

**TAMIL WRITING**  
**IN**  
**SRI LANKA**

**K. S. SIVAKUMARAN**

*Contemporary*

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SRI LANKA

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## FOREWORD

Disraeli's dictum about "Two Nations" needs amendment here. We are three nations, culturally speaking. If there is little communication between the exclusively Sinhala-speaking and the Tamil-speaking, the English educated tend to be a community apart. With the post-1956 winds of change, the more enlightened sections of the English educated, it is true, have attempted a conscious, sometimes painful adjustment. Nonetheless the largely linguistic barriers to communication remain. While the danger of mutual isolation to basic considerations of national well-being such as unity is too obvious to require reiteration, few among the English-educated, who are also fluent in either Sinhala or Tamil, have realised that this cultural situation offers them a challenging opportunity. They could act as productive links, as agents of communication.

Mr. K. S. Sivakumaran has seen this opportunity and, with commendable enterprise, done something positive to meet its challenge. He is a student of Tamil literature and a keen observer of the Tamil cultural scene. For nearly twenty years now he has been writing in English on Tamil literary and cultural events and issues for the leading English language newspapers in this country - *Ceylon Daily News*, *Sunday Times* and *Ceylon Observer*. He has also contributed articles to more serious periodicals like *Community* and *New Ceylon Writing*.

He has not stopped there. While performing the useful function of introducing to the English press (and therefore, to English speaking Sinhalese) matters of interest on the Tamil cultural scene, he has translated into Tamil the literary-critical work of Ceylonese critics published in the English-language press.

Mr. Sivakumaran who works for the S. L. B. C. is not only deeply devoted to Tamil culture but to those broader moral and artistic values which form the necessary foundation of all serious criticism.

**Mervyn de Silva**

Editor-in-Chief,

*The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.*

(C)

October, 1974

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO MY MOTHER,

THE LATE

Mrs. THANKATHIRAVIAM SELLANAINAR

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Colombo-12.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the exciting stories waiting to be written is the evolution of an indigenous Tamil Literature in Sri Lanka - the creative and critical activities of the writers - who made this growth possible. Such a history will be a record of tribulation and triumph, and I feel it is time that some one attempted writing it. Most of the Tamil writers who have contributed to this development and advancement were, and are, fully engrossed in their work and problems that they have very little time for either introspection or elaborate documentation.

Under the circumstances the history of Ceylon Tamil Literature has hitherto largely been neglected. It is true that, in recent years, a few University teachers have evinced some interest in the subject, especially in the history of 19th century Tamil Literature. Some recent studies have endeavoured to probe into the provenance of the Modern Movement. But the main body of contemporary Tamil writings in Sri Lanka remains to be critically evaluated. Here is a rich field awaiting explorers.

One of my most pleasant memories of the years I spent on the editorial staff of *Thinakaran* (1957-1961) was my close association with Tamil writers, many of whom played a prominent part in the Movement for an indigenous Tamil Literature in this country. The young writers who initiated this movement and responded to it in the mid fifties, could hardly have imagined that it would have grown to such proportions and that its participants would compel recognition for themselves in India and else where. No greater tribute could be paid to its basic soundness than that it has withstood several vicissitude and established itself in the consciousness of the Tamil literature.

I first came to know Mr. K. S. Sivakumaran as a young contributor to the *Thinakaran*. He was then bubbling with ideas and full of enthusiasm. I myself was then fresh from the University and remember having many a discussion with him on literary issues. It is also quite possible that I had imperceptibly persuaded him to concentrate on literary criticism rather than 'creative' writing in which he was bent upon at that time.

Looking back over the years I am gratified to see that the little encouragement I might have given him has been some benefit to him.

Perhaps, the best contribution of Sivakumaran has been his indefatigable effort to introduce and elucidate contemporary Tamil works to non-Tamil readers, especially the English reading public. I consider it a great service rendered by him. In that sense he has greatly helped to bridge the gap between writers working in different languages. Indeed, he has done a tremendous lot to propogate the aims and achievements of the modern Ceylon Tamil writers. The scheme of the book is basically thematic but it is also roughly chronological in the sense it delineates the origins and development of a quarter century of our literature. Naturally there is a certain amount of overlapping in the different sections. But such overlaps supplement one another in fully treating the main theme of the book. The author has not merely described the Tamil literary scene, but has, at times tried to understand and expound some of the underlying factors that shaped its features. He has, I believe, succeeded to a great extent in clarifying the broad principles that influenced the mainstream of our recent literary effusion. But he does not forget that his primary aim is to introduce Tamil writings as clearly and objectively as possible.

Sivakumaran is a prolific writer. Inevitably such voluminous and at times hurried writing tends to be uneven. The present selection at best serves only as a cross section of his varied writings. But I am happy to see that some of his important pieces have found a place in the present volume. Both as a translator and interpreter of Tamil literature, Sivakumaran has played a significant role. I wish him greater success in the coming years and hope to see many more selections of his writings in print.

**K. Kailasapathy,**  
President, Jaffna Campus,  
University of Sri Lanka.

Thirunelvely,  
Jaffna.  
01-10-1974.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The articles and reviews contained here were originally published in national newspapers and journals. They appear here with only slight modifications - updating and adding more facts. I do not pretend, however, that this is an exhaustive survey of the contemporary Tamil literary scene. As far as the reviews go they are a personal choice; but major outputs have been commented on. If a few novels, collections of short stories, anthologies of poems and critical works had not been mentioned here it is because they were either not very important or that they could not be reviewed before the publication of this book. I have not discussed those writers who began writing about the beginning of this decade, if their writing were not available in book form. Having been a participant in the contemporary literary scene, I wrote these articles and reviews with first hand knowledge; but I have also relied on papers and books of the senior writers, who had critically analysed our literary heritage. Their analysis appear to be correct for me. I have had the benefit of discussions with *Dr. K. Kailasapathy* and *Dr. K. Sivathamby*, who besides elucidating some of the problems, have at all times given me much encouragement when I wrote these articles and reviews. The pieces on "Literary Trends" and "Publications" included in this book were based on an article written by *Dr. Sivathamby*.

I am indebted to *Mr. Mervyn de Silva* (Editor-in-Chief *Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited*), a versatile journalist of international repute for publishing most of the articles collected in this book (since 1970) in the *Ceylon Daily News* and also for the encouraging foreword he has given me. My thanks are also due to *Mr. S. Muthiah*, formerly features editor, *Sunday Times of Ceylon*, *Mr. C. R. Hensman*, who edited *Community*, and *Mrs. Yasmine Gooneratne* who edits *New Ceylon Writing* for publishing some of the articles in this book. A few reviews included in this book were broadcast over the *Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation* in the *Arts Magazine* programme compiled and presented by *Mr. Vernon Abeysekera*, *Mr. Reggie Siriwardne*, *Mr. G. K. Hathottuwegama* and presently by *Mrs. Marion Abeysuria*. My thanks are due to the Director

General of Broadcasting, *Mr. Ridgeway Tilekaratne* in this respect. I cannot fail to pay a special tribute to *Dr. K. Kailasapathy*, President, Jaffna Campus, University of Sri Lanka for his introduction. He had been my mentor and guide for a long time and continues to advise me on many matters.

At this instance, I must not forget my father *Mr. K. Sellanainar*, without whose encouragement and understanding, I would not have entered the literary field.

**K. S. Sivakumaran**

21, Murugan Place,  
Colombo - 6,  
Sri Lanka.

6-10-74.

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## TOWARDS SINHALA - TAMIL UNDERSTANDING

### I. A Question of Dialogue

Serious minded Tamil writers and readers already know a great deal about the Sinhala writers, through the *Little Magazines* in Tamil. Even mass circulated dailies have published translations from Sinhala writing. Martin Wickremasinghe, Ediriweera Sarathchandra, Siri Gunasinghe, Gunadasa Amarasekera, K. Jayatileke, Wimal Dissanaiké, Reggie Siriwardena and A. J. Gunawardene are names very familiar to Tamil readers. Works of Dayananda Gunawardene and Martin Wickremasinghe have also been dramatised in Tamil. Seminars on Sinhala cinema with particular reference to Lester James Peiris' films provoked stimulating discussion on aesthetics among young writers.

So, there is a conscious effort on the part of young Tamil writers to understand what is taking place in the Sinhala Literary world. Can this be said of the Sinhala reading public on local Tamil literary scene? I fear not, at least not in the field of English writing.

Some of the short stories translated into Tamil from Sinhala, however, had a few Tamil speaking characters; but I have not read a single Sinhala short story which attempted to portray the Tamil living in full. On the other hand there have been a few stories in Tamil which portrayed Sinhala characters in perspective.

I believe Tamil writers are seriously looking at their Sinhala brethren as part of their own experience, own thinking and own identity, though politicians regard things differently. Many Tamil writers have told me that they are interested in meeting Sinhala writers and entering into a dialogue with them to discuss common problems. Except for a few dons who work together in various university campuses, the others involved in writing have not met at all.

So, why cannot there be a dialogue among Ceylonese writers?

Initially there will be certain difficulties of direct communication among them, because of their respective spoken tongues. Unfortunately a majority of the Tamil writers in Ceylon are not so fluent in English and I suppose this is so with some Sinhala writers too. Nevertheless the English educated writers among them can act as translators or agents in communicating their ideas. The number of people proficient in both Sinhala and Tamil is also increasing.

It is interesting to note that while the majority of the major Sinhala writers had been influenced by Western writers and literary modes almost all the Tamil writers are rooted and wedded to their own local idiom. One reason why the local Tamil writers are not particularly interested in Western bourgeois writing is that a good many of them come from lower middle and working classes. People like *Dominic Jeeva* (Editor of "Mallikai") *K. Daniel* and *Illankeeran* (Editor of "Janavegam") are proud to be called proletarian writers. Instead of looking at the West for everything the Tamil writer in Ceylon wishes to have literary connections with his Sinhala counterpart in particular, and Asian writers in general.

In a broadcast over the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation Mr. Reggie Siriwardena once suggested that the Sinhala writer could draw inspiration from neighbouring Indian writers and translate them into Sinhala, instead of translating Western writers. Relevance in terms of changing Asiatic Society is equally important to Ceylonese writers both Sinhala and Tamil.

So, why cannot there be a common consciousness among us as to what a Ceylonese idiom is? Surely we can find common grounds despite slight ethnical variations. Unity in diversity is all the more necessary now than ever before. Literature can thus forge a path for understanding and mutual appreciation.

## II. A Tamil - Sinhala Dictionary

The Sinhala Sandesa poetry bears many references to the fact that Tamil had in fact been taught in the *pirivenas* in earlier times according to Peter Abeysekera in his foreword to a Tamil - Sinhala Dictionary.\* He made reference to this

\* A Tamil - Sinhala Dictionary - Edited by N. D. Peiris, published by Atlas Hall, Colombo. (1972).

to emphasise the close relationship between the two races since ancient times. He further said "just as much as Sri Rahula was well versed in Tamil, people like Nanool Thuraiyar were fluent in Sinhala".

I have to quote from the forewords written by eminent Sinhala scholars to stress the importance of a Tamil - Sinhala Dictionary. Dr. Premadasa Udagama while hoping for a new generation of bilingual (Sinhala - Tamil) learned men who would help in the country's welfare, has commended the individual effort of N. D. Peiris in compiling this useful dictionary for students, writers and translators.

Apart from the dictionary itself, the long introduction by the late Ven. Panditha Hissalle Dharmaratne Thero is also elucidatory. The late Thero was awarded a Gold Medal at the second International Tamil Seminar held in Madras for his translation of the Tamil epic *Silapadikaram* into Sinhala. I quote from him:-

When Jaffna was under the dominion of the Sinhala Kings, a great number of Tamil words got into the Sinhala vocabulary. Since the 2nd Century to the Kandyan period the influence of Tamil can be seen in literary words, grammar and inscriptions. Tamil bhikhus from South India came to Sri Lanka by about the 14th century. Not only the clergy even the laymen gained proficiency in Tamil during the Polonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Kurunegala, Gampola, Kotte, Sitawaka and Kandyan periods in our history. Sri Rahula, Vithagama Maithri, Ranasekelle Alagiya-vannmuka Vetti and Kirimaltiyanai Kivindu were notable Tamil Scholars. After 1815 however, the Sinhala people turned to English. The absence of suitable books in Tamil for the Sinhala beginner discouraged them from studying this language.

It is in this respect that the new Tamil - Sinhala Dictionary is useful.

Mr. N. D. Peiris is a well known bilinguist. He earlier brought out a Sinhala - Tamil Dictionary and he has worked on this new project for the last six years and has more than fifteen years experience in teaching Sinhala to Tamil students. Mr. Peiris deserves the gratitude of both the Tamils and Sinhalese for his untiring efforts to initiate a dialogue between the two communities.



# LITERARY HISTORY

## I. Ceylonese Attempts at Novel Writing

The Ceylonese did not depend on South Indian writings for their reading matters in Tamil even as early as the eighteen-nineties. This fact is brought out in a little Tamil book by *Silayoor Selvarajan* called *The Growth of the Tamil Novel in Ceylon*, detailing the history of Tamil novels by Ceylonese writers from earliest times till 1962. As the scope of the book did not allow the author to critically evaluate the novels, he merely gives marginal comments in passing.

It all began in 1891, when *S. Ignacittamby* of Trincomalee adapted into Tamil a Portuguese Novella called 'Orzon and Valentine'. This book was the first Tamil novel of Ceylon.\* Written almost eighty years ago this is also the second novel ever written in Tamil. *Pradapa Mudaliyar* written by *S. Vedanayagam Pillai* of South India in 1879 is considered the first attempt at novel writing in Tamil. But modern critics do not reckon the early attempts as novels proper. *Kamalambal* (1893) by *Rajam Iyer* of South India ranks as the first novel in the accepted sense.

Trincomalee also produced the second novelist as far as Ceylon Tamil novelists were concerned. He was *T. Saravana muttu Pillai* who wrote *Mohanangi* in 1895. Sri Lanka had to wait till 1924 for the appearance of the first woman novelist in Tamil, *S. Sellammal*. Her novel was called *Rasadurai*.

Till *Rev. Bro. John Mary* wrote his *Punithaseeli*, most novels written in Tamil in Ceylon were either adaptations or translations. He brought in the Ceylonese idiom with Jaffnese flavour. The year 1929 saw the publication of *Saraswathi* by the second woman novelist *S. Rasa Ammal*. Notable novels during the thirties were *Aranganayaki* (1934), an adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth" and *Malai Velayil* a translation

\* Recently Mr. S. M. Kamaldeen has brought out an interesting fact to indicate that the first novel by a Ceylonese was *Asenbae* by Siddique Lebbe published in 1888.

from *Turgenev* by *S. Vythilingam*. Till the latter part of the nineteen thirties a spate of didactic novels were written. The contemporary social problems came to be treated only with *M. A. Selvarathanam's* novels. He wrote a number of novels, on progressive themes, while *H. Nalliah* wrote on communal unity among Ceylonese (*Somawathi* - 1940). During the fifties popular novelists came to the limelight. Most of their novels were historical, detective or romantic. Late Professor *K. Kanapathipillai* adapted European stories injecting local dialects. The Indian Tamil dialect spoken in the Up Country was given expression in *S. M. Peer Mohamed's* novels. *K. Ganesh* translated Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* into Tamil.

But it was after 1956 that serious novels came to be written in Tamil by Ceylonese. Contemporary social themes were analytical treatise by *Ilankeran*, *V. A. Rasaratnam*, *S. Ganeshalingan*, *Nandi*, *Benedict Palan*, *C. V. Velupillai*, *S. Ponnuthurai*, *Yalpanam Devan* and others.

*Silayoor Selvarajan's* book is very handy for a student to learn about our own attempts in the field of fiction. There is also an appendix giving the list of novels published from 1891 to 1962 and excerpts from some novels. The author has written on this subject in English in *Community - Ceylonese Writings - I*.

The author himself a poet, a talented broadcaster and a versatile journalist deserves praise in bringing out this timely book.

## II. From the Donoughmore Era to the end of the Sixties :

The advisory panel on Tamil Literature of the Cultural Council of Sri Lanka released a publication which gives a comprehensive survey of Ceylonese attempts in poetry, short story and literary criticism, right from the Donoughmore era up to the end of the sixties. One would have wished the inclusion of novel and drama in its scope.

There are also interesting articles on the role of the cultural council, Ceylonese Muslim poets, the chronological growth of the Navalur movement, 'Thoothu' (Sandesaya) literature, the impact and continuity of ancient literature on modern, the growth and problems of Ceylonese magazine production in Tamil, besides poems and relevant quotations on Ceylonese idiom. This



is a very useful publication to the student of Ceylonese Tamil Literature.

Writing on the growth of the short story *K. Kailasapathy* (Ambalattan) says that the Tamil short story both in Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu has lost its literary quality during the past few years as more people are writing novels under the influence of political, social and economic changes. Discussing the pioneers in the field the writer says that *Ilankayarkone* (the late *N. Sivagnanasunderam*) was greatly influenced by Western literature. The other pioneers *S. Vythilingam*, *S. Sivapathasunderam*, and *Sambanthan* depicted rural Sri Lanka in romantic tradition as much as *Ilankayarkon* did but were not deeply affected by Western literature. These writers enriched the Tamil prose style with their vivid imagery and imagination. They were essentially formalists who were interested in universal themes rather than indigenous characteristics. They did not see any direct relationship between literature and life. They acclaimed the short story as an integral part of an art form only. Their approach and attitude to the short story was lyrical.

The next generation of writers functioned as a "group" as opposed to being mere aesthetes. Their writings were published in a short-lived journal called *Marumalarchi* (The Renaissance). Its promoters were *Navatkuliyoor Nadarajan* (*K. S. Nadarajah*), *T. S. Varatharajan* (*Varathar*), *S. Panchadsara Sarma* and *A. S. Murugananthan*. But this journal as every other little magazine failed to reach broad sections of the reading public. However, it produced some fine short story writers like *A. S. Murugananthan*, *A. N. Kandaramy*, *Rajanayakan*, *Chokkan*, *V. A. Rasaratnam* and *Thalayadi Sabaratnam*.

With Sri Lanka gaining Independence in 1948, racial and political problems became important. Two solutions were suggested for these problems. Communal oriented solutions based on race, language and past glories were put forward in national garb. The other solution was based on socialist principles. The progressive ideology attracted many young writers. The fifties saw the emergence of some of the finest short story writers in Tamil. *S. Ponnuthurai*, *Piththan*, *K. Daniel*, *Dominic Jeeva*, *S. Ganesalingan*, *N. K. Raghunathan*, *M. S. M. Ramiah*, *Neerval Ponnian*, *Silayoor Selvarajan*, *Kavaloor Rasadurai* and *K. S. Ariyanayagam*

were some of them. These writers depicted the lives of the ordinary people living in their respective areas with human understanding and sympathy. In the same period many writers wrote love stories in the styles of the South Indian magazine.

The changes in 1956 led to the closer examination of social problems in perspective. It was during this period that the conflict between pundits and moderns took a sharp turn. Purists had to give way to inevitable change. The use of spoken idiom at last found a place in creative writing. *Ilangayarkone*, *Kanaga Senthinathan*, *V. A. Rasaratnam*, *Varathar* and *Chokkan* who belonged to the earlier generation adapted themselves to the changes and wrote equally well in the modern idiom.

As Tamil was the medium of instruction even in the University as from 1960, more and more people started writing short stories. Unfortunately these younger writers modelled their short stories on the South Indian magazine stories that flooded the market. In a way Ceylonese individuality began to be shaken up but only for a moment.

Because the mother tongue educated youth had certain limitations as far as global knowledge was concerned and because he had to depend on South Indian magazines for his understanding of this knowledge, he churned out mediocre, romantic, escapist pieces as the average South Indian writer does. Nevertheless the Peradeniya Campus produced a few short story writers who were not totally "art for arts" sake people.

Among them late *S. Kathiragamanathan*, *S. Yoganathan*, *Chempian Selvan*, *Nandhi*, *Sengai Azhliyan*, *Thuruvan*, *Kunthavai*, *Muthu Sivagnam*, *Kohila*, *Angayan*, *Imayavan*, *Saranathan*, *M. Ponnampalam* and *Vamadevan* were promising.

Besides them *Benedict Balan*, *George Sandrasegaran*, *Abdus Samathu*, *Maruthoor Koththan*, *Saral Nadan* and *Kumaravan* also wrote from outside the University. But the quality of the short story in Tamil at present is not up to standard contends *Dr. Kailasapathy*. It is too early to judge the new writers who have come into the field during the past three or four years.

This publication also includes an article on the history of criticism, in Sri Lanka written by *Dr. K. Kailasapathy*.

The pioneers in Tamil short story writing were also the leading lights in Tamil literary criticism in Sri Lanka. People like *S. Sivapathasunderam*, *S. Vythilingam* and *Ilangayrkone* wrote on literature and criticism. Late Professor *K. Kanapathipillai*, late *A. N. Kandasamy* and *K. Ganesh* were also interested in writing about the purpose and social function of literature.

Modern literary criticism as a conscious effort began only after 1956, although the earlier efforts were commentaries and appreciations

The neo-commentators and belles-lettres writers were followed by the modern critics. *Premjee*, *K. Kailasapathy*, *K. Sivathamby Murugaiyan*, *A. J. Canagaratna*, *M. Sameem*, late *M. Thalayasingham*, *Sillayoor Selvarajan*, *Kavaloor Rasadurai*, *Kanaga - Senthinathan* and *Eelathu Somu* began to write seriously on contemporary literature.\* *M. S. M. Kamaldeen*, *J. M. M. Abdulkadar*, *A. M. A. Azeez* are three critics on Muslim contribution. Late *M. Ramalingam*, *Mownaguru*, *M. Satgunam* were and are interested in evaluating folk literature.

Writing on modern poetry, *Murugaiyan* singles out Ceylonese poets as shades better than their counterparts in Tamilnadu. Commenting on the late *Somasundara Pulavar* he says that the poet was essentially a traditionalist.

*Murugaiyan* also speak about *Navatkuliyoor Nadarajan* (*Dr. K. S. Nadaraja*) and *Navaliyoor Nadarasan* (*S. Nadarasa*) and concludes that late *A. N. Kandasamy* who belonged to the same generation wrote with social consciousness. The next generation of poets were greatly influenced by local racial feelings at the beginning and later graduated themselves with more saner thinking. *Neelavanan* (*Sinnadurai*) and *Thanthonrie Kavirayar* (*Sillayoor Selvarajan*) are two other important poets. The new wave poets include *M. A. Nuhman*, *Shanmugam Sivalingam*, *Mownaguru*, *Subadran*, *R. Sivanandan* and *M. Ponnambalam*.

\* *Dr. Kailasapathy* also mentions the names of *Chempian Selvan*, *K. S. Sivakumaran*, *M. Ponnampalam*, *Shanmugam Sivalingan*, *V. Kandavanam* and *S. M. J. Faisdeen* as critics involved in assessing modern and contemporary writings.

### III. Oru Sila Vithi Ceivom - Norms for Poetry

How to reconcile modernity with the conventional poetic tradition is a major question for the Tamil poets today. Conventionalism suffers stagnancy, true, but there is also New Poetry-pseudo in character. A heavy burden of long standing tradition versus nihilistic New Poetry and the problems cropping up amid modernity are matters for critical study. Blind worship of tradition and superficial admiration of the modernity are really symptoms of decadence. Why this state of decadence?

Poetry criticism is almost a neglected field in Tamil decries the voice of a poet, who is also a critic and what he says is true. This decadence is due to lack of competent critics to assess poetry in the contemporary sense. Even if we have academics and fine literary critics here, they have not so far taken poetry criticism seriously. So the critic in *Murugaiyan* has shown that poetry criticism is not elusive after all if certain fundamentals are observed.

He has laid down certain norms that can be followed both by poets and critics in writing and assessing poetry. These are described in his little book called *Oru Sila Vithi Ceivom* which is both a critique and a pace-setter for the avant-grade.

The first chapter is a sort of running commentary on modern poetry in Tamil practised in Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu. His measured comments on *Somasundara Pulavar*, *Navatkuliyoor Nadarajan*, *Navaliyur Nadarasan* and *Mahakavi* are to be noted. The new generation of poets who shone after 1956 (people like *Neelavanan*, *Kasi Anandan*, *Rajabharati*, *Thanthonrie Kavirayar* and *Murugaiyan*) used poetry as a powerful weapon for socio-political movements.

The use of the language of the common speech, the selection of unconventional poetic themes and the innate desire for experimentation marked them as different from their counterparts in Tamilnadu.

The Parallel literary scene in South India was characterised by three factors: the concept of Dravidianism, Musicality of rhythm and New Poetry (Verse Libre). Names like film lyricist *Kannadasan*, *Suradha*, *Mudiarasan*, *Karunanidhi*, *Pitchaimoorthy*, *Vaideesveran*, *Gnanakoothan*, *Kambadasan* and others are associated with South Indian Tamil poetry.

Murugaiyan analyses the question of simplicity, content, rhyme and other aspects in modern poetry in the rest of the chapters. For fear of digression I shall describe here only his comments on New Poetry. The author defines:

The harmonious blend of ideas, the structural pattern of imagination and fancy and the rhythmic quality are some of the characteristics of a good poem. When these and other elements find a balance of norms, what may be called a good poem evolves. The Tamil New Poetry totally ignores rhythm. As a result the equilibrium is lost and the whole thing falls like a pack of cards.

The new poetry ignores metre too, but metre is not something that cannot be mastered. Murugaiyan goes on to explain the metre in Tamil poetry as lucidly as possible and scientifically too drawing illustrations from Tamil poetry of different periods. The fundamental weakness of new poetry in Tamil is its complex rhyme. This discordant note coupled with their content make new poetry in Tamil a farce says the author. The alien or strange themes in them discourage many to appreciate them.

Borrowed emotional experience from alien social setups remain a fanciful exercise in Tamil poetry. They lack the power to make an impact on the majority of the Tamil speaking people. Hence new poetry in Tamil is not a healthy outcome of a poetic tradition, laments the poet-critic.

When the West itself has revalued and devalued poets like Eliot, Pound and others, our imitators here still regret that the Tamil readers have not yet understood the masters of the West. According to Murugaiyan these new poets welcome hypocritical works as great. Defeatism and pessimism mark the essence of New poetry in Tamil.

Murugaiyan compares the new poets to the character from the novel *Inside Mr. Enderby*. They are bathroom poets says the author. There are few other new poets who wrote on positive values but completely cut off from involvement. These are romantic dreams for a revolution. Fancy and dream, romantic poetry that is, should not be confused with true poetry warns the author.

An awareness for positive development should be the first guideline says the author. The illusion that a bygone virtue

alone is desirable should be dismissed. History of mankind is not a tragedy of demise. It is a story of positive values. The romantic agony and the melancholic pessimism should no more envelope the brooding poets, rules out the writer.

Rhyme and metre are only servants of the content. Techniques are there for art and not technique alone is art. Economy of words and images drawn from immediacy perceptible to the senses and which are intelligible to the readers is another factor that the poets should take into consideration, and finally clarity and not obscurity should be the keynote in modern poetry, points out Murugaiyan.

These are obvious observations that anyone should follow in any branch of writing, but it is emphatically put in Tamil because at this moment poetry in Tamil is rather on a low ebb.

I have only introduced this book here, for the author says a great deal about poetry in general and Tamil poetry in particular, quite seriously. Aspects or elements of poetry are fully treated in this book. Murugaiyan usually writes in an academic style, but here his style is compact and direct.

#### IV. Literary Trends 1956 - 1970

Pre-Independence literary attempts in Tamil by Ceylonese did not press for a Ceylonese identity as a part of a whole body of Tamil literature. The lives of Tamil speaking Ceylonese were depicted as the continuity of Tamil heritage derived chiefly from the tradition of South Indian literature.

The advancement seen in Ceylonese Tamil Literature after 1948 is an important landmark in the whole body of Tamil literature. The pre-independence Tamil literary movement was mainly interested in the advancement of the Tamil Language and religion.

Contemporary history of Tamil literature can be traced from 1948. Between 1948 and 1970 much has taken place. This period can be subdivided into three phases: 1948-1955, 1956-1965, 1966-1970, in line with the change of Government. In a way the story of the Tamil literary movement in Sri Lanka is the story of the strength gained by the progressive writers of this country.

The progressive literary movement in Tamil which began to function in full force during 1956-1963 was the primary force in

determining what was Ceylonese literature. Under the flag of Ceylonese literature this movement brought into its fray all the Ceylonese Tamil writers. As the nature and scope of this movement shaped itself the national identity and realism in literature were emphasised.

Just as much as the progressive movement had its political base the anti-progressive movement too was politically oriented. By 1955, even the progressive writers began to isolate themselves for political reasons but their differences were not on fundamentals. Only the approaches were different. However, the literary scene became static. Socio-Political stimulant was required for literary development. Between 1965 and 1970, the progressive movement came to a standstill because of political changes. This break was temporary.

After the political and social changes of 1956 the literary activities point to a national consciousness. A knowledge of the Tamil literary publications in Sri Lanka will indicate the extent of *Ceylonism* in local Tamil writing. With the new political consciousness social awakening and economic changes, those speaking the Tamil Language in Sri Lanka started writing on those lines. People living in the Northern, Eastern, Central, North Western and Southern Provinces became the subject of literary works. This tendency was not seen earlier. This was an important event in the Island's Political and Literary histories. Higher education in mother tongue helped the Ceylonese in many fields to progress further in the post 1956 period. But this did not continue by 1965 as a result of a state of stagnancy. The desire to preserve the pre-1956 *status quo* was greatly felt during this period.

Due to a conglomeration of many individual talents and farsightedness, the progressive movement began to flourish by 1955. Nevertheless those holding divergent views on national development functioned in unison because of common literary identity. Those pundits who possessed certificates for their crudity in the Tamil language and those philistines who did not possess such certificates got together and spoke of Ceylonism in Literature. The latter did not have any special awareness for Tamil Literature, till that time. They were members of the illiterate families and yet they had creative ability and sensibility in them.

In the process progressive ideas (which were bent on effecting changes) and concepts grown out of the influence of practical living clashed. This is an external manifestation of the social conflict that takes place at the grass root level. The idea for new social order is usually in conflict with the prevalent views on society. The invincible changes however are a different matter. As a result the reactionaries started opposing the changes and were very vehement in expressing them. This was the situation before 1970.

## V. Publications 1956 - 1970

Despite heavy competition from South India and poor readership of Ceylonese books in Tamil in Sri Lanka, creative writing in Tamil has progressed very well here. It is encouraging to note that between 1948 and 1970 a total of seventy one novels, fifty seven collections of short stories, ninety eight anthologies of poetry and forty nine plays were published in Tamil by Ceylonese.

The quality of book production compares well with that of South India but the Tamilnadu's system of distribution is hard to beat.

Except for one publishing house, the others were not interested in publishing creative writing. About one thousand copies only were printed in each work and not all copies were sold out. Many writers had to bear the cost themselves. They even had a hand in the sale and distribution of their own books.

One reason for the poor sale of Ceylonese Tamil fiction is that these books are not tied up with the nation's educational system. Only a very few books by Ceylonese had been recommended as Tamil texts in higher forms and not a single Ceylonese fiction had been prescribed as a Tamil text. Even the libraries did not display Ceylonese books. Another reason why Ceylonese Tamil fiction is not widely read is because of its lack of popular appeal. The literary quality in these works discourages those readers nurtured in the South Indian tradition of escapist reading matter.

Books printed and published in South India were less expensive and reached a wider market. A total of fifteen novels were printed in India and out of these seven were written by one novelist. Only eight novelists published more than one novel and only five short story writers brought out more than one collection. Whereas

between 1948 and 1955 only one collection of short stories was published, during 1956 - 1965 as many as forty collections were brought out. Nearly seventeen poets have published more than one anthology. During 1966 - 1970 as many as forty three anthologies of poetry were published. Only two were printed in India. A majority of the plays published were historical, only few plays can be said to be social. Six dramas have been also published but only one one-act play saw the colour of the print. About nine folk plays were published during 1948 - 1965 on the initiative of Dr. S. Vithiananathan with the help of the arts council.

Whereas the Ceylonese Tamil writers is socially committed, the counterpart in South India places escapist art on the top. Since literature serves as a catalyst and also it mirrors history, creative writing should be well integrated with the nation's educational system.

#### VI. Indian Magazines and Local Journals:

One reason why there is an overwhelming fascination for Indian "Pop" magazines in Tamil, among Ceylonese is that these journals as any other popular variety appeal to the cheap escapist nature in man. Many of the South Indian writers make up their stories rather than create them. Their art in well-made products is so deft and compelling that the reader enjoys them for their sheer flow of patterns. This is not to say that they are fine craftsmen of story telling. The subjects chosen by them are another matter for study. Serious short story writers as usual are not well known but the popular writers are household names.

*Kumudam*, *Anandavikadan*, *Kalki*, *Bomma*, *Pesum Padam*, *Kalaimagal* and *Dinamani Kathir* are more avidly read by the middle class families in Tamil homes in Ceylon, than the locally produced journals. These South Indian magazines have captured a wide market in Ceylon. These journals call themselves "Magazines for the entire family" and in actual fact they primarily cater to the women-folks at home. Two of these are full-fledged film magazines. But most of them exploit the film scene.

Popular as they are they have one thing in common. They are attractively produced with three colour cover and profuse illustrations. Serialized stories on escapist themes (historical romances,

unrealistic upper-middle-class love stories), snippets, articles on and by film stars and politicians, a few articles on religious events and various other interesting pieces fill the pages of these plush magazines. The editorials are invariably on South Indian Politics.

It is true that literary magazines like *Manithan*, *Thamarai Depam*, *Gnanaratham*, *Kanaiyali*, *Yean*, *Kasadathapara* and *Semmalar* do come from Tamilnadu and earlier there were *Sarasvathi*, *Ezhuthu* and *Nadai*; but a majority of the Tamil readers in Ceylon have not heard of these magazines at all.

I am not saying that little magazines as these can have a wide market. But at least they could be popularised if the influx of these so-called family magazines could be kept at a minimal level.

One may ask why on earth there should be a limitation on the flooding in of popular journals, when a majority of the people really love them? Love for journals that dissipate the taste, dull the thinking power, mould an escapist character divorced from contemporary realities, is as damaging as a cultural onslaught on a people whose social, political, economic and even linguistic (different dialects) differences are much marked. It is for this reason, in the national interests that the Tamil people in Ceylon should not be allowed to live in the dream world, as it were of South India.

Fortunately the Tamil magazines produced locally are to a great extent devoid of these South Indian *delicacies*. But the tragedy is that nobody reads them except the writers, who write to these magazines. Middle class Tamil homes in Ceylon will subscribe to even three or more South Indian weeklies than buy the locally produced monthlies.

Earlier in Sri Lanka there were *Tenaruvi*, *Katpakam*, *Eelachudar*, *Anjali*, *Malar*, *Viveki*, *Maragatham* and other journals devoted to contemporary literature.

Now names of Lanka's rivers figure prominently in local Tamil journalism, *Maveli* (Mahaveli), edited by C. V. Velupillai and *Kalani* (Kelani) published from Kilinochi are two magazines which speak of national integration. Besides these two there are *Anu*, *Poorani*, *Kumaran*, *Tamil Amuthu*, *Sirithiran*, *Mallikai*, and *Thayakam* all semi-serious and literary and *Kalasam*, *Geetha*, *Kathambam* and *Manikam*

in the pulp teenage fashion. So we find a variety of Tamil magazines to cater to the needy, yet Tamilnadu journals like Kumudam Dinamani Kathir, Ananda Vikatan, and Kalki hold sway in Tamil speaking homes. State assistance to local magazine production is essential to popularise our own talents. State subsidy, provision of newsprint, assistance in distribution to schools, associations and libraries, government advertisements are some ways to encourage local magazine production - Sinhala, Tamil or English.

A rewarding attempt would be to publish limited varieties of magazines, each specialising in a particular field. By such a method, more people can be induced to buy magazines which are of special interest to the reader. One magazine can be devoted to short stories, another to criticism of the arts yet another to novels and so on. There can be academically bent journals for students in higher forms. As a matter of fact, a periodical called *Chinthanai* was published in this vein. Attempts are made to revive this journal. *Valarmathi* is now published to cater to the students.

Without adequate finance, no such noble ventures can materialise. It is here that the industrialists should come forward voluntarily to patronise these magazines. Can this be done?

## VII. A Southern attempt

Down the Southern beat, twelve miles east of Matara lies Dickwella. Right in the centre of this village is an area of one hundred and fifty acres live a Muslim community of nearly three thousand five hundred people. They call their dwelling area Yonahapura. They live like Muslims as in any other areas and also serve a useful purpose in assimilating and interpreting their immediate environ, which is the Ruhunu Sinhala culture to the others. These interpretations come in the Tamil language by way of translations and original writings in modern idiom. Those in the North and East are able to know and feel and even react to the Southern way of life through such writings. Because these Muslim youths are bilingual (Sinhala and Tamil) the Tamil reader benefits immensely. So we find pockets of literary activities in places like Dickwella.

Dickwella Writers' Association has brought out their second publication "POO" (flower) in Tamil. We find quite a few interesting articles in this issue.

Muslim contribution to Sinhala Literature by M. H. M. Shums, "The Origin of Dickwella" by M. Hamsa Muhammedu, "Ceylonse Muslims in the field of Trade" by M. A. Inayathullah and short stories by S. I. M. Hamza, Dickwella Kamal and poems by P. M. Abdul Sattar, Yonahapura Hamza and Vallai Cheelan, literary gossip by M. J. M. Anwar Khan and quotes from local Tamil writers are quite noteworthy and useful reading.

## VIII Hill country Writings\*

C. V. Velupillai a hill country Ceylonese, is one writer who has contributed substantially to the literary awakening among Tamil writers of that region.

Velupillai, true, writes in English (Born To Labour 1970) but most of his writings have been translated into Tamil as well. He writes for the last thirty five years and yet he says that he is not a poet, nor a writer: "The subject I have chosen made me what I am". He is modest but the younger group of writers respect him.

The hill country Ceylonese writing in Tamil often complain that their counterparts living in other parts of the island do not acknowledge their literary merit. It is not that the critics do not want to consider the literary talents of the up-country Tamils, but it is just that adequate books are not available for them to evaluate. Nor has there been an attempt made to trace the nascent literary development of the Ceylonese of recent Indian Origin living particularly in the hill country. The Tamil intelligentsia in Ceylon is opposed to South Indian infiltration of ideas through cheap "pop" magazines. But it is by no means anti-Indian. In fact it welcomes saner and intellectual writings of the Indians. In the same way the Ceylon Tamil writers are not particularly against Tamils of Indian origin in Ceylon, so long as they are rooted in Sri Lanka. For the

\* This is based on a talk delivered by Mr. C. V. Velupillai. But during the last five or six years, young people hailing from the hill country have shown tremendous progress in their thinking and creativity and a good many of them have had no formal education. Among the graduates, particular mention should be made of Vamadevan, Mariathas and M. Niththiyananthan. Benedict Balan, although from Jaffna, has written an excellent novel on estate life called, CHONTHAKARAN.

past half a century Ceylonese from the hill country have been writing in Tamil. Journals like *Loka Upakari*, *Amirtha Gunabodini*, *AnanthaBodini*, *Mahavikade Thutan*, *Navakasakthi*, *Modern Review* and *Indian Review* were some of the Indian Journals which were read by the Ceylonese, particularly those living in the up-country. In fact late C. Subramaniam, R. Ramiah and Vettivel wrote to some of these South Indian Journals. From Matale there was Abdul Kadif who wrote poetry in the early period. Modelling their verses on South Indian poems people like Periampillai, S. S. Nathan, Jabar, Kanthasamy and Emden A. Wijeratne wrote on Adam's Peak and the races at Nuwara Eliya, Radella and Peradeniya. C. V. Velupillai and K. Ganesh were inspired by Tagore and Sarojinidevi and they wrote very frequently. By 1934 the Tamil daily "*Veerakesari*" came to be published. A. Sithamparanatha Pavalur wrote the life history of Lord Buddha under the title "*Baudha Dhayana*". K. Ganesh translated one of Mulk Raj Anand's novels and C. V. Velupillai wrote in English a verse drama called "*Pathmajani*". The forties saw the spread of learning and this induced many to write. C. V. Velupillai, P. Krishnasamy, Thiruchenthuran, Raffael, M. S. M. Ramiah, Thiagarajan, Panneerselvam, Thelivathai Joseph, Tamil Oviah and others wrote a number of stories depicting the life in the tea gardens. *Theyilai Thottatnilae*, *Valvattore Valvu* and *Valipokkan* all by Velupillai were published during this period. K. Ganesh wrote fine poems in English which credited the appreciation from the Japanese monarchy. T. M. Peer Mohamed, Abbas, N. S. Nathan, late Periasamy were some others who merited attention. After 1957 progressive themes were handled by these writers. They now turned their attention on the social conditions of the people living in the Estates. Thennavan Kumaran, Rama Subramaniam, M. Sivalingam, Sikkan Raj, Mallikai Kumar, Eela Kumar, Isak, C. S. Kanthie, Karmegam, Ra. Sivalingam, K. Ramachandran, S. Visvaratnam, Saral Nadan are some of these writers. *Kurinjipoo*, *Kurinji Malar*, *Thuvanam*, *Thayakam*, *Malainattuchirukathaikal*, and *Born to Labour* are some of the collections that have been published recently.

## REVIEWS

### I NOVELS

#### (a) THE FIRST FOUR NOVELS OF S. GANESHALINGAN

I will not be exaggerating when I say that Ceylonese Tamil writers like S. Ganeshalingan write realistic social novels, better than their counterparts in South India. Local writers write with a sense of realism. They are also aware of the root causes of social problems. They analyse them in a way that is acceptable, to all. Their novels provide intellectual reading - fare.

Ganeshalingan has so far written six novels and brought out three collections. His anthologies of short stories are: *Nallavan* (The Good Man) *Ore Inam* (The Same Class) and *Sangamam* (The Merging). His five novels are better than his short stories, because they are more readable, apart from the seriousness of their content.

He first wrote *Neenda Payanam* (The Long Journey) followed by *Sadangu* (The Customs), *Sevvanam* (The Crimson Sky), *Tharaiyum Tharakaiyum* (The Earth and the Star), *Pore Kolam* (The War Dress) and *Mannum Makkalum* (The Soil and the People). Ganeshalingan is associated with *Kumaran*, a monthly in the left-wing tradition.

*Neenda Payanam* is a novel about the gradual changes that take place in a small village in Jaffna. The changes are mainly social and political. The social changes are in relation to the awakening of the so called low caste people in their village. The depressed class people, so called, tear down the barricades of man imposed social values which are rooted in religious beliefs and eventually they become strong enough to gain representation in their own local authorities viz. Village Council. In their long journey towards social and political emancipation the depressed class people have had to strive for three long years. It is their struggle that is described in this novel.

This is a novel on the problem of caste. The caste problem cannot be said to have been totally eradicated. It exists in some form or other in all grades of society. The irony is that even



among the so called low caste people, a kind of superiority of one caste over another exists as depicted in the novel, for instance. There is sincerity in the novel. The author's main concern is to depict and record with compassion the sordid life led by this particular class of people. That way he has succeeded in his attempt. It is realistic in tone, narrative in style, and authentic in description. The author's keen power of observation of humdrum events in the lives of a group of people in the down-trodden class in society is well brought out.

The story begins when a Sambattu Pallar caste boy is beaten up by Vellalar caste youths in a temple festival for having slept in the temple premises allocated to the Vellalar or high caste. In the meantime the hero's love interest is also described. He has three women associating with him. One of them belongs to a high caste, another of his own caste and the third also of the same caste as he is, but a shade lower than his, called Sembattu Pallar. By making his hero marry the latter girl, the author wants to stress the fact that reformation of society takes place first in his own home. In describing the love sequences, the author's lyrical description is beautiful and poetic. Even in other places the limpid and simple style of the author contributes to the readability of the novel. Employment of polished colloquial language adds colour to the narrative. There is no worked up sentimentalism in the novel. Every incident seems plausible enough. But I must add that some incidents seem to have been rather long drawn, as for instance, the private lives of certain characters in the novel, who are not of major importance.

From the point of view of readability the novel is interesting. Even commonplace incidents assume significance in the novel. From the point of view of sincerity of purpose, the author must be congratulated for having come forward to treat boldly this subject.

Ganeshalingan has depicted well fully certain major aspects of life and living of the untouchables. If this novel, *Neenda Payanam* can be translated into Sinhala or English it will enable non-Tamil readers to learn and know about the lives of this particular Pallar community among the Tamils in Ceylon. The Novel has all the potentialities to be filmed as a lyrical cinema like the *Gamperaliya*.

*Sadangu* in Tamil means ceremonies or rituals and in this particular context it means marriage ceremonies. This second novel of Ganeshalingan copiously records all possible ceremonies, customs and observations associated with an average Jaffna, Hindu, Rural wedding. So to one who is not familiar with all these, this book will also serve as a reference book.

Among many other things, the novelist laughs at the foolhardiness of certain conservative people, who only look to the grandiloquence of customs and ceremonies but ignore the susceptibilities and compatibilities of the marriage partners before arranging marriages for them. In other words the writer scoffs at the parents, who refuse to see a different generation emerging. According to him, the parents strive hard to thrust their own concepts of life, rooted in a feudal set up, thereby doing a lot of damage not only to their off-springs but also to themselves.

In the words of the novelist, the human emotions or inward life of partners are never considered and only the outward marriage observations are given importance among upperclasses in an feudal society... although such a feudal society is crumbling, the emotional conflicts of those caught in its whirlpool remain still complex. Man's day to day life is entwined with the political and social set up that exists. People react in relation to political conditions... and so on. The novel is written in the conventional form with a small difference. It has a potted political history of Ceylon in its narration from 1956 onwards.

Dr. K. Sivathamby has written a fairly lengthy foreword to this novel, highlighting its sociological significance.

Dr. Sivathamby underlines the fact that the caste system is the axis of the Indian feudal society. He says that the caste system evolved out of Vedic Aryan classifications of caste and the then existing Tribal groups. He goes on to say that the Ceylonese feudal set up is quite different from the Indian one and that even in Ceylon the set up among the Tamils also varies from place to place, as for instance between Jaffna and Batticaloa. Illustrating further he says that though the four divisions of caste have been accepted as the influence of Hinduism, the Brahmins are of no economic importance and on the contrary the peasants or farmers as land-owners are impor-

tant. As agriculture had been the primary economy and as the farmers were mainly Hindus and as there was an unrelented contact between South India, and Jaffna, the society was based on the caste system. There are castes in Jaffna which are not to be found in South India. Why the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British could not totally change the Jaffna Society was because of the sorry system of caste practised there. Dr. Sivathamby writes more. He gives valuable information regarding the social patterns of the Jaffna Tamils analysed from a marxist viewpoint.

In short this novel is a comment on the changing social values of a progressive society. But whether the political situations have a motivating impact on the characters, is not clearly drawn by the novelist and further the characters in this novel are not truly representative of a feudal society that the novelist speaks of. To my mind they are representatives of a middle class society. But this is a matter of opinion. Ganeshalingan's canvas though limited in its breadth - yet is deep enough with a psychological dimension. This book not merely tells a grave story in a realistic manner, but it also makes people approach contemporary mal-adjustment in an intelligible and righteous way.

This novel is yet another example to show that Ceylonese Tamil writers are on the right track as opposed to their innumerable counterparts in South India, a majority of whom churn out chunks of mass escapist literature.

*Sevvanam* translated as *The Crimson Sky* is the third novel written by Ganeshalingan. This is a socio-political novel with a contemporary setting. It may even be described as a contemporary historical novel as Dr. K. Kailasapathy says in his foreword. The novel does not come to a definite end and this is a notable thing I observed. It centres around an upper-middle class businessman who shot up to accumulating wealth suddenly by forces of political and social changes. His foil is a university educated Trade Unionist who prefers to associate himself with the proletariat. There is also a female secretary attached to a Press, and the extravagant wife of the businessman providing feminine interest in the story.

The novelist suggests a marxist solution to eradicate all evils in society. As a readable book the novel is very absorbing and stimulating. Bourgeoise morals, sex, love, wealth,

affluency, politics, society — in fact every influential factor that makes up life and living are unobtrusively touched by the author. There are certain failings in the novel, as for instance, in character delineation and absence of experimentation in structure. But then the form is determined by the content. At best levels an artist's perceptive mind is at work in this book. The narrative skill of the author is as usual abundantly manifests throughout the novel.

The fourth novel by Ganeshalingan is called (*The Earth and the Star*) - *Tharaiyum Tharakaiyum*.

Ganeshalingan selects particular phases in local contemporary history as the background scenes for his novels. In the novel under review, the ugly scenes of 1958 form the backdrop. But it remains only as background scene because the novel is about something else. One can even call this an explanatory novel explaining the theory that love, sex and married life do not exist in an idealistic sense, and that happiness in married life is largely a byword for affluency. Apart from the main theme, the novel also condemns the attitude of the lower middle class or working class families in trying to ape the ways and manners of the richer classes. This novel realistically portrays life among the lower middle class Jaffna Tamil families living in Colombo for purpose of employment. From another level the novel also analyses the psychology of women against that of men in relation to matters like sex and love. The hero has experiences with three women. The main character is drawn in an effective way. In the beginning of the novel he is an unemployed village youth in Colombo, lost in love with a rich girl in his native place. As the story develops he finds employment in the Government Service as a temporary clerk. The novel shows his rise to the middle class status and his attempt to keep in line with the rest of the bourgeois life and his difficulty in facing problems confronting him because of his artificial status. The middle class man in a society of classes, the Tamil clerical servant class three and the attendant economic problems these are the basic elements in the novel that the novelist takes for dissection and analysis. His conclusions may seem radical in a liberal set up but it is the bold point of view of the writer and the interesting manner in which he has written the story that deserves praise.

I will describe Ganesalingan's novel "The Earth and the Star" as a minor classic in Tamil.

### (B) First Novel by Ilankeeran in Book Form

THESTRALUM PUYALUM is the first novel by Ilankeeran that had a Ceylonese setting. His earlier novels were set abroad. This novel was the first of a series of realistic portrayals of contemporary Tamil and Muslim societies in Sri Lanka begun by Ilankeeran after 1956. Later novels such as *Ingirunthu Enge*, *Kalam Marukirathu* and *Avalukku Oru Velai Vendum* have been serialised in newspapers and they have not appeared in book form yet. *Neethyae Nee Kerl* is his second novel in book form.

Ilankeeran is the non-de-plume of Zubair, a Jaffna Muslim who has at different periods lived in South India and Malaysia. He published for a short time a literary magazine, called *Maragatham*, which died a natural death, due to inadequate financial support. Ilankeeran who is presently editing *Janavegam*, is one of the finest political analysts in the Tamil Language. He had earlier edited *Tholilalie*, another political weekly.

Ilankeeran - novelist and journalist - is himself a synthesis of both the old and the new. He is the product of the class struggle and a living force of what may be called *progressivism*. As a marxist writer and a member of the proletarian social startum, Ilankeeran has identified himself as a progressive writer. Some such prior knowledge of this novelist's deepest convictions is necessary to enable readers to approach his work with understanding. Whatever his political beliefs may be, Ilankeeran is far above his contemporaries in South India as a novelist, both in his ideas and in his artistic interpretations of them. He cannot be dismissed, as many others can, as a mere magazine story writer, catering to housewives and to adolescent tastes. He is a serious novelist, with depth of vision. Each novel he has written has shown a steady advance and his development as a mature writer has run parallel to the improvement and progress of the Tamil novel as a literary form.

*Thentralum Puyalum* (The Breeze and the Storm) reveals the attitudes of a Ceylon Tamil writer of ability to certain problems in contemporary society. It may not be a major novel, but it records the acute observations of a serious and progressive thinker.

The message of the novel is imparted through the words and actions of the characters involved. The plot, as a love story, has its interest, but the writer's ideas, his Philosophy of life carry the greatest weight. The resulting stiffness and inadequate characterisation causes the novel to fall short of being an outstanding piece of artistic, creative work. The story centres on a lower middle class family in Jaffna, which is torn apart by conflicting values. Balu, the son, falls in love with a rich and beautiful girl in Colombo, where he is searching for employment. She assures him of her faithfulness, and the passionate relationship that develops results in the girl, Manon's pregnancy. Her parents, on hearing of this, take steps to bring about an abortion and marry her hastily to a cousin possessed of the status, education and wealth that makes him a suitable husband for their daughter. This unexpected betrayal sours Balu's attitude to life, and fallen a victim to both mental and physical disease, he dies. The novel tries to show that the failure of this love is caused by class distinctions, and the differences they create in the mentality of the two opposing classes - the rich and the poor, "high society" and the middle classes. The love affair of Balu and Manon, skilfully handled by the author, begins like a gentle breeze and ends in a storm. Another story runs parallel to this - the love of Balu's sister, Thangam, for a neighbour of low caste, Poopathi. In spite of severe opposition, the attachment deepens between them, giving them the strength to make sacrifices for Balu, and ultimately the courage to venture on marriage. The contrast between the two relationships is emphasised in the novel through Natarajan, a young friend of Balu and Poopathi, who is the mouthpiece for the novelist's progressive ideas. Natarajan is pictured as a mature young man and his comments on events as they take place draw their standarda from the ideals of common humanity and the self-respect of the individual.

Colombo life is seen as opulent and false. In his search for employment, Balu encounters corruption and insincerity. He writes to Poopathi - "A bribe in the pre-requisite for a job, either in the Government or in the Mercantile sector. The so-called "great ones" in Colombo who promised to find me a job have hearts as thin as custard, although their posts and bungalows are big....." Commenting on the alien culture and sophistication that have infiltrated the behaviour and attitudes of Tamils in "high society", the novelist makes his attack through Natarajan: - "The great ones in our Tamil society have their names in Tamil, but their minds are Anglicised. Their dress, style, and manners are Americanised. No wonder the Tamil atmosphere cannot be sensed in their homes. Their children won't call them Amma and "Aiyah" - mother and father - in sweet Tamil. It is amusing to hear them speak at meetings and at public places as the saviours of Tamil culture and civilisation. Balu do you know where the Tamil language has a true development, do you know where the Tamil culture and civilisation are really flourishing? They are in the homes, minds, and lives of the poor Tamils. Certainly not in the bungalows of eminent folk." Sometimes, unfortunately, an excellent satire becomes shrill propaganda: - "The hard earned money won by the toil of labourers and workers is spent on cosmetics imported from the West. This foul capitalist society produces only a superficial, beauty conscious class that overwhelms the country in a useless flood. The world's capitalist countries rob our island of its national wealth" - these are Natarajan's thoughts when on a fine day, he and Poopathy sit in Victoria Park and watch an affluent social class taking its ease.

But social classes are, however, viewed with a critical eye. Balu's discomfort at Colombo's easy manners, and the true reason for it are made clear when he visits Manon's home as a tutor, and is entertained by her with a freedom that would have been impossible to think of in Jaffna. "Balu was hungry, but he did not eat too much at her house; the false pride of the middle classes prevented him from doing so. When he tells Natarajan of Manon's beauty, pride, status, wealth and ability his friend retorts:

You have now left a summer place for a place of winter. You may be glad of it. But be careful the cold might be intense enough to freeze you to death. As Balu becomes more and more fascinated by Manon, he is influenced by her to an extent that brings the novelist's comment - As Balu moved in high society his mentality began to acquire a new shape. It is environment that shapes our ideas and our behaviour, Natarajan is pessimistic about the future of the Balu - Manon relationship "Love may succeed against caste barriers, but it is difficult to go against differences of status. People like us - the Middle Class - are obsessed with caste feeling; people like Manon's parents are obsessed by status consciousness. There is no doubt, however, that it is in the people like us that Ilankeeran finds positive hope for the future. Only those of us in the Middle Class give importance to love, morals, shame, and good behaviour, the great ones do not care for these. They have different meanings for such terms in their dictionaries. They are not worried about all these things. They are interested only in seeing that nothing obstructs their comfort. In the struggle of the poor, the meaning of life is established. There are so many people like us. Their lives are not pleasant or comfortable like the Galle Face Promenade. The storm that blows over you blows over them also. But they are not disheartened. They spend their lives in battle. They fight for food, clothing and shelter. It is the battle for these three that is the history of mankind. And again, many think of life as a mirror, which when broken into pieces cannot be put together again. They become obsessed with this idea. Life is not a mirror, but a river. If swum with confidence, the coast appears. Love can come and go, but life remains...."

Within this general examination of social conflict, particular evils are pinpointed. The difficulties placed in the way of intelligent and sincere young people by the barriers of caste are examined in the Thangam - Poopathi relationship, between a low caste person like Poopathi and a high caste girl like Thangam it is only love that is possible. But they cannot take their love inside the place of marriage ... The wall named "Caste" has not yet crumbled., Poopathi knew well that this love might not, succeed. He expressed the conflict of his emotions to Thangam who replied, "I can forget you only if the moon in the sky

comes down to play on the earth". The dowry system is condemned by Natarajan to Balu: It is not only you Balu, many people are distracted by the dowry. Moneyed people do not worry about it; they have everything that is necessary. The dowry system is one of the many curses in our society. The so called great ones of our community, have they taken any steps to destroy this horrible system, and to free the lamenting lasses from the barricades of adulthood? The dowry is a murderous system, for it breaks the lives of maids. The debate is carried from words to the action of the novel.

When Balu returns to Jaffna, his father upbraids him, and tells him of Thangam's intimacy with Poopathi. Balu reflects on his sister's situation and his own, on the one hand the barrier of caste on the other the barrier of status and wealth. He does not even consider however, whether there exists real compatibility of temperament between Manon and himself. Thangam, on the other hand, never thinks about the feasibility of her marriage to Poopathi, and he is in his turn, unable to forget her, although he is fully aware of the social implications of a marriage with her. Society around them regards them with contempt, and when Poopathi is assaulted by a thug who bears him a personal grudge, the neighbourhood in general think him suitably punished for his illicit love for a high caste girl. Though Thangam is moved to near despair by this event, Poopathi reacts to the experience with courage and without selfpity. In a letter to Balu, he writes "Man has developed in knowledge and culture. The fact that I was attacked that day shows how little our Tamil community has developed. "Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and cry alone", it said. That day I laughed when I was beaten. No one wept or laughed with me. Though I laughed aloud I wept within myself. I do not expect the world to weep with me.

In his search for positives to place against the evils in society, the author finds part of his answer in personal relationships. As confidence in parental wisdom and authority crumbles it is affection between sincere and whole personalities that must replace it "There is no relationship between age and knowledge", says Natarajan. Our parents age does not necessarily imply that

they are wise or correct in their actions. It is against the laws of human justice and civilisation to allow the spread of divisions of caste, kind, and community..... Parents look to caste, kind, and religion when arranging marriages for their children. But the philosophy of conjugal love does not rest on these. It rests on the physical and mental development of the partners their familiarity with domestic matters, compatibility, their love for each other and capacity to live harmoniously together. But in the last resort, if love fails also then the fighter must look within himself for strength to alter the shape of society so that it will allow the freedom and selfrespect of every man: "Though he is of low caste, Poopathi is a noble man, Balu. He is prepared to sacrifice his love in your interest, though it might ruin his life..... You do not have the same heart..... Poopathi's is not like yours. If he had married Thangam, the caste and dowry systems would have received a great blow, for the marriage would announce the progressive world that is developing. Their love and marriage would be a challenge to society as it is and indicate the pattern of coming changes..... Love is only an important aspect of life and not life itself. One could go on living after failing in love, and accomplish many things ...

Only in novels and epics do you find women who sacrifice wealth and comfort for love. In everyday life, seldom can you find one. Even if she shares his miseries and turbulent life with her husband, she will not remain happy and satisfied. She will only deceive herself, and gradually life will become a pretence, hiding disgust. It is foolish to expect those used to comfortable living to live miserable lives for love.

Our society is split into many divisions..... the thoughts, ideas, justice, culture and morals of upperclass society are different from ours. Those who say that love has the power to weld the likes and dislikes of these conflicting classes into one, are mere romanticists, not realists. If their theory is correct, all the poor will begin to love the rich. It is absurd to be angry with love, and meaningless to speak ill of it. The love of people of similar status succeeds while that of others fails. The society of our time with its class distinctions, should radically change and only in a classless society could one sing the song of freedom...."

The novel ends with the marriage of Thangam and Poopathi and the death of her conservative father, from shock. Balu dies too, and Natarajan promises to look after his widowed mother. Progressive ideology thus triumphs at the close. Ilankeeran's style gives his ideas easy and forceful expression. *Thentralum Puyalum* has many faults as a piece of literary craftsmanship, but its virtue is its great sincerity.

### (C) A Note on K. Daniel's "Panchamar"

K. Daniel has brought out two collections of short stories and a novel. Although he has serialised a novel in a magazine earlier, his prize winning *Panchamar* is his first novel in book form. This book is more than a contemporary historical fiction. It is a documented piece describing the history of the representative Jaffna people in the first part of this decade: the oppressed in the Jaffna community rise up in arms to challenge the feudal set up. The happenings behind the cadjan fences in Jaffna are described to us, and we living in other part of Sri Lanka can now see for ourselves what is actually wrong with the Tamil Community.

### (D) A Novel from the Wannai

A very readable first novel in Tamil, on some aspects of a hamlet in the Wannai has come our way. It is fiction, but the surroundings of Thanneer Murippu are so authentically captured, that one could even take it as a case study for sociology, but unfortunately the writer A. Balamanoharan pays little attention to the social or economic aspects of the theme of the novel. He is rather preoccupied with his characters, (particularly the heroine *Pathanjali*), moulded in an idealistic framework than the social aspect of the novel. His heroine true enough, reacts realistically, but the novelist's idealism of a perfect world, without urban associations, prevents her from emerging as a truly 20th century character.

This is not to say, that the novel is bad in itself. We have to consider two factors, before passing judgement: One, this is the first novel of this young writer. Two, it is an offbeat novel in local Tamil writing, because the location and events in the story,

are new to the urban Tamil reader. We must congratulate the author, for not being ashamed (as most new writers influenced by teenage magazines from Tamil Nadu would be, for they write about upper middle class city types) to write about the simple life of jungle dwellers. So, in his first novel itself, the writer had plunged in to the description of a world that is hardly known to the sophisticated amongst us.

The episode where the heroine gets entangled in adultery, is highlighted in the novel; the novelist's effort for the most part, is spent on clearing her, from any possible moral onslaught by an urban society. In fact he is trying to compare her with that bird (*Nilakili*) which does not fly well above ground level. According to Balamanoharan, Pathanjali should have continued to live like that bird, without trying to fly. New knowledge through magazines had been responsible for her guilt complex, says the novelist. He resolves her problem, however by ending the novel on a positive note for her; the child born to her in adultery resembles her husband - so there is no problem.

Nilakili lacks polish although it is readable. This is partly due to the writer's limited vision. Balamanoharan seems to be obsessed with the idea of an ideal pure world where modernity has no place. This is very clear in the novel. Nostalgic yearnings for the past, is a kind of idealism and not progressive in the light of modern happenings right round the world, where youth plays an an important part. Nilakili is actually a halfway house between South Indian way of sentimental writing - Ahilan, Parthasarathy, Varathurnan - and local sentimental writing. Sentiment in itself is not a bad thing, but it should be genuine and should be in its right place. But these are shortcomings, which the author can easily overcome soon. Instead of being moved by the behaviour of the characters he himself has created, Balamanoharan can benefit, if he sees the motivation of his characters in a social background. After all, is it not true that social setups account for the peculiarities of social relationships? This novel has received an award for 1973.

### (E) Five Novels:

What is known as the novella or novelette has become a convenient genre for most writers in Tamil here, as the short story

proves to be a much demanding art form than the novel. It requires meticulous craftsmanship to write a neat good short story as it has got to be a depiction of a single experience or incident; and as such the short story has its limitations. Its canvas is not broad enough to accommodate the complexity of modern life in toto. So in Tamil too, novellas have gained currency. S. Yoganathan has written five such novellas. These are now collected together in a book form. Ten years ago while being a student in the University, he brought out a collection of short stories. Yoganathan is now a divisional Revenue Officer.

*Oli namakku vendum (We need light)* is the theme running through in Yoganathan's five novellas, although there is not a single story by that title. What the actual titles translated into English are; *Twenty years and three Desires*, *A word called Comradeship*, *Janaki*, *That day should come* and *Thiruchitampalam*. These were written between 1963 and 1972. *A word called Comradeship*, is being translated in world languages under the UNESCO scheme. *Twenty years and three Desires* is to be published in Sinhala very soon.

The sixties brought into the fore a host of Tamil medium graduates who excelled in the field of writing. Some of them are very prominent: Late S. Kathirgamanathan, S. Yoganathan A. Kailasanathan, K. Gunrajah, A. Rajagopal, A. Shanmugathas, K. Navasothy and Muthu Sivaganam. But not all writers were alive to contemporary or were they capable of comprehending their immediate environment and society. Most singled out varsity life as a separate experience and indulged in cynical or pessimistic herbourings. Undergraduates like Yoganathan and Kathiragamanathan however saw Varsity life as something similar to the larger life outside. The conflicts within the campus were actually conflicts in society itself. Yoganathan understood this and brought in typical characters in his writings to prove his point.

Discouraging self-centredness as part of the Individualistic trend and emphasising the need for collective struggle to bring in Social justice; need for educational reforms to suit the changing society, the urgency to mould conservative behaviour - there are the underlying themes in Yoganathan's novellas.

*Janaki*: A Brahmin Girl throws away conservatism aside to adapt herself to earn a living not only for herself but her widowed mother as well. The vociferous brother of her had already thrown away his rituals, to become a cleaner in a lorry. Janaki had to learn what life was by joining a nurses' Training School where her mentor was a girl from the depressed class. If conservatism and hypocrisy are attacked in this story in *Twenty years and three Desires*, the writer is bringing in through a dialogue between different temperamental people in the campus a consciousness for social reality. The characters are all typical varsity characters. Dammica (daughter of a middle class peasant) Sumanadasa (son of an old woman who earns a living by working in a building site) Dharmapala (a son of a farmer) and Sivakumar (son of a petty shopkeeper) represent different social strata, race, temperament and ideas. Self-centredness and insular thinking meet tragic ending particularly when broader and united effort is required to bring good to the under privileged. This is obvious in the novella. But, here is the writer's analytical realism as Raymond Williams would have meant it and not mere photographic realism. The solidarity theme is recurring in the other story called *A word called Comradeship*. As said earlier the need for more realistic educational policy (this has come now) is called for in the fourth novella, *That day should come*. The last novelle *Thiru Chittampalam* is again calling for positive attitude towards life and discourages self pity. Yoganathan's book is well timed. It carries a foreword by Dr. K. Kalasapathy. A prize for 1973 literary award had been given for this collection.

#### (F) The Indian Connection

A short novel *Veedyarukku* by Kavaloor Rasathurai throws much light on the comical situation of the Tamils living in the metropolis. It is comical at the surface but a pointer on the calculative business-like mind of the average Tamil, be he Indian or Ceylonese. It is common knowledge that a very high percentage of the Tamil speaking Ceylonese and Indians (both Nationals and others) live outside the North and East of Sri Lanka.

A Jaffna family shares a house with an Indian family, owned by a Sinhala Mudalali somewhere in Colombo. A father, a married



son whose family is in Jaffna and a spinster daughter represent the local population while the TRP holders comprise a father mother and a bachelor son. For fear of impending threat to leave the country forcibly, the Indian family hastens in to a hideout on a day when the Immigration Department boys make a surprise visit at their dwelling. Exploiting this awkward moment the Jaffna - born Tamil brethren try to grab the situation to their own end, all in the grand national way. Alas, the Sinhala Mudalali, real business mind he is holds supreme to the utter frustration of the master minded Dravidian Tamil speaking clans. At the bottom of it, it is a class warfare than anti-Tamil or Anti-Indian. That is the storyline, but it matters less. The novel in its essence is an expose of the fast functioning Pettah and Panchikawatie trade.

The Indian connection as one may call it - an unfavourable Cinematic cliché - is dramatized through the protagonist the Nadar of the infamous Pettah domain. The clumsiness of the typical Jaffna household is also told in style. Also pointed out is the vanity of the capital accumulating Sinhala land lord. It is true that these people are only representative and not universal but there is no malice and a fine sense of humour pervades right along the description. It is a fine story of a Tamil seeing his own people in funny situations. Rasathurai makes his comments on the Tamil speaking Ceylonese through a Sinhala politician, a member of the CMC. "When we refer to the Tamils we first think of the Thosai. I know that the *Thosai Kade culture* is not your culture. Kurakkan Pittu, Odial Pittu, Payasam, Paniharam and other delicacies cannot be found in Colombo. If, you people can run Hotels like the Chinese hotels and serve Jaffna food, how nice it would be? If you run a Kool Kade alone, you can reap profits. Your writer Alagu Subramaniam declares that the Kool is the most delicious food in the world in one of his short stories. Without doing such a thing you have pawned your economy, culture and literature to the South Indians and feel fully satisfied with that: You Jaffna Tamils living in Colombo are a worse lot. Your individuality, culture, eating habits etc have been pawned to them. We have heard of the Mudalali exploiting the labourer, the imperialists exploiting the under-developed countries. But have you heard of any country exploiting another country in the name of language and culture? The TRP Nadars never brought wealth from

their country. They earned this exploiting and deceiving the people of this country. Like religion conscience is also a myth. Conscience is only an archstone to uplift the religion. The subconscious mind is actually the voice of fear and not that of god". The Sinhala politician upbraids the Jaffna son when the latter called on him complaining the Nadar. Some positive side of the Indian Nadars is also seen. The Sinhala land lords prefer to rent out their houses to people like Santhana Nadar, for they would give the key money and advances and also pay their rents on due dates.

The author in the process of story telling has also added a few truisms, which do not stand out or deter the smooth reading of the novel. As for instance; Ethics and codes are generally in contrivance with human nature. Despite moral preachings by the sages and great men the world is disintegrating in the field of human conduct. These values are really man's ideals. The burden of life smothers them. Orderly life or a life lived in good conduct is actually a luxury. If the human race could be compared to a flowing river, then the Tamil race is not dynamic."

*Kavaloor Rasathurai's Veedu Yarukku* is interesting reading fare; it is also a clinical revelation of the unscrupulous business world dominated by the Indian connection. A dramatic version of this novel was also staged in Colombo.

### (G) Inter-Racial Love and Marriage

*Arul Subramaniam's Avarkalukku Vayathu Vanthu Viddathu* (They have come of age) is a splendidly written novel by a new writer. It gives excellent reading fare as a novel showing the gradual development of characters and their relationships with each other, besides it is also a progressive piece of writing on the theme of national integration.

A Tamil youth, Ariyam from Trincomalee, conditioned by the local political climate there, comes to Colombo only to realise that the Sinhala people are not bad as all that. He develops an attachment-both physical and platonic-towards Monica at whose house he is boarded. He marries the girl eventually, but is in a dilemma as to whether he should break the news to his parents, whom he dares to disobey. It is this struggle between conviction and commitment and the attachment and obligations

to his parents that worries him. He is not irrational as to take hasty decisions. It is his slow process of both keeping his wife and winning over his conservative, hard-core parents to his side that the novel describes. I will not be doing justice to the novel by merely telling what the novel is about. Readers themselves should read it to see in what a grand manner he has written his realistic social piece. Trincomalee has produced an outstanding writer and his first novel is a major contribution to Tamil fiction.

As Dr. K. Sivathamby has written in his foreword, this book too should be translated into Sinhala for the benefit of the majority of the readers, specially to show that not all the Tamil people are cast in the same mould. Those who scorn at our local Tamil writers that their writing are merely propagandist, will have to sit back and review their thoughts, as people like Arul Subramaniam are writing in such a way that structure and theme are inseparable in their creative writings. Arul Subramaniam has the naive, unspoilt freshness in him and this helps him to write his stories without any inhibitions. His is a realistic tone. As a contemporary writer he sees the inner realism rather than the obvious.

## II SHORT STORIES

### (A) Velli Pathasaram

"Ilankayarkone" was one of the earliest innovators of Tamil short story writing in Ceylon. The author, hidden by this pseudonym was the late N. Sivagnanasundram, a Divisional Revenue Officer. His short stories were published in reputed journals like *Manikodi*, *Sooravali*, *Sakthi*, *Saraswathi* and *Kalaimagal* of South India. Ilankayarkone was essentially a formalist and some of his pieces like *Under the shade of the Thalai Tree* and *The Cousin*, were beautifully written expositions of humanism. Humanism that was violent but gentle in its expression was the characteristic note in his writing. The collection Velliapathasaram consists of fifteen stories. *Anula Maria Madalena*, *Menaka*, *Thai*, *Yalpadi* and *Sigiriya* are stories that have nothing to do with the contemporary society of the Tamils in Ceylon. *Thalainilalilae (Under the shade*

*of the thalai Tree)* impresses because of the structure it has assumed in giving poetical expression to the author's sentiment towards the main character - a little girl of twelve. *Machchal (The Cousin)* is a narration written in the first person about a youngster and gives an account of his family history in relation to his twenty year old cousin. The title story, *Vellipathasaram (The Silver Anklet)* describes the romantic attachment of a newly married couple. This story seems to have fascinated many readers as seen from the appraisal written about it by some. *Manithakurangu (The Human ape)* deals with the humanism and open-heartedness of an ugly man who happens to marry a very beautiful and lascivious woman. *Nadodi (The Wanderer)* is a satire on the Tamil pundits who rest on their laurels and are enraged whenever any avant garde experimentation is undertaken by their contemporaries. The progressive ideas of the writer is reflected in the story. Well written with lively colloquial dialogue, *Anathai (The Orphan)* is a satire on sophisticated women who have the licence even to give birth before marriage and to discard the child.

### (B) Eelathu Parisuk Kathaigal.

This is a collection of nine short stories, and they were at one time or another awarded prizes in competitions conducted both by local and foreign journals. Not all the prize winning stories are included in this collection and this is representative of one section or school of writers only.

*Pakkuvam (Puberty)* by A. Muttulingam is in my opinion the best story in this anthology. It is not only written in a compact and coherent form, but also deals with a delicate and new theme. The story is simple - the attainment of maturity of a young but unattractive girl immediately after her younger sister had preceded her in this biological change of life. Because of an inferiority complex and because of the attractiveness and popularity of her younger sister, this girl has been developing a mood of depression. But a man comes to her rescue in comforting her psychologically - he describes her as a pretty girl and requests her to be attentive to her appearance. The medical probability of this quick transition in her mental and physical growth is left to be questioned and yet the writer deserves praise for his

suggestive undertones which make the story artistically convincing. This story was written in 1960 and it still holds its place as one of the outstanding stories written by a Ceylon Tamil writer. *Thiru Senthooran's Urimaienge? (Where are the Rights?)* vividly describes the failure of an estate labourer to obtain citizenship rights by registration. The colloquial dialogue employed and neat and realistic characterisation make this story a convincing one. A new comer to writing, Thiru Senthooran shows promise. *Malaiyum Maduvum (The Mountain and the Mouse)* by Sahidevi Kandiah, though written in sentimental strain, depicts the inconsistencies in the attitudes of people of different social status although they may be physically and intellectually attracted to one another.

I do not know how the film *Susan Slade*, impressed the writer of *Ithaya Kumural (The Throb of the Heart)* but the story is similar to the film. A mother and a daughter conceive and give birth at the same time. The mother's child dies at childbirth. The daughter's child becomes the mother's child as the daughter has no legal husband. The daughter cannot claim rights as mother for her own son for he goes as her brother. This precarious situation is described by the young writer, Chempian Chelvan, using the flashback technique. Based on the 1958 mis-adventure in the name of communal riots, *Nandawathi* written by *Navam* sardonically condemns racial hatred and those who hold dear to one may also be afflicted by this disease. *Anuranachalam - Bhikkhu* turned Tamil teacher - kills his girls *Nandawathi*, accidentally - (She had once saved his life) thinking that he was taking the life of somebody else. Although this story describes certain improbabilities in magazine story fashion, the underlying message is of some value. *Thedi Vantha Kangal (The Eyes that came in search for me)* by *Uthayanan*, also describes the sacrifice of a Sinhalese girl for the love she had for a blind Tamil man. She becomes a victim of the riots because she had loved a Tamil man. Here too the incidents are in magazine story fashion. *Marumanam (Re-marriage)* by *Sitpi* is also a typical magazine story with all its sentimentality and melodrama of love and the marriage of two people of different castes, while *Urimaikkahayir (Life for the rights)* by *Muttu Sivagnanam* is reportage of another incident during the

riots and emergency: *Nattukku Iruvar (Two for the State)* by *Chengataaliyan* is a piece of propaganda writing with a motivation of a political ideology. There is hardly any element or aspects of short story writing in this.

All in all, this volume indicates where a few of Ceylon's Tamil writers stood in short story writing way back in the early sixties.

### (C) Poattik Kathaikal

There are nine prize winning stories in this collection. The story that was awarded the first prize, *Poo (Flower)* by *M. A. Rahuman* is an exercise in filmic style trying to record the subjective mood of a character in the monologue technique. The structural pattern of the story is convincingly organic and it ends in a symbolic analogy. It questioningly challenges the propriety of a married woman's interest in another man though her marriage was the result of a love affair. *Rahuman's* story is remarkable and one expects the same excellence to show in all his future writings.

*Unarchikkappal (Beyond Emotion)* by *Chempian Chelvan*, lacks the sustained unity or coherence of the single idea he wishes to put forward, although it ravingly elaborates the egoistic hatred of a son for his father and the submissiveness of the ego in him at the end when his father dies. The writer's style is forceful and metaphorical. *Anna (Brother)* by *Sithampara Pathini* describes the angelic attitude of two people - a tutor and a women student - towards love. The story is a straight forward one though the technical device is hackneyed. *Indo - China Bai Bai* by *Manimekalai* is written in O, Henry fashion and ridicules the follies of extreme nationalism, while *R. Balakrishnan's Velvi (Malediction)* touchingly describes the patriotic and nationalistic feelings of *Kepettipola*. Inopposite images and free use of synonyms betray a laborious style; this is particularly so in the earlier part of the story. *Vehuli (Navets)* by *Maruthamunai Majeed* is also melodramatic but it does not show any signs of imposed pre-conception. The main character is a prototype of one of *Jeyakandan's* story. (He is one of the outstanding short story writers from

South India). The fervent desire of an innocent odd job-man for a girl who is unapproachable is described here. *Neerodai* (Stream) by S. Paramasamy is an essay on alien inspired nostalgia and the rootlessness of indigenous people on their own soil and intrinsic culture. The idea is a reflective one but the atmosphere and tone of the story is rather vulgar and crude and it is artlessly handled. *Uruthi* (Firmness) by Gopathi is an anecdote of the firmness of a man in respect of his opposition to a re-marriage encouraged by his mother while *Yarukku Perumai* (For whom is the honour) by Suseelan is a narrative of a young man's noble act in a precarious situation.

This collection was symbolic of the trends in writing that prevailed among the younger group of writers in the sixties.

#### (D) Yoganathan Kathaikal

Though by conviction Yoganathan is a Socialist Realist, he is more a subjective writer, probing the minds of characters rather than reporting objectively the transitional conditions of his society. But he is not an Utopian writer failing to gather material for his stories from real life. Yoganathan shows a genuine willingness to experiment in form of style. This is what is evident in *Yoganathan Kathaikal*. In this collection there are seven stories. Many of these defy the conventional formula-patterned structure of a short story.

In his story, *The Artist*, Yoganathan indicates the character traits of pseudo artists who refuse to see and understand the sordid aspects of life around them. *Cholakam* (The Day season in the North) vividly describes the poverty and gloom in the lives of a fisher family in Jaffna. Another story describes the reactions of a pregnant teacher towards her pupil in lyrical prose. Here again the symbols are appropriate and aesthetic. The interior monologue technique is successfully tried out in the story which pictures the last phases of Ambapali's (the courtesan's) life and her eventual devotion to the Buddha. *Colours* and *The rhythms are varied* are excellent exercises in picturing in words the rapid streams of thoughts of characters who are romantically involved.

Yoganathan's lyrical styles shows his mastery of words. There are however instances where due to over-enthusiasm perhaps his words remain mere rhythm-fillers.

La Sa Ramamirtham and Mowni are two South Indian writers whose style is akin to Joyce and Kafka respectively; Yoganathan's stories show a close affinity to the writings of the Indians as far as the technique and morbidity content are concerned.

#### (E) Thoni

*Thoni* (Boat) is collection of short stories, that won a Sahitya Mandalaya Prize for Tamil fiction. Its author V. A. Rasaratnam is a realistic story teller and has a special knack for descriptive writing with a sense of poetical diction. Harmonious blending of form and content in the sense the *New Critics* profess, is evident in most of his stories. A few stories in this volume can be considered outstanding, if one takes into consideration the period in which they came to be written. The fifteen stories in this collection were written in 1951 and 1954.

Besides the characteristic rural flavour in his stories, the writer has qualities like precision, economy and subtlety in his prose style. He is not a photographic realist but an artist with a true sense of penetration who carefully records both external and internal traits of character and environment. The essential strength of his stories is his characterisation. He has been inspired by Anton Chekov. More than physical description or emphasis on plots and action, his stories concentrate on character-development. By saying this, I do not stress that his collection is an altogether successful harvest, for there are a good many stories which are commonplace in treatment and content, but yet the overall impression is satisfying.

#### (F) Vee

*Vee* is a one letter word in Tamil and may be translated as a pregnant flower. The author, S. Ponnuthurai, has also published two novels - *Thee* (Fire) and *Sadangu* (Rites) He is often described by Tamil Literary critics as a good contemporary Tamil prose stylist in Ceylon. But he is not merely a stylist. He is a talented writer too. Although sex has been his

favourite theme and is often preoccupied with it, this collection is a better representation of his other interests as a short story writer. His stories are something to be reckoned with. He is a serious writer. I do not propose to make an exhaustive survey of his stories. I confine myself to a few passing comments on the stories in this collection.

*Theare (The Charict)* spars the entire old age of a happy-go-lucky man in nostalgic flavour. It is symbolic and depicts the life pattern of an average Jaffna man in his own surroundings. I regard this story the best in the collection. *The Arrow* may be described as a historical story depicting the re-awakening of sex in Somadevi. This is the author's fancy. The Unit is a sardonic piece satirizing half-baked politicians and intellectuals, but the essential background is pictured in an authentic manner. A story with a rural background, depicting the chastity of a devoted wife, is *The Fence*. *Eera* is the Tamil title of a story portraying the mental process of a widow - a Muslim - immediately after the funeral of her husband. The Muslim dialect is beautifully brought out in this story. A story written in the Batticaloa dialect is *The Price*. Here again the undercurrent of thought of a chaste woman who sues her husband for a divorce is vividly captured. *The Black Spot* is a story with an anti-climax. The remaining stories are different in tempo and philosophical in tone. There is a story for each of the four religious beliefs: Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Islam. As a whole they are noteworthy because his approach is daring and bold.

#### (G) Nan Sahamattaen

If all literature is a statement on life as critic Mervyn de Silva calls it, late Kathirgamanathan's story *Vietnam: the holy pronouncements of your own angels* (In Tamil: *Vietnam Unathu Devathaikalina Deva Vaku*) is such a human statement. It is a statement expressed through the character, a patriotic Vietnamese girl condemning the American presence in Saigon and the continuity of the Vietnamese tradition of resentment to any form of imperialism, Japanese, French or American.

If nationalism begets internationalism, then a clear example is the attitude of writers, who emerge from the narrow confines of nationalism, when that nationalism has served its purpose of creating patriotism. Kathirgamanathan had this attitude when he wrote the story mentioned. That was the last story he ever wrote, for he died at the age of thirty. A posthumous collection of three short stories and one translation has been released. Kathirgamanathan was a major talent among the first group of Tamil medium graduates, many of whom took to writing and he was one of the important short story writers in Tamil. One of his short stories was among the five Tamil short stories selected by the Sri Lanka Sahitya Mandalaya to be published by the UNESCO in forty two languages, and this story called, *A Village boy goes to school*, is included in the collection under review. Kathirgamanathan was awarded the Sahitya Mandalaya prize for his earlier collection of short stories called *Kottum Pani* (the Falling Dew). Kathirgamanathan worked as a journalist in a Tamil evening daily and latterly as a CAS officer in the public service.

*A Village boy goes to school* is an autobiographical piece as the author himself admitted. Although tending to be naturalistic in his description of the village Karaveddy, the author had written a fine realistic piece on feudal village school set up and the inner struggle of an emerging progressive youngster against a malicious caste concerned teacher symbolising the decay of the old order. The comment is implicit and the portrayal moving.

The third story in this collection, depicts in sympathy the plight and determination of a servant girl to liberate the curbing imposed by the mistress of the house. More than a mere protest story it deals in subtle manner the psychological workings in the minds of the servant girl. The translation from English of the Urudhu story by *Krishan Chand* relates the Bengal famine of 1942. *I cannot die* by the famous Indian writer is considered by many as one of the finest novellas in world literature. The translation by Kathirgamanathan is facile and neat.

Like all progressive writers, Kathirgamanathan too had an ideology, but he was not overwhelmed by it. He had the innate feeling for the form and a fine sense of subtlety. He experimented in style and structure, although the short story for him was a genre with limitations. He had all the potentialities in him to blossom into one of our major novelists. But death robbed him away from us, It is a sad story.

#### (H) Puthuyugam Pirakirathu

The late *M. Thalayasingam* had been toying with the idea of spiritual reformation for sometime. His book *Pore Parai* (The war Drum) - elucidated his point of view. As a forerunner to this book, Thalayasingam brought out a collection of short stories called *Puthu Yugam Pirakirathu* (A New Age is Being Born). Whatever the author's philosophy is, one can enjoy reading his observations of the society in which he lived. There are eleven stories in this collection. The theme in most stories is sex but it is treated as a symbol and also as a natural part of life that has to be enjoyed without inhibitions.

His story *Veelchi* (The Fall) in a way introduces the content of the rest of the stories in this collection. It describes the helplessness of an angry young man (not the western type) against odds that circumvent his daily routine. The man in the story attempts to emerge from the sullen and depraved tastes of his time but he fails to do so. His attempt actually results in a showdown - he becomes one among the philistines. It is not only a fall of an intellectual to the level of a philistine, but it is also the fall of *Atman* brought about by modern conditions.

In the title story a leftwinger (whom his wife accuses as 'your progress has killed our god') puts the blame on God for a personal calamity. What the author is trying to show here is that just as much the end is important, the means too should be important,

The story *Thedal* (The Quest) is an allegory. The later realisation of a coward who faces himself for the first time. He searched within himself but only to realize that he had he had not lived at all.

*Kottai* (The Fortress) is a symbolic piece of writing - clash of new ideas with old values, difficulties encountered in establishing new ideas, the ultimate failure of individuals striking against the hardcore of society.

A story called *Irattham*, (Blood) depicts the resentment of a young man brought up on Jaffna culture. The desire to face the truth with all its nakedness is what he wants to do.

In *Koilhal* (Temples) he speak about the ideal that will transcend death. *Pirathial* (The Outsider) is a story of an outsider seen inside out. In *Tholuhai* (Worship) sexual intercourse is treated as a symbol to illustrate divine creation. In *Sabatham* (The Promise) he treats sex as an obstacle to attain the ultimate purpose of life.

*Veli* (Space) is just the opposite of what *Veelchi* says. Here man is merging with the Supreme. The author has tried to show the failure of an age of reason and institutionalism.

According to Thalayasingam overindulgence in sex brings only V. D. but overindulgence in reason alone, shunning every other human feeling brings about a world wide catastrophe. The hero in "*Veli*" is Velantic so he remains calm. Remaining calm is the best way of showing protest and revolt and it is also a reunion with *Brahman* believed Thalayasingam.

#### (I) Man Vasanai and Kadal

S. Velupillai (Su. Vae) and K. Sakkalingam (Sokkan) share between them the prizes for short stories. The former's *Manvasanai* (The Fragrance of the Soil) and the latter's *Kadal* (The Sea) are good examples of short stories in the conventional style-meaning their content is not daring or in the round and their technique is in the classical form: Cautious and didactic themes which would give contentment to teachers particularly (those educated only in the mother tongue) of the earlier generation. I am not suggesting that *Su Vae* and *Sokkan* are not modern: but because they are modern in this decade of phenomenal social changes all over the world, their writings leave me unresponsive. But a strong point they hold is that they write well (neat classical prose) with attention paid to unities of the short story.

## (J) Kuralum Kathaiyum

Books for the Juveniles in Tamil are in terribly short supply in our country and books available are not totally suitable for the young people and it cannot be said that the books written cater to different age groups.

In recent times however, two books - one called *Oadiponavan* by K. Navasothy and the other entitled *Kuralum Kathaiyum* by N. Mahesan have demanded attention. Both have moral overtones and both are meant for children between ten and twelve years. The first is a short fiction, and the other is a collection of stories using the *Thirukural* as its source. In other words a few couplets from the famous classic is interpreted by way of stories.

Love without selfishness, sweet words, duties of a father and the son's duty in turn, hospitality and remembrance of one's past good deed in the midst of that one's later bad deeds are the themes in the latter collection. The intention of the writer is laudable and he succeeds in imparting morality to the young without much ado.

## (K) Kadavilarum Manitharum

Bhavanis has for her themes the romantic and sexual strings that vibrate the hearts of young couples, and lovers to be. A striking note however is her sincere effort to put in plain words, the undertones and hidden aspirations that often ripple and bubble around in the sub-conscious mind. She does not hesitate to portray such phantasmagoric explorations of the mind. The situation as well as the characterization in the stories create an impression that the writer is indifferent to the prevailing social set up and barriers.

She attracts the attention of the readers by startling them with highly shocking depiction of characters, who attempt to defy the conventional social beliefs and morals of the Tamils. In this sense, Bhavanis collection of short stories *Kadavilarum Manitharum* is a stirring and provocative attempt at creative writing by a Ceylon Tamil Woman.

There are fourteen stories in this collection. A story called, *Anbin Vilai* tells the love and marriage of a brother and a sister

to each other, not knowing that they were of the same blood and skin. When they came to know that there had been a sinful mistake, the wife takes her own life, leaving the daughter with the husband's brother. The daughter finds her peace in society highly challenging, but the lover of the daughter comes to her rescue after hurdling several obstacles. *Mannipara* is another provocative story which deals with the sexual relationship between two lovers on the eve of the marriage of the girl to another man. *Saria Thapa* is a story of a married woman who hated her husband and child. She fell in love with a friend of her husband. She undergoes an emotional struggle whether to elope with her lover or stay with the child and husband. Set in the same strain but incorporating a more convincing theme is the story called *Kappu*. An ugly woman, who happened to travel with a beautiful married woman and another male passenger develops a hatred towards the attractive woman. The male passenger not knowing that the latter is married, begins to make advances to the married lady and fails. The ugly woman then realises that her ugliness has protected her from unscrupulous passengers like the one who travelled with the two women.

There is a realistic setting in the story called *Vidivai Noaki*. The rest of the stories are melodramatic presentation of lackneyed themes. However objectionable the contents of her stories may be, one cannot dismiss the fact that there is unity in the form.

## (L) Pathukai

Dominic Jeeva edits *Mallikai*, a literary monthly. This collection by him consists of eleven stories. He has also brought out two other collections *Thannerum Kannerum* and *Salayainthirupam*. His themes are the problems of down-trodden and proletarian society. Caste differences, social discriminations, capitalism, literary escapism, bourgeois sophistication are all condemned severely by him. But the stories also have more altruistic and humanitarian themes. Depicting transitional social conditions with what may be described as photographic realism will not have any permanent value unless the depiction has a more profound and underlying universalistic appeal. That Dominic Jeeva has. He has established through his new collection that he is an efficient craftsman too.



The main features of this collection may be listed as follows:- depiction of benevolent or philanthropical values; portrayal of characters, who are ordinary and who belong to the lowliest of the low; description of regionalistic surroundings-Jaffna; consciousness of a truly Ceylonese Tamil culture as different from that of South India; employment of ordinary language - colloquial - to give a true colour to the realistic picture that is depicted; use of colourful and forceful figurative language; adoption of an easy and lucid style; philosophizing subtlety of themes; compact and coherent structure.

The story entitled *Kahitha Kadu (Jungle of papers)* impressed me most. This story is a satire on pseudo-intellectuals, but the author does not clearly present his intentions, in fact giving both sides of intellectualism - the tragic and the sublime.

*Kaivandi (Push Cart)* tells a story of a union of two families brother's and sister's who had been segregated on account of pseudo-superiority claimed by the in-laws. This union is made possible by the interference of a latrine cooly. The title story *Pathukai (Shoes)* tells of an incident in the life of a cobbler and the author should be congratulated for his characterisation of the cobbler. *Vaikarisi (Last Acts of Cremation)* is yet another study in human relationships and the plausible and psychological treatment given it makes it a convincing piece of writing. *Kurali Viththai (Black Magic)* ends in somewhat magazine story fashion but it is enlivened by the beauty of colloquial speech and description of characters. The same is true of *Vandi Chavari (Cart Race)*. The remaining stories are commonplace. One story entitled *Manathathuvam (Psychology)* is written in an epistolary manner and describes the love affair of two middle class characters. *Papachalukai (Concession to a Sin)* is another story depicting caste differences. *Nagarathin Nilal (Shadow of the City)* tells readers about the tragic life a rickshawalla leads. *Mirugathanam (Animosity)* shows a picture of humanistic and inhuman love between a stray dog and a dead boy. The last story *Thalakavadi (Rhythmic Vehicle)* may not be described as short story in the true sense of the term. It is more satirical reportages of the experience a bus conductor undergoes on his daily route.

In the last analysis *Pathukai* is a successful anthology.

#### (M) Daniel Kathaikal

Like Dominic Jeeva, Daniel too is a member of the working class. He has shown his cleverness as a successful craftsman in a few of his stories. In the collection under review plausibility in the treatment of psychology, where it occurs, is lacking in stories like *Maanam* (Shame). In *Thanneer* (Water) for instance, he apparently oversimplifies issues and presents a biased picture of characters and situations. *Asai* (The Recalling) is written in the first person singular. It describes certain major incidents in the later life of a hemophrodite, in relation to his place in society as a man lacking manliness. The writer tries to show that such unfortunate persons could only serve as pimps. This character also gives an account of the pathetic experience a young prostitute undergoes in a brothel and the writer attempts to create a sympathetic plea for her, by his characterization. All this sounds sentimental.

*Uravum Vilayvum* (Contact and Consequence) is modelled on a story called *Ponnagaram*, written by the late *Puthumai Piththan* (generally recognised as one of the best short story writers in Tamil). But Daniel's story is better in its treatment. In Puthumai Piththan's story, a poor young wife sells her body in the dark to a passerby for a few annas, to buy medicine for her dying husband. In Daniel's story, the married woman pretends to flirt with a fellow passenger in a train and steals a sum of nearly hundred rupees, but she takes her own life, when she finds that her husband had died of his ailment in the train itself. In both the stories, the motives are to save their husbands at the expense of losing their chastity. False modesty or sex do not play their part in these stories. *Maanam* (Shame) is written in a manner to shock readers. A depressed class woman, almost nude, removes her only rag in public to help a high caste woman, who had accidentally fallen into the well in her compound; and in doing so, she herself slips in and falls into the well, while the other woman reaches the top. The writer is underlining his interpretation that the high caste woman does not have the heart to disrobe herself to save her rescuer, because she is concerned about shame and prestige. This is a one sided depiction of character. *Valli* and *Marana Nilal*

(Shadow of Death) too attract the attention of the reader while the rest are commonplace.

Daniel's first collection of short stories is not altogether unconvincing. A change over to the study of human problems in universalistic vision, not necessarily proletarian might be welcomed. Daniel shows much promise. But he has to free himself from a lopsided notion of sex in our society. He has subsequently brought out a collection called *Ulagankal Vellapaduhinrana* (The Worlds are being Won over).

### (N) Yuga Piravesam

Pulolyoor K. Sathasivam writes to point out the inner realism of social patterns. He wants to bring realism in content by analysing the true factors for a social conflict. So his stories are directed in this sphere. He achieves his purpose with remarkable ease in form. There are eleven stories in a collection called *Yuga Piravesam* (Entry into a Yuga).

Marital relationship and other relationships are synonymous with economic relationships. Also the relationships between working class people and the affluent lot are not always a happy meeting ground — they often lead to frustration, yet feeling for fellow beings can transcend class or social distinctions. These may seem contradictory but they are truisms as revealed by the author.

Then there is the subtle support for family planning. The inevitability of changes is suggested in another story. Ignorance and superstition prevailing in the estates lead to the discriminate treatment of the plantation workers laments the writer. Maturity in conjugal relationships, optimism in tackling problems and decided course of action to wipe out social ills are reflected in the stories.

There is a kind of classical approach in writing these stories — the structure is identified with the theme to give an aesthetic flavour to the basic relationships among all sorts of people. This merit carries the writer to a leading place among our Tamil short story writers. Young Sathasivam works as an assistant medical practitioner in the hill country. He may be described as one of the best talents to flower in the seventies. His stories have won acclaim in South India too.

## III. POETRY

### (A) Eli Koodu

They called it poetry - new poetry. Whatever its name it is a new form of expression and the age old Tamil cannot be an exception to the moving designs of the times. Fluidity is the essence of tradition, and the inevitability has to come even in Tamil poetry. So the new poetry or free verse with a purpose, to pin - point paradoxes in Social life. The quick quips serve to register deeply in the minds of the reader.

*Dickwella Kamal* is one of the new jet - sets, who arrange words in that order to bring about images in flashes. The images themselves are self explanatory and serve as social comments. The thirty two quips he has written to various journals on these lines are compiled into one little collection *Elikoodu* (The Rat Cage) The immediacy and contemporaneity in them, outwit any caustic critical observation in formalistic terms. Erudite critics, who shunned this kind of attempt will have to now rethink about new poetry, if collections like Kamal's continue to make a frontal attack on them. What's in a form. If necessary content itself becomes new form. Subsequently, new collections called *Porikal* (compiled by Anbu Jawaharsha) *Aruvadai* (Poonahar Mariathas) *Polikal* (N. Logendralingam) and *Sinhala Theevukore Palam Amaipoam* (a release of the South Indian periodical *Yean*, including Ceylonese new poets) have been brought out. Most of the local journals give priority to this kind of poetic attempt now. More than two hundred new writers have come to be known through this new poetry. As Murugaiyan has said earlier serious poetry criticism is necessary to put them on the right track.

### (B) Ho Chi Minh Kavithaikai

Ho Chi Minh's prison notes have been translated into Tamil for the first time. A Ceylonese poet and a pioneer progressive writer in our country, K. Ganesh has beautifully rendered the poems written by the great Vietnamese, when the latter was in prison in South China in 1922 - 43. Written originally in Chinese and translated into English by Eileen Palmer these prison poems have now reached the Tamil reader. Rated high even by the

Chinese literary critics, these poems are exquisite even in translation. Ideas and emotions are inseparable in Ho's poems.

According to facts gathered from an article written by Dr. Kailasapathy, a quarter century ago, M. Izmat Pasha had translated into Tamil the notes of Julius Fucick, the Czech who was murdered by the Nazis in 1942 for his patriotism and communistic beliefs. This book too is in the same vein as Ho's prison notes. Even Oscar Wilde's prison notes had been translated into Tamil. In Sri Lanka, the late A. N. Kandasamy had done some useful translations. K. Ganesh and H. M. P. Mohideen are others in the field. Mr. Ganesh is presently interested in introducing South East Asian writings in Tamil. We understand that he is currently working, translating Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Hungarian and Sinhala writing.

Ho Chi Minh's story and the Vietnamese history are recorded in the introduction to the book. Ganesh is an unassuming writer who is respected by the young and old for his sincere and honest views on the arts. In this book, the Vietnamese culture as found in Ho Chi Minh has been introduced into Tamil and that has now enriched Tamil culture. So Ganesh has served as a bridge to merge these cultures.

### (C) Akkini Pookal

Love of humanity, the urge to see a new world emerging and determination to wipe out social injustices through collective efforts seem to be the characteristic traits of the young poet *Eelavanan*, whose collections of new poems (new in the sense contemporary) has just been released. His skill of selectivity, his choice of words, his aesthetic sense and his social commitment are remarkable. The poet's willingness to associate himself with new thoughts and ideas are a significant observation one could make in reading his poems. He discards worn-out ineffective ideas and beliefs. He desires literature should be created for those who struggle with fire in their abdomen. He also holds new ideas on literature and the like. He wants spiritualism to be related to practical life.

Eelavanan also attacks the "beauty" poets (meaning mere aesthetes) who fail to note the needs of the time. He wants songs to be sung for those people who burn like flowers in a

furnace of flames. The fire flowers (*Akkini Pookal*) he refers to are those under privileged suppressed, exploited lot. He says it's enough that we remained like rolled up "olas" after labouring and tiring ourselves, let us form ourselves into a front to see social justice is done. The poet hates war. He condemns the mass scale genocide in the name of war in global war spots like the M. E. and Vietnam. Some of his poetic usages are original: the tears that polish the floor, lightning flashes in the eye, the soft breasted lass walked on the brims of the paddy fields like the dancing decorations in a chariot, moving gently in the breeze. His feeling for the working class is demonstrated in his poem about the plight of the plantation workers. The poet dreams of a socialist world where everyone will not live for himself but for everybody else, who in turn could put their heads up and walk with self respect. So he wants preparation made in this direction. Eelavanan's collection is a significant contribution to the latest creative writings by the younger generation.

### (D) Veedum Veliyum

"Mahakavi has already been correctly recognised as a major force that directed the more important trends in Ceylonese Tamil writing". This opinion by yet another poet and critic Murugariyan cannot be dismissed as mere sentiment because even younger poets like Nuhman and Shanmugam Sivalingan accept that the late *Mahakavi* (Rudramoorthy was his real name) was a great poet. According to them, this poet was a realist and an innovator. An innovator? - Yes, as far as experimentation in structure was concerned, Mahakavi had a fine sense of form. But looking purely from an objective point of view, I see in Mahakavi the traits of a Romanticist. He was not a romantic in the Western 19th Century tradition, but he had this characteristic as far as idealism goes. Perhaps one would liken him to Robert Frost of our own times - that kind of good-neighbourliness and mending the walls, without commitments.

Rudramoorthy died while holding a post in the CAS. The following works by him have been published so far: Two collections of poetry (*Valli* and *Veedum Veliyum*) one collection of limerics (*Kurumba*) one poetic drama (*Kodai*) and two short epics (*Kannaiyal Kathai* and *Oru Satharana Manithanin Charithiram*).

\* *Veedum Veliyum* is a slim volume of twenty five poems by the poet. The first part consists of purely personal lyrics and the other half is devoted to the outside world. Love, sex, prostitution and romance attract the attention of the poet in his personal poems, and we have no quarrel there. In this section we find poems on "second marriage - re - marriage of a Tamil widow - This theme could have been novel two decades ago, but with Women's Lib and all that, it carries less weight now. "Ahalikai" is the only narrative poem included in this section; this again is mythological and facilitates fancy and imagination for a romanticist. This poem makes the reader pause a little because of its variant interpretation. Poems written between 1954 and 1964 find a place here.

We now come to the second section. It is here that the poet's desire to resign to mere observation and his hesitancy to plunge into firmer comment becomes obvious. Although the poems in this section are of a later period (1955 - 1969) the poet refuses to be cerebral. A few poems, however, please us for their naive detachment - if detachment is a kind of poetic virtue. The "Lizard" for instance is a beautiful picture of innocence facing cruelty for the first time. A child's bewilderment at watching a lizard swallowing an insect is pictured in the same kind of wonderment and detachment. A thin layer of social consciousness can be deciphered in the poem *Neerulavu* (The Sea Farmer). A fisherman in debt rejoices at his catch, but returns home disappointed, as the earnings go to settle his debts. *Veesatheer* is a poem that calls for humility even when one gives alms. *Thiruddu* describes the juxtaposition in experience of a miser who refuses to give a cent to a beggar. He had to eventually fall victim to pickpocketing while on his way home in the bus. In yet another poem called *Nermai*, the poet speaks of dishonesty as a virtue for the poorer classes in a world of injustice. Also included is the much quoted poem. *An insect in the size of a dot*. The upholders of Mahakavi praise this poem because the poet sympathises with the insect he killed accidentally and pleads guilty for the crime! Humanism! Well these are the poems I liked as poetry for sheer pleasure and readers of this collection may choose their's: if only poetry

\* 1973 Sahitya Prize for Poetry was awarded to this work.

or pleasure had been motivated by some kind of social consciousness, Mahakavi's *Veedum Veliyum* would have earned the reputation of a mirror that reflects clear images of life. It must be emphasised however that Mahakavi is still, a better poet than most of the other poets across the Palk Straits.

#### (E) Kurumpa

*Kurumpa* is collection of limmerics by Mahakavi. Short and compact quips on social behaviour with a mixture of connotations that border towards lewdness in its content. S. Ponnuthurai has written a lengthy appreciative note on these Limmerics.

#### (F) Kanikkai

*Kanikkai* (Offerings) is a book of poem by T. Ramalingam. The theme of most poems is sex. The poetic feeling is genuine in that the poet is describing the social behaviours and stigmas of a static hypocritical society of Jaffna. Also included in this book is a critical essay by M. Talaiasingam.

### IV. CRITICISM

#### (A) A note on Kailasapathy's Book on Tamil Novels

Dr. K. Kailasapathy's *Tamil Novel* consists of six studied essays on what may be described by a student of English literature as the most fundamental aspects of the art of fiction. In the first essay he distinguishes between *Epic and Novel* in relation to other world literature. The second essay is on *Prose and Novel*, while the third is on *Novel and Individualism*. *English original and Tamil adaptation* is the subject of the next essay. The fifth essay discusses the *Decline of the Short story and Growth of the Novel*, while the last is on *Realism and Naturalism*. Although primarily meant for the student, this book is an asset to everybody to appreciate modern Tamil Literature in contemporary universal consciousness.

Dr. K. Kailasapathy is a well-known Tamil intellectual in Sri Lanka. He is a leading critic and a university teacher. He was responsible for the conscious development of the idea of Ceylonese Tamil literature soon after the 1956 awakening. He was the

editor of the "Thinakaran" before joining the University. He is now the first President of the Jaffna campus of the University of Sri Lanka. Author of many books in Tamil and one in English (*The Heroic Poetry*), he obtained his doctorate from Birmingham University. His Tamil Books include, *Studies in Comparative Literature*, *The Tamil novel*, *Studies in ancient Tamil Literature*, *The Top and the Bottom*, *Two Great Poets and Poetry Appreciation* with Murugaiyan.

Each of his Books is a forerunner in its field and highly acclaimed in both accademical and literary circles. In a way all these books are Episodic histories of Tamil literature rewritten in modern terms.

#### (B) A Note on Sivathamby's Book on Short Story

*The Origin and Growth of the Short story* by Dr. K. Sivathamby, traces the development of the short story form historical and social angles. Remarkably analysed, this book is a comprehensive survey and the best of its kind now available in Tamil. The critic takes only those writers who are of importance in the process of development. His comments are based on the attitude of short story writers towards art and society. Although the critic records the process of development in its historical perspective, he indirectly welcomes those writers who use literature as not only as a mirror of life but also as a guiding force for social upliftment.

Dr. Sivathamby is one of our leading critics, drama is his special field. He is the head of the Dravidian studies at the Vidyodaya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka. Along with H. M. P. Mohideen, Ilankeeran, Premjee Gnanasundaram, K. Ganesh and Kailasapathy, Dr. Sivathamby had remained a very important. Theoretician of the Ceylon progressive writers Association.

#### (C) Iru Maha Kavikal

Rabindranath Tagore and Subramania Bharathi were two great Indian poets of their time and their influence on modern poets in various Indian languages continues to pervade even now.

Both were sons of their time when national feelings were running high in colonial India. Strangely enough, they had almost paradoxical views on life and politics, yet there were common grounds on which they held identical views. Their parallels and diametrically opposite lines are graphically analysed by Dr. K. Kailasapathy in his book *Iru Maha Kavigal*. This book is used in many South Indian Universities and Calcutta University has also recently included this book as a text in its Tamil Department.

Dr. Kailasapathy says: it is true that sufficient is known of Tagore but Tamil poet Subramania Bharathi's achievement as a national frontliner in politics and literature is not fully explained to the non - Tamil speaking readers.

Both Tagore and Bharathi ridiculed the idea of Maya (Illusion) which is professed in Hindu Thought. The physical world we see is nothing but the joyous dance of the almighty believed Tagore. Bharathi said that what we see is Sakthi and that is eternal. It is true, however, that the poets believed in Vedanta. They believed that life is for living and not for renunciation as promulgated in the Vedanta thoughts. They did not go beyond this philosophical outlook. Their attitude towards the Indian National Movement was based on Vedanta. They were the products of their time, although Tagore was much older than Bharathi.

They both believed that equality could be brought about on the lines of Vedantic thoughts. The idealistic views of equality enshrined in Vedanta and also the voice of the Saiva and Vaishnava Saints for special unity found favour with Tagore and Bharathi. The differences between the two were also very sharp as for instance Tagore was an individualist while Bharathi believed that the society that produced him was far greater than his own self. Bharathi was essentially a politically oriented poet. His national songs published in 1903 were case in point. Although Tagore did not lose touch with politics till his death, he considered literature a his spiritual idealism. While holding a foot on the literary world, Tagore wandered on the edges of the political world. Bharathi on the other hand took shelter under the shades of the literary world quite accidentally while his feet were firmly rooted in the political world. Since

Bharathi gave importance to the society that produced him. He began to adapt himself to the realistic of the world. Tagore quite conversely wrote for most part bhakti and serene songs. He believed that the "Jeevana Devtha" (which held a phenomenal hold on him) was responsible for the happenings in the world. Tagore dream that a world of love and compassion could be created with rationality.

Bharathi converted his patriotism as divine love. At the same time he concluded that patriotism alone would not give the swiftness and depth that were needed for national consciousness. To do this he compared his country to his mother and patriotism to maternal love. He proclaimed that praise for heroism was much needed than divine poojas. Both poets laid the foundation for Indian national resurgence. The rise of nationalism shook India all over. This development was commonly felt by both Tagore and Bharathi. Yet Tagore created for himself a secluded world of art, literature, and religion. He reacted unfavourably to the popular mass movements. Bharathi on the other hand became part of the movement and this helped him to use his conventional poetic themes reach the people. Bharathi's experimentation on poetic forms alone was another achievement.

Dr. Kailasapathy's initial comparative studies of these two poets have prompted others to proceed further.

#### (D) Ilakkiyamum Thiranaivum

I have a feeling that outmoded methods of teaching Tamil Literature in schools have dulled the sensibilities and critical acumen of many students. I say this because in conversation with many teachers, I have often found them considering literature as something remote and inviolable and meant only to be admired and not critically evaluated. This attitude is a residue of the medieval commentarial tradition. In many instances the teachers do not seem to know the purpose and function of teaching literature and are clearly ignorant of the critical standards as understood today.

In these circumstances a basic book dealing with these matters is much wanted today and to fulfil this requirement Dr. K. Kailasapathy's book on Literature and Criticism has come on our way.

I am sure this book will serve a very useful purpose to students and teachers alike in the understanding and teaching of literature in higher forms. This book will be also useful as a handbook to young writers.

This is the first time a book in Tamil has been written in specific terms, where the nature of literature is explained in relation to various literary movements and theories. Modelled on books in English on the subject, the author has included three papers he read at a seminar held on the new syllabus for Tamil in Teacher Training Colleges. The first essay is on Language and Literature, while the second speaks of literary principles and the third explains the critical concepts. Dr. Kailasapathy speaks mainly about four approaches of literary criticism — the organic, the sociological, the psychological and the formalistic. He recommends the formalistic approach propagated by the New Critics as most suitable as far as classroom work is concerned, but is quick to indicate his preference for the sociological approach among the theories adumbrated. What strikes me as the most notable aspect of the book is its bold and original attempt to evaluate critically the literary theories emanating from the West, especially from the Anglo-Saxon world, and to harmonise them with parallel concepts in Tamil. In doing so he has skilfully shown how social economic and even political factors have a bearing on literary concepts. To facilitate his arguments Dr. Kailasapathy draws freely from the history of Tamil Literature. Another welcome feature of the book is the treatment of the problem of style in a chapter. The average teacher of Tamil literature habitually thinks of style in terms of "Poetic diction". The author has, very briefly at least, drawn attention to the importance of style in the analysis of prose. A number of passages from both early and modern writers are included in the appendix by way of exercises. These have been carefully chosen. All interested in literature and criticism, who know Tamil should read his book for a better understanding of the subject.

#### V. MISCELLANEOUS

##### (A) Pore Parai

Late Thalayasingam was also interested in literary criticism and has written a number of pieces on contemporary Ceylonese Tamil literary trends. He called them "Notes in Hasie".

But in 1970 we saw a different Thalayasingam. His book called *Pore Parai* (The War Drum) was the newest of its kind in Tamil. Perhaps Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* and *Beyond the Outsider* had inspired Thalayasingam to write this book in Tamil. It is meant to serve the same purpose as the distant thunder announcing the approach of the rain. It gives a glimpse of what mankind could achieve, if its own activities are directed along the proper channels — proper that is according to the author. Thalayasingam writes a long preface explaining the unrest experienced in different parts of the world. He identifies this unrest as the labour pains of the birth of a new way of life — a new era in fact. Every page of this book is packed tight with history, insight and a deep knowledge of ancient and modern writings. In addition there are a few short stories and poems included in the book to express his point of view. He is fully conversant with the most recent and the most ancient writings of the West and East. He gives the most sublime interpretations to mythologies and carries one to the realm of pure thought or consciousness, beyond the experience of ordinary man. Thalayasingam rapidly traces the history of communism, as we see it today. How Karl Marx was greatly attracted by Hegel's Philosophy and turned it upside down, asserting that capitalism, vested interests and antiquated religious beliefs were the causes of all social evils, and if they were uprooted there would be social justice and freedom.

He seems to say that the whole human race has come to a stage where everything has to converge on a particular point, a particular philosophy and a way of life. This cannot be purely material communism, he says. He would like to evolve something further without losing the Marxist content. This has to be a spiritual movement that is highly scientific. To him this is symbolised by a synthesis of Marxism and the tenets of Sarvodaya. In other words Thalayasingam, wants to re-establish social reforms on a spiritual basis, but there are so many who feel that a number of attempts in this direction have been failures. In a sense such attempts remind one of the existentialists endeavour to integrate their philosophy to Marxism or what has been done in India by Sri Aurobindo in bringing about a synthesis of materialistic spiritual world outlook which he

called "Integral Yoga". But perhaps what happens is that with the lapse of time, the grip of the reformer seems to slacken and mankind slips back to basic needs. The whole world has been covered by the nobles of religion for centuries and yet one finds the need everywhere for further progress. It seems that progress occurs in cycles. But that is another vast subject, Thalayasingam, devoting his talents to abstract thinking, with feet firmly planted on the ground, deserves praise for his individual approach to establish his own convictions. His book has been awarded a Sahitya Academy Prize for 1970.

## (B) Yogaswami

In this decade of scientific attempt to give meaning to yogic tantrams and oriental mysticism, it is not totally irrelevant to make a study of contemporary ascetics in the historical and social background. Yoga Swami was one of the living legends of this country till recently. He lived for nearly ninety two years in Jaffna and attained Samadhi in 1954. S. Ambihaipahan (well known in religious and educational circles) has attempted to give a brief biography of this ascetic in his book *Yoga Swamy*.

Disconnected though in sequence the book gives a broad picture of the personality and achievements of the sage. It is a painstaking effort but the result is very useful to a student of sociology in Tamil. There are hardly any biographies of Ceylonese in Tamil. In this respect this is a useful book. What I liked most in this book is the author's attempt to establish the fact that even in our own land here were mystics who drew the respect and awe of many. The author finds a parallel in Yoga Swami's emergence, with the religious revival in the 19th century. The visit of Swami Vivekananda to Sri Lanka in 1897 and the religious and social changes that were taking place in the country form the background to the life of Yoga Swami, for instance prohibition campaign, the birth of the Hindu youth association, the contact with Swami Vipulananda and other activities are related to the life of Yoga Swami. Although Yoga Swami died in 1954 the younger generation do not seem to know in detail the part played by him in the country's social and religious awakening. Ascetic though he was he played a prominent part in politics and social activities.



An important aspect of the Hindu Tradition is that however much one might have progressed in spiritual life the initiation by a Guru is a necessity. The greatest sages and intellectual giants had all their gurus. To the youth of the present generation this would seem mysterious particularly when these gurus are simple illiterates and sometime only fit to be in the lunatic asylum. Yoga Swami's guru was Chellapah Swamy, an acknowledged lunatic. Strange though both their names appear in the short list of renowned Tamil teachers of Hindu religion published in the Tamil almanac (Panchangam) Yoga Swami's teachings and activities resembled that of Zen Buddhism. Though a Christian, Yoga Swamy practically abandoned all formal religions and followed the path of great sages transcending all forms and names - He was a true ascetic at heart and followed the middle path. He was an outright athuvist and taught monism, but encouraged dualistic worship as a stepping stone to that abstract philosophy. In this he followed Thayumanavar of the 17th century. Like Maccari Gosala (who was a contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira) Yoga Swami was a fatalist and he impressed upon this complete surrender to God or to unalterable natural law of evolution. Gosala who was, also known as Makkali Gosala never overcame the feeling of an overwhelming inevitability behind the appalling historical transformation.

Yoga Swami's admirers and followers could be counted in hundreds including foreigners like the German Swamy and Lord Sulbury's son. The book includes a selection of sayings by the Yogi. The author of this book, S. Ambikapathan, deserves the gratitude of all Hindus in this country. Valuable information of this great man would have been lost to posterity, if not for his noble work in publishing this book.

### (C) India Thathuvagnanam

K. Lakshmanan's book on Indian Philosophy is a compendium of the component parts of the Indian Philosophy right from the very beginning. It is an exhaustive, authentic and compact book. Certain aspects of Indian Philosophy, Materialism, Jainism, Buddhism, Vedantism, Saivism - there are some of the main heads under which the author elucidates and elaborates the major aspects of philosophy. The author does not at all times deal with his subjects chronologically but as far as possible he maintains the balance between the ages of different trends. He also compares certain aspects of Indian Philosophy with Western Philosophy. Basically his approach is descriptive rather than historical. The author refers to Indian Philosophy as pre-historic, conclusive, spiritualistic, fundamental and practicable. Although the author has maintained "conclusiveness" as one of the charac-

teristics of Indian Philosophy, at the end of the book he is sceptical about the conclusiveness of theories in Indian Philosophy itself.

Materialism, Jainism, and Buddhism, constitute the Heterodox tradition. The other systems are Orthodox. The main streams of Indian philosophy, though rooted in the Vedas and Upanishads, were rationalised by man with his power of thinking and accumulation of experience. The author in his compendium presents unbiased accounts of different fields of Indian Philosophy - presenting cases for and against each of them in a non-committal manner, except in one place where he has openly stressed his convictions. In the opinion of the author Dr. S. Radhakrishnan oversimplifies the basic differences between Buddhism and Vedanta, because intellectuals of Dr. Radhakrishnan's calibre often look at things in universalistic vision and always seek unity amidst diversity, but in actual fact the author believes that the differences between the realms of philosophy are far greater than that. Except for this exceptional deviation, the author maintains a uniquely balanced style of interpretation. The epilogue is a fine essay on the need of knowing about philosophy which also summarises the whole book in simpler terms. A long list of supplementary readings which includes twenty three works in English by such eminent authorities like Radhakrishnan, Bertrand Russell and others is also appended. Equivalent terminology in Tamil to current philosophical usage and an index are also included.

### (D) Pandai Thamilar Valvum Valipadum

Dr. Kailasapathy's work reveals him to be an original thinker, whose intellectual pursuits are not mere part time exercises, but guide lines for the emerging Tamil intelligentsia. He writes with a historical sense, and his subjects are analytically treated, his general contention being that it is the economic background of a society that determines the shape of literature, art, philosophy, religion, language and the like. He is also, it would seem, interested in fulfilling the need of students to understand the relationship between social life and the study of the arts, of literature, of ethics, and of religion.

There are eight essays in this book, taking the subject up to the end of the Chola period. In his commentary on the Tamil literature of the Pallava Period, Dr. Kailasapathy suggests that the literature in question was a product of the conflict between an economically sound mercantile class that practised Jainism, and the land owning agrarian class, which believed in Saivism. His view challenges the established views of Saivism, a sect of Hinduism that revolves upon the pivot of Bhakti or piety, which exempts one from all consequences of the past



Karma and opens the gates of Heaven. Dr. Kailasapathy's suggestion that Saivism can be seen as a by-product of the class struggle is something to reflect upon.

In his essay on Dharma and Politics, the twin epics SILAPADIKARAM and MANIMEHALAI are cited as works that depicted the social evils that prevailed at the time and indicated ways in which they could be overcome. The author suggests that the attempts of the poets at social reform failed because they based their ideas on the theory of Karma and of renunciation, while the actual disease was one of social inequality and injustice. The Bakthi cult paved the way for the establishment of the Chola period, during which devotion without question was the order of the day and the King the representative of the Divine. There developed the master slave relationships, and the feudal system.

According to Dr. Kailasapathy the heroic poets were the mouthpieces of the ruling classes. Dramatizing and glorifying war, suggesting that there was heroism and beauty in its horror, they were propagandists for the Kings, and were prompted by material reasons as well as aesthetic ideals. Hero worship provided the opportunity for laying the foundation of a strong monarchy; the ignorance and sentimentality of the common people were contributory factors that built a hero into something that resembled a divinity - all these things being fundamental to the social change that was to follow.

Tracing the beginning of Soul-consciousness in man, the author suggests that it has led man by degrees to the concept of god-consciousness. Embracing rituals and magic, the latter has led at last to the worship of the Mother Goddess as the source of all fulfilment. In one of his essays Dr. Kailasapathy traces the original worship of the Mother-Goddess, Murugan, and the final emergence as the nameless He - God of the Indus Valley civilization, now known as Siva. The He - God of the Indus Valley has assimilated in the first instance, the local Mother Goddess (Kottavai) as his consort, and Murugan (the local hero of tribal clans) as his son.

To the serious student of history, Dr. Kailasapathy's book is searching review of the past with a purpose; yet it is practical, because it confines itself to the dialectical materialistic concept of history and sees all things in its light. To the student of Tamil literature, his work offers a masterly introduction of certain fundamental principles of evaluation. I have found it an admirably written essay in literary criticism on a social and philosophical subject.

.....Perhaps. the best contribution of Sivakumaran has been his indefatigable effort to introduce and elucidate contemporary Tamil works to non-Tamil readers, especially the English reading public. I consider it a great service rendered by him. In that sense he has greatly helped to bridge the gap between writers working in different languages.....He has, I believe, succeeded to a great extent clarifying the broad principles that influenced the mainstream of our recent literary effusion. — Dr. K. KAILASAPATHY President, Jaffna Campus, University of Sri Lanka.

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.....Sivakumaran is not only deeply devoted to Tamil culture but to those broader moral and artistic values which form the necessary foundation of all serious criticism, — MERVYN DE SILVA, Editor-in Chief, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.

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K S. Sivakumaran has contributed a great deal to general knowledge in Ceylon of contemporary literary activity in the Tamil language. — YASMINE GOONERATNE (New Ceylon Writing - 1972.)

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K. S. Sivakumaran (38) educated at St. Joseph's College, Colombo, presently works in the News Division of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. Besides introducing Tamil Writing through the Ceylon Daily News, Sunday Times, Community and New Ceylon Writing, he is also well known as a critic in Tamil on contemporary arts and literature and as a broadcaster.

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