CHAPTER IV
CHARLES DICKENS AND JAYAKANTAN: THEIR ART OF CHARACTERISATION

Characters in a novel should be life-like. A good novelist succeeds in portraying his men and women as real live characters to us. They impress us by virtue of their substantial quality of life: we know and believe in them thoroughly, we sympathise with them deeply, we love and hate them cordially as if they belonged to a world of flesh and blood.

The novelist has some living person in mind before creating a similar character in his novel. He cannot give vitality to his creation without a definite person in his mind. Yet for all their likeness to real people fictional characters are not real people: they do not have to function in life but in the novel which is an art form. They function in plots which are abstractions, patterns and conventions. "The fictional character is, therefore, seldom the portrait of a living person, and more often a pattern or sketch suggested by a living person." (Liddel, 9).

W.H. Hudson in his book An Introduction to the study of literature says that...
methods of characterization - the direct or analytical, and the indirect or dramatic. In the one case the novelist portrays his characters from the outside, dissects their passions, motives, thoughts and feelings, explains comments, and often pronounces authoritative judgement upon them. In the other case, he stands apart, allows his characters to reveal themselves through speech and action, and reinforces their self-delineation by the comments and judgments of the characters in the story (Hudson 147).

The novelist quite often combines these two methods in the handling of character. Jane Austen and Thackeray prefer the indirect or dramatic method, whereas George Eliot and psychological novelists give a great emphasis on the direct or non-dramatic method. Hudson is of the opinion that "Modern Criticism rightly favours the fullest possible development of the dramatic method" (147).

Both Dickens and Jayakantan are pastmasters in the art of delineating characters. Dickens's characters are caricatures, though he has drawn his characters from
life while Jayankantan's characters are realistic as well as idealistic. Dickens has given us the largest gallery of characters. He has created innumerable characters whereas Jayakantan has produced neither more nor less; he just creates characters required by him in his novels. "One could fill pages with names of the Dickens's characters alone" says Walter Allen (92).

Dickens's characters are at once types and individuals while Jayakantan's characters are only individuals. The interests of both the novelists lie in characters rather than incidents.

Dickens: Greatest Character Monger

Dickens is prodigious as a creator of characters. He possessed a creative mind like that of Shakespeare and portrayed the infinite variety of mankind in his novels. Dickens was the greatest character monger among the Victorian Novelists. He had that joy in the varieties of character that Chaucer and Shakespeare had, and to a degree shared by none but these great masters of art.

The most striking feature of his characterization is, therefore, its variety and range. At the same time, his characterization is invariably most
vivid. "The fertility of Dickens's creative imagination is simply amazing. His first novel *Pickwick Papers* had a swarming mass of finely delineated characters, and he kept the pace of supply for subsequent novels" (Singh 535). In his novel *Pickwick papers* he displays a fertility of his character creation. There are nearly hundred names in the list of characters prefixed to most editions of this novel, and it has been calculated that three hundred and fifty persons come on the scene in some role or another. A very large proportion of them are drawn from people whom Dickens had personally known. However, it must be pointed out that Dickens's concern was with characters, not with character. In other words, he aimed at variety but not at analysing the individual. His genius was for the extensive vision, not for the intensive vision. Furthermore, Dickens had a liking for the peculiarities of character and a taste for eccentric oddities. His novels are full of eccentric persons. Successful as Dickens is in his story-telling, what remains with us when we have gone through his best novels are the characters, many of their eccentricities. His characters include such memorable figures as Pickwick, Sam Weller, Micawber, Jingle, Peggotty, Dick Swiveller, Marchioness, David Copperfield and Skimpole.
Dickens's characters are life-like and convincing. In other words, Dicken's portrayal of characters is realistic. Now the term "realism" is used in two very different senses. The more common sense of the depiction of persons and things as they are or as they appear. The other sense is the art of making anything or any person that has been imagined or created look real; by this art even the impossible may be made to seem probable. Dickens has most of this kind of realism. Many of his characters are drawn from actual life without much alteration and yet none of them resembles the people who might be met in day, as is the case with the characters in the novels of Thakeray. Several of characters are eccentrics, grotesque or absurd things, freaks of nature and freaks of art, but all have a life of their own, though they are not like any persons in ordinary experience. However, psychological depth is not to be expected in his characters portrayals. He seldom gets near the heart of his characters. Major Categories

In Dickens's novels we come across three or four widely different types of character. To begin with, he has created a number of innocent little children like Oliver Twist, Joe, Paul, Tiny Tim and Little Nell. These
children have a powerful appeal to the child-love in every human heart. Then we have the horrible or the grotesque type like Fagin, Quilp, Uriah Heep and Bill sikes. Thirdly there is the grandiloquent or broadly humorous fellow, the funmaker like Micawber and Sam Weller, and fourthly there is the tenderly or powerfully drawn figure like that of Lady Dedlock of BH and Sydney Carton of A Tale of Two Cities who rise to the dignity of true characters.

Caricatures

The most common criticism of Dickens's characters is that they are conceived as caricatures rather than living human beings with a note of reality and solidity about them. This feeling rises due to the fact that he exaggerates the oddities and eccentricities of his characters to such a degree that they appear to be caricatures.

Dickens's general method of creating character was to exaggerate the traits, peculiarities, foibles of his models and to put into the mouth of each one some phrase, or string of phrases, which stamped his quintessence on the reader's mind. Dickens only exaggerated but could never show the development of characters. As in the
treatment of fact, so in character building, the essence of Dickens's art is grotesque exaggeration. Like Smollet, he was on the look out for some oddity which for his purpose he made more old than it was.

The principle upon which this inexhaustible raw material of human nature is dealt with is that which governs the work of Dickens in every aspect - exaggeration. The strongest colours are laid on with the largest brush. From beginning to end his characters rarely, if ever, impress the reader as all-round, normal men and women .... There is usually some label attached to his characters - a habitual phrase, a gesture, a physical peculiarity - like a trademark to goods .... Dickens, then, relies much on exaggeration, and is frequently in the realms of the grotesque (Walker 482-483).

The reason why the characters of Dickens appear to be like caricatures is perhaps due to the fact that while portraying his characters Dickens lays greater emphasis on their individuality. As Trollope shows living men in his social relations and Dostoeiski as soul aspiring to God, so Dickens shows his characters as
individuals. Walter Allen defends Dickens against the charge of creating caricatures. He says,

Dickens' characters are often said to be caricatures or to be exaggerated. I do not think this is true: they are all so sharply differentiated from one another as to be plainly the product of intense accuracy of observation. But the intense observation is that of a child or rather of some one who has kept the innocent eye of childhood (110).

Even his caricatures live in their own right and are delightful in their own way. They are not pale shadows but living beings, each marked with certain peculiarities of their own. His looks are like mobs, huge seething chaotic mobs, but mobs in which there is no face like another, no voice but reveals in its slightest accounts a unique unmistakable individually.

What he meant by his characters it was a habit of Dickens to indicate by the names he gave them; as Lord Mutan hed, the Artful Dodger, the Barnacles and Mr. Hamilton Veneering. They are, all of them humours, highly idealised, and yet retaining so much of the real that we recognize in them some disposition of ourselves
and of men and women we meet. The number of these humorous types that Dickens added to fiction runs into thousands; it is by far the largest single contribution that has ever been made.

Of course, Dickens exaggerated, such was his natural way of writing and indeed of seeing. To him it was a technique of writing and in following this technique he proved more efficacious as a reformer than he could have been through realism, pathos or indignation alone.

Dickens's method of character portrayal consists in first giving us briefly some particulars about the physical appearance of a person and then allowing him or her to reveal himself or herself through speech, action and gesture. A character is also revealed to us by being made the subject of comments by others. Often the author himself indicates some of the prominent traits of a person. Some aspects of a person's character may become evident to us through his relationship with others and through the manner in which others behave towards him. Often, as in the case of Mr. Boythorm in BH for instance, Dickens gives us plenty of external details to indicate the essentials of a character.
Dickens's account of Mr. Boythorn's house and garden gives us an insight into the barrenness and loneliness of Mr. Boythorn's life. Mr. Boythorn's relationship with Miss. Barbary had come to nothing, and this fact is reflected in the green cloisters of the garden which delicately suggest the celibacy of Boythorn's life.

The Art of Depicting the Externals

A great many of Dickens's characters come alive before our eyes because of the faithful depiction of their physical appearance. Dickens had a very minute observation and he unerringly caught the apparently trivial and meaningless gestures which gave a character his individuality. This enabled the reader to grasp it firmly. Consider, for example, this description of the Artful Dodger in OT:

He was a snub-nosed, flat-browed common faced boy enough; and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He was short of his age, with rather bow-legs, and little, sharp ugly eyes. His hat was stuck on the top of his head so lightly, that it threatened to fall every moment - at would have done so, very often, if
the wearer had never had a knack of every now and then giving his head a sudden twitch which brought it back to its old place again. He wore a man's coat which reached nearly to his heels (OT 50-51).

A similar description brings alive Mr. Grimwig. "Mr. Grimwig had a manner of screwing his head on one side when he spoke; and of looking out of the corners of his eyes at the same time which irresistibly reminded the beholder of a parrot" (OT 93).

Tagging the Characters

Another method Dickens uses to give individuality to his characters is to give them tags. Sometimes the tag is physical. Uriah Heep has virtually no eye brows and no eye lashes; Peggotty's blouse is always getting unbuttoned at the back; the Artful Dodger is always wearing a man's coat which reaches nearly to his heels. But in other cases, speech tags are used: Fagin is in the habit of addressing everybody as 'my dear'; 'I shall eat my head' seems to be peculiar to Mr. Grimwig. Mrs. Micawber keeps on saying at all odd moments, "I never will desert Mr. Micawber".
Characteristics Through Speech Peculiarities

Dickens catches the individual way of speech of his characters with consummate skill. He tries to observe the favourite words or phrases they repeat, the themes with which they are obsessed, the turns of speech they used to, the wit or nonsense (as the case may be) peculiar to them and he represents these peculiarities faithfully in order to make his characters alive. When the Artful Dodger meets Oliver for the first time, this is how he addresses him, "Hello, my Covey! What's the row?" We do not have to see Fagin or Skies to know it is they who are speaking; we can immediately recognize them from the way they speak.

Sharp Character-Images in Place of Psychological Analysis

Dickens's method of characterisation is not that of psychological analysis but the method of triumphant exhibition. He creates a memorable, ineffaceable and sharp image of a character with strong impression of richness beneath. He makes us feel the beauty or horror of a character first; analysis takes the second place. The reality of Bumble, Fagin, Sikes, the Artful Dodger, Noah and Charley Bates is unquestionably vivid. Equally vivid are Peggoty and Ham, Agnes and Dora, Micawber and
Betsey Trotrood, or the characters in any other novel. The image created by Sidney Carton is so sharp that no analysis would have helped us to understand him better. We understand Dickens's characters no less completely as they are presented than if they were turned inside out by a psycho-analyist.

Representative Characters

Dickens's characters are not merely individuals but also symbolic figures. Some of his characters are like the humours of Ben Johnson, but through their humours, their traits have been universalised. Thus Pecksniff is not only Mr. Pecksniff, he is the type of all hypocrites; Mrs. Jellyby is not Mrs. Jellyby, she is also the type of all professional philanthropists. Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz is not only Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, he is the type of all legal advocates. Like the writers of all the old moralities, Dickens peoples his stage with virtues and vices, and like them he does it gaily, presenting them as no frigid abstractions but as clowns and Zanies thwacking their bladders, exuberant in motley and bell.

Most of the characters in HT are no doubt embodiments of certain ideas and concepts. Most of them
have, indeed, a symbolic significance in this novel which has been called a fable or a morality drama. Each character stands for something and represents something, each is a personification of an abstract principle. And yet we could confidently say that each of these characters is a living individual and not merely a typical character in the Jonsonian sense. Here, while we have personifications of certain abstract principles, each of the characters acquires an individual life of his own and a vitality of his own; each has some peculiarity which distinguishes him or her from the types they would have been without that peculiarity.

Gradgrind certainly represents the utilitarian theory of education, but this "eminently practical man" has a human touch in him. In spite of his absurd emphasis on facts, and his opposition to the exercise of fancy and of the affections and emotions, this man takes Sissyl under his protection. And, though he quotes statistics in order to prevail upon Louisa to marry the much older Bounderby, yet subsequently realizes, to the fullest possible extent, the enormity of his blunder in having ignored the importance of the "heart" as distinguished from the "head". Josiah Bounderby of Coketown is a personification of the utilitarian in his
business and in his dealings with his workmen. Even the minimum requirements of his workmen are described by this man as a demand for turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon. He dismisses Stephen without the least compunction. This man has individual traits also; he is "the bully of humility" boasting constantly of his humble origin, and exalting at the same time the aristocratic connections of his housekeeper, Mrs. Sparsit.

Many of his characters in BH though individualised, serve also as symbols. Mr. Krook is the owner of a junkshop in London. He has been buying all sorts of miscellaneous articles and storing them in his shop pell-mell. He has been given the nickname of "Lord Chancellor" by his neighbours, and he explains the justness of this nickname. He says that he is as muddle-headed as the presiding judge of the court of chancery. He says that his shop is full of miscellaneous articles of many kinds which are wasting away and going to rack and ruin. He also has in his shop innumerable legal papers and documents. He says that he has a liking for rust and cobwebs. He further says, "All is fish that comes to my net. I cannot bear to part with anything I once lay hold of or to alter anything, or to have any sweeping, nor scouring, nor cleaning nor repairing going
on about me" (51). Mr. Krook goes almost everyday to the court of Chancery in order to take a look at the Lord Chancellor who, however, does not take any notice of Mr. Krook. But they "both grub on in a muddle", as Mr. Krook puts it. Mr. Krook thus symbolises the Lord Chancellor.

Lady Dedlock is a lady of fashion. She has been leading a life of luxury and fashion. She has for many years been "at the centre of the fashionable intelligence and at the top of the fashionable tree. The author goes on to describe Lady Dedlock thus: "How Alexander went when he had no being tall" (57-58).

Lady Dedlock too serves a symbolic purpose. Her journey to death, after the exposure of her guilty secret, is a most elaborate dramatization of the disintegration which is taking place in English society. The chase of Lady by Mr. Bucket and Esther is not simply a Victorian melodrama. It is a symbolic dramatization of the destiny of Lady Dedlock and of her relationship with Esther" (Lall, BH 339)

Unlike the novels of Charles Dickens Jayakantan's novels are novels of introspection.
Encyclopaedia Britannica defines introspective novel as a work of fiction in which events are registered subjectively in the mind of one or more characters and in which the processes of consciousness are of equal or of greater interest than eternal events.

In the introspective novel there is little plot. Events are not presented in a chronological order but as they occur in the character's thought associations. Characters do not develop so much as they expand and transcend the limits of their time and space. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 272)

External events dominate only in the first two novels of Jayakantan - Valkai Aalikkiratu and Unnaippol Oruvan. But even in these novels the processes of consciousness are of equal interest. The later novels of Jayakantan satisfy the definition of the introspective novel given above. He has created characters required for novels of introspection.

In his preface to his novel PAP Jayakantan says: "The characters here have been drawn from the various people living in the world of intellectuals"
This statement of Jayakantan is true of not only this novel but also of all the novels of Jayakantan. His characters think before they act. They first discuss the pros and cons of an action and then take a decision and act. Rarely do we come across such intellectual characters in novels in Tamil. As a case in point let us quote the reply of Arasu in Kumutam to a question put by a reader:

"Unnaippūl Oruvan is a remarkable novel. Undoubtedly only Jayakantan could have written this novel. Kalyāṇi and Raṅkā are uncommon characters. We can't see elsewhere such a couple interested so much in debates. Not that they love each other less. Debate is their religion. They cater to the needs of those who are mad after debates" (78).

This is applicable to almost all the characters of Jayakantan.

Jayakantan: His Realistic Characters

Both Jayakantan and Dickens lay greater stress on the individually of their characters "There is nothing wrong if individuality and humanism predominate in novels
and short stories. I have laid greater stress on the individuality of my characters" (Jayakantan, Tinamanicutar 10). While the characters of Dickens are caricatures though drawn from real life, Jayankantan's characters are realistic. The realistic characters of Jayakantan are endowed with natural likes and dislikes, successes and failures, and weaknesses and strength. Here are a few realistic characters of Jayakantan.

Lalitā in PAP is a realistic character. She is born in a Brahmin family. She is the elder daughter of a Tamil pandit working in a school. She has three sisters and brothers. She lost her father when she was 16. In her 18th year she lost her mother. The responsibility of running the family rests on her. She works as a steno in a private company and gets her sisters married off. She educates her brothers and gets them jobs. Her first younger brother leaves her after his marriage. Her second younger brother suspects her chastity and drives her away from home. Thus, though she is born in a large family, and does her duty perfectly, she becomes a lonely figure. She lives with no restrictions. She starts writing for journals and becomes a great writer.
Later, when she is thirty, she works as a steno in the office of Makālin̄kam. He marries her though he knows about her past life. For five years Lalithā leads a peaceful life. Then Čaraṅkaṇ interferes in her life. First she has difference of opinion with him. Later she starts taking interest in him and becomes his lady love. Further, she thinks that she is in love with a man for the first time and that that man is Čaraṅkaṇ. But when he requests her to come to him after divorcing Makālin̄kam, she refuses to do so because of her gratitude to Makālin̄kam. Thus Lalithā is a realistic character.

Makutēcan in IN is another realistic character. He is 50 years. He lost his mother in his young age. Nothing is known of his father. Though he is a realistic character, he is very adamant. That is why, he refuses to give up his anger against his first son, Periyacāmi, ignoring the appeal of his wife. This anger of his does not subside till his death.

After his wife's death, his daughter makes preparations for his second marriage. Though at first he speaks as though he was against this marriage, he decides not to question the activities of his second wife. This
decision he takes at the instance of his bosom friend Vilakkucāmi. He adheres to this decision till the end.

When his second daughter comes to his house with her mother-in-law after a quarrel with her husband, he receives her, consoles her and allows her to stay in his house. But when her mother-in-law requests him to help her in filing case against her youngest son, he bluntly refuses saying that on no account he will go to the court to sue anybody.

As Makutēcan pillai is a Vegeterian, he wants all the members of his family to eat Vegetarian food. When he comes to know that his doting son, Cānkaraṇ loves eating fish, he suspects that his second wife is responsible for this. Further, when he is away, his first son comes home. As a result, his daughter-in-law becomes pregnant. He is mentally affected. He discards food. He dies without taking anything.

Kaṅkā in CN is a realistic character. Jayakantan is better at creating realistic characters than idealistic characters. Then there is no wonder in Jayakantan's creating an excellent realistic character in Kaṅkā. When 'Aṅgipravēcam' was performed, she was 18. When we meet her again she is 30. She belongs to a
middle class family. She lives with her mother. Of all the heroines of Jayakantan, she is highly educated. She is a post graduate working as an officer in a branch office and getting more or less a salary of Rupees 1000/- every month. In the short story Aknipravēcam she is not able to understand 'his' intention. But she grows into such an intellect as to astonish Veṅku Māmā in CN. She is a free bird of pradise with no restrictions. She is inclined to do whatever she feels right at that moment itself without any delay. A man utilises her weakness and rapes her only once. Veṅku Māmā tells her that she should live either with her seducer or without marriage. Kaṅkā takes a decision at the end of the novel. She is prepared to live with Prapu who raped her either by marrying him or without marriage.

Ciṭṭi, the hero of the novel UO is a realistic character. He is 30. His mother was deserted by her husband even before the birth of Ciṭṭi. Hence his mother wanted to arrest his birth. Even as a little boy, he wanted to wander freely. He was beyond the control of his mother. So she admitted him in school. But his teacher could not control him. Hence he dismissed him from school. Under these circumstances, he joined a group of unruly elements and got spoiled.
An unexpected meeting took place between Citti and Tontar Turaikkannu, the proprietor of 'Cornam Ice-cream Company'. The aimless wanderer sold ice-cream during day time and had his education during night time.

Again a storm rose in the life of Citti. His mother Tańkam fell in love with Māṇikkam, a parrot-astrologer and became pregnant. She asked Māṇikkam to live with her. The possessiveness of Citti did not allow him to welcome this new relationship. Hence he started hating his mother. He stopped selling ice and went to school. His hatred for his mother got intensified when he came to know that his mother tried to arrest his birth when he was in her womb.

Citti did not come home to sleep. His hatred towards his mother made him wander aimlessly once again. He met his old friends. Since he had already been reformed by Tontar Turaikkaṇṇu, their company did not spoil him. He stayed in a park with Kanniappan who was reformed by him gradually.

Māṇikkam realized that he was responsible for the separation of Citti and Tańkam. He met Citti and told him that he would leave the village. He advised him to live with his mother without quarrels with her. Then
he went away. But Ĉitti did not live with his mother as Mānīkkam expected. On the other hand, he continued to live in the park after informing his mother that Mānīkkam had left the village. Ĉitti's hatred towards his mother persisted as he considered the child in his mother's womb as his rival though Mānīkkam had left.

Later when Taṅkam was about to die in hospital after begetting a female child, Ĉitti went there to see her on the advice of Toṇṭar Turaikkaṇṇu. After his mother's death, Ĉitti took upon himself the task of bringing up the child at the request of his mother.

Jayakantan: His Idealistic Characters

Unlike the characters of Dickens, Jayakantan's are idealistic. Jayakantan has created a number of idealistic characters. Speaking of novel-reading Rees observes: "Though one may laugh at the idea of reading novels with the object of 'improving one's mind' the fact is that the mind is improved through the kind of enjoyment one gets from novel-reading" (130).

Considering the idealistic characters with this view in mind we can conclude that such characters are created in order to make us follow them in our life. "I
am told that I have said that I present life as it exists. Many people repeat this often. It appears to me that I present life as it should be" (Jayakantan, Munnumuraikal 137). This statement of Jayakantan shows his object of creating idealistic characters. Let us deal with a few idealistic characters of Jayakantan.

Tontar Turaikkannu in Unnaippól Oruvan is an idealistic character. He has studied upto V std. He is affectionate towards his mother. His ideal is to provide education to the poor children in his area and bring them up in the right direction. One day by chance he happens to meet Citti who is wandering aimlessly. Citti who cannot be controlled by his parents is shaped into a good boy by Tontar Turaikkannu. Thus he puts an ideal into practice.

Henry, the hero of the novel OM is an idealistic character. He is aged 30. His parents are no more. He is brought up by Capāpati pillai and Teracā. All his qualities have been created and developed by Capāpati. He hates none. When he has to face certain ideas that he doesn't like, he silently slips away. Capāpati has shaped him into a noble man. Henry does not hate his mother who hated him when he was in her womb. He does
not hate the mad woman who is wandering naked at Krishnāpurām. Pitying her, he clothes her. Jayakantan tells us in his preface why Henry has been made a noble man:

There is a layman's literary opinion that I always show the darker side of life. But this story shows the brighter side of life only. My intention or action has never been to show the weakness of man. Simplicity as well as noble qualities of man always attract me (Munnumurai 177).

Characters Mainly from Low or Middle Clases

Dickens was a pastmaster in depicting characters drawn from the middle or lower classes of society, for his knowledge of these classes is personal. He knew these classes intimately and could draw on them with skill and confidence. His pictures of the upper classes are almost always prejudiced and exaggerated, generally inaccurate, seldom kindly. He was much less successful with the characters drawn from aristocratic or upper circles of society for his knowledge about them was deficient. He did not possess the Shakespearean imagination which could successfully depict kings, nobles
and lords without having acquaintance or knowledge about them.

Like Dickens's characters, Jayakantan's characters also are drawn from middle class. In this connection Thi.Că.Ră says "Jayakantan's characters are the reflections of those who live in streets, huts, platforms and cūvam river" (6-7).

Jayakantan's knowledge of these classes is personal. Like Dickens he knew these classes intimately. He could draw on them with skill and confidence. But unlike Dickens, he portrays successfully the characters drawn from upper circles of society also. Asked whether his characters are real or imaginary, Jayakantan says: "All from self-experience. We should not reveal where we give imaginary touches. That is arts. If we don't do so, it becomes news"

(Jayakantan, All India Radio).

In his preface to Avarkal Ulle Irukkirārkal, Jayakantan writes:

We come across so many common people in the towns. Some rich people and great men we see and soon forget them in the busy and scientific
world of ours. I make use of such people in my writings and stories" (114).

It is obvious from this that Jayakantan draws his characters from real life and these characters are known to him intimately and his knowledge of them is personal. Asked why he has not used Muslim characters in his works and whether there is any particular reason for it, he replies:

"Nothing of that sort. I haven't moved with them. I have used only those characters whom I know". (Interview By Muttায্যা)

The publishers of Miğāṭci Patippakam write: "Jayakantan's characters are mostly drawn from the working class of the lower strata of society". (3-4). These remarks made in 1958 and 1960 about the short stories of Jayakantan are true of his short stories of that period and his first two novels - VA and UO. When Dickens came to the upper class society, he failed and his characters drawn from that life seemed to be theatrical rather than real. Miss Havishan in GE and Betey Trotwood in DC are unreal and theatrical figures. Hugh Walker's criticism of Dickens on this count is more or less true:
"Above the rank of the lower middle class his knowledge grew more and more scanty. The assertion that he could not delineate a gentleman in the conventional sense of the word is substantially true" (472).

Jayakantan deals with the upper class societies in his later novels. In his preface to Cuyataricinam Jayakantan writes: "I can write only about the lives of the people I know. I write about them because of love, affection and sympathy I have for them" (96).

It is obvious from this statement of Jayakantan that at the time of his writing the first two novels of his he loved and pitied the poor. But later on his love and sympathy shifted to the middle and upper class people.

Flat Characters

E.M. Forster in his Aspects of the Novel describes Dickens' characters as flat. He defines flat characters in these words: "In their purest forms, they are constructed round a single idea or quality: when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round" (75). Forster's flat characters are those which were called
"humours" in the seventeenth century. They may also be called types or caricatures. They are constructed round a single idea or quality. According to Forster, "the really flat character can be described in one sentence such as 'I will never desert Mr. Micawber. There is Mr. Micawber, she says she won't desert Mr. Micawber, she does not and there she is" (75). The flat characters do not develop; their qualities are fixed and defined. They are just like dummies repeating certain recorded sounds.

A round character must, according to Forster, be capable of surprising the reader in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat; if it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round; it has the incalculability of life about it (85). The round characters are like real human beings. They are capable of development. They act and react upon one another. They are impressed by the situations in which they are involved and show gradual progress under their pressure.

Forster points out some of the advantages possessed by flat characters: they are easily recognized when they come in and easily remembered by the reader afterwards. But he does not consider such characters as great. He does not give them a place in literature, nor
About flat characters Walter Allen says: "Flat characters are characters incapable of surprising us". 

Harry Shaw describes flat and round characters in these words.

...... writers use any or all of several basic means of characterization: a character is revealed by (1) his actions, (2) his speech (3) his thoughts (4) his physical appearance (5) what other characters say or think of him. A flat character is a minor participant in fiction, one who is characterized briefly by only one or two of these basic methods. A round character is one fully developed by four or five of these methods..... (51).

While Dickens' novels contain a large number of flat characters and a few round characters, Jayakantan's novels contain a large number of round characters and a few flat characters. Jayakantan's flat characters appear in 'the flash back' employed by Jayakantan.
David Copperfield attempts roundness. In *Great Expectations* Pip, Miss. Havisham and Estella can be described as round characters! At the beginning Pip is a village boy who looks forward to becoming an apprentice under his brother-in-law, Joe Gargary, the blacksmith. After coming into contact with Estella he hates his coarse and common life and wants to become a gentleman. When he gets his great expectations of becoming a gentleman he develops false pride and cuts himself off from his childhood companions. When he comes to know that his gentlemanly life has been supplied by a convict, there is a great struggle in his mind and he financially overcomes his false pride. Thus there are many changes in this character.

Miss. Havisham is also a round character. At the beginning of the novel she is a woman whose affections have turned sour due to her disappointment in love and who is pitiless in her desire to make men suffer. She brings up Estella to break the hearts of men. She takes pleasure in seeing Pip's attachment to Estella and Estella's contempt for him. Towards the middle of the novel she gets some doubts about the justice of her conduct with regard to Pip. Later she
realizes her injustice and begs Pip to forgive her. Thus there is an evolution in this character.

The heroine of the novel, Estella, can also be described as a round character. At the beginning she is proud and contemptuous of everybody, and she has special contempt for Pip. After her education in Paris, she shows some consideration for Pip. She cautions him against falling in love with her saying that she is heartless. At the end of the novel she is a changed woman and wants to be friends with Pip.

These characters attempt roundness, but so diffidently that they seem more like bubbles than solids. But all other characters in GE are flat. Joe is mild, honest and easygoing throughout the novel. There is no change in the wise and sweet-tempered Biddy. The sycophantic Pumblechook, the optimistic Herbert, the boorish Drummle and the ferocious Orlick do not change. The rampages of Mrs. Joe Gargery are stopped only by a severe blow on her head. This is no evolution.

Even in Jaggers and Wemmick we do not find any evolution of character, we only get a glimple of the more human side of their characters.
In Magwitch there seems to be a change from a fearful man into a mild and affectionate one. But this is more a reflection of the change in circumstances than any real change in the character.

In BH Esther represents a near perfection. Gentleness, humility, kind-heartedness, a spirit of service and self-sacrifice—these are some of the most conspicuous qualities of her character. We meet Esther early in the novel when, as a girl of about twelve, she is living with her godmother who has brought her up from the day she was born. She has never heard of her father or mother. She is not treated with much kindness either at home or at school. Her godmother is rather stern towards her, and so is the servant. Her birthdays are never celebrated. She has no companions except her doll to which she confides all her troubles. In this connection she writes:

There were holidays at school on the other birthdays—none on mine. There were rejoicings at home on other birthdays..... there were none on mine. My birthday was the most melancholy day at home, in the whole year" (Dickens 16).
Esther's misery is greatly increased by her grandmother's words spoken to her one day. Her grandmother says: "Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers. The time will come - and soon enough - when you will understand this better" (17).

At Bleak House, she is appointed the housekeeper, in addition to being Ada's companion by Mr. Jarndyce. She knows that she can never repay Mr. Jarndyce for all this kindness and patronage. Mr. Jarndyce is like a Providence to her. Esther becomes deeply attached to both the cousins, Ada and Richard. It is after a long time that Esther comes to know the identity of her mother. When Lady Dedlock reveals her identity in the woods, she is overwhelmed by her love for her.

Esther's treatment of Caddy, Jo, and Charley further strengthens our impression of her affectionate nature. Through the generosity and kindness of Mr. Jarndyce, her love is in the end rewarded, and she gets married to Mr. Woodcut. In the course of time, she is blessed with two children, and we take leave of her at the end of the story, feeling confident that she would always be happy. In Esther we recognize the clever head
and the noble, generous, single-purposed, sympathising heart, which is all that woman's should be, and all that man's so seldom is. At the end of a journey, Mr. Bucket praises Esther's grit, stamina, and determination in the following words:

'I never see a young woman in any station of society. ... conduct herself like you have conducted yourself, since you were called out of your bed. You are a pattern, you know, that is what you are" (Dickens, BH785-786).

Although Esther seems to us to be a lovable woman of many virtues, the portrayal of her character is flat. She is a static personality. What she is at the beginning, she remains throughout. In other words, there is no development in her character.

Robert Liddel is of the opinion that almost every successful comic character in Charles Dickens is flat. For we do not expect a comic character to put on three-dimensality. When he does this and abandons his stock phrase and says something quite different, we are disappointed. It is in the creation of these unchangeable comic characters in fiction that Dickens has no rival.
A character like that of Mr. Bumble has to be straight 'flat' in Forster's word — because only by being a straight character he serves Dickens's purpose of social criticism best. It is the inefficiency of Mr. Bumble, his indolence to a sense of responsibility that Dickens is interested in portraying. He is not just Mr. Bumble — a human figure — he is the portrayal of the habit of the mind of the institution he represents — the institution which refuses to take into account the needs of the individual. As such the force of irony very much depends on Dickens's emphatic insistence on some static qualities like Mr. Bumble's peculiar expression on the face, his tones of voice and his carelessness when he refers to 'two Irish labourers and coal-heavers' as to so much cattle" (Chaudhuri, 64). 

Dickens's general method of creating characters was to exaggerate the traits, peculiarities, foibles of his models and to put into the mouth of each one some phrase, or string of phrases, which stamped his quintessence on the reader's mind. He never showed the
development of characters and, on the whole, what his characters were at the beginning they remain at the end. In this connection T. Singh writes:

Dickens's characters do not "develop", and they do not surprise. But in spite of their lack of development and their numerous oddities they are "living" beings, being the effusions of a tremendously vitalising and vital imagination (537).

While Dickens is good at portraying flat and static characters, Jayakantan is good at portraying round characters. Jayakantan has created a few flat characters too. But his flat characters appear only in the 'flash back'.

The wife of Capāpatipillai in OM is a flat character. She appears in the flash back. She is an evil character. But Jayakantan points out only the good qualities in her. It is a fine example for Jayakantan's characteristic of pointing out good qualities in an evil character.

Teracā in the same novel is a flat character. She too appears in the 'flash back'. She is an Anglo-
Indian woman. When she was living in Rankūn she fell in love with Michael, an Anglo-Indian who was working in the army and married him. Later Michael, when he was on the verge of death, gave his consent for her living with Capāpatipillai. Hence she lived with him without marriage.

Again Palāṇi, the barber from Kricnāpuram is a flat character. He too appears in the 'flash back'. He is an evil character. But Jayakantan points out only the good qualities in him. The wife of Capāpatikpillai and Palāṇi run away secretly. It is this action of theirs that makes us include them in the list of evil characters.

Michael, who appears in the 'flash back' is another flat character. He was working in capāpatipillai's battalion. At the time of his death, he told his wife Teracā that she could live with Capāpatipillai if both of them so desired.

Cuntaram in PAP is another flat character. He hails from Tamil Nadu. He is an expert in karnatic music. He is awarded the title "Cāṅkīta pūcaṇam". He has learnt 'Rabindra music' in Cāṇtinikētaṇ. He is running an academy of music in a place where the Tamils
are living. His aim is to make innovations in the field of music. Cāraṅkaṇ has a similar aim. He wants to go to Paris to propagate his ideas. So Suntaram takes Cāraṅkaṇ to Calcutta. His plan is to give an opportunity to Cāraṅkaṇ in his academy so that he can fulfil his aim.

While Dickens does not indulge in psycho-analysis, Jayakantan employs psycho-analytic method. Psychologically complex characters were beyond the range and scope of Dickens. He made no efforts to delve deep into the working of the human mind. He treated his characters from without, without going into the heart of them.

In CN Kaṅkā is portrayed as a pervert. Jayakantan employs psycho-analytic method to record the feelings of Kaṅkā. He uses the stream of consciousness technique in this novel. What happens in the mind of Kaṅkā is presented clearly. It is shock resulting from her sexual relationship that has caused her main problem. When Prapu speaks of their marriage, she expresses her desire to be his concubine.

Symbolic Names of the Characters

Like Dickens Jayakantan too indicates what he means by his character by the names he gives them. Lord
Mutanhed, the Artful Dodger, the Barnacles, and Mr. Hamilton Veneering are, all of them, humours, highly idealized, and yet retaining so much of the real that we recognize in them some disposition of ourselves. Jayakantan gives symbolic names to his characters. Such names suggest the characteristics of the persons so named. A mentally retarded girl who has attained her puberty is named as Baby by Henry in OM. Her name suggests that like a child she too wanders without fear and shyness.

There is a coordination between the name of a character and its qualities. "When we hear the full name Vicvanāta carmā, we get an impression that he is very old. Certainly the person bearing that name cannot be the minor wandering in that car" (Jayakantan, CN 94).

Two of Jayakantan's characters in his first two novels are named as Taṅkam. Both have already been cheated by men. Later each chooses a man of her choice and lives with him with confidence. Gold when unrearted is full of dust. Removed of its dust and polished, its quality and value increases. Similarly Taṅkams who are not pure in the beginning emerge as pure and polished gold later.
In UO the second lover of Tańkam is Māṇikkam, the parrot-astrologer. Carbuncle is one of the nine gems. It is a valuable one. Similarly Māṇikkam seems to be a highly respectable man. When he comes to know that he is the main cause for the separation of Tańkam and his son, he wants to go away. But, he thinks that if Tańkam comes to know of this, she will not allow him to go. So he leaves without informing her. This action of Māṇikkam ennobles his character. Hence we can say that he has been named symbolically.

The theme of the novel PAP is based on music and art. The hero of the novel is Cārańkaṇ. It is the name of Rākā. Lalitā is closely associated with Cārańkaṇ. The word 'Lalita Kalai' refers to dance. Hence we can say that he has named the hero and his associate symbolically in a novel which deals with music and art.

The heroine of CN and a woman character in PAP are named as Kańkā. It is based on the holy river Kańkā. Hindu society considers the river holy. This custom of throwing away the dead bodies into the river still prevails in India. Yet the Hindus consider the river Kankā a holy one.
The Kaṅkā in PAP is born in a family much interested in arts. She is a dancer. She is attracted by Naracayyā. She lives with him as a pure woman. She becomes his wife after sacrificing her dancing profession. Just as we are not bothered about the source of a river but consider it a holy one on account of its use, we don't look at the family in which she was born but admire her for her good qualities.

The Kaṅkā in CN is raped by a man. She lives as a pure woman without any thought of marriage. Just as a dead body thrown into the river does not pollute its water in any way, the incident that happened in her life does not spoil her purity. Hence Jayakantan has named the two Kaṅkās symbolically.

Prapu in the same novel is also named symbolically. As his name suggests, he possesses the nobility of the Duke. Referring to him R.K.V. says: "Now he is a very honest man. He is really noble" (Jayakantan 118).

The same view is expressed by Arasu in the weekly magazine Kumutam in his reply to a question put by one of the readers: "Just as there is fire amidst smoke,
amidst many weaknesses of Prapu, there is nobility which attracts Kaṅkā" (5).

Ciṅkarāyar in CC is also named symbolically. Āti thinks about Ciṅkarāyar thus: "Even now the thought of his voice thrills me. In those days when there was no loud speaker facility, if he stood on the platform and roared aloud in his thunderous voice in all four directions, its echoes would he heard throughout the town" (Jayakantan 29).

In his voice and way of speaking, he resembles a lion. He has the courage and strength of a lion. Hence he is named as Ciṅkarāyar.

Titles of the Novels

While Dickens has named his novels after his characters, Jayakantan has not done so. Just as Shakespeare has named his tragedies after the principal characters Dickens has named some of his novels such PP, DC, OT, NN after the principal characters. The leading idea of his novel GE seems to be suggested by the title. Pip's 'discontent' can properly be called the 'theme'. GE is divided into three parts, the three stages of Pip's great expectations; the first leads up to the revelation
that Pip is to become a gentleman; the second covers Pip's experience of the life of a young gentleman upto the revelation of the true identity of his benefactor; the third and the final stage is the complete collapse of his great expectations and their replacement by a mature sense of life.

The title of the novel A Tale of Two cities is apt and appropriate. The affairs of Dr. Manette, Lucie and Darnay are closely connected with the two cities.

Unlike the titles of the novels of Dickens, the titles of the novels of Jayakantant are closely connected with their themes. The themes of his novels are symbolised by the titles of his novels. Since characters are associated with the themes, the titles are also linked with the characters. The title of UO reveals the qualities of the characters Tankam and Citti. Tankam is worried that she has no father or brother who is so self respecting as Citti to protect her. Hence we can say that the title is based on the qualities of the characters.

Jayakantant's characters are not caricatures like those of Charles Dickens. No man is always good. Nor is he always bad. This idea is stressed in the novels of
Jayakantan. According to him a character is not static. Often he changes his qualities. This idea he reveals through two characters.

"I will look at him in this way. Whenever he unmasks himself I count thus: This is one Rājā Rāman. This is one Rājā Rāman'. Rājā Rāman thinks of himself in this manner" (Jayakantan, RM 49).

Is Kaṅkā one woman? In different times, in different moods, in different moments, she is a different woman. The Kaṅkā that returns from college is a different woman. The Kaṅkā who got into the car on that day is different from the one who was dropped in that lane. This is what Kaṅkā thinks about herself (Jayakantan, Kaṅkai Eṅkē Pōkirāl 19-20).

The title of this novel CN is based on the idea that human beings are capable of changing their nature often. It is clear from the above that the title and the theme are closely linked with the characters in Jayakantan's novels.

If human beings are mere spectators without being the actors on the world stage, then their lives
will he devoid of so many problems. The novel ON is based on this idea. Jayakantan creates a character who is an actress transforming her life into a play and making her one of the spectators of the play. The title of the novel is based on her quality and philosophy.

Henry is a different man from others. The house of his foster father that remained locked at Krishnapuram is his world. This idea is suggested by the title OM.

The title Inta Nērattil Ival is based on the idea how we look at a person at a particular time.

That the titles of his novels explain the themes connected with the characters is made clear by the five of his novels discussed above.

Though each title of his novel points out the quality in a particular character, Jayakantan has not used the name of his character in the title as Dickens has done. In UO Unnai stands for Citti. In ON, 'Oru Natikai' refers to Kalyāṇi. 'Oru Manitan' refers to Henry. In IN 'Ival' refers to Kōtai.

Thus Jayakantan who in his early novels avoided the names of his characters for his titles, openly refers to the characters of his novels in the titles of his
later novels. He uses words denoting the qualities of his characters in his titles. Hence his titles declare that his novels are novels of introspection.

Good and Evil Characters

The characters of Dickens are either bad or good whereas those of Jayakantan are both good and bad. "Characters are neither completely good nor totally bad", writes Jayakantan (ON 7-8).

Dickens's BH is a novel with an astonishing number of virtuous characters, far more than Dickens presented in such numbers elsewhere. To the roll-call of Jarndyce, Esther, and Ada we must add Miss.Flite, Allan Woodcourt, Charley, Mrs. Roucewell, Mr. Boythorn, George and Phil, Mr. Snagsby, Mr. and Mrs. Bagnet, Caddy Jellyby, Rosa and Watt and in their hopeless ways, Guster, Jenny and her friend, Mrs. Blinder - the poor who are 'so much to the poor'. These characters achieve by their concerted goodness an effect of radiance akin to Esther's serene good humour in 'her' prose. There are also many characters from Lord and Lady Dedlock down through Richard, Jo, Prince, even to Guppy, who on balance, with whatever admixture of weakness or absurdity, strike us as more good than evil at heart. If we turn to the evil
characters they include several in whom Dickens's transforming zest is richly at work. Skimpole and old Mr. Turveydrop create themselves in the manner of Pecksniff and Micawber, not only atrocious but atrociously attractive, while Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle are softened, for all their awfulness, by Esther's eye. The really vile characters are by Dickens's standards few: Krook, Vholes, Grandfather Smallweed, Hortense, Mr. Snagsby (perhaps) and, of course, Tulkinghorn.

Prof. S. Cecutăcan writes: "In his novels Jayakantan shows bad people as possessing good qualities. But it is highly doubtful if he points out bad qualities in good people" (37).

As regards the qualities of a character Charles child writes: "Issues, after all always come to a head on borderline cases. When someone is absolutely right or absolutely wrong he does not become controversial" (294).

If we look at a person from various angles we may find unusual and contradictory qualities in him. This seems to be the viewpoint of Jayakantan. We may find good qualities in bad people and bad qualities in good people. This is revealed by many of Jayakantan's
characters. Jayakantan shows the difference between reality and appearance through the words of Rācā: "He appears to be calm. But inwardly he has a desire to beat somebody, kill somebody or spoil somebody. Thus he does all evils inwardly" (Yārukkanāka Alutān 107).

Jayakantan stresses this idea through Vairavaṇ in his short novel Enakkāka Alu.

In this world not all people whom we consider to be simpletons are simpletons. Not all the people considered to be geniuses are geniuses. Among simpletons there can be people who can rise to the level of great men and come near God. Similarly among geniuses there can be knaves worse than beasts" (32).

The same idea Jayakantan reinforces through Kōvintasāmi in his short novel 'Yārukkanāka Alutān. "When we come close to the bad people we can find at least a few noble qualities in them. Is it right then to think that a bad man is bad in the eyes of all people?" (Putia Vārupkaḷ 163-164).

Jayakantan's evil characters are of two types. The other characters in the novel know full well that
some characters are bad. Such bad characters belong to the first type. Some really bad characters are considered to be good by the other characters. Such bad characters belong to the second type. The bad people belonging to the first type possess good qualities also. This we can see in the first two novels of Jayakantan. Čarañkaṇ and his friends in V A; Kanniyappan and his friends in UO are of this type. To the second type belong Citamparam Pillai and Čēmu in V A, Lalitā in PAP, Venku Māmā in CN, Capāpatīpillaī's wife and Paḷaṇi in OM-

Jayakantan's good people do not possess bad qualities. Turaiṅkaṇṇu's smoking habit in UN and Capāpati Pillai's drinking habit in OM are only weaknesses, not evil deeds. Hence Čeçuṭācan is right when he says that Jayakantan does not show bad qualities in good people.

Women characters
Dickens

Unlike Dickens Jayakantan is good at portraying women characters. The women characters of Dickens have been regarded as feeble or artificial. Women in love have been portrayed with little understanding of sex-life. Compton Rickett is right when he says:
The tragedy of sensitive, ill-used children is a tragedy that Dickens could draw with force, tenderness and imaginative insight, but the tragedy of love, the tragedy of fitful passions of futile affections, the tragedy of Juliet, of Maggie Tulliver, of Tess of the D'Urbervilles is outside his range altogether" (503).

In his women characters we find him at his best when shrewd observation rather than psychological analysis is called for. Taken on the whole, we must pronounce Dickens's women characters as defective, except where they are eccentric or disagreeable.

Novels of Dickens give us a rich picture-gallery of foolish, ridiculous and offensive women. This is due to his ability to reproduce life with great fidelity. He writes about women with the liveliest-spirit of satire. He is often regarded as the libeller of fair sex. He has seldom been favourable with women.

Dickens draws his women characters mostly from lower middle class. They live comfortably. They are treated kindly by their menfolk and are expected to perform their household duties quietly. They are often
uneducated, unintelligent, ill-tempered and inbecile. This reveals the realism of Dickens as in those days countless women of this type could be seen in London. Dickens puts into their mouths the very language which we must have often heard them speak.

Dickens makes such women appear ridiculous. They become source of laughter. Mrs. Gummidge in *DC* suffers herself and causes untold suffering to her benefactors. She repeatedly offers her ingratitude to the family which supports her in her adversity. She suffers from frequent fits of depression and irritation. We are surprised to see that in Australia she is suddenly transformed into a bright, cheerful and useful woman. Mrs. Joe Gargery in *GE* is another such woman. She is a shrew. She tyrannises over her husband and her brother. By means of malicious lie she causes a quarrel between Joe and Orlick. Mrs. Nickleby is an uneducated smiling idiot with an irresponsible tongue. Mrs. Crupp who looks after David's chambers typifies all dishonesty and uncleanness. She is monstrously and ludicrously pretentious.

The women of Dickens seem to move about in the drama of life without any distinctive individually.
Miss Rachael in PP is an elderly woman who wants to marry. She is not in love with anyone. She accepted Tupman when that gentleman proposed to her and Jingle when she believed that Tupman had deserted her. When Tupman whispered tender things to her while at Rochester, she was pleased. When Jingle took her away, she was delighted. Her eager desire for marriage made her believe Jingle. In her story we see only the tendency among the women of the times to try to get married. That is all, we know nothing of women as a whole or of a particular type of womanhood. We do not understand Miss. Rachael even as an individual. She is colourless, vague and shadowy.

Dickens has more of sympathy for the working class women. He seldom criticises the women who belong to the very poor strata of society. Such women have a good temper. They are a source of joy and delight. In their abject poverty, they shed geniality all around and provide relief to the fellow sufferers. David Copperfield's nurse peggoty is a woman of this type (Malhotra and Paul, 168).
Dickens has given us a number of eccentric women also. David's aunt Miss. Betsey Trotwood is a case in point. She is one of the immortal character portraits sketched by Dickens. She spends her time in the care of Dick and making assaults on donkeys that enter her lawn. When David Copperfield enters her life, she showers her love and affection on him. Though she suffers from an unsuccessful marriage yet she has not allowed this dark fact of her life to embitter her temper. Of course, she prefers girls to boys. Despite her eccentricities, she is a woman of good sense. She advises her nephew not to be mean, false and cruel.

Dickens presents maidens of the marriageable age-group too in his novels. They smile and shed tears. They are like kittens. They are true to life. They are lovable. They have their individual traits. Little Emily and Dora may be placed in this category.

It is said that there is hardly any love-making in the novels of Dickens. Perhaps he does not have the ability or inclination to portray women in love. He does not much dwell upon passion. Judged by the fact that he was separated from his wife, who had borne him nine children, because he had fallen in love with a young
actress, he was himself a passionate man. But he does not describe passion in connection with the love affairs in his novels. Hence he follows the Victorian practice of prudery. For instance, much could have been made of the love-affair of Richard and Ada, and also of the secret feeling of love which Esther harbours for Mr. Woodcourt in BH. But Dickens is not interested in the ardour and the fervour of the passion of love. Indeed, his treatment of love is wholly unsatisfactory because he does not describe the intimacy of the passion of love which is one of the most important elements of human life.

Dickens's heroines in romantic episodes do not talk like creatures made of flesh and blood. They appear to be personifying certain theories only. The story of Emily's elopement with Steerforth has been painted in a hopeless manner. Dickens equally fails while describing David-Dora romance. Dora is wooed and wedded by David as if she were only a butterfly. Anyway, let us admit that this is the prettiest love-making in Dickens, though on the face of it, it is false. Dora is not to be taken seriously. She is unfit to share the responsibilities of life. She is virtually the 'Little Blossom' as she is called by aunt Betsey. All the heroines of Dickens are
short-statured. They do not appear to be creatures of flesh and flood.

Dickens fails to achieve success in the field of love and marriage. It seems the physical beauty of women has little appeal for him. His knowledge of the workings of the female heart seems to be imperfect and inadequate. His humour proves very useful in his delineation of character, but in the description of scenes concerning love and marriage it proves to be a definite hindrance.

Dickens is criticised for his preference for sexless love. He is good at describing the love of fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, uncles and nieces, brothers and sisters, but not of lovers and beloveds. Dickens may not be good at describing sexless love, but he is not afraid of showing sexual relationships. Affairs of Emily, Martha and Rosa Dartle in *DC* are cases in point.

The men of Dickens are certainly more admirable than his women. The reason for such a picture is not far to seek. Women in those days were not allowed the freedom to express themselves which we find in the present century. They were certainly less efficient and less practical and perhaps did in general reveal the
weaknesses described by Dickens. At the same time we see that he deals with them in a sympathetic manner. They are not shown as guilty of gross moral evil, their defects are of the venial type. Their lack of individuality makes it plain to us that his knowledge of women was not so deep as his knowledge of men.

Jayakantan

Jayakantan is good at portraying female characters. His knowledge of women is as deep as his knowledge of man. Referring to women characters in Jayakantan's novels, P, K. Sundararajan and S. Sivapatha sundaram write:

The woman character portrayed by Jayakantan in his novel "Cila Nēraṅkalil Cila Maṅitarkal" (1973) is totally different from the ordinary women we usually come across. She loses her chastity by accident. As a result, she is hated by her mother and her relations. She lives alone for a period of five years. Then she discovers the man who seduced her and starts loving him. She tries to live with him. But he is not in a position to accept her as he is already a married man and a father of a young
girl. In this novel Jayakantan tells us how human beings change their behaviour on certain occasions and form their character. In his novels Jayakantan does not seem to say anything in support of the behaviour of women. Nor does he seem to condemn it. His women characters take efforts to engage themselves in finding out a life of their own and settling down ...... (203).

One of the heroines of the novel VA is Kīta. She is the daughter of the maternal uncle of Rācā. She is living with her parents. She has a nervous breakdown. She is more or less 16 years old. Kīta is an idealistic character. Her ideal is to marry the man he loves. When she fails to fulfil her ideal because of her father's compulsion, she dies a natural death without committing suicide.

Taṅkam is the heroine of the novel UO, the second novel of Jayakantan. She is aged 30. She is a mother. She has lost her parents. She lost her mother when she was too young and her father when she was 15. She herself chose a man as her companion. Later she was deserted by him. Then she chose another man. Her ideal
is not to beget a child when she is not in a position to tell the child or the world what its father's name is. That is why, the forsaken Taňkam wants to destroy Citći even when he is in her womb. She becomes pregnant again. She wants to marry Mănîkkam, the father of her child in the womb. But all her attempts become futile. Though she is not able to fulfil her ideal, she does not commit suicide. Hence she is a realistic character with an unfulfilled ideal. Jayakantan has not succeeded in portraying Kīta as an idealistic character.

Kīta in VA and Kalyāṇī in ON are idealistic characters whereas Taňkam in VA, Taňkam in UO, Kaňkā in CN and Kaňkai Enkē Pōkirāl?, Ampikāi and Kōtai in IN and Cutantirā Dēvi in CC are realistic characters. Kīta, Kaňkā, Kalyāṇī, Ampikā, Kōtai and Cutantirā Dēvi belong to the middle class families. They have either parents or husbands to protect them. The two Taňkams are poor and have none as their protector.

Taňkam in VA is a realistic character who lived with an ideal. Taňkam in UO is a realistic character who wanted to live with an ideal but failed in it. Though he has not completely succeeded in portraying kalyāṇī as an idealistic character, he has succeeded to a great extent.
Kanka is a fine realistic character of Jayakantan.

Autobiographical Touches

Just as Dickens's hero David is modelled by Dickens on himself, a few of Jayakantan's characters too are modelled by him on himself.

Dickens

As T. Singh observes,

He (Dickens) constantly draws upon his own experience, and the sympathies and antipathies which we find so persistently manifested by him in his work very often have their origin in the years of his adolescence. Many of his novels are the records of his own life, though modified by subjection to the canons of Art" (540).

David Copperfield's experiences are Dickens's experiences to a large extent. All the trials and tribulations faced by David Copperfield are an imitation of the hardships suffered by Dickens in his personal life. Mr. Micawber, who is considered as an immortal creation of Dickens, has been drawn after his own father. Eccentric Betsey Trotwood, feigning villain Heep, merciless Murdstone and gentle-hearted Agnes are the
unforgettable characters drawn by Dickens in this novel. Most of the important incidents and experiences in the novel have been based on real life experienced by Dickens.

David Copperfield suffered at the hands of society. He had a very happy life in his early childhood when he enjoyed the love and care of his mother and nurse. Soon after his mother's second marriage, his circumstances underwent an adverse change. There are numerous recollections of this unhappy period. David recollects the enduring recollections of his early childhood. Dickens's virtue lies in his effort to tell a boy's story as a boy would tell it. He recalls all the brutality of word and deed meted out to him. He can never forget it. Dickens is very true in the exact reproduction of the intense sensitivity of his childhood.

Several experiences, ideas and incidents of the life of Dickens have found a place in the novel. It is believed that behind the little ideal of the love of David and Dora, there are the recollections of innocent juvenile love affair. This reveals his unconfessed though not unrepressed disappointment. Personal memories
of Dickens are harmonised with the old and new local associations. For example, Yarmouth painted by the author with unique poetic truthfulness had only recently been visited by Dickens for the first time during a holiday trip.

Mr. Micawber is a portrait of Dickens's father who was equally extravagant and improvident. Dickens's mother tried to help his father just as Mrs. Micawber helps Mr. Micawber. Mr. Micawber is forced to sell out his assets to make both ends meet. This is what Dickens's family had also to do.

School-life of Charles Dickens was full of numerous bitter experiences. He had to study under inordinately strict school masters. The Salem House of David, under Mr. Creakle is reminiscent of Wellington House Academy where Dickens experienced a deplorable state. Flogging was the order of the day and Dickens had a taste of the unmanly behaviour. These things remind one of the school days of Dickens.

To both Dickens and David their own life was their only school. Dickens is rightly called the graduate of the London street. He wrote what he had observed in the streets of London
and similar was the case with David. Like Dickens David was forced to work in the factory, when a mere child. The prison life of Micawber reminds us of the author's father, imprisoned for debts (Sahni, 194).

Adverse circumstances forced Charles Dickens to work at a blacking factory in his boyhood. His father's poverty compelled him to undertake this job. He gives us a faithful description of this experience in this novel. He was ill-clad and ill-fed. He developed sympathy for the children treated brutally in the factories and warehouses. He made an adequate protest against unhealthy social conditions.

When David's aunt loses her money, he is forced to learn shorthand. Dickens actually learnt shorthand and became an efficient reporter of parliamentary debates and discussion. Thus he supplemented his income as does David Copperfield in the novel.

In the novel David Copperfield becomes an author and Traddles helps him in the publication of his books. Dickens himself is an author of numerous books.
Love affairs of David Copperfield seem to be based on the personal experiences of Dickens. There was something wanting in his love affairs. That is what happens in the love affair of David and Dora. The marriage of David and Agnes is said to be perfectly happy. Perhaps Dickens found similar happiness and satisfaction in his fancy.

Thus we find numerous parallels between the life of Dickens and David Copperfield in DC. OT uses a lot of material supplied by his own experience of the low life of London in his tender years. In BH he draws substantially upon his early knowledge of courts and legal affairs. He recollects his school days in NN.

Jayakantan

Most of Jayakantan's characters resemble him. "In my forty years of life I would have lived as a son of my parents for less than ten years" (Jayakantan, Araciyal Anupavanthal 6).

Jayakantan was a self-made man. Hence we can say he has created his characters as self-made.

Rācā in VA, Citti in UO, Cāranūkaṇṭ in PAP, Raṅkā in ON and Makutēcan pillai in IN are self-made men. The
fearless Rācā and Ciṭṭi are brought up by their mothers. They were beyond the control of their mothers. Hence they grew of their own accord. Cāraṅkaṇ who had lost his mother was brought up by his father. He lived with his friends in London and grew into a self-made man. Raṅkā and Makutēcanpiḷḷai had also lost their parents and become self-made men.

These heroes of Jaykantan often wound the feelings of others by their contradictory views. They would not hesitate to express their strange views to their friends openly and thus incur their displeasure. This is how Rācā incurs the displeasure of his uncle at the time of his mother's death, Ciṭṭi makes his pregnant mother hate him, Cāraṅkaṇ incurs the displeasure of his father and Makutēcan piḷḷai antagonises his daughters and Civapākkiaṭṭamāḷ.

Jayakantan also did not bother about the feelings of others when he expressed his views: "I am well-known as a writer of problem stories which become objects of criticism. I am satisfied with the thought that I write a number of stories which become food for disputes and debates" (CN 10-12).
That Jayakantan also wounded the feelings of others by expressing his contradictory views is obvious from the following statement of his: "My creations are sold in the market. Don't think that my works become your own the moment you buy them. It is such a thought that makes you criticise me. If not, who gave you the right to criticise me? Certainly, I have not given you that" (Jayakantan's lecture 14 Dec. 1975).

Comic characters

Unlike Jayakantan Dickens has portrayed matchless humorous characters. Dickens is peerless in his creation of comic characters. Jayakantan has not created such a large number of comic characters as Mr. Pumblechook or Mr. Todger. As a humorist, Dickens stands supreme among English novelists and occupies a place next only Shakespeare. It is true that Shakespeare has not created any one to match Falstaff, but there is only one Falstaff in Shakespeare while Dickens has created a whole army of minor Falstaffs and at least one or two Falstaffs near. Mrs. Gamp, the absurd nurse symbolising gross humanity is the nearest relative of the Fat knight. The colossal Micawber stands as an enormous monument of human absurdity. Dickens's novels abound in funsters whose company is just exhilarating.
It is often said that Dickens's was the one man entertainment industry. His humour is an incessant stream of same nonsense. He has created myriads of characters, each one a grotesque fountain which gushes the living waters for ever. Fashions come and fashions go, and now it is the French who are the greatest novelists in the world and now it is the Russians, but supremacy of Dickens's as a humorist remains unchallenged. We have only one name to put beside his, as a creator of humorous characters and that, of course, is Shakespeare.

The humour of Dickens is essentially a humour of characters. Humour is produced by comic situations as well as by comic characters, but in Dickens the main contribution to humour is made by the comic characters. Dickens has created a host of humorous characters, the chief of them being Sam Weller and his father, Pickwick, Nickleby, Mantalini, Crummles, Dick Swivele, Mark Tapley, Mrs. Gamp, Toots, Micawber, Miss. Betsey Trotwood, Dora, Guppy, Harold Skimpole, Jobling and many others.

In Dickens humour is often mingled with pathos. There are certain things that make one's fancy chuckle while one's heart aches and these are the things around
which Dickens often weaves his novels. There are a number of scenes in OI as well as DC that touch one's heart while making one laugh.

Dickens had a natural gift for homely pathos. He could easily create pathetic situations and pathetic characters strong enough to wring tears from human eyes. Pathos, in his novels, is created either by the representation of the unhappy and miserable lot of children and their death or by the portrayal of the heart-rending situations of the factory workers and prisoners in Marshalsea prison. Pip in GE, Oliver in OI, David in DC, Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop and Paul in Dombey son are involved in quite a few pathetic situations. The experiences of David with his cruel stepfather Mr. Murdstone and later in the Warren's Blacking Factory are equally touching. The wanderings of Little Nell with her aged grandfather through churchyards and villages are also quite moving. The death of children creates tender feelings for their untimely demise and wring tears even from hard-hearted ones. Laughter and tears lie closely together in the writings of Dickens. Such mingling of humour and pathos we do not find in Jayakantan's novels, though he presents the sufferings of human beings.