AFFINITIES IN CHARACTERISATION

Characterisation is a prominent aspect in fiction as it functions as an effective tool to provide the incidents depicted, a sense of reality and to mould the themes and motifs into definite forms. Novelists create them to give a human colouring for their motivations and thematic presentation. They are often used as vehicles to carry out their messages too. Also it is through the characters, the novelist presents the variety, richness and complexities of human behaviour and responses. A novelist should possess a keen sense of observation and insight into human behaviour and mind which alone will help them to create living, natural characters and only through the portrayal of an individual's personality and potentials in all its richness, one could depict the integrity of a character in its depth. Thus in short, it is through characterisation that the personification of themes is made possible.

Mulk Raj Anand and Thakazhi Siva Sankara Pillai are two prominent writers in Indian English and Malayalam literatures respectively, who made revolutionary and daring
attempts in characterisation in Indian literature discarding all concepts and conventions of existing traditions. These two writers deliberately selected and portrayed certain characters belonging to particular socio-economic groups as protagonists in their works in orders to serve their purpose. Both Anand and Thakazhi wrote with the definite purpose of the exposure of bitter social realities. Their works were aimed at attacking the socio-economic factors that were responsible for poverty, exploitation and tyranny.

Writers of that period were merely following the conventions laid down by classical writers. Their protagonists were noble, heroic, and refined personalities belonging to the upper strata of the social hierarchy and were indulging in romantic and luxurious activities. But Anand and Thakazhi selected and portrayed characters belonging to the lowest strata of society as heroes and protagonists. They did it deliberately as they knew that only by such presentation can they expose and attack the bitter realities and forces of tyranny and exploitation. They realised that only when they appear as protagonists, the inhuman treatment given to them and the miserable life-situations and their woes will catch the attention of the readers in their depth and range. As
they were dedicated novelists who wrote with a social commitment and humanitarian concern, they portrayed the lives of out-castes like scavengers, coolies, farm labourers and other sections belonging to the down-trodden sections of the society. The elite writers were quite unaware of their life-conditions and their miserable world was totally unexposed in Indian literature and no one seemed to consider these characters as human beings who equally possessed all the human qualities and aspects as anyone else. It was through their works that a good number of the literary audience acquired an awareness of the bitter social realities around them and the severity of the treatment given to them by their own fellow-beings and various kinds of forces, authorities and institutions.

Thus by the portrayal of these characters belonging to the oppressed classes they not only presented the social realities but also expressed their viewpoints, protests and human concerns and thus served the purpose of creating a social awareness and humanitarian concepts. They in fact pulled down the established concepts and conventions and brought the elite reading public and literature from ivory-towers to grassy earth through the portrayal of the life-situations of raw-men and women who earned their livelihood
through physical labour. Through the portrayal of these characters as heroes they also were able to highlight the dignity of physical labour and treat work as worship, for the first time in Indian literature.

This attack and rejection of the classical concept of hero had made a strong impact on the reading public when the novels first appeared. They were not only amazed to see protagonists or heroes appearing in novels who come from untidy, poor, illiterate circumstances and some of them refused to accept this notion. Anand's Untouchable was rejected by many English publishers and elite reading public as they could not even think of keeping a book that portrayed the lives of scavengers. Similarly when Thakazhi published his first novel, Tyagathinte Prathiphalam, one of his friends tore the book into pieces and threw them at his face. The presentation of the atrocities and the portrayal of characters like priests, land-lords etc. who belonged to the upper section of the society as villains and evil personalities in a fierce and realistic manner indeed shocked the sensibility of readers and hence these two writers were considered as rebels and revolutionary ones who dared to challenge the noble literary tradition, concepts and practices.
Anand's protagonists fall into various categories and we see a developed, matured mode of characterisation in course of time. In his earlier works we generally see the protagonists as silent sufferers. Characters like Bakha, Munoo, Gangu etc. belong to this category. They are passive and unable to resist the atrocities and often silently yield to their destiny and are submissive believers in fate of Karma. They often wonder about their state of life but their responses and reactions remain to be static and passive throughout and hence can be treated as flat ones. But through these characters Anand effectively portrayed their condition and the various factors that are responsible for it in a touching manner. Through the character Bakha, who is an outcaste as he is engaged in the clearing of latrines, we are shown the miserable life-conditions and the extreme woes around the entire scavenger community. Through his experiences we are presented the social alienation of the community and their tragic life-conditions. Through a series of humiliating and torturous incidents which Bakha faces from various characters who represent the social structure like Pandit Kali Nath, the Brahmin priest, who tries to molest his sister Sohini, Lallaji, the merchant who beats on Bakha's cheek for polluting his son etc. Through these incidents he presents
the social factors behind them in a manner by which the readers' sympathy is evoked.

Similarly in *Two leaves and a Bud* Anand through the typification of characters, he exploits the opportunity to present the atrocities committed by capitalist forces and imperialist regime. Gangu, the protagonist is again portrayed as the representative of poor, innocent farm labourer who is unable to resist oppression and tyranny and silently suffers the tragic pains inflicted on him whereas Buta represents the ruthless money lender of the capitalist economy. He betrays Gangu with promises and sends him to the tea-estate in Assam where he receives only tragic experiences. Characters like Mr. Croft-cooke and Reggie Hunt represent the authoritarian forces of British imperialist regime. They torture and inflict pain on Gangu and the labourers and Laila, Gangu's daughter falls an innocent victim to Reggie's lustful desire. Thus a good number of characters who appear in this novel are types who functions as medium to represent various sections of society. The English characters with rare exceptions like Dr. Havre, the humanitarian doctor who supports the Indian labourers, are villainous and inhuman and the labourers represent the tragic, innocent Indian rural folk.
In Coolie, Anand pictures a similar character like Bakha. Munoo too is portrayed as a tragic character; he is characterised as if he is born only to suffer. Through him Anand presents the harassments inflicted on a person by various forces. But it is not caste as in Untouchable but it is the class-force that determine his painful course of life. He realises: 'I am a Kshthriya and I am poor, and Varma, a Brahmin is a servant boy, menial, because he is poor.' No, caste does not matter. The Babus are like the Sahiblogs, and all servants look alike. There must be only two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor'. But he is a passive character who believes that it is his fate, and silently bears all the tragic pains inflicted on him by various forces even though he realises his position.

But Anand is able to create more powerful characters who are able to transform when they acquire an awareness of the social exploitation and the forces in his later fiction. They develop themselves through the bitter experiences and the realities enable them to acquire a profound, mature vision and gather potentials to face challenges and even attack the forces of oppression and tyrannies. They act and reject the conventional belief of the fate or Karma and show the courage
and valiance that were hitherto lying dormant in them and emerge as majestic personalities with calibre and vision.

Lal Singh who evolves as a powerful character in the Trilogy is a typical example that shows Anand's mastery and skill in characterisation. From an innocent victim of social forces he emerges as a noble, heroic personality acquiring an awareness of social realities as well as a realisation of his own will power and potentials. His experiences in the warfield and European social sphere not only gives him the knowledge gathered out of wider experience but also his inner strength and calibre. He is no longer ready to accept the age-old conventions and oppressive forces that helped only to hamper progress in all walks of life. With a revolutionary zeal he emerges as a Herculean personality and with a strong determination he takes up the task of reforming the social sphere. Anand employs him as an effective medium to condemn land-lordism, priesthood, war, imperialism etc. and to present his rational views and human concerns.

Similarly in The Old Woman and The Cow, we see the development of a woman's personality. It wins our attention not only because of the emergence of a round character but it is the only novel of Anand where he characterises a woman as
the central character. Through this character, Anand portrays the pains and tortures inflicted upon the illiterate woman-folk of rural India and she (Gauri) represents every Indian woman in her. But Anand effectively characterises her as a person who emerges like a phoenix from her own tragic experiences and rises as a powerful character of self-determination, will-power, courage, and social commitment. With the help of Dr. Mahindra she is able to acquire wisdom and awareness and gathers strength to realise her potentials and with this self-realisation, she transforms herself challenging all social forces of oppression. Through her Anand expresses not only his human concerns but also his strong plea for the emancipation of women from the worn-out social conventions, and the acceptance of women's rights. The metamorphosis that takes place in her is beautifully portrayed and the transformed Gauri is characterised as a refined modern woman who is quite aware of her rights and calibre.

In The Road again Anand portrays an untouchable character, Bhikhu. But unlike Bakha who is unable to resist, Bhikhu is portrayed as a character who is unmindful of social barriers. Bhikhu represents the gradual awakening consciousness
of the Indian working class who having acquired an awareness of their calibres, attain significant growth and liberate themselves from their degraded state and demand their rights. Anand once again makes use of the character to highlight the gospel of work as worship here.

Among Anand's important characters we can find one more category. They are not confined to or concerned with their personal interests or achievements but their chief interest is in the liberation and reformation of fellow-beings and the living conditions of the society. Such characters come under the category of agents who serve the purpose of promoting the society towards progress and development. They are the ones who may not achieve any personal benefits but are dedicated to the welfare of the whole mankind. These unselfish characters are treated often as victims or martyrs of brutal forces. But they are characterised as personalities who represent the integrity and perfection of humanity, but their magnanimity and progressive revolutionary zeal is later carried down by others and even after their death, the fire kindled in them will continue to burn and give light to society. Their humanist ideals and concerns for the welfare of mankind continues to
echo even after they attain martyrdom and thus they become eternal characters.

Ananta the protagonist in The Big Heart, Maqbool Sherwani in The Death of a Hero, Dr. Havre in Two Leaves and a Bud, Dr. Mahindra in The Old Woman and the Cow etc. are some of the characters who appear as messiahs with the gospel of humanity and social reformation. Ananta, a remarkable protagonist of Mulk Raj Anand wins both admiration and sympathy of the readers. He is characterised as representing universal brotherhood, tolerance and service. He often mentions about the need for possessing a big heart to his fellow-beings and tries to reconcile the quarrelling groups and pleads for compassionate tolerance. But unfortunately he has to sacrifice his life for upholding human values. Throughout his life he bore the tension in the phase of transformation among the copper-smiths and had to face the problems that arose from the confrontation between tradition and modernity and meets an ironic but sympathetic end as he was killed in his struggle to maintain peace in the working place.

Maqbool Sherwani, in The Death of a Hero faces a similar tragic end as he too was killed by religious fanatics. Sherwani is characterised as a broad-minded personality who
stood for religious tolerance and communal harmony. Through his death, Anand portrays how fanaticism can become a brutal factor in making the lives of innocent people a tragic and horrible experience. Through him Anand evokes his contempt against bigotry and violence and expresses his feelings of religious harmony. Also Anand's ideas of man is communicated through Sherwani's messages and visions. The novel ends with his letter where his humanistic view-points are clearly and beautifully portrayed and we see in him the wholeness of a great personality.

Dr. Havre, in Two Leaves and a Bud is an exception among Anand's English characters. Unlike others who represent cruelty, exploitation and tyranny of the imperialist forces, Dr. Havre is portrayed as a character of benevolence and human sympathy. When all other English men turn their eyes away from the pitiable life-conditions and indulge in activities of tyranny and oppression, Dr. Havre tries to console them and leads them to make demands. He is therefore victimised and faces alienation among the white people and is finally dismissed from service. Thus along with the native folk he too bears the impact of tyrannical regime. Through him Anand portrays a duty conscious, refined, humanitarian personality.
Dr. Mahindra in *The Old Woman and the Cow* is another helping agent who rescues and reforms a rural woman to a developed personality with will-power and determination. It is he who with his noble vision and progressive ideals transforms her. She is then no longer the silent, calm cow who yields to sufferings. She attains the power to analyse situations and gathers self-awareness. She realises her own potentials and becomes powerful enough not only to challenge obstacles but also to serve the society with devotion and concern and behind this metamorphosis we see the noble personality and behaviour of Dr. Mahindra. It is his behaviour and sympathetic attitude that kindled the spirit of reformation in Gauri. Dr. Mahindra is rational in his outlook and analyses situations and persons scientifically and is not biased. We see his broad and scientific outlook in assessing the behaviour of Dr. Batra's immoral activities. He says, 'Dr. Batra is probably suffering from the usual frustration of our countrymen whose marriages are arranged. And as he can not get satisfaction from his wife, he seeks this in other women.' Thus instead of abusing him he analyses the cause behind his perverted behaviour rationally and pities him. Thus here too Anand makes use of his character to portray his ideal manhood and his vision set against the realistic background of social realities.
Thus an analysis of Anand's characters reveals that he is a writer who portrayed characters to communicate his visions and messages and exposes the social realities through them in a very clear manner. In this approach he has shown a tendency to portray characters as types rather than individuals with very few exceptions like Dr. Havre, the English doctor who is portrayed as a humanitarian among the white people. Generally he idealises the characters belonging to the working class and down-trodden as innocent hard-working, sincere persons; eg. Bakha in Untouchable, Munoo in Coolie etc. The characters belonging to the upper class are also typified. The priests like Pandit Kali Nath in Untouchable, Pandit Suraj Mani in The Village etc. are characterised as lecherous persons and through them he attacks priesthood and their methods of exploiting religion. Similarly the land owners and money lenders appear only as villainous characters who represent tyranny, exploitation and the worn-out social conventions of the feudalist period. Thus there is little scope for pointing out a variety of characters and personalities, and the varied nature and complexities of human mind and behaviour is less vivid in Anand's novels though he had shown novelty in selecting characters from various sections of the down-trodden strata of the society.
But Thakazhi seems to possess a better craftsmanship than Anand in creating characters. He seemed to have a more keen insight and depth on human psychology and nature. His familiarity with Freudian psychology, direct and intimate association with various sections of the society, his profession as a lawyer etc. might have helped him a lot to develop this insight and potentials. He has been able to create numerous characters with remarkable accuracy and the vividness he has shown in characterisation is astonishing. He has shown enough care in not making them stereotypes, and with immense skill he succeeds in portraying the complexities and vagaries of human mind, behaviour and responses. Most of his characters presented are those who have struggled against challenges, tragic disasters and predicaments and there he shows man's will-power, determination and courage in facing destiny. Seldom he presents characters resigning unable to face obstacles. But throughout his creative process, he portrayed characters who are very real and common and through them he successfully portrayed the universal human predicament with a concern for the suffering mankind.

In Thakazhi's earlier novels the characters mainly serve the purpose of exposing bitter social realities. But
he is careful in not making them spokesmen of his views. Though they seldom tend to communicate the message of the author, the protagonists who appear in the earlier novels win our sympathy and attention with the revealing of their painful life-conditions and bitter experiences.

In Tyagathinte Prathiphalam, his first novel, he portrays the life of a poor woman who had to undergo bitter experiences. It tells the life of a woman who sold rice in order to maintain livelihood in a realistic manner and it had a novelty among the works in that period as it portrayed life centred around a woman who belonged to the down-trodden section.

His second novel Patitapankajam too he portrayed a similar character who had a turn to prostitution out of circumstances and through her characterisation he portrayed not only her tragic experiences but the social conditions that are responsible for it.

His third novel Paramarthangal along with the former works were an outrage of the moral and aesthetic possibility of the elite group and they were shocked to see the realistic portrayal of characters indulging in immoral activities. But
Thakazhi was able to convince about the bitter, inhuman realities around them and the portrayal of the chief character Janaki Amma who is again a poor woman, wins our attention as she possesses a rare personality. Though she has to become a victim of circumstances she rises later as a woman of immense will-power and determination.

Thakazhi, through his Tottiyude Makan, pictured for the first time in Malayalam novel, a scavenger as the protagonist. Through the portrayal of three main characters belonging to scavenger community, he tells the story of three generations and the three represent their contemporary realities and backgrounds. Isakkimuthu belongs to the old generation and very much resembles Lakha, Bakha's father in Anand's Untouchable, as they are ready to silently accept the social codes and suffer without questioning them. Both are fatalists. But Chudalamuthu who belongs to the second generation attains the power of resistance to question and reform the existing conditions. But Thakazhi is careful in not idealising him as a noble, virtuous hero. He is portrayed as a cunning, crooked, ruthless personality who is ready to make use of his chances. He emerges as a union leader but betrays his co-workers for achieving his selfish interests.
His own wife, Valli understands his craze for money and his inhuman attitude. Persuaded by the authorities who want to make use of him to shatter the union activities, he betrays Pichandi, his former friend. He has dreams on his son Mohanan's future. Mohanan was sent to school but when he grew up, had to follow the same profession and later becomes a terrorist imbibing some of his father's violent and crooked nature. Along with this he presents the class-consciousness of numerous characters who belonged to the scavenger community and their organised effort in demanding the rights. Here he presents the generation gap and the transforming attitude of workers through the three characters. Isakkimuthu represents submissive attitude, Chudalamuthu resistance power and Mohanan individualism and this is portrayed in an evolutionary and realistic way.

Rantitangazhi too portrays the changes in the labour sector. Koran the protagonist is a memorable character who imbibes the resistance power to question the exploitation of the feudal lords and he emerges as a revolutionary leader but he was imprisoned for killing the land-lord's son when he made an attempt to molest his wife Chirutha. Still he goes with optimism and revolutionary spirit. His determination is
portrayed even in the beginning of the novel when he decides to marry Chirutha. He shows the dignity of strenuous physical labour and succeeds in his attempt to create an awareness among his fellow-beings about the futility of dedicated service to land-lords and the inequality and exploitation they suffered. His friend Chathan too is a powerful character and through him Thakazhi presents the moral virtues upheld by the illiterate, innocent peasant-folk. Though Chathan loved and desired to marry Chirutha and failed in his attempt, he takes up the task of protecting her and her child, when Koran tells him and treats her as his own sister.

Among Thakazhi's protagonists, Palani stands as a unique personality. In Chemmeen he represents the daring unyielding manhood who fights all forces around him. Palani in all aspects is the child of sea-mother. He has not even seen his parents, he seems to have been nursed and caressed by the sea-waves and the shore. No one is able to compete him in boat-rowing. He has his own philosophy woven around the experiences in sea-shore and he is not ready to surrender his individuality before any one. He wins the admiration of everyone including Chembankunju, who decides to give his daughter, Karuthamma to him. Palani accepts this offer but
in due course of time hates Chembankunju and feels alienated among other fishermen who believed that his wife is unchaste. But he gives no ear to their comments and tries to build up the family. Believing the popular myth, his co-workers refuse to take him in their boat, as they traditionally believed that the fisherman's life at sea very much depends on the chastity of his wife. Palani has no other way but to secure a boat and manages to go to sea alone. In the meantime, Karuthamma's sister, Panchami reaches there, to live with them and he happens to overhear his wife's enquiry about her former lover and becomes suspicious and appears before them furious and then goes to the stormy sea at night and meets death at sea. Thakazhi with his craftsmanship and keen insight on human psychology creates a rough character of immense stamina and calibre. Also he portrays the innocence and helplessness of a man who always had to lead a lonely life in the midst of a group.

Though Thakazhi portrays a tragic love-story in Chemmeen, he depicts in its back-ground the social and economic factors that affect the course of love and through the presentation of the character of Chembankunju, we are shown how the material factors and their ways intrude into the
personal lives and relationships of human beings. Chembankunju is highly ambitious and wants to possess a boat and become a distinguished man in the locality. With his crooked intentions he borrows some money from Pareekutty who is his daughter's childhood friend. Chembankunju has his fortunes and becomes rich with his cunningness and calculations but does not repay the money to Pareekutty. He behaves in a ruthless manner out of his greed. His arranges his daughter's marriage and maintains no relationship with her after the wedding. His wife soon dies, and with a desire to grow more rich marries a rich widow. But soon his mental health declines and he behaves like a lunatic. Her second daughter leaves him to join her sister and he wanders alone madly on the sea-shore.

If Chembankunju helps to expose the material factors determining the individuals, Pareekutty serves the purpose of revealing the social factors. He appears as a tragic hero in the novel. As a Muslim, he knows that he can not fulfil his desire to have Karuthamma, who belongs to the traditional fisher-folk. But day by day, their intimacy develops and forgetting all social barriers they continue their romantic affair. Due to his considerations with his lover he readily
gives money to Chembankunju but is betrayed by him. Chembankunju does not pay back the money too and this affects his business very badly. To make matters worse, Chembankunju arranges Karuthamma's marriage. Thus Pareekutty is shattered mentally and financially and like Chembankunju wanders in the sea-shore as a tragic character after her marriage and in one night when Palani goes to sea alone, visits Karuthamma, meets her to unite and two days later their dead bodies are found in the sea-shore.

Karuthamma again is a tragic figure and stands as a nerve-centre to various factors. It is she who has to bear all aspects, whether social, economic or subjective elements which are related to her father, husband, lover and event to the members of the fisher-folk. She too is victimised, and isolated like Palani for having made an affair with a Muslim. She has to bear the tensions created out of her personal desires as well as social codes.

She stands as a powerful character throughout the novel where she surrenders herself to her lover and thus becomes a martyr of love. Thakazhi's insight on feminine mind and its inner feelings is very well seen in the characterisation of Karuthamma, which he creates with amazing skill.
Thankamma who appears in *Enippadikal* too reminds us of Thakazhi's ability to portray female characters with astonishing craftsmanship. Through the voluptuous character, Thankamma, he is able to expose the complexities and vagaries of feminine mind and feelings. She is pictured as a complex, volatile and mysterious personality. The character Kesava Pillai in *Enippadikal* too reveals Thakazhi's mastery over presenting the under-currents of human minds. Through him Thakazhi presents the ruthlessness and opportunism of human mind while involved with the world of lust and power-politics.

Chellappan who appears as the protagonist in *Anubhavangal Palichakal*, in some respects, resembles Anand's Ananta in *The Big Heart*. Like Ananta he too falls as a martyr in his struggle for the liberation and progress of the labourers. He too is a dedicated, political activist and belongs to the category of the ones who had forgotten to achieve anything personally. Like Ananta, he firmly believes in ideology and submits himself to its fulfilment. But his family life has been a failure and due to his indifference his wife leaves him to live with another labourer and when he comes back from the jail for taking part in trade union
struggle, he finds that his daughter had died and he goes to Ernakulam. There he stabs an anti-human capitalist and he is sentenced to death. Thakazhi treats him as a dedicated, unyielding, daring worker who stood for ideals. At the same time he presents his follies and drawbacks too without idealising him.

Except Chellappan, Thakazhi's characters, from his creative period ranging from that of Chemmeen onwards, do not share similarity with Anand's. Thakazhi's vision and treatment developed much and acquired a wide range and variety and as he freed himself from ideological obsessions he was able to create real, raw, life-like characters without giving shape to stereo-typed or idealised ones. But in Anand, we can not find this development and vividness. He always stuck to ideological formula and it affected his creative aspects, both in the treatment of themes, and in the portrayal of characters with only very rare exceptions. But Thakazhi bid farewell to partisan politics and its ideologies and he paid attention to the portrayal of life-situations and characters in its own natural and evolutionary manner. This is colourfully and diversifically seen in Kayar where he successfully and with astonishing skill portrays hundreds of characters in its
richness, vividness and complexities. They belong to various generations, age groups, social and economic layers. But all of them appear in their naturalness, exposing the mysterious and varied thoughts, actions, behaviours and responses of the human mind. One can not see such vividness and depth in the portrayal of characters in Anand's works mainly due to his excessive lenience towards ideology and its formula followed by the idealisation of characters suited to its frame-work.

Thus the major difference between Anand and Thakazhi is that Thakazhi is not a writer who has not much typified his characters. Even in his early works we don't see much of it. He has not deliberately portrayed characters to communicate or send his messages and views and in his novels the characters do not appear in general as spokesmen. He shows much care in not idealising his character. Thakazhi's characters are real men, whatever sections of social and economic status they belong to. On the contrary they often represent certain common human qualities and are a mixture of good and bad qualities. They are set against the tragic predicament enveloping human life.

But irrespective of this, he shows an affinity with Anand in portraying the sufferings of common man. Both are
able to present characters from the down-trodden sections of the society breaking the concepts of protagonists. Thakazhi was one among the prominent writers in Malayalam, who for the first time showed the courage like Anand to present characters from the outcastes and others belonging to the drown-trodden sections of the society. Like Anand, Thakazhi too exposed the unexplored world of scavengers and their pitiable circumstances. He too portrayed the bitter realities and various forces that are responsible for making their lives tragic through the exposure of the bitter experiences of characters without any artificiality. Like Anand, Thakazhi too created a good number of characters who revealed us the dignity of physical labour. And his characters too win our attention through their self-determination, will-power, sacrifice and tragic sufferings.

Thus both the writers have some common aspects to share even amidst slight differences. Both the novelists portrayed characters who were able to reflect every Indian reality and through the characters both the writers exposed various social and economic factors and their impact on common Indian man and his surroundings and through this, both expressed their humanitarian concern and life in its wholeness to a
great extent in almost identical manner. Also through the portrayal of their life-conditions Anand directly and Thakazhi indirectly expressed their protest against the social inequalities and the various forces behind them.