CHAPTER II

CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL DRAMAS

3.1.3 FULL LENGTH PROSE DRAMAS

3.1.1 Among the various types of Tamil dramas that are very popular, full length prose plays occupy a unique place. These are dramatic compositions in prose form written for performance on the stage in which a full story is presented by means of dialogue and action, made very lively with gesture, costume, scenery and song.

A striking feature of such dramas is the forceful depicting of a complete story in a continuous form of action, full of social events and incidents. A full length drama is often found to be a comprehensive reflection of social life, with a continuous convincing overtone. It is society which provides the canvas for the portrayal of its own problems with all actions and interaction.
"Literature is the fruit of experience while drama is the juice that is extracted from it."\(^1\) Full length dramas are full of flavour of this type. No wonder, they easily attract the attention of any kind of audience. The renowned drama actor T.K. Shanmugham pays a glowing tribute to full length dramas with these words:

"Such a drama is the crown of art, the mirror of the culture of a country, the university of the laymen, and the noble art that educates and elevates the common people by kindling the finest feelings that are embedded in human mind and spontaneously drawing out the sublime love, longings and purity of existence."\(^2\)

However, these dramas happen to be a broader category of dramatic works; hence various classifications are found among them. The content, the form, the format, aim, purpose, presentation, dialogue, etc., are the deciding factors for this classification. Nevertheless, some predominant characteristics are there in each kind of drama. Social dramas come within the purview of this classification since they deal with the social themes.

2.1.3 G.I. Story: Unnatural Social Plays

The present day Tamil dramas are either one act plays or full-fledged dramatic productions. They may be in either prose form, or poetic form, or a mixture

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1. SORNAP., "Valarum Tamil" (Reference) p. 15.
of both prose and verse. Some of these are fit for mere reading while some others are fit for acting also. Those dramas that are fit for both reading and acting should be deemed as better ones.

Dramas that are written for the stage are bound with certain rules and regulations. In these plays dialogue should not be lengthy. If it is lengthy it would be tiresome to spectators. As far as possible, they should enable a realistic presentation of characters, and events and incidents to the audience. During the beginning of this century most of the Tamil dramas were replete with more of imaginary or fictitious characters and events. But at present, dramas producing realistic effect upon the audience have become very popular.

Generally, poetic dramas are considered to be good for the study table rather than for the stage. Common people cannot enjoy these if they are presented on the stage. The literary excellence inherent in these also cannot be realised by a layman. Only when the language is simple and concepts are common, effective communication through dramatic art is feasible.

One act plays forcefully depict an event or incident. The dramatic presentation in these is very quick and fast. But full length dramas have greater scope for dramatisation of the various facets of enjoyments. But present day life does not provide our people with enough patience and time to enjoy a lengthy play. Impressive
one act plays nowadays are more appealing to the spectators as they are heavily burdened with hard work and run fast for want of time.

Radio and Television are very powerful mass media that have furnished more opportunity for the enacting of short plays. Of course, radio dramas have to depend upon sound effect for their success, but television has both visual and aural appeal. The real effect in radio dramas lies mostly in the powerful exposition by means of the dialogues. Through forceful expression various physical revelations (veeyamattu) are brought out.

There are Tamil dramas written and enacted for entertaining the children. These may be full length plays or one act plays, but they must be quite enjoyable and recreative for them. "Education through entertainment" is the maxims followed in these dramas. Children could easily learn many a moral principle by reading or witnessing such dramas on the stage or through radio or television.

2.1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PLAY

During the nineteenth century, when musical plays were having their heyday, a few plays with fine social themes were also enacted before the Tamil audience. These plays have brought to stage the appealing aspect of human personality in its social setting.
Dramatists are those who observe life in all its dimensions. Endowed with keen powers of observation, they are able to watch men in action in the social medium. Human beings are beset with innumerable problems and their sufferings and sufferings and satisfactions, success and salvation provide grist to the mill of the dramatist. Society is the breeding centre of all kinds of social conflicts and controversies; it is the germination ground for the good as well as the bad. The dramatists get inspiration from social situations and depict them graphically in their work of art.

The stage is the school of society. People learn much by watching dramas on the stage. So the stage is the best medium to educate the people through entertainment. Problems in the society serve as themes for social dramas. Both the brighter and darker sides of our social existence have to be brought out on the stage. Serious social problems are taken for open discussion and possible solutions are sought out.

'Tamasha: Vileasar' (1937) written by Kazi Visvanath Mudalier can very well be claimed as the first social play in Tamil. The drama deals with the social evil of prostitution. The play depicts the real life of a spend-thrift who squanders his enormous wealth for the sake of a beautiful woman. When the fellow becomes penniless, he is driven out to live a wandering life in the company of beggars. The dramatist conveys a forceful message to the common people. The sorry plight of a rich
men on account of his bad company with the prostitute may o
the eyes of many people and prevent them from falling into
such pitiable condition.

'Tasildar Natakam (1939) by the same author,
severely criticises the corrupt nature of the revenue
officers. The first modernized play Piratana Santira
Velasa (1977) produced by Ramasami Raju deals with the
problem of prostitution and tries to reform the society from
that evil. It seems that during that time the society was
haunted by the evil of prostitution and so the dramatist
had tried to utilize his powers to save the society from
such disaster.

In the twentieth century the year 1910 marks
the beginning of the ushering in of the era of social dramas
in Tamil. Sampandu Mudaliar's 'Porvillankukal' heralded
this. It was the first social drama put on the stage. It
won wide acclaim. It deals with the frustrated life of a
sick lady who is ostracised from family life by her educated
husband. He is attracted by the outward appearance of a
fashionable Christian lady disliking the pathetic plight
of an ailing housewife and the problems faced by her in
married life. Her husband, enamoured of foreign culture
and education, illtreats his wife. He even gets ready to
forsake his religion but later realises his folly and
changes his mind.
The pre-independence period which happened to be the most crucial period in the annals of the history of this nation, had its influence extended into the world of literature also. The dramatic art added momentum to the struggle for freedom and the masses could be swayed by the patriotic fervour displayed on the stage. The socio-political awakening caused by the dramatists was considerably great.

2.7. Prashunam stands foremost among the Tamil political playwrights. His play Katharin Vetri' (1929) was bold, and venture some dramatization virtually glorifying the importance of wearing 'Vhadi' which was the symbol of Swadesi movement. The hero of the drama goes to the extent of sacrificing his life for the sake of 'Vhadi' movement. The drama was banned by the government as it openly preached patriotism and portrayed the programme of the flight for freedom by burning foreign clothes.

The same dramatist staged another play 'Vesakkodi' (1930) which was based on the events connected with Nagpur Ilai Satyagraham of 1930. This drama also presented a spirited story which supported the Swadesi Movement and urged people to fight for freedom. The dramatist, being a patriot has done commendable service to the cause of our country's Independence Movement.

Highly commendable is the yeomen service rendered by Peraringnar Amma in the field of Drama with the avowed objective of social reformation. Velaikari' (1947) Nallathambi
(1949) 'Chandrodhayam' (1953) 'Cor Iruv' (1954) 'Jathal Jothi' (1953) 'Pavayin Payiram' (1953) 'Ithaiyum Thangam Ithayam' (1952) are some of the excellent social dramas written by him. 

Iradiation of all social evils and social renaissance by upholding the rationalistic principles, were very dear to Anna. Burairaj in Chandrodhayam and Anandan in Velsikari are immortal characters who have earned a unique place in the minds of millions of our people. Through Anandan, Anna makes a severe and scathing attack on superstition and blind useless beliefs.

'Sallathum', a light comedy, contains a convincing message for social progress by criticising the inbalanced social life found in our country. In 'Cor Iruv' he strongly condemns the social evils of drinking lust, luxury, extravagance etc. in 44 scenes. Anna pleads for revolutionary changes in our social structure. Intercaste marriages, marriage of widows and spreading such other revolutionary social reforms are themes which are favourite to him. He is fully opposed to rich men who are bent upon exploiting and harassing the poor and the downtrodden. He wants to banish all ideas and practices which are against rationalistic and progressive measures. Hence, he very severely criticises all retrograde things found in society. All the social dramas written by him are replete with high ideals.

Dr. T.V. Virasam's 'Ponkunju' (1951) which was awarded a special prize in 1957 sheds light on a darker aspect of social life namely selfishness which is deeply
embedded in human mind. The message of the drama seems to be 'Love thy neighbour as thou loveth thyself'.
Prompted by the craving to lead an opulent life, many people indulge in heartless deeds and the drama gives a shock treatment to this affliction.

Another stalwart in the field of Tamil literature, K. Karunanidhi, has written a number of social dramas that have earned great fame. A follower of Anna, Karunanidhi also strongly pleads for social reforms. He upholds the rights of women, attacks social evils and strongly pleads for the amelioration of the sufferings of the poor and neglected section of society. He is a dramatist who is gifted with a great power of the pen. His dialogue is hard hitting and highly emotion stirring. His 'Kachukoppai' Vallikilamai, 'Porval', 'Shukkumedai' and 'Kakithapu' are dramas which are to be noted for literary excellence. Almost all these dramas were enacted a number of times throughout Tamil Nadu and they won popular esteem.

Dramatists have dealt with themes touching natural development during the post independence period. A vast canvas can be discerned in this area as a good number of topics have been presented in the dramas written by various authors.

Munnetramadai (1961) by M.A. Velayudham is a drama dealing with the Five Year Plan. The dramatist endorses the developmental efforts of our government and spreads the message of green revolution, and cooperative movement. This is a comedy with a propaganda vali
Yogi Nathanaeltha Bharathi's 'Viswakirti Vilasintha Varum' (1962) is an excellent drama with a revolutionary fervor. It is a historical theme woven around a hero who musters peoples' strength and support and fights against authoritarian force, and comes to power. The drama very beautifully upholds the supremacy of popular will and highlights the importance of democratic spirit.

Radhamanlani's 'Neelamani' (1963) is a comedy with a convincing message of reformation. The dramatist depicts the picture of a sickle minded person who suspects his wife and falls in love with another girl and pleads for a human approach to social life which should not give any room for suspicion and frailty.

'Poli' (1964) by J.V., a two act play is a powerful satire on the glamorous urban life which is a wasteful way of social living in the name of fashion. The dramatist strongly criticises the hollowness of this kind of living. The story is woven round a newly married couple who are residing in a large house along with a number of families. The members of these families try to hide their inner life weaknesses and pretend to be quite all right but it is interesting to note that everything is known to each other. The drama is a strong satire on the pretentious life led by city people. The dramatist very excellently does the function of a social reformer. Indeed, it is upto society to reform itself.
'Dharmakartha' (1964), written by Koonaraj (Venkataramanujam), centers around the life of a worker Poorcholai in a match factory and presents all the typical events that are likely to occur in a social situation. The character who is bad in the beginning reforms himself and becomes the trustee of a temple. The drama lies stress on the reforming of human nature.

Kalkichelvan's 'Incintha Ullam' (1965) portrays the social problems in a proper perspective. The clash between the poor and the affluent, the villainous behaviour of the rich, fidelity of friendship, the son being a lawyer, vindicating justice by getting capital punishment for his own father, are all presented in a vivid manner. The drama is a tragedy with a poignant note.

'Hakkal Panul' (1933) by Pavalar Puyil, is graphically depicting the selfless service of a drama sevita. The heroine Nilavoli is an ideal character who is devoted to the betterment of society. She reforms a ruinous like kavi and leaves a trail of serenity which is all the more pleasing. The drama is a commendable one since it preaches the need for selfless service to society.

Mayavi's drama, 'Pasathirai', (1937) forcefully presents the clash between conventionalism and modernisation. The characterisation in this comedy is very contrasting.
The father, who pretends to be conservative in outlook, is really vicious by nature while his son is virtuous to the core. The son reforms the father and makes him accept the lady forsaken by him. This dramatist very skilfully argues for the upholding of fundamental human values and virtues.

'Vedivel Vethiar' (1969) a popular drama written by T. Janaki Raman, is an action packed interesting social drama presenting 31 characters in 17 scenes. The drama extols the position of a teacher who is presented as an embodiment of virtues. The dramatic events are so absorbing that the enactment of this drama provides a pleasant entertainment. This social drama exhorts the spectators to uphold the nobility of human life.

'Nathuchiyil' (1969) by A.R. Allapataran is a social drama written with another objective. The message of this dramatist is that, spurred by the excessive enthusiasm and zeal for social progress, we must not try to root out the treasures of our tradition and the vestiges of our culture which are part and parcel of the nobler aspects of our social existence. The drama highlights the defects found in the official life of some of our people like Kannan and Kothai. The dramatist attacks the callous negligence and indifference shown by some towards their duty and responsibility. This drama also emphasizes the need for social reform,
A.R. Alagappan's 'Kariveppilai' (1970) is as interesting but highly thought provoking social drama written with the background of the social life of Chettiers, A Tamil community spread over 33 villages in Chettinad (Thudukottai and Ramanad Districts). The theme of the drama is woven round an ideal character Raman Chettiar who is the trustee of a temple and president of the village. The drama graphically presents the noble character of this person with a touching tragic note. The dramatist compares the services rendered by his hero to 'Kariveppilai', a leafy vegetable used for cooking, but thrown out after that. The message is very meaningful - society should not treat noble people who offer yeomen service to it in a slighting manner. The drama is a commendable one.

'Intra Thaniyum Intha Sethanthiri Thakam' (1971) written by 'Cho' Ramaswamy is a very powerful socio-political satire. Nallathambi, a politician creates trouble in heaven also. The dramatist known for his pungent satire criticises the ignoble part played by politicians and drives home the havoc caused by such unscrupulous elements. Full of humour, the drama is a strong attack on the mechanisms indulged in by third-rate politicians whose selfish and ambitious activities tarnish the image of any good system.
R.N.Rani's 'Irthamani' (1973) is an interesting social drama. Kanthamani, a young girl gifted with melodious voice, works in an office and she sings the songs written by Ravi, her colleague. Naturally they love each other. But Dulu interferes in this and makes Ravi marry the office manager's daughter. Kanthamani takes to social service to lead an ideal life. The drama magnificently portrays with all domestic charm a noble trait possessed by our women folk, namely service and sacrifice which enhance the status of an ideal character.

'Akni Cutchiyeke' (1978) by Ravirindranath is a realistic social drama with a touch of existentialism. The dramatist does not bother about the linguistic purity. The characters speak colloquial language. The mean mentality of Mohan who is fond of leading a life of power and pomp is the target of attack in his drama. The sufferings to which the noble and upright men are subjected on account of the capricious and cunning nature of fellow men like Sethu, Veda, Kittu and Linkan are effectively brought out in this. The dramatist severely criticises the mercenary motive of such men in our society.

Marina's 'Thanikudithanam' (1974) is an enjoyable social drama with a pleasing realistic touch. Two Brahmin families with their domestic problems are presented in this. The dramatist attacks the foolish longings of a newly married couple, Narayanan and Sunda, to separate themselves from the parents family and emphasises the importance of joint-family system.
He is critical of the tendency on the part of people to lead a wayward life, as he portrays Sopali and Sunatha the other people frittering away their energy in wasteful living.

'Yar Putton' (1975) written by Dr. Kora glorifies the importance of true friendship and makes a scathing attack on the scourge of society, namely dowry. The characters Ponnu Samy and Nivyan plead for social reformation in a humorous but forceful manner and the conversation between these two adds flavour to the drama.

M.S. Prasad's 'Aamantahl' (1973) is a social drama with a rural setting. The dramatist presents a double concept in this drama. Marutha Muthu the chief character displays his longing to make his son Sundaram a doctor as well as his deep religious fervour. Due to the force of circumstances he steals the golden 'Tali' (sacred ornament) of Goddess, but his remorse makes him lose his life. The drama has a typical social theme with its own peculiar events and incidents.

'Marina' (1977) consisting of 35 scenes is a pleasant social comedy. The theme is on righteousness. Masilamani, the hero of the drama, is a man of righteous nature. He is a widower, but a very pious person. His social life is very interestingly presented in this play. At the end he marries the heroine Geetha, by name. His own brother, an atheist and a drunkard, is the villain in the drama. But at the end he too becomes a pious person and upholds the tenets of religion which is the basis of righteousness. His words (page 197) are
very revealing, 'O Land I have not been believing you all these years, but you have believed me in one minute'. Seetha's words are also very significant, (p. 194), 'The world which does not allow righteous person to live well, lives by the righteous ones'. The drama contains a forceful message for reformation and righteous life.

Kosswaratanam's 'Perumale Satchi' (1978) having 11 scenes is a highly interesting full length social drama of a rare variety. It is a powerful drama with a strong social appeal. It focusses our attention on a number of social evils and leaves a deep impression in the audience, who are very much influenced by the sequence of events. Gopalaratnam, a rich man's family life is the theme of this drama. The dramatist very naively brings out how fortune favours those who do not possess high education. He attacks the social evils facing family life. Loganathan the race goer, Kandakini the wife of Gopalaratnam who leads a wasteful life in visiting ladies' club, the daughter Sandhini, who is mad of cine actors are all typical characters of our defiled urban families who do not honour higher social values and virtues. The dramatist makes a pungent attack on characters of this kind. Ananthaschari is a noble character who brings about the needed reformation. His words (page 73) are memorable 'You can make this country either a heaven or a hell'. He chides them saying (Page;51) "What fellows you are, you have no faith either in God or in great men hence this degradation."
The dramatist presents this character as a redeeming factor to our social life which needs complete reformation and transformation.

'Humamagal Vandal' (1979) by P. Neelakantan, is a revolutionary social drama presented through 33 scenes and it deals with the obnoxious social habit of demanding dowry. The author handles the theme with great humanism and dramatic skill of unsurpassed nature. The drama is a compelling tale, woven round memorable characters. The heroine Pushpa is a pathetic victim of a canker, which is a pernicious practice in our society. She is an admirably noble character, which is a tribute to the qualities of worthiness and endurance of our Indian women. Fast moving and engrossing, the whole drama is an emotion packed one. The irony of the whole tragedy, as the author says, is that it is women themselves who support a bizarre practice that destroys the lofty dignity of their own sex. This beautiful social drama is a commendable contribution to the cause of anti-dowry movement. The dramatist drives home the point that 'dowry is bribery' (page 11) Social dramas of this type will pave the way for the complete eradication of the social evil of dowry.

'Kalara Dhavitha Botti' (1980) written by Vijayalakshmi Ravaneetthan won first prize in the competition held at Madurai for dramas written by college professors.
Venkatarama Iyer is a very rich person and his daughter, Abirami, is a young widow. The second daughter, Yanju, is married to a person, but quarrels with her husband and comes back to her parent's house.

Gopal, the son, marries Sadma, an ultra modern girl for whom fashion is a passion. The last daughter, Shollam, has an affair with Chyan, who disguises himself as a girl and accompanies Shollam freely. But Abirami finds out this and brings it to the notice of the father, Rajan, a college lecturer and a young man with progressive ideas who is the tuition master for Shollam, advises Abirami to marry again and offers to marry her. Since others blame this poor widow, she commits suicide by taking an excessive dose of sleeping pills. The end of the drama is indeed very moving. The message contained in the chit held by Abirami even after death is highly thought provoking. "A flower should either blossom or perish."

The dramatist echoes progressive sentiments when she makes even Venkatarama Iyer, who should be conservative by virtue of being an orthodox Brahmin, say, "True a vicitian (ideal philosophy of life) is giving life back to a widow" (page 81).

The drama presents a powerful attack on the orthodox beliefs that a widow should suffer and end her life. Ill-treatment of widows is an inhuman practice prevalent in society, especially in communities like the Brahmin community. The drama would have been an excellent masterpiece in dramatic art, had the dramatist ended the drama with the remarriage of Abirami with Rajan. Perhaps the dramatist is also
comprehensive of social ostracism. Reformist dramas must deal with social themes like this in a very bold manner and drive home the point that normal life and never death is the penance for a shameful social evil. However, Abirami is a memorable character. Her words are significant: "The life of a moon never ends with Amavasai (the dark day), the sun that sets, rises again. Tree gets cut but grows again, but the life of a widow ends up in vacuum—this is not chastity, but suicide." (p. 31).

The social dramatist, besides being artistic and sarcastic, sometimes makes frontal attack on ill-conceived social practices which defile social life. Through his work he has to strike a note of warning to those who are prone to lead a wayward life. He should expose the undesirable aspects of society with a view to provide a corrective approach.

Social dramas written during the last two decades (1961 - 1980) highlight social problems with a view to tackle them from the proper perspective. The objective is to bring about a social revolution or renaissance through literary persuasion. It is heartening to note that Tamil social dramas to this in an excellent manner.

2.2.1 TRAGEDY

Social dramas can be classified as tragedies and comedies, though dramas belong to different categories according to the theme and treatment of subject matter,
let alone the overlapping found in all these. However it is the predominant characteristic that drama determines the type of drama, hence the categorisation as per the tragic note of the element of comedy holds good in Tamil dramas also.

Tragedies present poignant emotional overtones, since the end of the dramatic sequences is death or disaster. Hence these dramas are found to be heartrending and they arouse intense passions in the spectators or readers who are led to deep sense of sorrow.

Tragedy looks at life not only seriously but also in a mood of intense passions. It sees man wrestling with his demonic impulses and struggling with the outward forces of cosmic, spiritual, or social antagonism. Since the struggle is too great, it leads to inevitable disaster. But it raises the poignanty above mere pathos, and so affirms the force and formidable nature of fate over man's manipulations.

Aristotle observes, "Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious and also as having magnitude complete in itself with incidents arousing pity and fear".

According to Hegel, "tragedy is the outcome of the conflict between two good forces. They face each other, making incompatible demands. The family claims

1. ARISTOTLE, "In the Art of Poetry," Translated by Ingram By water (1964) p. 35.
what the state refuses, love requires what horror
forbids.”

Lucas states that "tragedy is a representation
of action which is serious, complete in itself, and of
a limited length, it is expressed in speech, made beautiful
in different ways in different parts of the play, it is
acted, not merely recited and by exciting pity and fear
it gives a healthy outlet to such emotions."2

L. J. Wells states that, "Tragedy signifies
passion achieved through images of strong suffering
having a more or less violent impact on the audience."3

In tragedies the evil is set free, at first, to
work out its will, but a chance can be noticed after
the crisis. Then there is a new turn to the good or bad.
In most of the tragedies, suspense is set at rest in the
end and the expected consummation would be reached.

Traditionally, Tamil people are quite averse
to tragic dramas. Even a typical tragedy of Tamil
classics, ‘Illeppatikaran’ had to be presented on the
stage as a comedy with the addition of Vanjikandam as a
pleasant conclusion to the sequence of events. This is
the case even with Turaiyaed Aiyankar’s drama ‘Mankaiyar
pakattu’ (1917) which is a conspicuous imitation of Shakespeare’s
immortal tragedy 'King Lear'. But this drama is a clear

1. HEGEL, C.B.T. A.C. BRADLY, Oxford Lectures on Poetry
    "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy", (1931) P. 71.
3. HENRY W. WELLIS, "The Classical Drama of India" (1964) P. 12.
comedy and not a tragedy. Perhaps this change was done in accordance with the Tamil dramatic flavour which makes one relish comedy and not tragedy. "It seems that Tamil dramas also follow the dictum that every drama should end as a comedy and not as a tragedy, as this was the practice in the case of Sanskrit dramas." 1

It is true that since the advent of this century a few tragedies are staged by breaking the time-honoured tradition. Sampanta Nidalier has written five such tragedies imitating Shakespeare's famous tragic dramas apart from translating a few of his tragedies. Among these "Iru Nanbarkal" (1936) is an excellent one. The character Sathyavathi evokes the sympathy of one and all by her supreme sacrifice to save her beloved from death.

The tragic note of this drama is very appealing. Another tragedy 'Unniyana Sakotharan' (1939) depicts the tragic end of the hero of the drama in a touching manner. 'Kalvar Thulaivan' (1894) is full of terrific and harrowing events and gives the drama a very tragic touch.

"Usthurjith" (1937) is also notable tragedy. It reminds us of Marlow's marvelous tragedies. By and large Sampanta Nidalier's dramas could attract the attention and arouse the appreciation of the Tamil audience and also the readers.

1. SHEKHAR, "Sanskrit Drama, its Origin and Decline", P. 110.
'Police Karan Nagal' (1968) by P.C. Ramya is a famous full-length social tragedy. The events in this drama are so nicely presented that the drama when enacted becomes a lively piece of art on the stage. The drama is a touching tragedy. This makes the acting very appealing. Neela, the heroine, is the daughter of a policeman. The theme of the drama is such that it leads itself to forceful acting by the heroine Neela and others who present the characters in an enticing manner. This drama could be enacted repeatedly because of its mass appeal. Right from the beginning the drama could arouse an abiding interest in the audience and keep them spell-bound till the end.

Murasoli Maran's 'Unchal Manam' (1972) is a good tragedy that strongly pleads for a powerful social reform such as the remarriage of widows and intercaste marriage. It espouses the cause of those who happen to be the pathetic victims of our custom ridden society. This drama can move people to tears when they witness the tragic fate of the hero Chinnathambi and the heroine Leela.

Innasi's 'Nankodal' (1974) and 'Desathiyaki' (1974) are two other tragedies that present some of the aspects of our social life, such as the ignorance and simple living of rural folk, the luxury and extravagance of the urban people, the dubious practices indulged in by some to earn money etc. But the tragic end to which the evil characters
are subjected at the close of the dramas, contains a message to the common people that they should refrain from doing evil.

A. N. Perumal's 'Panimoli' is a typical tragedy in which the heroine meets with tragic end. The hero Kattanathan, altruist by nature, fails to objectively assess all those who are around him and comes to grief. An innocent person imbued with a high sense of service and sacrifice succumbs to the trials of life. In this also there is message that all those who make mistakes and commit blunders should reform themselves. The dramatist's work is indeed a praise-worthy performance.

Tragedies are very few in Tamil. As they fail to leave their impact on the readers or spectators they could not claim to be good plays. The dislike of the people for tragedies is perhaps the reason and so a less number of this kind alone came to the stage.

Anyway, the few tragedies written by the venture of some dramatists cut a new path in breaking the old traditions. People have become bold to witness cruelties and diabolical actions on the stage. Sorrowful ends give strength to the spectators or readers to bear hardships and difficulties in life. Tragedies are more for instruction than for enjoyment. People can learn a lot from these dramas. By observing the pitfalls and shortcomings of the heroes and heroines they can mend their way of life and avoid the agonies caused out of ignorance.
Again, tragedies are more appealing and moving. They make the audience or readers shed tears, but they make them think and act. The message conveyed through melancholy is meant for the minimizing of the misery of men. Arousing empathy and sympathy in them, these beautiful works of literary art leave their own sublime and sobering effect in society.

2.3.3 Comedy:

Comedy is a type of drama which ends in marriage or reunion or prospect of a marriage. "It is replete with good humour and incisive wit and its episodes are intense with the sense of the ludicrous." According to Potts, "comedy deals with the abnormal but not the usual. The abnormality of the comic characters is not absolute; we should feel that they are capable of behaving normally if they would. But, it is the main concern of the comic writer to discriminate between what is normal and abnormal in human behaviour." 2

Killer is of opinion that, "a stage comedy does not automatically provoke continual laughter. Good comedy may contain suffering and death and it need not end 'happily ever after' in the usual sense. The difference

1. Allardyce Nicoll, "World Drama: From Aeschylus to the present Day" (1959) P. 103.
between this type of comedy and serious drama is in
the degree of emphasis. Comedy at its highest level
becomes essentially a matter of idea rather than action,
making its appeal to the intellect through skilled
character portrayed and polished after highly artificial
language."

Comedy very often appears ridiculous since
it distorts human nature by caricature and reduces
punishment to discomfiture and mortification. It seems
in some plays that it is not so much obliged to the
punishment of faults. The object of comedy may be to
ridicule the vices of men and to put folly in a foolish
shape before the audience and thus provoke the spectators
into good.

In some comedies unexpected obstacles are
there that prevent the smooth progress of the plots. By
considering the various factors of comedy it is clear
that it is a play with a happy ending or joyous consummation
after hard trials and errors in the train of events
both sorrowful and mirthful which involves rewards
for the virtuous and punishment or reformation for the
wicked. In a few comedies the comic element is the
only predominating factor, whereas in some, wit and satire
abound. They are interesting to the spectators since
they can provoke laughter.

1. JORDER Y. MILLER, "American Dramatic Literature"
(1951) P.310.
Comedy may be as serious as tragedy. High comedy involves a light hearted emphasis on sex. In them love becomes an elaborate game in the never ending war between men and women, Miller says "that the best high comedy of characters may seem to live without conscience, in their pursuit of sexual pleasures, but they are performing with the acceptable code, not in any fashion immoral but simply immoral, a considerably different thing."  

The characters have independent thoughts of their own and as in human beings they are fully developed. The comic elements in comedies usually stimulate through and criticise characters, their manner and ideas in concurrence with the time of their presentation.

It would be easy to define comedy as a play that evokes laughter. This would save a great deal of theorizing about the mainspring of the comic spirit, especially since the specialists on the subject disagree. It is still a sensible, practical procedure to define comedy thus, provided one differentiates, between the most elementary kind of fun known as 'farce' and the more intelligent laughter of high comedy.

Comedy, is a way of looking at the ludicrous side of life with the mind rather than with the passions. A life regarded in this manner becomes comparatively light

and playful; it includes smiles, if not laughter; it asks of an audience detached observation instead of emotional involvement. Life is certainly comic, in this sense, to those who think dispassionately.

That makes the plays comedies is a certain lightness of treatment, a nimble disapprobation (which creates balance), a watchfulness for human incongruities and contradiction and intelligence that is never overwhelmed by life's pain, and a triumphant retention of the spirit of play, in short, all the qualities that will also be found in comedies devoid of moral earnestness. It is the duty of the dramatist, always, to discover the comic mood or attitude in a play.

Romantic comedy requires a degree of grace and delicacy that would be incongruous in a naturalistic comedy, where a certain earthiness is indicated. A comedy of character calls for meticulous characterisation, whereas a comedy of manners demands particular attention to fashions, customs, elegances and other aspects of social behaviour. Moreover, stage drama may be called upon to give different emphases to different elements in a play, since it may combine romance, comedy of manners, characters and so on.

In Tamil, comedies are found to be light comedies. Many of the Tamil social dramas though they deal with sorrowful events, are comedies as they invariably present a pleasant end or conclusion. Those dramas that were produced during the latter half of the nineteenth,
century and the beginning of this century were 'King and Queen stories' and they were very popular with the

Sampathkumara Mudaliar has enriched the literary scene with a lot of comedies. His plays 'Puspavalli' (1931), 'Mayakkatal' (1932) are romantic comedies. In these plays the heroes and heroines are princes and their sweet hearts. They come across a series of troubles from their rivals. They find it difficult to achieve the object to real love. The heroine's father stands in their way and delays their desire. The lovers are driven to pathetic situations. They are made to meet with dangerous situations to enter into heroic adventures. The hero has to show his valour and skill during times of tribulations. At last they will find a way to escape and finally succeed in their attempt of achieving their objectives. The hero will be praised by all. Real virtue has its own prize while black villainy will be punished.

Suriyayya Sastri's 'Kalavati' (1938) and 'Rupavati' (1939) are also serious, notable comedies presenting intrigues between the protagonists and the antagonists. This gives importance to truth and courage, the two significant social traits of the Tamil people. Great stress is given in the play on the binding force of faithful friendship which makes one ready to sacrifice one's life for the sake of a friend.
'Manokarn (1935) written by Sambanda Mudaliar is a popular drama which was very appealing to the people. Though this was written for the stage and staged for more than 500 times, it was also very good for reading because of the literary excellence and material contents are really good and indeed enjoyable. The drama is full of thrilling scenes. Characters in this drama are also very appealing to the spectators. No wonder, 'Manokarn' is considered to be the best among Sambanda Mudaliar's dramas.

On the whole, Tamil comedies are very entertaining and interesting. But some of them seem mostly unreal. They do not present life with its realities. One can easily discern a tangible element of exaggeration. In some comedies the spiritual mixing with the material or mundane is presented to such an extent that an unbelievable influence of the supernatural gets introduced. An example to this is Sambanda Mudaliar's 'Varkulesteyam' (1899). In this drama a divine power just like Shakespeare's Ariel seems to cause the events. This is quite unnatural. Another drama by the same dramatist, 'Peyalla Peramaniye' (1903) is also based on the supernatural. Ghosts don't appear but the dramatic events are woven round people's apprehensions about ghosts.

S.T. Sundaram's 'Kaviyin Kanavu' (1945) is a typical drama of this type. This was staged a number of times and it was very much liked by the people. The
dramatist was a political sufferer. He was imprisoned on account of his participation in the freedom struggle. What he had experienced in life he had included in the scenes of the play. The political feelings were openly exposed in the actions of the characters. The drama strongly attacks autocracy. People who seek self aggrandizement for the sake of power and position never hesitate to indulge in activities that are quite unbecoming of human beings and do harm not only to others but to themselves. All these are powerfully presented in the drama. Moreover, this play clearly depicts the triumph of good over evil.

P. V. Kamatya's 'President Panchaacharam' (1963) is an attractive and amusing social comedy. Popular on account of its repeated presentation on the stage, this drama could earn a name as a typical comedy. Hilarious to the core, the characters of this play, Kigamani, Megalai and others are woven round present day social day-to-day living with its accompanying comic confusion. The story is a very pleasant one and the concluding part of drama, usual marriage scene found in a comedy adds its own peculiar charm and grace to this play.

'Domalar' (1969) written by T. A. Gnanamoorthy is a social drama with an ideal theme. The dramatist very strongly pleads for intercaste marriage and social mobility through education. The main character Gunalan is depicted as a vicious person becoming a reformed one
at the end. His marriage with a girl from a poor family and his sister's marriage with the doctor who belongs to the Dholi community are both idealistic in caricature and appreciable in presentation. The dramatist deserves praise for his reformist attitude and realistic approach to social problems.

Sujatha's play 'Oru Rodayam' (1979) is a light social comedy. A conscientious pickpocket Dala is presented in a very pleasant manner. There is something very touching in this character, as the dramatist wants to emphasise the human aspect of the personality of a person who unfortunately happens to be an anti-social element. However the reforming of this character, arousing a sense of remorse in him sheds light on the noble fabric of a human being who cannot but possess 'the milk of human sympathy'. The dramatist, a popular person in Tamil literary world, has created a very praiseworthy work of art.

Comedy, then, is a way of looking at life with the mind rather than with the passions; and life regarded in this manner becomes comparatively light and playful; it induces smiles; if not laughter; it asks of an audience detached observation instead of emotional involvement. Life is certainly comic, in this sense, to those who think dispassionately with the lovely light-heartedness.
Besides, entertaining the people the comedies convey some messages to the common man. Values and virtues are emphasised while vices are denigrated. But these comedies do not realistically present the social life of the people. However, the ravages of time brought about its own reformation. Dramatists had to come to grips with reality. Slowly social dramas which reflect the real social life and social problems came to light. The subject matter of the comedies is the complications of life, the consummation and deliverance from the difficulties. So there is woe and wail in the course of the play but bliss and beauty in the end.

2.7.3 

LARGE

Farce is a lively social comedy full of low humour and extravagant wit. According to Dryden "farce consists of forced humours and unnatural events. It is a delightful dramatic art designed with the deliberate intention to excite laughter in the spectators."

lesser sides of life, farce is irivalous yet fascinating
in its treatment of the subject matter. But it is all
the more pleasant since there is the predominance of the
comic sentiment.

Humorous words and actions are found in
abundance in a farce. At times, ridiculous props are
used judiciously to produce good effect. Farce is a
flagrant way of inciting laughter. However it is a
grosser and broader variant of the comic spirit. No
wonder, even comedies of greater intellectual refinement
contain episodes of sheer farce.

Farce evokes laughter for the sake of
laughter, regardless of how arbitrary, contrived or
obvious the means of arousing it. It readily resorts to
extravagant exaggeration of incidents and characters.
It is free to disregard those limits within which the
sweet sanity and humour of comedy appear.

Farce depends largely, though not exclusively,
on physical action both in working out of the plot, and
in initial impacts given to the dramatic action. However,
it does not rule out reference to reality, no matter
how fantastic the plot may be. As a stage drama, it has to
maintain its flavour, hence, there is too much reliance
on more movement and tempo.

There are some farces which depict the delightful
as well as the drab aspects of life. In many of the scenes,
there is not only wit but also wisdom. Nevertheless, farce is the drama that deals with the ridiculous, the flimsy and the funny episodes in which mirth and merriment alone is the motto.

Tamil stage has its share of farce which made our people feel happy and joyous. 'Kattai Venti' is an adapted drama written by K. Swaminathan. The original English drama, 'Condolers,' was written by Sir William. The characters are 12 village maids and 12 cart drivers. This farce packed with wit and humour could be enjoyed by many. Though an adapted one the drama gives the impression of originality.

It is relevant to note that Sambanda Mudaliar, the famous dramatist of Tamil, was the first to introduce farce on Tamil stage. 'Satisakki' (1946) a lively presentation of a submissive shepherd completely under the control of his wife is full of humour. The innocent poor folk and their foolish behaviours are very interestingly portrayed by the dramatist who makes the spectators have a hearty laughter at the expense of these poor people. The fantastic ways of life are fascinatingly depicted in this farce. It is indeed a very enjoyable entertainment. 'Sri Rajyam' (1938) is another lively farce written by the same author. A henpecked husband is the laughing stock of this play. A boy who watches his activities at home pokes fun at him. The spectators share the fun with him. Some of the incidents are exaggerated. But they are the theme in all such plays.
Garathi Dasan’s ‘Kurkandu’ (1959) is a noteworthy fascinating farce. Besides laughter, this kindles thought also. “Learn while you laugh”, seems to be the policy pursued by this famous literary figure. An ardent advocate of social reform, the author strongly criticises the marriage of old men with young girls. The play is a highly commendable one.

Savi, a humourous writer of repute has written ‘Vasanthnil Tirumanam’ a hilarious hit. A tamil marriage celebrated in Washington in the midst of an American congregation, provokes a lot of mirth and merriment. The dramatist seems to criticise age old customs, rituals and practices followed by orthodox Hindus, which have become obsolete in the modern times. There is much to laugh.

Tamilvanan, a popular modern writer presents ‘Joshiar Chockalingam’ (1964) an astrologer in a very humorous manner. A man indulging in fraudulent practices, the astrologer, is severely criticised by the dramatist, who strikes a strong note of warning against cheats and frauds who should not be allowed to take the gullible public for a ride.

A.R. Alagappan’s ‘Ammayappan’ (1973) is a very funny piece of dramatic work. Lord Shiva and Goddess Sakthi humourously discuss the problems of their devotees who are not sincere to their lord. Through
the lively discussion of god and the goddess, the
dramatist sheds light on the faults and foibles of
the human beings, who are more selfish. All have
an axe to grind in praying to the lord. The farce
provokes very lively laughter but discloses the human
weakness in a striking manner.

The farces in Tamil cannot be considered to
possess some high standard. Many of them deal with
cheap themes. They fail to please the sober section
of our society. Cheap and vulgar wits which are
disgusting, are found in some of them. The artificial
element, with which they are compared is also quite
unsavory. Nevertheless they make the common people
enjoy a hearty chuckle. This itself is a major achievement
of the farce. In a world full of woes and worries, one
longs to laugh and lead a blissful life for a while
atleast. In this regard the farce serves a commendable
purpose.

2.3.4 SATIRE

Satire is the expression in adequate terms
of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the
ridiculous or unseemingly provided that humour is a
distinctly recognizable element and that the utterance
is invested with literary form. "Without humour satire
is invective, without literary form it is merely clownish jeering. ¹

Satire is a dramatic form different from a mere comedy. It makes men realise their mistakes and prompts them to get rid of their faults and foibles. The intention of a dramatist in satire is to provoke thought and to reform society. In short, "Satire is merely a work of literature in prose or poetry which holds human follies and vices to ridicule." ²

Gifted with a keen power of observation the dramatist makes pointed attack on social maladies. Only those who can comprehend the concepts concealed in comic events enjoy the dramatic humour of this type of literary production. Hence "Satire is the product of the sophisticated mind which calls for an intelligent audience for its best appreciation." ³

Contemporary life, with its conspicuous components, provides the source and inspiration to the satirist who used his pen to eradicate vices of all kinds. The laughter that is evoked by the satire is light compared with the thought provoked by it. It is uneasy laughter that is

¹. ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, Vol. 19 (1910) P. 1086.
². J. ARCHER, "American Dramatic Literature" (1931) P. 367.
³. LAWRENCE LARKNER, The plays the thing, (1930) P. 40.
Caused by this since caustic remarks are therein it. Miller says, "the smile or Chuckle falls short of complete amusement." 1

Ambanda Mudaliar can be deemed the most popular satirist in Tamil. Endowed with a virulent style of writing he makes pointed thrusts against the wrongs done by his fellowmen. But the seriousness in his writings is so red with witty remarks which make us laugh. His Sapahati series 1 to 5 (1906 - 1937) are famous satirical dramas. They are profoundly interesting to the spectators and readers. The dramatist ridicules men and matters with the motive to reform and redeem them.

'Sapapati Turipasi', 'Sapapati Rehearsal', 'Sapapati Cinema' and 'Sapapati Tunukkukal' are four notable satires written by this famous dramatist. These satires contain pungent remarks which arouse peals of laughter but they all plead for the removal of the obnoxious social traits. The dramatist very powerfully advocates the adoption of socially uplifting modes of behaviour, discarding those which impede social progress.

Tamil Vanan's 'Vaithiyaruku Paithiyam' (1964) is a satire with its own peculiar flavour. An impostor, Varadappan is presented as a physician who causes a

lot of havoc, since he is careless in treating patients. The dramatist has a dig at physicians who are indifferent to their own profession. The objective of the dramatist is to reform those physicians who take their profession very lightly.

'Markali' (1973) written by A.R. Alagappan is another interesting satire woven round one Aramuthan who is a typical official fully aware of the pomp and position attached to an official's status. The dramatist drives home the point that respect or regard is more for the official's status than for the person. The drama is humorous yet reformative since it wants officials to remember the fact that the glamour of their position is just transitory.

Kora's "Iparisa" (1975) is a satire conveying an important message. Recommendations rampant in our social life are the targets of attack in this satire. The dramatist strongly criticises the practice of resorting to recommendations and desires remedying of this malady with which our social life is afflicted.

Cho Masasamy, another popular satirist has produced a number of popular satires. Though these satires have a strong political overtone, they could make people enjoy a loud laughter, while reading or witnessing the dramas. The dramatist uses satire as a very powerful weapon for attacking current social as well as political practices and actions with a view to make men mend their ways of life.
Jho Remasamy’s dramas are political and social satires. They are highly action-oriented, interesting and factual full-length plays. These dramas could be very popular on account of their intense power for entertainment. People like to witness these dramas, as they are found to be quite satisfactory to them. The three significant aspects that are noteworthy in Jho’s social dramas are (a) The dramatist gives greater importance to current political events. (b) They are full of humour and as they are hilarious they are very pleasing to people. (c) Though these dramas are political and social satires, they are full of actions which reflect life situation and experiences.

'Jerukum Ţedkamillei' (1973), with 12 scenes, runs for two hours. The story part of this is very simple. It is about the life of a prostitute. But the whole drama is packed with action and it is enjoyed by the audience. The dramatist pleads for these pitiable social beings who are left in the lurch by the affluent section of our society. The heroine Premila meets with a tragic end.

The drama is a very scathing attack on the society of ours, which has to be reformed by all means.

2.2.5. BURLESQUE

This is a type of drama, fascinating on account of its being purely flimsy and frivolous in its treatment of the theme. Burlesque is not at all serious in depicting
and presenting events of life. Most of them deal with the ridiculous aspects in the most ridiculous manner possible.

There is a difference between satire and burlesque. It can be differentiated from satire in the same way that the clown who slaps his fellow clown with a bladder is differentiated with the fencer who attacks his adversary with a rapier.

The absurdity in burlesque affords abundance of laughter, but it never touches the audience in any other manner. The spectators envision the incidents travestied in the burlesque and enjoy a hearty chuckle. There is exaggeration of events and incidents and this is what makes a burlesque enjoyable.

Plagiarism also plays its part in burlesque which takes much from other writers, but what is stolen gets altered. Burlesque is a dramatic composition of an ironical or satirical nature. Sometimes it is found to be a comic imitation of a serious literary work.

Comical caricature is the technique adopted in burlesque: Ramayana becomes Ramayamanam and Nandanar, Nintanar in burlesque. Heroes are depicted as clowns and Gods as lowly laymen. So it is parody in form and style. Mimicry, the graceful art of imitation, adds its own charm to burlesque.
The elegance and extravagance of incongruity in burlesque would be so appreciable to the audience that maximum mirth and merrierment accrues out of these. Hence, when burlesque is presented on the stage, the display becomes spectacular.

The best burlesque in Tamil is 'Santirakari' written by Sambunda Mudaliar. This is a travestied form of 'Arichantiram', the popular drama about the greatest exponent of truth. Arichantiram never utters a lie whereas Santirakari, the hero of the burlesque, is one who never speaks truth. This striking contrast between the hero who idealises himself with truth and the one who speaks nothing other than lie provokes loud laughter in the audience. As it is customary with a burlesque, this also does not teach any lesson to the people. It is merely a merry making dramatic entertainment. The dramatist has changed all the names of the characters, in order to give a pleasant dignancy to the plot. Even the scenes and actions of the drama have been changed diversely. On the whole this burlesque is a beautiful dramatic composition which became very popular adding a feather to the cap of the famous dramatist.

'Kumayam' a burlesque travesty of the famous epic of our land, Ramayana was a highly controversial one for a time. This was enacted by the popular cine actor M.R. Radha in order to popularise atheistic and rationalistic ideas among the people. But the burlesque in the limited technical character was appreciable on the stage. No wonder many were attracted by it. Rama
and Navana the principal characters were as such presented but with different characteristics. The hero became the villain and the villain became the hero in Ramayana. Though some people felt that the burlesque would arouse the religious sentiments of people, the laughter evoked by it was light and harmless.

"Kinnanar" by K. Krishnan the very famous comic actor of Tamil cine field was also another very popular burlesque which made people laugh loudly. This was indeed very interesting burlesque. The story of Kinnanar, the famous satirist is known to everybody in Tamil Nadu. Kinnanar was a travesty of this great savant, but it was very highly hilarious.

"Sanchathi" (1975) written by Koor is a funny burlesque of a peculiar type since the travestying is done in the case of women, who are presented as occupying the role of men and as ill treating the men (contrary to what is obtaining in society). The hero Nagesiyan and heroine Veeral entertain the spectators with very lively and laughter provoking conversation.

Burlesque, the type of drama with the least seriousness, is meant merely for merry making; hence the events, incidents, passages, dialogue etc. are contrary to conventional systems, not to make a mention of the contradictions and meaninglessness found in it. In fact, all these are the spices to this dramatic art.
However, it has to be borne in mind that burlesque means no offence to anybody. It is not at all an attempt to tarnish the image of the original excellent work of dramatic art. The subject matter in this drama is slaughtered merely for the sake of mirth and merriment. Beyond this, there is nothing in burlesque.

**MELODRAMA**

Melodrama is the action-packed drama that makes the spectators or readers emotional and excited. Mostly it deals with revenge themes; hence, it easily arouses intense feeling.

"The basic characteristics of Melodrama can be summarized briefly: a virtuous hero (or heroine) is relentlessly hounded by a villain and is rescued from seemingly insurmountable difficulties only after he has undergone a series of threats to his life, reputation, or happiness."¹

In it the story unfolds rapidly after a short expository scene; each act ends with a strong climax; all important events occur on the stage and often involves elaborate spectacle (such as battles, floods, earthquakes) which provide picturesque working conditions.

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The typical plot devices include disguise, abduction, concealed identity, strange coincidence, fights, murders and the like. Comic relief is provided by a servant or companion to one of the principal characters. Song, dance and music provide additional entertainment or underscore the emotional values of scenes. Melodrama, with its simple, powerful story, could be understood and enjoyed by the least sophisticated of theatre goers.

In melodrama we find exaggeration, predominance of physical movement as well as concentration on action without weighty characterisation. Stress, tension and appropriate atmosphere are the main traits of the melodrama. Tamil melodramas are very spicy to the spectators as these are full of intense emotional scenes.

"Suvilanka" (1951) by K.R. Rungaiya, which comprises two acts of four scenes is a very interesting full length drama. This is a good social melodrama with an appealing, political background. The hero of this drama Selvaratnam is a student politician. But the heroine Sunderavadivu is an outright social character who represents the sublime aspect of domestic excellence. The drama very beautifully highlights the formidable impact of social binding woven with subtle human passions which get subdued by the touch of nobility. The hero is handcuffed with flowers by the heroine. The dramatist successfully conveys the message of non-violence and makes a powerful appeal for upholding of higher values of life, even for the noble
'Memapin Tiripu' (1967) by K. Vermaedan is a melodrama with all its characteristics. Swift moving action is found in this play. A typical revenge theme upholds itself with all its melodramatic intensity. The clash between the rival sects headed by Kodaman and Kalupran leads to the inevitable climax of death and destruction. In a subtle way, the love story of Panickam and Nargatham finds its place in this melodrama of tense situations.

Melodrama is the type of drama fully based on the excitable and emotional aspect of human personality. During actions, clashes and calamities all make this very interesting to the audience, especially to those of the lower rungs of our social system. Hence, melodrama is given importance because of its popular public appeal. However, it is to be noted that this drama touches more the passionate people than the sober and thoughtful people of our society.

2.2.7 Psychological Drama:

Psychological dramas are those that present psychological problems in a striking manner. They deal with social life, but the events and incidents, the people and their problems are highly psychological in nature. The theme in these dramas deals with the conscious, subconscious and unconscious aspects of psychic life.
A dramatist of higher calibre can alone attempt to write psychological dramas. Such a dramatist has to make a probing search into the inner recesses of human personality in order to bring out the intricacies embedded in human nature. Exposing the inner aspect of the psychic functions in dramatic art is indeed a formidable task.

Penyayasy Thoror ni’s ‘Kankuka’ is a typical psychological drama. The problems found created in this play are due to the psychological disorder of the hero, Madhavan, who suffers from colour phobia. He is terrifiedly scared of black colour, but he gets cured of this psychic ailment after he receives psychotherapy. The dramatist very skilfully presents the dramatic events and the drama is a praiseworthy one.

‘Vellikudi’, (1923) written by V. E. P. Manickam, is another noteworthy psychological drama. The heroine Veliki witnesses a mother delivering a child. The labour pain and the suit rim, leave such a deep impression on the girl that she goes to the extent of refusing to marry the young man whom she loves dearly.

However, the girl realises the reality of the situation and gets reconciled to it. The drama has an excellent psychological theme and the treatment of this by the dramatist is very nice.

R. Choodamani has written a good psychological drama; ‘Arunodayam’ (1967). It presents the main character Kalyani as suffering from a mental obsession created by
the ill treatment, noted out to her by her step mother and her husband (Kesavanandam) who divorced her. The lady adopts two orphan children Sanker and Vidya and harrasses them under the spell of the obsession from which she suffered from her step mother and husband. But at the end she gets cancer and takes poison and dies. The drama is a memorable one.

‘Taxidriver’ (1978) written by A. Visvanathan is also an imprescindible psychological drama. Driver Raju meets with an accident and thinks wrongly that the victim was killed by him. Actually the girl knocked by his taxi had little injury only. But the poor taxi driver is overcome with remorse and as he thinks more about the accident, he becomes a typical psychic case. But the doctor who treats him, reveals the real situation and makes him all right. The drama is a very good one.

Psychological dramas have a flavour of their own. The theme and the treatment demand masterly approach. The subtle manner in which these dramas are written is indeed praiseworthy. These dramas are found to be all the more pleasant to spectators and readers, since one can easily discern a very spreading aspect in them, as they reflect real situations of life. However, it has to be noted that spectators or readers with some sophistication alone enjoy these dramas.
Biographical dramas deal with the lives of great men and in this respect they seem to be akin to historical dramas. But they are different from the latter since they highlight the life of a single individual from birth to death. These dramas present the lives of great men, in such a manner as to create a lively impression in the spectators or readers. Further, these are more realistic and enjoyable.

Sambandar's 'Buddha Avatharam' depicts the life of Lord Buddha in a vivid manner. To provide dramatic effect, the dramatist has introduced some changes created by his imagination, but he successfully conveys the message and the teachings of Lord Buddha.

'Viravatars' written by Valithunaivan is an interesting biographical drama. The special feature of this drama is its unique exposition of the life events of the great Tamil savant with a highly realistic touch. Aru Athanguppan has also written a biographical drama with the title 'Viravatars'. Both these dramas present a pleasant biographical account of the great poet.

Ethiraju has written a biographical drama on the life of the great Tamil poetess 'Avvai'. This drama graphically depicts the life events of the great Tamil scholar.
Ashogirisami's 'Kavicharavarchi' is another biographical drama presenting the life of the great poet who has earned an immortal place in Tamil literature. This drama is also a noteworthy biographical drama.

"Pachaiyappar, the great philanthropist is presented in a pleasant and vivid manner by Dr. M. V. in the biographical drama with the title 'Pachaiyappar'. This also is a full fledged biographical drama giving the details of the life of a great person.

Vasudhanarayanas has written a very illuminating biographical drama 'Nanthi-nukol' (1972) depicting the life of the great saint St. Thomas meeting and conversing with Chiruvallavar. The dramatist seems to strongly argue with vehement that the two contemporaries met and conversed with each other. This biographical drama is very interesting and thought provoking.

'Socrates' (1974) written by J. Karunanithi is another noteworthy biographical drama. Maintaining a dramatic tone of high pitch this drama graphically gives the life of the great Greek scholar.

Biographical dramas are interesting as they have a historical background also, since they are highly realistic, they are very appealing. In fact, some of them are found to be very moving.
Crime investigation is the central theme of detective plays. Nowadays due to the influence of English dramas, cinemas and thrillers many of our spectators and readers relish detective stories. Dramas which present crime and investigation leading to the detecting of the culprits and their eventual incarceration are found to be popular with our people. A few Tamil detective dramas are interesting and entertaining.

"Anandamundrum" (1932) written by A. Vasan is a detective drama. The theme is on murder, cheating, fraudulent practices like swindling of bank funds, attempt on the part of a forty year old man to marry a teen age girl. The crimes are very graphically depicted by Anandan in this drama.

V. Sundaram has written "Attal vanda kodishu" (1933) another interesting detective drama. The letter written by the victim Indian flown in the air is the source for the detection of the murder committed by Nallathu. The drama maintains suspense till the end when the crime is detected.

"Samini" (1973) by L. Viswanathan is a detective play presenting some interesting events. Rohini, the twin sister and not Samini the famous actress, gets murdered and the CID official Sundaram detects the crime. The drama is very interesting as it arouses suspense due to tension-creating situations. The last scene alone
reveals the truth, so the drama is very pleasing to
people who are fond of crime stories.

Pomponaguru's 'Vinai Vithathavargal' (1979),
published in two volumes, contains 30 crime stories.
These radio plays became very popular as the treatment
of the crime theme in this detective dramas iii is rigid
to be very interesting.

Detective dramas are interesting because
they present crime stories with realistic touch. The
suspense created by these is all the more enjoyable to
people. Further, they serve another important purpose
of educating the public about the nature and mode of
crimes committed so as to warn people to be careful and
cautious. Hence, these dramas are popular among our people.

2.1.1) PHILOSOPHICAL DRAMA

Drama is a powerful medium to present
philosophic concepts to our people. Philosophy has its
place in life and everyone realises the philosophic
nature of existence at one time or other.

Dramatists, imbued with religious and philosophic
enthusiasm indulge in philosophic thought whenever there
is a chance for it in their dramas. In fact, truth,
beauty and goodness are very much emphasised in every
drama. Values and virtues cherished by society and well
enunciated by scholars and thinkers have to be imparted
to the public through dramatic art. Many a Tamil drama
serves this noble purpose.
'Manomohan', the famous drama written by Sundaram Ilaa, is a beautiful treatise on moral principles. Jeyakan, the king, expresses philosophic thoughts when he exhorts his soldiers to bravely fight against the enemy. But it is Natarajan who excels other characters in expressing philosophic thoughts and ideas. In the whole the drama contains a good number of passages which carry philosophic thoughts.

'Ede Ottai' (1973) by A.R. Komasundaram presents two young men, Kumar and Lokhar as visiting on bicycle all the places in Tamil Nadu and watching and witnessing the happenings in these centres. The drama makes us think deeply about the problems of social life. The elementary school teacher who does not do the teaching properly, the college students on rampage as their request for inviting the cine actress being rejected by the principal, the factory workers indulging in arson, farm labourers resorting to strike during harvesting time are all thought provoking problems presented in this drama. The dramatist seems to plead for sanity on the part of all so as to enable everyone to lead an honest living.

Philosophic dramas are those that make spectators and readers think about higher and nobler ideals of life. They exert a sober effect on people since they arouse higher thoughts. The ideas and ideals emphasised in these have a salutary effect on all.
2.2.11 SCENE—POLITICAL PLAY

A play with predominant political theme arouses political awareness and stimulates people to bestow thought on political problems of the country. Usually, a political drama propagates patriotism among the people. During the period of our struggle for independence, struggle dramas were written by many to provide impetus to the movement. Inspired by the great leaders of our nation, writers with strong political convictions wrote dramas urging people to take active part in the fight against the foreign rule.

Political plays have a special significance since, they display an apparent down to earth approach, feeling for the country, and fighting for the emancipation of the masses striving hard to bring about socio-political reformation are all related to the life of the people as well as to the nation. When we fought against the foreigners our only concern was the liberation of the beloved land from the clutches of the Britishers. So dramas written during the pre-independence period were full of political fervour with highly emotional touches since the objective was to induce people to fight for freedom.

Now the scene is different. Post-independence period has brought its own problems and dramas written during this period reflect the aspirations and longings of the people and the dramatists discuss these problems from their own angle.
'Katharin Vetri' (1923) is perhaps the first and foremost political drama written during the pre-independence period. The dramatist T.R. Krishnamani was a staunch political worker and follower of Gandhiji. This drama was banned by the British rulers. But the dramatist wrote four more dramas, 'Desiya Kedi' (1929) 'Pathibakkathi' (1931) 'Bombay Kedi' and 'Governor's cap'. Through these dramas he spread revolutionary ideas among the people.

In 1931 Swaminatha Sarma wrote 'Panapuratti Veeran' which was another fiery drama preaching the ideal of liberating the country from foreigners. This was also banned by the government.

C.R. Kumaram's 'Veera Sudanthiram' (1974) was an excellent political drama embracing the life history of eminent political leaders like V.C. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva, Vanchu Iyer, Thirumoor Kumaran, Poet Bharathi, patriot Bagavath Singh, Arabinda Gosh and Jala Lajanathi Rai. The dramatist extolls the noble services rendered by these great stalwarts of our freedom movement. The drama is an excellent political drama containing stirring account of these great men of action whose valour, courage and indomitable spirit have been recorded in red letters in the annals of the history of our land. The dramatist deserves praise for this good drama.
'Thug Sangam' by Selvaraj is a notable political drama, written after independence, and it deals with political issues. The drama portrays politicians of various types and presents problems with a view to seek a solution to them. Manicka vasagam, the Gandhian, Sarma who pleads for individual rights, Kumar the Communist are the characters in this drama. The dramatist pleads for peaceful socio-political system which safeguards and interests of all.

Shambaram 'Amaravalu' (1959) is a political drama of a progressive character. The theme of the drama is on political revolution, socialist society, importance of labour, equality in social living and these are forcefully presented by the dramatist. The hero Sharan is depicted as an ideal politician who lays down his life for the sake of the cause which is dear to him.

Chithi Vinesakar's 'Pothuvudamai Ponnadu' (1972) is a political drama with a highly satirical tone. The drama is a severe criticism of communist regime. The dramatist strongly pleads for freedom of speech and freedom of expression which are denied in Communist system. There is a powerful attack on cooperative farming followed in communist countries. The drama is a political drama written for political propaganda against communism.
"Pincchu Pala" (1973) by Dr. Perumal contains a severe criticism of politicians. The dramatist exposes the insincere politicians who are found to be lacking in many respects. Politicians without fundamental educational qualification, power mongering, administering country without any talent etc., are the targets of attack in this drama. This also is a pungent political drama written with the purpose of reforming the politicians.

Karunan Brothers, the famous political fighters of Tamil Nadu, are the principal characters in Bala-sundaram's drama 'Thanmir Vitta Valarthom' (1975). This is a good political drama written to pay homage to two brave youngmen of Tamil Nadu, who sacrificed their precious lives for the cause of our country. The dramatist deserves praise for this good drama.

Political dramas are thought-provoking as well as emotion arousing. They make the people think about the country and its problems. At the same time they arouse their feelings and make them work for the progress of the country. These dramas educate people on the need for correct political approach to solve the problems of the country.

2.3.13 EXPERIMENTAL PLAYS:

Experimental play is an innovation in dramatic art. It is part of a movement to educate people about the stark realities of life. The intention is to instruct laymen about the happenings around them and to make them think seriously about these.
Neither a stage nor scene setting is essential for an experimental play. Makeup of actors also is not insisted upon. The entire auditorium or theatre, or even the complete street is used as the stage. But the whole action will go on before the audience if necessary with their involvement also. The spectators cannot find difference between them and the actors.

Dramatisation is made very simple and plain. Anyone can easily follow what happens on the stage or around him and realise what is intended for instruction. Usually the treatment of the theme is very blunt; but at times it is symbolic or satiric. There is place for humour in experimental play. But laughter is meant to provoke thought.

The exponents of experimental play never gloat over dramatic achievement. Here entertainment is not the aim. Education through entertainment is the earnest aim of these people. Their concern is how people react to what they watch and witness. They want to inspire the audience and induce them to some action.

All the aspects of our social life are brought to the stage. The cunning and the capricious people are posed to the audience with a view to eliminate all antisocial acts that harm society. Social progress on proper lines is the objective of this movement.
There is highly realistic approach in this dramatic art. What happens in real life is performed before the audience. There is no room for any artificiality. With less of technique much is achieved with great effect. No unnecessary or unwarranted scene or action is permitted. Every act or dialogue has its own meaning and purpose.

Experimental play creates very powerful impact on the audience. The spectators sit or stand and watch; and whatever they see enacted before them leaves an abiding imprint in them. They think, they feel and then they must get the urge to act. This, in fact, is what is aimed by the protagonists of experimental drama.

Perhaps, revolution in thought, word and action can be achieved through action on the stage. The motivation provided is marvelous. Experimental plays in this respect are very deep and more powerful.

Four types of experimental plays are
1) Parikshenatakam 2) Viti Natakam 3) Kuttu Pattarei and 4) Nija Natakam. All these are interrelated in their modes of presentation and performance.

N. Kuthuswamy's 'Karkalikkarar' (1977) is a popular Experimental play as there was no play like this earlier in the Tamil theatre. This was the first play in Tamil using the 'novel Technique'. The play drives home the point that 'politics now-a-days has been
reduced to a kind of sloganshotting stage technique. Groupism which is rampant in political parties is also ridiculed severely in the drama. On the whole, 'Narkalikarar' is hailed as a turning point in modern plays in Tamil.

'Porvaiporthia Udalal' (1979) by Indira Partasarathy is another experimental play. The heroine Vasanthy speaks about the dead body on the stage and audience also take part in the drama. The dramatist attacks the social systems which make the people resort to unbecoming ways of life and lead a deplorable existence. This play smacks of revolutionary fervour and the dramatist deserves praise since he aims at social reformation.

Experimental plays have a promising future. The innovative nature of this branch of drama is appealing to people. The down to earth approach and the effective way of presentation are very pleasing. Hence, it is proper to envisage a bright future for this kind of plays.

2.2.13 GEOGRAPHICAL PLAY:

These plays are written by dramatists who possess deep religious fervour. Usually, the theme of these plays is social and the characters are drawn from real life. The spiritual message of these plays is sometimes moving to those who are pious by nature.
Religious plays exert a sober effect on the spectators because man by nature possesses the spark of spirituality in him. When a drama presents characters and events touching religious aspects, it appeals to the spectator or reader.

The moral content in these plays is very significant. Hence, these are sometimes considered to be more moral than religious in nature. All the higher and nobler values and virtues of life are emphasised in these plays. Further, the impact of these plays is formidable. Many a man is prone to turn a new leaf in life merely by witnessing or reading such a play.

John Vellakkan's 'Vettinamakay' (1975) is a noteworthy socio-religious play. Akbar, the principal character in this play is presented as a notorious man who teases an innocent and pious person. Both of them are college students living in the same hostel and they observe each other and finally a turning point takes place. Akbar overcomes with remorse pursues the path shown by his friend Elviam. The religious nature of the play is very pleasing.

'Apnavuku Anjali' by Dayanandnen Francis is an appealing socio-religious play. Arul is a highly compassionate doctor. His loyalty to profession prevents him from attending the funeral of his own father. Conscientious by nature, he attends to a sick person
and saves him from death. He is blamed by his relatives.
But the person saved by him appears on the scene and
seeks his pardon. Moved by the doctor's vicious nature
the man follows him in faith also.

'Anmika Guruvum Arumai 'Seedanum' (1975) by
M.P. Gurusemy is a graceful drama depicting the life
history of two religious stalwarts of our country,
Samakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda, an
eminent pair of preceptor and disciple are the characters
presented in this good drama. A scoundrel becoming a
saint is so beautifully presented in this play that one
would come across many a moving scene. This is an
excellent socio-religious drama which exhorts everybody
to follow the footsteps of these two noble and venerable
religious personalities of India.

Socio-religious plays are more appealing to
people because their religious message is pleasing to
people. They play a significant role in reforming common
people and urging them to pursue the pious path which
eventually leads to greater glory and grandeur.

2.2.14 SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC PLAYS:

These plays treat scientific themes, but they
are written in striking social background. The scientific
inventions and discoveries have their impact on the
dramatist and no wonder, those who are inspired by the
modern inventions tackle these subject matter in their dramas.
These plays carry scientific concepts to the spectators or readers and these serve the purpose of educating the people about the progress achieved in the field of science. Some of them seem to follow the principle pursued by the famous English authors like H.G. Wells. However, it is to be noted that very few dramas of this type have been written in Tamil.

"ujatha's 'Padavul vanthirunthar' (1972) is an interesting socio-scientific play. Srinivasan, the hero after reading a modern science book on space life, is able to communicate with an "outspace being" Joe and gets many powers from him. But the people around him think that he is mad and shut him in his house. But he makes use of a ruse and speaks of his powers as spiritual ones, and amasses wealth. The dramatist drives home the point that our people have deep faith in the supernatural or the spiritual, but little faith in scientific process. The drama is very interesting as it contains many funny scenes also.

'Padavulin Ethirikal' (1967) by Keveri Naden, is about two scientists, Mathivanan and Arivazhagan who produce a test tube baby, but their wives resent their action and get divorce. The tube baby Mathavan is a genius with strong physical structure. He evokes interest among the people. Kumarappan poisons Mathivanan and the scientists murder Kumarappan by throwing him down from
the first floor of the house. The drama has a very interesting end. The wives of the scientist become pregnant. The drama very strongly endorses the scientific spirit of our age. Modern inventions will bring about changes in our social life. Scientific dramas are commendable since they spread scientific ideas among our people. The power and force of science must be realised and scientific dramas serve this purpose.

2.2.15 **ADAPTATION PLAYS**

Adaptation plays deal with themes which are borrowed from other authors of foreign languages or from Tamil authors. The original is subjected to suitable modifications and the drama is presented with characters and events having their bearing on current social life.

There are many Tamil plays adapted from other sources. The dramatist takes the subject matter from another author and presents it with his own treatment. New techniques and new standards add a touch of novelty to these dramas. Some of them are found to excel even the original; hence, they are impressive as well as interesting.

Kuthian Kudaliar wrote 'Rajasevari' or 'Kathalinetti' (1906) adapting Shakespeare's 'As you like it'. The drama is very interesting and the dramatist has taken pains to present the events in a very pleasing manner. The adaptation is so nice that Tamil spectators or readers
would like it very much. The drama comprises five scenes, and the dialogue is in prose as well as poetic form.

'King Lear' was adapted by K. Th Veisamy Iyer as Mangalayak Pakattu (1917). The tragedy gets converted into comedy. The old king in the Tamil drama is admitted to the hospital and gets cured. The third daughter is crowned at the end. The drama is a nice adaptation and the changes made reflect the Tamil people's love for comedy.

Tamil Thithan's 'Raman Sonna Naethi' (1973) is an adapted drama of the Telugu story on Krishna Devarayar. The popular Jester, Tannali Raman, is the hero of this play. The king gives golden mangoes to Brahmans as alms whereas Tannali Raman treats them with red hot iron. The drama evokes laughter.

V.S.D. Raman has written 'Manaviyin Urmai', a good drama with a striking social set up. The source of the play is Sangam literature, but the story setting is modern. The dramatist very powerfully pleads for the emancipation of women. This is a very commendable drama.

Adapted dramas are appreciable because though the original is different the modern version reflects the spirit of the present day. The problem presented is found to be pleasing to our people.
These dramas are mere reproduction of plays written in another language. Translated plays bring home to us the thoughts of other dramatists who have written good dramas. Many dramas from English and American Plays have been translated into Tamil.

The peculiarity of the translated dramas is that the original theme is presented in Tamil. The themes, events, characters, etc., are retained as such and no change is normally allowed. Hence these dramas enable us to have a taste of plays written in other languages with their characteristics.

Kamalalai Adigal's 'Sagunthalam' is a translated play from Sanskrit. This famous play has been translated into Tamil by many authors. But this one is considered to be an excellent one. The theme of this play is so familiar to people that it needs no special mention. This has been put on the stage by eminent dramatists like Ambika Raddiar, a number of times.

Harinara Barme has translated 13 Gujarathi dramas in 1933. These have been translated in such a manner as to give the impression that these are Tamil dramas.

"Vinotha Thirumanam" (1966) is the translated play written by Jaganatha Raja. The original is a Telugu play by name 'Kanyasulgam' (wonderful marriage).
The dialogue is in Tamil and in English. The translator has done full justice to the original. The names and some customs are new to Tamil. But the translation is appreciable.

Two French plays 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme' and 'Le Tartuffe' are translated as 'Puthupanakaran', and 'Tartymon oru nayavanachakan'. These two comedies are translated and the names of characters are left unchanged. However the dramas are found to be quite good.

Goethe's German Play (Faust Part-I) was translated by A. Duraisamy Pillai under the title 'Vasti Part-I' (1963). The dramatist has used very difficult terms and hence it arouses a sense of artificiality. However, the drama is a good translated play.

P. Thiraviyam has translated two dramas written by Ibsen. These dramas 'Savuga Pagaiyen', 'Nakkalin Pagaiyen' (1973) are two enjoyable dramas translated from the famous dramatist. The dramatist has tried hard to retain the impact of the original dramas and as such the work is commendable.

'Julius Cæsar' the very popular Shakespearean drama was translated by T. N. Seshachalam. This drama is found to be very nice. Antonio's oration is presented in Tamil in High literary form. However, the drama is a good one.
A. . . Dr. Nivasa Mudaliar has translated Romeo and Juliet (1920) and the play is good as the dramatist succeeds in retaining the original charm of the play.

Adapted and translated dramas are an asset to our dramatic literature. The gems produced in the other literary fields get scattered in our field and they add their grandeur and lustre to our literary world.

2.2.17 \textit{DEWA:}

Dance drama is a graceful type of dramatic art. These dramas are very much appreciated by art lovers. There is something majestic and magnificent about these dramas. Perhaps the admirable combination of art, music and dance make these dramas highly enjoyable.

The musicians with the accompaniment of the orchestra provide the background with melodious songs and the dances on the stage convey the feelings incorporated in these songs to the spectators in a very appealing manner. Witnessing such a dramatic performance is very attractive to the audience. Sometimes these dramas are found to be so enticing and enthralling that the spectators are very much swayed by their artistic charm.

Kalashatra at Adyar is a real abode of this artistic excellence and there are experts who are able to stage dramas of this kind very effectively. R. Subramanian is a popular person known for preparing
materials for these dramas. His 'Sivakamiyin Senadam' has been enacted time and again by the popular cine actress Sentirakanta.

'Kaveri Tanta Kaladhelvi' is another popular dance drama enacted a number of times at different places by another famous cine actress 'Jayalalitha'.

'Kittirepavai', 'Padmaasara' and 'Mohini' are the dance dramas put on the stage by yet other famous cine artists Rajasulochana, Vishilla and Manjula Vijayakumar respectively. These were very much appreciated by art lovers.

Nataraj and Sakuntala are another troupe who are popular in this art.

These dramas retained and propagated the traditional glory of Tamil arts and presented highly enjoyable entertainment to the audience making use of modern gadgets and techniques.

2.2.19

SOUND AND LIGHT PROGRAMME

Sound and light Drama is another modern innovative art in the field of drama. The effect produced by sound and light is very powerful and the audience are made to envision happenings with a high sense of appreciation. The sound and light show presented depicting the historical events upto 1347 at the Red Fort is a great attraction in New Delhi.
In Tamil Nadu this programme has become popular. Old Arankakattikal was first introduced in 1973. This is nowadays a regular feature of entertainment at Madras, Madurai, Trichy, Thanjavur and Vellore.

Sound and light programmes were presented on the occasion of Periyar centenary celebration and Marathi celebrations. The performance is a very pleasing one to the audience. Open-air theatre is the place in which this is presented. Spotlights and recorded songs and dialogue bring about the effect. The actors also play their parts.

The stage is created with natural background. This makes the show more appreciable. Different effects of light and sound make the performance highly enjoyable. There is something marvellous in this kind of show and one cannot but appreciate sound and light programmes.

2.3.0 Vacterial Changes

In almost all languages, the origin of drama can be traced to poetic plays. Tamil is no exception to this. All the dramas in Tamil up to the first of the 19th century are built of songs. Nanonmaniyam, written in 1891, may well be considered as the first verse play in Tamil. It was believed that for permanent success the drama should be in verse.
"Drama at one time for a long time meant only poetic drama"\(^1\) says Prof. K.R. Brinivasa Iyenger.

Poetry has a very important place in drama. According to T.S. Eliot the poet has three voices: "the first is the voice of the poet talking to himself, the second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, the third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse. And in poetic dramas all three voices are audible."\(^2\)

Bernard Shaw forcefully says "the theatre, if it is to survive, needs poets."\(^3\)

In Sanskrit many verse dramas were written during various periods in the annals of literary history. The term 'Nakshatras' has become very popular recently, but in the previous centuries drama meant only those written in verse. Only during the later half of the last century, the first full fledged drama in prose was written. Since, it is proper to conclude that verse dramas were the order of the day in the past.

Verse dramas in verse form which became popular were really excellent pieces of literature. But they could not leave any impression behind since they were lacking in many respects.

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Anderson feels that prose is the language of information and poetry is the language of emotion. Playwrights of verse dramas stimulate the emotive impulses by the powerful verse dictum. Songs are sung inside the plays in which there is music and melody.

The words used in such dramas are a series of fine and pleasant ones. In style and dictum these words are found to be appealing. In verse dramas the literary style is raised to higher artistic heights by the use of words endowed with greater potentialities and rich in associational values. There is dictum with unique decorum and dignity.

Verse form is highly musical. Literary expressions which are not in ordinary usage are in abundance in this. Hence, verse dramas remain in a higher plane and appeal more to intellectuals than to the laymen. They provide literary excellence as well as aesthetic pleasure.

The distinctive excellence of such dramas is to be sought in the poetic robe which envelops it as flowers overspread the bosom of the earth in the season of spiring. "It weaves the wreaths of idyllic fancies in unbroken chain, adding to its favourite and familiar blossoms ever fresh beauties from an inexhaustible garden."

Writing a drama is a difficult work and that too a verse drama is herculean. This needs a poet of high calibre with full knowledge of theatrical techniques. Poetic genius has to be applied for dramatic production. This is a rare phenomenon.

Even when a verse drama is produced it does not lend itself to be put on the stage. Most of these dramas are meant for reading only. Even Manonmaniyan by Sundaram Pillai is intended for reading and not for the stage. The author himself has said this is his introduction. "The play here submitted, it is needless to say, is meant for the study room and not the stage, and it is therefore written in the literary and not the colloquial dialect."\(^1\)

The dramatist who produces a verse drama is a playwright-cum-poet. The verse drama is more a poem than drama. The poet's work is suitable more for reading and enjoying than for witnessing on the stage.

A playwright who lays his hand on poetic drama has to do a stupendous task without minding the difficulty of the art and the outcome or success of his product. His is a literary work that must arouse pleasure in the reader who reads the drama. The spectator is no where in this picture.

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Verse dramas usually do not cater to the
needs of an audience in a theatre. Hence, these
cannot be staged. Technically they are "closed dramas".
Almost all the verse dramas excepting a very few are
dramas of this kind. To put it otherwise, we can say
only closed dramas are verse dramas in Tamil. Attempts
made at staging some of these dramas met with complete
failure.

These dramas are successful as radio drama,
since they are rich in their auditory appeal. Such
dramatic productions are worth reading and hearing.
"Dharmangal marum" and "Kayamunai Kalaivon" (1976) by
Alanthur Mohanarangam are dramas of this kind. These
are good social dramas in verse form.

Modern Tamil verse dramas can be broadly
classified as the following.

2.3.1 1) HISTORICAL VERSE DRAMA:

These are verse dramas which present historical
episodes. T.A. Sundararajan's 'Vengaiyin Vendhan' (1973)
narrates the story of King Vijayalaya Adittan of the
Chola dynasty. This verse drama is deemed to be one
of the excellent dramas in Tamil since it has a theme
which is superior and it is full of dramatic events.

The verse form used is known as paaktodai Verma. All other
verse plays try to emulate Hanumanaiyam, but this
one is unique in its composition, hence occupies a
place of importance.
"Thamir Vitte Valartham" (1973) of M. Balasubramaniam is about the Karudi Brothers, two very famous freedom fighters of Tamil Nadu, who fought valiantly against the British regime. This verse drama could also become popular because of the theme which is about independence struggle; and the incisiveness of versification which is very charming.

2.3.2 11) SOCIAL VERSE DRAMA:

These dramas present social themes with all the facts of our social life. They are more pleasant since their subject matter is realistic and within the reach of everybody's experience.

'Paninossi' (1963) written by A. R. Perumal has a story woven round the love affair of two lovers. This is a touching social tragedy and it occupies a unique place in Tamil social verse as it is a full-fledged social verse drama.

'Palmathy' (1975) by the same author is another appealing social verse drama. It depicts the struggle that takes place between the good and the evil. This is an interesting social comedy.

Vaikunda Rao's 'Selvam' (1974) depicts the social problems of unemployment, financial difficulties and political affairs in a graphic manner. This is a tragedy. However, it is relevant to note that this verse
drama is defective in its composition.

'Thaipongal' (1963) by P.Kovindan is an imaginary verse drama. This is the love story of Naruthan and Angayarkanni and it is a pleasant comedy with a commendable style of versification.

Kamarajan's "Sarasarigal" (1976) is a good social verse drama written in modern verse form. The theme is very interesting as it centres round middle class people's social life. Problems of almost all types, like the plight of wage earners, unemployment, impishness of officials, poverty, family squabbles etc., are presented.

'Maperum Aram' (1975), 'Poriyavetti' (1976) written by K.Perumal are based on the theme of tree planting campaign. These two verse dramas have a propaganda value, since they plead for the developing of forests.

111) PHILOSOPHICAL VERSE DRAMA:

Metaphysical themes which deal with the philosophical aspects of life are found in the verse dramas of this kind.

'Kalather' (1969) of yogi Suddhananda Bharathi is a philosophical verse drama with a social background. Strongly endorsing the philosophy of virtue having its victory over vice, the dramatist very nicely presents characters and events to emphasise the ideal that justice will prevail in this world. Siva, a leading lawyer who is
expected to espouse the cause of justice, err in marrying a young girl Sundari as his second wife and the complications that follow lead to the natural culmination in which all those who commit mistakes get punished. The drama is a good one on account of the philosophic concepts contained in it.

2.4.1 ONE ACT DRAMA:

'Orange natakam' in Tamil are dramas which have only one act and within this limit the entire episode of the drama has to be enacted. One act drama concentrates on only one feature and within this limited dimension the story, characters, the background dialogue, emotions etc., have to be portrayed.

In one act dramas the emphasis is put on 'something' and that 'something' is the main life of the play. The dramatist presents the problem very rapidly in the opening of the scene itself and the readers or spectators also grasp it very quickly. So the one act play is a well structured one. There is no room for unnecessary action or speech.

One act play is more or less like a short story, whereas drama can be compared to a novel. Within a compact canvass are depicted all the details, the theme, the situation, the development of events, the climax, the end and characterization.
Like the short story, the one act play is limited in its scope. It presents a limited number of characters with a limited story setting. In it unity is more important. Often a single incident with the requisite quantum of exposition to establish the chain of events is beautifully presented.

Many one act plays could impress readers and spectators since their appeal is great. The radio, the television and the magazines helped the growth of one act plays in Tamil to a very considerable extent. The time limit in radio and television programme and the limited space allotted in magazines and journals for one act plays made the dramatists concentrate on the form, unity and structure of such artistic creations.

One act prose plays are numerous in Tamil. Many one act prose plays have been written and enacted and some of these could arouse greater appreciation. These can be broadly categorised as follows:

2.4.2 1) EXPERIMENTAL PLAY:

Indira Parthasarathi’s one act experimental plays 'Pasi', 'Nashai' and 'Kelayandirangal' (1977) are famous one act experimental plays. In these the affluent wallowing in wealth and the poor perishing in
poverty are very drastically presented with a
poignant note. The dog pup, overfed by the rich
lady, dies. This happens in an impoverished country
where penury is the most formidable problem.

'Reluctant' presents Prof. Chandrasekhar
his daughter Nirmala and Dr. James as engaged in a
lively conversation and the intention of the dramatist
is reformation of society.

'Kalayandirangal' is a thought provoking one
act play which highlights the evil effects of the
mechanical life led by the people especially the rich
one. Nadhavan is presented as the typical victim to
mechanical living.

2.4.3 11) POLITICAL SATIRE:

Kalaignar Karunanidhi's one act play 'Thiruvalar
Desigan Pillai' (1974) is a typical political satire.
The politician, Desigan Pillai goes to heaven after
death, argues with Yezan, and indulges in political
activities even in heaven. The one act play is a powerful
political satire and it has a dig at every politician,
who is a problem to the society.

'Thalaivargal Jackdrathai' (1977) by S.D. Sundaram
is a pungent political satire. The dramatist warns the
public about political leaders who are impostors and who
are a headache to the people. A popular politician and
political sufferer, the dramatist is fed up with insincere
politicians and political leaders who are very selfish.
This one act play is a pleasantly comic and is an interesting play about the present day politicians.

2.4.4 iii) HILARIOUS ONE ACT PLAYS

P.S. Ramesha's 'Bagathuminthavan' (1965) is full of fun and frolic. A coward is very humorously depicted in a very graphic manner. He is scared of everybody including his wife and leads a miserable life which evokes laughter instead of sympathy. In the end his attempt to commit suicide also becomes a flop as he consumes a purgative and ends up with diarrhoea. The curtain falls with peels of laughter caused by the one act play.

'Badam Halva' (1979) by Gomathy Sivamohan is another hilarious one act play. Hadi, the hero a henpecked chap is the butt end of the colleagues as he indulges in a series of foolish endeavours. His promise to his friends about sweet Badam Halva is the source of laughter in this one act play. This is an enjoyable light comedy.

2.4.5 iv) EDUCATIONAL ONE ACT PLAYS

M.P. Guruvay's one act play 'Anagha Guruvum Arumai Beedanum' (1975) is about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. The play is a very lively and enchanting one.
The conversation between the preceptor and the pupil is quite enjoyable as it very beautifully presents the noble relation between a saint and his scholarly disciple.

'Hanthan Kathai' (1978) by Indira Parthasarathy is a beautiful biographical one act play on the life of Mandanar, a famous devotee of Tamil Nadu. The play sheds light on the pious life of a person who is born among the down-trodden, but by dint of his deep devotion elevates himself to the pedestal of spiritual excellence. The play is a commendable one.

2.5.1 ONE ACT VERSE PLAY:

These plays are less in number compared to one act prose plays. However, one act verse plays have a charm of their own. They are pleasing especially to the enlightened ones among the readers and spectators. These plays also have the same format as the prose one act plays with regard to story, setting, characterisation, climax, etc. The melody and harmony of verification in these plays would be more enchanting.

'Vairamookkuthi' (1978) by Irai Kuruvanar is a graceful one act verse play presenting the story of a diamond nose ring of the consort of Sri Ranganayagar of Srirangam. The 'archagar' (the temple priest) steals the diamond nose ring of Arangesachiar and when the king of Thanjavur, Vijayaragava Naicker begins beating the
culprit, the goddess herself comes to the rescue of her servant and saves him by giving back the stolen articles. The one act play is replete with deep devotion.

Alandoor Mohanarangam’s one act verse play, 'Kaya maye Palaimum' was that theme of a noble teacher Pampalagan leading the students to higher ideals of life. The play is appreciable in its treatment of the theme. The dramatist presents his message in a very graceful manner.

2.5.1 RADIO DRAMAS

Radio dramas are those with high auditory appeal. Nowadays dramas of this kind are very popular because of their medium value and impact. In fact Tamil social dramas could gain momentum as a result of the added advantage provided by this modern mass communication channel.

2.6.2 THE MEDIUM

Effectiveness of radio dramas depends upon the medium which is compounded of words, music and sound effects without the visual collaboration that augments them.

In radio dramas, there is opportunity for aural perception only. The listeners’ imagination or mental associations will conjure up the visual reality.
Since radio dramas cannot demand too complex visual imagery from its audience, it has to be simple in conveying thought, feeling or action.

Radio differs from the stage and film in reaching individuals; it cannot operate on the principles of mass psychology. It depends for its effect wholly on individual psychology. So in radio dramas, exposition must be very effective.

2.6.3 METHODS AND MECHANICS

The auditory appeal comprises three components - speech, music and sound effect.

a) Speech: Radio dramas have limited characterization. A small cast is needed for characters that must be identified by the audience. Since these have to be differentiated only by voice, speech is the identification of the character in radio dramas.

In the dramas, speech should be very effective, as the story has to be presented completely in aural and not in visual terms. So dialogue is given greater importance in radio dramas.

b) Music: Music is employed in radio dramas to create an instant mood or atmosphere for the development of the story. It is used to signify an emotional situation and to shift the scene of action. In this respect, it is radio's substitute for drama curtain or revolving stage. Through it the radio dramas gain pleasant or unpleasant overtones that is required for the situations;
c) **Sound effect**: Sound effect is essential in radio dramas. This is necessary to create a sense of reality in the listener. To set the background of happenings the sound effect is employed. The sound of rain, thunder, train, automobiles, horses' hooves etc., is to provide naturalistic sound effect.

In short, radio dramas present the entire story of drama through sound — speech, songs and sound effect.

Many a drama that has been broadcast over the years could be impressive to the listeners. Some of these became very popular and these have displayed their literary excellence also. M.S. Gopal's 'Kattilmidantha Vadakangal' (1973) are ten one act plays. These depict contemporary life situations and characters. They are all humorous. For example the dramatic piece 'Manai alankaram' is a powerful story on the extravagant living style of middle class people who suffer on account of their longing to live beyond their means.

Poornam Viswanathhan's 'Gourava Kapilai' (1965) comprises eight one act dramas. These are also very light vein comedies which evoke laughter. The dramatist criticises the faults and foibles of our social living. The title of the drama 'Gourava Kapilai' is apt as in this one act play a character is presented as contriving to marry a girl saying a lie.
There are 30 one act radio plays written by Paramaguru entitled Vindivithai Thavargal (1979). These are very interesting as they are real stories narrated by the dramatist who happens to be a renowned police officer and who could observe criminals and law breakers from a close angle. The author has in every case subtly identified the provocative factors responsible for criminal behaviour in modern life.

Deccit 'Kumribai' is a typical character who is led to criminal way of living due to the force of circumstances.

A few noteworthy radio dramas are 'Ilakam Palavitham' by Swaminathasarma, 'Nikumpalai' and 'Udayakami' by Srinivasa Ragavan, 'Katchi Kankatchi' by T.V. Sukusubramanian, 'Pathachoru' by P.B. Ramaniya and 'Badam Halva' (1973) by Comathy Swaminathan and 'Jevel Lambaandam' by Mohanarangam.

The popular dramatists who could attract the attention of the listeners are Mu. Varadarajan (Kanaccantu, Kimpelam, Yamattam) T.V. Gnanamoorthi (Katkareli, Vairamalai, Pudavaly, Ponmalar Sivakami, Kamakkanni) and a host of others like these.

2.6.5 **TELEVISION DRAMAS**

Unlike radio, television is a visual rather than exclusively aural medium and is consequently more interesting and abiding. The television drama retains a good deal of spontaneity that the stage affords. It is literally a 'live show'. The pace of performance,
the scene settings, the sequencing of events, action etc., are all peculiar to this. It is a mass media with its own refinement.

Many Tamil dramas have been telecast during the last few years and some of these could become very popular since they were found to be very interesting and entertaining to the spectators.

'Undagaram' (1980) by Mouli is an exhilarating experience to TV spectators. This drama had to be enacted repeatedly on account of its popular appeal. The dramatist presents both the sides of our social life - the affluent, and the down-trodden sections of our people and their struggle for survival. The message conveyed is very forceful. All people must be conversant with the various types of our social living.

Kannan's Television drama 'Ush, Kalandai' (1980) is an interesting Television drama. It portrays with an element of sympathy, the loyalty of a servant who is very much attached to a child and his master. The theme of the drama is based on the concept that 'God and child will be there where there is attachment and affection.'

'Oru Kolai' (1980) written by Sujatha is a very humorous one. The officer who is a widower is feeble minded and is butt end of ridicule. The others who want to teach him a lesson succeed in making a fool of him. The drama being very hilarious was very much
Gracy Nohan's 'Aiya, Amma, Aruvar' (1980) is another humorous Television drama. The hero Raghunathy, a lazy fellow, gets reformed by other people, especially by his wife, mother and a friend.

'Adugal nanaikintrane' (1980) is about a beautiful salesgirl who is liked by many but none is ready to marry her. The publisher who cheats her is a typical example of deceitful elements in our society.

'Oru roler Vadukirathu' (1980) presents an intricate domestic problem created by the absence of the breadwinner from home for a long period. The dramatist pleads for intimacy which is an ingredient of domestic bliss.

'Thavilagithil Thomsiyr' (1980) written by Francis Pavanandan is a sketch on the life of St. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus Christ, who came to Tamil Nadu to preach the Gospel.

'Anathu Akattum' (1980) by Gopali is a detective story. 'Santhavin Kathali' is another detective story. These tackle domestic problems from the angle of investigation, hence these dramas were interesting to spectators.
Dramas written exclusively for children are quite entertaining to them. Usually these are enacted by children themselves. There are theatres for children and dramatists write dramas with themes suitable for the young ones.

These dramas serve a didactic purpose. They are meant for education through enjoyment. There are long as well as short dramas. They are specially prepared to suit the taste of children. Hence, these dramas are very much liked by them. Moral values and virtues can be easily taught through such dramas.

A few famous dramatists for children are Thanikai Ulaganathan, Krotapren, Ala Valliapra, Raktimvathisalan and Payarman.

Alandur Acharanragam's 'Vetti engal Vaikalilic' (1975) presents Pari as an ideal character, who is honest, helpful and sincere. The dramatist conveys the message of good behaviour to the children through this drama.