Chapter Seven

Summing-up

More than anything else the present study has made one clearly realize that one can secure for one's literature its rightful place, only through a process of comparisons and contrasts with relevant writers hailing from other countries and literatures, overcoming linguistic and cultural prejudices. The comparative study undertaken here, besides helping one to understand the worth of a writer in the light of the values held by the other, has succeeded in instilling in one a vivid consciousness of the underlying unity of all literary creations and experiences. It is encouraging to note that writers of the stature of Jayakanthan, despite all limiting forces of life, not only demonstrate much similar, bold impulses like the Western writers but at times, dare to go even further in the analysis of human problems, endowed as they are, with a rare vision and insight. When studied in isolation, the distinguishing features of the works of these writers may not be so gainfully assessed as in the context of a comparative analysis.

As has been demonstrated by the present study, Comparative Literature is a highly rewarding mode of
research as it brings out the relationship between the writers compared, one in terms of another, despite all their regional and socio-cultural differences. Henry H.H. Remak, an eminent comparatist in his "Comparative Literature Its Definition and Function" points out that so far, only the literary figures of the West have been "discovered" and "resurrected" (11) and they are found to be "eminently fitted for comparative-literature studies" (11). After giving a list of such writers, he comments with optimism: "... and literature outside the Occidental tradition have hardly been touched; they are bound to contain many surprising literary nuggets" (12). The present study which includes an Oriental writer has gone a long way in fulfilling the literary ambitions and aspirations envisaged by Remak. The study has been particularly rewarding because Greene and Jayakanthan just happen to be eminently "comparable because of elective affinities in theme, problem, genre, style, simultaneousness, Zeitgeist, stage of cultural evolution, etc." (27).

A comparative study of one of the major themes namely humanism, which runs through the entire body of the works of the two writers, has been analysed from various perspectives in the foregoing six chapters in
order to show primarily how Greene and Jayakanthan are interested, more than anything else, in Man's predicament in the present-day, chaotic world, thereby bringing into focus at the same time, all relevant issues which are useful for a gainful understanding of the general trajectories of progress in the case of both the writers. Though the study has been mainly comparative, wherever feasible, it has also tended to be analytical and contrastive. However, no deliberate attempt has been made at any point to draw in mere parallelisms or go in for far-fetched one-to-one comparison. The study keeps in view throughout, the following observation of Remak:

A comparative - literature study does not have to be comparative on every page nor even in every chapter, but the overall intent, emphasis and execution must be comparative.

(13)

The first chapter, "The Making of the Humanists", sets out to prove that humanism of both Greene and Jayakanthan has their origin in their unhappy, loveless, convention-bound home and school life, their early encounters with death and violence, their gradual awareness of Evil in several facets of life where Good
battles with Evil for supremacy, their passionate—but-bitter sexual and love experiences, their early leftist affiliations, their existential modes of perception and their readings of the humanist literature of the past and the present.

As boys, both Greene and Jayakanthan realized that Man is inexorably rooted in a world which is essentially Evil. Hence, their characters are constantly engaged in putting up an endless battle with Evil both within and without in a spirit of defiance and challenge. Moreover, deeply moved by inordinate pity and compassion, both the writers naturally find themselves on the side of the erring humanity, seeing it often in terms of being endowed with a certain religious identity and sanctity. In doing this, both the writers throw to the winds, all accepted religious codes and conventions thereby revealing their essential humanity.

Greene's interest in Communism was short-lived. He started hating it because of the philosophical abstractions of its adherents who had no mind to be of genuine help to the poor suffering lot. Greene began to view the revolutionaries increasingly as terrorists engaged in ravaging the entire world and making it a shabby land unfit for habitation. Little wonder then,
the staunch and the die-hard Communists of Greene, like the gun-carrying Father Rivas in *The Honorary Consul* and the Mexican Lieutenant in *The Power and the Glory*, finally turn out to be lovers of humanity. In these two novels Greene clearly expresses his outright disapproval of both Marxism and Catholicism, in a marked preference to the cause of Humanism.

On his part, Jayakanthan broke away from the Communist Party of India as he could not subscribe himself to the violence and wide-spread atrocities, perpetrated by some of its members. As one who wanted to keep intact his self-respect and maintain his individuality at all costs, on many occasions, he tended to react sharply against the inhumanity of the Communists. It is to be noted that many of the protagonists of Jayakanthan too exhibit the same traits. Their self-assertiveness, spirit of individualism and daring defiance of all collective authority are easily traceable to their passionate and idealistic creator.

Though there is no recorded evidence to show that both Greene and Jayakanthan had read the works of the existential philosophers, several of their works do present very obvious existential themes and ideas. Like the typical existentialist characters one encounters in
literary works, the protagonists of both Greene and Jayakanthan often make free and independent choices without reference to any external authority, put a dramatic end to their lives of self-imposed isolation and alienation, and commit themselves for a human cause. Thus the existentialist trait in the case of the two writers inextricably stems from their fundamental faith in a humanistic cause.

It is to be noted that Greene's self-acknowledged reading of writers like Dickens, Kipling, Munro and James intensified his vision of Evil and that he learnt from these great masters how to show love and pity towards the most shabby and the most corrupt. In fact, Conrad, in particular, created in Greene, an aversion for the Western civilized world, besides suggesting certain themes and settings for his novels. Also, Greene saw in Dostoevsky a model repentant-transgressor whom he created after his own fashion in his fiction as Whisky Priest in The Power and the Glory.

Though Jayakanthan was influenced by a host of writers from both East and West, the most potent influence he seems to have had on him, is the Tamil Poet Bharathy. Also the great Tamil ethical work Thirukkural, Gandhiji and the Saivite and the Vaishnavite religious
poets had made a great impact on him during his impressionable years. His anti-Brahministic stance, his Advita principle of the oneness of all and his strong plea for the re-orientation of the orthodox religious values to give a religious identity to the low caste with a view to finding a lasting solution for the social dissensions that continue to tear the country apart in the name of religion, are all directly traceable to Bharathy. In the same manner, his emphasis on compassion which is the true voice of humanism has had its origin in the Kural which preaches basically a religion of all-embracing love.

The second chapter, "The Human Face of Religion", shows, how in their human interest both Greene and Jayakanthan humanize and socialize religious structures and conventions. They redefine religion purely in human terms endowing it three vital humanistic values, namely, love of others, duty-consciousness and disinterested, altruistic service.

Greene and Jayakanthan can speak only in contemptuous terms of people in whom there is a dearth of human love. They are of the opinion that man's materialistic interests have deprived him of his innate capacity to love his fellow beings. They also point out
a number of social, personal, familial, psychological, ideological and philosophical factors which prevent people from striking up healthy human relationships.

It is interesting to note that in their extraordinary humanist vision both Greene and Jayakanthan find a streak of human goodness even in the most evil-minded persons. Greene's Anthony Farrant in England Made Me, James Raven in A Gun for Sale, Jayakanthan's Sarankan in Vālkkai Aḷḷaikkiratu, Jessiah in Pārisukku Pō and Prabhu in Cila Nēraṅkaḷil Cila Manitarkal are just a few examples in this regard.

Again, it is their intensely felt humanism that makes both the writers elevate the lovers of humanity to the stature of a 'god', despite the fact they have some of the most depraved traits about them, like Greene's adulterous, drug-addicted Whisky Priest and Jayakanthan's Ōṅkūr Swāmī who is a slave to marijuana.

Greene and Jayakanthan have created a number of characters who are known for their exceptional duty-consciousness and selfless service to others. The Whisky Priest in Greene's The Power and the Glory, the Assistant Commissioner in It's A Battle-Field, the Priests in A Burnt-Out Case and Jayakanthan's Joseph in
Yārūkkāka Ālūtan?, Raghavan in "Anta Kōlaika", the Sāmiyār in his "Chattai" are all known for their non-attachment, self-denial and devoted, selfless service. Greene and Jayakanthan elevate these characters to the stature of 'gods' as they are essentially lovers of humanity. The Chapter throws ample light on the fact that both in the case of the two writers, religion does not mean mere conformity to a dry, conventional, doctrinaire theology, but an active and committed participation in human life around, sharing love, serving others, and doing one's duty unmindful of rewards.

The third chapter, "The Sinner-Saint Paradoxical Motif", seeks to show how Greene and Jayakanthan elevate certain sinners to the level of saints and martyrs. The sinners presented in the order of comparison are Rose in Greene's play The Living Room and Prabhu and Ganga in Jayakanthan's novels Cila Nērāṅkaḷil Cila Mānitarkal and Gaṅkai Eṅkē Pōkirāl; the Whisky Priest in Greene's novel The Power and the Glory and Ōṅkūr Swāmi in Jayakanthan's novelette Vilutukal; Scobie and Sarah in Greene's The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair and Malathy in Jayakanthan's Ovvoru Kuraikkum Kalẹ.

The two writers defiantly place these sinners above the most exalted authority of organized religions, on
the ground that the hearts of such sinners are capable of generating and exercising unique kind of dynamic love which transcends all narrow dogmatic and theological considerations. The chapter also highlights Jayakanthan's passionate plea for redefining the values of Hinduism to accommodate the religiously segregated low caste and the untouchables who are traditionally viewed as sinners. It is such a social-consciousness that makes Jayakanthan create a character like Šti, a low caste, about whom he says that in his knowledge of the Vedas and in righteous living, he is a better person than the so-called Brahmins.

The fourth chapter, "The Treatment of Eros", studies in detail how the two writers have dealt with love and sex, sexual repressions, the role of pity in the creation and destruction of love, the evil effects of possessiveness, and the superimposition of religious orthodoxy on the love-life of people.

Both Greene and Jayakanthan had a taste of the bitter fruits of love as young men and experienced psychological repressions. And they have both carried their personal experiences over to their fictional characters. Often love and sex in their works are presented as tragic emotions ultimately leading to misery, despair, frustration and betrayal.
Both Greene and Jayakanthan bring religion into the love-affairs and married lives of their characters and disapprove of sexual promiscuity and cohabitation of lovers out of wedlock. But when they find religion inadequate to make allowance for human irrationality, they plead that the erring partners should be forgiven and accepted.

Both the writers show the evil effects of sexual repressions on the part of youth. Nevertheless, it is again their humanity that saves these youth from running into ruin. Greene makes his Pinkie an ascetic and, through a priest, grants him a 'religious sanction' because he has the capacity to love. In Jayakanthan, Chiti and Ganga who experience sexual repressions, finally undergo a 'conversion' and find their sublimation in serving a useful social cause.

Greene and Jayakanthan hold widely different views with regard to the role of pity in love and married love. Through the love story of Scobie, Greene shows that misplaced pity is ruinous. Jayakanthan, on the other hand, shows through Gauri and Mudaliar that pity and love are inseparable in married life.

Both Greene and Jayakanthan find possessive love to be dangerous. Jayakanthan calls it aggressive love
which reduces the woman to be a slave of the male. Greene shows in his *Travels with My Aunt* that a healthy sexual life, in spite of all its absurdities and comicalities, can be perhaps the right mode of existence in the present-day chaotic world. Though Jayakanthan writes under the influence of D.H. Lawrence, glorifying sexual freedom, because of compulsions of the convention-ridden society around, he disapproves of promiscuity.

Here again, Jayakanthan, the feminist, has an advantage over Greene. He says that women must have education and they should be economically independent. To free women from the morass of slavery, he recommends to them cohabitation with men, sharing responsibilities with self-respect on an equal footing with them, but without any sanction for sex.

In the fifth Chapter, "Quest For the Eden of Childhood", both Greene and Jayakanthan strive to create an ideal world for Man where he can live a simple, happy, innocent, unambitious life barred of love, sex and even God. Greene in his novel *A Burnt-Out Case* takes his readers to the Congo, in the heart of darkness, and gives pictures of an ideal life led by a set of priests whose religion is love and service to the
lepers in the colony. Querry who comes to the colony, in quest of peace gets himself divested of all his former glories as an architect and a womanizer. However, soon the values of the civilized world of the West begin to persecute him in the form of three English people who spread all ridiculous stories about him, eventually becoming the cause of his death. Here, Greene seems to be of the view that man can have peace only if he retraces his steps back to the primitive Africa, the 'Eden' of man's racial childhood, where he can be at rest with himself and others, leading an innocent and happy life untouched by the materialistic values of the civilized West.

Jayakanthan too creates such an ideal world for Man in the happy home of his character Henry, the protagonist of his novel Oru Manitan Oru Vītu Oru Ulakam. Henry is an ascetic, known for his humility, self-denial, non-attachment, compassion and selfless service. He can eat the simplest food offered, sleep on the floor, worship any god, accept anybody as his friend, and offer what all he has to others at any given moment.

What Greene tries to impress through Querry is a readiness to suffer for others which the former believes
can put one in touch with the whole human condition as Christ has done on the cross. If Greene emphasises practical Christianity which is rooted in the principle of altruistic suffering, Jayakanthan through Henry advocates a readiness to renounce whatever one has and accept a life of simple living and high thinking, a kind of life prescribed in the Indian vedic tradition, and preached as practical Vedanta by Swami Vivekananda.

The sixth chapter, "Literary Techniques" makes a comprehensive comparative study of some of the major literary techniques employed by Greene and Jayakanthan. The techniques include plot construction, montage, stream of consciousness, point of view, etc. It also includes a brief discussion of the nature of the audience for whom both the writers wrote their works and their respective tastes.

There are pronounced dissimilarities between Greene and Jayakanthan. Like many of his contemporaries in the thirties, Greene too is a critic of the evils of capitalism. His novels England Made Me and Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party show to what an extent the moneyed people can be cruel and inhuman to the poor and the innocent. It is surprising to note that Jayakanthan who started writing early in the
fifties as a committed writer did not dwell on anything particular with regard to the monstrosities of capitalism. He focuses his attention not on the bourgeoisie but on the pathetic economic conditions of the exploited proletariat. Again, with regard to the treatment of Evil, Greene directs his probe into its issues in a far more relentless and terrifying fashion on account of his exposure to writers like Marjorie Bowen, Dickens, Kipling, Munro, Henry James and Dostoevsky. For instance, Greene's Pinkie and Raven, in their Satanic qualities, have no equals in Jayakanthan. An important reason for the nonexistent of such a probe in Jayakanthan is that he does not employ the thriller motif as Greene has done in his fiction.

There is a vital difference between Greene and Jayakanthan in respect of their treatment of sex. It should be borne in mind that Greene is writing in a predominantly permissive society and hence in the treatment of sex he can afford to be far more open and candid. His novels Travels With My Aunt (1969), and the short stories in the collection May We Borrow Your Husband? and Other Comedies of Sexual Life (1967) where Greene deals with issues relating to sexual behaviour can be cited in this regard. On the other hand,
Jayakanthan in most of his works, instead of delineating sex, stops with pontification on several issues concerning sexuality, despite the influence of writers like D.H. Lawrence. Being "a socio-spiritualist" his primary concern is the welfare of the women folk whom he says can live better by choosing to cohabitate with men avoiding altogether sex and marriage.

Besides, there has been a sudden shift of vision in Greene in the works he wrote after A Burnt-Out Case. In these works he passes from his religious to social preoccupation and subsequently from the social to the universal and ultimately from the serious to the comic mode of perception. This shift in focus is perhaps due to the growing cynicism in Greene with regard to several absurd conventional taboos which tend to inhibit healthy human behaviour. In Jayakanthan too, one can see two clearly distinct phases, the earlier committed phase and the later liberal phase wherein he glorifies the autonomy of the human individual.

Again, Greene and Jayakanthan differ widely in their creation and use of images. Greene creates his world-view through a plethora of seedy images which to him stand for the all-round deterioration and corruption as can be seen in novels like The Heart of the Matter.
Jayakanthan does not offer "image motifs" or "image clusters" in order to present any particular world-view. His images are mostly descriptive in character unlike the functional ones of Greene which are thoroughly integrated with his vision of life.

No doubt, there are differences with regard to the use of the literary techniques handled by Greene and Jayakanthan. But the truth remains, that both the writers take care to see how a particular use of a technique contributes an additional strength to their major preoccupation with humanism.

Beyond all doubt, Greene, when compared with Jayakanthan, presents a wider canvas and scope, and a profound aesthetic vision of life and employs the refined literary devices of a much more sophisticated language. Moreover, Greene's output has been so prolific during a period spanning over six decades and so much has been written on him by scholars and critics of the stature of Kenneth Allott, Miriam Farris, John Atkins, David Pryce-Jones, David Lodge, R.W.B. Lewis, Philip Stratford, Robert O. Evans and Frank Kermode, to name only a few. Still the fact remains, that there is something elusive about Greene, the writer. As John Atkins says "In nearly everything he does there is
ambivalence" (Graham Greene 237). This is because his major preoccupations as a novelist are prompted by an urge to search for an order against the backdrop of the modern chaos of experiences. And Greene's critics, harp again and again on a few conspicuously seen strain in him, namely, the religious and the existential issues, leaving out his major concern with the human condition which informs all his novels from the earliest to the last. Further, one detects a certain ambivalence in Greene's works because he makes use of shifting points of view in order to present a rounded and a holistic view of the human situation. It is precisely this discovery of Greene's interest in the human situation, namely, his humanism, that has emboldened the writer of this thesis to undertake the present study and compare him with Jayakanthan, a Tamil novelist, who has openly spoken and written on several occasions, asserting that he writes "only to spread humanism" (Ninaittu 44). One is reminded here of what Greene's character Dr. Magiot in his The Comedians writes to Brown in the same novel:

But Communism, my friend, is more than Marxism, just as Catholicism is more than the Roman Curia. There is a 'mystique' as well as a 'politique'. We are humanists, you and I. (286)
Talking of the preoccupation of a comparatist, Weisstein observes that "for Comparative Literatures, Stoff, theme and topos are of considerably greater interest ..." If a comparatist keeps this in view and studies Greene and Jayakanthan, he can light upon "fresh grounds and pastures new" with abundant opportunities and rewarding prospects. Their treatment of love, sex and marriage, their treatment of Evil and Good both from the religious and the philosophical point of view and their emphasis for the need for selfless commitment to the human cause are some of the possible subjects for further exploration.

A comparative literary study of this type has been rewarding for only a study of this kind can bring out in ample measure the native writer's merits. The writer of the thesis has felt personally that in certain areas, Jayakanthan's perspective is much wider and more insightful than that of Greene. Though evaluation of this kind is against all good literary taste, this passing observation is made here with the view to providing an incentive to the comparatists in the offing. Whatever may be the private motive of a comparative study, it must by all means ultimately lead to the "enrichment of the totality of mankind's
intelligence ..." (S.V. Subramanian 262). John B. Alphonso-Karkala, an Indian critic underlines the utility of this 'global scope' provided by Comparative Literature in the following words, the truth of which is exemplified by the present thesis:

I submit that time is very propitious for comparative and World Literature scholars together to forge a global outlook and begin to examine literature of the world not from a particular culture's or region's point of view, but as an independent discipline in itself, with a global scope. (Comparative World Literature 7)