Chapter III

Form And Content in Making Of Literature
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Form and Content is understood as a composition on a spectrum from the least to the most self-conscious communication. It is an awareness of the relative place of communicated words that lifts the issue of defining literature from a sterile debate to an act of engagement. The most important activity in receiving a work as literary, and in appreciating a literature, is to read as widely as possible both perceived literary and perceived non-literary writings and can assumed as the defining agent in literature. Content is the first criterion especially for implicit definitions of literature. It can be used to delineate compositions as Tales, Teachings, Lamentations, Hymns and Songs.

Tholkäppiyam has a strong resemblance with Sanskrit aesthetics. The first two chapters of Tholkäppiyam deal with grammar, while the third deals with literature (rhetoric). These are analogous to the three divisions in Sanskrit – Siksha, Vyaakarna and Alankara Sästra. It is observed that the portions of Tholkäppiyam dealing with the form of letters, their origin, the four fold manner of compounds and seven Vyakthis agree with the Sanskrit grammatical works of Panini, Yaskar’s Nirukta, Patanjali’s mahabashya, etc.

In connection to these, explanations for the eight sentiments (Rasas), 10 states (avastaas) and 32 accessory feelings (Vyabhichari bhavas), there is full agreement between the Bharata Natyasastra and Tholkäppiyam. It is confessed by Tholkäppiyar.
In the matter of 32 kavya yuktis (literary practices), 10 Kavya doshas (literary blemishes) and Sūtra lakshanās (Characteristics of aphoristic compositions) also, Tholkāppiyam agrees with the Bharata Sastrā and Arthasastra. Since Tholkāppiyar has a sense of tradition, Eliot too, has the same influence of Sanskrit literature through Vedas and Upanishads in his literature.

Thus, Tamil Literature falls into three great divisions; Iyal (poetry), Isai (music), Nātakam (drama). Tholkāppiyam influences in the first division Iyal, was treated under two heads, Ilakkanam and Ilakkiam. The first is the art of correct and elegant writing which comprises all works on grammar, including logic, rhetoric, and prosody. The rules of grammar have been deduced from the best classics. Ilakkiam is a general term for all well-written works and includes all approved poetical compositions constructed on the rules laid down in Ilakkanam.

Ilakkanam is treated under five heads. The section on Letters constitutes that part of grammar which deals with the number, name, order, origin, form, content and combination of letters. The section on Words treats the four parts of speech, namely, noun, verb, particles, and adjectives. This includes etymology and syntax. The third section is Matter in which, by writing words, a discourse is formed. The section treats of amplification, of the passions and affections of the mind which act internally on man, and of things belonging to the external world. The section on versification contains the laws of prosody. Embellishment corresponds to the European rhetoric. Under the head of Ilakkiam, the Tamils have epic, lyric ethics, dramatic, scientific and philosophic pieces: of these by far the most numerous are the ethics. Māhabāratham
and Ramāyanam represent the epic; Naishdham the lyric; the poems of Vaḻuvar; Silapathikāram, the dramatic; the works of Agasthiar, the scientific.

Tholkāppiyar dealt with letters and words in Eluthu and Sol. He devotes his final book ‘Porul’ to the theme of literature which, being the result or the fruit of the sentences formed by words and letters is the inevitable corollary to the Science of Language. Linguistic knowledge is indispensable for the study of an interwoven and there cannot be one without the other. Literature alone can nourish and sustain any living language. In fact, it is the finest flower of the language. Literature is the life and soul of a language. A language without literature cannot stand the mighty onslaught of the cruel time and it is bound to disintegrate and even wither out in course of time. Literature alone can guarantee immortality to any language. Moreover, it enriches our life. Life will become drab, dull and colorless without literature. It is a well known fact that we cannot forcibly separate linguistic knowledge and literary talent and that is why they have always combined the study of language with the Science of literature.

Ilakuvanār comments:

“Language is like a tree; and its words are like the leaves.

As the years go on, old leaves fall; and new leaves

take their place, but the tree remains the same.” (294)

This is very close to Eliot’s ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’. Tholkāppiyar respects tradition and feels that linguistic knowledge must inevitably lead to literary appreciation, and hence he speaks of the Science of literature in Porutpadalam or Porulathikāram.
Porutpadalam speaks of the ways and means of writing various kinds of literature. Since literature is born out of life and rooted in life, we say that literature can be easily applied to human life also. The Porutpadalam helps us to have glimpses of the literary ventures of early Tamils and it portrays the life and culture of Tamils in those days. In this analysis, Tholkāppiyar lays it down as cardinal rule that literature must be rooted in life and it is on this basis he deals with literature and human life in Porutpadalam which is a tribute to the scientific spirit of Tholkāppiyam. To deal with, we have to go in detail into Porulathikaram, as it is mentioned in the introduction; the book on Porul is divided into nine chapters as:

Ahaththinai: It speaks of the conduct of love affairs. A brief survey of general principles and the themes of Aham literature are given.

Puraththinai: It deals with the conduct of life other than love. A brief survey of general principles of Puram literature and its themes is given.

Kalavu: It means the secret love. The principles which are to be observed in portraying the course of secret love are described.

Karpu: It means the wedded love. The principles are to be observed in the life after marriage.

Porul: It means that which is essential. Essential principles which are to be followed in portraying the life of the lovers before and after the marriage are noted, sanctioning the deviations from the established principles concerning the theme of literature.
Meyppādu: It means the facial expression of psychic feelings. Reactions of the heart because of enjoyment of literature are analyzed and grouped under various categories enabling the author to portray them in his composition.

Uvamam: It means simile. Various kinds of smiles to be used in literature are given and proper use of them is noted.

Seyyul: It means composition or prosody. Various forms of composition are given and described.

Marapu: It means tradition. Traditional use of words concerning animals and vegetables which are sorted on the basis of their possession of senses.

The chapters above said five topics depict the life of the people also for; literature is the mirror of life. So, the study of the book on Porul is focussed into literary study and detailed study is required for understanding and analysis. Thus, it begins with,

Ahām and Puṭam:

Tamil literary works are conventionally divided into two groups of Ahām and Puṭam. Ahām works lay greater stress on the mental reaction of the hero or heroine to the external things; they are of a great psychological interest. They are intensely personal as the odes, where the play of emotions is dominant. It can be said that generally Ahām works deal with love while Puṭam works deal with the external reactions of this passion, besides other elements. The place given to the theme of love in Tamil works, whether of Ahām or Puṭam categories show how the ancient Tamils recognized the supreme force of this remarkable human sentiment. In fact, no
other human passion has contributed so richly to world literature as love and it is no wonder that we find some of the finest expressions of the same in ancient literary works of Tamil Nadu.

Love is the most refined of human sentiments and it serves as a touchstone for the civil and cultural attainments of a country. It is only this force of love that brings together the community devoid of distinctions of caste and religion; it is this force that serve as a background for all their actions and it is this which establishes a sense of equality amongst all individuals. Poetry dealing primarily with the emotions naturally springs from a soil, to speak, soaked in Love, As the Aham works refer primarily to the conventions of love and they claim a pre-eminent position in the realm of poetry.

Naccinarkkiniyar accounts love is called Aham for in his commentary: “As the great bliss enjoyed in union by a lover and his lady-love whose hearts throb in unison, is so delicate that it is not expressed openly before others, and as this naturally felt again and again by constant recollection in the mind, it is called Aham. Thus the recollection of the delights or bliss of Love is itself called Aham”. (12)(3) The ethical codes of Love are divided into sevenfold under three main divisions known as Kaikkilai, Aindhinai, and Perundhinai.

Kaikkilai refers to one sided love where either the man or the woman loves the other without any reciprocation. The lover finds many impediments; may be, the beloved is too young to realize the implications of love and union, or the parents of the girl may not be favorably included. The lover is thus helpless and he finds no sign
of encouragement from the other side. Thus he gives unfulfilled desire and longing in words steeped in sorrow and intense emotional fervour. He finds some consolation in imagining the delights he had been refused. The girl might entirely be ignorant of his love. This is a kind of Kaikkilai. All types of one-sided love come under this category. Thus it may deal within love with a person who is ignorant of the fact. However, the author does not refer to the two aspects of love. The young girl who is indifferent to her lover may yield as time passes by, when she grows in maturity. Thus the girl who forms the theme of Kaikkilai is mentioned as kāmām sālā ilamaiyōl (the immature young girl).

Perundhinai refers to unequal love. This is of four kinds. The lover who is thwarted tries to win his love by what is known as madalēruthal or he may wait for the loved one till the period of maturity. One may pine in love which is inexpressible and which cannot be fulfilled. Or out of excessive love, one may force the loved one by sheer might and have one’s satisfaction. These instances of love were rarely found in society; hence they do not occur often in literature as well.

Aindhinai refers to themes of perfect love or the perfect union of hearts. The aspects of this love are union, separation, variance, waiting and pity. When the lovers unite in love, it is called kurinji. When they are separated later, it is called pālai. When the lady blames her separated lover in feigned anger and charges him of infidelity and so on, this kind of variance between the lovers is called marutham. However the lady-love waits in patience, with a sense of reality, for her lover who has gone on business, this patient waiting is called mullai, as the days pass by, if the lover
does not return, the wife suffers terrible pangs and this pining is called neythal. Thus the five conventional divisions of the regions are used to refer to the five types of love known as Aindhiṇai.

The term thinai denotes both the code of behavior and region. Thus, kuññi means canons of union and the mountainous regions with their neighborhood. Marudham region stands for the code of variance in conduct and refers to the plains with fields. Mullai indicates ituththal code of conduct besides the region of forests and woods. Neythal denotes the course of pity besides the sea and the coastal region.

Pālai which refers to the pangs of separation might have remained without a particular region for it, for a long time. So the ancient Tamils called their land nānilam which means the land of four divisions. Then, pālai began to denote the war tracts of rocks and lands scattered about in all regions, besides denoting separation.

Ilango vadikal, the author of Silappathikāram, says that the mullai and kuññi regions, being dried and became waste, take the form of pālai (Cilambu-Kadukan-Kathai (64-66). Thus, in course of time, pālai began to denote both separation and the region.

The terms kuññi, marutham etc., first denoted the trees, plants and creepers, found in the regions. The ancient Tamils who lived in harmony with natural objects, swayed by their influences, called the region kuññi which abounded in kuññi trees and the other region marutham where marutham tree was in abundance. Later the characteristic ways of life, typical of the region came to be signified by the name of
the region itself. Hence, the names of the regions meant for the codes of life prevalent in various regions.

Then the poet describes the phenomenon of time. Time was broadly measured in two ways as *perumpoluthu* (the long period) and *sirupoluthu* (the short period). The long division of *perumpoluthu* refers to the six seasons of *kar*, (the early rainy season), the *kuthir* (later rainy season), *munpani* (the early spring) and *muthuvēnil* (the later spring). The smaller divisions of time (*Sirupoluthu*) refers to the divisions of a day into evening, midnight, dawn morning, midday, and afternoon. Of course there are some who hold that *sirupoluthu* consists of five parts and not six. Strictly speaking, it consists of six parts.

Long before Tholkāppiyar the people of Tamil Nadu were conversant with the various units of time like *Naṅikai* (a unit referring to an hour divided by $2 \frac{1}{2}$) day, week, month, season, year etc., Also every *thinai* had its own point of time or season for which it was favored. Thus the *mullai* region was noted for the early rainy season of *kār* and the evening, while the *kuṭiṇji* region was noted for its later rainy season and the dawn. Naccinarkinniyar gives a beautiful account of the time suited to the various regions, giving reasons for the choice as well.

The early rainy season (*kār*) comprises the months of *Āvani* and *Purattāsi*. It is said that there was a time when *Āvani* was taken as the first month of a year. Even today in Kerala, (one of the states in India) the year is counted from the month of *Āvani*. But today, we begin from *Ciththirai* as the first month of the year. It remains to be found out how this change came about in counting the months of the
year. Aippasi and karththikai are the months of kuthir season. The early winter months are Mârkali and Thai and the later winter months are Mâsi and Panguni. Ciththirai and Vaikasi form the early spring while Ani and Adi the later spring. All the names of the twelve months of the year thus divided are Tamil names which were used in the period of Tholkâppiyar.

The term karupporul (that which forms the nucleus) refers to the offshoots of the first phenomena of space and time. This means all things are useful for the day-to-day life of the people. They are God, food, animals, trees, birds, drums, occupation, and yāl (18 Porul (155).

Proper names are not mentioned in Aham while they are used in Puñam songs. If the Puñam theme is mingled in the Aham, the proper name may be used. The names used in Aham themes were classified two fold in each thinai as ‘thinai marii iya peyar and thinai nilaippeyar’. These may be professional or occupational names. The thinai marii iya peyar of each thinai indicates the use of the following names: Vēttuvār (the hunters), Kūravar (hill tribes) Ayar (the cowherds) and Ulavar (the peasants or ploughmen). The thinai nilaippeyar or names of region are also called uripporul peyarkal -They are Verpan, Aṇṇal, Ulavan etc.,

The heroes or the most important persons of songs should be positively eminent persons from all points of view. Those who lived a free life, cultured and refined, can alone excel in matters of Love. Of course love is also common to all beings, whatever is the rank or attainment. There were many servants and attendants in those days who could have well served as heroes of songs. But it would not be
easy or possible to compose poems thus suited to the five *thiṇais* having the commoners as the heroes of poems. The categories of *kaikkilai* and *perundhiṇai* give ample scope for such themes. Thus the poet lays down the restrictions as to the treatment of themes, without forgetting the possibility-though rate-of commoners figuring as heroes in poetry. It may be the servants, attendees and slaves who succeed in their love. However in such cases, it is no doubt true that the course of their love is subject to a lot of impediments. Even if they succeed, they are not in a position to lead happy lives thereafter. If a servant loves his master’s daughter, she may naturally be indifferent to him because of the inequality of status. This comes under *kaikkilai*. If he then is so much overpowered by his feelings of Love as to attempt to violate her while sleeping, it becomes *perundhiṇai*. If by chance she too loves him, she may do here love also wanes and she may be full of remorse for her error of judgment. Thus Tholkāppiyar shows remarkable practical sense in ruling out the love of “Men in low status” as not belonging to the five *thiṇais*; he gives the theme its right place in *kaikkilai* and *perundhiṇai*; so he says;

"Adiyor pāṅginum vinaivalar pāṅginum

Kādivarai ila puṟaththu enamanār pulavar" (23(155)

(The Scholars say that having heroes among servants and officials is not prevented in literature dealing with ‘Puṟam’ (matter’ other than true love).

The parents of a girl in love is opposed to marriage with the lover, the lover might also elope with his beloved without the knowledge of the parents. This elopement was called *kōṇdu thalaik kalithal*. Afterwards the mother would indulge in
lamentations over her lost daughter. The distracted mother would roam about the streets of the big city searching for her daughter; the foster-mother would even go out of the city for the purpose. The thōli is the loving companion of the heroine or the lady-love who would confide all her secrets to her, the thōli would stand by here through thick and thin and help her friend to fulfill her wishes. She would help the heroine to elope with her lover; she would console the distracted mother and the foster-mother who would be immersed in grief at the loss of the daughter; she would point out how wrong it was to grieve over the daughter who had gone away in love.

Many poems were composed on the theme of separation either before or after the marriage of the lovers. The cause that led to such separation are threefold; they are (i) education (othal), (ii) message to be carried (thūthu), and (iii) enmity or war. It was natural for men to leave their wives for purposes of higher learning, for carrying messages as ambassadors among rulers or for taking part in the battles among rulers. Those who were sent to foreign lands for study should be scholarly and wise, with a remarkable practical sense. Also those who serve as ambassadors in foreign country were noted for their wisdom, learning and personal charm. Therefore ethic power lays down that those who leave their wives or beloved at home for purposes of study or as a ambassadors, should be portrayed in poetry, as great scholars, and eminent in wisdom, hence his words.

"Ōthalum thūthum uyarndhor mēna" (26(156).

(Among them, higher education and ambassadorship are concerned with eminent people)
Poems were composed under the two divisions of *kalavu* and *karpu* (secret love and married love). As *kaikol* is common to both it is mentioned there. There is also another kind of separation caused by the *paraththai*. As this cause is concerned only with the post-marital life, it will be mentioned in *karpiyal*.

In the course of *kalavu* (secret love) and *karpu* (married love) the lover may be accompanied by his beloved. However, if he happened to go abroad, he should not take his wife with him on the seas.

*Munnir valakkam madhdu vōdu illai* (34(157))

(Voyage is not undertaken with the wife)

It is understood that this right to go on the seas was denied to woman, though they enjoyed all the other privileges. Voyage was forbidden to women in the interest of the welfare of the land. If the wife stayed in the country, she might be the source of attraction for the husband abroad and he would return to his native land. But if the wife too went along with him, there was every chance of their settling down abroad; wherever they lived, they might be made to feel it was their own land. It was for this reason that women were forbidden to go on the seas.

*Madalēruthal* was another privilege which men alone enjoyed and was denied to women. If a man loves a woman, and if he is not able to marry her in the natural course, he might observe what is known as the process of *Madalēruthal*. *Madal* means the stamp of the palmyra leaf. The figure of a horse would be made by using this: the lover; would mount the horse and cause it to be drawn through the streets. During such a procession, he would hold aloft a flag with the figure of his beloved
painted on it. The palmyra leaves would cut his limbs and blood would ooze out. This was a kind of self-mortification to achieve his purpose. The wise and elderly men would then take pity on him, approach the parents of the girl and arrange for the marriage. The parents and their daughter also would be moved to give their consent. If they would not, the lover who thus could continue to mortify himself would die for his cause.

But this process of self-immolation was not to be observed by women in love. There are no literary piece with such theme. If this were done, it would bring shame upon women who should be noted for modesty hence the lines:

Eththinai maruŋginum madkadū umadanmēl
Porpudai né্timai inmaiṉāna (35(157)

(In any aspect of love, the lady-love cannot have the right of riding on the horse made of palmyra-stem.)

In fact this method of self-immolation on the part of man-in-love itself comes under perundhinai category of themes, as it indicates unequal or one-sided love. Hence it is said to be absolutely unsuited to women.

The poet mentions ‘similes’ in the same iyal about the nature of the songs which come under aham and the characteristics of the similes and comparison which serve to clarify the subject matter of the poems. The form of the verse or song must be suited to the theme; the manifold emotional variations suited to Aham themes find their medium in the meter of kali and paripādal. These two meters come in handy; to take sounds echo the sense. There are the most musical of rhythmic beats.
Tholkāppiyar, has laid down that literature should be based on life; it is not a mere product of fancy. The day-to-day events of life are colored by imagination and presented as a work of art. It should be natural and Tholkāppiyar stresses this fact again and again, only to show that literature should not be removed from life or reality by sheer play of fancy. What is thus a natural product of life is called by him pulaneri valakkam—the code of the learned. The term given to signify truth to nature as a significant aspect of literature shows the remarkable critical sense of Tholkāppiyar. It is this truth to nature that imparts a universal significance to literary works; he who understands this aspect of poetry is the greatest of poets. Hence the casual name of the literary convention:

Nādaka vaḷkkinum ulakiyaḷ vaḷakkinum

Pādal sāṇrāpaneṅi vaḷakkam

Kaliyē pariapttu āyiru pāṅinum

Uriyathākum enmanār pulavar (53(161)).

( The poets say that the usage of poets which consists of imaginary usage and the factual usage as found in day-to-day life will have ‘kali’ and ‘paripādal’ as the meter-forms (which are specially suitable for describing the love aspects)

The term, ‘enmanār pulavar’, indicates that many of the poets who lived before Tholkāppiyar had established this literary convention of truth to nature in their works. Therefore centuries before Aristotle came and laid down the conventions of literature in ancient Greece, the ancient poets of Tamil land had clearly evolved a
healthy literary tradition which holds good even today and which is one of the 
fundamental aspects of world literature.

Comparison is a device that serves to bring out the meaning of a particular 
context clearly. It is a device to explain the unknown by means of the known: thus all 
can easily comprehend this device. However, the comparisons used in Aham songs 
are subtle and it requires scholarship to realize the full value of many instances of this 
convention. They are not obvious on the surface; they are so intervened with the 
subject matter that we have to take troubles to catch their tone and color. The very 
term *ullurai* used to refer to comparison suggests its concealment.

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\begin{align*}
\text{Viṅgu} & \text{ nilraviḻ nilam pakarpavarvayal koṇḍa} \\
\text{Nāṅgar} & \text{ malar cūḷ thanḏhrur pukurḏha varivandu} \\
\text{Ōṅguyar} & \text{ eḻīr yāṇaik kanai kadam kamaḷ nāṟṟam} \\
\text{Āṅgavai} & \text{ viruṇḍharrap pakal alikī kaṅgulan} \\
\text{Viṅgirai} & \text{ vadukkola viḷuṇarp puṇarṇḍhavar} \\
\text{Thēṅgamaḷ} & \text{ kathuppinul arumbaviḻ naru mullai} \\
\text{Pāyṇdu} & \text{ uthip padar thirṇthu pandu tham māṟiyya} \\
\text{Pūmpoykai} & \text{ maṟṇḍhul uḷḷap punalaṇi ṇallūra} (66 Kalithotokai (86).}
\end{align*}
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The obvious meaning of this *marutham* song in *kali* metre is as follows:

("The dark-blue *kuvala* flowers, blessing on the rising waters, are brought to 
the city for sale. Along with the flowers which blossomed in the fields, the (honey) 
bees also come surrounding them. They (the bees) drink the sweet liquid oozing out 
of the ears of the magnificent elephant in the town during the day-time, and during the 
night they drink the nectar of the fragrant jasmine flowers worn by the lady-love who
has enjoyed the company of her lover. Thereafter, they forget from where they came and forget the other flowers as well”).

The latest meaning of the passage is such,

(The terms *vingu nir* mean the quarters of the public women or *paraththai*. The blue blossoms of *kuvala* stand for voluptuous prostitutes. Those who sell the flowers are those who come in chariots parading the women. The bees that surround the flowers stand for the hero of the song. The sweet liquid oozing out of the rogue elephant refers to public women again. The terms *iravumullai* indicate ‘the woman of easy virtues’ in her house. The old dwelling place forgotten is the house of the hero and the tank or *kulam* means his own house. The flower blossoming there is the wife of the hero).

Thus the passage speaks about the complaint of the wife who is angry with her husband, having knowledge of his faithless activities. He has spent his time in reckless joy with public women paraded in chariots by musicians; he has enjoyed the company of *paraththai* at night; thus he has forgotten his loyal wife. This indirect hit on the husband is indeed beautiful. All the happening is mentioned in the form of images; this passage is indeed of high poetical value because of the sustained imagery. It must be noted that the ‘Sangam’ (ancient) poets revealed in the use of images and symbols; their imagination brings about the synthesis of all apparently irrelevant details and makes out of them a supreme work of art. Here comparison is not apparent, unless we know the context. As this derive of latent comparison enhances the literary beauty of *Aham* songs, Tholkāppiyar includes this device also among the conventions of composition.

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Love is the most potent force that enables man and woman to like together as husband and wife, in order “to propagate human species”. Marriage is of various kinds. It differs from place to place and time to time. Of all kinds, the marriage based on love is the best. It is only such a marriage which means the fulfillment of love that avoids all distinctions of caste, creed and religion and enables a man and a woman to live together drawn by a single force that sets at rest every other consideration. During the time of Tholkāppiyar, Love played dominant role in bringing the two sexes together in wedlock. The term kalavu refers to the love-making of a young man and a young woman drawn towards each other by mutual friendship. As their friendship grows without the knowledge of others, it is called kalavu or “Secret Love”.

Forms of marriage looks as though the contact between the northerners and the Tamils had begun at the time of Tholkāppiyar. The northerners were called maraiyōr which means those who conceal; it was perhaps because they concealed some parts of knowledge quite inappropriate to the Tamil ways of life, in their books, they came to be called as such. Tholkāppiyar refers to the existence of eight kinds of marriage prevalent among the maraiyōr. As the commentary given by Naccinārkkiniyar they are as follows;

Brahamam: This means the marriage of a forty-eight year old bachelor with a twelve year old girl offered to him as dharma after the first period of menstruation and before the second. She is to be given in marriage with suitable ornaments. Both must belong to the same kōththiram.
*Prajāpatyam:* Giving away the daughter in marriage with double the dowry as given by the bride groom's party.

*Aridam:* This means the offer in marriage of girl decked in jewels to a suitable person. Both the bride and the bridegroom are made to stand between a cow and an ox whose horns and hoofs are plated with gold and then they are blessed to live in joy like the animals, and holy water is poured as a symbol of giving away the daughter.

*Theyvam:* This means the offer of a girl in marriage to the suitable one among those who do the noble sacrifice of *Yaham* in the presence of the *Fire of Yaham*.

*Āsuram:* This means the marriage of valour where a person marries one after proving his manliness by subduing a wild ox, shooting a wandering hog by an arrow or by proving his skill in archery.

*Rākshsam:* This means a forced marriage where a person carries away a maid by sheer force without the will of the parents or the maid.

*Paisāsam:* This means the act of union with the old, the drunkards or the sleeping ones; also it refers to marrying a woman leading a disgraceful life.

*Kāndharvam:* This means just a meeting of a man and a maid falling in love with each at first sight and the uniting in love, just like the *Kāndharvas* (the Heavenly males) and their beloveds in heaven. Only the last form of *Kāndharva* marriage suits the Tamil ways of life so far as ancient Tamil Nadu is concerned. *Kāndharvam* as such may set aside considerations of moral code. But *kalavu* as explained in Tamil works means love never bereft of moral code as pointed out by Naccinārkkinyar.

So far as the two lovers met of their own accord, both the *Kāndharva* form and the Tamil convention agree with each other. Some are of the opinion that these eight
fold classification is of a later origin. The Mahabharatha refers to this classification. The Mahabharatha (in Sanskrit) is said to be 10th Century B.C. Tholkäppiyar who belonged to not later than the sixth century B.C has made analysis of the Tamil ways of marriage with the northern ways. Of course the northern conventions of marriage were not prevalent in Tamil Nadu at that time. Nor did Tholkäppiyar enjoin that they should be followed. On the other hand, it is clearly mentioned that the Tamil convention of marriage based on love should be adopted by poets in their writings. It may be questioned whether there was anything wrong in assuming northern conventions in literature though they might not be true to what happens in Tamil land. But it must be remembered that literature is not so cut off from life, and that Tholkäppiyar himself has laid stress on this aspect of truth to nature.

Then the question arises as to why Tholkäppiyar has referred to the alien eightfold divisions of marriage. Perhaps the Tamil convention was mocked at by the foreigners; perhaps they wanted their own alien customs to be adopted by the Tamils. Tholkäppiyar might have then tried to prove that the Tamil way of marriage also was not anything strange or unheard of. He might have just tried to show that it was more or less the same as the Kandharva marriage, so much colorized in Sanskrit works.

\[ O\text{nte \ ve\textcircled{r}e \ en\textcircled{r}u \ i\textcircled{r}u \ p\textcircled{l}ayin, } \]
\[ O\text{nti \ uyarndha \ p\textcircled{l}athu \ a\textcircled{n}aiyin } \]
\[ O\text{thatha \ kilavanum \ kilaththiyum \ k\textcircled{a}mpa } \]
\[ Mikk\textcircled{a}nayinum \ kadivarai \ in\textcircled{r}e \ (93\text{Porul} \ (175) \]

Naccinärkkkiniyar interprets the passage as follows:
"A man and a maid belonging to the same region or different regions, agreeing with each other in all the ten qualities of birth and so on, meet each other, either impelled by destiny or God’s will. The man is a little superior to the woman in certain aspect, it does not matter" (48). The westerners believe that love is God’s will or bound by destiny. It is believed that all the happenings in life are pre-ordained and to be attributed to Fate would not give freedom of choice to their own sons or daughters so far as Love is concerned. If they believe that love also is born of pre-destination, then there would be no trouble. But those who want to safeguard caste and religious distinctions are generally opposed to love leading to marriage, because it is likely to end up in their social recognition. Even the old Aryans did not approve of marriage based on Love for it would strike at the root Varnāsrama dharmā. However, the Tamil community of the Tholkāppiyar period honored only the love-marriage and the poet naturally felt that even in literary works marriage should proceed from love and not from any other consideration.

The passage gives rise to another, yet simpler interpretation also. The two sexes of beings-man and woman-can fall in love with each other. As the two grow older-following strictly the righteous path without allowing their minds to stray about and as the sex-instinct urges them, they love each other, completely identifying themselves with each other and want to get married. When they think of marriage, they become aware of the powerful force of love in their hearts, if they are suited to each other in all aspects. There is nothing wrong if he happens to be somewhat superior to the woman in certain aspects"
This interpretation, without reference to fate or God’s will, is quite reasonable; this is universal in significance in so far as it is applicable to all people, at all times. There is no doubt about the facts that in ancient Tamil land only the marriage on love was acclaimed as the best and most desirable form. Love marriage does not mean any indiscriminate or choice of a woman or a man. It does not mean the first effusions of feelings which will not ripen into love. The stress, it must be noted, is on the man and the woman who perfectly agree with each other in all aspects. What are these qualities in which the lovers should be in harmony with each other? As the harmony is an essential pre-requisite for love-marriage, Tholkāppiyar himself gives an account of the qualities in the chapter of Meypādu.

“Piṭappē, kudimai, ānmai, āṇdodu
Uravu, niruththa kāma vāyil
Niraiye, arulē, uṇarvodu thiru ena
Muṭaivirak kilandha oppinathu vahaiyē” (273 Porul (217))

(Nativity, family trait, strength, age, the means of enjoying love, chastity, graciousness, understanding and wealth-these being said in order-are the kinds of similarity between the lover and the love)

The two who loved each other must be suited to each other in birth, code of conduct, moral standard or manliness or boldness, age, personal appearance, the intensity of love, virtues, grace, wisdom (or knowledge) and wealth (or riches). These are the ten essential points of agreement between the lovers. Birth indicates here birth in a good family noted for moral uprightness. Family (kudi) is one thing;
caste is another. There was no question of caste in those days. One born in good family imbibes certain traditional virtues of the family; hence the moral standard is mentioned next. In fact, one’s family is judged by one’s conduct as Thiruvalluvar says: “Oḻuka mudaimai kudimai” means having good conduct is the sign of being born in good family. (Thirukkural 133). Thus proper conduct is the touch-stone of the family from which a person hails. The term ‘ānmai’ which strictly means manliness is used here to indicate generally power or healthier physical or mental-on the part of both the lover and the beloved. It is no doubt true that a weak or weak-willed person—whether it be a man or a woman—will not be able to stand “this fret and fever” of life. Thus, both the man and the woman must be suited in health or power which also ensures a perfect joy in union. As for agreement in age, the poet indicates the proper marriageable age of the man and of the woman. It was held in those days that the female was twelve years. There might be a difference of four years between them. The agreement in appearance refers to the personal charm of both and their general shape. Thus a short man should not marry a tall maid, and vice versa; nor should not marry a tall maid, and vice versa the term kāmavāyil indicates the intensity of love felt by both lover and his beloved. The love and the desire for union must be equally shared by both; otherwise the marriage will be a failure. The term ‘nifai’ indicates the constancy of the men; it means chastity. Today the term is generally associated only with women and we believe that men are not so much bound to be chaste as women. But Tholkāppiyar considers chastity as equally applicable to both men and women. Only when we grant this fact, domestic life will be happy. Next ‘arul’ refers
to grace or kindness towards the suffering of others. Both should of course share this quality to make married life a success. ‘Unarvu’ means the knowledge of what is proper to be done in the day-to-day life. ‘Thiru’ indicates the quality that endears the couple to all who meet them. Naccinārkkiniyar gives an interesting interpretation of this term. He means ‘Thiru’, is not only the possession of ‘porul (or material wealth), and the enjoyment of material pleasures after earning material wealth but also a certain condition of the mind which feels rich and contented always. Thus even if ‘selvam’ or wealth is taken to mean “the perfect content of the mind”, it is quite necessary for married life to make it happy. Moreover it may be taken as simple wealth, for, only when both the bride and the bridegroom are equally rich, they can live with self-respect as individuals. Otherwise, it is likely that the wealthy person might mock at the poor partner and keep the person in his or her mercy, as the case may be. Hence the saying, “Porul illärkku ivvulakamillai” (no place in world for those do not possess material wealth) (Thirukkural 247). It is no doubt true that material wealth is an extraneous factor that should not be an impediment in the way of love. Yet, at the same time, we find many instances of broken marriages because of economic inequality as well. Unless both are equal in their material possessions, they cannot be perfectly happy in this world, so long as social environment affects individuals.

It looks as though there were plenty of opportunities for men and women, thus suited to each other, to meet as often as possible, in ancient Tamil Nadu. They should have moved freely with each other, with a sense of equality. The ancient society of
Tamil Nadu seems to have afforded greater freedom to the maids of those days. Then only love was possible for it must be preceded by meeting. Though they might have met by the working of Fate, they might not be ignorant of each other's ways before falling in love with each other. When one of the lovers tries thus to know the other's heart, it is but natural there were many misgivings and doubts. These misgivings of lovers are thus the natural consequence of courting.

The man, for instance, should not allow himself to be completely infatuated by the personal charm and beauty of maid, the moment he sees her; he should not be taken in by her apparently winning manners. The hero should first try to find out the true personality of the maid be likes, however attractive she might be outwardly. He has to know her heart and mind before judging her. This is indeed a difficult and even laborious task indeed for the lover. He should never fall in love at first sight. This is applicable to the maid also. The code of love-making demands the same securing of conduct on the part of the girl in love (94 Porul). This aspect of love-making has been stressed so much just to avoid reduction or filtering in love. Hence the large part assigned to doubts and misgivings of lovers in Tamil Literature.

However poets observe certain conventions regarding heroes and heroines who appear in their works. When the hero of a poem, for instance, meets the good and attractive heroine, he would first wonder about her identity. He would be full of anxiety to know of her. He would compare her with all that is gracious in life (Thirukkural 1081). Similarly the heroine would be anxious to know all about the hero. She would go further in her companions, wondering whether it was Lord Muruka, or some other God standing before her. 'The first feeling that the heroine is
not of love but of fear', says Naccinārkkiniyar. According to him as there was no means known to her by whom doubts could be cleared, the heroine should avoid doubts regarding the identity of the hero. He seems to hold the view that the women, as a class, are ignorant.

The doubts thus arising are said to be cleared in certain ways common to both the hero and the heroine. It is the eyes that play the most important role in the meetings of lovers. They serve not only as organs of sight but also as tools subjugate the one to the other. Thus it is the eyes that speak the language of love and expose the desire for union. Words are felt to be of no use when the eyes of lovers commune with each other (96 *Porul*173). How do the lovers express their love by means of eyes-by certain meaningful looks? It was not quite refined to express their desire in words. This is true of all people on earth. Love, supposed to be tender than a flower, is more felt and understood than expressed. Thus the very nature of love is against expression.

Besides, there are certain characteristics typical of the two sexes, which make it difficult for them to express their desire openly in words. However much the equality of sexes might be praised, man as man is different from woman as such. They cannot both be of the same nature. Therefore Tholkāppiyar proceeds to give an account of the distinct characteristics of man and woman and their feelings. Thus he concludes that it is but natural for such beings to express their desire only by gestures or signs of love, not by expression.

The natural qualities of man are pride (*perumai*) and might (*uran*) (91). Pride or *perumai* is interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar as resulting from knowledge,
efficiency, fame, charitable disposition, reasoning power, culture, friendship and fear of sinful deeds. Uran or might is taken to mean manliness and physical might which reveals itself without these qualities, without being sure of the response of the heroine first, would not give expression to his love by words. As for the female, however much she is educated whatever be her position, she would never come forward to express her love first. Love is the one emotion which makes even those women who compete with men in occupation observes silence. A woman cannot easily get over her womanly qualities. What are they? They are fear, bashfulness and modesty (92).

In matters of love, women have to be more cautious than men. They have to fear the consequences if their love fails, more than men. Men can love more than one lady; so if they fail once, it does not matter. But women can love only once in their lives. ‘Thus disappointment in love is the greatest calamity that may be fall a maid. Naturally, with the future lying dark before her, she has to venture on love full of fear for the unknown consequences.

Nān or bashfulness is natural quality of a woman. It is so evasive a quality that it can be explained only showing the instance of a woman experiencing bashfulness. It is thus a distant quality quite characteristic of a woman. Naccinarkkiniyar interprets the term as indicating the feeling of modesty in a woman resulting from tokens of love. But as this bashfulness may spring either before tokens of love or after meeting the lover or husband, Naccinarkkiniyar’s interpretation may go wrong.

Madan means the feigned ignorance of women. Though a maid may know that she is being loved by a man, she might pretend to be ignorant of his love just to
know the truth or the intensity of love. No woman naturally would first express her love. The lovers who have thus expressed their love by gestures and other tokens try to fulfill their love in more ways than one. They try to meet each other under some pretext or other as often as possible. At times one of them may come to the same place where the other was met first and the person might meet the other on the way. This happy coincidence is called, "Idandhalaiippadu". Thereafter both are immersed in thoughts of each other. As the hero and the heroine are thus thinking only of each other, having given up all other pursuits in life, both ignores the needs of their body and they naturally become lean or reduced. Thus they pine away in thought. At such times they may give expression to the delights of union which they consider as the only remedy to save their lives. When they find a good companion or a bosom friend who pities them, they may express their love openly. Thus the hero expressed his love to the friend and the heroine to the ‘thōli’. Whenever they turn their eyes, they see none but their beloved. They forge their duty and other obligations. They linger in sorrow, revolving their love. Finally, they decide to put an end to their lives if their love does not succeed.

Even if the hero does not express the cause of his sufferings, his friend will understand it because of the change in the hero’s behavior. Then the friend tries what he can to help hero in his love. He arranges for his meeting with his lady-love. The context when the pining hero finds comfort in the words of his sympathetic friend is called ‘pāngarkkūttam.’ Similarly the context when the pining heroine find comfort in the words of her female companion is called ‘thōfiyarkkūttam’.

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The lovers may meet during day-time or at night. The place where they meet during day-time is called ‘pakar kuri’, while that where they meet at night is ‘Iravukkuri’. The ‘pakar kuri’ will usually be outside the house. The ‘iravukkuri’ may be in a part of the house; and those inside may be able to hear them. Sometimes the lovers may also be disappointment without findings the partner in the prescribed place.

The course of secret love, following a partner of its own, gradually comes to be known to the world outside. The female companion of the pining lady begins wondering on the changes-physical and mental-undergone by the heroine, if she does not suggest her love to her friend. Thereafter the companion clears her doubts as to the cause by certain tokens or gestures of the lady in love. She is sure it is the disease of love that causes her friend to wither. Then the heroine takes bold to ask for her companion’s help in fulfilling her wish to meet her lover. She implores her companion most movingly.

At a time when the heroine and her companion are thus together engaged in conversation the hero might come there. Then from the peculiar reactions of the lady-in-love, the wise companion understands the secret piercing a certain mischievous glee. Thus her doubt is cleared and the guess is confirmed by sheer accident. This context is called ‘mathiyudambaduththal’. Then the news or the secret spreads from the female companion to the ‘foster-mother’ i.e. Sevilli. It goes from the foster mother to the mother and from the mother to the father of the girl who is in love. As already mentioned it is not becoming of a heroine in love to approach his lover first and
express her love. This is against the code of bashfulness or modesty. However, it does not mean that she would keep quiet at a time when she finds impediments to her love. May be, the virtue of modesty is to be honored more than life; but chastity is nobler than modesty. She thus rebels against adverse circumstances, if there by any and then to preserve her chastity, she may even go out to meet her lover in his house. If under such circumstances she has to express her love in words, there is nothing wrong in it (113 Porul (182).

Therefore such statements of the lady-in-love also find a place in Aham literature, as pointed out by Tholkäppiyar. When the hero and heroine meet and move intimately in secret, however careful they may be, their love will gradually come out to be known to all. It is known by a few at the beginning and as the days pass by, more and more will get to know it. The context, when only to a few have knowledge of the secret, is called 'ambal'. When more people come to know of it, the context is called 'alar'. Thus the two conditions of 'ambal' and 'alar' give publicity to love. It is the hero who is largely responsible for the publicity that the love gains. It is he who comes to the lady's house often and it is he who makes others suspects him of love, because of the characteristic changes of conduct and behavior. The heroine, on the other hand, remains at home and as it is to not natural for women to reveal secrets in public in a rash and hasty manner, love is often made public only by men (139 (188).

As the two conditions of 'ambal' and 'alar' become more intense, the heroine finds the state intolerable; she suffers much and rebels at home; naturally she is watched more carefully at home, while talks of marriage begin, it is the parents of the
hero who usually approach first the parents of the heroine for talks of marriage. The parents of the girl may consent for the marriage without any knowledge of the previous intimacy between their daughter and the lover or they may not consent also and arrange for the girl’s marriage with some one else. When the heroine suffers in love and looks pale and sickly, the parents might try to find the cause of her sorrow by means of ‘kalangu’ or ‘veryāttam’; of course the truth will not be known by adopting these methods. She will continue to suffer. If the disease of love grows more overpowering, the heroine might even prattle in her dreams and wake up crying sorrow and fear. Thus the heroine’s love will come out by various ways. If it is decided to go against her wish, she would leave her home and elope with her lover. This context of the heroine in love leaving her home without the knowledge of her parents is called ‘udambōkku’.

If love is known to all, chastity must be preserved. In other words, both the hero and the heroine thus limited in love should be married. If no marriage takes place, both will die. The saying ‘kāṟṇam thappin maraṇam’ owes it origin to this habit; ‘kāṟṇam’ means the rites of marriage. “If love is not solemnized by means of marriage; death will be the result”( 139(188). Hence, ‘Karpu’ is a matter to be analysed here.

The term ‘karpu’ is taken to mean the distinct virtue of chastity. It is said to be applicable only to women today. It is said that this term means the virtue of a wife who never thinks of anybody by way of love in her mind except her husband. It is derived from the fact that the man and a woman born in different places come
together as husband and wife and choose to live together bound by an unseen tie or bond of wedlock. Thus what is imagined and established as seal is ‘karpu’. Naturally this virtue is stained the moment either of the couple. This code of chastity is based on the principle of strictly observed monogamy; and the etymology of the term implies that it is virtue to be cultivated by both the husband and the wife.

At the time when a man would enjoy the right to marry more than one woman, this virtue cannot be laid down for men. Similarly in any land where a woman can marry more than one man, this code of chastity is ruled out for her. As love is an essential pre-requisite for marriage, this virtue of chastity is an essential pre-requisite for love. It is this virtue which enables those united in love to enjoy their love and live happily together. Hence, the importance is given to ‘karpu’ or ‘chastity’ in Tamil literature. Naturally this virtue has been applauded by all as supreme.

The lovers who used to meet alone without the knowledge of others might continue to do so continuously for a long time; however there were also instances when this meeting was hindered in the middle owing to many causes. One who loved thus a lady might give her up after some time and prefer another more attractive and pay his attentions to her. Then the forsaken lady would be in a miserable plight because her intimacy with her faithless lover was not known to the people. Therefore it was that marriage prescribed as an essential ceremony to publicize and sanction the love of two people. Thus, marrying with the knowledge of the public and living together thereafter came to be recognized as a confirmation and cementing factor of love. The society thereby ensures a certain sense of security to both the lover and his
beloved. In fact marriage or ‘Thirumaṇam’ is also called by another term ‘Varaithal’, which confirms this view. This term means “confirming for oneself”. Thus marriage is a ceremony wherein an individual in society qualified to be claimed by all. Those who were not particularly claimed thus in wedlock belonged to all; they were the prostitutes, called ‘varaivil maklir’. The term ‘Thirumaṇam’ is a beautiful one to refer to marriage, containing a world of meanings; So long as man and a woman live separately without love, they are self-centered and do not learn to think of others. Once they fall in love with each other, they learn the virtue of selflessness; they begin living for each other and when they get married and bear children, they live more for the sake of their children than for themselves. Thus man learns to grow in selflessness first thinking of his wife, then of his sons and daughters, then of his family in general and finally of the society where all families live. Thus the husband and wife learn to negate themselves and live for others entirely. When they live such selfless lives, reputation seeks them; and reputation or good name is the very essence of life. It is their reputation that is imagined as the element that imparts fragrance to life and makes it lovable and enchanting as flower. Thus marriage which is the first step towards gaining this reputation or “fragrance of life” has been most aptly and beautifully called “Thirumaṇam” in Tamil. Of course ‘maṇam’ also means union but his meaning is not popularly known as fragrance. The prefix ‘thiru’ means “that which elicits the love of one who sees it”. The married life of an individual should be such as to elicit the praise of all. The choice of the word ‘Thirumanam’ to refer to
marriage is indeed beyond all praise. *Tholkāppiyar* calls the same married life as ‘*karpu*’.

‘*Karpu*’ or the virtue of chastity is confirmed only by married life. The ancient Tamils know very well that this would become a rare virtue in a society devoid of the rites of marriage. Therefore marriage itself came to be identified with ‘*karpu*’ or ‘chastity’ or called as such.

*Tholkāppiyar* says that ‘*karpu*’ is the offer of the lady love to the lover for the marriage by those who have the rights to offer, in the proper way according to rites (142(189)).

According to *Nacchinārkiniyar*, these Vedic rites mean the rites conducted by priests in the presence of the God of Fire as a witness; they would not be applicable to the Tamil ways of life at the time of *Tholkāppiyar*. It is usual for both the parties of the bride and the bridegroom to meet in the bride’s house some time before the marriage and confirm the alliance in writing; a *ōlai*’ i.e. ‘the letter of marriage’ or ‘*niccayathārththam*’ i.e. confirmation of marriage or *verrilai pākku mārruthal* i.e. the exchange of betel leaves and nuts among the parties concerned etc. Therefore there is nothing wrong in assuming that in olden days the lover married his beloved with the confirmation of his love in writing. The marriage rites mentioned are as follows:

“It is an auspicious full-moon day. The arrangements for the marriage are being made since early morning. There is a huge *pandal* before the house. Fresh sand is strewn on the ground, garlands are hung, and lamps are lighted. Cooked rice and black gram *kali* (something like pudding) are kept in abundance to feed the
guests. The house is full of all kinds of noise. The old women stand in a row carrying new vessels on their heads. Then four mothers (whose husbands are alive) come forward, carry the vessels, fill them with water and then bathe the bride with it. The ware is mingled with paddy and flowers. While pouring the warder on the bride’s head, the four mothers say: “May you never swerve from chastity (karpu); May you help your husband in carrying out all good deeds and thus may outlive as his partner loved by him for ever”. This is all the marriage ceremony. Then they lead the bride into the house with great jubilee. Then the near relations of the bride offer her to the bridegroom blessing her thus; “May you become the reputed partner of him”. That very night they both meet in a house for union. The bride lies down covering herself entirely with the new bridal clothes. The husband removes the veil on her face; she is nervous and sighs deeply. Thereupon the husband asks her to speak out her mind boldly. When he thus softly questions her, standing behind her, she is filled with joy and bows her head down in modesty or bashfulness” (428).

This picturesque description gives us some idea of the rites of marriage as observed by ancient Tamils. There is no mention of either fire or priests here. Those who blessed the bride were the mothers who had begotten children. Widows and maids were not qualified to bless the bride.

‘Ūdanbōkkku’ is known that how the lover would separate the beloved from her people and take her away in her parents are against him is nothing but elopement. This is rather rare in our country though it is little more common in other countries today. It is not permissible according to law also if a girl who is a major goes away
with a grown-up man as her lover. As the elopement takes place only with the will and consent of the lady-in-love, it does not come under *Rakshasa* form of marriage. The hero who thus elopes with the heroine may be shown as marrying her without the knowledge of the proper persons who should offer her in marriage to him (143(189).

There were no distinctions of caste or creed among the ancient Tamils observed in marriage rites. The question of such distinctions neither does nor rises, as there were no casters at all. How could they have adopted distinctions of *varṇa*? When these distinctions were later introduced in Tamil land, different customs were adopted to suit the *varṇa* and caste. It was only then that the verse 144 ‘Porul’ was also interpolated in *Tholkāppiyam* to confirm the distinctions and the pertaining rites.

The classification of the four *varṇas*, the consideration of the first three kinds as being superior to the last, and one of the *varṇas* being considered as the lowest were all alien to the Tamils who lived at the time of Tholkāppiyar. Therefore it is clear that this passage was introduced after the popularization and adoption of *varṇas* in Tamil Nadu. ‘*Varṇa*’ is said to be as that there was a time when the rites applicable to the three groups of higher beings were owned by the group of the lower ones also. This statement indirectly point out the absence is one of the remorseful complaint that looks as though one of the lower *varṇa* bemoans the loss of ancient glories of the people; it does not sound like grammatical dictum, as the other passages of Tholkāppiyar. If Tholkāppiyar himself would have written these lines, he would have clearly shown of the ‘*melōr*’ and that of the ‘*kilōr*’ and distinguished them. Therefore this passage is beyond doubt an interpolation and should be treated as such.
Next, the poet proceeds to show why the rites of marriage came to be adopted. They are necessary, as we have already seen, to protect the interests of the lady against the deceitful ways of men in general. That is why the ancient Tamil scholars and wise men prescribed wedlock to avoid lies and deceit and the lover and his beloved were enjoyed to get married in the presence of the public. Tholkāppiyar says in this connection as follows:

\[ Poyyum valuvum thōnṭiyā pinnar \]

\[ Aiyar yāṭṭṭhṇar karaṇam enba (145(189). \]

(It is said that after falsehood and failure appeared (in the conduct of love) the leaders of the society caused ceremony to be held)

Naccinārkkiniyar interprets the "enba". He interprets the term in the light of Aryan tradition based on Sanskrit work. He says that "enba" does not refer to the first writers or predecessors but the authors of northern books i.e. Sanskrit books. This assumption itself is entirely wrong. As Panamparanār puts it in his 'pāyiram' (Introductory verse), Tholkāppiyar indicates by 'enba' that he is mentioning the fact with absolute conviction which is based on the authority sanctioned by the learned predecessors of him in Tamil land, whose works he has thoroughly mastered. He means by 'enba' only those who inhabited the region between the Northern 'Vēnkadam' range of hills and Southern Cape of Kumari. He suggests that his statement carries weight and that it is irrefutable because it is the result of thought understanding of the writers who lived before him in Tamil land, and of the grammar of the language. He never thought of the Aryans at all or the northern race of the
language. In that case, he would have mentioned them beyond doubt. Thus the terms ‘enba’, ‘enbar’ etc., only denote the predecessors of the poet in Tamil Nadu.

He interprets the second line thus; the term aiyar used is a caste, Tamil term. It means “leader, or eminent ones, or men of unique glory”. The term aiya is a form of address which is derived from aiyar. The Brāhmins who found the old and respectable men in Tamil Nadu addressed as aiyar, assumed the term themselves. The Christian missionary who came here from Europe call himself aiyar and Sāstri imitating the Brāhmins of Tamil Nadu. Thereof it is clear that the term aiyar used here does not denote the Brāhmin only.

It is important to examine the import of the passage quoted above. Centuries before Tholkāppiyar, lovers might live together as husband and wife without either observing the rites of marriage or written confirmation of marriage. In course of time, when deceitful loves and faithlessness appeared, the eminent ones laid down that love should be consummated and solemnized by means of marriage rites.

Next, we find that Tholkāppiyar shows a remarkable analytical sense and aesthetic taste in classifying the suitability of the various expressions by the various persons in various contexts or places. Indeed this analysis, so grand and so detailed, is splendid in its appeal to us. The literary conventions he lays down reveal the tremendous psychological insight of the author who clearly understands the subtle variations of moods and temperament. Various expressions such as thōli, Kāmakkilaiṭhiyār or mistresses, sevili or foster-mother, actors, songsters (pānar) and Ilaiyar, (servants) we understand the routine of the domestic or family life in ancient
Tamil land, and the ancient civilization of the Tamils. It was usual for the hero to marry a second time and also to enjoy union with mistresses and prostitutes (*Irparaththai* and *Seripparaththai*).

The virtuous qualities of the heroine, as summarized by the female companion and other servants by way of introducing her to the hero are indeed worth cherishing even today in any housewife. Chastity, love, moral, goodness, patience or fortitude mixed with mercy (kindness), ability for concentration (or observance of the mental discipline) hospitality show in prompt attentions paid to guests and generosity show in treating the relations with kindness are said to be the typical qualities of the housewife (152(196). These are of course virtues of lasting value, loved at all times. It is but natural for the *thōli* and others to praise the heroine in the presence of the hero. His good opinion regarding the heroine is confirmed by what the others say, and he is full of joy.

Man is rarely satisfied with one virtuous woman and there need be no feeling of shame at the thought of the existence of prostitutes in ancient Tamil land. It must be noted that prostitution did not exist here licensed by the government as in certain other countries. It was not considered as a source of income for government. This aspect of prostitution was just treated as a literary device to enhance the charm of variance assumed by the heroine in the *thiṉai* of *marutham*; actually only the rulers, the warriors, and the wealthy in society were running after prostitutes. Thus it must be noted that generally those who formed the bulk of the society must have been actually loyal and faithful to their wives.
If a hero happens to go away from his home in search of prostitutes, the time when he should return is pointed out by Tholkāppiyar. This shows that the ancients had a scientific knowledge of matters dealing with sex-urge. It was a time when birth-control was unknown; it was considered a great bliss “to increase and multiply”. The hero is asked to be in union with the heroine at the time when the ovum is released, ready for impregnation. This period is said to be the twelve days after the duration of the menstruations. Modern Sexologists also are of the same view. Mary Stopes says that the ovum is released from the tenth to the twelfth day after the period of menstruations. Thus the ancient Tamils had also advanced much in the field of sex as well. The husband is enjoined not to go of sex as well. The husband is enjoined not to be away from his wife on these fruitful days:

\[ Pūppin \ pṟṟappadu \ iṟṟu \ nāḷum \]

\[ Niththakanṟu \ uṟaiyār \ emmanār \ pulaṟavar \ (187(201) \]

(When he is away from the wife for having intimacy with the paramour, he must not live without his wife for the twelve days after the menstruation- say the poets.)

This passage indirectly helps one to avoid the “days of fertilization of the ovum”, when family planning is the order of the day. Tholkāppiyar reveals profound scholarship in this field of physiology as well. Next, separation might be caused because of the higher education. He lays down the period of absence for purposes of education and shows when the husband should return to his wife. This passage enables us to visualize the condition of educational facilities available in those days. This line,
shows the duration of higher education does not exceed three years. It looks as though that the subject of education has divided into generally education and special or higher education even in those days. General education means the learning of simple arithmetic and alphabet necessary for all. Special education means any branch of technical study preparing for an occupation. The poet lays down that the husband may be away from his wife for a period of three years for that until the time of marriage, it was usual for a person to receive general education in his own place. When he is said to go away from home for study, it must be for the purpose of special education.

Today the professional courses of education like Medicine, Engineering or Linguistics last for a period of 5 to 6 years. However, the working days of the year amount to just a little more than six months. Thus the six years of study in professional course amounts three years of continuous instruction of olden days. The marriageable age for a man is 16 years, as pointed out by commentators. Thus up to 16 or 18 years the youth would remain in their native places, receiving general education and after marriage, some of them perhaps would go to place for receiving special education.

Education was considered compulsory for all in those days; all should not only acquire knowledge but also live strictly in accordance with the precepts of knowledge. There should be thus a harmony between what is acquired and what is practiced. There was no divergence between knowledge and practice in the case of
scholars, as we often find today. Education was honored and cherished as the very eye of a person.

Naccinărkkiniyar’s meaning of the passage does not seem apt in this context. “kalvi yāndu mūnru ṭavāthu”: The courses of education like the Vedanta and so on dealing with asceticism (Thuravaram) would not go beyond the required number of years. Mūnru ṭavāthu: All such courses of education would not go beyond the three pādam. Then he continues to explain the meaning as follows:

The term ṭavāthu is to be taken in both contexts. The three pādam are the branches of knowledge that show ‘Thou art that’. They are the Absolute (Param), Should and the realization of the complete synthesis of the two. That is, the study of the Agamas which impart knowledge of the matter (Porul) that is beyond all the philosophic principles involved in the three pādam. The poet has prescribed this knowledge for all the people of the three varṇās. The rest of the vēlālars also are mean in so far as they can study only the Agamas and their translation in Tamil.

There is no time limit fixed for this period of learning as those leading to domestic (family) lives to be prepared for a life of complete ascetics. There is no connection whatsoever between this interpretation or explanation and the signal passage of Tholkāppiyar. First the commentator mentions “the required number of years”; then while explaining he says that there is no time-limit to be fixed. Again as the terms “required education” clearly indicate the requisite standard of literacy, how does he conclude that they mean the study of Vedānta and so on? (Pillai, 428). Were the people who lived at the time of Tholkāppiyar conversant with the Vedāntas or the
*Upanishads?* Even if they tried to do so were they permitted to do so by those who professed Vedic, orthodox religion? When Naccinārkkinīyar refers to the branches of knowledge prescribed for the three varnās does he not suggest that the velalars enjoyed no such rights to learn and that they were denied the opportunities of education?

It is clear that Tholkāppiyar composed his poem in Tamil, to serve the purposes of Tamil Scholars and to bring out the glories of Tamil tradition. He would not have composed it to publicize the ailment distinctions of varnās, quite unknown to the people of his day. What Naccinārkkinīyar does is a clear example of what should be strictly avoided by commentators who are not expected to introduce all extraneous and irrelevant details they know in their interpretation of the original. They should strictly be guided by the sanction and authority of the original and confine themselves to what author lets them know.

In *Ahaththinai iyal* another passage is also irrelevantly explained by the same commentator. *Uyarṇdhōrk kuriya oththin āna.* The terms oththin āna are interpreted thus: “The Sanskrit and Tamil works born of the Vēdas”. *Uyarṇdhōrkuriya:* those which are suited to the Brahmins, kings, merchants and the high-born vēlalas. Here the term othhu is taken to mean the Vedas. othhu is a Tamil term which means the books of research or higher learning. This meaning of the term is confirmed by its use in *Kural:*

\[
Maṟappinum oththuk koḻukum P ārppān
\]

\[
Piṟappu oḻukkam kunṟakkedum. – (134)
\]
(A research scholar, though he forgets, may recover it, but if he fails in good conduct worthy of human being, he is destroyed).

“The book of research” means the specialization of study in some branch of knowledge, more or less like the research course today undertaken by scholars after finishing the Post-Graduate course in a subject. Those who are suited to do research in any field of knowledge may well be called the eminent –ones (Ūyarndhōr), and they are head and shoulders above others in acquisition of knowledge. Even today only those who distinguish themselves in their study are allowed to do research. Similar was the custom in olden days. Research is not suited to all but only to the deserving few, the eminent ones (Ūyarndhōr), who distinguish themselves in knowledge. This is the only possible and straight forward interpretation of the passage given.

Thus, we find there were three branches of education like general education, technical education and research at the time of Tholkāppiyar. These three branches were open to all irrespective of any consideration except an aptitude and taste for learning. There was no question of distinctions of varnās as it were not established then; nor was there need to prescribe a particular branch of study for a particular varnā.

The line “Vēndhuru tholilē yāṇdinathu ahamē” shows that it was usual for some men to leave their land for serving in other countries on political purposes. Such people should not be away from their wives for more than a year, says the poet. The stability of the government and the conduct of the subjects speak volumes for the
political wisdom of the ancient people in Tamil land. The other line “ēnaippirivum etc,” shows that the separation caused by purposes of earning material wealth should not also exceed the period of a year. As separations caused by purposes of ambassadorship also come under separation for political purposes, it must also rightly come under “services rendered to the king”.

It is usual today for men and women in all walks of life to go on excursions and picnic. We love to relax ourselves by whiling away the time in parks surrounded by fascinating natural scenery. Some may think that this recreation to give us relief from humdrum existence derived from the conduct with the Europeans or the Westerners. They may not know that such recreations as going on picnics or excursions were popular even during the time of Tholkāppiyar. The poet says that the husband and wife whiled away their time in parks and other beautiful spots.

\[ Yāṟum kūlānum kāvum adịp \\
Pathiyikandhu nukarthalum uriya enba” . (191(201) \]

(It is said that the enjoyment in sports and games pertaining to the river, tank and park outside the town – limit is due to them.)

The term ‘kā’ means a flower-garden like the park of today. Those who are in service today get a day off in the week but yet they do not have the facilities provided for them to spend their time in happy surrounding, most of them cannot afford to go on picnics or excursions even to the many spots of beauty. It is said that in foreign countries, the government itself provides some facilities in this regard. Similar facilities are quite essential in our country also. Industry, of course, is good and
fruitful; leisure also is essential to make industry more fruitful than it is today. Industry without leisure would become too much of a burden and drudgery. Recreations go a long much of a burden and drudgery. Recreations go a long way in refreshing the mind and enduring it with a new vigor to launch upon the work more efficiently.

Another interesting feature of lie in ancient Tamil land is that the people of those days looked upon the whole course of life of an individual as one continuous course of mingled obligations, duties and pleasure. Thus, learning is a life-long process with them. It continues even after marriage. When the proper time comes, the youth marries the beloved and for leading the domestic life with her, he has to carry out the duties and obligations of a householder (illarththan). The Brahmacarya period is a long period of bachelorhood and the Sanyasa period which is the period of asceticism after forsaking the household entirely foreign to the Tamil codes of life. The young man while experiencing love first marries the beloved and then lives with her for ever, bearing children and blessed by their relations and the guests; he thus carried out his obligations to society and does his duty remaining as a householder. He never cuts himself away from his wife and children and the society to which he belongs, bothering about why he is born and contemplating on the cause thereof. On the other hand he is concerned with the particular obligations and duties that devolves on him first as a householder, and then as a individual in society, and thus he tries to do his best, understating the purpose of life, if not the cause of life, perfectly well. Similarly he never worries why a person dies; he is concerned with the purpose
for which a man dies. Thus the ancient Tamils tried to make the best of life, seeking various ways and means. They learn the art of living well and they questioned only the purpose of life. What is it? It is nothing but doing what is noble or glorious or what is good to all.

Tholkāppiyar says:

*Kāmam cānṭa kadaikkōl kālai*

*Emaṁ caṇṭa makkāḷodu ihuvarli*

*Aṭamburi cuṟṟamodu kilavanum kilathiyum*

*Cīṟandhathu paiṭṭal iṟandhthan payanē*. (192(201)

(After the enjoyment of love is fulfilled, being surrounded by the pleasure-giving children and having the various virtuous relatives with them, the husband and wife must perform what is best for the world and die for it; this is the way of reaping benefit of this life.)

Naccinārkkiniyar has unfortunately paraded his love and knowledge of Sanskrit works and northern traditions in interpreting many such passages of Tholkāppiyam. Tholkāppiyar has thus made the Tamil codes of life, what the future generations too have to understand, analyse, and follow the virtues for the upcoming generations correlating ‘the past exist in the present the present modifies to the future’. Since because of the traces of influence of Sanskrit in Tholkāppiyam it paves way fit for the comparative study with T.S.Eliot who has *Vēdana Upanishad* principles of look into life and literature and attempts to represent the truth with their
own way of understanding and incorporates it by examining without any bias or prejudice in coining their characters.

Eliot has always been considered among the spiritual writers of the modern world, who are concerned with the problems of salvation. Most of his works reveal his religious conviction. All his poetic dramas belong to this category. According to Neville Coghill, Murder in the Cathedral is about a situation and a quality of life; the situation is perpetual and the quality is rare (MC 10).

Thomas Becket in Murder in the Cathedral was educated in London and Paris and became a personal friend and confidant of Henry II, King of England, who appointed Thomas to the high office of the Lord Chancellor of England; Later Henry II was involved in a battle with the clergy over the question of whether the king had legal authority over the clergy. He appointed Thomas as the Archbishop of Canterbury as he was sure that Thomas would continue his loyalty to the king. Thomas accepted the post reluctantly. And, when Thomas became Archbishop, he opposed the King’s measures against the special privileges of the clergy. The struggle between Henry and Thomas finally led to the later being forced into exile, and he lived in Europe for seven years. Following reconciliation with the king Thomas returned to England but the peace was of short duration. Becket ex-communicated certain Bishops who had officiated at the crowning of Prince Henry. This so enraged the king that he wished that somebody would so away with Becket. Four of his spiritual knights took the hint and went in search of the priest.

The four knights in the play Murder in the Cathedral are shown as the agents of the king. They themselves do not know that they are the agents of the will of god.
The four Knights play a dual rule. In the first phase, they are the agents of Henry I and come to Canterbury to execute the King’s historical order addressed to ‘those who eat my bread and drink my wine to rid him of his troublesome priest’. On the second phase, the play emphasizes the contemporary significance of Thomas’ martyrdom.

Eliot himself has a sense of literary tradition which influences his plays. Speaking about his sense of tradition Eliot in his essay ‘On Tradition’ writes,

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a Tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of the same people living in the same place.

(SP 20).

It can be explained that a sense of tradition is essential, for it makes us realize our kinship with the people living in the same place with us. Tradition is not something immovable but it is something constantly growing and changing. Eliot distinguishes between the essential and the inessential, the good and the bad in a particular tradition and says that the good and the essential must be followed and revived. Eliot in his seminal essay on ‘Tradition and the Individual talent’ says that tradition is not a dead one; it continues and lives in the present. When a really great work of art is reduced, this tradition can be modified only to some extend and the artist too has a sense of literary tradition. The saint is an artist who obeys the tradition of daily crucifixion and of ultimate martyrdom.
The play *Murder in the Cathedral* reflects this sense of tradition in its form and content. First speaking of the form, the play begins with the Chorus. Eliot, in this traditional sense, adopts the chorus in the plays. His attention has been focused on the central theme of martyrdom. He begins the play like the Greek plays at a comparatively late stage in the career of Becket. Incidents regarding historical events which preceded martyrdom have not been enacted on the stage but are imparted through the device of narration. Eliot does not disturb the unity of time. As in a Greek tragedy he makes the audience feel that the catastrophe is imminent. Like a Greek play, *Murder in the Cathedral* is religious and moral in tone. With the theme of martyrdom and with its ritual pattern, the play has strong religious emotions. Like the Chorus in a Greek play it provides information about events which happened off the stage and comments on character and action. It helps the audience to understand the play.

As in a classical drama in *Murder in the Cathedral*, Eliot has used a minimum number of characters. Attention is concentrated on Becket and the others merely symbolic; they are not individualized. That is why they are not given any names. They are known as 'messenger', 'tempters' etc.

Eliot presents the Chorus as a vision of horror. The women of Canterbury turn to the comfort of Christ's sacrifice about to be renewed in the martyrdom of Thomas. By the end of the play Eliot takes us to an understanding of the significance of Thomas' death. He makes us experience the moment of 'grief in joy' and 'joy in grief'. Thus Eliot uses the Chorus to provide both the background and the counterpoint to the action to be maintained.
Thus the Chorus, the representatives of ordinary humanity, is involved in the suffering. They are aware from the very beginning that they are being drawn into the events which disturb the daily routine of their lives. They do not wish anything to draw them out of 'the daily round and common task'. They want to 'go on living and partly living'. However they soon become conscious that the coming of the knights, symbols of evil, is a pollution of all life and nature. They feel that they themselves are involved in the imminent death of Thomas and their greatest need is for an utter purging of themselves and the world.

After the lamentation of the Chorus and the priest's failure to persuade Thomas to seek safety by turning the sanctuary into a fortress, the Knights make a brief second visit 'slightly tipsy', and singing a parody of hymn. They order Thomas to submit to the will of the king, and when Thomas refuses to do so, they murder him then and there.

The second aspect of the play is its literary structure. Eliot has constructed the play according to his earlier ideas of perfect structural organization. In Murder in the Cathedral he achieves an overall unity. The play is unified by the movement of fear and the 'will' is expressed at first by the Chorus and at last it mourns and rejoices at the full meaning of Becket's martyrdom. The interlude is an integral part of the play's total structure since it dramatizes Becket's attempt which turns out ultimately to be a successful one. According to Nevill Coghill the play is richly documented; but all the documents issue from the supporters of Becket. Nevill Coghill adds in his introduction that Eliot has treated their evidence faithfully but selectively, to give form and concentration of art to the natural hubbub of murder; almost everything in his dialogue has its
basis in one or other account so that what he has written is imagined, not invented... (MC 10)

The speeches of the four knights are seen as an expression of the worldly evaluation martyrdom, of Becket spiritual evolution. The acceptance by the Chorus of Becket’s explanation is the end of the play.

As for the versification, Eliot forms the rhythm of regular blank verse which has become too remote from the movement of the modern speech. Therefore what he kept in mind was the versification of Everyman, ‘An avoidance of too much of iambic, some use of alliteration, and occasional and unexpected rhyme, helped to distinguish the versification from that of the 19th century. Further Everyman states that ‘its versification is extremely irregular, at least in comparison with that of the earlier Miracle and morality Plays, which, nevertheless, it partly imitates’ (145). Nevill Coghill states that ‘the lines are of varying length and have a varying number of stresses, there is a good deal of rhyme and there are touched of alliteration’ (145) in this play. In fine, the versifying technique Eliot adopts in this play is quite suited not only to the theme it handles but also to the unity of its structure.

As a playwright Eliot has significant achievements. Murder in the Cathedral is a full length drama. In this, Eliot is confronted with the problem of dramatic form and his patience in it for the first time.

Eliot starts with the general assumption even before the beginning of his career as a dramatist that any form, which is perfected by the writers of one age, cannot be copied exactly by the writers of another age’ in “The Listener”. It belongs to its own period. He believes that a form is not merely ‘such and such a pattern, but a precise way
of thinking and feeling' (SW 63). According to Eliot, any form before it is applied to this purpose, must have the potential ‘to arrest, so to speak, the flow of spirit at any particular point” (SE 111). As to the possibility of having suggestive models from the past, Eliot holds the view that one must go back to such plays as Everyman, medieval moralities and mystery plays, or the plays written by the Greek dramatists.

Virtually, Eliot has followed the same practice in his play Murder in the Cathedral. This practice is comparatively closer and more diversified. The very design of the play is enough to establish its affinity with the classical models of tragedy. Considering the types of references, the play abounds in the liturgy of the church which the choruses resemble, the mystery and miracle plays of the medieval age; the Morality play with its Temptations and the Biblical style age; the Morality play with its Temptations and the Biblical style in general. Finally Eliot endeavours to present the history and tradition of Becket, which, not withstanding the other aspects of the play, prepares the audience for identifying themselves with the higher ideal, underlying Becket’s martyrdom. The play, in this sense, becomes rooted both in our time and in Becket’s time.

Eliot’s characteristic achievement is the dramatic power of its verse. The play has gained the qualities of unprecedented unity and intensity. Murder in the Cathedral embodies all the constituents of a dramatic language, about which Eliot has been terrorizing since long. The verse of the Choruses is a great success. It is, perhaps, the greatest thing in a great play. The following lines of Murder in the Cathedral show the new kind of dramatic movement of its language.
O Thomas return, Archbishop return; return to France return, quickly, quietly, leave us to perish in quiet. You come with applause, you come with rejoicing, but you come bringing death into Canterbury a doom on the house, a doom on yourself, a doom on the world (243)

Or

No! Shall I, who keep the keys of heaven and hell, supreme alone in England ho bind and loose, with power from the (Pope, descend to desire a punier power? delegate to deal the doom of damnation” (249).

Eliot makes alterative emphasis mush faster and displays a more scientific attitude towards the aural effects of the rhythmic beats, and everything he maintains is remarkable.

Eliot’s theory of ‘Objective Correlative’ occupies an important place in the creative process of Eliot’s poetry both dramatic and non-dramatic. One should not forget that Eliot always stood for an impersonal art. According to him, a poet must transmute his personal agonies into something rich, strange and universal. Naturally this process of transmutation demanded its own method. "The manipulation of an appropriate form provides to the poet a way to give order and meaning to raw experience, it cannot remain isolated from his view of life and reality” in mentioned in “The Dial”. Thus form and content become well fused together, in it Eliot wants to give form to experience and to create an artistic order out of the chaos of emotions’ (SW 55).

And so, Eliot chose the death and martyrdom of Thomas-a-Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the theme of his play Murder in the Cathedral. Though in Murder in the cathedral, the subject is historical, the drama is about the conflict between
the material and the spiritual worlds and about the historical situation as narrated by the three priests to the Chorus in the opening scene. Becket’s struggle within is given as a series of encounters with the tempters and with the priests. It is the focal point of the play. Eliot dramatizes through Becket the meaning of sainthood and martyrdom to the ordinary men and woman of today. The conflict between the Church and the state is a recurrent theme in English plays. Nevill Coghill, states that the position of Becket ‘is the centre-that at the circumference, acting, he at the still centre, patient, suffering, witnessing, willing’ (17). Eliot shows the need for the human role in sainthood which is a life of ‘willing harmony with the will at the still centre of things’ (20). Becket’s discussion of martyrdom is also his explanation of the peace of the Christ, that peace the world cannot give.

The central theme of the play is martyrdom. In this play, Eliot has used the term ‘martyrdom’ in its original sense. The word ‘martyr’ means ‘witness’. It is ‘not for the glory of becoming a saint, but for the sake of uniting his will with the will of Love that moves the stars’ (18). Eliot presents Thomas as returning to Canterbury where he finds no reconciliation with the king. The Choruses feel a sense of impending disaster. Then comes the crucial scene in which Thomas struggles with the temptations within him. D.E. Jones says that,

In the days following his return, which he knows must come, temptations throng his mind. Temptations of the past revive, the appeal to the senses (partly indulged in, in his days of worldly prosperity,) the lure of temporal power such as he had wielded during his Chancellorship, the prospect of beating Henry at his political game by accepting the proffered alliance
with the discontented Barons—these are temptations which he has known before. But the fourth temptations is unexpected, that is the temptation, ‘to do the right deed for the wrong reason’ (Jones 70)
is to become a martyr for the glory of being one. In this agony, Thomas acknowledges the spiritual pride within him and humbles his will, emerging with the hard-won knowledge that, as he says in the sermon, ‘the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr’ (MC 57).

In this way Thomas realizes through the Fourth tempter that he has been thinking of martyrdom as a glory, which exalts one above all on the earth and his realization gives him the final victory in the struggle with Henry. The fourth Tempter flings his own words back at him.

They know and do not know, what it is to (act or suffer, they know and do not know, that action is suffering and suffering is action. Neither does the agent suffer nor the patient act. But both are fixed, In an eternal action, an eternal patience. (49)

In losing his will in the will of God, Becket achieves the reconciliation. In it, Thomas discovers the force of the ultimate law of the spirit and the reality of Divine Love. In his sermon, Becket states that ‘Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for saints are not made by accident’ (57). In Murder in the Cathedral, Martyrdom takes place in a ritual form. Becket’s is an act of obedience to the will of god. To loose one’s will in the will of God is, as we have seen, to realize the eternal pattern in the flux of time:
To apprehend

The point of intersection of the timeless

With time, is an occupation for the saint' (57)

Thomas gives his life in such a spirit and accepts death. Thomas' share in the
pattern of action and suffering draws to a completion. 'Every martyr is a witness' and he
signifies to the efficacy of Christ's scarifies a gesture of love in response to Divine Love
is revealed in Christ.

His blood given to buy my life.

his blood given to buy my life,

my blood given to pay for his death

my death for his death(30).

And thus, Thomas fulfils his part in the 'eternal design'. To say it precisely,
Thomas is a type of Christ who sees that for him to die is more important in the eternal
dimension than to accept the reasonable arguments both of his tempters and the priest.
Eliot sees Becket's martyrdom as an action out of time, an action which has its full
significance in a timeless dimension, where every deed is seen to have eternal
significance or external insignificance.

A Christ is crucified in every age, so that the mass of men may be roused out of
their spiritual apathy and complacency; the son of man is crucified always 'wherever a
saint has doubt, wherever a martyr is giving his blood for the blood of Christ. And so
Eliot's theme of martyrdom is futile, if it fails to remind ordinary men and women of
God's love. It is with the blood of martyrs that spiritual fertility is restored to the
spiritual wasteland.
D.E. Jones says of 'True Martyrdom' that it 'requires the fulfillment of the two halves of a pattern' (74). The first half is fulfillment by the martyr himself. Thomas has accepted the martyrdom in the right spirit. In Murder in the Cathedral spiritual examination of the nature of martyrdom is set against the background not only of the 12th, but also of the 20th century.

We can analyse this dramatization of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, in two different planes. At the ordinary level, it presents two significant aspects of the historical situation. In the first place, it displays a psychological study of the saint, and secondly, it shows a struggle for power between the Church and the state. And at a deeper level, the play becomes the Christian drama of 'fall and regeneration' in which atonement is symbolized by Becket. Eliot, himself attains the state of the impersonal in creating Becket. As a martyr, he belongs to the class of Christ who also suffered temptation before entering upon the drama of action and suffering. The tempters may be regarded as the whispering adversaries, the Women of Canterbury are the fallen Adam; and the knights are the lawful heirs of Satan. Thomas Becket, like Christ, is tested, slain and exalted, not for his sake but for the fate of other men.

Drawing centrally from the prose sermon and Thomas' role as a saintly imitator of Christ, Eliot focuses on martyrdom and part of the play imposes a larger pattern on individual actions. The knights and Thomas are contrasted thoroughly here. The scene reflects Eliot's apprehension of human history. Eliot opposes it with Thomas' life by asserting that the value on a note of man's fate with the image of the turning wheel.

But in the life of one man, never

the same time returns, Server

127
the Cord, shed the scale, only
the fool, fixed in his folly, may think
He can return the wheel on which he turns (248)

Thomas refers to the agent and the patient being fixed in an eternal action, he proposes a pattern which embraces both 'eternal burden' and 'perpetual glory'. By the Eliot interweaves suffering, striving and acceptance and makes a strong note of his conception of the relation of the individual to the society. In his 'The Idea of a Christian Society' Eliot refers to the view that society is for the salvation of the individual and the individual must be sacrificed to the society.

It (the church) wants everybody, and it wants each individual as a whole. It must therefore struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives... it maintains the paradox that while we are reach responsible for own souls, we are all responsible for all the other souls. (SE 13)

In this process, a sense of permanence and eternal recurrence is caught sight of in the midst of flux. The image of the still point and the turning wheel thus seems to be an embodiment of the structure of the play.

Eliot uses the characters themselves as a device for the action to voice their inner thoughts. Becket gave his life 'to the Law of Man' and consequently became impersonal leaving his person behind. Eliot dramatizes Becket's innermost temptation through the Tempters in which the proud mind becomes humble and chooses the martyr's crown as its reward. The last temptation is the greatest reason; 'To do the right deed for the wrong reason'. Becket wins through to the recognition that no man can will his way to
martyrdom, ‘I shall no longer act or suffer to the sword’s end’ Murder in the Cathedral (53) concluded Becket and submits his will to the will of God.

Technically, Eliot used the Chorus to impersonate a definite group of people. It existed ‘in’ the play and not as an impersonal voice. Dramatically, the Chorus serves many purposes. It works as a mouthpiece of the dramatist, Eliot. It expounds the past; comments on the present, and illuminates the future. It provides the spectator with a counterpart of Eliot himself. It can appeal to the senses with an imposing dignity and grandeur. It presents the inside permutations of common humanity, and the capacity to portray human situation in its relevant perspective. And it is meant to promote the dramatic realization of the significance of ‘martyrdom’ in terms of Christian liturgy. Eliot sets himself in writing lines, not for an anonymous Chorus, but for a Chorus of women of Canterbury. He himself says that the ‘Liturgy is ‘unconsciously general’ and ‘consciously general’ (Sharma 94).

Looking at the plan of action of Murder in the Cathedral one can feel that the play exists at more than one level. Eliot exploits the historical context of the death of Becket; yet he never tries to render the history of the Christian Martyrdom. Through Becket’s sacrifice Eliot tries to dramatize the need for total submission to the will of god. Here Becket is moved by an inner realization and not by any eternal pressure. Eliot himself explains his decision in terms of ‘action and suffering’.

The death of Becket in its formal aspect may be regarded as martyrdom. But in its substance it may imply a deeper significance, not so much terms of martyrdom as in terms of sacrifice, suggesting a general truth. In the natural and human order, man
without such a sacrifice is a mere best. It is the act of receiving bloods, which in the final analysis redeems human beings.

The motif of action in the play *Murder in the Cathedral* constitutes two dramatic levels- martyrdom and redemption. The ordinary member of the audience will generally interpret Becket's death as martyrdom, while the intelligent members may consider it an act of redemption.

Considering the symbolic levels, the play *Murder in the Cathedral* has a deeper significance. The play resembles a tragedy and presents a moral flaw and a sense of justification. It goes to the credit of Eliot’s craftsmanship that, instead of conferring all aspects on the protagonist, as is usual in a tragedy, he has demonstrated them through all the characters in the play. Thus the moral law is presented through the implorations of the Tempters, the suffering of the Chorus, and the acts of the knights. The justification of the tragic act is manifested through the exaltation of the martyr, the condemnation of the murders and the salvation of the sufferers. In this sense, the knights symbolize sin, the women suffering, and Becket sacrifice. According to Theodore Spencer, the characters-the priests, the women, the knights and Becket himself- live at different levels of moral consciousness, which is the resultant outcome of the way. Each character looks at reality under divergent conditions of life. Francis Fergusson, commenting on this aspect of *Murder in the Cathedral*, compares the levels to the three ‘orders’ of Pascal-‘the order of nature, the order of mind, and the order of charity in his “The Idea of the Theatre” (210) which Eliot has elaborated in his essay ‘The Pensees of Pascal’ (SE 416).

There remains another level of consciousness, based on the structure of personal feelings. It gives, as Raymond William states, ‘the variation of levels of consciousness
we have seen described in 'Sweeney Agonistes'- the many unconsciousness, the few conscious’ (Williams 183). At the conscious level, the play shows its concern more with what happens through the ‘man’ than with what happens to Thomas Becket. Similarly, at the single religious level the feeling conveyed is a feeling of recognition in Christian terms, while at a purely secular level the feeling would be of a different kind. However, Eliot has succeeded in communicating the nucleus of his own feelings in a manner, which seems to be ‘traditional and conventional’ (183). The play, though religious in every sense of the word, has the intensity to arouse excitement even in those who are not religious. According to D.E.Jones, this intensity is the cumulative product of the ramification of meaning at all planes of awareness that man is capable of-intellectual, sensuous and spiritual (79). Thus Eliot has conveyed a definite view of life.

The statement of life which Eliot has tried to project exists at more than one level of understanding. At one plane, the plane embodies a feeling of Christian recognition; it also speaks of state and the church. If an allegorical view is taken, it would suggest a conflict between ‘brute power’, on the one hand and ‘saintliness’ on the other. It appears as if the Second priest is close in spirit to the knights, just as the First Priest is akin to the women, and the third Becket himself. The Second priest is a symbol of moral strength. He may not be bad, but he is unsaintly. The Third Priest remains passive through the understanding of all the implications of the conflict. In its final analysis, the conflict indicates the church, but a church dedicated to humility, and represented by the women rather than the priests, Eliot means to communicate two feelings; first, that a church is not only the priests and secondly, that a simple and sincere involvement done
out of a sense of humility, as that of the woman of Canterbury, constitutes the Church itself.

Thus the action of the play enhances the intensity of the action. The women of Canterbury confess and consent as does Becket himself. Psychologically, the internal conflicts of Becket and the Chorus are as it were, ‘microcosmic’. They present a searching study of the significance of martyrdom as symbolized by Becket. The knights are sin, while the chorus is suffering. The inner conflict is climaxed in a sin of ‘counterparts’ of the temptations from within through the tempters and the claims of humanity from without the priests and chorus. All through it, it explicates the personality of Eliot himself and expresses ‘the great mass of the individuals’ experience in an impersonal manner.

This exactly is what Eliot has tried to achieve by means of the ‘objective correlative’. It has provided to him the necessary appliances to objectify his personal experiences and raise them into something impersonal and universal. And this has yielded a unique structure of thoughts and feelings, and matter and method become indivisible.

Even as the artist submits his personal will to a tradition and is thus a martyr, the protagonist Becket surrenders his will to the will of God without any motive. Thus he dies to himself and to the world as well, as he has no value even for martyrdom. What the saint achieves spontaneously, the chorus also participates in and partakes of. The chorus by vindicating Becket and by feeling for him is martyrs in the making as they instinctively obey the call of the impersonal in the person of the Archbishop. The knights, by obeying the king selflessly, are also martyrs though in the wrong
cause. They are bound to evolve into spiritual beings before long. Thus in Eliot’s plays martyrdom is portrayed not as the exclusive prerogative of Bishops and archbishops only but that of even the lay characters as is evidenced in Harry in The Family Reunion.

The Family Reunion is the drawing-room of naturalism. It displays an uneven combination of formalism and realism. The persons in the play include several ‘everyday insignificant characters’. These elements represent framework rather than structure. And thus, Eliot opts for ‘the details of contemporary life with characters selected from the commonplace situation’ is depicted in “On Poetry and Poets” (SP 81) and the characters touch nearer to the contemporary speech.

Eliot formulates the plot of The Family Reunion in a simple manner. To put it in a nutshell, Harry had left his home seven years ago, and he returns to participate in his mother, Amy’s birthday party. In the meantime, he has lost his wife while traveling on a ship. And he does not understand how it happened. He has only a kind of feeling that he either pushed her or saw her slipping to drown. Since then Harry feels a sense of responsibility for the death of his wife. The mother looks forward to Harry’s return with the hope that he may settle down in his ancestral house. However, the son decides to become a missionary, and leaves for a foreign country. This decision causes great disappointment to his mother and she dies.

The play is situated around a family birthday party and all the characters are not fully assembled to celebrate the party of Amy in the beginning. Amy had been at Wishwood for nearly forty years. To her, her marriage was not fruitful. “It has been a loveless marriage, entered into for what, no doubt, had been considered good sound
family reasons at that time but it bred unhappiness and evil". (F.R.23). Anyhow the bliss of love had come to them on ‘the dark wings of renunciation’ (24). Harry was born and the unwilling father, on whom she had forced this son, was already planning to murder his wife but in vain. Eliot portrays a man’s wish to murder his woman as follows:

I knew a man did a girl in
Any man might to do a girl in
Any man has to, needs to, wants to
Once in a lifetime, to do a girl in.(19).

Agatha, the youngest sister of Amy had her own greatness as she had loved Harry’s father and restrained him from the foolish fantasies of murdering Amy, his wife. Agatha always thought of Harry and his close affinity to Agatha is such that Agatha’s love for Harry’s father got spiritually transferred to Harry.

After John’s and Arthur’s birth, their father who was living a ‘life-in death’ with uncommitted murder in his heart leaves them in the darkness. In the meantime, having renounced her love, Agatha accepts spinsterhood. Amy’s thoughts are for a better future and so she decides to get Harry married. Amy chooses Mary, who falls quietly and permanently in love with Harry as any normal human being does.

Harry rises to manhood and as a result he decides to marry according to his own personal will and this decision makes it clear that he has chosen a wife of the wife of the kind that would cut him adrift from Wishwood; Amy diagnoses the motive of her son’s ill-chosen wife.
She never wished to be one of the family,
She only wanted to keep him to herself
To satisfy her vanity. (75)

Harry’s marriage is as fruitless as his father’s. His history seems to repeat itself and Harry shares his father’s fate. He realizes himself and expresses his feeling of loneliness as follows:

Not yet; I will ring for you. It is still quite light
I have nothing to do but watch the draw out.
Now that I sit in the house from October to June,
And the swallow comes too soon and the spring will be ever
And the cuckoo will be gone before I am out again. (67)

Eliot portrays the return of Harry to his home after an absence of eight years and his departure again after three hours. Within these three hours, in the current of the play Amy’s selfish tendency to keep her son in Wishwood is thus explained.

I don’t want the clock to stop in the dark
If you want to know why I leave Wishwood
That is the reason. To keep Wishwood alive
To keep the family alive, to keep them together,
To keep me alive, and I live to keep them. (71)

Amy’s view is not the same as that of her sister Agatha’s and for dramatic purposes, Eliot states through Amy that

Only Agatha seems to discover some meaning
In death which I can’t find. (71).
The play portrays Wishwood and now it has none except Amy and Agatha, hardly gathering “aunts and uncles”. These guests have gathered neither in affection nor dislike, but from a habit of family solidarity (29) in obedience to Amy. Eliot presents these characters not to illuminate the action, but to express their inability to understand what is happening.

Harry feels guilty of his uncommitted murder and hears his mother’s words that he should go up and dress for dinner, as it will make him better after a hot bath. And he gives an opportunity for the family to discuss Harry and his mental condition. Harry is also in a state of mind which he finds almost impossible to explain to anyone else. Harry is brooding over his past and present, his loss of innocence and present guilt. As Harry himself says, “You do not know what hope is until lost it” (73).

Eliot presents Harry’s opinion, as he finds his real self while conversing with Marry; Mary suggests that Harry is still capable of hope, and he must have hoped for something in returning to Wishwood. Wishwood proves to be a cheat, perhaps the cheat was in himself-cheating his will. As a normal human being Mary’s words and the intimacy that goes with them-touched Harry with a glimmering attraction, a kind of returning hope and says

You bring me news

Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor. (109)

It is so because “There was no ecstasy since his marriage” (32) and so this attraction slightly intoxicates his mind and affects a possible ‘way of escape’. Mary tells him that “Harry has to be born twice; and that is painful” (32). This seems to be
the very essence of the play. Eliot presents this sick-souled person who is deeply conscious of his own sinfulness and of the sinfulness of the world around him.

Thus the central action is about his sin, the “Origin of Wretchedness” which was behind Harry’s childhood and which destroyed his marriage. Through the words of Agatha, it is clear that Harry’s future would be built upon the real past.

Nevill Coghill states that Agatha revealed to Harry the nature of love, a thing outside his experience till then; for he is cursed to bear the lovelessness of his family (34). Further Agatha is able to teach him that love is of two kinds: “the love of attachment- of man to woman-and the love of detachment- of man or woman from all created beings—that leads to divine union; that diverting of oneself from the call of the world which, St. John of the Cross tells us, is the way to be taken by those who seek to unite their wills with the will of God” (34). Even Agatha does not speak of God directly and of taking the way of the cross but she has in mind the pursuit of austerity through self-denial and doing service to others. Of earthly love she says,

There are hours when there seems to be no past or future,

Only a present moment of pointed light

When you want to burn. When you stretch out your hand

To the flames. They only come once. (147)

Agatha’s experience of divine love is more doubtful but its austerity is thus expressed:

Perhaps there is another kind,

I believe across, a whole of Tibet, of broken

Stones that lie, fang up, a life-time’s march.
I have believed this. (148)

Agatha herself comes closer to Harry to explain their destiny saying that it is not a story of detection—“of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation” (148). Eliot’s metaphorical mention of purgatory is an explicit use of Christian symbol in the play and Agatha explains it thus:

It is possible

You are the consciousness of your unhappy family

Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame

Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,

Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen

To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer. (148)

Eliot has tied the Eumenides into his pattern of thought in finding an equivalent for the transformation of the Furies through the difference between Hell and Purgatory, in the acceptance of the purifying fire. This brings from Harry immediate cry of joy.

Look I do not know why,

I feel happy for a moment as if I had come home,

It is quite happy, as if happiness

Did not consist in getting what one wanted

Or getting rid of what can’t be got rid of

But in a different vision. This is like an end. (140)

And thus he speaks of his future in the most general terms:

Where does one go from a world of insanity

138
Somewhere on the other side if despair.

To the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,

A stony sanctuary and a prime altar,

The heat of the sun and the icy vigil,

A care over the lives of humble people,

The lesson of ignorance, of incurable diseases.

Such things are possible…

I must follow the bright angel. (157)

All these lead Harry to choose the path of the missionary. Thus Harry’s change of heart, change of direction, and his understanding of his suffering come not only simply with the disclosures of the past but through the illumination of the past and the present. All these central figures are chosen to be the objective correlatives of the spiritual forces set in motion by the curse of lovelessness transmitted from Amy and her husband, to Harry and his wife, with their attendant ‘murders’.

And there was no love at Harry’s begetting, no love but domination in his upbringing, no love in his flight from Wishwood, no love in the marriage into which he fled and in both men; they will to murder a woman had been aroused. The men, at first are dominating personalities. Later Harry submits his will to the will of God.

The play comes to an end with Harry’s departure and the psychological truth carries the readers and the audience forward with a specific conclusion. Harry is convinced that his “Obligation is not to his mother but to God; that he is one of those are called to “leave all and follow” (Gardner 155). As Harry announces his departure,
Amy finds that her future is taken from her; she is left alone with the present and 'the clock stops in the dark'.

Eliot displays in this play various levels of consciousness as he did in Murder in the Cathedral. He satisfies both the playwright and his audience by means of many devices pertaining to the theme, the action, the protagonist, the symbolic context, the ritual imagery and the Chorus. In this connection, Becket’s sermon and the final chorus can be cited as relevant illustration. Eliot, in The Family Reunion improves upon these methods and makes it more relevant to the everyday experience of the audience. ‘He tries to win over his audience to a new way of life’ (Sean Lucy 192).

The immediate experience of the audience gets precedence. The world presented on the stage is contemporary in every sense of the world and Eliot keeps his audiences in the surface reality of their world of experience. Ironically, the family expects one kind of reunion but experience another kind. Similarly Mary and Harry present their relationship through a feeling of divine love. Eliot makes the appearance of Eumenides, a device of the ‘make-believe’ on the stage. And it is analogous to the knight’s addressed at the end of Murder in the Cathedral. Even the Chorus in The Family Reunion follows the same pattern. It has been closely integrated into the play. Eliot follows the tradition and it consists of Harry’s aunts and uncles. Its role is essentially different from that usually assigned to the Greek Chorus. It is nothing but a sense of ‘illuminating the action’; to create a relative feeling of inability to find what is going on, on the stage. For instance,

We do not know what we are doing,

And even, when you think of it,
We do not know much about thinking;
What is happening outside of the circle?
And what is the meaning of happening. (348)

They suddenly abandon their natural conversations and begin to speak as if in
a trance. Eliot suspends the flow of ‘outward action’ and tries to reveal some mystery
of the ‘inner life’ from the hinterland of man’s mind. Therefore, it reaches beyond the
ordinary members of the audience and reaches higher regions of consciousness.

Eliot blends two kinds of worlds, the normal and the spiritual in The Family
Reunion also. In the normal world, there exist different layers of reality, where each
color character talks and reacts according to his level of understanding. The knights
presented in Murder in the Cathedral, are ordinary people, they can see events but
cannot interpret them in their appropriate context. They belong to the ordinary phase of
the audience. The most impressive of such characters in The Family Reunion is Amy,
the mother of Harry. The rest includes Amy’s sisters, her brothers-in-law, Harry’s
uncles and aunts. The spiritual world has only one representative, Agatha (Harry’s
aunt) at the beginning, and Harry at a later stage. It is Agatha who gives Harry the
necessary guidance and instruction to accept “Sin and Expiation”. Harry wants to
remain silent in action. He does not communicate much with the other characters.
Thus Eliot portrays the psychological aspect of Harry’s consciousness.

Eliot thus provides a string to the various meanings which run through the
surface level by means of the “Orestes myth” and religious rituals. It can be clearly
said that the main purpose in constructing this type of thematic complex was to
present a modern counterpart to the experience of purgation through religion. Eliot
has excluded “Christian terms” from the action and the verse of the play, but his intention was to have the “Christian view” of man’s condition emerges from a commonplace setting of the secular modern life. In Antony George’s view, Orestia of Aeschylus also adheres to a similar pattern suggesting the connection of this theme with ritual and myth. As Agatha states,

what we have written is not a story of detection

Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation. (148)

Eliot has provided the two ritual struggles between the “order of earth” and “the order of heaven”. He tries to reflect a religious experience in contemporary terms deriving from myth. The Greek sources furnish him with material for the purpose of religious recognition. Eliot converts them into Christian terms and integrates them in his ritual play, The Family Reunion. The title itself is ironical at the familial level and factual at the spiritual level. The play ends with Harry leaving his family and leaving his mother alone. But he leaves the illusory family only to rejoin the Lord in a spiritual union. By giving up Wishwood, the world of Wish and Will, he becomes a martyr, Wishwood represents sin, the guilty the past and fearful future. Through Agatha Harry learns that sin is not action only. Even a thought, a wrong motive is sin. Harry’s father and Harry himself have been guilty of the sin of uxoricide as they had wanted to kill their spouses. The only way out would be to renounce the past and hope for the future, and live the present. That is, they have to take up the cross and willingly undergo the suffering of Being so that the past and future cease to exist, times comes to a standstill and man is born a second time; but this time he is born into the Eternal, the timeless, leaving behind Wishwood once and for all. Having been
left alone Amy has to face herself and hence she is a prospective martyr. In Eliot's play ordinary men, like Harry, are projected as potential martyrs. Women are not left behind. If Agatha is spiritually evolved person in The Family reunion, Celia of The Cocktail Party does the star turn.

In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot concerns himself with the theme of maladjustment between wife and husband and how the psychiatrist priest Harcourt-Reilly, corresponding to the doctor in mediaeval drama, brings about a reunion between them. But Eliot manages to conceal the origin of the play so well that no one could recognize the resemblance between the two plays unaided by the author. Eliot's main concern is still religious significance. He himself declares of a feeling which we can detect and be aware of in a kind of temporary detachment from action. And Eliot moves nearer to the style of the naturalistic drama in this play. True to his theory, he adopts tradition and the plot in the play has been taken from Alceldis. In the Greek play a dead wife is restored to life by the intervention of Heracles. Here, a runaway wife is brought back as if from the dead. In both the cases a marriage which had ended has to begin again. The play starts with a cocktail party. It may plainly be regarded as a domestic play dealing with the problems of marital relations, where Edward, Lavinia and Reilly are the central figures. These central figures are flanked by two persons, Celia and Peter who are yet to marry. Eliot follows his own way of the tradition he has adopted from the story from the Greek drama but has tried to interpret the same in terms of modern life.

In *The Cocktail Party* Eliot pays more attention to the element of suspense in the play and to the subtleties of characterization. The opening of the play is
surrounded by an atmosphere of mystery, with the unexpected absence of Lavinia from the cocktail party and with the presence of the unidentified guest. There is no direct suggestion of the supernatural as in the other plays but beneath the superficial social chatter the spiritual conflict with which the characters are confronted is heavily underlined. Eliot does not alternate between the tragic and the comic as in the early plays but fuses the two. He goes to the extent of providing the conventional love triangle comprising Celia in love with Edward, Peter in love with Celia and Lavinia in love with Peter. The psychiatrist priest provides a camera-eye in this fast changing situation. The tragedy of the lives of the major characters is that they suffer from a ‘loss of personality’.

Most of the time we take ourselves for granted
As we have to, and live on a little knowledge
About ourselves as we were. (36)

The real trouble with Edward and Lavinia is that they have been living a life which they have taken each other for granted without knowing the reality of experience between the two. Eliot says that we are not justified in fixing the image of a person at a particular movement, for ‘we die to each other daily’.

To pretend that they and we are the same
Is a useful and convenient social convention
Which must sometimes be broken. (74)

Edward and Lavinia have been excising an unconscious preserve each has formed of the other, resulting in a distortion of their marital relations. Lavinia’s
restoration after a few hours implies the death of her former life, having the same significance as the death of Alcestis had for Admetus in the play by Euripides;

I thought that if I died
To you, I who had been only a ghost to you,
You might be able to find the road back
To a time when you were real. (85)

Reilly is able to diagnose the real malady from which both Edward and Lavinia have been suffering. They are ‘only pieces of a total situation’ which he has to explore. Their sense of isolation resulting from the wasping of their personalities is brought out in these lines;

A man finds himself incapable of loving
And woman who finds that no man can love her. (123)

In Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot wrote a play about England’s most famous saint. In The Cocktail Party Eliot concerned himself with the making of a new saint in the person of Celia. Celia is weighed down by an awareness of solitude and a sense of sin. The role of Sir Harcourt Reilly in the play makes his patients choose their own way of reunion. They can be reconciled to the human condition and have ‘new life’ as the Edwards have at the end of the play, or they can choose the way of faith and atonement as Celia does. She chooses the way of dispossession and reunification and is no less of a saint than Becket was.

Thus, The Cocktail Party tells of a study of the search for a religious vocation. From Edward’s point of view his relationship with his wife depends on his being respectably married. Celia has to face along with her husband this unpleasant truth.
Her disillusionment at the lack of passion which is the hollow reality of Edward's character has a positive aspect. It makes her realize that this love was not really what she sought. This transforms her into one of Eliot's characters whose problem is to fulfill a religious vocation. In realizing this she is greatly assisted by Sir Henry Harcourt Reilly.

In his role of priest, Reilly interviews Celia and prescribes for her a sanatorium which is evidently some kind of curative ecclesiastical establishment. Celia's spirit does spread wings and she obeys Reilly's instructions to workout her salvation diligently. She realize her own mistake and feels 'sinful' for the mistake. Yet she can find no other word for her feelings. Celia is making a blind attempt to express the newly felt promptings of the mystical side of her nature. For the moment she has passed beyond the grief and shock of the 'crash' and being 'ditched' by (130) Edward to the realization that she is alone and aware of guilt or sin, or failure, because of mistaking the love between her and Edward for the real thing; whereas the treasure she was seeking, the love she is looking for, may be an illusion; lover and beloved, dream and dreamer all equally unreal(135); unless the ecstasy of love is real, though those experiencing it have no reality (136), if that is possible. She attempts to describe this ecstasy as an intensity of loving in this spirit, a vibration of delight without desire, for desire is fulfilled in the delight of loving (136). Reilly offers Celia's choice of alternatives whether she can be cured of a longing for a visionary love which she has not found and cannot find. Thus first possibility is having a glimpse of some spiritual vocation and of answering it fully enough to reach it. The next is being 'transhumanised' that is to accept the human condition that finds its way of love in marriage and a family. The last words spoken by
Jesus from the cross, according to the Gospel of St. John (XIX. 30) "It is finished" (142) completes the work in bringing Celia to a clear decision and the choice of 'transhumanised' way of life. Celia is ready to submit to the will of others and thus she surrenders to God.

And thus The Cocktail Party ends with a second party balancing that with which the play opens with the same guests present. Alex tells Peter that Celia is dead, having gone to Africa as a missionary and been 'crucified....nearer an ant-hill' (169) by some 'heathens' who were making an insurrection. While conversing with them Reilly explains that she did not know what form her death would take but that he directed her in the way of preparation.

That way, which she accepted led to this death.

And if that is not a happy death, what death is happy? (174)

And goes on explaining that Celia suffered far more than any one of them would ever be able to suffer, being more conscious.

She paid the highest price

In suffering. That is part of the design. (175)

No one, not even Peter, who was in love with Celia and who is not a guardian, challenges the assumptions behind Reilly’s statement. The most striking of these is that her death was not defensible as a risk undergone for the sake of doing real good to ignorant people but triumphant because she perfected her will, bringing it into conformity with the Will of God and thus receiving martyrdom.

It was time to entertain guests who are arriving for the cocktail party. Lavinia says, 'But all the same... I don’t want to see these people' (175). To which Reilly
characteristically replies, 'It was your appointed burden, and as for the party, I am sure it will be a success' (175).

In projecting the play, two souls are recovered from the dark in two different senses. Reilly restores a selfish wife to a selfish husband, so that they can learn to endure each other and to endure their reflection of themselves in each other. It is one at a higher level. At a higher level still, Reilly brings back Celia’s soul from the dead from destitution and restores her to life. And there is another recovery that, in restoring her to a life which is the saint’s death, he restores the world from sickness of life. Eliot, thus, fulfils Celia’s soul in restoring life and meaning to the religious act of atonement. And thus Celia is identified as a martyr.

Although Eliot keeps the religious significance of the play in the background, Celia’s death has to be interpreted at the same level as Becket’s. It has been atonement for the sin of the community as a whole. The cocktail party given at the end of the play in a way brings us back to the starting point and thus emphasizes the circular structure of the play.

This is how Reilly has taken the death of Celia, by seeing on her face the astonishment of the first five minutes after a violent death which has to take place later. In its own way, The Cocktail Party reiterates the theme of the realization of the Four Quartets. Again, as in The Wasteland, Eliot had utilized ancient myths to point out the significance of a modern situation. Here he has used the classical background of Alcestis and the Christian concept of confessor priest to point out the inadequacy towards the problem of maladjustment. The truths known to Christianity since long are expressed by psychology in a form which is comprehensible to the modern mind but it cannot explain
the profounder emotions of religion. Thus although the estrangement between Edward and Lavinia can be traced back to repression, psychology cannot account for the martyrdom of Celia.

The Cocktail Party seems to be a delightful play. At one phase, the members of the audience would have enough satisfaction from anything like manners and attitudes and at another phase it has a kind of greater 'spiritual consciousness' having philosophy, wit and religion. As a "comedy", it should be assumed to offer an ironic interpretation of contemporary life. Sir Henry Harcourt Reilly, the divine investigator prescribes cures to his visiting patients and this provides them their moments of obligatory choice. The cure, he suggests is a cure within the society. As he explains to Edward and Lavinia;

And now you begin to see, I hope
How much have you in common, the same isolation.
A man who finds himself incapable of loving
And a woman who finds that no man can love her. (123)

Sir Harcourt Reilly plays a significant role in resolving complex tangles. He brings the couple, Edward and Lavinia to know themselves and their situation. Again he helps in the process of reconciliation Edward realizes the truth and says:

Lavinia, we must make the best of a bad job
That is what he means. (124)

As Edward is also in this condition, he wants Lavinia back. At first Celia cannot believe it, and puts it down to a temporary weakness, overwork, mental illness; she tries to lend him her strength.
Will you assure me that everything is right,
That you do not mean to have Lavinia back
And that you do mean to gain your freedom,
That’s all that matters. Truly, Edward,
If that is right everything else will be,
I promise you. (64)

But Edward remains firm in his weakness. It is too late and he has lost the desire
for all that is most desirable (68). There is a kind of climax in self-realization for each of
them as the scene draws to its strange close. Edward seems that the effort to escape from
his own mediocrity, though his love-affair with Celia was only make-believe, a furtive
attempt to find a way out of the joyless realities of his marriage,
a pretence
That what is, is not, or could be changed. (64)

Edward says that he must be dull. The dominating apathy of his nature which
keeps him safe guards him from adventure and rules him as much as some other men are
ruled by an inner genius.

But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,
The indomitable spirit of mediocrity. (64)

As he makes this confession, it seems to Celia that she is witnessing a total
change in Edward’s nature. However, Miss Celia’s case is different. She wants to be
cured of “emptiness and failure” towards someone, “outside herself”. Reilly offers her
the choice involves sacrifices and leads to a long journey. As Reilly says,
The second is unknown, and so requires faith
The kind of faith that issues from despair.

The destination cannot be described;

You will know very little until you got there;

You will journey blind. (136)

Celia, unlike Edward and Lavinia, chooses the way of atonement in place of reconciliation. Her choice is dictated by her realization that life for her can never be the same again. Her immediate reaction is to withdraw from it in pursuit of something higher. The implications of Celia’s choice reveal an under-pattern and the play runs parallel to the surface pattern of the play’s action. Its particular significance lies in the fact that it derives its existence from the spiritual content of the play. This creation appeals only to the conscientious section of the audience. In this context, the choice of Celia is essentially the same as that of Becket, the martyr in Murder in the cathedral and the same as that of Harry, the expiator of ancestral guilt in The Family Reunion.

The action on Celia’s side moves from the region of human love or religion—giving herself to God. Lavinia’s assumed death and her coming back symbolize death and rebirth which amounts to a process of ‘disentanglement from their search for the divine in the human’ (Matthiessen 227). In the relation of Edward to Lavinia, Eliot shows a man subject to such pressure as call for submitting one’s will to the will of God. And by Reilly’s advice Edward and Lavinia have found their way to humanity.

Reilly’s ‘sanatoria’ resembles private hotels rather than clinics. And her Sir Henry is also in touch with certain religious houses he also calls ‘sanatoria’ and to these entrusts those patients whose malaise is a sense of the sins of the world and a spiritual craving to expiate or atone for them by a life of dedication, to a self-surrender to a
power whose beauty and attraction they have felt or glimpsed and which may be called the will or love of God.

Love, can be presented under two traditional modes, One of them is that which withdraws from the contemporary world of daily life under ‘rows of chastity, poverty and obedience, into monasteries and converts or in missionary and healing work under a religious discipline’ (241). The other is that of a life lived in ‘the normal, natural bustle of the world, and which, if moved by love, takes other rows- the rows of marriage, which it calls a sacrament’ (241). In both ways of life, love is seen religiously, as a calling, a vocation, either to the love of God, or to the love that makes a human family.

Thus The Cocktail Party lies at the heart of the matter; the love of God awakens in Celia and a love for each other awakens in Edward Chamberlayne and his wife Lavinia; each love discovers its right fulfillment, one in the making of saint, and the other in the remarking of a broken marriage. The answer given as to which way of love is the better, is

Neither way is better

Both ways are necessary (138).

And this is the third play of Eliot’s culminating in the study of Christian sainthood to which Eliot has given dramatic form. It is a great step forward in Eliot’s endeavour. He fuses speech and poetry in an effective manner, and elicits the under pattern of the plot, uses myth for the purpose of extracting religious recognition for the terms of Christianity.

Eliot has framed the play, The Cocktail Party in three levels as he did the other plays. Glancing over the play at the literal level we find it constituted by the purely
contemporary setting and situation. It deals with man in society and not in isolation. The play presents totally fellow citizens. The four characters Edward and Lavinia, Celia and Peter, face a challenge from another of the opposite sex. Reilly plays the role of an intermediary and consulting psychiatrist. Through him, the play sustains its interest in the spiritual level.

At this level, it can be said that the play has a moral also. In Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot combined the conventions of morality with those of Tragedy and Chorus. In The Family Reunion, he fused tragic choric poetry and a contemporary setting. A similar feature is displayed in The Cocktail party also. The didactic note is present everywhere. It is strange that loving persons cannot marry. This existing dilemma has been made permanent in the play.

Focusing at the analogical level, the play is deeper and even more serious. When Edward happens to know that his wife has left him, he is upset. He is nothing but "an object cub" or a "stalled engine". An unidentified guest narrates his plight as follows:

You no longer feel quite human
You are suddenly reduced to the status of (an object
A living object, but no longer a person.(85)

Edward himself is aware of his own state of mind, as he confesses to Celia;

"I don't know what has happened or what is going to happen; And try to understand it, I want to be alone (55). Reilly states Edward's soul-in-agony thus:

The Centre of reality But stretched on the table,
You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
For those who surround you, the masked actors. (85).
All these statements not only depict the spiritual agonies of Edward but also indicate the level of spiritual need. Reilly acts as a spiritual surgeon, parallel to those of God with man. Eliot adopts his subjective ideas is an objective stage.

In presenting Reilly, Eliot shows an outstanding feature of his thematic plan in this play, since these remedies always signify a sense of religious recognition in terms of Christianity. For example, the Chamberlaynes in *The Cocktail Party* accept reconciliation, indicating the significance of the positive way of Christian marriage. Celia’s option for atonement can be better understood in the light of the doctrine for Christian sainthood; similarly, the concept of choice between ‘destiny’ and; freedom’ which is the theme of *The Cocktail Party*. It is another example of Eliot’s concern for the Christian, but a wrong choice is always fruitful and leads to the reward of spiritual quest. As Julia states,

Everyone makes a choice, of one kind or another
And then must take the consequences. Celia chose
A way of which the consequence was kinkanja.
Peter chose a way that leads him (Boltwell. 177)

Eliot’s achievement is not much in such religious themes but in the symbolic pattern underlying its dramatization. It may be regarded as equal to his concept of an impersonal art. What he aims at is not merely a symbolic structure but an organism of sensuous symbols that projects an order out of the ordinary facts of human life.

Eliot’s adherence to the mythical method is a clever device to present experience in symbolic form. He regards it as one of the direct and natural modes of human expression. In his opinion, the mythical method, as against the narrative one can present
better the hinterland of man's mind. By way of analogy and irony it can offer new grounds to extract suggestive evocations of different ideas from the audience. Eliot feels that the story of the myth, besides yielding appropriate objective correlatives may also furnish the playwright with a suitable material 'to weave the web of an under-pattern' in the drama. Such a pattern concealed as it is in the structure of mythical fables, leads to the creation of deeper levels of meanings, which the playwright wants to convey to his audience. The ordinary pattern supplies entertainment of a crude type, the under pattern invites a tension of some members who belong to a higher category of sensibility.

In fact, Eliot's assumptions recognize connections between the personality of the author and his creations.

It seems to me that what happens when an author creates a vital character, is a sort of give and take. The author may put into that character, besides its attributes, some taint of his own, some strength or weakness, some tendency to violence or to indecision some eccentricity even, that he has found in himself. Something perhaps never realized in his own life something of which those who know him best may be unaware, something not restricted in transmission to characters of the same temperament, the same age, and least of all, the same sex... I believe that the author imparts something of himself to his characters, but I also believe that he is influenced by the characters he creates. (Matthiessen 21).

According to Eliot's belief, the intense feelings, ecstatic or terrible are something, which every person of sensibility may claim to know. It is subjective at the
first phase and has an objective quality of a higher order in the next. Eliot won this faithfully in characterizing Thomas Becket, Harry and Celia. The ordinary persons according to him put the crude type of feelings to sleep, while the artist keeps them alive by his ability to intensify the world of his emotions. Hence, these emotions assume a social dimension the moment the artist tries to transmute them into something rich, strange and universal.

The play reminds us of the structure of the comedy of manners in the quarrel between Edward and Lavinia while in the characters of the guardians-Julia, Reilly and Abe-we have Eliot’s ideas of a Christian society, a society in which the natural end of man’s virtue and well-being in community, is acknowledgement for all; and the supernatural end that is for those who have eyes to see it.

In *The Cocktail Party* Eliot succeeded in evolving poetry of speech which was his ideal of a medium poetic drama. It was the practical application of the dictum enunciated in ‘Poetry and Drama’ that ‘the chief effect of style and rhythm in dramatic speech, whether in prose or verse, should be unconscious’ (SP 66). Eliot tried to follow the self-imposed rule to avoid poetry which could not stand the test of strict dramatic utility. With the result the verse of the play is shorn of all redundant imagery and it achieves a taintless quality responding to every shade of character. It can communicate the superficial drawing-room atmosphere of the ending of the play, the subtle shades of feeling that are expressed in the dialogue between Celia and Edward and Edward and Lavinia and the aphoristic nature of some of the statements of Harcourt-Reilly, as in the following:
Disillusion can become itself an illusion
If we rest in it. (136)

Raymond William says in Drama from Ibsen to Eliot that “the verse from
developed by Eliot in the play is a very remarkable achievement, for it is both eminently
speakable and also the instrument of complete precision in the expression of feeling”
(135). It is not loaded with the jarring rhythms and bizarre imagery of the early poems,
nor does it ‘have the highly evocative rhythms of the Four Quarters because Eliot
wanted to make verse as natural a medium for drama as possible. Although the verse of
The Cocktail Party may be difficult to distinguish very wide range of feelings, Eliot
raises the verse to the level of poetry in the lines uttered by Celia.

For what happened is remembered like a drama
In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
In the spirit, a vibration of delight
Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
In the delight of loving. (136).

Thus Eliot fuses prose and poetry, to produce effect which suggests that both the
unevolved like Lavinia and Edward and the evolved like Celia’s merit on martyrdom.
For Eliot, martyrdom is not always willingly embracing violent death as demonstrated
by Beckett and Celia. It is the readiness to die a daily death in utter surrender to the will
of God. Edward and Lavinia embrace this path.

Hence, Eliot and Tholkäppiyar deals with the essence of form and content
become inevitable in literature and thus Tholkäppiyar names literature as seyyul – that
which is composed – and says that the elements of literature are thirty four (313
It appears from his statement that these classifications and naming are none of his own but of his predecessors. So it is to be inferred that the forms of literature had drawn the attention of the poets even during the centuries which preceded Tholkāppiyar. They have established that literature, whatever its content might be must yield aesthetic pleasure by the manner in which such content has been handled. It seems that literature has been considered as a fine art and like all fine arts; it has its own laws and conditions of workmanship being developed from ancient times.

Gurrey says, "Expression, sound, and rhythm, arranged in a particular pattern which we call the form, require us to obey a certain order and envelopment of thought, of imagery and emotion; and it is this shaping of a poem structurally which gives to poetry the necessary qualities of formal beauty which we find also in sculpture, music, painting; namely, balance, symmetry climax or focus, contrast, repetition and that structural rhythm which includes movement, continuity, proportion and unity"(102) what Eliot meant ‘auditory imagination’ is found in Tholkāppiyam.

"It is not the thing but the saying that moves us, not the matter but the manner of its presentation", (12) so says G.A Greening Lamborn.

These views find echo in the definition of literature made by Tholkāppiyar. The very verse, in which the elements of literature are given, seems to be a piece of art.

Letter, syllable, foot, thalai, line and rhyme are found to be the chief elements of a composition (Seyyul). Composition is divided into seven kinds. They are poetry, prose, nūl (systematic treatise), vāymōli (book of morals), pisi (book of proverbs).
Poetry and prose are named as \textit{pātu} and \textit{urai} respectively on the basis of meter and rhythm.

The names \textit{ahaval}, \textit{venba}, \textit{kali}, and \textit{vanji} denote their metre and rhythm.

Among the thirty four elements of composition '\textit{pa}' is said to be one which means, according to \textit{Pērasiriyar}, the rhyme of composition, which indicates the nature and kind of a poem even though its meaning is not understood, when recited. Hudson says, “Metre like music makes in itself a profound appeal to the feelings. Merely to arrange words in a definitely rhythmical order is to endow them, by some secret magic, with a new and subtle emotional power to touch them with a peculiar suggestiveness which in themselves, simply as words conveying such and such meanings, they do not possess” (Hudson 74). Lambourn has expressed the same view regarding the sound of the poem. He says “I have found that children enjoy the music of the milking song, in Jean Ingelon’s High Tide, when it is well recited, as much as they enjoy a fine song; they like Tennyson’s Frater, Am..............Vale, though they certainly cannot understand the words.” (Lambourn 32)

\textit{Thākku} and \textit{Thǒdal} are concerned with the sounds of the composition. So Tholkāppiyar seems to be wait aware of the role of the sound in the composition of the poems. Except \textit{urai}, all are to be in the form of verses \textit{urai} also is not to be without its diction. Because of it inclusion in the group of verses, it is to be inferred that \textit{urai} also has some form endowed with sound. It lies in the poet’s choice of melodious words and in their harmonious arrangement, it is a charm common as well to prose as to poetry, and is the secret of greatness, of the grand style in both.
Prose composition is said to be of four kinds (485 (240)

In those days as there was no intention for writing extensively in the form of prose, all resorted to the form of poetry which is noted for its brevity and intensiveness since there is a feeling of longing for poetry alone can be the mode to express the powerful intensity of the artist. This is what felt by Eliot for choosing Poetic drama as his medium of expression in his plays.

Hence, Nūl in Tholkāppiyam is said to be of systematic treatise. It has served as medium for dealing with the branches of science. The book which deals with the sciences also is expected to be written in a poetical form. All the books which deal with medicine, sculpture, astrology, astronomy, zoology, botany etc., are written in verse forms. The sciences of language and literature – Grammars – are in the verse forms. Tholkāppiyam itself is a fine example for illustrating the form of nūl.

The forms of vāymōli, pisi and angatham, are not available now. Vāymōli is interpreted as mandhiram about which we hold doubt. It is not the practice of Tholkāppiyar to give one name in one place and another name in another place in such a way as to make confusion in the minds of readers.

Pisi is said to be of two kinds (488 (241) which seems to be in the nature of riddles.

Angatham is satire. It is of two kinds – Sēmeporuḷ and Kārandhathu (436 (235). In English, also it is said that it has two main purposes.

“Two quotations from Dryden will illustrate the two main purposes of satire, to brand and castigate human viciousness, and to laugh at human folly” (Glassey 28).
Poems which contain satire are found instructive and interesting in all ages. *Muthumōli* is to be of proverb. There is a book by name *Palamōli Nānuru* as an illustration of this kind. The forms of these literatures are described clearly and found in the *Tholkāppiyam* in 471 to 502 songs.

Literature is made up of words. Words also have birth and earth; degradation and elevation. In the evolution of language they have ups and downs. Their meanings are either restricted or expanded. The authors of literature must be fully conversant with all these.

Nature is employed by the poets in many ways for many purposes. As very poet responds to nature according to the peculiar qualities of his own temperament the poetry of emotional interpretation takes many different forms as in the poetry of Sangam poets, for whom nature is the store-house of similes and metaphors; of *Nāyanmār* and *Alvārs* for whom the nature is the mediator between them and God; of *Kambār* for whom the nature is he solace and refuge to the troubled heart of his heroes; and of *Sēkkilār* for whom nature is a mystical revelation of that eternal spirit in whom all the modes of life are one.

Therefore the poets or the makers of literatures are to be in close touch with the nature and nature of livelihood. *Tholkāppiyar* has paid the leading way as Eliot too did. Thus the literary study of the book on *Porul* intends to reveal the nature and inevitability of form and content of literature to owe life to literature.