CHAPTER - VI

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH:
A CRITICAL ESTIMATE

Right from Indian 'renaissance', a result of Macaulay's
'Minute' and the subsequent rise of an Indian elite educated in
English, sincere efforts were being made in varied fields by various
scholars, reformers, journalists, orators and nationalists through
their spoken and written words to revive India to human values such
as equality, liberty and justice. The 'renaissance' was such that,
in the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, "It is not mere revival. It
takes up ancient wisdom and tries to reconcile it with modern
enlightenment and wherever there is a struggle between the two,
it cuts out with drastic hand whatever is repugnant to reason or
to the moral sense". ¹ Those who made this renaissance possible,
right from Raja Rammohan Roy to Mahatma Gandhi, chose English
as the medium of communication and thus, "from the language of
petitioning, persuasion and reasoning developed..... the language
of polemic, argumentation. And that is what it became in the hands
of Tilak, Gokhale, Gandhi and other patriots". ²

Among a host of such discursive writers Ambedkar emerges
as an original thinker and a brilliant theoretician who has made

1. S. Radhakrishnan, Living with a Purpose, (New Delhi: Vision,
1982), p. 47.

2. K.M. George (Ed.), Comparative Indian Literature, (London: OUP.,
a rich contribution to the socio-religious, economic and political thought. In his works which form 'literature of knowledge'/
'literature of thought', though the discursive mode is employed yet this mode - whether factual-objective or theoretical conceptual-
is sustained by 'imaginative' or 'figurative' mode.

**Style and Craft:**

Ambedkar's manner of putting thoughts in words was most belligerent as his own person was; Vincent Sheean remembers him to be "a big brusque fellow with a most belligerent manner.... an inveterate critic of Indian Society" and that after his death "critics of his calibre so brilliant and merciless are not to be found in public life today".3

Though most of Ambedkar's writings belong to the category of "factual prose" or "theoretical" work they nonetheless involve feelings. For as Lucas holds, even the most objective matter can be written so lucidly, argued so neatly, as to stir pleasure and admiration for "style... is.... the personality clothed in words; character, embodied in speech".4 Ambedkar's objective analysis and criticism of problems pertaining to Indian Society are passionately and cogently argued, seeking to raise the generosity

of the human heart. An erudite scholar that he was, his works are marked by his scholarship. As such, in all his writings can be found a wealth of quotations given in support of his views. The range of quotations is amazing; from Smith and Renan to Burke, Balfour and Bryce, from Lord Acton and Dr. Titus to Lane Poole and Macaulay, from Alexander Pope to Arnold Toynbee, from Savarkar to Gandhi and Jinnah, and from the scriptures of the West to those of the East – the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, the Gita, the epics and more importantly the laws of Manu. His treatises, Who were the Shudras and The Untouchables: Who Were They are replete with allusions to Hindu scriptures. It is rightly observed that "He has left no aspect of human life undissected and unmasked either in his speeches or in his writings.... He was always reasonable in all his analysis of men and matters... His reasoning covered the entire spectrum of the thinking mind – from the primitive aboriginal mind to the endless and limitless spiritual state of mind"; it is further observed that he "wrote not for literary fame but only for great causes since he was a man of mission to give words of wisdom and warning..... The host of topics .... gives full range of Baba Saheb's concern for all-round development of Indian society....."5

5. B. Shankaranand, 'Foreword', Thus Spoke Ambedkar (Eds.), Bhagwan Das, Adib Fazil, (Bangalore: Ambedkar Sahitya Prakashan), Vol.3.
In all his writings, logic and lucidity are the predominating features. There is to be found an unswerving logic whether he discusses Caste or speaks on the independence of India at the Round Table Conference. He observes, "The fallacy of the socialists lies in supposing that because in the present stage of European Society property as a source of power is predominant, that the same is true of India or that the same was true of Europe in the past. Religion, social status and property are all sources of power and authority, which one man has, to control the liberty of another. One is predominant at one stage, the other is predominant at another stage. That is the only difference. If liberty is the ideal, if liberty means the destruction of the dominion which one man holds over another then obviously it cannot be insisted upon that economic reform must be the one kind of reform worthy of pursuit. If the source of power and dominion is at any given time or in any given society social and religious, then social reform and religious reform must be accepted as the necessary sort of reform." The same kind of logic is applied in his advocacy for the 'annihilation of caste'.

There is intellectual lucidity in his discussion - whether he discusses Russell's concept of 'Reconstruction of Society' or 'Caste' or the problem of Linguistic Provinces or 'small holdings in India'. Observing that Caste devitalizes a man he particularizes the universal fact that "Education, wealth, labour are all necessary for every individual if he is to reach a free and full manhood. Mere education without wealth and labour is barren. Wealth without education and labour is brutal. Each is necessary to everyone. They are necessary for the growth of a man." Such intellectual simplicity is found in his 'Evidence before the Southborough Committee' where he states: "If one agrees with the definition of slave as given by Plato, who defines him as one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct, the untouchables are really slaves. The untouchables are socialized as never to complain of their low caste. Still less do they ever dream of trying to improve their lot, by forcing the other classes to treat them with that common respect which one man owes to another. Nothing will ever persuade them that men are all made of the same clay.

or that they have the right to insist on better treatment than that meted out to them. Observing the plight of these 'untouchables' he yet again states: "The untouchables are usually regarded as objects of pity but they are ignored in any political scheme on the score that they have no interests to protect. And yet their interests are the greatest. Not that they have large property to protect from confiscation. But they have their very 'persona' confiscated. The socio-religious disabilities have dehumanized the untouchables and their interests at stake are therefore the interests of humanity. The interests of property are nothing before such primary interests." 9.

Ambedkar's style is distinguished by energy and imagination. His writings display clarity and concentration of thought and expression. His clear, penetrating intellect sweeps aside all irrelevant things and pierces down to the heart of the matter in hand. This factor is evident in his writings on socio-religious subjects such as the origin of castes, the origin of untouchability and even economic subjects as the 'problem of the rupee', and others such as 'Buddha and Karl Marx'. The thought in his mind shapes itself into words that are not only apt but polished and finished. He gives a clear and exact expression to his views and thoughts so that there seems to be no need for him to aim at picturesque, colourful effects. The weight of his thoughts calls for weighty


phraseology. For instance, while criticising the denial of communal representation to the untouchables, considering their plight as brought out in his socio-religious writings, the only way left for them being the fight in a general electorate, Ambedkar remarks: "Now this is as it should be if all were equally free to fight. To educate the untouchables by Shastras into pro-untouchables and the touchables into anti-untouchables and then to propose that the two should fight out at an open poll is to betray signs of mental aberration or a mentality fed on cunning". Yet again, in another context, while discussing Russell's concept of 'reconstruction of society' Ambedkar discusses elaborately the use of force: "It must be remembered by those who are opposed to force that without the use of it all ideals will remain empty just as without some ideal or purpose (conscious or otherwise) all activity will be no more than mere fruitless fooling; ends and means (= force in operation) are therefore concomitants and the common adage that the end justifies the means contains a profound truth which is perverted simply because it is misunderstood........ The difficulty is that we do not sufficiently control the operations of the means...... (which) liberate many ends.... Of course for the exigencies of an eminently practical life we must set an absolute value on some one end. But in doing this.... if we are to use force.... we must see that while working for one end we do not destroy, in the process, other ends equally worthy of maintainance. Applying this to the

10. ibid., p. 263.
present war, no justification, I think, is needed for the use of force. What needs to be justified is the destructive violence. The justification must satisfy the world that the ends given prominence to by one or other of the combatants could not be achieved otherwise than by violence i.e., without involving the sacrifice of other ends equally valuable for the stability of the world. True enough that violence cannot always be avoided, and non-resistance can be adopted only when it is a better way of resistance. But the responsibility for an intelligent control of force rests on us all. In short, the point is that, to achieve anything we must use force; only we must use it constructively as energy and not destructively as violence.  

In his writings on various subjects, though he deals with serious matters yet the use of figurative language lends a certain beauty to the writings. The similes and metaphors, occurring in the course of serious discussion, relieve the tension of sobriety and seriousness. They also help to drive home the point under discussion. A number of them are dispersed all over his writings and speeches. A few illustrations can give an insight into his excellent metaphorical use of English: Writing about the disruption of the 'Empire of Religion' in ancient society by the 'revolution' brought about by science - the Darwinian and Copernican Revolution- Ambedkar remarks, "It is the result of the warfare which science

11. Ibid., pp. 485-486.
waged against theology for 400 years, in which many pitched battles were fought between the two and the excitement caused by them was so great that nobody could fail to be impressed by the revolution that was blazing on".\(^{12}\)

Dr. Mulk Raj Anand talks of the 'poetic prose', of 'Castes in India', an essay by Ambedkar, written as long ago as in 1916. The very opening lines of this essay capture our imagination: "Many of us, I dare say, have witnessed local, national or international expositions of material objects that make up the sum total of human civilization. But few can entertain the idea of there being such a thing as an exposition of human institutions. Exhibition of human institutions is a strange idea; some might call it the wildest of ideas". He proceeds to compare a student of Ethnology with a guide at some historic place like the ruins of Pompeii: "Like his prototype, he holds up the social institutions to view, with all the objectiveness humanly possible, and inquires into their origin and function". The complexity of the subject is handled by him in a very interesting manner. Phrases flow in a lucid and poetic manner: "Subtler minds and abler pens than mine have been brought to the task of unravelling the mysteries of Caste; but unfortunately

\(^{13}\) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Birth Centenary Seminar, held by Sahitya Academy : New Delhi, August, 1991,
it still remains in the domain of the "unexplained", not to say of the "ununderstood." I am quite alive to the complex intricacies of a hoary institution like Caste, but I am not so pessimistic as to relegate it to the region of the unknowable, for I believe it can be known.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus he begins with the proposition and justifies the purpose of his essay. Writing about customs such as "Sati", enforced widowhood and girl marriage in the absence of any authentic or written records about them, he says, "like fossils (they) tell their own history": "Though many have sung in praise of these customs", nothing can tell us the causes of their origin and existence; philosophies grew around them to justify them and some philosophies that created castes "were sweetened to gild the pill". Apt comparison indeed! He warns against the results of these means represented as ideals: "...idealization of means is necessary.... perhaps motivated to endow them with greater efficacy. Calling a means an end does no harm, except that it disguises its real character". He drives the point home with the use of a simile: "You may pass a law that all cats are dogs, just as you call a means an end. But you can no more change the nature of means thereby than you can turn cats into dogs."\textsuperscript{15}

Ambedkar concludes his essay with all modesty observing

\textsuperscript{14} BAWS, Vol. 1, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 14.
that the attempts of reform have aroused a great deal of controversy regarding its (of caste) origin as to whether it is due to the conscious command of a Supreme Authority or to an unconscious growth in the life of a human society under peculiar circumstances. He states in metaphoric language, "I hope, (that those with the latter view) find some food for thought in the stand-point in this paper.... I am not, however, so presumptuous as to think (my conclusions) anything more than a contribution to a discussion of the subject. It seems to me that the car has been shunted on wrong lines, and the primary object of the paper is to indicate what I regard to be the right path of investigation, with a view to arrive at a serviceable truth... Sentiment must be outlawed from the domain of science and things should be judged from an objective standpoint. For myself I shall find as much pleasure in a positive destruction of my own ideology, as in a rational disagreement on a topic... while I am ambitious to advance a Theory of Caste, if it can be shown to be untenable, I shall be equally willing to give it up".  

The serious discussion of the inter-relation between caste and class contains this metaphor: "To leave out the class cleavage between the Savarna Hindus and the Avarna Hindus is to relate Grimm's Fairy Tale which leaves out the witches, the goblins and the orgies. The Avarna Hindus comprise the three". 

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16. Ibid., p. 22.

Even in the political writings metaphors illuminate. Criticising the Constitution, in his *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, because the provisions of reservation of seats for untouchables and the provision for separate electorates had been given up, he writes: "The lambs are shorn of the wool. They are feeling the intensity of the cold. Some tempering of the wool is necessary".\(^\text{18}\) His religious-cultural writings and even his scientific analysis of the matter, contain metaphors. The point that - "The ways and methods employed by the Brahmanic invaders of Buddhist India to suppress Buddhism were not less violent and less virulent than the ways and means adopted by Muslim invaders to suppress Hinduism. From the point of view of the permanent effect on the social and spiritual life of the people, the Brahmanic invasions of Buddhist India have been so profound in their effect that compared to them, the effect of Muslim invasions on Hindu India have been really superficial and ephemeral", - is brought out very effectively in his use of the metaphor: "The Muslim invaders only stirred the waters in the bath that too only for a while. Thereafter they got tired of stirring and left the waters with the sediments to settle. They never threw the baby - if one can speak of the principles of Hinduism as a baby-out of bath. Brahmanism emptied the bath with the Buddhist baby in it and filled the bath with its own waters and placed in it its new baby".\(^\text{19}\)


\(^{19}\) *BAWS.*, Vol.3, p. 274.
Ambedkar's noted work, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, can be categorised both as a political and as a literary piece. Although it falls easily under the category of 'political literature' it reads so well as to form "beyond doubt.... a piece of literature", for "The book has a real merit as an example of a happy presentation of argument on both sides, in English, which attracts and holds the attention of the readers. Dr. Ambedkar writes with ease and felicity of diction that should be the theme of study by those who are to express themselves in Queen's English or Fowler's English idioms and phrases".\(^{20}\) It is also rightly held that the book, a fine piece of literature, contains passages that can be committed to memory.

It has literary value in that in the book are scattered gems of figures of speech. A book of critical analysis of the political predicament of the time made in historic prospective and being in itself prophetic, it is a scholarly work; it is replete with quotations from eminent scholars of the West, with tables and maps all used in illustration of his views. In the 'Introduction' he recalls the words of Prof. Toynbee who referred to India in 1915 as: "British statesmanship in the nineteenth century, regarded India as a 'Sleeping Beauty' whom Britain had a prescriptive right to woo when she awoke; so it hedged with thorns the garden where she lay to safeguard her from marauders prowling in the desert without. Now the Princess is awake.... wishes to walk abroad among her neighbours... It is inevitable that she should lead a more

\(^{20}\) *BAWS.*, Vol.8, Foreword, p. 11.
and more independent life of her own, and follow the example of Anglo-Saxon Commonwealths by establishing direct relations with her neighbours...." Ambedkar analyses the state of such an India, continuing the sustained metaphor: "Now that India the 'Sleeping Beauty' of Prof. Toynbee is awake, what is the view of the Indians about her? On this question, there can be no manner of doubt that those who have observed this 'Sleeping Beauty' behave in recent years, feel she is a strange being quite different from the angelic princess that she was supposed to be. She is a mad maiden having a dual personality, half human, half animal, always in convulsions because of her two natures in perpetual conflict... the Resolution of the Muslim League demanding the cutting up of India into two, Pakistan and Hindustan, so that these conflicts and convulsions due to a dual personality having been found in one way cease forever and so freed from each other, may dwell in separate homes congenial to their respective cultures..." 21 However, he claims that the work is not partisan though in it he has expressed his own views too; he asserts: "I have an open mind though not an empty mind". He brings out the consequences of having an empty mind using a simile: "...an open mind may also be an empty mind and..... such an open mind, if it is a happy condition, is also a very dangerous condition for a man to be in. A disaster may easily overtake a man with an empty mind. Such a person is like a ship without ballast and

without a rudder. It can have no direction. It may float but it may also suffer shipwreck against a rock for want of direction". Yet again, in his study of the disruption of Greece, Turkey and Czechoslovakia, in 'Lessons from Abroad' he asks one to profit by these examples. He cautions metaphorically: "Let the Hindus take the warning that if they refuse to divide India into two before they launch on their career as a free people, they will be sailing in those shoal waters in which Turkey, Czechoslovakia and many others have foundered. If they wish to avoid shipwreck in mid-ocean, they must lighten the draught by throwing overboard all superfluous cargo. They will ease the course of their voyage considerably if they - to use the language of Prof. Toynbee - reconcile themselves to making jetsam of less cherished and more combustible cargo".

As a skillful writer, Ambedkar recognizes for full effectiveness in writing, an ability to reason which is accompanied by other characteristics - sensitivity to situations and people, flexibility in using the resources of the English language, judgement in deciding which aspects of a subject to emphasize. As Arthur Schopenhauer observes, "...every really great writer tries to express his thoughts as purely, clearly, definitely and shortly as possible. Simplicity has always been held to be a mark of truth; it is also a mark of genius", Ambedkar's own style is marked by these qualities. He

22. Ibid., p. 18.
23. Ibid., p. 218.
does not, however, wrap up trivial ideas in grand words. On the contrary his Is an expression which is clear, intelligible and unambiguous. Instead of clothing very ordinary thoughts in the most extraordinary phrases, in the most farfetched, unnatural and out-of-the-way expressions, he deals with the varied matters in lucid, clear, expressive terms. And yet, it does not mean that his use of language is very ordinary. He is a master of the English language. His metaphorical expression, and the felicity of his language make even forbidding subjects like Economics to which he contributed considerably, exciting. For instance, criticising the Act of 1858 which annihilated the Board of Control, he observes at length: "It remains, however, to estimate the contribution of England to India. Apparently the immenseness of India's contribution to England is as much astounding as the nothingness of England's contribution to India": After making use of such antithesis he further remarks, "Both are, however, true statements if looked at from economic point of view. But from another point of view, if India's tribute cannot be weighed in scales of justice and humanity then England's contribution cannot be weighed in the scales of gold and silver (either).... Her contribution lies in an uneconomic realm; but just the same, it is too great to be measured in terms of coin".

Effectively bringing out in simple, factual prose, the recurring theme of 'untouchability' which he exposed before the world at large by speaking about it even at the Roud Table Conference in London, he writes: The plight of the 'untouchables' is such that "The Hindus

who touch them... can become pure by undergoing purificatory ceremonies. But there is nothing which can make the untouchables pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure and they give birth to children who are born with the stigma of untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse. With such keen, direct insight into the problem is coupled the indomitable spirit of Ambedkar. The latter quality in him is evident in his defence, which he makes with modesty though, as a writer on religion or religious history of India. He makes it clear to his critics who had warned him against it; the warning is unnecessary 'if it is an antidote to any extravagant claim made by me as a thinker or writer'. Admitting his incompetence to speak even on Indian politics, his deficiency of mastery over Sanskrit language, yet he states that this should not disqualify him altogether, for his study of the relevant literature through English translations carried out for fifteen years"...ought to be enough to invest even a person endowed with such moderate intelligence like myself, with sufficient degree of competence for the task... It may well turn out that this attempt of mine is only an illustration of the proverbial fool rushing in where the angels fear to tread. But then, I take refuge in the belief that even the fool has a duty to perform, namely, to do his bit if the angel has gone to sleep or is unwilling

to proclaim the truth. This is my justification for entering the prohibited field. 27

Madhu Limaye considers *Annihilation of Caste* which contains fresh analysis on the crucial subject, almost universally acclaimed as a masterly piece: "No (patriotic Indian)..... can afford to ignore this powerful indictment of inequality. I cannot think of this 'Great Manifesto' and its author except with reverence". Ambedkar's works comprising 'socio-religious literature' and 'political literature' especially, contain great argumentative prose; if the former category contains an advocacy of the cause of the down-trodden classes, the latter upholds the cause of the country.

The indomitable, courageous, uncompromising Ambedkar can be very well discerned through his writings. Justifying his stand for not joining the freedom struggle that was being carried out in India he states that he has been "no tool of power; no flatterer of greatness.... the whole (of his) public exertion has been one continuous struggle for liberty for the poor and for the oppressed", though his "only reward has been... calumny and abuse... I refuse to join with them in performing the miracle... of liberating the oppressed... with the gold of the tyrant and raising the poor with


the cash of the rich". Yet again, justifying his criticism of Gandhi and Jinnah he asserts: "I am alleged to have shown them hatred and disrespect. In reply to this charge what I have to say is that I have been a critic and I must continue to be such. It may be I am making mistakes but I have always felt that it is better to make mistakes than to accept guidance and direction from others or to sit silent and allow things to deteriorate... the alleged hatred is not born of anything that can be called personal. I hate injustice, tyranny, pompousness and humbug and my hatred embraces all those who are guilty of them. I want to tell my critics that I regard my feelings of hatred as a real force. They are only the reflex of the love I bear for the causes I believe in and I am in no wise ashamed of it..." 29

The same force and vigour of argument is also apparent in his rebuttal of criticism made against the inconsistency in his views. He asserts: "To a critic who is a hostile and malicious person and who wants to make capital out of my inconsistencies my reply is straight. Emerson has said that consistency is the virtue of an ass and I don't wish to make an ass of myself. No thinking human being can be tied down to a view once expressed in the name of consistency. More important than consistency is responsibility. A responsible person must learn to unlearn what he has learned. A responsible person must have the courage to rethink and change

his thoughts. Of course there must be good and sufficient reasons
for unlearning what he has learned and for recasting his thoughts.
There can be no finitude in thinking".30

His expression can equally easily take the form of a
narrative. In simple, clear manner which even a child can read
and comprehend, he can explain the matter. For instance, he relates
the tale of the Buddha: "Siddarth, surname Gautama, was born in
the Sakya clan at Kapilvastu in North India, on the border of Nepal
in 563 B.C. Tradition says he was a prince. He received education
fit for a prince, was married and had a son. Oppressed by the
evils and misery then prevalent in the Aryan Society he renounced
the world at the age of twenty-nine and left his home in search
of truth and deliverance. He became a mendicant and studied with
two distinguished teachers. But finding that their teachings did
not satisfy him he left them and became an ascetic. He gave up
that also as being futile. By hard thinking he got insight into
things and as a result of this insight he formulated his own
'Dhamma'. This was at the age of thirty-five. The remainder of
his eighty years he spent in spreading his Dhamma and founding,
administering an order of monks. He died about the year 483 B.C.
at Kusinara surrounded by his devoted followers". Ambedkar's
narration in simple language takes up grandeur of expression while
he relates Buddha's mission and achievements: "To the carrying out

30. Ibid., p. 139.
his mission, the Buddha devoted all his days after the achievement of enlightenment. His time was divided between filling the lamp of his own spiritual life by solitary meditation - just as Jesus spent hours in lonely prayer - and active preaching to large audience of his monks, instructing the more advanced in the subtle points of inner development, directing the affairs of the order, rebuking breaches of discipline, confirming the faithful in their virtue, receiving deputations, carrying on discussions with learned opponents, confronting the sorrowful, visiting kings and peasants, Brahmins and outcastes, rich and poor. He was a friend of publicans and sinners, and many a public harlot, finding herself understood and pitied, gave up her evil ways to take refuge in the 'Blessed One'. Such a life demanded a variety of moral qualities and social gifts, and among others a combination of democratic sentiments with an aristocratic "Savoir Faire" which is seldom met with.\(^\text{31}\)

Yet another method peculiar to Ambedkar as a writer is the use of analogy. Analogies recur particularly in the form of reasoning and logic. These analogies provide him a valuable way of clarity in what he is trying to convey. A telling analogy is the one between the Jewish problem and the problem of the untouchables. He states the former in historic perspective and holds: "...though the problem of the Jews and of the untouchables is similar in nature—in as much

\(^{31}\) BAWS., Vol.3, pp. 165-166.
as the problem is created by others - it is essentially different. The Jews' case is one of voluntary isolation. The case of the untouchables is that of compulsory segregation. Untouchability is an infliction and not a choice. Ambedkar examines the history of 'parallel cases' existing in other countries, classes which like the untouchables in India, were lowly and despised. Thus, he observes that of the five classes of population in ancient Rome - Patricians, Plebians, Clients, Slaves and Freemen - it was the client who had to look to his Patrician Patron for support and maintenance. The latter had to provide all that was necessary for the sustenance of the client and his family. This relation was a hereditary one; and the client, not being a civic, had no right of suit. As to the slaves, a rich man owned hundreds and thousands of them. They were 'not persons in the eye of the law and had therefore no rights'.

The English society also once had its servile classes as is made evident by the classification of the population shown in the Doomsday Book. Ambedkar gives a catalogue of the disabilities suffered by the Catholics in England whose position was similar to that of the untouchables in India. He further gives the history of slavery in Europe and Asia only to show that the plight of the slaves in a way was similar to the life of the untouchables.

32. BAWS., Vol.5, p. 5.
33. Ibid., p. 76.
To the astonishment and resentment of orthodox Hindus, Ambedkar brings out an analogy between the philosophy of Hinduism and the philosophy of Nietzsche; the philosophy of the latter was identified "with will to power, ....violence and denial of spiritual values ..........Superman .......... sacrifice servility to and debasement of the common man". He compares the laws of Manu with a part of the text of Anti-Christ only to prove "that Zarathushtra is a new name for Manu" and that 'Thus spake Zarathushtra' is a new edition of 'Manu Smriti'.

Besides such analogies, one can come across penportraits of eminent men also in the writings of Dr. Ambedkar. For instance, his portrayal of Ranade is brilliantly lucid: "He was of course great in his person. Vast in physique - he could have been called "Your Immense" as the Irish servant who could not pronounce 'Your Eminence' used respectively to call Cardinal Wiseman - his master. He was a man of sanguine temperament, of genial disposition and versatile in his capacity. He had sincerity which is the sum of all moral qualities and his sincerity was of the sort which was prescribed by Carlyle. It was not a conscious "braggart sincerity". It was the natural sincerity, a constitutional trait and not an assumed air. He was not only big in his physique and in his sincerity, he was also

34. BAWS., Vol.3, Chapter-2 and Chapter-3.
big in intellect. Nobody can question that Ranade had intellect of a high calibre. He was not merely a lawyer and a judge of the High Court, he was a first class economist, a first class historian, a first class educationist and a first class divine. He was not a politician. Perhaps it is good that he was not. For if he had been, he might not have been a great man. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Politicians are a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people and who, to say the most of them are taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men". Ranade though not a politician was a profound student of politics. Indeed it would be difficult to find in the history of India any man who could come up to Ranade in the width of his learning, the breadth of his wisdom and the length of his vision. Of Jinnah, he writes: "He may be too self-opinionated, an egotist without the mark and has perhaps a degree of arrogance which is not compensated by any extraordinary intellect or equipment... He may not be over-flowing with ideas although he is not, as his critics make him out to be, an empty-headed dandy living upon the ideas of others. It may be that his fame is built up more upon art and less on substance. At the same time, it is doubtful if there is a politician in India to whom the adjective incorruptible can be more fittingly applied.... No one can buy him. For it must be said to his credit that he has never been a solider of fortune".

In his political writings a realistic approach to the problems is most evident. His deep insight into problems is well expressed in coherent and clear prose: "...old time lawyers believed that the scope and function of Constitutional Law was to prescribe the shape and form of the political structure of society. They never realised that it was equally essential to prescribe the shape and form of the economic structure of society, if Democracy is to live up to its principle of one man, one value. Time has come to take a bold step and define both the economic structure as well as the political structure of society by the Law of the Constitution. All countries like India which are late comers in the field of Constitution making should not copy the faults of other countries. They should profit by the experience of their predecessors." 37

Yet again, on the eve of the independence of India he urges for the solution of the Communal Question. He holds that the very approach to solve it is fundamentally wrong. He argued that the principle followed "is not principle. There is only a series of methods. If one method fails another is tried. It is this changing from one method to another which has made the Communal Problem a jigsaw puzzle .... The attempts at the solution of the Communal problem are either in the nature of a coward's plan to cow tow to the bully or of bully's plan to dictate to the weak". If on the one hand there is a minority community which grows powerful and

demands certain political advantages the policy towards it being 'a policy of limitless demand followed by endless appeasement'. "On the other hand, there is a community economically poor, socially degraded, educationally backward and which is exploited, oppressed and tyrannized without shame and without remorse, disowned by society, unowned by Government and which has no security for protection and no guarantee for justice, fair play and equal opportunity. Such a community is told that it can have no safeguards, not because it has no case for safeguards but only because the bully on whom the bill of rights is presented thinks that the community is not politically organised to have sanctions behind its demand he can successfully bluff". 38

A rationalist as well as a realist, Ambedkar's vision of an ideal society does not remain an intellectual theory cogently argued, but with a pragmatic outlook he strove in his various capacities - as a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council, as a Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India and as the first Law Minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet - for an all-round improvement of the Indian Society. The endeavour is manifested in his written works and speeches too: The numerous illustrations, quotations, and criticisms, the exposure of the entire literature in the

respective field, be it sociology or history or economics or theology come down like a powerful current dashing against the vices, crimes and injustice man commits against man. And yet his arguments are sustained by logic as well as a spontaneous flow of metaphorical expression. As to the question of responsible government in the Centre he differs from the report of the Federal structure Sub-Committee. He feels that "It would be... dishonest for me to conceal from you my opinion that this change is shadowy and not substantial, and the responsibility is bogus and not real.

The Lord Chancellor told us that he has sown the seed and it was for us to tend the plant... Grateful as I am to him I am not sanguine that the plant he promises will grow. I fear the grain he has chosen for his seed is sterile and the soil in which he has cast it is not congenial to its growth”. 39

On another occasion, he pleads for more time to be given him to put forth his views; he says, "Mr. Speaker, Sir.... the decision... that you will not allow more than 45 minutes... and having regard to the notes that I have before me, I am afraid that I must begin by asking your indulgence for some extension of time. I might tell you that my request is not of an extraordinary character. There is a precedent. We all know the story in Mahabharata about king Yayati. He happened to marry in his old age a young girl by name Devayani. After marriage he found that

there was so much discrepancy between the ages of the couple that unless some period was added to his youthful life, the marriage would be of no use at all. Turning round he began to find out whether there was any charitable soul who would consent to deduct a part of his life and add the period to his own. He could find no one. Fortunately, his son Pururava who was a very dutiful son, much younger and who needed all his youth to himself, came forward and offered a part of his life to that of his father. Sir, I assure you that those who are sitting behind me — and, if I may say, my relations with them are those of son and father have all agreed to have some deduction made from their time in order that, that may be added to mine. But I know that unless you bless the bargain and sanction it, the addition cannot be made".

References not only of this kind but, significantly those made to constitutions of other countries such as America and Austria give an insight into the width of his reading and knowledge. On one occasion he relates how the constitution written by Jeremy Bentham was reduced to ashes; how the seceded Spanish American colonies such as Brazil and others, asked the assistance of Jeremy Bentham in framing their Constitution. And Jeremy Bentham, who was "a great legislator; he was a man who engaged in formularies; he was a man who engaged in symmetrical classification of things; he wanted to reform the English law on the basis of pure rationalism. The South American Colonies thought that a man who believed in nothing

but applying reason and who believed in doing things a priori was the proper person who would be asked to frame a constitution for themselves. Yet the constitution which was framed by such a man was 'broken to pieces'. Ambedkar with this illustration drives home "the point that I want to emphasize is this, that a constitution, like a suit, must fit". Ambedkar though sober and scholarly, can on occasion provide relief through humorous comments. He says, "A constitution which does not fit is no constitution, it cannot be a constitution. For instance, the coat, which the honourable Home Minister, with his slim body, is wearing could not fit on the corpulent structure that I carry. (Laughter). Could it? Would a suit made for a man with a hunch-back fit a normal man's back? (Laughter). Can a shoe which fits a man who can place his feet firmly and straight on the ground fit a man who has a crooked leg? It cannot. Therefore, in talking about democracy, we must talk about fitting theories to facts".  

Edward Thompson rightly observes: "Dr. Ambedkar (was) an 'alumnus' of German (and British) and American Universities, as well as of Bombay. He has, or once had, his own grievance against us over his caste....

Ambedkar... became a lawyer, and incidentally a master in his own very vigorous and individual fashion of the English language.

He is a most exhilarating polemist, utterly fearless, with a wide command of the unexpected and devastating illustration - historical or otherwise - and his energy flies so swiftly that it produces by the way most effective results. Speaking of the little influence that his enemies' attacks had on him, he said looking fiercely at me "In fact I am not only hide-bound. I am skin flint". 42

It is rightly observed that "Ambedkar may not have written poems, plays or fiction. But he wrote remarkable prose in both Marathi and English. His writings in English are characterised by a style that is robust, lucid and expressive. When the occasion or the theme demands, it can be impassioned, moving and full of brimstone or fire." 43 In this key note address it is aptly acknowledged that Ambedkar has changed the Indian's perception of culture fundamentally, that he "called into question a whole lot of assumptions and perceptions about our culture. He sowed the seeds of great intellectual ferment... (which) would also have an enriching effect on our literature". It is also rightly observed that Ambedkar has been the inspiration behind 'Dalit literature' manifested in the form of a movement throughout India; it is said to have brought into the mainstream of Indian literature in English as also in various regional languages the experiences, attitudes, resentments and

emotional turmoil of millions who were outside the pale of Indian literature. This 'Dalit literature', the literature by and about 'dalits', i.e., the downtrodden, has been in fact inspired by the life and works of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He belongs to that rare tribe of a very few scholar-statesmen who concretized their views, thoughts and plans in the form of written works. Indeed, his life, thought, action and his experiences, his personality, are all reflected in his writings and speeches in which no subject or aspect of genuine human interest has been left untouched. He did not write for the sake of writing but each of his writings has a specific purpose. With a wide vision, an inquisitive mind, a robust intellect and great erudition, he becomes a master of distinguished prose style. Although his works are widely read and research is being carried out on different aspects of his works, the reason for the delay in his being recognised as a man of letters is probably because his achievements such as a Parliamentarian and Constitutionalist have been so great that they have overshadowed those as a man of letters.

Dr. Ambedkar shares with Nehru a wide vision, an enquiring intellect and varied experiences. Even as Nehru's works collected and published in five volumes form an important contribution to Indian writing in English, those of Ambedkar in nine volumes so far as also the two forthcoming volumes, each containing more than 400 pages of small print, also form part of the genre. Like Gandhiji he is a writer's writer too. If Gandhiji "took good care of his
consonants, resisted smart expression, cultivated English carefully and prayfully", Ambedkar's expression is spontaneous, unstudied, and unrestrained. Gandhiji's writing came to acquire remarkable simplicity, precision, economy and clarity as a result of his conscious efforts whereas Ambedkar's is characterised by lucidity, profundity of thought, erudition and copiousness of expression, while "Nehru's own English has a lyrical intensity, a hesitancy bordering on equivocation in the best sense of the term and a rare capacity to concretize rumblings inside". Like the political speeches of Nehru those of Ambedkar which are cogent, logical, forceful and scholarly, delivered in English, form part of a literary tradition. He shared with Gandhiji the qualities of natural political talent, an effortless ability to lead, a selfless dedication, idealism and honesty; Nehru, along with these traits shares with Ambedkar an urge to change (the society). The three stalwarts emerge as important political forces as well as outstanding literary figures of this epoch. Nehru has made rich contribution to 'Literature of power' whereas the discursive writings of Gandhiji and Ambedkar have enriched the 20th century 'literature of knowledge', 'literature of thought'; this literature of the two owes its enrichment to truth not to beauty.

45. Ibid.
Summing up

In conventional understanding of literature, two kinds of distinctions are recognised by implication, though never explicitly or adequately theorised. The first is a distinction between discursive and creative writing, and the assumption that the term 'literature' should be reserved for the second kind of writing. The second is a distinction between prose and poetry in which though prose is divided itself into literature and non-literature, it is also assumed that even the most 'literary' prose is less creative than poetry. In assessing and characterising Ambedkar's work, one needs to go into the issues so that Ambedkar's contribution as a writer can be properly and adequately evaluated.

The distinction between creative and discursive modes of writing is easy enough to grasp but the question is whether it is a justified classification. By creative writing what is generally meant is writing which is not an account of factual reality or a presentation of 'abstract', 'conceptual' thought. In other words, the contrast is between 'imaginative', 'concrete' and 'subjective' modes of perception on the one side, and factual, 'conceptual' and 'objective' modes of perception, on the other side. Taken to its extreme, it is distinction between 'science' and 'non-science' as modes of discourse. This distinction, however, has been more recently questioned in the works of 'structuralist' and 'post-structuralist' writers like Derrida and Barthes. But even
before the post-structuralist attempt to obliterate the distinction between the two modes, there has already been considerable discussion which, while not denying the distinction, has held that there are two modes of articulating 'literature' itself - the discursive and the creative.

In both modes, imagination, not merely factual observation or conceptual schematization, plays a crucial role. Therefore, even a writer engaged in conceptional thought, can be creative and can produce literature. In short, the techniques that characterise creative writing - figurative language, analytical presentation and symbolic/allegoric framework or emotional appeal can be as important in 'discursive' writing as in the 'non-discursive'. Therefore, a discursive writer may have a different goal or a different kind of material to work on, but his way of dealing with the situation can be the same as that of a 'creative'/'non-discursive' mode. Ambedkar's writing displays a whole range of figurative modes that can be called 'imaginative', 'creative' and 'literary'. Therefore, there is a propriety in discussing his work as 'literature'.

The other distinction has been questioned as far back as the English Romantics - Shelley questioning the prose-poetry dichotomy, and Wordsworth questioning the science-poetry dichotomy. A prose writer who does not use conventional literary forms such as 'novel' or 'short-story' or 'drama', can be equally creative if he uses
figurative, 'tropological' language. Hence, in considering the works of Ambedkar, it can very well be said that his work can be legitimately regarded as a contribution to 'literature'.

Secondly, 'literature' itself has a 'discursive' foundation in so far as it reflects, however indirectly or complexly, the ideological, theoretical and intellectual presuppositions that characterise the society which creates 'literature'. Therefore, to understand that literature, it is necessary to understand its discursive foundations and ideological contents. In order to make sense of the content and context of Indian Writing in English, we need to study its 'discursive' component and the writers who have produced it. From this point of view also, most certainly Ambedkar's work has great relevance to the broad field of Indian writing in English.