

**The Late Dr. M. Karunanidhi Got All the Qualities of Characters
Represented in Dylan Thomas's Poem
"Do not go gentle into that good night"**

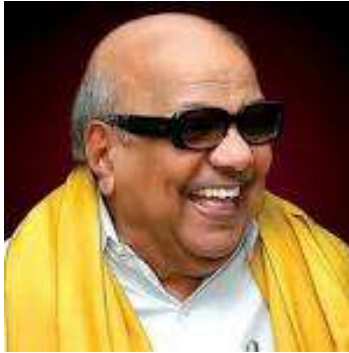
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Dr. M. Karunanidhi (1924-2018)

Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org > wiki > M.Karunanidhi

Abstract

Death is inevitable which occurs to all in life that gives an end. Dylan Thomas holds sentimental feelings of death. The poem *Do not go gentle into that good night* was dedicated to Thomas's father. It contains a universal message that death is inevitable. The author of the poem insisted on his father not to accept the death by calmly and peacefully. The speaker describes a series of different people -- "wise men," "good men," "wild men," and "grave men"— who *do* fight against death ^(1,2). The author of this article interprets and presents the late Dr. M. Karunanidhi, a powerful creative writer and public speaker, and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu as having all the qualities which were represented by Dylan Thomas as "wise men," "good men," "wild men," and "grave men" qualities. Also, as a man who *had fought* in the court of justice for his Tomb at Marina Beach, Chennai and also fought against death at the age of 94.

Keywords: Dylan Thomas, *Do not go gentle into that good night*, Dr. M. Karunanidhi, wise man, good man, wild man, grave man, good night.

1. Introduction to Dr. M. Karunanidhi

M. Karunanidhi was born on June 3, 1924 in Thirukuvalai in Nagapattinam district, Tamilnadu. He was widely known as *Kalaignar*. Karunanidhi was a multifaceted personality — journalist, poet, playwright, script writer - whose fiery dialogues in films unleashed changes in Tamil Nadu’s social scene. He took part in agitations against the inclusion of Hindi in Tamil Nadu in 1940. He published a handwritten newspaper *Manavar Nesan* (“Friend of Students”) which and later formed the first student wing of the Dravidian movement, Tamil Nadu Manavar Mandram.

The anti-Hindi agitation was revived by the DMK in 1965, leading to massive anti-Congress sentiments amid much violence. Karunanidhi also published *Murasoli*, a monthly which grew to become a weekly and later as a daily. Last year it celebrated its platinum jubilee. Dr. M. Karunanidhi, the DMK leader, had contested 13 times in Assembly Elections and won all of them. He has also been the chief minister of the state for five times.

2. Introduction to the Poem on *Do not go gentle into that good night*

The poem written by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas in a villanelle format has five stanzas of three lines each and the last (sixth) stanza has four lines ⁽³⁾.

Let us examine the stanzas to get a more thorough understanding of what is being expressed and what it might mean. *Do not go gentle into that good night* was first published in 1951. Though the poem was dedicated to Thomas’s father, it contains a universal message ⁽⁴⁾.

The author insisted on his father not to accept death calmly and peacefully. The poem encourages the dying—the sick and the elderly—to fight bravely against death. The poem also celebrates the vibrancy and energy of human life, even though life is fragile and short. The author of this article answers this question by describing Dr. M. Karunanidhi, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu who was “wise men,” “good men,” “wild men,” and “grave men”—who *had* fight against death. Dr. M. Karunanidhi is assumed to be the one of people having the characteristics of the different people - “wise men,” “good men,” “wild men,” and “grave men”—who *had* to fight against death.

3. Dr. M. Karunanidhi as Wise Man

When Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s Government at the Centre needed the support of 25 DMK MPs for its survival, Dr Karunanidhi acted as a “Wise Man” by giving the support to Mrs.

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Gandhi to show the majority in the Parliament with the agreement that two major projects be sanctioned for Tamil Nadu involving huge central government investment ⁽⁷⁾.

1. Tuticorin Port and
2. Salem Steel Plant.

Both projects were responsible for generating large employment to unemployed youths in the State. Tuticorin Port is renamed as **V. O. Chidambaranar Port Trust** which was declared to be a major port on 11 July 1974. It is second-largest port in Tamil Nadu next to Chennai and fourth-largest container terminal in India ⁽⁷⁾.

This wise man recognizes that he can't escape from death. But that doesn't mean that this "wise men" simply *accepts* death. Instead, the author, notes they "do not go gentle into that good night." He resists death, trying to win more and more projects for the welfare of the people. The speaker treats this as a model for other people to emulate.

Dylan Thomas expands on this metaphor in the second line, where the speaker proclaims that the elderly ("old age") should fight ("burn and rave") against death ("close of day") just as fiercely as if they were still young. The speaker wants him to "rage, rage" against death: He should "burn and rave"—fight fiercely and bravely—as his lives approach the end. He was a wise man who knew death is coming and he fights until the end. M. Karunanidhi was a wise man who knew death was coming and he fought against the death at the age of 94 by rage. In his elderly age he proclaimed that if he continued, he would have brought some more welfare schemes for the people.

4. Dr. M. Karunanidhi as Good Man

Dr. M. Karunanidhi's contribution to the welfare of the people of the State was immense as a Good Man. For Independence Day and Republic Day, only Governors unfurled the national flag. In 1974, Tamil Nadu CM Karunanidhi's letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi changed the tradition of state Chief Ministers unfurling the national flag on the occasion of Independence Day ⁽⁸⁾. He made supply of Electricity to all the villages. During his period, he enacted the Law for equal property rights to women and 30 per cent reservation for women in Government services ⁽⁹⁾. He made Free Education to Most Backward Classes and subject to income ceiling to Backward Classes up to Degree level. Also, he initiated the Free Education to Scheduled Castes and subject to income ceiling to women up to Degree level ^(10,11).

The **Uzhavar Santhai** (Farmers' Market) scheme was introduced in 1999 in Tamil Nadu by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr.M.Karunanidhi for the welfare of the farmers and society. **Uzhavar Santhai** is a place where the farmers can sell their products such as

vegetables, cereals, oil seeds, fruits, to consumers without any agent or middlemen. Also, he accomplished renewal of 117 old Uzhavar Sandhais and 45 new Uzhavar Sandhais during his period ⁽¹²⁾. Free bus passes for students. During his period Financial Assistance of Rs.6000/- disbursed to each of 20 lakh 11 thousand 517 poor pregnant women as a Good Man. Karunanidhi launched Chennai Metro Rail, and a new building for Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.

The lines read, "Good man, Dr. M. Karunanidhi the last wave by, crying how bright/his frail deeds might have danced in a green bay." There are two instances of light imagery in these lines: "bright" and "green bay" (water often appears to be green or blue on a sunny day). These words help describe the "good" man's life, which is full of light and energy. After all, even though his deeds are "frail"—which means "minor" or "insignificant" in this instance—he still might have "danced." In this passage, we can see how the living good men are full of a vital, powerful energy.

The word "good" in the phrase "good night" is ironic: the speaker definitely doesn't think death is a good thing! The strong consonance in the line—the /n/ and /t/ sounds in "Do **not** go **gentle into** that good **night**"—underscores the speaker's bristling, fierce passion: his fighting spirit.

At the end of stanza three, The poet urging people to resist death courageously rather than simply accepting it by repeats the line, "Rage, rage against the dying of the light," which indicates that the good man, Dr. M. Karunanidhi raged against death, just as the wise man did.

5. Dr. M. Karunanidhi as Wild Man

The DMK Conference held at Trichy in February 1970 floated one of its most popular slogans by Dr. M. Karunanidhi -- "State autonomy" for Tamil Nadu: "Maanilathile Suyatchi, Mathiyile Kootatchi" (Autonomy in the State, and Coalition in the Centre) as a wild man. Dr. M. Karunanidhi's argument was that an ideal Centre is the one which left sufficient powers with the states and kept just enough power with itself to protect the integrity and sovereignty of the country.

Dalmiapuram was a town near Trichy, named after industrialist Dalmiya who had set up a cement factory there. *Kallakudi* was the original Tamil name for the town. On July 15th, 1953. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) members had launched a protest against the renaming of Kallakudi as Dalmiapuram. Anti-Hindi slogans were raised, and the members were busy erasing the Hindi name board at the railway station. Dr. M. Karunanidhi along with other four members less than 30 years holding a black flag, jumped off the platform and laid down on the track where a running train was expected.

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The young curly haired man M. Karunanidhi wearing a black shirt was fined and sentenced to five months in prison. He refused to pay the penalty, stayed in prison for more than a year and since then came to be known as ‘Kallakudi konda Karunanidhi’ ⁽¹³⁾.



Photo.1: Dr. M. Karunanidhi fought for State Autonomy as Wild Man.

Courtesy: The News Minutes.

The wild man Dr. M. Karunanidhi "do not go gentle into that good night," just like the wise men and the good men before them. It is a remarkable achievement which has been declared that M. Karunanidhi who fought for Social Justice and State autonomy had to fight for his Tomb even after his death at the age of 94 ⁽¹⁴⁾.

6. Dr. M. Karunanidhi as Grave Man

In stanza five, the author introduced the last group of men: the grave men, near death who see with blinding sight. In this line, his use of Grave almost has a double meaning, metaphors, referring both to men who are saddened and those who are physically sick, aged, and near to death. Dr. M. Karunanidhi, grave man had the gift of "blinding sight," which allowed him to see when others have been blinded. He felt the strains of a long life, at the age of 94 but now he had faded to the point of showing no fire or life at all. This is a horrifying sight for the grave man, and it inspired him to "rage, rage against the dying of the light."

In the final stanza, the poet begs his dying father to "rage against the dying of the light." It is clear that the poet's father is near death, and that the poet is both commanding and begging him not to go.

7. Conclusion

The first three lines of "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" establish the poem's themes and its form. This is a poem about death, and it makes a passionate argument about how people can face death with dignity. This poem by Dylan Thomas was dedicated to Thomas's father and the author of the poem insisted on his father not to accept the death calmly and peacefully. "Do Not Go Gentle into That Night" was written sometime in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Dr. M. Karunanidhi didn't accept his Good Night calmly and peacefully. This poem was written sometime in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The poet Dylan Thomas published it in 1950's whereas Dr. M. Karunanidhi's all the mentioned qualities represented by Dylan Thomas were revealed after 1950's. Dylan Thomas had no chance of awareness of Dr. M. Karunanidhi's qualities, otherwise he would have insisted on his father not to accept the death but follow Dr. M. Karunanidhi who was having all the qualities represented by Dylan Thomas as "wise men," "good men," "wild men," and "grave men" qualities as a man who *had fought* in the court for his Tomb at Marina Beach, Chennai and also fought against death at the age of 94. We may also conclude that Dr. M. Karunanidhi was a social reformer who fought for social justice and State autonomy had to fight for his Tomb when he lost his soul with his body; that is, after his death also at the age of 94.

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