CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS
Conclusions

Literature cannot be divorced from life either in the process of creation or in the process of appreciation. Literature in general, particularly novel, is a product of the general climate of thought and feelings, the *weltanschauungen* which comprise economic, political, social and ideological components. There is always a close interdependence between literature and changing social life, the nexus being the authorial consciousness, the world-vision, which informs the work. But the consciousness of the author is the consciousness of the group in which he lives. Literature thus not only reflects the materiality of life but mediates the consciousness of the group, crystallizing into the author's world vision, which is the real shaping spirit. However, the complex of social attitudes presented, or even the world view mediated, is based on the structuration of empirical reality, the world of facts, the material life presented in the work. Hence an assessment of factuality becomes important in a critical understanding of the author and his work.

The Indian novel in English has from its very beginning reflected socio-cultural changes and revealed its social concern. The British conquest of India
imposed on its autarchic, still life a dynamics of change and within a century the country underwent a radical transformation. Increasing rural poverty, affluence of the urban areas and moral decadence, creation of new social classes and tensions arising out of the process, modernization of life and values, political upheavals and social reforms leading to conflicts within castes, classes, families and generations were some of the features of the social change which found adequate expression in the Indian novel in English.

From the thematic point of view the Indian novel can be divided into two types: 1) the novel mediating the traditional values and 2) the novel embodying the spirit of reform. The novel initially inspired by liberal thought soon met its dialectical opposition in a powerful assertion of national identity which confused the author in the initial stage (e.g. R.C. Dutt) but soon became formidable and aggressive (e.g. Raja Rao). Facing the complexities of life the novel became increasingly committed to certain values and certain view of life. Romantic realism of R.C. Dutt, progressive sentimentalism of Venkataramani are soon replaced by socialist humanism of Mulk Raj Anand, and revivalism of Raja Rao. R.K. Narayan with his creative detachment defends
the status quo disapproving of change.

The novels and the authors examined so far are motivated by a definite world view rooted in the middle class consciousness. As a result the writers excepting Anand are unable to transcend the world of middle class experience and fail to understand the potentialities of social change. Mulk Raj Anand adopts the mode of critical realism and is disputably conscious of the dynamics of social transformation but remains as an outsider. Nareyan disbelieves in change, presents a vision of life based on traditional values and fails to add anything new. Raja Rao in his desperate attachment to the past ignores the modern predicament and has nothing new to offer. The novel thus on a moral level shows its inability to absorb meaningfully the contradictory experiences lived at the level of lower classes or rural life. Though rich in ideology the novel lacks a forward looking stance. The ability to absorb wider experiences enriches the regional novel and makes it perennially fresh in its inspiration, vitalizing creative expression. Though rich in presentation of the changing realities of life and its commitment to ideological consciousness, the Indian novel in English fails to understand the predicament of man in modern India and the totality of
the social problem. Instead of grappling with the reality, the author often avoids it or escapes into fantasies of the future, myths of the past or takes refuge in the status quo.

There is an inevitable conflation between the mental structure of the author and the structure in the fiction forming structural homology. These structures are essentially the mediation of authorial ideology or authorial consciousness. The novel from Raj Mohan's *Wife to Comrade Kirillov* or *Man Eater of Malgudi* is essentially a mediation of middleclass consciousness, incapable of transgressing the class view of the world. This has been the story of the Indian novel, although, in Marathi the Dalit literature is on the point of achieving a break-through by presenting an altogether original world view expressed in original forms and refreshing language. Literature is part of the hegemony in so far as it is committed without being aware of its own class view. Only a counter hegemony or an alternate hegemony projecting new aspirations in new forms can vitalise the Indian novel as also the Indian novel in English.