CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Comparative Literature as a discipline was first established in France in the second half of the 19th Century. French comparatists had established the reputation long before the discipline reached the shores of the United States in the wake of German scholars who left Hitler's Germany. This has grown in the past few years and become a respectable academic discipline in many a country. Comparative Literature has been defined by Henry H.H. Remak as "The study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, religion, etc. on the otherhand".¹

Comparative Literature uses criticism as the main instrument for comparing literatures of different languages or different national literatures.

The recognition of a certain family likeness among the works of a specific age in different tongues has inspired many comparative literary studies. Consequently, the study of family likeness among the Romantic literatures of the Western countries has been undertaken by comparatists like Van Tiegham and Lilian R. Furst.² The present dissertation is a study of this kind and it analyses some of the similar aspects of Romanticism shared by the Romantic poems of English and Tamil,
especially the poems of P.B. Shelley and C. Subramania Bharati. Shelley and Bharati have been taken as the typical representatives of the Romanticisms of English and Tamil respectively since, they exemplify most of the progressive ideals of the above literary movement. Besides, a large number of similarities can be seen in their poems since their social milieu is more or less the same and they have concentrated mostly on similar social, political, individual and literary problems.

Social Milieu

The Industrial Revolution, American War of Independence, French Revolution and the English revolts against the abuses of the Crown were some of the important events that have cracked the backbone of the traditional Western civilization and mode of thought. The above revolutions and the advent of a highly advanced technological civilization have brought out drastic changes in the milieu and mentality of the Western nations. They introduced new ideas, techniques, and manners of thought which are reflected in the literature and philosophy of the Western countries of the 19th century. They shattered the feudal setup and the patronage systems of art and poetry, which have cultivated the traditional neo-classical writings, and paved the way for the emergence of a new middle class to the highest level of the social stratum. The old feudal system and its social convictions were terribly challenged by this new class.
The new scientific inventions have increased the production of commodities and brought out considerable income to the new capitalists as well as to the middle class workers and given them a sense of self-reliance. The newly emerged middle class, which is nurtured in the liberal democratic social ideals, has formed all its social ideals, theory of literature and aesthetic codes on the basis of the cult of individualism. It attacked the relics of feudal system as well as the orthodox social institutions and convictions which were fostered by the feudal set up. It has revolted against the feudal convictions, the patronage systems, the neo-classical mode of composition, and the tendency to imitate classical models. Romanticism is the artistic expression of the ideologies, social outlook and aesthetic sensibility of this new class which attained a dominating place in the 19th century Europe. Consequently, Romanticism is completely opposed to the neo-classical trends of the feudal set up and it can be described as the output of the newly introduced technological civilization. The rebellious nature of the middle class also finds powerful expression in the three ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity which were the basic factors behind the French Revolution. The French Revolution itself is an outward expression of the emergence of a new civilization and a new class.
The French Revolution

The French Revolution has left a strong impact on the artistic intelligentsia of the European nations of the 19th century both in the formal as well as in the thematical levels. As observed by A.G. George "The French Revolution was the greatest socio-political movement which stirred the imagination of the writers during the first part of the nineteenth century. Abstract ideas about liberty and equality began to spread in England. These notions challenged the old order of social hierarchy, the old conceptions of status, tradition and class privileges. 'Man' came to be defined not in terms of status, but in terms of elementary emotional and moral values. Thus, the individual becomes the subject of philosophical investigation." The artistic manifestation of this cult of individual is seen in the poetical compositions of the European Romantic movement, which has left an indelible impact on the artistic intelligentsia of India in the beginning of twentieth century and quickened the Romantic spirit in Indian literature. William Blake, William Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge, P.B. Shelley, Lord Byron and John Keats are some of the important poets of English Romanticism. Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra, Kumaran Asan, Vallathol Narayana Menon, Subramania Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Kavimani Desika Vinayagam Pillai are some of the leading exponents of Indian Romanticism.
Romanticism in India

The advent of the Westerners, the introduction of technological civilization and the western type of education in India have changed the social milieu of the traditional Indian soil and caused the emergence of a new English educated middle class to the highest level of the social stratum. The Freedom Struggle, the newly introduced technological civilization and printing press have challenged the old feudal order, agrarian civilization and their patronage systems of art and literature. New writers, who came from this English educated middle class, have drunk deep into the libertarian sentiments embodied in the Western Romantic literatures and started composing poems. All the neo-classical trends and theories were opposed vehemently by this new school of writers. This new school was given a vigorous start by Tagore and this spirit spread throughout the major languages of India in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Romanticism and Revolution

The influence of the above cited revolutions are a part and parcel of the study of the full-grown Romantic movement. As far as English Romanticism is concerned, the major poetry of this movement were all written under the influence of the new secular, liberal conception of man and
his destiny that had sprung from the French Revolution and the French 19th century thought that had preceded it. It is a known fact that most of the English and Indian Romantic poets, cited previously, have participated in the various revolutions of their age. Hence we can describe Romantic poetry as the product of some political and social revolutions and most of the poetry of this period were written by poets of the middle class, who directly or indirectly participated in the revolutions. As pointed out by W.H. Auden most of the English Romantics were members of the middle or upper middle class; most of them had classical education and they spent some of their time at school and University in the study of Latin and Greek. 5

Poetry of the Middle Class

Marx and Engels conceived the forms of human society in any given country and epoch as growing out of the methods of production which prevailed at that place and time; and out of the relations involved in the social forms arose a 'superstructure' of higher activities such as politics, law, religion, philosophy, literature and art. 6 If we account for the birth of Romanticism in this Marxiological perspective, we can explain it as the artistic manifestation of the bourgeois revolution against the feudal set up as well as against the social ties and institutions of its own class. As observed previously, most of the poets of this movement
came from the bourgeois class and hence all the ideals, aspirations, ideological backgrounds and libertarian sentiments of the 19th century bourgeoisie, which are centred around the cult of individualism, find powerful expression in their creative works too.

**Two kinds of Romanticism**

George Plekhanov has asserted that "The romanticists really were out of harmony with their bourgeois social environment. Their circles consisted of young bourgeois who were revolted by the sordidness, the tedium and the vulgarity of bourgeois existence. The new art with which they so strongly infatuated was for them a refuge from the sordidness, tedium and vulgarity." Thus, the social commitment and partisanship of the Romantics were responsible for one kind of poems whereas their aloofness and detachment from their social reality produced another kind of literary works. Some critics have named the former trend as positive Romanticism and the latter as negative Romanticism. The typical symbols of negative Romanticism are individuals filled with guilt, despair and cosmic and social alienation. Positive Romanticism is exemplified in the poet's role as a reformer, revolutionary and prophet.

The Russian writer Maxim Gorky has viewed two sharply contrasting tendencies namely active Romanticism
and passive Romanticism. He defines passive Romanticism as an endeavour to reconcile man with his life by embellishing that life, or to distract him from the things around him by means of a barren introspection into his inner world, into thoughts of "life's insoluble problems", such as love, death and other imponderables, problems that cannot be solved by speculation or contemplation but only by science and active Romanticism as an attempt "to strengthen man's will to live and raise him up against the life around him, against any yoke it would impose". It is obvious that positive Romanticism and active Romanticism as well as negative Romanticism and passive Romanticism explain the same concept even though the terminologies are different at the lexical level. The same trends have been noticed in the American Romanticism too even though the critics have preferred some other terms. As observed by one American critic "the more important writers of the period can be roughly classified as optimists and pessimists, according to whether they presented the individualism of American society in bright or dark colours. Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman clearly belong to the former category and Poe, Hawthorne and Melville to the latter". Even though the above two trends are discernible in the English and Tamil Romantics, the partisan spirit, the reformative attitude and the social commitment of the active side dominates in them over their negative aspects.
As pointed out by Lilian R. Furst, "English romanticism was constantly tempered by a native realism, good sense, moderation and spirit of independence, which protected the movement from the excesses into which the German lapsed through their tendency to abstracticism and their totalitarian extremism". The same can be said of Indian Romanticism, especially of Tamil Romanticism too. In the context of the development of Western and Indian literatures, Romanticism appears as a tremendous creative renewal of a force equalled perhaps only by the Renaissance. The very words used to describe Romanticism point to the renewal that is implied, phrases such as "the awakening of the imagination", "the religious revival", "the active reawakening of a creative impulse" which abound in the critical discussions of the Romantic movement. This active aspect of Romanticism, which is discernible in the poems of the later English Romantics such as Shelley, Byron and others and in most of the Indian Romantics, has been deemed as an artistic manifestation of the bourgeois alliance with the common man to overthrow feudal restrictions.

Definition of the Term

Broadly speaking, the word 'Romanticism' is used in two senses (1) a general and permanent characteristic of mind, art and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures and (2) a specific historical movement in art and ideas which occurred in most of the leading nations of the world after the
19th century with the emergence of a new capitalist set up. This term was used in England for the first time in the latter sense by Carlyle who has used the word 'Romanticism' with reference to the Germans. In this dissertation this word is used in the latter sense to indicate a particular literary trend that exerted a deep impact on the literary works of the European nations of the 19th century and the Indian literatures of the first half of the present century which flourished under the backgrounds of French Revolution and Indian Freedom Struggle respectively. This restricted usage is highly indispensable since, apart from the above meaning, there existed multifarious meanings and definitions for this term among the European sociologists, artists and critics. The later English and American critics have used this word as a technical literary term to denote the dominating trends of the 19th century European literatures. Now-a-days this has become an accepted poetic idiom to denote the 19th century European literatures and a part of the 20th century Indian literatures which share most of the common trends of European, especially the English Romanticism. This commonness in literature was caused by the same kind of social milieu existed in the Western and Eastern hemispheres in the above period. This social milieu represents a transitional period, the transition from a feudal set up to a highly developed capitalist pattern of society. The commonness and family
likeness existed among the European Romanticisms have been pointed out by René Wellek, who has said, "We find (in the 19th century) throughout Europe the same conception of poetry; of the workings and nature of poetic imagination, the same conception of nature; its relation to man, and basically the same poetic style, with a use of imagery, symbolism and myth which is clearly distinct from that of the 18th century neo-classicism".  

Inspite of the family likeness, the real relationship between the Romanticisms of various nations is infinitely more complex due to the differences in their social, economic and political backgrounds. Consequently, justifications can be given to these variations on the basis of their social milieu. The possibilities for undertaking a comparative analysis of various European Romantic movements have been insisted by René Wellek and Austin Warren as "We can compare English Romanticism with the different Romanticisms in France and Germany and can study the parallels or alleged parallels with the Romantic Movement in the fine arts even though the problems will be different in every time and place and impossible to make general rules".  

Such an attempt has been very successfully undertaken by Lilian R. Furst in her book Romanticism in Perspective (1972). I feel that more similarities can be seen in the Romantic poems of England, America and India, especially those of Tamil Nadu, than in the literary works of other nations.
These three Romanticisms form more or less one family irrespective of their slight individual deviations. The similarities between them sprout from the same kind of social reality existed in the Romantic age as well as the mutual influences between their creative works. The present study aims to establish the 'family likeness' between the Romantic poems of English and Tamil, especially those of Shelley and Bharati.

**English Romanticism - Its Origin and Growth**

The word 'Romantic' rarely occurs in the works of the major English Romantic poets, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, in contrast to its frequent appearances in the German and French theoretical writings of the 19th century. The English critics of this period were not, by and large, pre-occupied with the philosophical basis of the movement as were the Germans, nor with the distinction between classical and Romantic, as in France. It was the later critics, who noticed the presence of the fundamental trends of Romanticism in them, have grouped them under that family.

Eventhough 'Romanticism' attained a full fledged form in the 19th century, its origin can be traced to the love songs of the troubadours. Their songs strike an entirely a new chord in European literature, for they introduced into Western civilization the ideals of chivalry, courtliness, the cult of ideal womanhood and melancholy love poems. Subjectivism
is the most important hallmark of the Romantics and this
found powerful expression in English literature as early as
1742 in Young's *Night Thoughts*, which were inspired by personal
grief at the death of his daughter and a friend. It was
followed in 1745 by Akenside's *Pleasure of Imagination*, which
has given much impetus to the Romantic conception of creative
Imagination. These two works stand midway between the
conventional moralism of the neo-classic age and the
emotional outlook of the Romantics which admits expression
of personality and personal agony.

Harvey's *Meditations among the Tombs* (1747) and
Gray's *Elegy written in a country Churchyard* (1751) represent
the transitional era from the rigid and objective neo-classic
verse to the spontaneous and subjective poetry of the Romantic
School. Though these two authors were deeply rooted in a
social milieu which favours objectivity and rigidity in
creative activity, in tone and spirit, they seem to be the
forerunners of the later Romantic movement initiated by
Wordsworth and Coleridge. In the prevailing mood of
melancholy in Gray's poem, we see a prominent feature of the
Romantic movement. His wider outlook of humanity, his interest
in the short and simple annals of the poor and his democratic
spirit offer a striking contrast to the metropolitanism of Pope
age, and pave the way to Burns and Wordsworth. In his interest
in the revival of Celtic legends, we notice another important
aspect of the Romantic movement, and find in him the precursor of Coleridge and Scott. Self revelation or egotism which is a salient feature of the Romantic writers is also apparent in Gray.

Most of the Romantic trends can be seen in the Elizabethan poetry too. But the fundamental difference between Elizabethan poetry and the Romantic poetry is that whereas "Elizabethan Romantic mode is founded on an amalgam of wit + fancy + conceit + imagination, the 19th century Romantic poetry is grounded in sensibility and imagination". 16 As pointed out by D. C. Muick in his The Compass of Irony, "though we many find some of the elements of Romantic irony in such earlier writers as Chaucer, Shakespeare and Cervantes, it is not until the later 18th century that the full development of Romantic irony in practice as well as theory becomes historical possible". 17

Rousseau's disgust with the social order of his time, based on ownership of lands and goods, led him to idealize the primitive state of mankind and to call for the famous return to nature. This revolutionary naturalism of Rousseau had exerted a strong influence on the poems of the English Romantics. To the revolutionary naturalism of Rousseau and the melancholy pietism of English pre-romanticism was added the transcendentalism of the German philosophers. In Blake's
Songs of Innocence (1799) and Songs of Experience (1794) imagery was used in a manner totally different to its neo-classical decorative function and this was a vital break through from the old type of poetic expression. This attitude of using functional imageries instead of decorative ones is preserved in almost all the Romantic poems of England. It was in 1793, the year of the Lyrical Ballads, that Wordsworth accompanied Coleridge to Germany, and England was now to receive its stimulus from Germany. After their return, both Coleridge and Wordsworth collaborated together in the publication of Lyrical Ballads, the most important collections of English Romantic poems.

Informal in character, English Romanticism remained less systematic, less dogmatic than its continental counterparts. With the deaths of Keats (1821), Shelley (1822) and Byron (1824) English Romanticism came to an abrupt end.

As observed already, English Romanticism was informal in character and as asserted by René Wellek, "There was no 'romantic' movement, if we limit the meaning of such a term to a conscious program and consider the precise name as crucial." The English Romantics are pragmatic rather than systematic. It could, in fact, afford to be tolerant and broad in scope because it did not, as in France and Germany, have to be militant. "It was unorganized, without leaders or journals or definite programmes, a loose informal movement, 'a warm intuitive muddle'."
The leading poets of English Romanticism can be brought under two phases. The first phase of the Romantic movement includes Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Sir Walter Scott. They constitute the lake school of poets. The second phase of Romanticism includes three famous poets—namely Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats. Some other scholars have brought English Romantic poets under three phases. For instance, Harford, in The Age of Wordsworth, suggests the following division.

1. The Wordsworth group 1798-1806 centred on Stowey and Grasmere, comprising Coleridge, Crabbe and Clare.

2. The Scott group of 1805-10 including Campbell, Moore and Southey, concentrating on Medievalism and the Border lands.

3. Shelley group 1818-22, the cosmopolitans, such as Byron and Keats—passionate in their assertion of freedom and beauty.

Indian Romanticism, especially Tamil Romanticism comes very close to the 'Shelley group'.

**Romantic Tendencies**

In his book Romanticism and Modern Ego (1943) Jacques Barzun has explained the Romantic Tendencies as "a return to the middle ages, a love of the exotic, the revolt from reason, a vindication of the individual, a liberation of the unconscious, a rejection of artistic
conventions, a return to emotionalism, a return to nature and so on. 21 Some others have explained the main characteristics of Romanticism as "revolt against authority of all kinds, including all literary traditions and forms, faith in man, individualism, and personal liberty; love for nature; interest in the long ago, the far away, and the supernatural, giving of free reign to the emotions and the imagination; melancholy; cosmopolitanism; egoism; humanitarianism; and escapism". 22 Most of these salient features of English Romanticism are shared by Tamil Romanticism too.

The Romantics have widened the scope of poetry by drawing their subject matter from the most varied sources, and treating them subjectively. They have shown keen interest in the psychological studies of an individual man's mind, in the legends of Greece and Rome, in the history of myth of the middle ages and the simple tales of countrymen. They strengthened poetry by a return to simplicity of diction. They have thrown off the clumsy periphrases and stilted idiom that had encumbered so much poetry at the end of the eighteenth century, and shown how glowing, how moving, how imaginative the use of the simplest words could be in the right context. 23

Neo-classicism and Romanticism

The Romantic trends can be clearly brought to light if we compare and contrast them with the neo-classical trends
which existed in Europe, especially in England, till the advent of Romanticism. The difference between neo-classicism and Romanticism is indeed very significant. Neo-classicism is the product of a feudal setup whereas Romanticism is the output of a capitalist society emerging out of feudalism.

The conscious imitation of Greek and Latin models, strict obedience to Aristotelian rules, hatred of mystery and enthusiasm, repression of emotion and imagination - these are some of the characteristics of English neo-classicism. While the neo-classicists glorify reason and logic, the Romantics give importance to intuition and passion. The neo-classical poets celebrate the social man whereas the Romantics glorify the individual. Whereas the neo-classicists strictly follow certain accredited verses and metres, the Romantics experiment with new forms and metres in accordance with their poetic content. To the neo-classicists the surprising nature is trivial, vulgar and unworthy of serious attention whereas to the Romantics, it is a thing to be worshipped. The neo-classicists consider Man as an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant whereas the Romantics hail him as an infinite reservoir of possibilities. To the Romantics, Man is intrinsically good, spoilt by circumstances whereas to the neo-classicists, he is intrinsically limited, but disciplined by order and tradition.

Most of these fundamental trends can be seen in Tamil Romanticism too.
Romanticism in Indian literature

The same spirit and trends of the above said European Romanticism, especially the English Romanticism of the 19th century, prevailed with some variations in the major languages of India in the final decades of the 19th century and the first half of this century when the waves of renaissance, the new spirit kindled by it and the new literary theories expounded by the literary heads of England, America, France and Russia beat on India's shores and awakened her from her age long slumber. India with her rich legacy of literature and a long and fertile literary tradition responded positively to the influence of the West on her which provoked in her a new religious, social and literary awakening. She inherited and assimilated the alien literary traditions and gave a new dimension to her native literary theories and creative activity and due to the reconciliation of these two traditions, a kind of Romantic movement, akin to that which throughout drastic changes in the old literary trends of the European literatures, began to prevail in the Indian literatures also. As a result, the imaginative apprehension of experience, the primacy of feeling, the cult of individual, the new attitude to nature, the exploration of the unconscious, the fascination of the supernatural, the revolt against poetic diction and accredited literary conventions, the greater freedom of expression, etc. — some of the aspects of European Romanticism —
began to manifest in the poetical compositions of the
Romantic movement of India. This 'shift of consciousness'
has cracked the back-bone of the creative activities of the
Tamilis and its impact is clearly seen in the poetical
compositions of the literary heads of the early decades of
this century such as Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Xavimani,
who made a break through in the traditional way of thinking
and expression in the pedantic style.

world literature

In 1343 Marx and Engels wrote in their Manifesto
of the Communist Party that with the development of capitalism
"The intellectual creations of individual nations become
common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness
become more and more impossible, and out of the numerous
national and local literatures there arise a world literature". 25
Indian Romanticism, especially Tamil Romanticism, is the
product of a newly introduced technological civilization and
that of a newly established capitalist set up. Hence, reducing
national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness it echoes most
of the trends of the common literature, the Romantic
literatures of the world, a trend which was inevitable in
the above social milieu.
The Word 'Romanticism'

Eventhough the Indian critics are able to notice the tremendous changes that took place in the poetical compositions of India after the introduction of technological civilization and Western type of education, most of them are very reluctant in giving the name 'Romanticism' to this trend. Some have called these literatures as renaissance literature while others have described them as revolutionary literature. Its "family likeness" with other Western literatures which flourished more or less in the same milieu in other nations has not been sufficiently stressed by the Indian critics.

Yet, some of the critics of modern Bengali, Hindi, Telugu and Malayalam literatures have called this new trend by the name Romanticism. The existence of Romanticism in Bengali literature was noticed by Dr. Sukumar Sen, who wrote The History of Bengali literature. In his words "The group of romantics led by Bharilal Chakravarti was distinguished not only by the intense subjectivity but also by their stress on love, specially woman's love and on the sentimental ties".

He further differentiates the mentality of the Romantics and the English-educated neo-classicists of Bengali literature as "It is really strange that the latter who were mainly English educated men reacted unfavourably to the advanced ideas of the social reformers and theorists, and their support for widow remarriage and women's emancipation,
for instance, was somewhat mechanical and half-hearted -
The romanticists, on the other hand, were not collegians
and they were never eloquent on social reform but their
support for the woman's cause was enthusiastic and
spontaneous". He also stresses the need for a comparative
analysis of the Romantics as "The problem of the genetic
community of Bharati's poetry with the works of Shelley,
Tagore and other poets is a subject for special research".26
In a book review published in The Hindu dated 14.2.1973,
P.S. Narayanan has clearly traced the origin of Indian
Romanticism to Tagore and said "A phase of romantic literature
began in Indian languages when Indian poets like Tagore
discovered the romantic poetry of England. Tagore influenced
Bharati and Kumaran Asan".27 P.K. Parameswaran Nair in his
History of Malayalam Literature28 has dealt with the famous
Malayalam poets Kumaran Asan, Ulloor and Vallathol under the
head The Romantic Movement, and showed how the three poets,
who started their career as classicists, have become
Romantics.29 Prabhakar Machwa has shown how the poets of the
so-called 'renaissance-movement' of Indian literatures have
accepted "English or European Romanticism as the guiding
star".30 N. Sreekantan Nair has shown how Kumaran Asan's
Veena Poovu, "initiated the romantic movement in 1903".31
With reference to the above poem, he has asserted "Its
romanticism and lyrical beauty, the dramatic presentation
of the denouement, the flash-back into the past, the smooth compulsive progress towards the future, its structural strength and sense of proportion, the lovely pictures and original imagery, and above all the sweet, sad, philosophical deductions - all these embellish the first poetic expression of the romantic revolt".32 How Bharati and Asan share the aspects of English Romanticism and how they form one literary family with the Romantic poets of other nations are shown by me in a separate chapter in one of my books.33

The basic characteristics of Indian Romanticism, especially the Malayalam Romanticism, have been described by Kumara Pillai thus: "They (the Malayalam romantics) discarded the decadent neo-classicism in which they themselves were nurtured and restored the central tradition of our poetry to which they added a new dimension ... What we call the Romantic revival was not confined to the re-emergence of the romantic spirit which is basically the opposite of the realistic attitude. It meant a great revolt against pseudo-classicism and a re-assertion of the primacy of individual imagination. It was a vast movement which included the emergence of a new spirit of true romanticism and subjectivity, but it also embraced a new spirit of realism and an attempt at the restoration of genuine classicism which is really a harmonious blending of the two under a world view, which sees life 'steadily and sees it as a whole'.34 The above
description clearly brings out not only the cardinal aspects of Malayalam Romanticism but of the whole Indian Romanticism, especially the Tamil Romanticism. The following chapters of this study illustrate this fact clearly.

The existence of Romanticism in Hindi and Bengali was discussed by some other critics. Suresh Kohli has shown how "many contemporary critics of Rabindranath Tagore criticised him for the influence of Romantics on his poetry". He has also pointed out how the Indian literatures of this century derived their inspiration from the Western Romantics. With reference to modern Hindi literature "Jayashankar Prasad's Kanyayani is said to be the landmark of Romanticism. Yugant, a collection of new poems by Sumitranand Pant, is in a way the declaration of the death of Romanticism in Hindi". How the Romantic spirit is quickened in Indian literature by Western Romantic poetry is explained by K.M. George as follows "The Lyrical and Romantic elements were found quite interesting. Very soon in every language several lyrical pieces came to be written. Poets also adopted forms such as elegy, sonnet, ode, dramatic monologue, etc., etc. Shelley, Keats, Browning, Wordsworth, Whitman (and Eliot) are just a few who have influenced our poets. Modern poetry has been released from the grip of rhetoric and feats of craftsmanship. It has become a poetry of experience, has ceased to be the hobby of the leisured class and become the mouthpiece of the ordinary man.

It has gained in elegance, dignity and refinement and much of its progress is due to its continuous and inspiring contact with Western poetry.  

Byron's contribution for the enrichment of Bengali Romanticism has also been discussed at length. The existence of Romanticism in Telugu literature has been noticed by Qamar Rais. He has described it as follows: "It was during the twenties and thirties of this century that what could roughly be described as the Romantic movement in Telugu poetry swept the whole Andra country like the west wind of Shelley. It is possible that the 'new poetry' as it was so-called in those days, representing a revolt against the classical tradition was largely pioneered by Gurazada Appa Rao, who died in 1915, and Royaprolu Subba Rao, who wrote some of his earliest poems a few years before the first world war. But, the Romantic Movement as such was spearheaded by Dr. Drishna Sastri. How the Tamil poet Bharati spearheaded the Romantic trends in Tamil literature also has been discussed briefly.

All these views clearly illustrate that there is a tendency among the native scholars to view the modern poetry, which is the product of the newly introduced technological civilization and Western type of education, as 'Romantic Poetry' and to see its kinship with other Romantic literatures of the world eventhough no concrete and systematic comparative
study has yet been done in this field. The present study is a first venture in this area.

The Social Milieu Behind Tamil Romanticism

The advent of the Europeans has quickened the Romantic spirit in three ways. Firstly, the Europeans have introduced the technological civilization which leads to the urbanization of a number of metropolitans. This has terribly shattered the age old agrarian culture, its patronage systems and courtly conventions, which have fostered a kind of neo-classical literatures in Tamil. Up to the beginning of the 19th century, as far as Tamil literary arena is concerned, we can come across two kinds of patronage systems namely the temples and secular courts of the feudal patrons and they have cultivated devotional and secular literatures respectively. In these patronage systems, there are certain aristocratic court and religious literary conventions to which the poet is expected to give much respect. Being a member of an economically dependent class, which has to depend either on the temples or the feudal lords, for its existence, the professional Tamil poet has no artistic freedom. His duty is one of conformism as his main vocation is to please the whims and fancies of the ruling class or the authorities of the temples or the patrons of a particular religious sect. Their poetical
compositions, like the static conventions of the patronage systems, are also very formalistic. Thus arose 96 types of stereotyped poetic forms in Tamil literature called Prabhantas. With the ready-made form at his hands, the poet's duty is to infuse the form with certain conventional content either erotic or devotional. Thus a dichotomy of form and content, a mechanical conception of art, has existed in the feudal set up. The poet's role is to please his aristocratic audience by his diction, ornamental usage of language, artificial techniques, intellectual and scholastic bombast. His duty is to prepare a luxurious art, in harmony with the luxurious life of his paymaster under his capricious demand. The introduction of technological civilization has shattered the feudal set up and caused the emergence of a new class comprising of the small factory owners, the newly English educated landed men and the members of the middle class, well informed about Western civilization.

Secondly, the introduction of Western type of education enables this new class to study Western literatures which are imbued with libertarian sentiments and the freedom of individual and increases a reading public which comprises of the members of the newly emerged middle class. Most of the Romantic poets and writers have hailed from this English educated middle class. Thirdly, the introduction of printing
press has made the members of the artistic intelligentsia as an independent class depending on their own creative ability for their existence. Consequently, the old patron is replaced by the publisher and the aristocratic audience is replaced by a huge reading public. There is no need for the poet to be in conformity either with the conventions of the court or the whims and fancies of the ruling class. He writes for his middle class audience who are nurtured in the secular literatures of the Western world. Hence, he assumes the role of a creator, a rebel and a prophet, - almost all the Romantic poets assume these three roles.

The Middle Class

The Indian capitalism is an offshoot of the Portugal, British and French capitalism. This social change has left its impact firstly on the middle class of the city, the Brahmin community and then the landlords of the villages. The middle class has been the driving force of all the intellectual creations of the first part of this century which are the superstructure of this newly emerged capitalist social set up. Their poetry is filled with a spirit of confrontism and libertarian sentiments which are the salient features of Romanticism. The Romantic poets have advanced the conception of the naturally good man born free but everywhere in chains. Such revolts against existing systems of laws, cannons, forms
and traditions always appear as a revolt of the heart against reason, a revolt of feeling and sentiment against sterile formalism and the tyranny of the past. Equality, liberty and fraternity, the three main slogans of the French revolution became the social ideals of Bharati, who has accepted it as the motto of his journal entitled *Intiıyā*.

**The Nature of Tamil Romanticism**

When compared with European Romanticism, the Romantic movement of Tamil Nadu took place in a still later period; we can roughly say that it started with the birth of Bharati (1882). Yet, the first signs of the Romantic spirit and some of the aspects of Romanticism appeared in the works of Mayuram Vadanayagam Pillai and Gopalakrishna Bharati, who lived in an era when the decadent classicism was in full swing. They have used the language of common man as their poetic medium, shown keen interest in simple themes and echoed some kind of libertarian sentiments in their writings. It is a known fact that the Tamil Romanticism was highly influenced by the major English Romantic poets such as Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Lamb and Scott. Their influences on the Tamil Romantic poets such as Bharati, Bharati Dasan, Kavimani and Kalki have been discussed elaborately by many scholars. Like the English Romanticism, Tamil Romanticism is quite informal with no definite schemes or programmes behind it. It is inspired by a vision of the new world and
the future development of mankind. Like English Romanticism, Tamil Romanticism is never divorced from realism and like the former, it is evolutionary in character and therefore not given to such violent swings as German Romanticism.

**English Influence on Tamil Romanticism**

The European influence was very effective in India mainly through the British, who were the pioneers of a new technological and industrial civilization. Their advent was the main cause for the growth of numerous reform movements in religion and society which the Tamil Romantic poet Bharati glorified in his poem *Vēls Ilavaracarukku Vāltu 'Felicitation to the Prince of Wales'* . The typical declamation of Rousseau, "Cast your eyes over every nation of the world, preserve every volume of its history, amid all these strange and cruel forms of worship, in this amazing variety of manners and customs, you will everywhere find the same (basic) ideas of good and evil" has attracted Bharati who frequently reiterates the same idea in his prose and poetical compositions. The Indian cultural renaissance appeared under the leadership of Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) who made the first organized efforts to adopt Hinduism to the new situation. He is the harbinger of the social movements like Feminism which have influenced the above said three major Romantic poets of Tamil Nadu.
Vivekananda, who interpreted and gave a new dimension to the accredited dogmas and doctrines of old Hinduism and preached them powerfully like St. Paul, stressed the importance of free will and individual freedom. The Tamil Romantic poets, like Bharati, were highly influenced by his preachings and these ideals emerged with a new and artistic form in the poetical and prose works of Bharati. Bharati was an ardent follower of Vivekananda. In his poems Apētananta and Pupēntira Vijayam and in many of his prose writings, Bharati gives glowing tributes to Vivekananda who preached the doctrine of "One God, One Caste and One Religion" and emphasized the presence of divinity in each and every human soul irrespective of sex and caste. In one of his essays glorifying sister Nivedita, an Irish disciple of Vivekananda, Bharati hail Vivekananda as the root cause of the new political, cultural and religious reawakening of India.

Gandhi's gospel to eradicate the evils of casteism nourished the imagination of the Indian Romantic poets and due to these multifarious influences, they happened to be more revolutionary in their social outlooks than some of the European Romantic poets to some of whom poetry is a means to escape from the "still sad music of humanity". Prohibition of Sati, abolition of child-marriage, propagation of widow re-marriage, undermining of caste and sex distinctions became the themes
of the Indian Romantic poets who wanted to liberate their society and motherland from such social evils. Due to the urbanization of the important capitals, and villages, most of the Romantic poets, like Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Kavimani, began to sing of the manufacturing skill and the economic advancements of their own land.

The Indian Romantic poets were fascinated by Shakespeare on literary and human points of view. Marxism and other economic and social thoughts of the world also permeated their thinking. Western individualism was essential in giving the Romantics a feeling of self-reliance. The currents of renaissance forced them to revive classical themes and hence the Indian Romantics interpreted ancient myths and themes to suit their own ends. Thus the ancient Tamil poets Ilanjo, Valluvar and Kampaon became the idol of worship to poets like Bharati and Kavimani. The Malayalam Romantic poet, Kumaran Asan has revived and interpreted many ancient Buddhist tales in his compositions. Thus it is obvious that the European spirit, through English language and literature, has revitalized Indian Romantic literatures and increased their range and utility.

**Impact of English Romantics**

The influence exerted by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron and Blake on the Tamil Romantics is
worth mentioning. It is a known fact that Keats, Byron, Wordsworth and Walt Whitman have exercised a deep impact on Bharati and this has been discussed at length by V. Sachithananadan in his books *Western Impact on Bharati and Whitman and Bharati*. The influence of Shelley on Bharati will be discussed in the next chapter. The ideals and trends of English Romantic movement influenced Bharati and Asan indirectly through Bengali literature also, since, they came into close contact with the literary tendencies initiated and developed by Bankim Chandra, Madhuso'dan Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore under Western influence. The other Tamil Romantic poet Kavimani was an ardent admirer of William Blake. He has translated some of the poems of Blake into Tamil. The name of the French Romantic poet Victor Hugo was very popular among the Tamil Romantic poets. Bharati Dasan had a very great admiration for Victor Hugo. Some of the trends of English Romanticism such as the poet's yearning for subjectivism, his fascination to folk tunes, the great importance of creative imagination, etc. - were propagated powerfully in Malayalam literature by the renowned Romantic writer A.R. Raja Raja Varma. A number of English Romantic poems came to be translated into almost all the leading languages of India, in the end of 19th century and in the beginning of this century.
The English Romantics have influenced the Bengali Romantics to a considerable degree who in turn have influenced the Tamil Romantics. A new desire for liberty and a sense of revolt against authority which are apparent in the works of the English Romantics stirred the younger generations of Bengal and, as a result of this, a new note of individualism, revolt and scepticism were discernible in the Bengali poems also. The note of individualism continually deepens till the poet feels alone in an alien universe. The pathos and solitariness which characterize much of the poetry of Tagore is an expression of this spirit. 45

The emphasis upon individualism tends to loosen social bonds. When the individual exalts himself above society, old social patterns begin to crumble. A curious reflex of this process of social disintegration is often seen in the Romantic literatures of India. A social milieu in which traditions are sacrificed to individuality therefore often creates the background for the flowering of Romantic literatures. This individualism is responsible for the predominance of subjective poems and lyrical expression of individual experiences and emotions. This attitude has checked the growth of dramatic literature, which is the most objective form among all the literary genres. With a few exceptions, most of the Romantic poets are not able to create
fine dramatic works or flesh and blood characters. The ego of the poet is projected in his characters and hence they are cast out of the personality of their creator. The individual freedom leads women to clamour for equal rights with men - which is (sexual equality) another aspect of the Romantic poems of English and Indian literatures. The poems of Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Kavi.mani bear witness to this. We shall discuss this aspect at length in another chapter.

**Evolution of Tamil Romanticism**

Tamil Romanticism of the 20th century is a gradual evolution from the native tradition and was quickened by the introduction of the technological civilization, Western type of education and the English and American Romantic literatures. The important aspects of Romanticism such as the cult of ideal womanhood, childhood and nature are not alien to Tamil literatures. Though influenced by the poets of the English Romantic movement, the Tamil Romantics did not depend completely upon the English Romantics for these aspects of Romanticism. Like Shelley’s Beatrice and Cythna, the ancient Tamil has witnessed some revolutionary women prototypes such as Kannaki and Pāncālī in her major epics (eventhough their modern interpretation by the Romantic poets is different). Besides, the movement for the liberation of women is not a new one to the Tamil Romantics who lived in a period when Feminism was
in full swing. All these backgrounds paved the way for the emergence of some ideal and revolutionary female characters in the poetical compositions of the major Romantic poets namely Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Kavimani.

The Social Role of the Tamil Romantics

In spite of the common features, there are vast and manifold differences between the English Romanticism and Tamil Romanticism, since the latter prevailed in the beginning of the twentieth century — a period which felt the need for technological developments and drastic social reforms more than before. Besides the ideals of the French Revolution, Russian Revolution and Marxist thoughts have stamped their impacts strongly on the Tamil soil. Consequently, the Tamil Romantics have associated themselves with the progressive movements of their social reality. They were fully aware of their social role and the social function of poetry. Hence, they did not support pure poetry. The social conditions of Tamil Nadu are highly responsible for the emergence of the cult of individualism and the theory about the language of the common man, Bharati has advocated the theory about the language of the common man and in manifold ways, his compositions have clearly shown the dying away of the neo-classicism and the emergence of the new Romantic poetry.
Bharati's contemporaries

Even in the beginning of this Romantic age, many of the poets, who were nurtured in and accustomed to the Western type of education, have composed poems in the artificial style, traditional form and metres like their neo-classical predecessors. It was Bharati, the harbinger of the Tamil Romantic movement who broke a new ground in this regard. His best friend and a renowned scholar, Somasundara Bharati has composed Marivāyil and Maṅkalakkuriccī Poṅkal Nikalcci in the traditional style and written explanatory commentary in the same method which was displayed by the traditional commentators Naṅcinārkkiniyar and Purāciriyar. Vellakāl Subramaniam, a versatile scholar in English and Tamil, composed Kūmpī Viruttam, Nellaicciletai Venpā, etc. in the rigid and hackneyed forms experimented by the Tamil neo-classical writers. Pūnti Araṅkanāta Mutaliyār, a Professor of Mathematics, has composed Kaccikkalampakam in the traditional neo-classical metres.

Bharati

There were some honest attempts made by Suriya Narayana Sastri to introduce the English sonnet, a very famous Romantic literary form, in Tamil. Yet, he has not handled the sonnet form with powerful communicative force so as to serve an effective mass media. It was Bharati, who, like the English
Romantic poet Wordsworth, ventured on the task of composing a kind of popular genre in 'simple vocabularies, clear and lucid style, the rhythms which are very easily comprehensible and the tune 'mettu' that the populace highly relish'. In his earlier stage, Bharati also had experimented with the sonnet form and composed three poems entitled Yan, Cantirikai and Tanimaiyirakkam. The traditional content and the Western literary form meet and mingle in an effective way in these masterpieces. When the patriotic feeling, contemporary social and political crises began to impress him, probably in 1932, his creative activity underwent a radical transformation. The impact of the Freedom Struggle was vital for such an abrupt change. In 1939, he has compared the patriotic sentiment with a sunflower and said that like the sunflower, turning towards the direction of the sun, its lover, all living beings started responding to the patriotic spirit. Bharati began to compose poems in the heightened language of the common man. The song Vahkame Valiya which was sung by him on 14.9.1935 at the Marina Beach, is a standing example for the new kind of Romantic poetry with simple language, the rhythm of the common speech and the lyrical outpourings of an inspired soul. To him, poetry is a means of communication, a mass media, to communicate his lofty message to his inspired and passionate auditors and share his feelings with them. This is indeed a new role and turning point in the historical development of the Tamil artistic intelligentsia.
According to Bharati, good poetry must "express the visions of the inner soul in lucid and clear style" and he ridiculed his contemporary neo-classicists who devoted more attention on craftsmanship and other formal and technical aspects of poetry. Tamil poetry thus underwent a revolution in the hands of Bharati who used powerfully the rhythm and folk-song metres like cintu in kavyas like Pāncāli Capatam. He uses words pertaining to the religion of the past, but with a new meaning and significance for the modern world of freedom and science without any trace of superstition, dogma or creed.  

The Influencing Factors

He was nurtured by the Ālvārs, Nāyānārs, Gopalakrishna Bharati and Saint Ramalinga who wrote simple lyrics for the common man. What Bharati praised in them are inner vision 'oli', clarity 'tēlīvu' and sensuous style 'Kulirutanatai'. Like Wordsworth, he has chosen the common man as the protagonist. He has relished the folk songs and devotional poems which are highly lyrical in nature. Like the English Romantic poets, he has revived his own native forms of the folk songs like Kirttanai, Kilikkanni, Kummi and Temmāṭuk, which were very popular among the proletarians. He was influenced by the Tamil mystic poets like the siddhas and included him into their lineage. He candidly admired the poetic mind of the Western Romantic poets and praised the poets like Shelley, Keats,
Whitman, Miss Ross and Emil Vorherzen. He has eulogized Whitman's Feminist Gospel and his principles of equality and liberty. His free verse was influenced by Whitman.

Bharati is a worshipper of nature in her amiable state like Wordsworth and in her ferocious state like Shelley. He often took recourse into metaphysical speculations of it like Coleridge. He is a worshipper of beauty in its concrete as well as abstract form like Keats. In his feminist gospel and revolt against some of the social institutions, he is very near to Shelley and in his Vedantic philosophy and democratic spirit, he stands very near to the American Romantic poet Whitman.

The other Romantics

The other Romantic poet sharati Casan was a child of the self-respect movement of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy and hence, he happened to be an atheist like Shelley. He is concerned more with social reforms than with Freedom Struggle. He is a worshipper of beauty and nature. The cult of childhood and nature found powerful expression in Kavimani who almost lived a secluded life with less connection with Freedom Struggle and freedom fighters. He was highly influenced by the Romantic poets like Blake and unlike Bharati, he has expressed his defiant spirit in a calm and serene manner. With the advent of new trends such as Socialist Realism, Existentialism, etc.
and after the death of Kavimani and Bharati Dasan, the Tamil
romantic movement lost its vigour and vitality eventhough there
are poets who still compose poems following the Grand Trio of

The Procedure

In this work, I have taken some of the salient aspects
of Romanticism shared by Shelley and Bharati and analysed them
with a sociological perspective of the social reality that has
shaped the creative genius of the above poets. The similar as
well as contrasting points in them are brought to light and
justifications and interpretations are given on the basis of
the sociological backgrounds.

The second chapter studies the various similarities
that exist in the social ideals, attitudes, temperaments,
doctrinal backgrounds as well as in the themes handled by
Shelley and Bharati. The third chapter traces the development
of the cult of Individual both in England and Tamil Nadu and
studies the similarities and dissimilarities of the Romantic
Individualism as handled by the two poets. The next chapter
studies the social conditions that are responsible for the
emergence of the cult of womanhood and discusses at length
about the various types of women depicted in the poems of Shelley
and Bharati, the various influences on them and the diverse
interpretations given by psycho-analysts and literary critics.
The final part of this chapter studies the cult of childhood in Shelley and Bharati. The fifth chapter deals at length about the concept of creative imagination as revealed in the prose as well as poetical works of Shelley and Bharati in relation to the same concept as expressed by other Romantics. The sixth chapter discusses the historical, social and religious backgrounds of the revival of nature worship and makes a comparative study of the natural descriptions of Shelley and Bharati. The last chapter makes a comparative analysis of the various literary theories expounded by Shelley and Bharati as well as the literary techniques handled by them. The whole study brings to light the family likeness existed between English Romanticism and Tamil Romanticism.