CHAPTER IV
The Stories of the Time

Nationalism, while seeking freedom from foreign oppression, wants at the same time to strengthen the collective power of the people as a whole. And since collective power of the people can be strengthened only after the removal of social injustices, a nation struggling for freedom also struggles to free itself from the evils of the society. The attempt to rid the society of its age-old evil practices that in the name of custom are only harming the society, is also, therefore, a national process which may be called a process of national consolidation. Many of the Indo-Anglian fiction writers have written novels and short stories with the purpose of purging the society of its harmful practices. This attempt at the reformation of the society is not only an attempt at bringing happiness to the individuals of the society but also an endeavour to make the society as a whole strong. And in a society like the Indian one which is ridden by caste and religious differences, this endeavour for strengthening the society also means an endeavour for consolidation and integration of various peoples into one race or nation. We may thus treat the Indo-Anglian novels and stories with a reformative purpose as novels and stories with a nationalistic bias as well.

It should, however, be mentioned that though most of the Indo-Anglian novels and short stories are social, yet not all of
them are reformative, and thus nationalistic in purpose or spirit. Needless to say, we shall exclude from detailed discussion here - those novels and stories which do not show any serious social purpose of their authors behind them. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Raimohun's Wife (1864) and Toru Dutt's Bianca (1878) thus do not come into our purview.

The first Indo-Anglian social novel with a reformative purpose is The Star of Sikri by K. K. Sinha, published in 1893. In the Preface to this story of 89 pages only which has been called 'A Novel' in the title page, the author, however, writes, "The readers are requested not to expect to find much of interesting or instructive matter in this little book, lest they be disappointed." But that the author's real intention is instructive or reformative can be discerned not only from the spirit of the story but also from the author's comments in the course of the story. For example, in Chapter III of the novel, the author writes:

"Hundreds, nay thousands of cases can be cited in which the feelings of daughters are crushed under the iron hand of tyranny - tyranny of their custom - resulting in the long run in the misery of the daughters, and along with them, of their parents. The girl is yoked to a rich man, without any consideration of her feelings towards him. Gold commands the homage of their parents and wins their approach, while

the heart of the girl to be married has not a feather's weight with them. It is deplorable indeed that parents do not know that they overstep the bounds of parental authority and abuse the power with which they have been invested when they marry their grown up children against their wishes. Manu, in the third chapter of his Code, forbids a marriage when the girl to be married has from any cause been incapable of giving consent to the union.

The story through which such a criticism of the society has been presented, is, however, too unconvincing and unrealistic to produce the intended effect on the mind of the reader. The characters are also too shadowy to come out as real men and women. The story is about a beautiful honest girl Rajini Kumari of Sikri, a village town in Bihar, whom her father gives in marriage when she is only eleven. But Gopal Krishen, the bridegroom chosen by her father without asking anything to her by way of taking her consent, is not the choice of the girl. As such when the bridegroom's party comes to her house on the marriage day, she frankly exhorts the bridegroom not to come near her any more. This marriage which was a betrothal marriage only according to the Hindu custom, and which was to be followed by a final marriage after the attainment of puberty of the girl, thus ends in failure. The father of the girl, however, does not leave the matter there and he fixes the final marriage when time comes. Again the girl refuses to sit for the marriage on the marriage day, snapping all her relation with the bridegroom for ever.
This daring refusal and defiance of a teenager girl is, of course, unconvincing. But the author intends to show through this how the father's approach to the problem was wrong, and how this wrong approach of the parents in the Hindu society to the marriages of their sons and daughters invites troubles.

It is in order to make the girl's refusal a little convincing perhaps that the author has introduced the love story of the girl. But this, too, is quite unrealistic like her story of the refusal. The girl refuses to marry the man of her father's choice because she loves a youth whom she has seen only in a dream but whom she believes to be living in reality somewhere. In course of time, she discovers the youth in reality, but it is only to learn that he is already married. She later meets his wife who, instead of being jealous, only takes pity on her and arranges an interview for her with him. The interview, however, does not take place for some reason when the love-lorn girl receives a serious shock and dies.

This romantic aspect of the story has made the novel more of a phantasy than a social novel with a reformative spirit. The reformative zeal, however, can hardly be missed in the novel, though it has not been artistically expressed through the story.

The next novelist is a lady, Krupabai Satthianandhan who has two novels to her credit, viz. Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life

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and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life*. These two novels are not obtrusively reformative in spirit. But the pictures of the society shown in both the novels are mildly critical; and in this sense they are nationalistic.

Both the novels are at bottom Krupabai's own life-story. Both of them were serialized first in the *Journal of the Madras Christian College* and later published in book-form posthumously. *Saguna* which was written and published serially in the journal earlier than *Kamala*, though published as a book later, depicts the author's early life with her Guzerati Brahmin parents who were later converted into Christianity, and her medical studies in Madras Medical College ending with her marriage with a Madras Christian. While describing the author's real life thus under the garb of fiction, the writer gives here elaborate accounts of the conversion of her orthodox Hindu Brahmin parents into Christianity. *Kamala* on the other hand, depicts the author's later life since her marriage, a life of sorrows caused by the author's protracted illness and her only son's death. Both the novels contain a good deal of Indian ethnography; and in this sense, too, they are nationalistic.


4. These novels were not available for me in any library. My discussion is, therefore, based on John B. Alphonso Karkala, *Indo-English Literature in the 19th Century*, Literary Half-yearly, Mysore, 1970.
The next novelist is also a lady, Shevantibai Nikambe and her novel is entitled Ratnabai. This slender book of about ninety pages was written with the purpose of exposing the contemporary prejudices against women's education, especially the education of married girls and young widows. The story shows how young women through education could become useful and responsible members in the community and equal partners with their husbands.

Ratnabai is a Maratha Brahmin girl who is married when she is only nine years old. Her husband goes to England for higher studies while she stays with her parents. Her father then seeks the permission of her father- and mother-in-law to send her to school; but her in-laws are vehemently opposed to a girl going to school. The girl's father is, however, insistent and becomes successful at last in getting the permission. The girl thus goes to school; but her husband's relatives also are against women's education, and they create many troubles for the girl. Ratna, however, gets over all these difficulties and goes on receiving education till the return of her husband from abroad. As her husband comes back, he finds her a worthy partner for his life.

The author thus draws here an idealistic picture of a father and his daughter against the background of the conservative Hindu society of the time in order to propagate her idea of the necessity of female education in the society.

6. I could not find this novel also for my study in original. Hence my source has again been Alphonso-Karkala, op.cit.
The next novelist is again a lady, Cornelia Sorabji, who has to her credit three collections of short stories and a novelette besides the collection of mythological stories already discussed. The collections of short stories by her are Love and Life Behind the Purdah,\(^7\) Sun Babies,\(^8\) and Between the Twilights;\(^9\) and her novel is Shubala: A Child Mother.\(^{10}\)

*Love and Life Behind the Purdah* is a collection of eleven stories most of them portraying Indian women and their sad plights in the society. In a few stories, pictures of helplessness of Indian women against plagues and pestilence of the tropical country are drawn. These are especially evident in her stories *The Pestilence at Noonday* and *Love and Death*. She has also shown problem-ridden women inside the *zenana* as in *Love and Life* or *Behind the Purdah*. She has dealt with the curse of *sati* in the Hindu society in *Living Sacrifice*. But above all these, the author's note of protest against the evil practice of child-marriage in India rings high. The stories *Pestilence at Noonday*, *Love and Death*, and *Living Sacrifice* are all protests against child-marriage in India, protests lodged tacitly through the

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pictures of sufferings of the Indian women. In this way these stories are important for us from the point of view of Indian nationalism. In technique, however, these stories can hardly be considered as short stories, though in style they can demand a special place in the history of early Indo-Anglian fiction. The language of these stories is a poetic language with a fine sensibility and the subtle nuances of feelings and emotions of a woman. Such a style could hardly be attained by the Indo-Anglians of the nineteenth century.

If *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* is written for the improvement of women's plight in India, *Sun Babies*, her next collection of eight short stories, is written for the improvement of children's plight in the country. Of course, all the stories are not written with the same purpose or the same theme. For example, the two stories *Son-of-the-Wind* and *Feast of Light* are only tales for children without any reformative or instructive spirit in them. But in the remaining stories, especially in *The Doll Festival, Ceremonies and Green Rooms*, and *Mera - the Study of a Parsee Child*, the reformative spirit is distinct. These stories which the author has called 'Studies in the Child Life of India' in the sub-title instead of calling them stories, lack the literary fervour and poetic appeal of the earlier collection. Most of the stories do not have any story to tell nor do they have any plot. They are only some plain pictures of child life in India revealing certain problems. This shows how the author here is more interested in revealing the problems than
writing out mere stories. As works of art indeed, these stories are all failures.

Between the Twilights also reveals the sad plight of Indian women like the first collection through its fourteen pieces of short stories, though in style these stories cannot demand as high a place as those in the first collection.

In Sorabji's Shubala: A Child Mother, too, we find the recurrence of the same theme. But in this, the mode of treatment of the problem of women is different, this being a novel, and not a short story. In this novel which is the only novel by Cornelia Sorabji, we find the author more vociferous about the urgency of the need for the solution of the problem she has raised than in any of her earlier stories. She makes here direct appeal to the readers for the solution of the problem and this covers the major portion of the book, the pure story covering only 10 pages of this 27 page novelette.

In the story, Shubala is a ten year old girl when her marriage is fixed. The narrator of the story who introduces herself as Shubala's 'aunt-mother' protests against the marriage of the girl at such a tender age. But Shubala's mother says that she herself was married when she was only four. The mother also feels that this is not good; but the custom of the society is inviolable for her. Besides she is steeped in Hindu superstition according to which the parents of a girl married after eleven are condemned to the lowest rebirth possible. Anyway, the bridegroom
chosen for Shubala has only one qualification - he is the nephew of a Maharaja who would grant him an allowance.

Shubala's marriage is celebrated amidst pomp and grandeur and the bride is taken to the bridegroom's house in a Rolls-Royce car decorated with flowers. But what a contrast when Shubala is going to have her child! Shubala comes to her mother's house for the purpose. A doctor and a nurse are chosen by her mother. But Shubala's father-in-law's family objects to it. They want their daughter-in-law to deliver her baby in the old way at home. The mother thus cannot engage the doctor and the nurse; and Shubala has to deliver her baby under dire circumstances.

Shubala's father-in-law keeps reading aloud instructions from an old vernacular script for the guidance of an old-fashioned, untrained dhal or nurse from outside the closed room as Shubala delivers the child, herself being very near death. Then for forty days, the baby which is regarded as unclean by all, is utterly neglected, being kept in utterly unhygienic condition.

After showing in this way the writer's tacit concern with the problem of child-marriage and child-nursing in her country, she comes in the later part of the novel to address her readers directly to think over the problem and solve it immediately. For, as she writes:

This is not an isolated instance of what might happen in India. This is a cared for (sic.) illustration of an incident repeated in worst circumstances in thousands of Indian
houses, not only among the poor and destitutes, but among landed proprietors.  

The novelist addresses the Indian and English women separately and points out their duties about this problem concluding her novel with the words, "The words to be written in our hearts are: 5,000 babies die every day in India. What can I do to prevent this?"

It is evident already that though this novel is very important as a social novel with a serious purpose, it is a failure as a work of art. Propaganda gets the upper hand and the artistic side remains completely neglected.

Sirdar Jogendra Singh who comes next has neither a good artistic gift nor a serious concern as a novelist. His three bulky volumes of novels, viz. Narsin, Kamla, and Kamni are cheap stories for the amusement of lay readers only and do not deserve any serious critical attention here.

The next novelist A. Madhaviah is definitely a much better novelist than Jogendra Singh. His first novel Satyananda bears the mark of a really good novel from the point of view of

technique and literary style. But since the author's purpose is only story-telling which he has done quite well, and since he does not intend to reform the society or criticize it, I have abstained from studying it in detail here.

But in Madhaviah's next novel, *Thillai Govindan*, a novel written in autobiographical form, we see the author's direct concern with Indian nationalism. It deals with the life and experiences of Govindan, an exponent of Indian tradition and culture. Born in an ancient South Indian Brahmin family, Govindan has his school and college education in Madras where he comes under the influence of the Christian missionaries, takes to Westernized living, and then after his successful career as a Government servant, repents for his ways of living, amends his life and reaffirms his faith in Indian values, tradition, culture and philosophy. Not satisfied with that alone, he becomes a political reformer and fights for revision of laws and customs in the country. He even joins the Indian National Congress and attends its session as a delegate.

Even this brief outline of the life-story of the man shows the author's nationalistic preoccupation. But as a piece of literature, it is a failure. Though as a story of spiritual regeneration, it is akin to Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*, it cannot carry its reader to that elevated level of Rao's novel. Its language lacks the emotional fervour that is necessary to express

the subtle feelings of the mind common to a man of its hero's type. The hero's feelings and emotions remain so shallow that he cannot appeal to us with all his protestations and affirmations.

Short Stories by 'Kusika' is a collection of sixteen stories by the same author, Madhaviah. All the stories here are social and they are reformative in spirit, especially in regard to dowry system and untouchability in the Hindu society.

The Love of Kusuma by Bal Krishna is also a social novel. But the author does not have any serious purpose behind writing it; and thus it does not deserve any detailed study here.

But when we come to Mulk Raj Anand, we come to an Indo-Anglian novelist of real greatness. Anand is a very prolific writer, writing not only fiction but also dissertations on literature and other arts. As a fiction writer, he has always a serious concern with communicating some ideas of his own to his readers just as a writer of dissertation usually has. And his concern as a fiction writer has been always the redemption of the poor and


A second edition of this volume was published under the title Kusika's Short Stories (On Marriage Reform and Allied Topics) by The Author's Press & Publishing House, Madras, 1924. It contained 27 stories in two parts.

18. None of the two editions of Madhaviah's short stories had been available for me. The basis of my discussion is Dorothy M. Spencer, Indian Fiction in English, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1960.

the oppressed of the society from the clutches of the rich and the oppressor - an objective which he pursues with the zeal of a missionary. But the problem of the poor and the oppressed is present not only in India but also in other parts of the world; and when Anand writes for their redemption, he, of course, writes not only about the oppressed in the Indian society but also about those in other countries. He is, therefore, like all great writers, a universalist as much as he is an Indian nationalist. Of course, as an Indian nationalist writer, the locale of all his novels and stories is India, and the problems in which his characters are involved are always in the Indian context, even though all these problems are not always typically Indian.

As a reformer of the society, Anand draws his inspiration from European political ideologies, especially those of Marx and Lenin. As an artist, too, he shows the impact of the Western Progressive Movement by which the socially conscious writers of Europe and America of the thirties of this century when Anand took to write, "were all engaged in trying to find a solution to the world's woes through new political ideologies." 20 But with all his faith in Western political ideologies and with the impact of a Western literary movement on him, Anand is still an Indian writer "with the urgency with which he has reacted to the problems of his own society." 21

In his fiction, Mulk Raj Anand's heyday as a writer falls during the pre-independence period and all his best works of the early period started appearing in the two most hectic decades of Indian freedom fighting, i.e. a decade after the victory of the Russian Revolution. Anand is preoccupied mainly with three problems of the society - the problems of oppression and exploitation of the lowest classes by the upper classes, the tyranny and torture of the higher castes over the lower castes of the Hindu society, and the ignorance and superstition of the people caused by illiteracy and orthodoxy that stand in the way of the progress of the society.

In his first novel Untouchable, Mulk Raj Anand has shown the typical Indian problem of untouchability in the Hindu society suggesting the magnitude of the harm it has done to a section of the society and thus impeding the harmonious growth and development of the society as a whole while violating the sense of humanity in a most brutal manner. The oppression and tyranny of the high caste Hindus are all vividly shown here - their ruthlessness, their cruelty, their hypocrisy, and their love for mastery and dominance over the low castes. Against this is shown the sad and passive sufferings of the low castes with all their agony and pain.

22. Anand's art as a fiction writer seemed to be falling since 1945 when his novel The Big Heart appeared. But the publication of Morning Face in 1968, the first of a series of novels planned under the title The Seven Ages of Man has proved that Anand can again scale the height of his early great novels.

The surrounding in which "the outcastes from Hindu society" live is described in the beginning of the story with all its dark features that go against the rule of hygiene for human habitation. In the author's words:

The absence of a drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of the colony, and the ugliness, the squatter and the misery which lay within it, made it an uncongenial place to live in.25

The boy Bakha lives under such circumstances, changing the roads and latrines of the town and creating a hygienic condition for others. He is roused from the comfort of his early morning sleep by the urge of his duty.

After Bakha comes back home, his sister Sohini goes out to the well belonging to the caste-Hindus for bringing water. The outcaste Hindus have no well of their own, they being too poor to have one. As a result, these untouchable women have to collect at the foot of the caste-Hindus' well and depend on the bounty of some of their superiors to pour water into their pitchers. ... the outcastes had to wait for chance to bring some caste Hindu to the well, for luck to decide that he was kind, for Fate to ordain that he had time

For the outcastes could not touch the well since their very touch will pollute the water. After some bitter experiences of waiting, Sohini manages to get her pitcher filled with water by a Brahmin pundit of the temple and comes back. This Brahmin pundit who helps Sohini more for his attraction for her blooming youth than for his kindness to her, invites her to go to his house at the temple for cleaning.

Accordingly, taking her father's permission Sohini goes to the Brahmin's house before noon when Bakha also goes to the temple for sweeping its courtyard. On the way, Bakha meets the school-boys of rich upper class families going to school. At this sight, his long subdued desire for learning flares up:

His uncle at the British barracks had told him when he first expressed his wish to be a sahib that he would have to go to school if he wanted to be one. And he had wept and cried to be allowed to go to school. But then his father had told him that the schools were for the babus, not for the lowly sweepers. He hadn't quite understood the reason for that then. Later at the British barracks he realized why his father had not sent him to school. He was a sweeper's son and could never be a babu. Later still he realized that there was no school which would admit him because the

parents of other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of the low-caste man’s son. 27

The eighteen year old boy Bakha now approaches a school-boy who is much younger than he, and asks if he would kindly give Bakha lessons daily on payment. The little boy consents, and Bakha sees the prospect of a long cherished dream being fulfilled at last.

Bakha then proceeds towards the temple when on the road he accidentally touches a caste-Hindu and is beaten for that, besides being abused and cursed. In horror, rage and humility, helpless Bakha weeps bitterly and proceeds to his duty with all cautiousness not to touch any caste-Hindu.

When he reaches the temple, he finds that the religious rites for the noon are being performed there by the priests, and the caste-Hindu devotees have thronged into it for their noon-time pranam. As Bakha hears the singing of the hymns, he is profoundly moved and he hears it by standing at the stairs. But just then he hears the disturbing shouts "polluted, polluted" and sees all the priests and caste-Hindus rushing towards him who has polluted their temple by standing on the stairs. Bakha is soon driven away to a distance when he hears another shout "polluted, polluted" by a priest. This priest is no other than the one he had invited Sohini to clean his house. He has rushed to the temple to give an impression to his brethren that the sweeper-girl had touched him and defiled him as she went to his house to clean it. In

27. ibid. p.27.
reality, however, it was he who was the culprit. When she went to his house to clean it, he who was enamoured of her, made indecent suggestions to her, and when she refused to yield to him, he raised that hue and cry to throw the blame on her. When Bakha knows this fact from his humiliated sister, he is stunned; and then forgetting himself in anger, he rushes towards the temple to teach those caste-Hindu hypocrites a lesson. But the people disperse in fear, and he comes back vexed.

Coming back home at noon after one more bitter experience of polluting a family-house by his touch, he narrates before his father his experience at the temple with a view to knowing from him what he should do against all those injustices of the society. The father, however, with his life-long experiences as an untouchable in the Hindu society, asks him to tolerate all those passively for their own safety. "They are our superiors. One word of theirs is sufficient to over-balance all that we might say before the police"28 - he says.

Later in the afternoon when Bakha goes to play hockey with other children, the game ends in a pandemonium when a little boy watching the game is hurt by a stone. Bakha, out of his love for the child and sense of duty, carries the child to his high caste parents to be greeted there by them with curses and expostulations for defiling their house and the child.

28. ibid. p.63.
Bakha grows tired of such treatment in every step of his life; and he comes out of his house to a solitary place where he can enjoy the peace of being out of human touch.

In this way, through this poignant story of the boy's experiences in a day, the author has effectively shown the injustice prevailing in the Hindu society. The author suggests in the novel three solutions to this problem in the society of his country. Towards the end of the novel, Bakha in his humiliation and disgust hears three appeals for ending the disparity in the society. One appeal is from a salvationist missionary for his conversion into Christianity where there is no caste-distinction to oppress him. The other is the appeal of Gandhi in a meeting for the emancipation of the outcastes by carrying on propaganda against untouchability, and by doing their own cleaning works by the upper caste Hindus as Gandhi himself and the inmates of his ashram do. The third appeal is that of a Marxian poet who wants introduction of machine for doing the jobs of the sweepers which will redeem the untouchable caste from their dirty profession and thus elevate them to a higher rank, putting an end to the prejudice of untouchability.

Bakha is moved by Gandhi's appeal; but he feels more inclined to the solution offered by the Marxian poet, he having developed a taste for the civilization of the Tommies who, he has found from his experience, treat him like a human being while the Hindus have reduced him and his caste brethren to a sub-human status. Anyway, after hearing Gandhi and the poet, he feels that
a solution to the problem is not far away, and the redemption is bound to come. As E. M. Forster has so nicely put it in his unforgettable Preface to the book: "His Indian day is over and the next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not on the depths of the sky, a change is at hand."

In his next novel Coolie, we again find a similar story of a boy's oppression in the society. But in this Anand has shifted from the story of oppression in the Hindu society in particular to the story of oppression in the Indian society in general; and the oppression here is not of the lower caste by the higher caste, but of the poor, lower class by the rich, upper class. With this novel, therefore, Anand has struck a new note as an Indian fiction writer, that of analyzing the woes of man in terms of class struggle. An analysis of the plot of the novel will show it clearly.

Munoo, a fourteen year old peasant orphan boy of the Kangra hills of the Punjab, is forced to earn his own living when he is in his uncle's village home. His uncle who is a chapraisi in the Imperial Bank in a distant town, has arranged the job of a house-servant for him in the house of one of his superiors in the Bank, a Sub-Accountant. Munoo who could not live peacefully in his uncle's house as a dependent member because of the tortures and nagging tongue of his aunt, likes this arrangement for a new life, and comes to the town with a new hope. But soon he realizes

in the Sub-Accountant’s house that he has fallen here only from bad to worse. The mistress of the house is more cruel and oppressive than his aunt and she does not give him any rest from his endless odd jobs of the house. He feels in his new situation that he is looked upon as a sub-human beast by his employers while they regard themselves as a superior race. He is underfed, under-paid and constantly nagged at by them under such a humiliating condition as was formerly unimaginable for him. With a faint hope that his uncle who received his monthly salary from his master regularly, would be sympathetic to him and ameliorate his condition, he approaches him. But he finds his uncle, too, as unsympathetic as his master. He realizes then that they are of the same class, his master oppressing him and his uncle exploiting him.

He then runs away from the town by train. In the train he is met by one Seth Prabh Dayal, a partner of a pickle factory at Daulatpur. Prabh Dayal picks him up and takes him to his factory partly for his love for the boy as a childless man and partly for his need of some more hands in the factory. Munoo finds himself in a better position in the house of this joint owner of the small old-fashioned factory. Prabh Dayal who has risen from a coolie to this position of a factory owner loves this coolie boy Munoo. His wife, too, is equally kind to him. But his work in the dingy, congested, suffocating factory is rather hard. Munoo still would have continued to live in Prabh Dayal’s house as a coolie of his factory. But that was not to be. The other partner of the factory, Ganpat is not like Prabha. Like Prabha he
was never a coolie and so he cannot tolerate Prabha treating Munoo as a boy of their rank. His relation with Prabha is thus strained.

Besides, Ganpat had a trouble about this time with his neighbour Sir Todar Mal, a loyal servant of the British empire and a Public Prosecutor of the British Government, who has turned a "Public Persecutor" by taking to money lending at exorbitantly high interest. Sir Todar Mal's family is badly disturbed by the incessant smoke emitted by the pickle factory. This leads to a scuffle between Sir Todar Mal's son and Ganpat where Ganpat is badly beaten. It is a great insult to Ganpat, he being a rich man's son who feels that he is in no way inferior to Todar Mal or his son. But Prabha who "had risen from cooliedom to be the petit bourgeois of a factory" compromises with Sir Todar Mal with his habitual meekness and simplicity. Not only that, in Ganpat's absence, Prabha has borrowed money from Todar Mal and has rented a part of Todar Mal's house for the factory. Ganpat is enraged with Prabha for all these so much so that he dissolves his partnership with Prabha and stands against him, taking all the clients of their joint business to his side. Prabha thus runs bankrupt and is relegated soon to his former hard life of a coolie, though his broken health now does not allow him to take that profession.

31. ibid. p.93.
The result is equally disastrous for Munoo who has to earn his living now by doing porter's job. Not feeling secure in such a profession, he goes to Bombay in a special train hired by a touring circus party. In Bombay he finds an old coolie of a big cotton mill, coming back from his village with his wife and family. This coolie likes Munoo and takes him to the mill with the hope of finding a job for Munoo also in the same mill. Munoo gets a job there though after much difficulty on the part of the coolie in pleasing the haughty, greedy foreman of the mill.

As soon as Hari, the coolie and Munoo join their work, the foreman Jimmie Thomas, a white sahib offers to lend them a sum of money at a very high interest for their establishment. He also lets a straw hut to them at a very high rent, though the broken hut is situated at a very unhealthy place. They are to accept both the offers of the foreman, since that burly sahib is their immediate master in all matters of the mill. But soon after they establish themselves in that rickety hut situated in a low lying area, the area is flooded and the house is badly affected by it and made unfit for living in. Ratan, a gigantic coolie of the same mill then arranges a better house for them and Munoo, Hari and his family shift to it soon. But their master the foreman blows hot and cold at this and warns that they will have to face serious consequences for it. Ratan who is known as a wrestler for his gigantic stature does not care for it and he throws a challenge to the sahib.

In consequence, at the next payment of salary to the coolies, the foreman deducts a good part of the salaries to be
paid to Hari, Munoo and Ratan and a host of others quite arbitrarily. Hari and Munoo accept the punishment as a stroke of fate though they are badly in need of money because of their heavy debt and low salary. Ratan, however, refuses to pay the fine and he draws the salary in full by threatening the sabil. The result is still more serious. Ratan is disposed of his job summarily.

Soon Ratan is met by some leaders of the All India Trade Union Congress and they take up his case. A representation is made to the mill for Ratan's re-instatement. But the authority of the mill, not to speak of Ratan’s re-instatement, orders a wage-cut for all the coolies declaring short work in the mill. The three leaders of the Union then organize a meeting of the coolies which is presided over by the permanent President of the Union. But the President who is a hardliner and a conservative with a sympathy for the capitalists, urges the coolies for a compromise and a co-operation between labour and capital. The three Union leaders cannot tolerate this attitude of their President and one of them stands up and protests against the President’s speech. He explains how the mill-owners are "the brigands who live in palatial bungalows on the Malabar Hill"[32] on the money earned by the coolies with their labour while the coolies themselves are "roofless",[32] "riceless",[32] living twenty of them in one room in "broken straw huts and stinking tenements."

32. ibid. p.223.
The coolies are at once struck by the words of this leader and they unite under his command raising slogans for "right to work without having to pay bribes", "clean houses to live in", "freedom from the clutches of the money lender", "good wage", "shorter hours", "security against certain dismissal" and other like demands. But no sooner such slogans are shouted in one voice by the coolies than a trouble is created by some unknown miscreants. This trouble created probably by the agents of the mill-owner soon takes the turn of a Hindu-Muslim communal riot of grave intensity calling forth stern police action where the original issue between the coolies and the mill authority is forgotten.

Munoo loses contact with Hari or Ratan during the riot; and then he is run over by a car of an Anglo-Indian lady on her way to Simla. She takes the wounded boy with her to Simla where she engages him after his recovery as her rikshaw puller. Though Munoo finds his new life in the Anglo-Indian lady's house comparatively tolerable because of the wayward lady's love for him, he cannot forget the love of his lost friends like Ratan, Hari and Prabh Dayal. He at last becomes a victim to tuberculosis and the story ends with the grim prospect of his dying with a feeling of detachment in a lonely, isolated hospital of quiet Simla.

As is apparent from this story, Mulk Raj Anand is up for laying bare here a kind of violence in the society done to the

33. ibid. p.224.
34. ibid. p.225.
people of the lower rung by those of the upper - a universal problem of the capitalistic societies shown in the Indian context. As a Trade Union leader says in the novel: "There are only two kinds of people in the world: the rich and the poor, and between the two there is no connection." 35

The novel in this sense breathes more a spirit of proletarian humanism than a spirit of Indian nationalism. The injustice shown here is done not by the British to the Indians but by the rich to the poor, by the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, irrespective of their nationalities. Munoo as a servant is oppressed by his master the Sub-Accountant and his wife who do not understand Munoo's feelings. It is natural for them because they belong to a different class - the middle class while Munoo belongs to the working class. Munoo does not have any sympathy from his uncle since he, too, as an employee of the Bank has emerged into the middle class.

When he is employed in the pickle factory, Prabh Dayal loves him sincerely and Ganpat hates him as a coolie. It is again due to this class difference. Prabha has "risen from cooliedom to be the petit bourgeois" as the novelist himself writes; and as such he cannot yet hate the coolie boy, Munoo. But Ganpat is a thorough bourgeois, a son of a rich man of a town, and as such he can never feel any sympathy for a coolie - a working class man. The rupture between Prabh Dayal and Ganpat is not the result of

35. ibid. p.224.
their personal conflict alone. It is the result of the class conflict - conflict between the petit bourgeois and the big bourgeois.

As Munoo finds himself employed in the cotton mill owned by some British capitalist, he is again a victim to the big bourgeois. As is natural, his friends and well-wishers in the mill are all coolies like him. Since the difference of his class and the class of his employer is more distinct here, the exploitations and oppressions are also more ruthless and cruel. At last, in his last employment under Mrs. Mainwaring, he is happier than in his earlier employment, because the lady is again a petit bourgeois. But even under her employment and loving care, Munoo cannot be happy; and he who is a working class boy longs for the love and company of the brethren of his own class.

As a novel, Coolie is quite successful. But whereas Untouchable showed a more careful handling of craftsmanship, Coolie betrays a lesser concern for this. The author is more concerned here with the telling of his story appealingly and with his theme of class struggle than with the art and artifices of a novelist. But for this, the novel does not suffer in any way. Rather it gains in respect of its appeal to all classes of readers. Untouchable, inspite of its faultlessness as a work of art, is highly concentrated in the exposition of its theme within strict economy. This has made the work a little overstrained for which it needs careful and intelligent reading from its readers. But there is no such overstraining or overconcentration in Coolie. For this, Coolie can easily capture the attention of the readers.
Mulk Raj Anand's third novel *Two Leaves and a Bud* is a variation of the same theme of oppression of the rich over the poor, i.e. of the same class struggle. The story here is centred round Gangu, a peasant of the Punjab. He has lost all his land and property to the money-lender; and after maintaining his family with his meagre income from the job of a chowkidar at Amritsar, he comes over to an Assam tea estate to serve as a plantation labourer. But all his hope of a better fortune - a hope of earning more from his new job and getting a plot of estate land for cultivation, is belied; and he finds that even after the employment of himself, his wife and two children as coolies in the estate, their joint income is insufficient to maintain their livelihood. Thus Gangu has again to fall a victim to the money-lender who had once ruined him in the Punjab.

This disillusion of the wretched coolie is followed by a series of tribulations, one among them being the death of his wife in a cholera epidemic caused by the stiff indifference of the authority to the hygiene of the coolie lines. Broken down by the pang of bereavement and the malaria from which he was then suffering, Gangu goes to the Manager of the estate for a loan for his wife's funeral. As he reaches the office, the chaprasi wants bribe if he is to arrange the interview with the sahib. Gangu has to promise to pay the bribe when he would receive the loan from the sahib. Then the chaprasi moves the clerk to arrange the

Gangu is thus left with no other way than to borrow money again from the money-lender at a much higher rate of interest, he having remained in heavy debt to him already. But though the white Manager of the estate has thus no pity for him, the white doctor there is very kind to him as to all other coolies. He arranges a plot of cultivable land for him to mitigate his serious economic stringency. It is a relief for Gangu. He and his two children now work here, too, in addition to their work in the estate so that he may pay off some part of the heavy debt.

Another bitter experience of Gangu is still worse. When Gangu's young daughter Leila was working in the garden with other coolie women, a quarrel took place over the issue of some coolie women yielding themselves to the lust of the Assistant Manager Reggie Hunt. The attempt of a burly coolie sardar to subdue the quarrel worsens it still when Reggie Hunt who is notorious for his cruelty to the coolies and lust for the coolie women rides down his horse upon them in his habitual fit of anger, wounding many in the process. They are also beaten badly by the warders under the order of Reggie Hunt. The coolies do not know what to do against this injustice and they go in a procession to the kind doctor...
la Havre. The doctor in his sympathy advises them to go to the Manager in a body and seek justice from him, assuring them that he himself would meet the Manager later to plead for their cause.

The coolies proceed to the Manager's bungalow where they find the Manager Croft-Cooke quite unsympathetic for them. What is more, the Assistant Manager Reggie Hunt with some armed warders come upon them there, too; and with the support of the Manager, the aggrieved coolies are chased away home.

With "the bitterness, the folly and the pain of it all", Gangu later that evening goes to his neighbour Narain whom he and all other coolies regard as their own brother. Gangu finds there a few other coolies, too, all grumbling over the day's happening. Narain with his long experience as a coolie in that tea-estate explains stoically to them all how they are always helpless as coolies either to do anything against the authority or to do anything for the improvement of their own lot or even to go back home. One coolie suggests that if they are unable even to go back home, they can perhaps go to some other gardens where the condition of the coolies is better. Narain at once shows the preposterousness of such a suggestion:

You don't know the ways of the white folk, brother. A coolie of your age, a boy named Sridhar Tilang, was sent to prison because he wanted to go to Cinnamara Tea Gardens in search...

of work, as he heard that there were many other coolies from his district in that garden. 38

In this context, Narain also narrates how the Trade Union Congress Movement spread into the tea gardens of Assam, and how the aggrieved coolies joining it had to suffer so badly at the hands of the powerful white men and their Government. 39 "The sahibs can do anything, brother. When they want you, they can force you to remain, when they don't want you, they can compel you to leave" he tells them.

After hearing the revealing stories of vain revolts of the coolies in the past even with the support of the Congressmen, Gangu's hope of going back home is also shattered. He, too, realizes like Narain now that he would have to go on working there under the cruel planters passively - without any hope, without any grumbling!

But the Europeans of the garden as well as of other neighbouring gardens see in the act of the aggrieved coolies going in a procession to seek justice, the bugbear of a mutiny of the nature of the Mutiny of 1857, and they ask for Army and Air Force safeguard telegraphically. All the Europeans except the doctor de la Havre gather together and take shelter in the Manager Croft-Cooke's bungalow waiting for Army and Air Force safeguard. Soon the Royal Air Force planes and bombers gather over the sky of the

Macpherson Tea Estate and its neighbouring areas and fly round and round in a bid to save the white men from falling victims to the mutiny of their imagination. The helpless, unarmed coolies are terrified beyond measure, children run helter-skelter, women scream and a pregnant woman's heart fails and she dies. The terrified coolies again approach their saviour de la Havre who in his sympathy leads them to the Manager's bungalow. The result is the discharge of the doctor summarily from his service in the estate and his consequent departure from Assam. Another consequence is a fine of Rs.50.00 imposed on Gangu and a few other coolies to be deducted from their salary.

Later when normalcy returns to the garden, the lustful Reggie Hunt makes an attempt to rape Gangu's daughter Leila at the field. The frightened girl succeeds in freeing herself from his clutch and running home. But Reggie, who feels humiliated, takes it as a challenge and goes to her house in the evening when her father is away in the neighbour's house. Apprehending danger at Reggie's hands again, the girl shrieks when Gangu comes out from the neighbour's house. Reggie Hunt with his usual alertness then shoots at Gangu and Gangu falls down dead.

Then, "after a trial lasting for three days, Reginald Charles William Hunt, Assistant on the Macpherson Tea Estate" is given the verdict by His Lordship the white Judge in the words:

Prisoner at the Bar, an impartial jury has found you 'not guilty' on the charge of murder and culpable homicide. I

41. ibid. p.276.
concur with the jury's view of evidence. You are discharged. 42

In this way the author shows through this story again how the poor and the wretched of the working class have been exploited and oppressed by the rich and the wealthy of the bourgeois class. The one distinction in this novel is, however, that whereas in the earlier novel Coolie, the exploiting class consisted of both the Indians and the Britishers, here in this novel the bourgeois class consists mainly of the Britishers. This novel thus can be read as a story of oppression and exploitation of the Indians by the British, too. Indeed, in Narain's story of the sufferings of the coolies after the war at the hands of the tea-planters backed by the Government 43, the novel assumes the nationalist colour. The coolies in Narain's narrative, in their movement to go back home or get better facilities, are backed by the Congress Trade Union leaders while the British tea-planters are backed by the British Government. It is for this reason that Two Leaves and a Bud was banned in both India and Britain while all the other novels by Anand were banned only in India during the British rule.

The real theme of the novel, however, is not of the sufferings of the Indians at the hands of the British but the oppressions and exploitations of the coolies at the hands of the tea-planters - of the working class at the hands of the employers,

42. ibid. p.276.
be they Indians or British or of any other nationalities. Throughout the novel, this idea has been suggested by implications. It is for this that de la Havre the European doctor has been shown as a declassed bourgeois and a great sympathizer with the cause of welfare of the suffering coolies. The novelist writes about him:

The doctor had resisted Anglo-India's belief in British greatness ever since his arrival in this country. At first, perhaps it had been from an instinct to be different from everyone else, an individual. Then he had given up the Imperial Medical Service, because the sentimental romantic in him wanted to make a brave gesture to convince himself that he had really come to regard Indians as human beings and to believe that they had a right not only to rule themselves, but to rule themselves justly by destroying the inequalities of caste, class and creed.44

He urges the Manager for a hygienic water supply to the coolies in place of the dirty unhygienic wells and says:

I know that thousands of those coolies may be swept off by the parasites in those wells. And I feel conscience-stricken. It would be criminal not to do anything about it since I know the water supply is infected. And considering the Company earns millions of pounds every year on their labour, it wouldn't be such a terrible loss for it to spend a lakh

44. ibid. p.30.
to save the coolies from perishing through gnats and pests.  

In one of his many private notes, he has observed the sufferings of the "swarming, under-nourished, bleary, worm-eaten millions of India" and has written:

... the black coolies clear the forests, plant the fields, toil and garner the harvest, while all the money-grubbing, slave-driving soulless managers and directors draw their salaries and dividends and build up monopolies. Therein lies the necessity of revolution in this country. On the one hand, the vast masses, prisoners of so many chains, bearing the physical signs of grief, of lassitude, even of death, and on the other hand the supercilious rich, wrapped up in their self-assurance and complacency, never once questioning the ideals of glory and power and wealth.

This division of men into two classes and showing the need of a revolution in the country against the monopolies of the rich by the author's most idealized character in the novel is very significant.

Later when the coolies go in a body for advice to their benevolent doctor about their duty in the context of the Assistant Manager's cruel behaviour with them, de la Havre asks them why all of them together could not beat back the insolent Assistant Manager.

The coolies with their characteristic inferiority complex and submissiveness attribute their inability to their being black in complexion - being of an inferior race, when the white doctor explains how the difference between them and the Assistant Manager does not lie in complexion or race but it lies only in their classes. The doctor illustrates his point with the case of the white coolies in England who are also oppressed in the same way by their employers. "They and their like beat the workers of Vilayat in the same way as they beat you" - he says to the coolies. The coolies to whom this is a revelation ask in surprise, "Even though they be sahibs, Huzoor?" And de la Havre replies, "Yes, there is no difference."

It is only natural that the estate authority would remove such a man from his service.

In its artistic aspect, "Two Leaves and a Bud" is, however, inferior to "Coolie" or to "Untouchable." The depth of the agonies of Munoo the coolie or Bakha the untouchable has not been attained by Gangu in his sufferings. Consequently, the pathos that lies in the themes of "Untouchable" and "Coolie" is missing here. The personality of Gangu, too, has not been as distinct as that of Bakha or Munoo. Even the common sufferings of the coolies in general in the tea-estates are only reported in the novel through the narrative of Narain, though it is this which is in reality the theme of the novel. In case of selection of episodes and characters, however, the author has maintained here a commendable economy, though the excess of 'reporting' through conversations and writings in diaries

has marred the effect of the story to a great extent. The precision of details of the lives of coolies, babus and sahibs in the tea-estates of Assam or India is an asset of this novel as well as of the whole of Indo-Anglian fiction.

The next novel *The Village* by Mulk Raj Anand is again a variation of the same theme of oppression and exploitation. But this novel that brings two more novels in its trail as its sequel, studies with the other two the theme of oppression and exploitation more deeply and in wider perspectives.

The story of *The Village* is about Lal Singh of the village Nandpur, ten miles away from the town of Manabad in the Punjab. The boy Lal Singh who had read up to eighth class in a missionary school at Sharkot is a defender of the new progressive elements the British Government has brought to the country. A little headstrong and impetuous by nature, Lalu one day eats in a Muslim cookshop in protest against his own caste-ridden society, and gets his kaishas - the uncut hairs which are the symbol of his Sikhism, cut in a hair-cutting saloon in the town. Then he returns home to the horror of the conservative members of his family. Though his family tolerates this dare-devil attitude, his villagers who are all Sikhs, at once swoop down upon him in protest, blacken his face, seat him on the back of a donkey and parade him through the streets of the village. The rebellious

boy yields thus to a force much stronger than his. But his progressive spirit is not thereby subdued or bent, and he remains as firm in his sense of righteousness as ever.

But even this boy who is a staunch supporter of the progressive elements brought in by the British rule soon finds himself victimized by the corrupt feudalism and capitalism unleashed by the same British rule. Commenting on the corrupt management of the railway system introduced by the British, Lalu's father tells Lalu, "You don't think of the hire, the bribes you have to pay to the Babu at the godown each end." Lalu's father Nihal Singh criticizes in stronger words still the complexities of the British bourgeois administration that gives chances to the wicked to indulge in corruption and malpractices, "... I have never liked the town of Manabad which the rapers of their mothers, the ferungis, have built. I have never liked them or their ways." He holds the British responsible for putting an end to the Sikh Raj in the Punjab and for bringing in feudalism which has let loose a cruel reign of oppression and exploitation. "They destroyed the Sikh Raj and favoured thieves like Harbans Singh, who betrayed their race and killed the righteous." Criticizing the bureaucratic system of the court, the old man says to his son, "These ferungis carry on a suit for years, transferring it from magistrate to magistrate, till the lawyers have eaten away all one's money."
Lalu's father narrates to Lalu how the feudal system introduced by the British in the Punjab has deprived them of their paternal landed property. Because of this system, Teja Singh of their village became the landlord under the patronage of the British. He then grabbed ten of their twenty-five acres of inherited land. When Teja Singh was succeeded by his son Harbans Singh as the landlord, Harbans Singh grabbed five more acres from their remaining acres of land by fraud in which a landlord can easily indulge with the connivance of the new administrative system. The old man gets emotional as he describes how for the last ten years he has been going to the court in a bid to regain his five acres of precious land and how he has been almost ruined by it. Lalu thus realizes the gravity of the injustice done to them by Harbans Singh, and to the country as a whole by the corrupt feudalism of the British.

After Lalu is disgraced publicly in the village, his parents settle the marriage of his elder brother Dayal Singh. Besides, it is time for them to pay off the rent for their land. For these they are to borrow money. And it is for borrowing money that Lalu's father; Lalu's eldest brother Sharm Singh and Lalu himself go to the money-lender of the village to pray for a loan of rupees two hundred. The money-lender agrees to lend the sum at an exorbitantly high rate of interest if some pledges are kept with him as security. Lalu protests against the demand of the landlord for pledges since he would be given interest on the loan. But this only leads to a quarrel as a consequence of which the
money-lender refuses to lend the sum. But since the sum is ur-
gently needed, Lalu's father sends Lalu away whereupon the money-
lender lends out the sum by keeping Nihal Singh's thumb-impression
on a blank-sheet to be filled up later on by the money-lender him-
self.

Then one day the Deputy Commissioner of the district,
Mr. Long pays a visit to the village Nandpur where he is given a
public welcome by the villagers. Mr. Long has a great popularity
amongst the Indians for his love of them. Mr. Long especially
loved the illiterate peasantry of the country and tried to do
whatever he could for the edification and amelioration of their
condition. His visit to Nandpur is out of this love for the pea-
santry. In the meeting held in his honour, the D.C. forms a Boy
Scout Troop in the village for welfare works and Lal Singh, who
had been to a missionary school, is appointed the patrol leader
of the Troop.

The village landlord Harbans Singh is piqued at this. He
does not like his enemy Nihal Singh's son heading a village orga-
nization. Because Lal Singh's heading an organization under the
direct patronage of the Head of the district will lower down his
prestige locally, he being the only person in the village so far
having official contact with the Government. In a bid to keep his
prestige in the village intact, Harbans Singh devises ways and
means to pull down Lal Singh and stop the movement. His opportunity
comes when one day his daughter goes to Lalu's house to meet Lalu
in the pretext of making an enquiry about their preparation for
the coming marriage of Lalu's brother Dayal Singh. Harbans
Singh's daughter has a weakness for Lalu whom she had once met on
her way to a fair in the town. When his daughter now meets Lalu
at his house, Harbans Singh brings a charge against the boy for
leading his daughter astray. He further brings a charge against
the boy for allegedly stealing fodder from his field. Lalu then
runs away from the village partly for fear of being arrested and
partly in protest against what the landlord has done against him.

As Lalu reaches the town of Manabad, a campaign for
enlistment of young men in the Army is going on there. For escaping police arrest as well as for earning money to enable his
father to pay off his heavy debts, Lalu soon offers to enlist himself in the Army. He is then taken with a few other boys to
Ferozpur Cantonment where he is finally selected for the Army.
But Harbans Singh has not yet given up his grudge and he finds
out Lalu in the Cantonment. The military authority, however, does
not allow the police to arrest Lalu. Instead, it makes an investi­
gation into Lalu's past when he is found guiltless. Lalu is thus free from the fear of the police and of the landlord.

Failing to do anything against Lalu, Harbans Singh is
now after Lalu's family and he breaks the marriage of Lalu's elder
brother. Not only that, he succeeds in calumniating the wife of
Lalu's eldest brother. Harbans Singh's slander is that his son has an affair with Sharm Singh's wife. As Sharm Singh hears it,
he loses his temper and kills the landlord's son. Sharm Singh
is thus sent to jail where he is hanged to death. When the case
against Sharm Singh was going on, Nihal Singh had to mortgage a part of his land again for defending his son in the law-court in vain. The hanging of his eldest son and the loss of another part of land give the old man a mortal shock and soon he is confined to bed and reduced to an invalid. Lalu gets this information as he is undergoing military training. Coming home on leave, he finds his raving father at Death's door and his family on the verge of ruin. As Lalu keeps standing beside his father's bed, the ailing old man raves against the agents of the British Raj:

They are heretics, those who side with the Angrezi Sarkar. They are traitors who sold the Sikh Raj. And they will come to bad end if they learn to practise the machinations of the Devil as those ferungis have learnt to practise them.

The old man's end did not come very soon, however. Lalu leaves home for the Cantonment where he finds that his Brigade is going to be sent to the war in Europe. It was the First World War. He likes the idea of going abroad, though not to fight in a war. Anyway, he gets ready to go to the war in Europe, leaving the directions in his pay-sheet for his emoluments to be sent to his ailing father. As his Brigade reaches Karachi and he is about to leave the shores of his country for his unknown destiny, he receives the news of his father's death. For Lalu, it is then too late to come back home, and he sails to Europe across the black waters.

53. ibid. p.218.
Thus the story which opens with the old man's grumbling against the British system of administration ends with the same old man's complaints of the same sort in his dying lips. And in between we see his young son's learning by experience how his father's complaints are true in the main. The progressive minded young man, however, remains an admirer of the good things the British have brought to his country.

However, throughout the novel, the author shows that it is not just the British rule which is responsible for the sufferings of the people in India. It is their system of administration that favours the rich in their exploitation of the poor which is really responsible for the woes of the people in the country. It is for this that the exploiters here are not just British. They are rather Indians favoured and corrupted by the British system of administration. Thus Harbans Singh the landlord is a British creation; Chamanlal the money-lender thrives under the British set up. On the other hand, the only man who has realized the situation clearly in the novel is a Britisher, the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Long. As the author writes about him:

He was said to be strong in justice and a friend of the poor. Under the name of Aflatun, he wrote interminable treatises full of wise sayings for the edification of the illiterate villagers! And he even flouted the orders of the Sarkar in his efforts to ameliorate the lot of the peasantry.54

54. ibid. p.126.
Naturally the British Government is not pleased with him and thinks his ideas dangerous. But undaunted, Mr. Long chalks out a programme to help the farmers of the country. His programme, however, remains a paper policy since it cannot be implemented under the prevailing rules and regulations of the Government.

He thought it inequitable that the peasants should be fleeced annually of one third of their produce. But knowing that there was no solution of the difficulty, as the Sarkar depended on the landed revenue to maintain a large army, he devised odd schemes to rid the peasantry of their misery, in order to quieten the unrest in his own conscience without conflicting too violently with the works of the Sarkar.55

With such a sympathy for the lower class, Mr. Long is thus akin to Dr. de la Havre of the earlier novel. His character together with the characters of the landlord and the money-lender prove that the novel is a protest against the British system of administration only, and not against the British rule.

In technique, The Village is akin to Coolie, a simple story for expounding the theme with all the humour and pathos of the situations - an art where Mulk Raj Anand is a past master.

Anand's second novel of the Lalu trilogy, Across the Black Waters,56 describes the experiences of Lalu in the battle

55. ibid, p. 126.
field of Flanders in France where he fights for the British against the Germans and is taken a prisoner by the enemy. The war story has little to do with Indian nationalism. We are concerned with it here only as a sequel to the life-story of Lalu, a victim of the bourgeois exploitation in India, fleeing his country and society in order to escape prison and help his family recuperate from its economic ruin. Two things that are important here for us are Lalu's observation of progressive farming in France by the use of tractors and fertilizers which has made the farmers and the country rich; and the facility of the French farmers for borrowing money from the Co-operative Bank at a very low interest. Lalu is impressed so much by these two facilities in France for the farmers that he hopes to open a farm in his own village on the French line when he returns home so that he can redeem his land and property from the landlord and the money-lender.  

Mulk Raj Anand's third novel of the trilogy, The Sword and the Sickle tells us about Lalu's life after he is set free by the Germans and returned by the British Army authority to India from England. As he comes home from Bombay by train, his hope is to get a grant from the Government for his service in the war so that he may fulfill his hope of redeeming his lost land and property from the landlord and the money-lender and of opening a farm like those he had seen in Europe. But as he reaches home, he sees everything topsy-turvy — his beloved mother dead, his property

57. *ibid.* pp.254-255.
auctioned away by his enemies, and he, not having even a house to live in, in the village.

As he takes shelter in his uncle's house, he observes, however, a welcome change coming over to the village. There is a stirring amidst the peasants against the rich, and against the Government that favours the rich, all professing their faith in Gandhi. He meets a political leader, one Prof. Verma coming from the U.P. to his village to rouse the peasants to a movement. Prof. Verma befriends Lalu, the worst sufferer in the village from the exploitation of the rich, and requests him to go with him to the U.P. to organize and conduct the peasant movement there. The Professor talks of a 'Count' whom Lalu had met in Germany and who as a leader of the peasant movement in the U.P. still remembers Lalu.

The idea of a revolution against the rich and against the Government that favours the rich at once stirs the imagination of the adventurous ex-soldier Lalu; and he agrees to go to the U.P. without ever understanding the nature of the movement and the ideology behind it, and without ever questioning the urgency of such a revolution at the time. The Professor tells him that while in the Punjab some of the peasants still own their lands, in the U.P. "most of the ryots are landless labourers. And those who hold bits of land are fast evicted by the landlords, as they can't pay all the legal and illegal taxes which the Taluqadars levy on them." 59 And this is enough for Lalu to be roused to the cause of

59. ibid. p.73.
the revolution. He elopes with the daughter of the landlord, the girl who had loved him in his childhood and for whose love he had to quit the village and the country. He soon arrives in the U.P. village of the 'Count'.

The rest of the story is a story of the political revolution of the peasants in the U.P. which will be discussed in its proper place. From the social part of the story it is found how Lalu has not been able to forget the injustice done by the rich to his family as well as to the poor in general, and how he has dedicated his life at last to the cause of a revolution that will put an end to this injustice in the society. In all the three novels of the trilogy thus, the writer's concern with the exploitation and oppression continues. In The Village it is shown in detail, in Across the Black Waters remedy for this is sought while in The Sword and the Sickle, a revolution is waged against it. This does not, however, mean that all the three novels are of the same theme and are of similar stories. They are certainly not so. Only the author's concern with an important political problem in the first novel, continues in the second and the third.

But when we come to Mulk Raj Anand's next novel The Big Heart, we find Anand showing his concern for a completely different problem and dealing with quite a new theme - the introduction of machine into the society and its implications. He has thus shifted here from the story of the problem of exploitation

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of the poor to the story of the problem of the working class thrown out of their traditional moorings with the advent of the Machine Age - a problem which has also a serious implication for his own age and country.

The thathiars or the traditional coppersmiths of Amritsar have lost their traditional jobs because of the setting up of a new plant for copper works in the locality by two rich coppersmiths. A few of the coppersmiths have been engaged in the plant as workers; a few others have also got piece-works to be done, though piece-works have been quite unrewarding now. Still the bulk of the coppersmiths remain jobless. This critical situation amidst the jobless coppersmiths has been exploited by the reactionary elements of the society - Mahasha Hans Raj, a religio-political Arya Samajist leader who has joined Congress and has become a protagonist of Mahatma Gandhi's programme of reviving the Golden Age in India. Mahasha Hans Raj has his supporters, a staunch one among them being the student leader Satyapal. They have spread the ideas amidst the jobless thathiars that these machines are the cause of their doom, and the teachings of Gandhi are against machines. They plead for scrapping the machine and going back to the age of the spinning wheel as Gandhi has asked them to do.

Only Ananta, a 'rogue' in the popular assessment of the thathiars, a flesh-eater and a drunkard who has a tubercular young widow as his mistress, is for the introduction of the machine and for a change of the age-old profession, even though he himself is
a jobless *thathi* now, and the piece-work he does earns very little for him. Ananta worked formerly at a Naval Dockyard foundry in Bombay where he gathered experience about the Trade Union Movement. Coming back to his home town Amritsar, he finds the establishment of the plant and welcomes it. But at the same time he plans the launching of a movement for the welfare of those workers that are thrown out of their jobs as well as for those who have been absorbed by the plant. He wants the movement "to ensure their right to a proper wage until they are strong enough to displace their exploiters and seize the factory, which by all rights of humanity is theirs."  

But being tactless in words and deeds, Ananta cannot carry the people to his opinion. As his mistress Janki says, "I can understand why the *thathiar* won't listen to you. They have nothing to eat, and the machine has come and taken their jobs away, and you talk of *rope* to them." 62 Ananta, however, has a strong supporter, the Marxist poet Purun Singh Bhagat who with his learning and the poetic vision of the future world-situation, helps Ananta in his task of wooing the jobless coppersmiths to the cause of forming the Trade Union. But the people find his exhortations also too theoretical and idealized.  

Gokul Chand the headman of the utensil sellers' community, and Murli Dhar the headman of the coppersmith brotherhood - both of whom have together established the plant in the town, hate

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Ananta and Mahasha Hans Raj equally. A betrothal ceremony at Murli Dhar's house for the marriage of Murli Dhar's grandson with Gokul Chand's daughter is marred by the absence of Gokul Chand's own brethren of the old coppersmith brotherhood. The absence is due to the fact that Murli Dhar has kept no relation with those men of his own caste, he having risen to a better position now. Murli Dhar and Gokul Chand suspect Ananta at the back of the absence of the few invited workers of the factory and they brood revenge for it.

On the other side, on the same day about the same time, Ananta has given a feast to all the thathiars affected by the establishment of the factory with a view to forming a Union. Besides inviting the jobless thathiars, he has also invited the leaders of his rival faction, Mahasha Hans Raj, Satyapal and a few others. When all gather for the feast, Ananta explains to them how these days caste brotherhood of the old days has gone out of fashion and people should form class brotherhood for their own welfare. He supports his point by the example of Murli Dhar not inviting his own caste brothers to the ceremony of his house, they being of a different class now from his. He then appeals for the formation of the Union of all the jobless coppersmiths who are of the same class now. Most of the unemployed coppersmiths are convinced about the need of such a Union then; but Ananta's rival leaders Mahasha Hans Raj and Satyapal stand in the way and foil the attempt.
Yet Ananta does not abandon his hope of forming the Union. Late in the afternoon the same day, he with the support of Gokul Chand's son Kushal Chand who has come over to his side at last, makes another attempt to bring the unemployed coppersmiths to his fold. But the coming over of Kushal Chand to Ananta's party has been interpreted by Ananta's opponent Mahasha Hans Raj and Satyapal as a step by selfish Ananta towards a friendly settlement with the rich factory-owners who have created the havoc in the society. Thus Hans Raj and Satyapal win the jobless workers to their side when Ananta's last appeal to his brethren for a "radical change" in the context of their "living a life of terrible, awful suffering" "under the relentless oppression of the Angrezi Sarkar and the rich of our country" is greeted by them with such terms for him and his followers as "hypocrites, renegades and traitors."

Mahasha Hans Raj has another very staunch supporter, an intellectual and orator who with his superb power of oratory has roused the jobless coppersmiths who are already embittered with Ananta, against the factory. This intellectual, Professor Mejid explains to them with his silver tongue:

The real enemy is hidden here, the factory which is going to convert you all from feudal slaves to wage slaves.... the greatest danger now facing all nations is the wealth of the rich and the development of the machine.

63. ibid. p.195.
65. ibid. p.204.
The jobless coppersmiths thus get impatient with the factory and its owners as well as with Ananta, who, to them, is a collaborator with the rich now, until at last a gigantic drunkard - a jobless coppersmith loses his temper, forces his way into the factory and starts breaking the various parts of the machine with a large hammer. None dares to stop that enraged giant in his destructive action and all stare at him, motionless and panicky. Ananta alone comes forward with the spirit of a true leader and forbids the drunkard giant. At once Ananta is smashed to death with that same hammer by which the drunkard was smashing the machine.

Thus ends the life of a foresighted soul who was up for bringing in a new age of happiness for the wretched and the poor - an age where the hard, tiresome works will be done by machine, and all will be free from fear of odd, unprofitable labour.

This then is the story of the novel. Through Ananta, the protagonist of the machine civilization, the author expresses himself. Ananta dedicates his life for bringing in the Age of Machine and formation of the brotherhood of the working class which will master the machine and not be a slave of it. This seems to be also the author's vision of the new age. But the author allows Ananta to perish at last. This is not to show that Ananta's stand is uncalled for and wrong. This is done by the author only to draw more sympathy for Ananta. And yet Anand as an artist is never unduly partial for him. Indeed, Ananta has never been idealized by the author. He has been created with all his follies and
foibles; and these have been always very real before our eyes. Even his death at the hand of the drunkard has been quite natural for him, who is all along tactless and careless.

In contrast to Ananta, Mahasha Hans Raj is more virtuous. And yet the author's art has made him an object of hatred before us inspite of all his devotion to the ideals of Gandhi and allegiance to the Congress and the Arya Samaj. So is Prof. Mejid with all his power of oratory and intellectual flashes. On the other hand Purun Singh Bhagat the Marxist poet and supporter of Ananta draws our sympathy even when he speaks against Gandhi -

Because Gandhi always worshipped the kind of truth which was orthodox, though it was dynamic, because he really accepts the system of private property, the vicious circle of the old order which can never last in India if it has made a mess of things in the other parts of the world. 66

As for the art of the novelist, the foremost artistic quality in the novel is the author's ambivalence in his portraiture of the character of Ananta who is apparently a rogue, though at the same time an ideal protagonist of the new age. The second quality lies in the author's economy in the selection of episodes and incidents which are all shown as taking place within the framework of a day's time, as in Untouchable. From early morning till night, the story develops through the actions and conversations in three quarters - in the private life of Ananta and his mistress

66. ibid. p.143.
Janki, in the public places of the Cat Killer's Lane where the coppersmith community dwells, and in the families of Gokul Chand and Murli Dhar.

These, then, are the pre-independence novels of Mulk Raj Anand, all protesting against the contemporary set-up of the society and all calling for a new order where the wretched and the poor would come to the level of the fortunate and the rich, and none would be able to oppress or exploit others. Anand is a nationalist writer only in this sense of trying to evolve a better and happier society for his countrymen, not in the sense of upholding whatever is Indian or detesting whatever is foreign. Indeed, Anand wants the society of his vision to be based on the ideologies of two great foreign political thinkers, Marx and Lenin, as already mentioned, and not on the ideology of Gandhi, the father of his own nation, inspite of his best love and respects for the Mahatma. As Purun Singh Bhagat, the Marxian poet in The Big Heart says:

... we must be on our guard against those in our country who only want to substitute Brown or Yellow rule instead of the White. Certainly, if there is anything which has accrued to me through my pilgrimage of the world it is the belief that I must help to change the present order built on profit; that I must devote myself entirely to the poor.67

67. ibid. p.143.
This is what seems to be Anand's own mission as a writer; and this is what lies behind all his novels as their leitmotif.

Coming to Mulk Raj Anand's short stories published till 1947, we find that all of them do not reveal the same concern for the poor and the wretched as do all his novels. Less than half of the total number of short stories published till 1947 express this spirit, the remaining ones being only expressions of man's universal feelings of love and hatred, irrespective of their class or caste or nationality. In his first collection of short stories which is the first work of fiction by Mulk Raj Anand, viz. *The Lost Child and other Stories*, the author gives expression to the feelings of the human heart and its indomitable spirit to know and to conquer. In his second book of story, *The Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts* which is a long story, we, however, see the sufferings of an Indian youth both mentally and physically in a peculiar Indian situation where people regard physical labour as undignified. In the next volume of short stories entitled *The Barber's Trade Union and other Stories* where the three prose-poems of the first volume are reprinted, we see three trends of Anand as a short story writer - expression of universal feelings of the human heart, expression of sympathy for the lowly class,


and expression of sufferings of the Indians during their freedom struggle. In *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess*, most of the stories are the stories of universal human feeling. There are only three stories which reveal Anand's typical concern with the lower rung of the society. They are *Birth*, *The Prodigal Son*, and *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess*.

From the foregoing analysis of his novels and short stories, it will appear that Mulk Raj Anand reflects in his works a struggle between the two classes in the society - the rich and the poor - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat where his tacit sympathy goes to the poor or the proletariat and where he wants an end to the oppression and the exploitation of the downtrodden. A political ideology, no doubt - the ideology of the progressive writers of Europe and America. But it is the credit of Anand that his works do not remain mere propaganda pieces or party manifestos as many tend to regard them as such. The redeeming features in them are the artistic aspects - as I have pointed out while discussing the novels individually.

From Mulk Raj Anand we may now go to his equally great and famous contemporary, R. K. Narayan. But though R. K. Narayan and Anand are contemporary writers, they are diagonally opposite to each other in the nature of their art and in the objectives of their writing. For example, we have already seen how Anand writes with a conscious purpose; R. K.

Narayan, on the other hand, has taken to art not for any specific purpose but for only observing life in its depths and varieties. And as he observes life, he does it always with a detachment and a genial smile. For this detachment and for this ability to see life with a genial smile, Narayan is little concerned with the maladies in the society in which he lives and shows no desire for reforming it. For this, his novels and short stories, great as works of art as they are and far greater than many of those novels and short stories by other writers discussed here elaborately, hardly come within the scope of this study. But still Narayan has been discussed here briefly because the lives and deeds observed by Narayan are Indian; and we see in them the typical Indian ways of living and the typical Indian way of looking at life.

Narayan has placed all his novels and most of his short stories in a medium sized South Indian town of his imagination and he calls it Malgudi. The characters he has portrayed are generally the middle class people shown against the background of this town. Narayan is thus a painter of middle class town life of India.

Let us now go to the pre-independence novels of R. K. Narayan for the elaboration of the points. In *Swami and Friends*, R. K. Narayan's first novel and one of his best, we see the life of a school boy of lower form, Swaminathan with a few of his school friends. Their words, deeds and problems are all typically

frivolous words, deeds and problems of the middle class school children such as encounter of unprepared students in the class with their exacting teachers, hostilities with fellow students of opposite natures, friendship with students of like natures or tastes, engagement with games and sports leading to juvenile problems and demanding all juvenile seriousness and the like. With such a juvenile story, this novel is the only one of its kind in Indo-Anglian fiction. It shows a cross-section of the Indian children in towns, Indian children who are free from the grim realities of living faced by the poor children of the peasants and the workers in towns and villages. But it has to be mentioned here that though the ways of living of the children are Indian in this novel, there is nothing peculiarly Indian in the novelist's way of looking at life.

The next novel, The Bachelor of Arts,73 depicts the life of Indian youths in college and out of it through the life of Chandran in his last year in college and the subsequent years until his marriage. He passes his college days joining debating competition, acting as Secretary to the Historical Association, enjoying the eccentricities of teachers and company of the friends. As he passes B.A., his neighbours and well-wishers bore him with their endless interrogations and advice about his aim until at last he is compelled to do something to get rid of them. He consults his father and decides to go to England for a doctorate degree. But as he gets ready for his voyage, he sees a girl, falls

in love with her at first sight and approaches his parents for settling his marriage with the girl, he himself being unable to make any contact with her or her guardians. There is no difficulty, of course, for his parents in approaching the girl's parents for the marriage, the girl being of their own caste, and the girl's father being of a lower rank in his profession.

But the Indians are not only ridden with caste but also with beliefs in destiny, planetary influences and the like, and as the two families consult the horoscopes of the boy and the girl, they find that the horoscopes do not match and as such the marriage cannot take place. This gives a shock to Chandran; and he goes for an outing to Madras with his father's consent. At Madras, he shaves off his head in a whim, dons the saffron robe and becomes a sanyasi in search of peace in his frustration. As a sanyasi, he wanders from place to place in South India for eight months until at last he is tired of that life, too, and comes back home to resume his normal life.

With the influence of his father who is a District Judge, Chandran now gets the Agency of a Madras Daily in his home town; and then he works hard for increasing the circulation of the paper in his area. He thus becomes a very busy man sincerely devoted to his work with the aim of earning more and more from the Agency. In such a life he forgets all about his love. He has reached such a stage where he cannot even understand the sentiment of love. His parents, however, choose a girl for him now; and he consents to marry after a little hesitation lest his business should suffer.
With this story, we are shown very well the clamour for jobs after completion of education in India, hurdles in marriage based on love caused by various prejudices and superstitions, man's love and reverence for a religious hermit and so on, though showing these alone is not the objective of the author. The true theme of the novel is the realization of the belief of the Indians in the traditional pattern of life. It is thus that Chandran who loved a girl in the western way and wanted to marry her against all the Indian prejudices and superstitions that stand in the way, realizes at last that such a love does not exist and the girl chosen by his parents is as much fit for him as the one he loved himself. He also realizes that taking to an uncommon life of a saffron-robed hermit without possessing any religious knowledge and wisdom especially at a stage when one should settle in life and marry, is not the way; and thus one should go back and take the normal course of life. In this novel thus Narayan is looking at life in a typical Indian way besides showing the peculiar Indian beliefs, superstitions and prejudices.

R. K. Narayan's third novel The Dark Room is not at all like his earlier two. It is about the unhappy conjugal life of a woman who is the mother of three children and whose husband who neglects her, has been enamoured of a flirtatious woman, a sub-ordinate employee of his office. As Savitri who is very dutiful as a wife and mother knows this affair of her husband, she rashly quits the house in a bid to commit suicide and take revenge.

upon her husband that way. Her attempt is, however, foiled by a villager of a nearby village. Out of kindness, he takes her to his house where his wife takes pity and arranges a job for her in the village temple as she refuses to go back home. But just after spending a night in the temple, she is repentant for choosing such a life and longs for her home and children. Soon she comes back home to be greeted by her children and husband.

This novel, therefore, is again the story of the realization of an Indian woman of the values of Indian married life and her consequent coming back to the traditional Indian fold. Its theme is in this sense not very different from that of The Bachelor of Arts, though its story is quite different. The story here is not as interestingly and amusingly told as those of the earlier two novels; and Narayan's credit as a novelist being mostly dependent on his art of telling the story, this novel is rather a failure.

But when we come to Narayan's fourth novel, The English Teacher which came out eight years after the publication of The Dark Room, we again see the usual mastery of Narayan in the art of telling the story. But it is not akin to the earlier two novels only in this. It is akin to those two and quite different from the third in another respect also. It is a continuation of the story of the two phases - childhood and youth - of a man's life told in his first two novels. After the story of childhood

in *Swami and Friends* and youth in *The Bachelor of Arts*, we find in *The English Teacher* the story of early manhood.

The hero in this novel is already married and has a child. So far he had left his wife and child with his parents at his village home and he himself had been staying in the hostel of the college where he is a lecturer in English. It is the same college where Chandran of the earlier novel was a student; and the same teachers are still here with the Principal Mr. Brown. Krishnan the teacher of English has now taken a house on rent and he moves there with his wife and child who have come from the village to stay with him. His life in the new house is a life of happiness and bliss with their mutual teasings and chattings as well as with the child-like gesticulations and chatterings of the little girl. But this life of rare felicity is soon cut short when one morning the young wife catches the contamination of typhoid, the misdiagnosis of which at the early stage by the doctor throws it out of control and the young wife dies. The English teacher sees darkness everywhere and writes in his diary, "Nothing else will worry or interest me in life hereafter." 76

Soon, however, occult science interests him and he establishes a psychic relation with the spirit of his wife, exchanges messages and has talks about each other's life and condition. Life once again becomes meaningful to him in this way and he gets himself absorbed in his new relation with the wife's spirit. Side by

side with this, he develops another interest. It is his newly established relation with an eccentric man, an aged B.A. with wife and children, who has opened a school for little children. He teaches the children there in a completely new method, a method developed by himself and called 'Leave Alone Method'. The man spends his time amidst the children, observing them in their play and learning, indifferent to his termagant wife and his own children who are under the control of their mother. This man with all his oddities and eccentricities, his patience with his intolerable wife at home, his belief in astrology and in the prediction of an astrologer that his life is nearing its end and he is going to die on a particular date given by the astrologer, amuses Krishnan immensely and he becomes his most intimate friend. This eccentric man also absorbs the attention of Krishnan now together with his wife. And in these involvements, he loses interest in the college.

The man who also finds Krishnan equally amusing and interesting requests Krishnan to join his school for the little children and help him in his new experiment in children's education. Krishnan hesitates first since he is already vexed with his teaching job in the college. But later he feels that observing the little ones in their play and learning would not go against his taste and he decides to resign his post in the college. In a heart touching scene of the farewell meeting in the college, Krishnan almost weeps as others also do; and he comes out of it to join his new post in the children's school at a much lower salary. This is all in search of mental peace in his lonely life. However, that
night when his little daughter is away at his village home and he has freed himself from all the tangles of a worldly life, the charge of his daughter's upbringing and education having been taken by his parents, and the charge of her marriage in future having been taken by his father-in-law, when he is alone at home sleepless and pining for the company of his wife, his wife appears before him, lovely and loving as ever - a moment in his life for which "one feels grateful to Life and Death." 77

Such is the story of The English Teacher, a gripping story of conjugal love and spiritual re-union. But from what point of view is it an Indian novel? No doubt, Krishnan's later life when he grows indifferent to the material world, even to his job in the college, and gets absorbed in establishing a spiritual relation with his wife - is typically Indian. But his indulgence in occult science for establishing the relation with his wife's spirit diminishes the literary value of this otherwise perfect work of art. Had Krishnan established his relation with his dead wife mystically and spiritually without any help of para-psychology, the story would have been not only more convincing and more appealing, but also more Indian. 78 Anyway, Krishnan's indifference to the material world and new interest in the spiritual is peculiarly Indian; and depicting this later part of life so nicely and movingly, Narayan has really achieved something very great in Indo-Anglian fiction.

77. ibid. p. 211.

An American edition of the novel is published under the title Grateful to Life and Death, Michigan State College Press, 1953.

78. C. D. Narasimhaiah, op. cit., p. 146.
The other novels of Narayan were written after 1947 and as such though some of them like *The Financial Expert* and *The Guide* are greater or more serious works of art than the novels discussed here, they do not come within the scope of our study. But even in these four novels published till 1947, we see the genius of Narayan as an artist - the "consummate practitioner of art."79

As an Indian novelist, Narayan has another aspect where he has shown the scenes of an encounter between the two civilizations - the civilization of the ruling race and that of the ruled. The novelist, however, does not show any leaning to any side here, too; and he remains a dispassionate observer. In *Swami and Friends* this encounter manifests itself in the picture of the political movement of the Indian nationalists against the British Government.80 In *The Bachelor of Arts*, the encounter takes place on the cultural level81 when Raghavachar the Professor of History forms a Historical Association in the College with Chandran as the Secretary of the Association. In *The Dark Room*, however, this aspect is totally absent while in *The English Teacher*, there are scattered lines about it.

R. K. Narayan is also a good short story writer and he has four volumes of short stories to his credit till 1947. These

are Dodu and other Stories, Malgudi Days, Cyclone and other Stories and An Astrologer's Day and other Stories. In the short stories, too, we observe the same detached view of life and the same felicity of art of R. K. Narayan. Here, too, we do not observe any concern of the author for a better or happier society in the country. And what more, the aspect of the encounter between the two civilizations which we find in the novels is absent here.

After R. K. Narayan, we come to a Goan writer, Louis Gracius who has to his credit two collections of short stories, though only one of them was published before 1947. The one published before 1947 is Wild Winds where we see the life and society of the Indian Christians. None of the seven stories of this collection, however, reveals whether the setting of the story is British India or Portuguese Goa. The author is quite silent about the names of the places where his stories are set. But the characters here being all Christians, we may treat these stories as pictures of Indian Christian life in general - be they British.

84. R. K. Narayan, Cyclone and other Stories, Rockhouse and Sons, Madras, 1944.

The first three volumes themselves do not contain any date of publication. The dates quoted here are given by Harish Raizada, R.K. Narayan: A Critical Study, Young Asia Publications, New Delhi, 1969.
86. Louis Gracius, Wild Winds, the Author, Bombay, 1940.
Indian or Portuguese Indian. These stories, which Sarojini Naidu called "attractive little stories with so much of skill and sincerity", as we know it from the author's Preface to his second collection of short stories Eastern Clay, do not, however, reflect any serious social mission.

The next author deserving our attention is Ahmed Ali with his famous novel, Twilight in Delhi. With its story of a Muslim family in Delhi, their joys and sorrows, births and deaths, and marriages and festivals, it is, of course, a novel of the Muslim society in Delhi in the first two decades of this century. But then, this story of the society and the family is also told against the political background of the country of the time. And the background plays such a vital role in the development of the plot of the story that doubt arises in the mind of the readers as to whether the story of the family is only the background to the story of the political development in the country or vice versa. A deep reading of the novel will, however, make it clear that the novelist's main concern here is with the story of the family and the society; and the political aspect serves only as a background to this story to make our understanding of the story or the theme clearer. But the political aspect of the novel is also a dominant aspect which makes the novel a socio-political one. I have discussed it as a social novel because the political nationalist

87. Louis Gracius, Eastern Clay, the Author, Calcutta, 1948.
spirit breathed by the novel does not belong to any recognized phases of our freedom struggle. It is only a political feeling of a particular section of a particular community at a particular period of our history. A short analysis of the story will make it clear.

Mir Nihal is the head of a big Muslim joint family of Delhi consisting of his wife, his widowed sister-in-law, and her children, his sons, daughters, daughter-in-laws, and grand children besides the servants. He is an old man in sound health, a typical feudal gentleman with his aristocratic habits of flying pigeons as a hobby and keeping a mistress for sensual pleasure. He saw as a ten-year-old boy the Mutiny of 1857 when their relations were killed by the British soldiers ruthlessly and their houses were demolished and destroyed, property looted, residents turned out, and their emperor Bahadur Shah cruelly dethroned. All these he could never forget in life and consequently, he had been burning with a smouldering rage in his soul.

An affect of this in his character is his British hatred throughout life. He led a traditionally Indian Muslim life, hating those who had followed the British or imitated them and preferring the company of only those who had lived like him and shared his views. When he sees his young son Asghar putting English shoes, he protests, "You are wearing again those English boots! I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangis in my house. Throw them away!" 89 When Asghar wants to go to

As the head of the family, we see him performing the marriage of his son Asghar. After giving birth to a daughter, Asghar's wife dies of tuberculosis when he wants to marry his wife's younger sister again. The old man consents to this also. After this he finds nothing to do except indulging in his hobby of pigeon-flying. He then resumes his profession of the indigenous system of medicine and alchemy - which he takes rather as a hobby than as a profession. Except these, Mir Nihal does little in the novel. He passes his days more in observation of others in their action than in doing anything himself. But he receives a few shocks one after another in his otherwise smooth, happy life. The first of these is the death of his mistress; the second is the suffering of his daughter-in-law from tuberculosis and her consequent death; the third is his own stroke of paralysis; the fourth is the separation from his family of the widow of his own dear elder brother who was dead long ago; and the fifth is the death of one of his own earning sons, leaving behind his wife and children. The paralytic, bed-ridden old man survives all these successive shocks; but he is at last "more dead than alive, too broken to think even of the past."91 "His world has fallen to pieces, all around him smothered by indifference and death."92

90. ibid. p.50. 92. ibid. p.288.
91. ibid. p.287.
In the story of such a life, we cannot look for any exploration of any social problem. But the story is full of pictures of the Muslim society, which though apparently irrelevant, are actually the vital parts of the novel, since its purpose is to show a picture of the Muslim society of Delhi in the early part of this century. We hear in it the morning call of the azaan rousing the Muslims of the city from their sleep to their prayers and work, and strains of quwali and clappings of the singers' party. We see hear the pigeons released from their nests and flying in the sky in scores, street-vendors selling their goods shouting and bellowing at passers-by, the naked fakirs begging from house to house, hakims practising indigenous medicine, superstitious people taking help of charms for winning their desired object, the solemnization of the marriage in the Muslim way, and burial of the dead according to the Muslim customs. All these are shown in the novel with ardour in a poetic language.

But all these are not designed to reveal any racial identity. The novelist only tries to show through these how the glory that lay in the Muslim life and society of India during the Moghul reign is fading away. The character of Mir Nihal himself is created for the same reason. He is an old man whose "days had gone, and a new era of hopes and aspirations, which he neither understood nor sympathized with, was beginning to dawn."
He has lived up to a time when "all that he had stood for had been destroyed."\(^{98}\) New men had come now and settled in Delhi; and "they brought with them new customs and new ways. The old culture which had been preserved within the walls of the ancient town, was in danger of annihilation."\(^{99}\) When the Delhi Durbar of 1911 on the occasion of the coronation of King George V is held and the whole city wears the garb of a festival, Mir Nihal cannot feel happy like others. On the coronation day, as a huge procession goes round the city with the king, "Mir Nihal closed his eyes for a while, but painful thoughts were in his mind which did not allow him any peace."\(^{100}\) His mind goes back to 1857 when the Muslims of Delhi gave the last fight with their swords against Metcalf and his army, all armed with guns on 14 September and fell heroically. Looking silently at the procession and brooding over the glorious past of the Muslims in India, he says to one of his little grandsons:

Those are people, who have been our undoing, and will be yours, too ... But you will be brave, my child, and will fight them one day... You will be brave, and drive them out of the country.\(^{101}\)

With such an uncompromising spirit dipped in the lost glories, he might well have joined the new national movement in the country for freedom. For these were the days when the "Terrorist

\(^{98}\) ibid. p.250.  
\(^{99}\) ibid. p.140.  
\(^{100}\) ibid. p.150.  
\(^{101}\) ibid. p.153.
Movement was gaining ground all over the country — a picture of which is shown in the novel itself with the incident of bomb-throwing at "Lord Hardinge when he was holding the imitation Durbar." These are also the days when the Home Rule Movement which brought "prophetic rumblings of distant thunder as the movement went sweeping over India", But

... all these did not affect Mir Nihal. It was not for him, the martyrdom and glory in the cause of Mother Land. ... He was one of those who had believed in fighting with naked swords in their hands. The young had only agitated.

With such a character, the author very effectively reflects in the novel the feeling of a section of a community of the Indian people against the British when they had established their rule superceding the old regime of the particular community. Their heartache for the days that are gone and the glory that has faded is very nicely expressed through the character of Mir Nihal as well as through the symbolic pictures of the decadent society. As the author himself writes in his Introduction to the second edition of the novel:

My purpose has been to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes.

103. ibid. p.250.
The next writer D. F. Karaka, though one of the few very popular and widely read Indo-Anglian novelists can be disposed of very easily here in view of the fact that none of his three novels, viz. Just Flesh,105 There Lay the City,106 and We Never Die,107 shows any seriousness of purpose. Just Flesh is a story of British social life, set in England and told through all English characters, showing the influence of Galsworthy’s The Man of Property. It does not reflect in any way anything of the Indian society or of the Indian national scene of the time like Toru Dutt’s Bianca where, too, the characters and the setting are English.108 There Lay the City is, of course, set in Bombay during the Second World War. But it is only a love story and has little to do with any serious problem either facing the society or the nation. Karaka’s next novel We Never Die is set in an Indian village and a town. A stray picture of the Indian freedom struggle is also shown here through the eyes of an ignorant villager, when the struggle takes place in his village. But the story remains a simple story of love and marriage without any serious purpose behind it, though it shows also an ideal relationship between the Indians and the British, and between the Hindus and the Muslims.

108. Meenakshi Mukherjee in her study of Just Flesh by Karaka has written, "He must be the only Indian novelist to write a novel set in England using only British characters." - The Twice Born Fiction, Heinemann, New Delhi, 1971, p.68.

It is not known why Dr. Mukherjee has passed such a remark when there is Toru Dutt also with such a novel, Bianca (1878).
Manjeri S. Isvaran shows a far greater seriousness of purpose as a fiction-writer than D. F. Karaka. But he, too, in his five volumes of stories, viz. Naked Shingles, Shiva Ratri, Angry Dust, Rikshawalla, and Fancy Tales published till 1947, does not raise any serious social problem before his readers' eyes with an appeal for any change in or improvement of the society.

Darkening Days by Ela Sen is a collection of eight short stories depicting the untold miseries of the famine-stricken people of Bengal during the Second World War like So Many Hungers by Bhabani Bhattacharya. But whereas Bhattacharya's novel has attained a political proportion ascending the level of a mere narrative of the famine-stricken people's woes, Ela Sen's stories remain in the level of mere narratives of people's woes.

Iqbalunnisa Hussain is our last serious social novelist till 1947 with her only novel Purdah and Polygamy where she

   (This volume was not available for me, nor is it properly catalogued by any bibliographer. Thus I could not put its publishers' name and place of publication here).
111. Manjeri S. Isvaran, Angry Dust, Shakti Karyalayam, Madras, 1944.
115. Iqbalunnisa Hussain, Purdah and Polygamy, Life in An Indian Muslim Household, the Author, Bangalore, 1944.
has protested against the suppression and oppression of women in the Muslim society in India through the two orthodox customs of Purdah and polygamy. A brief analysis of the story of the novel that covers three generations of a Muslim mercantile family placed vaguely in some Indian city will make it clear.

Umar, a rich Muslim, resides in a house of eight rooms, six of which are rented out to three other families. In such a congested place, the women of all the four families spend their days, deprived of open air and day light. Soon, however, Umar has an attack of cancer which, he being a miserly man, is detected late. He then gets his daughter married in a hurry before he dies of that fatal disease. When his son Kabeer succeeds him as the head of the family, he proves himself to be much wiser and saner, though he, too, is without any high education. All the eight rooms of his house have now been used for his own family so that it may get rid of congestion. Kabeer's marriage is soon after performed with the beautiful daughter of a rich Muslim of the same city. According to the Muslim custom, Kabeer's mother did not consult Kabeer while settling this marriage, and Kabeer married the girl without any hesitation.

Though Kabeer becomes happy with his wife, his mother soon begins to hate her. At last when the young wife is to deliver a child, and her father engages a doctor for the delivery, Kabeer's mother can no more tolerate. After the delivery, the doctor advises complete rest to the mother of the baby, she having heart trouble. The old woman then loses all patience; and soon
she gets her son married again with an ugly girl of a poor family. This is possible for Kabeer's mother because successive marriages of a man are permissible in the Muslim society. The ugly, poor girl is happy with her marriage, though Kabeer's first wife is utterly unhappy for that. With heart ailment and sorrows, the first wife falls seriously ill at last; and a change of climate becomes urgent. She is then sent to Kashmir by her parents where she becomes more unhappy by being cut off from her husband.

When the sick young woman is thus away in Kashmir, Kabeer at his house marries for the third time. This time the marriage takes place at his own initiative; and the girl chosen is educated and beautiful. The parents of the girl consent to this marriage with a polygamous husband, because this girl is their third child; and according to Muslim superstition, the third child is always unlucky. The girl herself was, however, disinclined to marry Kabeer; but a girl's inclination or disinclination means little in the Muslim society. When Kabeer's first wife then comes back from Kashmir, she is surprised and shocked to find another co-wife for her in the house.

Once the third wife has a burning injury when Kabeer who loves her most brings medicine for her. Kabeer's mother cannot tolerate this and she begins to hate this daughter-in-law, too. Her hatred increases when she finds this educated girl wasting money in buying books and magazines. She writes poetry also and wants to publish them in book-form. This is not approved even by Kabeer to whom writing poems and publishing them defames a woman.
Kabeer thus gets estranged in his relation with her, too.

Meanwhile Kabeer's first child by the first wife has grown up to be a spoilt child spending his father's money recklessly and living with a widow much older than he with the determination to marry her. But by this time again, Kabeer the old father of the boy, marries for the fourth time a tender aged girl. This marriage is, however, kept secret by Kabeer who has left this little wife in her mother's house.

After this, the old man has an epileptic fit when he falls into a state of coma. His fourth wife is then brought to his house with her grandmother to enquire about his health. Kabeer being unconscious then, the grandmother of the girl-wife reveals the girl's identity to the family of Kabeer. All the three wives of Kabeer refuse to recognize the girl as Kabeer's wife. Kabeer's spoilt son, however, shows his magnanimity and comes forward to welcome his new step-mother to the house. The little wife's husband, however, passes away.

The novel is thus an effective attack on the custom of polygamy in the Muslim society; and on the indifference of the Muslims to the happiness of the women in their homes. The harmful effect of the Purdah system is brought to light in the novel through the miserable condition of the women of the four houses in one building of eight rooms with only one narrow courtyard common to all, to which the women are strictly confined since they are to observe Purdah and cannot go out farther than this. Another bad effect of the Purdah system is again suggested when Kabeer's
third wife is looked down upon by her husband and mother-in-law because she writes poetry and wants to publish the poems. How the custom of polygamy is thoughtlessly and heartlessly accepted even by women is shown by the writer through the incident of Kabeer's mother arranging her son's second marriage without even consulting him. After showing the women's thoughtless acceptance of the system, the author shows how the male ones, too, indulge in it on frivolous grounds with equal thoughtlessness and heartlessness through the incidents of Kabeer's third and fourth marriages. The story is thus a strong protest against the inhuman practice of Purdah and polygamy in the Muslim society.

In her attempt to make a pointed attack on the society so that a better, happier society may evolve, the author here has not neglected, however, the aspect of art. Though the story is built up with a specific purpose in view, and though it is long winding and complex, it has never been boring or dull. The main characters have also been vivid so that they appear before our eyes as living realities. The novel is thus a success both in the execution of its theme and as a work of art. In the words of C. R. Reddy in the Foreword to the novel, "It is an analysis which is intellectually convincing as well as emotionally stirring."

These then are the Indo-Anglian social novels and stories which sometimes with their protests against the injustice
violence in the society, sometimes with their records of Indianness of feelings, realizations or understandings, sometimes again with their pictures of some aspects of Indian life, appeal to the readers obviously or tacitly for a better, happier society so that a stronger nation may evolve out of it.