CHAPTER I

Introduction

Comparative Literature is an exacting study and it calls for the researcher's discerning acumen and alertness to pinpoint the variously underlying strands of similarities, influences and divergent views of the ages and the authors. It is only an extension of healthy critical procedures adopted by readers of literature in all periods and cultures.

Each university is now actively involved in establishing a separate department of comparative literature and many scholars have produced good studies. But till 1980s, it was not at all thought of in the Indian context and that is why Nirmal Jain, in Comparative Literature, points out, “Comparative Literature as a separate study has not taken root in the Indian academic system” (80). Kailasapathy, the Tamil scholar, in his Oppilakkam, confirms this point “Generally comparative approach and research have not shown any improvement in Tamil Nadu” (54).

Tamil literary historians were concerned over the dormant Tamil literary scene in the field of comparative literature, since, by 1920s, in western countries it had already well grown. Vanamamalai utters the following to convey his regret: “It will not be a matter of pride to sit idle leaving this domain of research to the foreigners. We should show progress by undertaking many projects” (65). Any student of Indian literature is
obliged to go beyond his own literature and quite often to study his own literature in relation to a literature belonging to a different civilization. By doing so, he not only quenches his thirst of comparison, but also contributes much to enrich his own literature.

Effects of liberalism make easy availability of literatures of other states and nations. Chellappan, a great scholar and comparatist, aptly conveys, "The concept of a self-contained national literature is becoming outmoded as harmful even from the aesthetic point of view. It tends to blur our vision, atrophy our attitudes and conventionalize our responses" (1) Comparative literature widens the outlook of the scholars, when the works of other nations are valued. In this respect, it is worth quoting Chellappan again:

Comparative Studies liberate literature from narrow, linguistic boundaries and seek to establish the unity of literature and thereby the unity of Man. In as far as all great literature is concerned with the universal man they have a common core and comparative literatures can enable us to see national literature as part of a universal culture. (1)

Sisir Kumar Das expresses similar standpoint in his paper titled, "Comparative Literature":

Comparative literature differs from the study of single literature not in the methods but in matter, attitude and perspective. It can go on extending its area of operation-its ultimate limit is the literatures of the whole world. Its strength and its weakness lie in its cosmopolitanism. (97)
Veteran comparatists feel that the overweening nature of national literatures can be put under check by means of comparative literatures. For instance, no regional literatures of India, like Kannada, Tamil or Malayalam, can assume international recognition, unless the quintessence of these literatures are compared with those of established national literatures, like French, Russian, German and others. The following comment of a comparatist is worth looking at:

Comparative literature emerged as a new discipline to counteract the notion of the autonomy of national literatures. Its ultimate goal, though it is doubtful whether that can ever be achieved, is to visualize the total literary activities of a man as a single universe. (Das 95)

Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), the renowned Indian Philosopher and former President of India (1962-1967), offers his suggestions, in Contemporary Indian Literature, to make Indian literatures rub shoulders with the internationally established literatures. He avers, “There should emerge an integrated picture of Indian literatures...And there should be repeated interaction and interactivity among the literary traditions of this land” (XVIII).

Chellappan gives additional information as to why comparison has come to stay in India. Literature is seen as a unity in diversity and importance should be attached to these aspects of literature, which are shared by all great literatures and as a result, there will evolve a general literature. He writes that in comparison, “the distinctness of the two authors or literatures concerned are more clearly brought out”(1-2). Kailasanpathy goes a step further to arrive at the following observation: “By comparing two literatures, the general characteristics as well as the special characteristics of them can become quite
evident" (51). Moreover, the researcher's extraterritorial curiosity in authorial indebtedness, acknowledged or otherwise, will be satisfied and in the process he will be further led to understand analogous designs and matrices, thrusts, and drags of the creative process itself (Majumdar 148).

Among the two different approaches to the study of comparative literature, the American school relaxes the rigidity of the scope of the French. The latter lays stress on the certainty of the "reputation and penetration, the influence and fame" (Wellek and Warren 47), whereas the former holds the view that any two works of any two different literatures offer scope for comparison. The liberal attitude of the American school facilitates easy comparison of any two literatures. Remark's definition of comparative literature can be quoted here as a representative American concept:

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of relationships between literatures on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief... on the other. It is the comparison of one literature with other spheres of human expression. (1)

Sachithananthan reiterates the American school of comparative literature in the following observation: "It has also identified certain areas of critical inquiry with which it is deeply concerned; influences and analogies; movements and trends; genres and forms; and motifs, types and themes" (23). Of the two schools, the French school's insistence will limit the scope in a world of diverse languages, cultures and ethnic groups,
whereas the American school embraces a vast area cutting across the cultural and
national barriers to grasp the essentials of human expression.

A serious study of comparative literature may throw light on the similarity and
dissimilarity in themes and approaches. It also shows new insights into the nature of
human responsiveness. Fokkema is of the view that "the comparatist who studies
contemporary literature in distant cultures may have a similar excitement of meeting
writers, critics and scholars whose world view and value systems rival his own" (3).

Comparison in the Indian literary scene seems a must, since it will usher in unity
amongst diversity. As Indian literature is multilingual, a comparative study of the novel in
India should be thematological. Only such a study can determine the Indianness of the
Indian novel. Satyendra Singh deplores the regressive nature of Indian comparative
literature. Hesitant steps have resulted in quantity than in quality. He avers, "Mostly
novels from two language literatures have been studied and nowhere is an attempt made
to go beyond language literature, not in relation to a Pan-Indian context" (206). He
charges additionally that "an Indian writer is three-quarters inside his culture and one
quarter outside it" (206).

Satyendra Singh's observation becomes partly true with regard to Mulk Raj
Anand and Rajam Krishnan. Anand has been very much influenced by western writers
and intellectuals. His stay in London has facilitated this influence. But for this influence
he would not have become a total humanist, and applied canons of western tests to Indian
situations. As for Rajam Krishnan, she is completely inside Indian culture and she acknowledges no western or north Indian influence on her.

Indian fiction got impetus with the arrival of the British. Early novels reflect the author's attitude towards the society in general. Later, reformist ideas were expressed through the novel. Novels between 1930 and 1942 provide a discontinuous but homogenous picture of the urban proletariat, the low castes and the peasantry before and after the First World War (William 36). The rise of such novels is explained in the following. "The emergence of the Indo-Anglian novel of social realism and revolution after World War I can be seen as an Indian phenomenon"(36). In the third and the fourth decades of the twentieth century, Gandhian revolution attracted the attention of the writers. For instance, R.K. Narayan’s Dark Room and Waiting for Mahatma, Raja Rao’s Kanthapura and Anand’s Untouchable and The Sword and the Sickle reflect the Gandhian philosophy. After Independence, most of the novelists took up social and political issues.

When the trio, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan came on the Indian literary scene, the Indian novel in English had already taken deep roots. What distinguishes them from the early Indian novelists in English is the fact that these three novelists became internationally well known, thus facilitating the Indian Writing in English to stake a claim for equal recognition.
Anand emerged as a creative writer in India when it was experiencing the spirit of Renaissance heralded by great souls like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Mohamed Iqbal, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawharalal Nehru. Rajan in this context, makes an apt comment: “Anand belongs to the long line of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra and Prem Chand and continues the tradition as a social realist with greater zeal and zest” (13). The rise of the Novel in India was not only a literary phenomenon. It was a social phenomenon as much, rather the fulfilment of a social need and was closely associated with social, political and economic conditions.

Indian literary historians have established the fact that the novel in India made its appearance in all the Indian languages and in Indian Writing in English simultaneously. The development of the Indian novel in English is “almost exactly though more slowly, paralleled by its development in many regional languages” (Ramamurthy 47). Nemade expands this point: “The influence of English on Indian languages is invariably linked with a special kind of Renaissance in the values of major Indian language communities...”(141). Tamil literature witnessed more or less similar changes. With the arrival of Christian preachers like Caldwell and G.U.Pope, it received tremendous inspiration to develop on its own. Already there were “new forces working silently towards a great Renaissance which came into full vigour in the early years of the present century” (Ramalingam 13). Consequently, there emerged a great mental expansion similar to what the European nations experienced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
In the beginning of the twentieth century, which is classified as the ‘Dark Age’ by Veerasamy, Tamil novelists focused attention on social reforms. He adds, “Individual versus family and individual versus society had been the focus of attention of these writers” (20). Moreover, on the political arena, Gandhi and his non-violent movements paved way for the upsurge of nationalism and, in its wake, socialism. Particularly in Tamil Nadu ‘Self-Respect’ movement started by Periyar E.V.Ramasesamy Naicker tried to drive away many injustices unleashed to the poor by the monied and powerful people. Tamil novels began to be published to highlight the social issues of education, reforms, freedom, politics and economics. Besides, feminist problems also trickled into the social novels. Writers like Subramania Bharathi, Mu.Varadarasan, Vai.Mu.Kothainayaki, Kokilambal and Narana Duraikannan were responsible for creating a new awareness in Tamil society. Ramalingum writes, “Only after Independence, Tamil novels started growing in quality” (27). Akillan, Janakiraman, Parthasarathy and a few others brought out literary works of standard quality. In such an atmosphere, Rajam Krishnan started writing novels from 1952 onwards.

Anand was born on 12 December, 1905 in Peshawar in a family of Kshatriyas (Warriors). His father was a head-clerk in the 38 Dogra Regiment of the British Army and mother, Iswar Kaur, was a tender-hearted and strictly pious housewife. His mother’s pantheism lacked conviction, for she was “basically a superstitious and ignorant woman given to propitiating evil spirits by distributing oil to barbers or feasting the already over-fed priests” (Cowasjee 3). His father’s religion was a compromise between traditional beliefs and the secular life his profession demanded.
Rajam Krishnan was born in Musiri, on 5 November, 1925, to the couple, Yagya Narayanan and Meenakshi Ammal. Her father had worked as a mathematics teacher at Musiri, Lalgudi, Kulithalai and Thottium and was well-versed in Tamil, English and Sanskrit. Her mother was a pious housewife. Among her parents, Rajam Krishnan has expressed her sense of gratitude and acclaim towards her father, whereas Anand is all praise and affection for his mother who saved him from her husband’s fury at their participation in the strike against the British Government and helped him, financially and morally, sail to England for higher studies.

A multitude of factors influenced Anand to emerge as a creative writer. From his young age he had been initiated into the folk literature of the Punjab by his affectionate mother. Then he was gradually introduced to the great heritage of India, especially in arts and literature and the major religions like Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. As he grew up, he read voraciously the European classics and his subsequent stay in England for twenty years enabled him to get into contact with the philosophers like Locke, Hume, Berkely and Russell. Opportune contact with Marxist literature altered his outlook on society, his affiliation to the leftism of the ‘pink decade’ and his participation in the Spanish Civil War sharpened his experiences of death and the inevitable mortality.

After his return to India, he was influenced by the nationalist leaders like Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Tagore and he passionately yearned for early Independence to India. His predilections towards socialism and humanism have sprung from his
acquaintance with the works of Gogol, Gorky, Malbraux and Dickens. The intense inspiration towards a new social ethos came from Ruskin and Morris. To perfect his style in order to suit his purpose, he owes indebtedness to Joyce and Lawrence. Thus owing to the interplay of all these varied elements in his personality in a tumultuous period of history, he seems to have imbibed many currents of thought and the final result has been his avowed promulgation of 'Progressive Humanism'. William Walsh succinctly sums up these influences, "One is aware of a distinctly European set of influences operating on him, particularly French and Russian influences—in his approach to the novel, in his techniques, his weaving together of theme and event, in his hope for what the novel may publicly achieve" (8). All these influences would have developed the man in Anand; but to emerge as a creative writer, there should have been some prompt or prop from known persons in his personal life. Anand writes in "The Story of my Experiment with a White Cat":

I wrote from the compulsion of a morbid obsession with myself and the people who possessed me, deep in my conscience. This body soul search in my autobiographical narrative was narrated to the young daughter of a Professor of Philosophy ... because of the urge to communicate the troubles of my conscience. (7)

Anand's early association with Iqbal, long stay in London, incessant perusal of western classics and opportune contacts with powerful literary luminaries have superbly moulded the novelist in him. His mother's contribution to the development of the creative writer in him cannot be underestimated. His affectionate mother has developed
his admiration for stories, and his innate interest to build imaginary castles in the air has been nurtured by her captivating manner of story-telling. He glorifies his mother’s gift for flawless narration in the following: “So sure was my mother’s gift for story-telling, so vivid her manner, so wonderful her sense of humour that sometimes I found myself rapt with an intensity of words...” (SS166). And he goes on, “In fact, she was building this world up for me every day, with stories, legends and myths” (169). His mother has encouraged “his native flights of fancy” (226), which would have developed the artist in him. The rightful beneficiary, as a consequence, is none but the readers of Indian Writing in English.

Rajam Krishan did not enjoy such multi-faceted experiences and influences. She had to fight hard to wriggle out of ‘the kitchen of a big family’ in her in-law’s house to emerge as a writer. When asked by her critics to describe the backdrop against which she has risen to stamp her personality, she replies, “It is difficult to segregate my writing from my experiences. Moreover, in the notes of my biography, the beginning of my creative writing has been a remarkable one and nothing else matters” (9).

Her father Yagyanarayanan, a teacher of mathematics, whom she adores as ‘a hundred percent teacher’, encouraged her to read a lot in her young age. She was initiated into the literatures of many languages and she acknowledges the fact that she has read and enjoyed classics in English, Sanskrit and Hindi. Her multi-lingual mastery has been hinted at in the following: “Over the years she has learnt and mastered Malayalam,
Gurajati, Marathi, Bihari, Konkani, Russian and German. The impact of these literatures has propped up her creative writing" (Vijalakshmi 241).

Among the Tamil novelists, she preferred to go through the novels of Vai.Mu. Kothainayaki, Mu Varadarasan and Narana Doraikkannan. The revolutionary poet, Subramania Bharathi, has exercised a strong influence in shaping most of her modern views, especially, the evolution of women. She owns up her sense of gratitude to English writers like Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Oliver Goldsmith and Pearl S. Buck. Her frank statement to Nalinadevi in the personal interview has been: "In young age I was more interested in devouring other books than the prescribed texts" (9).

During her formative period, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy Naicker was particularly targeting her Brahmin community for the decadence of the society. Even then the necessity of social reforms could not have escaped her literary acumen. Curiously, she claims the familial lineology with Madhavaiah, who, in his own limited way, has masterminded the spread of social reforms through his novels. She applauds the unstinted effort of her predecessor in opposing the injustices done to women in those days (Nalinadevi 10).

Anand was definitely lucky to have sailed to England for higher education and to meet internationally known intellectuals, like Bertrand Russell, S. Radhakrishan, prominent writers, like T.S. Eliot, George Orwell, E.M. Forster and to peruse the writings of Charles Dickens, Lord Ruskin, Virginia Woolf, Karl Mark, Maxim Gorky, H.G. Wells,
C. Day Lewis and others. But, for Rajam Krishnan who was married off, as per the Hindu custom, at the early age of fourteen, the lack of contact or inspiration of living literary souls did not deter her from “emerging as a writer” of her own volition. With nostalgia and regret, she reminisces her early attempts at self-development. There were no opportunities for training in music and higher education and the surrounding ambience did not provide any motivation to her. She felt apprehensive of people’s reaction to her early attempts and in such an adverse atmosphere, she started writing, initially, without being noticed.

Once recognition knocks at the door of a creative artist, he naturally becomes prolific and death alone can give rest to his overworked pen or keyboard Till 1998, Anand had brought out sixteen novels, seven short story collections and many books on non-fiction themes like art, Indian dishes, and many chapters and introductions in books and critical articles and miscellaneous writings. Following is the list of novels written by him: Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts (1938), The Village (1939), Across the Black Waters (1940), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), The Big Heart (1945), Seven Summers (1951), Private Life of an Indian Prince (1963), Death of a Hero (1963), Morning Face (1968), Confession of a Lover (1976), Nine Moods of Bharatha (1998) and Pilgrimage to Ellora (in press).

Anand won the Sahitya Akademi Award for Untouchable and was awarded the International Peace Prize in 1952, for promoting understanding among the nations of the
world through his creative work. He became the Vice-President of the All-India Peace Council and the Secretary-General of the Indian Writers Association for Afro-Asian Solidarity and in 1966 was appointed Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi. The country also honoured him with the award of Padma Bhusan in 1967.


Her short-story “Usiyum Unarvum” won the International short story competition held by the New York Tribune in 1950, Verukkunir, the Sakitya Akademi Award in 1973, Valaiyaram, the Soviet Land Award in 1975, Karippu Manikal, the Ilakkia Chintanai Award in 1980, Cetiril Maniarkal, the Bharatiya Basha Parishad Award in 1986, and Culali Mitakkum Tipankal, the Tamil Valarchi Kazhagam Award in 1989.
She has chaired the National Women’s Association, (Tamil Nadu Branch) for four years and has been the Vice-President of the National Women’s Forum. Besides, she has actively associated herself with the Tamil Writers Association as an Executive Member. She resigned her Counsellorship with the Sakitya Akademi, New Delhi, on the ground of its award to a novel denigrating the dignity of women. Moreover, she had been to the USSR in 1976 and 1979.

For a writer of socialist consciousness, the novel form suits best. He can pour out his irrepresible views at length only through this literary genre and has to maintain a balance of form and content to present his work aesthetically good, appealing and classic. Jameson argues that “form is, really, only a projection of content and of the inner logic of the latter” (Rajan 20). Content of a novel always gets the upper hand of form and gives life to the literary paraphernalia. A novelist has to keep in mind the interdependence of form and content in his work and the duty of a social novelist becomes tougher, since his propagandistic intentions should not stand in the way of artistic essence of the creative output. To illustrate the intertwining bondage between form and content, Lukac’s words are quite relevant here “Abnormality and artistic content can result in dissolution of forms”(24)

Anand’s novels have ‘human centrality’ and the form, which he chooses is adequate for his purpose. Cowasjee comments, “They are organic wholes, the form and
content are fully integrated. And they are inseparable parts of a single whole" (33). It is a well-known fact that the form or structure of his novels is a fusion of western realistic tradition with that of Indian moral fable.

Rajam Krishnan considers the novel form as the suitable medium to express her opinions. In her introduction to Verukkunir, she makes her points clear: "My characters in this novel are types and I have not developed them as individuals. If I go on intensifying individualistic problems, the story has to be told differently" (6). Like Anand, in some of her novels, where she too seems to be in a hurry, she does not mind in not conforming to the requirements of a novel. She writes in her introduction to Cēṭṭi Manitarkal, "What I am bothered is the projection and exposition of themes and the problems of the common man and in the process some of the qualities of a novel may be marginalized" (3).

Rajam Krishnan’s commitment to society by projecting its evils is well known. Tha. Ve Veerasamy conveys his understanding of her mission in creative writing in the following lines, "Only a few writers convey through their works the travails of the working class and only such creative writers can further the evolution of the society. In Tamil, writers with a social sense are very few. Rajam Krishnan, as an exception, brings out her novels with deeply felt social purpose" (17). In her Introduction to Alaivaikaraiyil, Rajam Krishnan opines:

I do not agree with the view that a novel is just a creative work out of one’s mere fancy. It is, of course, fiction. Yet it has to reflect human lives’
day to day problems and postures. As for me, the real experiences, which I happened to have had on my extensive tours, play on my musical cords of the violin of my heart and the melodious outcome is the novel. That is why I go often after newer and newer pastures of novel experiences (2).

Nalinadevi couches Rajam Krishnan's theory of novel in her critical work, *Rajam Krishnanin Putinankali Samudāya Mātram*:

I have no belief in the theory of the novelist sitting in an ivory tower, relying on his own gift of imagination. Rather I considered fiction writing as a research, visiting the field in person and acquainting oneself with the concerned social problems amidst the affected people to imbibe the special life with the dialect they use. For a minimum, I have stayed in such locations for six months before writing (13).

In her preface to *Kūdugal*, Rajam Krishnan says:

I cannot write novels according to a set formula. Creative writers cannot contribute to the development of art, if they keep aloof from the society. What I create is taken from real incidents, characters and realities. They reflect real situations under the garb of imagination (2).

Rajam Krishnan's theory of novel is a society-related one. In the introduction to *Karippu Manikal*, she writes, "It has a serious purpose. Apart from entertaining the readers, it should foster feelings of social love and humanism among the people" (2). Moreover, she is of the opinion that "creative writing should envisage alternatives to social problems and a writer should look at life with humanistic perspective"
Like Anand, she, too, has no belief in the theory of art for art's sake and reverberates the sentiment of Bernard Shaw, who said that he would never write a single sentence for art's sake. She regrets that in the name of art, sexual and violent feelings are induced in the readers. Thus instead of creating the qualities of leadership among the present-day youth, only mental and physical weaknesses are engendered. That is why national development and the solution of societal problems are hampered (Nalinadevi 33).

A novelist, even if he minds only aesthetic qualities, "cannot turn his back on the social realities of his time, but should carve man's image in his art with his social awareness and insight into life" (Subbarao 172). Rajam Krishnan's only purpose in creative writing is to deal with misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for a better life. Hence she never bothers to comply with the requirements of the novel form.

Anand is a socially conscious writer exposing the plight of the overburdened peasant, and the overworked labourers who are all "powerless to fight superstitions and social conventions and baulked at every step in their aspirations for a better life" (Subbarao 172). Through fiction he wants to expose the travails of humanity, of course, with a colouring of his philosophy. Cowasjee makes it clear in So Many Freedoms: "Anand believes that the modern writer with a conscience cannot shut himself in an ivory tower" (70). To the popular charge of being a propagandist, Anand replies, "I have been accused of indulging in political and social propaganda. But fundamentally, my exposition of character and situation is to reveal life in as total a manner as possible."
(Naik 176). The dismissal of Anand’s novels as propaganda literature or as sociological tracts is both unjust and unfounded. Goyal sums up Anand’s greatness, “His novels are an extension of a deeply felt anger against the contradiction and oppressions of the Indian society, against man-made institutions reeking of exploitation and aggression, greed and selfishness, stupidity and violence” (70).

Like Anand, Rajam Krishnan tries to pierce through the delicate fabric of society to expose its inherent defects. Her purposiveness and ideals in being a creative writer project her as a committed writer. She wants, ultimately, to set society right. It is this aspiration which has purveyed enough motivation to her for more than four decades. In Lamps in the Whirlpool, Uma Narayan and Prema Seetharaman, translators of Culalij Mitakkum Tipankal, observe, “Rajam Krishnan’s commitment is nothing less than establishing a society on the principles of enlightened or rational spirituality, humane interaction, mutual respect and sense of responsibility as a citizen” (82).

Both of them thus use their tools, in a utilitarian way, to project the society in all its squalor, suffering and evils. Balarama Gupta writes of Anand: “Anand is a committed writer. He does not believe in art for art’s sake “ (129). Rajam Krishnan too holds similar views and expresses in her prefaces that her novels are not meant to entertain the readers but to expose the horrid and miserable lives of the poor.

Since these two authors belong to the same continent, they have analogous themes and personal points of view, despite the difference of languages. As the novelists offer
wide scope for a comparative study, the present attempt is made in regard to some common themes found in their works. The major themes taken up for the present study are, the practice of untouchability, exploitation of labour and women and superstitious and blind practices. These themes reveal their commitment to art and society.

The practice of untouchability is not only the worst evil in Indian society but also the much-dreaded subject for any creative writer. No Indian novelists before Anand were "prepared to plead on behalf of the low castes" (Cowasjee 5). Anand’s primary concern while taking up this theme could have been due to two reasons: firstly, his natural sympathy for his childhood friend, Bakha and his siblings who were maltreated by Anand’s own family members. Anand acknowledges in "The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie", "And, in view of this, I developed a guilt about him which compelled appeasement" (8). And, secondly, he would have wanted to project the hidden malaise hampering the natural growth of one section of the Hindu society, which has been bestially suppressed by the hypocrisy and selfishness of those who abuse authority. Regarding Anand’s greatness in Indian writing in English, Wash offers the comment: "He is one of the first Indian writers to look on the savagely neglected, despised, and maltreated poor with an angry lack of resignation" (12).

Rajam Krishnan, too, has been affected by the adverse effects of the practice of untouchability, even though by her peak time, the government had enacted laws to prevent its observance. She has not made it the main theme of anyone of her novels; none the less her sympathies go to the underdogs of Hindu society in Karippu Manikal.
Cētra Manițarkal, Pătaivil Patinta Adigal and “Mallikaippū”, a short story. She declares in her introduction to Cētra Manițarkal, “I will make the lowly-placed untouchables the heroes of my novel” (2).

Anand and Rajam Krishnan hold similar views in regard to the societal relegation the untouchable are subject to and through their works declare that the Vedas have not ordained a separate caste, that is, the untouchables, apart from the four varnas. These writers would have been in fact pained to see scenes of humiliation meted out to the untouchable by caste Hindus. Hence their literary output espousing their cause.

Anand was very determined to bring out a novel on untouchability rather than obliging Gandhi’s request to write out a plain tract. In the case of Rajam Krishnan, her efforts in this direction have been equally commendable. She writes in the preface to Cētra Manițarkal, “They have been kept as slaves meant for farm-works by the feudalistic forces. They hold the view that being born an untouchable is owing to Karmic reasons or as a result of the effects of previous generations’ deeds” (2).

She focuses her attention more on projecting their poverty than on making a serious issue of untouchability. Her point of view has been that once they are economically better off, they can stake a claim for social recognition (Nalimadevi 224-5). By creating an exemplary biography on the revolutionary Brahmin widow, Maniammai, who moves among the outcastes displaying her philanthropy and disinterested social service, Rajam Krishnan also fights for the humane treatment due to the untouchables.
By the name of caste, a section of Indian society has been repressed and by means of exploitation another section, which is a little better than the outcastes is also suppressed. The British government has depleted the national resources and mercilessly exploited the ignorant and poor labours in the pre-Independent days. And the capitalists and feudalists, in the post-Independent days have taken up the baton from the British. Thus the elements of fascism, capitalism and feudalism have never allowed the poorer sections of the society to lead normal lives.

Anand and Rajam Krishnan have projected the unameliorated travails of the working class in their novels and articles, of the pre-and post-Independent days respectively. Since both of them have come under the influence of Marxist principles, their sympathetic attitudes towards the workers have been duly coloured. Child labour and its attendant repercussions on them have been specially dealt with by Anand in Coolie (1936) and Rajam Krishnan in Kutukunjukal and Karippu Manikal (1979). They highlight the fact that, in spite of laws prohibiting child labour, related problems still exist in certain pockets and the novelists expect the change of attitude from the employers and the employees.

In other fields like factories, farms and small mills, labourers are lowly paid and overworked and are denied regular works. Moreover, government holidays are not paid ones, since their services come under ‘unorganized’ categories. The British government
took undue advantage of the competition among the poor workers to dole out minimum wages, which remained unrevised for more than a century (Cowasjee 85).

Rajam Krishnan focuses the attention of the readers on the poor working conditions of the labourers in the salt-pan, and farms, and also the fishermen. She has undertaken field surveys to ascertain her points of view and her tours have resulted in Cēṭril Manitarkal expounding the cause of the farm hands, Karippu Manikal projecting the inhuman hardships underwent by the salt-pan labourers, Alaivaikaraivali unravelling the blighted lives of the fishermen and Pātaivil Patinta Adigal highlighting the yeoman service of the revolutionary Maniammai to the ignoramuses.

Both Anand and Rajam Krishnan condemn the low wages paid to female workers for equal work with men. In the manifestos of the labour-union strikes, this becomes an important issue along with other points like medical facilities, maternity leave and other facilities (Vijayalakshmi 187). Hari’s wife (Coolie) and Gangu’s wife and his daughter, Leila (TLB) are lowly paid than men and Anand brings this cruel exploitation to the fore.

Exploitation of labour has been at its worst in tea and coffee plantations in Assam, Ooty and Ceylon. Anand points out through Two Leaves and a Bud that “the estate workers are victims of both men and the gods” (Naik 51). Rajam Krishnan presents similar situations of the plantation workers in Ceylon, where Tamil coolies were indentured during the British regime, in Mānikka Gangai, Like Gangu (TLB), here.
too, indentured Tamil coolies have gone there looking forward to happier times but in vain.

Anand and Rajam Krishnan have thus made it their mission in life to project the utterly inhuman treatment, which the working class has been subject to. Their pleas for poverty-alleviation have been the hallmarks of their novels. Moreover, they maintain that by focusing attention on the plight of the have-nots, their novels can contribute to the amelioration of their sufferings.

In a male dominant society, women are not only at the mercy of men but also women whose vision of life gets coloured by the society’s priority to men. Thus buffeted by both sides, women have to lead servile lives without any chance of developing themselves individually. If the past had been worse, the present too does not present rosy pictures of women’s status in Indian society.

As for Anand, his own affinity to his aunt Devi, cousin Kausalya, and lady-love Yasmin and their unexpected deaths, and his innate admiration for his dear mother would have expanded his heart to the fragile nature of women and their sufferings. Moreover, his pre-occupation with Progressive Humanism has enabled him to look at the distaff side on an equal scale with men. He targets on the injustices perpetrated by the traditional society on women, in The Old Woman an the Cow, his only novel to present the sufferings of women. And Anand is concerned over the fact that the society which had by then witnessed the passing of the Sati-Abolition Act (1829) and the Child
Marriage Act (1872) is still not free from the inhuman sale of women, dowry deaths and wife-beatings.

Rajam Krishnan has emerged mainly as a feminist writer. In her earlier novels, she has wholly focused on the pathetic plight of women in Tamil society. Being a woman, she has had the advantage of comprehending and meticulously presenting the problems of women. She owes to the national poet, Subramania Bharathi, her single-minded approach to female issues. Through her non-fiction works like, Kālam Tōrum Pen (1989) and Kālam Tōrum Penmai (1990), she makes bold to question even some of the canonical texts like Thirukkural for indirectly putting women under patriarchal subjection in the name of an ideal wife. And she castigates the present-day society for sugarcoating the bitter bill with ancient and puranic ideals to lure women into subjection. Indra writes, “Her forte has been to restore women’s status through education. She challenges the Brahmin community for its legitimization of the atrocities perpetrated on gullible women”(1).

Anand and Rajam Krishnan, in their own ways, have projected the inferior status of women in their novels. Rajam Krishnan’s effort has been a prolonged one spanning five decades, whereas Anand treats lightly the sufferings of women.

Indian society is a superstition-ridden one and its backwardness has been attributed to the prevalence of age-old conventions and customs. For a progressive
writer, it is a ghastly sight to look at his own country grappling with obscurantism, when
the western society has gone ahead by leaps and bounds.

Anand’s non-religious outlook has been caused by his father’s secular thoughts, even though his mother was strictly following all religious ceremonies at home. His long stay at England associating with great intellectuals like Bertrand Russell and perusal of books by Gorky, Tolstoy, and Ruskin and obsession with Marxism induced in him a totally secular outlook. He cries aloud, “We put too much emphasis on the unknown fate and prostrated ourselves towards the deity, under the guidance of our priestly mentors. The dynamic west with its various revolutions showed that man can make himself” (AFH 5-6).

Anand’s search for faith can be called as “the search for human beings, or humanness, or the dignity of weakness in men or women” (7). Like Rajam Krishnan, he too criticizes “the false emphasis of our Hindu Brahminical tradition” (7). He acknowledges quietly that he, “early in life, has acquired a bias against all indigenous customs and grew up hating everything Indian” (34). He laments over the professed tolerance for the religious beliefs, castes, creeds and customs of the people, “because it allowed the sores of old superstitions to fester and kept the country divided” (36). Even in his personal life, he was “disturbed by the mendacity, ignorance and superstition of his coppersmith brotherhood” (42).
Rajam Krishnan does not mince words in targeting the conservative Brahmin community, which is immersed in irrelevant religious rites and ceremonies. In the name of religion and customs, emerging spirits of individuals are curbed. Though she has been brought up in an orthodox background and married off at an early age, her husband has been of immense help to her to come out of traditional outlook.

When Rajam Krishnan came under the spell of Marxist principles like Anand, she too viewed society with broader perspectives. Her women characters rise against orthodox life at home. Viji (KK) does not like to go to temples, since she considers it a showy affair of hypocrites. Maniammai, the biographical woman (PPA), has no time to think of god and temples, and serves humanity like Mother Theresa. Service to humanity has become her religion. Revathy (MMP) scorns at the hypocritical nature of her husband, saying, “I do not believe in Brahminism” (73). Like Anand, Rajam Krishnan has finally shifted her attention towards humanism. Her own coeval Sivasankari declares that she is more a humanist than a mere feminist, since she writes about social problems of both men and women without gender differentiation. (The Hindu, July 7 2002).

Anand has been fortunate to have met and stayed with Gandhi in the Sabarmati Ashram. The seriousness of his interest in meeting Gandhi is evidenced by his trip from England to India. As for Rajam Krishnan, she does not mention whether she has seen or met him. Since her productive writing career started from the 1950s, that is, after the demise of Gandhi, she could not have had the chance of meeting him. Rather she makes
her characters like Maniammai in Pātaiyil Patinta Adigal and Yamuna’s parents, Ramji and Rukmani in Vērukkū nir, meet him in person.

Though Anand failed to oblige the request of Gandhi to write a tract instead of a novel, he openly acknowledges his indebtedness to Gandhi for his conviction in humanism. Gupta remarks “Gandhiji’s humanism, similar in several respects to Tagore’s had a profounder mass-appeal because of the Mahatma’s dedicated devotion to the cause of the lowly and the downtrodden” (155).

Rajam Krishnan expresses her admiration for Gandhi’s services through the characters of Yamuna, her uncle and Maniammai. Shanmugam in Cēṭri Manithargal refers to the yeoman service of Gandhi for the upliftment of the untouchables. Maniammai in Pātaiyil Patinta Adigal tells of the mission of Gandhi in his life: “To eradicate untouchability and to empower women” (87).

Anand traces the influences of Tolstoy on him through Gandhi, whereas Rajam Krishnan unravels the influence of ‘Pampatti Siddhars’ on her through Subramaniam Bharathi. Naik got the following reply from Anand which he has included in Mulk Raj Anand: “The fact that Tolstoy had influenced Gandhi, to whose ideas I had been converted, made the influences of Tolstoy very real” (19).

On Anand, Gandhi and his idealism have a direct influence; but on Rajam Krishnan it is natural that Gandhi could not have influenced her in the same measure.
Jalinaodevi pinpoints Rajam Krishnan's attitude to the influences of Gandhian principles in the present generation. She writes, "The present world, which is in a hurry finds Gandhi's codes impracticable. Since their way of living and outlook on life have not kept pace with the advancement of the age, the commoners, too, have failed to follow his deal principles" (46). Akilan, the famous Tamil creative writer cum critic, says in "The 'alented Artist Rajam Krishnan": "After Independence to India, the fact that how the dreams of Gandhi have not been realised and instead violence and anti-social activities have sprouted, has been well-defined in this novel, Valaikkaram" (57-58).

The impact of Gandhi and his principles is stronger on Anand than on Rajam Krishnan, since he has had the personal contact with him. The charismatic influence of Gandhi determined Anand's ideology towards humanity. Anand tells in "The Story of My Experiment with Truth", "the inspiration had gathered force from the experiment of Gandhi with various truths" (18). Narasimbaiah opines in Makers of Indian English Literature: "The well-known trio of Indian fiction in English -- Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan derived inspiration from Gandhian vision in different measures and at varied levels in the 1920s and 30s in the context of India's freedom struggle" (39). Anand's stay in the Saharmate Ashram has made him realise the worth of Gandhi in his missionary works, like the removal of untouchability and the upliftment of the inferior status of women. Moreover, the charismatic personality of Gandhi has fascinated Anand and so he writes, in "The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie", "I am sure however, that the warmth towards Bakha, ... may, to some extent, have emerged from my warmth towards the person of Gandhi" (15).
The present is the continuity of the past, as T.S.Eliot says. No writer can be unmindful of the past; yet meaningless and irrelevant vestiges of the past have to give way to the exigencies of the present. Overcoming the challenge of amalgamating the best of the past and the present is what makes a writer a legend.

Anand writes that he is very much conscious of, "the burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European and the Himalayas of my Indian past" (AFH 67). The confrontation between tradition and modernity is one of his main themes. Naik writes, "His upbringing and intellectual development have led him on the whole to emphasise on the need to revolt against the decayed aspects of the Indian tradition than on the acceptance and upholding of the finer elements in it"(23). He deftly exposes the limitations of Indian tradition and champions the cause of modernism as a cure for the ills of Indian society and at the same time demonstrates through his novels that modern India can draw upon the strength of native tradition.

Rajam Krishnan similarly abhors all that is outmoded and ante-diluvain. Orthodoxies and age-old ceremonies choke the growth of society and her younger characters defy the canonical mores stringently imposed on them. In her work, Kalam Torum Penmai, she projects the relevance of modern feminism. She finds the best in both tradition and modernity, and tries to strike a balance. Her view of modernism and freedom does not advocate the break-up of the family unit rather she likes the continuity
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of the existing unitary family system. At the same time, she desires that the aspirations of individuals should not be oppressed by the ceremonial observance of the past.

Rajam Krishnan is, at the same time, unsparing in criticising the evils of modernity. In Kūdukal, she scolds the “present-day youths for their unheeding nature to the atrocities done to females. They take every thing in their stride as a ‘take-it-easy policy’ (131). She goes on denouncing the disrespect shown by the students towards their teachers. And she laments over the fact that an ideal discipline among the taught is now missing. In the past, disciples of a guru were unaware of the inequality between a king and a beggar while being trained at the gurukulam.

A creative writer has the special knack of exploring into hearts of personalities. He is capable of moulding the values by which men must live. Moreover, the spirit of the age and milieu conditions an artist’s work. Thus the characters of his creation embody the trials and sorrows, the passions and torments, the agonies and ecstasies of his countrymen. Both Anand and Rajam Krishnan have avowed openly their commitment to society. Since they have fallen under the spell of Marxism and are not for ‘art for art’s sake’, they happen to project the realities of human life with its squalor. Their ultimate aims have been to rejuvenate the dignity of men.

Anand has come to Humanism through Marxism and Socialism. After 1945, “his literary theory stresses humanistic-oriented values”(Margaret Berry 33). He first defined Humanism in ‘I Believe in Man’ in 1943 and has since defined it in scores of
articles and books. Cowasjee finds Anand’s Humanism encompassing Marxism, though Humanism is a broad term to mean much else besides. “Man and his development is at the centre of Marxist thought. One must not lose sight of the close relationship between Marxism and Humanism in Anand’s mind…” (14-15). Rajan traces the development of Humanism in Anand: “Humanism which places Man at the centre of the universe is in fact the dominant world-view of Renaissance periods in history. Himself a representative of the Renaissance tradition, Anand naturally upholds humanism as his philosophy of life” (16).

Why Anand insists, repeatedly, on humanism in his creative writing has become a much-debated topic of research for the scholars. The tip of his humanistic iceberg is shown to the willing gazers in the opening sentence of the short story, “The Barber’s Trade Union”: “Among the makers of modern India, Chandru, the barber boy of our village, has a place which will be denied him unless I press for the recognition of his contributions to history” (1).

In his Apology for Herosim, Anand asserts that, “I believe, first and foremost, in human beings, in Man, in the whole man…” (93). He has been obsessed with the theory of Protagoras, the Greek philosopher (500 B.C) that “Man is the measure of all things” In conceiving Man as the centre of the universe, assigning great importance to Reason, laying faith in the capacity of Man to decide his destiny as well as the world and rejecting the ecclesiastical interpretation of life, Anand’s humanism appears fundamentally akin to the Western conception (Rajan 17). Naik, Rajan and Balarama Gupta agree with the
view that Anand’s Humanism has derived from European Hellenism. Anand himself defines Humanism in “Prolegomena to a New Humanism”, “Nor is humanism entirely new to Asia, if we remember the Buddha” (Naik 16). Anand’s wonder at the being of man is brought out in *Apology for Heroism*, in the following:

And, above all, how great a force is man in his ability, in his animal and material life, to adapt himself to the highest point in the evolutionary process under a better dispensation... He can conquer Nature, and harness it to his purposes... In fact, he can master himself and the universe, create new values and transcend through imagination, memory and will... to attain the newest and most vital life (138).

Anand’s Humanism comprises the following principles: Man is the highest reality in the world and not God and the supernatural. There is no life hereafter and man has only here and now. Man should have the option of being religious or otherwise. And Man’s highest duty is to realize his full potential for a complete life. There should prevail perfect equality between man and woman, the brotherhood of all men and the right of every person to enjoy social, economic, political and intellectual freedom.

Rajam Krishnan started her career as an avowed Feminist, focusing on the sorry state of affairs women are subject to in modern times. She has been influenced by the poet Subramania Bharathi, since his fiery writings motivated her to fight for the cause of women. In *Pen Kural, Anbuk Kadal, Mayaculal, Malarkal, Malaiaruvi, Kurinjiten, Nilarkolam* and a few other novels, her mission has been to set the society right by
projecting the sufferings of women. Then started the spell of Marxism and her novels began to focus on the working class, both men and women in select regions. Her affinity to man and the aim of bringing back due dignity to man are expressed in *Alaiyikaraivil Kintukunjukal, Cetrilmanittarkal, Pattayil Pattinta Adigal* and *Karippu Maniakal*.

Her women fight for basic rights denied by the male-dominant society. Working-class men and women also struggle to get regular income and facilities both at the work spots and in their habitations. Thus Rajam Krishnan’s concern has been on their perennial struggles in life. In her interview, she underlines the essence of Gandhism and Socialism to alleviate the travails of the lowly-placed working class men and women. According to her, people should realise their bounden duties and become responsible citizens abiding by the existing law and order (Nalinadevi 276). Her Humanism is mainly based on Socialism and her firm conviction has been that socialism alone can be the ideal option left to humanity (277). Her Humanism also encompasses feminism and so she states categorically that in all spheres, the presence of women is now inevitable and the society should lessen the burdens of women for its own upliftment. “Better Women, Better Society” has been her oft-repeated slogan in her novels. Since she has completely devoted her attention only to the cause of women, her theory of Humanism is mostly feminist-oriented.

Both Anand and Rajam Krishnan have thus dedicated their services as creative writers to expose the worsening situations prevailing in the present society. Readers are made acutely aware of the malaise subsisting around them. By dint of commitment to
social issues, they have, in their individual ways, aroused the dormant consciousness of the society. And the awards and recognition both of them have so far received will testify to the sincerity and greatness of their purposes. Hence it is hoped that this comparative study will be a rewarding experience.

In the ensuing chapter, the worst evil of the Indian society, that is, the practice of untouchability has been dealt with. How Anand and Rajam Krishnan minutely look at this evil has been presented