Introduction

Comparative literature as a critical approach is a recent phenomenon in the literary history of the world. Critics have always felt that the knowledge of a single literature is inadequate to appreciate and assess a genre, an author or a work. British scholars have had the heritage of Greek, Latin and French literatures, which provide them with a universal outlook on life and art. "He does not know English literature who only English literature knows," says Matthew Arnold (qtd. in Sharma 1). India being a multilingual country, the average Indian scholar is a comparatist by nature: since his literature is written on the basis of the cultures of the subcontinent, he is obliged to take into account the literary-spiritual connections of different parts of the country while assessing it (Kadihasalam 344).

The renowned German poet Goethe (1749-1832) censured the narrow provincialism of the German writers of his day. He coined the term "world literature" to mean that response to literature is an international experience not at all limited by the narrow boundaries of countries (Subramanian, Srinivasan, and Balakrishnan 3). The term "comparative literature", which was derived from the French, was considered to refer rather to the themes discussed than to the methods employed (Weisstein 9). It
was Arnold who for the first time coined the term "comparative literature," and said that the knowledge of a great foreign literature is a prerequisite for a proper understanding of one's own literature (Sharma 1).

Man has common basic instincts and emotions. Baral says:

Down the ages, man had the same experiences—emotional, moral and physical; the same ecstasies and agonies, triumphs and defeats, glories and shame. He has confronted similar human problems, and similar questions. (54)

Hence "literature is one, as art and humanity are one" (Wellek 50). Comparison of two literatures is sure to result in a better understanding of life at large and to foster universal brotherhood. Subramanian, Srinivasan and Balakrishnan in Introduction to the Study of Comparative Literature discuss several schools of comparative literature that have developed over the years in Europe (4-6). In France, comparative literature is a restatement of the French literary history, relating the world literary experience to the French literary response. The French comparatists consider their literature to be the backbone of the universal literary system. They analyse the external sources and influences of works. Therefore
comparative literature in France is an ancillary discipline to the French literary history.

America is a continent of immigrants, who are attached to their parent literatures. Therefore comparative literature is natural there. Open-mindedness and tolerance are the hall-marks of American comparative literature. The American comparatists accuse the French approach of studying only influence, which, according to them, is unconscious imitation. They accept negative influence, which is the emergence of new trends and beliefs in the native literature inspired by foreign models.

Comparative literature in Russia is rooted in the philosophy of communism. The Russian comparatists believe that literature is a social property meant for social welfare. The creative writers are expected to give a realistic account of social happenings. The comparatists assess the variety of social reason embedded in their literature.

Comparison between English literature and Indian literature tends to be richer than that between two Western literatures because of cultural differences. Arnold says, "Every critic should try and possess one great literature at least besides his own, and the more unlike his own, the better" (qtd. in Sharma 1). Different
literatures will correct one's attitude and judgement (Narasimhaia 345). Though India was under the British rule for centuries, Indian and British cultures are totally different owing to differences in religions, languages, climates and food habits. So, a comparison of English literature and any one of the native literatures poses more problems than solutions. Such contrastive studies unearth a treasure of information unequalled in its amplitude by analogistic research.

The American comparative literary theory and practice are accepted as the universal model. The American comparatist H. H. Remak defines comparative literature:

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history and social science (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), religion, etc., on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human experience. (Remak 3)
Comparative literature in Remak’s view is a broad academic discipline studying literatures or literature and the other arts. Manavalan says that, to understand one literature well, it should be compared with other literatures, and adds that a comparatist acquires the knowledge of two languages and compares the works in those languages (Ayvu Sikalhalum Theervuhalum 49,52). Comparative literature is concerned with affinities in themes, genres, movements and trends in two literatures (Remak 22). The similarities found in two literatures can be the subject of comparative literature (Kanchana 97). Comparative literature is concerned “with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space” (Bassnett 1). It, however, studies not only “universals” but also “divergences” (Fokemma 20). For, “It is only through differences that progress has been made” (Strauss 18).

Comparative literature aims to counteract one’s provincialism and liberate literature from narrow linguistic boundaries. It removes ambiguities in one’s literature through a universal outlook (Sharma 36). It discovers social and cultural aspects through the experiences of the individuals of different nationalities. It tries to reconcile all the basic features of single literatures and to evolve a uniform concept of literature.
Incidentally, it presupposes proficiency in two languages, widening of perspectives and suppression of local and provincial sentiments (Sharma 17).

More than one authority on this discipline has referred to the difficulties involved in comparative literature. The researcher should be careful to note the fundamental differences between the authors under study (Hudson 43). The scope of comparative literature is limitless (Gifford 58). If the authors selected belong to two different cultures, it becomes all the more difficult to master their backgrounds, themes and visions of life. Naturally, comparative literature is considered to be still in the process of growth (Dhawan 10).

Comparative literature is a flourishing academic discipline in India today. Professor Buddhadeva Bose first introduced comparative literature at the Jadavpur University, Calcutta. His intention was to bring together the regional literatures of our country in order to shed parochialism. The Fulbright/Smith Mundt programme operated by the government of the United States of America through the United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) developed this branch of study.

The Dravidian school of comparativism is a recent development. English literature and any one of the Dravidian literatures are compared under this school.
Since English is the second language in India, comparison between English literature and any one of the Indian literatures is easy.

Comparative literature with particular reference to English/Tamil literary relations was inaugurated by the dissertation entitled *The Impact of Western Thought on Bharathi* submitted by V. Sachithanandan in 1970 at the Annamalai University under the guidance of the multilingual scholar Meenakshisundaram. Since then it has gained in importance academically and intellectually. Comparative literature is recognized as an academic discipline in the Madurai Kamaraj University (Devi 1-2).

English and Tamil literatures are the core and reference literatures for this study respectively. The individual, social and cultural aspects of the theme of woman's love are discussed in terms of comparisons and contrasts, of similarities and dissimilarities.

This dissertation is a parallel study. Thomas Hardy and Jayakanthan belong to different cultures. Hardy had written his last major novel *Jude the Obscure* in 1896 while Jayakanthan wrote his first novel *Valkai Alaikirathu* in 1957. However, there is no noticeable influence of Hardy on Jayakanthan. A parallel study is valuable for two reasons. It brings to light the merits of individual literary works. It also calls for the scrutiny of
similarities and dissimilarities in the national literary traditions of different countries.

The researcher was induced to undertake this study by analogies existing in the social backgrounds and works of these two writers, who were unconnected in any way whatever. Aldridge defines analogies as "resemblances in style, structure, mood or idea between works which have no other connection" (qtd. in Subramanian, Srinivasan, and Balakrishnan 94). An analogy or affinity study is on two authors of two different literatures, and becomes a study of two cultures eventually. The works of both Hardy and Jayakanthan are usually heroine-oriented with rare exceptions. Both writers probe problems of love, marriage, rape and chastity against conservative social backgrounds. Both envisage spiritual fulfilment for humanity beyond the seemingly unsolvable riddle called life.

Five novels each by Hardy and Jayakanthan are the primary sources for this study. The selected novels by Hardy in English are Under the Greenwood Tree (1872), A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873), The Return of the Native (1878), The Woodlanders (1886), and Tess of the d’Urbervilles (1891). Those by Jayakanthan in Tamil are Parisukku Po (Go to Paris, 1966), Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal (Certain Persons at Certain Times, 1970), Oru Nadihai Nadaham Parkiral (An Actress Witnesses a Drama, 1971),
Ovoru Kooraikum Keele (Under Every Roof, 1981) and Sundara Gandam (Beatific Episode, 1982).

The selection of the five novels by Hardy has not been made for any other reason than that more than five novels might render the study unwieldy and inexact. The masterpieces The Mayor of Casterbridge and Jude the Obscure have central themes other than love. Among the female-dominated novels of Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge is a male-dominated exception, describing the rise and fall of Michael Henchard's fortunes. Jude the Obscure brings out the contrast between the ideal life imagined by Jude Fawley and the squalid life he sinks into.

Most of the forty novels and novellas by Jayakanthan are on social themes like poverty and exploitation since he began his literary life as a communist, having joined the party when he was twelve (Journal of Tamil Studies 21). The novels that he wrote, after he became disillusioned with the communist party, are mostly on love (Krishnasamy 22), of which five have been selected for this study.

The significance of this dissertation is that it is a consummate study on the personal, social, cultural and spiritual relations between two peoples, namely, the British and the Tamil, through sexual love as the central
theme in the novels chosen. Its position is determined by
the fact that it will widen the researchers' perceptions
and direct their attention from general studies to
thematic analysis. This study will cut across provincial
boundaries and encourage such thematic studies across the
country. Thematic comparative studies on the literatures
in the Indian languages will throw light on the
integrating and divisive forces among the linguistic
groups in India. This will help in strengthening the
integrating forces further.

The reason for taking up this study is the striking
resemblance between Tess in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and
Ganga in *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal* and *Gangai Enge
Pohiral*. Both lose chastity, both search for fulfilment
and both die at the end. Furthermore, the conservative
Victorian society in Hardy and the tradition-bound Tamil
society in Jayakanthan were similar (Jeevanagarathinam 34-
36)

This study proposes to discuss the following aspects
of woman's life. Most women are attracted to more than
one suitor each. They select one of the suitors, to be the
lover. Though money, status and education either cause or
solve a few marital problems, most misunderstandings occur
owing to differences in attitude, which can be changed to
bring about peace. Some women sometimes lose chastity
owing to temptation. Such women, too, get married and live happily if they are sincere to their spouses. If man accepts woman's sexual equality, most of the problems interfering with their relationship will disappear. Women search for spiritual fulfilment and only a few of them get it.

This study reveals similarities in the emotional, social, cultural and religious life of two different peoples. The relevance of this study to India is in terms of its being a model for other thematic studies. The cultural unity of two different peoples offers great hope of it being present in the literatures of the numerous Indian languages. Nor will it be difficult for comparative studies to emerge on Indian languages since numerous states follow the three-language formula, i.e., Hindi, English and the provincial language.

A Ph.D. thesis as a comparative study on the modern woman in the novels of Thomas Hardy and Henry James is listed at the address: <www.lib.nus.edu.sg/theses/clhdlang.htm>. An M.Phil. thesis (1999) as a comparative study on the characteristics and significance of tragedy as revealed in Shakespeare's tragedies and Thomas Hardy's novels was submitted at the University of Glasgow <www.britishshakespeare.ws/theses.htm>. The important comparative studies on Hardy are as follows: on the themes
of *The Return of the Native* by Hardy and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (<www.ez_essays.com/free/194.html>); on the characters of Heathcliff in Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* and Henchard in Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (<www.allpapers.com/top/literaturez.htm>); on the characteristics of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy as novelists (<www.enotes.com/dreiser/507>); on the themes of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* and Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (<www.studentcentral.co.uk/English_literature/novels_and_short_stories/British>); on the themes of *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* by Hardy (<www.Studentcentral.co.uk/English_literature/novels_and_short_stories/British>); on the characters of Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* by the American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne and Tess in Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (<www.EnglishLiterature.org/essays>); and on the general characteristics of Charlotte Bronte’s *Shirley* and Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* (<www.English.ufl.education/narrative.conference/resume.htm> (9 Aug. 2004).

Jayakanthan’s works were taken up for comparative study as early as 1967 when Maharishi wrote a study on La.Sa.Ra. and Jayakanthan in the journal *Dheepam* (Chennai: Aug 1967, 57-58). Bharwatha Regina Papa wrote her Ph.D.


The method of analysis adopted for this study is comparative, including the contrastive and descriptive aspects.

This is a thematic study with patterns and process of love as Chapter II, problems and solutions in marriage as Chapter III, the cultural question of chastity as Chapter IV, and human fulfilment as Chapter V.

Patterns of love as theme are similar in the selected novels. Triangular and rectangular love patterns as discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapters are the
ones discernible in them. The word "Pattern" here refers not to design but to "An example, an instance; especially, a typical model or representative instance, a signal example" (The Oxford English Dictionary, Vol.7: 565). It means "a representative instance: a typical example" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged 1657). In this sense, Encarta World English Dictionary defines it as "a regular or repetitive form, order, or arrangement, e.g. a predictable pattern of behaviour" (1384).

The Oxpord English Dictionary defines love as "That feeling of attachment which is based upon difference of sex; the affection which subsists between lover and sweetheart and is the normal basis of marriage" (Vol. 6:464). Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines it as "attraction based on sexual desire" (688). Encarta World English Dictionary defines it as "passionate attraction and desire; a passionate feeling of romantic desire and sexual attraction" (1116). The definition of love for the purpose of this study is limited to the healthy relationship between man and woman tending towards marriage. Incestuous and perverted love is outside the purview of this study. Chapter II presents the selected writers' ideas of love.

This dissertation aims at discovering the selected novelists' commonness of approach to love and marriage and
their sympathy for woman and her problems. Thus, it seeks to promote a better understanding of Oriental and Occidental literary relations. This investigation attempts a humble contribution to comparative literature by bringing out the universality of human experience and the unity of literary creations.

The range and variety of the Tamil novel in the twentieth century can be compared with those of the English novel in the nineteenth century. Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol. 16: 575-76) provides information on the origin and growth of the English novel. The novel was born and shaped in the eighteenth century in England. Daniel Defoe and the four wheels of the English novel [Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne] developed it. The novel saw perfection with Jane Austen writing at the end of the eighteenth century and with such stalwarts as Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot and Hardy in the nineteenth century. Kailasapathy in Tamil Novel Ilakiyam (37-38) says that attempts were made to write novels in Tamil in the nineteenth century by Vedhanayaham Pillai and Rajam Iyer. The twentieth century saw great novelists like Madhavaya, Kalki, Rajam Krishnan, Akilan, Jayakanthan, and Parthasarathy. Thus, similar ages of greatness in fiction in English and Tamil have been chosen for this study.
Sexual relationship between man and woman has been a perennial theme in literature right from the days of the Iliad and the Ramayana. Shakespeare, Milton, the Romantic poets and the English novelists have dealt with it. It has been a key theme in epic, drama, poetry and novel in English. Similarly, Ilango, Kamban, Bharathi and the modern poets and novelists have treated it in their writings in Tamil. Since sexual relationship is the basis for the continuation of the human race, it will remain a theme of the greatest attraction to men of letters until eternity.

A general introduction to the age, life and career of the selected novelists will not be out of place here since there is little scope for them in the following chapters, which discuss the chosen theme exclusively.

Clarissa Harlowe (1947-48) by Richardson was intended as a warning of "the Distresses that may attend Misconduct both of Parents and Children in relation to Marriage," and was thus in some sort a complement of Pamela. (The Oxford Companion to English Literature 173)

The novelists who came after him followed such corrective morals intended to lead man and woman on the path of good, eschewing evil. It was George Eliot who gave the first shattering blow to the Victorian complacency and prudery
by holding that woman’s virtue was man’s greatest invention (Mullik 14). She discussed bold themes like loss of chastity. The other novelists of her age like Dickens and the Bronte sisters held: “The wave of passion must always be broken against the rigidity of moral law,” while Eliot believed: “Morality is not a mere dead formula to be obeyed blindly” (Ellis 234). However, Eliot herself did not go beyond the portrayal of woman’s struggle for self-development and intellectual emancipation in the patriarchal society. Her women characters only deviate from the popular Victorian ideal of the submissive lady, whose major activity was domestic service to her husband and children. Eliot did not transcend the moral problems of her characters (Daiches 1068). For the first time Hardy, as a total modernist, gave, in Blunden’s words, “a frank treatment of the destructive influence of a vein of sensuality” (90).

Hardy lived in an age of transition. He depicts the impact of the age of the railway and the telegraph on rural England. Pastoral life could not tackle the encroachment of modern industrialism (Ward 713). Extensive capitalist farming made small-holders and peasants disappear. The heroine of his masterpiece Tess of the d’Urbervilles is handed over by her mother to Alec d’Urberville. This signifies the lower class being at the
mercy of the ruling class. Town in Hardy embodies the evil of civilization and the miserable condition of the workers in slums as against the happy countryside (Green 794-96). However, as he progressed in his career as a novelist, he became aware that "a way of life was vanishing in his time, and on the whole, as a meliorist he was on the side of the steam engine" and town (Ford 405).

In his first popular masterpiece Far from the Madding Crowd, the townsman Troy dies to give way to Farmer Oak who marries Troy's widow Bathsheba Everdene. Hardy's view had undergone a sea-change by the time The Woodlanders came out. His village hero Giles Winterborne in this novel dies to let the heroine Grace Melbury rejoin her husband Edred Fitzpiers, a wayward town doctor. In spite of Hardy's effort to introduce the elements of city life into his later novels, "None of his novels, with the possible exception of The Hand of Ethelberta, is metropolitan in its setting" (Ford 404-05).

Hardy was born and brought up in the district of Dorsetshire. He was attached to the customs and habits of country life (P.Rogers 358). He was trained to be an architect, and so his novels abound with minute stills of nature description. He had no formal education. He was fortunate not to have gone to a university since "Academic influences would have broken that unaffected, slightly
archaic connection with his native place which his self-
education and his architectural training did not destroy" (Legouis 405). He attempted in vain to make a mark as a poet and turned to novel since “fortune as well as fame could be the reward of the successful novelist” (Page 8). When he gave up novel altogether, his reason was: “I never cared very much about writing novels. I had written quite enough novels” (qtd. in Lerner and Holmstrom 147). Then, he began to write verse. He was a successful novelist of the nineteenth century and a famous poet of the twentieth century.

Hardy’s “range,” says Cecil, is “limited” by the circumstances of his upbringing (16). He is called a regional novelist since his heroines and heroes mostly do not go beyond the “imaginary world of Wessex,” which “covers a large area of the southern and western counties of England” (P. Rogers 358). Legouis says:

Hardy lived an isolated life in his native district Dorsetshire and the surrounding region, the “Wessex” of his novels, and his work is, therefore, devoted to provincial and, still more, to rural life. (366)

Though Hardy was at home in cities, where he received recognition and honours as a renowned novelist, his
fictional world could not but be rural (Ray, "Hardy in Aberdeen" 1).

His being called a regional novelist in no way detracts from his greatness as one of the few immortal novelists of the world. For the richness of his works, the novelist Joseph Conrad called Hardy "the last of the Elizabethans" (Ray, "Hardy and Conrad" 2). His insight into nature and human nature, his tragic vision and his intimate knowledge of the woman's heart have rarely been excelled.

Nature "is not just the background in his drama, but a leading character in it" (Cecil 16). Egdon Heath in The Return of the Native is a living presence, which destroys those (Eustacia and Wildeve) who refuse to understand it and blesses those (Thomasin and Clym) who sympathize with it. For instance, "Egdon Heath is nothing but a heath to Thomasin [...] but to the outsider Eustacia it is an enemy" (Boumelha 4). The Heath is responsible for all her misery. Thus, she illustrates the axiom "Geography is Fate". Talbothays dairy, which is a pleasant asylum for the happy lovers (Tess and Angel), and Flintcomb-Ashe, whose aridity adds to the forlorn Tess's misery, are as good as human characters in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Nature has a charm in his novels though it is indifferent to human suffering (Ford 367).
Hardy probes the female heart with an uncanny insight. He treats woman with sympathy stressing her weakness, her sweetness and her fickleness. Woman in Hardy is capable of more suffering than man, and transcends the personal, moving through "human to sublime" (Smith 8-9). He investigates the question whether female purity consists in ignorance of the harsher facts of life or whether it is based on knowledge and experience. His feminist approach comes to light in The Woodlanders, in which he discusses divorce at length. His greatest work Tess of the d'Urbervilles, in which Tess forgives Angel's sexual trespass while he does not excuse hers, reveals Hardy's anger at the double moral standard (Rutland 155).

The tragic intensity of Hardy's novels has made Allen call him "almost the only tragic novelist in our literature" (246). Daiches regards Tess of the d'Urbervilles as Hardy's "tragic masterpiece" (1075). Gloominess pervades many of his novels. The heroines and heroes of his early novels manage to unite in matrimony against heavy odds. But his later heroines either suffer humiliation at the hands of their lovers and husbands (The Trumpet-Major and The Woodlanders) or die (The Return of the Native and Tess of the d'Urbervilles). Things have gone against most of his heroines, says Stewart (41).
Hardy said:

As to pessimism, my motto is, first correctly diagnose the complaint—in this case human ills—and ascertain the cause; then set about finding a remedy if one exists. The motto or practice of the optimist is: Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms. (qtd. in Rai 84)

There is unrelieved suffering in some of his novels. Elfride in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* suffers throughout and finally dies a heart-broken death for almost no mistake of hers. Her husband till almost the very end puts Grace in *The Woodlanders* to undue hardships. Tess’s miseries are colossal. Even after her husband has changed his mind and returned to accept her, Hardy makes her kill Alec and subjects her to execution. Hence critics “had cast slurs upon him as Nonconformist, immoralist, Heretic, Pessimist, or something else equally opprobrious” (Ford 407). On the other hand Hardy believed that his pessimism was not based on the assumption that the world was going to the dogs. He claimed that his practical philosophy was distinctly meliorist (Millgate 410). As a meliorist he held up hope for mankind as discussed in this dissertation.

Hardy’s characters do not make any efforts to ward off the disastrous events but drift towards tragedy.
(Guerard 33). Eustacia Vye in *The Return of the Native* does not try to stop moving in the stormy night towards her suicide. Grace Melbury in *The Woodlanders* does not induce her husband Fitzpiers to give up his visits to Mrs Charmond. Such characters in Hardy prove the dictum "Character is Fate." The beauty of Eustacia and Tess causes their destruction. Hence, "Anatomy is Fate."

Hardy often forgot that he was writing to a conventional society. He came into conflict with society with the publication of his second novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, in which Fanny's illegal pregnancy and the death of her baby and herself were very much against popular prudery. Hardy was dubbed a sensational novelist for accepting "seduction and betrayal, adultery and shameful pregnancies as plot devices" (Cunningham 20). He did so because he had no patience with traditional demands of purity in women (Cunningham 88). In his later novels, he transcends the simple medieval Christian morality of good and evil, which is against the requirements of modern life (S. Rogers 3). He recognizes the natural order as against a society that would condemn an innocent girl for rape. Thus he gave feminist creative writing *the right direction.* He was disgusted with the bad reception of his last novel, and groaned in despair, declaring: "Well, if this sort of thing continues, no more novel-writing for me" (qtd. in Page
Thus ended his career as a novelist, for which he had no relish.

Hardy was influenced by the German philosopher Schopenhauer's conception of the world as "Will" and of life as "strife" and "misery" (Durant 308). The heroine in _Tess of the d'Urbervilles_ is considered, for example, a victim struggling between her instinct to enjoy the pleasures of life and the insurmountable destiny dragging her down to death (Johnson 143). However, Hardy continued to search for the meaning of life ("Thomas Hardy and Christianity" 1). He groped through fatalism in his early novels towards fulfilment in _Tess of the d'Urbervilles_, the heroine realizing her soul.

Hardy claimed that his stories were impersonal narrations. But he drew heavily on his personal life. His courting of his first wife Lavinia Gifford is reflected in Stephen's love for Elfride Swancourt in _A Pair of Blue Eyes_. Casterbridge is Dorchester. Talbothays dairy, where Tess meets Angel, is actually Hardy's brother Henry's house of that name. His novels are replete with his childhood associations.

Hardy does not give much attention to the design of his plot. The twofold accusation against his plot is that "his hold on design is slack and clumsy" (Cecil 110) and that he "always had difficulty in resolving his fictional
entanglement" (Ford 411). He is guilty of unnatural ending in his fiction. There is no real need for Alec's murder by Tess. The other examples of bad ending are Troy's death in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and Eustacia's suicide in *The Return of the Native*. However, K.Chellappan remarks that works become great not by the conclusions but by the deep analysis of human conflicts, and adds, "Conclusions are no solutions" (376).

Hardy's novels are in the third-person narrative. He was "not a critical student of the art of fiction" (Page 63), and did not experiment with innovations. His conception of the novel was traditional. He believed in telling his stories straight.

There are too many authorial comments in his novels. He is "given to laboured commentary and intrusive autodidactic opinions," which often become "troublesomely oppressive" (P.Rogers 359).

To sum up, Hardy is one of a few great writers, who enjoy both an "academic reputation" and "a wide and enthusiastic following among the common readers of the world" (Page 33).

The Tamil novel, until Jayakanthan began to write, discussed subjects like education, hygiene, fraternal and marital love, chastity, honesty, gratitude and humanity. Feminism in the twentieth century became an important
question in fiction. The female character Ranjani in Rajam Krishnan's [a woman novelist] Veedu says, "Woman is destined to be man's property. Where, then, is her uniqueness?" (158). The feminist writer portrayed woman as "the victim of a set of values that demanded implicit obedience to male domination and of many other social practices" (Jayawardane 79). But they did not go beyond moral questions. Puthumai Pithan and Jayakanthan were the first to give a frank treatment of sexual relationship in the short story and the novel in Tamil respectively (Kailasapathy 52-53). In the works of such writers as Akilan [Jayakanthan's contemporary], sex and sexual perversions do not transcend their intended sexual appeal to the readers, while in Jayakanthan's writings sex is investigated as a theory (Kailasapathy 152). Sex as a theory refers to the meaningful sex relationships between men and women that Jayakanthan presents in the selected novels. This aspect is discussed in this dissertation in terms of patterns of love. Jayakanthan remains unique in matters like the analysis of woman’s heart, the indication of her individuality and desires, and the quest for feminine fulfilment.

When Jayakanthan began to write in the post-independent era, modern scientific inventions had enriched the upper and middle class life while the lower classes
were reeling under poverty and misery. The heinous caste system was another major undermining influence in the Tamil society of his day (N.Subramanian, Social and Cultural History of Tamil Nad 226). Jayakanthan's early novels and short stories dealt with the ups and downs in society, and so critics tried to stigmatize him as one who wrote only on poverty (Krishnasamy 218). Therefore he did not hold poverty as the general social background in his later novels. The historian K.K.Pillai says that in the early part of the twentieth century, ninety percent of the doctors, engineers and lawyers were only Brahmins (511). But according to Jayakanthan, casteism does not interfere with individual morality and freedom, and so he does not describe caste conflicts in his writings (Sabai Naduve 127-28). It is relevant to note the words of Jnani: "When a writer goes deep into himself, he transcends class and caste"(96).

Woman in the modern Tamil society enjoys equality in education and employment (Kuppusamy 51). Majumdar, Ray Chaudri and Dutta say that customs and prejudices against woman’s education are fast disappearing (945). But the traditional stigma sticks to an innocent woman at her inadvertent fall as it does to Ganga in Jayakanthan's Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal. While Hardy portrays his characters against the rural background of poverty,
Jayakanthan tells almost all the stories of the selected novels in an affluent, urban setting.

Jayakanthan (1934–) is a living writer, who was born in Cuddalore near Chennai. As a boy, he was unruly. He was uninterested in formal education, and ran away to Chennai to become a full-time Marxist-Communist worker. Chennai commune became his study centre, where he became aware of communism and world affairs. Often, he was penniless, and spent his time with the miserable humanity on the platform. This laid the foundation for his career as a writer. In the nineteen fifties he made a mark as a writer of short stories. His early novels evince his communist affinity as they are on poverty, exploitation and prostitution. It was in his later novels, written after 1965, that he experimented with the themes of liberated love, marriage and chastity. This change in him is attributed to his disillusionment with communism and his maturity as a writer (Journal of Tamil studies 21-22).

Jayakanthan is versatile. He has portrayed a variety of characters from indigent coolies, slum-dwellers and middle-class Brahmins to the upper-class people living in bungalows with foreign cars; from atheism to sainthood; from communism to democracy; from the local brew to Scotch; from Chennai Tamil dialogue to King’s English (Krishnasamy 142). Totatri considers it a mark of
Jayakanthan’s versatility that he has recorded affluent life, which is the result of social change (36).

Jayakanthan is at home in both rural and urban settings. In novels like Rishimoolam [Genesis of a Hermit] and Oru Manithan Oru Veedu Oru Ulaham [A Man, a House, a World], he creates village atmosphere. Rajaraman watching the dead bodies burning against the background of a river in flood in Rishimoolam (17-19) and the calf skipping with uplifted tail in front of the lorry that was moving uphill in Oru Manithan Oru Veedu Oru Ulaham (24) are scenes of rural life rarely excelled by any other writer. But his ultimate view of nature is no more than utilitarian. He says, “Man cannot live after destroying nature. Man is part of nature. When a new society is formed against exploitation, we should struggle to protect nature” (Sabai Naduve 134). He does not evince the intensity of emotional communion that Hardy has with nature. Since the selected novels portray urban life, nature has almost no role to play in them.

All the selected novels of Jayakanthan are heroine-centred (K. Chellappan 368). Woman is not the slave but the new power (Meenakshisundaram 61). The emergence of Indian women began during the Indian freedom struggle. Women played an important role during the freedom struggle (Chattopadhyaya 107). Jayakanthan considers that the
virtues of good will, chastity and love abound more in women than in men in real life (Sunday Dinamani Supplement 5). The women of his time face their problems boldly (Idaya Ranihalum Ispade Rajakalum 3). In a male-dominated society, the problems faced by women from school-going girls to widows are humanely treated in Jayakanthan’s works (Krishnasamy ix). He maintains that women’s loss of chastity should be hidden because, when it is made public, the traditional society prevents them from getting married decently. He disagrees with the ill-treatment of fallen women. Being a feminist writer, he recommends education and jobs for women so that they can be independent of men and be free from sufferings in a male-dominated society. He looks at women’s sexuality from a modernist point of view. Premarital and extramarital affairs do not prevent most of his heroines from remaining happily married.

Jayakanthan believes in optimism in literature (Krishnasamy 27). Though he has written tragic short stories and novels (e.g., “Oru Pidi Soru” [A Handful of Rice], and Unnaipol Oruvan [One like You] respectively), most of his novels do not end tragically. In the selected novels, none of the heroines dies. Jayakanthan concentrates on the problems and solutions in life rather than on the tragic side of it. The sufferings of the heroines are caused by their inability to accept solutions
(Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal and Sundara Gandam), and not by a divine hand punishing them for their sins.

Jayakanthan has little sympathy for the customs which strangle normal human desires. Majority of his characters overthrow the habits, values and morality followed for ages. Like Hardy, Jayakanthan too was accused of writing sensational stories (Krishnasamy 58). He discussed subjects like rape and incest (in the short stories "Agnipravesam" and "Chalaram" respectively). He thought that a writer should fight superstition and social injustice through his stories (Oru Ilakiyavathiyin Kalai Ulaha Anubavangal 228). When his short story "Agnipravesam" came out in 1966, there was a volley of protests both from the critics and from the reading public against the fallen heroine being cleansed and purified by her mother pouring a pot of water on her head and keeping her fall secret. To satisfy the readers, he rewrote the story into the novel Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal, in which the heroine Ganga is left forlorn at the end, and becomes indifferent to society and its law. He thinks that if a woman loses her chastity inadvertently, she should not make it public (S.Subramanian 151). He believes that the traditional conception of chastity should change with time (S.Subramanian 141). This treatment of the life of the modern woman gave fresh impetus to Feminist creative writing in Tamil.
It is no wonder that Jayakanthan calls himself a modern Hindu since Vedic Hinduism has long been part and parcel of the religious life of the Tamil people (N.Subramanian, *The Tamils, Their History, Culture and Civilization* 100). According to him, a Hindu searches for God within and finds Him in himself (*Nanum Enathu Nanbarhalum* 101-02). During one of his visits to a Hindu monastery, he sat among the hermits, laughed away the time and felt the joy that comes from reading poetry (*Balasubramanian* 259). The ascetic outlook of life that hermits embody has found a way into his fiction. He has written the novel *Gangai Enge Pohiral* [Where Does Ganga Go] to show how the fallen girl of the short story "Agnipravesam" and the novel *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal* attains the truth of life through renunciation. Like Hardy, Jayakanthan preaches the fulfilment that results from detachment.

Jayakanthan, like Hardy, has drawn heavily on his own life. For instance, his amorous experiences in the world of cinema, where he has made his mark as director and story writer, have formed the basis of his novels *Parisukku Po* and *Oru Nadihai Nadaham Parkiral*. His novels *Intha Nerathil Ival* [This Woman at This Time], *Pattimarhalum Pethimarhalum* [Grandmothers and Granddaughters] and *Appuvukku Appa Sonna Kathaihal* [The
Stories That Father Told Appu] give an account of his ancestors (Krishnasamy 150-53). Thus, his novels are full of the details of his own life.

Jayakanthan's early novels and short stories are not defective in plot (Senthilnathan 88). He does not pay proper attention to plot in his later novels. Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal is the short story "Agnipravesam" lengthened. Parisukku Po is defective in form as it is considered a combination of four short stories ill-connected (Krishnasamy 39). Like Hardy, Jayakanthan is clumsy with the conclusions. He leaves the heroine of Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal frustrated for no good reasons. He makes Kalyani in Oru Nadihai Nadaham Parkiral lame to satisfy the "sadistic impulse" of the society (K. Chellappan 376) and to unite her with her husband. However, bad conclusions do not affect the greatness of his works.

Jayakanthan employs the first- and third-person narratives and even the technique of the stream of consciousness as and when the occasion demands (Vanamamalai 74). He calls himself a propagandist (Sinthayil Ayiram 3) and gives long didactic comments in the course of the narration. Such authorial comments interfere with the plot and the holistic appeal of his novels (Vedasahayakumar 47).
Jayakumar sums up Jayakanthan's achievement:

"Ignoring [Jayakanthan] and his writings, nobody can speak of the growth of Tamil literature" (Jayakanthan, Nanum Enathu Nanbarhalum 137). S.Chellappan says that nobody can write the history of the twentieth century literature without mentioning the contributions made by Jayakanthan (45). Jayakanthan is not in favour of research. He says that he has not written his stories for research. "Can the researchers assess what I am [...]? You bring your dissertations. I shall tell you what you are [...]," he says (Nanum Enathu Nanbarhalum 177). Nor does he help researchers with answers to their questions ("Padiyungal"). Still, he has grown in popularity and academic reputation.

There are personal, social and cultural similarities between Hardy and Jayakanthan. Both were not formally educated. They wrote the selected novels for serial publication. Both became controversial because of the free discussion of sexual relationships. Female characters play a predominant role in their fiction. Characterization is more important with them than plot. They have dealt in detail with the themes of love, marriage, female chastity and fulfilment. Both have pointed out the male chauvinism in their respective societies and the sufferings it has caused woman. They
stress the need for a change of outlook on the cultural question of woman’s chastity. They appeal to society to accommodate itself to woman’s sexuality. Both believe in individual salvation resulting from religious detachment.

The dissimilarities between Hardy and Jayakanthan are due to their social backgrounds. The selected novels of Hardy have rural settings because he was born and brought up in the countryside. On the other hand, the selected novels of Jayakanthan have urban settings because, ever since he was eleven, he has been in the city of Chennai. Though Hardy called himself a meliorist, he has reached depths of tragedy rarely excelled in fiction. Jayakanthan, as an optimist, attempts to seek solutions to the problems in woman’s life. Hardy, being an architect, delights in pictorial description. Jayakanthan, as a socialist, argues for communism, though not in the selected novels.

Both Hardy and Jayakanthan, as representatives of two great cultures in the world, are fit to be considered for a thematic comparative study. Individual, social, cultural and spiritual aspects of woman’s life are discussed under love, marriage, chastity and fulfilment respectively. Chapter II sketches the love patterns in the selected novels in order to trace the process by which woman falls in love.