CHAPTER II

NARRATIVE MODELS: FAMILY, SOCIETY AND NATIONALISM
The Children sang:
"Mother, hill!
Thou sole creed and wisdom art,
Thou our very mind and heart,
And the life-breath in our bodies.
Thou as strength in arms of men,
Thou as faith in hearts dost reign."¹

The above citation is a patriotic song sung by the Children when they face the British artillery in the concluding sections of Anandamath. The narrator observes, "The fierce roar of the British cannons drowned this great song of the Children."² Ironically enough, Bankim's narrator is able to see that the great aspirations of the people of India are simply drowned in the expansion of the British raj. Historically speaking, it took another two hundred years for the song to emerge into light and resonance. The National Movement in India had a long incubation before it became a mighty movement to dislodge the British. This movement influenced life in all spheres, including that of creative activity. Literature
associated with the National Movement is vast, varied, and uneven in quality. But there are a few great novels which capture the spirit of the Children's song in Anandamath.

Nagarajan's Athawar House, Bankim Chandra Chatterji's Anandamath and Raja Rao's Kanthapura, which were written before we attained independence have structural elements that make them models for the other novels. In analysing these novels, I have shown at the appropriate place the structural features that elevate them to the level of a model.

I

Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says, "Nagarajan's novel Athawar House was a family chronicle after the manner of Galsworthy's The Forsyte Saga and ended with the adventurous, even revolutionary inter-caste marriage of Sona, a Maratha brahmin girl to Venkataramani, a Tamil Smartha." It is the story of a Maratha joint family located in a village of the twenties and the thirties in Tamilnadu. The gradual transformation of the family from traditional
conservatism to modern liberalism and the influence of nationalism and freedom struggle in the internal affairs of the family are dramatized in the novel. The National Movement is not the theme of the novel, but only the background to the story of the family. The author narrates the story with ironic detachment, but he appears to be aware of the Indian nationalism and the integration it brought to the people of different regions of the country. Most of the scenes are drawn from real incidents of the freedom struggle.

Nagarajan's *Athawar House*, a family chronicle, is divided into three parts according to the history of the freedom struggle. The first part commences with the passing of Rowalatt Bill in nineteen nineteen and ends in nineteen twentyone, with the landing of the Prince of Wales in Bombay, which results in an all India hartal and arrests of Motilal Nehru, C.R.Das, Lajapat Rai and twenty five thousand Congress workers. The political aspect is introduced through Raghu's political consciousness. He fails to get a job and becomes critical of the British and supports the Home
Anantakrishna is an I.C.S. Officer. His teen-aged son, Venkataramani takes part in the freedom struggle. The father is perturbed and asks his son, "What is your Head-master doing about that? He does not put a stop to all this non-sense?" "What can the Head-master do? He can't prevent boys from staying away. What power has he to do that? He is not a greater man than Mahatma Gandhi," replies the boy. At the same time Lakshman Doss, the Secretary of the Congress Committee of Gandindi invites Chandrakant De, an excellent orator, a fellow worker of Gokhale, and a trusted person of Gandhi, to deliver a speech at Gandindi. Thousands of people gather to hear him. But the meeting is banned in time and the police disperse the people. De is adamant and still addresses the public in defiance of the police order and says, "Adopt the creed of non-cooperation, which is the only means of our national salvation. Eshew the law-courts and Government aided schools and boycott foreign cloth for all you are worth. Above all, remember the doctrine of 'ahimsa' and decline to have any truck with violence."
Go, good men of Gandhi, fight the good fight by peaceful means and help Mother India to come to her own." For defying the police order, De is arrested and tried for contempt of court. Gandindi observes a hartal. Students abstain from classes and gather at the court along with a large number of people. De refuses to participate in the proceedings of the court in keeping with the spirit of Non-cooperation and is convicted and sentenced to one month's simple imprisonment. People are agitated and a skirmish takes place between the people and the police.

In the second part, members of the Swarajya party at their Kanpur session are directed to walk out of the Legislatures. The second part ends with the acceptance of the Constitution drafted by the Motilal Nehru convention by the Congress sessions. In this part Gopinath, an elder member of the Athawar House, wants to seek election to the District Board of Kedaram. The younger brother, Raghunath forbids him from contesting, with a nationalist bias. Raghnath hates the idea of an Athawar seeking election at a time when the whole country has declared its support for Non-cooperation.
and had gone in for wholesale boycott of councils of every description."^6

The third part commences in nineteen twenty-nine, when the revolutionaries throw a bomb at the Assembly in Delhi and the Viceroy declares Dominion status for India, and the Congress session at Lahore declares its goal – complete independence. It also describes the launching of the civil Disobedience Movement. The narrator describes Gandhi's march to Dandi:

"He had marched to the sea-coast, exhorting the people all along the route to break the Salt Law. Clad in a loin cloth, staff in hand, he marched along, followed by a ragged band of followers, the whole thing looking like an Old Testament picture come to life...Government, however, considered it as a direct challenge to the authority and proceeded to deal with it accordingly. And early in May, Gandhi shared the fate of many of his lieutenants and was put away in Jail."^7

Gandinidi also participates in the Civil Disobedience Movement under the leadership of Lakshman Doss. A public meeting in the town condemns the imprisonment of Gandhi and his followers. Lakhsmana Doss also launches a vigorous propaganda for the boycott of foreign cloth with picketing parties to
prevent people going to these shops. The narrator's neutral stance is very clearly seen in his description of Venkataramani, the teen aged boy and an ardent follower of Gandhi who acts as a Congress volunteer and hears the speeches of nationalist leaders. When De is arrested, his father as the Sub-Divisional Officer, says that it is he who will have to try De and send him to jail. The son shrugs his shoulders and feels ashamed.

On the trial day of De, Venkataramani is arrested and later released. His father is perturbed over this and sends the boy to Kedaram to be with his grandfather. He meets Raghunath on the way. Raghunath encourages him. He consoles the boy and says that the boy has done nothing to be ashamed of. He also says that people older than the boy would follow his example.

After some years, Venkataramani becomes a Magistrate. But he does not follow the example of his childhood. As a school boy, he followed Lakshman Doss in the National Movement and adored him. But later he tries him as a Magistrate and sends him to jail without...
any hesitation. Before the trial, the government asks Venkataramani, the young magistrate, if he would himself try the Secretary of the Congress or would want somebody else to do it. But the young magistrate replies that he is determined to do his duty. This he does without ever faltering. Yet, there is not a word of contempt or ridicule for this character from the writer's pen and this makes the character more realistic. Perhaps, it shows at the same time that the nationalist aspect remains a mere back-drop to the family chronicle.

From the above discussion it follows that the author does not intend his novel to be a plea for nationalism. But he has taken care to signify through it, the idea of national integration. He has shown the mixing up of the people of different regions of the country, presenting it not as an ideal, but as a reality. He has shown the inter-caste and inter-state relationships in the story from a national perspective. The overtone of inter-caste and inter-state relations and of friendly mixing of the people of different regions is too conspicuous in the novel to be missed. This can
only be interpreted as the nationalist's emphasis on the emotional integration of the various regions of the country. As Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says,

"Nagarajan's *Athawar House* like some of the great European novels that detail the slow changes in close-knit families over a period of years—like John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, *Athawar House* covers a period of fifteen years in the history of a Maratha brahmin family in South India. Like Old Jolyon in Galsworthy's novel, Gopinath is the patriarch of *Athawar House*. But with the relentless passage of the years comes also the study erosion of old values and prized traditions. When the novel ends, Gopinath is dead, and an 'un-orthodox' marriage takes place between a Maratha brahmin girl and a Tamil Samartha brahmin boy. The walls of Jericho have begun to fall indeed!"

One hardly disagree with Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's estimate of the novel. The comparison with *The Forsyte Saga* and *Buddenbrooks* suggests a significant point. The novel may be taken as a structurial model. Indian National Movement has many aspects; political, historical and spiritual. The novelist has succeeded in structurising the experience in such a way that the structure absorbs the experience. The mighty National Movement is reduced to the level of a family story, giving the reader a
microcosmic image of the changing national scene. In this way it compresses the sweep and vision of Anandamath. While Bankim and Nagarajan have structured reality to suit their fictional concern. Raja Rao provides a moral fictional document in Kanthapura, which the village community transforms itself into a protagonist under the spell of Gandhian ahimsa.

II

Mahatma Gandhi's political philosophy, which owes much to the teachings of Thoreau, Tolstoy and Jesus Christ, is not the philosophy of the great novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Mahatma Gandhi preached and practised ahimsa. Chatterji, on the other hand, set forth the principle of unselfish militancy as taught by Krishna in Bhagavat Gita, the Bible of Hindus. Aurobindo Ghose acknowledges Chatterji as his political guru and says, "of the new spirit which is leading the nation to resurgence and independence, Bankim Chandra Chatterji is the inspirer and the political guru...His was the sweetest voice that ever spoke in prose."

Bankim Chandra Chatterji occupies a unique
position in India's renaissance and in her revolutionary movement. Bankim suffered a shock at the failure of the so called Sepoy Mutiny. He saw that the people of India were fast being denationalized by the English. In Chatterji's view the reborn freedom is to include not merely freedom from the British rule but also freedom from the inequities of the caste system and other oppressions. Bankim's dream of new nationalism for India did not die with him. Its translation into terms of national achievement has now become the mission of millions of Indians. Bankim's greatest achievement for India is that he made patriotism a religion, and his writings became the gospel of India's struggle for political independence. The most popular among those writings, the most widely read by the masses and the most deeply impregnated by the spirit of his own great love of India is the novel *Anandamath*. In the original Bengali and in translations in many Indian languages it was widely read for twenty-four years after its first publication. Lord Curzon, in an effort to destroy the solidarity of the Bengali people, partitioned the
province of Bengal. This act of arbitrary rule proved to be a blessing in disguise. It united India, and the great Nationalist Movement was born in Bengal in the same year. Bankim's novel became the inspiration of this revolutionary movement and Indians dedicated themselves to the task of making Chatterji's dream come true.

The Indian National Movement created not only a new political perspective, but a fresh literary milieu in the country. Even before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the political scene, writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterji wrote novels like Anandamath and Durgeshnandini. In Anandamath, Bankim introduces sanyasis into the narrative, and like the Hindu widow, Sanyasis too figure often in Indian fiction, sometimes as beneficient, sometimes as malevolent, and sometimes as merely ludicrous characters. A decade after he passed away, he suddenly leapt into national fame as the inspired author of the song. "Bande Mataram", which is imbedded in Anandamath. "The Mantra had been given, "said Sri Aurobindo at the time of the partition of Bengal, "and in a single day a whole people had been
converted to the religion of partition." It rang through the length and breadth of the land as a call to duty. It inspired equally the Mahatma Gandhi pacifists and the Aurobindo Ghose revolutionaries. Suffering the most barbarous atrocities in the British jails in India, thousands of Mahatma Gandhdi's followers chanted this great song of freedom.

Apart from their absorbing story interest, Bankim's novels are seen to be in some measure the testaments of a seer's wisdom, and readers do not hesitate to infer from this Bible of the new patriotism. And what exactly is this gospel? Sri Aurobindo has summed it up in a few lines:

It was the gospel of fearless strength and force which he preached under a veil and in images in Anandamath and Devi chaudhurani. And he had an inspiring, unerring vision of the moral strength which must be at the back of the outer force. He perceived that the first element of the moral strength must be 'tyaga', complete self-sacrifice for the complete self-devotion to the work of liberation...Again he perceived that the second element of the moral strength needed must be self discipline and organisation. This truth he expressed in the elaborate training of Devi Chaudhurani for her work, in the strict rules of the association of Anandamath in the pictures of perfect organisation which those books contain. Lastly he perceived that the third element of moral
strength must be the infusion of religious feeling into patriotic work. The religion of patriotism - That is the master idea of Bankim's writings."

It is to be noted here that it is "Bande Mataram," "Hail to the mother", sung by some patriotic characters in Anandamath, became the national song for Indians, which, acting like a mantra, roused them against the British rule. It inspired equally the non-violent pacifists and also revolutionaries. Bankim wanted to create a new myth for Bengal in order to shake people out of their somnolence and he found in the historical record of the Sanyasi Rebellion, a convenient point where elements of bravery, religion and nationalism would be made to converge. Thus Anandamath is a deliberate attempt to mythicize history. Anandamath is by no means Bankim's best novel, nor is its historical frame-work authentic, yet the novel is significant for many extra-literary reasons, especially for the tremendous impact it had on subsequent nationalist movements in Bengal and other parts of India.

"The secret societies modelled themselves closely upon the society of the 'Children' of Anandamath."
"Bande Mataram", the battle cry of the 'Children' became the war cry not only of the revolutionary societies but the whole of nationalist Bengal,"¹² wrote Lord Ronaldshay in nineteen twentyfive. The novel fuses among Hindus a revived religious fervour with a new found patriotic zeal.

In the seventies of the eighteenth century, the whole of Bengal had not come under the British rule. The British merely collected the revenue while the welfare of the people rested in the weak and dissipated nawab. To quote from the opening chapter of Anandamath, "If cowardly Mirjafar - the heinous traitor was unable to protect himself, how would he protect the lives and property of the people of Bengal? Mir Jafar drugged himself and dozed. The British extorted the revenue and wrote despatches. The Bengalies merely wept and resigned themselves to their ruin."¹³

The action of the novel Anandamath is placed in the seventies of the eighteenth century, a decade which saw in Bengal a dreadful famine as well as the so called Sanyasis Rebellion. Although the famine and
the insurrection are historically recorded events, Bankim did not emphasize the historicity of the novel. Bankim himself admits in one of the essays in Bangadarshan, that the concept of nationhood is the direct result of English education.

The novel thus reflects the concerns of Bankim's own time, a period marked by the rise of nationalism. The fact that the background of Bankim's *Anandamath* is the devastating famine, which is said to have wiped out a third of Bengal's population, and that in this novel he deals with the nationlistic endeavours of a group of Sanyasis reminiscent of Phadke's group, is not a mere coincidence. The religious sanyasis become the persons who inculcate nationalism in the minds of the people and their ashrams become the store houses of arms and meeting places of rebels. The novel is set against the nightmarish misrule and devastating famine of Bengal. The British collect the revenue, even if mother earth refused to yield wealth. Mahendra Singh, a prosperous householder, is driven out of his village, Padachina with his wife and child by the prospect of starvation. While travelling through the devastated
land, he is separated from his wife, Kalyani, and the child. Kalyani and the child are carried away to the forest by the robbers. The famine is so severe that the robbers are ready to eat human flesh. One of the hungry men cries angrily: "We have been forced to eat the meat of jackals and dogs. Now lest we die of starvation, comrades, let us eat this man," The entire band of robbers shout with approval and one of them begins to prepare a fire for the feast. In the meanwhile another person suggests that it would be better to roast and eat the young woman and her baby rather than the dried flesh of their leader. The above citation is enough to describe the famine of Bengal. While the robbers are quarrelling, among themselves Kalyani runs away with her child. The robbers follow her in darkness. Kalyani cannot find her way in the darkness. She meets Mahatma, a man with long hair and beard, dressed in pure white. He saves her and takes her to his ashram. He goes out to find Mahendra Singh. In the meanwhile Mahendra Singh is caught by the British and later released by the men of Mahatama Satya.
Mahatma Satya, the leader of 'Children' asks Mahendra to go back to Padachina, construct a formidable fort and manufacture guns, cannons and ammunition to bring freedom to the mother land. For the project, money would be supplied by Mahatma.

"Now," Mahatma Satya continues, "please go home and live there. In batches, two thousand Children will follow you. You can utilize them for the building of the fort. Then build a house of solid iron. That will be the treasury of the Children. One by one I shall send you the chests full of gold and silver and jewellery. You will use this wealth for the building of the fort. And I am gathering experts in the manufacture of cannon and rifles, gun power, shells and bullets. That is the reason, why I asked you to return home immediately."

By gradually sapping the strength of the enemy in guerilla warfare, they finally rout the combined forces of the Muslims and the British in an open encounter. Many Children die singing 'Bande Mataram.' Before long there is not a man left of the English army to convey to Warren Hastings the news of his historic defeat.

Since the victory could not be historically authenticated, in the last chapter of the novel, Bankim introduces an ascetic with prophetic vision, who
dissuades the rebels from going away further. It is necessary, he advises them, to submit to the British rule until the true religion of the Hindus could be purified from its present degenerate and corrupt state by new empirical and scientific knowledge.

**Anandamath** presents a world that ranges between the settled habitat of Pedachina and the surrounding forest. Likewise the women in the novel belong to two realms. But both types of women sacrifice their lives for the sake of the motherland. Kalyani, wife of Mahendra Singh, a prosperous householder, belongs to the 'enclosed space' of a settled homeland. But the ravages of famine, recreated in the novel from authentic historic sources, drive her out of her village into the dangers of the forest outside. The other woman, Shanti, belongs to the forest. When the male patrician is roused to heroic action by the clarion call of sacrifice for the defence of the motherland, the two women range themselves on two different sides. Kalyani, the domesticated wife, becomes the temptress, and Shanti, the outlandish wise, becomes the real *sahadharmini*, the real partner
in religion. Kalyani thinks of herself as an obstacle in the way of her husband's vow of celibacy. In a sense of euphoria, she releases Mahendra from the ties of home, by drinking poison. Even when she is revived, almost miraculously, by Santan Bhabananda, she becomes, against her wishes, a snare and a temptation. Bhabananda has to die alone a hero's death for this lapse. Kalyani is rewarded for acts of self-denial by being rested to her home, now a flourishing base for the manufacture of defence armament and her husband and child. Shanti decides to perform her wife's role beside her ascetic husband Jiban by donning the male sanyasi's disguise and fighting by his side. This dynamic uplift that Bankim gives to the traditional role of a sahadharmini greatly contributes to that patriotic euphoria of the novel which overwhelms any loyalist message that Bankim may have introduced in it. Shanti, for instance, is seen to tackle the British soldiers with admirable Panache. The ease with which Shanti unhorses Lindlay and rides away on his horse could put any modern feminist to shame. In another of the late novels of Bankim, Debi Chaudhurani, the
bandit-heroine has to revert to her earlier identity and make her compromises with domesticity. But Shanti in Anandamath remains a fighter to the last and refuses to go back to domesticity.

When Jiban dies after his heroism has induced the Santans to return to the fight and totally crush the enemy, Shanti finds his corpse. After Jiban is brought back to life by the supernatural presence of the healer, Shanti induces him to renounce the garb of a Sanyasi because they had won the battle and did not want a share in the kingdom. Instead, she accompanies Jiban on their great departure (mahapraṣṭhaṅ), somewhat reminiscent of the final journey of the Pandavas. The neo-pacifist heroine of Bankim chandra marches abreast of her fellow-traveller husband in the joint quest for the welfare of the motherland. Their final departure, though depicted in supernatural terms, is seen as the last act in the heroic defence of the motherland: "Then the two aroṣa hand in hand they disappeared on that moonlit night into infinity. Alas! will the like of them ever appear again? sons like
Jibananda daughters like Shanti?". The restoration of order in the tortuous situation of a colonial society transforms the man-woman relationship into an allegory of heroism that crosses the boundaries of naturalism. The novel begins to aspire to the condition of the epic.

Thus Bankim Chatterji did for Bengali fiction what Michael Madhusudan Dutt had done for Bengali poetry, that is, he brought in imagination. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, known for his caustic criticism and his refusal to flatter anyone for the sake of mere convention wrote, "Bankim Chandra Chatterji ..... besides being a genius in imaginative literature, was certainly the most powerful intellect produced by India in the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest of Hindu minds, perhaps equalled in the whole of the Hindu past only by the great Samkara."16

Bankim is a prophet of modern India who steps back to a grounding in the past in order to take great strides towards the future, as did his contemporary, Bal Gangadhar Tilak. His influence on his countrymen
is deep, inspiring the pacifist philosophical and artistic minds like Ranbindra Tagore's as well as politically inclined Bengalis who resort to terrorist activities to express their nationalist fervour. His works fed the variegated imagination of an awakening India. His song "Bande Mataram", "Hail to the mother", which became India's national song, express his vision of mother India as a Goddess, and of woman as holy and venerable. His vision sparked the imagination of his compatriots in Bengal and other parts of India. Though over a century old now, Anandamath continues to speak to people today. It stimulated an ideal of nationalism in the past, and continues to be thought-provoking in the present, as India struggles to become westernized without losing her soul, to go high-tech and yet keep intact the unique gifts which she can bring to an emerging planetary culture.

Anandamath is the only novel of Bankim Chandra's that can claim full recognition as historical fiction imbued with the spirit of nationalism. It is also a political novel charged with selfless patriotism, with a plot that definitely marks Chatterji's power as a
novelist. As Tagore says, "It may be read as a legendary folk tale of the Eighteenth Century. Bankim's Sanyasis are fabulous men, rather like characters in Mahabharat — where God Krishna appears as a character among princes, princesses, sages, heroes, noble-men, evil courtiers, soldiers. So this novel is a legend of the struggle for freedom against John Company's extortionate rule of the Eighteenth century. In those days, our people accepted renunciation as do Bankim's Sanyasis. Also village people willingly offered to sacrifice themselves for a vow! And women accepted their husbands turning Sadhus and renouncing life. And 'Dharma' still meant 'Maitri', brotherly connection with others.

After centuries of political slavery, of social tyranny and of economic exploitation, the wheel of life in India is beginning to revolve again. And in the new awakening of a great nation, this prophetic novel from the pen of Bankim Chandra Chatterji has played a dynamic part. Though a century has gone by since it was first published in India, its influence has been
steadily progressive with each passing year. The theme song of this great novel is "Bande Mataram" - "Hail to the motherland". Today it is India's national song. It rang through the length and breadth of the land as a call to duty. It inspired equally the Mahatma Gandhi pacifists and the Aurobindo Ghose revolutionaries. Suffering the most barbarous atrocities in the British jails in India, thousands of Mahatma Gandhi's followers chanted this great song of freedom. And when Aurobindo's men stood on the gallows to be hanged for the "crime" of loving their own country, they joyously breathed their last with the sacred mantra of "Bande Matara" on their lips.

As a literary construct Anandamath has action and vision. Its song is the mantra of nationalism. Not only did it influence Bangali literature, but it also made Indian nationalist novel possible. Although the society that the novel presents is the society of the eighteenth century, if can be metaphorically extended to suggest any society which is becoming conscious of itself. It may be called an inaugural book and a model for fiction writing with the theme of patriotism. From
Nagarajan's calm family milieu we go back in Bankim's novel to the turbulent waters of patriotism and a strong love of freedom.

III

N. Radhakrishna, writing about the Nationalist Movement in Indo - Anglian Fiction, sums up Gandhi's influence on every village during the twenties and thirties, "Even this tiny village (Kanthapura) with its humble folk is shaken to its foundation by the whirlwind of Gandhian Revolution." No novelist of the period could escape the Gandhian whirlwind and Raja Rao is no exception to it. So, he dramatizes Gandhian Movement and its effects on a remote slumbering village, Kanthapura. It is transformed into a centre of anti-British activities. The impact of Gandhi on Indian villages is the impact of a dynamic religion sustained by the purity of its supreme practitioners. In this connection Rama Jha observes, "Each Indo-Anglian novelist of the thirties derived from Gandhi what was in accordance with his temperament, ideological orientation if any, absorption of western modern culture and above all his creative needs and
vision of life." This vision of life of each novelist distinguishes him from the contemporary novelists whose creative preoccupations are different. It is this vision that distinguishes one novelist from the other, although they deal with the national themes.

To evaluate Nationalism and Raja Rao's portrayal of Gandhi in his novels, one must have a thorough understanding of Raja Rao's perception of Gandhi and Gandhism. Raja Rao is a confirmed Gandhian. In his interview with Shiva Niranjan, describing his development as a novelist, Raja Rao confirms his commitment of Gandhi, and says, "In Kanthapura I was Gandhian". The novel Kanthapura depicts the Gandhian whirlwind that shook the lethargic little village to its roots from its slumber.

Prof. C.D.Narasimhaiah observes, There are at least three strands of experience in the novel: the political, the religious and the social, and all the three are woven inextricably into one complex story of Kanthapura. It is true this back - of - beyond village slumbering for centuries suddenly comes to life, thanks to the non-violent, non-cooperation movement of Gandhi in the twenties. It is in the handling of this theme that the novelist quickens it to activity and thus gives us an insight into the appalling social conditions of India's villages as also the values that have preserved its people against flood, fire and famine.
and exploitation from within and without more than all, that incomparable manner in which Gandhi tapped the deeply religious and spiritual resources of people living in the remotest parts of India and buildup a national movement in a life time.

The National Movement in *Kanthapura* is the result of traditional religious norms of the village. Moorthy, the protagonist, knows pretty well that the villagers could be very easily influenced by religion. Both the religious bhajans and the National Movement help the novelist penetrate into the deeper layers of human nature. In the novel, Moorthy enters the scene of action by, unearthing a half-sunk linga and arranging a consecration ceremony. He knows pretty well the pulse of the village and the ways and means of drawing the rural folk to the National Movement. He uses rational, religious and moral means on each to make them come together. The narrator says, ".....our Moorthy as we always called him - was going through the backyard one day and seeing a half-sunk linga said, why not unearth it and wash it and consecrate it?" 'why not!' said we all".20

This method of knitting a community is not a new
method in India. It was actually adopted by Bala Gangadhara Tilak during the National Movement. Religion played an important role in the National Movement. Sankara Jayanthi is celebrated in Kanthapura. People come forward in competition and offered dinner for each day of the month. It is through the Harikatha of Jayaramachar that the people of Kanthapura are familiarised with Gandhi, the Congress, and the National Movement. The Harikatha he tells is about Gandhi's birth. The people of Kanthapura realise that Mahatma is a saint, a holy man. But Jayaramachar is arrested and the entire responsibility of mobilising the people falls on the shoulders of Moorthy. He gathers youngsters of his age and all of them throw away their foreign clothes and become Gandhi's men. Two days later, Policeman Bade Khan comes to live in Kanthapura.

Moorthy is depicted as a true replica of Gandhi. To the villagers he is another Gandhi: "He is our Gandhi," "He is the saint of our village." Thus Moorthy exploits the sentiment of religion in introducing the National Movement to the people of
Kanthapura and in bringing them into its fold. According to C.D. Narasimhaiah, "It was Gandhi's greatness that he produced hundreds of little Gandhis throughout the country."\(^{22}\)

Moorthy is shrewd and careful in mobilising the villagers representing different castes and interests by explaining how the National Movement and Swaraj fulfil their aspirations and interests and he prepares them psychologically to face any consequence for the sake of freedom.

He moves very patiently from one quarter to the other, explaining how the British is importing mill made cloth from England and robbing the people of their money. He explains in detail to Nanjamma how she can get clothes without spending her money and thus he brings all people into non-cooperation movement. He asks them to spin yarn; they can spin their yarn and wear their own dress. The uneducated villagers may not understand the economic and political aspects of the spinning, but they do could understand that they can have their clothes woven by them selves and save money.
Even the brahmins do not object to it, because it does not question their caste supremacy. Bhatta and Waterfall Venkamma are the only antagonists of Gandhian ways. But they also approve of the spinning. In this connection, Bhatta says, "I see no fault in Khadi and all that. But it is this pariah business that has been heavy on my soul." Bhatta goes to the extent of excommunicating Moorthy for mixing with pariahs. Bhatta is the representative of traditional brahmins who are against the Gandhian ideology of the removal of untouchability. Bhatta is the symbol of usury and false orthodoxy and low cunning. But strangely, the pariahs of Kanthapura find in Moorthy a redeemer and a messiah who can eradicate the evil of untouchability.

But even Moorthy, the Gandhi of Kanthapura, falters when it comes to practising the mixing of castes. It is to the novelist's credit that he reveals the mental struggle that Moorthy undergoes when he enters pariah's quarters. It is a straight conflict between his brahmin sentiments and Gandhian principles. The integrity and honesty of the novelist is praise-
worthy, for he permits the idealised character to react the way he does in Rachanna's house. "... Moorthy, who had never entered a pariah's house -- he had always spoken to the pariahs from the gutter slab -- Moorthy thinks this is something new, and with one foot to the back and on foot to the fore, he stands trembling and undecided, and then suddenly hurries up the steps and crosses the threshold and squats on the earthen floor."24

But maybe these are reactions of new comers to Gandhism. His behaviour after leaving Rachanna's house may raise the eye brows of many Gandhians. Is this the same Moorthy who preaches castelessness and brotherhood? He feels guilty and tells Rangamma about the incident. He hesitates to enter her house, takes bath in the river and changes clothes. Rangamma, another ardent Gandhian, asks him to change the sacred thread. But Moorthy says that it is not possible to change it as often as he goes to pariah quarters. Then she tells him to purify himself by taking the Ganges' water, and ".... taking the Ganges water he feels a fresher breath flowing through him, and lest
any one should ask about his new adventure, he goes to the river side after dinner to sit and think and pray.\textsuperscript{25} His feelings reveal how he feels relieved of the pollution of entering pariah quarter after taking the Ganges water. He fears for his own community and that's why he leaves for the river. Raja Rao, a brahmin, brings out the instinctive reactions of Moorthy: "After all a brahmain is a brahmin."\textsuperscript{26}

Moorthy goes to Range Gowda, the village patel, and seeks his help in the formation of the village congress of Kanthapura. Moorthy says, "This is what is to be done. We shall start a congress group of Kanthapura and the Congress group of Kanthapura will join the congress of All India. You just pay four annas or two thousand yards of yarn per year, and that is all you have to do, and then you become a congress member. And you must vow to speak Truth, and wear no cloth but the Khadi-cloth."\textsuperscript{27}

Range Gowda refuses and says a few insulting words about pariahs. He does not mince words nor does he care for Moorthy's feelings. But Moorthy doesn't leave
him. He says: "Most certainly, Range Gowda, one cannot become a member of the congress if one will not promise to practice ahimsa, and to speak Truth and to spin at least two thousand yards of yarn per year." But Moorthy is very intelligent and tactful. He does not disapprove of the words of Range Gowda and tries to convince him. Finally he convinces him. Moorthy is too practical to hurt the feelings of the village head, because he needs his assistance in forming the congress committee. Moorthy knows pretty well that if Range Gowda is convinced, there is no need for him to convince each and every one of the village. For him, Range Gowda is there to make the docile villagers fall in line with his activities. So, Moorthy doesn't try to convince the villagers of the need for starting the congress committee nor does he explain the rationale behind the Gandhian ideology of non-violent and non-cooperation movement.

When the Pariahs and Sudras hesitate to become the members of the congress, Range Gowde becomes wild and shouts, "If you are the sons of your fathers, stand up
and do what this learned boy says," and Range Gowda's words were such a terror to them that one here and one there went up before the sanctum to take the oath of practising ahimsa and seeking truth." But the pariahs are made to take the oath in the court yard and not before God. Moorthy remains a mute spectator to all this, whereas the pariahs are always reminded of their social status. Moorthy doesn't utter a single word by way of at least a mild protest. Thus the behaviour of Moorthy bewilders the villagers who consider him their Gandhi. In this way Raja Rao shows that Gandhian followers cannot get rid of their traditional beliefs.

Most of the people do not consider Gandhi a human being but a super man, an avatar of God, and it makes them think that Gandhian ideology can be practised by Gandhi alone. It is very clearly explained by Range Gowda. When he says, "...that is for the Mahatma and you, Moorthappa, not for us poor folk." Gandhian virtues of ahimsa, truth, and loving one's own enemies caught the imagination of the whole gamut of society. But people treat them as something impracticable and
not within their capabilities. This is very clearly seen when the women of Kanthapura express their joy at the burning of Bhatta's house.

It is quite surprising to note that Moorthy does not begin his reformative work at home. His mother herself is left out of the stream of the National Movement. So, Moorthy's excommunication makes her ill, and she dies. Rama Jha stresses the significance of Gandhi's influence on the villagers: "...the significant aspect of Gandhian movement which essentially addressed the village India was religious and spiritual in nature."^31

After Moorthy forms the congress committee in his own village, he gets it affiliated to the Provincial Congress Committee and works whole heartedly for it. He is arrested and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment. Though everybody offers to work for his release, Moorthy refuses. Finally, he is released. Gandhi launches the Civil Disobedience Movement with his historic Dandi March. And the people of Kanthapura, hearing with all devotion the story of this
great pilgrim's progress in his March, get exalted and want their leader Moorthy to lead them in similar action. As one of the villagers says,

"I do not imagine the Mahatma like a man or a God, but like the Sahyadri Mountains, blue, high, wide, and the rock of the evening that catches the light of the setting sun. 'That's what he is. High and yet seeable, firm and yet blue with dusk, and as the pilgrims march up the winding path, march through prickles and boulders, thickets and streams, so shall we march up to the top.""32

Moorthy launches the campaign in the village by taking out a procession to the toddy-grove to offer satyagraha outside the toddy-plantation. The police resort to lathi-charge and many are wounded and hurt seriously. Thus the innocent, unarmed processionists including Moorthy become the victims of police atrocity. A large number of people are arrested and sent to jail. In their next campaign, they take out a procession to the toddy-booth at the coffee estate, where they are again beaten back by the police Government's repression is even more ruthless this time. Even children, old men, and women are not spared and the suffering of the fellow - villagers touches the
heart of the workers of the Skeffington Coffee Estate and they too join their suffering brethren. The whole atmosphere resounds with shouts of 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai.' Many are arrested. Moorthy is also arrested and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Moorthy's involvement in the Skeffington Estate affair on behalf of the workers is similar to that of Gandhi's involvement in the Champaran struggle of the workers. Just as Gandhi could not solve the Champaran problem, Moorthy also cannot solve their problem.

The people in Rampur, Siddapur, and Maddur also picket before Toddy-shops. Soon not only Kanthapura but also the whole country is charged with the spirit of satyagraha and Civil Disobedience. After this the response of the villagers to the movement is by way of launching satyagraha, observing non-cooperation by not paying taxes, and showing disloyalty to the government.

"But day after day Revenue notices fell yellow into our hands, and we said, 'Let them do what they will, we shall not pay our revenues'. And the new patel came, and behind the Patel, the Policeman and behind the Policeman the landlord's agent and we said, 'Do what you will, we shall not pay.' And the policemen would shake their fists at us and say, 'Take care, take care. Things are not as before. You pay or the Government will squeeze water out of
stone. You will have to pay,' and we would stand beside the threshold and say, 'we will see? The Police would go to Pariah's quarter and beat Rachanna's wife, Madanna's old mother and Siddanna's two daughters because they squatted behind the garden wall and sang,

There's one Government, Sister,
There's one Government, Sister,
And that's the Government of the Mahatma."

Thus the author has created an idealised character after the image of Gandhi, like Kandan of K.S.Venkataramani. Both play the part of Gandhi in their own villages and stand amongst the villagers as pillars of Gandhian ideals, firm and yet humble. But Raja Rao's Moorthy is more distinct, more real, and active with a definite programme of the Movement before him.

The next aspect of the novel that contributes to its success as a political novel is the depiction of the National Movement itself during the particular period. The depiction is so real, vivid and masterly that the novel may be called a mirror of the age itself. When Moorthy, the college student, is inspired by Gandhian ideals, he propagates the ideals of social reform by breaking the caste-bar. He also spreads the
Congress ideal of reconstruction of the national economy. Thus the movement at Kanthapura depicted by the author shows us very well how the simple people in the villages of the country are roused to a new national consciousness through the electrifying impact of the great leader of Indian nationalism.

In his Foreword to the novel Raja Rao says, "There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a Sthala - Purana, or legendary history of its own." Following Raja Rao's suggestion, some have called Kanthapura, Gandhi-Purana. The term purana is a generic term which implies free story telling, episodic in structure. It doesn't confine itself to a well organised plot and round characters. Devices like Harikatha refine the structure of Kanthapura. In other words, the puranic structure is so elastic as to absorb a great variety of material. By devising the loose structure which could compress the thematic complexity and variety of the material, Raja Rao provided for posterity the unique narrative model. Nagarajan and Bankim Chandra Chatterji made family and society the core of their model narratives. Thanks to Raja Rao, we
have a model of a variety which is rural based and humanly oriented. When we read Kanthapura, the rural milieu and minor but significant characters attract our attention. I shall discuss the point in the foregoing chapters at the appropriate point. Suffice it to say here that Kanthapura is an ex-exemplary novel, or, in other words, a linguistic construct that acted as a model in the development of Indian novel in English.

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