Chapter -III

PRE-INDEPENDENCE INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE
Pre-Independence Indian English Literature

The first generation of Indo-Anglian novelists has considerable literary merit; most of the novels of this era, seldom if ever, rise above the level of well cultivated mediocrism.

The Indian literary renaissance was quickened by the impact of English literature. Indian writers, who tried to express themselves in English were under the spell of early Victorian models, as they tried to imitate in their own writings. The Indo-Anglian novel started like toddling child-its steps were faltering, but it was trying to imitate the elders and it had abundant energy to learn and improve.

Novels on Early Victorian Models: It is true that the early Indo-Anglian novels were imitations of the early Victorian novelists and we have to admit it that few of the Indo-Anglian novels published during this era have survived the test of time. All the novels of that period are stories of the tastes and times of a bygone age, which have little no appeal for the reader today. Normally that which has permanent value emerges and that which only appeals to a transitory phase of taste is finally obscured. Moreover, as yet these Indo-Anglian novelists have not been sympathetically studied or appreciated. “To appreciate the art of another period one must, to a certain extent enter into its Spirit accept its conventions, adopt ‘a willing suspension of disbelief’ in its values.”

The early writers and mainly the South Indian writers are praise for the British Raj and “their language is coped from works or the English Romantics and Victorians” Even the historical novels of this period show the clear influence of Sir Walter Scott in form as well as structure. “However, the stories written in the nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth century were poor creative effort. The highlighted social evils eulogized the lovable qualities of India womanhood and depicted Indian rural life.”

Miss Sorabji’s ‘Love and Life Behind the Purdah (1901)’, S.B. Bannerjea’s ‘Tales of Bengal (1910)’ and A.Madhaviah’s Thillai Gvindan (1916)’ are valueable to students of sociology but not good fiction.
Variety of Themes: The first things that strikes any reader of these novels is that they are more or less on the lines of the early Victorian novelists. True that there is a vast difference in the moral point view and some small differences in subjects for every writer extend the range of the subject matter. ‘Padmini’ by T. Ramkrishna portrays a historical episode, whereas ‘One Thousand and one Nights’ by S. K. Ghosh is a romantic imitation of the Arabian Nights. Thus they have tried various subjects, their point of view or the angle of vision being fundamentally Indian. But from the literary point of view and the point of view of form, the differences are much less than the likenesses.

Another point that stand out clearly is that the main pattern of the novels bearing inevitable individualistic differences is the same. These stories consist of a large variety of characters and incidents grouped round the figure of the hero, bound together in a very slack way by an intrigue and ending with a happy marriage. This applies to all novels whether it is Roshinara by Lahiri Kalikrishna or ‘The Prince of destiny’ by S.K. Ghosh or the ‘Dive for Death’ by T. Ramkrishna. For example in ‘The Prince of Destiny’ inspite of individual inevitable difference, the main story runs in the same old oft-repeated rut—a prince, his ambitions and loves and they end with marriage bells. Names change, incidents change but the pattern remains the same.

The third outstanding fact about these novels is that they contain an extraordinary mixture of strength and weakness. Most of the novels are mediocre and some like “The Hindu Wife” are downright bad. Everyone of them is deformed by false sentiments, melo-drama and wooden characters—very often the hero himself is wooden. ‘The Prince of Destiny’ by S.K. Ghosh, which may be taken as a more significant novel of that period Prince Bharath is the hero. The novel is full of many interesting discussions for understanding the conflict in the view point of East and the West. But Barath’s character lacks life, and vitality.

It is very rare to find a single novel in which the story is conceived as an organic whole of which every incident and character forms an integral part. He chooses a conventional plot. Unlikely, packs it with a setting and characters with which it has no organic connection. The result is that the main interest of the book lies in characters and scenes irrelevant to the stories. In ‘The Prince of Destiny’ the story of Barath hangs by a very slender thread. It is loaded with political discussions, superstitious events, unrealistic relations, and equally unrealistic love scenes.
The early Indo-Anglian novelists think nothing of having two or three plots devoid of any essential connection and progressing on parallel and independent lines. In “One Thousand and One Nights” various adventures have been strung together “Vasudev Sastri, the novel left incomplete by B. R. Rajam Iyer and published in the book “Rambles in Vedanta” tries to portray the character of a truly great Vedantin Brahmin, but it is overloaded with an under-current of Vedantism. ‘Hindupore’ by S M. Mitra (1909) has for its theme the love of lord Tara for princess Kamala, but this story is too much burdened with political discussions and gibes at British rulers and communal leaders.

Over and above these defects, one is struck by their limitations and range. The treatment of sex is meagre and very often unrealistic. We find very little in these novels about the thought, art or public affairs of the day. It does not mean that these subjects never appeared in these novels. No novelist can avoid them, but they appear in these novels in a very indirect way and their discussions are also not actually realistic. The limitation of subject matter curtails in its turn their most successful creations Vasudev Sastri, Barath (The Prince of Destiny) and Narayan I (One Thousand and One Nights) are types rather than deep studies of individual human nature. Internal conflict is a rare phenomenon in these novels. The deeper issues of human life which are the main interest of characters, do not feature in these Indo—Anglian novels. The result is that a well portrayed character, is a mere idealistic delineation and hence far from the true—life characters. A comparison with the western novelists, by the absolute standard of the West, though very tempting, would be very misleading in the case of Indo-Anglian novelists. Indo-Aglian literature was still in its cradle; Indo-Anglian novelist, then, had no conception of the novel as a form. Many Indo-Anglian novelists did not come up to the level of even a fairly good English novelist because most of the writers, who wrote through the medium of English did not possess the imaginative perspective of those writers perhaps, talented novelist were yet to come and hence the earlier attempts paved the way for mature works.

The first Indo-Anglian novel Rajmohan’s Wife’ by Bakim Chandra Chatterjee was published in 1864, some nine years after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. But after this first attempt in English Bankim Chandra wrote his novels in Bengali, though, of course, he saw to it that their translations in English came out in due time. Why he stopped writing directly in English remains still a mystery to be solved by some
research scholar. But the fact stands out that the Indo-Anglian novel is just over one hundred years old. Here also it took some fifty more years for the Indo-Anglian novelists to master their technique and catch up with the main stream of literature written in English.

Since Bengal felt the first impulse of the literary renaissance it was natural that Bengal should be in the vanguard of Indo-Anglian novelists of the last century. In Bankim Chandra Chatterjee one can find excellent storytelling, zeal for social reform and a touch humour.

Indo-Anglian artists, were still grouping their way at the cross road of Western models and Eastern subjects. The works which possess the general quality of immaturity, e.g. Roshinara by K Krishna Lahiri or Bijoy Chand by H. Dutt are the novels of antiquarail interest and equally immature is Hindupore by S. M. Mitra ‘The Love of Kusuma’ by Balkrishna. But even then some stories have quite well turnout plot For example, ‘Bianaca or the Young Spanish Maiden’ by Toru Dutt was certainly a remarkable performance. The novels of T. Ramakrishna, S. K. Ghosh, and Sardar Jogendra Singh are conceived with imagination and they have some sort of unity.

The social novels of pre indepedence period are mainly concerned themselves with religious basis and emancipation of women in social reform Philosophy and propaganda dominate these novels. In this category’ fall the following novels

(1) Rajmohan’s Wife (1864) by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee,
(2) The Hindu Wife, by Raj Laxmi Devi (1876).
(3) Sarata and Hingana, by Kshetrapal Chakrabarti (1895).
(4) Bijoy Chand by H. Dutt (1888).
(5) Vasudeva Sastri (published in Rambles in Vedanta) by Rajan Iyer (1905).
(6) Thillai Govindan by A. Madhaviah (1912).
(7) Tales of Bengal (Short Stories) by S. B. Barmergea (1910)
(8) Unfinished Song by Mrs. Ghoshal.
(9) The Fatal Garland by Mrs. (Ghoshal)
(10) Hindupore (A peep behind the Indian unrest) by S. M.Mitre (1909).
(11) Nasrin by Jogendra Singh (1915).
(12) The Love of Kusuma by Balkrishna (1910).
(13) Love and Life Behind the Purdah by Sorabji Cornelia.
(14) Sun Babies (1990) by Cornelia Sorabji,
(15) Between the Twilights by Cornelia Sorabji (1908)
The list, naturally could not be exhaustive but no known work in the field of the social work has been omitted. *The Hindu Wife or the Enchanted Fruit* of Raj Laxmi Devi and *Sarata and Hingana* by K. Chakravati are flimsy novels written in a very antiquated style. As their plots are ordinary, these novels fail to excite our interest and deserve nothing more than a passing mention. *Bijoy Chand* H. Dutta is also novel with unrealistic and improbable plot.

“Path-makers rather than creative artists, standardized the medium which their contemporary, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1834-94), turned with superb skill gust into a magnificent tool for his novels and stories. Bankim Chandra is known as the father of the novel in India. Fables, stories and tales of romantic adventure had been known to India for more than two thousand years, but the novel, as the term is understood today, is a western importation. Bankim’s genius made the alien form native, which explains his influence profound and extensive, on his contemporaries and successors.”

The story of Indo-Anglian fiction thus is just a century old. The first Indo-Anglian novel, naturally enough, came from Bengal. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee whose fame fundamentally rests on his Bengali novels wrote his first novel, *Rajmohan’s Wife* which was published as a serial in 1864 in *The Indian Field*, a weekly periodical. The existence of this novel was for a long time forgotten even by his biographer and nephew, Sachis Chandra Chatterjee who has stated that Bankim, did not finish this English novel. Mr. Brajendra Nath Banerji while going through the flies of the famous Anglo-Bengal paper the *Hindu Patriot* for 1864, found that the binder had through mistake bound all but first three of the *Indian Field* in which Bankim’s novel had appeared. Thus a fortuitous mistake of the unknown binder has brought to light the first Indo-Anglian novel.

Social life of those days is reflected in these novels. It was an age of religious reform and emancipation of Women. Political stirrings were there but the desire for full independence had not caught the minds of the People who were, at best, demanding home rule. If *The Hindu Wife* tries to put the Indian ideal of the Hindu wife before the readers. Nasrin and Sarata and Hingana show the loves and troubles of Indian families. Vasudev Sastri presents an ideal Brahmin so common in those days but not yet extinct even in our days. Love stories are all dominated by the traditional concept of love in which the beloved is prepared to die for her lover. *The Love of Kusuma, Nasrin, The Fatal Garland* and such other stories illustrate the same point.
Religious reform was the order of the day and found reflection in the novels like *Thillai Govindan* and *Vasudev Sastri*. The political outlook of the day is mirrored in *Hindupore* and in some stories from *The Tales of Bengal*.

It must be admitted that the attempts were made to depict life of the day but the novels were far from being satisfactory and highly unrealistic.

The historical novels written during pre-independence period do not show very originality or sense of historical perspective. They have to breadth and vision and study demanded by the historical novel. The result is that these novels are just historical romances. Uma Parmeshwarn ably sums up the characteristics of such historical romances, “Their novels have all the familiar Scott silhouettes-high romance, barehanded struggles, feats of prowess, protestations of lifelong love, songs and poems within the novel, bards and seers, womens and talismen, tales of old retold and relived, damsels in distress and knights arrant, and loyalty-unto-death followers.”¹(4) They are stories of love and batred, intrigues and murders woven round some historical incidents.

In those days, it was almost impossible to expect anything like detective fiction in the Indo-Anglian novel and so it becomes a pleasant surprise to come across S. B. Banerjea’s “Indian Detective Stories” (1911) Evidently Banerjea has been inspired by the Sir Arther Conan Doyle and his Sherlock Holmes. These stories, evidently do not come up to our expectations. They hardly, if ever, achieve the scientific perfection so necessary in the art of detection. These stories of crime and detection, at best, remain interesting attempts. India will have to go a long way before she can produce Sherlock Holmes or Poi rot or Perry Mason.

The technical knowledge of the art of detection and crime demands leisure and comparative study from the novelist which the Indian novelists can rarely afford. At the same time, in Indian English literature detective fiction is looked upon as an outcast fit to be despised and shunned. Naturally, therefore, writers of merit rarely attempt this genre of story-telling.

Indian mind from time immemorial has loved romances. To think of an ideal life of brave men and beautiful women and “old unhappy far off things and battles long ago” (5) has been a favorite theme with the Indian writers. As such even at this early stage good romances are noticed.

Toru Dutt the girl prodigy, whose poems were highly esteemed by western critics also wrote an English novel, a romance, *Bianca the Young Spanish Maiden*. 
This romance was posthumously published as a serial story in *The Bengal Magazine*. This romance written when she was only in her teens, has not come out in a book form. She thus stands in line with Fracoise Sagan and other women writers who won fame as novelist even in their teens. *Roshinara by Kalikrishna* (1881) in an unimportant mediore romance woven round the figure of Roshinara. S. K. Ghosh is a gifted story-teller. Mr. S. K Ghosh’s first book *One Thousand and One Night’s* (1904) first appeared in Pearson’s Magazine. The sub-title of the story is ‘The Trials of Narayanlal’ and the story “recounts in the manner of an oriental story-teller the super or deeds of Narayanlal.”

Very few of the Indo-Anglian novels of pre-independence period, have achieved even a tolerable measure of artistic beauty. Very few of them are readable today a student of literary history would care to turn their pages. “Vasudev Shastri” by Rajan Iyer the two romances of S. K. Ghosh, the short stories by Cornelia Sorabji or the novels of Sardar Jogendra Singh offer some interesting reading for the modern reader as they “surprise the world with native merchandise”, “with bright divine imagining.”

It becomes apparent that the novels upto 1920 are a strange mixture of the good and the bad. None of the novels rise much above the standard of mediocrity. Technical skill, various artistic methods of storytelling and stark realism—all these find no place in the novels of pre-independence period. The best that one can say about them is that some of the novelists are good story-tellers. It is true to note Prof. Bhupal Singh when he says; “Indian writers and story-tellers, on the whole do not compare favourably with Anglo-Indian writers. That they write in a foreign tongue is a serious handicap in itself. Then few of them possess any knowledge of the art of fiction. They do not seem to realize that prose fiction, inspite of its freedom, is subject to definite laws. In plot construction they are weak, and in characterization weaker still. Their leaning towards didacticism and allegory is a further obstacle to their success as novelists. As writers of short stories they have occasionally achieved success.”

No uniform pattern or regularly developed trend is visible in these novels, except the spasmodic progress of a line of development discussed above, because novels came from various provinces and were representative of the development of literatures of their respective vernaculars. Hence lack real continuity. There were
various attempts to represent India in English literature. The importance of these novels is only historical as milestones on the path of achievements to come.

The first World War ended in 1918 and its impact began gradually to be mirrored in literature from 1921 onwards. The War with its grim carnage had stirred the conscience of the world. Indian writers were doubly affected by the war because, the national consciousness was awakened and liberty and independence were prizes worth fighting and dying for. This idea became more and more marked as the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi gradually spread over the length and breadth of India. Many a writers in the era who wrote the songs of freedom and martyrdom. Stories and novels or the struggle of independence were written.

The war that shocked humanity had brought forward new sources of inspiration. All these were reflected in the novels and short stories of the Indo-Anglian writers. Like the other periods of change and new ideas, this period also produced bold experiments and exciting successes. Charlatans and imitators jostled with men of originality and genius. It was no time for high polish and excessive refinement. Men were shaken and stimulated by world events and ideas and emotions became often consciously dramatic.

There was not a sudden break from the old tradition as they continued along with the new ones. Old topics, old technique and old sentimental didactic novels did not disappear. But the realistic novel with a purpose appeared in its own right bringing with it new inspiration, new technique and new vision.

No doubt the themes of the novels were changed. A man like Mulk Raj Anand would plumb the depth of humble life and reveal dignity or majesty in the manhood of an untouchable or a coolie; another like R. K. Narayan would depict the middle class man of South India; a Raja Rao or a Karaka would soar into Utopias of the soul and proclaim “the world’s greatest age begins anew” yet another like Muhammad Habib or Ahmad Ali would find his solution in weaving sensuous word pictures from “faery-lands forlorn”; another like A. S. P. Ayyar turned away from prevailing ordeals and currents to live with the great men of ancient Indian Gupta period.

pre-independence period therefore, marks a great leap forward. There is a clearcut advance in technique, form and style. Raja Rao enriched the novel with highly poetic and prose and artistic narration. This period threw up men like Mulk Raj

In the point of technique they brought the Indo-Anglian novel within hailing distance of the latest novel of the west. The village granny narrate the dramatic times of the Independence struggle in Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’. The autobiographical form of narration so useful in analyzing the character is well utilized by Raja Rao. The technique used by him is Conradian and the grandmother in this novel takes the place of Marlow. Mulk Raj Anand used advanced technique of storytelling in all his novels. At the same time fighting for the cause of the poor and the have-nots Karaka, Ahmed Abbas and others with their journalistic way of writing produced effective stories which were like a blast of crisp fresh air. S.K Chettur in his “Bombay Murder”, produced a well turned out detective story on the lines of Agatha Christie.

The form of these novels showed a clear-cut advanced. Technique the novelists have shown considerable knowledge of the form of novel. They have tried all the forms from the traditional novels to the highly advanced novels like ‘Kanthapura’ or ‘Untouchable’. The Indo-Anglian novelist has by now understood the emphasis to be laid On character. He has learnt the novelist’s job, “not to describe life, in Somerset Maugham’s phrase “line by line,” but by the exercise of his fastidious selective power, to choose to describe only what is significant. He does not tell all-that would be impossible he suggests. By the words he uses, by the gesture he indicates, by the speech he cuts short and he makes us understand what is passing in the minds of those whom he portrays. If he makes us want to know all that he knows, he has mastered the first secret of good novel writing.”

Another change that is discernable in the Indo-Anglian novels of this period is that they are comparatively free from didacticism. The stories of R. K. Narayan are a fine example of a writers objectivity. Mulk Raj Anand, unluckily, is not free from this propagandist motive. According to K.M.Munshi,“When a conscious purpose, however good, becomes the predominant motive with a literary artist, his creation ceases to be true literature. It becomes only an instrument. Fundamentally, we must realise that literature is the flowering of the creative urge in the artist expressed through word, the spontaneous expression of a mood, emotion or impression of the joy of living or the anguish of suffering; a creation, like the flower which a tree puts fourth, or the song which a lark sings as it soars overhead.”

10
Some of the good Indo-Anglian novelists have gone all out for an intimate contact with life, its joys, sorrows, triumph and failures. Some have succeeded to a certain extent, depending upon their inner creative urge. The old method of telling the story from the birth of the hero upto his death is also dying out instead novels of intense reality describing only the significant period have stepped in. The novelists of before-independence have tried to make their stories as realistic as possible. This does not mean that fantastic, impossible to swallow-stories were not written in this period. But the predominant trait seems to remain in direct personal contact of the reader to create and to feel by representing life as it is actually lived.

It is true that many novels and short stories like those of Mulk Raj Anand, Khwaja Ahemad Abbas, Humayun Kabir and others are loaded with some propaganda motives. They plead the cause of the unhappy mill-worker or the debt-ridden farmer who was leading a subhuman life of toil, slavery and disease. Others too like Raja Rao come out with novel of glorious sacrifices in the cause of freedom. K. M. Munshi that loading a work of art with any extraneous motive tends to reduce its artist value to that extent. But at a time when the entire nation was locked in a life and death struggle for freedom and for fair play to the undergo, it was impossible for any novelist of worth to shut his eyes to the injustice and misery around him and to put on the mantle of detached objectivity of the dwellers of the ivory tower. No novelist can escape the currents and cross currents of the social life around him and if as result be raises his voice in protest against such things, his novels gain in force and subjectivity what they lose in balance and art. The struggle for independence had thrilled the entire nation. Civil disobedience lathi charges, shootings and dire misery of the villages had shocked the entire nation as also its men of the letters. Thus a little exaggeration of such events is found in most of the stories of pre-independence period. These stories are very often tinged with propaganda and sentimentalism.

This period also saw the rise of the rural novel, the novel of the tillers of the soil and dwellers of the cottages. India is predominantly an agricultural country and the problems of the villages were the problems of the nation. So far, the city-born writer never cared to look into the sub-human conditions of the life of villagers. He was content to write the stories of the “glories of our blood and state” and the princes and the rich. The realities of life, therefore, rarely crept into the novels. The miserable lot of the untouchables, eternal debt, poverty and serfdom of the agriculturist were
shown in their cruel nakedness. The novelist, therefore, tried to tackle these problems of villages in this own way. Venkataramani’s “Murugan, the Tiller”, Nagarajan’s “Cold Rice”, Shanker Ram’s “The Children of Kauveri” and ‘The love of Dust’, D.F. Karaka’s “We never Die” are all the stories of rural life, predominantly featuring the rural problems.

It is not that before 1920 short stories were not written. They were written but artistically turned out short stories in Indo-Anglian fiction were almost non-existent. Serious literary or artistic short stories came to be written only during this era of 1920-47, which is called the era of awakened national consciousness. Volumes after volumes of collected short stories by the writers of repute like, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Humayun Kabir, Venkataramani, S. Nagarajan and others appeared in quick succession and the stories contained in them were, in matter of form, style technique and plot, not below average in literary merit.

One of the reasons why the short stories developed fast in this period may be the rise of the demand for English newspapers and magazines. “It may also be added that the post-War period (or rather the period between the two wars) in India saw a considerable change in the journalistic world. Old newspapers and journals stabilized themselves and many fresh ones boldly made a bid for popularity. There was something of an actual demand for short stories in English and occasionally even for serial novels.” (10) Thus the short story came into its own during this period.

The general trends pointed out above might leave one under a wrong impression, if we do not view these achievements are not observed in a broader perspective. It is true that this period threw up a good number of novels and short stories of abiding literary merit. Many of these works will survive the test of time. But the Indo-Anglian novel had yet to produce novels which plumbed the depth of the human misery. Prof. Humayun Kabir’s “Men and Rivers” is perhaps one of the best novels of this period and can very creditably stands in comparison with any good English or American novel. On the whole atleast, so far as top writers are concerned, their novels, if they do not reach the height of literary merit, do not fall below an average English or American novel. They do not lose much by comparison with the West. It is remarkable to note that the Indo-Anglian writers, with the reserve so characteristic of the East have eschewed sex from their novels, an expedient so freely used by the American novelist for keeping alive the interest of the reader. Tagore’s short stories have a compact and well knit structure, vivid characters and incidents,
apt atmosphere and an unfading shine of language. Tagore’s poetic vision peeps in all his stories. All his stories have an indwelling unity— the unity of the idea that inspires and sustains the story. His novels exercised great influence on the development of Indian English novel. The exposition of socialism, stark realism, all embracing humanism, psychological analysis of human characters and all pervading poetical beauty which characterize Tagore’s novels, influenced Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and many others.

A society undergoing resurrection and transformation provides a fertile soil for fiction. The dawn of self awareness in a society long suppressed under the British rule provided variety of themes to the novelists and compelled them to think anew over the numerous social and national problems. It was, in fact, during this period that Indian English novel discovered some of its most significant themes—freedom struggle, East-West relationship, quest of identity, the exploitation of the under-dog, the search for justice and fair play, the treatment of the rural life etc.

In fact, the Independence Movement in India “was not merely a political struggle, but an all pervasive emotional experience for all Indians in the nineteen twenties and thirties That was an experience that was national in nature.”

Indian writer could avoid this national upsurge. The Indian English novels written during this century deals with this national experience as theme or indirectly as significant public background to a personal narrative-. The Indian political movement was not only a political movement for independence. It combined varied forces which gathered together for ushering India as a sovereign independent nation purged of all social, economic, political and communal evils which had eaten into the very vitals of national life. The ideology of M.K. Gandhi was the moving force behind the national upsurge. The Gandhian ideology became not only a philosophy of life but a way of life. The Indian English writer basked in the broad and radiant sunshine of Gandhian ideology. No discussion of Indian English novel would be complete without the assessment of the all pervasive influence of the Mahatma.

Meenakshi Mukherjee writes: “The most potent force behind the whole movement, the Mahatma is a recurring presence in these novels, and he is used in different ways to suit the design of each writer. He has been treated variously as an idea, a myth, a symbol, a tangible reality, and a benevolent human being. In a few novels he appears in person, in most others his is an invisible presence.”
Mahatma Gandhi’s influence on Indian literature of this period has been twofold. First as, a writer he evolved chaste, lucid and simple style which influenced contemporary writing. Secondly, he influenced the thematic content. K.R.S. Iyengar remarks: “Besides, whatever the language medium chosen, the stress has been more on simplicity and clarity and immediate effectiveness than on ornateness or profundity or laborious artistry, and this has been marked in English writing as in writing in the regional languages. As regards the choice of themes and the portrayal all character, the Gandhian influence has been no less marked there has been a more or less conscious shift of emphasis from the village or there is implied a contrast between the two-urban luxury and sophistication on the one hand and rural nodes and manners on the other.”

In Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* and *The Cow of the Barricades* the Mahatma never appears in person but his presence is felt everywhere. A local figure in these works represents the Mahatmas who stands for compassion gentle and ability. In R.K.Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* the Mahatma appears as a warm human being. In Anand’s *Untouchable* Mahatma Gandhi appears as a crusader of the evil of untouchability. In *The Sword and the Sickle* Anand does not idealize Gandhi. The revolutionary group derides the gohead achieved by the Mahatma. Lalu is influenced by the directness of Gandhiji. He agrees when the Mahatma says that fear is the first enemy of peasants. Lalu, a Punjabi peasant by birth and soldier by profession, believes in direct, positive action and dismisses Gandhian principles of celibacy, hand-spinning, and passive resistance. K.S.Venkatramani’s *Murugan, The Tiller* and *Kandan the Patriot* were written under the influence of the Mahatma. Murugan is an exponent of Gandhian politics and Kandan represents Gandhian economics. In Khwaja Ahmad Abbas *Inquilab* Mahatma Gandhi and other leading personalities of the Gandhian age are introduced. Gandhiji continued to inspire Indian English novel even in the post-Gandhian era, as in Bhabani Bhattachrya’s *So Many Hungers* and *Shadow From Ladakh* Anand Lal’s *The House of Adampur*, Nayantara Sahagal’s *A Time to be Happy* etc. Commenting on the treatment of the Mahatma in Indian English novel. Meenakshi Mukherjee writes: “Whether Gandhi would be treated as an idea or as a human being, as symbol or tangible reality, is ultimately determined by the point of view of the novelist, and Gandhi’s presence in the novel is justified only if it into the internal pattern of events. In lesser novels the Mahatma is used merely as a device to fit the novel in a particular time of history.”
The Indian English novel of this period deals directly with the national experience as the central theme. The various momentous events of this turbulent period—Mahatma Gandhi’s passive resistance movement against Black Rowalt Act, The inhuman massacre in Jalianwala Bagh in Amritsar, the Khilafat Movement, the boycott of Simon Commission, the prohibition of the foreign goods, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the famous Dandi March, the Government of India Act of 1935, the emancipation of women, the Quit India Movement of 1942 and many other facts of the Gandhian movement are vividly described in the novels written during this period.

Under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi the Indian writers turned from romanticism to realism. The realistic novel with a purpose appeared in its own right bringing with it new inspiration, new technique and new vision. The main themes of the realistic novels are—portrayal of poverty exploitation in all its manifestations, hunger and disease, vivid presentation of social evils and tensions; exploration of the hybrid culture of the educated Indian middle classes; disintegration of the village community and analysis of a number of dislocations and conflicts in a tradition-ridden society under the impact of an incipient, half hearted industrialization. Sardar Jogindar Singh whose Kamala and Kamini have already been discussed was a pioneer in this respect A.S.P. Ayar’s The Finger of Destiny and Other Stories discuss contemporary social problems. The foundation of the Progressive Writers Association in 1935-36 strengthened the movement for realism in literature. Sajjad Zaheer, Mulk Raj Anand and a few other enthusiastic Indian Writers founded it in England and soon it was also established in India. Rabindranath Tagore, Munshi Premchand, Joshi and many other Indian English Writers supported this Association and soon after its establishment in India it embraced almost all Indian languages. With this movement an extensive background of Indian life and the urges of the masses found prominent place in literature. It became a true and authentic mirror of man and society. Novelists like Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao turned to social realities of their time and carved man’s image in their art. The novelist’s main concern has been an examination and revaluation of society, and also a consideration of the nature of man and his place in the universe.

The novel of commitment and propaganda is an offshoot of the realistic novel. Some of the writers like Mulkraj Anand are ardent believers in the ideology they are writing about and Anand’s commitment for social revolution through his social
ideology is undisguised. Excessive commitment and propaganda militates against artistic coherence and unity. Raja Rao’s commitment is also reflected in his novels but he observes detachment to a certain extent, which is conspicuous by its absence in the works of Anand. R.K.Narayan is detached and impersonal. K.A. Abbas in Inquilab refuses to get involved because he aims at presenting the total picture impartially as he can.

The rise of the rural novel, which is also realistic in character, is another remarkable feature of this period. The urban writers cared little to portray the appalling and inhuman conditions of the life of villagers. Under the Gandhian influence villages attracted attention. Consequently the serfdom of peasants, their poverty and exploitation were exposed in Venkatramani’s Murugan, The Tiller, Nagrajan’s Cold Rice, Shankar Ram’s The Children of Kauveri and The Love of Dust, D.F.Karaka’s We Never Die and Mulk Raj Anand’s Coolie and Two Leaves and A Bud. The entire thinking of the realistic novelists was socialistic. Their main intention was to highlight the progressive forces of the underlying, the tension born of the Western contact with Indian mind. East-West encounter and search for identity is another realistic theme in the novels of before-independence period.

There was a significant advance in respect of technique. New techniques were evolved to suit new themes and the purpose of the novelist. Technique is a means to expose and amplify the novelist’s point of view. Anand employs the picaresque method in The Sword and the Sickle, the stream of consciousness technique in Untouchable and the autobiographical style in Morning Face. In Attia Hussain’s Sunlight On a Broken Column the turbulent times before and after the partition of the country are viewed through the consciousness of a young Muslim girl who has led a sheltered affluent life. Theme, plot and character are merely instruments to expose the novelist’s viewpoint. R.K. Narayan’s The Waiting for the Mahatma, and Raja Rao’s Kanthapura deal with the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian society. The one depicts Gandhian influence on an individual, the other discusses Gandhian influence on community. Narayan’s story is narrated by the third person from the viewpoint of Sriram in a simple, direct and straightforward manner. There is no fusion of myth and reality in it. Kanthapura is narrated by an old woman to an imaginary listener who seems to be a villager. The unlettered narrator’s personality colours the entire theme which is the non-cooperation movement. She uses simple and racy language which has an elemental quality. Fact and myth are effectively mingled. What distinguished
Indian English novel from 1920 to the present day is the artistic use of myth as technique defining myth and its function. Joseph Campbell says: “A mythology is a system of images that incorporates a concept of the universe as a divinely energized and energizing ambience within which we live. A myth, then, is a single story or a single element of the whole mythology interlock — they interlock to be consistent within this great world image. But myths are not invented us stories are. Myths are inspired. They come from the same realm that dream comes from.... The myth world and the dream world come from that level beloved the threshold of consciousness, which is that I would call the nature wisdom, the life wisdom, the body wisdom.”(15)

To Campbell there is in the myth a kind of message from the unconscious to the conscious. According to him myths serve basically four functions. The first is the mystical function, that is to realize what a wonder the universe is, and what it wonder to people are, and a feeling of awe before this mystery. The second is a cosmological dimension with which science is concerned. The third function “is the sociological one supporting and validating a certain social order.”(16) The fourth function is to guide the individual through the normal crises of a lifeline decently and harmoniously. Myths in Indian English novels are mostly employed to fulfil the third function and to some extent the fourth. Whatever the method employed, each novelist has his own unique vision that colours the attitude towards myth. Anand, Raja Rao, Narayan and many others use myth as technique in the realistic novel.

The Indian English novelists of this period have surmounted over the difficulty of language and style. Novelists like S. Nagarjan, KS. Venkatramani, Anand, Raja Rao and Narayan conscientiously experimented with English and gave it a peculiarly Indian tone and colour by drawing on the resources of the Indian languages and infusing their essence into normal literary English. They have deftly used Indian imagery in their novels and have successfully captured the rhythm of the vernacular in English. English has been completely decolonised and has been given national character. The Indianisation of English has greatly contributed to the development of novel. The cavalcade of Indian English novel marched on with dignity and grace. In the hands of its practitioners the novel became “a living and evolving genre, a fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality.”(17) The novelist cannot ignore the public.
Ralph Fox writes: “From the public the author takes his characters as well as finds his readers there. Here he discovers both his raw material and his critics. In the greatest novels there is a kind of living unity between creator, characters and readers. Where that unity is wanting where the author is aloof from the public, ignores it, or is spiritually ignorant of it, there is very likely to result an anaemia, lack of some important element in the chemistry of imagination which impoverishes the author’s thought or cripples his powers.” (18)

The Indian English novelists have consistently maintained unity with the public. Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan the three Musketeers of Indian English novel, began writing during this period and won great distinction. Their mature works belong to the Dawn of Freedom and hence, as they have unity and coherence. The Indian English novel of this period has a distinct corpus of works which are conspicuous for revealing the spirit of the age in an authentic manner. Indian society is found in transition from the old to the new, the traumatic experiences of the disintegration of the old values and the instability of the new ones, growing interest in modernism and progressivism, national awakening and fascination for Gandhi and Gandhian ideology, the rise of realism and humanism, the development of fictional, technique and the evolution of various fictional genres are some major characteristics of novel during this period.

Indian English novel is about India as it presents an Indian point of view, and has a style which fits well into the matrix of Indian culture and way of life. Dorothy Spencer regards the Indian English novel as a major source for “a systematic study of cultural change, with Indian world view as focus”, which can increase the Western readers’ “knowledge of acculturation process.” (19) The Indian English novelists of this era as we have discussed, draw their artistic sustenance from their heritage and have their roots deeply ingrained in his cultural matrix. In order to create the impression of Indianness artistically they choose Indian setting and subject manner and successfully use appropriate language and imagery. The modern novel “is the organic product of a particular environment in a particular society in a given time. It is thus impossible to write a good novel today that remains suspended out of time and space; it must have a definite location in temporal and spatial reality.” (20)

The novels of this period show a remarkable advance over the novels before 1920 in respect of the rise of realism and humanism. There has been a major shift in the selection of themes. The major problems confronting the nation occupy the
novelist. He has minutely seen the life around him and he has consciously tried it in his novels. The novelists are at close grip with life, with its joy, sorrow, hatred and love. This has resulted in the rise of realism and humanism. The novelists of this period lash out among other things at social inequities, mental inhibitions, moral and religious taboos, economic disparities, political systems and metaphysical subtleties in a spirit of strong, healthy humanitarianism. As the novelists represent the varied caste and communities, various regions and cultural segments, they interpret nearly every aspect of India’s variegated and multitudinous life.

The development of the rural novel is an offshoot of realism projecting life as a whole. The novelists of the previous era were interested in depicting the life of the high strata of society and cared little to write about the sub-human conditions of the life of villagers. Under the Gandhian influence the novelist focused his attention on Indian villages.

Growing interest in the rise of the feminist movement and great concern for the amelioration of women, who have suffered much in male dominated society, is an important theme in Indian novel in English. A. Madhaviah in *Thillai Govindan*, Sardar Joginder Singh in *Kamala* and *Kamini*, R.P. Dey in *Mother and Daughter*, Innocent Souza in *Radha: A Hindu Belle*’ portray various social evils the plight of widows, child marriage, sexual exploitation which women have been suffering from times immemorial in Hindu society. Iqbalunnisa Hussain in *Purdah and Polygamy: Life in An Indian Muslim Household* exposes the evils of purdah and polygamy which have embittered the life of women in Muslim community.

The revolutionary changes brought about by Western influences in Indian society are depicted in the novel of this period. Young people who developed critical and progressive outlook opposed superstition, casteism, communalism and irrational social customs and traditions. Old people struck to their conservative mode of life and opposed the desire to change. Hence, the conflict between the old and the new became a popular theme in the novel.

East-West encounter or the cultural conflict is another important theme in the novel of this period. A number of novelists have attempted to study this encounter at various depths of meaning. In the novels written during this era, the East-West encounter operates as the conflict between pre-industrial modes of life and mechanisation in Venkatramani’s *Murugan, the Tiller* and Chintamani’s *Vedantam, The Clash of Traditions*. Inter-Cultural conflict has been vividly depicted in post-
independence novel, especially in the works of Anand, R. K. Narayan, Manohar Malgonkar, B. Rajan, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal etc.

What distinguishes the Indian novel in English during this era is the rise of the regional novel. The novelists who come from various regions and states brought regionalism and local colour in novel. A. Madhaviah, K S. Venkatramani, Shankar Ram, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan pioneered the regional novel about south. D. F. Karaka and Amir Ali wrote about Maharashtra, especially Bombay.

Literature mirrors national life. The national awareness through Gandhian movement immensely influenced the Indian English novel of this period. The important milestones of the Gandhian Movement—Passive Resistance Movement against the Rowlatt Act in 1919, the Jallianwallah Bagh Tragedy, the Khilafat Movement, the Non-violent Non-cooperation Movement of 1920-21, Civil Disobedience Movement in Bardoli in 1921-22, the Salt Satyagrah and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and the Quit India Movement of 1942 have been portrayed realistically in K. S VenkatRamani’s Kandan, The Patriot, K. Nagarjan’s Athawar House, D. F. Karak’s We never die’, Raja Rao’s Kanthapura, R. K. Narayan’s Waiting for the Mahatma, K. A. Abbas Inquilab and in many other novels. Besides Mahatma Gandhi’s ideology and personality, also inspired the novelists of this period.

Some Indian English novelist attempted to deal with the glorious pages of Indian history. A.S.P Ayyar’s Baladitya, Dewan Sharar’s Eastern Tales, Dhitendra Nath Paul’s The Mysteries of the Moghal Court and Joseph Furado’s Golden Goa are memorable works of historical fiction written during this period.

In respect of plot construction, the Indian English novelists failed to attain any remarkable achievement. They usually followed the loose picaresque design employed by eighteenth century and early Victorian novelists — Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Dickens and Thackeray. From the architectural point of view their novels are formless and have little dramatic and organic quality. Indian novels in English are mainly novels of characters and in this respect they have achieved noticeable success.

The Indianization of English is most outstanding achievement of Indian English novelists of this period. Novelists, representing various geographical regions have remarkably harnessed English to reveal Indian ethos and sensibility. What distinguishes their English is the regional and local colouring they base imparted to English in order to make it an authentic and powerful medium for the expression of
regional background and peculiarities. The English of a writer from North differs from that of South.

“During this era the toddling Indian English novel inspite of many hindrances and handicaps has learnt to stand firmly on its legs. A conscious and artistic pattern has evolved itself. The novel has become great literary force, and a powerful medium for creating social and national awareness and for suggesting ways of changing society.”

Indian literature is warmly wrapped up with the Indian religious system. The earliest sacred writings are the Vedas. It is certainly not an overstatement to say that one of the primary influencing factors on Indian literature since ages is religion. Indian literature perhaps seizes the most sublime attention, owing to its most ancient and pre-historic approach by religious thinkers and spiritual believers. It is said that literature in India represents that body of artistic works, which both oral and written, depending upon the ages that had passed till the contemporary times. The whole course of Indian literature and in a broader sense the course of Indian civilization was influenced largely by the concept of devotional worship of a personal deity. This very influencing factor to a great extent structured a cult era in Indian literature whilst giving rise to the historical development of the Bhakti movement. Just not the religion. Indian philosophy, Islamic tradition and indeed the Dravidian culture all were once the influencing factors which determined the silhouette of Indian literature. The French, British, Dutch, Portuguese, and English also influenced the dominant Sanskrit tradition. Thereby influencing the Indian literature to a great extent. The influencing factors on Indian literature since ages have moulded and reshaped Indian literature.

The incredible influencing factors on Indian literature pertain to those subjects which has enlivened writers from time immemorial. Right from the Vedic Period, as can be very well comprehended from Sanskrit literature, socialistic factors influenced the Indian literature a lot. Indeed, it can be stated that social influence on Indian literature is one such domain, which can perhaps never be ignored or overlooked at any time. The society and its social beings is an integral portion of any literature, which forever is mirrored in every writer’s creation. The surroundings have over and over again been recognized as a personified being in Sanskrit literary influences in literature from India. Works like Ritusamhara or Vikramorvasiya by Kalidasa verily depicts the society in erstwhile Indian times, times when India was still fondled by
lores and its majestic or mythical kings. The ancient period in India indeed was a melting pot of rendering superlative influences on Indian literature, primarily the socialistic or majestic influences, basically performed by writers to appease the royal household with their dedicated works. Ancient times in Indian literature, precisely of the 7th or 10th centuries had also remained spectator to the arrival of Buddhism. Jainism and other linguistic influences, which were however, not although as potential as Hinduism as such. The Bhakti influence of Indian literature with Meera Bai. Buddhist influence on Indian literature with Gautama Buddha, Jain influence on Indian literature with Vardhamana Mahavira and the dazzling linguistic influence on Indian literature that had come with it, was incredibly focused on to making literary overlapping a matter of much ease and poise. The indelible and verdant mark that was noticed side by side with Sanskrit literature and its influence in the Indian literature was culture that, the country was awaiting in bated breath of its subsequent arrival of the influential majesties and luminaries to come for Middle and Colonial culture.

The Medieval Period in India had to very much stay witness to and rely upon the overwhelming and new advent of Islamic culture in the Oriental soil. The Middle Ages was also one period in India which not only did impact the literature as a whole, but also the whole essential indigenous Indian set-up. The previous period was one, which was thoroughly identified with the Hindu religious and Hinduism rising more towards peak excellence. However, broader and more extensive influence on literature from India was one that had been scripted during the Medieval Indian times. This redefines that era, which witnessed, for the very first time that Indian regal rulers could also succumb to alien incursions, those coming from the corners of Persia, Turkey, or even the European voyages to chart a world map. As such, an uncanny amalgamation was noticed with Muslim and European mixtures of culture, which also brought in literatures and languages from Persia, in the Farsi or Urdu and its consequent brilliant after-effects. Influences on Indian literature also were furnished with the option of a kind of dichotomy to hand- pick from the beneficial or the malicious influences on the literary write-ups. However, intelligent enough as the writers were from medieval India, they chose to select the beneficial ones to give life to memorable pieces. The Muslim era upon India, with the Delhi Sultanate and the later most esteemed Mughal Empire, can be blindly named the masterminds, under whom the Indian cultural ethos expanded to its most stretching extent. Not only Urdu literature, but every other Indian indigenous literature was lent an impetus under the
hands of the Sultanate or the good-hearted Mughal emperors. Such extolling and respected influencing factors on Indian literature can never be dismissed, which are perhaps only available to the contemporary Indian natives only in picturesque format.

The colonial period, which was at first dealt with much subtlety and humour in the literal sense, did take on many momentous and grave proportions due to the British Raj and its cruel domination. In fact, European arrival on Indian soil was one such aspect, which had begun already during the times of Mughal Emperor Jehangir. Yet, British domination, beginning with the East India Company perhaps had surpassed every other literary influence on Indian literature, with 200 years of ruthless reigning. Be it the Company or the later British Empire under the Crown annexation, Indian literature never did remain the same again. Indian regions were turned into provinces and the leading port cities, into Presidency administration. Each of the administrational system was overhauled, which began to gradually make a profound impact upon the mass and the class alike. The cultural ethos, the cultural distinctiveness that India owned, was completely shattered owing to English power and ascendance. This no doubt was to make its shielding as well as protesting a mark in regional Indian literature, which again was a societal duty for any author. Cultural influence on Indian literature was mostly viewed in the limelight, with writers attempting to at times make headway for nationalists, or, the others, supporting the beneficial cause of the rare-to-find kindhearted Englishman. Whatever was the case, Indian literature was tremendously influenced from its every single angle of advancement.

Yet another path breaking aspect was the arrival and permeation of English language was a major means of communication for the class first, and later, the mass. Those kind-hearted Englishmen, who had taken the task upon them to bring natives to justice had planned to create special position in native heart, by spreading English language and literature into every Indian soul.

As such, one of the main influencing factors on Indian literature was the English language. English language thoroughly had influenced the Indian literature. Colonial influence in Indian literature was so much an aspect of everyday basis, that after some time, neither the ruler nor the ruled were very much taken in by it. If India was made a colony under British Empire, it was very very much obvious that colonialism would make its everlasting influence upon any kind of literary work from Indian nationals, be it in English, or be it in the regional languages.
However, a distinct thin line still remained between these ‘ruler-ruled’ relationship, in terms of communication, with the latter forever trying effectively to root out the former. And this very element very much became a reality in 1947, with India gaining Independence after 200 years of merciless suppression. The sudden darkness and lack of light that was felt with the Partition of India, intensely had impact upon any quintessential Indian, mirrored very much in the then-framed ‘Indian Diaspora’ and its cluster of writers and authors.

Post-colonial influence on Indian literature is that very sphere, which can still be viewed in the Indian English literature, not forgetting the sporadic regional literatures of 21st century. The abstract anxiety of helplessness, the angry young man restlessness, or the masked features of any Independent Indian human mind is still perfectly intact in the core of Indian literature, which however has taken towards fresh directions under the gradually arriving globalization and its influence onto Indian literature.

The twenties and thirties of the 2010 Century are in a way a borderline in the development of Indian—English literature. This was the time of the origin of its artistic prose. The 19th Century flooded India with a torrent of English books. But time gradually separated grain from weed. Out of a great number of English authors, the most favourite of the Indian intelligentsia remained Shakespeare, Swift, Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith, Scott, Dickens, Bronte Sisters, Jane Austen. Thackeray, Wilde. Romantic poets and some others.

The first direct reaction of “writer” readers to this literature, built on different ideological—aesthetical origins was displayed very soon and in an altogether unique form. The characters of the English novels, having obtained Indian names, continued to exist in India. The themes of plays and novels, and the types of personages were transplanted, like flowers, from the European conservatories to the Indian soil, and the seedlings got acclimatized. A Bengali novel, The General’s Daughter by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, was nothing but a paraphrasing of Waltar Scott’s Ivanhoe, and the theme of Shakespeare’s play The Tempest, was employed by Kishori Lal Goswami in his Hindi story, “Indumati”, Adapations of Shakespear’s plays and also those of Molliere and Hugo by the Marathi writer Apte are well-known. It was out of the question to apply adaptations, paraphrasing, renderings, as it might be observed in other Indian literatures, and not in Indian-English literature because to translate from
“Royal English” to “Indian English” was meaningless. The question about adaptations was, of course, no longer valid.

In the 20th Century the popularity of European translations in India significantly grew up. It was through English translations that the Indians got familiar with the French classical writers: Voltaire, Rousseau, Molliere, Hugo, Maupassant, George Sand, Anatole France, Balazac, Zola and also with the works of the Russian writers: Crime and Punishment, The Brothers Karamazoy, The Idiot, The Possessed by Dostoevsky; War and Peace, Anna Karenina, Resurrection by Tolstoy The Dead Souls, The Government Inspector by Gogol; Fathers and Sons, A Nest of Gentry, Hunter’s Sketches by Turgenev; The Cherry Orchard, The Three Sisters by Tehekov; and a litter later The Mother, The Lower Depth, The Philistine by Gorky. The great classics of critical realism in France and Russia intensified in the consciousness of the Indians the idea about the principles of this creative method, and stimulated their attention towards the concrete reality.

Although, according to European standard, the Indian literature lagged behind, nevertheless, it covered the same stages in the assimilation of artistic methods. It is true that here this process passed with an accelerated speed. Since Indian Literature, like other oriental literature also, did not have sufficient time to assimilate the ideas of enlightenment and romantism, according to the expression of N.I. Conrad, it “spread towards realism”. In this situation varied creative methods capriciously got on with each other in the framework of one and the same chronological period and in the creative work of a single artist. A similar trait of development, in a certain measure, is also inherent in Indian English literature, although the Indian novel, apparently, escaped those stages, which covered this genre in European literature and in particular the Indian regional literatures. The Indian novel in English did not hear the sound of the swords of the romance; it did not exercise the jokes of the swindlers; and it did not impress the reader by the zig-zags of success in the picaresque novel. For as a genre it was already established during the thirties of the 20th Century, and was immediately confronted by complicated problems; to reproduce life objectively to portray reality in the context of certain historical period, and reveal the psychology of human personality. A solution to these problems lay on the shoulders of eminent novelists like M. R. Anand, R. K. Narayan and others and their contribution was highly appreciated by critics.
The development of the English language novel in India was slow, as it was late, as though it still seemed to remember its modest birth by way of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya’s unfortunate Rajmohan’s Wife (1864) and Toru Dutt’s sentimental Bianca (1878). These experiments lead to be unsuccessful and evoked only an unfavorable reaction. After the first experiments came in a pause for a quarter of century, it was only in the beginning of the 20th Century that the Indian novel in English once again hesitatingly declared about its own existence. This time the author was not from Bengal but from Bombay-Nagesh Vishwanath Pai, well known as the author of a humorous book, Stray Sketches in Chakmakpore and a poem, “The Angle of Misfortune” taking the reader back to the times of the region of King Vikramaditya. Nagesh Vishwanath Pai wrote two novels: Padmini (1903) and The Dance of Death (1912) ; but neither of these were successful. Some other Indian novels in English such as Kamala, A Story of Hindu Life by Kruplai Satthinandhan (1894); The Prince of Destiny by Sarath Kumar Ghosh (1909); Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest by S.N. Mitra (1909); The Dive for Desath: an Indian Romance by T.Ramakrishnan (1911); The Love of Kusuma, an Eastern Love, by Bal Krishna (1910), but they were not of the high order either.

There was a new class of affluent, globetrotting, often diasporic international. Writers The New Yorker photograph, which paved precisely this new mobility and homelessness of the new Indian English writers, made their denationalization. The best recent example is of course Arundhati Roy, who, Cinderellalike, catapulted from total obscurity to international celebrity. Vikram Seth, Amitav Chose, I. Alan Sealy, Vikram Chandra, Amit Choudhury, Anita Desai, and several others, belong to this category.

Then there are the stay-at-home who nonetheless have made it big: R. K. Narayan, Nayantara Sahgal, Khushwant Singh, Sashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Gitta Hariharan, and so on. All these have achieved varying degrees of international recognition. When there is a new super class, there are also new under classes who have not yet achieved even national renown, not to speak of international fame and celebrity. Publishers kill their books as casually as they publish them, shelf space always being at a premium.

In all of this, a major question remains about the relationship between the market and the literary quality. Surely, the market can affect, even control the prevailing ideas of quality, but cannot totally kill quality itself. There is something
quite transcendental about quality, as Robert Pirsig has so eloquently argued, that it resists such annihilation.

Economic globalization, engendering as it does a world cultural system, has posed new challenges to Indian culture. Particularly to Indian English literature. While the writers are richer and more famous than they ever were, it is notice unprecedented inequities and asymmetries in power relations, not only vis a vis English and Indian languages, but between genres, and between authors.

While the dependency on global cultural capitalism has deepened and while the exploitation of cultural resources continues apace, people have greater opportunities to make profit out of culture than ever before. Culture is now no longer merely a way of life, but a way of earning a living. If only one can capitalize on the vast cultural riches, one might end up being not just a great culture producing but also a great culture exporting country.

There are two hypotheses concerning language power: the intrinsic-power hypothesis and the acquired-power hypothesis. The first one claims that English would intrinsically possess certain linguistic characteristics which would make it a preferred language for international purposes. This position can, according to Kachru, to some seem similar to claims of racial superiority. The second hypothesis emphasizes the ways in which a language acquires power, and thus it is also easier to understand. “A fact is that English has spread as a result of exploitation and colonization. It's notable that, especially in many ex-colonies of Britain, English is still the language of an exclusive social elite.”

Kachru 1986c: 128-129 has given various reasons for which languages are used in a society. They can be used to expand the speech community, as a vehicle of cultural or religious enlightenment to deculturize people from their own tradition (to the “civilizing process” also belonged distancing from native cultures: the colonizers wanted to introduce European literature to the natives, at the same time remaining ignorant of their indigenous literatures), to gain economic advantage, to control domains of knowledge and information, and for deception. The following statement by Charles Grant clearly demonstrates the attitudes of the British Raj in India.

The most important reason for the success of English is according to Kachru, naturally the historical role of England as a colonial power. In India, the political
power naturally attributed a power to the language of the Raj (called the linguistic elitism strategy), and it also became a symbol of political power. English came to be the language of the legal system, higher education, pan-regional administrative network, science and technology, trade and commerce—either because the indigenous languages were not equipped for these roles and English provided for a convenient vocabulary, or because the use of English was considered prestigious and powerful. English became gradually a major tool for acquiring knowledge in the sciences and the humanities. It has come to represent modernization and development, and, as a link language, it has acquired international roles over the years.

Linguistic power can be manifested by using one of the following power strategies: persuasion, regulation, inducement and force. Kachru has listed as examples of linguistic power suppression of a particular language (variety) and the elevation of another. Strategies can include crude linguistic power (e.g. the imposition of Japanese on the Koreans and the Malays during World War II), indirect psychological pressure (e.g. claims of “Other-World” power) and pragmatic power.

Kachru lists also some other reasons for the dominance of English around the world: its propensity for acquiring new identities, its power of assimilation, its adaptability to “decolonization” as a language, its manifestation in a range of lects, and its provision of a flexible medium for literary and other types of creativity across languages and cultures.

Kachru mentions four basic areas in which the power of English manifests itself: linguistic, literary, attitudinal and pedagogical. Linguistic control is reflected, for example, in the codification of a language, the attitudes toward linguistic innovation and lexicographical research. The literary aspect refers to the ethnocentric attitude toward literary creativity in the Outer Circle. The attitudinal aspect is involved in issues concerning the identities of individuals and speech communities.

The British were given a lot of political stature due to their political power, and they were required to adopt a pose that would fit their status. Language became a marker of the white man’s power. Kachru quotes E. M. Forster in A Passage to India.

“India likes gods. And Englishmen like posing as gods.”

The English languages was part of the pose and power Indians accepted it, too.

English was used in India and elsewhere in the colonies as a tool of power to cultivate a group of people who identify with the cultural and other norms of the
political elite. European values were, naturally, considered somehow inherently better whereas the indigenous culture was often considered somehow barbaric. English was considered as a “road to the light”, a tool of “civilization”. The Europeans thought that they can bring emancipation to the souls: they considered this as their duty. They sincerely thought they would contribute to the well-being of the native people in the colonies, and their language was elevated into being almost divine. English provided a medium for understanding techno and scientific development. Non-western intellectuals admired accomplishments of the west. European literature was made available in colonies. Macaulay shows ignorance towards the native languages in India by saying. I have never found one amongst them (The Orientalists) who would deny that a single of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of Indian and Arabia. In India, English gradually acquired socially and administratively the most dominant roles: the power and prestige of language was defined by the domains of language use. Ultimately the legal system, the national media and important professions were conducted in English. In the words of Kachru, skilled professional Indian became the symbol of Westernization and modernization. Raja Rammohan Roy was committed to the idea that the “European gentlemen of talent and education” should be appointed to construct the natives of India. English came to be used by Indians as well. By the 1920s English had become the language of political discourse international administration, and law a language associated with liberal thinking. Even after the colonial period ended, English maintained its power over local languages.

For the writers who wrote in English, English was eventually used against Englishmen, their roles and intentions as it became the language of resurgence of nationalism and political awakenings: the medium, ironically was the alien language. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), for instance, although struggled to create consensus for an acceptable native variety as the national language expressed his message to the elite in English, and most of the writers had the impact of Gandhi and his philosophy, which has been projected in the works of the writers.

Mulk Raj Anand :-Tagore brought a new humanizing breath of outlook to bear on his material. Munshi Premchand wrote about the defeated peasantry of Uttar Pradesh with acute poignancy. He was directly the predecessor of Anand and the author of the people-men and women, farmers, clerks, prostitutes and such people, who stand on the bottom rungs of the social ladder. His novels “Seva-Sadan”,

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“Rangbhumi”, “Karambhumi”, “Godan” – bring us to the full level of the novel proper. His women like the women of Hardy are born to suffering and sorrow. His peasants are towers of strength but they are crushed under the steam roller of the society.

Mulk Raj Anand, the novelist short story writer, essayist, art-critic and ‘bogus professor’ (as he calls himself), was born on December 12, 1905 in a Hindu Kshatriya family in Peshawar. The first five novels appeared in the following sequence: Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), The Village (1939) and Across the Black Waters (1940).

His novels were mainly romantic, historical narratives, outside the form of what is known as the novel in contemporary western literature. The fiction of Rabindranath Tagore was mainly concerned with the upper landed gentry of Bengal and the ‘Bhadra-Log’ the middle section of Calcutta society.

The influence of Premchand can be traced throughout the entire work of Anand. Sharat Chandra Chatterjee wrote about the lower middle class and brought forth the humanity of the humble folk. All these influences, Bankim’s romanticism, Tagore’s humanizing breath, Premchand’s sympathy for the suffering people and Sharat Chandra’s understanding of the human hearts influenced the artistic make up of Mulk Raj Anand. “Anand has one side facing into Premchand’s world, the other side facing into Tagore’s.” (25)

1930 was the year in which Anand started off a series of novels planned on the lines of Balzac revealing the involved pattern of Indian life with all its complexities. His European view gave him the objectivity and breadth of vision which he brought to bear upon his conception of India. The patriot, the realist and the artist peep alternately through the pages of all his novels. “Anand’s fiction has been shaped by what he himself calls ‘the double’ burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of my Indian past.” (26)

To his Indian past, however, Anand’s attitude is ambivalent. On the one hand, he is indignantly critical of the deadwood of the hoary Indian tradition its obscurantism and fossilization, on the other, as his lifelong interest in ancient Indian art and the intuitive understanding of the Indian peasant mind in his writings indicate, he is equally aware of its finer and enduring aspects as well. And it is mainly from the European tradition that Anand derives his fervent socialist faith and his vision of a modern egalitarian society. Anand’s numerous novels form a fictional chronicle in
which his electric humanism and his humanitarian compassion for the underdog are persistent themes. Both these themes receive perhaps their best fictional treatment in Anand’s first novel, *Untouchable* (1935), which describes an eventful day in the life of Bakha a young sweeper from the outcastes. Colony of a north.

This particular day brings him his daily torments and more but in the end it also suggests three alternative solutions to his problem: A missionary tries to persuade him to embrace Christianity; he listens to Gandhiji, who advocates social reform; and he also hears of mechanized sanitation as the only answer possible.

“Anand’s treatment of his theme here is remarkably objective and restrained, which saves the book from the lush sentimentality which marks some of his later novels. Unspiring in its realism, Untouchable is also structurally the least flawed of all Anand’s novels. Apart from the long harangue on modern sanitation at the end the entire narrative is a thing of perfect unity and finish.”

He started with a small canvas. *Untouchable* (1935) describes one full day in the life of an outcast-one of the untouchables. Among his other novels ‘Untouchable’ by Mulk Raj Anand is a story in which Anand has tackled a very unusual subject—the life of an untouchable in India. *Untouchable* is, the shortest of the novels, and the most revealing and rewarding of the lot. The ‘unities’ are admirably preserved, as in a classical play, for untouchable covers the events of a single day in the life of the ‘low-caste’ boy, Bakha, in the town of Bulashah.

The well-known English critic Mr.V.S. Pritchett writing in an issue of the “By Stander” has remarked, “Untouchable and Coolie”, the earlier books of Mulk Raj Anand, are not only the best Indian novels of the last twenty years, but they have as place in English literature.”

E.M. Forster who has written a preface to this novel says: “Indians, like most orientals, are refreshingly Frank, they have none of our complexes about functioning; they accept the process as something necessary and natural, like sleep on the other hand. They have evolved a hideous nightmare unknown to the west; the belief that the products are ritually unclean as well as physically unpleasant, and that those who carry them away or otherwise help to dispose of them are outcasts from society. Really it takes the human mind to evolve anything so devilish. No animal could have hit on it. As one of Mr.Anand’s characters says, “They think we are dirt because we clean their dirt.”
“The sweeper is worse off than a slave unclean himself, he pollutes others when he touches them. They have to purify themselves, and to rearrange their plans for the day. Thus he is disquieting as well as a disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public roads, and it is his duty to adduce and warn them that he is coming. No wonder that the dirt enters into his soul and that he feels himself at moments to be what he is supposed to be.”

‘Untouchable’ could only have been written by an Indian, any by an Indian who observed from the outside. Mr. Anand stands in the ideal position. By caste he is a Kshatriya, and he might have been expected to inherit the pollution-complex. But as a child he played with the children of the sweepers attached to an Indian regiment, he grew to be fond of them, and to understood a tragedy which he did share. He has just the right mixture of insight and detachment, and the fact that he has come to fiction though philosophy has given him depth.

Bakha is a real individual, lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian. Even his physique is distinctive; one can recognize his broad intelligent face, graceful torso and heavy buttocks, as he does his nasty jobs, or stumps out in artillery boots in hopes of a pleasant walk through the city with a paper of cheap sweets in his hand, poisons all that happens subsequently, even such pleasant episodes as the hockey match and the country walk. After a jagged course of UPS and downs, we come to the solution, or rather to the three solutions, with which the books closes.

The first solution is that of Hutchinson, the Salvationist missionary; Jesus Christ. But through Bakha is touched at hearing that Christ receives all men, irrespective of caste he gets bored, because the missionary cannot tell him who Christ is. Then follows the second solution, with the effect of a crescendo: Gandhi. Gandhi too says that all Indians are equal, and the account he gives of a Brahmin doing sweepers work goes straight to the boy’s heart. Hard upon this comes the third solution put into the mouth of a modernist poet. It is prosaic, straight-forward, and considered in the light of what has gone before in the books, it is very convincing. No god is needed to rescue the untouchable, no vows of self-sacrifice and ablegation on the part of more fortunate Indians, but simply and solely-the flush system.

Some readers may find the closing section of the book too valuable and sophisticated, in the comparison with the clear observation which has preceded it, but
it is an integral part of the author’s scheme. It is the necessary climax and it has mounted up with triple effect.

“Bakha returns to his father and his wretched bed, thinking now of the Mahatma, now of the machine. His Indian day is over and the next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not in the depth of the sky, a change is at hand.”(29)

In the very opening paragraph of the untouchable, Anand gives a background of the outcastes colony. After giving the details of the mud-walled houses and of the inhabitants of various castes among untouchables, such as, Scavengers, leather-workers, washerman, barbers, water-carriers, grass-cutters and other outcastes, he also describes the physical problems confronting them.

“A book ran near the lane, once with crystal-clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes. The absence of a drainage system had through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive small. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in”.(P.11)

As the concluding sentence amply shows, Anand’s strategy in giving the above details of the unhygienic surroundings of the hero is to draw the reader’s revulsion as well as sympathy over the hero’s fate. From then on, Anand proceeds to show that Bakha’s sense of cleanliness and his dream of leading a life of ‘Fashun’ remain largely intact even in such unhygienic surroundings. It is natural that Bakha considers himself superior to his fellow-outcastes such as, Chota and Ram Charan because they are willing to wallow in dirt and filth while he is not.

Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable depicts graphically the hardships and humiliations that Panchamas suffer. It exposes the ugly deformity of the Hindu society. The novelist does it just by narrating the life of Bakah, and untouchable boy during one day.

Bakha is a son of Lakha, the Jemadar of the sweepers of the town and cantonment. He is 18 years old. He gets up early in the morning and goes to work at dawn. He cleans three rows of latrines several times single-handedly. Yet he remains comparatively clean. Inspite of the reveries that he indulges in, he does his work efficiently and the hard toil makes him very strong. Anand says,
“Each muscle of his body, hard as rock when it came to play, seemed to shine forth like glass, what a dexterous workman!’ the onlooker would have said. And though his job was dirty, he remained comparatively clean.”

Like a devoted doctor of the society, he prevents several infectious diseases from attacking the caste-Hindus by cleaning their latrines and sweeping their roads. Yet the people who enjoy his services never treat him with a little compassion. On the other hand, some of them humiliate and hurt him.

The Panchamas are forced to live away from the village. They cannot use the well in the village as caste-Hindus think that their mere touch pollutes it. So the panchama men and women have to wait at the well for a long time until a caste Hindu is kind enough to draw water from it and pour it into their pots.

Sohini, Bakha’s sister faces the same fate in the novel. She balanced her pitcher on her head and went to and fro her one-roomed home to the steps of the caste-well where she counted on the chance of some gentleman taking pity on her and giving her the water she need (P.24) She and others quarrel among themselves for the chance of getting water and abuse one another using ‘inter-caste recriminations’. None of the caste Hindus who take water from the well feel kind enough to pour water into their pots.

After a long time, Kalinath, the priest who badly needs physical exercise as a remedy for his constipation agrees to get water from the well for the low caste people who assemble there for water. He draws a pail of water with great difficulty. He sees Sohini and feels enchanted by her youthful beauty. He therefore derives others away and pours the water into her pot. Then he orders her to come to his house to clean the courtyard. When she goes to his house, he seeks erotic pleasure from her. Feeling frightened, she screams loudly. He shouts at her and accuses her of polluting his holy home. A crowd of angry caste-Hindus gather there to scold Sohini. At the moment, Bakha arrives while sweeping the streets. He feels furious at the injury and insult but he controls himself. He sends his sister home and the rich Hindus. Since he is not a girl, he is less successful than his sister in collecting food. Bakha returns home after collecting food. He expresses his resentment of the ill-treatment by caste-Hindus. He bitterly says to his father who does not react as he expects him to. He tells Bakha how he has been cured of a serious illness by Bhagwan Das, a local doctor. He accepts the Hindu law of untouchability though he is not happy about it.
This shows how each parent generation internalizes the social hierarchy which it transmits to the next generation psycho culturally. Thus panchmas become their own enemies by taking for granted their inferiority and the superiority of caste-Hindus which are culturally programmed as rightly argued by Srilata Batliwala in her brilliant article, “why do women oppose women”. The oppressed people like Bakha resent and rebel against caste distinctions when they are young. But they yield as they grow old. “This is because the psycho cultural acceptance and observance of caste distinctions by almost all the people prove more powerful than the physical force that the high caste-Hindus may use in preserving them.” (31)

Bakha gets a pair of old breeches from Tommy and a pair of old boots from a soldier. He daydreams that he looks like a civilized white foreigner by wearing the breeches and boots in the ‘fasshun’

In the afternoon he attends the marriage of his friends sister whose higher caste prevents him from marrying her. The love shared by him and his playmates in their friendship dissolves their caste distinctions for the time being. So he, Ram Charan a washerman’s son and chota a leather-worker’s son eat sugar-plums together at the marriage. They plan to play hockey in the evening. Havildar Charat Singh treats Bakha affectionately and presents him a new hockey stick. Bakha forgets his caste and feels happy in his presence.

Bakha and his friends play hockey in the evening. He plays very well and makes a goal. The rival group feels jealous about it and this leads to a quarrel among the players. During the flight, a high-caste little boy falls down and hurts himself. Bakha takes pity on him and lifts him up. The boy’s mother sees it and rushes to the spot. She angrily scolds Bakha for polluting her son. Feeling miserable and frustrated, Bakha returns home. But his father rebukes him for wasting the afternoon and drives him out of the house. Bakha’s cup of sorrow is full and he leaves the house. This exemplifies the plight of the children of lower castes who are deprived of the joys of childhood that the children of higher castes enjoy.

The remaining part of the novel is a kind of epilogue. Bakha feels greatly frustrated and looks for a way to end his agony. He meets colonel Hutchinson, the Salvationalist who offers him a solution for his problem. He is asked to get converted into a Christian to end his caste. Many low caste people have accepted Christianity to attain a respectful status in Indian society. Then he attends a meeting addressed by Mahatma Gandhi who says, “I regard untouchability as the greatest bolt on
Hinduism”.(32) Gandhi calls the untouchables ‘harijans’ the people of God. He considers the ideas of pollution satanic. Bakha feels much encouraged yet disturbed by this. As he walks on, he encounters a third solution.

The poet Iqbal Nath Sarbhar says that, “the untouchables can end their caste by changing their profession as the modern sanitary system will make this possible of all the three solutions, this impresses Bakha the most as Anand himself seems to favour it. Bakha finds great solace in it and feels relieved.”(33)

Anand’s novel Untouchable brings to light the sorrows and sufferings that caste Hindus inflicted on the untouchables and the outcastes- the scavengers, the leather workers, the washerman, the barbers, the water carriers, the grass cutters etc. This novel breathes a strong protest against social injustice meted out to untouchables. With unflinching realism Anand describes a single day in the life of an untouchable, Bakha, in the town of Bulashan. All happenings have been artistically packed in order to create an artistic effect.

Untouchable is based on the theme of ostracization and isolation of untouchables from Hindu society. It was a new and revolutionary theme in novel.

E.M.Forster remarks : “No European, however, sympathetic, could have created the character of Bakha, because he could not have known enough above his troubles. And no untouchable could have written the book; because the world would have been involved in indination and self pity. Anand stands in the ideal position. He has just the right mixture of insight, detachment, and the fact that he has come to fiction though philosophy has given him depth. His hero is no suffering obstruction. Bakha is a real individual, leveable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak, and thoroughly Indian.”(34)

It is a cold morning of an autumn day. Bakha’s father, Lakha, who is old and weak, first of all ill treats him. He calls him “illegally begotten” in the early hours of the morning and asks him to go out to clean latrines. Then Havildar Charat Singh abuses him for not cleaning latrines. He does his work dexterously and skillfully. From the latrines he returns to the cottage but does not get anything to satiate his hunger. His sister Sohini, goes to the well to bring water. She has to wait at the well for long.

The untouchables are not allowed to go up the circular platform of the well because the caste Hindus think that the untouchables touch would pollute water. At
last Pandit Kali Nath, the lustful priest, pours water into Sohini’s pitcher and asks her
to come to the temple to clean his home. Bakha takes tea and a piece of bread.

Bakha, an enthusiastic and optimistic boy, eagerly looks forward to get the gift
of a hockey stick from Charat Singh in the afternoon. His felicity reaches climax
when, with a packet of Jilebis in his hand and the taste of the warm and sweet syrup in
his mouth, he moves about the market. Bakha, whose shadow pollutes a Brahmin,
touches a caste Hindu. He is abused and beaten. All sympathize with the Brahmin. He
has been suffering a series of humiliating experiences right from the morning. A
Hindu shopkeeper throws a packet of Cigarattes at him, the jilebis are thrown at him
like a cricket ball, then he accidently touches a Brahmin. Again a high born lady
throws a piece of bread at him from the top of her house as if he were a dog. These
traumatic experiences upset him.

Bakha reaches the big temple of the town. Being as sweeper his entry is
prohibited in it. He wants to see it and the images of gods and goddesses in it. As he
tries to enter it, the devout priests shout, “polluted, polluted.”

Pandit Kali Nath, whose design to molest Sohini has been frustrated, also
shouts. In a flurry Bakha sees his sorrowful sister Sohini who tells him about Kali
Nath’s attempt to molest her. Bakha is enraged and he wants to take revenge on the
priest. Seeing him in a threatening posture the crowd run helter skelter and the corrupt
priest also runs away. Humiliated, dejected and depressed Bakha returns home and
tells his father, “I want go to the town again. I have done with this job.”

The consciousness of Bakha is totally opposite to the fatalistic approach of his
father, Lakha. Lakha’s reaction to the Pandit attempt to molest Sohini is as follows:

“We can’t do anything. They are our superiors. One word is sufficient against
all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them
and do as they tell us. Some of them are kind.”

Lakha, whom life long Slavery has made completely humble and submissive
tries to calm him by saying that there are some generous souls among the caste
Hindus. Bakha does not relish the wet bread which Rakha has bought from the
barracks. He leaves his cottage and goes to attend the marriage of Ram Charan’s
sister.

He, then goes to collect the hockey stick from Havildar Charat Sing. Soon he
comes back and participates in the hockey match. The burra babu’s son is hurt. Out of
affection he takes the wounded boy to his home. The boys mother, instead of thanking
him, curses him for polluting the boy. Bakha returns home where his father falls on him for coming late and for not cleaning the latrines in the evening.

In utter despair, Bakha leaves his cottage. He mutters, "What a day I have had! Unlucky, inauspicious day!" And he sits nursing his head in his hands, utterly given up to despair. Bakha meets colonel Hutchinson of the local Salvation Army. He suggests that Christianity is the only solution of untouchability but Bakha is not satisfied. The missionary cannot tell him who Christ is.

Mahatma Gandhi, whom Bhaka listens to in a public meeting provides another solution. Gandhi too says that all Indians are equal, and the account he gives of a Brahmin doing sweeper’s work goes straight to the boys’ heart. Hard upon this comes the third solution, put into the mouth of a modernist poet. No good is needed to rescue the untouchables, no vows of self sacrifice and abnegation on the part of more fortunate Indian’s but simply and solely the flush system. Introduce water closets and main drainage throughout India, and all this wicked rubbish about untouchability will disappear. Bakha returns to his father and his wretched bed, thinking now of the Mahatma, now of the Machine.

―His Indian day is over and the next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not the depths of the sky, a change is at hand.‖ (36)

Bakha is only partly the prototypical ‘Untouchable’ for he is also himself, a unique individual, even in some measure an exceptional ‘Untouchable’. The many things that happen to him in the novel could have happened, perhaps they still happen somewhere or other even today.

The narration from first to last is handled with consummate touch of a master. The working of the mind of an untouchable boy is described with rare accuracy and skill. Although the novel has no definite plan and although the action moves slowly the novel remains interesting because the author has put before us the ugly reality of the life of the untouchables. Strangely enough the author has pointed out three possible solutions, without giving preference to anyone of them.

Only the dramatic telescoping the juxtaposition, the linking up, of so many events in the course of hardly more than twelve hours-is Anand’s. There is no doubt that he has drawn upon what he had seen and heard as a boy, for there is a photographic fidelity about the picture that convinces at once, though it also overwhelms us by its cumulative ferocity and force of detail. Life in the town and cantonment the colours and the smells the chants and the noises the flith and the
cruelty the kindness and the humanity the shifting scenes in the temple, the marketplace, the playground-the quiet of the hillside-the sir at public meetings all are evoked with an uncanny accuracy.

‗Untouchable‘ is an unpleasant book as it reveals the worst putrid sore in the social structure of the Hindu society. The novel is good inspite of its being unpleasant. “The influence from all this surely is that the reader, if he asks that a novel should give, in George Eliot’s words, a faithful account of man and things as they have mirrored themselves in his mind, cannot expect all the time to have pleasant books and pleasant characters.”(37)

“Untouchable‘ is a novel with a purpose Anand’s purpose is to analyse the existentialistic structure of the untouchables predicament.”(38)

“The untouchables suffer from the abominable effects of ‘discrimination’ deprivation and a kind of denaturalization of moral and others cherishable values of a civilized society.” The anguish of all untouchables is found in Bakha’s words: “Unlucky! Unlucky day! what have I done to deserve all this?” (39)

The novel is a powerful indictment of the caste system and the writer treats untouchability as a social crime against human dignity by showing the perversion in the caste Hindus. Untouchable “strikes us as the picture of a place, of society, and of certain persons not easily to be forgotten, a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy.”(40)

R.T.Robertson finds in untouchable “the best example we have in commonwealth literature of the archetype of the conflict between society and the individual who is trying to free himself from it.”(41)

For C.D.Narasimhaiah, Bhakha is “a representative untouchable exemplifying the predicament of not only the so-called Hindu untouchables but also of dispossessed men everywhere.”(42)

In addition the social criticism of the novel, other aspects too have been highlighted. H.M.Williams praises the novel for its “lyricism and comedy as well as pathos and vivid naturalistic description.”(43)

K.K.Sharma calls the novel as Anand’s “masterpiece”(44) and Suresh Nath considers it “a great success.” (45)

To conclude, we can say that a portrayed object determines not the beauty or ugliness of a work of art; what matters it its execution and the objective of the artist behind it. The idea of Untouchable had sprouted from the seed of humanism deeply
ingrained in the novelist while its planning and execution was done after Anand himself had undertaken the sweepers work in Gandhi’s ashram in close consultation with the master. When such a nobel intention motivates a work of art, when a great Mahatma directs and supervises it, and when the flawless execution characterizes it, only a perverse mind can see the ugly spots in what to others happen to be the luminous, moon-like beauty of the novel.

The attainment of independence on 15th August 1947 ushered in a golden era in India. Untouchability was legally and constitutionally abolished. Various constitutional measures were adopted to ameliorate the sad predicament of the scheduled castes and tribes. The constitutional safe guards to the outcastes who form the largest segment of Indian society.

Even the benefit of the policy of reservation in jobs has been availed by a privileged class among the scheduled castes and tribes and the poor and the needy among them are still deprived of the fundamental freedoms and justice.

It is sixty years since Anand wrote ‘Untouchable’ and sixty five years since we got Independence. But things have not changed any better and the social deformity of Hindu society has survived all the social reforms and revolutions.

Raja Rao - Internationally known as a novelist and short story writer, Raja Rao is, perhaps, the most brilliant English writer of modern India with an essentially Indian sensibility. He was born in a very old Brahmin family of Mysore in 1909, and graduated from the University of Madras. He went to Europe at the age of twenty, researching in literature, first at the University of Montpellier and at the Sorbonne under Prof. Cazamian. His first collection of short stories Javni, was published in 1930 in France. Returning to India in 1940, Raja Rao spent the war years in India.

Among his other novels, the most poetic novel written by Raja Rao is ‘Kanthapura’. The poetic glamour of Kanthapura is, in the earlier years of Raja Rao, not overshadowed by the whimsical, philosophical, and metaphysical digressions which, brilliant as they are in themselves, definitely dampen the interest of the readers. Raja Rao’s first novel, ‘Kanthapura’, published in 1938, mainly launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1920s to liberate India from the imperialistic hegemony of the British. India’s struggle for independence, with its powerful impact on Indian some critics opine that the novel is not reveal the author's characteristic metaphysical preoccupations, except in a general way. However, as deeper probe into this work reflects Raja Rao’s abiding interest in philosophical themes. The novelist
sympathetically explores the Gandhian values of loving one’s enemies, non-violence and abolition of untouchability. His continuing interest in Vedanta is also discernible.

Raja Rao has always been concerned with his metaphysical quest for truth—a motif which looms large in his later fiction. Hence, it is not surprising if he refers to the impact of Vedanta on some of the character in _Kanthapura_. In the early phase of his life, Raja Rao influenced by the Gandhian thought which was one of the most challenging philosophies of the era. Fascinating as he was by the Gandhian way of living, he spent a few days at Gandhi’s ashram at Sevagram. Raja Rao, who developed an immense love for India after his first visit to France in his twenties, kept himself abreast with the political happenings that were shaping the destiny of India in the pre-independence period. When the Quit India Movement was started by Gandhi in 1942, Raja Rao was “associated with the underground activities of the young socialist leaders.” As a novelist he is contemporary with them in the choice of themes but not in his art as a novelist or in his enchanting prose style.” As a writer, Raja Rao is the “Child of the Gandian Age, and reveals in his work his sensitive awareness of the forces let loose by the Gandian Revolution as also of the thwarting or the steadying pulls of past tradition.”

Raja Rao’s _Kanthapura_ is, however, a remarkable rendering of India’s struggle for independence which affected even the remotest villages in the country. Since he is fascinated by the Indian metaphysical tradition which is devoted to myths, he exalts the Freedom Movement by the use of myths and fables drawn from Indian culture. Mother India, “which is the goddess of wisdom and well-being”, represents the enslaved daughter of Brahmans and therefore the gods must incarnate themselves on earth to work for her freedom. ‘_Kanthapura_’ by Raja Rao is a winter’s tale told by a grand mother of Kanthapura village, and “of an evening, when as the dusk falls, and through the sudden quiet lights leap up in the house and stretching her bedding on the Veranda, a grand-mother might have told you new comers, the sad tale of her village.”

The language put in the mouth of that grand mother is beautifully picturesque, full of the flavor of the earth, the scent of the seasons and realistic dialogue like style of the Indian village in the Mysore state.

‘_Kanthapura_’ is a novel of revolt against the traditional follies of the villagers, the exploitation both local and foreign and the evil habits like drinking. As such it is a
historical document recording the chronicle of national movement. It is a fight for the ideal as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi. The real is not satisfying at all. There are evils existing about the place. However, the novelist does not seek the pure idealism. The social ideas prevail and on them are based the social ideals. It is for the better living of the people. The human reality accepted by the Britishers has been depicted as the central principle of the theme at home.

The theme of the novel lies in the routine of the British rulers. It would result in the improved conditions of the common labourers and the common people in general. The caste system is a great hurdle in the way of the unified social living, and as such it must go. The goodness of Moorthy has a general appeal to the imagination of the people. They rally round him for achieving their goal. They get strength from the goodness. Even a tiger of the village, as he is called, is tamed by the goodness of Moorthy. The theme on the whole is dynamic. It has the side issues as well and they get the deserving weight at the hand of the novelist.

The story of Kanthapura is the story of a typical village in the province of Kara in Mysore. The story has no particular hero or heroine. All the people of the village play their part in the story; so we can say that the main character in our novel is Kanthapura itself with its presiding Goddess Kenchamma, with its Himavathy river, with its superstitions small pox and regular malaria.

Moorthy and Bhatta, a Brahmin who was collecting more and more money, and Lingayya, Ramayya, Subbayya, Chandrayya, Kamalamma, Patel Range Gowda, Post master Suryanarayan and a hosts of other characters play their parts in this novels. Kanthapura portrays the whole drama of Gandhian revolution as enacted in a village in all frenzy and fury. The typical features of real life its mixture of politics and mythology, its seraphic freedom from the taint of science and technology, its ruggedness and even its vulgarity are faithfully reproduced in terms of art.

Kanthapura represents not an isolated village in Mysore but the whole country. It is a rural novel remarkable for its distinctive treatment of thought content, form and expression. In it Rao relates the story of Kanthapura, as south Indian village as it rallies to Mahatma Gandhi’s call of non co-operation. It vividly describes the National Movement in the twenties when countless of villages all over India responded in much the same way. In handling the rural theme the novelist “gives us an insight into have preserved its people against flood, fire, famine and exploitation from within and without-and more than all, that incomparable manner in which
Gandhi tapped the deeply religious and spiritual resources of people living in the remotest parts of India and built up a national movement in a lifetime.

Moorthy is the Gandhi man of the village. He advises people about Swarajya and Gandhi Movement. Then Bade Khan a Mohammedan police man comes to the village but the villagers ignore him. So Bade Khan goes to the ‘Skeffington Coffee Estate’ and lives in a hut on that plantation. The congress movement gradually gathers strength and the villagers take to spinning the Charkha.

Moorthy took up the work of the uplift of the Mahars, the untouchables, and that brings on his head the wrath of the orthodox. The Swami excommunicated Moorthy but he did not care for the Swami.

Moorthy came back to Kanthapura and the whole village started the “Don’t-touch-the government campaign”. The movement spread. The police came and arrested Moorthy at last but the crowd gathered there and there was the first lathi charge. The result was that the congress movement grew all the stronger for repression. The orthodox were spurned and Moorthy was the hero of the day.

In this novel the hero has been fashioned after Mahatma Gandhi. He is a true Gandhian in thought, word and deed, only he does not possess the intellect of the father of the nation. He is a man of average intelligence. He rises by virtue of his being the executor of the programme of Gandhi in the village. He is a good following in the village, they love him a great deal. The pure opposition comes only from the ignorant few of the village. When Moorthy was sentenced to three months imprisonment, the whole afternoon no man left his Veranda, and “not a mosquito moved in all Kanthapura.”

Time passed on and Moorthy came back. “Do you know brothers and sisters, Mahatma has left Sabarmati on a long pilgrimage, the last pilgrimage of his life, he says, with about eighty-two of his followers, who all wear Khadi and do not drink and never tell a lie, and they go with the Mahatma to the Dandi beach to manufacture salt? Day by day we shall pay for the success of his pilgrimage, and we shall pray and fast and pour strength into ourselves, so that when the real fight begins we shall follow in the wake of the Master.”

Then the Mahatma was arrested and a wave of protest over the length breadth of India. Don’t-touch-the Government and the no-tax-payment campaigns started in an absolutely non-violent way. There was a wave of repression by the police but the spirit of liberty could not be crushed by lathi charges or even firing. Women too were
arrested and put miles away from where they had to walk back. There was Satyagraha in front of the toddy booth where the coffee plantation labourers used to come to drink today.

There was a severe lathi charge and the result was that even the coffee plantation labourers joined the villagers. The police used to force the prisoners to salute the government flag but the prisoners would find from somewhere the national flag and salute it. The villagers of Kanthapura had decided not to pay their revenues and the police came there to help the revenue authorities.

The police freely used their lathis and so women ultimately had to run for safety. Ratna, the modern young widow in Kanthapura was also amongst the Satyasgrahis. Then the policemen were selling out the fields of those, who did not pay the taxes, to the businessmen of Bombay. Women led by Ratna were determined to oppose this. “We know the Government auction of lands today, and our men are going to come from the city, hundreds and hundreds of men are going to come from city, for we have decided to hold a “Satyanarayan Puja” and it will be held in this house, and our men will escape from all the policemen the Government can send and all the soldiers the Government can send and yet men will come from the city, and they will come for the ‘Satyanarayan Puja’ and no land will ever be sold, for the government is afraid of us.”

The last scene was the most tragic scene on the Bebbur Mound the Satyagraha procession was carried out. The police inspector stopped the procession was carried out. The police inspector stopped the procession but the procession went on. There were shouts of Vandematram and ‘Inquilab-Zindabad’ and blows of lathi; then somebody waved the national flag in his hand and the police rushed at him but the man rushed through barricades of shiffington Estate, and the procession moved on.

Then came the soldiers with guns. It was a fight for the national flag.

“--------- from behind a tree or stone or bound, we could see before us, there beneath the Bebbur Mound, the white city boys grouped like a plantain grove, and the soldiers shouted, “Disperse or we fire”, but the boys answered, “Brothers we are non-violent.”

A few shots were fired but the crowd moved on and coffee coolies joined together shouting Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai. The soldiers then opened fire. Many were wounded; again the soldiers fired; they attacked women also. Then there was a long
silence. But the crowd had not yet dispersed. Someone hoisted the national flag from the Bebbur Mound.

The soldiers attacked with bayonets. There was a hand to hand fight. Ratna was crying that there should be no violence in the name of Mahatma. Then the flight ended. Moorthy was in prison and the spirit of the people of Kanthapura was not broken but these villagers could not go back and settle down in Kanthapura because the police had confiscated their lands and sold them to the men from Bombay.

The old grandmother ends the story with these words: “Waterfall Venkamma, it appears, has gone to study with here new son-in-law and Concubine Chinna Still remains in Kanthapura to lift her leg to her new customers. I drank three handfuls of Himavathy water, and I said, “protect us Mother!” to Kenchamma and I said, ‘protect us Father’ to the Shiva of the Promontory, and I spat three times to the west and three times to the south, and I threw a palmful of dust at the Sunken Wretch, and I turned away. But to tell you the truth, Mother, my heart beats like a drum.”

K.R.S.Iyengar described, “Such is the sad and simple story of Kanthapura which becomes by the alchemic touch of Raja Rao not merely a ‘Gandhi-Purana’ but historically and authentic saga of the Indian nationalism, invested with the solemn dignity and religiosity of a piece of ancient mythology.”

This is the story of Satyagraha movement lathicharge, and ruined homes. But the old grandmother has narrated this story with realism, irony and humour. Sometimes even rustic vulgarity creeps into her story; but the incidents narrated are vivid and realistic.

The author loads the novel with a significance. The heroic sacrifice of the people was not in vain. “say not the struggle not availeth.” The author has portrayed the picture of this struggle “which is not merely, ‘like life’ but “true to life.” In a ‘pictorial’ method in which the narrator tells his story as he sees it, a picture that stirs the national consciousness. Even the names and nicknames bear the real favour of the rustic ways of speech.

For example there are Temple Rangappa, Front-House Suranna, Waterfall Venkamma, Nose-Scratching Nanjamma, Concubine Chinna names that villagers alone can use in the Mysore state, names that have illustrative appendages applied with earthly humour to give them a distinctive twist, the names that are so reminiscent of Hardy’s Wessex rustics.
The entire novel is the product of the Gandhian political and social philosophy. The programme for the movement is there, and the civil disobedience movement comes to the village of Kanthapura. The people must be freed from the social and political bondage of the foreign rules. The mills of England must be rendered idle, and for this we find the spinning movement inside the village. The method employed for the purpose are those of non-violence. They will not beat any one but they would be beaten by the police.

Mahatma Gandhi viewed himself as an uncompromising opponent of violent methods. Then there is Moorthy’s fast for self-purification which is the replica of the Gandhian method. Women too are made ready to join the movement. Even the children are enthusiastic about the whole thing. The novel gives the concept of the Satyagrahi i.e. one who is ’prepared for but does not anticipate depression. He imputes no evil to the opponent. The fight of a Satyagrahi is the fight for the right and that without hate, because Mahatma Gandhi held that hatred injures the hater, never the hated. The moving spirit of the novel, despite the fight, is that of ‘ahimsa’

C.D. Narasimhaiah maintains that the novel displays the dynamic power of a living religious tradition, for there is a tremendous religious activity in the novel. He observed that “religion seems to sustain the spirits of the people of Kanthapura.”

The villagers are enrolled as members of the Congress in the sanctuary and the oath-taking ceremony is performed before the gods in the sanctum.

Moorthappa invariably asks the recruits to stand before the god and vow, they will never break the law. The members voluntarily promise to spin the yarn, practice ahimsa (non-violence) and seek truth. When Moorthy is arrested, the inhabitants of Kanthapura invoke the goddess to set him free :“The Goddess will never fail us-she will free him from the clutches of the red-man.”

It is in the name of goddess Kenchamma that the people willingly pledge not to drink at the Government managed toddy booths. As the freedom fighters, picketing the toddy trees, are assaulted by the cruel policeman, they turn to Kenchamma Hill to seek strength from the goddess for renewed resistance that is why, they rush forward, though the lathis strike their backs, hands and heads.

When the wounded women with bandages return home, they invoke the gods and goddesses to protect them. As most of the male Satyagrahis are taken to prison and Moorthy is left out, the non-arrest of the Gandhian hero, too is attributed to god : “But Moorthy they would not take, and God left him still with us.” (P.200)
Interestingly enough, whatever success the freedom fighters hope to attain in their struggle against the British is ascribed to the deity they worship. As more freedom fighters arrive from other parts of the country to join the struggle in Kanthapura, the villagers pray to Siva to accept them in the movement. Believing that the soul is immortal and indestructible, the Satyagrahis cheerfully plunge into the Freedom Movement without fear of death. The emphasis on the religious faith of the freedom fighters, who derive inspiration from the Ramayana or the Gita affirms the novelists abiding belief in the eternal values of Indian metaphysics.

Gandhi’s non-violent revolution was an amazing phenomenon for the whole world as it was a “war without violence and battle without hatred.” It was a new technique employed by the politically weak against the imperialistic strong. Moorthy’s assertion that “the purer we are the greater will be our victory” corroborates the Gandhian percept that “good ends can be achieved only by good means.”

Gandhian view also sets the tone of Raja Rao’s novel ‘Kanthapura’, in which the tremors of Gandhi’s influence can be felt more vigorously than in Untouchable. It deal with the powerful impact of Mahatma Gandhi on the villagers of a South Indian Gandhi on the villagers of a South Indian village. The story is narrated by an elderly widow in a very fine way. The manner of her telling the story is full of spontaneity and sweetness, irony and humour suffused with a deep touch of village atmosphere.

Here, the political activities mostly related to Mahatma Gandhi are transcended and described in such a way that they become the part and parcel of Indian age-long myth and legend, history and religion, that is, “the hum-drum becomes the unique, the trivial becomes the heroic, and the hectic excitement of a day becomes a permanent communal possession----the heroes and heroines of epics jostle with historic personalities and time past and time present are both projected into time future.”

Thus, Kanthapura, the tour de force, explicates the explicit attitude of Mahatma Gandhi, whose universal theory of truth and non-violence embalmed the wound of the poor and the deserted Indians. It tourniquetted the bleeding of the age-long suppression and oppression the Indians had to suffer sometimes on cause and sometimes without any cause M.K.Naik aptly holds the view: “Kanthapura is, thus, a brilliant attempt to probe the depths to which the nationalistic urge penetrated,
showing how, even in the remote villages, the new upsurge fused completely with traditional religious faiths, thus, rediscovering the Indian soul.”

In ‘Kanthapura’ Raja Rao has used the ‘free form’ and added as new dimension of sensibility recognizably Indian and contemporaneous. Raja Rao is aware of the need to find a creative approximation of the western novel form to the Indian experience. He achieves the fusion of themes and form at once traditional and experimental. The interest of the novel lies in this fusion.

As a child of the Gandhian age, Raja Rao exploits the rich resources of Indian past in relation to the complex present in Kanthapura. The novel narrates how the Congress struggle for Independence came to the small South Indian Village, Kanthapura. Gandhian spirit shapes the events and incidents of the novel.

A.V.Krishna Rao aptly points out: “Raja Rao has made an effective literary transcript of the Gandhian myth by artistically attuning the reality of his tale to the poetry of truth and its myriad miraculous transformations in the prism of historical consciousness.”

Raja Rao narrates the story of Kanthapura as a veritable Sthala-Purana--- a legendary history of the Indian life in the Pre-Independence era. Writing the novel during the Gandian revolution, he projected his vision into an undefined future when the story of the present will become a legendary history. The events are given the colour of a puranic myth. Every village in India lends itself to be described with an air of mystical past.

Raja Rao Opines: “There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich Sthala-Purana or legendary history of its own. Some god or god like hero has passed by the village-Rama might have rested under this pipal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present, and the gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grandmother always bright. One such story from the contemporary annals of my village I have tried to tell.”

Gandhi’s weapons are the same as Rama had used; truth, non-violence and self-control, and war was to be resorted to only if it was inevitable. Gandhi’s greatest gift to the world is his message of truth and non-violence twin principles for the achievement of freedom and justice. For him, Love, Truth and Non-violence are synonymous. ‘There is but one force in life and that is truth, and there is ------- but
one God in life and that is the god of all.’ Thus, in Kanthapura “the past mingles with present and gods mingle with men.”

Raja Rao has fused myth and reality artistically in Kanthapura. By the use of various myths, legends and rituals, he has raised the struggle for political freedom from its topical limitations to the higher planes of eternal struggle between Good and Evil. Raja Rao’s use of legends to mythologize the modern situation and his narrative technique of the Indian oral tradition gain for him the position of an innovator in Indian English fiction.

The theme of Kanthapura may be summed up as ‘Gandhi and our village’, but the style of narration makes the book more a Gandhi Purana than a piece of mere fiction. The theme of Kanthapura is reminiscent of a tug of war between good and evil of supremacy and slavery, of exploitation and assertion. The followers of the Mahatma represent mankind in its poignant struggle against the alien rulers who enslaved the country through guile and deceit.

The Freedom Movement launched by Moorthy in the village makes good converts for the cause. But some of them ridicule the good man. No great task is done in smooth manner. There are always some detractors who do not relish the radical move or the spirit of revolution. Gandhi himself has observed in this connection:

“Every good movement passes through five stages: ‘indifference, ridicule, abuse, repression and respect.”

But Moorthy exercises a restraint against the irresponsible talk against his work. He does not care for Bhatta or Waterfall Venkamma. He has the Gandhian Fearlessness about him. He takes real pleasure in the service of the people. Gandhiji observes: “Service can have no meaning unless one takes pleasure in it. When it is done for show or for fear of public opinion, it stunts the man and crushes his spirit.”

Moorthy, the hero in the novel possesses all the virtues of leadership; self-sacrifice, fearlessness, courage and endurance. His ideal evidently is Gandhi. Another person Sankar follows Moorthy. It shows that the virtue breeds faster and in a noble manner than vice.

The Freedom Movement against the exploitation of the Britishers are conceived by Mahatma Gandhi has its origin in his own idea. “The Economics that permits one country to prey upon another is immoral.” It is why colonialism has been condemned; and imperialism too comes under hammering from the wise and the liberal nation. The ideal of the Swadesh, the removal of untouchability, the movement
against toddy drinking, the wearing and spinning of Khadi etc. stem from Gandhism, Kanthapura becomes an ideal microcosm for all this.

Moorthy replaces Mahatma Gandhi in the village. The life of purity and the real sunshine breaking forth through the clouds sheds its radiance on the people and the places. If the life is magnified it would become Ramrajya of the dream of Mahatmas Gandhi ensuring equal rights for the prince and the pauper alike Moorthy like Gandhi is after social justice.

Charkha comes to the village of Kanthapura, “Charkha stands not for the greatest good of all”. Moorthy teaches spinning to the people of the village. In spinning lies the seed of Gandhian revolution.

The Gandhian philosophy and the programme of the Freedom Movement launched by the Mahatmas from the spirit of the life of Kanthapura. The novel thus has the home-spun spirit of the people despite the cleavage between the Brahmins and the Pariahs. It is a concentrated effort of Raja Rao. The theme, no doubt, limits the dimensions of the canvas and makes the stuff of a specific nature.

In this way Kanthapura shows in miniature the struggle—the political struggle-led by Mahatma Gandhi against the British Raj with the weapons of Truth, Non-violence and Non-co-operation.
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