Chapter – VII
Summing Up
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A humble effort has been so far made to analyse critically some of the similarities found in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. This chapter, therefore, besides summing up the major findings of this study, examines how far the strong response of Anand and Pillai towards the social concern reveals their relative strength as novelists and the writings of them bring out the relative success achieved by each writer in transmitting the social content into artistic form.

Both Anand and Pillai are committed writers in focusing their conscious intention towards the society. They write with a fine scorn of social and economic inequalities. Fiction for them is a weapon through which they criticise the ills of the society. Anand himself admits in "Why I Write":

What is a writer if he is not fiery voice of the people, who, through his own torments, urges and exaltations, by realizing the pains, frustrations and aspirations of others...transmutes in art all feeling, all thought,
all experience—thus becoming the seer of a new vision in any given situation. (15)

This is applicable to the works of Pillai also. This is evident from the description of N. Gopalakrishnan Nair: "The novelist’s (Pillai’s) primary concern is to react to contemporary life" (168). Humanist convictions and their humanitarian compassion have fired their imagination; in turn Anand and Pillai have given unforgettable fictions to the world of literature.

Anand and Pillai are equally occupying the same position in effectively presenting the social and political problems in their novels. Many of their works expose their similar social concerns keeping in mind their aims as proletarian humanists. The comment of C. Paul Verghese stands testimony to this:

In a large number of Thakazhi’s novels we have the portrayal of the lives of scavengers, of peasants, of fishermen who suffer the agony of hunger and poverty owing to the oppression of
the privileged class and the absence of social justice. (120)

P.K. Singh also expresses the similar view over some of the novels of Anand:

**Coolie** is the domestic servant because of poverty. **Untouchable** narrates about the miserable condition of outcastes and social hypocrisy of religious people. **Two Leaves and a Bud** throws light on the exploitation of the peasants. (13)

Anand and Pillai bring out similar psychological insight and realistic analysis of human nature and a concern for the common man.

They choose a central character and through his view they stare at the various absurdities, eccentricities and other aspects of society confronting a common man in day-to-day life. The titles of the early novels, **Untouchable** and **Coolie**, present the universal status as against the particular. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly observes, "Bakha is all untouchables, Munoo is all Coolies" (356). Anand makes the
individual, Bakha or Munoo, assert his uniqueness without quite ceasing to be the universal.

The study reveals that Anand and Pillai resemble most in their preoccupation with the lives of the poor and dispossessed masses of people and the hard realities underlying their wretched existence. It shows how they skilfully exposed the ills of contemporary Indian life and society through their forceful depiction of the seamy and sordid aspects of the life in their novels. Anand and Pillai do not miss any opportunity to castigate social injustice rampant in the society. The presentation, which they have employed in the delineation of characters, and development of themes, has innumerable similarities. They have chosen some women characters to depict their sufferings. Anand’s women are mostly silent sufferers excepting Gauri in The Old Woman and the Cow. But the women of Pillai are brave and they boldly face challenges in their lives.

Anand and Pillai have taken the fictional medium to give actualization of their favourite ideals about societal transformation. Their works provide classic examples of the seamless blend of art and ideology which invariably heightens
the quality of literature. Their novels are rooted in the social milieu of their time and address the intractable social problems never attempted in any fiction earlier. Gandhiji advised Anand to write a tract on untouchability. Gandhiji said, "The straight book is truthful and you can reform people by saying things frankly" (36).

This is how one of the best works of Anand's *Untouchable* has come into literature. He has centralized the character of Bakha based on Uka, as narrated by Gandhiji. *Untouchable* in turn influenced Pillai to write *Scavenger's Son*. This is confirmed by the writings of C.P.Sivadasan: "In fact, Thakazhi’s work was partly inspired by the appearance of Anand’s *Coolie* and *Untouchable* as was stated by Thakazhi himself in a private conversation with the doyen of Malayalam critics, Professor Joseph Mundassery" (53).

Pillai is a true disciple of Maupassant. He acknowledges the fact that some of his stories are mere imitations of him. For instance, he imitates the story of *The Moonlight* in *Mathrubum*. K. Ayyappa Paniker observes, "In a later edition of the collection of stories, Thakazhi added a footnote to indicate that ‘In the Moonlight’ was an adaptation of a story
Every story of Pillai declares that he has carefully studied the works of Maupassant. The imitations of Anand and Maupassant did not hamper the originality of Pillai but they have enriched the art of story writing in him.

It is to be noted that Anand and Pillai have consistently turned their attention towards political matters from the social one. The trilogy, *The Village, Across the Black waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, narrates the story of two generations of the Indian peasants. Alastair Niven brings out the main theme of the trilogy: “It is important to read the three books as a single unity for in them lies Anand’s most explicit explanation of his political philosophy” (34). In Anand’s *The Private Life of an Indian prince* and *Death of a Hero*, the protagonist is centred upon the political turmoil. Jack Lindsay praises *The Private Life of an Indian prince* by writing in this way:

> It is a psychological work on a grand scale; its scope is Dostoevakeyan. The psychological revelation of the Maharaj never loses touch with the social situation... If Anand had written
nothing else, his place in the history of the novel would be secure—his place as a profound interpreter of Indian Life in a phase of pervasive crisis (30).

Anand's *Death of a Hero* deals with riots in Kashmir at the time of Pakistan aggression on India after the achievement of Independence. Anand requests the people to discard narrow religious considerations and communal chauvinism.

Similarly, S. Guptan Nair describes the central theme of *Two Measures of Rice*: “One of the most interesting features of the novel is the gradual evolution of a generation of labourers with developing faith in the rights of working men” (4). Pillai presents the ruin and misery suffered by the farm labourers and poor farmers. He describes the theme of social revolution through the portrayal of the hero, Koren. The social changes bring about a class consciousness on the part of the hero and he becomes a revolutionary.

From political ideology, Pillai once again deviates to different kinds of themes. Ayyapa Paniker observes, “From *Thottiyude Makan* (Scavenger's Son) and *Rantidangazhi*
(Two Measures of Rice), it is a big leap forward to Chemmeen, which is more than the star-crossed love-story" (153). Chemmeen is totally different from the earlier novels and here everlasting love is the main theme. It shows the age-old values and traditions of society and finds individuals in conflict with them. Subba Rao rightly observes, “In plain terms Chemmeen deals with essential emotions and with its effect upon individuals for the breaking of traditions, customs and taboos” (169). There is nothing uncommon in the novel Chemmeen. It is the traditional story of love and the death of the lovers under tragic circumstances and thus it is considered as his most outstanding work.

Pillai, according to the modern age, changes his themes in his works. C. Paul Varghese's writings of Pillai prove this point. Rungs of the Ladder is, “set against the background of bureaucratic rule in the erstwhile Travancore State” (123). The central theme of this novel is to highlight the machinations and intrigues inherent in the administration and politics of the modern times. C. Paul Varghese sums up the three novels:
Rantitangazhi (Two Measures of Rice) is a forceful novel of the soil, Enipatikal (Rungs of the Ladder) is a significant novel...Chemmeen- neither a novel of the soil nor political novel- Thakazhi enables us to have passionate glimpses into the well-springs of human nature. (124)

Since human nature is the same, the themes of all the novels of Pillai contain elements of universal dimension. Pillai is satisfied by depicting all significant factors of social life.

Anand and Pillai write novels deriving strength from their actual experiences with ordinary people in India. In each novel, the inspiration for writing is the passionate desire to help these suffering masses of people in their struggle to improve their lot and find their place in the world as free individuals. Narayana Menon rightly observes, “Thakazhi and his contemporaries brought in the poorer people from all walks of life into literature” (17).

Both Anand and Pillai, with a common purpose in their mind as revolutionary novelists, unravel the hidden social rottenness accumulated in the society through centuries. As
social novelists, Anand and Pillai focus their attention towards the workers’ and peasants’ culture. They look into the emotional problems of these human beings who are perhaps non-entities before the eyes of the society. They have strong conviction that the revolutionary movement would change the world in the interests of many and against the rule of the privileged. Their powerful exposures of the sufferings are mainly intended to create awareness among the people, about the need of a better society built on the ideals of humanism or socialism.

During the economic depression and organized labour movement in many parts of India during nineteen thirties, Anand and Pillai, as proletarian writers, expose the ills of the society and their intention is in favour of social change. C.J. George’s comment of Anand is apt in this connection: “Anand’s social criticism is sustained by his faith that an artist can contribute immensely towards social change” (66). Similarly, K.P. Appan opines, “Thakazhi has analysed as a social scientist, or perhaps as an economist, the problems of work and labour” (20).
Considering the social movement of India in the early writings of Pillai, R.E. Asher points out

The social novel could therefore hardly have avoided social comment, and novelists' views have rarely been entirely hidden. The main distinction to be drawn has been between those authors who have made their views known by implication and those who have indulged in digression in order to educate the reader in a right way of thinking.

(210)

Anand and Pillai, in keeping with the spirit of their times, they expect a social change in their early writings. Their intention is not merely to provide a photographic representation of life, but to interpret the realities of life in order to enlighten the people. Anand presents some wise figures to educate the readers in his novels. This is evident from writings of M.K. Naik: "He then resorts to direct statement through his mouthpieces, of which the poet in Untouchable, Puran Singh Bhagat in The Big Heart and Colonel Mahindra in The Old Woman and the Cow are glaring examples" (155).
Pillai too sometimes makes some authoritative comments and he tries to remain aloof as far as possible, thereby keeping a desirable distance between himself and his characters. Unlike Anand, he does not intend any of his characters to be his mouthpiece. But Anand often uses pen for the distillation of his social and political ideas; and his characters mostly work out to be little more than elucidators and amplifiers. This appears to be more glaring in his socialist novels.

A comparative study of their social novels in terms of their artistic merits reveals that both the writers have taken much care to conceal their views or their social comments. With this common awareness they make similar attempts to embody their views or social comment through typical characters, incidents, dialogues and others. One of the reasons for the success of these novels lies in the ability of both the writers to move from the particular to the general. This is true of Pillai's fictional protagonists too. The particular plights of the central characters enable Anand and Pillai to explore the destiny of humanity which these characters represent. This explains the universal appeal of their novels. The characters, places, events and things in their novels
seem to have multi-dimensional, universal or symbolical meanings.

While Pillai's work is an attempt to concretize his idea of social revolution through various incidents, situations and the characters' actions, behaviour and others, Anand presents it mostly through a series of statements on the subject made by different characters. While Anand thus dogmatizes the subject through the heated arguments, speeches and others, Pillai expresses his ideas by translating them into deeply-felt literary experiences. Unlike Anand, Pillai does not allow his ideas to become expressly obtrusive. In fact, his views communicated indirectly, gain substance from the concrete details into which they are artistically transmuted.

This is an undeniable fact that Anand and Pillai do not lag behind in presenting the social and political problems which India faces today. The unique contributions given by Anand and Pillai through their fictional literature by criticizing the social life for the betterment of society will be forever remembered and recognized. As writers of social concern they have bequeathed a message to the readers that the miserable plight of people can be ameliorated by love and compassion.