CHAPTER IV

THE CULT OF WOMANHOOD AND CHILDHOOD
Another manifestation of the individualism of the Romantics can be seen in their depiction of women characters. The literary works of the Romantics are dominated by women characters of new types who completely differ from the female characters depicted in the classical as well as neo-classical literary works. The proto-types of some of the women characters of the Romantics can be seen in the traditional myths or the poetical compositions of the classical predecessors. Yet, the Romantics have projected very powerfully their subjective feelings, aspirations and ideals on such classical proto-types and hence, they also reflect the egotistic temper of their creators. In the literary works of the Romantics we come across not only ordinary sensible women, but strange feminine creatures, nymphs, savage queens, oriental princesses, revolutionary viragos etc. The quest for idealized as well as unreal women is apparent in the poems of the major English and Tamil Romantic poets, especially, in those of Shelley and Bharati whom I have taken for study. For making the analysis more clear and lucid, it is better to group these women characters under three heads viz.

(1) Fatal women
(2) Idealized women, and
(3) Revolutionary women
Fatal Women

Among the above three categories, the women who fall under the head (I) is less in the Romantic poems of Tamil than those present in Western literatures while there are sundry examples for the other two groups. This may be due to the socio-religious and literary backgrounds of these two hemispheres. When compared with the Western literatures, the pan-human vision for creating nymphs, savage queens, witches, ghosts, etc., are comparatively less in the aristocratic literatures of India. As far as Tamil literature is concerned, the portrayal of ferocious women can be seen in the depiction of Alli in the folk tradition as well as Kāli and her ghost followers in Kaliñkattupparani. Yet, the portrayal of Kāli is entirely different from the Western portrayal of fatal women eventhough some physical descriptions seem similar in these two traditions.

The fatal women of the Romantic poems of France, Germany and England have been studied by Mario Praz in his book The Romantic Agony. He has traced a line of this tradition right from the beginning of European Romanticism and shown Lewis': Matilda at the head of the line. In all such instances the Fatal woman seduces the hero and finally deceives him or kills him. The poet or the hero imagines himself in front of her as a "Powerless victim". The proto-type of such characters can be seen in the depiction of Calypso as well as to a certain
extent in the portrayal of Cleopatra. It is significant to note that the English, Tamil and American Romantics, who have written poems with a good amount of social consciousness, have almost avoided such kind of portrayals. Yet, the traces of the Fatal woman can be seen in Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and Shelley's *Alastor*. Leaving alone her seducing aspect, another salient feature of the portrayal of the Fatal woman is the ferocious description as well as the supernatural qualities of her physical appearance. Such descriptions can be seen in Shelley's *the Witch of Atlas*, *Queen Mab* as well as in his description

"Of some Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the Zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm".  

in *Ode to the West Wind*.

**The Mother Image**

As already stated, some similarities can be seen between the ferocious as well as supernatural description of women characters in the poems of Shelley and Bharati's depiction of the malicious and awful dance of *Kālī* in poems such as *Ulkhîtti* and others. But, whereas Shelley handles such characters and descriptions just for aesthetic purpose and to create some sense of remoteness, Bharati uses them seriously with full of religious and political connotation. He has identified the ferocious *Kālī* with mother India and her
awful dance with a great cosmic revolution which shatters the old social order and inaugurates a new one.

The origin of Bharati's conception of Cakti, Mother Goddess Kali, Mother India, etc. can be traced back to the fertility cult, the cult of Mother Earth, conceived as a female deity. It was in Saivism that the ideas centring round Cakti or the Female Principle, had found a ground most favourable for poetic expressions. Bharati was a Cakta and nowhere in the religious history of the world do we come across such a completely female oriented system as Caktism. In its present form, Caktism is essentially a medieval religion, but it is a direct offshoot of the primitive Mother Goddess cult which was so prominent a feature of the religion of the agricultural peoples who based their social system on the principle of mother right. This mother image was always in the mind of Bharati and it found artistic expression throughout his poems. Regarding this Indian mother image, C.G. Jung observes "In India, 'the loving and terrible mother' is the paradoxical Kali. Sankhya Philosophy has elaborated the mother archetype into the concept of Prakrti (matter) .... There are three essential aspects of the mother: her cherishing and nourishing goodness, her orgiastic emotionality, and her stygian depths".

We are not able to come across the mystical portrayal of mother image in Shelley as we see it in the poems of Bharati. In this respect, Bharati challenges comparison with the American
Romantic poet Walt Whitman, who has given much importance to mother worship. Yet, his mother-worship is not religious but secular. His feminism was shaped by his extraordinary filial affection for his mother on whom he doted. There is no doubt that for him it was a form of mother worship. Like Whitman's feminism, Bharati's feminism and his conception of mother goddess also were inspired by his devotion to his own mother whom he lost at his very early days of life. In Bharati's poem the mother image assumes three guises; the human mother, Bhārāta Mātā and the mother Goddess Caktī. At the highest of his patriotic fervour, he makes no distinction between Bhārāta Mātā and Caktī.

Idealized Women

Another type of woman obviously seen in the Romantic poems is the idealized woman character. Such characters need not be revolutionary but simply an embodiment of the poet's conception of the divine or ideal beauty. They are the outcome of the Romantic poet's attempt to idealize the earthly woman. The characters thus created also appear like the shadowy forms that come in dreams and hence they are highly ethereal in character. Most of the non-revolutionary women characters of Shelley and Bharati can be brought under this category. Shelley's revolutionary women such as Cythna and Beatrice also have a tinge of such idealized feminine beings. Yet, the lady who appears in Alastor, Emilia as portrayed in Epipsychidion etc. can be taken
as concrete examples for this. The idealized woman in Alastor lures the poet and finally disappears throwing him into utter dejection. The love that the poet had for such woman always ends in failure because she is ethereal, unattainable and endowed with divine beauty. The influence of the ideals about Platonic love and the Petrarchan Sonnets have contributed much to the creation of such characters in English Romantic poems. With such an idealistic bent of mind Shelley even portrays Emilia as

"Poor captive bird! Who, from thy narrow cage, Fourest such music, that it might assuage The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee, Were they not deaf to all sweet melody; This song shall be thy rose; its petals pale Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale."

As pointed out by V. Sachithanandan, "In his essays Bharati was concerned with the present status of women and in his poems with their role in the future. Hence his portraits of women in his poems are more idealistic and less realistic". The idealized type of ethereal women characters are less predominant in the poems of Bharati than those in the poems of his English predecessor Shelley. Yet, it can be stated that the image of an idealized ethereal woman has haunted the mind of Bharati from the beginning of his poetic career to the end. We can listen to a pathetic, a frustrated and a melancholy tone and visualize a typical Romantic picture of such women in his poems that celebrate them.
In all such poems, like Shelley, Bharati portrays his dejection caused by his inability to attain the idealized woman. There are many possibilities to suspect that there may be either some kind of dejection in Bharati's conjugal life or some love failure, which was not clearly shown by his biographers.

Bharati speaks about his dejection in his early love-affair in *Guvacaritai* but this love seems to be quite an unrequited one because the girl as portrayed by him is a girl of nine years old. His wife Chellammal says that the love episode portrayed in this poem is not his real love for any earthly girl but his love for the goddess of poetry. But, the poem gives no clue to interpret it in that way. One of Bharati's contemporary biographers named Yatukiriyamal clearly says that Bharati was not happy in his married life and he had plans to marry another woman when Chellammal left him for her native place without his notice. But, the grand daughter of the poet says that "Bharati regarded his wife as the form of Shakti, and treated her as his equal in fact a little higher than himself." In the midst of the controversial statements of the biographers it is very difficult to come to a conclusion regarding this till we get an authentic and well documented biography about the poet.

The first image about the idealized ethereal woman occurs in Bharati's poem *Tanjir Iraikkam* which is in the form of a sonnet. This poem depicts the poet's unfulfilled love for a beautiful damsel and the poet's soul-stirring lament
for losing her. The next image occurs in *Cuyacaritali*, where he depicts the girl as a child of nine falling hopelessly in love with him. The third image occurs in the poem *Alakuttayvam*, where the girl who attained the age of sixteen appears before the poet in the form of the Goddess of Beauty in the dim moonlight. The poet’s love for her was quenched when she showed a tender smile on her face. The developed form of this image occurs in his *Kayirpattu* which was published in 1912. Here again, the lady appears in his day-dream, he embraces and kisses her but the trance vanishes within a short while. When he woke up, he found himself in his house surrounded by old mat, pen and papers. This poem resembles Shelley’s *Alastor*. But, the only difference is that whereas the poet-hero is not able to embrace the ideal heroine in *Alastor*, the hero of Bharati’s poem comes to reality only after fulfilling his infatuation for her.

The Revolutionary Woman

Another type of women characters which we frequently come across in the Romantic poems are the revolutionary women, who stand as a typical representatives of the ideals of social freedom and sexual equality. Among the Romantics, it was the English Romantic poet Shelley, the American Romantic poet Whitman and the Tamil Romantic poets such as Bharati and Bharati Dasan who have very successfully created revolutionary women as the mouth-piece of the feminist movement, which manipulated during
the aftermath of feudalism and at the dawn of capitalism.

In the feudal set up women were not given equal status with those of men. The landlords and the chieftains have used them only as beautiful puppets in their harems to pacify their lust and in domestic life also they were meant only for bearing and rearing children. To liberate womanhood from the cruel hands of the feudal customs and convictions, a new movement named Feminism began to manipulate in the European countries and in India. The ideals of the women liberators who fought for the emancipation of women, cherished and nourished the imaginative faculty of the Romantic poets such as Shelley and Bharati, who sung of the doctrine of sexual equality as if divinely inspired. Apart from feminism, as far as American Romantics are concerned, the Quaker tradition also has contributed a great deal for the propagation of the ideal of sexual equality. It is significant to note that Whitman's reverence for women was partly influenced by his family's Quaker tradition; the Quakers gave equal status to women along with men in Church organization and recognized women's ministry. 11

Godwin's Influence on Shelley

Among the English Romantic poets, Shelley's feminist gospel was inspired and influenced by his acquaintance with William Godwin, the author of the great epoch-making book named Political Justice. In this book Godwin has thrown some hints on sexual equality and the need for free-love.
**A Vindication of the Rights of Women**

The doctrine of sexual equality was given a new and concrete shape by Godwin's wife Mary Wollstonecraft, who is recognised as the chief pioneer of women's emancipation through her well known book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Before Mary, John Cartwright, one of the reformers associated with Price, Burgh, Priestly and Jebb had discussed the question of female suffrage in 1773. There are no sufficient evidences to prove that Shelley was influenced by all these thoughts. Anyhow, it is clear that he was highly influenced by Mary's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Her feminist Gospel is this: Women are human beings before they are sexual beings, that mind has no sex, and that society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and "alluring mistress", denies them economic independence and encourages them to be docile and attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else. She draws a classic comparison between women and slaves: they were property, and from respect paid to property flow, as from a poisoned fountain, most of the evils and vices which render this world such a dreary scene to the contemplative mind. To her, woman's perfectibility is to go hand in hand with man's and the rights of man and the rights of woman are one and the same thing. She has again explained how the total financial dependence by one sex on another rob both of dignity and makes it almost impossible for women to act as free and moral agents. She has emphasized that if girls
were encouraged from their earliest years to develop their minds, nourish ambitions and exercise their bodies exactly as boys were, they would develop equal capacities and talents. Mary has accentuated her wish that women should be trained for professions and careers; medicine, mid-wifery, business, farming, shop-keeping, etc. This would free them from the bitter bread of dependence and enable them to plan their lives and manage the affairs more rationally.12

Mary is of the opinion that women should take an interest in politics with a view to parliamentary representation. Mary had associated feminism firmly with radicalism and an anger directed at social conditions and assumptions, but avoided a vengeful approach to the male sex. Horace Walpole classed Mary as a "Philosophizing serpent" and a "Hyena in petticoats".13 Her book was reviewed in respectful tones and circulated merrily all over the British Isles. Mary's disciple Mary Hays has written six volumes entitled Female Biography in 1803 and in this book she has transcended her fore-runner in many respects in presenting her views regarding sexual equality. She has clearly pointed out that the progress of the human species as a whole must depend on the emancipation of women. She raised the cry that 'mind is of no sex' and that the incitement of a sly submissiveness in girls from early childhood was equally harmful to both sexes.14
Mary's Influence on Shelley

Shelley read Mary's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1821 and this book has nourished and cherished his imagination, expression and revolutionary views in this regard. It is significant to note that his idea of sexual equality finds more clear and vivid expression in his later poems than his earlier composition, *Queen Mab*, which was composed during the year 1812. As far as his feminist gospel is concerned, Shelley has accepted his mother-in-law Mary as his revered Guru. The high esteem and deep veneration he had on her is apparently seen when he praised his wife Mary, the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, in *The Revolt of Islam* as

"... ... thou aspiring child.
I wonder not - for the one than left this earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory, still her fame
Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild,
Which shake these later days". 15

The traces of Mary's personality have been noted in the characterization Cythna by some critics. According to A.M.D. Higues, "With her 'Cythna' disparagement of passion and her commendation of marriage throughout the book, he would think of Mary Wollstonecraft in her fight for women as of one who had indeed delivered the prisoners prospectively from their cells, but had not unbolted the Great Gate". 16
How far Mary’s book has influenced other major English Romantic poets such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats and Byron is not known clearly since such an enthusiastic perspective and deep purview of woman liberation and its positive consequences are not expressed in their compositions as clear and lucid a manner as in Shelley’s poems. Besides, such kind of revolutionary women characters like Cythna and Beatrice are very rarely seen in their poems.

The Empire of the Nairs

The advent of the Europeans to the Indian soil has enabled the West to come into close contact with the cultural heritage of India. A number of English versions of Indian classics as well as romances based on ancient social life of the Indians were published in England. Consequently, the English Romantic poets started to visualize classical India as a dreamy land and a utopia. Shelley was highly fascinated by the mother-right of India, especially that which persisted among the Nairs of Kerala. It is significant to note that mother-right in India was historically connected with the early agricultural economy and that was, in all probability, violently suppressed in the subsequent days.

In 1911 the Hoophil brothers issued from their press in four volumes James Henry Lawrence’s Empire of the Nairs, a book which no revolutionary propaganda exceeded in audacity. It was formally a romance, with the purpose of depicting a
high civilization without marriage, and dealt principally with the Nairs on account of the hegemony of women among them and the law and custom of free love. In this utopia there is no matrimony, but the woman is free to choose and change her lover and to grant her person when and to whom she will, and not expected to declare who is the father of her child. In an introductory essay, as well as everywhere in the book, "Lawrence inveighs, against marriage as a yoke; a blind plunge; a clog, as cruel as it is often futile, on the legitimate variability of passion; a tie of which only the Papists and the English have found no easy loosening".17

This book came to Shelley's hand in the spring of 1812 and thence forward elements of the story supplied his imagination, and were embodied five years later in The Revolt of Islam; as in the incident of the women shipped for the harem and set free by the mariners and Cythna, victim and vanquisher of the system of lust, diffusing her free spirit in the halls of the palace. Later, in Hellas, the women of the Sultan's harem chant their superb choruses of undying hope.

The View of Psycho-analysts

While analysing Shelley's Amazonian heroines, critics like George Barnfield have come to the conclusion that the main reason for Shelley creating revolutionary women characters is due to some innate psychological problems in him. Barnfield holds that Shelley's physical traits such as his feminine face
and shrill voice were but the indications of a deeper psychic femininity and opines that Shelley belongs to the class of double-natured or intermediate types. Being an androgynous type, he loved to create androgynous types and liked the feminine qualities when they were in men, and masculine qualities in women and it would seem as if he were continually striving to create ideal bisexual characters. That is why we see vigorous intellect, will power and Amazonian heroism in Cythna, the heroine of The Revolt of Islam.18 This bisexual nature tends to idealize women before making their acquaintance as is evident from Epipsychidion and this attitude is purely instinctive and even unconscious reaction. Love in his mind (as in a woman's mind) meant sympathy and the passive experience of emotions and sensations. That is why he could understand the women's demand for freedom, and cry "can man be free if woman be a slave". This innate psychic-nature also has strengthened his ideals of feminism which was a demand of his social milieu.

The Tamil Romantics

The major Tamil Romantic poets namely Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Kavimani have created a number of revolutionary women characters and expressed their ideas about sexual equality as clearly as their European counterparts. The feminist movement was very strong in India in the era of the Indian Freedom Struggle and so the above said three poets, who were the children of the Freedom Struggle and the Reformation movements have created ideal and revolutionary women characters, who are
the products of their cherished ideals and optimistic vision about the role of women in the future India. They have derived some of their Revolutionary women characters like Panchali and Kannaki from their ancient classical literary works. Yet, in spirit and action, vigour and vitality they differ from their classical proto-types and are representatives of the age of their revivers.

Formative Influences on Bharati

Influence of Shelley and Whitman

It is obvious that Bharati, the harbinger of the Tamil Romantic movement, who called himself Shelley Dasan, was highly influenced by Shelley in the portrayal of the 'New Woman'. V. Sachithanandan has pointed out that Bharati's New Woman is the legitimate successor of Shelley's 'New Woman' embodied in his heroines from Cythna to Emilia. According to him the heroine of Bharati's poem incorporates the main characteristics of Shelley's revolutionary women. He again says that Bharati's portrait of Sister Nivedita bears a strong resemblance to Shelley's the Lady of Atlas. Besides, Bharati was a good admirer of Walt Whitman, who can be labelled as a poet of the American feminist ideals.

Whitman's eloquent plea in Leaves of Grass

"Be not ashamed woman,
Your privilege encloses the rest
And is the sum of the rest"
You are the gates of the body, and
You are the gates of the soul".  

also may have cherished the imagination of Bharati. The new woman created by Whitman and Bharati in their works was the equal of man in the matter of privileges and duties, but the essence of her femininity was her divine motherhood which made her superior to man. Leaving aside these external formative influences let us see the social milieu which has shaped Bharati as a poet of the feminist movement.

Social Conditions

If we want to have an objective understanding about the historical and social significance of the feminist movement of Bharati's time it is better to trace it from its very origin. It is curious to note that, like Shelley, Bharati also was highly fascinated by the mother-right system existed in Kerala, eventhough his contemporary poet Kavimani has ridiculed the similar system existed in Nācīl Nadu and written a satire on some of its evil consequences. In one of his essays entitled Malayālattukkatal 'Malayalam Story', Bharati says that "I was informed that the land of Malayalam was called as the land of Cakti and the women there are highly educated and intelligent and hence that land also came to be regarded as Pan Malayalam 'Woman-Malayalam'."

As observed by F. Engels, the overthrow of mother-right was the world-historic defeat of the female sex,
Consequently, woman was degraded, enthralled, and made as the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children. The Goddess like Cakti, etc. whom Bharati worshipped and identified with the New Woman represent an earlier period and are descendant of the matriarchal set up where women occupied a freer and more respected place than in the heroic age where women degraded owing to the predominance of man. The oppression of the female sex starts with the monogamous marriage because in monogamy, women are generally considered to be the property of men. This condition reaches its pinnacle in the feudal set up. In the feudal set up, man has to be the earner, the bread winner of the family, at least among the propertied class, and this gives him a dominating position which requires no special legal privileges. The duty of the woman is bearing and rearing children and performing like a domestic slave the household duties allotted to her. As pointed out by Engels, the question about "the emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry, which not only permits the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into public industry."
When the technological civilization was introduced into the Tamil soil, and when the foreign capitalism of the Britishers and the small native capitalism started emerging out, gradually ousting out the feudal set up, the new social milieu required much labour power for production. Consequently, women also happened to come out of their narrow cell and to work in factories and fields to raise the production. So, it is probable that the industrialized society tends to equalize men and women. This fact was observed already in the 19th century when the trend was in its mere beginnings.\textsuperscript{27}

Eventhough the psycho-sexual and biological characters of woman differ from those of man and she is considered as a weaker sex, the capitalist set up required her active participation in production and in the building up of the economic structure, which enabled her to take part in the social intercourse. But, the feudal conventions imposed their cramping social codes on her by not allowing her to take part in social affairs and by not giving proper social status. This resulted in the sprouting of the women liberation movement throughout Europe and India in 19th and 20th centuries respectively. But, what we mean by Feminism in India differs from the Feminism of the European countries in the superficial level eventhough the core demand of them is similar. In the European nations, mostly women took the lead whereas in India, some of the illustrious men, who were actively engaged in social reformation sowed the ideals of women liberation movement.
which was only a by-product of the Freedom Struggle and the cultural renaissance of India.

Some Indian women also have worked for the emancipation of women and their roles have been evaluated by Bharati in glowing terms. In his essay entitled *Tamilil putu vilippunarcci* 'The Awakening in Tamil' Bharati writes

"Mr. Justice Sadasivam's wife, Mrs. Mangalambika is the leader of a party which is working for the liberation of women, Mrs. Anne Besant is a model and incentive to her. Their contention is: women also have souls, minds and senses. They are not dead mechanisms nor are they like living vegetation. They are like ordinary males. There are differences in their bodily structure. The soul is the same". This strikes exactly like the feminist gospel of Mary Wollstonecraft.

In the era of Indian Freedom Struggle, Eswara Vidhyasakar, Ram Mohan Roy and Mayuram Vedanayagam Pillai, the supporters of feminism have propagated the need for the liberation of womanhood from the horrible social customs that crushed its progress. They stressed the need for the recognition of the claims of women for political and legal rights equal to those possessed by men. As a result of this popular movement and its deep impact on the contemporary literatures, so many new types of revolutionary women characters appeared throughout the literary works of India. Vedanayagam Pillai's fictions, and the Malayalam literary works like Chandy Menon's
Induleka, etc. can be considered as some of the powerful literary works of the earlier period that genuinely propagated the ideals of feminism through their female characters.

**Cakti Cult**

In the above social environment, the Cakti cult or the worship of the Divine Mother was revived and resurrected in Bengal with a new religious zest and was popularized by Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Aurobindo. Aurobindo's *Letters on the Mother*, his cult of Divine Cakti, her various manifestations, the identification of Cakti with cosmic power as well as with chaste women, etc. had highly influenced the Tamil Romantic poet Bharati, who had close acquaintance with him during his stay at Pondicherry. The Freedom fighters, like Bharati, identified the Mother Goddess with Indian nation and this passionate association has enabled the Romantics to sing powerful patriotic lyrics with affectionate attachment with the motherland and to rouse the people against the oppressors with a patriotic and religious ardour. To Bharati, the entire womanhood is the incarnation of the Goddess Cakti and he even preached the brutal husbands to worship their wives who are the real Goddesses. The basis of Bharati's Cakti dharma is to worship womanhood as mother, as the basis of all creation. Speaking about the impact of Cakti cult on Bharati's *New Woman*, V. Sachithanandan observes, "This visionary woman is the distilled essence of the Vedas. She is..."
an embodiment of Cakti and a living symbol of wisdom, righteousness and freedom.  

Classical Revival

Besides, due to the revival of the classical learning in this era, the ideal revolutionary women characters of the epics like Cilappatikaram, Ramayana, and Bharatam such as Kannaki, Citai and Pancali began to attract the attention of the Tamil Romantics, who have started giving new life to these characters. Bharati in his epic fragment Pancali Capatam presents Pancali with a new spirit and deep allegorical meaning so as to depict his social and political crises. According to S. Vijaya Bharati, Bharati's above poem is not merely the story of enslaved India, but the presentation of womanhood. In so far as Pancali Capatam illustrates the basic culture of this country and explains the social atmosphere, characteristic of culture and state of civilization, it may indeed be regarded as a great piece of national literature. It appears, on closer inspection, that even Bharati's Draupadi is only a reprint of Kannaki.

Influence of Sister Nivedita

Bharati's meeting with Sister Nivedita, the disciple of Vivekananda, in 1905 on his way from the Benares Session of the Indian National Congress, was a turning point in his poetic career, since, it had sharpened and strengthened his idea about sexual equality more than ever. In the course of
their conversation Sister Nivedita asked Bharati why he did not bring his wife with him. Bharati retorted "In our families we do not take our wives to public places with us. Besides, what will she know of the Congress?" For this, Nivedita flared up and said "How can one half of a society win freedom when it enslaves the other half? Let the past be forgotten. Henceforth do not think of her as something different. Hold her as your left hand and praise her in your heart as angel". Her words roused him to fight for the emancipation of Indian women.

Due to these multifarious influences, the Tamil Romantic poets such as Bharati had a very clear perspective of the ideals of feminism than their English predecessors and this enabled them to create revolutionary women characters which Tamil literature with her rich and lengthy literary tradition had never seen till then.

II

Cythna and Putumapipe

Among the Romantic poets of English and Tamil literatures Shelley and Bharati have very successfully created some revolutionary women characters. Shelley is considered to be the first to accept as axiomatic the modern views on sexual equality, and was able to enrich the concept of Romantic love by improving the status of the girl to make the lovers equal. The same can be said of Bharati too. Among the revolutionary
women characters who propagate sexual equality, Shelley's Cythna and Bharati's Putumaippan 'New woman' occupy a prominent place and play a dominant role.

Cythna is a woman character in Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*. She is in the first place an infinitely tender and loving child; then she becomes the confidante of the hero's revolutionary hopes; and later she comes to precede him in experience as a liberator, and gives back the inspiration originally received from him. Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* and Bharati's *New Woman* entirely differ in form and in a lesser degree in content also. Whereas *The Revolt of Islam* is a long narrative poem in XII Cantos (4815 lines) modelled on the epic pattern, Bharati's *New Woman* is a short piece of ten stanzas, each containing eight lines, in a series of poems of various kinds under the title *Camatâyam 'Society'*. In *The Revolt of Islam*, Shelley has expressed his doctrines through certain characters. He has created for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world. He has chosen for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished, and the deepest sense of justice of their cause, met adversity and death.33

Bharati has neither built a story nor created a series of events but is merely felicitating his *New Woman* by
explaining her virtues, mission, vision and revolutionary ardour. He is only a narrator or a spokesman who is reporting her words and actions and at the same time commanding her deeds in glowing terms. Yet, in spirit and action she stands very close to Shelley's Cythna who may be her proto-type to a certain extent. A close analysis of these two characters further strengthens this view.

Edmund Blunden, Shelley's biographer, described Cythna as the first 'New Woman' in English poetry. She "is the type that modern revolutions have made familiar, the woman in the heart of storm, at the head of the crowd, diffusing the joy of devotion". Like Bharati's New Woman, she feels equal of her mate; she shares his interests and is as bold as he in promoting them within her powers. She is active in spreading propaganda, but unlike the stout dames of Tasso and Spencer, she takes no part in fighting. Bharati's New Woman incorporates the main characteristics of Shelley's Cythna in this regard. Whereas the narrator himself celebrates the glories of his woman in Bharati's poem, Leon, the hero glorifies Cythna in The Revolt of Islam. Leon speaks about sexual equality in the following lines:

"Never will peace and human nature meet
Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace, and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat,
This slavery must be broken"
He further raises a rhetorical question

"Can man be free if woman be a slave?".37

In the same vein Bharati's New Woman says that

"This world will become wise and prosperous
Only if equal rights are given to man and woman".38

Cythna is prepared to burst the bondage of superstition that tied man and woman and made them live like slaves. She says,

"... ... man and woman
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow".39

In the same tone, Bharati's New Woman ridicules the oppressors and prepares to burn the chains of slavery. She boldly asserts

"Fools are they who try to enslave
The intelligent souls of human beings
Let us throw the chains of slavery into
Fire and burn them so as to enable
Mankind prosper in righteousness and Dharma
And become Devas of this earth".40

In the lines dedicated to Mary Shelley, Shelley attributes some of the heroic qualities of his free willed New Woman to his wife Mary and says

"In thy wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among".41
In the same way, Bharati's New Woman says that she is prepared
to shatter away the superstitious convictions and accredited
conventions that set bounds to the free life of womanhood.

"Age old lies she will destroy
Foolish bondages she will break.\textsuperscript{42}

She again says,

"Let dogs possess shy and fear, the traditional
feminine qualities.
Let wisdom, charity and free-will be
our characteristics.\textsuperscript{43}

Like Bharati's New Woman, Shelley's Cythna combines in herself
the sterling qualities of a hero, the mildness of a woman and
the simplicity of a child. Like New Woman, Cythna also makes
an eloquent plea for equality as

"Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and love are but the slaves of thee,
The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the stars, and from the Ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound
thee:}\textsuperscript{44}

The sweetness of the voice of Bharati's New Woman
when she preaches the gospel of liberty to the down-trodden
woman folk is described as celestial music. Her voice is compared to the divine music of the lute in the hands of Nārātā and the celestial flute in the hands of Lord Krishna.

"The sweet utterance of Women liberation comes
From your flower-like soft and sacred lips.
Is it the melodious tune of the Veena of Nārātā?
Is it the delicious music of Krishna's celestial flute?
Is it the Vedas that has incarnated as golden maiden
And preached the way for our emancipation?
Is it an ambrosia that destroys death?"45

The same quality of thrilling mystery is perceivable in the voice of Cythna when she sings hymns to freedom which is composed by Lyon. In the words of Lyon, this "Free and orphan child"

"... ... would arise, and, like the secret bird
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
With her sweet accents - a wild melody!
Hymns which my soul had woven to freedom".46

It is significant to note here that while the Vedantist Bharati derives his images from the mythological sources associated with Hindu religion, Shelley, the atheist, obtains most of his images from nature which is his spiritual companion and guide. It is again interesting to note that whereas Shelley's description of the New Woman is purely ethereal, Bharati's description of her is entirely mystical. The ethereal imagination of Shelley tends to describe his heroine Cythna as
"She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
One impulse of her being - in her brightness
Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,
To nourish some far desert". 47

In a typical unearthly delicacy, he describes the impact that she has exerted on her followers and earth as

"To thy voice their hearts have trembled
Like ten thousand clouds which flow
With one wide wind as it flies". 48

Shelley's Cythna is as wise as a serpent but as harmless as a dove. He sees her as an incarnation of some Divine power. Cythna herself declares that

"... some said
I was a child of god sent down to save
Women from bonds and death, and on my head
The burden of their sins would frightfully be laid". 49

In the same vein, Bharati views his New Woman as an incarnation of his famous Gakti in her deeds and actions, and says

"The mighty goddess Parāsakti
Has incarnated as a damsel and out of
Compassion has come down to earth to
Reveal the hidden truth". 50
Shelley's Cythna aspires to make this earth more beautiful than ever by clothing it with science and poetry. She says

"To make this earth, our home, more beautiful
And Science, and her sister poesy
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free". 51

The same aspiration is apparent in Bharati's New Woman also when she says that the free woman must make their country prosperous by means of education. In her words

"The beautiful damsel of India must work
For the prosperity of their nation by learning
The subtle aspects of worldly life, by studying various
Books and by visiting various nations
And bringing the new things to their country". 52

Though Cythna and Bharati's New Woman stand for wisdom, truth, heroism and freedom, they are not viragos but mild and tender beings who never fail to perform their domestic duties. Bharati's heroine says in another poem entitled Pankal Viṭutalaikleusu

"Having won the hand of a lover and
Extending our support in all his activities
Let us live a glorious life performing all
Domestic duties more cleverly than our predecessors" 53
Like her, Shelley's Cythna also proves to be an ideal companion and 'the only source of tears and smiles' to Laon. Laon himself says

"As mine own shadow was this child to me
A second self, far dearer and more fair"  

and

"... ... ... she
Became my only friend, who had enuned
My purpose with a wider sympathy".  

Beatrice and Pancali

Among the Revolutionary women characters created by Shelley, Beatrice vehemently opposed the tyrannical attitude of her father Cenci, who banished his sons and violated the chastity of his own daughter. The story of Shelley’s The Cenci is a historical event which took place at Rome in the 16th century during the Pontificate of Clement VIII. According to the story dramatized by Shelley, Beatrice, who took revenge on Cenci was a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, but violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstances and opinions.

Beatrice resembles the revolutionary woman of Bharati Dasan namely Cundam, the heroine of his long narrative poem entitled Tamilaggirinattti. This amiable and beautiful woman who is the wife of a good natured innocent farmer is raped by
one of the officials of king Tecûk. She stabs the man who violated her chastity and boldly points out the tyrannical brutality of the king as well as his officials before a huge audience and despises the king for his arrogancy. The king tries to impose severe punishments upon her but she dies according to her own will.

In spirit and action, Shelley's Beatrice resembles Bharati's Pâncâlî also. Bharati's Pâncâlî Capatam is an allegorical epic fragment which implicitly narrates his contemporary social and political crises in the ancient mythological backgrounds. Whereas Shelley has taken his plot from a real historical incident, Bharati has chosen his story from the Mahabharatam of Vivâcar. Though Shelley has asserted that the Camel "is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions", un瓷consciously, he could not completely escape from expressing his subjective feelings, ideals and libertarian sentiments in this drama.

Beatrice and Pâncâlî, have attracted the attention of these two poets who have sung gloriously about women liberation as if divinely inspired. Both Beatrice and Pâncâlî ridicule and despise the arrogance and brutality of the tyrannical rulers Cengî and Parivâtâna who are the embodiment of cruelty and debauchery. The conditions of these two heroines are very pitiable, Beatrice is raped by her own father, a man
who is spending his life in debauchery and wickedness and who have conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children. Pāñcāli, the wife of the five valorous Pandava kings is lost in the gambling and she is on the verge of receiving worst insult from the oppressor Turīvotana. She stands in his court before a huge audience and as asked by Karna and Turīvotana, Tuuccatana, is undressing her calling her a prostitute. Like Shelley, Bharati is expressing his libertarian sentiments through Pāñcāli. To Bharati, Pāñcāli is nothing but mother India in chains. To Shelley, Beatrice is a symbol of his ideal revolutionary woman, whose aim is to root out tyranny.

Bharati describes Pāñcāli as 'the boon of the Pāñcāla country', 'the light of the absolute', 'imaginary kuyil', 'the wealth of a land', and 'a divine creeper'. Earth felt the wound, nature sighed and the whole cosmos trembled when Turīvotana sent a man to drag her to his court for insulting her. The ferocious Goddess Kāli, the Mother Goddess of the poet was terribly moved and was furious to see this brutal deed.

Like Bharati, Shelley also portrays Beatrice as an amiable and loving soul with genial spirit and good nature. She has deep affection and even devotion towards her brothers Giacomo, Bernardo and her step-mother Lucretia who were also
oppressed by Cenci. Out of her affection for her brothers, she even calls her father as an "Unnatural man" when he exiled them. She is very furious when her father has celebrated a feast for the death of his sons. In the words of her brother Giacomo

"... ... ... Beatrice,
Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised
A living flower ... ... "57

The story of Fa\(^{\textsc{nh}}\)ncali suits the purpose of Bharati who revolted against the British imperialism, which according to him was oppressing the Indians, degenerating their past glory and deteriorating their traditional values. The story of The Cenci also suits the purpose of Shelley who revolted against the tyrannical rulers in general and religious institutions in particular. Like the story of Fa\(^{\textsc{nh}}\)ncali, the story of Beatrice was a popular one before Shelley rendered it in the form of a drama. As remarked by Mrs. Shelley "all ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart".58 Bharati says in the preface of his poem that he has merely translated the popular story narrated by Viyasa and has made some changes in the characterization. He asserts that it was inspired by
the Goddess Parâcakti whose mission is to give a new life to the Tamils. 59

In the beginning of the play Shelley portrays Beatrice as a pious lady like Paranâ. In moments of adversity she is quite confident about the helping hands of God and remains silent saying 'there is a God in Heaven'. She even advises her tyrant father to seek some way of redemption and says

"Bow thy white head before offended God,
And we will kneel around, And fervently
Prays that he pity both ourselves and thee." 60

The helping hands of God rescue Bharati's heroine in moments of adversity whereas to the heroine of the atheist Shelley, they fail to console and help her when she was in agony and so she takes vengeance on her tyrant father. She even ridicules God and says

"... ... Thou, great God,
Whose image upon earth a father is". 61

Like Bharati's Paranâ, "the sufferings we all share have made Beatrice wild". She says

"Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,
All the fit restraints of daily life
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now
Would be a mockery to my holier plea". 62

Beatrice sees her father as a symbol of tyranny and ridicules him as a
"Cruel, Cold, formal man; righteous in words
In deeds a Cain". 63

and thinks that to root out such a licentious beast is 'a
high and holy deed'. Her act of vengeance has been described
by Giacomo as

"She, who alone in this unnatural work,
stands like God's angel..." 64

Like Beatrice, Pāṇcālī views Turīyottana as an
incarnation of mischief and brutality. She furiously flared
up that if ghosts started ruling the country then even the
sacred book will eat corpses. She even argues that her husband
Taruma has no right to loose her in the gambling since he lost
himself already. Here, Bharati advocates his doctrine of
sexual equality through Vīttumana, who says that in antique
past, man and woman were considered equal. Gone are those golden
days and in the present degenerated social set up man has
dominated and he can even sell his wife or give her to another
as a gift.

In the midst of the exchange of such valorous
exhortations, Karnap intervenes and asserts that Pāṇcālī
being a slave should not cover her breast with clothes and he
asks Turītātanana to undress her. In this pitiable moment,
she forgets herself, mingles with the Absolute in her prayers
to Lord Krishna by whose mercy sari s come perpetually from her
body which makes Turītātanana fail in his attempt to undress her.
Pancāli with her husbands swear an oath in the name of the Mother Goddess Parācākti that she will comb her hair only after dipping it in the blood of the tyrant Turivōtana. As an affirmative reply to her oath, the Gods and the sky respond ‘ōm’. There is an earthquake and whirl wind which are preternatural events signifying the oncoming dangers to the antagonist.

Though the tone of Pancāli Capatam is tragic we cannot call it a tragedy. It ends with an implicit agreement between man, gods and nature to revenge the tyrant. Righteous men, celestial beings and natural objects join together to avenge the antagonist. The final prosperity of Bharati’s poem is wrought out of adversity. Being a classical story, it maintains poetic justice too. The characters have a sense of security and no feeling of aloofness. But, Shelley’s play is a tragedy in which the tone and exode are completely tragic. Beatrice and Pancāli represent their creators also. Bharati, the Vedantist had a strong faith in the Providence and so his character, like the author, feels no sense of loneliness even though her husbands lost her in the gambling. As she believes, she is saved by Lord Krishna at the end. But, the position of Beatrice is entirely different. Her prayers proved futile, Har’s is completely a spiritual alienation, betrayed even by the God whom she believes at the beginning. She says
"My Pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul
Which weeps within tears none are true". 65

She is said to be the female counterpart of Hamlet. 66 She is not worried about Christian teaching regarding revenge. She considers vengeance as a 'high and holy deed'.

Feminist Gospel

Shelley

Shelley's women characters are not explicitly preaching the doctrine of sexual equality as clear a manner as the New Woman of Bharati since Shelley considers 'didacticism as abhorrence'. Besides, Bharati mostly handles the lyrical pattern in his poems that propagate sexual equality, whereas, Shelley uses the narrative pattern. This lyrical form enables Bharati to express all his ideals without any reservation while the narrative pattern handled by Shelley gives no room for self-revelation. Consequently, Shelley presents his ideals through his characters and not preaching them directly, "From Queen Mab to Helen, his new woman waits and watches in unwavering hope for the good cause, either in her mortal form, or translated, like Asia and the Lady of Atlas, to the rank of the intermediary between Men and Gods". 67

Like Bharati's New Woman, Shelley's revolutionary woman also speaks about the importance of love as
"And love made free - a hope which we have nursed
   Even with our blood and tears - until its glory
   burst."

like Bharati's New Woman, she also feels sorry for the present
condition of women. Her voice has awakened a number of
down-trodden womanhood.

In Prometheus Unbound, Panthea propagates some of the
feminist ideals of Shelley. Queen Mab insists upon woman
liberation as

"Woman and man, in confidence and love,
   Equal and free and pure together trod
   The mountain - paths of virtue, which no more
   Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet."

In Epipsychidion, which was inspired by Emilia Viviani, a
beautiful nineteen years old Italian girl, Shelley sees Emilia
as an unfortunate girl, a symbol of the down-trodden womanhood,
illy treated by her parents who put her up in a convent. Yet,
he has not created her as a revolutionary woman like Cythna but
as an Ideal woman in the Platonic sense of the term. Consequently,
he portrays her as a "spirit - winged heart" and "seraph of Heaven".

Bharati

Apart from expressing his idea about sexual equality
through characters like New Woman and Papanji, Bharati has
propagated it then and there in his other poetical compositions.
too. In his poem entitled \textit{Vam}, he emphasizes that woman liberation is an inevitable one in the present environment. In his short poem \textit{Vitutalai}, 'Freedom' he says that the foolish attitude of enslaving womanhood must be destroyed. The singers of this song, probably some women, say that they are going to change the traditional attitude of the society which considers women as inferior to men and attain the prosperity they enjoyed in the antique past.\textsuperscript{73} His idea of the emancipation of womanhood finds powerful expression in the poems that come under the title \textit{Bharati Amrataaru}. In one of the poems entitled \textit{Penkal Vitutalai} 'women liberation', he angrily asks "is it a righteous attitude to enslave the whole women race just because to assert your superiority over your wife? Is there any God superior than your earthly mother? If you enslave women, then the whole human race will become slaves. Try to live happily like the free birds of the forest without subduing others".\textsuperscript{74}

In his poem, \textit{Katalivin Pakal}, he emphasizes the need for women liberation on the basis of his doctrine of Love. To him, the beauty of the beloved is capable of leading one to the depth of joy, releasing one from the worries of the world. Bharati's conception of revolutionary woman endowed with valour, wisdom, free-will and modesty finds artistic expression in his portrayal of sister Nivedita, who kindled him to fight for the emancipation of Indian women. Bharati describes her as an embodiment of mercy and the \textit{saasg}
sanctorum of love. She is a sun to the darkness of ignorance, and rain to the people of our country who are like the crops of a sterile land.

Bharati has translated a poem by the Chinese poet Ciyê Gândi under the title Penvitutalse, in which women take an oath on the wine cup saying that they have decided to liberate the slaves. According to them, Çakti created man and woman equal and that men have degenerated their social status. They are prepared to toil with men to liberate their motherland.

In his prophetic song Penkal Vitutalseikkumâ, women thronged together clapping their hands in sprightly dance singing a melodious song as if they have liberated themselves from the brutal oppressors. They are happy since the witches that bewitched them have gone away. Before their eyes, the men who thought that a woman should not even touch a book, have vanished. Those who thought of locking women inside their houses were put to shame.

Prose Works

In addition to poems, Bharati has given his concrete plans for the emancipation of women in his prose works too. In one of his essays entitled Tamil nattu Natarukku, Bharati has said that 'men and women are equal and as long as they do not harm each other they have the liberty to act according to their will and pleasure; this is the basis of European culture'. In the same essay, he has listed his feminist gospel:
1. Girls must not be married off before attaining the age of puberty

2. They must not be compelled to marry a man whom they do not fancy

3. Even after marriage she should have the freedom to live apart from her husband; she shall not be put to shame on this score

4. Girls must get an equal share in ancestral property

5. After husband's death women must be allowed to remarry

6. Women who would prefer to remain spinsters must be allowed to do so, provided they are able to earn a living by business or handicraft, independently

7. The condition required of women that they must not speak to or associate with men other than their husbands, as this is born out of fear and jealousy, must be removed

8. Women, like men, must be allowed the advantages of higher education in all branches of knowledge

9. If they are qualified to be employed in any Government jobs, this must not be prevented by law

10. There is no use to plead for women's rights in the government as, even men in Tamil Nadu do not have it. However, if Tamil Nadu were to become independent soon, women must be given a share in the government as well as men.
Some of his other essays published in the journal *Intiva* also speak about the steps to be taken for the emancipation of women. Bharati also fought for the emancipation of Muslim women though not with the same ardour and freedom he displayed in defending Hindu women. Probably he did not want to sound too offensive to his Muslim brethren who might have resented his unwarranted comments on their treatment of their women folk.

Shelley and Bharati on Free Love

Adhering to the teachings of Godwin, Shelley has insisted **Free Love** in *Queen Mab*, which he wrote at the age of eighteen. He thought that Godwin's concept of free-love would be a good remedy for the oppression of womanhood. In his note on *Queen Mab*, he has emphasized that "Love withers under constraint; its very essence is liberty." According to Shelley, "Love is free; to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed; such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry." Godwin advocates that the institution of marriage is made a system of fraud. To him, free-love even at the risk of lust is preferable. Inspired by Godwin's doctrine, Shelley writes in his note on *Queen Mab* as follows: "Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature; society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war; she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance, she lives a life of infamy; th
loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long lingering disease; yet, she is in fault, she is the criminal, she the forward and untamable child — and society, forsooth the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her unsealed bosom!" After giving this description, he comes to the conclusion that "A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage": He points out in Epipsychidion

"... ... ... Narrow

The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity". 78

Bharati, the successor of Shelley, has got more opportunities than his English predecessor to witness the various steps taken for the liberation of women, both by the European reformers and by the architects of Tamil Renaissance. Consequently, he views the merits and demerits of their ideals more objectively than Shelley. Bharati is fully aware of the doctrine of free-love propagated by Godwin and Shelley. He knows the rotten consequences of it if it were allowed to enter into his ideal state. Even Shelley himself has committed grave mistakes in the name of free-love which has resulted in the suicide of his first wife Harriet. Bharati is not prepared to
support this and castigate the institution of marriage like his predecessor Shelley. In his essay named 'National Education' he condemns free-love. For despising this doctrine, he has written a poem entitled 'Free-love'. In this poem, he has said that the doctrine of free-love is spreading all over Europe. According to this women can have sexual intercourse with any man according to their will and pleasure and can separate themselves after pacifying their lust. Bharati vehemently criticizes it and asserts that this is the doctrine of some cowards. According to Bharati, the instinct of man is to enjoy sexual pleasure that is derived out of immoral means. The concept of free-love has to be castigated since this gives licence to the free play of the incestuous nature of men and will demoralize the society.

This clearly brings to light the similar as well as dissimilar opinions shared by Shelley and Bharati regarding the various aspects of the cult of womanhood. Eventhough both the poets are Romantic in spirit and temperament, with regard to the feminist ideals, Bharati seems to be more pragmatic than Shelley, who is inspired mostly by ideas than by real events.

**Cult of Childhood**

The Romantic movement exalted the childhood for his unjaded fresh perception. The universe is here seen through
the eyes of a child, felt through its senses, judged through its heart. This child is the symbol of the most delicate and courageous intuitions in the human mind, just like the soul of a peasant in those moments of sober exaltation which will be to Wordsworth the very source and inner substance of poetry. 79 Rousseau has glorified childhood for his unspoilt nature and propagated the importance of the cult of childhood in literature. Like Bharati, who has preached the moral and social ethics to child in Pappappattu, Rousseau also has adopted the method of propagating maxims as if teaching them to child. Following Rousseau, the Western Romantic poets have glorified the cult of childhood in their compositions. Wordsworth's intimations of immortality Ode is a standing example of this cult. In this poem Wordsworth has idealized the child and hailed him as the father of man. He has glorified the child as a philosopher who brings divine illuminations to this world. Even though Coleridge has criticised Wordsworth's concept of 'Child Philosopher', the cult of ideal childhood has become a popular theme throughout the Romantic poems of the world.

The glorification of childhood is not a new one to Tamil literature since we have a number of poems in the classical literature glorifying child. The Tamil Romantics have not merely imitated this classical tradition but given a new dimension to it by making the childhood as an ideal stage of life and projecting their own aspirations on it.
Consequently, the leading Romantic poets of Tamil like Bharati, Kaviyani Desika Vinayagam Pillai and Bharati Dasan have given much importance to the concept of childhood and have hailed child as a best character in their poems.

In their concept of the cult of childhood too, Shelley and Bharati have shared a number of striking similarities even though the dissimilarities are more in number than what they have in common. In *The Daemon of the World* Shelley has described the ruddy children as fearless and free.  

In *Alastor* he has portrayed the innocent laughing of the childhood. He has also depicted the calmness of the 'cradled child in dreamless slumberbound'. He has described the smile of children as

"By those infantine smiles of happy light,
Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,
Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night
Hiding the promise of a lovely birth".

His poem *A Vision of the Sea* gives a Romantic picture about this concept of ideal childhood. The traces of this cult can also be seen in *Queen Mab* and *To Ianthine*. In the latter, he describes the child as

"I love thee, Baby! For thine own sweet sake;
Those amure eyes, that faintly dimpled cheek,
Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak,
Love in the sternest heart of hate might wake"
Shelley was roused to indignation when the Lord Chancellor refused to give him his own children born to Harriet. This incident coupled with the death of his own children compel Shelley to give portrayals of childhood tinged with considerable amount of melancholic tone. This desperated mood is well expressed in his poem entitled *To William Shelley* as

"They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
They have made them unfit for thee;
They have withered the smile and dried the tear
Which should have been sacred to me". 85

When he lost his son William Shelley, his grief went beyond control and found artistic expression in the same poem which has some elegiac note. 86

Thus Shelley's picture of an ideal childhood is turned into a melancholic description of the loss of his own children. But, there is no melancholic tone in Bharati's cult of childhood. Bharati's conception of ideal childhood is highly influenced by the Tamil devotional literatures and *Pillaiittamil* which have portrayed God as child. Eventhough the conception of God as child has been developed in Christianity, Shelley, being an atheist, has not shown keen interest in it. But, unlike Shelley, Bharati has further developed the concept of God-the-child as expressed in the literary genre *Pillaiittamil* as well as in the hymns of Alvars. But, in the treatment of the subject and in the handling of images Bharati is highly Romantic.
Bharati's *Kannamman en Kulantai* gives a beautiful picture of the cult of childhood in which we can see a harmonious blending of the Tamil devotional tradition, the elements of *Pillaiattamil* and a number of fervid Romantic images and techniques. The treatment of the subject is purely objective since the poet assumes the role of a loving mother. The divine child is portrayed as a human child with all the tender and magnificent qualities of an earthly infant. The childish pricks of the child *Kannan* is given in *Kannan en Vilayattuppillai*. In all the above instances, the basic difference between Shelley and Bharati in the treatment of the concept of ideal childhood is that, whereas, Shelley is purely subjective and lyrical, Bharati is highly objective and impersonal. In Bharati's poems we see the mother of the child glorifying the child, whereas, in Shelley's poems we see the subjective feelings of the poet finding vivid expression. Consequently, Shelley's concept of ideal childhood is purely personal whereas, that of Bharati is impersonal. Whereas Bharati's conception of ideal childhood has a rich philosophical undertone, the same concept of Shelley has only secular backgrounds. Consequently, Shelley's poems on child reflect the spirit of the age as well as the rebellious temperament of the poet than those on Bharati's divine child. Shelley's child yearns for freedom but is oppressed by the tyrants.
Like an ordinary earthly child, Bharati's child either delights the loving mother or moves her to tears. This also explicates the unique nature of Bharati in handling this theme in accordance with the nature of his own literary tradition.