CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The relevance of cross culture and multi-ethnic studies has gained recognition for the involvement of tolerance, excitement and multiple perspectives and values. Comparative literature does not involve pronouncements of ethical and cultural judgments on national and international literatures. The main objective of the study of comparative literature is not just to compare two national literatures. The comparison must be based upon scientific principles. Moreover one can compare literature on the one hand and the subjects like history, philosophy, fine arts and science on the other hand. Comparative literature emphasizes the fact that the creativeness and literary experience would remain the same anywhere in the world. It gives an account of the similarities found between two literatures. At the same time it examines the meaningful diversities also.

It is an uphill task as one has to labour under difficulties of grappling with the differences of language, culture and tradition so as to make comparison between poets of different linguistic cultures. For every language has got its own nuances and finesse of words and meanings. Every poet has got his individuality which one has to comprehend while making the comparison.

According to Mathew Arnold, “Everywhere there is connection; everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures”. (qtd in Chandra473)
According to Bassnett, “Comparative literature aims to involve the study of cross-cultural literatures; its concerns go with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space. It would also study the affinities and influences among different literatures”. (1)

Rene Wellek defines comparative literature study as follows: “It is an examination of literary texts in more than one language, through an investigation of contrast, analogy, provenance or influence; or a study of literary relations and communications between two or more groups that speak different languages”. (49)

Fowler defines comparative literature as an evaluative process:

The analytic and evaluative process of a literary critic is well complemented by the techniques of comparison. The comparative literary study aims to enhance awareness of the qualities of one work by using the products of another linguistic culture as an illuminating context: studying same broad topic or theme as it is realised in the literatures of different languages. (34)

Rene Wellek also opines that the comparative literature studies the interrelationships between two or more literatures (49). Studying comparable poems would help to analyse and interpret the literature very well.

Anthoney Thorlby observes that writings in different languages could be compared:

Comparative literature does not in itself commit one to any other principle than, that comparison is a most useful technique for analyzing works of art, and that instead of confining comparison to writings in the same language, one may usefully choose points of comparison in other languages. To see
one poem, or one picture, or one building is to have little feeling for its qualities. To see another example of the ‘same’ thing which being another work of art is of course not the same but only ‘comparable’ is to take the first step towards recognizing what is in each case good, original, difficult and intended. (qtd in Chandra 78-79).

Wellek and Warren recognize the comparable aspects found in the literatures of different countries:

> We recognize that there is one poetry, one literature, comparable in all ages, developing, changing full of possibilities. Literature is neither a series of unique works with nothing in common nor a series of works enclosed in time cycles of Romanticism or classicism, the age of Pope and the age of Wordsworth. Nor is it, of course, the ‘block universe’ of sameness and immutability which an elder classicism conceived as ideal. (43)

According to K.Chellappan, comparison is a source of knowledge and method of enquiry used by all sciences. Similarly a comparative study of literature across cultures could be considered an extension and intensification of healthy critical procedure adopted by sensitive readers of literature in all periods and cultures.(1)

Henry Remak defines comparative literature as follows:

> Comparative literature is a study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of the relationship between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the fine arts, philosophy, history, the social science, the sciences, religion etc. On the
other. In brief it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression (1).

According to Owen Aldridge, “comparative literature can be considered the study of any literary phenomenon from the perspective of more than one national literature or in conjunction with another intellectual discipline or even several”.(1)

There are two schools of comparative literature: the French and the American. In the French school the concept of influence is given importance since it is considered the expression of direct casual relationship. It looks at comparative literature as a part of literary history which deals with international relations, especially factual demonstrative influences which cross national and linguistic boundaries. “Influence” in this context is used to denote the relations between various works of art.

The American school takes up parallel studies in which similar images or image complexes in the works of writers unknown to one another are analyzed. They are sometimes subjected to a Jungian interpretation tracing them to certain archetypes. Parallel studies of a particular then a particular genre found in various cultures in the world are also compared. The striking similarities may be traced to common human experience and the attempt of the writers to convert raw materials to art involving social, literary and psychological factors may also be compared.

In this study, the investigator has attempted to compare the aspects of Cankam poetry and English Metaphysical poetry. It is only a parallel study and not an impact one.
English metaphysical poetry is the richest and most widely ranging in the language. In the seventeenth century, the metaphysical poets brought forth the best erotic poetry, devotional poetry, finest lyrics, satires, pastorals and visionary meditations of that era.

According to Grierson, metaphysical poetry in the full sense of the term is a poetry which has been inspired by the philosophical conception of the universe and of the roll assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence. While writing about metaphysical poetry, T.S. Eliot remarks that the phrase has long done duty as a term of abuse or as the label of a quaint taste. The question is to what extent the metaphysical school is a digression from the main current. He also states that it is very difficult to define metaphysical poetry. The poetry of Donne is very close to that of Chapman. The devotional verse of Herbert, Vaughan and Crashaw has a quality which returns through the Elizabethan period to the early Italians.

The term ‘metaphysical’ gives the impression that metaphysical poetry discusses the nature of the universe. The word metaphysical refers to style, rather than subject matter and the style reflects an attitude towards experience. Like other poets, the metaphysical poets wrote on common subjects like love, religion and death. But it is in their mood of treatment of these subjects that they differ from others.

A term was needed to describe the poetry of Donne and his followers. Critics put forward a few possibilities. “Metaphysical”, was not the only one. ‘strong-lined’ was the term used by the contemporaries of the poets in question
and Helen Gardner adopts it. Grierson puts forward ‘fantastic’ as a possibility. The term ‘metaphysical’, however unsatisfactory it may be, has come to stay and will hardly be replaced for questions of literary nomenclature are seldom resolved to everyone’s satisfaction.

One of the salient features of metaphysical poetry is concentration. A metaphysical poem remains to be short and is always closely woven and so there is some truth when it is said a metaphysical poem is an expanded epigram. The reader is held to an idea or a line or argument. He is not allowed to pass and ponder over a passage. Metaphysical poetry demands the reader’s attention and compels him to read on.

The metaphysical poets were interested in concentration and precision while writing the verses. They invented verse form which suited them to express the diversity of their poetic experience. They preferred a line of eight syllables to a line of ten and they employed stanzas of varying length into which the sense was packed.

Helen Gardner has aptly summarized this feature in her introduction to The Metaphysical poets thus:

A stanza of Donne or Herbert is not, like rhyme royal or a Spenserian stanza, an ideal mould into which the words have flowed. It is more like a limiting frame in which words and thoughts are compressed. The metaphysical poets favoured very simple verb forms, octosyllabic couplets, or quatrains or else stanzas created for the particular poem in which length of line and rhyme scheme artfully enforced the sense. (25)
T.S. Eliot finds it difficult to identify the common aspects of the metaphysical poets:

It is difficult to find any precise use of metaphor, simile, or other conceit, which is common to all the poets and at the same time important enough as an element of style to isolate these poets as a group. Donne, and often Cowley, employ a device which is sometimes considered characteristically ‘metaphysical’; the elaboration (contrasted with the condensation) of a figure of speech to the furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it. Thus Cowley develops the commonplace comparison of the world to a chess-board through long stanzas (“To Destiny”), and Donne, with more grace, in “A Valediction,” the comparison of two lovers to the content of a comparison a development by rapid association of thought which requires considerable agility on the part of the reader. (112)

William Walsh criticizes the amorous verse of the moderns: “The moderns, on the other hand, have sought out for occasions that none meet with but themselves, and fill their verses with thoughts that are surprising and glittering, but not tender, passionate, or natural to a man in love.” (qtd in Willamson 4)

According to William Walsh, the metaphysical poets exhibited enormous imagination and greater wit. But the softness, tenderness and violence of passion was waning in the love verses:

Never was there a more copious Fancy or greater reach of wit than what appears in Dr. Donne; nothing can be more gallant or gentle than the poems of Mr. Waller; nothing more gay or sprightly than those of Sir John
suckling; and nothing fuller of variety and learning than Cowley’s
However. It may be observed, that among all these, that softness,
Tenderness, and violence of passion, which the Ancients thought most
proper for Love verses, is waning. (qtd in Williamson 5)

Dryden comments on the writings of John Donne as follows:
He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous
verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair
sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their
hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love. In this Mr.Cowley has
copied him to a fault. (qtd in Williamson 6)

While writing about the school of Donne, Pope remarks as follows:
“There Drayton becomes an imitator of Spenser; Carew remains in the school of
Waller; “Crashaw is a worse sort of Cowley”; “Herbert is lower than Crashaw”;
“Donne had no imagination, but as much wit, I think, as any writer can possibly
have.” (qtd in Williamson 9)

Dr. Johnson christened the Metaphysical poets and analyzed their school of
poetry in his ‘Life of Cowley’. He opined that the main aim of those poets was to
show their learning:

The Metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning
was their whole endeavor; but, unluckily resolving to show it in rhyme,
instead of writing poetry, they only wrote verses, and, very often, such
verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the
modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables. *(qtd in Willamson 7)*

Johnson also attacked the metaphysical poets for combining dissimilar images and discovering mysterious resemblances in things clearly unlike. He was also opposed to the idea of connecting heterogeneous ideas by violence together:

But wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of “Discordia concors;” a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtlety surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased. *(45)*

According to Johnson the greatness of the metaphysical poets seldom elevates but their acuteness often surprises the readers:

In perusing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exercised either by recollection or inquiry; either something already learned is to be retrieved, or something new is to be examined. If their greatness seldom elevates, their acuteness often surprises; if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflection and comparison are employed; and in the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found
buried, perhaps, ingrossness of experience, but useful to those who know
their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and
polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety,
though less copiousness of sentiment. (qtd in Williamson 43)

The metaphysical poets felt their thought. In these poets there is a
“direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of that thought into
feeling.” As James Reeves says “intellect and emotion are inseparably united, they
exist in harmony, not in opposition”, in these poets. But on the contrary, in the
poems of Wordsworth, Shelley, or other romantic poets, there is tension between
the two, viz., thought and feeling, rarely union. We cannot imagine Donne
sighing, as Keats did “for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts.

Cynicism is a quality that stands out prominently in the erotic verse of the
metaphysical. It was the fashion to write love poems in the manner of Petrarch
“Idealizing the lady and falsifying the poet. “the lady was placed on a pedestal of
unattainable perfection, at the foot of which the lover sighed and groaned. Donne
rebelled against this artificiality and he wrote love poems in an original and
realistic vein. So realistic was he about the nature of women that his poems tend to
be cynical.

Donne’s age saw an immense development of the drama and Donne himself
was a great frequenter to plays. Like him his followers also possessed strong
dramatic imagination. Many of the poems of the metaphysical open in an abrupt
manner there by arresting the attention of the reader from the very outset.
Compared with the mellifluous poetry of the Elizabethans, the verse of the metaphysical appears to be harsh and staccato. Donne himself averred, “I sing not siren like, to tempt.” It has been correctly pointed out that Donne’s harshness cannot be divorced from his poetic experience. Harshness is an integral part of the poetry of metaphysical poets. Grierson has observed that Donne’s harshness is not a sign of his carelessness or indifference to his art. In this connection Grierson writes of Donne thus: “he writes as one, who will say what he has to say without regard to conventions of poetic diction or smooth verse, but what he has to say is subtle and surprising, and so are the metrical effects with which it is presented.”

One of the charges against metaphysical poetry is its obscurity. Very often Ben Jonson’s statement is quoted in support of it. But in reality the charges of obscurity cannot be sustained. Metaphysical poetry makes demands upon the reader and challenges him to make it out. It does not attempt to attract the lazy.

Metaphysical poetry is close-packed and dense with meaning. It has got to be “chewed and digested.” Difficulty in certain places may arise due to the structure of the verse but as Eliot points out this is not a vice: it is fidelity to thought and feeling. Recondite imagery and juxtaposition of the remote with the near, the concrete with the abstract, and the sublime with the commonplace may also render a poem difficult.

Donne, the undisputed leader of the metaphysical poets, influenced his followers to a greater extent. But then his influence did not curb the originality of his followers. Helen Gardner admires the metaphysical poetry: “The metaphysical style heightens and liberates personality. It is essentially a style in which
individuality is expressed. The best pupils in the school of Donne learned from their master how to speak their own minds in their own voices.”

Herbert’s poetry is simpler than Donne’s. The range of his experience was narrower, for he wrote no love poetry, whereas Donne traverses every variety of moods both as a lover and worshipper. Herbert’s narrower experience not only limits his choice of subject matter, but simplifies the texture of his poems.

Herbert was the most religious of the metaphysical poets and he never wavered in his resolution to devote his poetic gifts exclusively to the service of God. “Herbert’s main themes are the incarnation, the passion, and the redemption.”

Personal misfortune, the civil trouble of the time, and the influence of his mystical brother Thomas, all helped to turn Vaughan to a poetry of religious contemplation.

Vaughan’s early poems show Donne’s influence in the most unmistakable manner. Vaughan borrows phrases and images from Donne. But the influence of Herbert on Vaughan is much more considerable. The influence of Herbert’s teaching brought about a conversion in Vaughan and he became a religious poet. He was passionately concerned like Herbert with the relation between God and the individual soul.

Of all the metaphysical poets, not excluding Donne, Marvell wrote on the greatest variety of subjects. He wrote on the great country houses where he was employed and of the political events of his day. He wrote of love and religion
also. The characteristic opening lines of Donne are not to be found in Marvell’s poetry. Marvell’s poetry conveys the impression of a cool and detached judgment.

Perhaps Crashaw has been considered a metaphysical poet mainly because of the conceits and paradoxes in which his work abounds. His use of metaphor in fact differs from that of the other poets in that it is more decorative and its function is often to evoke sensation.

Abraham Cowley wrote love poems in acknowledgement of Donne’s supremacy as a poet of love, and often seemed to follow him. He aims at clarity and hence makes his images simple. His metrical irregularities lack the power of Donne’s “strong-lines”.

The revival of interest in the poetry of Donne and his followers has been regarded as one of the most significant features of modern English poetry. This revival of interest is not the result of a shifting literary taste but a deep-rooted similarity between the age of Donne and of our own age. R.G.Cox writes relevantly, “the interest shown by our age in the period from Donne to Marvell and especially in the poetry of metaphysical wit amounts almost to a discovery. The experience of flux and transition in the present century seems to have given us an understanding denied to the eighteenth century, to the Victorians, and even to the Romantics. To those poets of our times who have struggled to bring poetry back into relation with the widest possible range of experience and to fuse thought and feeling in one act of imaginative apprehension, Donne and his followers have seemed to be particularly relevant.
The Tamil language has the distinction of being a classical tongue with an unbroken tradition of creativity and popular speech for well over two and a half millennia. The eight anthologies called *Ettuthokai* form part of early Tamil literature which is known as *Cankam* literature written eighteen centuries ago. Ten long poems called *Pattupattu* contain guide songs. These two collections contain 2381 poems in all, whose length varies from a minimum of three lines to a maximum of 782 lines. The subject matter of these two bodies of poetry is classified into *Akam* and *Puram*, the former dealing with the aspects of love between a young woman and man while latter with the rest, viz. war, munificence etc. The history of much of later Tamil literature is largely the history of the development and influences of these classical works.

Hart opines that Akam poetry is quite different from any other literary work:

*Cankam* literature is the touchstone for all subsequent literature in Tamil and shaped the future of literary discourses in the language. Even more importantly, *Cankam* literature is one of the great literary treasures of the world. Its works provide a Tamil perspective on life and on human experience that is quite different from anything found in Sanskrit, Latin, Greek or any other language. Its meters, its language, its conventions, and its spirit are all purely Tamil. Its scope is so large that it can easily be compared to any of the other classical language.

One could not find in any other language many poems written on a single theme composed in adherence to a set of pre-determined norms and rules. These
poems prove the fact that one could achieve great heights of creativity even if abstracted by certain prescriptions and prohibitions. The poets of the age have transmuted these conventions into standards with which to invest their compositions with an intrinsic order and unity as well as a sense of timelessness. One such convention is that the characters should not be referred to by individual names, real or imaginary, which may imply that the *akam* poet should not fix his characters to any particular time or place. The hero is mentioned in these poems simply as the man of the mountain, the man of the town, the person of the sea coast, etc. so also the heroine is referred to as the woman of the hill tribes, the girl of the peasants, the daughter of the fisherman etc.

The poet did not want the reader to identify the hero and the heroine with historical persons. As T.P. Meenakshisundram puts it, Akam poetry “expresses not something to be dated with reference to any particular person, and the aspects of love depicted in it intended to be universal and common to all times”(26). Nature is used to enrich the suggestive nature of poetry and this kind of suggestions through some description of Nature is called ‘*iraicci*’. When the hero has been meeting his sweet heart at night during his pre marital relationship, the lady companion desires to impress on him the necessity of hastening the marriage and asks him to come and meet her during daytime. It might also be that the ancient Tamils wanted to hand down a cosmic poetry with universal men and women as characters living the rhythm and joy of human life. Another unique feature of these poems is that they deal only with the alive and the living, celebrating the delight and ecstasy of the created universe. Love was dealt with in
five ‘\textit{tinais}’, each pertaining to a particular region with its own suitable season and appropriate hour of the day and its flora and fauna and characteristic environment. \textit{Kurinci-tinna}i or the clandestine union of the lovers is characteristic of the mountainous region; hero is set with the background of the forest region; \textit{maruta-tinna}i or the sulky life has the agricultural tract as its background; \textit{neytal tinai} or the life of despair is characteristic of the sea coast; \textit{palai tinai} or the life of desolation in separation is depicted in arid tract. \textit{Mullai tinai} or the life at home spent in expectation of the return of the lover.

Literary tradition in Tamil has closely associated the sloping hills and the winding streams with the adventures of the lover coming to his sweetheart at midnight, the early winter and the mullai blossoms of the forests with the patient waiting of the wife for her husband’s return from the battlefield, the fertile paddy fields and the roaming buffaloes with the careless life of the hero in the company of a harlot, the backwaters and the seashore with the heart- rending despair of the heroine and finally the waterless arid tract of the withered trees and emaciated beasts and birds with the separation of the hero from the heroine in pursuit of wealth in a far off country.

The poems on the theme of love are written in the form of dramatic monologues. The hero, the heroine or the lady companion seems to express his or her feelings and thoughts. The poet uses natural scenery. The poet has no place on this poetic stage. He cannot express his own ideas or feelings unless through the hero, the heroine and others in the drama of love. The feelings and thoughts of the characters imagined and created by him have been expressed. The poet merges
himself in the characters he creates and does not, as in subjective poetry or in ordinary narrative, describe or relate in his own person and from the outside. The dramatic element commonly appears more or less prominently in the shape of dialogue. The poet could have used some autobiographical material in such poems but it is not always easy to distinguish those elements. These are dramatic lyrics, and in spirit and method subjective poems: but the subjective element pertains, not to the poet himself, but to some imagined characters into whose feelings and thoughts he gives expression.

In English metaphysical poetry also, the poets do not express their own ideas. As John Garratt explains, poets express the universal feelings of the human beings. According to Grierson,“No links are suggested between the poems of Donne by the use of an imagined name or connection of circumstances.” (xviii)

John Garrett opines that Andrew Marvell has depicted the archetypal human being in his poem entitled ‘To His Coy Mistress’:

When Marvell wrote poetry he reached for one of his various masks as unfailingly as he reached for his pen. Sometimes the persona is explicit, as when he speaks in the voice of a young maiden who has just discovered the presence of evil in the world, in ‘The Nymph’ complaining for the Death of the Fawn’. More often, though, it is implicity ‘To his Coy Mistress’. The ‘I’ of Marvell’s poems stands most probably for a general or an archetypal human being summoned forth specially by Marvell for the occasion of the poem. So the speaker in ‘To his Coy Mistress’ advances the sort of argument used in any age by a man wishing to side step the
barricades of conventional morality and persuade a young virgin to sleep with him. Marvell own attitude towards the speaker of his dramatic monologue and his approval or disapproval of his arguments adduced by the saducer can only be surmised, not ascertained. (63)

The *akam* poets have conceived of human life as being built on the bedrock of the blood-relations between man and woman. V.Sp.Manickam, in his book entitled the *Tamil Concept of Love* finds *akam* poetry a literature of human sexual love based on the essential principles of sexual life. Most of the themes that could evoke the Tamil Muse are man’s physical wants and the sensuous enjoyment. It can be even stated that the ineffaceable sex urge constitutes the core of the akam thematic structure. Within the corpus of akam poetry, there are a large number of verses that portray the bliss and the pain of passion with great poetic fervour and intensity.

For the passions and the feelings of the lovers do not get a provocative exposure however intense and unbearable their emotional strain is. One of the sources of the outstanding superiority and aesthetic vitality of akam poetry lies in the treatment of the passion of love. The heroine, reduced to an emotional nothing in the absence of the hero, likens her condition to the flood dashing against the rocks, which M.Shanmugam pillai and David .E. Ludden appropriately interpret thus: “just as water in the rushing flood is pounded on the rocks into drops, spray, and finally mist, her life is being pounded away little by little, as her surging longing for him crashes on the hard fact of his absence.”
Andrew Marvell is one of the very important metaphysical poets. His poems present a combination of feelings and intellectual and a synthesis of thought and passion. Most of his poems reveal that he is a great poet of nature.

According to Annabel Patterson, “Andrew Marvell was an incorruptible patriot, garden loving poet, metaphysical wit, Neoplatonic savant, the man of puritan conscience, the reasonable loyalist politician and the literary critic disguised as a lyric poet”. (57). Any scholar who reads Marvell’s poetry could trace parallel ideas in the poems written by Cankam poets in Tamil language.

Andrew Marvell’s early poems express a fondness for the charm of rural nature. He has great love for garden, meadow and rivers. In the following lines the poet is addressing woodvines:

Bind me, ye woodvines, in your twines
Curb me about, ye gadding vine
And oh, so close your circle lace, (OBSV 752)

Similarly in a Tamil poem written by Karuvoor pouthiran, a mullai plant (a vine) has been admonished not to smile at the poor plight of the lover separated from the lady love. (CI 94)

In the poem “The Garden”, Marvell derives sensuous delight in describing the natural scenery. Ripe apples hang from the trees over the poet’s head. The bunches of grapes hang so close to his lips that their juice enters his mouth. The nectarines and peaches reach his hands. Moreover, he stumbles on the melons which are found on the ground. He is so entangled among the flowers that he almost falls on the grass. And here are the lines:
Ripe Apples drop about my head
The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine
The Nectarine and curious peach. (OBSV 752)

Likewise in Thirumurukarrupadai, Nakkirar, a Tamil poet describes a natural scenery sensuously. The cataract makes *akil* and sandal pieces of wood fall down. It also makes honey combs and jackfruits roll down. It makes monkeys and elephants tremble because of the chillness. Moreover it uproots the banana trees and scatters coconuts in different directions.

In *kalithokai* (a Tamil poetic collection), a sensuous description of nature has been depicted. It is raining heavily with intermittent lightning and thunder during a midnight. With the help of light produced by the lightning, the elephants enter the field and eat the plants. After hearing the footsteps of the top of the elephants, the man living in the forest climbs up the top of the wooden platform and using a catapult pelts the stones in different directions. The stones scattered the flowers of the *vengai* tree. They also make the jackfruits fall down. Moreover, they penetrate the honey comb and the mangoes also fall down. They also tear the banana leaves. Finally, the stones strike into the jack fruits. (CI 332).

In a poem written by Paranar in *Akananuru* (another poetic collection) nature has been portrayed vividly. A wild pig with sharp horns drank water in a pond. It also dug the ground and ate many tubers. A cataract which fell from the rock would end up in a pond. By the side of the pond there was a thick hedge. Above the hedge there was a tree with bunches of white flowers. These flowers
used to shed pollen down on the pig. And in the end, the pig would graze the grains and have a sweet nap by the side of the hill. (CI 253).

In Andrew Marvell’s ‘Bermudas’ one can find sensuous description of nature. In the Brumudas Island, God has given eternal spring which lends beauty to everything. Many birds visit this place. To take care of the people living there, plenty of bright oranges are found in the trees. They look so bright. They appear to be golden lamps hanging in the darkness of green orchards. There are pomegranates which look like jewels. One can find melons grow at its feet. A rare variety of pineapples are also found there. God has gifted the island with cedar trees. (TPAM 40)

In the same way, in a Tamil poem, nature has been described beautifully. During the night, the rain lashed the hill region where pepper plants grew in plenty. A monkey plucked a jack fruit but it dropped it into the cataract. Hence the stream brought it to the place where people would drink water. Such a sensuous description is found in kuruntokai (CI 86).

Nature is used as the backdrop in the Tamil Akam poetry. There is the suffering solitary heroine who looks at the wild stream flowing down from the hill of the hero. The stream is fully covered with flowers dropping from the trees on the banks along. She accuses the stream of indifference towards her, as it flows stealthily. When the lover is away from the lady love, she suffers a lot in the backdrop of the pathetic cries of solitary birds the hooting of the howl, the unending roars of the sea waves, and the ceaseless blowing of the northern wind and so on. Her sense of despair and anxiety comes to us through the images of the
stagnant waters, the dried springs, the eagle, the vulture, the ferocious tiger, the cruel robbers and so on. In all these situations, the landscape in nature finds a perfect harmony with the psychological conditions of the human beings.

The rhythms of human life and those of nature are made to correspond, coexist and coalesce in these poems. It looks like an impassioned unity of all things in the universe, interpenetration between man and nature. It could be a strange vision of life where inanimate objects are endowed with animation, or even with a soul. Man and nature did not stand in opposition and did not therefore have to be apprehended by different modes of cognition. Natural phenomena were regularly conceived in terms of human experience, and human experience was conceived in terms of cosmic events. For, there is the heroine who considers the punnai tree her sister and feels shy of love-play under it, because it has been grown by her mother (CI 162).

The emotional coming together of the sexually matured man and woman has for its setting the mountain region in winter at midnight. The summer and the midday in the parched wasteland are the images that serve as the ‘objective correlative’ of the angst of passion the heroine suffers in her separation from the hero. The heavy downpour, the flooding rivers, the rutting elephant, the blossoming trees, the ripened corn, the mating birds and beasts evoke the passion of the hero and the heroine. The interminable roar of the sea waves at night, the unabated blowing of the northern wind, the pathetic cries of lonesome birds, the hooting of the howl and so on are the phenomena in nature that the lonesome, despondent lady lives with as her man is away on his manly quests. Her sense of
wretchedness and anxiety comes to us through the images of the stagnant waters, the dried springs, the eagle, the vulture, the devouring tiger, the heartless robbers, and so on. In all these instances, the landscape in nature finds a perfect harmony with the psychology of the humans.

In Cankam Literature, the worlds of men and nature are brought into an organic oneness by providing the latter with human qualities and understanding it by the same mode of cognition of which the human world is conceived. The ripples of the backwaters sing a lullaby to the crow. A crane hearing the cries of pain of the beetle rushes to the spot and releases it from the crab. A wolf in the company of its mate refrains from attacking a female deer with its young one by its side. When its mate is killed by the hunters, a female deer remains hungry and suffers in solitude. As the male elephant is killed by a tiger, the female elephant and its calf suffer a lot. When its male is caught into the net of the fisherman boys, the female crane abandons its food and makes pitiful cries from a Palmyra tree. As a male elephant slips down and falls into a pit, the female throws the branch of a tree to help it. Such portrayals of tenderness and love in the non-human world are intended to convey a meaning and a message to the hero who has deserted. When the suffering heroine tells the thundering clouds that their behaviour is unbecoming of noble persons and they appear to be laughing at her condition, or when a dove fans its soft features over its mate and protects it from the scorching sun, it points to a ‘love’ poetry which remains a unique contribution to world literature.
Grierson has also stressed that Donne has described the infinite quality of passion of lovers: to express infinite no doubt is contradiction in terms. But no poet has gone never to the hinting and adumbration of this infinite quality of passion and of the relapses and reactions from passion, than the author of the second Anniversary and the Ecstasy.

According to Stevie Davies, Donne’s love poems delineate passionate endearment, assertion of possession or sexual derive, sexual imagination or a kind of exciting tranquility. (27)

Zest for the beauties of the external nature characterizes Cankam Literature. According to Thaninayakam nature has been used as the backdrop in most of the poems written by the ancient Tamil poets. He opines:

The Tamil poets were expected to be both expert psychologists and expert naturalists, and nature was important to them only in relation to man. Nature was the stage on which the human actors came and went. It provided the background and setting for the drama of life, but was not a mere frame or mere background. The important aspects of poetry was the feelings, the behavior, the conduct of man, but nature served to these themes in bolder relief by being portrayed as being in harmony or in contrast. (80)

In Thirmurukarrupadai, Nakkirar describes the beauty of the cataract which makes many things fall down. The cataract rolls down the different kinds of trees such as Akil, the sandal wood and Bamboo. It also brings the bee hive, Jack fruits and the flowers of Curapunnai down the stream. The splashing drops of
coldwater from the cataract make the monkey and elephants shiver. Because of
the action of the cataract, banana plants are rooted out and coconuts scatter from
the tree tops. Peacocks and hens run helter-skelter. Pigs and bears hide
themselves in the caves. Wild cows begin to bellow. The cataract falls down
making great noise.

……..palavutan

Veru pal tukilin nutanki akil cumantu

……..ilumena ili tarum aruvi

Palam mutri colai malai kilavone. (CI- 562)

Kousikanar describes the beauty of nature in **Malaipatukatam**. The green
forest areas around the hill and the falling cataract have been vividly portrayed in
his work. The sweet scent emanating from the jack fruit is spread all over the hill.
The cataract scatters the different objects found on the hill down the stream. It
also falls down making great noise. The huntsman and the people living in the
forest produce various kinds of noise. Pillai comments:

The author describes the grand mountain scenery of Naviram with the Siva
Temple on its summit, the rapid whirling cheyyar flowing down its slopes,
the numerous waterfalls with their continuous roar, the noises of the
elephant tamers, the drunken dancing drummers and the women singing
and pounding millet.(88)

Avalavum micaiyavum tuvanri pala utan

A lakai tavirtta en arum tiratta

Malai patu katam matirattu iyampa. (CI- 630)
In kalitokai, the beauty of the hillock has been portrayed in many poems. In one of the poems, Kapilar speaks about the tall trees touching the sky which are found abundant on the rainy hill. Elephants used to roam in all directions. Often tigers would fight with the wild elephants.

Perukalirrinattotu vinku eruttu erul mun pin
Irumpuli mayakkurra ikalmalai nal nata. (CI 384)

Kapilar in his kurincipattu describes nature vividly. Birds fluttering in the sky rushed to their nests. After quenching their thirst by taking water from the ocean, clouds gathered around the hill. Thunders began to strike resembling the noise of the drum. Lightning flashed like the brightness of the spear of Lord Murukan. The wind gathering around the sky made the clouds rain heavily. This rain water fell down from the top of the hill and became a cataract. Ladies began to bathe in the stream for a long time. Water flowed down as if marble had been melted down from the hill.

Nirai irum pauvam kural pata Mukantu kontu
Akal iru vanattu visu vali kalavin
Muracu atirntanna in kural errotu…. (CI 610)
Min mayariku karuviya kalmicai polintena
Annal netunkottu ili taru tel nir
Avir tukil puraiyum avvel auvi. (CI 612)

According to V.S.P.Manickam, “Nature of all kinds was made to serve as the background of human behaviour. Only such things in nature as were found to be utilized for the poetic theme related to the life of human beings attracted the
attention of the cankam poets”\(^{(102)}\). Ancient Tamil poets used Nature in their poetry as the backdrop of the human feelings. For example, Nakkirar speaks about the force of the wind which below during winter season and made many people suffer. Animals forgot to graze because of cold. Monkeys shivered and birds fell down from the trees because of the cold wind. Cows declined to feed their calves. Even the hill appeared to be suffering from the cold wind.

\[
\text{Ma meyal marappa manti kura} \\
\text{Paravai pativana vila karavai} \\
\text{Kanru kol oliyak katiya vici} \\
\text{Kunru kuirppanna kutir panal (CI 484)}
\]

The cold wind appeared to be doing harm to many people. But it was considered to be good as it made the king carry out his duty, even though separated from his wife. The poet ends the poem with an optimistic view that the king would return home after completing his duty successfully.

To sum up, the Cankam poetry was written about two thousand years ago. During the seventeenth century, a group of poets used metaphysical images in their poetry. An attempt has been made to compare the cankam poetry and English metaphysical poetry as a parallel study and to find out the affinities and similarities. In the introductory chapter, aspects of comparative literature have been discussed. Moreover the theme of love and the concept of nature as found in the Cankam literature and English metaphysical poetry have been briefly introduced. In the second chapter, the treatment of love as delineated in cankam poetry and English metaphysical poetry has been discussed in detail. In the third
chapter, the religious fervour as described by the poets belonging to two languages has been discussed. The fourth chapter analyses the poetic imagery and the other stylistic devices used by the poets. In the concluding chapter, a convincing summary has been provided.