Embarking on a project on the study of the regional novel will require an understanding of the meanings and implications of the term region. This will invariably lead to questions on the scope and limitations of the terms region and regionalism. At the outset, I would like to make it clear that, this study does not confine itself to any particular meaning of region i.e. 'region' taken to mean one specific, geographical, cultural area. It examines the complexities and problematics of the term, 'region' in British literary tradition, Indian literary tradition in general, and the Telugu literary tradition in particular. In this chapter, I seek to theorize the term 'region' as it is viewed in the Social Sciences and Humanities and examine the problematic surrounding the term, region. By problematic, I mean the indefinable quality of the concept region which in turn encapsulates the inaccuracy that surrounds a blanket term like the region. This chapter lays out the field of study and its scope and describes the methodology used for analysis. The first part provides the theoretical base and the interpretive space of the region in the literary texts taken up for study. The second segment traces out the genealogy of the regional novel in different literary traditions, and I conclude with an overview of arguments to be presented in the chapters to follow.

My initial understanding of the term, 'region' as a culture specific, geographical area required modification as I came across a panorama of definitions given to the term in
social theory. The terms, 'region' and 'regionalism', lose exactness when they enter academic vocabulary and hence the terms are always used in inverted commas. The region is usually understood as a physical entity expressing individuality of a particular space. It represents a philosophy of self-development with its own resources and capacities. The geographical, cultural, political and domestic "regions" would also be called into question and interrogated as I progress, through a socio-economic analysis of the term.

The definitive nature of the "region" and the aspects of its homogeneity will be determined by the "functional aspects" or the dominant aspects of the region. These functional aspects could be caste/class features or language. The social and political consciousness level of the people also determines the nature of a "region". To have a better understanding of the terms, "region" and "regionalism" and how they gained currency in literature, it is important to emphasize the diversity of usage in the meaning of these terms.

The meanings of the term "region" are manifold. It is used to refer to a broad variety of concepts. Some critics understand it essentially as a geographical category. Used in this sense, it explains social phenomenon as something that may be understood when considered in relation to physical features like geography, topography, climate etc. Other approaches like the anthropological and the ecological, study the interrelation between the peculiar traits of people and the geographical area and the relation between
environment and people. "Region", in other terms, magnifies the interests and concerns of the local group in relation to the society. According to Robert E. Park it is the long years of "association and cooperation" that brings about a kind of specificity to the region. In all these approaches to "region" there are certain overlappings and intersections.

When we look for a precise definition of the "region" in sociological terms there is an immense amount of fuzziness around it because the "region" has not been theorized in the way the nation has been. In the context of the currently contested debates on Indian nationalism, a search into the concept of nation will be of help for an understanding of the definitions of 'region". These debates are dismissive of the subject of whether the region existed before the nation. They argue that, the notions, "region" and "nation" are not given, but are only constructed through a skilful choice of issues in history. In this connection, Sudipta Kaviraj elaborates on the nature and history of the region as,

Actually the region, though culturally more homogenous, is as much a historical construction as the nation is. More startlingly in some cases, the formation of linguistic region is not of much greater antiquity than the coming of anti-colonial consciousness, for the rise of a distinct regional language was related to some developments linked to colonialism.

(Chatterjee and Pandey 22)

Kaviraj is dismissive of the concept of a monolithic structure like region as a completely self-contained entity pre-existing before colonial intervention. He maintains that any
attempt to define nationalism or regionalism as monolithic structure is "fraudulence," in the construction of history. Colonialism according to him did not destroy a homogenous culture. In fact the nationalists' attempt to construct a Hindu identity as national identity, undertook the responsibility of combining the regions forcibly under one shelter. Hence in all these attempts of locating an authentic "nation" or authentic "region" there can only be a "subterfuge of antiquity." Though regions and regional histories have been in existence even before the advent of colonialism, the consciousness of regionalism is resignified with the emergence of the notion of nationalism itself. One of the chief concerns of colonialism has been the reconstruction of a supposedly unified past.

Often the process, by which the region comes into being, is through constructions available in literary texts and in history. What are the constructions and what is the method of interrogating these constructions, chiefly figure in my thesis. When the image of the Indian nation is constructed it is meant for a set of privileged sections. It is mainly an upper caste, Brahmin, Hindu nationalism that is selectively embedded in the narration. Along similar lines, my enquiry will also bring to perusal the several representations and constructions of the region in the regional novel. The discrepancies and dichotomies in the invocation of the "region" in various literary traditions will be examined and interrogated.

In this connection, two distinct kinds of questions can be asked about the world created inside the literary texts. Firstly, what kind of world is it--- its structure, its limits,
the possibility, the inner logic of its working? Secondly, how did this world that the artist create relate to the world in which he lived. In other words, in the regional context, it primarily alludes to the representations of the region. Through an analysis of the regional novels, I seek to explain how the regional writer envisions the canvas of his region and what will be the support systems that are responsible for the full-fledged development of the images of the "region". Here I seek to understand the structure of the world of regional fiction. The study does not engage itself with a search for historical facts within the literary text as it holds that art can only play on variations of reality. By implication I suggest that the ideas reflected in texts need not be taken as the given reality, these images should be treated as pointers to an alternative reality. As history reveals to us, any given concept of "region" or "nation" has never had a unified past which can be recalled in the present, because it is constantly evolving into something new by effacing the older self.

My aim, therefore, is to explore the 'problematic' of the region and not the specificity of the "region" itself since it poses large unanswerable questions like what is authentically regional and what is the reality of the region, etc. Hence what I wish to reflect upon is less the authenticity of "region" than the nature of the constructions itself within the texts taken up for study. The study focusing on the "problematic" of the region in the British, Indian and Telugu regional novel attempts to unravel the meanings of the projected images of the region; it accounts for this particular fabrication through cultural/historical compulsions. The method by which the "region" gets understood will be examined in these discursive contexts. Contrary to the simplistic assumptions of the "region" the following discussion understands the "region" as an entity, where historical
and cultural forces determine the particular shape of the projected images at a given moment in history. I will examine how their meanings emerge dynamically in different discursive contexts. I attempt to map out the different sets of stories of the "region" as rendered by the authors, in their texts.

The novelist in the process of negotiating the regional space indulges in recreating an imaginary/real story of a people, of a culture, of an identity. From Thomas Hardy down to the Indian regional novelists, all of them offer a saga associated with the "region". The images of region that recur in the novels relate to the author's sense of place to his conception of selfhood itself. Some of the Indian writers use history, folk-myths or 'sthalapurana' for the fabrication of the region. Only after bestowing a name to the region the author proceeds to narrate other issues like culture and identity of the people. Thomas Hardy creates an imaginary world called Wessex. Hardy creates this space as a foil to the polluted industrial cities. In all these narratives there is an effort to bring together a 'unified past' which is apparently lost to the present generation owing to the interventions of Industrial Revolution and Colonialism.

Hardy projects Wessex as a veritable repository of all the enduring qualities of Nature. Wessex symbolises the rhythm of the life of country folk in all their realistic modes. The portrayal of Wessex acquires completion along with Hardy's artistic perfection. Hardy has been hailed as 'myth maker' for his poetic delineation of Wessex. Hardy's novels project the regional society, as he perceives the familiar rural life of
Dorset. To give vent to his creative imaginations Hardy invented an imaginary world "Wessex" endowing the place with the familiar features of Dorset. In the words of Hardy himself,

I first ventured to adopt the word Wessex from the pages of early English history, and give it a fictitious significance as the existing name of the district once included that extinct kingdom. The series of novels I projected being mainly of the kind called local, they secured to require a territorial definition of some sort to find unity to the scene...

("Preface" to *FFMC* xxxix)

Wessex seems not just to give unity to the scene in the Aristotelian sense of the term, it created an imagined land amidst the tumultuous Victorian period: a romantic escape-hatch for the strife-torn Victorian world. Wessex becomes Hardy's imaginative space to explore a culture, customs and the emotional turbulence of the pre-industrial population. Wessex world seems far away from the smoky, foggy, dingy London of Dickens. The unaffected pristine "churchy" life of the rural folk forms the core of Hardy's creation.

If it is an imaginary world that comes alive in Thomas Hardy's novels, the Indian regional writers Phaneswarnath Renu, Tarashankar Banerjee and Kuvempu indulge in retelling the stories of actual regions like Maryganj, Shivkalipur, and Malnad. The ethos of the region is very much part of the creative consciousness of the author. In *Maila Ancal*, Maryganj is the place where all activity takes place. Renu seems to have been
inspired by his knowledge of P.C.Roychaudhury’s Marygunj, which he creates in his book *Inside Bihar*. The place is named after a European lady who used to reside in that area. The fictional village of Maryganj is situated on the banks of the river Kamala. It can be reached from the railway station of Rauhthat, fourteen miles eastwards, after crossing the river Burhi Kosi. The 'kothi' of Maryganj is very famous and it is constructed by W.G. Martin, an English indigo planter. Mary is the name of Mr.Martin's wife. For his convenience, he has even constructed a road and established a post-office. To attribute a touch of credibility to his narration, Renu endows his fictional village with all the administrative units that one finds in any Indian village of that time.

Tarashankar too gives an account of the emergence of the region with its exact geographical features in *Ganadevata*. In a way, the story of the region invoked here provides the reader an opportunity to look deeper into the life and culture of the people in the past. It in fact helps in establishing a link with the unheard history of the people and the region in turn. *Ganadevata* is set in the Birbhum village of Shivkalipur. Tarashankar observes that Shivkalipur derives its name from two nominally separate villages, Shivpur and Kalipur. Shivpur gets its name from a sect of Devals who lived in that village. He says, "they had acted as priests and caretakers at the shrine of Siva in Kalipur. But they were no longer there. The few who had not died had migrated elsewhere... Shivpur derives its name from the fact that they lived there." (Banerjee 17) The relationship of people with the land is highlighted here. The fertility of the soil, the rains, plains and hills, all become part of the culture of the region.
Yet another related aspect of the "region" is encapsulated in Kuvelpu's *The House of Kanooru*. Kuvelpu renders the history of ‘malnad’ (the land of hills with plenty of rain). Water, earth, and fire stand as symbols for regional life. *The House of Kanooru* renders the story of Vokkaliga community who are basically agriculturists. If 'malnad' tells the story of a region with plenty of rain, the Jokumara myth exemplifies the lack of it. Rain rituals are a common feature in agrarian societies. I incorporate an interesting story of the rain, at this point to reiterate the role of myths and oral narrations in the recording of regional experience. The Jokumara (one who brings joy) myth is associated with one such rain ritual. These rituals directly relate to attempts to appease the rain deities for rain. Jokumara is considered a harbinger of rain and traditionally the people appease him for rains and happiness. He is the brother of Lord Ganesa. When Ganesa visits the earth, he overlooks the problems of people and gives a very good report to his parents about the conditions of life on earth. People become furious over the indifference of the Lord and when Jokumara visits the earth, people present him with their problems, the most important being the drought situation. This myth is popular in Karnataka and the southern part of Andhra Pradesh. The Jokumara idol is made with clay by one of the potters in the village. People parade it with its enlarged mouth and bulging eyes in the village for three days. The carriers of the idol get offerings of grain and money from the villagers. At the end of the third day they leave it with the dalits who in turn will take the idol into the nearby field and beat it. This rain ritual dramatises the scarcity of food and other societal inequalities in the villages. The rain-related myths also add to regular myths about the region. It’s interesting to see the treatment meted out to the Jokumara idol. In these folk myths gods are treated to all human emotions and
passions. At one level they worship the idol at another level they express their anguish (at the prevailing drought situation) by beating up the idol. Gradually, Jokumara becomes synonymous with rain.

A reality lived in the past is recapitulated in the folk myths that Dr. Kesava Reddy so exquisitely portrays in his novels. They are connected with the past and forgotten histories of the people. These stories are retold in the folk myths. One such myth is retold in Dr. Kesava Reddy's Smasanam Dunneru. Dr. Reddy observes, "nobody knows how these 'sthalapuranas' come into existence." (133) The process of retelling is interesting here, because it involves a cerebral process of going down the memory lane as well as a physical process of digging the ground. A team of dalit labourers, discover an urn full of golden coins in the process of cleaning up a burial ground. The pictures and the graffiti on the coins give scope for conjecture as to who could be the ruler engraved on the coin. After some deliberations they come to the conclusion that he is not one of those rulers whom they get to hear about in the puranas but that the figure on the coin is one like them. Finally they identify him to be Lachchumureddy who was a palegar of the place once upon a time. He is the grandfather of the present landlord Peddareddy. One of the older members of the team recollects the golden period of Raja Lachchumureddy, his generosity, his military prowess and his love of the land. He also gives the geographical outline of the Raja's region. He is supposed to have ruled the land between the present Mokallakonda and Bonthalagutta on one side and from Jillellakana to Sugalollamitta on the other. The important factor one should bear in mind is that the figures in folk myths, the landscape and their culture are identified with ordinary people and not with some invisible cosmic power.
In the previous section I have discussed the complexities implicit in the term "region" and its reflections in literature, its various forms and directions. Throughout the discussions, a background of historical authenticity is assumed and now I come to the task of presenting it in more detail and how it evolves in literary production. In this section, I wish to turn to a discussion of the literary term, 'regional novel'. I would like to provide a genealogy of the regional novel in the British, and in the Indian literary traditions, in order to situate the argument in the larger framework of the thesis.

"Regionalism" in literature is identified with marginalization: marginalized themes and languages find place in regional writings. Much before the word "region" gained popularity in British literature, it was applied to a set of writings that came up in Scottish dialect expressing the sentiments of the rural population and much later it came to be applied to Thomas Hardy's writings. It is an interesting paradoxical situation in which the Scottish writers find themselves at the beginning of the 18th C. In 1707, when the Scottish Parliament ceased to exist and Scotland became northern part of Great Britain, Scottish culture and language/literature was assimilated into British culture. It becomes inevitable then that Scottish writers follow English speech and English literary forms. Frustrated in their political hopes, Scotsmen turned to their literary past for consolation. In the process of asserting a separate national identity from that of a British identity, Scottish writers turn to the regional or dialect variety of Scottish language which was only reduced to a series of dialects, while English continued to rule the roost in mainstream literary life. Though there was a revival of Scottish verse, it was treated as a
dialect verse used for the most part for humorous or sentimental purposes, in patronizing, exhibitionist or nostalgic manner\textsuperscript{9}.

As a mark of protest against standardization of English as the literary language, Robert Burns brought recognition to the dialect variety of poetry written with rural themes. Burns was skeptical about his success as a poet, when he began writing his dialect poems but he went ahead and published \textit{Poems Chiefly Written in the Scottish Dialect} in 1784, the success of which provided him with the necessary confidence to carry out his project further. His success gave a further impetus to his own self-image as a poet from the rural area. It is noted that, Burns began to play to the demands of a particular readership once he became famous. Apparently, Burns selected the \textit{Kilmarnock} poems with care: he is anxious to impress a genteel Edinburgh audience. He played up to contemporary sentimental views about the natural man and the noble peasant. He seems to have exaggerated his lack of education, pretended to a lack of technical resources which was ridiculous in the light of careful craftsmanship which his poetry displayed and in general. Burns' choice of dialect poetry was dual. On the one hand, he used it to consolidate his Scottish national identity, and on the other, to increase saleability for his works. Burns' influence was in fact termed as "sentimental vulgarization" of rustic poetry. Nonetheless, it created a space for the discussion of the regional themes\textsuperscript{10}.

If Robert Burns was largely responsible for bringing about a change in the language of poetry, William Wordsworth is considered to have brought about a change in the themes discussed in poetry in British literature. He favoured innovation against
traditionalism in materials, forms, and styles in literature. The classicists and neoclassicists perceived literature, as an "art" which required innate talents and the characters as human beings who possess "representative characteristics". And the treatment of the themes was also "serious". Wordsworth brought about a change in the themes and treatment through his *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. His "Preface" to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was written as a poetic "manifesto" or statement of revolutionary aims in which he denounced the "poetic diction" of the earlier century and proposed to deal with "materials from common life in a selection of the language really used by men." (Mason 254) Wordsworth's serious treatment of lowly subjects in common language violated the basic neo-classic rule of "decorum" which asserted that serious genres should deal only with high subjects in an appropriately elevated style.

When the novel was innovated in Britain in the 19th century, the sentiments for a lost, pure past had to be recalled once again in the new generic form. Thomas Hardy gets identified with the regional novel for his unique portrayal of Wessex. The novels that are branded as "regional", discuss themes and concerns that are particular to a specific group. And this group is demarcated based on local dialect, speech manners, culture, etc. It places emphasis on the common man and the themes are commonplace. As a result, the regional novel affirms a trend that cannot find scope in "Universal" literature. To put it in the words of Oliver Lafarge, "A certain provincialism similar to the attitudes of a Parisian towards 'les provinces' strengthened by our middle class' strong sense of security and unity has led us to accept a novel laid in New York or Boston or some such centre as being general, whereas one laid in Georgia as sectional." (Draper 30) The middleclass' perception of the "regional" and "universal" merely reduces it to the country and the city.
But the American critics are of the opinion that, 'local colour' novels deal with simple village life whereas the regional novel has a political dimension added to it. They say 'local colour' was a pursuit of defining idiosyncrasies of character and dialect in a country rapidly becoming standardized and not so rapidly shaping its culture towards an internationalism, which it was believed, laissez-faire economies would eventually make politically possible. And they observe that the 'local colour' writings merely showed an interest in portraying the curious, the odd and the picturesque rather than having any kind of serious engagement with human concerns specific to that region. Contrary to the existing notions of regional writing, Thomas Hardy's works provide a serious picture of the countryside reflecting the conflicts of the contemporary society.

An examination of the Indian literary scene takes us further to probe into the diverse forces that culminated in the evolution of the regional novel in India. There hasn't been a unified movement towards writing regional novels in Indian literatures. Regional consciousness in India is fostered by other factors like linguistic reorganization of states in 1956 and the fissiparous tendencies visible within a seemingly monolithic culture propagated by print capitalism. The printed word enjoys the status of being recognized as knowledge and thereby, the alternative modes of expression and the culture associated with them are treated as marginalized. Dialects, in this connection, are not treated as worthy of literary value. Though the evolution of the regional novel is a slow affair, it acquires significance in the light of the political movements, which fought for the rights of the oppressed and marginalized. These political movements give a special thrust to literature that represents the cause of the movement. The fact that some of the regional
writers are activists contributes to bringing the regional novel into the limelight.

The regional novel which remains unknown as a specific genre, till the 1950s takes a new turn with the publication of Phaneeswanath Renu's novel *Maila Ancal* (1954). Asserting his local identity the author declares that *Maila Ancal* is an ancalik novel. Though the term 'anclalik' has been in vogue for quite some time in literary circles, it becomes popular only after Renu's publication of the novel. 'Ancal' means a tract of land as well as the covered bosom of a woman. As such, the term invokes a maternal image. The English term "region" may not adequately carry the connotative meanings of the Hindi term 'ancal' which evokes the image of maternal affection and is connected with the emotionally appealing concept of dharti-mata and Bharat-mata. The jingoistic temper with which Renu began writing the regional novel is evident in his determined declaration that his is an 'ancalik upanayas'.

With him the regional novel gets understood as a socio-realistic entity in which greater attention is paid to the region than to plot and characterization. This is also interpreted as an attempt to underplay the role of the stereotype to give importance to commonplace things. Phaneeswarnath Renu realizes that he has to invent a new genre to contain his new discourse on regionalism. The early regional novels discuss the "region" as unconquered and uncontaminated by the influences of colonialism and modernity, whereas Renu, Tarashankar and Kuvempu deliberately attempt to show that the "region" is not a self-contained unit any longer and that it is as 'dirty' as the nation is in their novels.
The histories of Indian literatures mention the evolution of the regional novel only in a few languages where there has been a strong effort on the part of the authors to discuss matters of local interest in all parts of the country. There may be many more voices, which may have remained submerged owing to various reasons social and otherwise. These histories do not discuss the category of the regional novel in Telugu. However, a decisive set of Telugu writers, have begun writing about the region in the regional dialect. The writers themselves have termed this act as an effort to decanonize literature. The metropolitan literature, which overshadowed the regional literature in the West, proves responsible for the ghettoization of the regional categories in Telugu too.

A different form of fuzziness surrounds the origin of regional literature in Telugu due to a relative lack of clarity in the formation of literary histories. While attempting to contextualize the evolution of regional/dialect variety of writing in Telugu, it is a bit complicated to unravel concrete evidence as to when exactly it took the shape of dialect writings. In the course of our search for a context for a fundamental understanding of the origin of dialect literature, we have to turn to the movement towards colloquialism led by Gidugu Ramamurthy.

The movement begins with the conducting of exams for the Telugu students of Madras University. The students who appeared for F.A. exams in Madras University found themselves in a difficult position to write their exams in Grandhika Telugu, when that was not their spoken language. However, Madras University had to concede to
requests of the students, and allowed them to take their Telugu exams in colloquial Telugu in 1920. The classicists understood the change to colloquialism as an attack against Hinduism itself and they carried out a mission in defense of classical literature and language.

In Andhra the education system was to be put through a rigorous reassessment and reforms needed to be brought in as the students had tremendous problems in learning the literary Telugu. The agenda of the colloquial movement included the introduction of texts that were written in colloquial languages into the curriculum. Writers like Veeresalingam (Rajasekhara Charitamu) and Gurajada Apparao (Kanyakulam) wrote in colloquial Telugu. We must bear in mind that, this colloquial Telugu is the Telugu spoken in coastal districts and not in any other part of Andhra. In the process of democratization and liberalization, standardization of Telugu language also took place. 

So far, neither the conservatives, nor the liberals thought of the heterogeneity of dialects within Telugu. The conservatives, who have been opposing the colloquial movement, realize that they are on a losing ground, and raise a point of objection on the grounds that when there are several dialects available, how can justice be done to all the dialects if one is going to be standardized. In the light of the contradictory opinions expressed by the members of two groups, a compository committee was appointed by the Madras University under Gurajada Apparao's membership to look into the pros and cons of the introduction of colloquialism in the education system. The conservatives in this
committee realised that, the committee is dominated by the liberals. They referred to the obvious drawbacks in the formation of the committee - that it is an all-coastal committee and there is a need to include representatives from Rayalaseema. The classicists cleverly won over these representatives to their side and consequently there was no case for Rayalaseema dialect. It is obvious that the conservatives in the committee expressed their willingness to include Rayalaseema representatives only to add numerical strength to their argument and not out of any real concern for the region. The battle for spoken language is not won in one day. By 1919, all kinds of information related to public relations began to be published in spoken Telugu and by 1937 Andhra Sahitya Parishad officially recognized it as the medium of communication.¹⁵

Though academic institutions accepted the spoken language, literature remained the rigid forte of the classicists and the classicists’ fears of the loss of the Hindu culture proved baseless, as what came to be accepted and subsequently standardized was the Hindu upper caste culture. The system did not enlarge itself for the inclusion of the other dialects from other Telugu speaking regions under Madras Presidency. Telangana was not yet united into Andhra Pradesh and therefore the Telangana question did not arise at all. Nevertheless, after the reorganization of states there was an indiscriminate, uniform implementation of the earlier system. What Sudipta Kaviraj says about the standardization of Bengali is also true of the Andhra situation. He states:

Gradually, through a historical selection of the privileged dialect of some area, this elite gives rise to a new norm language. The growth of printing,
and the possibilities of standardization it contained, helped this norm language to be consciously adopted by the elites of the sub-regions so much so that they become gradually ashamed to utter the dialect which would have been in an earlier era, the cultural flag of their region. Once such a language develops, all dialects can now be differentiated from it as lower-case languages.

(Chatterjee and Pandey 24)

However, the colloquial Telugu movement led by the upper caste, Hindu intellectuals, cannot be taken as a point from where dialect literature takes its roots. In fact, the Telugu readers had to wait for another three decades for the revival of a regional literature written in dialect. Though colloquialism was accepted in the educational system, dialects were still treated as lower-case language of the mainstream language. The awareness of the region, dialect and the movement to turn to one’s own culture for literary inspiration took shape only in the wake of the peoples’ movements in various third world countries.

The context in which regional literature emerged in Telugu is rather diverse and most significantly influenced by the several peoples’ movements all over the world. As Nikhileswar, a prominent Telugu poet and literary critic rightly points out, the existing modes of literature fail to encapsulate the existential angst of the modern man torn between several national and international influences chief among them being
colonization and market economy. Contemporary modes of literature were either filled with pulp fiction or it was treated seriously; in addition to that only classical literature was taught, studied and discussed in Universities. According to him the contemporary literary world is “never contemporaneous with our present”. (qtd. in Nikhileswar 37) The Telugu intelligentsia is compelled to contemplate on the changes and concerns of the contemporary world. Revolutionary spirit was in the air in the 1960s all over the world. The oppressed literatures were beginning to voice their concerns. Nigeria gained independence and African, Latin American, and African American writers recognized the need to articulate their existential predicament in literature. Black Panther Movement was actively voicing the African American communities' problems. The Telugu intelligentsia could not have remained uninfluenced by these developments. “Digambara Kavitvam” emerged lambasting the traditional literature shrouded in hypocrisy. The contemporary reality demanded an interrogation and disruption of all kinds of hegemonical power structures. Having been influenced by some of these movements, Raavi Sastry and Dr. Kesava Reddy began the trend of writing in dialects in the late 60s and early 70s as an attempt to assert the identity of the regional experience. The sources of influence on Dr. Kesava Reddy can be traced down to the American writers whom he avidly reads and emulates. John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath written in black vernacular dialect was one such source of inspiration. The working class revolutionary movements coupled with caste movements have contributed to the invention of an equally powerful medium of expression in dialects. The cultural hegemony of coastal Telugu came to be countered
only in this fashion. Thus 'sthaniyatha' came to be reflected in literature. For instance, Dr. Kesava Reddy wrote his novels focusing on the Rayalaseema region and Raavi Sastry wrote about the everyday lives of the people of Kalingandhra. In all the mainstream histories, Maagokhale, Kavikondala Venkata Rao and Karunakumara (writers from coastal Andhra Pradesh) are celebrated as the regional writers who wrote in dialects. However after the Naxalbari movement, regional issues are discussed in literature written in the local dialects. Appalanaidu, Vangapandu Prasada Rao and Gaddar, B.Ramulu, Allam Rajiah, Jukanti, Sadanand Sarada are some of the writers who write about the region in dialects and who have been rightly recognized as regional writers. Dialect therefore is equated in most cases with 'pranteeyata' or 'sthaneyata'.

So far, I have discussed the conditions that led to the origin of the regional novel in British, Indian and Telugu literatures from a historical perspective. In addition, I feel it obligatory on my part to explain the purpose of taking up a project on regional novel at this moment in history. One of the reasons for my interest in regional writing is that it represents, what David Jordan calls a "decentred world view", (qtd. in Inness and Royer 2) The regional novel offers a heterogeneous perspective of the world, and also addresses questions of cultural identity. To put it in the words of Howard W.Oдум and Harry Estill Moore, "the conception of a regionally differentiated and inter-regionally related culture has something to offer to literature, namely a subject matter (the physical and cultural landscape, local customs, character, speech etc.), a technique (folk and native modes of expression, style, rhythm, imagery, symbolism) a point of view (the social idea of a
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So far, I have discussed the conditions that led to the origin of the regional novel in British, Indian and Telugu literatures from a historical perspective. In addition, I feel it obligatory on my part to explain the purpose of taking up a project on regional novel at this moment in history. One of the reasons for my interest in regional writing is that it represents, what David Jordan calls a "decentred world view", (qtd. in Inness and Royer 2) The regional novel offers a heterogeneous perspective of the world, and also addresses questions of cultural identity. To put it in the words of Howard W. Odum and Harry Estill Moore, "the conception of a regionally differentiated and inter-regionally related culture has something to offer to literature, namely a subject matter (the physical and cultural landscape, local customs, character, speech etc.), a technique (folk and native modes of expression, style, rhythm, imagery, symbolism) a point of view (the social idea of a
planned society and the cultural values derived from tradition as the liberator not the confiner." (W.Odum and Moore 1-4) In other words, it offers an alternative worldview.

I discuss Industrial Revolution in connection with Hardy's novels, since my thesis begins with Hardy's conceptualization of region as untouched by the squalor and dinginess of the Industrial world. Moreover, this is a point of prominence to get an overview to provide a key to the politic played in relation to creating a Utopia out there in the 19th C. And colonial history is invoked to understand the Indian context. This phenomenon changed the whole of history transforming the face of the world unrecognizably. Native histories were either lost or retold and the present itself was shaped according to the dictates of the colonial masters. Therefore any discussion of politics after colonialism cannot escape the consideration of that phenomenon. The ideological climate changed notions of history, nation and region. The regional writers experienced postcoloniality through various filters of hegemonic power systems.

This enterprise begins with an examination of Thomas Hardy's novels to provide a space to locate the historical context of the genre, 'regional novel'. The recalling of Hardy's writings by way of tracing the lineage of the regional novel, in a study rooted in Indian literatures, I am aware, would lead to controversies. But it is fundamentally guided by my own institutional training in English studies. Owing to the comparative dimensions of the present project, the glaring spatial and temporal interstices have been overlooked in stitching together a narrative of the regional novel based in literatures as
diverse as British, Indian and Telugu traditions. Phaneeswarnath Renu, Tarashankar Banerjee and Kuvenmpu will be brought into discussion to provide us glimpses of early regional novels in India. And Dr. Kesava Reddy, Ravi Sastry and Vattikota Alwarswamy will be studied as the representative regional novelists of Andhra Pradesh.

This thesis justifies itself in the light of studies till date on regional writing. While other critical works on regional writings also have used a broad definition of the genre, this thesis offers an analysis of the various ways in which "region" has been projected by writers with greatly different backgrounds, both culturally and historically. The non-existence of political reading of the texts demands this kind of a study. The thesis attempts a precisely political reading of the texts. An enlarged interpretation of the genre permits consideration of literature from diverse writers, in a variety of formats and on a range of topics.

For my study of the regional writings in this project, I wish to follow the methodology proposed by Cornell West I wish to focus "not on the kinds of texts chosen for an enlargement of the old canon or the making of a new one but rather on a historical reading that shapes the way in which literary canon itself ought to proceed and the kind of cultural archives that should constitute this formation."(Munns and Rajan 413) This reading is informed by a particular sense in which conflict, struggle and contestation are
prominent. Such texts that will enhance and enable a deeper understanding of human predicament will be studied. The historical evolution of these novels and the successive movements, which helped the projection of different points of view along with internal developments, will be taken up for study.
Notes


2 See ibid, p. 15


5 Ideas gathered from Sudipta Kaviraj's *The Unhappy Consciousness* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1995).


Palegars were the rulers of Rayalaseema.

9 Ideas gathered from Dietrich Strauss and W. Horst (eds), *Scottish Language and Literature* (Frankfurt: am Main, 1986).


11 For a detailed discussion on the differences between local colour novels and Regional novels, see Howard W. Odum and Harry Estill Moore, *American Regionalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company Ltd., 1938).

12 This concept which is prevalent in the Indian regional novels is inspired by Sumitra Nandan Pant's poem quoted in *Maila Ancal*.


Ideas gathered from Nikhileswar's Prapancha Sahityamlo Tirugubatu Udyamalu (Hyderabad: Visalandhra, 1995).