the Marvaris who were not really touched by the reform movements in any substantial way.

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ANGLO-CEYLON WRITING:
A Note on the Achievement of Alagu Subramaniam[1]

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ANGLO-Ceylon writing, admittedly, is still in its infancy. The despairing sense of mediocrity evident even to the most undemanding reader of English fiction in Sri Lanka is not merely due to the problem posed by an alien language. The process of tinkering with the language seems to have been dispensed with early enough. The problem seems to have been a lamentable absence of any real contact between the writer and his environment. Having been cut off from authentic experiences of Sri Lankan life through an English education, most Anglo-Ceylon writers have been in the unenviable predicament of having to depict the essence of that life while being alienated from it. It is only sporadically that even the better known writers like James Goonewardene, Vijayatunga, and Punyakante Wijenaike have been successful in transcending this barrier.

Alagu Subramaniam's contribution to Anglo-Ceylon writing is perhaps not great but it certainly merits attention. Its significance lies partly in its range and partly in its involvement with the Jaffna community—a region untouched by any other writer in English. Born an orthodox Christian the writer married into an orthodox Hindu family. Having known Jaffna intimately he spent a considerable part of his life in England. He thus imbibed in a very real sense the essence of two spiritual and cultural traditions. This gave him not only a wide range of experience but also the necessary intellectual equipment to portary and evaluate with remarkable authenticity the life of the Jaffna community. The only other writer who attempted to depict the Jaffna community in the second quarter of the 20th

1. Born in Jaffna (the peninsula at the northern tip of Sri Lanka exclusively settled by Tamils) in 1915 to middle class parents, Alagu Subramaniam left at an early age to England and spent approximately 15 years there—the most creative part of his life—before returning to Sri Lanka in 1948. Although his works were published in Sri Lanka fairly recently, the bulk of his writing seems to have been done during his stay in England. After his return he took up to active practice as a lawyer in Jaffna while continuing his literary pursuits. He died in 1971.

century is Ilankayarkkon[1] who wrote exclusively in Tamil. But even he lacks the critical detachment and calm objectivity of Alagu Subramaniam.

Alagu Subramaniam's first collection of short stories, **The Big Girl**[2], is probably his best. Written for the most part in England these contain a strain of nostalgia that is reminiscent of R. K. Narayan. It is also in this collection that the writer uses his characteristic mode of irony with remarkable flexibility and finesse. Irony to him is not a weapon of rejection but a definite mode of expressing his vision of life in the Jaffna community. Never indulging in bitter invective he employs irony with utmost judiciousness to reveal the dichotomy between fact and pretence, between his cherished ideals and out-moded social conventions and practices It is to his credit that he looks at these problems with both detachment and deep involvement. His detachment gives him a perception and his involvement gives him a genuine personal commitment.

The Thorn, a significant story in this collection, deals with a small girl Parvati who on being admitted to an English school run by missionaries faces numerous problems in adjusting herself to the new standards around her. "The Thorn" is the little girl's description of a fork that is thrust into her hand by the hostel matron who insists on her using a fork and spoon instead of her fingers to eat. In symbolic terms this becomes a thorn in her set of values and she is faced with the dilemma of whether to cling on to her old beliefs or succumb to the new. This, however, is not the main point. What is relevant in this story is the attempt to convert Parvati to Christianity. The little girl Parvati—whose name refers to the spouse of Lord Shiva—simply cannot accept the ideas of Christianity and reject the Hindu beliefs inculcated at home. The conversation between the matron and Parvati reveals the writer's capacity to satirise some of the methods adopted by the missionaries :

"You must go to Him Parvati. You must. He will receive you".

"How can I go to Him when I haven't even seen him? Does he come to school?"

"Oh, you're silly," said the matron, "you don't understand anything. A Christian child would have known all this."

"Your parents haven't brought you up properly."

"Matron Akka?"

"What is it?"

"Where are his wives?"

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1. His collection of short stories entitled Velli Paathasaram was published in Jaffna, 1962.

2. The Big Girl nd Other Stories, Jaffna 1964.

"Whose ?" asked the matron angrily.

"His," said Parvati, pointing at the picture,

"I don't know his name."

"Blasphemy" cried the matron, placing the picture on the table and beating her head with her hands.

"How dare you ask such a question ? Oh, what can I do now ? You have committed a sin against God" (pp. 16—17)

However, one does not get the impression that the writer is trying to pass judgement either on Hinduism or on Christianity. Apart from the sharp satire levelled at the stupidity of the matron the writer seems to wonder whether it is necessary or advisable to inculcate these ideas into a girl who has already been influenced by the religion of her parents. The beginning of the story with its evocation of simple unsophisticated and joyous life seems to be in sharp contrast to the rigour of the matron and the oppressiveness of the new atmosphere.

This theme of religious conversion becomes more explicit in the story called **The Convert.** It is the story of a young man who by his long association with a missionary school becomes a genuine convert much against the wishes of his parents and clings to his new religion despite all the efforts made by his friends to get him removed from his job and thereby compel him to embrace Hinduism once again. This young man however does not fall into the same category as the little girl mentioned earlier. He is a Christian by conviction and the writer seems to feel that his attitude, his defiance in the face of so much opposition is worthy of admiration. His friends send an anonymous letter to the principal of the school where he is working, stating that he is a true Hindu at heart and that he has become a convert merely to ingratiate himself into the favour of the authorities. As the friends finish this obnoxious business and sit back with obvious satisfaction, Alagu Subramaniam with his characteristic subtlety puts into their mouth a sentence which cuts away the ground under their feet :

"Siva Siva he will be dismissed."

The invocation of God at a time when they are engaged in the detestable business of depriving a man of his livelihood seems blasphemous. Their efforts to defend Hinduism seems hollow. The convert at least is honest to himself. And that beautiful sentence uttered by him when he is accused of being a hypocrite is a remarkable piece of writing :

"Siva Siva! How can I forget Jesus Christ" (p. 28)

On the surface this might seem facetious but the writer seems to imply much more. What does it really matter whether he is convert or not? Has he not in a sense distilled the essence of both religions ? The convert is free

of hypocrisy and lives by his conscience. From the point of view of the writer this seems good enough. In fact one is tempted to think at the end of this story that the writer identifies himself with the convert.

One of the most moving and humane tales in the collection is **The Professional Mourners.** It deals with the custom of hiring low-caste women to attend funerals of high-caste folk and wail in order to create the impression that the deceased is being mourned in a fitting manner. Writers have handled this topic before but invariably with another motive, namely, to evaluate the poetic value of the songs sung by these women at funerals. It is worth making a passing reference to the fact that these songs are rich in meaning and have a haunting rhythm. This story however, deals with the plight of the mourners in relation to the caste system of the time. The writer reveals the hypocrisy of the whole procedure and suggests that the funeral itself could become utterly meaningless and the professional mourners in the final analysis make a mockery of this tragic moment.

But the story is much more than a comment on the validity of these meaningless customs. The writer looks at the mourners with sympathy and understanding. Their lot, he realises, is a hard one. They have hardly any alternative. This story is inextricably linked with the caste system which gave the members of the higher caste the power to treat the members of the lower caste with utmost cruelty. This story deals with a man who goes to fetch these professional mourners to mourn at his aunt's funeral and is told that they have lost their mother and are shedding tears of genuine sorrow. To this man this reply seems outrageous and he flies into a wild rage and indulges in bitter invective. The writer captures the moment with remarkable skill :

"The sisters, still on bended knees begged to be excused, "We didn't mean to be rude Sir," said one of them, "but please let us go this time. On the next occasion when there is another funeral at your place we will come and howl until our throats give way". "Insolence" shouted my uncle. "So you are wishing for another death in my house. Probably you desire mine, you miserable creatures. I'll have you flogged by the magistrate for such impudence." And getting hold of their saris he dragged them along the ground for some distance.

"Please remove your hand; we are coming," they wailed. (pp. 54—56)
The caste system has been a favourite theme with a number of writers but it is to Alagu Subramaniam's credit that he has the capacity to render into English the inhumanity of this system.

These are of course his better stories. Stories like the **Market Square** lack cohesion while the **Danger** lacks purpose. It is difficult to imagine that a writer who could probe into the depths of the human heart and show acute sensitivity to conditions around him could also relapse at times into writing such shallow and meaningless stories.

The second collection **Closing Time and Other Stories**[1] shows Alagu Subramaniam on the wane. In fact five stories included in this collection had already appeared in **The Big Girl**. The second edition which appeared posthumously has been done with so much carelessness that one cannot escape the feeling that the whole effort was rather perfunctory. However, mention must be made of **The Raid**, a remarkably concise story which traces the problem encountered by a Ceylonese in trying to enter into a harmonious relationship with an English woman. There is an awareness of the gulf that separates them — a gulf born out of two widely different cultures :

> "It's impossible," he answered. "The moment I open my mouth you eat my head off. You have an inferiority complex."
>
> She leaned forward. "Listen" she reproved him. "We both have it, like most people."
>
> "Don't talk rubbish," he protested. "I haven't any because I have two thousand years of culture behind me."
>
> "It's always behind you," she taunted him. "That's what is wrong. And where do you think mine is? In front? Ha, Ha." (p. 96)

Despite the half serious tone the significance of the statement does not fail to come through. What gives greater poignancy to the story is that they subsequently patch up their differences and move over to the woman's flat. No sooner this is done than a bomber dives down, makes a direct hit and reduces the flat to a mass of debris. The impossibility of establishing harmony between people of two widely different cultures is expressed fairly forcefully in this story.

However, taken as a whole these short stories would reveal a growing propensity to be impressionistic, a want of purpose, a sense of humour devoid of the usual needles of irony.

The unpublished novel **Mr. Moon** bears a resemblance to **Closing Time** in that it captures something of the listlessness and disillusionment of the Bloomsbury circle. The story is related by Harry, a bookseller and at times one cannot fail to detect a vague resemblance between Harry and the author. Particularly at the point where Harry protests against removing his scarf the resemblance is obvious. Alagu Subramaniam habitually wore a "gaily coloured scarf usually of a flamboyant shade, not as others do for warmth but for the colour effect."[2]

What gives unity to the novel is the relationship between Moon—a neurotic painter and Helen—the girl friend of Harry. This relationship is never treated overtly but it is always a sinister presence in the background.

1. Jaffna 1971.
2. Anon 'Ceylonese Author is no Bloomsburyite', **Ceylon Observer**, Dec. 22, 1946.

The beginning of the novel is rather ominous and seems to anticipate the macabre ending. The eerie description of Moon juxtaposed with the nervousness of Helen in his presence seems to portend the end :

> "On our way to the bus Harold bought some flowers for Helen and was polite and charming to her. As we went upstairs Helen remarked that Harold had better manners than I but she felt nervous in his presence. When the bus had moved a few yards along the straight road we looked back. Moon was still standing where we had left him and his eyes seemed to dart forward reaching for the bus. Helen shivered, looked at me and touched my hand. She was cold." (p. 2)

The novel is episodic and moves at a leisurely pace dwelling on seemingly trivial incidents but the Moon—Helen relationship is never forgotten. Towards the middle of the novel, soon after Harry sends Helen to see a film with Moon she says bitterly :

> "Sends me with other men to see murder films and they in turn try to murder me." (p. 42)

This again strikes a very disturbing note. The climax is reached at the end when Harry, now out of a job and deserted by his friends reads in the papers that Moon has murdered Helen. No explicit reasons are given for this murder but it seems to grow very naturally out of the sinister atmosphere of the novel.

Moon is perhaps the only character who is dealt with in some detail and it seems obvious that he is in many ways the representative of the milieu in which he lives. Inconsistent, idiosyncratic and Bohemian, his only extenuating virtue is a sporadic generosity of heart :

> "Another day Harold came to me, sold me his lighter for half-a crown because he was flat broke, then he took me to the Silver Bar and bought me a pint of beer. He spent the money straight away." (pp. 56—57)

Statements like this help to make Moon endearing to the reader. This is probably why the reader experiences a sense of dismay at the end. Totally oblivious to all other obligations he is solely concerned about his paintings and this drives him on. In contrast to this is Mrs. Olivia Storm-Strake who is presented as a charlatan. Her own words betray her superficiality :

> "Art is greater than life. Art never wearies me." (p. 39)

The writer looks at this group of rather aimless characters with sympathy and understanding but always with unerring critical irony. Moon's childlike exuberance in relating his encounter with the bus conductor who refused to take his fare is treated with mild irony :

"We had some trouble on the bus," Moon said. "The conductor was trying to be funny, so I gave it to him."

"I hope you didn't kill him", Demetrois said, laughing.

"No, but I floored him all right."

"Did he Harry ?"

"Oh, yes, Harold was terrific."

"I had no alternative. By the look on his face I knew Moon believed in what he said. And to change the topic told Demetrois about the sale of the picture." The whole episode is a kind of wish fulfilment. (p. 8)

The novel achieves its effect through a series of episodic incidents. The final impression of the novel is one of gloom, lostness and insanity. Particularly the eyes of the protagonist Moon—probing, frightening and impressive, convey the impression of a man who has come to the edge of sanity. The author is successful in portraying the complete breakdown of relationships and all spiritual and moral values in Bloomsbury. It is significant that the only normal and healthy relationship in the novel is between Harry and Diana and this too breaks down at the end.

A survey of his works would reveal that he is above all a very humane writer. True, he attempts to expose the foibles and weaknesses around him; but this is not all. His stories are a sympathetic response to perennial human problems. Conditions have changed but problems continue to remain very much the same. Of course, the problems touched on by the writer in his stories about the Jaffna community, like the caste system and the dowry system, are still extant. But what the writer seems to demand is a sympathetic response to human suffering. An indictment of his society is not his main concern. In his encyclopaedic vision there are no barriers of social inequality. His sardonic comments about the activities of the missionaries and his mild irony about the self-righteous high-castes stem from the basic urge in him to impress on the mind of the reader the need for compassion, the need for a more humane attitude. In the totality of his vision there is hardly any difference between Shiva and Christ, the higher and the lower classes.

THE TAMIL PURIST MOVEMENT:
*A Re-evaluation.**

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THE place and role of Tamil language in the modern politics and social conflicts of South India (and one may add Sri Lanka) have been abundantly described in a number of monographs during the last two decades.[1] Besides the specific studies on South India, certain general works dealing with the Indian sub-continent as a whole or other regions of India in particular, have made passing references and observations that have helped focus attention on the subject.[2] One aspect of the language movement in Tamil that has not received the scrutiny it deserves is the **tanittamil**, 'pure-Tamil' movement, which in many ways highlights the more virulent features of Tamil revivalism. Although the 'pure-Tamil' movement will, inevitably be discussed in its socio-political context, the present paper intends to approach the subject from the vantage point of a writer's experience; more specifically the implications of the movement to creative literature and its ramifications will be analyzed to evaluate its importance. For while a certain amount of sociological data for the emergence of the purist movement has been examined by writers on the subject,[3] the literary sources bearing on it have hitherto been largely neglected. Furthermore a study of instances of language prescription which is the main characteristic of the movement can be revealing for both the linguist and cultural historian.

The intellectual background to Tamil Nationalism has already been dealt with in recent studies to make any elaboration on it unnecessary here. Suffice it to say that certain statements by European missionary scholars like Percival, Winslow, Caldwell, Pope and others [3a] kindled a sense of pride among Tamils about their heritage. The writings of these early Indologists contributed in no small measure to the discovery and interpretation of their past by Tamil scholars and writers. The enthusiasm and thrill with which

* This was originally presented to the South Asia Colloquium of the Pacific Northwest (SACPAN) at the University of Washington, Seattle on 10 March 1978.

the European savants presented the salient features of Tamil language, literature, antiquities and religion also instilled in these Tamil scholars a notion of uniqueness about their past glory that set them apart from other races and peoples of India, especially the Brahmin community, (broadly identified as Aryans) who were portrayed as traditionally hostile to Tamil and constantly conspiring to elevate Sanskrit at the expense of Tamil, through a process of 'Aryanization' or 'Sanskritization'.[4] Rev. Robert Caldwell (1814—1891) was probably the first to adumbrate the idea.

> It was supposed by the Sanskrit Pandits (by whom everything with which they were acquainted was referred to a Brahmanical origin), and too hastily taken for granted by the earlier European scholars, that the Dravidian languages, though differing in many particulars from the North Indian idioms, were equally with them derived from the Sanskrit...This representation...and the supposition of the derivation of the Dravidian languages from Sanskrit, though entertained in the past generation, is now known to be entirely destitute of foundation...The Orientalists referred to were also unaware that true Dravidian words, which form the great majority of the words in the southern vocabularies, are placed by native grammarians in a different class from the...derivatives from Sanskrit and honoured with the epithets 'national words' and 'pure words'...Tamil however the most highly cultivated **ab intra** of all Dravidian idioms can dispense with its Sanskrit altogether, if need be, and not only stand alone but flourish without its aid, and by dispensing with it rises to a purer and more refined style...So completely has this jealousy of Sanskrit pervaded the minds of the educated classes amongst the Tamilians, that a Tamil poetical composition is regarded as in accordance with good taste and worthy of being called classical, not in proportion to the amount of Sanskrit it contains, as would be the case in some other dialects, but in proportion to its freedom from Sanskrit...Even in prose compositions on religious subjects in which a larger amount of Sanskrit is employed than in any other department of literature, the proportion of Sanskrit which has found its way into Tamil is not greater than the amount of Latin contained in corresponding compositions in English. Through the predominant influence of the religion of the Brahmins the majority of the words expressive of religious ideas in actual use in modern Tamil are of Sanskrit origin and though there are equivalent Dravidian words which are equally appropriate, and in some instances more so, such words have gradually become obsolete, and are now confined to the poetical dialect... In Tamil,... few Brahmans have written anything worthy of preservation. The language has been cultivated and developed with immense zeal and success by native Tamilians and the highest rank in Tamil literature which has been reached by a Brahman is that of a commentator. The commentary of Parimelaragar on the **Kural** of Tiruvalluvar...is the most classical production written in Tamil by a Brahman.[5]

These remarks made by Caldwell in his lengthy introduction, under the sub-heading 'The Dravidian Languages independent of Sanskrit' have had such an abiding influence over subsequent generations of Tamil scholars that they merit closer scrutiny. Phrases such as "pure words", "religion of the Brahmans", "native Tamilians" and "freedom from Sanskrit", etc., set in motion a train of ideas and movements whose repercussions and consequences went beyond the field of philology. Many socio-political and cultural movements among the Tamils during the last hundred years have without doubt been influenced in one way or another by statements of Caldwell: the non-Brahmin movement, the self-respect movement, pure-Tamil movement, the quest for the ancient Tamil religion, the Tamil (**icai**) music movement, the anti-Hindi agitation and the movement for an independent Tamil state, not to speak of the general revivalist movement of Tamil literature and culture, owe, in different ways and degrees, something to Caldwell's zealous writings.

Be that as it may, it was P. Sundaram Pillai (1855—1897) who introduced some of these ideas into Tamil literature.[6] In his dramatic poem **Manonmaniyam** (1891) Sundaram Pillai made an innovation in the matter of the invocatory verse. Till then it was customary for authors to invoke a deity or deities at the beginning of a work. Sundaram Pillai wrote a "Prayer to Goddess Tamil" as the invocatory verse.[7] Composed in the **kali** meter which lends itself for singing,[8] the verse has since remained a model in Tamil literature.[9] In 49 of the 57 lines of the verse Sundaram Pillai paid homage to Goddess Tamil in a diction that was charged with emotion and ecstasy. Its impeccable literary quality is indisputable. But what concerns us here is its content. Sundaram Pillai made the following assertions. (a) Deccan is a distinctive division of the country (India), (b) Dravidam is pre-eminent among its constituents, (c) Tamil has universal recognition and fame, (d) Tamil is like the eternal God, (e) Tamil is the 'parent' of all the Dravidian languages, (f) Unlike Sanskrit (which became extinct) Tamil is a living tongue (ever young). In making these statements the author compares works in both Sanskrit and Tamil and asserts that Tamil works are superior in their imagination, morality, piety and social justice. For instance he says that those who know the **Kural** well will never accept the laws of Manu which discriminates between different castes and prescribes differing moral codes and justice. Likewise he says that those who are captivated by the enthralling **Tiruvasagam** will not waste their time in chanting the Vedas.

Sundaram Pillai was one of the pioneers in the study of the history of Tamil literature and there is no doubt that some of his contributions are noteworthy.[10] He was also active in other fields like religious studies in 1880's propounding the theory that the early religion of the Tamils were based on the **Agamas** which were later corrupted by the Brahmins who tried to reconcile the Vedas and Agamas. In this he was ably supported by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai (1864 — 1920) who started a monthly called

Siddhanta Deepika or **Light of Truth** in 1897 which served for many years as the rallying forum for non-Brahmin Saiva protagonists. However Nallaswami Pillai was not anti-Sanskrit like Vedachalam.[11]

It is true that Sundaram Pillai was also drawing on certain Tamil literary sources which were jealous of Sanskrit and had portrayed Tamil as equal or superior to it. In fact, it is evident from the **Bhakti** poems of the Pallava period (circa 7 c. A. D.) that Tamil was beginning to be cherished as a sacred language and hence equal to Sanskrit.[12] But it is in the works of the late medieval authors like Kumarakuruparar, Sivapragasa Swami, Paranjoti Munivar, Karunaipragasar and the author of **Tamil Vidu Toothu** and others that we hear strident voices contemptuous of Sanskrit and placing Tamil on a divine pedestal.[13] And yet these voices were limited in their range of 'knowledge'. Sundaram Pillai imbibed the arguments of Caldwell and converted them into bases of a new religious creed. Furthermore Sundaram Pillai's predecessors had no 'scientific' authority to back up their statements. They were also not hostile to Brahmins as such. But Sundaram Pillai was apparently drawing on the philological discoveries (of Caldwell and others) and giving his statements the stamp of history, sociology, anthropology and philology.[14] Naturally his pronouncements acquired enduring prestige.

Another contemporary of Sundaram Pillai needs to be mentioned here. V. G. Suryanarayana Sastri (1870—1903) who was a graduate of the Madras University and Professor and head of the Department of Tamil at Madras Christian College had changed his name into Paritimalkalaignanar (Pariti = Surya, mal = Narayana, Kalaignanar = Sastri) a pure-Tamil form of his original Sanskrit name.[15] Sastri too was influenced by the writings of Caldwell and wrote a book on Tamil language. He also wrote poetry, plays and novels. He adopted a classical style in his writings which made them somewhat difficult and heavy. However he was sensitive to new ideas and trends and was enthusiastic of innovations.[16] He was for sometime the joint editor of **Nanapotini**, a periodical published since 1897 in Madras by M. S. Purnalingam Pillai (1866—1947). In fact Sastri began serializing his novel **Mathivanan**—which he titled in English, 'A classical Tamil story'—from the first issue of the magazine.

It is significant that the founder of the pure-Tamil movement had close ties with Sundaram Pillai and Suryanarayana Sastri both of whom laid the foundations for the movement. S. Vedachalam Pillai (1897—1950) who changed his name into Maraimalai Adikal, after he started the pure-Tamil movement, was a Vellala from Nagapatam in Tanjore district. At the age of nineteen (1895) Vedachalam went to Trivandrum along with his Tamil mentor Narayanasamy Pillai to meet Sundaram Pillai who had also studied under the same teacher. It would appear that Vedachalam had made a good impression on the Professor who gave him a testimonial recommending him for a post in colleges.[17] Vedachalam returned to

Trivandrum the next year and spent about three months working as a tutor and delivering lectures on religion. During this period he came into contact with Nallaswami Pillai who was then a District Magistrate in Chittoor and very much in need of help to edit his Tamil version of **Siddhanta Deepika.** Vedachalam worked in the journal for some time before joining the staff in Madras Christian College. As has been remarked earlier, Suryanarayana Sastri was the head of Tamil Dept., there and Vedachalam worked as a Tamil Pandit in the College from 1898—1911. Sastri died prematurely in 1903 (within two years of the demise of C. W. Tamotharam Pillai[18] whose tutelage was valuable and fruitful for his academic career) but Vedachalam must have had close connections with him for at least five years.

Thus we see that before launching the pure-Tamil movement, Vedachalam had a preparatory period during which he had the benefit of learning, and discussing matters with active and eminent personalities like Sundaram Pillai, Nallaswami Pillai and Suryanarayana Sastri who were propagating the "ideas concerning the antiquity and cultural self-sufficiency of the Dravidians". It is probable that there were also other influences that shaped Vedachalam's ideas.[19]

The genesis of the pure-Tamil movement has been described, albeit dramatically, by the biographers of Vedachalam.[20] It is said that while discussing the poetry of Saint Ramalingar (1823—1874) with his daughter Neelayathadci, Vedachalam opined that in a particular line the pure-Tamil word **yakkai** (body) would have been more aposite and aesthetically more satisfying than the word **tekam** which was of Sanskrit origin.[21] At the end of the discussion they decided to use thenceforth pure-Tamil words in their speeches and writings. In accordance with that decision both father and daughter changed their names to Maraimalai Adikal and Neelambikai respectively. Likewise his journal **Nanacakaram** was renamed **Arivukkadal** and his Institution, **Samarasa Sanmarga Sangam** was redesignated **Potu nilaik Kalakam.** These development, of course, took place over a period of time. However, historically speaking, we may consider 1916 as the year in which Vedachalam launched the movement. (It is indeed interesting to speculate on its timing when we recall the fact that the Justice Party - officially called at the beginning the South Indian Liberal Federation - (SILF) came into being that year.[22] The organization announced its birth with the publication of "The Non-Brahmin Manifesto" and proclaimed its aim to promote and protect the political interests of non-Brahmin caste Hindus. If not anything else, Vedachalam would appear to have chosen the perfect moment to "eliminate" Sanskrit - a language identified with Brahmins - from the Tamil scene.) In other words, as much as the SILF strove to "free" South Indian socio-political life from Brahmin domination, Vedachalam too wanted to "free" Tamil language and literature (and religion) from Sanskritic influences. Both movements were mutually

complementary. Furthermore it may be pointed out that in spite of his professed abandonment of "non spiritual public activities" and retreat to his "Ashram" in Pallavaram in 1911, he did participate actively in both the anti-Hindi agitations of 1937 and 1948 - addressing public meetings and publishing pamphlets.[23]

We may now delineate Vedachalam's concept of pure-Tamil. Being one of his main preoccupations he has written about it at different places in his works. In brief, he argues that language is the basis of civilizations and hence its preservation and vitality is essential for a race like the Tamils; at all times it is the elite who have the capacity to direct the development of a language; the Tamil alphabets are sufficient and adequate to express all the necessary sounds and hence no reform is required; alien words will corrupt both the language and its speakers. But let his words speak for themselves:

> That the Tamils were highly civilized in the past is not only deducible from their ancient literature but is demonstrated also by the researches of Oriental Scholars. Dr. Caldwell writes: "The primitive Dravidians do not appear to have been by any means a barbarous and degraded people. Whatever may have been the condition of the forest tribes, it cannot be doubted that the Dravidians properly so called, had acquired at least the elements of civilization prior to the arrival amongst them of the Brahmans"...In any case Dravidian civilization was predominant in India before the coming of the Aryans. ...The Dravidians were probably in a much more advanced stage of civilization...
>
> Now, it is time we try to get at an idea of the factors that have contributed to the building up of such a Civilization...It is the peculiar good fortune of the Tamils that those halcyon days produced among them thinkers and writers of the right type, differing in this respect from their brethren of such contemporary Western civilized nations as the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Chaldean, the Aryan, etc. It is because of this vital difference that the Tamil Civilization endures against odds while others remain merely as archaeological curiosities. The language used by the Tamils continues alive and grows while the rest are all respectable dead languages...It is to impress this fact on our mind that the late lamented Professor Sundaram Pillai sang: "Oh! Tamil! If the whole world had been yours before the birth of the Aryan tongue which contains the four Vedas, is it too much to say that ye are the first-born and eternal speech?" To those who deeply consider all these facts it must be obvious that this enduring characteristic of the Tamil civilization is not a little attributable to its birth from the loins of ancient Tamil poets and scholars who bravely, wisely and unflinchingly held up the standard of Tamil culture. Writers of over 1800 years ago were careful to practice the art of writing in pure, well-chosen, simple and virile Tamil words. They would not weaken

its strength and get themselves demoralized by indiscriminately admitting into its fold any extraneous word. A language loses its vitality if it is needlessly and thoughtlessly corrupted. So also a class of people becomes disintegrated and weak by harmful admixture. The great and deserving merit of the Tamilians is that, for more than fifty centuries, they have used their language with so great care and vigilance and kept it so pure and undefiled, without disintegrating it by reckless mixture with Sanskrit words, that we who are their descendants are enabled to speak now almost the same language they spoke then and derive the same enjoyment they had of their productions as if they had been the productions of our own age. For such legacies, is it possible for any of us to make an adequate return in an appropriate manner?[24]

These statements and claims need no explication. The author's indebtedness to Caldwell and Sundaram Pillai is obvious. But what is most striking is his notion of the role of thinkers and poets in the growth of the language. While his idea of the past is certainly romantic his prescription for the preservation and development of the language is elitist and betrays utter voluntarism. In it lies the strength and weakness of the movement he initiated.

Because of the fervour with which he presented his case and the prevailing socio-cultural milieu, Vedachalam's call had considerable attraction. Although the number of people with total commitment to the cause was always small, it had initially at least, a certain amount of vogue that was out of proportion to its actual strength. Given the fact that Vedachalam travelled around in South India and Sri Lanka to deliver lectures he established contacts and changing names became fashionable among certain Tamil scholars, especially those who had some grounding in traditional literary scholarship. One of his early followers was Uruthirakodeeswarar who also lived in Sri Lanka for a few years. Another follower was S. Balasundaram who changed his name to Ilavalakanar[25] and wrote a number of books on Sangam literature. Some aspects of the linguistic implications of the Tamil purist movement have been treated by Dr. E. Annamalai in a recent paper.[26] As has been mentioned earlier the literary background will be considered here in greater detail.

Puristic movements in languages are not new and nor are they entirely a modern phenomena. However it may be correct to say that such movements have a tendency to be present in situations where national sentiments are awakened or strong.[27] The essence of purism has been aptly summarised by Wexler.

People have also frequently shown an inclination to direct the development of their language by proposing that certain existing linguistic elements be either dropped or retained while still other elements be introduced into their language. These activities of labeling and regulating linguistic elements are invariably characterized by recourse to some

previously defined preferential norms, usually consciously formulated by the native speakers themselves. The terms "purism" and "puristic trends" are widely used to designate instances of language evaluation and regulation where speakers are generally opposed to elements in their language.[28]

The Tamil purist movement had, as the object of elimination foreign elements like Sanskrit (and English) words that had and were finding their way into Tamil.[29] These were to be replaced by native elements. (In practice the attack on English was less vehement and often purely symbolic. For as we shall see, Vedachalam himself wrote frequently in English and as time went on, particularly after the anti-Hindu agitations argued for the retention of English as the main language. In a peculiarly patronizing tone he once wrote "therefore, the safe, precious and inspiring examples, to be followed for building up a solid and substantial future are available only to the English and the Tamils").[30]

Viewed historically, one might **a priori** concede that there was a felt need for crying halt to the indiscriminate and sometimes wanton use of Sanskrit words in Tamil. As part of the commentatorial literature, a style of prose evolved in Tamil using not only a very high percentage of Sanskrit loan words, but also unadepting them to Tamil phonemic system and translocating a great number of structural features of Sanskrit into Tamil. Furthermore a poet like Tayumanavar (circa 1706—1744 A. D.) could write whole lines comprising Sanskrit words. This mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil was called **manipravala**, like a necklace of gems and corals. The Vaishnava philosophical writings excelled in this type of prose.[31] With the given lead in educational and social standing the Brahmins were prone to adopt this type of style. But it must be pointed out that in the 18th and 19th Centuries the non-Brahmin caste Hindus too wrote, if not in **manipravala**, certainly in a highly Sanskritized idiom. With the increase in the reading public and popular education there was a necessity to rectify this absurdity. Furthermore, **Virasoliyam** the grammatical treatise (circa 12 C. A. D.) had legitimatized the **manipravala** style and subsequently a few commentators to the **Tolkappiyam** and the 17th Century grammarian Swaminatha Desigar asserted that Sanskrit grammatical rules applied to Tamil as well. These trends naturally provoked reactions[32] among Tamil Scholars and Vedachalam was, in a way giving form and shape to such sentiments. But the manner of his reaction was extreme and as will be shown below, in the end, self defeating. As long as the pure-Tamil movement overlapped with the general revivalist trend it evoked general support. But the main thrust of the linguistic (and cultural) fervor was for the devlopment of Tamil into new branches of knowledge and experience which basically required a sense of freedom and variety. But Vedachalam's concept of pure-Tamil was in effect a return to the glorious past—the time of the **Cauror**, the Sangam poets[33]—whose poetic language was supposed to be free from Sanskrit admixture. In choosing or

opting for the old Tamil, doubtless archaic and unintelligible to large numbers of people in modern times, Vedachalam was trying to swim against the current. There were two issues involved and he mixed the two together.

It is well known that traditional diglossia has existed in Tamil in the form of **Centamil**, classical language, and **Koduntamil**, vulgar language and these two "have long-established, functionally separate roots in the same society."[34] Besides the above classification which was fundamental, the grammarians also spoke of **valakku**, spoken, colloquial (style) and **ceyyul**, literary, poetic (style). Until the first quarter of this century, the spoken language was rarely committed to writing. (Western missionary scholars like Beschi,[35] Caldwell and Pope[36] were quick to perceive the diglossia situation and came to terms with it.)

Partly as a result of the impact of English and also due to the changes in the Tamil society, the main effort in modern Tamil has been towards the creation of an effective, simple and standard language. This drive manifested itself first in prose and subsequently in poetry. The achievement of a person like Arumuka Navalar (1822—1876) is precisely this. Although he never used colloquialisms, "he wrote simple elegant but grammatically correct prose". That is why he is considered "the father of modern literary prose".[36a] Navalar who had a hand in the translation of the Bible, benefited from his education in a Methodist missionary school in Jaffna and made many innovations in writing. Later in his polemical writings against the Christians and Hindus he adopted a rhetoric that almost approached the speech rhythm of his times. He was also the first to introduce public speaking in Tamil.[37] Navalar of course, used Sanskrit loan words in Tamil but adapted them to Tamil phonemic system. Similarly Subramania Bharathi (1882—1921) the father of modern Tamil poetry was committed to writing in an idiom that could be readily understood by the average person. The very success of Bharathi and his place in modern Tamil literature is mainly due to his use of simple - popular language Thus we see that, both in prose and poetry, the mainstream was towards 'modernization' and 'simplificatian' of the literary language [37a] The task was not easy and the process is still on. Naturally, there was and is some opposition to this process of using an increasing amount of popular language. The question of a standard Tamil is still not settled. But Vedachalam's attempt to preserve not only the classical Tamil but also make it free of Sanskrit wrs doubly retrogressive. It was an impossible task. But he persisted. Besides writing 'theoretical' essays on the subject of purism, language preservation and planning, Vedachalam endeavored to preach by his own practice too By 1916 he had already published nearly a dozen books which had Sanskrit words in them. It is probably true that even before 1916 he used Sanskrit words sparingly.[38] But he now set out to revise his works and began to expunge the Sanskrit words interspersed in them. As is to be expected he was also interested in dictionary writing

and coining of terminology. Sociolinguists characterize such activity as part of the process of modernization of a language. Ferguson's observation is apt.

> The efforts of language planners generally focus on the production of glossaries and dictionaries of new technical terms and on disputes about the proper form of new words, when the critical questions seems to be that of assuring the consistent use of such forms by the approriate sectors of the population.[39]

The purists in Tamil first took up positions in this matter (under the leadership of Vedachalam) during the 1930s when the need for text books and other reading material in Tamil led to some organized efforts. The Madras Presidency Tamil Association (with government patronage and support) constituted a Committee for Scientific and Technical terminology in 1934. It published initially a volume of ten thousand technical terms in Tamil pertaining to nine branches of study.[40] C. Rajagopalachari as Chief Minister of Madras was keenly interested in the project. (He was confident that science could be taught in Tamil but given his family and social background was not a purist)[40a]

During the time when the glossary was being prepared "disputes about the proper form of new words" erupted. With the view to obtain a consensus and greater participation of interested persons the Committee conducted a number of seminars and conferences,[40b] which also provided the forum for conflicting viewpoints. Basically there emerged (as is often the case till today) three points of view : (1) the 'cosmopolitan', (2) the 'Sanskritic' and (3) the 'puristic'. (In each school of thought there were extremists as well as moderates.)[41] Broadly speaking the English-educated liberals, especially those seriously concerned with the development of the science comprised the core of the cosmopolitans. They argued the case for the adoption of foreign (English) words into Tamil for efficacy, economy and expediency. They were aware of the need for intertranslatability.[42] Tha 'Sanskritic' school was predominantly championed by 'nationalists' and 'integrationists' who felt that Sanskrit was the fountain of technical vocabulary for the whole of India and citing the analogy of Latin and Greek forming the base for technical terms in European languages pleaded for leaning on Sanskrit. This school probably had many Brahmins supporting it.

The 'puristic' school marshalled all the evidence in support of the purity and self-sufficiency of Tamil and argued that the inherent nature of Tamil language (words being formed from roots) would facilitate the coining of precise and pleasing terms. Vedachalam's opinion may be seen in one of his book of essays.

> Tamil is an independent language with a rich store of words capable of expressing in a skillful hand all kinds of thoughts that appear in the different branches of learning.[43]

The purists were also opposed to the use of **Grantha** alphabet in Tamil, especially in technical terms. Vedachalam's daughter Neelambikai was active during this period and with the help and under the guidance of her father, published two Dictionaries of Sanskrit loan words in Tamil and their equivalent pure Tamil words.[14] She also wrote a monograph on the development of Tamil language. Judging from the various glossaries in Tamil dealing with Science, law, administration, commerce, etc., that have been published since then, both in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka, it would appear that the puristic school has had definite impact.[15] But more often than not the terms in the glossaries have never gained currency in usage. A leader published in the **Madras Mail** (May 28, 1927) seems to have registered the point.

> Fortunately such purists do not control the growth of a language. That is the work of the common people. The purists may frown at slang, they may grumble that the language is being debased by slipshod and lazy talkers and writers, but fifty percent of what they condemn eventually finds its way into the language, to be defended by a later generation of purists as violently as the earlier fought for its exclusion. Language cannot be successfully cribbed cabined and confined.[16]

As mentioned earlier, the influence of Vedachalam and his followers on those engaged in the preparation of glossaries and dictionaries has been significant. But two important forms of discourse in the process of modernization are the news and feature stories of the press and radio.[17]

It is in this important aspect that the purists were always pushed to a defensive position if not utter helplessness. The real problem insofar as Tamil was concerned was the existence of traditional diglossia and the urgency for a 'standard' language adequate for communication in the context of modern life. In that sense Vedachalam's grand crusade was really charging at the windmills; the actual battle was elsewhere. Nor was Vedachalam's campaign of any immediate importance or advantage for the ruling elite, who were quite happy with the English educational heritage.

Although Vedachalam made periodic sallies into the soci-political arena, he was never in the front line. Nor were his periodicals reaching the common man at any time. His journal had a circulation of less than 300 copies. As a result it was personalities like T. V. Kaliyanasundaranar (1885—1953) scholar, publicist, politician and pioneer trade unionist or C. Rajagopalachari (1878—1972) statesman, scholar and writer or Kalki (R. Krishnamurti 1899—1954) social worker, writer, organizer and journalist, or C. N. Annadurai (1909—1968) politician, dramatist, orator, or P. Jeevanandam, agitator, trade unionist, publicist, who were decisive in shaping the form of the modern prose. The politicians, popularizers and propagandists used the language as a medium of communication. The newspapers in particular helped evolve a standard Tamil that was always

close to the idiom of the people. And because Vedachalam and his disciples were restricted by their concept of classical and pure-Tamil they were never in the picture.

It is interesting to note that the novel too has played its role albeit obliquely in deflating the altruistic claims of the purists. Among the unforgettable characters created by Rajam Iyer (1872—1898) is the erudite but naive and impractical Tamil pandit Adusapatti Ammaiyappa Pillai, who has since remained the prototype of a pedantic Tamil teacher speaking in obsolete language. His flawless but fossilized and funny utterances are in sharp contrast to the lively and vibrant conversations of the other characters. Subsequent novelists, playwrights, cartoonists and film makers have often utilized such characters for evoking laughter.[48]

But the real weakness of the purist movement showed up in its inability to generate any form of literary creativity. For, starting with the religious revivalism it was more in literature that the Tamil Reanissance found its maximum outlet and noteworthy accomplishments. The novel in particular, has been in vogue since 1876 and except for a handful of novels written now and then in pure-Tamil all of them show a wide variety of linguistic patterns. Virtually all the dialectal forms have found their way into the novel. From Rajam Iyer who wrote "the first real novel in the language"[49] to Rajam Krishnan the contemporary novelist who handles socio-political themes realistically, the novelists have touched upon all dimensions of the life of the people both in its private and public aspects. The history of modern Tamil prose is largely the history of the novel.[50] Some of the finest prose-writers like Rajam Iyer, Madhavaiya (1872—1925), Bharathi, Kalki, R. Shanmugasundaram, T. Janakiraman, T. M. C. Ragunathan, G. Alagiriswamy (1923—1970), D. Jeyakanthan, S. Ponnuthurai, K. Daniel and L. S. Ramamirtham are also remarkable novelists. Many of them were also journalists.

Now, Vedachalam himself published two novels, **Kumutavalli** (1911) and **Kokilampal Kaditankal** (1921) in pure-Tamil. Both were adaptations from English works of fiction which are considered mediocre : the former, **Kumutavalli**, was a tamilized work of a story by G. W. M. Reynolds (1809—1873). Vedachalam remarked in his lengthy English preface that the original was a celebrated work and he was rendering it into Tamil as an exemplary creation. (This of course reflects on his literary taste and judgement.)[51] But more than literary or aesthetic considerations he was once again using the novel as a pretext for his puristic crusade.

> Although the Tamil language is pliant and rich in vocabulary capable of conveying the finest shades of meanings, yet in all the Tamil novels published in a decade or two the diction is rendered very unwholesome by the introduction of unassimilated foreign words from Sanskrit and other languages and by the unhappy combination of words and phrases,[52]

Except for the fact that **Kumutavalli** was prescribed as a text for examinations held by the Universities of London, Madras, Annamalai and Sri Lanka at different times, it was never considered a serious work of fiction by the Tamil readers. Apart form its rigid, archaic, monotonous and grave style, the content of the novel too was remote and unfamiliar—the story taking place in an imaginary Tamilnad of the 6th or 7th Century A. D. "In his enthusiasm to maintain purity Atikal even resorted to the use of certain archaic forms of literary expression"[53] which found its peak in a work like this. Suryanarayana Sastri too wrote his **Mathivanan** in a language which "exhibits all the worst features of linguistic purism and the artificial introduction of stilted phrases".[54] His disciple and biographer N. Balarama Iyer (1875 1943) too wrote the novel **Leelai** (1897) in a similar style. These writers were probably motivated by the desire to see their works prescribed as literary texts for examinations.[55] But such attempts ceased with the works of Vedachalam. The readers of the fiction from 1920s had access to a variety of novels that were being written in easy and elegant style and hence had no patience for a language that was frequently unrecognizable to them. Thus ended the abortive attempt of the purists to enter the world of creative writing. It is true that a few poets like Bharathidasan (K. Subburathnam 1891--1964) and his followers—Suratha, Mudiyarasan and Vaanidasan were exponents of pure-Tamil poetry. Bharathidasan was a disciple of Subramania Bharathi, but later embraced the self-respect and pure-Tamil movements. Due to his allegiance to the DMK doctrines he became popular among non-Brahmin readers and was the unofficial "Poet-laureate" of the DMK. He was called **paaventar**, king of poets. However he never adopted archaisms and was also flexible and relatively simple in his style. But perhaps, because of his obsession with purism, anti Hindi and anti Brahminism and other issues, his poetry suffered. Says Zvelebil: "Bharathidasan—only a few years after his death—sounds slogan-like, proclamative, flat and full of hollow rhetoric."[56] This sums up the attempts of the purists to use their language as literary medium.

The most powerful and productive literary group that sprang in 1930s was called after the short-lived but scintillating journal **Manikkodi.** It was started by two veteran journalists K. Srinivasan and T. S. Sokkalingam, with Va. Raa. (V. Ramaswami Iyengar 1889—1951) as the editor. Va. Raa. who was an admirer of Subramania Bharathi and wrote the first biography of him, made the journal the forum and center for literary experimentations. He was one of those rare personalities who could inspire promising writers without patronizing them or inhibiting their ideas. Although the journal was inspired by patriotic and Gandhian ideals it soon emerged as a quality magazine devoted to serious literature and criticism. In the previous decades V. V. S. Aiyar (1881—1925) had been the leading figures in literary activity.[57] He was the first to write original short stories in Tamil (1910) and also introduced modern literary criticism and comparative studies. The writers who gathered around **Manikkodi** had not

studied Tamil as a discipline. They came to Tamil writing having studied Sanskrit, English, Philosophy, Economics, Medicine, etc. They were influenced by British, American and European literature between the two world wars, and of course by the achievement of Bengali writers. To some of them, literature was a vocation. Putumaipittan, (S. Virudachalam (1906—1948) the greatest short story writer in Tamil, was one of the members of this group. He was (in spite of his pseudonym which meant "he who is mad after novelty"), well grounded in traditional Tamil literature, which naturally gave him an edge over his fellow writers. As Zvelebil observes, some of his stories may be favourably "compared with highly developed story-writing of world literature".[58] But one person does not make a movement. Bedsides Putumaipittan, K. P. Rajagopalan (1902—1944), N. Pitchamurti (1900—1976), B. S. Ramaiah, C. S Chellappah, P. K. Sundararajan, Mauni, L. S. Ramamirtham and others wrote short stories, poems, new-verse, criticism, polemics and political commentaries. Most of these writers were romantics, whose individualism, aesthetic commitment and creative zeal called for felicitous, sensitive and unrestricted language and style. To them pure-Tamil was intellectually and emotionally abhorrent. The sheer power of their works and the others who followed them, established the **marumalarchi natai**—the style of renaissance - as the principal medium of literature and communication.[58a]

These writers were not content with creative work alone. Bharathi and V. V. S. Aiyar had written occasional essays on the nature of literature. But these writers, concerned as they were, primarily with contemporary literature and its problems, went into the question of the appropriate prose for different genres of literature and wrote penetrating articles on the subject. Va. Raa. was of the conviction that "one should write as one speaks".[59] But others like Putumaipittan, C. S. Chellappah,[60] K. N. Subramanyan, N. Pichamurti and Ilangaiyarkon were more subtle. Their articles were analytical and persuasive. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, the illustrious editor of the Tamil Lexicon and one of the outstanding textual critics and literary historians took a sober view of the problem and wrote in favour of simple and effective prose.[61] Himself a scholar with scientific objectivity and scrupulous exactitude, his support gave some moral strength to the creative writers, who were standing up to the ferocious onslaught of the purists (and traditional Tamil scholars). But the **Manikkodi** writers got backing from one unexpected quarter though. T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar (1882—1954) popularly called **Rasikamani** — 'connoisseur par excellence' was a gentleman of means and leisure who spent his time in the enjoyment of poetry, especially in the company of selected friends. A sort of an anti-intellectual with an impressionistic approach and endowed with graceful eloquence, he was an institution by himself lending his support to cultural movements. Being a gifted conversationalist, he was of the opinion that "you should write as you would speak". He never hesitated to use Sanskrit loan words if he felt it was appropriate although he was capable of coining words for new concepts.[62] Chidambaranatha Mudaliar

was an intimate friend of C. Rajagopalachari and Kalki and wrote regularly to the weekly, **Kalki**. Primarily concerned with cultural values, he resented the regimentation and pedantry of the purist school.

Yet another factor too worked against purism from about the 1950s. Both in South India and Sri Lanka, post-Independence problems created the conditions for a band of writers who came from traditionally oppressed sections of Tamil society, i. e. the lower castes. Many of them were attracted by Marxism and communist organizations which provided them with a world view and also the confidence to struggle against exploitation and articulate their thoughts and feelings freely. As might be expected, their level of literary education was somewhat low. But they ushered in new experiences and visions into fiction, poetry and drama using hitherto unheard of dialects, idioms and expressions.[63] They were indifferent to "correct" Tamil itself as taught by school teachers; pure Tamil was of no concern to them: they in fact openly despised it and ridiculed its proponents. To them linguistic restrictions or restraints were akin to social and political oppression and all such barriers had to be broken down. Harrison's general observation in a slightly different context seems applicable here.

> Where language differences tend to coincide with class distinctions, language conflict is apt to coincide accordingly with the lines of social conflict, greatly increasing it. And if the language of the lower classes is spoken by them at a time when they increase in numbers, or when they gain a bigger share in political and economic power in the society, then the language quarrels will be part of a general process of their elevation in the society and of their gradual bid for increasing social power.[64]

Viewed in sociological terms, the exclusiveness of the pure-Tamil movement, its alienation from the literary mainstream and the social pressures from below sealed its fate. "By the Thirties, pedantic, scholarly writing was practically dead, and the purist trend was sterile."[65]

This inescapable weakening of the purist dogma was bound to reflect on the movement itself. Nambi Arooran has analysed the percentage of Sanskrit words in Vedachalam's works at different times.[66]

Year	*General theme*	*Literary theme*	*Religious theme*	*Averages*
1902	21%	7%	22%	16%
1911	28%	10%	16%	15%
1921	9%	3%	8%	7%
1931	6%	5%	5%	5%
1941	10%	9%	9%	9%

Explaining the increased percentage of Sanskrit words in Vedachalam's latter works, Nambi Arooran conjectures that his failing health and old

age vitiated the vigorous pursuance of his ideal. But it would be more logical to surmise that Vedachalam had reached the limits of pure-Tamil writing and the inevitable relaxation and compromise were taking place. Such a line of argument is strengthened by the fact that while dealing with non-literary themes he had perforce to use more Sanskrit words. The table indicates that the percentage of Sanskrit was highest in works pertaining to general themes. This fact is crucial. The whole point of developing a language for modern needs calls for quick and easy communication in a medium that would cause the least delay and confusion. Vedachalam himself must have recognized this problem as is shown by the fact that at times "he found it necessary to limit his pure-Tamil style while communicating with his readers". In other words he had to make concessions to his readers. But by and large, he stuck to his position, arguing that the readers of his work should make an effort "to catch up his high and pure style which was the only way to increase one's vocabulary" and knowledge of the language. It is interesting to note that Dr. Raghuvira one of the most prominent and enthusiastic proponents of pure Hindi momvement once retorted to Nehru, (who had complained that though a Hindi speaker himself, he found it difficult to understand documents in pure Hindi), that "the attitude of the educated Hindi speakers to the new style should be that of a learner, a receiver'."[67]

As has been indicated earlier, the purist movement lost momentum in the late Thirties and early Forties. Some causes have been pointed out; a rounded statement may be attempted now. Wexler adduces four major reasons for the ultimate discrepancy between prescription and performance in language purism.[63] (1) Regulators are frequently not consistent in implementing their principles. (2) Regulators may frequently disagree with one another, and a single trend may include supporters who differ in their interpretations. (3) Prescriptive norms may change through time with the result that new recommendations can both supersede and coexist with earlier recommendations. (4) The public fails to heed prescriptive pronouncements.

These four factors have, in varying degrees, been operating in the Tamil purist movement too. For instance, while the extremists would have no Sanskrit words at all, the moderates were prepared to accommodate them provided they are changed to suit Tamil orthography and pronounciation. We have also pointed out the inconsistencies in Vedachalam's practice[68] and the compromises he had to make.

I must conclude now with a few remarks on the socio-political aspects of the purist movement. It was pointed out at the beginning of this paper that the launching of the purist movement coincided with the formation of the SILF (Justice Party). Notwithstanding the differences between politics and culture in the tempo of their development, one is able to see certain broad

parallels in the rise and fall of the Justice Party and the pure-Tamil movement. Both were started by non-Brahmin upper caste personalities drawing support from educated, wealthy and pro-British personages. They were never really popular movements; under their broad slogan of Dravidian nationalism and its ostensible unity were hidden several conflicts, contradictions and confusion. At times they even seem to have functioned with a certain amount of cynicism and double standards. In the Thirties, the Justice Party ran out of fuel being superseded by the Self-Respect movement, which in turn gave way to the more militant DK and DMK. Likewise the pure-Tamil movement merged with the anti-Hindi movement in the Thirties and was later absorbed into the ideology of the DMK. In Sri Lanka it became part of Tamil cultural nationalism. Wasbrook's observation on the Justice Party is illuminating:

> The South was supposed to be the scene of a great Brahman / Non-Brahman drama but, between the early 1920s and 1937, this was taking place off-stage. The Non-Brahman Justice Party in office had dismantled its ideology and had shown itself very willing to support any Brahman who would support it. By 1930 it was seriously considering offering membership to Brahmans. The British, who had played a large part in engineering caste animosity, had lost interest in the controversy.[70]

Although caste, religion and language served at a particular juncture to mobilize loyalties and furnish a sense of identification they are not the real bases for politics and power. For nationalism along with modernization is simultaneously the cause and effect of old communities dying and new communities being born. In this process loyalties and priorities too frequently fluctuate and change. Class interests overtake caste interests though sometimes both can coexist and overlap. Language bonds are not free from political manipulation.[71]

The middle class which spearheaded the literary renaissance did not wish to be contained within puristic boundaries. The claims and boasts of the purists doubtless gave a sense of pride and self satisfaction to some sections of the middle class. But such claims were not to be taken seriously for actual practice. For the middle class, while paying lip service to pure-Tamil, and such other cultural symbolisms were set on a cosmopolitan course. Life and literature, precept and practice were neatly separated. Language was also a handy weapon. So when the Anti-Hindi agitation flared up, pure-Tamil enthusiasts like Eelathu Civanantha Atikal and others began to campaign for it. The pure-Tamil movement became a past relic, a hobby horse of the monolingual Tamil teachers in South India and Sri Lanka, who refer to it while bemoaning their plight. The middle class itself prefers to be its own watchdog rather than allow the purists to dictate its correct expression. In Tamilnadu under the guise of fighting against

Hindi, English continues to dominate the administration, courts and education. "By putting forward English as the only weapon with which the Hindi offensive can be met, the most conservative and powerful sections in our country cleverly hide the fact that their real object is a refusal to let Tamil grow and a determination to keep English in the place which Tamil, and not Hindi should occupy."[72]

It is an irony of history to note that Vedachalam, who probably spoke and wrote more about the development of Tamil and its potentialities, should have eventually argued for the retention of English as the common language of India.[73] Using all his skills he made a case for preferring English. With that the pure-Tamil movement not only lost its momentum but also its very **raison d'etre.**

The writers and communicators of the new generation, have categorically rejected the restraints of purism. Yet we must concede a formative importance to the prose of Vedachalam which, taken in conjunction with that of some of those whom he influenced was to modify today's language.

NOTES

1. Hardgrave, Robert L. Jr. *The Dravidian Movement*, Bombay : 1965; Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India.* Berkeley and Los Angeles : 1969; Barnett, Marguerite Ross, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism* in South India, Princeton, N. J. : 1976; Bhaskaran R. *Sociology of Politics*, Bombay : 1967; Suntharalingam, R. *Politics and National Awakening in South India* 1852—1891, Tucson, Arizona : 1974; Thambiah, S. J., "The Politics of Language in India and Ceylon " *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. I. Part 3. Cambridge : July 1967. pp. 215 — 240. Schiffman, Harold, "Language, Linguistics and Politics in Tamilnad" *DRAVLINGPEX*, Vol. 5, No. 2 November 1972.

2. Das Gupta, Jyotirindra, *Language Conflict and National Development*, Berkeley and Los Angeles : 1970; Prakash, Karat *Language and Nationality Politics in India* Madras : 1973; Brass, Paul R. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge : 1974; Wriggins, Howards, *Ceylon : Dilemmas of a New Nation*, Princeton, N. J.:1960.

3. Nambi Arooran, K. *The Tamil Renaissance and Dravidian Nationalism, 1905—1944, with special reference to the Works of Maraimalai Atikal*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, (University of London, 1976). Also, Irschick, *Ibid.*, pp. 275—310.

3 a. For a sample of these, see Rajarigam, D. *The History of Tamil Christian Literature*. Bangalore : 1958. pp. 8—11. It is of interest to note that the writings of two other Christian Missionary scholars

in the present century influenced the "Dravidian nationalist" historians and linguists : Father Henry Heras (1888—1955) whose work on the Indus scripts favoring a Dravidian origin for them boosted the 'morale' of many an anti-Aryan scholar. Father S. Gnanapragasam of Jaffna, Sri Lanka (1875—1947) wrote, among other things, a *Comparative Etymological Dictionary of Tamil* (incomplete) which argued that Tamil was the basic language. Father Gnanapragasam who knew more than twenty languages was an indefatigable worker and was honored in Germany with an issue of a stamp. His ideas have influenced later Tamil writers like K. Appadurai, Devaneyan, Ilakkuvanar and M. Kanapathi Pillai.

4. Unfortunately Tamil literary history and scholarship provide ample examples of such attitude. A modern scholar like K. A. Nilakanta Sastri (1892—1976) whose researches on many aspects of South Indian culture earned him the well deserved esteem of scholars all over the world, had a predilection for extolling Sanskrit as the mainspring of Tamil literature and philosophy. Cf. *History of South India*, Oxford : 1958. P. 330. Also *Dravidian Literatures* Madrass 1949. W. Krishnaswamy Iyer, a Judge of the Madras High Court once remarked that, "Sanskrit is the parent of all Indian literatures including Tamil; for much that is claimed in Tamil as original is indebted to conceptions which are entirely to be found in the field of Sanskrit literature" *Madras Mail* 6, May, 1910 quoted by Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, p. 341. At the other end of the spectrum one sees modern Tamil enthusiasts with scholarly pretensions like G. Devaneyan, K. Appadurai Pillai, S. Ilakkuvanar and others asserting that Tamil was the first language in the world. Such emotionally charged statements and positions "can sometimes be quite comical and fallacious in content" for these men "are very often not professional linguists and, as propagandizers of a particular position, frequently act on emotion rather than on objective examination of facts" *Vide*, Wexler, Paul N., *Purism and Language* Bloomington, Indiana : 1974. p. 7. Although the author deals primarily with modern Ukranian and Belorussian Nationalism, his comparative data is instructive; for a critique of Brahminism, Nair, B. N. *The Dynamic Brahmin*, Bombay : 1959.

5. *A Comparative Grammer of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*. 2nd edition. revised. London : 1875 pp. 45—51.

On the question of the British Government's role or connivance in creating ethnic, caste and racial appeals, see, for instance, David Washbrook : ".....the evidence of the Census and of the writings of missionaries and early anthropologists provides some foundation for a generalization on 'the official mind'. The features of caste most commonly emphasized in European literature of the

time was the permanency of ritual position and the subjection of lower to higher castes—features which were derived to a considerable extent from the Hindu scriptures and from the vocabulary of local status confrontation". D. Washbrook, "The Development of Caste Organization in South India 1880—1925 in *South India* by Baker and Washbrook, 1975, pp. 180—181,

6. For biographical details, see *Professor P. Sundaram Pillai Commemoration Volume* (ed.) Pillay, K. K. Madras : 1957; Vaiyapuri Pillai, S. *Tamil cudar manikal* 3rd ed. Madras : 1959.

7. For a detailed study of Tamil invocatory poems, see Kailasapathy, K. *Adiyum Mudiyum*, Madras : 1970. pp. 64—119.

8. It may be recalled that during the DMK rule, the Tamilnadu government had declared this poem as "national" anthem. Even before that it was sung before commencing Tamil literary meetings.

9. Says Xavier S. Thani Nayagam : "The burden of these lines has been a recurrent theme during the last sixty years and has not been superseded even now as the main undertone of patriotic Tamil writing" "Regional Nationalism in Twentieth Century Tamil Literature", *Tamil Culture*, Vol. X No. 1. 1963. p. 3.; More than thirty five poets have written similar poems on Tamil since Sundaram pillai. For a representative collection of these poems see T. Swaminatha Velautham Pillai, (ed.) 2nd edition, *Moliyarasi*, Madras: 1971.

10. *Some Milestones in the History of Tamil Literature*, Madras: 1895.

11. Balasubramaniam, K. M. *The Life of J. M. Nallaswami Pillai*, Annamalainagar : 1965. pp 61—63. Nallaswami Pillai was closely associated with the founding of the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam in 1905 and was for many years its senior adviser and organizer. After a few years of association, Vedachalam kept away from the activities of the Samajam. It is likely that in Vedachalam's view Nallaswami Pillai was too moderate.

12. Kailasapathy, K. *Pandai Tamilar Valvum Valipatum*, Madras : 196 6 pp. 120—126. Vanamamalai, N. *Tamilar Varalarum Panpatum*, Madras : 1966 pp. 42—62.

13. *Adiyum Mudiyum*, p. 108.

14. It is an indication of the English-educated, middle class oriented nature of the revivalist movement that Caldwell's seminal work—*Comparative Grammar*—remained untranslated into Tamil till 1959. And yet it was the most invoked work in language polemics in Tamil during the last few decades. Isolated passages from his works were often cited as quotations—often out of their contexts—by Tamil scholars to buttress the arguments about the antiquity, purity,

independence and self-sufficiency of their language vis-a-vis Sanskrit and Hindi. For the translation of Caldwell's work see *Tiravida molikalin Oppilakkanam* translated by K. Govindan and T. Singaravelu, Madras : 1959; the continued use of English as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges was also a reason for the delay in the translation. For a balanced view on these matters written in Tamil *vide* Vaiyapuri Pillai, S. *Tiravida molikalil Araychi*, Madras: 1956. It is only recently with the development of Linguistics as a discipline in Universities in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka that Caldwell has been objectively evaluated.

15. *Suryanarayana Sastri Centenary Volume* (ed.) N. Subramaniyan, Madras : 1970. See Kailasapathy, K. "*Paritimalkalaignanar—marumatipitu*" in the volume.

16. Sastri tried to introduce the English sonnet in Tamil by publishing *Tanipacurat tokai* Madras : 1901. G. U. Pope translated some of them into English and wrote an Introduction too. Sastri also wrote a treatise on Dramaturgy called *Natakaviyal Madras* : 1901.

17. It is interesting to note that a few years later Vedachalam gave an almost identical testimonial to T. V. Kaliyanasundaranar who was applying for a teaching post at Wesley College, Madras. *Vide*, *Valkkai kurippukal* 2nd ed Madras : 1969. p. 164.

18. C. W. Tamotaram Pillai (1832—1901) from Jaffna, Sri Lanka was, in many ways, one of the most remarkable scholars of the last century. He was the first graduate of the Madras University, passing the B. A. degree examination in 1858. He later qualified and practised law and retired as a High Court Judge in 1890. A Key figure in Tamil Renaissance, he critically edited and published several literary and grammatical classics. An outstanding intellectual, he was instrumental in creating a love for Tamil among the educated people of his days. "Without doubt he was the one who was first engaged in the rediscovery of the earliest classical literature... Perseverance and modesty were the two most characteristic features of this man, whose greatness and merits have never been acknowledged" Zvelebil, Kamil, *The Smile of Murugan*, Leiden : 1973 p. 269; Vaiyapuri Pillai, S. *Tamil Cutar Manikal*; also see Kailasapathy, K. Foreword to V. Muttucumaraswamy's *C. W. Tamotaram pillai* Jaffna : 1971. Tamotaram Pillai was very fond of Sastri (having been one of his examiners), and constantly encouraged him in his pursuits. At the death of Pillai, Sastri wrote a moving elegy : see his *Tamil Pulavar Carithiram* 6 edn. Madras : 1968, pp. 92—96.

19. Vedachalam's view on Saiva Siddhanta was largely shaped by his mentor and model Somasundara Nayagar (1846—1901) who treated him as his son. At Nayagar's death Vedachalam wrote a long elegy.

It was later published, *Comacuntara Kanciyakkam*, 3rd ed. Madras : 1941. Another person who probably influenced Vedachalam was Gnaniyar Atikal (1873—1942) who was the Head of the Tirukkovalur *Math*. He was an enlightened person who did much for the revival of Tamil and Saivism. He was associated with the founding of the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam and it was largely due to his suggestion that Pandi Thurai Thevar, Zamindar of Palavanantham founded the Madurai Tamil Sangam in 1901. See Sundaram, V. *Tavattiru Gnaniyar Atikal*, Madras : 1972. pp. 36—43. Vedachalam must have also imbibed his missionary zeal from his Christian teachers at the Wesleyan Mission High School.

20. Pulavar Aracu, *Maraimalaiyatikal* Madras : 1951; M. Tirunavukkaracu, Marai *Maraimalaiyatikal Varalaru*, Madras : 1959. The latter author is one of the sons of Vedachalam. For interesting and revealing reminiscences of the man, see T. V. Kaliyanasundaranar, *Ibid.*, pp. 163—169; also Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, pp. 309—328. But a critical biography and study of Vedachalam is yet to be published. That it is a desideratum need not be emphasized.

21. For the poem and its English translation see Balakrishnan, A. *English Readings of Thiru Arutpa*, Madras : 1966. pp. 22—23. Vedachalam was influenced by Saint Ramalingar's life and works from which he derived his idea of a religious order.

22. Irschick, *Ibid.*, pp. 47—48.

23. Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, p. 354. and the details cited in footnotes. Perhaps Vedachalam's most important pamphlet was *Inti potu moliya ?* (Is Hindi a common language?) serialized in his journal in 1937 and later printed and distributed freely by his disciple from Sri Lanka *Tlattuc Civananta Atikal*.

24. *Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets*, Pallavaram, Madras : 1939. pp. 12—15. The concluding lines of the passage quoted here, reminds one of a similar sentiment expressed by Sundaram Pillai in his preface to *Manonmaniyam*. Vedachalam probably followed Sundaram Pillai in writing prefaces in English to his Tamil books.

25. Changing of Sanskritic names to "pure" Tamil ones is perhaps one of the most tangible results of Vedachalam's movement. In Sri Lanka too a number of Tamil poets and scholars assumed new and pure-Tamil names. e. g. Balasubramanian became Ilamurukanar. Of the others, S. Iraca Aiyanar, Venthanar and Alagasundara Tesikar (1873—1941) may be mentioned. At one stage it became a fad. In subsequent years, such symbolic actions became part of the Tamil nationalist politics in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. In some cases changing names was also an escape from caste positions, enabling those with new names a greater amount of social mobility

within the political group. Those who did not formally change their names took on pure-Tamil pen names. On changes in names and designations in Tamil, cf. Franklin C. Southworth "Linguistic Masks for Power : Some Relationships between semantic and social change" *Anthropological Linguistics*, Vol. 16. No. 5. Bloomington : May 1974. pp. 177– 191.

26. "Movement for Linguistic Purism," seminar paper Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, India : Jan. 1977 (mimeographed).

27. Although language conflict and planning is a major problem in developing countries especially where multilingual situations prevail, purism is also present in developed countries like France and Germany. By and large, East European countries appear to have experienced these problems for many years. It is interesting to note that in Sinhala too there is a purist movement initiated by Munidasa Cumaratunga (1887—1944) in the Thirties of this century. He was a scholar in grammar. His movement was called the *Hela* or *Elu* movement fighting against Sanskritization. It is said that Sinhala poetry has always preserved *Elu* and that it is one of its peculiarities. Cumaratunga was a lecturer in Sinhala in Teacher Training Colleges and those who came uuder his influences carried his messages all over the country. At times the movement betrayed caste loyalties too. Munidasa Cumaratunga was also a writer of some distinction. In recent years the *elu* movement appears to be sagging. On purism in Sinhalese see Sugathapala de Silva, M. W. "Effects of Purism on the Evolution of the written language : case history of the situation in Sinhalese" *Linguistics*, Vol. 36. p. 5—17. Hague : November 1967; Sugathapala De Silva, M. W. "Some Linguistics, Peculiarities of Sinhalese Poetry "*Linguistics* 60, pp. 5—26, August 1970. Also, Gair, James W., "Sinhalese Diglossia" *Anthropological Linguistics* Vol. 10, no. 1, Bloomington : Jan. 1968 pp. 1—15.

28. Wexler, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

29. Some perceptive Tamil scholars (e. g. the late Prof. K. Kanapathi Pillai 1903—1968 of the University of Sri Lanka) who were not too concerned with the 'politics' of purism felt that more than foreign vocabulary, foreign syntactic patterns are influencing and imperceptibly changing the essential characteristic of Tamil language. Kanapathi Pillai was a traditional scholar and a trained linguist. For instance, ever since the translation of the Bible into Tamil, English syntactic and phraseological influences have come into the language. Concerned, as he was, with the intrusion of overtly recognizable 'nonnative' elements, Vedachalam does not seem to have discussed this aspect of the problem. (It is also likely that his particular penchant for English might have stood in the way of

such an inquiry.) Systematic studies of English syntactic overlay in Tamil formal prose will be immensely rewarding. For parallel data on this problem, see Wexler, *Ibid.*, p. 5—6 *passim.*

30. *Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets*, p. 3

31. Meenakshisundaram, T. P. *A History of Tamil Literature*, Annamalainagar : 1965. pp. 173—74.

32. For discussion of this situation see *Adiyum Mudiyum*, pp. 102—110.

33. Kailasapathy, K. *Tamil Heroic Poetry*, Oxford ; 1968. pp. 229—230.

34. Cf. Fishman, Joshua A. in *Language Problems of Developing Nations* New York : 1968. p. 45.

35. It is generally accepted that Constantius Beschi (1680—1746) was the first European to note the presence of diglossia in Tamil. He Wrote *A Grammar of the Common Dialect of Tamil called koduntamil* Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal series : 1971.

36. G. U. Pope (1820—1907) has endeared himself by his exuberant love for Tamil language and literature and his many translations of Tamil works into English. As Irschick rightly remarks, Pope contributed much "to the elevation of Tamil studies and Tamil religion as legitimate subjects of study for Oriental scholars" *Ibid.*, p. 279. He published many of his translations in *Siddhanta Deepika* and was a source of encouragement to Nallaswami Pillai. Pope had wide contacts with Tamil scholars in India and Sri Lanka. Also see Balasubramaniam, K. M. *Ibid.*, *passim* on Pope. Vedachalam has made an observation on Pope's translation of *Tiruvachagam* : "How strange and uncouth, and even how grotesque in certain places does the literal English translation of the Tiruvachakam the great sacred lyric in Tamil, look, even when it is done by so eminent an English and Tamil scholar as Dr. G. U. Pope·" *Ancient & Modern Tamil Poets* p. vii.

36a. Meenakshisundaram, T. P. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

37. Sivapadasundaram, S. *Arumukha Navalar*, Jaffna : 1950. p. 9. In recent years there has been an upsurge in the study of Sri Lankan Tamil heritage and as might be expected Navalar has attracted considerable attention. See, Thananjayarajasingham S. *Navalar panikal*, Peradeniya : 1969; Somakanthan, N. "From the role of a religious reformer to a national hero" (in Tamil) *Tamil Sahitya Festival Souvenir* Colombo : 1972; In 1968 on the occasion of the second International Conferenee—Seminar of Tamil studies held in Madras, the Tamilnadu government honored great Tamil personages by erecting statues for them. The Tamils in Sri Lanka felt hurt and let down that Navalar was overlooked. Reacting to this alleged blatant indiscretion, an idea to ercct a statue for him in Sri Lanka

at his birthplace gathered momentum. A Navalar *Sabha* came into being (or was revived) and in 1969 a statue was duly installed in Nallur. It was also planned to establish a library there. The occasion assumed a "national" character. A commemoration Volume was published containing articles in Tamil and English. See K. Kailasapathy "Tradition and Modernity in Navalar" (Tamil) in the volume. Two years later in October 1971 the Government issued a stamp in honour of the National Hero. This episode shows the existence of (minor?) contradictions between South Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil 'national' sentiments. It is a constant irritant to Sri Lankan Tamil enthusiasts that Navalar who had done yeoman services to the revival of Tamil and Saivism should be forgotten by the Tamils in India where Navalar spent a good many years teaching, lecturing and printing books. In another sense Navalar has become, in a different context, part of contemporary Tamil Cultural Nationalism in Sri Lanka. A number of books have been written on him recently. *Vide* Kanapathi Pillai, S. *Navalar*, Jaffna : 1968.

37a. It is only in recent years that socio-linguists have begun to investigate the problem of social change and linguistic patterns. For an early essay on this important topic see Ramanujan, A. K., "Language and Social Change : The Tamil Example" *Transition in South Asia —Problems of Modernization* ed. Robert I. Crane, Duke University: 1972. pp. 61—84.

38. Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, pp. 343—344.

39. Ferguson, Charles A. in *Language Problems of Developing Nations*, p, 33

40. Ratnam, K. P. "Kalaic Collakkam", *Proceedings of the II International Conference Seminar of Tamil, III* Madras 1968. pp. 222—236.

40a. In fact Rajaji wrote a few articles on elementary chemistry in Tamil. His intention was to demonstrate that scientific subjects could be dealt with in Tamil. These articles were later published. *Thinnai racayanam*, Madras : 1946. In his Foreword to the book he made the following observation : "No one can create barriers for the development of Tamil; it is wrong to do so. But I do not wish to quarrel over the matter. Authors should be free to choose their mode and style. The best will survive." As is well known, Rajaji was a prolific writer in Tamil and among his valuable contributions are translations from Socrates and the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Rajaji's prose is simple, conversational and homely but incisive and to the point. For Rajaji's views, *The Art of Translation—A Symposium*, New Delhi : 1962.

40b. One such conference was held in 1936 at Pachayappa's college, Madras. Swami Vipulananda (1892—1947) from Sri Lanka presided

over the conference and ably guided the proceedings. The Swami, previously called S. Mylvaganam, was a science graduate of the London University and a pandit of the Madurai Tamil Sangam—the first to qualify at the Academy from Sri Lanka. He was the first Professor of Tamil at Annamalai and Ceylon Universities. As a Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission he was universal in his outlook and knew Sanskrit (and a few other languages) very well. However he leaned towards pure-Tamil unobtrusively. He took part in the coining of terminology and made significant contributions. See for instance his long essay "Vignana Deepam" (The light of science) where he uses numerous terms he had coined. Unlike some of the aggressive artless purists, Vipulananda had a poet's sense of feeling for euphonic words and a scientist's concern for precision and brevity. He was also a gifted translator from English to Tamil. He did sections of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Browning and others into Tamil which are of a very high order. Vipulananda's students later became officials in the Government Language planning agencies in Sri Lanka and adopted their teacher's preference for pure-Tamil but without his broad vision and subtlety. Vedachalam visited Sri Lanka three times—in 1914, 1917 and 1921—and during his sojourns Mylvaganam had met him. It is likely that his interest in pure-Tamil was kindled by these meetings.

41. Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, p. 339 and the references given therein.

42. Cf. Ferguson, *Ibid.*, p. 28

43. *Cintanaik katturaikal* 2nd ed. Madras : 1925. p. 23

44. *Vatacol Tamil Akaravaricai*, Madras: 1937; *Vatacol Tamil akaravaricai Curukkam* Madras : 1938.

45. Insofar as the preparation of glossaries for technical terms in the various branches of academic and administrative establishments are concerned, the Tamils in Sri Lanka have done more and better work. Because the medium of instruction in most of the educational institutions is in national languages, the compilation of dictionaries glossaries and translation of basic text books and other reading material was a dire necessity. This urgency was never felt in Tamilnadu where by and large, education still continues to be in English. At the same time most of the work done by private persons and Government Agencies unmistakably show the firm hand of purists at work. The literary (not creative) elite who were bureaucratically chosen to man these posts had, as a result of their preoccupation with such matters over a period of time, preconceived notions about their tasks and apparent expertise. Once given responsibilities they set about to create a vocabulary and a prose style that was consistent with the genius of Tamil languge.

Beginning with Dr. V. Ponniah who was a sort of a polymath, a number of people connected with 'official languages' work— K. P. Ratnam, A. W. Mylvaganam, E. Rathinam, M. Kanapathi Pillai— were of the puristic school. It is only in very recent years, especially after bitter experiences and telling feedback and protests, a gradual relaxation of "fundamental principles" is becoming evident. See Ratnam, K. P,, *Ibid.*, p. 227. For interesting—almost identical—parallels in the Hindi scene, Das Gupta, Jyotirindra, *Ibid.*, pp. 177—180.

46. Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, p. 341

47. Ferguson, *Ibid.*, p. 32; also Fishman, Joshua A. "*Language Modernization and planning in comparison with other types of national modernization and planning.*" *Language in Society* Vol. 2. No. 1. April 1973. pp. 25—26.

48. Usually the forced alliterations, pompous phrases, shallow witticisms, silly blunders, pure-Tamil patterns and recurrent hyperboles of these pandits cause the laughter. The present writer himself has played the role of such a character in a play by Ilangaiyarkon (C. Sivagnanasundaram 1915—1961) an outstanding short story writer and a talented playwright.

49. Zvelebil, *Ibid.*, p. 281

50. For an elaboration of this idea, see Kailasapathy, K. *Tamil Naval Ilakkiyam*, Madras: 2nd ed. 1977. Chapter 2

51. *Ibid* ., Chapter 4

52. *Kumutavalli Nakanattaraci*, Pallavaram, Madras: 1911.English preface, p. ii

53. Nambi Arooran, *Ibid*,, p. 346

54. Cf. Harrison, Selig S. *The Most Dangerous Decades*, Columbia University : 1957. p. 19

55. Sundararajan, P. G. & Sivapathasundaram, S. *Tamil Naval*, Madras: 1977. pp. 69—72

56. *Smile of Murugan*, p. 285. Zvelebil seems to have had a different opinion of the poet a few years ago. Vide, *Inroducing Tamil Literature*, Madras : 1968. p. 23, wherein he says, "Bharathidasan was one of the greatest—or perhaps the greatest—modern Tamil poets after Bharathi."

57. Aiyar went to England to study law but became involved in radical patriotic activities and escaped to Pondicherry which was then a haven for Indian patriots. He was a confidant of V. D. Savarkar, a friend of Aurobindo, and a dear companion of Subramania

Bharathi. His essay "Poetry" (1918) was the precursor to later critical works, that flourished in the late Twenties and Thirties. In politics Aiyar was a militant Hindu.

58. *Smile of Murugan*, p. 292

58a. Something should be said about a few other journals. After *Manikkodi* ceased publicaton, a number of little magazines, each in its own way tried to continue the literary endeavour of *Manikkodi* : *Kalamohini*, *Chandrodayam*, *Suravali*, *Teni* and *Kirama ooliyan* in Tamilnadu and *Eelakesari*, *Bharathi* and *Marumalarci* in Sri Lanka served as avenues for the ever increasing literary output. All of them were short lived. However, one magazine established itself successfully and is still in business : *Kalaimagal* was started in 1932 by R. S. Narayanaswami Iyer who ran the Madras Law Journal Press and from the beginning it established respectability and reliability. It no doubt had a strong Brahmin bias and thrived on caste loyalty. But it also catered for the new literary consciousness. In its early years scholars and cultural personalities like K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, T. A. Gopinatha Rao, U. V. Swaminatha Iyer R. Raghava Iyengar, S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, P. N. Appuswami, P. Sri Acharya, T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, Swami Vipulananda and others wrote in it. It also carried translations of Bengali, Hindi and Marathi fiction. But gradually its character changed. After the end of *Manikkodi*, a number of writers had their short stories published in *Kalaimagal*. It was never really inclined towards experimentations and on the whole is conservative. But it played its role in the consolidation of modern creative literature.

59. See his powerful essav "Etu Tamil?" (which is Tamil?) in *Inraiya Tamil Ilakkiyam*, Madras : 1965. pp. 172—182.

60. *Tamilil Ilakkiya Vimarcanam*, Madras : 1974. He is the 'historian' of the movement, nostalgically hanging on to the past.

61. Vaiyapuri Pillai (1891—1956) had an abiding interest in creative literature and occasionally dabbled in it. He has to his credit a few poems in translation, a couple of short stories and a novel *Raji*. His essays dealing with modern Tamil literature are collected in *Tamilin marumalarci*, Madras : 1947. He was a good friend of the poet-scholar, Desigavinayagam Pillai (1876—1954) and wrote a few appreciative essays about his works which are collected in *Kavimani Desigavinayagam Pillai*, Nagarkoil : 1967. He worked closelly with K. A. Nilakanta Sastri.

62. For representative collections of his literary and cultural essays see *Itaya Oli*, Madras : 1958 and *Arputa rasanai*, Madras : 1964. He is said to have coined the word *panpatu* as an equivalent for the English term culture. It has virtually supplanted the earlier

word *kalacaram*. For a brief critical evaluation of T. K. C. as he was known, see K. Kailasapathy, *Ilakkiyamum Tiranaivum* 2nd edn. Madras : 1976. pp. 43—48. 121—123 *passim*.

63. I have discussed this point in a historical perspective in "Tamil Studies in Sri Lanka" *Newsletter of the SSIS*, Vol. 10, No. 1. November 1977. Also in a seminar paper for the International Writing Program, the University of Iowa, October 1977, "Tradition and Change—A glimpse of Modern Tamil Literature."

64. *The Most Dangerous Decades*, p. 12. In Sri Lanka the late Fifties and early Sixties saw a sharp struggle between the 'progressive' writers and the Tamil literary establishment over the use of dialectalism and neologisms. Some purist members of the establishment had called the language used by certain writers, *ilicinar valakku*, 'the usage of vulgar (low caste) people.' The matter had socio-political undertones. For a quick glimpse of contemporary Tamil writing in Sri Lanka see Kailasapathy, K. *Tamil Naval Ilakkiyam*, Chapter 6; Sivathamby, K. *Tamilil Cirukataiyin torramum Valarciyum*, Madras : 1967. pp. 143—152; Sivakumaran, K. S. *Tamil Writing in Sri Lanka*, Colombo : 1974; And Sundararajan & Sivapathasundaram, *Ibid.*, pp. 261—272.

65. *Smile of Murugan*, p. 287.

66. Nambi Arooran, *Ibid.*, p. 346.

67. Das Gupta *Ibid*. p. 184.

68. Wexler, *Ibid.*, p. 13.

69. Some contradictiona in the personal life of Vedachalam have always troubled his friends and admirers. In contrast to his insistence on Tamils using their language in all walks of life, he maintained his diaries in English. Tirunavukkarasu, *Maraimalaiyatikal Varalaru* p. 153. Likewise he also corresponded with many in English. T. V. Kaliyanasundaranar refers to such matters in his autobiography *Valkkaik Kurippukal*, p. 168.

70. Baker, C. J. and Washbrook, D. A, *South India*, Bombay: 1975. p.16.

71. Cf. Harrison, Selig S. *Ibid*., p. 7.

72. Kumaramangalam, Mohan S. *India's Language Crisis*, Madras: 1965. p. 71.

73. Besides Vedachalam, a person like S. Somasundara Bharathi (1879—1959) a lawyer who turned to Tamil studies (like many others of that era—S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, K. Subramania Pillai) flourished in the self respect atmosphere. He even occupied the chair of Tamil at Annamalai University. A fanatical purist he later campaigned against the imposition of Hindi but

eventually argued for the retention of English. Likewise M. S. Purnalingam Pillai (1866—1947) who was a colleague of Suryanarayana Sastri at Madras Christian College and wrote *Tamil Literature*, (1929) the first history of Tamil literature, favored the use English. In contrast T. V. Kaliyanasundaranar consistently pleaded for the use of Tamil in education and administration.

74. A feature that became noticeable during the last fifteen years or so is the lavish use of English—words, phrases and sometimes whole sentences—in prose and poetry by some Tamil writers. They either use English alphabets or transliterate the words. This is most prominent in what is called the avant-gardist writings that are published in little magazines. This trend started with the "New Poets" who emerged around 1958—59 and spread to fiction writers too. Among the novelists Indira Parthasarathy, Jeyakanthan, N. Parthasarathy, Sujatha, Ambai and a few others are noted for this. C. S. Chellappah, V. Swaminathan, K. N. Subramaniam and N. Jegannathan intersperse English in their critical essays. Some of these writers have created characters that are bilingual and at times conversing in English. Naturally the readers' knowledge of that language is taken for granted. This phenomenon is not seen in the writings of the earlier generations (1930s and 1940s) who too in their days claimed to be "experimental" writers. I do not mean the use of technical words but simple sentences like "Don't be silly". Indra Parthasarathy's play *Malai*, 'Rain' is virtually in both Tamil and English. Some observers have attributed this excessive use of English to alienation of the writers, a reaction to linguistic prescription, a growing sense of 'internationalism' in literature and a process of intellectualization of Tamil literature. It is also true that such writers are mostly from cities. On some aspects of the "New Poetry" see *Smile of Murugan* pp. 313—335. As to the problem of alienation of the writers and the impact of modernization vide, *Tamil Naval Ilakkiyam*, pp. 135—156. Also Shanmugam Pillai, M. "Code Switching in a Tamil Novel" in *Structural Approaches to South India*, ed. Harry M. Buck & Glenn E. Yocum, Pennsylvania: 1974 pp. 81—95 wherein he analyzes the phenomenon of code-switching found in a novel by Jeyakanthan. Shanmugam Pillai thinks that because the novelist writes about middle-class people and some of the subjects dealt with in the novel are taboo, English helps to keep the distance and facilitates discussion. On the question of using regional dialects in fiction, Shanmugam Pillai, M. "Merger of literary and colloquial Tamil" *Anthropological Linguistics*, Bloomington : April 1965. The lavish use of English seems to be a feature in contemporary Hindi Literature too, especially in poetry. This became marked at the end of 1950s. I am indebted to Dr. Karine Schomer (Berkeley) for this information.

Printed at St. Joseph's Catholic Press, Main Street, Jaffna by Mr. Nicholas James of No. 20, Fifth Cross Street, Jaffna and Published by the Faculty of Humanities, University of Jaffna, Jaffna Sri Lanka, (Ceylon)