CHAPTER II

THE GLOBAL CANVAS
CHAPTER – II

THE GLOBAL CANVAS

Great revolutions in human society change men's consciousness and revolutionize not only social relationship but their outlook their philosophy and their art. (1960, p28).

Before going to the aspect of 'Modernity' in detail, we need to know about the global canvas during the period. No doubt 'Modernity' is a highly dynamic concept not limited to any specific age or space. Yet, particular periods in history definitely need mention as the harbingers of 'Modernity' or at least the catalyzing agents which ushered in Modernity. Certain events, incidents, inventions, discoveries or all these entirely put together crystallized into the so called 'Modernity' or 'Modernism'.

'Modernity' can be viewed in four different perspectives:

1. Modernity - a way of life
2. Modernity in terms of literature.
3. Modernity in Kannada Literature and
4. Modernity in African Literature

'Modernity - a way of life' means changes, alterations, mutations, adjustments, adaptations observed or experienced in the way people or a particular community lives its life. For example, earlier in the absence of good transport system, people were more or less confined to a particular area and even if they travelled, it was within a limited radius. But later with advancement in transport facilities, the mobility of people has grown by leaps and bounds so much so that the world is called 'a global village' giving scope for continual mobility. This easy and seamless movement has changed the lifestyle of the people in multifarious ways. In fact Arjun
Appadurai considers movement or migration as one of the major and interconnected diatrics in bringing about modernity (1997 p3)².

'Modernity' in terms of literature means the changes reflected in all literary works. Any art form or literature cannot exist in vacuum. Literature is nothing but the reflection of life and if literature has to exist, it needs to be parasitic on life – about life, for life and of life. Any changes, alterations, modifications in life or lifestyle of people correspondingly lead to change in literature also. For example, the literature of earlier times reflected the contemporary age like the usage of telegrams in the beginning for speedy communication. This later on led to trunk call system which in turn led to pagers, mobiles, e-mails, etc. The contemporary literature reflects the modern means of communication.

Literature is the reflection of life. It reflects the boons – banes, virtues – vices, and the realities of life. Since human life is its pivotal point, no literature can exist without life. Conversely life also is affected by certain impacting literature. In this regard it is worth recalling the words of Prabhushankar wherein he raises a couple of fundamental questions regarding literature:

1. Do changes in society bring about changes in literature?
2. Do changes in literature and writings bring about changes in society? (1993 p2)³.

Changes in society definitely bring about changes in literature. For example industrialization, urbanization, democratization and massification brought about a drastic change in the life style of the people, which in turn was reflected in the literature of the times also. One good example is Hardy’s novels set in the Victorian Age which reflect the Industrial Age of the time. So, also Dickensian novels like Hard Times and A Tale of Two Cities which give a clear picture of England and unstable French politics of the time.
Just as changes in society bring about changes in literature, the converse is also equally true. Powerful pens can bring about changes in the socio political set up of a society. For example, the writings of the French writers Rousseau and Voltaire, the poets, historians and the intellectuals of the mid-eighteenth century, mirror the social life of the times. Rousseau, through his writings exerted a strong influence on politics, literature and psychology. He was one of the first to give expression to his innermost feelings through his writing in *Jules Oula Nouvella*. This later on formed a Movement by itself named as the Romantic Movement. His political views are said to have deeply affected the masses. Further, he was one of the pioneers to advocate “self expression” thereby giving a new approach to the concept of education. This vexed the ecclesiastical authorities of France and they burnt his books.

Voltaire’s witty and satirical verses against the Royalty attracted the wrath of the regent of France and so he was even ex-communi cated. *The Letters*, one of his most interesting works indirectly criticized the French institutions and customs creating a huge furore and uproar in the French society. He constantly attacked the Christian faith and political circles with wit and satire and used many of his plays as vehicles for political and philosophical propaganda. Through his writings, he fought against religious intolerance and aided victims of the religious persecution. Voltaire aimed not at political upheaval but at changing political thought in order to achieve a greater understanding of humanity and justice. He showed little respect for existing institutions and expressed contempt for austerity. Therefore it is definitely necessary to study the socio political situation of the Age to know the advent of ‘Modernity’ in literature.

There is considerable debate about when the modern era began. Most historians and social scientists are of the opinion that Britain and its colonies are the
originating societies for ‘Modernity’. Many advocate that France is to be considered as the originator of it. Some sociologists are of the opinion that ‘Modernity’ did not properly begin until what is known as the ‘Industrial Revolution’, which occurred in Britain between 1750 and 1820. The Industrial Revolution shook the countries of Europe in all spheres in such a way that its repercussions were felt throughout in varied ways and diverse levels. Political revolutions that had the effect of overturning monarchical power occurred in the American colonies in 1776 A.D. While the same had its presence felt in France in 1789 AD. Majority of the Scientists and Sociologists agree that ‘industrialism’ is a sine qua non for ‘Modernity’.

The Industrial Revolution had manifold repercussions. Improved methods and techniques of farming led to large scale production and distribution of food grains to the non-agricultural population; industrial products gained precedence over agricultural produce thereby leading to international trade and distribution of wealth; change in political and economic policies catered to the industrial society; working class migration led to urbanisation transforming the attitude of man which enhanced his spirit in mastering nature. It also created and re defined the class structure Hence Industrial Revolution is often considered as the edifice on which the structure of Modernity has been built.

Our next endeavor is to date back ‘Modernity’ to its genesis- how and where it began. In trying to assign a suitable time line to ‘Modernity’, a few sociologists date it back to the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. No development in history has affected individuals more than the Industrial Revolution. The phrase ‘Industrial Revolution’ was popularized in the 19th century by the British economist Arnold Toynbee (1992 p11)

Historians debate as to where and when the Industrial Revolution began. It set
about the 18th century in the English Midlands. The actual historical process varies from country to country. In Britain, the Industrial Revolution is dated at about 1800 and reached its peak by 1820. Western Europe, at the beginning of the 18th century, was still essentially at the handicraft stage. In Germany the Industrial Revolution is often ascribed to the early 19th century. Since Industrial Revolution started at different times in different places, we can roughly consider Industrial Revolution to have started around the latter half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

Several historical and cultural influences account for the Industrial Revolution. With the tumultuous years of 1789-1815, the European culture was transformed by revolution, war and disruption. By ending most of the social and cultural props of the previous century, the stage was set for dramatic economic and political change. European philosophy precipitated and drove many of these changes. Being the first country to industrialize, Britain had a head start over other nations. But slowly in the 19th century, industrialization caught on in several other European countries. Elements characteristic of industrial society can be seen in isolated examples long before the 18th century. Nevertheless, there is one place and one time – England in the 18th century in which these threads coalesced into a process of undeniable change which later on crystallized into and came to be termed The Industrial Revolution.

It is Karl Marx who tried to define Industrial Revolution by the impact it had:

Industrial Revolution is the mode in which modern industry was historically developed. In the rare of that industry the traditional forms of manufacture of handicraft, and of domestic industry is entirely revolutionized; manufactures are constantly passing into the factory system and handicrafts into manufactures. (1999 p490)
Several historical and cultural influences account for the Industrial Revolution. With the opening of the Middle-East to Europe during the Crusades, began a flow of new ideas which stimulated commerce in Europe. The discovery of the new world and forging of new trade routes largely by Spain and Portugal further stimulated trade and commerce and they gave rise to 'the spirit of enquiry' The new outlook led by the critical scientific discoveries catalysed the era of Industrial Revolution. Many new scientific inventions and discoveries lead to constructive and life saving mechanisms which revolutionized human history.

The 19th century saw the birth of science as a profession. Amongst the most influential ideas of the 19th century were those of Charles Darwin, who in 1859 published the book *The Origin of Species*, which introduced the idea of evolution by 'natural selection'. Louis Pasteur made the first vaccine against 'rabies' and also made many discoveries in the field of Chemistry including the 'asymmetry of crystals'. Thomas Alva Edison gave the world 'light' with his invention of the incandescent bulb. But the most important step in science at this time was the ideas formulated by Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell. Their work changed the face of Physics and made possible the emergence of new technology.

The period was the occasion for the greatest changes ever seen in the media of cultural production, photography, cinema, radio, television, reproduction and recording. The emblems of urban life like the train and the motor car entered people's life. The Railways gave a new experience and perspective to modern life – the sensation of speed and motion that was very different from the earlier cart or the horse. Modern engineering revolutionized its experience of time and space. The period was more complex owing to the effects of technology which not only filled the world with more things than never before but also changed the relatively settled
relationships of the feudal era for the confused openness of the modern industrial state. A series of machines were invented which revolutionized the century. Just to name a few: the Kodak camera (1888), the electric motor (1888), the diesel engine (1892), the Ford motor car (1893), the gramophone (1894), Marconi’s radio (1895), the luminaries, cinematograph (1895) and x-ray machines (1895).

The first half of the 19th century was a period of bloom and burgeons in all spheres of life. It was a period of very brisk creative activity, free thought and enquiry, philosophy, experiment and individualism. A sense of optimism and progress pervaded the length and breadth of Europe. Man’s understanding of himself was changing. Anthropology was probing the primitive roots of religion. Philosophers like Nietzsche and Bergson were emphasizing the importance of instinct rather than reason. Psychologists like Freud and Jung were showing the power and significance of the unconscious. Divergent and conflicting ideas of art and culture were the characteristics of the age.

The spectacular influence of contemporary science was witnessed in domestic field also — in terms of ideas and also in terms of direct material experience of a world whose bywords were progress and change. Domestic appliances such as electric kettles, telephones, electric pressing and refrigerators were available though everybody couldn’t afford them. In London city alone there were already two and a half million electric lamps on bicycles, in cinemas, in torches and so on. The growing mechanization of the industrial world on the one hand produced the catastrophes of war and on the other, led to the atomisation of the human beings also. Science was changing not just the way humans viewed the world but also the notion of what it meant to be human. The first flight of Wright Brothers (1903), the first flight of the
English Channel by Bleriot (1909) and the launching of the Model T Ford in America inaugurated the era of fast movement, private travel and entertainment.

The Age was also an era of exploration and global knowledge. Peary reached the North Pole in 1909, while Amundsen made it to the South in 1911. The invention of the electric telegraph made communication across the world easy. The five fold expansion of millions of kilometers of world’s railways and the doubling of the merchant shipping increased tourism tremendously.

Politically, there was the increasing challenge to capital by labour no longer prepared to accept a completely subordinate role as the economic benefits of industrialization became more evident. Accepting one’s place, loyalty to authority, unquestioning obedience began to break down; patriotism during one’s duty, even Christianity seemed questionable. After the Napoleonic wars, the British Empire became the world’s leading power, controlling one quarter of the world’s population and one third of the land area. This was the period when the European powers carved up the third world countries between them for the purposes of their own political advancement. They wanted markets and raw materials for their expanding economies, but above all they needed ‘spheres of influence’ - stretching of territories which could be used in Europe as the bargaining counters of power.

It was during this period that Europe witnessed the transformation of an agrarian and handicraft economy to one dominated by machine and machinery. It would not be wrong to say that the Industrial Revolution began with the textile industry. Because, it was at this time that workers instead of weaving piece work at home - began to work in factories. Here cotton cloth manufacturing became important. Several inventions were responsible including the spinning jenny, flying shuttle and a water power loom. This was soon followed by the key invention of our
times which served as a catalyst for industrial expansion – the steam engine. John Newcomen and James Watt developed the steam engine. The abundant supply of coal in between 1869-84 developed an efficient engine. The steam engine was an efficient source of energy that could be put into work.

The introduction of railroads provided the first major advancement in land transportation. Their placement and application radically altered the ways people could live. And people could obtain necessary commodities, fuelling major urbanization movements in the countries across the globe. The 19th century was remarkable in the widespread formation of new settlements which were particularly prevalent across North America and Australia.

The population of Britain increased which favored the rise of industrialization. With the rise in population, vast number of people migrated from agricultural areas to the rising industrial centers. The reasons being various like more regular wages in the industrial areas which allowed better shelter, more fuel, more regular nutrition promoting a higher survival rate for mothers and children.

*The Engine of Growth* of the Industrial Revolution was external trade. Britain’s overseas trade expanded after the American Revolution. The produce of Lancashire textiles was dispatched to foreign countries. Correspondingly the local demand also expanded which in turn was gradually responsible for the overall economic progress. The industrial expansion triggered the growth of new and larger industries. This had its impact on the transport industry as well.

Massive machinery, new form of power, fixed capital and increasing productivity were the key elements in industrial progress. Cotton trade induced the development of ancillary industries such as machine building, chemical factories and railway workshops. The Industrial Revolution had many profound effects on
European civilization. It rendered much of the old artisans useless and irrelevant, boosted the bourgeoisie to economic and political power and drafted much of the old peasant class into its factories. The result was naturally a shift in attitude towards wealth. Rousseau had argued in his Social Contract:

that true Democracy could not thrive in a society with great extremes of wealth and poverty as power always flows towards the wealthy.

Whatever the electoral system, the sort of democracy, the bourgeoisie advocated was for a long time reserved for property owners, merchants, manufacturers, landlords and bankers. One of the greatest struggles of the 19th century was for the gradual expansion of the vote first to working man and much later to women.

(www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/rousseau-soccon.html)

Agricultural field witnessed various better and lighter implements, introduction of new varieties of grasses and root crops, breeding of new improved live stock allowed agricultural output to increase. One another important factor behind farm production was the enclosure system where in large proprietors evicted tenants or purchased farms from small holders to create pastures for sheep and cattle. Since then the enclosure of open fields for more productive mixed farming rapidly developed. The excess population in new areas not absorbed by agriculture migrated to seek employment in the new industrial towns.

Thus in a little over a century, Britain went from a largely rural agrarian set up to a country of industrial towns, factories, mines and workshops. Endowed with great natural resources, a rising population, representative Government, a flexible social structure responsive to new wealth, surplus capital from trade, scientific and inventive
genius and a protestant ethic of early 18th century, was equipped to experience economic expansion.

**Literary Works that had a Bearing on the Globe**

The early Nineteenth Century witnessed overall changes in literary and scientific field. One cannot forget the impact of certain great works which shook the very foundations of the erstwhile human thinking. Several writers emerged on the global scene of who three are worth mentioning. Three prominent works which created history were Karl Marx’s *Das Capital*, Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* and Sigmund Freud’s *Interpretations of Dreams*. The famous German sociologist philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) in his master piece *Das Capital* developed a theory of Capitalist System emphasizing its inevitable self-destructive tendencies. He developed a humanist system of ethics based upon a sociological approach to history. In his work he sought to explain all events in terms of their place and function and also the ‘relations of production’ which explained the laws that governed historical development. His other great works include *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). *The Philosophical Manifesto* of the Historical School of Law and many others.

The British naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) proposed the contentious *Theory of Evolution* which created a sensation in Christian England and Europe when it was first published in November 1859. This was because it was a blow to the orthodox theological Christian opinion and implied that man was not unique but similar to other animals. It totally denied the hitherto existing belief that man was a very unique creation. His evolutionary theory stated that species undergo change with the passage of time and that man had evolved from the more primitive species.

Sigmund Freud (1853-1939) an Austrian physician and neurologist was one of the most renowned psychoanalyst of the century whose investigations and discoveries
concerning the ‘unconscious mind’ have had a major influence on the Western thought and have also permeated the contemporary culture. But the most significant contributions Freud made to the western thought were his arguments concerning the importance of the unconscious in understanding conscious thought and behavior. (1981 p741). He conceptualized the mind metaphorically as an ancient buried ruin which had to be unearthed. He unraveled the ‘Oedipal complex’ and the ‘Id’ in man’s dreams illustrate the ‘logic’ of the unconscious mind. He developed his first topology of the psyche in 'The Interpretations of Dreams' (1899) in which he proposed that the unconscious exists and described a method of gaining access to it. At a time when only the external behavior of an individual made his personality Freud touched upon the intricacies of the internal human mind and found out new ways and means to study the same. This was in no small measure a unique contribution to the study of human psychology which deviated from the very presumption of earlier studies.

There were other writers like Fredrick Nietzsche, Berkson, Bertrand Russell, and Jung who through their writings created a new wave in their respective fields. All these great thinkers through their revolutionary writings, changed the very attitude, outlook, and approach of the people of their or at least inspired them to look at the various alternative perspectives of the existing issues and to discuss and deliberate upon them.

Although these factors were not unique to Britain only in the period, it was only there that they were collective, reacting with each other to reform the economic structure and social and economic relationships. The cumulative of all these changes which started in Britain subsequently spread throughout Europe, the United States of America, and Canada and eventually to its colonies and the entire world.
Imperialism brought the modern state, modern scientific thought, modern technology and what is known as westernization to other continents and eventually created the basis of the new nations especially as industrialization, education and the creation of an administrative cadre produced local elite politicians urbanized masses who saw themselves as members of a country dominated by foreigners. Colonialism brought the colonies also under the umbrella of new scientific upsurge and industrial revolution, new trading policies, new western education, new administration, new religion and new socio political situations. For example, in India and in Africa, it was the British who brought with them the remnants of the new western thoughts and ideas. It was the British who introduced English education, set up the Christian churches and opened the English law courts in both India and the African countries.

It was not that all these trends developed all of a sudden; they had been developing over a long time scale and yet they reached a peculiar urgency during the early twentieth century. The war of 1914-1919 dramatically crystallized and hastened the changes, resulting in a more complex and intricate world.

So far we have seen how the global scenario was ripe for revolution. Now we shall look at Africa and India, the situation in these two countries and how receptive they were towards the changes of ‘Modernity’ as a result of the influence of European colonization under these headings:

1. The African Social Scape
2. The Indian Socio Political Spectrum

The African Social Scape

The Africa of the later 19th and early 20th century was one which was in the process of transformation, undergoing a lot of socio political and cultural upheaval. The Europeans had not only set their foot but established themselves firmly on the
soils of Africa. The close knit Ibo family and the society was no longer the same organic whole and disintegration had started at all levels. The simple, frugal and subsistence society had paved way for a complex, greedy and lavish urban set up with loss of ethical and moral values and discipline. Gone were the days of ‘Age is respected and achievement is revered’ (1958 p8).

Informal local education had gradually led to the much aspired English education which not only ensured a post in the civil services but also accorded an upward mobility in the society. The fancy for overseas higher education was so much so that people even went to the extent of bribing the concerned authority sanctioning the scholarship. English educated youngsters lead a lavish life and cared very little for ethical values and moral code of conduct. They dashed, ate and enjoyed their life to the core, had very little religion in them and were ready to go against the customs of the clan at the slightest instance.

The Indian Socio Political Spectrum

During the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century, a two fold process marked the development of socio political thought in India. On the one hand, a part of India was strictly agrarian, rural, traditional and superstitious and conventional. On the other hand, with the advent of the Europeans, despite much pain suffering and frustration, many villagers particularly the young were exposed to a sense of exhilaration about the opening up of new opportunities and possibilities. In short, the colonial Indian society saw the co-existence of the traditional and the modern.

One of the important characteristics of colonial India was gradual elimination of the distinction between urban and rural life. One apparent consequence was the mass exodus from rural areas to the towns and the entry of technology into the
countryside. The result was that younger people migrated and able bodied men took jobs away from the land and only older people were left behind. The erstwhile agricultural families started giving more importance to education and related careers. As such villages wore deserted looks while the towns started crowding.

The English started a two fold brisk expansion in India: through education and through religion. Some affluent Indian families already started self study of the English language and science like that of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Tagore’s family etc. When the British under the leadership of Lord Macaulay, William Bentinck and the like established English schools, they were literally flooded. C.V. Trevelyan, in his *History of British Rule and Colonisation in India* speaks on this aspect thus:

The popularity of English schools was soon obvious. The thirst for the new learning was so great that the demand for English schools was very high. The passion for English knowledge penetrated the most obscure and extended to the most remote parts of India. (1838 p82)

With the industrial revolution, the scientific inventions, discoveries and new innovations started percolating in the minds of the Indian nation. Improved communications increased trade while speeding the development of colonies. Steam ships cut the time of travel from England to India; electric telegraphy and railways opened up and unified the colonies. By 1870, submerged cables were laid linking Canada, India, New Zealand and Australia with London. As a result travel between England and India increased. This resulted in the emergence of a new class of people who were fluent in English and as such interacted with the British.

Apart from education, the coming of the rail, the steel plough in the village, and the factory in the town, the introduction of the postal system, electric telegraphy, laying of the GT and other highways were all the other impacts of the European
Colonialism.

In the field of religion, the missionaries had established their churches and were on a proselytizing spree. Their target was usually the labourers working in the plantations or those who were tempted by their luring. They translated the Bible into the regional languages and brought Christianity, to the door step of the people.

Having known the global scenario of the age, we now move on to the next important issue of the role of a writer and his writing in the society.

The British Raj, English education, English literature along with a host of other important aspects played a vital role in the development of Kannada literature. The English education introduced by the colonial rulers received a lot of impetus all over. It helped the natives to get a glimpse of what is happening around the globe. It exposed the natives to the English language, literature, culture, ideas and ideologies of the western world. Conversely the English also started acquainting themselves with the local language, literature and culture. Many of the Indian classics were also rendered into English.

Many great historians like Elphenstein, Castel, Vincent Smith and others studied and researched on Indian History and came up with 'The Cambridge History of India'. Indians started realizing the greatness of their native culture through the western eye. Rajaram Mohan Roy started the first newspaper in Bengal, whereas in Mangalore the first Kannada newspaper 'Mangalore Samachar' was started in 1843 published by Hermann Mogling and the first Kannada periodical Mysore Vrittantha Bodhini by Bhashyam Bhaskaracharya was started. The introduction and starting of English education had a multi folded impact on the native Indians:

Firstly, they were exposed to a free and open English society and way of life.
Secondly, English education came with a twin package of English education and Christianity. Thirdly, Science and Technology made their way into the life of the natives. Fourthly, a set of the native intelligentsia advocated and helped the spreading of the new way of life. Lastly, it created a new awakening among the native people about the native flaws and evils inherent in the society.

Thus English education introduced by the Colonial masters created a real awakening in all spheres of life. There was a need to meet the challenges posed by the new culture and reassert its identity. When the Europeans started claiming superiority, the natives realized the inevitability and need to redefine their cultural identity. They tried to do this in two ways - a) By highlighting their oriental cult and studies, and b) By trying to do away with certain inhuman and unbecoming native practices and rituals.

It was the time for spiritual awakening also as many of our great intelligentsia like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswathi, Sri Aurobindo and others started an aggressive spiritual camp highlighting the glories of English education on the one hand and condemning some of the irrational blind customs and practices. While practices like the Sati, Child Marriage and untouchability were challenged, widow re-marriage and female education were advocated. A number of spiritual centres were established like the "Arya Samaj, the Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj. The Ramakrishna Ashram and the like.

Western Science and Technology played a major role in the modernization of India. Especially communication and transportation were the prime modernizing devices. As a result of telephones, telegraphs and the printing press, oral and written communication became faster and information spread faster across the nook and corner of the country. Politically, colonization with its English education created
awareness among the natives about self-rule, democracy and freedom and kindled the spirit of nationalism. The mentality of submission and subservience to a supreme authority received a jolt and Gandhian notion of individual morality and the liberal humanism of the West gained popularity. The history of the cultural awakening or even the history of native literary texts is relevant because literature is not an isolated activity but a literary expression of the combined effect of mind and milieu on man. Literature is but the reflection of life and when any society is undergoing a social upheaval or is in transition, the literature of the Age registers the same spirit. The evolution of the novel in India as a form of literature coincided with the growth of nationalism. The burning issues of the time were Nationalism, the developing spirit of Enquiry, rising individualism against conventional joint family system, the identity of women and the marginalized section of the society, changing human relationships under changed social conditions, the disintegration of the rural agrarian economy and the East-West encounter.

Public amenities like the railways, the road, the school, the hospital, the posts and telegraphs all are shown as symbols of modernity in Indian literature. These symbols are used to explore the impact of modernity and also to depict the attitude or response of the characters to socio-cultural changes. Hence a survey of the literature of the time can definitely be taken as an indication of the awareness of the time. In the words of Kuvempu, the renowned Kannada writer, “Literature is often described as the reflection of life. It not only reflects life but also affects life’ (2003 p282). He is also very well aware of the fact that change is the order of the day and that the writings of an age reflect those changes effectively which in turn influence life indirectly. In his Preface to Kuvempu Samagra Gadya, H.J.Lakkappa Gowda conveys the inevitability of Change as follows:
As and when life, life styles values and vision of life changes, it is but natural that the pattern, perspectives and objectives of life also change. It is necessary that this constant changing life and its reflection-literature influenced by the ever changing local and global impacts need to be subjected to changing parameters of criticism. If not traditional writings will end up as museum specimen (2003 p7)\(^\text{11}\) of preface) (translation by the researcher).

**Novel as the New Form of Literature**

The spread of education, an increased awareness of the changing national and global scenario, growth of individualism, progress of printing and many more such factors contributed to the emergence of a new literary form named as ‘novel’. Bengal being the first place to come under British regime, it was also the birth place of the Indian Renaissance. This spirit of Renaissance later spread like an epidemic to all parts of India. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya was the first important Indian writer who tried his hand in the novel form both in Bengali and in English. His novel ‘*Ananda Mutt*’ (1882) is based on Sannyasi Rebellion that took place in 1772. In *Ananda Mutt*, Bankim Chandra exhibits an ambivalent attitude towards colonialism which inspires nationalism and is also indicative of the need for western intervention. Bankim strongly believed that the concept of nationhood and the spirit of nationalism had its roots in colonialism and English education and expressed it very clearly in one of his essays ‘*Bangadarshini*’ (1985, p49)\(^\text{12}\).

Commenting on Bankim Chandra’s novel Meenakshi Mukherji remarks:

The importance of the book lies not in the authentic portrayal of a historical period but its impact on the people who read it. It consolidates the inchoate ideals and aspirations of a people who
needed a new myth. And the ending of the novel interests the modern reader as an example of the characteristic ambivalence of Bankim's as well as most educated Indian attitude towards British rule, an attitude which wavered between the dream of an independent India and admiration for the British (1985 p51).^1

Regional Literature of Karnataka

The history of modern Kannada literature can be traced to early nineteenth century. One notices varied influences in the development of the regional Kannada writing like spiritualism, divinity, royalty, Sanskrit literature, English literature etc. G.S. Shivarudrappa recognizes three different instincts in the development of Kannada literature: Spiritualism, Royalty who patronized literature and Sanskrit literature. (1986 p139-140)^14 While A.N.Murthy Rao maintains that, "divine, negotiating with divinity and the related karma theories form the fundamental factors on which Kannada literature is being built", L.S.Seshagiri Rao speaks on the "impact of Sanskrit literature especially poet Bana on the narrative and imaginative skills of the Kannada writer with examples from Maddiddunno Maharaya of M.S.Puttanna" (1994 p 9)^15.

The other impetus to modern literature came from English education and the Christian missionaries who had the intention of propagating the gospel through the local language. With communication and transport taking a heed in Indian environment, the novel form developed almost simultaneously in various Indian languages. From Bengal, the novel form spread to other parts of India. Coastal Karnataka opened itself first to missionary activities and English education as it was under the Tamil Presidency then. It was here with Mangalore as its hub that the first novel in Kannada (1899), the first short story (1900), the first Kannada newspaper
(1843) all came into being. The establishment of Basel Mission, the evangelical activities, the starting of Christian educational institutions, the presence of Arya Samaj aiming at the revival of Hinduism, the nationalist movement under the leadership of Karnad Sadashiv Rao all these churned Coastal Karnataka. In the words of Ganesh U.H., “A multilingual and multicultural atmosphere prevailed there with people using different languages-Kannada, Tulu, Konkani and Urdu and following different faiths like Hinduism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity” (2012 p70)^16. Speaking on the early Kannada novels, C.N.Ramachandran says:

The earliest modern novels in Kannada language are the ‘Suryakantha’ by Lakshmi Gadagkar and ‘Indira Bai’ by Gulwadi Venkata Rao. B.Venkatacharya learnt Bengali language and translated the novels of Bankim Chandra into Kannada. Later the first realistic novel in Kannada *Indira Bai* took its birth at such a critical juncture in 1899 (2001 p25)^17.

A similar example is seen in the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer At Ease* where the protagonist Julius Obi returns with reformist intentions to his native country after higher studies in England. During the colonial period England is looked at as the pivotal centre for new and innovative ideas and modern knowledge. Hence, visiting England is almost equivalent to having a head on collision with modernity.

Some of U.R.Anantha Murthy’s novels like *Ghatashraddha* and *Bharatipura* also form good specimen novels exhibiting modernity in terms of movements and reforms. Jagannath, the protagonist of *Bharathipura*, Ghanashyam of *Divya*, Keshav in the story ‘Clip Joint’, Ananthu in the ‘Stallion of the Sun’ all return to their native trying to introduce changes and reforms. A similar situation is found in
Kuvempu’s ‘Kanooru Subbamma Heggadathi’ in the character of Hoovaiah who goes out of his native village and gets back to it, educated and reformed like Rama of Karanth’s ‘Return to the Soil’ who returns to Kodi with a new zeal to implement modern methods to traditional farming for better progress. Thus in colonial literature one finds movements from rural to urban or native to overseas, signaling movement from tradition to modernity.

To take a reference to Arjun Appadurai who posits ‘Modernity implies a general break with all sorts of past’. He considers ‘media and migration as its two major and interconnected diatrics and explores their joint effect’ (1997 p4).^18^ In the words of C.N.Ramachandran:

Gulwadi’s Indira Bai can be considered a paradigm of the reformist novel. At one level it posits and advocates the colonial equation of English education = modernity = progress. It associates everything that is regressive-religiosity, hypocracy, superstitions criminality with one set of characters and everything that is progressive. (2001 p49)\(^19^\)

The English tried to influence the natives by introducing English education and also Christianity. Many leading Kannada writers like Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, Shivarama Karanth, Kuvempu and U.R.AnanthaMurthy depict in different ways the impact of colonization and the related changes therein.

**Modern Kannada Novel**

The genesis of the novel as a form of literature is a recent one as compared to either prose or poetry and is considered to be triggered with colonization. At the same time it is equally true that the local narrative tradition too did have an impact. Typical examples of this are Kempu Narayana’s ‘Mudra Manjusha’ (1873) a historical novel, and an innovative version of the Sanskrit version and Galaganatha’s ‘Prabuddha
Padma Nayana' (1898) and Bankim Chandra's ‘Durgesha Nandini’ are other specimens of early Kannada novels. The novel as a form developed well during the 1925 – 1950, often referred to as the ‘Golden Harvest’ period of Kannada fiction. The literature of the period dealt extensively with subjects of everyday life, rural themes and the common man. The language used was less inhibited and made generous use of colloquialism and slang. Aesthetic concerns replaced the didactic and a sense of form developed. Shivarama Karanth, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, Kuvempu and others are the prominent writers of the Age.

Kuvempu’s conception of modern Kannada literature:

Modern Kannada literature has its source in situations and is the effect of western literature and culture especially influenced by English literature. New forms of literature like short stories, novels and criticism have evolved. Freedom has taken precedence over theory; a live violation of principles is considered better than blind adherence to set principles. The target reader is the common man rather than enlightened scholar. (2003 p716)²⁰ (Translation by the researcher).

Modernity in African Literature

Before dealing with the African novel, we need to study the salient features of the African literature. In trying to know what African literature is, we come across various interpretations. Some try to define African literature as:

- Any literary work written in any language about Africa or Africans with African themes.
- African natives writing in any language, meaning the origin of the writer is significant or
- African writers writing about their own life, themes and culture.
Defining African literature, Abiola Irele writes:

The term ‘Africa’ appears to correspond to a geographical notion but we know that, in practical terms, it also takes in those areas of collective awareness that have been determined by ethnic, historical and sociological factors as they affect and express themselves in our literature, marking off for it a broad area of reference. Within this area of reference then and related to certain aspects that are intrinsic to the literature, the problem of definition involves as well, a consideration of aesthetic modes in their intimate correlation to the cultural and social structure which determine and define the expressive schemes of African peoples and societies (1992 p43)

The African literature, in the earlier times had a legacy of rich oral tradition - the Ibo, the Yoruba, the Huasa and the like. It was mainly in Prose or in Verse form. The African literature is divided into four different categories - The Oral literature, The Pre-colonial Literature, Colonial Literature and Postcolonial Literature. The early African writings were not very influential as they were more or less written imitations of their oral tradition. The writings of Amos Tutuola of Nigeria, D.O.Fagunwa in Yoruba, Violet Dulu in Zulu, S.E.K. Mqhayi in Xhosa and Mario Antonio in Portuguese bear the testimony.

The Pre Colonial African literature was more or less oral and was either in prose or verse form. It was abound in folk tales. One popular form of African folk tale is the Trickster story which revolves round animals. It is in a way identical to the Panchatantra even the Jataka tales. Trickster – Picaresque stories depict small animals using their wits to survive encounters with larger creatures. The best known
work in this tradition is the 'Kebra Nagas't or 'The Glory of the Kings'written in Ge'ez of the origins of the Solomonic line of the Emperor of Ethiopia.

The Colonial African literature consists primarily of slave narratives. Africans exposed to western languages, began to write in their tongues. In 1911 Joseph Ephram Casely published what is known as the first African novel written in English 'Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation'. During this period, African plays also emerged. The first English language African play was published by Herbert Issac. Ernest Dhlomo of South Africa called The Girl who killed to save: Nongqawuse, the Liberator in 1935. African literature, during the period of global wars displayed themes of liberation, independence and negritude. The first anthology of French language poetry was published by Leopald Sedor Senghor in 1948. Postcolonial Literature like English, French and their native languages and also in their local languages like, Swahili, Yoruba, Hausa and others. The writers of the Age discussed varied themes in their works. Mazrui. A. Ali, speaking on the issues handled in the writings says:

The writers of the Age reflected several conflicting themes like the clash between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self reliance, between rural and newly urban, between genders and generations and between Africanity and Humanity. (1935 p564)\(^2\). Other themes include social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries and the rights and roles of women. Major novelists of the era include Chinua Achebe, Elechi Amadi, Ayi Amaah, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Kweh, Awoonor, Kofi and others.
Peter Abrahams has written Mine Boy, which depicts the plight of a young man caught in the complexities of urban life and racial segregation in Johannesburg. Ayi Kwei Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born portrays the postcolonial corrupt condition of Africa and how a railway clerk tries to avoid the pressures of corruption in Ghana. Seydome Badian reflects the complexities of a family caught between traditional ways and western influences particularly in relationship to the marriage of girls in The Sacred Night. Most African countries gained independence during the 1950s and 1960s. The literature of the time has grown in quantity and recognition. But still the African writers in this period wrote in western languages.

The history of African and Kannada literature display some commonalities and contrasts in the wake of European rule. Colonialism is often considered a catalytic agent in promoting literacy, education, spirit of nationalism and other such issues. Kannada and African fiction of the sixties and seventies are identical in many respects, in the sense they depict vividly their respective contemporary societies in their entity. The novels of Achebe and Karanth portray the social change, cultural discord, new phases of political changes, rural urban criss-crossings, spirit of nationalism, spiritual awakening, lulls and laments, decadent rural settings, tragic urbanization, disappearing moral values, old values being replaced by new ones, individualistic and internal critiques, cultural dislocations, Postcolonial corruption, chaos and many more such themes. Commenting on the features of the Third World Writings, Charles Larsen comments:

The third world writings distinguish themselves from western writings in that they use situational themes, and peripheral characters or the community is given more importance than the protagonist. The community of the third world literature usually would be experiencing
a similar situation. Hence importance is more on the situation rather than the character. That situation would more or less be the experience of a particular community. (1976 p11-12)

But Nataraj Huliyar does not totally agree with Larson’s analogy. He cites supportive examples from both African and Kannada literature to refute Larson’s analogy:

While Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat* partially correspond to Larson’s theory, it is not applicable to Amos Tutola’s *The Palm Wine Drunkard* or Soyinka’s *The Interpreters*. Similarly certain novels in Kannada literature like *Indira Bai*, *Devadootaru*, *Maadiddunno Maharaya* etc are also character oriented and not situational as indicated by Larsen (2004 p46)

Having studied the socio-political situation of the age, we move on to the impact of ‘art’ and the ‘artist’ on society in the next chapter titled *The Artist and his Art*. 
END NOTES


5. Cited in Karl Marx, *Das Capital* (First Published 1867), (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1999) 490


9. Cited in Trevelyan C.V. *History of British Rule and Colonisation in India*, (1838) 82


13. Ibid. p51

14. G.S. Shivarudrappa ed Kannada Sahityada Pramukha Preranegalu: Dashavarshika Vimarshegalu, (Bangalore: Karnataka Sahitya Academy, 1986) 139-140


17. C. N. Ramachandran, Shivaram Karanth: Makers Of Indian Literature (New Delhi: Sahitya Achademy, 2001) 25

18. Arjun Appa Dorai, Modernity at Large (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997) 4

19. C. N. Ramachandran, Shivaram Karanth: Makers Of Indian Literature (New Delhi: Sahitya Achademy, 2001) 49


