Preface
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Comparative Literature is the comparison between literature and other areas of knowledge and the belief which is an unquestionable academic sanction to any psychological study of a work of art. Psychology and criticism come together on the ground that belongs to the study of aestheticism. Criticism is an effective intellectual force to dispel falsehood and establish Truth. Serious criticism gravitates towards setting up high ideals for human pursuits. Eliot and Tholkāppiyar believed in such a dedicated undertaking of the concept and pursued it in this spirit.

Eliot and Tholkāppiyar’s passion seems to standardize human thinking, art and criticism. Standard criticism depends upon standard thinking. It ultimately depends upon established norms and ideals. Eliot calls it in terms of ‘religion’ and Tholkāppiyar as ‘a way of life’ as the best part of Tradition. According to them, it is of standardizing human thinking and criticism with theological standards. These standards alone give a positive stay to humanity saving it from the suicidal pit of Secularism.

Social sciences take as substitutes for the religious principles. Such a fundamental awareness of the finality of the theological values of religion has led Eliot to give it a high place in art and criticism. It is this conviction that persuaded him to declare that literary standards are adequate to determine whether a work is literature; its greatness as literature must be measured by other standards.
The aim of this study is to set forth the validity of the statements of Eliot and Tholkäppiyar’s efforts in practicing it unconsciously in Tholkäppiyam in the ancient time. In doing so, several issues are encountered with the evaluatory criticism, the archetypal, the various cross-currents versus religion and a fresh look at Formalism in its comprehensive meaning with solid questions about human experience, human ideas and attitudes of life.

Chapter 1 prepares the ground defining Comparative Literature and different schools of comparative studies. It points out why the researcher has taken interest in Thomas Stearns Eliot from the American school and Tholkäppiyar, whose era is almost unknown, from his native land to get it fit for comparison. It introduces Eliot as a critic, and playwright and his own formulated theories and introducing Tholkäppiyar and his book Tholkäppiyam – its three divisions – Eḻuthu, Sol and Porul and focuses broadly on the land, language and literature. It depicts about the people who were united linguistically, racially, culturally and religiously to achieve great in the civilized humanity.

Chapter 2 deals with an argument by considering criticism as a means to Truth and studying the definition of literary criticism and dwelling upon the usefulness of evaluatory system of criticism in assessing a work of art by recalling the evaluations of the past. It justifies that the makers of literatures are always in close touch with the nature and nature of livelihood.

Chapter 3 defines Form and Content and how they are relevant and need for our study. Tholkäppiyar focuses ‘Porul’ to the theme of literature. It proves Art
serves to defend human rights and it has fought against the tyranny of despotic rules. Literature assures immortality to any language and enriches our life. So as, it is projected vividly with the codes of life of Tamils, few common men as depicted in Tholkāppiyam and in few poetic dramas of Eliot since literature is intimately related to Sociology which is indispensable and interdependent.

Chapter 4 plans to look at Eliot’s views on religion as detective norms to identify the greatness of literature. It sees the nearness of religion and literature more than that of ethics. Religion is seen as an archetype. It speaks of the close intimacy between religion and culture. It speaks of how secularism in literature has denigrated it and reflects on the Higher Principle and the contemplation of the Pure-Being and the Ultimate Reality. Discussion on the art-experience and life-experience is essential to creation of literature. It concludes by studying these authors’ own religious convictions and their bearings on his idea of culture, life-nature and criticism.

Chapter 5 sums up Tholkāppiyar’s observation on the way of common people’s belief in god and Eliot’s has the same view of God fearing among the creation of his common characters. Eliot has verdict on the indispensability of extra-aesthetic criteria in a work of art to decide it great or not. The verdict relates to the demands of formalistic principles of literary criticism and their closeness in literature. And in this way, how Tholkāppiyar and Eliot urge the literary world to stick towards religion to make it its central principle of value and evaluation and the high quality of human experience, human ideas and attitudes make literature great.