CHAPTER TWO

JOSEPH WAYNE AND MOORTHY: TWO ASPIRANTS FOR SELF-REALIZATION

The Indian philosophical system outlined in the first chapter has influenced and shaped the personality of the two great writers, one from the West and the other from the East, right from the formative years of their writing career. In this chapter, two early novels of the writers, *To a God Unknown* (1933) by John Steinbeck and *Kanthapura* (1938) by Raja Rao are taken up for a comparative study in order to show how the main characters go through, in a steady progression, the four stages of man's life as outlined in the Indian philosophical system. Indian readers are pleasantly delighted when they find not merely echoes but overt references to Indian thought in Steinbeck's works. The philosophical base of Steinbeck's noteworthy works - *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *Cannery Row* (1945), *To a God Unknown* (1933) - has many strands similar to the Indian philosophical systems and the Indian view of life.

We come from a source unknown and again go back to a source unknown after filling the gap between birth and death, otherwise known as one's lifetime. The key Sanskrit phrase *tat*
*tvam asi* meaning 'that thou art' emphasizes the invisible connection between the human soul and the Soul unknown. Sankara's Advaita philosophy highlights this fundamental connection, rather the identity between the *Brahman* (the Supreme Absolute) and the *Atman* (the Self). In other words, the *Brahman* or the deeper eternal self is immanent in all human beings, the union of the one with the other is nothing but identity which "the sages call *nirvana*" (Hiriyanna 359). In Dowson's opinion, all the six schools of Hindu philosophy subscribe to the view that the absorption of the individual soul into the Supreme Soul or the identification of the *Brahman* with the *Atman* is Self-Realization which leads to eternal bliss (82).

The nature and purpose of life in regard to the characters, Moorthy of *Kanthapura* and Joseph of *To a God Unknown* will be the focus of attention in this chapter. Raja Rao wrote *Kanthapura* in 1938 when he was at the threshold of his writing career. The spirit of freedom for the Indian masses dominated the political and social scene in the pre-independence India. In tune with the time, the early phase of Indian freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi provides the setting to the novel. The liberation of India from the clutches of the British was the sole aim of all right-thinking people. Gandhiji considered political freedom as the destination of a pilgrimage. Religion, the manifestation of the
spiritual and politics, the temporal matrices, interacted in the Ghandhian way of struggle. The very concepts of Truth and Non-violence depend on, and interact with, the nature of meaningful life for an individual to realize the goal of freedom. The external realization of Indian freedom at the macro level has a parallel to the internal realization of Moorthy at the micro level. Moorthy was born as anybody else in the village, but he made up his mind to stand apart by bringing into play the quest for both the physical realization of Indian freedom and the spiritual realization within his personality.

The novel presents a graphic description of village life in South India and the village Kanthapura may well be regarded as a microcosm of India (Srivastava 40) and by extension, of the world. If a man is born to live and die like an animal without any purpose worth remembering, then he dies unacknowledged and unknown to the people around him. When the same man has a purpose in his life and faces all the challenges that mark the three progressive intermediary stages of Kama, Artha, and Dharma, all these three stages in turn prepare him to push him on to the most important purpose of his life, Self-Realization otherwise known as Moksha.

Moorthy of Kanthapura can be placed in the Indian philosophical system and be juxtaposed with Joseph Wayne of To a God Unknown. Though Steinbeck hails from the West and is
brought up on the tenets of Christianity, his view of life fits in the Indian Philosophical system. Like Moorthy, Joseph too exhibits the nature of his life and eventually reaches the point of looking ‘inward’ in the evening of his life. Two different settings, one from the East and the other from the West, have many parallels in terms of their aspirations, struggles and spiritual successes.

Steinbeck has constructed the novel *To a God Unknown* on the strong foundation of the Advaita philosophy. It is evident from the very title and his assiduous revisions that finally boiled down to the present title. Steinbeck himself says that the revisions were necessitated by the shifts in thematic emphasis as well as the meaning of the novel (Steinbeck and Wallesten 50) He throws further light on the choice of the title in a letter to a friend: “The title will be To a God Unknown. The transposition in words is necessary to a change in meaning. The unknown in this case meaning ‘unexplored.’ This is taken from the Vedic hymns. I want no confusion with the unknown God of St. Paul” (67).

*To a God Unknown* opens with Joseph Wayne living on a farm near Pittsford, in Vermont. His elder brothers Thomas and Burton are married and his younger brother Benjamin, known as ‘Benjy’, will be married when spring comes. Joseph feels “there won’t be enough land now. I have a hunger for land of my own,”
he tells his father (TGU 2). Benjy has never been dependable. The old Wayne could see something more in Joseph than in his brothers. To him, Joseph is "more sure and inward" and so he has always intended his blessings for Joseph. He expects Joseph to take his own place in the family hierarchy (TGU 2).

Permitting Joseph to go to California for homesteading, the old father blesses him in the traditional manner. In the words of Lisca, "Although he is not the eldest son, it is Joseph who receives the patriarchal blessing, and in the old manner placing his hand between his father's thighs" (Wide World 43). We may regard this as a sort of spiritual guidance. After offering his benediction, the old man says that he will go with Joseph in a year or two. If Joseph loses a cow, the old man could help him to find her, "being up in the air" and he "could see things far away" (TGU 3). That Joseph leaves Pittsford in search of new land to farm is a condition of isolation from the collective membership - from dependence to independence and his own journey of life begins. To a God Unknown easily evidences Steinbeck's view of man as a religious creature, but more important in the novel is the nature of the individual's search for an answer to the question, "Who is the God to Whom we shall offer our sacrifice" (Marks 36).

1 Steinbeck John To a God Unknown Harmondsworth Penguin Books Ltd 1979 Subsequent references to this source will be provided in the body of the text with an abbreviation of the title followed by page number
Everybody is dependent on parents or somebody until their youthhood in the normal course of life. However, when the time comes everybody ought to stand on his own, by delivering himself of a state of dependence towards that of independence. This separation marks physical detachment or liberation and a person's real journey of life towards the ultimate spiritual liberation begins here, of course, only when that individual has gone through a period of yearning for spiritual goals. At the same time, Hinduism claims that all human beings born in this world may not aspire to a spiritual goal unless their previous births had prepared them for it.

As the collective wisdom of Indian sages and seers puts it, a person in this mundane atmosphere has to push himself through the intermediary stages of Kama, Artha and Dharma before he reaches the final and much coveted goal of Self-Realization; so the stage is all set for Joseph to make this pursuit of Self-Realization possible. As every youth does, he also wants to be successful in the material world and begins his journey to a place where it is realizable, of course, with the blessings of his father. The father figure assumes the role of a "Guru" (spiritual teacher) here and the Guru continues to be with him in absentia also.

Before Joseph could settle down in the Nuestra Senora Valley in California, he has been wavering, and the "strong material
memories of his youth disturbed him, but fortunately his father's blessing had cut him off" (TGU 3). His indecisiveness blows over as soon as he arrives in the lush valley and his feeling for the land "begins to take on a symbolic meaning" (Lisca, Wide World 44). The journey of Joseph from his native place begins as a physical one and slowly it begins to get transformed into a spiritual one. However, the process of transformation is long, for it involves a series of challenges that one has to overcome. At Nuestra Senora, he has recorded his homestead. During his ride towards the land, "he could never lose the feeling for the land" (TGU 5). He feels that this "land might possess all of him if he were not careful. To combat the land a little, he thought of his father, of the calm and peace, the strength and eternal rightness of his father, and then in his thought the difference ended, he knew that there was no quarrel, for his father and this new land were one" (TGU 5).

In To a God Unknown, as Ferrell says, "Steinbeck's central character was Joseph Wayne. The land was as central a character to the novel as was Joseph Wayne" (69). In fact, the relationship between Joseph Wayne and the land acquires new dimensions. Joseph feels that his body is filled with the hot fluid of love. He is in love with his newly acquired land and a kind of inexplicable and mysterious kinship blooms between them, as his age would have it now, he even feels like copulating with the land. The temporal body
quenches its physical thirst, the stage of *Karma* has set in, and such a physical gratification holds Joseph tight now.

He considers everything as an extension of his being. “This is mine,” he says simply. There is pity in him for the grass and the flowers; he feels that the trees are his children and the land his child that he “must take care of it.” “For a moment, the land has been his wife. His fingers gripped the wet grass and tore it out, and gripped again. His thighs beat heavily on the earth” (TGU 8). This symbolic copulation with the earth marks his becoming part of the soil, which is a symbol of eternity. “Joseph Wayne’s love of land is at once practical, religious and sexual” (Ferrell 69).

Joseph draws a parallel with Moorthy of *Kanthapura*. Moorthy was born in the remote village of Kanthapura, of orthodox Brahmin parents. His widowed mother Narasamma “was a pious old woman, tall and thin, and her big broad ash-marks gave her such an air of ascetic holiness” (KP 46-47). Moorthy, being the youngest among her children, was so brilliant in school, and he was so deferential in his ways, his mother thought that he, with his looks and his intelligence, should one day be a Sub-Collector at least. He has a mother figure as his ‘Guru’. He strives to realize his
mother’s ambition. He therefore leaves his native place in search of intellectual knowledge and material comfort. Many parents of grown-up daughters woo him with their daughters’ horoscopes. However, Moorthy has already set his eyes on collegiate education and his higher qualification and the status he is likely to get after employment will have opened up ways for a richer girl as his partner in life. Perhaps motivated by this material impulse, he joins a college in the nearby city.

His departure from his mother and others in the village marks his first deliverance from dependence towards independence. As any youth of his age, he sets material elevation as his immediate goal and that shows his love for money, status and all other appendages of earthly life. The stages of Kama and Artha simultaneously operate upon Moorthy and bring him under a spell. The spell is short-lived in the case of Moorthy and soon the Mahatma in a vision initiates him into spirituality.

In his vision, Moorthy is standing beside the Mahatma in whose speech, he felt, “There is in it something of the silent communion of the ancient books” (KP 47-48). The Mahatma, meaning ‘great soul’, says “There is but one force in life and that is Truth, and there is but one love in life and that is the love of mankind, and there is one God in life, and that is the God of all” (KP 48). Moorthy is sitting beside the platform, his head in his
hands, tears well up in his eyes, and he weeps softly, and with weeping, peace descends upon him. Gandhiji’s speech has inculcated the seeds of transformation in Moorthy’s mind. He looks at the sandal and the feet of the Mahatma and says to him further, “That is my place” (KP 48). To overcome the first two objects of life Kama and Artha, he needs the guidance of a spiritual Guru. His reaction ‘That is my place’ denotes Moorthy’s acceptance of Gandhiji as his guide and Guru for attaining his ultimate goal, i.e., Salvation or Moksha.

Falling at the feet of the Mahatma, he declares, “I am your slave” (KP 49) In addition, he says that he is ready to execute any command of the Mahatma. The Mahatma goes on to say, “I give no commands save to seek Truth” (KP 49). He advises Moorthy to give up his foreign clothes, foreign books and foreign education and desires him to toil among the dumb millions of his country. The Mahatma pats him on the back, a kind of benediction (similar to that of the old Wayne to his son Joseph Wayne), and through that touch is revealed to Moorthy as “the day is revealed to the night, the sheathless being of his soul” (KP 49) and Moorthy draws away and as it were with shut eyes, gropes his way through the crowd to the bank of the river symbolic of the ever-flowing eternity.

We consider water a symbol of purification. Hence, his movement toward the riverbank seems to highlight his washing his
hands of his attachment to the illusory goals of life. He wanders about the fields, lanes, and canals. When Moorthy comes back to college that evening, he throws his foreign books and foreign clothes in the bonfire and walks out “a Gandhi man” (KP 49). This is the culmination of his spiritual initiation. The bonfire destroys not only his foreign clothes and foreign books but also his attachments and ephemeral pleasures enabling him to obtain eternal bliss. In his childhood, on the banks of the river Himavathy, when his mother was washing, Moorthy remembered the puranic Prahlad, who had said that Hari that is, God was everywhere. In his meditation, he had a vision of God. Later, he told his mother, “I have seen Hari” (KP 91). Even as a child, Moorthy had the spark of spiritualism in him. Now at the right time, it has emerged and facilitated him to have “a holy vision” of the Mahatma (KP 91).

Joseph’s giving up of his ancestral farm at Pittsford in Vermont to his brothers and leaving for California to have a land of his own itself is a sort of sacrifice on the physical plane; similarly, being a brilliant student, had Moorthy pursued his higher education he would have become a Sub-Collector and led a princely life. However, in response to Gandhi’s call, he gives up his studies to fight for the freedom of his motherland. His economic status assures him of a comfortable life free from the oppression of the foreign rulers. Only the poor and the downtrodden suffer under the
British rule. The affluent and the upper strata of society were in the favored lot of the rulers. However, though a member of the upper class, Moorhty identifies himself with the motherland and her suffering masses at the lower strata of society after his holy vision of the Mahatma and his divine message, and he makes a sacrifice by giving up his studies.

Initially, both the protagonists, Joseph and Moorthy use the lower physical plane as springboard to reach the higher spiritual plane. Their outward projection is always deep-rooted in a kind of consciousness trying to elevate itself to the higher reaches of the Unknown. The physical means help them to go ahead progressively on the onward march and once the means have served the purpose of leading them to Self-Realization, they lose their interest in the material society and start willingly on a more meaningful journey towards the inevitable and inescapable reunion with the Absolute.

In the first stage, they try to establish a relationship with the physical and the physically experienceable. The first stage ends in Joseph’s initiation into spirituality with the blessings of his father carried fervently in the heart. Joseph becomes successful in establishing a homestead at Nuestra Senora in Central California. His “hunger for the land” (TGU 3) of his own materialized at once. The irony underlying the expression, ‘the land of his own’ reveals the fact that the very land of physical reality and seemingly
appropriated possession becomes a ‘maya’ (illusion) from which he will be ultimately released through his self-sacrifice. One cannot ignore the physical for the sake of the spiritual and conversely the physical complements the spiritual. That Joseph loves the land so intensely is evident from his symbolic copulation with it. Hence, he becomes inseparable from it. He also believes that “his father and the new land were one” (TGU 5).

After his symbolic copulation with the soil, Joseph realizes that he must channel his demonic sexual energy into a socially acceptable symbol. He feels that he needs a wife, for otherwise it will be too lonely in the valley. Thus, his desire for land and a wife reveals that he passes through the first two objects of life: Kama and Artha. Material possession and conjugal love fulfill physical and emotional needs. However, one of the immediate needs is establishing order and building a house on the farm. He builds his house near a giant oak tree, which stretches its protecting arm over the roof. Soon, a letter from Burton reveals the death of his father whose last wish was to “see Joseph’s new land but there was no sadness in him [Joseph]” (TGU 16). He experiences a feeling of joy and welcome. “He heard the sounds come back to the land.” The great oak tree stirs to life. When Joseph looks at the tree, his eyes shine with recognition and understanding, “for his father’s strong and simple being, which had dwelt in his youth like
a cloud of peace, had entered the tree" (TGU 17). He talks to the tree softly, "I'm glad you've come, sir. I didn't know until now how lonely I have been for you" (TGU 17). The tree stirs as if it were responding. He feels that his father's spirit is staying in the tree. "He stood up, walked to the old tree, and kissed its bark" (TGU 17). He is not sorry about his father's death, for he says, "because my father is here" (TGU 17). He tells Juanito, "My father is in the tree. My father is that tree." He says further, "this land is full of ghosts [which] are weak shadows of reality" (TGU 17). This is akin to the Hindu belief of worshipping the dead and idol-worship. Juanito also declares: "the earth is our mother, and how everything that lives has life from the mother and goes back into the mother" (TGU 18).

The giant oak tree, Joseph feels, thus symbolizes his dead father and is a faithful guide and companion in shaping his character. While the physical needs (except his marriage which will be solemnized after the arrival of his brothers and their families) are being taken care of, the spiritual spark in Joseph grows into wide configuration simultaneously with the evolution of his attachment to the tree. He has a feeling for community, which marks his third object of dharma, calls his brothers to come and join him at the farm. He informs them, "We'll make a new community here, if you'll come" (TGU 18). Through the character of
Joseph, Steinbeck "portrays the growth of an individual from narrow egoism to gradual stages of expanding altruism. What started with Joseph Wayne as an individual dream to try to buy a land of his own, finally evolves into a dream of community of which he offers himself as a supreme sacrifice" towards the end of novel (Prabhakar 84-5). Joseph thus moves from selfishness to selflessness, from 'I' to 'We'.

Likewise, such seeds of transformation are sown in Moorthy after his spiritual contact with the Mahatma in his holy vision. The motives of Kama and Artha have died down and Dharma has taken their place. He becomes a self-effacing personality and moves from the ego-centric level to an altruistic level. He does not want to live for himself alone any more and strives to uphold the Dharma of universal welfare. He places the interest of all his fellow beings in his motherland as his own and takes every possible step to deliver them from the shackles of foreign rule, thereby making India a free land. To achieve this, he follows the Gandhian principles of Dharma, Non-violence, and Truth. His self-sacrifice and fraternity pave the way not only for the nation's freedom but also for his soul's freedom from the earthly bondage. In other words, self-sacrifice is the last stepping-stone before Self-Realization and Moorthy now stands on this stage awaiting total transformation.
Moorthy is known as 'Corner-House Moorthy' and 'Moorthaappa' (respectful address for Moorthy). After discontinuing his studies, he returns to his native village of Kanthapura and is completely detached from materialistic life. He "had gone through life like a noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent and brahminic, a very prince" (KP 6). Now he is a transformed man - a devout follower of Gandhi.

Like Joseph, who identifies himself with the Mother Earth, Moorthy identifies himself with the Mother Land. Moorthy's return to the village and the causes for it shock his mother Narasamma, who falls on the floor and begins to weep and cry saying that she will never look upon Moorthy's face again. Then she consoles herself saying that her son will at least stay with her looking after his hereditary lands (27 acres of wet land and 34 acres of dry land, a cardamom garden, a mangrove forest of twenty five trees, and a small coffee plantation) and get married to a girl befitting his status. Moorthy does not want to marry, but his mother fears that Moorthy, "a grown-up boy," if he does not marry now, "will take to evil ways" (KP 50). Moorthy assures his mother: "I swear upon my holy thread I shall keep pure and noble and will bring no evil to my ancestor" (KP 50). Moorthy exudes selflessness and rises above the physical plane.
Joseph, after establishing order on the farm, feels the need for marriage to cast off loneliness, whereas Moorthy, not so lonely as Joseph, vows to be a celibate. He decides to devote all his time and energy to organizing the Congress Party along with the economic development of his villagers. The freedom struggle, which has been unheard of hitherto in the village of Kanthapura, becomes a focal point after Moorthy's return from college for good. Though Moorthy belongs to an orthodox family, he knows that Gandhism, which is a substitute for Truth and *Ahimsa* (non-violence), transcends all barriers that block equality, fraternity and liberty of his fellow beings. The caste system was deep-rooted in the villages. With a feeling of brotherhood, Moorthy mingles with people irrespective of their caste and social status. He preaches the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and appeals to them to join the Congress Party. Even the illiterate pariah men and women become members of the Congress Party. They all say, "We know Moorthy had been to the city and he knew of things we did not know. And yet he was as honest as an elephant" (*KP* 12-13). Moorthy collects one rupee each from the villagers for celebrating Ganapati's Festival, Rama Navami, Krishna Jayanthi etc. In Moore's opinion, "Kanthapura shows Rao's intense preoccupation with Indian religiousness - the permeation of religion through society at all
levels" (95). Festivals and the rites and ceremonies connected with
religion foster brotherhood. For uniting the people of India,
Moorthy’s spiritual ‘Guru’ Mahatma Gandhi also used religion as an
instrument, for Gandhi knew that “Religion is not only the way to
God, but also the way to man” (Radhakrishnan Present Crisis 30).

Like Gandhi, Moorthy also spiritualizes politics. Religious
festivities and rituals are as inevitable as breathing for Indians in
general and the villagers in particular. In the words of
Radhakrishnan, “All religions require us to look upon life as an
opportunity for Self-Realization” (Present Crisis 15). Moorthy, after
his holy vision which is his spiritual initiation, without any
attachment, preaches the Gospel of the Mahatma—Truth and
Non-violence, the paramount ideals of Gandhism. The political
struggle launched by Moorthy in his native village is to serve many
purposes, the most important of which is the religious
reawakening, for the goal of life is communion with the Supreme
“The author of the Fourth Gospel makes Jesus say ‘I am the Truth’
[which is similar to the Vedic dictum ‘Tat tvam asi’, meaning ‘that
art thou’]. .. The religion of truth is based on spiritual realization”
(Radhakrishnan Present Crisis 57).

Moorthy, in tune with the Gandhian principles and the
ideology of the Congress Party, is for the abolition of the caste
system, widow-remarriage, and many other reforms for uplifting
the poor. He treats the pariahs or outcastes, as his equals. Orthodox Brahmins like Waterfall Venkamma, who has a grudge against Moorthy for not having married her grand daughter, and Bhatta, a priest-turned money-lender and Zamindar, "the symbol of usury and false orthodoxy and low cunning" (Iyengar 392), vehemently oppose reforms and revolutionary changes which might upset the existing social system. They believe that Moorthy and others in the Congress party "pollute the world" (KP 13). Moorthy collects money in his "ascetic bowl" (KP 15) for various organizational purposes. He believes in the Vedic dictum Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, meaning 'The whole world is my home', treats the villagers as belonging to one family, unites them, and establishes order in the village.

Like Moorthy, Joseph is also surrounded by some people who are ignorant of the greater things in life and behave like animals. Thomas, Joseph's eldest brother is "too much an animal himself to be sentimental" (TGU 19). Though he understands animals, he neither understands nor trusts human beings very much. He establishes a "strong kinship" with animals and is satisfied with the immediate pleasures of life (TGU 19).

Joseph's second brother Burton's religious fanaticism blinds him and as a result, he fails to see things around him in proper perspective. This shows his selfishness unduly supported by his
blind adherence to his religion. He lacks love and understanding in his dealings with people outside his religious boundaries. His approach to life is close-ended and his vision narrow, not based on dharma. This confirms that he is miles away from a spiritual enlightenment leading to Self-Realization. Thus, his apparent over-enthusiasm in terms of religion does not put him on the path to salvation. Burton is an evil force that tries to wean Joseph away from the influence of the tree of life. He thwarts Joseph's readiness to realize a spiritual union.

Joseph's younger brother Benjamin is dissolute and undependable. In his drunken mood, he has seduced the women who pitied him. He is the only wayward young man on the ranch. Benjy, short for Benjamin, leads an animal life in the garb of a human being and represents the degeneration of morality in modern life. He has no control over his senses and is devoid of the primary qualification to have an experience of spirituality at any level.

Thomas's wife Rama is a strict disciplinarian within the four walls of her homestead and her world circumscribes her husband and her children and she seems unconcerned with all that happens outside her domestic limits. Despite being a good wife and mother, she is an ordinary woman bound by the domestic obligations of earthly life.
Harriet, Burrton's wife, is fully under the control of her narrow-minded husband. Burton expects her to dance to his tunes. He usually sits beside her and ceaselessly prays until her mouth grows firm again and stops babbling. Jennie, Benjamin's young wife struggles hard to keep her wayward husband from hurt. Her prayer at night is that her husband might not fall and get hurt. She helplessly watches her husband's incorrigibly shameless behavior and lacks spiritual strength.

The people around Joseph are not as motivated as himself in realizing the greatness of final spiritual deliverance through Self-Realization. There is no denying the fact that there has been an eternal conflict between Good and Evil from time immemorial. When one tries to uphold Dharma in all possible ways, one has to face the forces of evil and struggle to vanquish them at last. Dharma suffers for some time but reigns supreme forever. Both Joseph and Moorthy are not an exception to this universal phenomenon. They are made to stoop initially by their respective environments but they conquer at last.

The path of Dharma accelerates the phase of Joseph's movement from selfishness to selflessness. That Joseph is altruistic is evident from his passion for fertility, which, according to him, grows strong. All things about him are fertile: the soil, the cattle and the people. All these derive their source from Joseph, who is
the root of their fertility. His desire is that all things about him should grow, conceive and multiply. In his view, barrenness is an intolerable and unforgivable sin. He considers a pregnant creature holy, for he wants the land to swarm with life. Existence must go on non-stop so that spirituality descends and manifests in certain human beings as a guiding force to humanity even when living.

There are two settings in To a God Unknown - the focal points around which all activities take place. They are the giant oak tree at the center of the farm and the moss-covered rock near the open glade in the pine grove. All these have ritualistic association at the physical level leading to the spiritual and moral levels. The divinity and sanctity of the place is indelibly imprinted in Joseph’s mind and he tells his brother Thomas, “When we have a need, we’ll go back again and be fed” (TGU 30). After courting Elizabeth, a school teacher, whom he is going to marry soon, Joseph wants to go to this place to sit by the rock and stroke the soft moss on it. He thinks, “It would be a place to run to, away from pain or sorrow or disappointment or fear there’s need to lose some plaguing thing, that will be the place to go” (TGU 39). This pine grove appears to Joseph as a shrine at which he can get salvation and freedom from the temporal frame. There is an aura of sacredness around that place enhancing the spiritual aspects of divinity, descending and manifesting in rocks and trees. Joseph’s spiritual strength lies in
that hallowed spot and he has identified it as a place of self-sacrifice and Self-Realization. He remembers that peace reigns in the glade.

Even before her marriage Joseph, Elizabeth finds some remedy for her homesickness in that place. Joseph, who believes that the oak tree is his father, allows Elizabeth to sit in the crotch of the tree. He tells her that the tree loves her. Probably, Joseph has shown his bride to the tree to get the approval and blessing of his father's spirit. This shows the apparent compatibility of temperament between Joseph and Elizabeth.

Joseph's wedding takes place in the little protestant chapel at Monterey. Inside the Chapel, Elizabeth finds in Joseph a Christ image, "when she drew a picture of the Christ in her mind, He had a face, the youthful beard, the piercing puzzled eyes of Joseph, who stood beside her" (TGU 47). Joseph's transformation from a man of dharma into an icon of spirituality is emphasized here in the words of his bride Elizabeth. Of all the characters, Joseph stands out strikingly and singly as an embodiment of the hope for humans of elevating one's self from the physical plane to the spiritual plane, if one goes through the stages of life in proper order, and with a purpose in mind.

Even Benjy's death at the hands of Juanito does not affect Joseph, as he is cut off from such accidents in life. As a result of
violation of self-discipline, Benjy loses his life. Joseph, now a man of equanimity, takes the smooth with the rough in a stoical manner. He shows the condition of a spirit that must be detached from temporal bonds. As he himself puts it:

Now I know what the [his father’s] blessing was. I know what I have taken upon me. Thomas and Burton are allowed their likes and dislikes, only I am cut off, I am cut off; I can have neither good luck nor bad luck. I can have no knowledge of any good or bad. Even a pure, true feeling of the difference between pleasure and pain is denied me. All things are one, a part of me

(TGU 60-61)

He is neither glad nor sad about Benjy’s death. Joseph once more reports to the tree: “Benjamin is dead, sir. I would not have stopped, if I could. Nothing is required in satisfaction” (TGU 62). This act of Joseph implies the Hindu belief in the Karma. Benjy has reaped the fruits of Karma. As Rama says, Benjy “stole the precious little decency of girls” and “drank to steal a particle of death and now he has it all” (TGU 63).

Rama is the only person in the novel who has understood Joseph well. Joseph is more human than she thinks. According to her, men like Joseph are
so human as to make others seem unreal. Perhaps a
godling lives on earth now and then. Joseph has
strength beyond the vision of shattering, he has the
calm of mountains. His figure will grow huge, until it
tops the mountains, and his force will be like the
irresistible plunging of the wind. Joseph is eternal. His
father died, and it was not a death. I tell you this man
is not a man, unless he is all men. He is a repository
for a little piece of each man's soul [and] a symbol of
the earth's soul. (TGU 66)

Joseph is thus portrayed as a person who has done all the
necessary spadework for the next stage. It is also a transition from
the Gruhasthya stage to the Vanaprasthya stage.

When Juanito offers himself to be punished by Joseph, the
latter addresses him as a non-entity and that he has no powers to
punish him. Joseph says, “I have no punishment for you” (TGU 71)
Juanito goes away saying, “When the bones are clean, I will come
back. Memory of the knife will be gone, when the flesh is out”
(TGU 72). Joseph remains unperturbed over the murder of his own
brother and he takes it with an air of sainthood. One who seeks
reunion with God rises above all such skirmishes and trials in
earthly life as Benjy's death.
Likewise, Moorthy too has to ease himself out of the evil forces that scuttle his efforts of establishing Dharma in his native village in particular and by extension in the whole world. Since Moorthy is the central character in the novel Kanthapura, all the other characters revolve round him. Bhatta is a money-lending hypocritic Brahmin. He is one of the persons in the village of Kanthapura who oppose the Congress and the freedom movement. For him freedom struggle is a kind of annoyance (KP 29). He is a priest, but he pushes his priestly business to the background and vehemently upholds orthodoxy in its pristine form and worships Mammon in his heart and goes on accumulating wealth. He is a fanatical votary of the existing social order built on the foundation of selfishness. He resists anything that will upset the position of his superiority and that of his community. The critic Rao describes Bhatta as stooping so low to invite all the horrors of social excommunication and ostracism on Moorthy. The satyagrahis have thus to fight as valiantly against the puritanical forces of orthodoxy and conservatism as against the tyrannical rule of the 'alien' government (52).

Apart from Moorthy, the other characters that involve themselves quite enthusiastically in the freedom struggle are Patel Range Gowda, Rangamma, and the fifteen-year-old widow Ratna Patel Range Gowda, the Patel (revenue collector of the village) of
Kanthapura, accepts the leadership of Moorthy and vows to cooperate with all his endeavors for freedom, though the Patel is more powerful than Moorthy and senior to him in age too. Moorthy has acquired the charm of gathering all like-minded people through his selfless pursuit based on dharma. Range Gowda promises to see the people of Kanthapura through the difficulties during the freedom struggle. He tells the people of the village, "this Moorthy, who has been caught in our knees playing as a child is now grown up and great, and he has wisdom in him and he will be our Mahatma," and the villagers said, "So he is" (KP 106).

Of the female characters, Rangamma, known for her gentle and generous nature, is the most prominent freedom fighter. She has been a loyal member of the Congress Party. In fact, her home has become the center of the Congress activities and in consequence the police with the help of an elephant demolish it, during their last struggle against the Government in the village.

Many other villagers also join the movement quite willingly and come forward to stand behind Moorthy in realizing the goal of national freedom. The young "widow-girl" Ratna is one of them. As she refuses to accept the position that tradition has imposed on her, she does not fit properly in the village society. As a sincere and dedicated Congress worker, Ratna is indistinguishable from other party workers in submerging her personal predilections for a
larger cause. Her role in the Congress works and in the ensuing struggles against the alien rule is certainly whole-hearted and selfless. *Dharma* has to confront challenges from the evil quarters. So Moorthy, now a symbol of *dharma* is forced to face opposition from Bade Khan, the police man, in his task of setting the nation free. Bade Khan is "the symbol of oppression, the soulless bureaucracy made visibly repressive" (Iyengar 392). As a savior of justice, Moorthy goes to the Skeffington Coffee Estate to fight for the workers who are ill treated, ill paid, and the women workers molested or raped while the culprits go unpunished. Moorthy begins his work earnestly at the grass roots level.

The novel *Kanthapura* discusses the philosophy of selfless action. Indian freedom struggle is rightly chosen, as a replica of the great mythical war of the *Mahabharata* and *Kanthapura* becomes an actual *Kurukshetra* where the war between the forces of good and evil is waged. It is a war between the forces of freedom and slavery, love and hatred, truth and falsity, and thus it is fought both in the inner world of the spirit and in the outer world, between the British forces and those of the nationalists. It is obvious that *Kanthapura* "is a novel of action although the action depicted in the novel is not an ordinary action motivated by pure individualistic interests. It is an action of selfless mind inspired by spiritual ideal *Satyagraha*" (Srivastva 28). The
protagonist of the novel Moorthy tells the people that unless they eschew violence and speak the Truth, they cannot triumph over the evil forces.

Moorthy intensifies his reformatory activities with unalloyed dedication and freely mingles with the social outcastes. He entreats every one of them to spin at least a hundred yards of yarn per day. The villagers readily accept this, for it will certainly improve their economic condition. Thus, Moorthy implements his economic reforms. Like Joseph deriving comfort from the oak tree and the mossy rock, Moorthy, going up the Promontory, enters the temple very often, bangs the bell and performing a circumambulation, asks the blessing of the gods. Waterfall Venkamma deserves to be called “Venom.” Venkamma, as she works against the spirit of equality. Aided by Bhatta, she condemns and insults Moorthy in public, because the latter advocates the eradication of untouchability. This social evil is so deep-rooted in Kanthapura that Moorthy is about to be excommunicated soon from his community (KP 53). But he is not deterred by the threat of excommunication. He is highly religious and has a deep faith in the Scriptures, yet his dharma is not blind. He declares, “Let the Swami do what he likes. I will go and do more and more pariah work. I will go and eat with them if necessary” (KP 59). He does not hesitate to join them in carrying the dead body of a pariah woman. He regards the Swami,
who decrees Moorthy's excommunication, as a "self-chosen fool" and a heartless man despite his Vedic scholarship (KP 59).

That Moorthy freely moves with social outcastes "is nothing short of a psychological revolution" (Bhattacharya 263) He has taken a momentous step and become ready for a transition. As Bhattacharya says:

He [Moorthy] was in more sense than one, to enter a new world, adopt a new life, accept new norms and values. It was a world in which there would be neither Brahmin nor Pariah, it was to be a life in which there would be no caste privileges and caste disadvantages, in the new norms and values, one was to be judged not by accident of one's birth but by one's own intrinsic worth. (263)

On hearing about Moorthy's excommunication, his mother Narasamma, blinded by filial love and attachment, fails to see reason and condemns the pariahs for her son's present plight. Her shortsightedness and narrow vision push her to the brim of desolation and activate her death by the riverside. She is not able to recognize the spark of divinity in Moorthy, who is a microcosm of the Mahatma in Kanthapura. Her failure on this account makes her deserve the punishment, though she begot a Mahan-like (great man) son Moorthy. She falls a victim to the village bigotry and
meaningless orthodoxy. The death of his mother does not preclude Moorthy from going ahead with "the task of achieving freedom for his compatriots. His personal loss pales into insignificance, since he is preoccupied with a much greater work than his exhibition of filial bond. He is least upset and maintains calm and serenity befitting a man free from earthly attachments. The interest of the Motherland is always uppermost in his mind and clouds his material affection. From now onwards, his Motherland is his real mother and he is all set to realize his goal.

It is interesting to see Joseph in To a God Unknown moving along the same line as Moorthy in Kanthapura. On the New Year's Day Joseph holds a fiesta for rain on a grand scale. It begins with a Catholic Mass held by Father Angelo from the town of Nuestra Senora. As part of the ritual, Joseph pours a little wine on the bark of the oak tree to the shock of his second brother Burton. Father Angelo too doesn't approve of Joseph's pagan worship. Then, Joseph, keenly watching the fierce bucolic dancing and the noisy merriment of the participants, says, "We have found something here, all of us. In some way, we've come closer to the earth for a moment" (TGU 88). Having become selfless in his dealings, Joseph now appears to have come closer to God. The earth is identified as a physical manifestation of spirituality and Joseph stands on the threshold of Mukti or Self-Realization. He has understood the truth
"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" and he is now ready to seek reunion with the Creator (Genesis 3.19). Such a reunion demands selfless service, universal brotherhood and at times self-sacrifice as well.

The fiesta is, no doubt, a powerful prayer and Joseph says, "It will bring the rain. Something must happen when such a charge of prayer is let loose" (TGU 88). Soon it rains heavily. He learns about the good news that his wife Elizabeth is pregnant. Joseph always derives happiness from the joy of others. Burton, who can never feel happy in spite of his immense faith in religion and his grotesque puritanical morality, is in the grip of insular prejudice and mindless fanaticism with which he wantonly decimates his catholicity, his senses and faculty of reasoning. He considers the fiesta as "devil worship" (TGU 88). He declares that he will not allow the Pope on the farm. Burton means that Joseph should not have invited the Catholic priest, Father Angelo to hold a mass.

While Joseph has risen from the Gruhasthya level to the Vanaprasthya at which one identifies oneself with humanity and one's joy and happiness finds its origin in the collective happiness of the people around, Burton seems still immature and he has not yet been made aware of the need for a spiritual journey.

On seeing the stormy sky, Joseph seeks the protection of his father's spirit in the oak tree. Burton dislikes the "Pagan growth"
(TGU 94) in Joseph, because the latter makes offerings frequently to the tree. In Burton’s opinion, the torrential rain that followed the fiesta is nothing but God's wrath against the idolaters and lightning will strike them next time.

Thus, in every way, Burton stands in contrast to his younger brother Joseph and he represents the scientific spirit based on facts and reasoning, but fails to understand that all the physical realities are ephemeral and everything that happens on earth has to fit in an inexplicable cosmic scheme. Burton reveals his ignorance of the eternal force and everything that comes off it must return to it. People like Burton do not seek a remedy for their actions and so die unnoticed without salvation. But people like Joseph, who methodically plan their lives, as outlined in the Indian philosophical system, progressively grow stronger towards their ultimate goal of merging with eternity.

Burton’s intolerance prompts him to ask Joseph to cut down the giant oak tree. His intention is like that of Bhatta in Kanthapura. His plan to cut down the tree is similar to Moorthy’s excommunication engineered by the machinations of Bhatta. The excommunication is immaterial for Moorthy. In fact, it releases Moorthy from the narrow circle of the age-old caste system to the universal bond. He carries on his missionary work without being affected by his mother’s death, for now his real mother is his
Motherland. But for Joseph, the tree is his immediate prop, his inspiration, and his guiding spirit, which leads him on the right path for performing his dharma. Joseph loves the oak tree and talks to it, for it is "a fine tree a perfect tree," (TGU 102) and calls it "Sir," as though it were a human being that too, a venerable human. He tells his wife Elizabeth how his father had died wanting to come to the West etc., He says, "[The tree] gives me a feeling that I have my father" (TGU 102).

In Kanthapura, "The central character Moorthy, upon whom all the actions and incidents hinge, is a Gandhi-figure and is portrayed as an undaunted hero who is ready to suffer, make sacrifices and renounce everything for the emancipation of the people from the shackles of slavery" (Baskiyar 32). Moorthy's excommunication cuts off the long established link with his community in terms of caste and faith. This proves to be the disentanglement of the only attachment clinging on to Moorthy. Now he belongs to everybody, the Universe. His Vanaprasthy stage has set in. Hereafter, he will concentrate on others and try to redeem the masses from the deep mire of ignorance into which they have been sunk for generations. It is an uphill task and makes strenuous demands on Moorthy. However, Moorthy now matured in his outlook and perception of things acquires all the requisite
courage and confidence to overwhelm the frailties of a normal human being with a sense of detachment like that of a Sanyasin.

What his role model, the Mahatma, is doing elsewhere in India is being reflected in the selfless attitude of Moorthy in Kanthapura. He remains undaunted when the community head, the Swami throws him out but rather he feels happy about it as an unnecessary burden taken off his shoulders. "The combination of poise and power" found in Gandhi can be found in Moorthy also (Jones 17). He identifies himself with the rest of the people of Kanthapura, cutting across all man-made barriers like caste, religion, status etc., since now he has all the makings of a Sanyasin in him.

Like the unreal prop of caste affinity in the case of Moorthy, Joseph too feels an inexplicable affinity with the oak tree, which to him is his father-incarnate. Practically, the oak tree maintains his filial bond with his father and family in absentia. In the process of going through the Gruhasthya stage, Joseph gets two more attachments, his wife Elizabeth and his child John. When Elizabeth tries to overpower the eternity that has existed as an unshaken rock, she experiences a humiliating defeat and pays a heavy price for it. Joseph takes it with a sense of objectivity and parts from his only child by giving it away to his sister-in-law Rama. Now Joseph is all ready to enter into the stage of Sanyasin, free from all
“unreal” encumbrances. The task that he sets for himself is not selfishly motivated but motivated by a sense of self-sacrifice.

Joseph wants to see that life goes on unperturbed on earth and he is ready for any kind of sacrifice to see it through. Famine should give place to abundance and sterility to fertility. The lifeline of earthly activities is water; it is the water of life. At any cost, the earth should not be deprived of water. So Joseph enters into a tapas or meditation to bring down water to the starved earth for its sustenance and survival. It is not that water comes down to earth, but the rain of salvation and grace comes down to Joseph. Joseph’s sacrifice is rewarded and in essence he has crucified himself for the farm and its people and symbolically the Universe. Like a Sanyasin, in the last stage of Hindu philosophical code, Joseph makes himself free and available to everyone who looks upon him as a savior. The ‘I’ in him becomes ‘We’

Likewise, in Kanthapura Moorthy’s concern about the lot of the coolies is well known. Whatever act he does is selfless, egalitarian and result-oriented. The Skeffington Coffee Estate situated on the outskirts of the village stands as a symbol of British imperialism. Coolies from the neighboring states work there. These coolies are harassed for no fault of their own, paid very low wages, and their women molested and raped. Mr. Skeffington, the owner of the estate is responsible for these crimes. If
Mr. Skeffington is caught and dragged to a court of law, he promises to pay damages to the victims, but never keeps his promise. “The Whiteman’s court forgives him” (KP 81).

Moorthy wants to work for the betterment of these hapless coolies. When he is about to enter the estate gate, Bade Khan prevents him. There ensues a battle of words. Many satyagrahis and the minions of Mr. Skeffington join the wordy battle resulting in a fight in which Moorthy, Bade Khan, the maistri (supervisor) and many others receive beatings. Even women workers of the Congress exhibit their prowess. Moorthy appeals to each of them. “No beatings, sister. No beatings in the name of the Mahatma” (KP 85).

The next day as a reprisal, Rachanna, his wife and his orphaned grand daughter are evicted from their quarters in the estate. Range Gowda says, “We’ll show our mountain tricks to the bearded goat [Bade Khan]” (KP 86). Moorthy, being sorrowful, begins his ‘Don’t-touch the-Government-Campaign’. He wants to fast for three days commencing from the next day. He says that too much violence has been done because of him, and if he had full of the radiance of Ahimsa, such things would not have happened. When Rangamma says, “It was not your fault Moorthy,” he replies, “The fault of others is the fruit of one’s disharmony” (KP 87). While Moorthy has been fasting, Waterfall Venkamma and later Bhatta
visit him with the sole intention of humiliating Moorthy, by adding insult to injury. Moorthy bears with these indignities like a stoic and says, “I shall love even my enemies. The Mahatma says, we should love even our enemies” (KP 89).

When Ratna waits for his order, he tells her, “Pray with me that the sins of others may be purified with our prayers” (KP 92). Ratna hardly understands the implication of what Moorthy has said, for she is but fifteen (KP 92). Moorthy tells his followers, “The great enemy is in us hatred is in us” (KP 93). He feels if they show fearlessness and affection free from hatred towards their enemy, they will become stronger and the enemy will yield and be converted. Only great sages and seers have this kind of conviction Moorthy, no doubt, belongs to this category of great men.

This kind of process is quite visible in the character of Joseph also in *To a God Unknown*. Immediately after Elizabeth delivers a male baby, Joseph goes to the oak tree and reports the birth of the child. “You are the cycle,” says Joseph, “and the cycle is too cruel” (TGU 107). Now he is very much perturbed about the oppressing drought. Thus the cycle has in it alternating joy and sorrow just as childbirth and drought present the whole of the cycle in life.

Later, he initiates his son John by putting him in the crotch of the tree with the belief that “it would not let him fall” (TGU 110). This pagan act of Joseph angers Burton who says that his brother’s
act will “let evil in” (TGU 111). He tells Joseph, “You are opening the door to evil. A thing like this will not go unpunished” (TGU 111). Joseph denies Burton’s charge and his reply infuriates his puritanical brother. The next day, Burton leaves for Pacific Grove with his family, for good. Joseph tells him “We will miss you, Burton. It will cut the strength of the family” (TGU 114). Burton “represents a sort of joyless Puritanism, and his narrow vision in damning those who find moral good through their senses and in the physical world, makes him Joseph’s spiritual and intellectual antagonist” (Lisca, Wide World 40-41). Ironically, before leaving for his destination, Burton girdles the tree. By doing so, he has cut off Joseph’s strength. He has killed the tree of life. What Joseph considered as an ambassador between him and the land is dead. It is palpably evident that “Joseph represents natural religion as opposed to the ascetic Christianity of his brother Burton” (Fontenrose 17).

After Burton’s departure, the tree looks pale and lifeless. Joseph feels that Burton’s sudden exit has split the family. Stroking gently the cold bark of the tree, Joseph says, “The tree is dead. There is no life in my tree” (TGU 118). He feels as though he has lost everything in life. When he learns that Burton only has caused the death of the tree, he speaks without any sense of vindictiveness, “He will punish himself. I have no punishments”
In forgiving the offenders, he is peerless like his Indian counterpart Moorthy. Even the news about the death of his father, did not plunge Joseph in sorrow. But the death of the tree fills Joseph with immense sorrow and pain. His father's death was no death, because his father was the tree. In the death of his tree, he has lost his father.

Now Joseph has to look for another source to depend on for his strength. Looking up to the pine grove, he thinks, "I must go there soon. I'll be needing the sweetness and strength of the place" (TGU 119). He is further worried about the drought.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth wants to go to the pine grove to "scotch the rock" (TGU 127). She says that she loved the rock more than her husband or the baby. Since the rock frightened her in her dreams, when she was pregnant, she wants to punish it now so that there won't be any more dreams about it. During her previous visit she felt, "I was the rock...the rock was the strongest thing in the world" (TGU 123). Joseph is united to Elizabeth not only in marriage, but also "in their mystical experience." The mystical experience of Joseph is not the solitary case of a maniac, but an experience adequately shared by his wife Elizabeth. (Chadha 36). For Elizabeth, the mystical visions are "an admixture of vagueness, awe, holiness and half-realization of some spiritual experience"; for
Joseph, "they are a key to the meaning of life" revealing the mystery of spiritual truth (Chadha 37).

On seeing the little stream that issues from a cave in the mossy rock, Joseph says that the land is not yet dead, for the flowing stream is "like a vein still pumping blood" (TGU 127). Now Joseph pins his hope on the holy rock to save the land. Elizabeth, while climbing on the rock falls down dead, quite unexpectedly. "It was too simple, too easy, too quick. All the stories, all the incidents that made life were stopped without any meaning" (TGU 128). He wants to cry out in order to give vent to his personal pain before he is cut off, having lost his feeling of sorrow and resentment "It was the one chance to communicate," he says but now it's gone. It starts raining. The vibration of life that embraces the land is quite visible. Stroking the rock gently, Joseph says, "Now you are here. Now I will know where I must come. Dear earth, dear land" (TGU 129). Once when Joseph poured a pig's blood on the oak tree, it started raining. Now Elizabeth's sacrifice also brings rain.

Joseph has unmistakably understood the mystery shrouding the rock, for the "forces gather and center and become one and strong" (TGU 130). The feminine principle, which is known as Sakti in Indian philosophy, merges with the Absolute, the outward form of which is the rock. The divine rock is the center, which Joseph
wants to join. He reveals his understanding that "There is some cycle here, steady and quick and unchangeable as a flywheel" (TGU 131). Now a new bond has tied him to the earth and the land has been closer to him. He feels, "Everything seems to work with a recurring rhythm except human life. There is only one birth and one death" (TGU 134). This view of Joseph stands in contrast to the Hindu belief in transmigration because Joseph is not "aware of persons only people," and he "can't see units only the whole" (TGU 134-35).

The quest for the Absolute will be realized only when the seeker obtains the benign guidance of a Guru. Elizabeth’s death has unraveled the mystery only partially. When Joseph meets the little old man on the coastal side of the mountain, he makes a discovery of the secret of the old man. The old man is "the last man in the Western World to see the sun. After it is gone to everybody else," says the old man, "I see it for a little while" (TGU 143). Every night he kills some little things at sunset. He says, "The sun is life. I give life to life"(TGU 147). He makes a symbol of the sun's death. He does it because he likes it. "In the moment, I am the sun. I burn in death," declares the old man (TGU 147). Putting his hands on Joseph's knees, the old man says how his life reaches "a calm level place," when he performs these rites (TGU 147). The old man’s touching Joseph’s knees is a kind of
blessing and the culmination of his initiation, from which Joseph understands what he should do on his part later.

As the drought has already become severe and hostile, Thomas leaves the ranch with his family and the farm animals. Joseph gives away his child John to the permanent care and charge of Rama and swears, “He is yours for ever. I have no more claims on him” (TGU 155). After this, he quickly turns to the pine grove, as if for an answer. He avers, “The land is struck not dead, but it is sinking under a force too strong for it. And I am staying to protect the land” (TGU 155). Joseph believes to be the savior to protect the land. His staying alone in the ranch after sending his people and farm animals away to the coastal region serves two purposes: that Joseph is able to give up his claim on his son by snapping his last attachment and that he continues to remain in the ranch which is a place of peace and hope. It is as if choosing the place to sit in meditation invoking the rain god for the benefit of humanity. Now he has lost touch with all worldly ties, the last of which being his young son John. His kinship with the land and the pine grove is purely a spiritual relationship, the last step in his quest for the Absolute.

In his lonely battle to tackle the severity of the drought situation after the departure of all the members of his family, Joseph willingly resigns himself to the forces of nature and thus
prepares the spadework for his reunion with the unknown. He
spells it out earlier: “the forces gather and center and become one
and strong” (TGU 129).

After discarding the ephemeral, Joseph, “knew the rock no
longer as a thing separated from him. He had no more feeling
of affection for it than he had for his own body. He protected it
against death as he would have saved his own life” (TGU 158).

The rock is the center of the earth; the green moss on the rock is
the lifeline to the land. It is his responsibility and bounden duty to
keep the moss alive to save the land. He should protect it against
death, as he would have saved his own life. “Here it is safe,” he
thinks. “Here is the seed that will stay alive until the rain comes
again. This is the heart of the land, and the heart is still beating”
(TGU 158-59). Thus Joseph is the land as well as the rain to
sustain life on earth.

While Joseph is fighting against natural forces, Moorothy is
battling against orthodoxy, illiteracy, poverty, inequality, evil of
drinking, and social injustice. Even the timid and the meek in the
tiny village of Kanthapura emerge as bold as a lion. Women too
exhibit their prowess in opposing the brutality of the misguided and
slavish agents of the government. A sleepy village once, Kanthapura
now abounds in heroic men and women, because of
Moorothy’s unstinted leadership and tireless efforts. Sankar, an
advocate and Moorthy’s close associate says, “I love him [Moorthy] like a brother, and I have found no better Gandhiist why he is the saint of our village. Someday he will do holy deeds” (KP 133). This conviction of Sankar is not an exaggeration. Nanjundiah, a villager, says that the Redman’s Government cannot harm Moorthy, “who is like gold - the more you heat it the purer it comes from the crucible” (KP 134) With his fasting and Bhajans (hymns by a congregation), acumen and personality, Moorthy has been holding a sway over the heart of the people.

Even the decree of excommunication passed by the Swami could not interfere with Moorthy’s activities. Bhatta, Patwari Nanjundiah, Schoolmaster Devarayya, Rama Chetty, and Subba Chetty, Waterfall Venkamma and above all, the Swami are the people who represent the evil forces and are dead against the ‘pariah business’ of Moorthy and his followers. Waterfall Venkamma finds fault with Rangamma for having given shelter to Moorthy and fed him at her kitchen threshold.

It is the month of Kartik. One night, the Police Inspector comes to Kanthapura and searches Moorthy’s room. He then orders the arrest of Moorthy and others. There is mutual exchange of blows between the police and satyagrahis. Moorthy tells them, “Brothers, in the name of the Mahatma, let there be peace and love and order. As long as there is a God in Heaven, and purity in our
hearts, evil cannot touch me. We hide nothing. And if these gentlemen want to arrest me, let them. Give yourself up to them. That is the true spirit of the Satyagrahi" (KP 122). Moorthy's speech irritates the Inspector and he gives a slap on Moorthy's face. Consequently, men, women, and children are brutally assaulted and many are arrested. Moorthy, whose faith in Truth and Ahimsa is unshakable, does not want an advocate to defend him. He says, "That is not for me. Between Truth and me none shall come" (KP 122). "I shall speak that which Truth prompteth, and Truth needeth no defence" (KP 123).

Even Sadhu Narayan is not successful in making Moorthy take the help of a lawyer. He says that "if Truth needs a defence, God himself would need one, for as the Mahatma says, Truth is God, and I want no soul to come between me and Truth" (KP 124). Thus, Moorthy follows the Gandhian principles to the letter. He prefers the Absolute to the immediate.

At a meeting organized by the followers of Moorthy held at the Gandhi Maidan, an agent of the Swami comes uninvited and tells the audience that the British have come to protect 'our Dharma'. He also tells that the Swami has been offered a Rajadakshina - a royal gift by the Government. The old agent has the audacity to speak at a meeting against the organizers because they are passive and dedicated followers of Mahatma Gandhi. He
severely criticizes the Mahatma also (KP 127-8). Ranganna, who too has been excommunicated, throws open his family temple to the social outcastes, who according to the traditions prevalent, should not enter any place of religious worship meant for the other castes. According to the Swami, “When the pariahs will have worn out their karma, and will have risen in the waters of purification, nobody will prevent them from becoming Brahmans, even sages, in their next lives” (KP 129). So, he has advised Ranganna to keep away from the untouchables and the freedom movement as a true Hindu, for the British Government is sent by “the Divine” will and we may not question it (KP 131). Only after this, Ranganna has taken the vow to work for the well-being of the pariahs and has allowed them to enter his family temple and worship the deity with dignity.

Now, at the meeting, he tells the people to “choose between a saint like Mahatma Gandhi who has given up land and lust and honours and comfort and has dedicated his life to the country,” and the so-called “guardians of our trusted traditions” (KP 130) who are well-paid by the alien Government. Sankar, another advocate, “is a saint” (KP 138), who never accepts a single false case. A dedicated associate of Moorthy, Sankar makes his entire family fast very often in memory of various events connected with the Mahatma and the Congress Party.
Despite the hurdles generated by the inimical forces of slavery, Moorthy goes ahead undaunted and as a result he and his followers are given three months' rigorous imprisonment. After his release, he is all out for action. He reveals "the pilgrim path of the Mahatma from day to day" to his followers (KP 171). He emphasizes the oneness of his fellow beings: "We are here in a temple, and the temple is the temple of the One and we are one with everything that is in the One" (KP 169). In his view, irrespective of caste, or social status, "We are all one as the mustard seed in a sack of mustard seeds, equal in shape and hue and all" (KP 170). They very often conduct Bhajans "to have the supreme vision of the Mahatma" (KP 171). They are told that they should not "budge a finger's length" (KP 174) even if the police use brute force to subdue them.

The Kanthapurians have decided not to pay the tax to the Government of the aliens and constitute a 'parallel Government' They struggle not to yield without resorting to violence. The freedom fighters are against the demoniac corruption that has entered their hearts, and declare: "the purer we are the greater will be our victory send out love where there is hatred." They are to fight like "soldier saints" (KP 180). Thus Moorthy every now and then inculcates in the minds of the Congress workers a sense of
dedication and the need for their fight against alien rule without sacrificing their principles.

For Moorthy, social reforms are as important as the liberation struggle. To eradicate the evil of drinking, Moorthy and the satyagrahis have decided to picket toddy shops and to enter the toddy groves in order to cut down the toddy (coconut and palm) trees. When someone says that the coolies are incorrigible drunkards and no one can straighten the tail of a dog, Moorthy says, "You cannot straighten a dog's tail but you can straighten a man's heart" (KP 195). Thus Moorthy has an indomitable spirit, the will and perseverance to reform the coolies, who have fallen a victim of the evil of drinking. The police intervene and the non-violent fighters receive a shower of beatings. The Government itself patronizes this evil of drinking and the police have come to disperse the reformers.

In spite of the beating by the police and the torrential rain and standing in the mud with his clothes soiled, Moorthy appeals to the coolies not to drink "in the name of the Mahatma... for drinking is bad and the Government profits by your vice and the usurer by your debt and your wife goes unclothed and your children unfed and never again will you see a hut and hearth" (KP 203) Moorthy's concern for the poorest of the poor is evident here; he reforms not only their present, but also shapes their future so that
their progeny will be free from the evil of drinking and live a meaningful life.

When Seetharamu narrates the hardships he had to face in jail, Moorthy says, "That is how you should be. Bear all as though *karma* willed and everything will be borne" (KP 205). The next day, the police fall on the recalcitrant coolies, who are swayed by the charm of Moorthy and chase all those who have assembled there. Somebody rings the temple bell, which is a clarion call to those who still remain at home. Then, there is a pitched battle between the *satyagrahis* supported by the coolies and the police, and "the whole world seems a jungle" (KP 214). The police let loose their brutal and oppressive force paving the way for much violence. Bhatta's house is on fire and it gladdens a few women *satyagrahis*. Ratna, who leads the women warriors, tells them to shun such trivial sadistic pleasures and be magnanimous like the true followers of the Mahatma. The men folk of the village were arrested the previous night itself. Now the women sing *Bhajans* and plan to hold *Satyanarayana Puja* so that many *satyagrahis* from town will also join them for a do-or-die fight.

The followers of Moorthy always believe that they can convert their enemies. Even an illiterate woman like Rachanna's wife says, "We are out to convert them, our will and our love will convert them. And now let us be silent for a while in prayer, send
out our love that no hatred may live within our hearts” (KP 259). She tells them with confidence that they will win the battle. There are about three thousand dedicated Congress volunteers, who have come from town and the nearby villages for the battle with the alien Government. Though the volunteers are not aggressive, they shout slogans like, “Mahatma Gandhi ki jai”, “Vande mataram”, “Inquilab Zindabad” etc., which irritate the police and the soldiers. The satyagrahis declare that they will be loyal only to the Government of the Mahatma. Someone plants a flag and all the volunteers salute it. This anti-government action forces the police and the soldiers to resort to firing. Their brutality has taken the lives of many men, women and children. Those who survive the barbarous onslaught reach Kashtipura, a village near the outskirts of their region in the nearby Mysore State and settle down there. The whole village of Kanthapura is totally annihilated by the heartless government forces. Now, “there’s neither man nor mosquito in Kanthapura” (KP 259).

For the people of Kanthapura, now settled in Kashtipura, it is not a defeat. This setback is temporary and mercurial. Their spirit ever remains strong; Moorthy, after his release from prison, tells his followers, “Things must change to eradicate poverty and caste system.” In Swaraj meaning self-rule, “there shall be neither the rich nor the poor” (KP 258). Their conviction is the prelude to their
**Self-Realization.** Jawaharial is like a Bharatha to the Mahatma to liberate the country from slavery. Now the people consider Moorthy as “Brother saint” and want to worship him like Bharatha (KP 258) Kashi, known as Varanasi or Benaras, is a holy place for the Hindus. People, after completing the stage of Vanaprasthyya, usually go to Kashi for salvation by spending the remainder of their lives there. Kashipura in the novel symbolically represents a place of Salvation. The struggle started in Kanthapura is only a beginning. Moorthy is Kanthapura as Joseph is the land. That he has created a reawakening among the naive villagers is his Self-Realization Like Phoenix the people will rise to the occasion and cause sweeping changes.

As Rao puts it, “At the end, the village is left in a heap of ruin and rubble. But a new village comes into being; Kashipura is raised on the outskirts of Kanthapura signifying the permanence of India, as a concept” (Fiction 148)

Moorthy, being a celibate, begins to comprehend the deepest mysteries of life early and so cuts short the Artha and Kama stages. However, his interest to pursue higher studies and plan to get married when his mother advises him to do so are certainly the two intermediary objects in life. But he is able to free himself from all these ephemeral attractions in favor of his exploration into the Unknowable.
Even a great rishi of the Vedic times, Vishwamitra was wavering in the presence of the beautiful damsel Menaka from heaven. No wonder, human weakness tries to enslave Moorthy also one day, when he feels attracted towards the young, beautiful widow Ratna. But this attraction is a fleeting one. That Moorthy is not completely disinterested towards the charms of the young widow Ratna who disturbed even Bhatta is evident from his frequent visits to her home. One day, returning from Karwar with a bundle of khadi on his back and a bundle of books in his arms, instead of going to his own home, he goes eagerly to meet Ratna at the well. Later, during his fast, according to Bhattacharya, Moorthy's "feelings changed, and the idea that he could ever think of her other than as a sister shocked him and sent a shiver down his spine" (260). Of course, Moorthy gives response to Ratna's feelings earlier, but after his fast, his attitude changes into that of a brother.

The transformation of Steinbeck's protagonist, Joseph is in the extreme, for he has moved to the glade to reside there, leaving behind him his dynastic ranch, perhaps, parting with the last of his attachments. He has been staying near the rock for weeks together. He feels: "only this rock and I remain. I am the land" (TGU 180). He remembers the story that Elizabeth told him of a man (in some mythology), who ran away from the old Fates and
clung to an altar where he was safe. Like that man, who probably stands for Markandeya in Indian mythology, Joseph clings to the rock, which in Satyanarayana’s view is the stone image of Lord Shiva of the Hindu pantheon (98). Joseph tells Juanito, who has come back after his self-imposed exile, “I will stay, until I am dead. And when that happens, nothing will be left” (TGU 166). When Joseph is in deep sleep, he appears to Juanito like the “crucified Christ hanging on His cross, dead and stained with blood”. Juanito “crosses himself” and walks to Joseph’s bed (TGU 168).

In Burton’s view, Joseph, a worshipper of Nature, is a pagan. However, he along with Juanito, goes to meet the Catholic priest, Father Angelo at Nuestra Senora Joseph is ready to do anything for the sake of rain. He requests the priest to pray for rain but the priest tells him that already they have held a Mass for rain. He dispels Joseph’s fear that the land is dying. The priest wants to pray for the soul of Joseph and asks him to get into the church. But Joseph, not consoled, feels betrayed and bursts out: “To Hell with my soul! I tell you the land is dying! Pray for the land,” and leaves the priest. When the priest also fails to help him, Joseph wants to go back to the rock and wait. After his departure, Father Angelo, in sympathy, prays for Joseph’s soul, because there is “too much pain in him.” For a moment, Father Angelo sees the “Christ-like” figure of Joseph in his mind, but a Christ with “no message” (TGU 172).
Leaving Juanito behind, Joseph reaches the pine grove alone and to his consternation the moss on the rock is stark dry. Now, he remembers the little old man, who, in a way, is his Guru. In the fashion of his Guru, he sacrifices a lanky calf, but nothing happens. He understands: "His secret was for him. it won't work for me" and questions himself, "I am all alone why should I stay in this dead place?" (TGU 179).

Feeling exhausted, he wants to sleep on the rock for a while. While climbing the rock, a saddle buckle cuts his wrist. Joseph's "wrist and palm were bloody The aloofness cut him off from the grove and from the world" (TGU 179). Milton states that the novel, To a God Unknown reflects an old pagan view which once had validity and which still reaches us through the unconscious, perhaps as a warning that if the twentieth-century man loses touch with the earth, his intellectual enlightenment, his organized religions, and his technology will not save him. Joseph has found his own kind of Salvation, his own sense of what is right and good, through ultimate self-sacrifice, giving his own life for that of many lives in the valley. (320-21)

Now Joseph recalls the old man and his animal sacrifice: "The old man by the sea becomes Joseph's initiator, the Guru The rock
and the old man are one - divine, the guru is god” (Satyanarayana 99). Animal sacrifice and other types of sacrifices will not suffice, so something more precious than all this is demanded of Joseph to realize his goal. He feels that prayers in Church won't help him because there the emphasis seems to be on the rituals.

After a few attempts by Joseph, truth ultimately dawns upon him that he must obliterate himself, that is his physical identity, and become one with the Unknown. This leads to his “discovery of the identity of himself and the Universe” of which the rock is a part (Kallapur 18). The rock symbolizes the Absolute. Only in such an invisible reunion, the true self realizes the immense presence of the Absolute and one's life mission is complete for which the Indian philosophy bears evidence (Aurobindo 10).

Having resolved to sacrifice his life, Joseph cuts open the vessels of his wrist, and releases his blood as a sacrifice. Lying on his side, with his wrist outstretched, he looks down the long black mountain range of his body. Then his body grows huge and light and rises into the sky and out of it comes the streaking rain. He whispers, “I should have known, I am the rain” (TGU 179). It starts raining heavily. The hills grow dark with moisture. Joseph cries “I am the land and I am the rain. the grass will grow out of me in a little while” and dies (TGU 179). Through his final sacrifice, Joseph has attained Self-Realization and saved the land. "Joseph’s
sacrifice was prefigured in the daily sacrifice made to the setting sun by a strange old man on the coast who claimed to be 'the last man in the Western World to see the sun' (Fontenrose, *Introduction* 17).

It may be concluded that both Joseph and Moorthy, the protagonists of *To a God Unknown* and *Kanthapura* respectively, achieve their goal of *Self-Realization* heroically. In the light of the four stages and objects of life enunciated in Indian philosophy, their struggles, the trials, the perils they encountered, the service they rendered to their people, their sufferings and achievements have many parallels and contrasts. Joseph Wayne passes through all the four stages and objects of life, because he is married. In the case of Moorthy, being a celibate, the second and third stages assume less significance, but he strictly adheres to the four objects of life. When a spark of physical attraction towards the young beautiful widow, Ratna flashes in his mind, he nips it in the bud and treats her with brotherly feelings. Thus he gives in momentarily to the allurements of the *Gruhasthya* stage but he steadies himself and quickly steps into the *Vanaprasthya* stage. Moorthy has a mother and possessions like lands and groves and all this gives him the image of a *Gruhastha*. But he ignores all this and puts on the mantle of a *Vanaprastha* seeking peace and harmony in the company of a greater family—the people of
Kanthapura. Both heroes achieve the four objects of life quite successfully, without being selfish. Joseph and Moorthy have their initiation at the very beginning by the old Wayne, and Mahatma Gandhi (in Moorthy's vision) respectively. After their initiation, they establish order - Joseph on the farm, and Moorthy, in the village of Kanthapura. Both of them realize the oneness of all beings. From the beginning, their words and deeds prove this Advaita principle.

Moorthy gave up his worldly attachments, the moment he had the holy vision of Mahatma Gandhi. He was not upset by the death of his mother. Even when there was violence, he did not feel agitated; instead, he tried to calm down his angry followers. Even the rishis of ancient times lost their temper and cursed those who caused impediments to their meditation. But Moorthy as well as Joseph loved their enemies. This is a rare quality found only in great sages and saints. Joseph too is always serene. Burton, who killed the giant oak tree, or Juanito, who killed Benjy, had no punishment from Joseph. He cared for the commonweal of all the living beings on the ranch and in the Valley of Nuestra Senora. This is evident from the spiritual evolution of Joseph's character. The inevitable physical needs like a wife, child and material possession and so on were secondary to Joseph for the "desire for wealth and power can corrupt a man's soul and eventually subdue the glowing
vitality of his spirit" (Simmonds, 4). The entire creation is saturated with

divine love. Hence just as the Supreme Being, the embodiment of

love, showers love on humanity, man too should share this gift
given to him with others. But man conditions his love by

associating it with worldly relations and wastes his life. Mere

physical ties cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. A

sincere and real devotee of God will exhibit this rare quality and

serve mankind without expecting anything in return.

Man's nature should be to adhere to Truth, non-violence and

compassion. He should keep himself constantly reminded of the

fact that he should observe the law of Righteousness and not

behave like an animal. Divinity dwells in everyone and there is no

need to hate others. Since Joseph and Moorthy stand above wealth

and poverty, they retain the vitality of their spirit till they attain

Self-Realization. Elizabeth gave Joseph a sense of possession and

strove to strengthen his ego. Her death, in the words of Rajni

Chada, stands for liberation necessary for his spiritual journey.

Joseph also offers his child to Rama, his brother's wife when every

one decides to abandon the land, which is no more fertile due to

the severe drought. Chada remarks:

This marks the second and final stages of renunciation,

thereby qualifying him to become a fit martyr for the

redemption of the land and humanity at large. In his
last stage, he is able to realize his clear unity with all only because he has transcended the narrow cell of individuality and egoism by his act of renunciation. (39)

As far as Moorthy is concerned, he considers no material possessions worthy except his highly esteemed virtues. He never seems to be the owner of wet and dry lands, groves and an ancestral house, which are finally destroyed by the Government forces. His property remains only in name, and Moorthy never claims ownership nor does he have any kinship with them after his excommunication; he has been eating food given by his mother like a mendicant at the threshold of the kitchen. After the death of his mother, Rangamma gives him food at the threshold of her kitchen. It is therefore evident that Moorthy has never owned or desired material possession ever since his initiation through his holy vision of the Mahatma. This is equally applicable to Joseph.

The Vedanta philosophy claims that Self-Realization alone can remove man's sorrow. The root cause of all human suffering is the ignorance about the true nature of the Atman (Self or Soul) because man instead of identifying himself with the Self relates to his body-mind complex. Every human being has certain fundamental goals in life, though each individual seeks it in different ways. One looks for fulfillment, security and happiness in the realization of these goals. Though one pursues these goals in
the material world, all these pursuits represent the search for the Self. The majority unknowingly pursues this end and only a few do it knowingly. Quest for peace, fulfillment in life and security is thus the outward manifestation of the quest of the Self.

Joseph merges with the land when he says, "I am the land" (TGU 179). The land is a symbol of eternity through which he realizes the rainfall and through this realization, he identifies himself with the Paramatma (the Supreme Being). His self-sacrifice on the rock is the manifestation of his Self-Realization. He frees his soul from the perishable shell, the body and paves the way for his soul's union with God. He is not for himself and the world is not for him alone; he does not belong to the temporal abode, but he is equipped with the capacity of discharging his duties and responsibilities like a man who has detached himself from the tangible but short-lived one. He identifies the rain as the descent of the Paramatma (the Absolute) and its arrival on the earth marks the release of his eternal soul from the body. He sacrifices himself, not to perpetuate himself but to perpetuate life on earth by bringing down the life-giving water, the water of life.

Likewise, Moorthy attains Self-Realization through his selfless service for the people and his act of creating the spiritual awakening among the ignorant masses of the tiny village. The problems that he has encountered are quite different from those of
Joseph. That a village, which was in the firm and adamantine grip of orthodoxy and superstition, was turned into a village of revolutionary heroes and martyrs was no mean achievement. The men, women, and children of the village, after their transformation, faced the bullets and severe beatings of the police and the soldiers quite courageously. The ‘saint soldiers’, as the satyagrahis call themselves, have lost not only their material possessions but also some of their kith and kin. Moorthy has sacrificed his higher studies, the idea of leading a comfortable married life (by remaining a celibate), his dear mother and all his material possessions for the sake of his countrymen. As a revolutionary, he rebelled against the orthodoxy of the villagers. If Moorthy had had a desire for conjugal pleasures, he could have married Ratna or some other beautiful girl from a very rich family. But Moorthy does not do so, because there is not even an iota of selfishness in him. He knows very well that carnal pleasures are not the only means of achieving one’s spiritual goal. Like Santiago in Hemingway’s The Old Man and the Sea, Moorthy and his followers cannot be defeated. But they can destroy themselves for spiritual enlightenment to realise the nature and purpose of human existence. Their experience has lit a beacon of hope for the world to fight against all kinds of evils that oppress humanity.
There are thus many points of similarities between Joseph and Moorthy. However, there is a marked contrast between these two protagonists, which ought to be mentioned here. Joseph is born to a physical culture and material pursuits. His movement towards spiritual goal has to be from one extreme to the other. Hence his spiritual journey is gradual, passing through all the four stages and objects of life. Whereas Moorthy is born to a spiritual culture, his intellectualism is a great asset that makes his movement towards spiritual practice very smooth and quick. Hence he has set the goal of *Self-Realization* at the first stage itself. Of the four objects of life, the third object, *dharma*, dominates his life and career more, paving the way for the fourth and last object of liberation, within and without.

The comparative analysis reveals that the novelists, Steinbeck and Raja Rao, though divided by locale, culture and religion, converge at a point at which they both are influenced by the Indian *Advaita* philosophy. Besides their own textual reference in their respective novels, the theme of man's reunion with the Absolute runs through both the novels quite conspicuously. Since the physical prefaces the spiritual in such a spiritual realization, the heroes experience what is experienceable in the worldly life and thus make preparations for the otherworldly. When the transition occurs, they are to face a conflict by growing within a sense of
detachment and by strengthening their spiritual anchor. When the conquest is over, they find themselves above the physical plane and closer to the Unknown. The ultimate reunion is attained through *Self-Realization*. The evolutionary stages of their spiritual voyage are markedly illustrated in the novels. The influence of Indian philosophy is evident in both the works and the writers exhibit the oneness of human thoughts and endeavors when the question of finding the ultimate truth in life comes up.