

# THE CONTINUING THEORY OF TINAI ACROSS THE WORLD PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS

S. Pilavendran  
Associate Professor  
Dept. of Folklore  
Puducherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture  
Puducherry

## 0. Introduction

Sangam Literature is remarkable among the ancient Tamil literatures we have been handed over. Sangam Literary Corporuses have been anthologised as *ettuttokai* and *pattuppaattu*. They are very ancient and found to be without any admixture of Sanskrit words and other indoeuropean words, too. The literary conventions of these anthologies are entirely flourishing with uniqueness. The sangam literary convention specifically signifies the semantic conceptualization as *akam* and *puram* wherein in the *akam* we can find both *kalaviyal* and *karpiyal* which denote the life of love, where as the *purattinaiyiyal* denotes warfare and mundane materialistic life as well. Even within the macro concepts of love and warfare there are many micro inner segments functioning in the deeper layers.

Tamil literature has epitomized human life as love and war in toto. This is the essence of the concept of human beings' innerscape and the outerscape; the sum total movements or functioning of human beings put in a nutshell. This is a very rudimental force that moves both of man's physique and psyche. We can say the following two things as the basic functioning of human life: (1) being existent and (2) reinforcing the continuity of his progeny. These two functions are common to all the living beings. These two core impulses are the basic volitional drives of all the living beings.

*The joy of union between the sexes  
That every living being accomplishes  
As it unites in passion with its loving mate*

*(Tol. Porul: 1165)*

These two drives are inchoative from the very origination of the living beings as innate drives and inbuilt drives as physiological and psychological impulses. These basic drives of being existent and

reinforcing the continuity of progeny get manifested in the activities of hunting for food and wooing for a mate. Though the activities of food hunting and mate seeking may appear simple but in the widespread span of time and space both of them demand toil and moil. Though these toil and moil are physiological, yet they are intrinsically ensuing from psychological dynamics. This naturally leads towards mingling as well as differing with its own cohabitants. The functionings of cohabiting and warring with one another bring forth the spirit of love and warfare. In this way we can conceptualize that the reality of existence and the reinforcement of progeny encompasses both the spirit of love and war as the basic dynamics of each and every living beings' existence. Only in this way the human beings' or the human society's basic moving force of his body and mind are formed into the spirit of love and war. Only this has been represented as *eros* in the ancient Greek philosophy. The same has been developed as the very structure of mind and its functioning by Sigmund Freud.

By representing love and war as the basic dynamic forces of human society's mind goes in unison with the basic philosophical discourses of all the social sciences, the proto tamil philosophical discourses of *akam*, *puram*, *aintinai*, *mutal*, *karu* and *uri* specifically gets reinterpreted and superinterpreted again and again.

## **1. Literature : Constructing Epistemological Convention**

The epistemological concepts registered in the literary corpuses in the Tamil sociocultural space and their logical systems through which they sprout out very many dimensions and through which they put forth worldwide discourses of philosophical, conceptual undercurrents are comparatively studied along with the inner currents of the epistemology is the object of this research paper.

The physical landscape of Tamil has been classified under the basis of natural ecosystem. These are categorised under five types of landscapes as *kurinci*, *mullai*, *marutam*, *neytal* and *paalai*. However, under the basis of categorisation the landscape would be specifically four in number and yet as per the nature's seasonal cycle and temporal ecosystem, the very landscape would be categorised under five types. Both the basic sociocultural dynamic drives such as *akam* (love) and *puram* (war) have been harmoniously associated with the pentafold categorisation of the

Tamil landscapes. The so called dynamics of *akam* implies the functionings of sexual intercourse, homemaking, love tussel, love pining and separation whereas the *puram* (heroism – war ) implies the dynamics of seizure of cattle, retrieving the cattle, marching against the enemy, facing the enemy boldly, defending the fort, besieging the fort, engaging in violent battle and winning the battle are logically are categorised as per the pentafold landscape demarcations as *akam* and *puram*. But so far the existing traditions of exponential interpreters have given much weight only to the trends of appreciating the literary conventions or the formative techniques entailed in the sangam corpus. However, the background of these literary conventions or the formative techniques expose the sociocultural and geographical connotations of both the tamil literary conventions and the tamil social, mental milieu wherein we can find the internal logic as well as the philosophical planes of consciousness. Though this has been acclaimed as the literary conventions/formative technique, we are now compelled to study the concepts of *akam*, *puram*, *tinai*, *mutal*, *karu* and *uri* under the illumination of multidisciplines of the world.

## **2. The Tamil Text: Dimensions of Tamil Thought**

Viewing the Tamil literary corpus, specifically Sangam Literature and *Tolkaappiyam*, the two corpuses of ancient texts as mere expressions of Tamil society's language, literature, grammar and culture will be tantamount to a mediocre and superficial evaluation of a rich treasure trough. Yet, even in the nook and corner of these written texts, we can find the synopsis of Tamil social mind's cognitive dynamism, functioning planes and efficacies embodied and embedded within or impregnated with. So, such simplifications would totally be unadvocated. Hence it will be befitting to emphasize that within these texts the whole Tamil society's long traversed and long cogitated thoughts, cognitions, feelings, logics, quests, philosophy and such like epistemological vistas of philosophy are embedded within them. In this line of thinking a basic hermeneutical significance of the ancient tamil literary texts are studied to deconstruct the basis of meanings, functioning within these texts in coherence with the conceptual phases and also to establish a linkage with the universal disciplines of philosophy.

M. Raghava Iyengar (1929:23) has asserted that each *tinai* oriented behavioural pattern specified in the tamil texts is closely related to its respective *tinai* landscape and its cultural needs. In the same way P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar (1929:4) has said that such type of *tinai* concepts are the credentials of the Tamils' sociocultural evolution. At the same time Ramachandra Dhitchithar (1936:17) has expounded that *tinai* suggests the concept of prehistoric period of south india, the five categories of landscapes and their respective behavioural patterns.

Meanwhile, Kamil Zvelebil (1993) has specified that the five categories of landscapes and their respective behavioural patterns have to be taken as the signs of a change in patterns of living according to natural environmental conditions of the landscapes towards where the societies were displaced from their various landscapes in the course of history and these have to be taken as the primary proofs.

All these studies are too general in explaining the concept of *tinai*. Though these studies have dealt with social evolutionary pattern, they emphasize the process in an unilinear way. For instance, *kurinci*, *mullai* and *neytal* landscapes are naturally formed and have been existing naturally; Whereas the formation of marutam landscape is of a later period. The crisis effected upon the spheres of social, political, economical, and environs of kurinci and mullai landscapes followed by the changes impacted by the crisis of food hunting, occupational skill and productive systems along with the changes brought by the advent of Greeks, foreign traders and invasion of outsiders have brought heavy impacts both internally and externally upon those sectors of landscape. Following suit, very many changes have manifested in the sociocultural life patterns of the previous tribal social system, chieftainship system, food hunting system, productive system, education, art and literary systems. In the same way remarkable changes have also occurred in the peoples' dwelling places, kinships, general relationships, patrilineal and matrilineal systems and social headship and governing systems. These signs of change have been registered throughout the texts of sangam period. The *marutam* poems of sangam texts amply explain how the earlier tribal social system along with its various dimensions slowly ended up into the systems of family, power and governance centering on the feudal and agrarian occupations. Besides these, the sangam literary corpuses not only the *akam*, *puram* behavioural patterns signified by the

five categories of landscapes but also the very socioeconomic behaviours then prevalent have been expounded by them.

### 3. Tamil Epistome: *mutal, karu, uri*

*Tolkaappiyam* contains all the things in the world under the category of three concepts, *mutal, karu and uri*.

*Mutarporul, karupporul, uripporul*  
*In this order of precedence*  
*Do define the structure of(akam) poetry,*  
*Which on examination one discerns*  
*Mutarporul is aspects of land and time,*  
*So do men of discernment find.*

(Tol. Porul: 949-950)

Among these the semantics of *mutal* implies of space and time (landscapes and timescapes). These two alone get priority among the concrete realities of human social life. These are the very basic realities of tamil life. These two are universal for the whole world/geosphere. From time immemorial all the living and the nonliving beings are existing upon the concrete landscape conducive to them. To their existence, evolution and adaptation as well as for their perpetual existence in time and space both the landscapes and their respective natural environs have become essential. Both time and space have the nature of influencing upon all things on earth. It would be highly impossible for anything to have either concreteness or existentiality without the elements of space and time. Having comprehended this reality, the tamil society has defined space and time as the *primary cause/ substance/ essence* of all. This has been explained to some extent by Pilavendran (2013: 245-256).

The landscape has been categorised under five centering upon physical and ecological characteristics. In the same way the second part of the primary essence (*mutal porul*), i.e., time which has also been explained in the corpus of the tamil literature. Tamil has been further divided into micro and macro units signifying the diurnal and periodic seasons.

*The rainy season and the evening*  
*Are assigned to the forest tract*  
*The learned find*

*The cold season and midnight hour  
Assigned to the hilly tract.  
The early dewy season  
Does also go with the hilly tract  
So has it been said.  
The wee hours just before daybreak  
Are assigned to the cultivable tract.  
The day's close before sunset  
Belongs to the littoral tract.  
As we see it,  
The hot season and midday hour  
Go with the centrally placed (arid) tract.  
The late dewy season  
Is also held to be proper to the arid tract.  
The two modes of separation  
Do stand assigned to the arid tract  
So do the learned men hold.*

(Tol. Porul:952-959)

These two segments of time with little span of time variations are universal. The micro segment of time implies the time span falling between the beginning of dawn and the fall of dusk: the time span falling within the beginning of a periodic season successively and cyclically followed by changes of seasons in a cyclic order returning to its very inception of the selfsame season itself ; comprising within a year is defined as the macro segment of time. This system of measuring time plays a very significant role in the everyday human social activities as well as in the yearly lives of them. Moreover, macro segment of time determines the social, economic activities and the social life of the human beings. In the same way micro segment of time too, has been associated systematically with individual human beings' every day time based behavioural patterns. Both sangam literatures and *tolkaappiyam* describe about individual human beings as well as the collective social life's behaviours such as love and war have been correlated in a symbiotic way with space and time. The same has been expounded by various scholars like K. Sivathamby(2003) and others.

The hermeneutics on space and time can be done at two levels. One is to correlate both space and time at a macro level. When Jamalan tries to re-read space and time of the tamils, which *tolkaappiyam* proposed, he says, that male, female, emperor, kings and the civil public

might be considered as power of individual human beings as well as individual human physicalities and they might be transfigured into social bodies and which might be transformed into history.

Jamalan rereads tolkaappiyar's concept of space and time by giving metaphorical correlation to space as a female entity and time as a male entity of which the male entity's *esse* plays the role of dynamics of history; where as the female entity's *esse* plays the role of space as a force of stasis. The level of hermeneutics, K. Sivathambi(2003: 37-38) rereads the very concept of space and time that each and every spatial *tinai* landscape represent a microcosm.

*The forest tract which ma:yo:n tends*  
*The hilly tract which ce:yo:n tends*  
*The fertile cultivable tract which ve:ntan tends*  
*And the littoral tract which varunan tends*  
*Are known to be*  
*Mullai, kurinci, marutam and neytal respectively.*  
*(Tol. Porul:951)*

Each and every *tinai* landscape differs from one another by their secondary & tertiary attributes (*karu* and *uri*). Hence each and every *tinai* landscape is taken as an individual microcosm by themselves.

#### **4. Other domains Harmonizing with akam and puram**

K. Sivathambi(2003:41-42) says that, though by '*tinai*' the code of conduct or the content of life is meant, it also encompasses the meaning of the following categories like family, lineage and settlements of habitats. This kind of defining '*tinai*' will strike something like finding out the meaning superficially. But Jamalan observes in that the very concept of *tinai* as binary oppositions of *akam* and *puram* consisting many astonishing interrelationships between them. By this Jamalan tries to define *tinai* as a correlative associate of human feelings and the meanings of relationships inherently contained by the categories of space and time.

Jamalan says that this kind of bifurcation might have been manifested when the tamil society has shifted from matrilineal to patrilineal system. The hermeneutical concept of land has been metaphorically imbibed with

the concept of 'mother' when she had been revered as the centre of society and from then on substituting land for mother started. One of the main functions of landscape is that it has constructed the very consciousness of woman as the consciousness of land. Only from the concept of motherhood the land has been given magnified significance from the original concept of fertility and protectiveness ensued from the motherhood. By unifying woman and land as a single entity woman is implied metaphorically as inscape of *tinai* i.e., *akam* and escape of *tinai* i.e., *puram*. From this the tactics of winning over woman is equated with the tactics of conquering the landscape i.e., *puram*. Love becomes the basic grammar of eros and the warfare becomes the basic grammar of war. In the domain of *akam*, sexual intercourse becomes eros whereas in the domain of *puram*, combating the enemies.

In this way both the activities of warfare and love making has been brought within the same systemic order. So this kind of bifurcation of *akam* and *puram* has become the basic factor for the formation of metaphorical image of recesses of memoir. From this masculinity and femininity have entered into literature as history and land respectively. The same has been said by Jamalan(1998 &1999) that both of the entities have registered in our history as innumerable warfares and innumerable works of literature. Further, one can find the same binary entities space and time, *akam* and *puram* are to be evaluated according to their social, cultural, political and religious moves.

### **5. *akam* and *puram*: Some Attempts for Semantic Extensions**

A. K. Ramanujan(1987), Tamilavan(1993) have emphasized the need for delving deeper into the concepts of *akam* and *puram* together with their semantic and metaphorical implications not only within the written literatures but also to be sought out from the oral traditions and folklore. In the same way Ganapthy Subbiah (1991: 84-86) has described that even the theories of *akam* and *puram* are found to be the undercurrent in the religious tradition of the tamils. The very same has been reiterated by a German scholar in religious studies that the concept of *tinai* found in the tamil literary corpus would be observed even in the pastoral folks of some sections of Karnataka and Maharashtra wherein their religious and



literary conventions of lyricalisation, these *akam* and *puram* concepts are found to be the basic units of them (Gunther D. Sontheimer, 1993).

The tamil society has undergone great changes in the fields of economy, politics and culture after the periods of sangam age. The continuous migrations of the *tinai* based settlement dwellers, deforestation for the growth of agroecconomy, the small and great wars among the chieftains, new princely states and expansion of them have brought about great changes in the social, cultural and literary domains. The religious traditions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism have palpable impacts on the expanded domains of cities and states, too. Amidst the following great changes brought out by the following factors like religious disputes, migrations, redistribution of lands, settlement area, villages and townships, the changes in the irrigation systems, systems of commerce and trade and inception of devotional literatures – all through these types of changes both the conventions of *akam* and *puram* has pervaded, thrived and prevailed. These literary conventions have been absorbed into the public spheres of living and have become the basic units of life. The space of utility and the spheres of meanings such as love and chivalry, meant for the semantical currency of *akam* and *puram* transcended the restricted frontiers of tamil life. The concept of *akam* and *puram* has got harmonized with the changed rudimental essence of space and time and which has transcended beyond the frontiers of love making and warfare and ushered in along with these two hermeneutical significances, various binaries/ binary oppositions such as *nature* vs *culture*, *i* vs *thou*, *self* vs *other*, *life instinct* vs *death instinct*, *unconscious* vs *conscious*, *human* vs *divine*, *potence* vs *kinesis*, *competence* vs *performance* and so on. Hence it has to become highly essential not only to find out the whole dimensions of *akam* and *puram* perforated into the basis of various fields of social studies such as sociology, linguistics, philosophy, religious studies, psychology, anthropology, history and so on.

## **6. The Worldwide Discourses on Philosophy**

Each and every society has made it a natural quest for establishing their existence in the spheres of space and time globally. This quest has been nurtured as a separate entity of epistemological discipline. This kind of quest has ushered in the concept of the origination and existence of

human life, nature, living beings and universe and also it has urged the human beings to find out the relationship between human and nature as well as the interrelationship between the cosmos. This quest has compelled the oral societies to form and foster myths, rituals and a reserve of folklore. This activity has continued throughout the history as a macro level discourse. New scientific disciplines have been made foundations by the factors of incessant wars among the societies and natural calamities, industrial revolution ensuing with scientific discoveries. Even among these also the philosophic discourses have had the upper hand or, rather, even among the new scientific disciplines and scientific discoveries, the discourses of philosophy have continued.

This discourse has been developed as philosophy in one hand and literature, aesthetics, religion on the other hand. In this way of discoursing activities among various societies such as Jewish, Semitic, Greek, Chinese, Egyptian, Tamil, Sanskritic and European have helped to evolve their philosophy, literature and religious traditions.

Among those societies, some of them have given priority to literature and some of them to philosophy and some to religion as the basic concept for their dialogues and discourses and then flourished with their orientations of philosophical discourse. Some others interpreted these three as one and furthered the dialogues and discourses. Even among those dialogues and discourses each and every society has impregnated with their experiences, accrued from their epistemology, ethos, aesthetics and so on. These have played major impacts upon the systems of governance and religion. In those days the rulers as well as the religious pontiffs have been much abhorred to see those dialogues and discourses make about the system of philosophy. Hence they prohibited and banned those voices. We can see the very same type of approaching the philosophical dialogues and discourses with the sense of abhorrence and aversion continues even from the historical period of Socrates till now. However till this day the dialogues and discourses started in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C from Thales and continued in the periods of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pythagores, philosophers of middle ages as well as the twentieth century philosophers such as Heidegger, Hegel, Kant, Marx, Levistrauss, Freud, Jung, Foucoult and Derrida. Many schools of thought in our present day are also goading the same activities of dialogues and discourses.

These have become interdisciplinary and by becoming so, they are fulfilling the gaps occurring among the various fields of knowledge. By those types of activities alone they are paving a new path towards getting the possibilities of comprehensive outlook about philosophy. Hence a quest for comprehensive philosophical outlook of tamil will never keep itself mum from the current trends of world philosophical discourses.

## 7. Conclusion

Therefore the discourses of tamil social sphere has to elucidate the theory of *tinai* with all its multifaceted dimensions specially through the spectrum of universal dialogues and discourses developed universally in the fields of science and philosophy. Though the tamil oriented vistas of knowledge is not like any other traditions; it depends not only on literature but also on the spheres of astronomy, alchemy, medicine, metaphysics of *aasivakam*, *saktaism*, *tantrism*, *buddhism*, *jainism*, *siddhaism* and so on. Discourses on these types of traditions, too, have to be carried on. Still it strikes a grand surprise how such a system of systemic dialogues and discourses have not been formed into a holistic macro level dialogue in tamil. However it is highly indispensable on our part to search for the forms of variants and the extracts from the philosophical traditions of tamil contained within the basic concepts of philosophical discourses which are being discoursed globally.

## Notes:

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- ❖ I acknowledge that the English translation of the *tolkappiyam* verses are taken from Dr. V. Murugan. 2000. *Tolkappiyam in English*. Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies.

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