Introduction

Today, different nations of the world have come close to one another and the need for interdependence has been increasingly recognized everywhere. As a corollary, cultures are now in a melting pot, merging into a pronouncedly homogeneous whole.

Comparative Literature is one of the modern means which tend to promote such a cultural synthesis, leading ultimately to a realization of the oneness of humanity. As Fritz Strich puts it in his Goethe and World Literature: "It is a literary bridge over dividing rivers, a spiritual highway over dividing mountains" (5).

A comparative study of a similar area or phenomenon in the literatures of two different countries helps us understand in a better light, by equipping us with a more clear insight, the underlying unity behind the world's historical process and concomitant issues such as the natural process of social and literary development in general. Such a comparative study of literatures gives an opportunity to pose in a wider perspective a number of important questions of the history and theory of literature.

A comparative study of the relationships between two or more literatures of different countries,
inevitably leads to the study of literature in its totality, which ultimately provides an expanded vision of life and literature, paving the way for the establishment of what Goethe calls "World Literature". When the scope of the study of Comparative Literature widens thus, there arises a certain possibility for a synthesis and an interaction and interconnectedness between various cultural, racial and linguistic values. The following observations of S.V. Subramanian are worth quoting in this context:

...comparative literature, with its conceptual framework clearly drawn and its scopes, priorities and perspectives carefully defined, can play a role more constructive and creative than that of sages and seers, statesmen and social reformers, religion and science, in shaping the collective human destiny. (257)

Comparative Literature studies have been undertaken with much insight and profit and vigour for quite a long time in several Indian universities and colleges. Today, Comparative Literature is a widely recognized and much respected discipline in Indian literary circles and it can boast of numerous exponents and experts in its fold. Significantly, several studies using innovative
comparative methods and perspectives are still in the offing. In Tamil Nadu, the pioneering work done by eminent scholars like Dr. V. Sachithanandan, Dr. S. Ramakrishnan, Dr. K. Chellappan, Dr. John Samuel, Dr. N. Subramaniam, Dr. Manavalan, Dr. Samuel Dhasan et al. has contributed to the phenomenal growth of this branch of academic discipline. In fact, the earliest instance of literary research of this kind using the method of comparison, goes as far back as 1964, when Dr. T. Prabhakaran submitted to the University of London, his dissertation on the influence of Indian thought and culture on Robert Southey's "The Curse of Kehama" (Manavalan 4).

In keeping with the theory and method propounded by such great comparatists like Ulrich Weisstein, Henry H. H. Remaκ, J.T. Shaw and others, a sincere effort has been made in the following pages, to bring together two of the most popular novelists of the West and the East, namely, Graham Greene, an English novelist and Jayakanthan, a Tamil novelist, for a comparative study, by focussing mainly on a single strain that runs through the entire corpus of their works, namely, humanism. The former was writing fictional and non-fictional works from the thirties to the nineties and he is now no more.
Jayakanthan, on the other hand, started his career as a short story writer in 1953 and till date he remains as busy a writer as ever.

Over the past fifty years, Greene's novels have received considerable critical attention and acclaim. So far, the major bulk of critical evaluation of Greene has been directed towards his Catholic themes which critics think, form the most singular essence of his artistic and literary expression. Critics and theologians like Alastair Flower, Walter Allen, Anthony Burgess and Frederick Karl, probe deeply into Greene's insights into the meaning of Sin, Suicide, Damnation and Salvation, and the treatment of some of his obsessive themes such as the eternal conflict between Evil and Good, God, the relentless pursuer of the fleeing sinner, Man pitted against an evil world of violence, fear, despair and death and God's inordinate mercy and compassion even for the worst of the sinners. Critics like David Pryce-Jones on the other hand, highlight the social burden of Greene's art, paying scant regard to his religious and theological preoccupations. Pryce-Jones' remark that "his [Greene's] Catholicism offers little hope or joy but only fear and danger" (Graham Greene 1) assumes significance in this context.
Commenting on social consciousness in Greene he observes there is, in the former, an element of social sympathy and an "undergraduate communism" (10). James L. McDonald is of the view that Greene's abiding concerns "have always been social and political" ("Graham Greene" 201). Further, the Soviet critic V. Ivasheva asserts that Greene in his novel, The Quiet American, promotes Communism "as a distinct alternative to fascist reaction, as the ideology of the future" (20th Century English Literature 234). Robert O. Evans, in his turn, finds the influence of the existentialists, Sartre and Heidegger especially on Greene and dubs him as a novelist dealing mainly with the existential themes of freedom and responsibility. In Short, Greene has been looked at from a number of angles and perspectives - as a Catholic novelist, a social realist, a romantic anarchist, a Marxist, a Christian existentialist, an aesthetic existentialist, a heretic and even a burnt-out Catholic.

In the eyes of many of his readers, Greene remains still a Catholic novelist and an essentially religious writer and they are never tired of asserting his commitment to Catholicism, seeing Greene in the popular image of a loyal Catholic who is out "to justify the
ways of God to Man" (A.J.M. Smith 17). It is true that Greene has written novels like Brighton Rock (1938), The Heart of the Matter (1948) and The End of the Affair (1951) in which the dominant figures are Catholics, but paradoxically enough, their 'religion' with its so-called rigid systems, principles, beliefs and dogmas do not offer them any satisfactory solution to several of their earthly problems. What happens in these novels, when viewed without any bias to religion is, "Orthodoxy is submitted to the test of experience and its inadequacies exposed ..." (Terry Eagleton 112).

Seen in an enlightened perspective, Greene is, first and foremost, a creative artist exercising a wide appeal over a vast range of his readers, including the non-Catholics, and this is so, because in reality, he deliberately restrains himself from propagating any religious doctrine. Even in the above mentioned novels, which focus on certain clearly pronounced Catholic themes and consciously present certain 'religious' characters, one may find Greene eminently defending even the worst sinners, especially, those who commit adultery and suicide. Scobie, in The Heart of the Matter, and the Whisky Priest, in The Power and the Glory, come alive in the minds of Greene's readers, not by virtue of their
religiousness but because of their innate humanness, their love for their fellow beings and their innate human goodness. Greene's confessions to Marie-Francoise Allain, throw ample light on his goal as a writer of fiction:

I don't as a rule write to defend an idea. I'm content to tell a story and to create characters ... I don't want to use literature ... for religious ends ... my so-called 'Catholic' novels are [not] written to convert anyone. (15)

As suggested by K.S. Subramaniam, "Greene's novels of the thirties have an immediate topical reference; they have a contemporary atmosphere" (3). Like Auden and Spender in the thirties, Greene too is mainly concerned with the actualities of the fundamental human situation - Man placed against all kinds of evil both within and without. His works show in unmistakable terms how Man placed in such a predicament lives, suffers and retains till the end his inborn humanity. Thus, humanism registered in the face of all odds by the suffering humanity, occupies the very centre of Greene's fictional art, and, as it has remained an insufficiently explored area till date, it richly deserves a detailed
attention and furnishes a fruitful sphere for literary research.

In the same vein, the vision of Jayakanthan, who is still busy writing novels in Tamil, has not been adequately assessed by his critics. To a great majority of them he is, in the main, a social novelist. For instance, Vallikannan says that Jayakanthan deals mainly with the problems of caste and class with specific reference to the Brahmin society ("Tamil Navāl" 78). Sethumanian takes up for his study twenty-two short stories of Jayakanthan and concludes that Jayakanthan focusses his attention on varied social problems and finds neat and clear-cut solutions for most of them ("Jayakanthan Ciru Kataikaḻil" 81). N. Arivalazhan comments that Jayakanthan, through his characters, shows how society changes from time to time (271). T.V. Veerasami says that Jayakanthan is on the side of the exploited masses in society, defending them and attacking what is backward in the Tamil Society (Tamilil Samūka Nāvalkal 163). K. Kailasapathy calls Jayakanthan a bourgeoise novelist who pictures society both realistically and naturalistically. (Samūkaviyalum 23). R. Mohan and K. Chellappan find Jayakanthan as a writer endowed with a high degree of social consciousness.
However, it is S. Thothadri, a Marxist critic, who, for the first time, noticed in Jayakanthan's writings an underlying strain of humanism, and hailed it as a welcome feature of an ideologically committed writer. However, Thothadri laments that the same strain is sadly missing in Jayakanthan's later works which he wrote as a free-lance writer, disowning his earlier ideological commitment. This omission, says Thothadri results in an undue glorification of individualism, and in the creation of introverts and neurotics (Jayakanthan - a Study 30). Obviously, this is a highly biased view, common to most of the Communist detractors of Jayakanthan who are ever on the alert, to debunk him for whatever he writes in his post-lapsarian phase.

However, if one approaches Jayakanthan without any such prejudice, one may discern that, like Greene, he too has a sustained interest in showing how Man, placed in a totally dehumanized world, is capable of preserving and revealing his innate humanity and goodness. A close study of his works reveals that his characters carry on a relentless fight against social, political and religious evils, which work against both the private and universal happiness of Man. Such a constant and tireless struggle against inhuman forces put up by the
characters brings Greene and Jayakanthan closer to the point of stressing and glorifying human grandeur and dignity. Critics like C.S. Lewis have found something extremely lovable and admirable about such a human struggle facing the odds in a world that is becoming increasingly callous and mechanical: "I think there is in the heroic courage with which man confronts the irrationality of the world, a beauty greater than the beauty of art" (C.S. Lewis 123).

It is, therefore, in the fitness of things to make a comparative study of an area hitherto insufficiently exploited, namely humanism, in Greene and Jayakanthan, with a view to estimating what these writers have to say about Man, his problems and his place in the universal scheme of things. The accidentals of language, cultural perceptions, social milieu etc. cannot inhibit such an eminently appropriate literary pursuit.

Humanism itself is a vast branch of philosophy having its proponents and advocates down the ages all over the world. Its history is a long and involved one starting with Protagoras with his most popular dictum "Man is the measure of all things". Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the earliest exponents of the above principle put Man and his well-being at the core of
their philosophical teachings. Humanism had its hey-day during the Renaissance when Man turned his attention from theology and cosmology to himself and to his own infinite and glorious attributes.

Over the centuries, Humanism has developed a number of branches like Christian humanism, Naturalistic humanism, Religious humanism, Evolutionary humanism, Existential humanism etc. What unifies all such ramifications, however, is the overweening emphasis they accord to human development in all phases of life towards the ultimate realization of peace and plenty for the human population of the entire world.

Frolov defines Humanism in purely human terms eschewing all philosophical colourings from it:

Humanism [is] a system of views based on respect for the dignity and rights of man, his value as a personality, concern for his welfare, his all-round development, and the creation of favourable conditions for social life. Humanism is the opposite of fanaticism, rigorism, intolerance, and disrespect for the views and knowledge of others. (178)
Humanism, shorn of all its philosophical trappings widely appeals to all. Many today accept it as a way of life, centred on human interests and human values, which promote social living in peace and harmony. Viewed in this sense, Humanism consists in commitment to the principles of love, happiness, harmony, freedom, peace, non-exploitation, friendliness, corporate living, compassion and kindness, all of which lead to Man's happiness and sense of fulfilment. Corliss Lamont defines Humanism as "a credo for average men and women seeking to lead happy and useful lives" (12).

Greene and Jayakanthan do not preach or advocate any particular brand of humanism. What is found in them is a strong undercurrent of a broad-based humanism which embraces human values which point to the oneness of humanity and Universal Brotherhood. In Short, Man, according to them is a measure of all things. Even in their so-called 'religious' novels, they ascribe the highest value only to the human personality and not to any doctrinal definition of God or dogma-oriented institutionalized structure or authority.

The thesis comprises seven chapters. The first chapter, "The Making of the Humanists" makes a critical study of the life of the two writers under study: their
personal, literary, religious and political experiences, with a view to understanding the origin and nurture of their humanist aspirations.

The second chapter, "The Human Face of Religion", studies how the two writers humanize and socialize religion for the well-being of humanity in these days of isms and schisms which tend to push humanity into a global chaos. Both look upon religion not as a mere structure based on a set of unquestionable precepts and principles, but as a living organization united from within, by the three essential human values, namely, love for others, duty-consciousness and selfless service which make people spiritually, morally and socially creative and healthy.

The third chapter, "The Sinner-Saint Paradoxical Motif" studies in detail, how in their inveterate preoccupation with humanism, the two writers, at times, elevate even the worst sinners to the stature of saints and martyrs, according them a divinity and sanctity. Both of them also plead for a reorientation of religious values in order to make room for a greater accommodation of the sinners and the low castes.

Chapter Four, "The Treatment of Eros" explores how Greene and Jayakanthan deal with themes of romantic
love, sexual love, sexual repression and love based on sheer possessiveness. Both the writers tend to superimpose religious orthodoxy and religious conventions on their lovers and eventually plead for forgiveness and absolution for the erring partners.

In Chapter Five, "Quest for the Eden of Childhood", a microscopic comparative study of Greene's novel *A Burnt-Out Case* and Jayakanthan's novel *Oru Manithan Oru Vīṭu Oru Ulakam* is done, to show how in both works the two writers strive to create an ideal world based on love, sacrifice, total detachment and sexlessness, in order to ensure human happiness. Both make a call to return to primitivism for the promotion of peace, harmony and happiness.

The sixth chapter, "Literary Techniques", makes a comparative analysis of the literary techniques like plot construction, montage, stream of consciousness technique, point of view, diction and dialects, audience and their taste, image and symbolism, Freudian complexes, stereotypes, clones, characterization, male chauvinism, letters, diaries, situational and thematic motifs, and epilogues and prefaces to throw significant light on the art of Greene and Jayakanthan besides showing how they handle such techniques to drive home the primary interest in humanism.
The seventh chapter, "Summing-up" recounts all the findings made in the various areas of the current project of research. The chapter also includes a discussion of further research viable in respect of both the writers under a comparative literary study.

Besides using Comparison and Contrast, the two major tools of Critical Methodology, all sound and valid avenues of Criticism namely, Historical, Biographical, Sociological, Psychological and Moralistic approaches have been applied to both the writers, wherever necessary.

Though the present study is mainly concerned with the novels of Greene and Jayakanthan, ample references have been made to their short stories and non-literary pieces, whenever they are called for. References to and discussions of other relevant works by other writers are also made in suitable contexts.

The methodology used in the preparation of the thesis is in accordance with MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Fourth Edition) by Joseph Gibaldi.