CHAPTER V

DICKENS AND JAYAKANTAN: THEIR SKILL IN PLOT CONSTRUCTION

Plot and character are the two most important elements of the novel. "Character generates plot and plot results from and is dependent upon character" (Shaw 51).

Many critics have pointed out that character is more important than plot. Maren Elwood observes: "There is something more important than plot, something that gives meaning and significance and life to plot. That something is character" (1).

Aristotle said that in a tragedy character is less important than plot. Charles child Walcutt disagrees with Aristotle and remarks "Modern critics have rarely been willing to accept this dictum. The assumption is that character is source and motive and cause of what happens" (13).

This discussion leads to the question: Does the novelist begin with his characters or plot? Charles child Walcutt answers the question thus:

..... Whether character or plot is more basic in a novel. The general response is that the
writer begins with his characters and proceeds to display them in one of several plots that would all serve perhaps equally well. The contrary notion that an author might begin with a good plot and see that characters it turns out would generally be dismissed as leading to inferior and melodramatic fiction (6).

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica also stresses the same point: "The inferior novelist tends to be preoccupied with plot; to the superior novelist the convulsions of the human personality under the stress of artfully selected experience, are the chief fascination" (278).

Character alone remains in the memory of the reader after he finishes reading a novel. In this connection Ma. Rāmāliṅkam says:

When we think of the well-known novels of the world, only characters appear before our mind's eyes. Neither plot nor theme nor any other thing do we remember. Tolstoy's Anna, Hardy's Tess, Tagore's Cora, Tagali's karuttammā, Kalki's Civakāmi seem to appear before us even now when we think of them (65-66).
Hence a novelist has to give much importance to characterization. A good novelist is one who creates immortal characters in his novels. Both Dickens and Jayakantan have to their credit a number of such immortal characters.

Nowadays narrative technique is more important than content in a novel. In this connection Arnold Bennet says: "An artist must be interested primarily in presentment, not in the thing presented", he (Arnold Bennet) once wrote. "He must have a passion, for technique, a deep love of form" (79).

In characterization technique plays an important part. Miriaim Allot observes: 'In the final impression left by a novel the part played by the novelist's technique of character-creation is certainly very important" (201).

The raw material out of which a plot is made is life. The plot of a novel should possess a substantial value and genuine human meaning. Its incident may be from high life and low life; but it must be intense and meaningful. W.H. Hudson writes: "A novel is really great only when it lays its foundations broad and deep in the things which most constantly and seriously appeal to
us in the struggles and fortunes of our common humanity" (132). A novelist must make use of knowledge, gained by him from indirect sources, such as books, talks or observation.

The greatness of the theme is not enough; there must be greatness in the execution of the plot. There should be tension, curiosity, suspense, and irony in a well-constructed plot. Mastery of technique alone can give that aesthetic pleasure, which is one of the principal aims of literature. The individual genius of the novelist must cooperate with his technical skill in creating the masterpieces of fiction.

The story may be fresh and interesting; it must also be interestingly told. All parts of it should be arranged with a due sense of proportion and balance; the incidents may flow naturally, as cause from effect; the march of events should be orderly; and the catastrophe, whether foreseen or foreseeable should be the original resultant of the preceding events. Tom Jones, though a love story, has a perfect organic harmony. GE is an example of a well-planned novel. The plot of a novel should result from growth and not from manipulation.
From the point of view of plot-construction novels may be divided into two different kinds (i) the novels of loose plots, (ii) the novels of organic plots.

In the former case the story is composed of a number of detached incidents, having little necessary or logical connection among themselves; the unity of the narrative depending not on the machinery of the action, but upon the person of the hero who, as the central figure or nucleus, binds the otherwise scattered elements together (Hudson, 139).

In the novels of organic plots separate incidents are not treated episodically, they are dovetailed as integral components of a definite plot pattern. In writing a novel of this kind it is necessary to make an entire plan of the story from the beginning to the end before starting the work. A few novels of this kind are *Tom Jones*, *BH*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *The Woman in White*.

There are three methods of narrating the story i.e., direct method, the autobiographical method and the documentary method. The direct method is the most usual method of telling the story. The novelist assumes the
role of a historian and narrates the story from the outside. He is omniscient who is believed to know everything that happens. It is the best method as it gives the greatest scope and freedom of movement to the novelist.

In the autobiographical method the novelist writes in the first person. He identifies himself with one of his characters (usually the hero or the heroine) with David, the boy hero in DC or with Pip the hero of GE and writes an imaginary autobiography. In the documentary method the story is narrated by means of letters, written by various persons involved in the plot. Richardson and Burney set this fashion.

While Dickens's early novels are purely episodic and later novels show better plot construction, Jayakantam's early novels have well-constructed plots and later novels have weak plots. Just as Dickens uses Direct Method and First person narrative, Jayakantan too employs both the Direct Method and the First Person narrative.

Dickens's Skill in Plot Construction

Dickens's plots lack organic unity. They are not organic wholes of which every incident and character
may form an integral part. Dickens seldom saw the plot as the most important element in narrative. Almost all the critics have found Dickens's plot weak, faulty and inconsistent. They lack symmetry, coherence and unity. They look like independent patches on a chequered cloth. Various loose strands stand unfitted to the basic structure of the plot. The spotted tapestry remains unassimilated. Aristotle talked of the best plot as 'it should have beginning, a middle and an end (36), meaning thereby a plot should essentially be characterized by an organic unity. There should be built in coherence in even the minute thread of the novel. But Dickens's plots are deficient of all such old standards of a good and organic plots. Dickens's plots are marked with discursiveness and diffuseness. They are elaborate passages of description and redundant details which do not seem to have a bearing on the development of the story.

The plots in the early novels of Dickens were loosely constructed. Dickens cannot construct for one thing. His books have no organic unity; they are full of detachable episodes, characters who serve no purpose in furthering the plot. Dickens was just a slave of the former conventions imposed on the novel of Fielding and
Richardson. Therefore he could not write a novel without erecting a whole structure of artificial intrigue, disguised lover, mistaken identity, long-lost heir and all the rest of the hoary paraphernalia of romance on which to hang it. "Very often" observes David Cecil, "he leaves a great many threads loose till the last chapter, and then finds there is not enough time to tie them up neatly. The main strands are knotted roughly together, the minor wisps are left hanging forloraly" (28).

Walter Allen, though a great admirer of Dickens writes:

For considerable part of his career, he wrote as an improviser, caring little about unity of plot or probability except loosely to tie up the ends of the actions in the last chapter. So his novels, those of the first half of his career especially, are often like shapeless bags into which all manner of different objects of varying shapes and sizes have been ruthlessly crammed. They contain something for everybody and the parts you do not like you can more or less ignore. We remember the early novels not as wholes but by episodes" (119).
Dickens freely indulges in humorous situations, and after pages of scintillating talks he is reminded of the main thread of the story, and comes back hastily to the right lines only to abberate after a short while. He then connects old forgotten facts. Only in his later novels, BH, TT, GE and Our Mutual Friend did he develop something like coherent plots, but the rest of his novels suffer from formlessness and incoherence.

Of course, in his later novels, Dickens endeavoured his best to make amendments and improve his plots (as is evident in his *Great Expectations*) yet, candidly speaking, there had been little improvement. His novels remained "topsy-turvy plotted" (Sahni, 13).

Like most of the Victorian novelists Dickens did not conceive the story of the novel as an organic whole of which every incident and character forms a contributory and integral part. Generally he chose a conventional plot and then adjusted it forcibly to a setting and character which had no organic connection with the main thread of the story. In his earlier novels Dickens failed to create unity of plot and tried to tie up the action in the last chapter only. In his plots he
was more concerned with far-fetched eccentricity, some piece of knavishness, some unlikely occurrence to deck his tale. He cared more for entertainment than for artistic stories.

The lack of organic unity in Dickens's plots has been attributed to his lack of intellectual strength which failed to impose any form or discipline on the discursive matter of his novels. Dickens's intellectual weakness meant that he had no sense of form. He could not order on the tumult of his inspiration. Figures and scenes swam into his mind in a coloured confusion. He just strung together on any worn thread of clumsy conventional plot he could think of.

Another important factor that considerably contributed to the incoherence and formlessness of Dickens's novel is their serial publication. Most of the Victorian novels before they were issued in a single volume were serialised in magazines. This created quite a few artistic problems. It is possible that some reader may not have read the earlier instalments of the novel or may not be in a position to read the following ones. If the novelist is a great serial writer, the reader should not leave the magazine discontented. It means that every
instalment should be complete in itself, should have its beginning, development, climax, denoument and resolution and should also fit in the larger pattern of the novel. This often resulted in making the final pattern clumsy and formlessness.

Dickens was primarily interested in characters. In his novels character is the main thing and the plot is subordinate to character. He agreed perfectly with Turgenev's pronouncement that the writer of fiction should begin with his characters and not with his plots. Dickens did not bestow any care upon his plots, and he stretched and strained them to the utmost to accommodate his characters. Once he had invented his personages and got them going, he felt strongly that it was their business to tell the story and not his. If they got out of hand and decided to have their own way, he was more or less inclined to let them have their way. He allowed them to talk themselves out to the full. And when they had been weary of talking, he again came to the main plot to proceed it further. That was Dickens's method and he developed it into an art which he alone could master.

A complex plot was quite typical of a nineteenth century novel. For a writer the plot was
conceived of as a necessarily unimportant and artificial framework. For most of the writers of the time, the word 'plot' probably denoted the conventional plot devices of melodrama, important incident rather than action, action being the logical working out of a certain initial situation and springing from the nature of the characters.

Today also, many critics regard the mismanagement or even the absence of the plot as not particularly disabling. They allow that the most rigid and artificial formulas can become the basis of a fiction which can transmit fine "awareness". In his introduction to the *Twentieth Century Views on Dickens*, Martin Price says:

> Must Lear have three daughters or Portia three caskets? Can we credit the Duke's disguise or Angelo's sudden toppling from righteousness in *Measure for Measure*? and how shall we support, in the midst of a play where everyone is acting or choosing a part, a company of players who present a play within a play? If these are foolish questions to raise about Shakespeare, are they wiser to be applied to Dickens? Clearly his plots, like his characters, are part of a
coherent Dickens world: a world in which casuality is intensified into a web of coincidence. It is a world of heightened significance, a world of unrelieved and often frightening relevances, a world where crime and disease are not discrete experiences but dimensions of a larger and more oppressive dehumanization. It is a world of doubles and counterparts, of actions that reticulate into a vast mesh of consequences. As W.J. Harvey says, it 'expresses our sense that real life blends the casual and the casual, that things are connected and contingent, patterned and random, that we are both free and determined'. He speaks of this real world as a 'labyrinth of the conditional', where 'what seems to us a straight path is nothing but a series of cross roads (7-8).

Dickens's later novels show better plot construction. It is true that early novels of Dickens are purely episodic. In a novel like PP it hardly matters if some scenes are totally dropped or if the sequence of scenes is changed. Dickens, however, changed and developed. He began with the old, rambling, purely
episodic tale of Smollet, an almost artless affair and gradually tightened and elaborated his construction and went to work more and more deliberately and with greater art. From Dombey and Son onwards, Dickens was definitely more careful of his plots. "The first novel is replaced by formal plot and the subordination of everything in the book to the working out of the plot is Dombey and Son" (Allen, 170).

He had gradually become aware of his deficiency and had also become sensitive to criticism. He felt offended if anyone pointed out to him the absence of form in his novels. But he took pains to give his later novels some form. DC does manage to give the impression that it has a plot. BH, HT, TT and Little Dorrit are definitely better constructed than, say, NN.

In the novels of Dickens it is not the most elaborately worked out plots that are the most satisfactory. Where the thesis is stressed, as in the historical and in the purely social novels (Barnaby Rudge, A Tale of Two Cities, Hard Times), we feel that too rigid an intention is at work; and that this effort towards concentration on a single purpose makes the
whole book somewhat strained. Dickens does not possess the gift of compact, logical or artistic writing. The type of narrative which best suits his inventive genius savours very much of the old picaresque model; his favoured theme is that of life, a life which lasts, which renews itself and which is born, as it were, of itself. In the opening chapters of *Pickwick*, the connecting thread is the most slender; later it gains strength without allowing the reader to forget the purely comic purpose with which the book began; and a plot revolving round the biography of a central character (as in *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*) imparts a supple unity to the best novels. In his later work Dickens endeavoured to tighten this rather lax construction: *Great Expectations* is a novel of a strong and sober texture, which takes a place apart from all the rest (*Lall, BH 1b*).

"What was new was that he (Dickens) had completely mastered the skill of construction and that everything in this novel was completely under his control" (*Fielding 179*).
GE is a fine work of art from any standards. We find a close connection established between the different characters and the different incidents in the novel. GE has a well-constructed plot. “The plot of Great Expectations is a good one; it holds the reader's interest; it is full of surprises and odd turns; its complexities all come out neatly in the end” (Paul Pickrel, 165).

The fierce and terrible escaped convict whom we see at the beginning of the novel, turns out to be the unknown patron of Pip and the father of Estella. The second convict with whom Magwitch, the first convict grapples, turns out to be Compeson who had deserted Miss.Havisham after promising to marry her.

The man whom Pip passes on the stairs on his second visit to Miss. Havisham, later brings him the news of his great expectations and becomes his guardian. This is Jaggers, the lawyer. It also turns out that Jaggers was responsible for Miss. Havisham adopting Estella. And his house-keeper is Estella's mother and the wife of Magwitch.

The pale young gentleman, with whom Pip fights on his second visit to Miss. Havisham, Herbert turns out to
be his tutor's son and his own life-long friend and companion.

The incidents are also well-knit. When Pip is a small boy of seven years he helps an escaped convict with a file and some food. He does this purely out of fear. This convict who is recaptured on the same day is transported to Australia. He prospers beyond his wildest dreams and adopts Pip as his son to be brought up as a gentleman.

When Pip stops going to play in the house of Miss Havisham he should have lost touch with Estella. Infact this is what he is given to understand by Miss Havisham, when he calls on her after he becomes an apprentice under Joe. But his adoption by Magwitch enables him to meet Estella once again. He is able to tell her that he loves her. Though at first she rejects his love and marries Drummle, later on, after Drummle ill-treats her and after his death, she marries Pip.

Out of the five hundred pounds which he receives as a present on his twenty-first birthday, Pip begins the work of helping Herbert to secure a partnership in a business without the latter's knowledge. When he comes to know that his unknown patron is Magwitch, the convict,
he decides not to receive any more money from that source. So he is not able to complete the work of getting Herbert, the partnership. But he persuades Miss. Havisham to complete the good work. And this enables him to find a job when he loses his great expectations. Thus we find a close connection established between the different characters and the different incidents in the novel.

HT has a kind of perfection as a work of art that we don't associate with Dickens—a perfection that is one with the sustained and complete seriousness for which among his productions it is unique. HT is a brilliantly plotted novel. The action in this novel moves on with a sense of single-minded, concentrated energy which is almost unique in Dickens. Dickens here appears as a skilled craftsman, and this novel shows a sense of technique which no other novel of Dickens possesses, not even GE. HT is a wonderfully compact novel, free from digressions, superfluous matter, unnecessary details, and comic scenes which Dickens is in the habit of introducing in most of his novels purely to add to the comic effect and without any other justification. One reason for the compactness of novel is, of course, its brevity which allows no room for
irrelevant matter or for any matter connected with the main section only slightly or flimsily. There is nothing superfluous in the novel; there is no padding; there are no digressions; and there are no characters who are not in one or the other way closely related to the plot.

There are three separate plot-sequences in *Hard Times*. The main action centres round Mr. Thomas Gradgrind who may be described as Mr. Utilitarian. Mr. Gradgrind is a "man of realities", "a man of facts and calculations", "a man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four and nothing more"(*HT* 2). Gradgrind speaks mathematically making no allowances for the tender or softer emotions. He conducts all the business of life in a practical manner because this is the way to go ahead, to make money, and to become financially and socially successful according to Victorian standard. He bows to the god of cash-payment, and he brings up his children in accordance with this philosophy. The progress of the story shows how this utilitarian philosophy works out. Louisa, Tom and Sissy belong to the main action of the story. Louisa's marriage with the capitalist, Bounderby, proves a disastrous failure. Dickens shows his heroine on the verge of yielding to the temptation of running away with...
a lover, but successfully overcoming the temptation at the last moment. The wreck of her life is complete; her father's philosophy has effectively undone her. Tom's life is ruined also. He becomes a gambler, and to repay his gambling debts, robs the bank where he works and throws the blame on Stephen, a worker in Bounderby's factory. Ultimately Stephen's innocence is established, and Tom has to flee to a foreign land in order to escape the clutches of the law. Sissy, like a character in a moral play, illustrates ideas which are diametrically opposed to the utilitarian philosophy taught at Gradgrind's school, a philosophy which she simply cannot imbibe. She plays a vital part in the story of the family of Gradgrind proving immensely helpful to all its members.

The second part of the action centres about Mr. Bounderby a hard-hearted and vicious banker and manufacturer. Mr. Bounderby, is a personification of utilitarianism in the field of business and industry and he is also a concrete symbol of the theory of laissez faire. His attitude to his workmen in his factory is governed primarily by a desire to make the maximum possible profits from his businessmen and industry, and he looks upon the modest requirements of his workmen as a
demand for turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon. His treatment of his mother shows a complete lack of any sentiments in his heart. The same cold attitude is evident in his relations with his wife Louisa who, therefore, feels somewhat inclined towards a lover James Harthouse, yet another symbol of utilitarianism. Bounderby has also a place in the sub-plot based upon his relations with his housekeeper, Mrs. Sparsit, who symbolises the vanity, the snobbery, the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the Victorian upper-classes.

The third part of the action pertains to Stephen Blackpool, a worker in Bounderby's textile mill. Stephen's conjugal life has been made intolerable to him by a wife who became, early in his married life, a heavy drunkard. He now loves another woman, Rachael and would like to divorce his wife but, finding it impossible to do so, he lives in a state of frustration, with Rachael providing whatever comfort she can. As stephen is used by Tom in his scheme to shift responsibility for the theft at the bank, Stephen is connected with the Gradgrind story. Stephen refuses to join the worker's union and is sent to convendry for this refusal. At the same time, he refuses to act as an informer against the union and is dismissed from his job by his employer,
Bounderby. Eventually he dies in an accident, but is able, before he dies, to exonerate himself from the charge of the robbery at the bank.

These three plot-sequences illustrate Dickens's general plan for revolving his action around his thesis. The thesis itself is, however, wider than the attack on utilitarianism and laissez faire, since it also includes criticism of the educational system (through Gradgrind's emphasis on facts and statistics and his neglect of the emotions and imagination), criticism of the class distinctions (through the satirical portrait of Mrs. Sparsit) and criticism of the divorce law (through Stephen's inability to get rid of his drunken wife and find happiness with Rachael). Structurally speaking, Hard Times has no loose ends, everything being woven skilfully into the repetitive moral pattern which constitute its form.

In DC all the parts of the plot are artistically united and the story, inspite of its entanglements, develops smoothly. There are stray incidents but they are harmonised in the texture of the plot. "Bleak House shows a great advance in construction" (Fielding 121).
BH is a thickly populated novel, with a multitude of characters and a multiplicity of incidents. The sheer size and complexity of this novel as a fictional structure are amazing. Many early and mid-Victorian novels and Dickens's earlier work are extremely long; but with BH a new kind of massiveness enters the 19th century English fiction. The only possible rival to the novel is Thackeray's Vanity Fair. But even the panoramic sweep of Vanity Fair is exceeded by the range and variety of BH. And this is more than a mere matter of length, of the number of characters, and of the multiplicity of incidents. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the novel from this point of view is its quality of inter-relatedness, the eternal links which bind the characters together and which bind the scenes and incidents into an ultimate thematic harmony.

Dickens has taken enormous pains in weaving an elaborate web of relationships in this novel, rarely dropping a stitch: A recognition of the need for aesthetic unity has been built into the very texture of the novel. The image of a spider's web spreading over, and unifying a large expanse is close to one's total sense of this novel" (Lall BH 347).
Both Dickens and Jayakantan are admirable storytellers. Though Dickens is not a master of plot-construction, yet as a narrator of his tales he is admirable. He may not construct a story well, but he tells it admirably. With his first sentence he engages our attention, and holds it to the end. His novels never become uninteresting and dull. The readers' attention and interest are always kept alive. The interest is maintained partly because of the humorous incidents and characters, partly because of the reformative and humanitarian appeal, partly because of its pathos, and often because of the thrilling and melodramatic events that at once grip us in their clutch. The mecabre and the melodramatic elements in his novels exercise their hypnotic charm on the reader and he is lost reading such effective scenes as the murder of Nancy in **OT**, Mr. Carker's just journey to France in **Dombey and Son**, the escape of Darney in **TT**, the meeting of Pip and Magwitch in **GE**, the revelation of Uriah Heep's felonies by Micawber in **DC** and the death of little Nell in **Old Curiosity Shop** and the death of Paul Dombey in **Dombey and Son**.

Most of the novels which Dickens wrote were written in the third person, with the author himself
being the omniscient narrator. However, Dickens also employed the autobiographical form in two of his most famous novels, **DC** and **GE**. In **BH**, strange to say, Dickens combined both these methods, now using the third person pronoun with himself as the omniscient narrator, and now using the first person pronoun with Esther, the heroine as the narrator. This is a unique method, probably not used by any other English novelist, although the author of **Wuthering Heights** employed a somewhat similar method in that novel. Of the total of 67 chapters in **BH**, 34 are written in third person with the author himself as the narrator, while 33 are written in the first person with Esther as the narrator. Another usual feature of the technique employed in this novel is that, while the author has used the present tense in the chapters where he is himself the narrator, he has made Esther use the past tense in the chapters where she is the narrator. The contrasting styles of the two narratives offer relief and variety to the reader. The omniscient style has all the liveliness, fantasticalication, and poetic density of texture which we typically associate with Dickens. Esther's narrative, on the other hand, is plain, matter-of-fact and conscientiously plodding. Esther's narrative is more intimate and in
intention more feminine. The author's narrative is harsher in tone, fiercely ironic, and sometimes declamatory. Thus there is a gain in variety.

Jayakantan's Skill in Plot Construction

As Jayakantan's attitude to life changes, the content of his novel also undergoes a change. His objective attitude to life becomes subjective as a result of his becoming a non-committed writer. This change has affected the form of his novels. But in both CN and its continuation Kankai Enkē pōkirāl? Jayakantan employs interior monologues and first person narrative.

The change that takes place in the form of Jayakantan's novels is different from the one that takes place in the works of other novelists in Tamil. The precursors of Tamil novel like Vētanāyakam piḷḷai and Rācam Ayyar observed the changes taking place in the society and followed objective approach to life. In Pratāpa Mutaliyār Carittiram and Kamalāmpāl Carittiram it is the novelist who narrates the story. Moreover, the novelist appears in many places in the middle of the story, gives expression to his philosophy and comments on the development of the story. Kalki employs the same
method in most of his novels. He himself narrates the story from outside.

We find this third person narrative in the novels of Putumai Pittan, Ku.pa. Rācakōpālaṇ, Akilan, Intrā pārtta cārati, Rācam Kricṇaṇ, Ārvi, Rakuṇataṇ and Celvarāc. They also employ the method of describing their characters in their environment.

Jayakantan employs the same method of narrating the story in his short stories and earlier novels like VA, UO, Prammōpatēcam, Prajāyan and Yārukkanā Ka Aluṭaṇ. His novel VA begins thus: "The dim light of the waning moon penetrates the trees on the banks of the river and shines on the lone building" (5).

Employing this method Jayakantan narrates the events one after another. While narrating his experiences in the society also, he employs the same method in his novels UO and Prajāyan. But as his attitude to society changes, the form of his novels also undergoes a thorough change.

Though Dickens and Jayakantan treat their characters from without, Jayakantan does it from within also. Jayakantan's novel PAP has a loose plot
construction. This novel analyses the feelings and passions of Cāraṇkaṇ. Jayakantan narrates the story employing his earlier method. But at the same time he delves deep into the recesses of the character of his novel. As a result the plot of his novel suffers.

The same method Jayakantan employs in his novel RM also. Though the novelist narrates the story from outside, the major portion of the story tells us what happens within Rācā Rāman. While the author narrates what goes in the mind of the character, the form of the novel undergoes a corresponding change. Jayakantan employs interior monologue in RM and flash back technique in his novel 'Ātum Nārkālikal Atukigrana'.

Jayakantan handles the stream of consciousness technique and the first person narrative in his novels CN and Kaṅkai Ehkē Pōkirāḷ?

Stream of consciousness is a popular Western literary technique which seeks to record the random and apparently illogical flow of impressions passing through a character's mind. The stream of consciousness in modern fiction had its birth between 1913-15. Those novelists who used this technique turned from external to internal reality, from the outer world to the world of fantasy and
reverie and wrote essentially subjective fiction which contained a strange kinship of search, voyage and pilgrimage of the mind and spirit through consciousness.

It was William James who first used the term "stream of consciousness" in his book Principles of Psychology in 1890 to describe the flux of the mind, its continuity and yet its continuous change through the human consciousness, which is an amalgam of all that we have experienced and continue to experience. The pioneers in this kind of fiction are Dorothy M.Richardson, James Joyce, Mareel Proust and Virginia Woolf.

Twentieth century literature is marked with a deeper and more searching inwardness, which made the novelists recreate thoughts and feelings of their characters. Owing to the outbreak of the First World War the acknowledged values of life were shattered and the process of inwardness consequently was quickened. This process of inwardness was accelerated by the writings of Bergson, Freud and William James. They explored the psychology of thought-consciousness and probed underneath the analytic method, which had been attempted and made popular by Hume, Locke and others. The new concept of
time as a continuous flow, rather than a series of separate points, was one of the factors which brought about the birth of psychological novel. Bergson's ideas about time reached far and wide around 1920's and influenced even the novelists who had studied them. The old concept of plot which moved the character from moment to moment in a precise chronological sequence was replaced by a new kind of narrative which sways forward and backward freely and makes a sincere effort to catch the sense of time as it works in the human awareness.

The word "interior monologue" has been used by Djaurdin, the famous French novelist, for the stream of consciousness technique. In the matter of content it is the expression of the most intimate thoughts, those which lie nearest the unconscious. The interior monologue is a technical device to enable the reader to enter the inner life of a character straightaway. The omniscient is still there but once the flow of sensations and impressions begins without any logical organization he removes himself from the scene to enable the readers to observe the flow of sensations. The interior monologue aims at portraying the most intimate thoughts and is not meant for any hearer.
CN reflects the changes that the form of his novels has undergone. The entire story reflects what happens within the mind of kaṅkā. Jayakantan keeps aloof and presents in a moment what goes on and what has happened in the mind of Kaṅkā. Jayakantan has spoken beautifully and wonderfully in a feminine voice. In a moment the present, the past and the future combine together and emerge in the form of CN.

Jayakantan also experiences certain problems that a novelist employing the first person narrative has to face. When he faces such problems he changes his technique and employs third person narrative in certain pages without any hesitation. The following are such pages:

i) 33 to 36 ii) 43 iii) 66 to 72 iv) 102 to 104. v) 167 to 170 vi) 217 to 220, vii) 361 to 368 viii) 383 to 392.

In addition to this, he devotes a few pages for the stream of consciousness of Kaṅkā's mother kaṅkām. Such pages are ix) 36 to 43 x) 144 to 148.

That Jayakantan changes his technique in the middle of his narration shows that he has not fully succeeded in his new experiment. It is not by accident that Jayakantan employs the stream of consciousness
technique. That he has resorted to this technique knowingly and deliberately is obvious from what he has written in his preface that he wrote when he started writing this novel under the title Kālaṅkal Mārum in Tinamanikatir. "At present I have involved myself in a new kind of experiment. The result is Kālaṅkal Mārum" (10).

So begins the preface. What he refers to as an experiment is the new technique he employs for narrating the story. The experiment that he tries here seems to be a failure. For he has not employed the same technique throughout the novel. It is clear that he has admitted that he cannot express his views without resorting to third person narrative and the stream of consciousness of another character.

In this context Karu. Muttayyā writes: "We can admire Jayakantan for his failure. Instead of trying to express his views by employing the same technique throughout and failing in his attempt, he has resorted to a different technique. This is something admirable" (116).

Jayakantan cannot reveal the mental state of Kagakam through the stream of consciousness of Kaṅkā. In
one place (P.36-46) Kanakam thinks that her daughter is a very good woman. In another place (P.144-48) she thinks that her daughter's way of life has been spoiled after her meeting with prapu. In these two places Jayakantan has to show what goes on in the mind of Kanakam and reveal the character of kaṅkā. Hence he has to change his technique.

In the remaining eight places Jayakantan narrates the story from outside. One of the parts (P.383-392) has been separated and given the title "later story". Changing the technique in this place is not a fault.

In the remaining seven places six places except one (P.167-70) are concerned with the events in which other characters except kaṅkā participate. It is Jayakantan who narrates these events. It is difficult to narrate them through the stream of consciousness of Kaṅkā. Hence it becomes a necessity for the author to change his technique. But it is not known why Jayakantan narrates the event in which kaṅkā also participates (P.167-170).