PRE-INDEPENDENCE

ENGLISH AND HINDI NOVEL:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED BY
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STATEMENT UNDER UNI. O.Ph.D.7

I hereby declare that the work embodied in my thesis entitled as The Pre-Independence English and Hindi Novel: A Comparative Study, prepared for Ph.D. degree has not been submitted for any other degree of this University on any occasion.

To the best of my knowledge, no work has been reported on the above subject.

The work presented in this thesis is original and whenever references have been made to the work of others, they have been clearly indicated as such and the source of the information is included in the bibliography.

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CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

India is a rich treasure of narrative literature that can be traced to *The Rigveda* in Sanskrit. *The Yama-Yamini* dialogue and *Pururva-Urvashi* dialogue among others serve as its evidence. *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* are extensive forms of narrative literature. The depiction of gallantry as a part of Indian culture has for centuries inspired and influenced the literature and the authors. The development of an appropriate relationship between man and society manifested the creation of several didactic tales such as *Brahatkathas, Kathasaritsagar, Hitopadesh* and *Panchtantra* among others. With the rise of Buddha's philosophical doctrine and Jain philosophical doctrine was created the *Jatakkathas* and Jain ballads. The Indian fictional literature particularly novels in Indian languages could have definitely not remained uninfluenced by this rich narrative tradition.

Besides Sanskrit literature, the influence of the legends of gallantry such as Chand Bardai's *Pruthviraj Raso* (twelveth cenury a.d.), Narapati Nalha's *Bisaldev Raso* (eleventh century a.d.), Sarangdhar's *Hammir Raso* (fourteenth century a.d.) and *Aahla-Udal* among others too cannot be overlooked. The Sufi works like Jayasi's *Padmavat* (1540) are the exquisite mingling of fiction and history also cannot be oversighted. Though the narrative tradition exists in a verse form, they have served as the source of origin for the novel. It should not be forgotten that it was the need of the age to have these literary forms in verse.

Had Chandvardai or Jayasi been alive today they would have preferred the prose form to verse in depicting the account of the lives of their heroes and heroines.

The Sufi-poetry and the contemporary novel have many things in common. The attraction of the opposite sex in their youth, the mutual desire of their union and the obstacles of religion and society among others are the common characteristics in both these literatures. Regarding the proximity of the narrative tradition and the novels, when compared from the point of view of character development of the hero and the heroine and ignoring the form legislation, the Hindi novel is closer to the Indian narrative tradition in Sanskrit Apabhrabhansa, Pali and lokbhasa's than the English novel of the West that came to India with the advent of the British.

Throwing light on the scenario prior to the advent of the novel, Premchand remarks:

> Before the advent of the novel, there were narratives in the form of kissa and kahani dealing predominantly with the themes of love and separation. The lover used to become a victim of the amorous glance of his beloved. The beloved would then tell the story of his suffering to her friends. Mr. Lover would sigh and beat his head and brow. Then the message was passed to the family members, friends and relatives and they used to gather to counsel him. The physicians would treat him but the one suffering from the sickness of love would remain uncured by any medicine or counseling. However, after suffering the pangs of separation for months and years, both of them would meet through some coincidence. Usually, there used to be strange magical manipulating detective scenes that would arouse curiosity in the readers. In this tradition *Tilism Hoshruba* in Urdu was written in twentyseven volumes and *Bostane Khayal* in seven volumes. By this time there, there was nothing like novel in Hindi. A few translations were certainly there but there was no novel. (Avadhesh Kumar Singh Discourse 78)

The colonial encounter with the British saw the transplantation of the novel in India, the cradle of narrative tradition. Apart from being a literary

phenomenon, the rise of the novel in India was a social phenomenon too. The years between 1818 and 1850 witnessed the emergence of prose as well as the appearance of the journals and periodicals in most of the Indian languages. This was also the period which saw the dawn of the age of reason, of rationalistic reaction against the established order, the age of great reforms, liberation and individualism. Change in the economic order, the facilities of press, newspapers, education and the rise of a new professional class among others led to the rise of the new middle class that felt the need of new literary form to express its new multidimensional issues. That form was novel.

The earlier literary forms such as poetry, drama and narratives among others were traditionally bound to poetic form, and consequently were not suitable to depict the contemporary multi-dimensional life. They did not provide scope for the publication of personal experiences. The combined form of timeliness and literature in a broad sense was for the first time observed in this form. Thus, a new form was discovered to depict the realities of life and it had also to be multi-dimensional to depict this multi-dimensional life. The earlier forms had been a manifestation of expressive composition, tradition free values and universal truths. The novel prioritises individual experiences to collective experiences, but an individual attains experience from his contemporary environment. The novel thus provides enough scope to the comprehensive description of individual experiences as well as of the milieu.

Though the rise of the novel took place in the West from where it came to India, the factors responsible for the origin and migration to India are to a

great extent dissimilar. The factors responsible for the rise of the novel in the West were industrialization, periodical essay, spreading of economic prosperity and the emergence of the powerful economic middle class. It was during the eighteenth century that England saw the dawn of the age of Enlightenment when Science replaced superstition and philantrophy and humanism and set themselves against many social evils such as slave trade and debtors' prisons. The spread of education institutions of women and the development of prose as a powerful and effective medium of expression among others were some of the distinct features of the eighteenth century England.

The English literature in the West had crossed its first phase by the time the social reforms spread, spirit of national awareness took roots and a class of western educated Indians came into contact with the literature and the culture of the West in India. These social reforms and changes first took place in Bengal before they did in any other part of India. But the dawn of the era of the prose and reason was not confined to Bengal alone. It was a pan Indian phenomenon which manifested itself in due course of time in all the major languages of the country. Therefore the credit for being the first novel in an Indian language goes to the Bengali novel *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (1854) by Pyari Chand Mitra. By the time the first novel in Hindi, Lala Srinivasdas' *Pariksha Guru* (1882) was available many good Bengali novels had been written.Just as *Pariksha Guru* (1882) is considered to be the first novel in Hindi, *Sasu Vahu ni Ladai* (1862) is credited to be the first novel in Gujarati. Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) and Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta*

(1874) are the claimants as being the first Indian novel in English. Thus the novel in Hindi reached via Bengali. Most of the early Hindi novels were either translations or adaptations of the Bengali novels. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the novels of Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Rameshdutt, Dwarkanath Ganguly and Damodar Mukherjee were very popular whose works were translated into Hindi. Thus the Hindi novel writers of this age acknowledged the Bengali supremacy in the field of literature.

The limitations and achievements of an age find their expression in their contemporary literature making a study of the age inevitable for a proper understanding of its literature. Thus a study of the political, social and economic conditions of the age becomes imminent.

The modern age of Hindi literature is believed to begin from 1857 but the process of the modernization of modern India commences one century earlier in 1757 when the East India Company defeated Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in the battle of Plassey. Originally known as Mirza Mahmud Siraj ud Daula, the last independent Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa before the British adjourned their role of being just traders and took the political powers into their hands, though the Nawab continued to hold office on paper. In 1765, the company acquired, from Shah Alam, the Diwani or the right to collect revenues on behalf of the Mughal Emperor in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Nawab of Bengal was finally disposed off in 1772, and thus the British became the soverign rulers of Bengal.

The abolition of the dual government was the crowning achievement of Warren Hastings who consolidated and stabilized the administration on his return to Bengal in 1772. He shrewdly ensured that the British turned from mere traders and plunderers into the administrators in the true sense of the term. Gradually the Sikhs, the Marathas and the Moghuls were also defeated and by 1856 almost the entire country was under the rule of the British East India Company.

The fact remains that an overwhelming majority of the Englishmen in India never viewed the country of their habitation as their 'home'. For them it was just a site to exploit for material aggrandizement, to be abandoned as soon as the exploitative task was accomplished. Thus, they differed from the earlier invaders, who had arrived in the country for plunder, but had settled down in India as a part of the same. Reflecting on the difference between the earlier invaders and the English colonizers, Jawaharlal Nehru in *Discovery of India* quoting Shelvankar remarks:

> …settled within her frontiers and made themselves part of her life. She had never lost her independence, never been enslaved. This is to say, she had never been drawn into a political and economic system whose centre of gravity lay outside her soil, never been subjected to a ruling class which was, and which remained, permanently alien in origin and character. (Nehru 301)

The Company initiated several changes in the different spheres of administration and education. Thomas Babington Macaulay's infamous Minute on Education in India, which was implemented on 2nd February, 1835 fulfilled the British objective of promoting European literature and sciences among the natives of India. Macaulay's primary purpose behind the introduction of education in English was to generate a pool of trained manpower who could

assist in the administrative duties of the company, primarily being 'interpretors' between the colonizers and the colonized.As a consequence the English language gradually assumed the form of a status symbol and became the passport to government jobs and material progress. Later with Governor-General Lord Dalhousie's acceptance of Sir Charles Wood's proposals resulted in the establishment of the universities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in 1857.

Surprisingly, in 1857, a short period of the British formally inaugurating the higher education in English in India, the country also witnessed the first war of Indian independence. Indians educated in European knowledge were soon to realize the difference that separated the West from the East. The modern higher education with its notions of equality and freedom made them long for the freedom of their motherland and desire equality in a society which committed rampant discrimination on several fronts.

With the revolt of the 1857, the East India Company was abolished and India came directly under the rule of the Queen. The British brought a change in their economic, educational and administrative policies. The Indians too were made to think and act differently with a different perspective. Regarding the far-reaching changes brought about after the first struggle for independence in matters relating to the armed forces and in dealing with the landlords, Percival Spear writes:

> By and large, there was a change of attitudes in two directions. It was realized that the government should be in closer touch with, and more sensitive to Indian opinion, particularly the established classes who could control the general mass of people and there was a new caution in implementing the

> westernizing policy. Public works rather than public morals or western value was the guiding star of the post-mutiny reformer. (Spear 144)

Public works in form of a railway network, canals, bridges, hydroelectric projects and roads made the country rich in terms of infrastructure and created new job opportunities.

Economically the Indian society was divided in the rural and the urban spheres and as the rich and poor. The urban centers were economically represented by the capitalist and the labourers, whereas the landlords and the farmers represented the rural sphere. The landlords exploited the farmers and the condition of the laborers under the capitalist was no better. From the economic point of view too the policies of the British government were harmful to the Indians.

Prior to the British rule, the economic structure of the Indian villages was static and steady. The villages in themselves were complete economic units comparable to small republics. Their requirements were fulfilled in the villages itself.

During the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, British rule had a disruptive impact on the Indian economy particularly the village economy.

John Williamson in this regard, remarks:

> While there is a debate among scholars as how much of India's pervasive poverty today can be attributed to the impact of the British rule there is general agreement that the British did have an adverse impact on the village economy. (Old Age Security 143)

Prior to the British rule Indian villages in general were entirely self-sufficient. Each village had its cultivators and its artisans; little by way of

markets or goods from outside the village was required. The peasants were poor by contemporary standards, but they were not subject to the swings of world commodity market. As the British obtained political control over territory they began to set the prices that would be paid for various products. This impoverished many workers who had no alterantive to accepting these very low prices and the corresponding low wages. The British encouraged specialization among cultivators and a shift to cash crops for export to Britain. There were periods when this specialization benefited the local economy as when the demand for cotton was high during the American Civil War, but it also made the village economy highly vulnerable to the devastating impact of swings in world commodity markets.

The Industrial revolution in Britain created both a demand for raw material and a need for export markets for finished goods. Given India's dependent colonial position, the impact of Britain's industrial revolution on India was in many respects negative. In addition of being organized around the supply of British industry, the Indian economy was also structured to provide a ready market for British manufactured goods. Village astisans were unable to compete with cheap imported goods such as brass and copper utensils. Similarly handicraft weavers were unable to compete with the prices of British mill cloth. This forced down wages and then produced massive unemployment. As the artisans left the villages the cultivators who remained became increasingly dependent on the outside market. A money economy replaced a

barter economy making the peasants more vulnerable to the adverse consequences of swings in the world economy.

Starting in the 1850's a few cloth mills were built "but even at the end of the century ninety percent of the demand for mill cloth was being met by imports from Britain which is of particular note given that India had once been a major exporter of textiles." (Williamson 144) Many factors contributed to India's relative lack of industrialization during the late nineteenth century. Quoting Rothermund, Williamson reveals that one of the most important reasons for the underdevelopment of the textile industry in India during the eighteenth century was "Britain's unwillingness to allow the protective tariff that would have encouraged Indian industrialists to make the necessary capital investment in enterprises capable of locally producing textile machinery." (Old Age Security 144)

The villages and cities with their respective cottage industries were distinct units and mutually unrelated to each other. The British entrepreneurs with a view to capture the Indian market destroyed the local cottage industries. Economic destruction of this magnitude had not taken place even with the advent of the Muslims. From the point of view of social development the Muslims were backward and wanderers. Their condition was pre-feudalistic. Thus in spite of being victorious they were partially won over by the great culture. The economic and social stability was provided by the Moughal rule but they could not change the basic structure of the society. The status quo of the economic structure was maintained. The Britishers were a step ahead and

had accepted the capitalist system of economy. Socially too they were a step ahead of the Indians. Thus they were successful in ruining the economic system and in bringing a change in it.

The land-reforms introduced by Sir Thomas Munro in 1820 contributed in bringing a change in the contemporary economy. According to this reform the land could be sold and purchased by both the landlord as well as the tiller. Earlier the possession over the land could not be acquired. With the land becoming a personal property the commercialization of agriculture was inevitable. The agriculture produce that earlier remained within the village now reached the market. With the increased facility of transportation the quality of the produce too improved. The introduction of the currency notes too increased the commercialization but could not improve the miserable condition of the farmers. On one hand they were troubled by paying revenue to the landlord and on the other hand had to repay the loans to the moneylenders. The poor farmer was caught in the clutches of the money lenders. The credit of spreading the net of the *mahajani* culture very much goes to the Britishers.

The inter-dependence of the Hindu and the Muslim cultures is not that significant for bringing change as compared to the economic reasons that transforms the basic social structure. With the land becoming a personal property and change in the system of distribution of the agricultural produce led to the displacement of the old social relations and forming of the new ones. The ruining of the agriculture led to the breaking of emotional bond of the relations. Individuals had their own vested interests. Thus the economic

interests became self-characterised. Capitalist economy gives birth to cheap selfish interests and mechanization, the next step of capitalization, leads to loneliness or alienation. Thus the change in the economic structure by the Britishers caused tremendous difficulties to the masses. The mediators between the farmers and the administration too increased. The agriculture production declined. “With the ruining of the rural industry and economy more and more people became dependent on agriculture. The urban industry too was ruined by the blessings of the British.” (Old Age Security 148)

The new economic system established by the British in India led to certain changes in the Indian society. The villages abandoned their inertness and were forced to come into contact with the cities. The closed economy opened up and the nation that was only tied by the religious bond became conscious of the national unity too.

The new economic system also leads to the birth of new economic class in the society. Apart from the upper class and the labour class, a new class that of the middle class was born. The contribution of this class to the modern age is the most revolutionary.

The nineteenth century witnessed a revolution in the means of transportation. Railways, buses and steamships among others were introduced. The railways ended the isolation and the self-sufficient economy of Indian village life. There was greater social mobility and cohesion. At the same time they accentuated the commercialization of agriculture. The peasants produced for markets instead of producing simply for home and consumption. The

commercialization did not, however, benefit the peasants since much of the profits went to the traders and the middlemen. They played an important role in creating a feeling of nationalism and of ideological unity among the masses. The roads and the railways helped in the commercialization of agriculture besides assisting in the interaction of the masses from one corner of the nation to the other. In India too, the establishment and spread of railways and motor buses appreciably contributed to the forging of the Indian people into one nation.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, as a result of the unprecedented technological advance, together with the accumulation of capital from the trade during the previous period, powerful machine based industries sprang into existence in England. The English industrialist were faced with the problem of rapid disposal of the products of these new and steadily expanding industries and securing raw materials for them from India and other parts of the world.

The interests of the British industries urged the government of the East India Company to establish railways and to construct roads into India. Lord Dalhousie, who initiated a programme of wide railway construction in India, in his famous Minute on Railways in 1853, unambiguously defined the economic reason behind this construction.

Further, British capitalism was being steadily confronted with the accumulation of surplus capital which could not always be profitably employed in Britain. An outlet was needed for this surplus capital. If the government

were to adopt a programme of railway construction, it would require capital. A part of the surplus capital could be loaned to the Indian government and thus find an outlet.

In addition to these economic reasons, there were political-administrative and military strategic reasons for establishing railways in India. The British conquest, when it became complete, united India, for the first time in her centuries old history, into a single political-administrative system. This political administrative unity of India accomplished by Britain was not a surface unity. Unlike the pre-British governments which were largely only revenue collecting agencies, the British government made inroads in the inner life of the village, broke its jurisidical and policing independence, subjected it to the reign of a uniform system of law governing the entire land, posted its representatives in the village to enforce these laws, in fact, took over from the panchayats of the autonomous villages all those functions which belonged to the state but which those bodies had been performing from times immemorial.

Thus, the British evolved in India a colossal administrative apparatus penetrating even the remotest village.The need to erect and to efficiently operate such an apparatus also prompted them to establish and extend railways, to construct modern roads, to establish the post and telegraph systems. It was this necessity of assembling villages, towns, districts and provinces, increasingly brought under the British rule, into a single political-administrative system, which also stimulated railway construction in India.

Further, the military strategic reason also made the introduction of the modern transport system in India necessary. The British regime established in India had to be defended both against internal rebellion and external invasion. For a rapid mobilization and transfer of troops at the required key strategic points it was necessary to lay down adequate railway lines and metalled roads. Thus the military defence needs of Britain also led to railway construction and in general, to the extention of the modern means of communication.

The railways and the modern roads created a veritable revolution in the agricultural sphere. They made agricultural production marketable. The agriculturist began to produce commercial crops. The agricultural economy became an integral part of the national and even world economy. Thus economic isolation of the village, the main cause of its social and cultural stagnation, broke down.

But for railways, motor buses and other means of communication, political and cultural life on a national scale would not have been possible. If these became the means of consolidating and preserving British rule in India, they also played the role of playing the material means for organizing the political movement of Indian people on the national scale against that rule. Such political organizations as the Indian National Congress, the Liberal Federation, the National Democrats, Youth Leagues, the All India Women's Conference, All India Students Organisations, All India Trade Union Congress and others could neither have come into being, nor been able to function on a national scale without the facilities provided by modern railways, buses, post

and telegraph. The nationalist movement would not have been conceivable but for the fact that the railways made it possible for the people of different towns, villages, districts and provinces, to meet, to exchange views and decide upon programmes for the movement.

The modern means of transport made it possible to spread progressive social and scientific ideas among the people. In the absence of modern means of transport, scientific and progressive literature could not have been distributed throughout the country. No mass education would have been possible without these services.

The scientific and cultural gains of a single centre could be made national property by the aid of railways. Scientists, artists, sociologists, philosophers and economists could bring the wealth of their knowledge and the delight of their art to the people if they could travel. Scientific and cultural conferences were the quintessence of Indian intellect and artistic talent meet, were possible only if such swift means of travel as railways and buses existed. Thus, mass education as well as a culture, national in character and accessible to the nation, depended on the railways as much as on other factors. Books and periodicals among others could be easily delivered to the far off places. This contributed in eliminating the old narrow beliefs.

In 1536, Jaao Bustamante, a Spainiard, brought a printing press to India. Pioneer among the Indian printers, he joined the Society of Jesus and adopted the name Jaao Rodrigues and was ordained in 1564. However Jaao Consalves of Goa was the first among the Indians to make types of any Indain script. Thus

first printing in India took place in 1578. The attempts made by missionaries to make use of printing presses for propagation of Christianity gave an impetus to printing works. In 1819 a Serampore missionary established the *Samachar Darpan*, a weekly as an aid to propagate Christianity in Bengal. As Hinduism came under attack in this weekly Bhowanee Charan Bannerjee started a journal *Sambad Kaumudi* or the *Moon of Intelligence* in 1821. It was later taken over by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. These two journals carried on a verbal war in defence of respective religions.

While the missionaries looked upon the press primarily as an agency for propagating the Christian faith, James Augustus Hicky in the Memoirs of William Hickey Vol. II states, he decided to use it for "political propaganda". (p 175) His determination to fight for the freedom of the country led him to this daring course of action. Accordingly, he published *The Bengal Gazettee* or the *The Calcutta Advertiser*, the first newspaper in India in January 1780. Earlier in September 1766, William Bolts announced his intention to start a newspaper for giving expression to the differences of opinion existing between the opposing groups of traders of East India Company. But the government of Bengal viewed it with disfavour and sternly put down his attempt by ordering him to quit Bengal. Before long more papers *The Indian Gazette, The Calcutta Gazettee*, *The Oriental Advertiser* and the *The Bengal Journal* were founded in Calcutta. *The Bengal Gazettee* established by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, in 1816, was the first newspaper edited by an Indian. *The Calcutta Journal* was started in 1818. James Silk Buckingham, its editor, caused considerable

embrassment to the administration of Lord Hastings, the Governor General of Bengal. In 1858 Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar started a Bengali weekly *Sam Prakash* and also took over the *Hindoo Patriot.* In 1868 Motilal Ghose started the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. S.N. Banerjee founded *The Bengalee* in 1879 and made it popular because of his single minded devotion. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Agarkar launched the *Maharatta* and the *Kesari* in 1881. Because of them the press in Bombay assumed political character in the nineteenth century. On the realization of the effectiveness of the press in formulating public opinion and following the examples of the missionaries and the government, the various sections of society based on trade, race, caste, religion and community started newspapers to voice their grievances and to draw the attention of the government.

The growth of the press and journalism in the second half of the nineteenth century was an important catalyst for the new socio-political consciousness. By 1879 there were twenty newspapers in English and two hundred in vernacular languages. A steep rise in the number of periodicals was witnessed by the second half of the nineteenth century. They not only immensely contributed in the exchange of the ideas but also in eradicating the orthodoxy and the social evils. Through their medium the opposition of the actions of the British government too took place that was against the interests of the nation. Besides they significantly contributed in forming of a scientific and nationalistic outlook.

The establishing of the printing press not only led to the spreading of cultural, social, political and religious ideologies but also of the exchange of the ideas through the print medium. Thus the introduction of the printing press served as a blessing for the Indian renaissance.

Besies the printing press, another impotant development during the second half of the Riti period (1643-1843) was, the sincere efforts that were made to infuse prose with a new vigour by Munshi Sadasukhlal (1746-1824), Inshaallah Khan (d. 1817), Lallulal (1763-1835) and Sadal Mishra (1768-1848). Of these Sadal Mishra's *Nasiketopakhyan* (1803) and Ramacharit (1806) and Lallulal's *Premsagar* (1802) deserve special mention. Enlivened by a new consciousness and spirit of the Indian renaissance this period witnessed an upsurge of activity in the social, cultural and political spheres.

The age is also characterized by the rise of intense and passionate nationalism along with the influence of such reformist societies as the Brahmo Samaj (1828), Prarthana Sabha (1867) and Arya Samaj (1875). These social reformation institutions attempted to adapt religion to the new emerging conditions of the society and created a strong impression on the contemporary social, political and cultural ideologies. The advent of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda and the Theosophical Society brought a trend-setting process of universal awakening upon the socio-religious scene. Just as Bhakti movement opposed the rigid caste-system, untouchability and hypocrisy from the medieval period and attempted to create a feeling of harmony in society, the social reformation organizations of the modern age too tried to bring harmony

in society. But the new age needed a new kind of harmony. The harmony of the medieval period was emotional. The ends could now not be achieved through emotional gratification. Emotions were replaced by rationality, discretion and wisdom. It would not be wrong in stating that the beliefs of Brahma Samaj, Prathana Sabha, and Arya Samaj were highly based on sense of discretion and rationality.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the country was home for many anglicized Indians who were relatively more comfortable with the English language, manners dress and furniture. Chief among those who championed the cause of the introduction of western education was Raja Rammohan Roy, a man of great learning and sophistication whose demeanor had "a charm of modesty and reverence that produced the most agreeable effect on all who saw or conversed with him." (*The Times*, 30, Sept. 1833) As a versatile scholar, he "mastered Greek Latin as well as Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian; his activities included the printing of the first newspaper; the founding of the religious sect, the advocacy of the abolition of sutee, the promotion of civil and political rights, and a journey to England." (Spear 161) The impact of the Western education introduced by the British, the Western Science and History gradually made its appearance into the curriculum and the whole range of Western ideas and attitudes began to be conveyed through English and European literature.

Thus with the new economic conditions, modern education and communication systems begins the process of Westernization in India. The

social reformation, the introduction of the printing press, and the infusion of the vigour in the Hindi prose by writers such as Lallulal and Sadal Mishra and with the combined influence of the Western culture and literature, scientific progress and awareness in the masses gave rise to several literary forms and genres of which the novel is the most significant. The seeds of novel are sown when the writer attempts to depict the picture of society or the external or the internal conflict of man. The conditions for sowing the seeds of the novel form were ripe and thus in the very beginning of the first half of the nineteenth century do we come across the novel form in its primitive stage in the form of Inshaallah Khan's *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* (1800).

CHAPTER – II

HINDI NOVEL BEFORE PREMCHAND

Traces of the Hindi novel can be found since 1800 to the the present where it is a very dynamic, experimentative and living. Premchand is the first significant novelist who provides Hindi novel an identity and direction. A specific change in characteristics is observed with his advent on the Hindi novel scenario.Thus the age from 1800 with the publication of Inshaallah Khan's *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* and to the arrival of Premchand with his *Sevasadan* (1918) can be categorized as the age of the Hindi novel before Premchand. As the Hindi novel centres around Premchand, the pre-independence Hindi novel can be further categorised as the age of Premchand (1918-1936) and Post-Premchand Hindi novel (1936-1947).

I

The first fictional prose work in the modern age, Inshaallah Khan's *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* is a brief work primarily depicting the triumph of the love of Rani Ketki and prince Udebhan against parental opposition. Shyamsunderdas presumes that this work was written by Inshaallah Khan around 1800 A.D. In the introduction he further states that presumably this story was written between samvant 1856 and 1865. The writer is conscious of his setting a new precedent of Hindi prose, or is rather laying the very foundation of Hindi prose.

Prince Udebhan and princess Ketki fall in love with each other and wish to be married. The parents of Udebhan agree but the parents of Rani Ketki

consider the status of the dynasty of Udebhan inferior and not fit for their daughter. Raja Surajbhan wages a war on the kingdom of Rani Ketki's father that is on the kingdom of Raja Jagatprakash. Raja Jagatprakash sends a message of distress to his guru Gosain Mahender Gir, who resides on the Kailash Parvat along with his devotees. Coming to his rescue the guru wrecks havoc on the army of Raja Surajbhan through a strong dust storm, hailstorm and locusts. He even curses the family and transforms them into deers. But Rani Ketki could not forget prince Udebhan and one day disappears from the palace by applying the magical ashes given by the guru. The disappearance of Rani Ketki brings a change of heart in her parents who ultimately reconcile to the wishes of their daughter. With the help of Raja Inder, Guru Mahender Gir transforms Udebhan and his parents to their original form and festivities of the marriage take place on a grand scale.

The language of the author is quite simple, lacking suspense in narrative. Thus, it is dry and resembling the essay. The only place where the writer has to some extent been able to raise some curiosity of the readers is when Gosain Mahender Gir is not in the position to trace Udebhan and his parents whom he had turned into deers. The failure of tracing Udebhan and his parents could lead to serious consequences to the extent of the marriage of Rani Ketki being stalled.

The work is simple prose, quite un-novel like and lacks a specific plot. The delineation resembles the narrative prose. The characters too are flat and undeveloped. Besides for the change of heart of the parents of Rani Ketki for

Prince Udebhan no specific change is found in them nor do we find them to grow from the beginning to the end of the work.

The two restrictions that the writer imposed upon himself in his works are the non-usage of foreign words and the syntax similar to what we call Urduness.

Regarding the contemporary language scenario, Shyamsunderdas in the 'Bhoomika' of *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* comments:

> Hamare pradesh men aadhunik bhasaen men poorva men avadhi, madhyadesh men brajbhasa aur paschim men khadi boli ka prachar raha. (*Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* 5)
>
> Awadhi in the east, Brajbhasa in the central region and khadi boli in the West are the modern languages current in our province.

Earlier Awadhi and Brajbhasa were employed for literary works while *khadi boli* was generally employed in the day to day conversations. Gradually *khadi boli* became popular for literary works and the usage of Awadhi and Brajbhasa declined. Shyamsunderdas credits Inshallah Khan for popularizing *khadi boli* by creating *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* through the same medium. Thus, the credit of providing a literary form to modern Hindi prose, that is the beginning of the use of *khadi boli*, goes to Saiyyad Inshaallah Khan along with Lallulal's *Premsagar* (1802) and Sadal Mishra's *Nasiketopakhyan* (1803).

The language of *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* is distinct in the sense that one frequently comes across rhyming words such as "aatiyan jaatiyan", and "gharwaliyan batlatiyan" among others. This distinctness is assumed to be because of the influence of Punjabi language in which such applications are observed. The language in the beginning of the nineteenth century was in an

underdeveloped stage. Selecting *khadi boli* as his medium of expression at a time when language is passing through a transitional phase is a giant leap for Hindi prose. This is a story entirely in Hindi and does not contain any resemblance to any other dialect other than *Khari Boli*. Thus, throwing light on the terms such as Hindi, *Hindvi bhasa, bahari boli* and *ganvari*, Bachhan Singh remarks:

> Bahari boli ka arth hai Yamani bhasa, yani Arbi-farsi se bhari Hindustani. Bhasa ka mane hai sanskrutnisth panditau Hindi. Ganvari vah hai jo bhale logon ki bhasa na ho. Arthat Insha ne shistjano ki bolchal men, jismen na to Sanskrit ka prabhav tha, na arbi faarsi ka, *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* likhi.
> (*Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas* 60)
>
> Bahari Boli means Yamani Bhasa, which is Hindustani containing Arabic. By bhasa he means Sanskritised scholarly Hindi, which is not the language of the cultured is Ganvari. Thus Insahallah Khan has written *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* in a language of the cultured, which is the language uninfluenced by Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.

Though the work might not have much significance from a literary point of view or its form, keeping in view the period during which it was written, it does assume importance from the linguistic aspect. Elaborating on this aspect, Premchand in his essay *Sahitya Ka Udeshya* remarks:

> Hamare sammelano aur anjumano ka ab tak aam taur par bhasa aur uske prachar par hi bahas ki jati rahi hai. Yahan tak ki Urdu aur Hindi ka jo aarambhik sahitya maujood hai, uska udeshya, vicharon aur bhavon par asar dalna nahin, kintu keval bhasa ka nirmaan karna.
> (*Sahitya ka Udeshya* 7)
>
> The most common discussion of our seminars and conferences upto now has been language and its propaganda. Even the early literature available in Urdu and Hindi has as its objective not of influencing ideas or emotions but only of creating language.

Thus, *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* is a work belonging to the category of *Khari Boli* wherein its importance is not from literary point of view but from the aspect of the creation and the development of language. Published in the early

years of the nineteenth century this work is undoubtedly an early illustration of Hindi prose. Not only that but because of its being the first narrative work the scholars even consider it to be the first story in Hindi. In fact, it is a prose narrative similar to Lallulal's *Premsagar* (1802) and Sadal Mishra's *Nasiketopakhyan* (1803).

Though the brief story is of no significance from the point of view of the novel form of the West its importance of being among the first modern prose works cannot be denied as the work depicts certain modern characteristics such as the importance of love in marriage and individual freedom to love and marry according to one's choice.

. The use of prose for the first time for expression itself is a revolutionary step in Hindi literature. Language had been a major barrier for the growth of the Hindi novel. Had *khadi boli* been dominating, the other literary works would have quickly followed. The efforts of prose domination and presenting the new mode of writing qualify Inshaallah Khan an important position in Hindi novel. Applying the rules of English novel to a Hindi work when the English novel itself was in its early stages in England and with more than half a decade before English education was introduced in India would amount to discrediting the writer of his dedication and contribution to Hindi prose. Thus, it took another seventy-seven years for the next work of Hindi novel, Shraddharam Fillori's *Bhagyawati* (1877) to appear on the Hindi literary scenario.

II

The transition of the language from Awadhi and Brajbhasa to Khadi boli, creates a vast gap of around seventy-seven years until the publication of Shraddharam Fillori's *Bhagyawati* (1877). The author in the *Bhoomika* reveals the work's moral domination and socially educative nature. He remarks:

> Bahut dino se ichha thi ki koi aisi pothi Hindi bhasa men likhoon ki jiske padhne Bharatkhand ki striyon ko grahasth dharma ki shiksha prapt ho, kyonki yadhapi koi striyan kuch padhi likhi hoti hain, parantu sada apne hi ghar men baithe rahhene ke karan unko desh-videsh ki bol-chal aur anya logon se barat vyavahar ki poori buddhi nahin hoti. (*Bhagyawati* p-5)
>
> The semi-educated women too because of the lack of exposure do not have a complete understanding regarding manners and behavior with other people. Thus I had a long pending desire to write a book in Hindi that would provide some education to the women of the Indian sub-continent regarding their familial duties.

It is this didactic element of spreading awareness that provides form to the work. Like most of the early Hindi prose, this work too begins with a story containing the dry narrative element that lacks curiosity and spectacle. The writer rather reveals the conclusion first and then narrates the incidents. Consequently he fails to maintain the curiosity of the readers. In his usual style he avers:

> Ab Bhagyawati ne sare parivar se alag hoke jaise apni buddhibal se fir sab padarth ikatthe kiye aur aapat se sampat men pahunchi vah sara vrutant sunne ke yogya hai. (*Bhagyawati* p-55)
>
> The entire account of Bhagyawati separating from her in-laws, generating income by her intelligence and becoming prosperous is worth listening to.

Just for the sake of the depiction of the poetic justice, the writer in the next few pages depicts the pathetic poverty stricken condition of her unjust in-laws. The problem is not with this activity but with the undue haste and artificial means of achieving it.

The story ends with the reconciliation of Bhagyawati and her in-laws. Thus the gross story of one hundred and twenty three pages is just in forty to forty-five pages. The entire work is just a story and the plot consists of just the linear unconnected incidents being put one after another. Thus plot, the indispensable component of the novel is really missing. Most of the incidents seem to be introduced with the only objective of highlighting the virtues, achievements and characteristics of Bhagyawati. The narration by the novelist is clearly suggestive of his objective. He narrates:

> Bhagyawati ke dhairya aur kshma aadi ke gun kuch apne hi ghar men nahin the… (*Bhagyawati* p-74)
>
> Bhagyawati's qualities of patience and forgiveness were not limited to her family alone**…**

The novelist then narrates the incident of Bhagyawati who tactfully handles a hot-headed and quarrelsome woman of her neighborhood. As soon as this incident is delineated, the novelist begins with a fresh incident. He avers:

> Ab Bhagyawati ki yeh baat bhi sunne ke yogya hai ki uske gun vidhyachaturai, dhairya, santosh se adhik uska man shoorvir kaisa tha. (*Bhagyawati* 110)
>
> Now this attribute of Bhagyawati too is worth listening to. Apart from being virtuous, intelligent, patient and content, how valiant she was.

The several sub-plots of Bhagyawati's in-laws, their leaving for pilgrimage and her parents' family do not in any way help in the development or the justification of the main story. A consistent theme that should be spread through out the novel is non-existent. Consequently the question of the reader's curiosity being maintained through out the creation does not arise. The nature

of most of the incidents too is the same and they are either related to theft or fraud.

From the point of view of characterization too the work is unimpressive. The title itself is suggestive of the work containing only one chief character and the other characters seem dwarfed in her comparison. The writer has only presented a revelation of ready-made characters and not made any contribution to their growth. Bhagyawati's character, indifferent to the situation always remains steadfast and is not dynamic. She is the spotless moon of the full moon night, endowed with rich qualities and free from all defects and weaknesses. Evaluating the character of Bhagyawati, Shivnarayan Srivastava states:

> Bhagyawati ko sarvagunsampanna banane ke prayatna men lekhak ne kahin manaviya seemaon ka dhyan nahin rakha hai. (*Hindi Upanyas* 31)
>
> The novelist has overlooked the human limitations in presenting Bhagyawati endowed with all the virtues.

The consequence of Bhagyawati's dominance is that the other characters of the work have become puppets, dancing to the fancy of the writer.

The depiction of the contemporary milieu adds to the authenticity of the fictional work. Apart from the social reforms related to women, the praise of the British rule, the prevalent corruption and western influence among others provide the readers with a perception of the transition taking place in society. The transitional milieu is not directly portrayed but is suggested through the discussion taking place among the characters. The work justifies its objective of social reformation and is presented in an intelligible manner. Such kind of presentation is of historical significance too.

Co-incidentally it does contain some seeds of the novel form but these seeds could not sprout and assume the form of a novel. With the consequence the work has achieved a mixed form of the moral tales in Sanskrit and the contemporary essay. It can thus be termed as a perceived narrative.

Bhagyawati presents a shift in Hindi prose as compared to the earlier work *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani*. In spite of being an underdeveloped novel *Bhagyawati* does contribute to Hindi literature as being a complete prose work.

The language had acquired stability and a definite shape by the zealous efforts of Bhartendu Harishchandra and Nagari Pracharini Sabha. The age too was witnessing religious, social and political upheavals. For the first time the prevalent Sanatan dharma faced challenge from the social reformation organizations that had become active under the influence of the Indian renaissance. Thus *Bhagyawati* is a work influenced by the contemporary social reforms. Apart from spreading the message of social reformation the work is a significant specimen of transition of Indian society from a narrow rigid outlook to a broad, progressive and reformist attitude. Though the work lacks an appropriate plot and relevant sub-plots, the progress of Hindi prose from *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* to *Bhagyawati* is quite evident. From the dominance of prose the shift is to complete prose. Hindi as a language had acquired stability and a definite form appropriate for literary expression. Thematically too a great leap is observed from romance to social reformation.

The work is primarily didactic and having a reformist approach. Though *Bhagyawati* is the second work that comes to light after a long gap of around

seventy seven years and its importance is not from perspective of language but from delineating the changes necessitated by the influence of the Indian renaissance. Thus the novel is historically significant.

III

Pariksha Guru (1882) is the first novel of the English kind to appear in Hindi. Lala Srinivas Das, the author of *Pariksha Guru*, belonging to the Bhartendu circle is credited by the majority of the critics with being the first original novel in Hindi. Associated with the middle class life, the novelist terms the work in the *Nivedan* as "…worldly story providing didactism from experience". (*Pariksha Guru* 3)

It is quite obvious from the 'worldly story' that the novelist has based his work on the ground of realism that is distinct from the stories of the fairies, princesses, animals-birds and divine narratives. Lalaji has also termed it as a novel, suggesting that he wanted to write a novel based on the style of the English novel.

The principal theme of the novel is to prove the trial as the guru and the novelist at several places clarifies that the selfish and flatterer friends would desert Madanmohan during distress. Only the trial during adversity would differentiate the genuine from the fair weather friends. Through this theme the novelist has not only skillfully provided a broad picture of the contemporary national milieu but has also woven it with a specific objective.

The plot of the novel is regarding the reformation of an assumed nobleman of Delhi misguided by falling into wrong company. Through this medium the novelist evaluates the vivid incidents of life into a weak aphorism. The narrative is very scattered because of the several chapters being unrelated to the main plot. The novelist has included several historical and didactic stories for proving his point; consequently creating chaos in the novel. On one hand this quality of being scattered signifies the fault regarding the organization while on the other hand also demarcates the possibility of the future novels.

The novelist resorts to the flash-back technique in emphasizing the difference of ideology and values between the generation of Madanmohan and his father. The use of flash-back technique by the novelist in the beginning of the plot indicates a revolution in the narrative technique of the Hindi novel.

The distinct characteristic of *Pariksha Guru* is that for the first time it presents the realistic issues of life. Neither does it contain a love story of the traditional kind nor some amazing incidents. The presentation of the contemporary middle class and its various members is its prime objective. The words by the novelist in the *Nivedan* themselves reveal that the treatment of this prose is to set a new precedent in the history of Hindi literature. The novelist states:

> Ab tak nagari aur Urdu bhasa men anek achhi achhi pustaken taiyyar ho chuki hain, parantu mere jaan is reeti se koi nahin likhi gayi. Isliye apni bhasa men yah nai chaal ki pustak hogi. (*Pariksha Guru* 3)
>
> Up to now many good volumes have been written in Nagari and Urdu, but none of this type has ever been attempted. Thus it will be a work of new custom in our language.

Differing from the contemporary prose, the novelist in the exposition of the work itself reveals the traits of a novel. The prose works of the Pre-Premchand age, similar to *Udebhan Charita ya Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* and *Bhagyawati* begin with providing a lengthy introduction of the characters and presenting the incidents right from the birth of the protagonist and providing comprehensive details of the family background. But no such information is provided in this work and the mysteries too are revealed at an appropriate time and place. This task is dexterously handled by the novelist and he succeeds in raising the curiosity of the readers. The novelist does not reveal the traits of the principal character Brajkishor upto the one sixty eighth page of the novel. The craft conscious novelist thought it necessary to clarify in the *nivedan* the difference between the novel and the drama. The essential fact is that the novelist is conscious of the artistic style of the novel, which he may have adopted from the English novels. This awareness of artistic novelty too proves *Pariksha Guru* to be the first novel of the English type in Hindi.

Though *Pariksha Guru* is credited with being the first novel in Hindi, it does contain traces of drama and narratives. The maxims, idiomatic phrases and soliloquies of Brajkishor serve as illustration of the influence of the past on the new emerging literary form.

The comprehensive reading of the novelist is revealed through his extensive knowledge of history and literary works in English, Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu. As proof of his scholarship, the author quotes writers such as Lord Chesterfield, Shakespeare, Kabir and William Cowper and from works such as

Hitopdesha, *Manusmruti*, and *Ramayana* among others. The writer, in the *nivedan* acknowledges his obligation of the epics and other literary writers and forms in achieving this feat of accomplishing the work. He avers:

> Is pushtak ko rachne men mujhko *Mahabharat* adi Sanskrit, Gulistan vagere Farsi, Spectator, Lord Bacon, Goldsmith, William Cowper adi ke purane lekhon aur streebodh adi ke vartman risalon se badi sahayata mili hai… (*Pariksha Guru* 6)
>
> In writing this book I have received huge assistance from *Mahabharat*, Sanskrit and Gulistan and Persian, the old writings of *Speactator*, Lord Bacon, Goldsmith, William Cowper and periodicals providing understanding to women…

By resorting to the illustration style the novelist has created *Pariksha Guru* into an encyclopedia of knowledge. But the abundance of illustrations, quotations and moral preaching results into the structure of the work becoming deformed and creating an obstacle in the smooth flow of the story. This confession is made in the 'Nivedan' too wherein the novelist suggests the '+' sign for the readers who wish to skip through the illustrations and just go through the lineal account of the story. This indicates that the novelist himself was conscious of the structure and the form of the plot but could not conceal his greed of spreading knowledge.

The novel is realistic in its minute and realistic depiction of the contemporary social milieu. The lack of sub-plots helps in not complicating the story of the novel. Throwing light on the limitation of the theme of *Pariksha Guru*, Satyapal Chug remarks:

> Vaastav men yah kathavastu ek choti kahani ke hi upayukt hai. Ismen jeevan ke vividh angon, manav-man ke nana raagon aur pravruttiyon ke prasar ka avakaash nahin. (*Hindi Upanyas: Uday Aur Utkarsha* 83)
>
> In fact the theme is appropriate only for a short story. It does not have scope of diffusion of the vivid aspects of life and the various passions of the activity of the human mind.

The efforts of the novelist of appropriate character-portrayal reveal his awareness regarding characterization. The positioning of the characters according to their importance too is suggestive of the novelist's skill of characterization. Madanmohan is the protagonist and the center of the action in the novel. Brajkishor makes special efforts of reforming Madanmohan and his endeavors ultimately bear fruits. Thus, his position is next to the protagonist. The female characters do not find any significant place in the novel with the exception of a minor role of Madanmohan's wife.

All the characters of the novel represent a specific class of society. Madanmohan's father is an old fashioned, God fearing, practical and man of values. His wife is an ideal Hindu wife. Brajkishor, though modernist in his attitude, is proud of his culture and an active citizen. Through Brajkishor, the novelist has highlighted the issues ranging from social, personal and of national interests. Lala Brajkishor is an ideal character and the novelist's mouthpiece. By depicting the protagonist not as a heroic but as a weak character, the novelist is also credited with introducing a distinct kind of realistic characterization. Analyzing the conduct and the expressions of the characters, Satyapal Chug avers:

> Madanmohan saras, bhola, darpok tatha bhavuk hai isliye vah jitni jaldi sharmata, gabharata tatha bhaon chadhata hai, vaise Brajkishor nahin. Brajkishor ka nischal, nidar vyaktitva beparvahi tatha svatantrata se baat karta hai.
> (*Hindi Upanyas: Uday Aur Utkarsha* 91)

> Madanmohan is credulous, sentimental, timid and sensitive. Thus his expressions of shyness, fear and frowning are prominent, while Brajkishor does not reveal his expressions and keeps his emotions under control. He is fearless, consistent and expresses himself in an easy and unrestrained manner.

The conversations are presented in a natural style. Thus, we find instances of a character intervening and making statements before the other character can complete his statement. The conversations, depicted among the friends of Madanmohan, are brief, effective and practical, while that of Brajkishor are lengthy, at times monotonous and assuming an argumentative form.

In the novel, rather than employing the difficult words from Sanskrit and Persian, the language spoken by the people of Delhi has been emphasized for presenting an authentic sketch of an assumed nobleman of Delhi. Thus the novelist has neither made the language burdensome by employing the out of vogue Sanskrit words nor has the language digressed by the usage of Urdu words. He has made use of Sanskrit, Persian and English words that are simple, in vogue and intelligible. The writer in the *nivedan* itself remarks:

> Is pushtak men dilli ke ek kalpit rais ka chitra utara gaya hai aur usko jaise ka taisa (arthat swabhavik) dikhane ke liye sanskrut athva farsi arabi ke kathin kathin, shabdo ki banai hui bhasa ke badle dilli ke rehne walon ki sadharan bolchal par jyada drishti rakhi gayi hai.
> (Lala Srinivas Das 5)
>
> This book presents a picture of a resident of Delhi and to present him as he is (that is natural) the emphasis has been more on the day to day language of the people of Delhi rather than the difficult words from Sanskrit or Arabic and Persian.

Pariksha Guru is a work of the period when *khadi-boli* prose was attempting to acquire a literary form. Thus its language provides us with the information of the language and the words of that time. From the aspect of language *Pariksha Guru* is close to life. It is the contemporary day-to-day language of its age.

With abundance of instructions and directions, the work is idealistic from the renaissance point of view. Yet it creates a realistic impression in matters such as providing an authentic picture of the transitional Indian society, regarding the selection of the characters for the story and in the presentation of the appropriate language.

The novelist has desisted from the presentation of the divine and miraculous incidents as presented in *Rani Ketki ki Kahani*. Thus Bachhan Singh remarks:

> Ismen parampara mukt silsilevaar katha nahin kahi gai hai balki usmen aavashyaktaanusaar ulat fer kiya gaya hai. Patron ke svabhaav, unke parasparik sambandhon ko yathasambhav vishvashniya banane ki chesta ki gayi hai, bolchal ki bhasa, patron ka kalpanik chitran sankankshta aadi ka sambandh men ve pahele hi se satark the. Yahi karan hai ki ise Hindi ka pehla upanyaas kaha jaata hai. *Devrani Jethani ki Kahani*, *Bhagyawati* aadi men ye aupanyasik tatva nahin milte.
> (*Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas* 79)
>
> The story is not narrated in a linear manner but the necessary changes have been made. Attempts have been made to make an authentic presentation of the nature of the characters and their mutual relationship. He was conscious from the very beginning regarding the language of conversation and the fictional delineation of characters among others. This is the very reason of its being considered the first novel in Hindi. '*Devrani Jethani Ki Kahani*' and '*Bhagyawati*' do not contain these elements of a novel.

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Pariksha Guru exhibits all the major characteristics of the English type novel. The novelist too depicts awareness of his work being different from the

drama and the narrative tradition. His knowledge of plot and narration is evident from his statements made in the *nivedan* itself. He remarks:

> Pehle to padnewale is pushtak mein saudagar ki dukaan ka haal padhte hi chakravenge kyonki apni bhasa mein abtak vartaroopi jo pushtaken likhi gain hain unme aksar nayak nayika vagere ka haal thet se silsilevaar (yathakram) likha gaya hai "jaise koi raja, badshah, sheth, sahukaar ka ladka tha uske manmen is baat se yah ruchi hui aur uska yah parinam nikala" aisa silsila kuch bhi nahin maloom hota "Lala Madanmohan ek angreji saudagar ki dukaan men asbab dekh rahen hain Lala Brajkishor, Munshi Chunnilal aur Master Shimbhudayal unke saath hain." Inmen Madanmohan kaun, Brajkishor kaun, Chunnilal kaun aur Shimbhudayal kaun hai? Inka swabhav kaisa hai? Yah baten pahlese kuch bhi nahin jatai gai! Haan padhnewalen dhairya se sab pushtak padh lenge to apne, apne maukepar sab bhed khulta chala jayega aur adi se ant tak sab mel mil jayega. Parantu itna dhairya na rakhenge vah iska matlab bhi nahin samajh sakenge. (Pariksha Guru 3-4)
>
> Initially the readers would be confused on reading about the traders shop as the narration in the books of our language are from the very beginning in a chronological order "as there was a son of some king, emperor, sheth, moneylender and because of certain idea a particular interest arose in him and this was its conclusion", no such order is found here. "Lala Madanmohan is having a look at some showpieces in an Englishman's shop. Lala Brajkishor, Munshi Chunnilal and Master Shimbhudayal are with him." Of them who is Madanmohan, who is Brajkishor and who is Shimbhudayal? What is their nature? Nothing of this sort has been informed here in the beginning! All the things will be clear from the beginning to the end, if the reader has patience and reads the entire story. But those without patience will not be able to make out anything of this.

The characters of this work are neither the aristocrats nor royalty but belong to the contemporary middle-class. The first novel in Hindi keeps the middle-class in the centre-stage, the class that plays a crucial role in the transition of society. The earlier novelists of this age lacked a modern outlook and the necessary knowledge of the novel form. They also lacked the capability of serious critical inquiry.

Pariksha Guru is also the first work in Hindi literature depicting resistance to discriminatory economic policies of the British rule. Brajkishor's views regarding loss to the Indian economy by the Indians purchasing costly

artifacts from the British depicts the economic awareness that is later observed in full bloom only in the works of Premchand. This resistance is missing in the earlier works of *Bhagyawati* and *Rani Ketki ki Kahani*. *Bhagyawati* rather depicts the praise of the social welfare measures of the British in India and nowhere shows any signs of discontent against the discrimantory economic policies of the British in India. It is probable that at the back of his mind the novelist is juxtaposing the social welfare measures during the feudal rule that existed prior to the establishing of the British rule. Inspite of all its incompleteness and deficiencies *Pariksha Guru* for the first time depicts in Hindi the organization of the elements of the novel and the application of the novel craft.

At a time when most of the writers were staunch followers of *Sanatan dharma*, Lala Srinivas Das' dealing with the economic and industrial issues with a view of progress and prosperity of the nation in itself speaks volumes of the intellect and the foresight of this nineteenth century novelist.

The influence of the Indian renaissance is clearly visible in the works of Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850-1885). In his essay *Bharatvarshonnati Kaise Ho Sakti Hai?*, he remarks:

> Hindu Brothers! You too should give up your internal difference. Love each other. Follow this principle. Whoever lives in Hindustan, whatever be his/her colour, caste, is a Hindu. Help Hindus. All Bengalis, Marathis, Punjabis, Madrasis, Vedics, Jains, Brtahmins and Muslims should hold each other's hands.

Belonging to the Bhartendu group known as the 'Bhartendu Mandal', Lala Srinivasdas, as a writer, just like Bhartendu raised in his dramas, raised his voice against the social problems of his age. The novelist in *Pariksha Guru*

expresses a desire to modernize the nation with new means of agriculture and through industrial progress. It insists on not blindly emulating the British, emphasizes on traditional education and condemns fashion and extravagance. Bhartendu and his compatriots like Lala Srinivasdas were trying to free themselves from the influence of Britishers through their writings. Thus the efforts of Lalaji in attempting a holistic presentation of the contemporary age are worth commending. Premchand's idealistic realism in fact begins from here itself.

Pariksha Guru being considered the first English type (keeping novelists like Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy in consideration) novel in Hindi suggests that the Hindi novel begins with social realism as its identity. This journey of social realism as its identity is carried forward by Premchand and Yashpal among others to the present times and has become capable of acquiring diverse dimensions.

IV

If *Pariksha Guru* is the first novel in Hindi of the English type, then very soon appeared Thakur Jagmohan Sinha's *Shyamaswapna* (1888), an Indian type novel in Hindi, as it is a convergence of Reeti Kaal and the modern prose. This dual quality of prose as well as verse provides it a distinct position in Hindi novel. The author on its cover page claims it to be "prose dominated imagination in four segments" and in English claims it to be a "novel". Supporting Ambikadutt's view of the work being a prosaic verse, Srikrishna Lall in the

bhoomika observes:

> …*Shyamaswapna* sachhe arth men gadhkavya hai. Is men gadhya aur padhya donon men hi kavya ki srushti hui hai parantu yah gadhya pradhan hai. (*Shyamaswapna* p-14)

> …*Shyamaswapna* in true sense can be considered to be a prosaic verse as it contains poems in prose as well as in verse. But it is prose dominated.

One of the chief characteristics of the novel is its realism. The realism of the novel is in quite contrast to the miraculous depictions of the Hindi period of the *Reeti Kaal* (1643-1843). But *Shyamaswapna* is totally devoid of realism. Terming his work a 'dream' the novelist in the dedication states:

> Raatri ke chaar prahar hote hain – is swapna men bi chaar prahar ke chaar swapna hain – to vah bhi swapna hi hai – par mera *Shyamaswapna* swapna hi hai. (*Shyamaswapna* p-3)

> Night consists of four prahars. This dream too consists of a dream for each prahar. The world is like a dream – then this too is a dream. My writing too is explicitly a dream – but my *Shyamaswapna* is only a dream.

Of the three characters of the novel – Kamlakant, Shyama and Shyamasunder, both Kamlakant and Shyamasunder are lovers of Shyama. Revealing Shyamasunders' intense love for Shyama, the novelist avers:

> Ve apne pran ko bhi itna nahin chahte the. Nainon ka tara main hi thi. Prem pinjar ki unki men hi saarika thi. Brahma, Ishwar, Ram, jo kuch thi men thi, ve mujhe ananya bhav se mante the. (*Shyamaswapna* 70)

> He did not have that much love even for his own life…I was the only starling of his love – cage. Brahma, Ishwar, Ram, I was all. He had undivided faith in me.

Shyama, the heroine of *Shyamaswapna* resembles the heroine of the Hindi *Reeti Kaal* (1643-1843). She has mastered the art of shrewdness at a tender age of fourteen. On the shrewd acting of the fourteen year old Shyama,

Kamalakant cannot help remarking:

> Vaahri Shyama chaudah varsha men jab tum itni chatur thi tab aage jaane kya hua hoga. (*Shyamaswapna* 64)
>
> Oh wonderful Shyama. If you were so shrewd at fourteen then what might you have been at later age.

Apart from shrewdness, the beauty of Shayama too is similarly described as the heroines of the Hindi period of *Reeti Kaal*. Describing her beauty, the writer observes:

> Pankaj ka gun na chandrama men aur na chandrama ka pankaj men hota hai – to bhi iska mukh dono ki shobha anubhav karta tha. Kaali kaali bhaon kamaan si lagti theen. Dhanush ka kaam na tha. Kamdev ne inhe dekhte hi apne dhanush ki charcha bisra di. (*Shyamaswapna* 26)
>
> The qualities of a lotus and a moon are distinct. Yet her face exhibits the splendor of both. The dark eye-brows seem like an arch. On seeing them Lord Kamdev too was distracted from the discussion of his bow.

The language employed by the writer in describing the beauty of Shyama too is similar to that of the ancient poets. He observes:

> Nab joban naresh ke pravesh hote hi aang ke sipahiyon ne badi loot maar machai isi bhaose men sabhon ke haunse rah gaye…par yah na jaan pada ki beech men kati kisne loot li. (*Shyamaswapna* p-8)
>
> With the entrance of the king of youth, the soldiers of the various body parts went ransack and lost their discretion…but nobody could make out who plundered the loins.

Among metres Thakur Jagmohan Sinha's favourite metres are Doha, Savaiyya Kundaliya, Sortha etc. Even in prose the novelist has displayed dexterity in Yamak (repeatation of words or syllables of similar sound but different in meaning) and Anupras (alliteration). The beginning of Shyamaswapna is in the same manner.

> Aaj bhor yadi tamchor hi ror se, jo nikat ki khor hi mein jor se shor kiya. (Shyamaswapna 5)

The words such as *Bhor*, *Tamchor*, *Hor*, *Jor aur Sor*, *Janjaliya aur Jaliya*, *Jivasha*, *Nirasha Mithyasha*, *Pyasa*, *Nain aur Chain*, *Viheen*, *Deen* etc exhibit the figures of speech-Yamak. Tamchor which is the corrupt form of 'Tamrachood' is done so just for the sake of repeatation, the figure of speech - Yamak. In this manner one comes across concious efforts by the novelist in attempting repeatation which is the influence of the *Reeti Kaal*.

The characters of the work are types and based on the characters of the Hindi period of *Reeti Kaal* (1643-1843). Kamlakant and Shyamasunder too are heroes as depicted in the works of *Reeti Kaal* (1643-1843). All the characters are of poetic temperament. Most of these verses are soaked in *Shringar Rasa*. Thus not only the language employed and characterization but the environment depicted too is unrealistic and similar to that of the works of the *Reeti Kaal*. The incidents depicted in this unrealistic environment are not only hard to comprehend but are also beyond thought and reason. Consequently the plot too is complicated and incoherent. The writer observes:

> Bahut thaur unmatt kavya rachi jako arth kathora l
> Samujhi jaat nahin kaihun bhatin sangna shabd athora l
> (*Shyamaswapna* 163)
>
> I have created a very frenzied literary composition whose meaning is uncouth, hard and ardous.

The novelist confesses of having created a very frenzied literary composition whose meaning is uncouth, hard and arduous. Thus, Shrikrishna Lall comments:

> Trutiya aur chaturtha prahar ke swapna men is prakar ke unmatt kavya avashyakta se adhik hai.
> (*Shyamawapna* 22)

> The dream of the third and fourth prahar contains more than necessary such frenzied literary compositions.

The descriptions in the first two *prahars* are devoid of any kind of complexity or incoherence. But with the third fragment of the dream begins the unnaturalness, complexity and incoherence. This complexity is further heightened by the complicated relationship shared among Shyama, Kamlakant and Shyamasunder.

Besides Hindi, the novelist has quoted verses of Sanskrit poets too, especially Kalidas and Bhavabhuti. The language of the writer is heavily influenced by his comprehensive reading of Hindi and Sanskrit poets. Analyzing the influence, Srikrishna Lall, in the *bhoomika* states:

> Prakruti-varnan ki prerna unhe Sanskrit kaviyon se mili aur shrungar-varnan ki prerna Hindi ke reetikaleen kaviyon se. (*Shyamaswapna* p-29)
>
> The Sanskrit poets have provided him the inspiration for the Nature descriptions and the Hindi poets of the Reeti Kaal the inspiration for Shringar descriptions.

At the same time the literary composition also shows evidence of the influence of Bhartendu Harishchandra. Instead of the Reetikaleen embellishment and spectacle, Bhartendu laid emphasis on art and naturalness. The same innate naturalness and freshness is observed in the poetry of Jagmohan Sinha.

The mingling of *Khadi boli*, Brajbhasa and Bundelkhandi vocabulary is observed. Citing the admixture of language the cause of the work becoming excessively disorganized and loose, Srikrishna Lall avers:

> Sach to yeh hai ki Jagmohan Sinha kavi the aur kavya ki bhasa hi ve likh sakte the aur usi bhasa ko unhone gadhya ka roop diya jiske karan vah nitant avyavasthit aur shithil ho gai hai. (*Shyamaswapna Bhoomika* p-32-3.)

> Basically Jagmohan Sinha is a poet and could write only in a poetic style. Consequently he has provided a prose form to his poetry. Thus the creation seems excessively disorganized and loose.

Whatever modernity in this prosaic verse can be found is regarding the rebellious ideology of Kamalakant against the Brahmins, the creators of the ancient scriptures. Kamalakant revolts because he is a Kshatriya prince and loves Shyama, a Brahmin girl. He is put behind bars for his desire of marrying her. His views differ from the views of the scriptures regarding love and marriage. As the scriptures cannot be dishonoured, the novelist supports his stand on the basis of an ancient treatise. Through the legend of Devyani and Yayati, the novelist has depicted the acceptability in the scriptures regarding the marriage of Kshatriya boy and Brahmin girl. Through the ancient treatises the writer also confirms the acceptability of *Gandharva Vivah*. He cites illustrations of *Nal-Damyanti*, *Dushyant-Shakuntala* and Radha-Krishna among others to strengthen his stand. The emphasis on *Gandharva vivah* presents the increasing importance of love in marriage in the Pre-Premchand society.

Apart from its strong influence of the Hindi *Reeti Kaal* (1643-1843) the unique feature of *Shyamaswapna* is the dominance of prose and the voice of rebellion. Yet Srikrishna Lall does not consider these characteristics sufficient to include it into the category of a novel. As the composition treats the same subject in alternate passages of prose and verse he finds it suitable for classifying it as a "*champu kavya*". Expressing his disagreement of including the work as a novel, he remarks in the *bhoomika*:

> Is Reetikaleen vatavaran ke chitro se poorna jatil aur asangat katha vastu tatha unmatt kavya se yukt 'Shyamaswapna' ko upanyas kahena uktisangat

> nahin jaan padata yadhapi lekhak ne swayam ise an original novel – ek maulik upanyas athwa prabandh kalpana likha hai. Sahitya-roop ki drishti se ise pracheenkaleen katha, akhyayika aur champu kavya ki shreni men rakhna adhik samicheen hoga…astu *Shyamaswapna* ek champu kavya hai jisme upakram aur upsanhar ke roop men ek swapna ki bhoomika de di gai hai. (*Shyamaswapna* 25)
>
> Though the writer himself terms the work as an original novel or an origanised imagination it does not seem rational to term this work depicting the Reeti Kaal in full bloom and containing complicated and incoherent narrative, a novel. From the perspective of literature it would be more appropriate to term it as an ancient narrative, legendary tale or a champu kavya…Thus *Shyamaswpna* is a champu kavya in the form of a beginning and a conclusion in the backdrop of a dream.

Inter-textuality is another significant characteristic of *Shyamaswapna*. Scores of poetic creations of poets such as Dev, Behari, Tulsidas, Padmakar, Raskhan and Sripati find place in this creation. Of all poets Bhartendu Harishchandra is most profusely quoted. According to Shyama, Kamlakant keeps reciting poems of his long-standing friend, which are the works of no one else but Bhartendu Harishchandra, an old time friend of Thakur Jagmohan Sinha. Also while writing a letter to Shyama, Shyamasunder quotes couplets composed by his friend. These couplets are an extract from Bhartendu Harischandra's *Prem Sarovar*. Also when, under the influence of the witch, Shyamasunder is released from the prison and finds himself in his *kavita-kutir*, where are scattered the works such as *Shyamalata*, *Devyani*, *Sankhya* and *Yog*. Of these *Shyamalata* and *Devyani* are works of none other than Thakur Jagmohan Sinha himself. The consequence of intertextuality is that the writer enriches the readers with his comprehensive reading of Hindi and Sanskrit works. Thus, this characteristic too makes the work unique as it is not observed in any other earlier or contemporary work of its time.

Focussing on his contribution to modern Hindi prose, Nagendra observes:

> Shaili-vikas ki drishti men itna vaividhya aur itni sajivta parvarti yug men nahin dekhi gayi. (*Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas* p-494)
>
> From the point of view of development of style we do not come across such dynamism and liveliness in the earlier ages.

The work is neither incident dominated nor character dominated, but lays more emphasis on emotions, yet *Shyamaswapna* is Jagmohan Sinha's unique creation of the Bhartendu era. Besides representing the environment, language and temperament of the Reeti Kaal, it also represents modernity – the dominance of prose and the voice of rebellion. Fact is that it would be more appropriate to term the creation a poetic composition rather than a prose. But it definitely contains the activity of the beginning of prose writing. It contains an excellent expression of unrestrained love. Presenting an illustration of ideal love it concludes with a pessimistic opinion about the influence of love and women on men. The opinion provided is the co-mingling of the views from *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesh*, Bhartahari and Shankracharya. This pessimistic conclusion regarding unrestrained and ideal love is an echo of the opinion of the medieval age.

Namvar Singh in *The Novel of English Type* and *Indian Novel* suggests that not all Indian novelists subscribed to the colonial model of English novel. Certain novelists resisted the model of the English type novel as he exposes two faces of colonialism. Thus, he appreciates the efforts of novelists like Bankimchandra, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Hazari Prasad Dwiwedi who rejected the realistic English novel in favour of romances like Kapal Kundala,

Durrgesh Nandini, Anand Math and Shyamaswapna of the 19th century, which were the foundation stones of the Indian novel – not works like *Parikshaguru* (1878) by Lala Sri Niwas Das, the first novel of English-type in Hindi. Awadhesh Kumar Singh in *Towards a Theory of Indan Novel* remarks: "In rejection of the English-type novel, Namvar Singh saw rejection of colonialism."

Though Thakur Jagmohan Sinha cannot be included into the category of English type modern novelists, but *Shyamaswapna* definitely contributes to the enrichment of the contemporary Hindi prose.

V

With all the works published upto *Shyamaswapna*, none achieved popularity that reached a wide section of society. It was only the publication of Devkinandan Khatri's *Chandrakanta* (1991), which created a sensation unprecedented in the realm of Hindi novels.

The novel *Chandrakanta* (1991), depicting a feudal setting with the state of Naugadh, presents the hero, Prince Virendra Singh possessing the medieval qualities of chivalry and being in love with the extremely beautiful and virtuous princess Chandrakanta. With an objective of making the work interesting and engrossing the novelist introduces several obstacles in their union. The father of Chandrakanta, the king of Vijaygadh, influenced by trivial measures of prestige and standing in society, is the first obstacle in their union. The other obstacles are Kroor Singh, the son of the minister in the court of the kingdom

of Naugadh and Shivdutt Singh, the king of Chunar. It is only mutual interest that brings the reconciliation between Chandrakanta's father and Virendra Singh. Thus along with the depiction of the incidents of magic and deception (Tilisma and Aiyari), the incidents of the conflicts and the clashes among the neighbouring kingdom too raise curiosity and anxiety among the readers.

Chandrakanta and *Chandrakanta Santati* present a chain of amazing and astonishing incidents of magic and deception. Regarding the chain of amazing and astonishing incidents of magic and deception, Ram Darash Mishra comments:

> Ghatnaon ke karyakaran sambandhon ki parvah kiye bagair lekhak jahan jaisa chahata hai, ghatnaon ki shrushti karta hai aur pathak in vichitra ghatnaon ke mayajaal se chamatkrut hota hua, katha pravaah ke saath teji se behta chalta hai. In upanyason men pathak ki kautoohal vrutti ko ramane aur bahane ki apaar kshamta hai aur yahi inka udeshya bhi hai. (*Hindi Upanyas: Ek Antaryatra* p-19)
>
> The novelist without caring for cause and effect of incidents creates incidents and the readers keep flowing along with being astonished with the snares of the illusory world. These works contain an immense potential of astonishing the readers and this is their objective too.

These incidents of Tilisma and Aiyari served as a spectacle for the readers. This trend was a change from the earlier reformation works presenting the realistic social issues. Defending the depiction of the Tilisma and Aiyari incidents, Satyapal Chug remarks:

> …Hamare liye yeh itna mahatvapoorna nahin jitna yeh samajh lena ki kalpana ki nirbandh krida-kautuk se kaam lenewala prarambhik upanyaskar bhi bhali-bhanti samajhta tha ki 'upanyas' pariyon ki kahani nahin ho sakta- kam-se-kam atimanviya to ho hi nahin sakta- aur yadi koi is baat ki upeksha kar alokik-se dikhne vale varnan karega, to use pathakon ko javabdeh hona padega. (*Hindi Upanyas: Uday aur Utkarsha* p-105)
>
> …The rationality of the arguments by the novelist regarding the authenticity of the incidents is not important. Important is that an early novelist understands that a novel is not a fairy tale and does not resort to a free-play of his imagination. The novelist violating this fact and depicting divine

> incidents will be responsible to the readers regarding their justification. Thus the novelist resorts to such devices that create an illusion of authenticity.

The lack of relevant sub-plots can be considered a drawback of *Chandrakanta.* But this drawback is not perceived because of the presence of large number of characters and incidents which successfully keep the readers engrossed with their activities and development. The novel *Chandrakanta* is in itself complete but *Chandrakanta Santati* an extension of *Chandrakanta* in twenty-four volumes, cannot be comprehended without going through Chandrakanta as all its major characters are present upto the last twenty-fourth volume.

Basically *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* are incident dominated works. The novelist doesn't pay much attention to characterization. It presents persons and not characters that can be given any name. Thus it is difficult to differentiate one character from another. All their action is removed from reality and is imaginary. The characters here are created to suit the requirements of the incidents and not vice versa. In fact this is character narration or ready made construction of characters but not characterization.

The characters are static and go through no change or transformation from the beginning of the work to its end. They lack individuality or any trait that can term them as round characters. According to the will of their creator they exhibit their evil and virtuous qualities and are either entirely evil or entirely virtuous. The nature of the conduct of the characters is even not with an objective of providing entertainment to the readers. This objective is fulfilled by the strange incident of *Tilisma* and *Aiyari* (magic and deception).

Inspite of the characterization of the novel being its drawback the novel succeeds in achieving popularity among the readers. Analyzing the reason of the popularity of these flat characters among the readers, Nand Dulare Vajpayee comments:

> Nayak aur nayikaen yadhapi raajkiya vargon se li gayeen hain, parantoon unka charitra-nirmaan prem aur veerta ke swachhand prasangon ko lekar hi hua hai, jismen unmen jan-sadharan ke liye bhi akarshan aa gaya hai. (*Premchand: Sahityik Vivechan,* p-110)
>
> Though the hero and the heroine belong to the royal class, their character portrayal is based on the incidents that depict unrestrained love and chivalry. Thus attracting the masses towards them.

Usually the objective of the depiction of the milieu is to express the sensibility of the age besides providing authenticity to the depicted incidents. But Devkinandan Khatri's objective in *Chandrakanta* is solely to provide entertainment to the readers and not to raise the social and political issues. Yet one does come across implied influences of the contemporary milieu. Satyapal Chug states:

> Bhartendu-yugeen lekhakon men punarutthan ka swar spasht sunai deta hai. Khatriji ne Rajpoot ke jo veer aadarsh prastoot kiye hain, ve bhi isi bhavana se prerit dikhayi dete hain. Bhartendu yug ki rashtriyata Hindu rashtriyata hai jismen Musalmaano ke prati ghruna bhi hai. Yahi ghruna Khatriji men bhi dikhayi deti hai. (*Hindi Upanyas: Uday Aur Utkarsha* p-111)
>
> The influence of the renaissance in the works of Bhartendu-era is distinctly evident. The depiction of gallantry, high ideals and the Rajput chivalry too is influenced by the same renaissance feeling. The nationalism of Bhartendu-era is Hindu nationalism that contains hatred for the Muslims. That same hatred is observed in the works of Devkinandan Khatri.

The novelist confesses that the objective of his works is only to entertain the readers. Thus the chief attraction of his works is the astonishing world of magic and deception, the external world away from the world of reality. Neither does the novelist desire to expound a definite philosophy of life nor to

provide a clarification regarding human nature through the character portrayal in his works. He does not wish to raise any issue or to provide any solution of them. Had he any of these objectives he would have provided a definite conclusion to his works. The only objective of the novelist is to depict poetic justice and provide entertainment.

But Acharya Ramchadra Shukla rejects these works of Devkinandan Khatri as unliterary just because of their not depicting the contemporary milieu. He alleges:

> Yahan par yeh keh dena aavashyak hai ki in upanyason ka lakshya keval ghatnavaichitra raha; rassanchar, bhavvibhuti ya charitrachitran nahin. Ye vaastav men ghatnapradhan kathanak ya kisse hain jinmen jeevan ke vividh pakshon ka chitran ka koi prayatna nahin, isse ye sahityakoti men nahin aate. (*Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas* p-216)
>
> It is important to state that the objective of these works is only to present amazing incidents and not inciting sentiments, depicting power of emotions or characterization. They are in fact incident dominated narratives or tales that contain no attempts to present the vivid aspects of life. Thus they cannot be included in the category of literature.

Regarding the language employed by Devkinandan Khatri in his works, Acharya Ramchandra Shukla avers:

> Kehana chahen to yeh keh sakte hain ki unhonne sahityik Hindi na likhkar 'Hindustani' likhi, jo keval isi prakaar ki halki rachnaon men kaam de sakti hain. (*Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas* p-216)
>
> It can be said that he did not employ literary Hindi but 'Hindustani' that is suitable only to such light creations.

The language of *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* is simple, colloquial and devoid of any complexity. He has employed the prevalent indigineous and foreign words from Persian and Arabic. The employment of this kind of language was inevitable by taking into consideration the literary standard of the contemporary readers. It is the simplicity of the language that

not only led to the creation of a wide base of readers of the Hindi language. The popularity of the work can be gauged by the publishing of around forty-five editions between 1891 and 1963 A.D. Thus *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* mark a paradigm shift from the earlier didactic and socially reformative works such as *Bhagyawati* and *Pariksha Guru*. With them picked up the trend of depicting amazing incidents and of providing entertainment. Had other writers upheld this tradition (social realism) then the art of the depiction of social realism would have matured prior to the arrival of Premchand.

Premchand did not consider everything written as literature. In his collection of essays *Kuch Vichar*, he categorically states:

> Parantu mera abhipraya yah nahin hai ki jo kuch likh diya jaya, vah sabka sab sahitya hai. Sahitya usi rachna ko kahenge, jismen koi sachhai prakat ki gai ho, jiski bhasa praudh, parimarjit aur sundar hai, aur jismen dil aur dimag par asar dalne ka gun ho aur sahitya men yeh gun poorna roop se usi avastha men utpann hote hai, jab usmen jeevan ki sachaiyan aur anoobhootiyan vyakt ki gai hon. Tilismati kahaniyon, bhoot-pret ki kathaon aur prem-viyog ke akhyanon se kisi jamane men ham bhale hi prabhavit hue hon, par ab unmen hamare liye bahut kam dilchaspi hai.
> (*Kuch Vichar* p-11)

> I am not of the opinion that anything writtern is literature. Only that work which reveals truth is literature, the language of which is mature, refined and beautiful. That which has the quialities of influencing the heart and the mind and these qualities in their completeness originate only when it expresses the truth and the experiences of life. Through tilismi stories, stories of ghosts and spirits and the stories of love and separation might have had influence on us in the past but they do not interest us any longer.

Further Premchand believes the “criticism of life” to be the most appropriate definition of literature. He elaborates:

> Chahe vah nibandh ke roop me ho, chahe kahaniyon ke ya kavya ke, use hamare jeevan ki alochana aur vyakhya karni chahiye. (*Kuch Vichar* p-8-9)

> It should provide a criticism and definition of life whether in the form of an essay or a story or poetry.

On this basis rejecting *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* to be literary works Premchand avers:

> Hamne jis yug ko abhi paar kiya hai, use jeevan se koi matlab na tha. Hamare sahityakar kalpana ki srushti khadi kar usme manmane tilisma bandha karte the. Kahin *Fisanaye Ajaayab* ki daastan thi, kahin *Bostane Khayal* ki aur kahin *Chandrakanta Santati* ki. In akhyanakon ka udeshya keval manoranjan tha aur hamare adhbhut ras-prem ki trupti. Sahitya ka jeevan se koi lagaav hai, yeh kalpanatit tha. Kahani kahani hai, jeevan jeevan, dono paraspar virodhi vastuen samjhi jati theen.
> (*Kuch Vichar* p-9)

> The age that we have just gone through had nothing to do with life. On the basis of creating a fictional world our writers created the choicest *Tilisma*. We had the story of *Fisanaye Ajayab*, *Bostane Khayal* and *Chandrakanta Santati.* The objective of these tales is only to entertain and the satisfaction of our desire of the wonderful. Proximity of literature with life was something impossible. Story and life were considered to be both mutually opposite matters.

With the publication of *Chandrakanta* the trend of the novels depicting amazing incidents picked up and they provided the much needed entertainment. The contemporary readers ignored the didactic and socially reformative kind of novels and with the lack of encouragement from the readers the growth of the socially reformative novels got stunted.

VI

Almost at the end of the age of the Hindi novel before Premchand arrives Mehta Lajjaram Sharma's *Aadarsha Hindu* (1915). Like Shraddharam Fillori's *Bhagyawati* and Lala Srinivasdas' *Pariksha Guru*, Mehta Lajjaram Sharma's *Aadarsha Hindu* (1915) is another didactic work of the Pre-Premchand Hindi age. Just as Shraddharam Fillori's *Bhagyawati* is influenced by the social reformation taking place in the nineteenth century, *Aadarsha Hindu* is influenced by the contemporary *Sanantan dharma*.This work depicts

the influence of the Sanatan dharma on this age. The work is also a fine specimen of the resistance to the social reformation taking place in the Indian society during the Pre-Premchand age.

The novelist proposes to emphasize the significance of Hindu religion, eradicate the evils in Hindu society and to create a healthy and virtuous society based on the beliefs of *Sanatan dharma*. To fulfill this objective the writer presents the work in a manner of a travelogue. The male and the female protagonist are on a pilgrimage and visiting places of religious significance such as Kashi, Gaya, and Prayag among others. The experiences of this couple during the pilgrimage form the novel *Aadarsha Hindu*.

The writer touches upon a wide range of issues concerning Hinduism from evil practices at places of pilgrimage, significance of religious traditions and customs, superiority of Hindu religion and customs, Hindi language, untouchability and economic condition of rural artisans among others. Rather it has been the writers attempt to touch upon almost all the contemporary issues relating to Hinduism. This has made the work artificial and highly didactic. But one cannot deny the sincere efforts of the writer in attempting to present the incidents in a natural manner as if naturally cropping up from the incidents occurring in the work.

The novelist attempts to expose the ritual performing pundits in Prayag cheating innocent public. The novelist also emphasizes the significance of being vegetarian. If a pandit cites shastras permitting the Hindus to intake fish, Pandit Priyanath, the mouthpiece of the novelist quotes *Manusmruti* that

strictly prohibits consuming food by taking life of a living creature. Citing the significance of being a strict vegetarian Pt. Priyanath taking recourse to *Manusmruti* avers:

> Jo prativarsha ashwamedha karta hua sau ashvamedha kar jaata hai aur usse jo poonya hota hai vah poonya maans na khanewale ke poonya se badhkar nahin hai…Jis kisi praani ka maans is lok men khaya jaata hai vahi praani parlok men us bhakshak ka maans khata hai, yahi manishiyon ki aangna hai. (*Aadarsha Hindu*, Part – II, p-19)
>
> The merit achieved by performing hundred Ashwamedha yajna is not above the merit achieved by abstaining from consuming flesh…It is the order of the sages that the creature whose flesh is consumed in this world will intake the flesh of his eater in the other world.

The novelist being a staunch follower of *Sanatan dharm* supports the orthodox beliefs and practices. He emphasizes on the importance of traditions and customs. He is a supporter of purdah-system, religious ceremonies, caste system and idol worship. Thus he praises Priyamvada, the female protagonist for maintaining purdah even from a pure Brahmin and a member of their group, Pandit Godbole. His views regarding the status of the women in Indian society too have a strong Sanantani influence.

The writer makes use of the novel as a vehicle to spread *Sanatan dharma* and is less concerned with the the literary form of the novel. Thus the work lacks an appropriate plot and structurally resembles Shraddharam Fillori's *Bhagyawati*, having artificially assorted incidents forming a novel. Consequently the plot and characterisation remain underdeveloped. The travelogue form provided to the work provides it some uniqueness. The characters portrayed too are with a purpose of espousing the sanatani beliefs. They are not individuals but a means to propagate the views held by the writer. Thus we find ready-made characters but no characterization.

The pair of Sukhada and Pandit Kantanath serves as a foil to the pair of the protagonist Pandit Priyanath and Priyamvada. Unlike Priyamvada, Sukhada's views differ from the Sanantan dharma. But this leads her to pain and unhappiness and ultimately she realizes her folly and accepts Sanatan dharma. Presenting her acceptance of Sanantan dharma, Sukhada states:

> Aapka joothan khane ko mil jaae aur aapki charan-seva, bas inke sivay mujhe ab kuch nahin chahiye.' Vah ab yahan tak sambhal gai thi ki inki ichha na hone par bhi apni khushi se ghar ka kaam kaaj karti, inki aankh bachakar jis din inki dhoti dhone ke liye mil jaati apne ko krutarth samajhati. (*Aadarsha Hindu* Part II, p-51)
>
> Apart from the remnants of your food and doing your service I do not wish for anything else.' She had so much recovered that inspite of his unwillingness would happily perform the household chores and would consider herself fortunate if she could manage to save his eyes and wash his dhoti.

The work similar to most of the works of its age lacks relevant sub-plots and appropriate characterization. The character where some change is presented is Sukhada, the wife of Pandit Kantanath, the brother of the male protagonist, Pandit Priyanath. In her transformed state she accepts herself as a Hindu house-wife and tows the line of Sanantan dharma.

The writer even resorts to melodramatic and supernatural presentation of incidents to convince the readers into accepting Sanatan dharma. Thus when the virtuous Sanantan dharma abiding female protagonist, Priyamvada, is in the custody of the villain Ghurhu, who attempts to molest her, her rescue by the lathi yielding men is portrayed as a divine intervention. Presenting the incident, the novelist states:

> Is tarah Soordasji ke pad ga-gakar jyonhi vah prarthana karne lagi na maloom kanha se aath dus lathaiton ne aakar us aadmi ki mushken kas leen. Kasne ke anantar laat aur ghooson se uski khoob khabar li.
> (*Aadarsha Hindu* Part-II, p-129-30)

> From somewhere eight to ten lathi yielding men arrived just when she invoked God by reciting the verses of Soordasji. These men not only tied his arms to his back but also rewarded him with several kicks and blows.

Though the incident can be observed as a co-incidence, the novelist does attempt to give it a supernatural color or present it as poetic justice. The objective of spreading Sanantan dharma facing serious challenge from the contemporary social reformation organization has been the principal concern of the writer. Thus Ramchandra Tiwari avers:

> Kishorilal Goswami, Lajjaram Sharma aur Gangaprasad Gupt Sanatan dharma ke samarthak the. Aryasamaj ke naveen sudharvadi andolan ke viruddh hote hue bhi ye lekhak naitik jeevan-drishti ki pratishtha chahte the. (*Bhartendu Yug: Gadhya Sahitya* p-521)

> Kishorilal Goswami, Lajjaram Sharma and Gangaprasad Gupt were supporters of Sanatan dharma. Though opposed to the new reformation movement of Arya Samaj these writers desired the establishment of the ethical view of life.

The novelist with his Sanatani bent of mind attempts to defend the orthodox Hindu culture from the onslaught of the social reformation organizations. As the Hindu religion was under attack from several sources, the approach of the writer is reactionary and as a defense mechanism shrinks within and closes self from accepting any other worldview. His concern for Sanatan dharma makes him totally indifferent to the novel form and in making the work interesting. Shivnarayan Srivastava avers:

> Age chalkar isi sudharvadi dharre par *Hindu Grihastha*, *Adarsha Dampati* (1904), *Bigde Ka Sudhar* (1907), *Adarsh Hindu* (1915) aadi anek aur upanyas bhi Mehtaji ne likhe. Kalatmak drishti se inmen bhi koi vishesta nahin parilakshit hoti. (*Hindi Upanya: Aitihasik Adhyayan* p-37)

> Later on the basis of the same reformation style Mehtaji wrote several other novels such as *Hindu Gruhastha*, *Aadarsha Dampati* (1904), *Bigde Ka Sudhar* (1907), and *Adarsha Hindu* (1915) among others. Artistically no speciality is observed in them too.

The writer employs language that is appropriate for adding authenticity to the incidents depicted. The Hindu characters are depicted speaking pure Hindi with some Sanskrit words sprinkled here and there. The language of the Muslim co-passenger in the train is Hindustani with Urdu words dominating. A Parsee co-passenger is portrayed speaking Gujarati but is presented in Hindi script and is intelligible to non-Gujarati speakers too. The co-passenger obsessed with English language and culture speaks more English words in his Hindi. The writer too resorts to several English words for wider communication. Will power, motto, refresh and government are some of the English words employed by the writer.

The novelist has thus paid more attention to the issues concerning Hinduism rather than the literary form of the work. Ignoring the form of the work, it authentically presents the contemporary Indian milieu. The writer not only discusses each and every significant issue of his time but also provides a Sanatani solution to them. Though his views are influenced by Sanatan dharma, one cannot deny the sincerity of the writer in dealing with the issues raised.

The Pre-Premchand Age consists of diverse literary works that are attempts to emulate the novel right from the intiating of the works from verse to limited prose such as *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* to *Shyamaswapna* wherein the novelist consciously claiming his work to be a novel but with several critics refuting the claims of the writer on the basis of the strong influence of the ancient narrative legend and the dominance of verse. The reformation tendencies and its reaction too are observed in *Bhagyawati* and *Aadarsha*

Hindu; though the reformation objectives differ in both the works. *Bhagyawati* is not religious reformation but spreading awareness of the contemporary world to the simple, illiterate or semi-literate rural women folk and bringing a reformation through emancipation and literacy. *Aadarsha Hindu* reveals the desperation of the contemporary orthodox class that feared the erosion of conventional values at the hands of the religious reformists.

Among the works written during this period only *Pariksha Guru* fits best into the catgory of the novel of the English kind wherein the writer shows awareness of the structure, plot, and characterization of the novel as well as its difference from the drama and the legendary narratives. Majority of the critics accepting it as the first novel in Hindi comes as no surprise.

Chandrakanta and *Chandrakanta Santati* do contain a sizeable characteristics of the novel but their tilt towards the amazing and the exciting world of magic and deception, an escape from the contemporary harsh realities, deviods them from being credited with the inclusion into the category of novel. Rather the tremendous popularity of *Chandrakanta* and *Chandrakanta Santati* change the direction of the Hindi prose from sociological realism to entertainment and a world of fantasy. But along with *Aadarsha Hindu, Pariksha Guru* and *Bhagyawati* it is closer to the novel in comparison to *Rani Ketki ki Kahani* because of its prose element. *Shyamaswapna* alone can be credited to be the first novel in Hindi of the Indian type with its prosaic verse qualities.

Though the last fortythree years of the nineteenth century form a natural period in Hindi literature, the literary instinct was not in abeyance during the five decades preceeding this period. Till the age of Bhartendu Harishchandra (1857-1900) the Riti school (1643-1843), though perceptibly decaying, was still a living force. The stimulus towards decisive change came from the writers' initiation into humanism and the determination of a few elect spirits to adopt the new language, Khari Boli, which was gradually replacing Brajbhasa, the language of the Hindi poetry for centuries. The emergence of Khari Boli, the language of the cultivated circles in and around Delhi, was one of the major contributions of the Mughal Empire to the progress and the efflorescence of the modern Hindi and the force behind the evolution of the Hindi literature.

CHAPTER –III

HINDI NOVEL IN THE AGE OF PREMCHAND

The Hindi novel was in a state of evolution in the nineteenth century. Before Premchand, it revolved around magical or tales of deception, entertaining stories and religious themes. Thus the Hindi novelists before Premchand could not fulfill the precise purpose of the novel as they were either only didactic or only entertaining lacking the didactic element. They failed to blend both of them satisfactorily and even could not benefit from the development of the novel in the West. Premchand for the first time understands the form and purpose of the novel and blends idealism and realism wih the Indian themes, issues and worldview in this western form. He not only enriches it by his valuable contribution but also provides the literary form a specific direction and growth. Thus Premchand is considered one of the most revered figures in the field of Hindi novel and progressive movement. The demarcation of the Hindi novels as Pre-Premchand age and Premchand age is not only chronologically based but is based on these distinct literary characteristics. Similarly Premchand age and Post–Premchand age too represent two distinct streams of literature. Thus Premchand placed between his preceeding and succeeding age seems to signify specific standards for Hindi literature.

The Hindi novel that witnesses a sea change after the arrival of Premchand, had access to the tilismi- aiyari and the detective novels. Historical romances too were no different. Socially educative novels and works of social reformation such as *Bhagyawati* or *Aadarsha Hindu*, having tilt towards

Sanatan dharma were available. These works either espoused or opposed the purdah system, the unconditional fidelity of a wife to her husband, co-education and child-marriage according to their social affiliation. Premchand intervenes at this place and provides a direction of realism to the Hindi novel by salvaging it from such confusing and reactionary conditions and emphasizing on the issues faced by our nation and society. He is the flagbearer of this new literary consciousness.

With his comprehensive reading of Western literary works of Dickens, Henry James, Lord Chesterton among others, Premchand arrives at definite literary conclusions, that are to be comprehensively discussed in this chapter, and sets a blue-print for the Hindi novel. With a specific view regarding novel, he rejects the earlier *tilisma* and *aiyari* works as unfit for his age, as they focussed on romance and were escapist in nature. Premchand believes that the "objective of poetry and literature is to further intensify our perceptions; but human life is not limited to the love of the opposite sex." (Sahitya Ka Udeshya, *Kuch Vichar* p-9) He questions that "can the literature that considers it important only to escape from the harsh realities of life, fulfill our requirements concerning ideology and expressions? Shringarik disposition is one of the parts of life. It serves neither as a matter of pride nor an example of good taste if the majority of literature of a particular race associates with it." (Sahitya Ka Udeshya, *Kuch Vichar* p-10)

Premchand perceives the change of the literary taste among the contemporary readers and appreciates their tilt towards realism. Elaborating on this change in literary taste, he remarks:

> Parantu hamari sahityik ruchi badi teji se badal rahi hai. Ab sahitya keval man-behlav ki cheej nahin hai, manoranjan ke siva uska aur bhi udeshya hai. Ab vah keval nayak-nayika ke sanyog-viyog ki kahani nahin sunata, kintu, jeevan ki samasyaon par bhi vichar karta hai, aur unhen hal karta hai. Ab vah sfurti ya prerna ke liye adhbut ashcharyajanak ghatnaen nahin dhoondta aur na anupras ka anveshan karta hai kintu use un prashno se dilchaspi hai jinse samaj ya vyakti prabhavit hote hain.
> (“Sahitya Ka Udeshya”, *Kuch Vichar* pp-10-1)
>
> But our literary taste is rapidly changing. Now literature is not only a means of entertainment but has some other objective too. Now not only does it narrate the story of union and separation of the hero and the heroine but also discusses the issues related to life and attempts to provide their solutions. Neither does it derive inspiration from the amazing and astonishing incidents nor does it investigate the assonance. But it is integrated in those issues that influence the society and the individual.

Premchand believes in framing high standards for literature. He believes that, “literature that does not create good taste; does not provide spiritual and mental satisfaction; does not provide us strength and progress; does not arise the love for beauty – does not provide us the determination to triumph over difficulties is useless and does not deserve being called literature.” (“Sahitya Ka Udeshya”, *Kuch Vichar* p-11)

Prior to the age of Premchand, the change in literary taste from escapism to realism goes even beyond the incidents of magic and deception such as depicted in *Chandrakanta Santati*. It even finds its influence in characterization and their authenticity. He believed that the activity of the presentation of real state of affairs in modern literature is so much on the rise that the contemporary story does not cross the limit of the probable direct experiences. Just the resemblance to human beings from the psychological point of view too does

not content the readers and unless the author has provided us an authentic biographical delineation, they are not influenced by the actions and views of the imaginary characters as they do not have faith in people created by imagination. The reader should be assured that the creation of the writer is based on direct experiences and it is the language of the common man that the character speaks.

Premchand changes the concept of novel that existed prior to his age. Redefining novel and its function, he observes:

> Main upanyas ko manav charitra ka chitra samjhta hoon. Manav-charitra par prakash dalna aur uske rahasya ko kholna hi upanyas ka mool tatva hai…Usi bhanti, sab admiyon ke charitron men bhi bahut kuch samanta hote hue kuch vibinnataen hote hain. Yahi charitra sambandhi samanta aur vibhinnata-abhinnata men bhinnata aur vibhinnata men abhinnata dikhana upanyas ka mukhya kartavya hai. ("Upanyas", *Kuch Vichar* p-49)
>
> I consider novel to be an image of human character. Its principal attribute lies in its ability to throw light on human character and unveil its secrets…Similarly despite many similarities, human characters have some dis-similarities. The primary function of novel thus is to show all similarities and dissimilarities, commonalities and difference and above all similarity in difference.

The principal contribution of Premchand to the Hindi novel is "idealistic realism". He divides his contemporary writers into two groups of realists and idealists. According to Premchand realistic novelists "try to present characters realistically as they are. They are not concerned if the consequences of worthy and unworthy conduct are good or bad." (Upanyas, *Kuch Vichar* p-51) Their characters end their given roles by showing their merits and demerits as they are. Since in the real world, the result of good and bad is not always good or bad, and is often opposite, so good people suffer and are often insulted. Their goodness breeds opposite results, whereas villainous human beings prosper,

become popular and renowned. Their evil acts bring about opposite results. This is a strange rule of nature. The realist is fastened to the fetters of experience. The world is full of evil characters and the characters of even very good people have some or the other stains on them, so realism is a naked portrait of our weaknesses, contradictions and cruelties.

Premchand opposes the presentation of stark realism in literature. He believes that its excess can have a negative impact on the readers. His opinion is that realism makes us pessimist and we lose faith in human characters, for we begin to see the world around us permeated by evil. Indubitably, realism is appropriate for drawing attention to evil practices in society without which it is possible that we might exaggerate the evil and show it in darker light than it is. However when realism crosses the limits of propriety it becomes intolerable. Moreover, human nature has another quality that of "the presentation of pettiness, cunningness and deceit, that permeate it, does not please it. It wants to fly to a world, at least for some time where it is free from perverted feelings and thoughts. It wants to forget that it is imprisoned by anxieties and tensions; it wants to see such lively sensitive and kind creatures as are free from acrimony and opposition, intrigues and conspiracies. Human beings think that if they have to deal with the same kind of characters in the fictitious narratives as they see in life, then why they should read such books." (Upanyas, *Kuch Vichar* p-51)

Suggesting the merits and demerits of idealism, he believes that the idealist novelist introduces us to such characters whose hearts are pious, who

are free from selfishness and lust and are saintly by nature. Though such characters are not practical in the ways of the world and they are easily deceived because of their simplicity, yet human beings fed up with knavish cunningness, seek unique pleasure by seeing such simple yet unpragmatic characters. If realism opens our eyes, idealism transports us to a charming place. However, the attributes of idealism make us aware of the suspicion that we might tend to portray such characters as mere idols of ideals. He remarks that "it is not difficult to imagine a God, but it is difficult to infuse life in that God." (Upanyas, *Kuch Vichar* p-52)

Premchand combines idealism and realism and coins a new term 'idealistic realism'. All his works except *Nirmala* and *Godan* represent idealistic realism kind of works. He avers:

> Isliye vahi upanyas uchh koti ke samjhe jate hain jahan yatartha aur adarsh ka samavesh ho. Use aap aadarshonmukh yatharthavad kah sakte hain. Aadarsh ko sajeev banane ke liye hi yathartha ka upyog hona chahiye, aur achhe upanyas ki yahi vishesta hai. ("Upanyas", *Kuch Vichar* p-52)
>
> Therefore good novels are those as combine realism and idealism in them. You may term it as idealistic realism. Realism should be used to concretize an idea and that is the attribute of a good novel.

Premchand considers characterization too to be very important and has specific views regarding it. According to him, "the greatest quality of a novelist is the creation of such characters as would enchant their readers with their noble behaviour and thoughts. The novel bereft of this attribute is worthless." (Upanyas, *Kuch Vichar* p-52)

It is not necessary that the characters should be free from blemishes to sublimate or to idealise characters. Even the great men can have some

weaknesses, and there is no harm in portraying their weaknesses in order to enrich their character. These weaknesses make that character a human being. A character free from all weaknesses would become a God and we would fail to associate ourselves with him or to understand him.

Focussing on characterization, Premchand proposes that characters should have a positive influence on the readers. The job of a literary writer is not to amuse his readers; this is the job of Bhats (panegyrists or flatterers) jugglers, jesters and jokers. The seat of literature is much higher than this. It acts as a guide, and thereby it awakens our humanness. It is a transmitter of virtuous disposition in us and widens our perception. In fact, only this should be his objective. To achieve this end, it is necessary that his characters are positive and they do not succumb to temptations. They should rather defeat and support passions without being trapped in their claws, and therefore set out on the march of victory.

According to Premchand, characterization has to be very skillfully handled by the novelist. The more clear, profound and developed the portrayal of characters, the greater influence, "will it have on the readers. Just as we do not become familiar with the mentality of a person by just casting a glance at him; the secrets of his personality are revealed gradually as we become intimate. Similarly the characters of a novel too are not imagined in entirety; but they develop gradually." ("Upanyas Ka Vishay", *Kuch Vichar* p-69) This growth is so confidential and unclear that the reader does not perceive any change. If any character remains the same in the end of the novel as he or she

was in the beginning – no growth of its strength-intelligence and emotions takes place; then it is an unsuccessful character.

Premchand is of the view that the highest ideal of literature is when it is created for serving art. He observes:

> Kala ke liye kala ke siddhant par kisi ko apatti nahin ho sakti. Vahi sahitya chirayu ho sakta hai, jo manushya ki maulik pravruttiyon par avalambit ho. Irsha aur prem, krodh aur labh, bhakti aur virag, dukh aur lajja ye sabhi hamari maulik pravruttiyan hain. Inhi ki chataa dikhana sahitya ka param udeshya hai aur bina udeshya ke koi rachna ho hi nahin sakti.
> (“Upanyas”, *Kuch Vichar* p-54)

> No one would object to the principle of ‘Art for arts sake’. Only that literature would last which is dependent on the original tendencies of men. Love and jealousy, anger and greed, affection and separation, sorrow and shame all these are aur original tendencies. It is the prime objective of literature to show their splenour. Without objective it is not possible to create.

. Premchand believes in ‘Art for Arts Sake’, and is against literature propagating certain social, political and religious beliefs. But a realistic assessment of the situation makes him take a practical point of view. He elaborates:

> Kewal aajkal paristhitiyan itni teevra gati se badal rahin hain, itne naye naye vichar paida ho rahe hain ki kadachit ab koi lekhak sahitya ka aadarsha ko dhyan men rakh hi nahin sakta. Yeh bahut mushkil hai ki lekhak par in paristhitiyon ka asar na pade – vah unse andolit na ho. Yahi karna hai ki aajkal Bharatvarsha ke hi nahin, Europe ke bade bade vidvan bhi rachana dwara kisi ‘vaad’ ka prachar kar rahen hain. Ve iski parvah nahin karte ki isse unki rachana jeevit rahegi ya nahin, apni mat ki pushti karna hi unka dhyeya hai, iske sivay unhen koi ichha nahin. (Upanyas, *“Kuch Vichar”* p-54)

> However situation is too rapidly changing and so many new ideas come into existence that no writer can keep the ideals of literature in his mind. Author can no longer remain unaffected or un-influenced by these changes and situations. Thus not only in India but also in Europe even great scholars are publicizing one or the other ideology. They do not care if their works would live or die because of it. They do not have any other desire but to propagate their ideology.

Citing great literary works of literature and defending works that propagate specific ideology, Premchand observes:

> Magar yeh kyonkar maan liya jaye ki jo upanyas kisi vichar ke prachar ke liye likha jaata hai, uska mahatva kshanik hota hai? Victor Hugo ka *Le Miserable*, Tolstoy ke anek granth; Dickens ki kitni hi rachnaen, vichar-pradhan hote hue bhi uchhkoti ki aur sahityik hai, aur ab tak unka akarshan kam nahin hua. Aaj bhi Shaw, Wells aadi bade bade lekhakon ke granth prachar hi ke udeshya se likhe ja rahe hain. ('Upanyas', "Kuch Vichar" p-54)
>
> But why should we think that the novel based on certain ideology, has some temporary interest? Hugo's *Le Miserable* and novels of Tolstoy and Dickens, despite being concerned with certain ideas are works of literature having immense literary significance. They have not lost their charm even today. The works by contemporary writers such as Shaw and Wells among others too are written with an objective of propagating specific ideas.

The works that represent the principle of 'Art for Life's Sake' whose today Premchand avers "are more viable than the ones representing the principle 'Art for Art's Sake'. The age of 'Art for Art's Sake', is when the nation is prosperous and well to do." (Upanyas, *Kuch Vichar* p-54) Premchand questions as to how is it possible that we are not alarmed when we find ourselves shackled with various political and social limitations and all around us we observe pathetic pictures of sorrow, poverty and the lament of adversity? The novelist should exercise caution that his ideas are expressed indirectly and they do not become a barrier in the naturalness of the work; or else the novel would become uninteresting.

Premchand finds the scope of the subject-matter of a novel is as broad as that of characterization. It is related to their actions and ideas, their divinity and savagery and their sublimation and fall. The principal subject of their novel is the diverse form of their disposition and their growth in diverse conditions.

Creativity and sharp observation, according to Premchand, are indispensable for a good novelist. He observes:

> Usmen aur chahe jitney abhav hon; par kalpana shakti ki prakharta anivarya hai. Agar usmen yeh shakti maujood hai to vah aise kitne hi drishyon, dashaon aur manobhavon ka chitran kar sakta hai jinka use paratyaksh anubhav nahin hai. Agar is shakti ki kami hai, to chahe usne kitna hi deshotan kyon na kiya ho, vah kitna hi vidvan kyon na ho, uske anubahav ka kshetra kitna hi kyon na ho, uski rachna men sarasta nahin aa sakti.
> ("Upanyas ka Vishay", *Kuch Vichar* p-65)
>
> He might be deficient in several matters; but sharp observation is inevitable. With this ability he can describe various scenes, situations and dispositions of which he has no direct experience. Without this ability his works will lack grace and refinement even if he is a globe trotter, a scholar having a vast experience of life.

He insists on a lively and impressive creative style of delineation by the novelist that should not be mere jugglery of words eluding the readers to believing that the work contains a deep hidden motive. Though writer's dealing in ostentations of words might achieve temporary popularity, but the masses provide a seat of honour only to those novels whose distinctness is not their obtruseness but their simplicity. Though he does not object to the inclusion of specific incidents in a story for creating interest, he puts certain conditions for the same. He remarks:

> Lekin shart yeh hai ki pratyek ghatna asli dhanche se nikat sambandh rakhti ho. Itna hi nahin balki usmen is tarah ghul-mil gai ho ki katha ka avashayak ang ban jaaye anyatha upanyas ki dasha us ghar ki si ho jayegi jiske har ek hisse alag-alag hon.
> ("Upanyas ka Vishay", Kuch Vichar p-66)
>
> But the condition is that every incident should be closely associated with the basic structure. Not only that but it should be intricately woven so as it becomes an important part of the story, or else the condition of the novel will be similar to a house whose every part is unconnected.

According to Premchand, everything in the world is fit for becoming a subject of a novel. But, "the significance of a subject and its depth too play an

important role in the success of a novel. He finds the most important quality of a successful novelist to be to succeed in raising the same emotions in his readers that exists in his characters." (Upanyas ka Vishay, *Kuch* Vichar p-67) The readers should forget that they are reading a novel, a feeling of intimacy should be created between them.

He emphasizes more on the dependence on presentation of significant conversations in a novel rather than the descriptions provided by the novelist. He presumes that the novel will be more beautiful with the abundant presenatation of conversations and less descriptions by the writer. But the conversations should be customary. Every sentence should throw light on the mentality and the nature of the character. The conversations should be entirely natural, appropriate to the situation, simple and brief.

He not only had comprehensive understanding of the contemporary taste of the readers but also had foresight about the change that would take place and the qualities with which the future novelists would have to equip themselves with. Like a prophet of novel, he foretells:

> Bhavishya unhin upanyason ka hai, jo anubhuti par khade hon. Iska aashay yah hai ki bhavishya men upanyas men kalpana kam, satya adhik hoga, hamare charitra kalpit na honge. Kisi had tak to ab bhi aisa hota hai, par bahuda ham paristhitiyon ka aisa kram bandhte hai ki ant swabhavik hone par bhi vah hota hai, jo ham chahte hain. Lekin bhavishya men pathak is swang se santusht na hoga. ("Upanyas ka Vishay", *Kuch Vichar* p-72)

> The future is of the works that are based on experience. It suggests that the future novels will have less imagination and more truth. Our characters will not be imaginary but will be based on the lives of the individuals. To some extent it is so even at present but very often we create such a series of situations that the conclusion, though natural is of the type we wished. The more skillfully we make pretence of naturalness, the more successful we are. But in future the the reader shall not be content with this pretence.

The Hindi novel which had no specific direction upto now finds a meaningful and definite direction with the arrival of Premchand. He zealously discusses each and every point meticulously and leaves nothing to speculation. Thus Premchand through his views regarding the novel drafts a blueprint for the future novel in Hindi which he himself adheres to and also guides his contemporaries and successors.

The new spirit of realism in literature lent a powerful stimulus to the creativity of the writers of fiction. The age demanded that one of the chief factors of interest in any fictitious image of life should be its resemblance to truth. Premchand and the other eminent writers of the age imbibe realism as an important element in their work. Thus, the objective of art in this age is the study and the depiction of reality.

I

Sevasadan (1918) is the first principal novel by Premchand in which the novelist has raised the issues concerning women in the Indian society alongwith several other associated social issues such as the custom of dowry, mismatched marriage and prostitution. His basic preoccupation has been the reformation and rehabilitation of the prostitutes in the society.

The inability of Daroga Krishnachandra, an honest police-officer and the father of Suman to manage a good dowry for his daughter, leads to her mismatched marriage with Gajadhar, a thirty years old clerk earning a meagre salary of fifteen rupees per month. Inspite of the best efforts from both sides

differences soon crop up, their marriage ends on the rocks and with the consequence Suman ending up into prostitution.

Vithaldas, a zealous social reformer, meets Suman and urges her to give up the sinful profession and begin a dignified life but fails to specify precisely the dignified occupation. Suman exposes the hallowness and the hypocrisy of the society that pushes innocent women to this profession. Ultimately she gives up this sinful life and joins a vidhwa-ashram, an institution supported by several donors and social reformers.

Though Suman accepts a dignified life the stigma of her past sticks to her. Thus, the marriage of her sister Shanta fails to solemnize as her past is revealed to her in-laws. Emphasizing the disastrous influence of social morality on the fate of women, Ram Darash Mishra observes:

> ‘Sevasadan’ men nari jeevan ki pratarna ka roop aur bhayankar ho uthata hai jab vah apni samagra pavitrata, sundarta aur gundharmita ke bavjood apne parivarvalon ke doshon ke karan thukra di jaati hai…Vyaktitva ki itni badi avmanna kitni bhayankar hai, ghatak hai. (*Hindi Upanyas: Ek Antaryatra* p-40-1)
>
> The deception of the life of the women acquires a sinister form in ‘Sevasadan’ when she is rejected inspite of all her chastity, beauty and virtues just because of the faults of her family members…How dangerous, how fatal is such a huge unrecognition of individuality.

Premchand has very subtly exposed the contradictions of the Indian society wherein on one hand it forces an honest police-officer, Krishnachandra to accepting bribe and pushing a virtuous women like Suman to prostitution while on the other hand considers Shanta who is beautiful and chaste to be condemned and ignored just because of being the daughter of Krishnachandra and the sister of Suman. The society with its contradictions, weaknesses and

worn out values of life comes alive in *Sevasadan*. The root cause of all is economic impoverishment.

Though the plot of 'Sevasadan' is well arranged, yet critics have observed some discreprecencies in it. From the beginning of the story to the incident of Suman giving up her home and husband is very systematically presented. But the later incidents are not beautifully presented. The description of Suman's stay at Dalmandi is drily presented. Premchand has devoted a large part of the novel to Suman's introduction to life of prostitution and the social and psychological conditions responsible for it. Then he immediately diverts the story to a reformation mode. If he wanted to bring such a swift change in Suman, then he should not have spent such a large part of the novel to the incident of Suman's introduction to prostitution.

The proceedings in the municipality, the debates and the motions passed among others though associated with the issue of prostitution, are not properly connected with the main story of Suman. Nanaddulare Vajpai observes:

> Yadi municipality ke ye sare vrutant Suman ki kahani se aur adhik sanshlist sambandh rakh pate to upanyas ki katha adhik samanvit aur arthpurna hoti. (*Premchand: Sahityik Vivechan* 15)
>
> The plot of the novel would have been better balanced and meaningful if the details of the municipality had been better synthesized with the story of Suman.

. Suman's story of giving up prostitution and joining a vidhwa-ashram is brief. But another objectionable matter is that the latter part of the novel presents not the story of the chief protagonist Suman but that of her sister Shanta. Probably the novelist had nothing significant to add to the story of Suman after her joining the vidhwa-ashram. Shanta becomes the protagonist in

the latter second half of the novel. Premchand fails to establish a proper connection of the two that would provide a smooth flow to the novel. Thus the story of Suman, the action in the municipality and the story of Shanta appear scattered. The strings connecting the three different stories are very weak.

Suman, Gajadhar, Shanta, Sadan, and Padamsinh are the main characters of the novel. The faint sketch of Suman's portrait provided in the beginning of the novel is quite effective. The novelist delineates:

> Badi ladki Suman sundar, chanchal aur abhimani thi; choti Shanta bholi, gambhir, sushil thi. Suman doosron se badhkar rehna chahti thi. Yadi bazaar se dono baheno ke liye ek hi prakar ki sadiyan aatin to Suman mooh fula leti thi. Shanta ko jo kuch bhi mil jaata, usi se prasann raheti. (*Sevasadan* 5)
>
> The older girl Suman was beautiful, playful and proud; while the younger one Shanta was credulous, serious and cultured. Suman always wanted to outdo others in every matter. Suman would become haughty if similar sarees for both of them were brought from the market. Shanta would be content with whatever she got.

Thus the novelist has through their behaviour portrayed the individual personality of the two sisters right from their childhood. Premchand has, at several instances attempted the psychological delineation of Suman's behaviour, though it was not important to do so. The character should get an opportunity to open up on its own. There is no need of comments.

Suman's psychological reactions to the prostitute 'Bholi' living in her neighbourhood are delineated at length by the novelist. The change in her approach towards her from detestment to her gradual tilt towards her and ultimately her willingness even to live with her is the consequence of the impact of the social reaction on her. Thus, the character of Suman is an individual and also depicts progress in the sphere of characterization. In the earlier works the characters had no individuality and were just types

representing some social class. The novelist has also succeeded in portraying the grey areas of personality from the earlier entirely black or white.

The other characters of the novel Gajadhar, Krishnachandra and Padamsinh are all realistic characters with a mingling of their weaknesses and strengths. Gajadhar, the husband of Suman, is a typical middle-class character. The flaws like being hot tempered and demanding as a husband, presented in his character are not his but of the contemporary age and its economic conditions. Within his limited resources he is unable to fulfill the deires of his wife. Thus he turns Suman out of his house and even repents later for his deeds. Probably his renunciation and becoming an ascetic is atonement for his actions. The novelist has utilized the services of Gajadhar in providing solace and solution to the other distressed characters. By the end of the novel he is a social reformer and represents the idealism of the novelist. Thus, through the character of Gajadhar, the noveist comes true to the theoretical conception of ideal characterization as presented in his views on the novel form in his essay *Kuch Vichar*.

Sevasadan is a milestone regarding socio-economic and cultural ideology from its earlier works. Earlier too the novelist have dealt with the issue of prostitution but the treatment by Premchand is different. He touches the very core of the issue and exposes the causes that lead women to prostitution. He empathises with the prostitutes and considers them to be the victims of the perversions prevalent in society. He considers the custom of dowry and mismatched marriages among others as the social factors that create

a breeding ground for this social evil. Earlier the characters of prostitutes were presented as inherently evil. Premchand for the first time provides a human touch to this fallen class and considers them sympathetically. He has focussed more on the social and economic conditions that lead women of good families to this sinful profession. Thus the novelist suggests that shifting the brothrels away from the city is not the proper solution. The main issue is of economic emancipation of the prostitutes after giving up their sinful life and merging them in the mainstream of society. Several characters in the novel attempt to provide a practical solution to this issue but fail to do so. The only way that seems viable to the novelist is that social service organizations can function in the eradication of this evil only by the generous donations of the rich citizens of the town.

The language of the novelist is simple and intelligible barring the two chapters where Premchand has exhibited his knowledge of Urdu. The Muslim characters are depicted speaking fluent Urdu just on the pretext of naturalness but causing inconvenience to the Hindi readers and also creating an odd environment in the novel.

The novel very well fits into the definition of 'idealistic realism' provided by the novelist. The concerned issues are presented realistically and an idealistic solution too is attempted. Though the first work of the novelist, it is as a form superior to most of his other later works.

II

Besides *Sevasadan*, Premchand's *Nirmala* (1927) is another women-centric novel. The principal concern of Premchand in *Nirmala* is the state of Indian women living an accursed life since centuries within the male-dominated societal structure. As such Premchand has depicted the tragic reality of the lives of the women in his earlier works such as *Pratijna*, *Vardan*, and *Sevasadan.* But such a tragic and realistic presentation is not found in his earlier novels. The novel highlights several social issues such as the evils of dowry system, mismatched marriage, suppressed sexuality and the subsequent disintegration of the family structure.

The marriage of Nirmala, the older daughter of Munshi Udaybhanulal had been fixed with Bhuvanmohan, the son of Bhalchandra and Rangeelibai. But the change of situation with the untimely death of Nirmala's father and the subsequent inability of provding an appropriate dowry seal the fate of Nirmala with the calling off of the proposed marriage. Ultimately she is married off to a middle-aged widower Munshi Totaram, a father of three. The tragedy of Nirmala's life begins with the death of her father but with her mismatched marriage to a middle-aged widower her tragedy is all the more evident.

Nirmala compromises with the realities of life and fulfils her duties of the house-hold but fails to submit herself into accepting Totaram as her husband. Revealing the psychological state of Nirmala, the novelist delineates:

> Nirmala ko na jaane kyon Totaram ke samne hasne bolne men sankoch hota tha. Iska kadachit yeh karan tha ki ab tak aisa hi ek aadmi uska pita tha jiske samne vah sir jhukakar, deh churakar nikalti thi. Ab unki avastha ka ek

> aadmi pati tha. Vah use prem ki vastu nahin samman ki vastu samajhti thi. (*Nirmala* 26)
>
> By some reason Nirmala hesitated to inter-act with Totaram. Probably because upto now a man of the same age was her father to whom she bowed her head and maintained physical distance. Now a man of the same age was her husband. She did not consider him as one who could be loved but as one to be respected.

Through such psychological delineations of Niramala, the novelist reveals the psychological suffering of an adolescent caused by suppressed sexuality. Instead of imposed morality, the realistic novelist brings within his range of sensitivity that bitter truth of Nirmala's life that makes him stand in support of crores of voiceless Nirmalas.

Munshi Totaram leaves no stone unturned in winning the heart of Nirmala. He not only provides her with all kinds of cosmetics but on the advice of his friends also tries his best to prove himself a manly person. All his efforts fail from enchanting Nirmala towards him. Rather the proximity of Nirmala and his adolescent son Mansaram sow the seeds of suspicion and from this point onwards begins a new tragedy. Being overaged and suffering from the inferiority complex, Munshi Totaram doubts the relationship of Nirmala with his adolescent son Mansaram. Nirmala perceives the suspicion of Totaram and distances herself from him. Playing safe Totaram admits Mansaram in a boarding school. The innocent Mansaram is so much shocked at his father's behaviour and suspicion that he suffers from consumtion and dies. But he proves his innocence before breathing his last. His last words of clarification are:

> Ammaji is abhage ke liye apko vyartha hi itna kast hua. Men apka sneh kabhi na bhoolonga. Ishwar se meri yahi prarthana hai ki mera punarjanam apke garbh se ho, jisse apke rurn se ururn ho sakun. Ishwar janta hai ki maine

> aapko vimata nahin samjha hai. Men apko apni mata samajhata raha. Apki umar mujhse bahut jyada na ho, lekin aap meri mata ke sthan par theen aur maine apko sadaiv isi drishti se dekha…Ab nahin bola jaata amma, kshma kijiye yeh antim bhent hai. (*Nirmala* 73)
>
> Mother, you simply had to take so much trouble for such an unfortunate as me. I shall never forget your affection. To repay your debt my only prayer to God is that I be reborn through your womb. God knows that I did not consider you my step mother. Though you are not much older in age to me you were in the place of my mother and I always looked upon you with the same reverence…I cannot speak further mother, please forgive me this is our last meeting.

By the time Munshi Totaram realizes the truth it is too late and he too is ashamed of his mentality, but apart from repentance nothing else is left in his life. His other two sons too hate him. He becomes unfit even for Nirmala's hatred and becomes an object worth pitying. Nirmala gives birth to a baby girl and Totaram sees his late son in her. But as the family even earlier lacked co-ordination and harmony the second son Jiyaram commits suicide after committing theft and the youngest son Siyaram leaves the home after being beguiled by a gang of imposter sadhus. Totaram leaves home in search of his son and Nirmala is left alone with her daughter and his widowed sister Rukmini. During this period she comes close to Sudha, the wife of the doctor Bhuvanmohan, one who had treated Mansaram during his illness. Her company provides her the strength to face the hardships and uncertainities of life.

Doctor Bhuvanmohan is the same person with whom the marriage of Nirmala had been fixed but had been called off due to the inability of managing an appropriate dowry. Co-incidentally the marriage of Krishna, the younger sister of Nirmala takes place with Bhuvanmohan's younger brother. When Sudha comes to know of Bhuvanmohan's decision of rejecting Nirmala just for

the sake of dowry, she reproaching him avers:

> Aaj agar use maloom ho jaye ki aap vahi mahapurush hain to shayad fir kabhi is ghar men kadam na rakhe…Tum mera vakhan karte ho. Men to uski londi banne ke yogya bhi nahin hoon…Tumne yeh bada bhari anyay kiya hai aur tumhe iska prayashit karna hoga…Kaho to kal Nirmala se tumhari mulakat karva doon. Vah bhi jara tumhari surat dekh le. Vah kuch bolegi to nahin par kadachit ek drishti se vah tumhara itna tirasskar kar degi jise tum kabhi na bhool sakoge. (*Nirmala* 78)
>
> Today if she comes to know that you are the same great man then she probably will never step again in this house…You praise my beauty but I am not even worth being her servant…You have done great injustice and you will have to do repentance for the same… If you insist I can arrange a meeting with her. Let her too have a look at you. She wouldn't utter a word but her single glance of scorn would be enough for you to remember for ever.

Nirmala is the central character of the novel and the title of the novel too suggests the same. The novelist has presented her as a traditional and weak character, as one who accepts misfortune as her destiny. Though unhappy in her situation she never attempts rebellion as Sudha does. Thus she has surrendered to her situation.

Through the character of Nirmala, the novelist has depicted his insight and comprehensive understanding of the human nature. In presenting the psychological truth he has even crossed the traditionally insisted limits of morality. Thus her attraction towards Mansaram, her step-son is a natural attraction to the opposite sex. She is shocked when she finds that her husband doubts their relationship. She naturally wishes to be intimate with Mansaram and at the same time is forced to maintain distance from him. Living a dual life, she is under pressure from both the sides. Her instinctive desires clash with the traditional values. She only attempts to strike a balance between the two. Confessing her attraction towards Mansaram to her sister Krishna, Nirmala

remarks:

> Vah ladka hi aisa tha ki jo dekhta tha pyar karta tha. Aisi badi badi doredar aakhen, maine kisi ki nahin dekhi…Aisa sahasi ki agar avsar aa padta to aag men fand jaata. Krishna men tumse kehti hoon jab mere paas aakar baith jaata to men apne ko bhool jaati thi…Yeh jaanti hoon ki agar uske man men paap hota to men uske liye sab kuch kar sakti thi…Haan yeh baat sunne men buri maalom padti hai aur hai bhi buri parantu manushya ki prakruti ko to koi badal nahin sakta. Tu hi bata – ek pachas varsha ke mard se tera vivah ho jaye, to tun kya karegi. (*Nirmala* 84-5)
>
> He was such a boy that no one could help loving him. I have never seen such large round eyes of anyone …so courageous that if situation demanded he could even jump into fire. I confess Krishna that whenever he came and sat beside me I forgot myself…I know that if he had evil intentions then I could have done everything for him…Yes, this might sound bad and it is definitely bad but no one can change human nature. You yourself tell me what would you do if you were married to an old man of fifty?

The treatment meted out to Mansaram by his father in his suspicion regarding him and his step-mother; consequently shiftng him to a hostel and his suffering from tuberculosis, shocks the readers' sensibility. The motherless, innocent child is a victim of his father's suspicion and is tortured to the last breath of his life.

The lone inspiring figure in the novel is that of Sudha. Having an independent identity of her own she serves as a foil to Nirmala. She is not only her role-model but also her only source of inspiration. Regarding her husband's attempt to sexually abuse Nirmala and consequently his suicide after being exposed, she avers:

> Ishwar ko jo manjoor tha vah hua. Aise saubhagya se men vaidhavya ko bura nahin samjhati. Daridra prani us dhani se kahin sukhi hai, jise uska dhan saanp bankar kaatne daude. Upvas kar lena aasan hai, vishaila bhojan karna usse kahin adhik mushkil. (*Nirmala*134)
>
> Whatever happened was God's wish. I do not consider widowhood bad in comparison to such a married life. A poor person is much happier than a wealthy man whose wealth itself acquires the form of a snake and bites him. It is easier to fast rather than consume poisonous food.

Various dignified female characters too in the novel include Kalyani and Rangeelibai who submit themselves to the male dominance, but they do not lack independent identity. The achievement of the novelist lies in the fact that in a short novel he has provided several male and female characters having individual traits and characteristics.

From the beginning to the end the strings of torture and suffering weave the tragedy that finally with a great force jolts the sensitivity of the readers. It is the story of the ruining of a huge and prosperous family and enveloping within its tragic facet more than one family and several people**.**

The tragedy begins with the death of Nirmala's father, Udaybhanulal and after it begins a series of unending tragic incidents. One incident gives birth to another similar incident and the tragedy is evident in its full bloom. The death of Udaybhanulal leads to mismatched marriage of Nirmala with Munshi Totaram, the mental suffering received by Nirmala in the family of Munshi Totaram, suspicion cast on her as a woman and on her status of a mother, the tragic death of Mansaram, the suicide by the second son Jiyaram, Siyaram the third son abandoning the home in the company of imposters in the guise of sadhus, Munshi Totaram leaving in the search of Siyaram and Nirmala's lonely life at her home, the connection of the tragic story of Sudha and Doctor Bhuvanmohan with the main plot, the suicide by Doctor Bhuvanmohan, the widowhood of Sudha and the death of Nirmala due to illness and suffering, all the incidents make the story an endless saga of compassion. Shivkumar Mishra

states:

> Ye saare prasang nihayat swabhavik aur yathartha prasang hai jo Bharatiya parivaron, paramparagat samyukt parivaron men sadiyon se apne ko duhrate adhavadhi usi tarah se chale aa rahe hain. Yeh hamare parampara aur rudhigrast parivarik jeevan ka yathartha hai jo lambe arse se hamare ghar parivaron ko tabah aur barbad karta chala aa raha hai. Hajaron lakhon Nirmalaon ki bali ghar parivar ke aise hi prasangon aur sandarbhon men chadhti rahi hai. (*Nirmala*145)
>
> All these are very natural and realistic incidents that keep re-occuring since centuries in Indian families and traditional joint families. This is the truth of our tradition and our orthodox joint family life that is ruining and destroying our families from a long time. Thousands and lakhs of Nirmalas have been sacrificed on such occasions and contexts.

. A profound melancholic raga keeps re-sounding from the beginning to the end of the novel. In this sense it is the lone novel of Premchand. *Rangbhoomi* and *Godan* too have an unhappy ending, but along with unhappiness and suffering are also presented the joyful and interesting incidents that provide relief from the tragedy. But there is not a single incident in Nirmala that is full of joy and happiness. The tragedy that begins with the death of Udaybhanulal gradually intensifies and ends with the death of Nirmala.

At a deeper level, Premchand is not just narrating a tragic story of a woman but through this medium he is raising some strong and basic issues and also addresses us with some new questions that had earlier not been presented in this manner by any one else. The issue of love and sex has come to light in *Nirmala* on a very concrete social and psychological context. Being punished by mismatched marriage Nirmala lives a life of unexpressed love and suffocation. Her love with her contemporary older son acquires a compassionate form. Traditional morality is very much emphasized in a closed and rigid society. Consequently the entire society historically becomes a canal

of tragedy. Thus it is clear that whenever Premchand raises any such issue of the tradition of dowry, failure of love, mismatched marriage or widow re-marriage, he is simultaneously in search of a new sexual morality and economy. The Indian society presently as it is rigid is even today very concealing regarding sex. The proportion of sexual suppression and sexual exploitation too is vastly present. The traditional orthodox marriage system too leads to sexual suppression or exploitation. Thus Premchand has raised marriage as the chief Indian issue because in it the relation of economic and sexual crisis is more evidently visible.

For the first time in Hindi literature *Nirmala* associates economic impoverishment with sexual crisis. Our homes and families are on economic foundation and economic impoverishment gives birth to several issues. These include issues in various forms of sexual suppression and sexual exploitation. Only because of economic impoverishment thousands of girls are married off to unsuitable matches and then begins a series of problems. Whether it is flesh trade in the form of prostitution or illeligitimate relationship, sexual suppression through traditional morality, sexual exploitation through muscle power, widowhood and its related issues, all by some or the other means are related to either economic reasons or economic impoverishment. *Nirmala* is an illustration of tragedy caused due to economic impoverishment. The root cause of her mismatched marriage with an old widower Munshi Totaram is economic impoverishment. The greed for dowry of Bhalchandra and his son Bhuvanmohan is responsible for rejection of Nirmala's hand in marriage. She

ultimately marries Munshi Totaram and then begins her saga of miseries. Lack of tuning between Nirmala and her husband, suppression of sexual desires, her causal attraction towards her step-son, Mansaram, her contemporary, suspicion cast on their relationship, tension in the family, death of Mansaram and ultimately the death of Nirmala due to illness. The root cause of all these issues is economic impoverishment. The issue presented in the novel is not only mismatched marriage, untimely widowhood or the subsistence of widows but what superficially seems to be a sociological problem is actually an economic problem.

The novel *Nirmala* suggests the fact that balance cannot be achieved in society without eradicating economic suffering and freedom from economic slavery. Diagonosis of social issues is difficult without setting in order the economic issues.

The novel also exposes the feudal structure of the Indian families wherein the man, whether father, husband or the head of the family is a virtual dictator. He is the controller of the future and the fate of his wife and children. Nirmala and Mansaram have to give in to the wishes of Munshi Totaram.Thus not only women but the male children in the feudal structure are also exploited at the hands of the head of the family. Ramvilas Sharma observes:

> Is jarjar samanti samaj men striyon ki tarah ladke ko bhi swadhinta nahin hai. Yeh tathya sabse pehle Premchand ne pesh kiya. Mansaram apni vimata ka gulam nahin hai, vah gulam jaisa suluk pata hai apne pita se. Totaram ke ladke chori badmashi seekhne ki azadi haasil kar lete hain. Lekin Mansaram ke sahaj vikas aur uski swabhavik ichaaon se pita ka swarth takrata hai, vahan ladke ko dabna padta hai. Pita use usi tarah apni sampatti samajhata hai jaise stri ko. (Shivkumar Mishra148)

> Similar to the woman, the man too has no independence in this worn-out feudal society. This fact was first presented by Premchand. Mansaram is not

> a slave to his step-mother but receives treatment fit for a slave from his father. Totaram's children can acquire independence for thieving and mischief but Mansaram has to give in when his natural growth and instinctive desires clash with his father's interest. The father considers him also as his property as he considers his wife to be one**.**

The message of the work is loud and clear and is summed up by the protagonist, Nirmala in her last words before her death to her sister-in-law, Rukmini. She observes:

> Bachhi ko aapki god men chod jaati hoon. Agar jeeti-jaagti rahe to kisi achhe kul men vivah kar dijiyega. Men to iske liye apne jeevan men kuch na kar saki, keval janma dene bhar ki apradhini hoon. Chahe kawarin rakhiyega, chahe vish dekar mar daliyega par kupatra ke gale na madhiyega… (*Nirmala* 135-6)

.

> I am leaving behind this child in your care. If she survives marry her in some good family. In my life I could not do anything for her accept being a culrit of giving birth to her. My only request to you is either to keep her single or poison her but don't impose her on some unworthy suitor…

Nirmala, one of the most realistic works in Hindi fiction, depicts a growth from the earlier works of Premchand as well as the other contemporary writers. Accomplished in matters regarding the plot, characterization and theme the novel studies the contemporary issues from the socio-economic-cultural perspective, which provides unprecedebted dynamism to the novel.

III

Ingrained in the socio-political tribulations dominated by religious discrimination, Premchand's *Karmabhoomi* is a psychological probing delineating the human relationships. Through his protagonists and their yearnings, the novelist subtly brings alive the India of the early decades of the twentieth century and simultaneously delivering a powerful social and political message. *Karmabhoomi* deals with issues such as Hindu-Muslim unity, shared

welfare of these two communities, the non-violent struggle of the untouchables, peasants, and the urban poor.

Set in the background of the twentieth century Uttar Pradesh, *Karmabhoomi*, delineates the peaceful existence and the sudden outburst of the Hindus and the Muslims with the initiation of education. The commencement of education is a direct attack on the social barriers between the Hindus and the Muslims. On an apparent level though *Karmabhoomii* is a picture of society, human life is portrayed as a field of action in the novel by which the character and the destinies of individuals are formed and revealed through their actions.

Amarkant, the protagonist of the novel, has a disregard for degrees and hates the contemporary education system. Condemning the education system and the incompetent teachers, the novelist avers:

> Jab vah apne adhyapako ko tuition ki gulami karte, svarth ke liye naak ragadte, kam se kam karke adhik ke liye laabh ke liye haath pasarte dekhta, to use mansik vedna hoti thi, aur inhin mahanubhavon ke haath mein desh ki baagdor hai. Yahi kom ke vidhata hain. Inhen iski parvah nahin ki Bharat ki janta do aane paison par gujar karti hai. Ek sadharan aadmi ko saal bhar mein pachaas se jyada nahin milte. Hamare adhyapakon ko pachas rupay roj chahiye. Tab Amar ko us atit ki yaad aati jab saare gurujan jhopdon mein raha karte the, svartha se alag, lobh se door, satvik jeevan ke aadarsha, niskaam seva ke upasak. Vah rashtra se kam se kam lekar adhik se adhik dete the. Veh vaastav mein devta the aur yeh adhyapak hain, jo kisi ansh mein bhi ek mamuli vyapari ya rajya karmchari se peeche nahin. Inmen bhi vahi dambh hai, vahi dhan madh hai, vahi adhikar madh hai. Hamare vidhyalay kya hain, rajya ke vibhag hain, aur hamare adhyapak usi rajya ke ansh hain. Ye khud andhkar mein pade hue hain, prakash kya failaenge – Aisa maloom hota hai ki garibon ki laashon ko nochane vale giroh ka samooh hai. Jiske paas jitni badi degree hai, uska swarth bhi utna hi badha hua hai. Mano lobh aur swartha hi vidvata ka lakshan hai garibon ko roti mayassar na ho, kapdon ko taraste hon, par hamare shikshak bhaiyon ko motor chahiye, bangla chahiye, naukaron ki ek paltan chahiye. Is sansar ko agar manushya ne racha hai to anyayi hai, ishwar ne racha hai to use kya kahoon. (*Karmabhoomi* p-71-2)
>
> When he used to see Professors as slaves to fashion, demeaning themselves for their petty selfish ends, doing the least amount of work and craving for maximum benefits, then he used to suffer from immense anguish because those gentlemen were skippers of the country. They were the makers of the

> nation, yet not concerned with the fact that the people of India survive on two *annas* a day. A common man does not get more than 50 rupees a year. Our teachers, however, need fifty rupees per day. Then he would remember about the past when our teachers used to live in cottages away from selfishness and greed, practiced ideals of pure life, as worshippers of service without caring for the result. They took the least from the nation and gave it maximum in return. They were real gods. And our present day teachers are in no sense less than petty traders or state officials. What enlightenment shall they bring about when they themselves are in darkness?...It seems that all are herd of vultures gnawing at the corpses of the poor. The more and higher degrees one has, the more inflated his selfishness. It seems that greed and selfishness are the attributes of scholarship. Poor people do not get meals and clothes, but our educated people need motor car, bunglows and a platoon of servants. If this world is constructed by man, then he is unjust, and if by God, then what to say to him.

Amarkant's criticism of the modern education associated with the colonial rule does not come to an end even when his father stops providing financial assistance for his education. His frustration and disregard for the modern higher education is evident in his reply to his wife, Sukhada, when she proposes him to go to his in-laws at Lucknow and study there without any monetary worry with the prospects of going to England for acquiring further qualifications. He avers:

> Mujhe degreeyan itni pyari nahin hain ki uske liye sasural ki rotiyan todu agar mein apne parishram se dhanoparjan karke padh sakoonga, to padhoonga nahin koi dhanda dekhoonga. Mein ab tak vyarth ki shiksha ke moh mein pada hua tha. College ke bahar bhi adhyayanshil aadmi bahut kuch seekh sakta hai. Mein abhimaan nahin karta lekin sahitya aur itihaas ki jitni pushtaken in do teen salon mein maine padhi hain, shayad hi mere college mein kisi ne padhi hon. (*Karmabhoomi* p-14)
>
> For degree it is not so necessary that I become dependent on my in-laws. If I can earn some money on my own, I would study or enter some business. I was infatuated uselessly with education. A studious person can learn a lot outside the college. Without having any sense of pride let me state that the books of literature and history that I have read in these years, perhaps no one in the college would have read them.

Looking at the introduction of Higher Education as one of the systematic tool of the Bristish colonizers in uprooting the traditional systems and establishing their superiority, Avadhesh Kumar Singh remarks:

> Colonialism necessiates political defeat of the nations by a dominant, not necessarily superior, cluster of interests whose centre lies not in the colony but in a far off land, and involves systematic unsystematization of native material and psychological structures – religious, educational, bureaucratic, judiciary economic and their replacement by their institutions in the names of modernization. Thereby it justifies its presence in colony. Its principal purpose is exploitation of native resources-economic through loot, natural resurces as raw material, human through the use of natives as cheap labourers, and intellectual through its appropriation and translation. For they constructed discourses denigrating the native institutions and thereby justifying there presence in the colony and validating their intervention in the existing structures e.g. the educational system.
> (*Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period* p 50)

Thus, the novelist castigates the educational structures imposed on India by exposing the evils of the newly introduced higher education system and its emphasis on degrees and not on knowledge and values. Traditionally the education system is considered very sacrosanct, pious and noble, but the new education system introduced by the British is imparted by incompetent, indifferent and insensitive teachers, who are no longer committed as the gurus in the traditional Indian education system. The entire education system functions as a business, regarding which the novelist avers:

> Hamare schoolon aur collegon mein jis tatparta se fees vasool ki jaati hai, shayad maal gujari bhi itni sakhti se nahin vasooli ki jaati. Mahine mein ek din neeyat kar diya jaata hai. Us din fees ka dakhila hona anivarya hai. Ya to fees dijiye, ya to naam katvaein, ya jab tak fees na dakhil ho, roj kuch jurmana dijiye. Kahin kahin aisa bhi niyam hai ki usi din fees do guni kar di jaati hai, aur kisi doosri taarikh ko doguni fees na di to naam kat jaata hai. Kashi ke Queens College mein yahi niyam tha. Saatveen tarikh tak fees na do, to ikkisveen tareekh ko doguni fees deni padti thi, ya naam kat jaata tha. Aise kathor niyamo ka udeshya aur kya ho sakta tha, ki garibon ke bachhe school chhodkar bhaag jayen – vahi hridayyheen daftari shasan, jo anya vibhagon mein hai, hamare shikshalayo mein bhi hai.Vah kisi ke saath riyayat nahin karta. Chahe jahan se laao, karz lo, gahene girvi rakho, lota-thali becho, chori karo, magar fees jaroor do, nahin dooni fees deni padegi, ya naam kat jayega. Jameen aur jaydad ke kar vasool karne mein bhi kuch riyayat ki jaati hai. Hamare shikshalayon mein narmi ko ghusne hi nahin diya jaata. Vahaan sthayee roop se martial law ka vyahvar hota hai. Kachheri mein paise ka raaj hai, hamare schoolon mein bhi paise ka raaj hai, usse kahin kathor, kahin nirday. Der mein aaiyen to jurmana na aiyen to jurmana sabak na yaad ho to jurmana kitaben na kharid sakien to jurmana koi apradh ho jaye to jurmana shikshalaya kya hai, jurmanalay hai. Yahi hamari paschimi shiksha ka aadarsha hai, jiski taarifon ke pool bandhe jaate hain. Yadi aise

> shikshalayon se paise par jaan dene vale, paise ke liye garibon ka gala kaatne wale, paise ke liye apni aatma bechne wale chhatra nikalte hain, to ascharya kya hai- (*Karmabhoomi* 1)
>
> The earnest compulsion with which fees is collected in schools and colleges surpass the hardships even in the collection of revenues. On the fixed date of the month the fees is to be submitted. The inability to do so would lead either to cancellation of the name or pay the fine if delayed. In the Queen's College the rule was that the fee was paid on the 7th day, the fee was doubled by the 21st or the name was cancelled. What can be the objective of such strict rules but to drive away the children of the poor from the schools? The same heartless bureaucracy which dominates government offices also dominates the working of our educational institutes. Bring fee from whatever source – borrow, mortgage your ornaments, sell off your utensils, steal but pay the fees by all means. Else it would be either doubled or the name would be either deleted. Some concession is given even in the collection of taxes pertaining to land and property. The entry of kindness is disallowed in our educational institutes. The marshal law is permanently imposed in there. Money reigns supreme in our educational institutes as in the courts with greater rigidity and and greater hardships. If you get delayed you are fined, if you are late you are fined, if you do not remember your lesson you are fined, if you are unable to buy books, you are fined, you commit a mistake you are fined. Is it an educational institute or an institute to impose fines? That then is the purpose of Western education which is being praised in hyperbolic terms. Should it surprise us if these institutes produce children as are unwilling to sacrifice everything for money, cut throats of poor people and sell off their souls for money?

Besides condemning the modern education system, the novelist does not even spare the western civilization for its misplaced faith in its education system. The protagonist Amarkant's friend, Salim, who helps him with his fee and other means asks Amarkant to help him with a few points for his speech on the topic of Western civilization:

> Aaj jalse mein jaoge?
> Majmoon kya hai, mujhe to yaad nahin?
> Aji vahi paschimi sabhyata hai.
> To mujhe do char point bata do, nahin to mein vahan kahoonga kya?
> Batana kya hai – paschimi sabhyata ki buraiyaan hum sab jaante hi hain. Vahi bayan kar dena.
> Tum jante hoge, mujhe to ek bhi nahin maloom.
> Ek to yeh taaleem hi hai. Jahan dekho vahan dukandari. Adalat ki dukan, ilm ki dukaan, sehat ki dukaan. Is ek point par bahut kuch kaha ja sakta hai. (*Karmabhoomi* 7)
>
> Would you go in meeting today?
> I do not remember even the topic.
> The same old topic of the western civilization.

> Please tell me a few points. Else what shall I speak there?
> What is there to tell you? All of us know the evils of Western civilization. Just speak about them.
> You would know, but I do not know even one. One of the things is education. Wherever you see, it is nothing but business. The shop of court, shop of education and also of wealth. A lot can be spoken on just one point.

Thus Premchand was not a blind imitator of the Western civilization. He was against its selfish values and their uncritical imitations by the Indians. The protagonist, Amarkant, putting his words into action, along with Prof. Shantikumar opens a pathshala free from the penalty of donations, which aims at the natural development of tiny, innocent children who would be courageous, contended, and serving citizens of the society. Amar's idealism makes him demand the resignation of Prof. Shantikumar from the post of professor. Describing this clash as of between idealism and practical/pragmatic idealism that demands some regular economic support for the institutions, Avadhesh Kumar Singh, in the preface of *Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period* remarks:

> Hence, Premchand was not merely constructing discourses of resistance against the colonial system of education but providing an alternative as well, based on the pragmatic idealism of the people who have been a part of the system as a student or teacher as well. Salim, Amar's friend is an example of those who make use of education system to attain an administrative position so that they can rule by joining the tribe of the colonizers in one way or the other. (*Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period* 54)

The novelist wove a few suggestive texts to the fabric of the novel. Though the issues of untouchability, poor peasants and village life and Hindu-Muslim unity are dealt with in the earlier works of *Sevasadan*, *Rangabhoomi*, and *Kayakalpa* in a different way, *Karmabhoomi* depicts the revolt against religious segregation and even suppression of the low caste people, as they were not allowed to listen to the katha or enter the temple. The high caste

people deprived low caste people from entering the temple and even sitting in the back-rows from a distance for listening to the katha, for according to the Brahmins, they were unworthy of it. All efforts to eradicate this custom proves futile. Thus a satyagraha is launched by Naina, Shantikumar and Sukhada, as they wish to settle the matter once and for all. The harijans are awakened by the inspiring words of Shantikumar. He remarks:

> Tum tan man se doosro ki seva karte ho par tum gulam ho. Tumhara samaj mein koi sthan nahin. Tum samaj ki buniyaad ho. Tumhare hi upar samaj khada hai, par tum achoot ho. Tum mandiro mein nahin ja sakte. Aisi aniti is abhage desh ke siva kahan ho sakti hai? Kyat um sadaiv isi bhanti patit aur dalit rehna chahte ho. (Karmabhoomi 139)
>
> You serve others wholeheartedly, but you are slaves…You are the foundation of the society. The society is based on you, but you are untouchables. You cannot go to the temple. Where else can there be such an unethical practice, except in our unfortunate country? Do you want to remain downtrodden and dalits like this forever?

The movement against untouchability is a mass movement and the harijans under the leadership of Shantikumar are successful in achieveing their objective of the right to entering the place of worship.

The movement against untouchability is followed by another movement for the construction of municipal quarters for workers. The municipality rejects the proposal and Satyagraha is again launched in which Samarkant, Sukhada and Naina participate and are arrested. Naina's martyrdom compels the Municipal Board to succumb to the demands.

Premchand takes up the matter pertaining to the reducing of the revenue tax of the farmers by a cordial meeting between the protagonist Amarkant and the Mahanta, who combines religion with land lordship, and does not see anyone without receiving the present of one gold coin. The hollow promises of

the Mahanta compel Amarkant to lead an agitation, which very clearly depicts the Gandhian influence as he asks the people to be patient and non-violent. Further, the subsequent discourse speaks of the resolution on the part of the hitherto voiceless minor characters to resist oppressive ways. Even bureaucracy has realized that the days of the rich people are over. Gaznavi, in conversation with Salim and Amar are prophetic. The novelist remarks:

> Aji yeh to ek din hona hi hai. Voh amiro ki hukumat ab thode din ki mehman hai. Is mulk mein angrez ka raj hai, isse hamme jo amir hai aur jo kudrati taur par amiro ki taraf khade hote hain, vah bhi garibon ki taraf khade hone mein khush hain kyon ki garibon ke saath unhe ijjat to milegi. (*Karmabhoomi* 200)
>
> Dear, this was to happen some day or other. The rule of rich people would last only a few days. The country is ruled by the Englishmen so even rich among us who naturally side with rich are now happy to side with poor because by being with them they get honour.

The novelist through these words emphasizes on the change in perception of the poor and the oppressed and the willingness of the haves to be with them depicts the general change in the Indian psyche for freedom. Gaznavi, the senior I.C.S. officer of Salim too can see the trend and criticizes the bureaucracy. His observation about Swaraj and Hindu-Muslim relationships and the apprehensions of the Muslims are not only valid but anticipate what was to follow in the form of Muslim League a few years after the publication of the novel. Gaznavi states:

> Swaraj hum bhi chahte hain magar inqulab ke siva hamare liye aur koi raasta nahin hai. Itni fauj rakhne ki kya jaroorat hai jo sarkar ki aamdani ka aadha hajam kar jaye. Fauj ka kharch aadha kar diya jaye, to kisano ka lagan badi aasani se aadha ho sakta hai. Mujhe agar Swaraj se koi khauuf hai to yeh ki musalmaanon ki haalat kahin aur kharab na ho jaye. Galat tavarikhen padh padh kar dono firke ek doosre ke dushman ho gayen hai aur mumkin nahin ki Hindu mauka pakar musalmaano se farji adavato ka badla na le lekin is khayal se tasalli hoti hai ki beesvin sadi mein Hinduon jaisi padhi likhi jamaat mahjabi gerohbandi ki panaah nahin le sakti. (*Karmabhoomi* 212-13)

> We too want Swaraj, but except for the revolution there is no other way. What is the need of such an army which eats up half of the revenue of the government? If the expenditure on the army can be halved, the tax on the farmers can easily be reduced to half. The only fear that I have from the Swaraj is that the condition of the Muslims would become worse. By reading wrong histories both (Hindus and Muslims) have become enemies and what if the Hindus, given an opportunity, take revenge for false animosoities. But I get consoled by the fact that educated people like the Hindus would not be victims of religious gansterism.

The characterization is very apt with characters of Saleem and Lala Samarkant depicting a change of heart from the greedy, power hungry to the compassionate and welfare oriented. The novelist has provided a comprehensive canvas to the portrait of Sukhada. She, initially leaves the house with her husband, but returns to serve her ailing father-in-law. Later she takes charge of the movement to provide residential quarters to the poor sections of the society. She is misunderstood even by her husband, Amarkant, who thinks she loves her ornaments too much to part from them. But Sukhada before leaving her in-laws house to accompany her husband gives up all her ornaments. All arguments of Amar fail to persuade her, as she avers:

> Tum samajhte hoge, maine gehano ke liye kone mein baithkar roungi aur apne bhagya ko kosoongi? Striyan samay aane par kitna tyag kar sakti hain yeh tum nahin jante. Mein is fatkar ke baad in gehano ki aur taakna bhi paap samajhti hoon, inhen pehenna to door ki baat hai. Agar tum darte ho ki mein kal hi se tumhara sir khane lagoongi, to mein tumhe vishwas dilate hoon ki agar gehno ka naam meri zubaan par aaye, to zaban kaat lena. Mein yeh bhi kahe deti hoon ki tumhare bharose par nahin ja rahi hoon. Apni gujar bhar ko aap kama loongi. Rotiyon mein jyada kharcha nahin hota, kharcha hota hai adambar mein. Ek baar amiri ki shaan chhod do to, fir char ane paise se kaan chalta hai. (*Karmabhoomi* 77)
>
> You would think that I would cry for ornaments and curse my fate. You do not know the kind of sacrifice that women can make? After the rebuke I consider even looking at these ornaments as a sinful act; leave aside the question of wearing them. If you are afraid of the fact that I would clamour for them tomorrow, then I must assure you that even the word ornament would never come on my lips. If I ever do so, chop my tongue off. Also I must say that I would not be dependent on you. I'll earn for myself. One does not need much for meals, only show off demands more money. If you give up the false world of rich people, then you can manage in few annas.

Sukhada too surprises the readers from her materialistic lifestyle to a revolutionary, having a firm control over the masses, under whose pressure the municipality board too has to succumb. Thus Awadhesh Kumar Singh in *Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period* avers, "…their transformation expresses the novelist's faith in the possibility of human regeneration." (p 56) Naina too joins the movement of providing land for the housing of the urban poor and becomes a martyr at the hands of her own husband who is depicted as a hypocrite with vested interest, not valuing the virtous qualities like dutifulness, simplicity and caring nature of his wife, rather wishing to have a partner who could be of more help in furthering his business interests. Premchand thus shatters the false image of a woman as weak, lover of luxuries, ornaments and dependent on men for financial security. The strong women characters like Sukhada, Naina and Sakina speaks volumes about the novelist's concept of woman.

The language of the novelist is simple day to day Hindi, with the Muslims characters like Salim and Gaznavi speaking with a sprinkling of Urdu words like "jehmat", "lafz", "majmoon" and "takhmina" among others.

Premchand successfully presents the mirror of the society and also suggests the means in making the society a better place to live in harmony for the different sections of society, without any discrimination of caste, creed and class. Though the protagonist occupies the centrestage, the novel is symbolically poignant defining the society as the *bhumi* and the human conduct as *karma*, combining which forms the *karmabhoomi*.

IV

Premchand, the pioneer of progressive writing in Hindi novel studied social issues like a sociologist and presented them as an artist, arousing noble emotions of love, kindness, charity and pity among others. *Godan* (1936) his last complete novel is considered his best work. It is the most realistic interpretation of Indian village society, the backbone of India. It is the story of changing people, hungry and semi-starved, yet hopeful and optimistic, in the truest spirit of the age it represents.

A novel of epic dimensions, *Godan* portrays the exploitation of the farmers by the landlords and the money-lenders. Hori, the protagonist and a farmer owning five acres of land represents the agricultural class that was mercilessly exploited by the zamindars and moneylenders. The agents of Rai Saheb, the zamindar, besides collecting rent also collect fines imposed upon the farmers on false pretexts and sometimes without any pretext. Occasional collections for celebrating festivals too are made by the zamindar. When guilt ridden, exposing the darker side of the zamindari system, Rai Saheb observes:

> Don't go by the look of things. Our names are big. But our deeds are small. The poor are selfish and spiteful; this is out of an instinct for self-preservation. I consider such self-interest excusable…But a zamindar's animosity and jealousy are for pleasure. We have become so big that deceit is now the salt of our lives. In fact, we have reached that stage of divinity where the other man's tears only arouse our mirth. (*Godan*16)

Apart from the zamindars, the money-lenders leave no stone unturned in exploiting the poor helpless farmers. Rather it is the nexus of zamindars and money lenders that completes the cycle of economic exploitation. Whenever

the zamindar demands rent from the tenants, the farmers rush for help to the money-lenders. The money-lenders not only charge exorbitant rate of interest but also fool the poor illiterate farmers through miscalculations. Exposing the villainy of Pandit Datadin the moneylender, Gobar observes:

> From thirty rupees to two-hundred rupees in nine years! How much would it be at the rate of one percent?...In ten years it comes to thirty six rupees. Added to the principal, that makes it sixty six. We'll let you have seventy. I won't pay a coin more than that. (*Godan* 56)

The clout of the moneylenders in the pre-independence India can be judged from the fact that *Godan* depicts a variety of moneylenders. One such money-lender is Jhinguri Singh who maintained an accounts ledger, deducted an annual instalment in advance, charged not only for the stamp paper but even for drafting the deed. Thus on a loan of twentyfive rupees the farmer got in hand not more than seventeen rupees. Similarly Pandit Datadin and Pateshwari's amount given as loan multiplied like the germs of cholera. Dulari Sahuain dealt in wood and kerosene but was perfect in her calculations with the scale of benefit weighing heavier on her side. The money-lenders fooled the poor farmers. They also exploited the helpless condition of the poor farmers. Supporting this issue, Jhinguri Singh, one of the village money-lenders remarks:

> If a farmer is badly in need he'll go on bended knees and get elders to sign. In any case we'd deduct twenty-five percent**.** (*Godan* 65)

It is evident that moneylending was a booming business in the pre-independence period. What is interesting to note is that it is not limited to the business community; rather it has been adopted by the Brahmins and the Thakurs as well. On this basis Awashesh Kumar Singh concludes:

> Iska arth yeh hai ki nai arthik vyavastha mein sabhi oonchi jatiyan daliton aur kisano ke nirdhan varga ke khilaaf khadi hain. (*Saakhi* 221)
>
> It means that in the new economic system all the upper castes are pitted against the economically weaker sections of the dalits and the farmers.

Thus, the duo of the landlord and the money-lenders exploited the poor farmers with impunity. *Godan* depicts the zamindars as a burden on society. Rai Saheb admits that the zamindar's were the parasites, extorting money from the poor farmers to live an extravagant life, unmindful of the harm it was doing to them. He observes:

> It is ridiculous and disgraceful that a few people can make thousands by governing and commanding those who can't even get a crust of bread. I know very well how dissolute, how immoral how dependent and how shameless we zamindars have become in these circumstances. (*Godan* 17)

The novelist attempts to drive home the point that living a life of luxury by exploiting the poor farmers was not good for the zamindars themselves. The feeling is that they can't even justify themselves from the point of view of self-interest. In order to sustain such ostentation they have to destroy their conscience to such an extent that they are left without a trace of self-respect.

Though living an extravagant life-style but he and the other zamindars are far from happy. He also reveals the mutual relations and jealousy prevalent among the zamindars and their ego of supremacy. Revealing these sentiments

he states:

> …What I cannot stand is the laughter of my squads; it is full of jealousy and sarcasm. Why not? I find plenty of laugh at them when they are hard up. Hori, riches and fellow-feelings never go hand in hand. We give in charity, of course; but only to outshine our equals. Our benevolence smacks of vanity. If one of us is served with a decree or ejectment order or jailed for not paying revenues, all of us have a good laugh at his expense. (*Godan*15)

The novelist presents a complete chain of exploitation existing in the pre-independence Indian society. Ironically the zamindar is the class that is the exploiter as well as the exploited. Rai Saheb revealing his helplessness observes:

> We are forced to plunder our tenants. If we don't give expensive gifts to the officials, we are branded as traitors. If we don't live in luxury we're branded as misers. At the slightest suggestion of progress, we start trembling and run to the authorities appealing for help. We're like spoon-fed babies – fat on the outside but weak inside, debilitated and impoverished. (*Godan*18)

Awadhesh Kumar Singh considers colonialism to be responsible for this loss of innocence of the colonizers as well as the colonized especially the natives who come into the contact of the colonisers. Studying the urban characters such as Rai Saheb, Khanna, Tankha and Omkarnath Pande from colonial perspective in *Godan: Vaad ke Dayre Mein ya Vaad se Pare*, he remarks:

> Arthik, sanskrutik aur mansik taur par upniveshvaad maasumiyat khatma hone ka karan bhi hai aur parinam bhi – unke liye jo upnivesh banate hain aur unke liye bhi jo upniveshvaad ka shikar hote hain. Upniveshvaad ke shikar log upniveshakon ka virodh aur pratirodh karte hain aur fir unke saath milibhagat karne lagte hain aur is poori prakriya ve unke (Upnivesh ke) taur tarike apnate hain, fir unke anukool bante hain aur rafta rafta un tarikon ke maahir ho jaate hain. Upniveshvaad aur uske pratirodh ki prustabhoomi mein likhe gaye upanyas *Godan* mein uprokt prakriya ke bhayankar parinam parilakshit hote hain, khaskar un desi logon par jo pratakyash ya paroksh roop se upniveshakon ke sampark mein aate hain. (Saakhi196)
>
> From the economic, cultural and psychological point of view, colonialism is the cause and the consequence of the loss of innocence – for those who colonise and for the victims of colonization too. The victims of colonization first oppose and resist the colonizers and then become hand in glove. In this process they acquire the demeanour of the colonizers and gradually they become skilled in them too. Written in the background of colonialism and its resistance, the novel *Godan* depicts its devastating consequences, especialially on those natives who directly or indirectly come into the contact of the colonizers.

Thus urban characters like Rai Saheb, Khanna, Tankha and Pande among others, who come directly or indirectly in contact with the colonizers

acquire the similar demeanour in their attitude and conduct towards the rural natives. Rai Saheb is with the colonizers as well as with the freedom struggle too. He talks of change but would not let zamindari be abolished. Khanna represents the new capitalist class that exploits the poor misersable labourers as well the farmers coming from the rural stock through his sugar mill and as an office bearer of a bank.

The novel can be studied from the point of view of internal and external colonisation too. The plot does not have scope for external colonisation, but its indirect influence is definitely observed. No representative of that world is directly present other than characters such as Raibahadur Amarsingh, Prof. Mehta, Malti, Khanna, Pt. Omkarnath and Tankha among others. Focussing on the internal colonization, Avadhesh Kumar Singh in *Godan: Vaad ke Dayre Mein ya Vaad se Pare* avers:

> Savarno, mahajano, zamindaro aur sarkari mulajimon dwara bhautik aur prakrutik sansadhano ke shosan mein antarik upniveshvaad ki jhalak milti hai. Apne hi desh mein upnivesh banane wale deshvasi aise parjivi hain jo apne hi logon se kar aur arthik dand ke roop mein paisa aithkar sarkar ko dete hain aur kuch hissa ya to apne aishoaram par kharch kar dete hain ya fir aise dikhave mein jisse unki samajik pratishtha ya jhooti shaano shaukat mein ijafa ho. Ye log baajo ki tarah hain jo chidiya ka shikar apne liye nahin, kisi aur ke liye karte hain. Ye upniveshakon ke gagh dalalon ka kam karte hain jo kisi aur ke liye kam karte hain aur is beimani ke dhande mein apni kuch dalali kama lete hain. Upniveshvaad ko pratyaksh roop se kathanak ka hissa na banate hue bhi upanyaskar is tathya ko rekhankit karta hai ki kis tarah upniveshvad bharatiyon ke jivan ko alag-alag tarah se prabhavit karta hai.
> (*Sakhi* 196)

> A glimpse of internal colonization is found in the material and natural resource exploitation by the upper caste, mahajans, zamindars and government servants. Those colonizing within the country are such parasites that they collect tax and fine the people on behalf of the government, and in the process, keeping a part of it for themselves which they spend on exhibition that raises their social standing or raises their false prestige. These people are like eagles who prey the bird not for themselves but for others. They work as the cunning agents of the colonizers, and in this process earn some commission for themselves. Though not depicting colonialism as a

> direct part of the plot, the novelist reveals the various influences of colonialism on the lives of the Indians.

The novel is written in the background of the post First World War and the great depression of 1929. Throwing light over the global conditions prevailing during that time, Awadhesh Kumar Singh in *Godan: Vaad ke Dayre Mein ya Vaad se Pare* writes:

> Is kaal ka aham tathya hai ki upniveshvaad apne charam par tha aur beesveen sadi ke doosre sadi ke doosre dashak mein pruthvi ka lagbhag 85% hissa upnivesh ban chuka tha. Is ke saath hi uth khade ho rahe the upniveshvaad ke khilaaf sangharsh jinhone akhirkaar use khatma kar dala. Iske saath hi bharatvarsha ki aam janta se lekar sudoor kshetron ke majdoor tak 'great depression' ke asar se bach nahin paye the aur taklif bhi unhin ki sabse jyada thi. Halaki is ghatna ke adhikendra Europe aur uttari America the, lekin baaki duniya, khaskar vah jo upnivesh ban chuki thi, ne bhi is ghatnachakra ke dhakke ko bakayda mehsoos kiya…In tathyyo ke maddenazar jis sachhai ko nazarandaz nahin kiya ja sakta vah yeh hai ki upniveshvaad ne samaj ke manovaigyanik aur arthik dhanche par apni amit chhap chhodi hai.
> (*Saakhi* 195)
>
> The basic fact of this period is that colonization was at its peak and by the second decade of the twentieth century almost 85% of the earth's surface was colonized. Also arose from this the struggle against colonialism that ultimately brought it to an end. Along with it the common masses of India and the labourers in the interiors too could not be uninfluenced by its impact and they suffered the most too. Though the epicenter of this incident was Europe and North America, the rest of the world especially that was colonized, too witnessed the drawbacks of these series of incidents…On the basis of these facts, the truth that cannot be ignored is that colonization created an irrevocable impression on the psychological and economic structure of the society.

Hori represents the poor village farmers who are the victims of the exploitation by the zamindar's and money-lenders. He is not only an individual but a class in itself. He has good as well as bad qualities. He loves his family and is also a God fearing person. He has experienced the harsh realities of life and even in most trying situations he never loses his temper. Till the family was undivided he showered fatherly affection upon his younger brothers too and even after division in the family considred their honour as his own. In spite

of being an honest and hardworking man he experiences no comfort or happiness in his life and is with every passing day further burdened under the weight of debt. He loses his fields and turns into an ordinary farm labourer from a dignified farmer. His wife and daughter too join him in as helping hands in the fields of others yet they cannot even manage two square meals a day. Fatigue, exploitation, poverty, undernourishment and helplessness all put together takes its toll on him.

The zamindars, moneylenders and the government administrators leave no stone unturned in exploiting and victimizing the poor farmers. Yet the credulous farmer fears being ostracized from the community to be more dreadful than being caught in the clutches of the moneylenders. The simple farmer cannot even imagine his life out of his community. Thus to save him and his family from being ostracized, Hori is ready to pay a hefty penalty for supporting the marriage of his son with Jhuniya. He is ready to pay a bribe even for the brother's house not being searched as it would bring disrepute to his own family. For paying all these penalties he has no alternative but to seek a loan from the moneylenders.

Hori breathes his last after succumbing to the hot winds while working empty stomach at the the road construction site. Hori's fate is the fate of the common farmer who is exploited to the core by the zamindars and moneylenders during the pre-independence period.

The novel has a very wide canvas and the characterization presented is very authentic and extensive. The characters are befitting the role they play

which also reveals the minute observation and sharpness of the novelist. Thus the Rai Saheb presented here is a zamindar with a difference. Traditionally zamindars were known for their atrocities on the tenants and for their extravagance. Rai Saheb also realized fines and rent from the tenants but he was conscious that what he was doing was inhuman and wished that the system could be proscribed.

Rai Saheb was a member of the council. To be elected to the council he had to make publicity of his pro-poor policies wherein he spoke of abolishing zamindari. But inherently he finds it difficult to digest. Delineating his views on zamindari, the novelist avers:

> I was brought up in a tradition where the king was God and the zamindar, God's minister. My late father was so benevolent that in times of frost or drought would waive half or even the whole rent. He would distribute grain from his own store-house to the tenants and would sell the family jewellery to help with the marriage expenses of the village girls but only as long as the people acknowledged him as both ruler and divine representative and worshipped him as much. Taking care of the people was his religion, but he wouldn't surrender one particle of authority. (*Godan* 18)

Rai Saheb contradicts his own social and political values when on one hand he is not ready to give up his own interests and on the other hand he curses the zamindari system for exploiting the poor.

He reveals that the world thinks them to be happy and fortunate as they own lands, palaces, carriages and scores of servants. But a person who cannot sleep peacefully for fear of the enemy, who licks the shoes of the officials and sucks the blood of his people, cannot be called happy.

Rai Saheb represents the class that was seeing a decline or a downfall. The zamindari system was in the last throes of its life. The novel in itself is

about the fall of feudalism. It is not about the tragedy of their lives as they themselves are a class of evil incarnate, the most debased of them being the disdain for labour, and exploitation of the poor farmers. It is a cruel mockery as the feudal class is depicted as prosperous and flourishing but this prosperity is only superficial as it is based on deceit and exploitation. Though materialistically prosperous, mentally they are sick and intellectually bankrupt. This intellectual bankruptcy can be observed in the other characters like Raja Saheb, Khanna and Mirza too. They exploited the poor farmers and the tenants and in return were exploited by the British rulers. Thus as the poor farmers fear the zamindars they too fear the British rulers. Revealing this fact to Hori about the fear of the officials, Rai Saheb states:

> When the British officer comes on tour or on a hunt, I follow him like a shadow; a frown from his face freezes me to death. To what length I go to make him happy. If it comes to that, I don't even hesitate to prostrate myself before him. (*Godan* 17)

Premchand has very aptly created his characters. Undoubtedly Hori, Dhaniya, Mehta and Malti are strong characters, they are not merely individuals but represent various institutions. Rai Saheb represents the feudal class that is the exploiter, hypocrite and opportunist. Inspite of these negative qualities he does have some good qualities too that separate him from the rest of his class as he leaves some land for the grazing of the cattle. He also supports the views of Mehta in the 'Women League' though he does not apply them when it comes to his acceptance of the intercaste marriage between his son Rudrapratap and Malti's sister Saroj. Shyam Behari Tankha too, a lawyer and a broker represents a class of parasites that has no values or morals and

which prospers in all situations. Malti and Prof. Mehta represent the new educated class that is progressive, optimistic and committed to their values and ideology. Khanna, the Bank manager and the director of the Sugar Mill, does not leave any stone unturned in displaying himself as the messiah of the poor but claims the strike of the exploited mill labourers as unjustified and illegal. Mirza Khurshid represents the fallen Muslim feudal class. The editor of the daily *Bijli*, Pandit Omkarnath represents the 'press', is the watchdog of society and talks of high moral values but in reality cannot think beyond his own personal interests.

The novelist through characterization also depicts the hypocrisy prevalent in the pre-independence rural society. One can keep committing sins and yet would be secure in the community if he followed the necessary rituals laid down by the community. Pandit Datadin serves as an illustration to this fact. His illegitimate relationship with a low caste woman was known to the entire village. But he still applied the tilak on his forehead and performed religious rituals. There was no loss of status in his case. Thus those who followed the artificial social customs were spared even if they violated the traditional social norms while the merciful and God fearing like Hori were penalized. But the novelist also sees a light of hope at the end of the tunnel. This hope is observed through the characters like Gobar, Matadin, Siliya and Jhuniya who oppose these hollow customs and rituals and emphasize more on truth and humanity.

Premchand had infinite faith in the traditional Indian culture. Alongwith the faith in the Indian culture he also emphasized idealism and moderate path. He firmly believed that only that nation or society can progress which desires to inculcate culture, truth and ideals. These values find their voice through Prof. Mehta, the teacher of Philosophy. Through him he also rejects feminism of the West which was spreading its wings in India too. Stating his views on an ideal wife, he elaborates:

> In my idea, a wife should be an embodiment of sincerity and self-abnegation who effaces her own individuality and merges herself with her husband's personality; the body is of the husband and the soul that of the wife. You will ask: why should the man not do the effacing? Why the woman? It's because no man is capable of of it. If he effaces himself, he'll become an empty vessel. He will retire to a cave and dream of merging his soul with the all-pervasive soul. He is mercurial; and in his vanity, he thinks that he is imbued with wisdom. And he aspires to identify himself with the God-head. But the woman is patient like the earth, tranquil, forbearing. If a man takes on the qualities of a woman he becomes a Mahatma. But if a woman imbibes the qualities of a man she becomes evil. A man is essentially attracted towards a woman who possesses the attributes of a woman. (*Godan*125)

Prof. Mehta is the mouth-piece of the novelist. Addressing an audience of The Women's League and emphasizing the greatness of the traditional Indian culture and the traditional Indain woman in comparison to that of the West, Prof. Mehta remarks:

> I am sorry to see that our women are taking to the West as their ideal. There the women has fallen from her place of honour, she is no longer mistress of the home, but a show piece, a prize exhibit, an object of pleasure. The woman in the West wants to be independent, so that she can enjoy life to the hilt. But physical pleasures have never been the ideal of our women; they have dominated and run the family through service…But aping others blindly is a symptom of moral bankruptcy. The women of the West no longer wish to remain housewives. They have surrendered their modesty-that priceless trait!-at the altar of pleasure. When I see the educated women in the West openly parading the charms of their bodies, the arms, the legs I feel pity for them. Their craving for sensations has blinded them so much that they can no longer think of being modest. There couldn't a greater curse come on women. (*Godan*154)

It is not that Premchand has depicted male characters at length in his works but he has equally profound understanding of the female sensibility and has presented them in a manner as Shakespeare presents the female characters in his plays. In the same manner the character of Dhania, the wife of Hori is the mouthpiece of the novelist in representing the women of the Indian villages. Besides serving as a foil to Hori she also exposes the tyranny that Hori was obliged to bear mutely. Hori lives his entire life fearing the land-lords, the village Brahmins and the money-lenders. But Dhania is fearless and wished that Hori too lead a life of dignity. Dhania avers:

> Why bother with all this flattery for land that could not even provide food for our stomachs**.** (*Godan* 5)

She is unhappy with her husband's cowardice and blind obedience to religious beliefs. His humility and respect for the social set-up have made him an easy victim for the money-lenders and Brahmins. Dhania is dynamic and powerful and raises her voice against injustice and exploitation. When the village money-lenders wanted Hori to borrow thirty rupees from them to give to the police inspector for not searching his brother's house, Dhania could see through the villainy. Acquiring the ferociousness of a tigress, snubbing Hori

and exposing the village money-lenders, Dhania roars:

> Here we are starving at home, longing for just a grain of food, with nothing to wear, and you go tossing out handfuls of money just to save your honour. You think you have that much honour left to be saved. (*Godan* 98)

Dhania has the right to be ferocious because she has not only lost her cow but also has to lose other thirty rupees to avoid the house of Hira being

searched. She has the courage to call a spade a spade and bluntly accusing the police inspector states:

> I have seen what your justice is like – and your brains too. Cutting the throats of the poor is easy enough. But separating milk from water, running an honest investigation, is something else.
> (*Godan* 105)

Thus Dhania's boldness and freedom of speech saved the home from paying an unnecessary fine of thirty rupees.

As a mother, Dhania is very affectionate. She loves her children form the core of her heart. She weeps bitterly when Gobar decides to live in the city. She is equally tender-hearted and when situation demands she can go against society and shower tenderness on the victimized. She has the courage to accept Jhunia as her daughter-in-law even though she does not belong to her community and is largely concerned for her because of her bearing the child conceived through Gobar. When the village panchayat imposed fine on them for accepting a girl of another community as a daughter-in-law, Hori meekly accepts the judgment while Dhania angrily retorts:

> Sell our fields and gardens and then live in luxury yourself! Not while Dhania is alive. You won't…We don't have to stay in the caste…staying in the caste won't bring us salvation. We're living by our own sweat now, we'll keep doing so even if you out-caste us…Why didn't I drive her out and let her beg in the streets, you ask. Is that what you call justice? (*Godan* 88)

Dhania's kindness is revealed not only for Jhunai but also for Siliya, a low-caste woman who was no way related to her. Siliya was left in lurch by Matadin and her own parents in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Pandit Matadin after making her pregnant refused to marry her as she belonged to low-caste. It is none other than Dhania who takes pity on the miserable

condition of the woman and makes arrangement for her delivering the baby. She can rise to the demand of the occasion and can fight against the rigid orthodox norms of society in providing succor to the underprivileged and the have-nots. Thus cursing Matadin for his dumping Siliya and escaping from duty, Dhania remarks:

> Men are all like. No one was upset when Matadin defiled her. Now the same thing happened to him, so what is wrong in that. Doesn't Siliya's virtue count as virtue? That's exactly the punishment hoodlums like him deserve. (*Godan*156)

Similar to traditional women, she is a typical mother-in-law. When Gobar decides to take Dhaniya with him to the city, she is unhappy and believes that Jhunia must be responsible for all the trouble-making decisions and poisoning Gobar's mind. Dhania is thus an alter-ego of Hori, with whose help he hopes to see the fulfillment of aspirations and ideals in life. She becomes an extension of Hori's self. She is a woman of grit, determination and also of delicate emotions. Not surprisingly called "Bhawani" (the Goddess of Power) by the villagers.

The concluding pages of Godan touch the depths of our heart. Hori hounded by money-lenders and ostracized by the social evils, continues his struggle till the end. Gobar feels that prestige and honour have no meaning when a man can't fill his stomach. If Hori had been like others, squeezing people by the throat and making off by their money, he too could have been well-off. But he stuck to his principles and this is the punishment he got for it.

Hori stood stripped of all his belongings at the time of his death. He was penniless, but he still had his principles and philosophy which he stood by till

the end. Yet in all the adversity he had not lost his sense of humour. When his brother Hira remarks that he has grown thin, Hori replies that the only people who get fat are those with no worries about debt or prestige or honour. To be fat these days is downright shameful. A hundred have to grow thin for one man to get fat.

The obsession of the cow still exists and now he wants it especially for his grandson Mangal, for whom milk is so necessary. Thus when a contractor started digging gravel near the village for road construction, Hori hurried to him and got work of digging gravel at eight annas a day. If the work lasted two months, even then he'd be able to earn enough to buy a cow. He worked in the loo throughout the day and returned home half-dead. In the night too he spun yarn and did not sleep until midnight. It is his dream to pay-off all his debts as soon as possible and make a new beginning. He observes:

> Only those who have leisure fall ill… If I can get rid of this debt this year, it will mean a new life for me. (*Godan* 346)

Presenting his views regarding the obsession of Hori for cow from religio-cultural and mythological perspective, Awadhesh Kumar Singh avers in *Godan: Vaad ke Dayre Mein ya Vaad se Pare* avers:

> Sach to yeh hai ki khetihar arthavyavastha mein gay kisan ki naav bhi hai aur nav khene vala chappu bhi. Vah parivar ke liye doodh ka strot hai aur uske bachde kal ke bail hain jo khet jotne mein kaam ayenge. Kalantar mein brahmano ne gay ke irdgird alokikta ka ek jaal bun diya aur yeh niyam bana diya ki marne ke pehle har vyakti dwara Brahman ko godan karna anivarya hai. Yeh ek trasadi bhi hai aur majak bhi ki Hori ke jis bhai Heera ne gay ko jehar de diya tha vahi heera chahta hai ki Hori marne ke pehle godan kar de. Adhure kartavyo aur Heera ke liye adhure vaadon ke beech Hori chal basta hai aur peeche chhot jaati hai uski patni Dhania jo Hori ki un ataarkik manyataon aur khud par thope mulyaon par lagaatar savaliya nishan lagati rahi – ve mulya jinse kabhi bhi vah nahin mila jo chaha tha. (*Saakhi* 199)
>
> The fact is that in an agricultural economy the cow is a farmers boat as well as the spade for rowing. It is source of milk for the family as well as its calves

> are the bulls for tomorrow who will help ploughing the fields. With passage of time the Brahmins weaved a myth of divinity regarding cow and made it a rule that every person is to inevitably gift a cow to a Brahmin before death. It is a tragedy as well as a joke that Hori's brother Heera, who had poisoned the cow, that same Heera wishes that Hori perform Godan before death. Hori passes away with unfulfilled commitments and promises towards Heera and leaves behind his wife Dhaniya, who always questioned Hori's illogical beliefs and the views imposed upon her – those values which never delivered that they promised.

Before his death Hori also had the satisfaction of seeing his fugitive brother return after several years. His happiness knew no bounds on seeing his long lost brother. Describing his joy the novelist avers:

> Who said he had lost the battle of life? Was this pride, this joy, this verve, the sign of defeat? …If his barn contained a few hundred maunds of grain and his purse a few hundred rupees, he, would not have got the same joy as he did on seeing Heera. (*Godan* 350)

By presenting Hori the protagonist of the novel as having ideals and principles, as one who emphasizes more on family and social bonds rather than the materialistic gains, the novelist conveys the message of the richness and strength in the traditional Indian culture and its superiority over the self-centred individualism of the West that was gaining ground in the Indian society. He also suggests the superiority of the joint traditional families and laments the breaking down of this sacred institution.

Hori represents the resilience that has developed in the Indian peasant after facing hardships throughout their lives and the lives of their past generations. Even such hardships and miseries cannot steal him of his sense of humour, zest for life and his humanity.

Hori succumbs to his working unclothed in the hot loo on an empty stomach, not taking rest even at night and uninterruptedly working throughout the day. Thus on the ill fated day of his death, he felt strangely heavy in body.

After doing little work he was breathless. Drinking little water, he vomited and blood drained away from his face. He had caught loo working in the heat on an empty stomach. He vomited again and darkness swarmed before his eyes. Describing his hallucinations, the novelist avers:

> His eyes closed and one by one old memories came alive and danced before his eyes...came his childhood, when he snuggled in his mother's lap and played gulli-danda …He found himself milking a celestial cow, giving the milk to Mangal. (*Godan* 350-1)

Dhania and other villagers arrived. Seeing his brother breathing his last, Heera suggesting salvation for Hori, observes:

> Bhabhi have patience, give a cow in charity. Dada is about to leave us for ever. (Godan 352)

Dhania had no money with her except the twenty annas she had earned from the sale of yarn. Placing the coins in the hands of Hori and looking at Datadin, painfully states:

> Maharaj, there's neither a cow, nor a calf nor any money in the house. This is all the money I have; this is all I can give. Take this in place of the cow. (Godan 352)

Hori who in his life-time could never fulfill his dream of owning a cow is insisted to donate a cow to attain salvation. The system that exploited him throughout his life does not even spare him in death. Regarding the tragic ending of *Godan*, Awadhesh Kumar Singh in *Godan: Vaad ke Dayre Mein ya Vaad se Pare* remarks:

> Upanyas ke ant mein Hori ki trasadi to khatma ho jaati hai lekin usse bhi bhayankar trasadi ki shooruat hoti hai Dhania ke jeevan mein. Agar Hori ek purush hokar purush pradhan samaj mein nahin jee paya to bhala ek stree khud ko kaise bacha payegi? Premchand jaanbhooj kar is sawal ke jawab nahin dete hain kyonki ve chahte the ki pathakgan swayam hi *Godan* ke alikhit shesh bhaag mein apna yogdaan de. Jitne prakar pathakon ke hain utne hi prakar ka ye sheshbhaag bhi hoga sivay ek samanta ke ki 'nayak' Dhaniya hi hogi. (*Saakhi* 205)

> To the conclusion of the novel also ends the tragedy of Hori but with it begins an even more dangerous tragedy, the tragedy of Dhania's life. If Hori as a male could not survive in this male dominated society, then how could Dhania as a woman survive? Premchand deliberately does not respond to this issue as he wished that the readers themselves contribute to this unwritten part of the novel. The variety in the unwritten part of the novel would equal the number of readers with the only similarity of Dhania as the protagonist.

Thus, the novelist through the last scene very vividly brings out the picture of the exploitation, suffering and helplessness prevalent in the contemporary pre-independence society.

On one hand *Godan* depicts the rural life through the characters of Hori, Dhaniya, Gobar, and others while the urban life is presented through the characters such as Dr. Metha, Malati, Rai Saheb, Mirza Khurshed, Khanna and others. Barring the money-lenders and the Brahmins, the life of the majority of the characters represented such as the farmers is tough, full of challenges and facing exploitation. On the other hand the urban characters live a luxurios life of enjoying the theater and organizing hunting parties for pleasure. These two worlds are poles apart and no where do they overlap or come together.

The novelist who had been a reformist and also had coined the term "idealistic realism" seems extremely frustrated with the condition of the society in this novel. Who as a reformist had earlier provided solutions in work such as *Sevasadan* to tricky issues such as prostitution and mismatched marriages, is without any solution to the issues raised in *Godan.* The novelist has rejected all the major political and economic options. He has depicted the change taking place in society from the decline of the feudal order to the rise of the capitalism

in the Indian society. Thus the urban capitalists are indirectly present in the rural society through their representatives and the industries where the rural populace provides manpower. The novelist has rejected capitalism as unfit for a healthy society but has not provided any alternative as he has rejected communism which because of the bloody revolution goes against the Gandhian principles.

Godan for the first time in Hindi literature realistically depicts the shift of power taking place in the Indian society: the feudal structure crumbling and the capitalism taking over. It suggests that the change of the society from the feudalistic to capitalistic did not change anything for the poor exploited farmers, farm labourers or the labourers working in the industries. The exploiters changed but the fate of the exploiters remained the same.

Ideologically too the novel depicts the triumph of the Indian traditional culture over the West through the tramsformation of Doctor Malati from Madam Malati to Malati Devi. The novel also rejects feminism and suggests keeping it at bay from the Indian society.

Dealing with such diverse perspectives justifies the novel with the critical acclaim due to a masterpiece.Thus, Namvar Singh remarks:

> …Sahitya ke roop mein *Godan* tamam upanyason ke beech kya sthan rakhta hai? Aur kyon mahatvapoorna hai? Baavjood iske Hindi mein uske baad Jainendra ke upanyas hai, *Maila Anchal hai*, *Naukar ki kameez* hai, *Raagdarbari*, *Aadha Gaon* hai. Upanyason ki is lambi parampara mein Godan kyon aaj bhi aparajeya hai? Koi uski gehrai aur vistar ke saath hi uski marmikta ko nahin vyakt kar saka hai. (*Saakhi* 16-7)
>
> …As literature what place does *Godan* have amongst literary works? And why is it significant? Besides it, after it in Hindi there are the novels of Jainendra, *Maila Anchal* is there, *Naukar Ki Kameez* is there, *Raagdarbari*

> and *Aadha Gaon* are there. Why is *Godaan* uncomparable even today in this long tradition of novel. Nobody has been able with such subtlety to express such profoundity and comprehensiveness.

It is obvious that Premchand's writing was not limited to any 'ism' or 'class'. No good writer would become a supporter of any 'ism' to the extent that it becomes as obstacle in his creativity. A writer is a supporter of life and its values that are integrally interwined and a characteristic of his writing. He is always committed to the issues and struggles concerning existence, especially of the downtrodden, the exploited and the marginalized. Thus, Premchand gives a voice to the suppressed through his writings which were earlier unprecedented in Hindi literature. By selecting the rural setting and the exploited poor masses as domain of his creative surge and his commitment towards them make him a legendary Indian novelist.

As a novelist, Premchand has dealth with the various issues such as caste structure, communalism, prevailing economic inequality and how the rich and uppercaste for their vested interests make efforts to perpetuate this inequality. Thus, he brings the age live to the readers with its evils, strengths, weaknesses and challenges.

The novelist's journey from *Sevasadan* to *Godan* depicts the several issues and conditions that plagued the pre-independence Indian society. From the minutest incident of the family to the significant social and national issues find place in his works. His sharp observation analysed the nation and the society from various perspectives and also attempted to understand the ambigious human nature.

The plots of *Sevasadan*, *Gaban* and *Nirmala* are more organsied as they present issues concerning either a single family or a particular single class. Thus, the plot begins with an individual or a particular incident and the other related incidents becoming complemetary and nurturing the main plot. All these three works contain a single theme. *Karmabhoomi* too takes up several issues simultaneously from Hindu-Muslim unity, to the struggle of the peasants and the downtrodden and the rural and urban poor. *Godan* contains several tales having independent existence clubbed into one and it becomes difficult to identify the main from the rest. It should not be forgotten that *Godan* represents the diverse classes presesent in the Indian society from the farmer, labourer, zamindar, capitalist, urban and rural along with their issues and concerns. The novel also introduces the awakening among the masses and suggesting revolution to be imminent. Thus it is not possible to organize the plot similar to the manner of the works having only one main plot and limited sub-plots. Rather the novelist deserves praise that inspite of dealing with several important issues and challenges of the Indian society in one work, he has attempted to strike an appropriate balance and connection between them.

IV

It would be unfair to compare two distinct literary works or writers yet one cannot stop from terming Vishwambaharnath Sharma 'Kaushik' as a writer of the 'Premchand School'. His *Bhikharini* (1929) presents a tragic love-story of a prosperous and gentle youth Ramanath and Jasso, a daughter of a beggar

Nanadu. Attracted to Jasso, Ramanath provides refuge to the father and daughter by hiring them as servants in his home and the bond of love between Jasso and Ramanath becomes strong. Later on it is learnt that Nandu is the only son of a prosperous Thakur landlord. He was in love with a girl of his village belonging to the same community and wanted to marry her. Facing parental opposition he eloped to Calcutta and married her. But the death of his wife shattered him and he took to begging along with his daughter. On learning about the whereabouts of Nandu, his father Thakur Arjun Singh along with his wife come to Ramanath's place and take their son and grand-daughter home. But the separation torments the lovers. When Ramanath cannot bear this separation he takes help of his friend Brajkishor and through him sends a proposal of marriage with Jasso. Nandram, now a son of a big zamindar, considering social limitations and the traditional mindset of his father rejects the proposal of inter-caste marriage. He does not wish that the incidents that occurred in his life and the trauma he faced are repeated in the lives of any one else. Jasso too is not in favour of elopement. Ultimately giving up efforts and succumbing to family pressure and in consultation with his friend Brajkishor, Ramanath marries elsewhere. Jasso and Nandu too turn up to attend the marriage ceremony. Inspite of Thakur Arjun Singh's sincere efforts the marriage of Jasso with a suitable match fails as the deeds of Nandu's past life haunt the family. The grandparents die with the unfulfilled desire of seeing their granddaughter in the form of a bride. With the death of the parents, the lonely life of the village torments Nandu and Jasso. Ultimately, they donate

their entire property for the welfare of the village and living life of mendicants move about in the vast world in the form of beggars.

The novel presents a subtle picture of the conflict between the natural attraction of the heart and the orthodox social conventions. Even today when the caste division and affiliations are very strong, one can imagine the situation in the pre-independence Indian society when orthodoxy was at its peak.The writers of the time too did not have any solution to this issue. Thus the fate of such couples opting for inter-caste marriage was either to face social condemnation or to face the pangs of separation. The trauma of Nandu and Jasso was due to these stringent social codes. Ramanath eventually got married to a beautiful bride and almost forgot his love for Jasso, but Jasso by vowing to remain unmarried, sets a high ideal of love.

The characters of Thakur Arjun Singh, Nandu, Ramanath and Brajkishor are presented in a natural manner and all these characters represent specific class they belong to. Thakur Arjun Singh represents the class of the traditional zamindar, Nandu is the son who rebels against the strict social codes, Ramanath is a weak character who does not have the courage to boldly challenge the orthodox social codes and Brajkishor is a practical youth advising Ramanth to live a comfortable life instead of taking up the challenges of society and living a life of misery. The dialogue between Ramanth and Brajkishor when they come to know of Jasso and Nandu donating their entire property for the welfare of the poor people and turning mendicants makes the point evident. The novelist delineates:

Brajkishor ne kaha – "Tum bade bhavuk ho Ramanath. Maan lo tumne is samay khana na khaya to isse kya hoga?"

"Hona havana kya hai?"

"To fir?"

"Is samay zara tabiyat ranjida ho gai."

"Bewkoof ho! Chalo utho, in baaton men kya dhara hai."

"Bhagwaan jaane tumhara hridaya kahe ka bana hai."

"Mera hridaya us vastu ka bana hai jo vyartha ki bhavukta se prabhavit nahin hota… (*Bhikharini* 245)

Brajkishor said – "Ramanath you are very sentimental. What difference will it make if you don't take your meal?

"What difference will it make?"

"Then what?"

"Presently I am a little disturbed"

"You're a fool! Get up, what's there in such talk."

"God knows of what your heart is made of?"

"My heart is made of that material that is not influenced by useless sentimentality…

The readers get an understanding of the characters more from their dialogues and their conduct. The characters influence us by their attitude, their words and actions. Jasso the female protagonist leaves a strong impact not only on the readers but on the male protagonist Raamanath too. The novelist delineates:

"Ab to asambhav ho gaya."

"Kya asambhav ho gaya?"

"Jeevean ki is ghatna ko bhoolna. Yadi Jasso vivah kar leti tab to sambhav tha, parantu ab asambhav ho gaya. Jasso ne is karya se hamare hriday par apni chhap amit kar di hai."

Brajkishor ne avishvas aur sandehpoorna swar me kaha – "Aisi baat hai! Kam se kam uska yeh sarvaswa tyag to mujhe bhi janma bhar yaad rahega. Yadi aapka tatparya bhi yahi hai to me aapki baat manta hoon. (*Bhikharini* 244)

"Now it has become impossible."

"What has become impossible?"

"Forgetting this incident of life. It would have been possible had Jasso got married, but now it is imposssbe. By this act Jasso has made an unforgrettable impression on my heart."

In a voice lacking trust and conviction Brajkishor observes – "Is it so! I too will atleast remember her giving up her entire property. I agree with you if your reference too is the same.

Her sense of sacrifice sends a strong message to the characters like Ramanath and Brajkishor who are driven by self-interest. It makes them realise their weaknesses and blemishes which is contrasted with her greatness and distinction.

The novel lacks sub-plots or intricacies as the novelist does not attempt to present the issue raised in its diversity or entirety. The novelist has attempted with limited characters and some heart rendering incidents to present a particular realistic picture of society. The story moves forward at its own slow pace and usually the development takes place only through the characters. The novelist does not resort to lengthy delineations that serve as an obstacle in the smooth flow of the story. The story though simple contains spots where emotions are presented intensively, thus providing a beauty to the work. The work contains some co-incidences but they are beautifully organized so as to seem natural. Especially the incident of Jasso and her father Nandu donating their entire property for the welfare of the poor farmers and the villagers is known through a news article printed in the newspaper 'Leader', read by chance by Brajkishor and Ramananth. Also the incident at the conclusion of the novel when Ramanath encounters Jasso after several years of his marriage in the guise of a sadhvi at the station of Haridwar serves as an appropriate illustraion.

The incidents in the works of Kaushik do not contain several branches and sub-branches. Originating from a single point they develop in a straightforward manner without inter-mingling or creating any complications.

The plot opens with the arrival of Jasso and Nandu as beggars and their refuge at the house of Ramanath, the attraction between the Jasso and Ramanath, the arrival of Thakur Arjun Singh and the separation of Ramanath and Jasso, the consequent marriage of Ramanath to another girl and the novel concluding with the ultimate asceticism of Jasso.

As a subscriber to the 'Premchand School' the novelist shares several similarities to Premchand the literary flagbearer of the age. One cannot fail to notice the similarities in his and the works of Premchand in matters regarding the narration style, theme, plot and characterization. Similar to Premchand, 'Kaushik' too took to writing in Hindi after initially beginning in Urdu. Similar to Premchand, 'Kaushik's' works too are inclined towards idealism.

VI

The years from 1915 to 1936 are to such a great extent dominated by Premchand that other writers seem dwarfed in his comparison. But it would be wrong not to credit the other writers for their contribution to Hindi literature. Unlike *Bhikarini*, dealing with a love-story, published in the same year is Jayshanker Prasad's *Kankal*, dealing with serious social issues of hypocricy of the established institutions of society. Jayshanker Prasad's novel *Kankal* (1929) exposed the hypocrisy and the double-standards of the Indian society.

Kankal depicts a contemporary particular class from a particular perspective. Human beings, in the course of the growth of the civilization have established certain religious and ethical values. The basic purpose of these values is collective welfare. But the over insistence over these values leads to

neglect of the individual and the suppression of the basic rights. *Kankal* is a story very subtly depicting the conflict between social taboos and the individual's natural instincts.

Prayag, Kashi, Haridwar, Mathura, Vrundavan and other places of religious significance are the centres of the plot of *Kankal*. Tara, the illegitimate child is denied refuge by her own father inspite of his knowing that her mother has expired and she has fallen into flesh trade. Mangal, an Aryasamaji comes to her rescue but when he comes to know of her being an illegitimate child, he too withdraw's and disappears on the day of marriage itself. Tara is pregnant as they had started living together as a husband and wife. Thus the cycle of exploitation is repeated. She faces the same exploitation similar to her mother. She attempts suicide several times but is unsuccessful and uultimately gives birth to a male child. She deserts her child and lives a life of a destitute.

Kishori, the wife of Srichand, a businessman of Amritsar gives birth to a child fathered by her childhood friend Niranjan, now Dev Niranjan and a renowned sage. Srichand hates her and sends her to Kashi with her son and sends her the finance necessary for survivial. She names her son Vijay. Tara too reaches Kashi in the form of a destitute and she is hired as a servant by Kishori. To conceal her past Tara changes her name to Yamuna.

Vijay loves Tara now with the name changed to Yamuna but is disillusioned as his love remains unrequited. He now turns towards Ghanti, a child widow, but the society does not permit him for marriage with her too. The

third time Vijay falls in love with Gala, the daughter of a dacoit Madan Gujar born out of a relationship with a Muslim woman. She too rejects his marriage proposal as he has taken her refuge. Mangal ultimately ends up marrying Gala. On the other hand Batham the Christian priest is attracted to Ghanti. Thus Kankal satirises all the recognized instiutions of society.

Thus, the plot of Kankal is well knit and enfolds chronologically. All the incidents depicted in the novel are mutually related and removing any one of them would ruin the beauty of the work. Thus none of the incident can be considered unnecessary as they either reveal the qualities of a character or they provide velocity to the story.

The novelist either unfolds his plot directly or suggests the incidents indirectly. Being a skilled dramatist Jayshanker Prasad has imbibed the dramatic elements in his novel. The novelist has presented most of the institutions through the conversations between the various characters but not presented them directly. The childhood friendship of Niranjan and Kishori is revealed through the internal conflict of Niranjan and the story of Mangal and Ghanti is revealed through the blind beggars. Vijay absconds after committing a murder and gets refuge from the bandits of a Gujar gang. He changes his name from Vijay to 'Naye'. But this fact too is not revealed directly by the novelist. The fact comes to light by the conversation amongst the characters. In the same manner the details about Gala's mother are made available through her autobiography and the mystery of the parentage of Tara or Yamuna is revealed through the letter to Niranjan. Thus the novelist has devised new

techniques such as letters and autobiography. The novel succeeds in raising the curiosity of the readers from the very beginning itself.

The plot should develop on the basis of the law of causality but the novelist seems to resort to a larger extent on the elements of chance and co-incidence. Though the plot contains several sub-plots their presence is justifiable and rational.

The knowledge of being an illegitimate child has a profound impact on the personality of Vijay and he becomes cynical and a rebel having bitterness towards society. Srichand, the father of Vijay too is aware of this illegitimacy and distances himself immediately after his birth. Though he provides finance and does not reveal the truth to anybody he does not shower the love and affection that a child receives from a father.

The novelist emphasizes through Vijay the importance of parental love and affection and its importance in moulding the personality of an individual. The personality of Vijay is presented as abnormal or disturbed and the reason is obviously his illegitimate birth. He is denied affection from Srichand and from his biological father Dev Niranjan.

Though the love relationship exists between Kishori and Dev Niranjan it is concealed from society and it remains an enigma for Vijay too. He never has any feeling of respect for Dev Niranjan as normal children have towards their fathers. Rather he never refrains from any opportunity of publicly criticizing Dev Niranjan. The reason of Vijay being critical of social values and norms is his illegitimate birth. The presentation of Vijay as a social rebel is a

consequence of the illicit relationship of Kishori and Dev Niranjan. He becomes a misfit in society. All that Vijay needs is unconditional love and he searches it in Dev Niranjan, Yamuna, Ghunti and Gala. He wishes to marry Yamuna but his proposal is rejected. Later he had a physical relationship with Ghunti but did not marry her. He is attracted towards Gala too.

Looking at the circumstances of Vijay, it can be concluded that he is not responsible for the situation that he is in. His desire for receiving love remains dissatisfied. At the same time he does not reveal the emotional trauma he faces and conceals them from the society.

Vijay is presented neither as a hypocrite nor as a hollow man. There is no artificiality in him. If he rebels against society it is public. Mangal serves as a foil to Vijay. He talks of eradicating the evils of society but does not have the courage to implement his words into action. He promises to marry Tara and even makes her pregnant but deserts her on the day of marriage. Vijay is not such pretentious and what other people do slyly is done publicly by him. In fact Vijay is bold, courageous, benevolent and truthful. He provides refuge to the orphaned Ghunti without caring for its consequences. He supports Yamuna when Dev Niranjan reproaches her. Inspite of being virtous he is unsuccessful. His pathetic condition at the end of the novel arouses the feeling of pity and compassion in the readers.

The character of Mangal though sacrificing and hardworking represents religious cowardice. He speaks of overcoming social fear but he himself could never overcome it. Though idelogically an Arya Samaji but in practice he is no

different from a *Sanatani*. Thus his character oscillates between weakness and ideals.

After indulging in physical relationship with Kishori, Dev Niranjan does not spare a widow Rama too. Tara or Yamuna is thus a biological child of Dev Niranjan. But this makes him realize the hollowness and emptiness of a life of an ascetic. He realizes the superiority of family life and the irrelevance and hypocricy of the life of the mendicants. His illegitimate son Vijay serves as a foil to him. Inspite of being the father of Vijay he does not publicly accept him as his son. It depicts not only his hypocricy but cowardice too. The character of Dev Niranjan represents the class that experiences its weakness and even repents them but cannot boldly face the society.

Of all the characters Vijay has the maximum canvas and is also the protagonist of the novel. Though all the characters are fictional they appear to be real and succeed in impressing the readers. In fact the characters of *Kankal* are based on realism. Majority of the characters are presented as weak. The work depicts live realistic characters and all the characters are worldly and we do not find unnaturalness in their actions. Thus the novelist successfully presents a realistic reflection of real life.

The unique feature of Prasad's art of characterization is that they develop naturally and following the principles of psychology. Similar to modern thinkers the novelist too has emphasized the significance of situation in shaping the human character. The characters in the novel struggle against the situation they face and ultimately adjust their nature appropriate to the situation

they are in. Thus the male protagonist Vijay is by nature haughty, rebellious and unrestrained. It is the environment and his surroundings that influence his behaviour. Similarly the sacrifices of Tara or Yamuna, her ability to bear pain and remain neutral are appropriate to her circumstances.

The novelist has resorted to the dramatic technique in the portrayal of the characters. For the analysis of the actions of characters, the novelist has resorted to the use of conversations. The characters state their opinion regarding another character during their conversations, implicitly revealing their conduct. Thus Mangal is exposed through his conduct. He is depicted as a hypocrite because there is difference between his actions and words. In the same manner Dev Niranjan too is exposed. Behind the veil of service and worship of God is a lustful and evil individual is what is revealed through his deeds. Thus all the characters have been successfully portrayed in *Kankal.*

The novel very forcefully conveys the message of rejecting the established institutions and hollow values of society. The novelist attempts to present the grandness of the characters by favouring the characters rejected by society. In contrast, the characters considered to be ideal are in fact the suppressors of the very values and ideals they represent in society. The novel shakes the faith of the readers in the class that is worshipped as divine and virtuous and is never doubted upon. The ascetics in the novel are depicted having the same weaknesses that are observed in an average man. In contrast the class of prostitutes and illegitimate children that are neglected and

condemned can also contain greatness that might be non-existent in the privileged and the adored.

The novel is basically a satire on the pre-independence Indian society. The chief purpose of a satire is to reform. The satire becomes very effective in the hands of a neutral and kind hearted writer like Prasad. The satire is evident in situations and in the dialogues and the actions of the characters. The union of the sage Dev Niranjan with Kishori is satirical. The act of establishing a physical relationship by Mangal, a volunteer of Arya Samaj, with Tara and later deserting her on the day of marriage and ending up marrying the daughter of a dacoit Badan Gujar born out of his relationship with a Muslim woman is satirical too. Kishori adopts another child while her son Vijay passes his days as a beggar in the streets of Kashi. The novel contains several instances where individual, society, situations and fate are sartirically presented. But the objective of the writer is not to hurt the sentiments of anybody but to reform.

The title of the novel suggests that our society is externally idealistic and beautiful but is internally hollow and ugly like a skeleton. The objective of the novelist is to present this ugly picture of the society to the readers. The novelist has taken care that while presenting the moth eaten structure of society has also suggested the re-building of society. Thus the approach of the novelist is not only critical but creative too. He presents his view that society is created for man and it is not the activity of society to suppress the natural desires of man. Rather it is in helping the man to satisfy these desires by providing appropriate education and reformation. The work also depicts that conventions gradually

assume the form of religion. It is not necessary that all the customs get recognition in society. Some of them may be a burden on society too.

Though we do find a couple of other good novelists during this age such as Vishwambharnath Sharma and Jayshanker Prasad, it is Premchand who is the forerunner of this age. The success of Premchand can be attributed to his fidelity to life of common people like peasants and workers, interesting narration style, simple language, and the avoidance of highly Sanskritized words as was the trend among other writers and the use of the dialect of the common folk. Premchand deals with the issues ranging from corruption, the rights of the peasants, communalism, zamindari and colonialism, bringing the Hindi novel out from the flights of magical events, of deception and detective fantasies. These works move, edify and instruct the readers. They have a psychological and moral substance – a kind of social realism – that adds greatly to their value as realistic studies of character and society. Thus Premchand stands true to his own words that "a writer by his nature is progressive or he cannot be a writer."

CHAPTER IV

POST-PREMCHAND HINDI NOVEL

The years after Premchand were marked by radical changes in the form of the Second World War, the scienitific inventions, the awakening and freedom of the colonized nations with the significant astronomical achievements among others. These developments questioned the fundamental values and led to revolutionary changes in humanitarian values, life style and idelogies. In India, the youth recruited for wars fought by the British, the Indian struggle for independence, the 1942 Quit India Movement and the suppression of the freedom struggle by the colonisers, the establishment of the Indian National Army by Subhaschandra Bose, unprecedented price rise, the famine of Bengal and the communal riots leading to the partition of the sub-continent and the consequent independence were some of the important developments from which no sphere of life could remain unaffected. Thus the influence of all these developments taking place in society had a profound impact on the literature of this age too.

The age of Premchand was an age of faith in the traditional culture and social values. The voice of protest had begun in the age of Premchand itself but it was still not an outright rejection of the traditional social and moralistic values. Thus Hori, the protagonist of *Godan*, the last complete novel by Premchand, is depicted as a conformist inspite of the exploitation by the established institutions and the miseries in his life. That was the limitation not of the writers but of the age itself. But the novelists after the age of Premchand

depict the activity of rebellion against the social and political injustice and attempt to present the new social and political order.

With the shift from writing to psychological and psychoanalytical, the modern novel took up individual experience as its basis. The internal conflicts depicted in the form of stream of consciousness and its influence on our action and conduct are the focus of the writers. The psychological complexes and prejudices, the suppressed desires, their finding place in the sub-conscious and their influence on the personality and behaviour of the character is of interest to the writers of this age.

The Hindi novel has been receptive to the influences of the Western experimental novel, especially the novels of Zola and Flaubert, and to such psychological novelists as Marcel Proust and James Joyce. Ajneya's Shekhar: Ek Jivani (1941) exemplifies this influence as the action shifts from the external world to the internal.

I

The Hindi novel writing witnesses a shift from the presentation of the external world and its conflict to the psychoanalysis and stream of consciousness that is pioneered by Jainenedra. *Tyagpatra* (1937) is one of his chief works.

In *Tyagpatra,* Jainendra's magnum opus, the chief characters are Pramod and Mrunal his paternal aunt (bua). In fact, the male protagonist Pramod is just the narrator while the story is of Mrunal. Mrunal was brought up by the parents of Pramod as their parents had died when she was very young.

While studying in school, she fell in love with the brother of her friend Sheila and when the facts came to the knowledge of Pramod's parents she was thrashed mercilessly with a stick. She was hurriedly married off to a man much older than her. But when her husband too gets to know of her past affair, not only do his atrocities increase but ultimately he even turns her out of the house. Out of helplessness Mrunal has to take refuge of an ordinalry coal trader and she even carries his child. After some time the coal trader also deserts her and her daughter born out of the relationship with the trader too dies at the tender age of nine months. Mrunal's struggle with the polluted world continues for another twenty years and ultimately she finds release through death. Pramod very dearly loves his aunt and true to her name he compares her symbolically to a lotus that floats above the polluted water. The news of her death shocks him to the extent that he resigns from the post of a judge and starts living a secluded life.

The novel is a moving tragedy of a pure woman driven by circumstances from one misfortune to another. She is more sinned against than sinning. Mrinal's tragedy does not lie in her being an orphan, nor in her destitution and poverty, but in her persecution at the hands of a brute, unrelenting social order. She is forced into a life of ignominy and finally into prostitution until death overtakes her. At several points in her life, Pramod tries to rescue her, but she would have no pitying help. She turned him away asking him to transform the entire system instead of rescuing her alone. She retorted:

> "Pramod, sahayta ki men bhoohki nahin hoon kya? Tujhse hi vah sahayta na loongi? Lekin Sahayta ka haath dekar kyon mujhe yahaan se uthakar oonche varga men ja bithane ki ichha hai? To bhai mujhe maaf kar do. Vaisi meri

> abhilasha nahin hai…Pratistha mujhe kyon chhahiye, mujhe to jo milta hai, usi ke bheetar saantvana pane ki shakti chahiye - ” (*Tyagpatra* 63)
>
> “Pramod, am I not needy of help? Wouldn’t I take help from you itself? But why do you wish to lend me your support and place me on a higher class from here? Please excuse me then. I have no such aspiration…Why would I want prestige, I just want the strength to find consolation in what I get-”

Annoyed, Pramod left her to herself. Seventeen long years pass by and then he learnt that Mrinal was dead.

The novelist cares less for the outer structure of the novel, nor is he bothered about the plot. The unraveling of what goes on in the mind and heart of the character is his main concern. He unveils the inscape of his characters, mainly of Mrinal and Pramod.

He is at his best when he probes the human heart. He lays bare the pain that gnaws one from within, the conflict that grips the soul, and the suffering that overwhelms a person. Ill treated by her brother’s wife at a very early age, Mrinal gets acquainted with grief and harshness. What she wanted to cherish most was her emotional tie-up with the brother of her friend Sheila. Condemned for love, she tried to snap all ties and suffered in the process. The novelist is not concerned with the study of neurosis, he rather presents a deep analysis of Mrinal’s subtle feelings, the crisscross of her desires and dreams, and complexities of human emotions.

The work is based on the social condition of the women and the issues originating out of their helpless and miserable condition. Mrunal, in her childhood and youth was tortured by her sister-in-law. She is denied the right to love and as a punishment is married off hurriedly to a middle-aged man. Here too she compromises with her lot and wishes to be faithful to her husband. But

she is turned out of the house as if women have no rights for themselves. The novel presents a very grim and pitiable picture of the status of the women in the Indian society. The novelist considers social discord to be the only cause for Mrunal's tragic end. She is entirely innocent. Barring the attraction of love in her youth never do we find sexual attraction in the character of Mrunal. We do not feel hatred for her even when for the sake of her livelihood she takes refuge of a man outside marriage. Rather she naturally wins our sympathy. This can be attributed to nothing else but the skilled presentation of the novelist. Mrunal's greatness and stature rises even when surrounded by the the sinful world. Providing morality a new humanistic value, the novelist here raises morality above physical relations.

The characterization in the works of Jainendra is not natural as he presents only the bare minimum sketches to his characters and yet they are unforgettable for their conviction, depth and density of presentation. They are individuals, seem unreal and are created to carry out the Gandhian philosophy in a Jainendrain way. They move from the superficial to the subtle levels and bring into focus aspects of man which we normally do not see. His works do not suffer from abundance of characters nor do they have much use for an intricate network of events and episodes. They are essentially character-oriented and the female and revolutionary characters represent his forte. His female characters find more canvas in his works while the male characters are only as supporting figures of the story and are never in the main role. The

intricacies of man woman relationship, their interactions, their mutual attraction and repulsion represent a special feature of his fictional world.

Jainendra has tried his best to convince his readers that he is telling nothing but the truth and thus he falls here in the line with the school of English novelists beginning with Defoe who employ documents, memorandums and letters among others in order to create a sense of verisimilitude and increase the illusion of verifiable fact. Thus in the very beginning of his novel he states:

> Sir M. Dayalji is prant ke chief judge the aur judgi tyagkar idhar kai varshon se Haridwar men virakt jeevan bita rahe the. Unke swargwaas ka samachaar do mahine hue patron men chhapa tha. Peechhe kaagajon men unke hastakshar ke saath ek paandulipi pai gai, jiska sankshipt saar itastah patron men chhap chukka hai. Use ek kahaani hi kahiye, mool lekh angrezi men hai. Usi ka Hindi ultha yahaan diya gaya hai. (*Tyagpatra* 8)
>
> Sir M. Dayalji was the chief judge of this province and was living a solitary life from several years after giving up judgeship. The news of his demise was published some two months back in the dailies. The brief essence of a manuscript with his signature, found after his death has been published here and there. The original document is in English, can be calleda story. The same has been translated here into Hindi.

Thus, *Tyagpatra* imposes upon the readers as nothing but a reproduction of documents fallen, by chance, into the hands of the author. Thereby the novel adds novelty to the writing of its time and an innovative way of presentation that provides curiosity too. The novelist by basing his work on the technique of stream of consciousness and psychoanalytical type, explores the human psyche in *Tyagpatra* through the immortal characters of Pramod and Mrunal.

II

Vrundavanlal Varma (1889-1968), a contemporary of Premchand contributed to Hindi literature for several decades and has more than two dozen

novels to his credit. His important works are *Gadh* Kundhar (1929), *Viraata Ki Padmini* (1936) and *Jhansi Ki Rani* (1946).

Vrunadavanlal Varma achieved great fame for his historical novels because he was the first to bring out good quality historical works in Hindi that associated past incidents with life and with the psyche of the people.

The historical novel *Jhansi Ki Rani* primarily deals with the depiction of valour and sacrifice of Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi and her army in the struggle for achieving *swaraj*. The novelist attempts to provide an honest and historically agreeable story of the great sacrifice of Rani.

The great grandfather of the novelist Deewan Anandrai had laid down his life for Rani Laxmibai in the battle at Mau in 1858. As a child he had heard several tales regarding her valour from his great grandmother and later after her death from his grandmother. Though unclear and vague, the heritage was more based on faith and devotion rather than truth. But a biography of Rani by Parasnis titled *Rani Laxmibai ka Jeevan Charitra* stated facts that contradict and undermine the sacrifice and valour of the Rani. It states:

> …inka shaurya vivashta ki paristhitiyon mein utpann hua tha. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 5)
>
> …her bravery had originated out of a situation of helplessness.

Disagreeing with Parasnis, the novelist states:

> Parasnis ka anveshan kaafi mulyavaan hote hue bhi unka vichar ki rani Jhansi ka prabandh angrejo ki aur se gadar ke jamane mein karti raheen, pardadi aaur dadi ki batlai hui paramparaon ke samne man mein khapta nahin tha. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 5)
>
> The investigation of Parasnis though quite valuable, the suggestion that Rani managed Jhansi on behalf of the British during the revolt does not stand testimony against the traditions narrated by great grandmother and grandmother.

Thus, the novelist takes the onus of providing the due respect and honour that Rani deserves in the struggle for Swaraj by proving the views of Parasnis to be baseless and prejudiced.

The novelist also feels that the novel form was the most appropriate to suit his purpose and a good medium to enthusing flesh and blood on the skeleton of history.

Expressing his resolution of writing a historical novel on Rani Laxmibai that is historically factual and agreeable, the novelist observes:

> Maine nischay kiya ki upanyas likhunga jo itihaas ke rag-reshe se sammat ho aur unke sandarbha mein ho. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 8)
>
> I decided to write such a novel that is in conformity with historical facts and with references.

In the court of Jhansi, the novelist came across official correspondence that took place between some English army officer and the then Lt. Governor in 1858 just after taking control over Jhansi. The novelist in the introduction remarks that these letters further strengthened the novelist's faith in the sacrifice and valour of Rani, and convinced him about the facts that bravery was not the outcome of a situation of helplessness. (*Jhansi ki Rani* 6)

The novelist also came across a *rojnamcha* belonging to Nawab Alibahadur from his grandson. The *rojnamcha* threw light on the important facets of Rani's personality and heroism. It not only revealed the kind of person Nawab Alibahadur and Pir Ali his servant were; but it gave an idea of Rani Laxmibai's dynamism and also of the contemporary society. (*Jhansi ki Rani* 6)

The novelist accidentally came across the details of the other characters that are presented in the novel such as Motibai, Juhi, Durga and Mughal Khan. The novelist affirms the authenticity of these characters and their importance in assisting Rani in her struggle for swaraj.

The theme of the novel is the selfless defiance of Rani in fighting the British and forming a unity among her subjects for the patriotic cause. The struggle was not in isolation but was a mass movement with the common man uniting across a wide cross section of communities along with the traditionally combative communities such as the Rajputs and the Marathas.

The success of Rani Laxmibai in motivating the masses speaks of her vision and of her ability to cast a spell on her subjects. She realized the limitation of the *Varna* system and discarded it to add teeth to her movement of swaraj. For her every able-bodied man and woman of Jhansi was a potential soldier in the fight for *swaraj*. Thus she involves her subjects in the struggle irrespective of their caste and community at a time when the fortune had deserted the country and the fortune of the British was on the rise.

Throwing light on the life, personality and childhood of Rani, the novelist remarks:

> Manu was active, determined and sharp…Because of being less in the company of women she had distanced from shyness and hesitation. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 29)
>
> Manu chapal, hathili, aur bahut paini buddhi ki thi. Striyon ki sangati kam pratit hone ke karan vah laaj sankoch ki ati dabav aur jhijhak se dur hatati gai thi.

She was nicknamed ‘Chabili’ by Baji Rao and others in childhood itself because of her attractive looks. Her views too were unconventional and

differing from the contemporary women. Presenting her unconventional views, he observes:

> Purushon ko purusharth sikhlane ke liye striyon ko malkhamb, kushti, ityadi seekhana hi chahiye. Khoob tej daudna bhi. Nachne gaane se bhi striyon ka swasthya sudharta hai, parantu apne ko mohak bana lena hi to stri ka samast kartvaya nahin hai. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 51)
>
> To teach men perseverance the women should definitely learn *malkhamb* and wrestling. The health of the women becomes good by running fast and by dancing and singing too. But just making oneself attractive is not the only duty of theirs.

Manu's unconventional mode of thinking in the childhood is also observed in her views when she reaches womanhood and took up her struggle to save Jhansi from the British. Her views regarding the caste-system have been presented in the novel wherein she was against the discrimination of caste and inisited all able bodied men and women irrespective of their caste affiliation to train themselves in warfare and join the struggle for swaraj. Understanding the strength in the masses like the peasants and the artisans, she avers:

> Janata asli shakti hai. Mujhko vishwas hai ki vah akshay hai. Chatrapati ne janata ke bharose hi itne bade dilli samrat ko lalkara tha. Rajaon ke bharose nahin. Mavle kunbi kisan the aur ab bhi hain. Unke halon ki mooth mein swarajya aur swatantrata ki lalsa bandhin raheti hai. Yahan ki janata ko bhi aisa hi samajhti hoon. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 101)
>
> Mass is the real strength. I'm confident that it is invinvcible. Chatrapati had challenged the mighty Samrat of Delhi just because of his faith in the masses and not on the basis of his trust on the kings. The people of Malwa were *Kunbis* and farmers and are today too. In their plough is the urge for swarajya and independence. I assume the people of this place to be the same.

The people of Jhansi too are of a fighting spirit. They resent the growing influence of the British and are ready to take up arms for swaraj. They have complete faith in Rani and are ready to lay down their life for her. Reflecting this fighting spirit a resident of Jhansi states:

> Samay aane par Teli-Tamboli bhi talwar-bandook chalavenge. Le aao apni dhal talwar. Main apni dhal talwar laata hoon. Fir dekh lo Jhansi ka paani. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 110)
>
> When time arrives Telis-Tambolis too will take up arms. Bring your sword and shield. I'll bring mine. Then have a taste of Jhansi's valour.

Rani is determined in her mission. She, with Lord Krishna as a witness, has taken up the task of acquiring swaraj even if none in Hindustan takes up the pious task. She is ready to take up this task even if she has to sacrifice everything of hers. She is confident that even if she fails in delivering her task, the flow of swaraj that she has furthered would be eternal. For her, her subjects are everything and the satisfaction of her subjects supporting her is the utmost. Thus the subjects have to be bonded with the slogan of swaraj. Her conviction is that the British can destroy the kings of Hindustan but not the people. She dreams of the day when leading these very people she will hoist the flag of swaraj.

She has even set up an intelligence wing that spy on the British and their activities. Rani's associates are in a hurry to begin the rebellion against the British. But Rani wants to wait for an appropriate opportunity to strike. Advising them to be patient, Rani avers:

> Abhi nahin. Orcha, Ajaygadh aur Chhatarpur ke raja balak hain. Rjyon ka prabandh par angrejon ki chhap hai. Iske sivay kranti ka lagga lagvate hi daaku aur batmar badh jaayegi. Hamari jananta hi in upadravo se pidit hogi. Jab tak hamare paas majboot sena nahin ho jaati tab tak hum logon ko aarambh nahin karma chahiye. Angrejon ko parast karne ke saath-saath in janpidakon ka bhi to daman karna padega, anyatha janata ka kshobh angrjon ke sir se hatkar hum logon ke sir aavega. Hindustani sainikon ko apnane ka kram jaari rakhana chahiye. Jab man bhar jaave, tab haan kahi jaavegi. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 153)
>
> Not now, Orcha, Ajaygadh and Chatarpur's rulers are minor. These states are managed by the British. Besides with the declaration of the revolt the dacoits and the thieves would become active. Our people would be the victims of this revolt. We shouldn't begin unless we have a strong army. Apart from

> defeating the British we have to suppress these elements too. Or else the unhappiness of the mass would be diverted from the British towards us. We should continue accepting the Hindustani armymen. Only when I am completely satisfied will the consent to attack be given.

These words of Rani not only reveal her shrewd strategies for the achieving swaraj but also her concern for her subjects as well as the neighbouring states. The subjects too reciprocate her love and concern. Thus the love and respect of the people of Jhansi for Rani too has no bounds. They worship her as a goddess.

The novel contains lengthy descriptions revealing Rani's warfare skills, the preparations before the war and her team work that made her achieve the impossible. Thus the first task she takes up after taking up the reins of Jhansi is to bring peace and maintain law and order. The thieves and dacoits are brought under control. Her achievement is her ability to make optimum use of the very limited resources she has at her disposal. She does not just depend on the traditionally combative communities for her army but trains and inducts all the able-bodied men and women. Sundar, Mundar and Kashi are her most trusted assistants. Such magical influence does she have even on the dacoits and plunderers that Kunwar Sagar Singh, a notorius dacoit gives up the evil path and joins the army of Jhansi along with his gang. In the same manner the backward communities too join hands with her and add teeth to her force. She has the vision of her Jhansi that is free from caste bias and strong. Unhappy with the prevailing caste descimination in the contemporary society, she exclaims:

> Hamare desh men oonch-neech ka bhed na hota to kitna achha hota. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 224)

> How good it would be if there was no discrimination of high and low in our society.

Keeping the futuristic interests of Jhansi in mind she desires that selected people from all the castes should be taught to fire canons. Rani includes each and every segment of the society of Jhansi in her struggle for swaraj and makes it a mass movement in a true sense. Even women who were earlier unknown to yielding weapons take up arms against the British and put their entire might for the struggle for swaraj. Raising the moral of the women, Rani Laxmibai observes:

> Do char din bheetar hi apni Jhansi ke upar goro ka prahar honewala hai. Tumme se anek yuddhavidhya seekh gai hain. Jo jis kaarya ko kar sake, vah us karya ko haath men le. Ladnevale ke paas gola, barood khana paani itiyadi theek samay par pahunchta rehana chahiye. Aavashyakta padne par hathiyar bhi chalaenage. Tum me se koi meri behan ke barabar ho, koi mata ke saman. Apne baap ki, apne sasur ki, apne pati ki, apne bhai ki laaj tumhare haath men hain. Aisa kaam karna jinse purkhon ko kirti milen.
> (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 240)
>
> Within two or four days our Jhansi would be attacked by the British. Many of you have mastered the art of warfare. Take up the charge of whatever you can perform. The soldiers should be supplied with ammunition, food water etc. in time. If need arises you will also have to take up arms. Of you some are like my sister, some like my mother. The honour of your father, your father-in-law, your husband, your brother lies in your hands. Do such deeds that bring honour to the name of your ancestors.

Her commitment to swaraj inspires the women and the Pathans to even lay down their lives for Jhansi. Reflecting confidence and patriotism Motibai remarks:

> Sarkar mujhko aur meri sanginiyon ko alag morche diye jayen aur fir dekha jaaye ki swaraj ki ladai ke liye Jhansi ki striyan akele kya kar sakti hain. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 272)
>
> Sarkar, I and my female soldiers should be given separate fronts. Then just watch what the women of Jhansi alone can do in the fight for swaraj.

The Pathans who were given refuge in Jhansi too are ready to lay down their lives for this just cause. Gulmuhammad, the Sardar of the Pathans vows:

> …Huzoor am na bahut samajhta hai aur na bahut sonata hai. Sirf inta araj hai ki am log Jhansi ki mitti me milega aur bahist lega. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 272)
>
> …Huzoor neither do I understand much nor do I listen much. The only desire is that we become one with the soil of Jhansi and achieve martyrdom.

The character of Rani Laxmibai dominates the novel. The secondary character of this novel is the legendry freedom fighter Tantya Tope who moves about all over India and gathers significant information regarding the political conditions prevalent in other states. He has secretly visited Awadh, Gwalior, Punjab, places in Maharashtra and South India. But Jhansi falls not because General Rose's army was more powerful than that of Rani's but because of the betrayal by Pir Ali and Deewan Dulhaju.

The novel also depicts the excess committed by the British army on the people of Jhansi after taking over the fort. Innumerable houses were razed down. Children, youth and the aged were shot at. Loot and plunder at a large scale took place. Piles of dead bodies were formed. Analysing the reasons responsible for the defeat, the novelist avers:

> Tantya sarikhe utkrust Senapati ke hote hue bhi sena ka prabandh avyavasthit tha. Kaaran Tantya ka ek bhavgat dosh tha. Vah tha Rao sahib ho apne tan man ka sampoorna swami manna aur apne sainikon ka vah atyant snehbhajan tha, parantu isse sena ki anushashanheenta ki poorti nahin ho sakti thi. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 297)
>
> Inspite of an able general like Tantya Tope the army was unorganized. The reason being the flaw in Tantya's nature – that is of accepting Rao sahib as his mentor and forgiving the addictions of his soldiers. He was very dear to Rao Saheb and the soldiers, but this did not compensate for the indiscipline of the army.

Another drawback of the rebels led by the Peshwa against the Brtitish was that they turned euphoric even on small successes. Instead of preparing for next offensive after capturing Gwalior, they begin indulging in lengthy celebrations. The novelist delineates:

> Gwalior ka gaayan-vaadan shatabdiyon se prasiddh raha hai. Isliye uska akhand upyog kiya jaane laga. Nrutya aur gaayan se din aur raat ot prot ho gaye…Kavi sammelan aur mushaire bhi hue jinme kavi kalpana ne shabdon ke pul baandh baandh kar, zameen aasman ek kar diye. Koi Peswa ki tulna Ramchandraji ke saath kar raha tha aur koi Indra ke saath. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 315)
>
> Songs and music of Gwalior are popular since centuries. Thus they were fully utilized. Days and nights got involved in dance and music…Kavi sammelan and mushairas were held in which the poetic imagination at its best was presented. Some compared Peshwa to Ramchandraji and some to Indra.

In fact it is Rani who understands the political and warfare strategies better than any other leader of that time. She even visualizes the outcome of the current policies and strategies of Tantya Tope. As a last attempt to bring round the rebels Rani advises Peshwa:

> Kayda barateia. Kile men band hokar ladne ki baat mat sochiye. Angreji fauj ko aage badhkar saamna kijiye. Aur sabse pratham Scindia ki is saina ko apne sardaron men baatkar kada anushasan jari kar dijiye.
> (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 319)
>
> Maintain law and order. Don't think of facing the British from within the fort. Face the British army by moving ahead and charging at them. And the foremost of all, enforce strict discipline by dividing the Scindia's army among your Sardars.

But the Peshwa thinks differently. He does not heed to the advice of Rani Laxmibai nor does he agree to her views. He believes that the time spent on the celebrations and feeding the Brahmins is not a waste of time, but something equally important as fighting for swaraj. Rather the Peshwa believes that feeding the Brahmins and acquiring their blessings would be instrumental in achieving swaraj. Clarifying his stand, he remarks:

> Is samay bhi kuch avashyak kaam hi ho raha hai. Dharma ki neev par hi sab kuch tikta hai. Dharma hi vijay ka karan hota hai. Isliye dharma karaya ja raha hai. Brahman bhojan aur dakshina ke liye umde chale aa rahen hai. Iska aashirwaad kya vifal jayega. (*Jhansi Ki Rani* 319-20)
>
> At present too some necessary work is being done. Everything is based on the foundation of dharma. Dharma is cause of victory. Thus the Dharma is

> being done. Brahmins are being fed. They will bless us. Brahmins from far off are arriving for food and *dakshina*. Will these blessings go in vain?

Peshwa's inaction and content, celebrations and slackness prove to be disastrous for the rebels. The over confidence, poor understanding of the situation, complacence of the Peshwa and the limitations of Tantya Tope ruin all the achievements of Rani and help the British in taking control of Jhansi. To the conclusion of the novel is the tragic death of Rani fighting valiantly the British forces and achieving martyrdom. But the Rani remained a tremendously inspirational figure upto the very end, who believes in herself and laid down her life for *swarajya*.

The historical novel not only highlights the profound sacrifice of Rani Laxmibai but also attempts to depict authentically the period of the first rebellion for independence.

Though Vrindavan Lal Varma began his writing career in the age of Premchand, he continues contributing for a long period even much after. But he stuck to his bastion of writing historical novels through out his career, consequently earning the tag of a historical novelist.

The publication of Jainendra's *Tyagpatra* was an announcement of departure from the narrative style of fiction writing. Premchand wrote his fiction mainly about rural India whereas Jainendra chose his stories from the new emerging educated middle class. Premchand's realm consisted chiefly of the external social and political situations and traditions causing conflict and misery in life of people whereas Jainendra took up internal psychological conflicts emerging due to the changes taking place in society.

The age after Premchand remains entirely dominated by Jainendra upto the Indian independence and even much later till the seventies. Jainendra had proximity with Premchand and was presented to the readers by Premchand as his successor. Yet, he did not imbibe much of Premchand's influence either in content or in the craft of story-telling. Jainendra's thematic content adopts the subjective world and the mysterious goings on within the inmost recesses of human mind as field. He brought a change in the very conception of structure. Premchand conceived of plot in terms of logical continuities, in terms of relation of cause and effect, in terms of a particular consequent under a given set of antecedents. Chronology dominates Premchand with action or plot as an organizing factor in it. But Jainendra models his novel on the operative character of consciousness as such in *Tyagpatra*. Not action but psychology and the subjective aspect of experience controls form and maintain unity in the novels of Jainendra.

Another distinct characteristis is in the comprehensiveness of the writing. While Premchand's novels are detailed and comprehensive in depicting the contemporary society and its concerns, Jainenedra's writings are precise and dealing not with the entire gamut of issues of the age but only the ones that affect the psyche. Thus, a clear and subtle growth is observed in the Hindi novels with the change of age from Premchand to the post-Premchand one. With introduction and increase of psychological and psychoanalytical knowledge and an upsurge of individuality in society, the writing too reflects these characteristics.

CHAPTER –V
INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL – THE BEGINING

The English language was transplanted into India because East India Company, soon after establishing their rule in India, began to feel a communication gap between the British rulers and the natives. In order to solve the communication problem, which was a major hindrance in an alien land, consequently, Charles Grant, one of the directors of East India Company, pleaded for the adoption of the English language in 1792. Later on after a gap of fortythree years, the English language was adopted in 1835 by a brief resolution of the Governor General in council for the promotion of the European literature and Science among the natives of India. India witnessed a beginning of a new era with the announcement of Lord William Bentick to impart the Indians the knowledge of English literature and Science through the medium of English. In the mid nineteenth century, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who had initiated social reform programmes and in the process, favoured the English language for spreading the wealth of information and culture available in British publications. Roy, a master of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic languages, felt that all renaissance knowledge was compiled mainly in the European languages.

At first the Indians reacted with suspicion towards the English language, but later on welcomed it with open arms. English language was granted a special place in India. The initial requirement of the Indian writing in English was the English knowing people. Various factors contributed in the creation of

a mass expressing itself in Englsih. One of the major factors was the introduction of the English education in India. Despite suspicion from a section of society that English education was being introduced to create a class of clerks and sycophants who will consequently harm the social and cultural fabric of India, it encouraged the cultivation and mastery of English as a language.

Gradually more and more people came in contact of English language and literature. The nineteenth century intellectuals began to question the orthodox prejudices, dogmas and superstitions that prevailed in India. The impact of Western learning gave a new impetus to Indian renaissance. Indian society underwent a metamorphosis. The revival of Indian classical learning and the introduction and the study of European arts and sciences gave rise to an unprecedented awakening in India. For the first time in India, a middle class of intellectuals began to emerge from the feudal society, giving rise to intense nationalism, during which the Indians struggled to articulate their passionate thoughts and feelings through whatever means were available to them. Writers like Bankimchandra and Saratchandra Chaterjee, caught up in the provincial patriotism, revived the regional languages, others believing that the English rule had come to stay studied and used the language of the rulers, giving rise to a new genre of Indian Writing in English, initially termed as Indo-Anglian literature.

In India the renaissance did not appear in the sense of revival alone. The consciousness of the great Sanskrit heritage, the revival of classical learning -

largely the works of foreign scholars was only one aspect of the new change that appeared on the Indian scene in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The main effort of the Indian renaissance was the effort to create the actual life that existed in the West. Indo-Anglian literarture was born out of instinct of imitation. Thus, when the writers started to write; the Western influence was evident. There works were directly or indirectly inspired by the English writers. The educated Indian class attempted to imitate Western techniques and literary forms. Western education that was imparted to the Indians through English in the educational institutions founded all over the country, had also a far reaching influence on these developments. If the progressive steps taken by the missionaries and officials resulted in an overhaul of antiquated education, aims, methods, materials and tools; Western education turned the minds of the Indians inside out. It removed the mental blocks and promoted in them a new integral outlook. The transmission of modern scientific and sociological ideas made the Indians aware of the blessings of materialism and social organizations, of the infinite value of democracy as a way of life and of reason as an instrument of analysis and critical inquiry as the champion of free and independent thinking. The awakened Indian started expressing himself in all Western literary forms; especially in the novel.

The other side of Renaissance has a diffeent version. Among the German Indologists, Max Mueller, in his *India: What can it Teach Us?*, locating Renaissance in India and Sanskrit literature, states:

> I believe that it will be found out that the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries were the age of literary renaissance in India. That Kalidas

> and Bharvi were famous that time, we know from the evidence of inscriptions. We know that in the sixth century the fame of Indian Literature had reached Persia, and that the king of Persia, Khosru Noshirvan (reigned 531-579 A.D.), sent his physician, Burzoi, to India, in order to translate the fables of Panchatantra or rather their original, from Sanskrit into *Pahlavi*. The famous 'Nine Gems', or 'the nine classics', as we should say have been referred in part, to the same age, and I doubt whether we shall be able to assign a much earlier date to anything we possess of Sanskrit literature, excepting always the Vedic and Buddhistic writings.

Going by Max Mueller's views, the Indian Renaissance was directly related to the Vedic and Buddhist literature. It can be concluded from the views of Max Mueller that the Indian Renaissance took place much before, at least two thousand years before the European, Italian or English Renaissance. Thus Avadhesh Kumar Singh in *Indian Renaissance Literature* remarks:

> The significant thing is that Max Mueller was speaking of learning from India in 1882, almost five decades after T.B. Macaulay and his bother-in-law Charles Travelyan had rejected Indian knowledge, leave aside the question of learning from it. (*Indian Renaissance Literature* Preface: Reconsidering Indian Renaissance 22)

Through the efforts of the British and the support of groups of educated Indians, the roots of the English language were firmly fixed on the Indian soil. But the fact that English is a foreign language persisted and initial Indian writers in English did face flak for their efforts in writing in English.

India had a richer potential for the narrative tradition form than the West because of the Indians' gift for story-telling which goes back to the *Rigveda* and the *Upanishads*. *The Thirty Two Stories of the Throne* relating to the King Vikramaditya and Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara* are perhaps the most popular in Sanskrit as well as the regional languages. What is striking is that so much

of contemporary social reality goes into these stories. Thus the modern Indian writer is an heir to a rich cultural past merging into the corridors of time. M. K. Naik, about the modern Indian English writer states:

> He is a tree, with its roots nurtured in the Indian soil and its branches opening out to breathe the winds that blow from a Western sky. (*Mulk Raj Anand* p 9)

The novel of the Indian Writing in English becomes conspicuous in the ssecond half of the nineteenth century. The claimants for the first Indian novel in English are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) and Lal Behari Dey's *Govind Samant* (1876). Raj Lakshmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Toru Dutt's *Bianca* (1878), Kali Krishna Lahiri's *Roshinara* (1881) and H. Dutt's *Bijoy Chand* (1888). Regarding these works, K. R. Srinivasan Iyengar remarks:

> These novels, written in English, have for us today no more than an antiquarian or historical interest. (*Indian Writing in English* 315)

I

Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta* (1874) is the first important Indian novel to appear in English. The original edition of *Govind Samanta* bore the title *Govinda Samanta, or, the History of a Bengal Raiyat*, while the edition of 1908 published by Macmillaan, London was entitled *Bengal Peasant Life*. The scene of the novel is Burdwan district during 1850-75 and the author in his prefatory note makes direct statement on what the reader should and should not expect in the work. For e.g., he should expect here 'a plain and unvarnished tale of a plain peasant living in this plain country of Bengal'. (*Govind Samanta*)

Govinda Samanta is realistic story poignantly told, without any consciously developed form or plot that goes on and on without a pause or break. As the subtitle speaks, it is a story of a Bengali raiyat, Govinda Samanta, the son of Badan Samanta of Kanchanpur, a village in Burdwan. The Samants are a typical joint family of rural Bengal and Badan lives with his mother Alanga, his wife Sundari and his brothers Kalamanik and Gayaram whose wife is Aduri. The novel is a chain of many events and incidents extending from the birth of Govinda Samanta to his death. There are marriages, childbirths, funerals and festivals, all most vividly and colourfully described. One of the most important events in the family history is the sudden death of Gayaram by snakebite, leaving his wife Aduri a widow. She suffers as did all the widows in those days, but her sufferings and the death of Gayaram himself were only part of the scheme of things which the rural society had learnt to live with through the ages and accept passively. Similarly, Malati, the daughter of Badan, suffers under her mother-in-law. Madhawwa, the husband, is almost a fatalist and he rules out the idea of their living away from his mother. He observes:

> No, no, separation is impossible. I will speak to mother and you must try and get on with her. It is neither your doing nor mother's doing, it is written on the forehead. We cannot escape the decree of fate. (*Govinda Samanta* 20)

The irate mother in her turn protests all at once that she would get a 'better and more thankful wife'. Govinda Samanta is betrothed to Dhamani. Aduri, the widow, goes on a holy pilgrimage with Alanga and two others. Alanga dies during the pilgrimage and Aduri is now called to join the mendicant order, "wanders about the country in the company of her 'pious

lover', Prem Bhakta". Govinda clashes with the Zamindar of Kanchanpur who is 'A Bengal Tiger' when the latter forces his *raiyat* to make the customary contribution *mathot* for the wedding of his son. Kalamanik too revolts against the Zamindar. Madhawa revolts against Mr. Murray, the indigo planter, and both of them lose their lives in the encounters that follow. Finally, an epidemic in 1870 claims countless lives, and an attack of this disease leaves Govinda Samanta utterly weak and prostrate. The hero braves trial after trial, but as misfortunes come in terrible succession, he succumbs to ill-health and suffering.

Thus *Govinda Samanta* is a tale, with a well-developed form. There are description of the food, dress, pastimes, social and religious customs, expressions of endearments, terms of vituperation, etc., and they help us a great deal about institutions, interpersonal relations, attitudes and values relating to that period. *Govinda Samanta* is full of such pictures and accounts. It tells us about the '*ghataks*', or matchmakers, the marriages, festivities with their *haridra*, the *chandimandap*, the *amudhabhojana*, the *andarmahal*, *rangmahals*, the horrors of *Sati*, the *haats* or the weekly markets, the bathing tanks and their pastoral scenes. It is one of the few novels of that period which gives us authentic ethnographical information. It is so rich in its ethnographical description that it takes on the shape of a saga, almost an epic of rural Inida.

Like *The Coverly Papers* and *Robinson Crusoe*, *Govind Samanta* too marks the birth of the new democratic spirit which compels the writer to turn his attention to the individual life and individual character in relation to their

environment and sets the seal of literary approval on heroes of economic individualism as did the works of Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Daniel Defoe.

The historical importance of Lal Behari Day's work is from the point of view of the rise of the novel in India exactly similar to that of Defoe and Richardson for it brought into being with equal suddenness and completeness the formal realism of the novel genre in this country. It also marks the transition from romance to realism in Indian creative writing, a transition which was logical consequence of the great socio-economic changes taking place during that period. Besides realism it marks the rise of individualism both in the life and literature of the country as Kalamanik and Govinda Samanta react against the established codes and practices of society and militate against them to the point of martyrdom, typify the rise of individualism and the struggle of man for economic freedom. By depicting the scene of the emergence of the individualist social order as against the traditional economic and social order the author is championing the cause of the heroes of economic individualism.

The concluding pages of the novel suggest the readers of the dark days to come, of the calamitous famine which ruins, degrades and crushes to death spirited men like Govinda Samanta. The fate of Govinda Samanta was the fate of every Bengali raiyat or of every Indian raiyat and the novel fills us with the awareness of the sad lot of the Indian raiyat and of the predicament of man in a world surrounded by inimical forces. Its design is that of a poignant human tale

which pictures the helplessness of the individual against an established order as well as the greatness of the human spirit which battles against evil.

The language of the novel is in harmony with the 'plain unvarnished tale of a plain peasant living in this plain country of Bengal'. It is not that the author is unaware of the Bengali peasants speaking English better than that spoken by most of the uneducated English peasants. In the very first chapter the author suggests regarding the usage of words:

> …The usage of English words two or three feet long is now the reigning fashion in Calcutta. Young Bengal is now a literary Bombastes Furioso; and Bengalese is Johnsonese run mad. But thinkers may require, as old Sam Johnson said, big words, but we plain country folk, talking of fields, of paddy, of the plough and the harrow have no sublime thoughts, and do not therefore require sublime words. If gentle reader, you have a taste for highly wrought, highly seasoned language, for gorgeous smiles…I advise you to go elsewhere and not to come to this country confectionery. (Lal Behari Day 2)

Expressing his helplessness in the matter the author states:

> If I had translated their talk into the Somersetshire or the Yorkshire dialect, I should have turned them into English and not Bengali peasants. (*Govinda Samanta* 89)

The environment depicted is essentially Indian and the author of the first work of Indian fiction was keenly sensitive to the issues of the condition of the raiyat raised in the work. *Govinda Samanta* is a good beginning for the Indian novel in English as the writer deliberately attempts to make the readers believe that what they are reading is a true account and not a fictitious one and thus bringing the work close to life.

Though *Govinda Samanta* may not satisfy many of the demands of the novel in the strict sense of the term, its claims to the title are by no means poor. Apart from the fact that its appearance marked the birth of a new type of narrative prose fiction in India, it also adopted with studious preciseness the manner and tone of actual biography.

The emergence of women writers during this period is of great significance in the sense that it marks the birth of an era which promises a new deal for the Indian woman. Writers such as Toru Dutt, Mrs Ghosal, Sorabji Cornelia and Krupabai Sathianathan fulfil the task of the emanicipation of the Indian woman from the tyranny of the ages and from the age old cruel customs

II

Toru Dutt earned critical attention as a significant writer. Besides being an eminent poet Toru Dutt (1856-1877) has two novels to her credit with *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* in French and *Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden* (1878) in English published posthumously.

Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden, a romance consisting of eight chapters, is believed to be a self-portrayal and was written during the years 1875-76 when Toru fell ill and was on her death bed and death proving to have triumphed over life. Thus the marvelous piece of work remained incomplete.

Bianca, the central figure of the work is the young and the only surviving daughter of a Spanish gentleman, who has settled in an English village. Her elder sister, Inez has just died. Bianca and her father, the sole

mourners, return home and the sensitive young maid feels all too sharply the contrast between her own sheltered surroundings and the cold damp ground in which her sister is buried. A year after her Inez's death, Mr. Imgram the fiancé of the dead sister offers to marry Bianca, but she just refuses the proposal on the ground of having sisterly affection for him. Lord Moore is deeply in love with her and she is rather coolly received by the widowed mother when she visits his place as she dreads the prospect of her son marrying her. But Moore himself visits Bianca's home and while they are in the garden he kisses her. The author narrating the feelings of Bianca avers:

> A strange feeling of unutterable bliss mingled with pain came upon her; "Oh, if he could kiss me again!"…she buried her face in her hands and wept. Was it for joy or for sorrow? She felt as if she had committed a great sin. It seemed all so strange to her…She sighed and rose; "I must tell father". (*The Bengal Magazine,* 290)

Thus the extract depicts Bianca as a very immature and childish young girl who clings to her father half in love and half in fear and considers it her sacred duty to keep nothing from him. While it makes for a sensitive and delicate portrayal of character, it has been written in a language which has no suggestion of anything Indian or un-English and tends itself beautifully to the gentle humour and pathos inherent in the situation.

Taking the plot further, there arrives a letter from Lord Moore making an offer of marriage to Bianca and the young lady promptly turns down the offer of marriage just to please her father. Not only do we see the same childish character but also the inherent contradiction in the action and desire. Besides we also see how the very shock of sending a letter to Lord Moore rejecting his

proposal proves too much for the tender and delicate young maid. She takes ill and goes into a fit of delirium and Lord Moore himself rides for a doctor. Bianca recovers from her illness and the lovers plight their troth to each other. The next chapter reveals the parting between the lovers when Lord Moore departs for the Crimean War. With this the story comes to an unconcluding end.

The incompleteness and fragmentary nature of the novel is a serious handicap in forming any precise opinion regarding it. From the available portion it can only be concluded that Bianca going into a sudden fit of delirium and recovering all too suddenly is rather unrealistic, typical of the Victorian novelists. Regarding the style and language of the writer, K.S. Ramamurti avers:

> One looks in vain in all the Indo-English novels which were written during the years that followed a description so real and clothed in English so natural and felicitous as to sound almost un-Indian. (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 71)

Toru Dutt's sensibility, her attitude to feminine beauty and grace, though apparently English, is essentially Indian. Though the setting of the novel is an English village with Spanish characters, the novel reveals a quality of mind that is essentially Indian. The English language lends itself to a sensibility in the hands of a young writer who was by no means a conscious experimenter with her medium.

Both *Bianca* and *Le Journal* are self-portrayals of a particular kind. Both Marguerite in the French novel and Bianca in the English novel are some sort of dream projections of the writer herself. K.R.S. Iyengar remarks:

> Marguerite, the French maiden and Bianca, the Spanish maiden, are but abstractions; Toru, their creator is the only reality. (*Indian Writing in English* 58)

One comes across several similarities in the novel such as the attachment between father and daughter in Bianca as well as in Le Journal, the death of Inez being an echo of the death of her own dear sister Aru and the portrayal of the characters of the two heroines – all indicative of the novel being purely autobiographical. The feelings and attitudes reflect not only Toru's individual characteristic but that of an Indian woman in general too. Alfonso Karkala points out:

> Bianca feels it her duty to regard her dead sister's fiancé with affection rather than with love; her father fears a possible charge of husband hunting…" (*Indo-English Literature in the Nineteenth Century* 78)

These attribute help build up the image of an Indian woman in the reader's mind rather than of English or a Spanish woman. Emphasizing the essential Indianness of Toru's literary and aesthetic personality, James Darmesteter observes:

> The daughter of Bengal, so admirably and so strangely gifted, Hindu by race and tradition, an English woman by education, a French woman at heart, poet in English, prose writer in French; who at the age of eighteen made India acquainted with the poets of France in the rhyme of England, who blended in herself three souls and three traditions and died at the age of twenty, in the full bloom of her talent, and the eve of the awakening of her genius presents in the history of literature a phenomenon without parallel. (*Life and Letters of Toru Dutt* 1)

This novel marks a turning point in the development of Indian fiction by giving it a subjective and inward direction. It marks a transition from an objective social and public orientation of the old world to the subjective

individualist and private orientation of life and literature of the years that followed. Evaluating her contribution *The Saturday Review* in England wrote:

> Had George Sand or George Eliot died at the age of twenty one, they would certainly not have left behind them any proof of application or of originality superior to those bequeathed to us by Toru Dutt; and we discover little of merely ephemeral precocity in the attainments of this singular girl. (H. Das, Life 323)

Toru Dutt can be put in the category of the writers of unfulfilled renown like Thomas Gray and John Keats. The Indian novel in English in the pioneering hands of Toru Dutt revealed possibilities.

III

Krupabai Sathianathan (1862-1894) had chosen medical field as her career but had to give it up midway because of her failing health. It was after her death that her two stories were published in the form of books under the titles of *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* (1894) and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (1895). Both these novels tell us only the story of her life in its different phases except that the names are fictional.

Saguna is an autobiographical novel in which a rebellious young girl, in a family recently converted to Christianity, tries to come to terms with change. More poignant is the situation of her mother Radha, an orthodox Hindu child-bride, who must reconcile herself to her Christian identity. Further, the pioneering nineteenth-century classic is an insightful psychological study of two generations of women, as well as an invaluable social document. Desptite its serious concerns, it remains a charming, vibrantly descriptive novel.

The story is of the earlier years of her life in Bombay and gives a vivid picture of her own home which had originally been a Brahmin home, for her

parents were Brahmins who were later converted to Christianity. The novel reflects the deep impact conversion had on Krupabai and her own sensitive reactions to the changes which conversion had brought on the character and the atmosphere of the household. The novel also provides a great deal of information on the Christian community in Gujarat and Maharashtra of the nineteenth century.

Kamala is the story of the author's later life, written mostly from sick bed. It focuses more about the story of her inner life, about the sorrows, conflicts and tribulations which afflicted her. The faithfulness of Krupabai's narrative and the sincerity of her purpose become vividly clear in the story of Kamala, the heroine. The death of Kamala's child is so directly felt that one would know almost without being told that, the pen which described Kamala's sorrow had been dipped in a mother's tears.

Samuel Sathianathan, her husband clarifies that *Kamala* was written in the midst of ill-health and sorrow. He observes:

> The longing for expression was so strong in her that she had thought out some of the chapters whilst in the hospital at Madras, notably the one in which Rukma's husband died of cholera. (*Sketches of Indian Christians* 43)

Saguna does not contain a specific plot. The novel rather begins with the childhood of the protagonist's mother, Radha and the hardships faced in her life, her marriage to Harichandra, Harichandra's conversion from Brahminism to Christianity, and their latter life in the Christianity fold. All these incidents are presented in more like a documentary form rather than a novel.

The characters presented are for serving the purpose of the incidents and do not develop as round characters and keep changing with the incidents. Thus the characters of Radha and Saguna find maximum canvas and yet remain flat upto the conclusion of the novel. There are a couple of minor characters like Lakshmi, Bhasker and others who do not have any siginifiacnt contribution to the work except of assisting the protagonist or her mother in distress. An incident after incident follows and the characters react to the situation they find themselves in till a new incident is presented. This sequence continues till the very end of the novel. The incidents and the characters too do not connect each other in any logical sequence like a plot.

In fact both *Saguna* and *Kamala* are more autobiographical than fictional. Thus K.S. Ramamurti observes:

> They are stories of the author's own life told in a simple and straightforward way without being cast into the framework of a plot and without being dressed up with incidents and characters born of the imagination. (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 78)

These novels are a reflection of the freshness, originality, imagination and shrewd understanding of life and analysis of human nature. Her extra-ordinary sensibility is evident in the following extract from *Kamala*. In a style typical of the novelist, she delineates:

> Yes! It is only on the sick bed we realize fully the bright side of human nature, for nothing is so very effective in removing the dress of human nature as sickness and sorrow. It may only be a word that a person is able to utter with great effort and pain, but it shows the working of the whole mind, points to the depths from which it is uttered. Those that are near forget that they are in this world, they are with the dear one on the borderland of glory, tasting of the heavenly bliss and sharing its immortal joys. (*Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* 34)

The tragedy of writers like Toru and Krupabai was that they died before they had really begun their careers, or had a chance to give full proof of their abilities. Both these writers wrote from their sick beds and yet gave promise of what they might have achieved if they had lived full lives. Their poetic prose, their description of nature, their attempt to create characters, and above all, the desperate struggle of their earnest spirits to express themselves shall remain like bright beacons among the dull, timid, uncreative Indo-English fiction that was written during the century.

III

Shevanthi Bai Nikambe's *Ratnabai* (1895) is with an objective of strengthening her cause and spreading awareness regarding the rights of the weaker sex. A social worker, she dedicated herself to the betterment of the weaker sex against the tyranny and exploitation prevalent in the society during her time.

A slender volume, *Ratnabai* deals with the issue of importance of female literacy. A young girl Ratnabai who is married when she is only nine, lives with her lawyer father when her husband is away in England for higher education. The father decides to send the girl to school but the latter's in-laws oppose the idea tooth and nail. They are shocked and outraged by the very idea of a married girl going to school. However, he succeeds in steering clear all opposition and puts Ratnabai in school but the girl suffers much under her husband's relatives who keep on teasing her and making life miserable for her. At the end of five years, when Ratnabai is in her sixteenth year, her husband

returns from England and finds his wife a woman quite different from the one he expected to find. With all the advantages that a good education has conferred on her, she is now his equal and match and their married life begins on a cheerful and happy note. The novel concludes with the author's own optimism foreseeing a bright future for the country in the hope that all girls whether married, unmarried or widowed should be well educated.

Ratnabai is more a propaganda story than pure fiction, but its appearance was significant since it voiced and espoused the cause of women's education and of the emancipation of the Indian woman.

The growth of women's education and the emancipation of the Indian woman through reformist movements were in themselves significant social phenomena which favoured the rise of the Indian novel in English and they were also the symptoms of the emergence of the individualistic social order which was indispensable to the growth and the development of the novel as a form of literary expression. Regarding the change of the Indian novel in English observed from Toru Dutt to Krupabai Sathianathan, Meena Belliappa observes:

> Both *Ratnabai* and the novels of Mrs. Sathiananthan, while reflecting the birth of the new order and the writers' awareness of the slow unfolding of a new life of the women of the country have also in them a distinct reformist motivation and partly justify the view that the Indian novel in English emerging from the pleasant dilettantism of young Toru Dutt gradually acquired a reformistic basis. (*Indian Women Writers of Fiction in English* 80)

The theme of almost all the novels of the early women witers was the Indian woman, the new woman as the writers saw her emerge. Though the works of these early women writers in Indian Writing in English is not keeping

in tow with the novel form to its contemporary English writing in the West as they lack in plot, characterization and approach but what unites all of these is the theme of the contemporary Indian woman, the new woman who emerged from the dynamic social milieu.

IV

Though the contribution of Swarnakumari Ghosal (1855-1932) is not immense, whatever she produced bears on it the stamp of good writing in English. She has three novels to her credit. They are *The Fatal Garland*, (1910), *An Unfinished Song* (1913), and *An Indian Love Story* (1910).

The Fatal Garland is a historical romance set against the background of the fifteenth century Bengal. Its theme is the rivalry in love between two beautiful and spirited young girls, Shakti Moti and Nirupama. Even as very young girls they are in love with the Prince, and once while playing in the garden a garland which the Prince throws in jest falls around the neck of Shakti Moti leaving Nirupama jealous and frustrated. The incident which leaves Nirupama in tears and grief keeps the flame of love blazing in Shakti's heart for years. But destiny makes Nirupama and not Shakti the wife of Ganesh Dev who when he meets the latter at a fair some years later, thinks that she is already another's wife which she really is not. Shakti Moti is too spirited and jealous to accept the reality of the situation when she learns to her shock that Nirupama is already his wife. She swears revenge. Later Shakti Moti becomes the cause of rivalry between Prince Gai-ud-din and his father Sultan Badsha. Both father and son seek her love, but even when the father is slain and Gai-ud-

din becomes the Sultan, Shakti Moti asks for time from the Prince in the hope that she might still win over Ganesh Dev. But when she finds Ganesh Dev too much of a true Hindu husband to accept the love of another woman, she marries the Sultan. She lives with the Sultan for five years and bears a daughter by him whom she names Gul Bahar. In the conflict that ensues between the Sultan and his nephew Sahe-ud-din, Ganesh Dev supports the latter and this gives an opportunity to Shakti to have her revenge on Ganesh Dev. Ultimately she sacrifices her own life to save that of Ganesh. In the fullness of time Jadav Dev son of Ganesh and Nirupama marries Gul Bahar after becoming a Mussalman and Shakti's curse is fulfilled. The young man becomes Jelal-ud-din, the famous Sultan of Bengal.

The Fatal Garland can be appropriately termed as historical romance rather than a historical novel. It is short and slender, and its dimensions do not warrant a full development of character. Though the characters are slightly drawn, they are powerful and consistent. The character of Shakti Moti certainly leaves an impression, particularly the picture we get of her as a wounded and angered woman who, crushing the faded wreath and striking her chest with clenched fist, vows revenge.

Meena Belliappa too points out the accents of a modern woman observed in the character of Shakti Moti in her argument with the Sanyasin on the question of love, duty and marriage. Yet pointing out again she avers:

> …the possibilities of portraying the new type of woman are not fully exploited. (*Indian Women Writers of Fiction in English* 100)

Taking a realistic approach of the characterization it should also be agreed that in a story set against a medieval background with its emphasis more on fate than on character any attempt to make Shakti Moti more 'modern' in outlook and character should have been unappropriate.

V

Swarnakumari Ghosal's next work *An Unfinished Song* (1913) raises several important issues relating to love, man-woman relationship, marriage, construction of female identity, the impact of West, the East West encounter and nationalism.

Similar to Toru Dutt's *Bianca* and the novels of Krupabai Sathiananthan, *An Unfinished Song* (1913) has an autobiographical touch. It is narrated in first person and the narrator is Moni who is a girl of eight or nine when the story begins. Her name is Mrinalini but they call her Moni. As a very sensitive and spirited young girl, she has felt the slow unconscious blossoming of love in her heart. Love for the father is the greatest and most dominant, but she also felt it in respect of Chotu, a young cousin who is a childhood companion and playmate. Her childhood love for Chotu is a love begotten by a song sung to her by him and this song remains in her heart through the years keeping alive the flame of her first love and lending continuity and meaning to all her feelings and emotions. The song though simple in itself, is meaningful and significant. Moni is haunted by the melody of the lines of the song that go as such:

> "Alas, we met when moon and stars had faded
> Springtime had fled and flowers withered by,

> Garland in hand through the dark night waited…"
> (*An Unfinished Song* 214)

Moni's waiting for someone to complete the unfinished song is symbolic of love waiting for its fulfillment. The entire theme of the novel is Moni waiting for the resolution of the mystery. Thus in the very beginning the novelist delineates:

> Ten years have passed since then. I have known the fiery possessions of youth. Mighty joys and sorrows, ambitions and aspirations have come and gone, yet lingers the memory of the love of my early life, when such happiness was mine as I have never known since because it was unmixed with any sorrow. But life has ever been a vast riddle to me. (*An Unfinished Song*27)

It is this unconscious yearning for love which makes her heart go out for Rammohan Roy. She loves his songs but not the man himself. Once she hears him sing at dinner and when the song is over, she feels that something is left out-that the song is unfinished. She is charmed but satisfied. With the passing of time, however, there is a slow change in her heart and she is no longer annoyed by suggestions of love coming from Mr. Roy. His song has the power to flood her heart with the childhood memories, the memories of Chotu singing the same song. The song of her childhood friend casually sung by Mr. Roy captures her fancy and becomes loosely connected emotional symbol connecting the past with the present and leading to a realization of the ideal she has been yearning for. The song makes her realize all at once the power of love.

It is not only to Moni but also to Mr. Roy that love has become real and understandable and he makes his proposal on an evening when Moni is

gathering flowers in a blossomy garden bathed in an after shower freshness. Love opens out in Moni's heart. But her joy is short-lived. The arrival of Dr. Chowdry brings with it the shocking disclosure of Roy's shady past. The shock proves too much for Moni, though her sisters take it lightly. With her midsummer night's dream vanished, Moni's mind is made up once and for all. Chagrined and frustrated by this unexpected development, Roy accuses her of deceit practiced at his expense, while Moni herself becomes utterly broken-hearted. Thus if it is love waiting for its fulfillment as the underlying theme of the novel, then the arrival of Dr. Chowdry marks what appears to be reversal of the process of fulfillment, for it is he who brings shocking information about Mr. Roy's past.

But the doctor himself becomes the instrument of revival and regeneration as the tender sympathy and concern shown by him makes an impression on Moni and the vase of flowers he puts by her side rouses tender nostalgic feelings in her. The flowers themselves seem to be associated in a queer way with tender memories of Chotu, memories which perpetually feed the deep springs of love in her and she is now in a mood to 'forget and forgive' and decides to marry Roy. But her inability to reply to the letter she receives from Roy leads to a further widening of the rift. Her inability to reply to Roy's letter is not really due to a difference to write in English as it might appear but due to a much deeper reason. Many educated and accomplished young women have suffered from a complex of this kind is borne out by the behaviour of the

woman characters of many Indian novels which appeared in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century.

The break with Roy does not, however, prove the end of Moni's journey in quest of true love. It is just a turning which opens her eyes and helps her see new vistas of fulfillment. She feels more and more drawn to the doctor who has made an impression on her by the tender concern and sympathy he has shown her during her illness. Moni's quest for true love suffers yet another rude shock when she learns that the doctor is engaged to her own sister. Expressing her agony the novelist delineates:

> I thought I had loved the other, but oh, how far short had been that feeling of what controlled me. He had fascinated me with a song, had brought me the pain of past memories. What knew I then of this complete transformation of body and soul? That emotion had been the outcome of a strong sympathy, a deep-rooted faith in love I had thought to be genuine, but when it had been unable to stand the test, the faith that had gone with it, and which I had mistaken for love, had died out. Now even though the feeling I had for this man brought me no happiness, nay, worse, carried me to the very verge of despair itself, yet I had no desire to get away from it, it became on the contrary, more firmly rooted in my being with every fleeting moment. (*An Unfinished Song* 157-58)

The disillusioned young girl now seeks peace and solace for her tormented soul in the company of her father. She commits herself entirely to her father's care, feels so secure, peaceful. But once again there is a thunderbolt. Chotu the boy of her childhood dreams is proposed to her but she reacts to the proposal in a

strange way. Expressing her feelings the novelist delineates:

> I felt like one struck by lightning. I remembered a time when being married to Chotu was the one vision of my youthful life, but now! (*An Unfinished Song* 160)

At a time when her father is being blamed by everyone for allowing his nineteen year old daughter to remain unmarried, Moni writes to him pleading to be allowed to remain a maid. The mysteries of Moni's love, rather the mystery of woman's love, remains a mystery still. The resolution of the mystery as well as the fulfillment of the quest for true love is brought about when Moni's father returns home one day bringing with him a doctor who is proposed for her. All of a sudden, Moni finds herself seated at the piano before she knows it she begins to play the song. Now the song is completed. She hears a new voice completing it. This song was sung by Chotu, by Rammohan Roy and now by Dr. Binoy Krishna, the man who is proposed to her, who completes the song. The mystery of the person who finished the song for her remains unsolved. It is revealed only in the last chapter 'Conclusion' which is not without a trail of romantic sensations. Describing the romantic setting of the night, the novelist delineates:

> It floated like a mellow silver orb in the deep blue ocean of ether. The fragrant *Sepolican* fell around us like a train of meteorites, and the air was filled with beauty and fragrance. The autumn air was mellow and soft, and it flowed into our being and all was love and beauty. (*An Unfinished Song* 216)

The romantic setting in which the veils of disguise and mistaken identity are drawn, has almost a Shakespearean touch in it, reminding us, as it does, of the beautiful night scene in *The Merchant of Venice* when the pairs of young lovers meet, revealing their true identities to one another.

Now Chotu explains why he did not reveal his identity but at the same time accuses Moni of having failed to recognize him. Presenting the discussion between them the novelist observes:

> "…you do not love Chotu, the friend of your childhood, you love the new man, the doctor."
> "And you do not love me, you love the companion of your childhood."
> I thought at one time that individuality disappeared in love, and that love was self-abnegation, but now I find that as light and shade are both required for a landscape, so altercations and demands are also adjuncts of love, and in this way love is kept ever young.
> At any rate in our lives love is full of challenge. "You do not love me" I say mockingly, "You love the companion of your childhood."
> "You do not love me" is the inevitable reply, "You love the man you met at your sister's house."
> I love, I admit, but the question remains, whom?" (*An Unfinished Song* 218-19)

Thus, even with the revelation of identities the mystery of Moni's love seems to remain a mystery still, for she cannot say which Chotu she really loves – the Chotu of her childhood days or the Chotu who has come back to her as Dr. Binoy Krishna. What is true of Moni's love is perhaps true of every woman's love and love itself is always an unfinished song, a song without a beginning and without an end. It begins somewhere, comes floating in the winds of life, and pierces the heart with hopes and fears, with ecstasy and agony.

An Unfinished Song may be characterized as a lyrical novel which has some of the features of the 'Stream of Consciousness' school. The symbolism of the song, the song of Chotu lingering in Moni's memory and consciousness awaiting its completion, dominates the whole novel in a way similar to that in

which the symbolism of the lighthouse dominates Virgina Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

The novel *An Unfinished Song* is an open ended novel. It begins with the beginning of love and ends with the regeneration. The novel ends not with a denouement worked out by a sudden recognition or revelation of identity, but by a slow clearing up of all doubts and mysteries.

The women novelists in the Indo-English literary scene during the quarter century following the publication of *Govinda Samanta* were writers of great promise. The unprecedented emergence of the women writing in English during this period was significant in itself, marking as it did, the birth of a new era which held out for the Indian woman opportunities of a dynamic participation in the social life of the country. A common feature inevitably observed in the writing of these writers of this period is that their theme is invariably the Indian woman, the new woman as the writer saw her emerge in the fast changing social milieu. A striking feature of the novels of these writers is that they are, by and large, like personal memoirs and autobiographical sketches with characteristic emphasis on subjectivity and private experience.

The women writers who wrote during the three decades of the publication of *Govinda Samanta* made a significant contribution to the development of the Indian English novel. The subsequent writers mark a definite change in the genesis of the novel as a genre as they attempted to portray life as they saw it through sketches, romances and pseudo-fictional

works. Among these writers Behramji Malabari and Nagesh Vishwanath pai deserve mention.

VI

Behramji Malabari (1853-1912) was a Parsi born in Gujarat and acquired the title of 'Malabari' as his family traded in sandalwood and spices from the Malabar coast. Though verse was the medium for Malabari's satires to begin with, he changed over to prose when he took to journalism. He was in fact more successful as a satirist in prose than in verse, and even as his verse satires bear a close resemblance to those of the eighteenth century poets, his satirical essays remind us of the essays of Addison, Steele and Goldsmith. Regarding the resemblance of his writings with the journalistic writings, K. S. Ramamurti avers:

> The resemblance becomes particularly significant when we take into account the fact that he was also like Addison and Goldsmith, a pioneer of journalism in India and was perhaps one of the very first to publish the 'periodical essay' in English in India…He was in fact one of Indias leading journalist to portray life as he saw it and to draw satirical pictures of the contemporary social scene such as would open the eyes of the world to its own faults and follies.(*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 114)

He was also a pioneer of the journal and the periodical essay in India, he sought to portray life as he saw it in the style of a neutral observer, he made an equally effective use of irony and humour in his satires and above all, he presented his essays in a fictional garb. The importance of his essays can be judged from the fact that when his essays were collected and published in volumes entitled *Gujarat and Gujaratis* (1882) and *The Indian Eye on English Life* they turned out to "pseudo-fictional works as valuable and interesting as

The *Coverley Papers* and *The Citizen of the World*." (*Rise of the Indian Novel In English* 116) These pseudo-fictional works were forerunners of the Indian novel in English in the nineteenth century in the same way as the works of Addison and Goldsmith were the forerunners of the English novel in the Eighteenth century.

This is, in fact, yet another factor which strengthens the view that all the literary conditions that operated in eighteenth century England and favoured the rise of the novel were not different from those which operated in nineteenth century India and favoured the emergence of the novel as a literary form in English as well as in all the Indian languages.

His *Gujarat and Gujaratis* is a collection of twenty-six sketches which had originally appeared in the *Bombay Review* periodically. These sketches make for a satirical picture of the social scene in Gujarat in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The 'Introduction' contains an autobiographical note, besides a brief statement of the authors aim and purpose in writing these sketches which he calls "sketches from real life." (*Gujarat and Gujaratis*)

Not only does he present vivid pictures of the towns visited in Gujarat but the sketches relate to the various communities such as the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and the Boras. Besides he presents a very lively picture and interesting pen-portraits of social types, such as the barbers, the money-lender and the lawyer, and also descriptions of certain social institutions like marriages and festivals, domestic scenes and scenes from law courts. He is ruthless in exposing the hollowness and hypocrisy of the Hindu religious heads.

The following extract serves as a suitable illustration in exposing the unscrupulous and selfish religious heads of the day:

> The Vaishnav Maharaj of the Day is a spurious character: for though he may claim to be the lineal descendent and visible incarnation of the protecting deity, he is susceptible perhaps more than ordinary mortals to pain, pleasure, love, hatred and other emotions. Pinch him and he will roar; tickle him and he will grin; gratify his desire, and he will worship you; baulk him of it, and he will put you out of caste! He is a born 'Lord' of ancestors and the Lord knows who, and at a very tender age he lords it over a seraglio of intellectual ladies whose husbands are men of highly liberal marital sentiment. It is a wonder to many how the Maharaj lives in such a princely style. It is thus: The Maharaj has a first rate taxing imagination…for homage by sight Rs 30; for homage by touch Rs 30; for honour of washing the Maharaj's toes Rs 35; …for the bliss of occupying the same room with the Madan Murti (Image of Cupid) Rs 50 to Rs 500…The Maharaj is a very pious man, a week before he dies, he goes to where the rest of us do not that is to Gaulok (Paradise). (*Gujarat and Gujaratis*134-36)

His account of the 'native medicos' and 'the Parsi bone doctor' shows the true comic spirit at work:

> It is the Hakimji's creed that Allah cures fastest those who pay handsomest. His system of medicine is called *Unani* or the Grecian. His doses are not so drastic nor so nauseating as of the Hindu *Vaid*… He sometimes cures by breath , touch or speech. Sometimes he even gives the patient little pieces of paper scribbled upon in mysterious hieroglyphics to be washed in a glass of water and drunk. (*Gujarat and the Gujaratis* 263-65)

Behramji's descriptions of places, people and qeer characters make them come into life in all their crudity, glamour and horror. Sometimes his descriptions are monstrously course and indecorous as in his portrayal of the Marwari and the Hajam (barber).

His *Gujarat and Gujaratis* is replete with delineations which are not only types like the Marwari or the Hajam but also individuals like Shett Jamal Gota. His interview with Colonel Buttercup makes an interesting reading. The

Shett appears before the Colonel with a bottle of liquor which he places at the feet of the latter, stating:

> "Namdar Sirkar Saheb, it is our custom to lay before such feet as yours (Buttercup had left one of his feet on the field of Assaye) the first fruit of the season. Hence the trouble, Lord Saheb, for which give pardon, General Saheb." Buttercup who neither relished the allusion to his absent foot nor the bottle in the presence of the strict Jalap (Collector) affected to be thunderstruck. (*Gujarat and Gujaratis* 277)

These accounts and descriptions, inspired by a genuine concern for a better order even while expressing the ills of a decadent society, make them meaningful and purposeful. These satires have in them not only the irony and humour of Addison and Goldsmith but also the same seriousness and moral purpose. Though Malabari states in his 'Introduction' that his aim is in presenting these sketches is to give an account of the inner life of the Gujaratis, his real subject is India and his real concern for the passing away of the virtues of Indian character. He regrets, indeed, the fact that India's glorious past is fading but welcomes the positive and powerful influences promised by the introduction of western education and the impact of western culture. Sirdar Jogendar Singh points out:

> He was against impatient idealism. He was convinced that the only hope of future progress lies in the slow but sure assimilation of new ideas, requiring unbroken peace, and that the foundation of national life must be laid in the homes of the people. He was not deceived by the first dawn of a renaissance which has dazzled so many honest workers. (*Rambles with a Pilgrim Reformer*)

Malabari, the author of *Gujarat and* Gujaratis, was the first and foremost, a social reformer, a 'pilgrim reformer' as he has called himself. His first concern as a reformer is for the widow in Indian society. No one has dwelt on the tragedy as well as the tragic-comedy of the lot of the widows in India as

he has in the essays he published in *Indian Spectator* in 1884. Depicting concern for the moral and social instability on the condition of the widows in India he, avers:

> …that whereas, the virgin hopes to marry someday, the widow has no hope. The result is that the virgin conducts herself well because it is open to her to obtain a husband some day. But the widow in her desperation, is apt to go wrong, disregarding her finer instincts because she knows she has no chance of remarriage. (*The Life and Life Work of Behramji M.Malabari*, 32)

These passages illustraste the moral earnestness of the writer, his sincerity which seems inseperable from the gift of humour and an unmistakable strain of comic faculty combining with sound moral intentions.

In *The Indian Eye on English Life*, Malabari speaks in the guise of a pilgrim observer rather than that of a pilgrim reformer. Similar to Goldsmith's Chinaman he sets forth to record his impressions of the English people, their institutions, customs and manners in the style of a neutral observer. His writing about the English, not withstanding the queerness of a typically Indian point of view, conatain realism, irony and humour.

The work begins with an interesting account of the writer's journey from Bombay to London followed by his first impression of the London crowd. His reaction to the crowds of women seen in London is essentially Indian. He observes, "After all a women's place is at home rather than in the street." (*The Indian Eye on English Life* 28)

Describing the various social types such as the Postman, the London cab-driver, shop-boys, shop-girls and the "Dear old Bobby", he states:

> What a contrast he is to the stupid, peevish, insolent Patawala in India…If I were a girl, I would prefer a London policeman for my

> knight to any Bond Street merchant, whatever ladies may say to that. (*The Indian Eye on English Life*174)

The *Indian Eye on English Life* has with its fictional interest numerous anecdotes, incidents and personal experiences narrated with vividness, irony, humour and pathos.

The social criticism and characterization in *Gujarat and Gujaratis* and *The Indian Eye on English Life* anticipated the emergence of the modern Indian novel in English. To say the least, this combined the elements most vital to good fiction, namely realism, satire, irony and humour, not to speak of qualities like sympathy, understanding and a liberal and human approach to problems informed by a respect for basic human values and the dignity of man as a man.

Malabari's place in the history of Indian novels in English is, as that of a forerunner comparable to the place which the writers of the Periodical Essays in eighteenth century England have in the history of the English novel. His writings have in them not only the satire, irony and humour and the moral purpose of the *Coverley Papers* and the *Chinese Letters* before they found their palce in the English novel and the immortal creations of Addison and Steele such as *Sir Roger*, *Beau Tibbs* and the *Man in Black* were the forerunners of the characters who appeared in the novels of later times. In a similar way, the social criticism and the characterization of *Gujarat and Gujaratis* and *The Indian Eye on English Life* may very well be said to have anticipated the emergence of the modern Indian novel in English.

It is difficult to assess the nature and magnitude of the influence Malabari had on the Indian writers of fiction in English both in his own time

and on posterity, but it cannot be denied that his prose writings anticipated much that was to follow in the succeeding decades, particularly the fictional and satirical works of writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh and Nirad Chaudhari. It would thus not be an exaggeration to say that Malabari set the pace for the kind of English writing in India which combined the elements most vital to good fiction, namely realism, satire, irony and humour.

VII

A contemporary of Malabari, Nagesh Vishwanath Pai (1860-1920), is basically remembered for his works, *Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* (1894) and *The Angel of Misfortune* (1904). The latter is a narrative poem while the former is a pseudo-fictional work.

Chakmakpore is a fictitious creation of the author though the town as it is pictured could be any town in India. In fact, Chakmakpore is a forerunner of the fictitious towns which provide the setting for the novels of R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Nagarajan and Bhabahni Bhattacharya. These novelists owe their success and popularity in no mean a measure to the settings they have created for their novels and to their ability to take the reader into the charming worlds of their own, be it Malgudi, Kedaram, Kanthapura or Sona Mitti. Each of these little worlds has a personality, an individuality all its own and yet it may be any town anywhere in India and emphasize the essential unity which marks the Indian ethos. The significance of Nagesh Pai's *Sketches* lies in their being the first to place characters in a setting which is at once local and pan-Indian, and

an attempt to make character, action and destiny bound up in a subtle way with the character and spirit of the locale.

The ‘sketches’ of Nagesh Pai are pen-portraits of characters drawn from the different levels of social life in Chakmakpore. They are interesting characters, both types and individuals, and show a very good variety and range of selection. They are realistic portrayals of social types who may be found anywhere in India such as the Beggar, the Street Performer, the Sharp Moneylender, the Coolie and the Street Preacher. Some of them however are peculiar to the place and the setting like the street Vaid, the Pedagogue, the Mithaiwala and the Parsee Girl. Sketches include a few animals and birds too, which are part of the life of Chakmakpore, such as the Pariah Dog, the Crow, the Moorghee and the Cat. There are also a few characters who are too individualistic to be identified with this or that part of India, though one feels that one has met them too often in Indian towns and villages, the Irritable Sahib, the Zealous reformer, the Hindu Nowker and the Pani-Bhat. Even the dog and the cat in Chakmakpore seem to have a certain measure of individuality and unlike Malabari who refers to entire community of pariah dogs as a social menace, Pai describes them with some sympathy and understanding. To Pai the horse, the dog and the crow are not just members of a species but individuals which have a place in the ethos of Chakmakpore and have distinct personalities of their own. Regarding the Moorghee, the domestic hen, the author observes:

> Does an animal predestined for the table know it? I suppose not. If it does, its stoicism is wonderful, for you will never by any chance find it

> melancholy so long as its immediate wants are attended to. (*Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* 159)

In a similar vein describing the Ghatee-Tat (jutka pony) the author avers:

> The pucka-born Ghatee-Tat whose fibre has not been released by a dash of Arabian blood is a very hardy creature. He is not much to look at perhaps…Yet it would be unsafe to infer weakness from this, for the endurance of the plucky animal is phenomenal. In a long race against time, patience, under the most favourable conditions of diet and stabling few animals can hold their own against him…Now some may admire the graceful Arabian, others might give the palm to the splendid race horse of England, but for me the poor whimsical, dimunitive, patient enduring Ghatee pony possesses a peculiar interest, which I do not feel for any other species of the equine race. (*Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* 168-73)

Among the human portrayal, describing the Parsee Girl, the author remarks:

> She is unmistakably pretty and stylish, this fair flower of Iran, this fair worshopper of the sun. She has a good eye for the colour. Her saree in silk is far and away the loveliest thing out on silks… (*Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* 159)

The author is sorry that this girl "in the first blush of youth" and "in the full glory of her charms" is condemned to conceal the "greatest" of her charms under a veil. He is sorrier still that 'eligible young men' do not accept these pretty girls, 'these fair flowers of Iran' such as they are. The author states:

> They (eligible young men) are not insensible to the charms of the fair maidens. Quite the contrary; but they show no eager haste to take them for better or worse unless accompanied with something more substantial and less liable to withering influence of time than mere beauty. (*Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* 21)

The mother-in-law is again an interesting portrayal. Conscious as he is of his writings for the western reader, Pai points out how the mother-in-law in India is a contrast of her counterpart in the West. He writes:

> The Hindu fears no woman. His own lawful partner may, if she is inclined to intimate Mrs. Caudle, give him a bad half-hour now and again, and generally submit to this with the easy good humour and exemplary patience of the husband of that lady. But, as to allowing the maternal parent of his better half a meddle with his affairs, he would never hear of such a thing…The woes of his Aryan brother from the West, therefore, find no sympathetic echo in his heart…To the lucky Hindoo, the mother-in-law is the most amiable being in the world. She rarely ventures to open her lips in his presence. (*Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore*107-108)

But Pai is deft to clarify that the term mother-in-law has a different connotation with reference to the unfortunate young wife in India who has to submit herself to the cruel tyranny of her husband's mother as soon as she enters the wedded state.

The writer also throws light on the problem of begging and mendicancy. Commenting on the existence of real poverty and suffering in India side by side with the most unblushing mendicancy, Pai remarks:

> Nay, in the fullness of his heart he might even give a handful of rice from his own scanty store to a poorer wretch, whom starvation has forced to solicit help even from this charitable pauper. (*Stray Sketches from Chakmakpore* 144)

Pai's *Stray Sketches from Ckakmakpore*, like Malabari's *Gujarat and Gujaratis*, is a forerunner of the Indian novel in English in the sense that it is one of the earliest attempts ever made by Indian writers to produce good readable stuff in English. The sketches have in them many of the elements and features which have given the Indian novel in English its own individual quality, such as lively humour, gentle irony, keen social sense and a sound moral purposefulness. The work also provides an interesting study of man as an individual and as a social animal whom we see in relation to the environment in

which he is placed. All the characters portrayed in these sketches belong to the little world of Chakmakpore and is nothing but India in a microcosm.

By creating the little world of Chakmakpore and peopling it with a variety of characters, by making the place and the people belong to one another inseparably in a regional sense and yet remain pan-Indian in character, Nagesh Pai has anticipated the fictional creation of writers like Narayan, Raja Rao and Nagarajun, namely Malgudi, Kanthapura and Kedaram.

The 'Sketches' of Malabari and Nagesh Vishwanath Pai, mark a distinct stage in the evolution of the Indian novel in English. They mark the rise of individualism in Indian fiction in English and can be said to signify the triumph of realism over romance. But most of the other fictional works in English which appeared during the quarter century that followed the publication of *Govinda Samanta* seem to have retained the characteristics of the tales of old and show a marked predilection for romance rather than for realism.

VIII

. Chakravarti Khetrapal's *Sarala and Hingana* (1895), an illustration of romance, is a piece of prose fiction comprising two different tales, namely *Sarala* and *Hingana.* In the first tale, Sarala is the young girl-wife of Hem Chandra who is a poor dependent of his uncle. Inspired by a strange dream the young man starts on a pilgrimage to Pareshnath Hill where he hopes to get the clue to a treasure trove. Hem's virtousness and strength of character are put to test when Indumati, one of the lady inmates of the ashram makes violent protestations of her love for him. The 'all knowing' *Siddhapurusha* is pleased

by his honesty and purity and blesses him and sends him home with the treasure trove. All ends well. Indumati appears again at the end and she begs permission to pass the rest of her life in the temple which he visits daily. K.S. Ramamurti considers it to be a work of "…poor specimen of prose fiction which tells us a tale too naïve for adult reading." (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 129)

Hingana is another romance, an account of romantic lass, Hingana of the Gonds race who falls in love with Kumar without knowing that he is Prince Kumar Birkeshwar. This is again a poor specimen of prose fiction and it can interest the reader only by some of the vivid descriptions of the pujas and festivals it contains. Even with such descriptions the tales hardly throw any light on the real Bengal life they claim to portray.

The language too is, rather poor and un-English and there are many instances of bad English such as "sceneries" and "it was passed 4 p.m.". But one cannot discredit the writer for flashes of figurative phrases such as, "She (Sarala) looked to him as beautiful as any lotus in that pond." (*Sarala and Hingana: Tales Descriptive of Indian Life* 2)

Summing up the contribution of the novelist it can be said that *Sarala and Hingana* is one of those poor romantic tales which lend support to the view that Indian prose fiction appeared first in tales of romance and adventure before it developed into the novel built on a foundation of realism though this is not altogether true. The appearance of such romances in English marked, however,

a stage of transition from native verse romance to realistic prose fiction in all the Indian languages, including English.

IX

T. Ramkrishna Pillai, the next writer combined the sketches and romances in English during the first few years of the twentieth century, made his contribution through works such as *Early Remininscenes* (1907), *Life in an Indian Village* (1891), *Padmini: an Indian Romance* (1903) and *The Dive for Death: an Indian Romace*.

Saluva, the minister of Venkataraya, the ruler of South India in the novel *Padmini: An Indian Romance* usurps the throne of Chandargiri. The king and his family are put to cruel death, but his second son Srirangaraya is whisked away to safety in a bundle of clothes by the kings trusted washerman. Saluva is madly in love with Padmini, a simple innocent but beautiful village maid who, however, is, stern and consistent in her refusal to accept his offer. Padmini falls in love with Chenappa, the obscure village boy, impressed by his acts of daring heroism. When Chenappa defeats a wrestler of great renown in public wrestling match Padmini throws to him the pearl necklace given to her by Saluva. Both Chenappa and Padmini flee independently to escape the wrath of Saluva and after a long period of mutual yearning and pining meet each other, when both are in disguise. In the meanwhile, Chenappa becomes the head of the village which later shapes into the capital of a kingdom, Chinglepet. Ultimately it is discovered that Chenappa is none other than Sririangaraya, the rightful heir to the throne of Chandragiri and when Saluva flees, he is restored to the throne.

He gives to the British a plot of land to building Fort St. George. Though the British offer to call it Sririangarayapatanam, the king prefers his former name and wants to be named Channapatnam, which later becomes Chennai.

Padmini is full of legends, incredibilities such as dreaming and astrological predictions and with comprehensive accounts of Hindu customs and traditions. There are many observations made by the author on Hindu character. The author states:

> The apprentice for learning the work, has to perform various duties to his master in the way of attending to his daily wants, one of which is to have ready always a sufficient quantity of a leaf called the *betel* and a nut called areca, prepared in a particular manner, and hand them over to chew after meals. These are invariably and extensively used by the Hindus. (*Padmini, an Indian Romance*112)

Such observations are both naïve and misleading and show poverty of imagination as well as of English expression. The long passage of betel chewing is not necessary at all. A mere reference to it would have sufficed and to a western reader an explanation like this would be of little help.

In Dorothy Spencer's annotated *Bibliography of Indian fiction in English*, *Padmini* has been referred to as 'an historical novel, primarily a love story of the seventeenth century, following the fall of the Vijayanagar empire'. According to Dr. K.R.S. Iyengar, the author has attempted to portray "the historical events leading to the great battle of Talikote, which brought to an abrupt end the history of the never to be forgotten Vijayanagar Empire." (*Indian Contribution to English Literature* 173) Bhupal Singh describes it as a work which gathers romantic facts into a story relating to the defeat of the

Hindus at Talikota in 1565, leading to the disruption of the Vijaynagar Empire. It is therefore a romantic tale with a sprinkling of historical events.

X

The Dive for Death: an Indian Romance, is a romance that centres round Devamani, the beautiful daughter of the chieftain of Vellipalayam. The emerald shining in her forehead is pecked away by a trained bird sent by Samban (son of Maran) who is later on challenged by Vijayan, the youth who loves Devmani truly. In the trial of strength that ensues, Vijayan and Samban fight at the edge of a precipice and Vijayan falls into the abyss throwing his beloved into great woe. But years later he reappears as the orphan youth of Madhanpur and the reunion of the lovers takes place.

This is again a story full of legends, inset stories, dreams, astronomical predictions and oracles of frenzied women during festivals like the festival of blood and fire**.** All read like a fairy tale for children and there is little of plot, theme or characterization, consequently making it difficult to be considered as novel in a strict sense.

XI

Like the sketches and romances of T. Ramkrishna Pillai, Bal Krishna contributed to Indian Writing in English through his single work *The Love of Kusuma: An Eastern Love Story* (1910).

The plot of *The Love of Kusuma: An Eastern Love Story* depicts a typical romantic tale of Kusuma, the daughter of Janak, who falls in love with the young and handsome Mohan whom she meets by the side of a lake in the

beautiful plains of Rajagiri in the twilight glow of romantic evening. The young man and the young woman look at each other and part without exchanging a word. They speak no language but the language of the eyes. It has been to them an 'instant of eternity' and they part, pierced to the very depth of their souls by the mysterious but invincible arrows of Cupid. The novelist narrates:

> Your (Mohan's) letter has sunk deep into my (Kusuma's) heart. It is as clear as crystal and as true as truth itself. You are actually repeating my own experiences, for my soul has been always with yours. (*The Love of Kususma: An Eastern Love Story* 19)

Mohan and Kusuma love each other to the point of sickness, though they do not meet each other. In fact they just miss meeting each other when Mohan invites Kususma's father to dinner not actually knowing who he is but having a vague intuitive apprehension of the fact. He believes what he likes to believe and he is right.

Then comes in the villain, Bansi, Kusuma's cousin who has been cherishing a desire to marry his beautiful cousin and who is now annoyed by the intervention of a rival. He tries to scare away his rival but all his threats and intimidations only strengthen the love of Mohan and Kusuma through letters and secret meetings. Then Bansi contrives to get the consent of Kusuma's parents to marry her and makes them hurry through a formal horoscope ceremony. News of this shocks Kusuma who takes ill.

The erring parents do not persist in their error. Realizing their folly, they break their contract with Bansi and send the young lovers to a place of safety across the Rajputana desert. They are waylaid and taken captive by Bansi who

hold's Mohan's life to ransom. The young girl who has shown remarkable courage and fortitude as well as constancy in love in the face of many dangers all along, winces at the ultimatum thrown by the treacherous Bansi. The timely arrival of the parents of both on the scene averts the tragedy of Kusuma yielding to Bansi's threats and the novel ends with Mohan taking his beloved Kusuma in his protecting, possessive embrace. Bhupal Singh observes:

> The author of the novel has in his anxiety to please the West developed his theme in a manner alien to the spirit of Hindu life; This 'Eastern Love Story' is a mass of incidents and characters. He indulges in sermons and homilies in the midst of his story which possesses neither any originality in thought nor beauty of expression. (*A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* 308)

This novel strikes us as an "Incongruous mixture of realism and romance", one which takes us into a world which seems to be lost between the past and the present, the real and the unreal.

Another interesting feature of this work is the contradictory views found regarding its language. The foreward by Victoria Cross is full of praise for the 'good English' used by the novelist while K.S. Ramamurti denounces the same. K.S. Ramamurti avers:

> What is much more intriguing in Victoria Cross's foreword is that it is full of praise for the 'good English' in which the novel has been written while it really abounds in passages such as the ones quoted below which can hardly justify such a claim:
> He consulted with some of his best friends.
> After such heart-rending sorrow, Mohan and Kusuma entered into the ocean of happiness.
> Therefore such a soul only remembers the circumstances of its death, which is left impressed on it at the time of death and which alone shows apparition by drawing the thin matters from the atmosphere. (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 137)

It is quite unfortunate that contemporary British reviewer's should have praised Bal Krishna's English and equally unfortunate that many latter day critics should have judged all the earlier writers of Indian fiction in English on the basis of works like *The Love of Kusuma*. The writers contributing through their sketches and romances made many mediocre and unsuccessful experiments to the activity of novel writing.

XII

Taraknath Ganguli's novel *Swarnalata* (1903) was originally written in Begnali and later translated into English. There are two English versions of the novel, one by Bidhubhushan Mukerjee and another by Edward Thompson. The title of the Edward Thompson's English version of the novel is *The Brothers* and the story centres round two brothers Sasibhusan and Bidhubhusan, sons of Chandresekhar Chattopadayaya, a Brahmin living in a village not far from Krishnanagar. The brothers who are almost models of brotherly love and devotion are separated by the vily tricks played by Pramada, the wife of Sasibhusan, the elder of the two brothers. Sarala, the good natured and loving wife of Bidhu, the younger brother, faces the bitter consequences of the separation with remarkable courage and fortitude particularly after her husband goes to the city leaving her and her child, Gopal. Even the money which Bidhu sends his wife does not reach her, for every money order is received by the unscrupulous Gadadar, brother of Pramada who, while pretending to receive it on behalf of Sarala, keeps it for himself. Sarala and Gopal suffer the bitterest

pangs of poverty and want. Life becomes a perpetual misery to the virtuous young lady and her child. But mother and son share their woes and find their peace and solace in the strength of love which binds them, ever hoping, ever expecting the return of Sasibhusan. Delineating their plight and pathos the novelist remarks:

> How wonderful is the power of love! Gopal did not in the least know why Sarala was crying, but when he saw his mother crying his eyes filled with tears. Sarala at the sight of his weeping face forgot all her troubles and came out carrying him and began to walk about. Gopal raised his head on her shoulder and was quiet. She then tried to make him speak; and in the efforts to make him laugh she laughed herself. (*Swarnalata: A Glimpse into the Indian Inner Home* 17)

There is yet another soul who shares the woes of Sarala and Gopal, and that is Syama, the poor orphan who helps them in a hundred ways. She even saves them from dangers and troubles by her timely warnings and daring actions. Syama is almost an idealized portrait, and yet she is amazingly real and human as is borne out by passages. The novelist observes:

> Syama had this special gift, that she could manage to overhear anything that was anywhere said. She used to go everywhere so soundlessly that no one ever detected her… (*Swarnalata: A Glimpse into the Indian Inner Home*17)

Bidhubhusan who has left his home, wife and child in search of employment finds an interesting companion, Nilkamal, who shares all his hardships and sufferings. The adventurous experiences which befall these two men have in them an element of picturesqueness and they account for much of the irony and the humour in the novel. The companions are separated from each other for a while and poor Nilkamal is in distress but a stroke of good luck brings them together again. Bidhu has now embarked on a new career, having

found a wealthy patron who recognizes his musical and histrionic talents and when Nilkamal joins him again he asks the latter to play the role of Hanuman in one of his performances of *The Ramayana*. Nilkamal is none too happy to appear in the role of Hanuman, the monkey-god, and his unhappiness is so great that he goes to the extent of declaring to the audiences that he is no Hanuman but only Nilkamaml. The novelist narrates:

> "Sir, they have dressed me up as Hanuman by force!" The audience laughed with delight. Nilkamal shouted again, "Don't your honours believe what I say? I can swear it. I am not Hanuman. My name is Nilkamal, my home is at Ramanagar, they have dressed me up as Hanuman by force." The laughter grew more uproarious yet. Nilkamal collapsed in shame. "Son Hanuman!" Rama called. "Who's your Hanuman? If you go calling me *Hanuman, Hanuman,* you'll have trouble!" (*Swarnalata: A Glimpse into the Indian Inner Home* 116)

Nilkamal reminds us of Shakespeare's, Bottom, though when Bottom declares his intention to assure the audience that he is no real lion but only Bottom, the weaver, he is not naïve or foolish like Nilkamal. He speaks not only from an unbounded confidence in his ability to play all roles but also in his anxiety to reassure the gentle ladies that he is no lion.

Nilkamal's plight almost takes a turn for the tragic, for the "Son Hanuman" joke spreads, and the poor man is hunted and jeered by urchins and street boys wherever he goes.

When Bidhu returns home at last as a prosperous gentleman he is greeted with many surprises and new developments both in his own home and in his elder brother's. Sasi his elder brother, is now on the verge of bankruptcy and his wife Pramada, who with her mother has been responsible for all his pecuniary troubles, betrays him by bolting away with all the jewels and cash

left in the house. In his own home Bidhu finds his beloved Sarala bedridden and almost dying. The novel ends on a note of reunion and reconciliation.

This may be considered a good novel from the point of view of both plot and characterization. It has in it many other elements which go to make a good novel such as realism, irony, humour and pathos.

Swarnalata ushered in a new age in the history of Bengali novel. At a time when novels of Bankimchandra were busy traversing the path of colourful history and cloudy romance, Swarnalalta took the readers to down to earth reality. Taraknath Ganguly is a close observer of men and manners, and he has a faculty, which seems to be exclusively his, for working up ordinary material into a highly effective picture.

Another contemporary writer, Rajam Iyer contributed only one novel in English and that too he did not live to complete. It was published as a serial in Prabudha Bharata during the years 1896-98 and it was also printed in his book *Rambles in Vedanta*. It was published as a novel under the title *True Greatness of Vasudeva Sastri* by George Allen and Unwin, London.

XIII

The hero, Vasudeva Sastri, of the work *True Greatness of Vasudeva Sastri*, is a Vedantin who practices the highest kind of stoicism and disinterestedness even while remaining in the fetters of worldly, domestic life. It is an idealized portrait. The novelist avers:

> …a middle-aged man of fair complexion and well proportioned limbs, his face had a calmness and serenity in it, a sweetness and luxuriant cheerfulness like that of a full blown lotus flower which an ancient rishi might have envied…The glory of those eyes, if I may say so, lay not in occasional lighting like flashes, but in their constant and

> continued revelation of the ocean of goodness, love and calmness that dwelt within…He seemed to depend for his happiness on nothing known outside and he was never known to be excited wither by pleasure or by pain and much less get angry. (*True Greatness of Vausdeva Sastri: A Collection of his contribution to Prabudha Bharata* 627-28)

Vasudeva Sastri takes all the blows of misfortune with the serenity of a saint. He stands the supreme test of his strength of mind and character when temptations come to him in the shape of Janaki, the dancing girl of Srirangam. He seems to have been destined to convert both Janaki and Srinivasan, the wayward young prodigal and that seems to be the reason why the experience of finding himself in the bed chamber of the dancing girl befalls him all of a sudden. Every experience which befalls him and every action of his seems to fit into a pattern divinely ordained and this is typical of the average Indian concept of life. The personality of Vasudeva Sastri is that of a true Vedantin, a blend of the mystical and the rational, of the passionate and the serene.

The idea of destiny is the loom on which the novel under discussion has been woven, not so much to preach fatalism or complex philosophy of any kind as to show that everything in the world, every experience has a purpose and meaning and has a place in the scheme of things. In fact, the character of Srinivasan, the misguided son-in-law is intended to be a warning against blind or implicit faith in destiny or fate. Srinivasan who lets his amateurish preoccupation with Vedanta run away with him in contrast to the true vedantin that Vasudev Sastri is. When frustrated by the death of a promising youth like Krishna, he becomes angry, angry with nature, with God, with fate and what else. Thus K.S. Ramamurti remarks:

> His Vedanta is a self-deception, being a superficial understanding of the mysteries of life. (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 153)

Janaki, the dancing girl, is again another instrument of destiny. She comes as a temptation first but ultimately proves a touchstone for both the Vedantins. She becomes too, an agent of that destiny which makes the true vedantin conquer the one who is not, and her agency brings about the regeneration of the agent herself.

There are many other memorable portrayals like Rukmani, the much confounded wife of the vedantin and Lakshmi, an idealized version of her class, a choric commentary on all that happens and does not happen in the world around her. The average lady of the house in a South Indian Brahmin household is a passive but effective presence, more of a chorus than a character, and the only novelist who has attempted to picture her in this light is Rajam Iyer. Throwing light on the character of Vasudeva Sastri, K.S. Ramamurti remarks:

> Our conception of the character and role of Vasudeva Sastri, the protagonist depends much on our understanding of the Indian conception of the role of an individual in the world into which he is cast.
> (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 154)

Expressing similar views on Hinduism M.E. Derrett states:
.

> …individual fulfillment will be achieved through harmony with all things, not through our response in knowing but in being… Each individual is able to fulfill his dharma by fulfilling his particular role in this life and in this way he hopes to rise in his next birth. (*The Modern Indian Novel in English* 45)

The passivity of the characters in Indian fiction can be justified only by the worldview prevalent in the Indan society itself. They wait not always

for succour and reward promised in this life but hope for them in another birth though sometimes the rebirth or regeneration comes even in this life itself. It is not only individuals but even whole societies and communities which wait, wait on and on endlessly, for to wait is to be very Indian. To understand this is to understand the Indian worldview which continues to be at the root of all its literature including what it produces in English.

With these considerations in mind Rajam Iyer's *True Greatness of Vasudeva Sastri* convinces the readers that the apparent shortcomings in the novel are not the shortcomings at all and they are characteristics which have remained in the writings of the writer. Yet it does have the limitations that are evident in the novel of any fiction in its embryonic stage.

The work is over elaborate; there are too many dreams, too many long speeches, too many direct addresses and explanations to the reader. There is too much of poetry and philosophy, too. The language of Rajam Iyer is characteristically oriental and Indian and conveys the same Indian modes of thought and life through a medium he finds most natural and flexible for his purpose.

Rajam Iyer's *True Greatness of Vasudeva Sastri* can go down in the history of Indian English fiction as an authentic work, as a forerunner of the South Indian fiction in English in the sense that it anticipates much that it is praised in the novles of Narayan, Nagarajan and Raja Rao and as a piece of fiction writing which illustrates whatever is and should be peculiarly Indian about the English novels produced in India.

XIV

Madhaviah wrote five novels in English *Satyananda* (1909), *Clarinda* (1915), *Thillai Govindan*, *Muthuminakshi* and *Lieut. Col. Panju*. *Satyananda* (1909) comes first in the chronological order. *Clarinda* is a historical novel in the sense that it narrates the story of Clarinda who was a historical figure.

Clarinda written in English is set in the mid-eigtheenth century. The story is based on a historical figure, a real Clarinda, the widow of a Maratha Brahmin. It tells us the powerful and exciting story of a woman who beginning as a coy, soft-natured young girl, rises to the stature of a great heroine. The theme, therefore, is more personal than historical. Dorothy Spencer delineates:

> She was the widow of a Maharatta Brahmin who had been in the service of the ruler of Tanjore and (she) later became the concubine of an English officer who instructed her in Christian doctrine, and after his death she was baptized at Palamcottah where she later built the first Christian Church in that part of the country. (*Indian Fiction in English: An annotated Bibliography*)

Clarinda is the grand-daughter of Pundit Rao, the Dewan of the Maharaja of Tanjore through his only son Murari Rao, the general, who, when the novel begins, has led an army to crush the Maravas. Pundit Rao, who has the Maharaja completely under his thumb, having unlawfully helped him to the throne, is a virtual dictator in the king's court. At the opening of the novel, we find him swelling with pride and haughtiness on receipt of the news that his son Murari has inflicted a crushing blow to the Maravas, but all his haughty self-importance is shattered to pieces with the arrival of the tragic news that Murari Rao, trapped by the superior skill and strategy of the Maravas, has been hacked to pieces. His cup of misery is full when is informed that Murari's wife who

has just borne a daughter (Clavirunda Bai) has died of shock. The old Dewan breaks down beyond consolation and retires into the forest after putting his orphaned grandchild under the care of the old havildar Ragoji.

The child grows under the loving care of Ragoji. In the meanwhile, Pundit Rao, now a sanyasi in the forest, is met by an Englishman who gives him all the news about Pratap Singh's court and tells him how Pratap Singh feels the absence of the old Dewan. Pundit Rao returns to Tanjore and meets his grandchild, now a vivacious young girl who delights the old man with her lively arguments.

With the retreat of the French and Pratap Singh's victory, the king finds more time to turn his attention to matters domestic. He has a deep and tender concern for Clavirunda Bai and is anxious to see that she is happily married. Madhava, the nephew of Dewan Ramanna Pandit and son of Amatya is proposed to her, but the wily schemer that he is, the dewan rejects the proposal on astrological grounds and ends up by offering to marry the girl herself. Pundit Rao is in a predicament. In the meanwhile, Lyttleton, who is now a close friend of the old man, happens to meet Clavirunda Bai. They are brought together through a small incident when the beautiful young girl is bitten by a snake and the Englishman renders her first aid. The young girl and the English man are drawn to each other but before their attraction and attachment blooms into love; old Pundit Rao dies all of a sudden. Clavirunda Bai is now completely at the mercy of the old Dewan that she is hastened into marrying him. It is from this point that the novel warms up with life and realism.

When Clavirunda Bai enters the household of the Dewan she is just a child-wife and she finds herself surrounded by many hostile forces. The household is dominated by the clever and the scheming Kamala Bai, the widowed sister-in-law of the Dewan who has a powerful hold on the old man. Then there is Ganga Bai, the daughter of the Dewan, and Madhava, son of Amatya who still burns with passion for Clavirunda. The scheming and treacherous Kamala Bai deliberately fans the flame of passion in Madhava and tries to bring them together, her real motive being to expose the innocent and the virtuous young girl to charges of marital infidelity. An attempt is also made to get all her own *Sridhana* transferred to Amatya's son who is to be adopted by the Dewan. In the meanwhile, Madhava's return after a long interval of absence from home causes a new awakening of love in the heart of Clavirunda, for the hot and passionate kisses which Madhava had once forced on her against her will catching her unawares in the dark corridor leading out of the old Dewan's sick room, had affected her in a way which she herself had not realized in her immediate reaction of anger and grief. But the unworthy Madhava seeks her only for gratification of his lustful desires, while his father is scheming to get all her property. The novelist observes:

> Thus it came about that while the thoughtless son sought to pollute and dishonour the poor girl's body and soul for his own pleasure, his heartless father plotted to destroy them for his own profit. (*Clarinda: A Historical Novel* 147)

With the passing away of the Dewan, Amatya assumes full authority all at once and Kamala's retribution begins. A gruesome attempt is made to make Clavirunda a true sati and she is saved in the very last minute by the timely and

heroic intervention of Lyttleton. She lives under the protection of Lyttleton staying in an outhouse with Saradha, her trusted maid. Her subsequent interview with Madhava brings with it a terrible shock and disillusionment; for Madhava makes the unshamed proposal that she can live as his mistress and not as his wife. Clavirunda's argument with Madhava shows her up not as a typical orthodox Hindu woman but as a bold, rational, progressive-minded modern woman. The revulsion that results from Madhava's unashamed proposal makes her decide to hitch her destiny to that of Lyttleton himself who has by now all but converted her to the Christian way of thinking.

Clavirunda marries Lyttleton but she is kept ignorant of the invalidity of the marriage, for Lyttleton has hidden from her the fact that he is already married and that he has been expecting the news of his release from the bonds of an earlier marriage which had turned out to be an unhappy one. Though he hides this with the best of intentions it leaves a scar on Clavirunda's feelings. Bishop Schwartz, the German Bishop before whom they appear, condemn both and they separate but only to unite. Their married life is anything but happy. Frustrated by Clavirunda's persistent refusal to receive and entertain some of his friend's, or playing a good hostess, Lyttleton takes to drinking. He falls ill and is laid up with a severe attack of gout. But during his illness Clavirunda attends on him with such loving care and tenderness, and a devotion characteristic of a Hindu wife that she rises very high in the esteem of Lyttleton and all his friends.

Clavirunda is left alone in the world after Lyttleton's death. She adopts Gopal, Saradha's son and later both she and Gopal are baptized by Bishop Schwartz. Her last days are spent with Christians and people of 'lower castes'. Clavirunda is deeply concerned about the absence of a Protestant church building and supplies the 'desideratum' at her own cost. The church is consecrated by Bishop Schwartz in 1785. Her last years are spent in selfless service and acts of noble and great philanthropy.

Clarinda has a continuity of the central theme, the theme of a young woman's ordeals and tribulations and her heroic battle against evil and hostile forces. The plot of the novel develops step by step. It begins with the helplessness of beauty, innocence and virtue in a world of scheming courtiers and the blossoming of the love of Clarinda which is destined to suffer the rudest shocks of betrayal and disillusionment. The love theme does not end with Clarinda's betrayal by Amatya but develops in yet another direction when the deep seated regard and affection which Clavirunda had once entertained for Lyttleton comes to surface; putting forth new shoots and blossoms of love that has matured with experience. Regarding the maturity of depicting the falling in love for the second time of the heroine in the novel, K.S. Ramamurti avers:

> The love theme has been developed with a naturalness which is rare in much Indian writing, for there is no falling in love at first sight and love blooms only when fed and nourished by circumstances. Once again the experience of love is followed by the experience of disillusionment though this time the disillusionment is brought about not by rude shock of betrayal but by a slow and painful realization of mutual incompatibilities and of a mutual failure to 'understand' each other. (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 163)

The character of Clarinda, the female protagonist has been admirably drawn. It has a steady growth and development. Clarinda suffers and suffers endlessly and in this suffering the character grows. No attempt has been made to idealize her. She is more realistic, worldlier and more 'modern' a woman than is met within most novels in Indian languages even today; the evolution of her character is very natural. She is symbol of the new woman, the woman emancipating herself from the tyranny and cruelty of the ages of asserting her individuality, and moral and spiritual independence against the established order.

The novel depicts the contemporary life of its time, especially the court intrigues, treaties and conquests. It also portrays the domestic life of the Maharatta Brahmins which can be constituted as ethnographic realism in the novel.

The style of the novel is quite natural and graceful. Madhaviah's English has none of the defects or deficiencies of the writers of the tales and romances of the period. He wields a powerful pen and his English, for the most part, does not appear to be strained. An important aspect of the language made use of by the novelist is that it depicts fidelity befitting the native speaker of English and even to those for whom English is not a native language. In all the dialogues involving Indian speakers he has struck the kind of delicate balance between colloquialism and correct English speech but the kind of English which his English characters speak is like that of an Englishman. The novelist makes Lyttleton, an Englishman, speak as such:

> "You know I am not a coward to take fright at a mob like that, and probably you know that I shoot fairly straight. Besides, - Orderly!" cried out Lyttleton in a loud tone…
> "I am not a Lally," said Lyttleton calmly, "but when a helpless girl is being murdered in cold blood, I don't look to the sanctity of the offenders. You may send in your mob, Amatya and I shall soon pacify them myself. (*Clarinda: A Historical Novel*170-71)

The informal tone of the English of Lyttleton is in contrast to the speeches of the characters in most Indian novels in English which are rather artificial and flat.

It is really significant that Madhaviah has shown a clear awareness of the difference between two distinct sensibilities, the Indian and the English, which seek two different modes and tones of speech. This awareness is clearly reflected in the contrast we find between the speeches of Amatya and Patteri on the one hand and Lyttleton on the other, and it is an awareness of this kind which is at the root of all the experimentation with the medium which we find in the novels of the best writers of Indian fiction in English.

The speeches of Clavirunda have a dignity and force which arise from an inherent nobility and strength of character. The taunting replies she gives to Kamalabai and her impassioned answer to Amatya's mean and unashamed proposal that she could be his mistress and not his wife illustrate the point. The novelist delineates:

> "Never," she said bitterly and emphatically. "Your father sought to kill my body for the sake of my caste, and you now seek to kill my body and soul together for your own sensual pleasure, and also perhaps for the same reason, to judge by his instruction to you." (*Clarinda: A Historical Novel* 194)

The imagined story of this unusual woman, who gradually takes control of her life, gives Madhaviah the opportunity to work out some of his favourite

themes: women's education, the issue of sutee and widow-remarriage and the encounter between the Hinduism and Christianity. The cross-cultural, inter-religious relationship which is at the heart of the novel is unusual and of profound interest.

Keeping the development of the novel form in mind, *Clarinda* can be termed as a novel that contributes to the same. Judged by its plot and setting, its characterization, its dialogue and description, *Clarinda* can stand the test of good novel in English. Its merits and excellences measured against its faults claim for it the title of a worthy forerunner of the Indian novel in English.

XV

Thillai Govindan (1916), the next work of the writer, professes to be the memoirs of a South Indian Brahmin brought up in a village and given a university education, who finally, after a career as a government servant, reaffirms his faith in Indian values, valuable for its vignettes of village life, and its information on Brahmin attitudes and values.

Its theme is the middle-class Brahmin life in South India with its trials and tribulations at the material, moral, intellectual and spiritual planes. The moral and spiritual crisis which the male protagonist, Thillai Govindan, passes through were faced by most educated middle class Brahmins of that generation represented by the author himself.

The novel also narrates an interesting story, a story full of incident, action, suspense, pathos, irony and humour in its own unpretentious manner. It abounds in character of great variety and colour. Most of them are recognizable

types and yet have remarkable individual qualities. The characterization has a fine blend of humour, irony and pathos. Seshy, the ugly old widow, granddame Naumy, Thillai Sambasiva Dheekshithar, Vedambal, the stepmother of Govindan, Sundaraam Iyer, the school-master with "his short breath and shorter temper", the "septuagenarian" with his invincible "ferula", Uncle Mahadevan, the members of the local bodies and temple trusts, the lovely and innocent childwife of Govindan all make their brief appearance but compel attention. They are not only recognizable types but recognizable symbols of all that is good and bad in the small society they represent, of the agony and the ecstasy of the life which they are destined to live. Thillai Govindan, the protagonist himself symbolizes the assertion of the individual soul stirring to outgrow and overlap the boundaries of custom and tradition.

The last few chapters make tedious reading, particularly Chapter xvi which "records his political tenets." In a novel which is short in itself, the last few chapters with their long reflections and recordings of the protagonist's excursions into political and philosophical thought are disproportionately long.

The novel also becomes memorable as it abounds in passages that are remarkable for their irony and humour. In one such passage depicting the irony and humour, the novelist describes:

> Promised no hope of recovery by the village physician and himself feeling none, my grandfather (the grandfather of Thillai Govindan, the narrator-protagonist) expressed a strong desire to go through the ceremony of Apath Sansayaam (becoming an ascetic at the last hour when death has become a certainity) or in the other words giving up the world when it has entirely given you up, and you are forced to quit it. (*Thillai Govindan* 23)

In another such passage portraying similar humour and irony, the novelist states:

> Presently he (the schoolmaster) sat up again with the ferula in hand, the action of taking up the cane with the dawn of wakefulness having by long habit become involuntary now, and called out "Govinda". I first thought he was repeating the name of the god Vishnu, but he looked at me and called again, and so I left my place and stood before him. (*Thillai Govindan* 34)

These are some of the illustrations that one comes across in the novels of Madhaviah and portray how the writers found in the English language an excellent medium for their comic sensibilities to operate upon.

Equally humorous and ironical is the incident depicted in the novel of the parliament of the village elders discussing the practice of 'Kothandam' (one of the various forms of cruel punishment administered to erring pupils by the village schoolmasters, the punishment of having the offender hung upside down). The novelist comments:

> Another member spoke of the foolishness of sparing the rod with children and heroically boasted that he has suffered the punishment of *Kothandam* thrice during his school days. "And to no purpose," muttered another and those around him laughed. (*Thillai Govindan* 44)

There are also in the novel a number of passages which reflect the powerful impact made by the English education and the study of western literature on the educated middle classes of the period. The narrator-protagonist describes, for instance, his initiation into the study of the Western literature and the joy which the experience brought him. He notes:

> It was all like a new and beautiful country suddenly thrown open to my (the narrator's) view and my spirit, which in the American's language, had "broken the fetters" delighted to roam over it at its own free will, undisturbed and untrammeled by any scruples. Tyndal, Huxley and Spencer also claimed my time and attention; but this was

> later on, and the brilliant Ingersoll was my god at this period. There were my Vedas and Shastras; and for "pure literature" I read the novels of Reynold's with their exciting illustrations and became familiar with crime and vice. (*Thillai Govindan* 64)

There are several references to many great writers and intellectuals such as Tennyson, Shelley, Dr. Annie Besant, Draper, Ingersoll and others. Thus the novel reflects the influence of the English writers of the West and consequently on the Indian Writing in English.

The work also contains passages portraying the wit of the novelist. In one such passage the novelist states:

> Lawyers are men that hire out their words and anger. The man who in the language of the world 'gives and takes', who longs to please everyone, and hesitates to call a spade a spade because it might hurt the spade's feelings – in short the society man, with his oily tongue and propitiating smile pays a heavy penalty indeed for his popularity. (*Thillai Govindan*122)

In the final analysis, however one is inclined to say that Thillai Govindan has many ingredients of a good novel, that it has the stuff of good fiction in spite of its pseudo-fictional trappings.

XVI

The novelist in the very introduction of the text *Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* (1934) mentions the fact of the date of publication of the novel. He clarifies that though it was written way back in 1915 it could be published only as late as 1934. The delay in its appearance in book form was caused by the legal complications brought about by the differences of opinions between the publisher and the printer. The following extract from contemporary review of this book makes interesting reading. It states:

> What is wanted is not mere imitation novels of the western type but real original production of the indigenous variety, with Indian characters faithfully drawn and fully developed and with original pots scientifically and artistically constructed and bearing reference to the Indian society as it ought to be. We have before us now a book of this description by one who may not be unfamiliar to our readers, Mr. Madhaviah. A striking feature of the book to us is the extraordinary extent to which it has succeeded in being true to life.
> (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p. ii.)

In a similar opinion of *The Indian Review* quoted by the publisher on p. ii, comments:

> The language is pure and simple with a pleasant idiomatic flow showing literary perfection. The hero's chaste life and scrupulous adherence to ideals and subsequent sacrifice are of absorbing interest.
> (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p. ii.)

Lieut. Panju, while presenting a good and exciting story, pictures South Indian middle class life both at he domestic and official levels. K.S. Ramamurti remarks:

> It is a piece of good social criticism which exposes the ills of a social order which British bureaucracy had brought about and yet shows how individual goodness and nobility, whether among the Britishers or among the natives, could always rise above those ills and assert their might and power.
> (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* p.173)

The novel is in two parts- two "books" of about a hundred pages each. The first book tells us about the rise and the fall of Ramnath Dikshithar, the father of Panju, the protagonist while the second part tells us the story of Panju himself. Ramantha Dikshithar, the Head Accountant of the Tinnore Collector's office is the son of Panchanatha Dikshithar, a great scholar who helped Regent Amar Singh to the throne of Tanjore by a daring piece of chicanery. Ramanatha Dikshithar is born to the great scholar through a young girl whom he marries in his sixtieth year as his third wife. After the death of his renowned

father, Ramanatha Dikshithar is brought up by Nondipatti, the clever and worldly wise mother-in-law of Panchanatha Dikshithar. This wily character who has "a hearty contempt for all priestly Brahmans" removes the boy to Tanjore and puts him in the English school there braving criticism and opposition from the orthodox sections of her community. The boy, however, "does not make much headway in English and shows instead a passion for music and a strong partiality for musicians and nautch girls."

Eventually he manages to score through the U.C.S Examination and enters the service of the government under a collector, who is the patron of his father-in-law, then a Tahsildar. The following extract depicts the rise of the career of Ramanatha Dikshithar. It also throws light on the rise of the most English-

educated young men in government jobs in those days. The passage reads as:

> His knowledge of English was poor, but he was a good accountant, and what was more, he became an adept in the art of pleasing his official superiors. While his father-in-law instructed him in the whims and the ways of the Europeans and in the art of pleasing them, retailing for his edification his own and varied experiences, Nondipatti took care that he stood well in the graces of his immediate native superiors. Naturally gifted with a tall handsome person and prepossessing appearance which his dandiacal ways and dress set off to advantage, with pleasing manners, and with the powerful help of ancestral wealth, Ramanatha Dikshithar advanced rapidly in his official career, and in the course of a dozen years became the head-accountant of a collectorate. But for two complaints of having extorted bribes in the name of his official master and patron, he knew he would have been made a Tahsildar by the former collector before he left the district. In refusing his request, the collector had mentioned his poor knowledge of the English language as the chief reason; but Ramanatha Dikshithar knew that it was not the only reason, and determined to be more circumspect in obtaining bribes and perquisites for himself or for his superiors who were glad to profit by his help but did not like to hear it talked about or made the subject of official complaint. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p.10-11)

Ramnatha Dikshithar, thanks to the efforts of Nondipatti and his own, does rise to the position of Tahsildar. Nondipatti lives long enough to hear the good news and her only regret at the time of death is that he is not yet the father of a son. He has been blessed with two daughters but not with a male issue the absence of which is, in orthodox Hindu view, a definite handicap both materially and spiritually. So the dying old lady "conjures him with her last breath to marry another girl forthwith and beget a child to perpetuate his name and family." She always advises his wife Komalam not to stand in the way if he should choose to take another wife for he is left without family ties he would lose himself completely in his growing immoral habits.

Ramanatha Dikshithar is indeed one who leads an immoral life. His weakness for nautch girls and dancing girls is almost proverbial and he has no scruples about receiving bribes both in cash and in kind which help him to live a gay bohemian life. He has a friend, Dandi Narayan Rao, a man from the north whose life seems to be shrouded in mystery and who is an accomplice in Dikshithar's amorous adventures.

The announcement of a grand darbar to be held at Tinnore on the occasion of "the assumption of the title of the Empress of India by Queen Victoria" proves a turning point in Dikshithar's career. He uses all his power and influence to raise large sums of money through forced donations and gets up a very grand show, marked by floral decorations, fireworks and a sort of beauty parade by about five hundred nautch girls. Everything seems to be

going well and in his favour and both the collector and his wife appear to be greatly impresses and pleased. The novelist delineates:

> "This is beautiful, simply beautiful, I have never seen any-thing like it!" exclaimed the collector's wife, where did you get all these flowers and who erected this canopy?"
> "I got flowers, villages whole district, and other districts rail," replied the Tahsildar proudly, "mother pleased, I happy. I planned everything, *pandarams* worked my orders."
> "Pandarams, did you say? What do you mean?"
> "Pandarams, mother," explained the Tehsildar, "Temple servants; *sudras;* make garlands, gods and goddesses."
> The 'mother' was not enlightened and gave it up. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-49)

The collector too is pleased to observe:

> "You have done A-1 today, Tahsildar," said he "and I am very pleased. It has all gone off splendidly." (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p.49)

But the remarks which the collector makes before he leaves do not seem to bode well for the Tehsildar. The novelist states:

> "Are there really so many dancing-girls in Tinnore, Tahsildar?...Where did you get them all?" (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p.49)

The Tahsildar felt most pleased by the remark and he replied with evident pride and pleasure:

> This district, no temple, no dancing girl this night; all come here: honour great Queen Empress. Your honour's durbar. I know all. I got all. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p.49)

The last statement proves a fatal one, and the collector gives him a bit of his mind. Reproaching him, he states:

> I have heard of your amorous peccadillos before, but I didn't know you were quite such a bad lot, Tahsildar. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p.50)

Though Ramanatha Dikshithar is not slow to take the hint from what the collector has spoken, he is not wise. When the odds are against him so badly as to warrant a forced premature retirement, he plays fast and loose with his

official power and position to "make as much hay possible while the sun shines." He does not know how he is hastening his own doom. In the meanwhile, he discusses with his wife Komalam the question of his taking another wife. Komalam's predicament is that of thousands of young ladies of her generation and she submits herself to her lot in sheer helplessness trying to make the best out of her situation, though she does not hesitate to show her husband all the contempt she has for his immoral ways. The novelist states:

> "I feel certain that no child will be born out of my loins hereafter," replied she sadly, "and you may adopt my sister's second son. What guarantee is there that a child will be born if you marry another wife?"
> "All astrologers have unanimously declared that I shall have two wives and at least four children; can astrology be false?"
> "You have not two but thousand, or is it two million wives, and who knows how many children by them?" She said bitterly. "But what care I hereafter? If wed you will, I shall not stand in the way. Only, after all that I have suffered, let me not have to bow and be subject to some strange upstart girl in the house. Wed my cousins daughter, Lakshmi. She is good girl and handsome enough. She will be a sister to me, and I think I shall not feel it so much if it is she." (*Panju: A Modern Indian* p-53)

Remarkable feature about the characterization of Komalam is that the novelist has portrayed her in a more realistic manner than that of women in similar situations. Komalam has not been depicted as the ideal Hindu wife who is willing to please her husband at all costs but as one who, even if she is too weak and helpless to prevent her husband from taking another wife, does not hesitate to call a spade a spade. She typifies the new spirit which makes the Indian woman see her husband as he really is and not as a God to be adored or worshipped. It is interesting to note that the author makes Komalam speak a language which, in contrast to the long involved sentences spoken by many other characters in the novel, has a simplicity and sharpness which are

disarming, reflecting as it does the speaker's clarity of thinking and determination to face things as they really are without giving away any sentimental nonsense whatever.

Lakshmi, the new bride who arrives in the household, is just a child. The

novelist describing her writes:

> Though hardly thirteen she is full-grown and full-blown, and her figure is perfect; only her face still betrays the child; …the eyes indeed are perfectly beautiful, large as the fawn's at love-time, but there is love play in them, and their expression is one of utter innocence and faith, of the wonder and joy of childhood…No, she is not strictly beautiful according to the accepted canons, but there is a nameless charm in her face…and she looks such a pretty picture of innocence, purity and faith that it is a pleasure to behold her and watch her as she gracefully moves among the jasmine bushes in the small garden…softly humming to herself a favourite tune. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-59)

In contrast to the tenderness and the pathos in the description of Lakshmi is the fact that this innocent girl has been married to an immoral debauch in his late fifties.

Ramanantha Dikshithar is meanwhile faced with an additional responsibility. His friend Dandi Narayan Rao who had left for the north had entrusted his wife and "the child in her womb" to his care. He had also taken a promise that in case anything happens to him during his travels, he should look after them. Narayan Rao's premonitions seem to have been well-founded and there is no news of him at all even after a year of his departure. In the meanwhile, cholera which rages in the town and claims the lives of hundreds does not spare the household of Narayan Rao and Puttoo, his dumb servant, is the first fatal victim and Mrs. Narayan Rao is the next. The dying lady, who

sends for Dikshithar, reveals to him that certain startling truths about herself and her husband. Dikshithar is astounded to hear that his Narayan Rao was none other than Nana Saheb, the man who rebelled against the government during the Mutiny. He had been in disguise and now the lady has a 'vision' informing her of his death at the hands of her own revengeful Rajput brothers. Before the lady breathes her last, she takes a promise from Dikshithar that he will look after her child Balaji and that he will conceal from the child the truth about his father. She leaves all her property too in his charge to be used for the upbringing of the child.

The purpose for which Dikshithar has taken a second wife is fulfilled at last. Lakshmi gives birth to a male child, but the birth of the child takes place at a most unhappy hour when Ramnatha Dikshithar has been arrested and imprisoned on very grave charges of bribery and misuse of official power and position. To add to his distress, the bank in which he has kept most of his savings as well as the amount realized by the sale of Narayan Rao's properties crashes, leaving him almost penniless. Dark days follow and after months of travail and suffering Dikshathar get himself acquitted in the High Court at Madras. The family returns to Madhyarjunam and poor Dikshithar feels that he if had served the government honestly he might have saved more in the end. The author cryptically observes:

> I claim to know human nature deeper than to believe that the example of the Tahsildar would benefit any corrupt official who might chance to read this story. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-178)

Panju, the darling child of Dikshathar grows into a remarkable precocious young boy. He is the one source of joy and comfort to everyone at home, but his intelligence and precociousness are often a source of embarrassment to the elders as for instance, when puzzled by the sight of the temple chariot being drawn by elephants and numerous men he asks his mother,

> Why do they drag the car? Why cannot God make the car go by His power? (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-179)

The young child is deeply disturbed and puzzled when he happens to witness the gruesome sight of an old mendicant woman being accidentally caught under the wheels of the temple chariot and crushed to death. He cannot understand how and why the all-powerful God cannot make the old lady whole again and the answers made by the elders to his searching questions, far from satisfying him leave him with the conviction that elders can never be trusted. It is this impression made on the tender mind of the child which lasts and determines his views and attitudes in later life and makes him grow into free-thinking, rational young man holding views which are dangerously heterodox. Thus Panju typifies the rise of both rationalism and individualism in the Indian ethos. Panju the child reveals, the Panju of the later years in the making.

The focus of interest in Book II is Panju, the growing young boy. Panju makes a great impression at school, while Balaji who is now under the same roof proves a truant. Nevertheless the two are good friends in spite of Balaji being treated as a sort of outcast in the Brahmin household. Balaji takes up the post of a gymnastic instructor in Badras and the friends part with heavy hearts.

Poor Panju does not know that Balaji has left only in deference to the wishes of his own father who has a lurking fear that Balaji's company may harm the interests of his son. The novelist delineates:

> Young as he was, there was a particular vein of nobleness in his character which his father… was almost afraid of; whenenver therefore he stopped to do anything quite above board, he instinctively kept it secret from his son if possible.
> (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-103)

In fact Ramnatha Dikshithar had kept both Panju and Balaji completely in the dark as regards the latter's legitimate share of five thousand rupees lost in the bank crash. Poor Balaji is also equally ignorant of the fact that he is the son of no less a personage than the great Nana Saheb. The irony of the fact is reflected in the conversation he has with his friend Panju when the latter recalls what his professor said about Nana Saheb while lecturing on the great Indian Mutiny. The novelist avers:

> …In describing him, he said that Nana Saheb's eyes were set on his face in a very peculiar manner. You (Balaji) know that your eyes are set very peculiarly on your face, and curiously enough, I was reminded of it more than once at the time."
> "Nana Saheb was a Mussalman, I presume," remarked Balaji.
> "No," replied Panju, "he was a Brahman and the adopted son of the last Peshwa.. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-105-06)

Panju suffers a rude shock when Komalam who has been more than a mother to him passes away. This interferes with his studies at a critical period and he passes his First-in-Arts Examination only in Second Class. His father who is already sore over his having refused to receive and don the amulets given by him and is also displeased with his son spending more time on 'all sorts of big books' other than his text-books is now in a rage. The reserve father and the son grow almost into a cleavage. But the cleavage widens into a

chasm when Ramanatha Dikshithar refuses to send Balaji the sum of five hundred rupees when the latter is in a poor financial condition and makes a telegraphic request for the amount.

Panju passes his B.A. degree examination in the first class and desires to join the Medical College at Badras while his father wants him to do law. In the meanwhile, Dikshithar has other troubles. Kanju, his second daughter, through his first wife, is ill-treated by her husband, who is professor, all because she wouldn't bring from her father the two thousand rupees he needs. Kamu, the first daughter is expected home for confinement. At the same time offers pour in from "big places" proposing eligible brides and rich dowries to Panju. Dikshithar suffers the worst shock of his life when, after receiving even part of the dowry in advance, his son, now a medical student, refuses to marry. He gives a very vague hint to his mother that he will be glad to marry one of those beautiful Christian girls in his class.

At college Panju is quite a success and is liked by all his professors except Capt. Trumps, nicknamed Guys, with whom he comes into open clash. When Panju is in the second year Ramnatha Dikshithar passes away and the family comprising Panju, his widowed mother and his sister Kunju moves to Badras. Panju refuses in principle to purchase his sister's happiness by paying her professor husband the sum demanded by him. At the same time he pays in full the money his father owed Balaji. Kunju is "a sprightly girl, neither very handsome nor ugly-looking, and somewhat passionate by nature" and Panju who has a very soft corner for his unfortunate sister treats her with great

tenderness and consideration. He educates her by engaging a lady teacher and his friend Balaji, now a frequent visitor, also helps her in her studies.

Balaji and Kunju who have grown together like brother and sister are very free in each other's company, but deep down in Balaji's heart there glows a passion which is more than a brother's affection. He is emotionally disturbed and falls into frequent fits of gloom and tries to overcome his moodiness through drinking. One day his passion betrays itself in the most unexpected way when Kunju comes upon a sentence in the English Reader, "In India people generally marry young and even little boys and girls are often wedded to each other." Describing further the novelist avers:

> You are old enough, but a bachelor yet. Why don't you marry Balaji? My mother says you should have married years ago," said Kunju.
> "I will marry you if you will let me," replied Balaji almost unconsciously.
> "What, what is this you are saying?" said Kunju, more puzzled than angry or alarmed.
> "We can run away somewhere together," said he and then he suddenly caught hold of her and strained her to his bosom. The next moment he was gone. Lakshmi was then in the kitchen… and somehow Kunju though at first greatly frightened and in tears, did not then tell her mother or brother of it.
> (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-151)

What Kunju's reaction is left vague by the author. There is, however, no suggestion that the girl has resented Balaji's words and action with the kind of feelings of moral revulsion with which a married Hindu girl is normally expected to shudder even at the very thought of such situations. The scene reaffirms the author's belief in the emergence of the Indian woman as an individualistic entity and as one who is on the verge of seeking liberation from the the tyranny and injustice of the ages. Both Clarinda and Kunju represent the

birth of the new spirit which permits no illusions of any type to women who are grieviously wronged by their spouses.

Balaji never returns and all search for him is in vain. Only two years after the incident when all hopes of his return have been given up does Kunju tell her mother of the incident. Panju, however receives a letter from his friend in which he writes of his having proved unworthy of all the kindness shown to him by Panju and his people and that he has enlisted as a sepoy.

The tenth chapter of the novel gives a very interesting account of the various 'influences' which shape Panju's intellectual and moral stature, particularly of the influences of Dr. Ling and Dr. Barham who take very kindly to budding young doctor and rouse his moral and social consciousness in a manner that would make him an ideal 'healer' imbued with a true missionary zeal. Panju faces yet another trial in his life which involves not only his heart but also his conscience and truthfulness to his own inner self. He is deeply in love with Miss Grace, the daughter of a Christian missionary and the young lovers are determined to cast their lots with each other. Panju, though a son of an orthodox Brahmin is ready to break the barriers of religion and caste, the Rev. Devamirtham, Grace's father, would not permit the union unless Panju is willing to embrace the Christian faith. This puts the young man in a serious moral dilemma, for he cannot reconcile himself to orthodox Christianity. He is sorely disappointed that while he is ready to incur serious parental displeasure and face social ostracism all for the sake of the damsel of his heart, the girl herself is not prepared to compromise on her parental or religious loyalties. He

becomes heartbroken but does sell his soul for the sake of love though "his soul hungers after Grace night and day". The comment made by Kunju when she hears of the matter is quite noteworthy. She avers:

> What happiness is there for many of us who are wedded in the orthodox Hindu fashion, in our own caste and religion? If my brother really loves a girl, I don't see why he should not marry her and be happy rather than marry…some other girl whom he does not care for, and then lead a dog-and-cat existence with her for the rest of her life. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-165)

The comment is but a re-affirmation of the author's conviction that the Indian woman should break open the shackles of the age old superstition and religious tyranny and follow the promptings of her own inner self.

Panju outlives the shock of his disappointment in respect of the lady of his heart by taking a full plunge into his duties as Assistant to the District Medical Officer of Tinnore. He earns his name and popularity as a Medical Officer within a very short period but bad luck follows in the shape of Captain Trumps "Guys" who is appointed as his boss. "Guys" finds the presence of an honest and upright assistant like Panju a hindrance to his own act of irregularity and abuse of power and position for personal benefit. He tries to report against him making much of his harmless participation in some meetings and conferences and Panju resigns his post. His soul is restless because of his deep desire to work for the upliftment and regeneration of his mother country. Eventually he joins war service much to the distress of his dear mother whom he tries to convince and console through a long and spirited address justifying his decision. His chief argument for Indians fighting for the British in the Belgian war is stated as:

> Once admitting Indian to fight side by side with her own sons and shed their own blood on Belgian soil for Belgium's rights, England cannot deny them the same rights for a day longer. (*Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian* p-198)

Panju goes to the war front destined never to return. When he is in a Belgian farmstead near the line of fighting, rendering first-aid to the wounded, he is helped in his duties by the matronly mistress of the farmstead and her only daughter, a plain looking girl of eighteen, who are bravely clinging to their ancestral home. It is here that Panju is destined to meet his dear old Balaji but under heart-rendering circumstances. Balaji, the sepoy who has fought most gallantly, is brought in a dying condition and before the friends exchange even a few words Balaji dies. When Panju hears that his friend has saved a whole regiment that day at the cost of his life, he murmurs to himself "Then he has more than atoned for his father's offence."

Similar to Clarinda, the protagonist grows from childhood to mature adulthood and we find him growing and developing in a most natural way. Rather all the characters in the novel carve out their own destiny. All the thoughts and actions issue from the character and the story is nothing but what comes out of those thoughts and actions.

The law of causality prevails through out the novel. This is what rules out all possibility of manipulation and makes it a story of 'growth' and it is really significant that a novel coming so early in the chronology has in it the virtues of a good novel.

The growth of the novel can be judged from the fact that the characterization is uninfluenced by conventional ideas of good and evil. The

characters are too individualistic to be contained by the boundaries of conventional codes of social or moral behaviour. The male and the female characters seek a complete release from the past and carve out their own individual destinies. K. Kailasapathy remarks:

> …his characters break away from their wonted social settings and tread new paths and that it is this acute social consciousness of the author which makes him see men and women as they are involved in and influenced by the great tides of social change and re-orientation. (*Tamil Naval Illakiyam* p.128)

If Ramanatha Dikshithar and Komalam represent the older generation which has long since lost its faith in many old moral, religious and social values, Panju, the protagonist, and Kunju, his sister, represent the rising younger generation which has emboldened itself to assert its individuality and independence against the lingering evils of the past. The difference between the two generations is that the older generation believes in keeping up appearances, whereas the younger generation believes in forthright rejection of false values and conventions. For instance, Ramanantha Dikshithar has no real piety left in him and wants to put up a show when the occasion demands. The novelist delineates:

> He had long ago ceased to be punctilious about his ablutions, but in the presence of so many Brahmins, he gave his forehead and body extra coating of holy ashes and performed the prayer with ostentatious piety…Ramanatha Dikshithar celebrated his grandmother's funeral obsequies with great éclat and with more of lavish expenditure and outward display than sincere piety. (Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian p 60-1)

But the younger generation has no patience with such false outward shows, lacking substance and sincerity. This is reflected in the cynical contempt with which Panju refers to the 'greatness' of the Hon'ble Mr.

Sahasranamaier who condescends to offer his daughter to him. The novelist narrates:

> "I have heard of him too, mother," replied Panju. "He is the gentleman who performed his father's shraddham at the hill station, and because there were no crows there, paid Rs. 4 to a Hillman to catch and bring two crows from the plains, and take them back and set them free on the plains again, after they had represented the names of his ancestors and eaten of the rice offered to them. (Lieut. Panju: A Modern Indian p 166)

It is the falseness and emptiness of orthodox Hindu customs and conventions, observed more in form than in spirit, which really makes Panju turn a free-thinking rationalist prone to reject all these beliefs as false and meaningless. The brief Balaji-Kunju episode is yet another reaction to the evils of casteism and exploitation of the woman.

All the characters of the work represent the age of transition in which men and women were caught between two worlds. The difference between the two generations is that the older generation believes in keeping up appearances, whereas the younger generation believes in forthright rejection of false values and conventions.

The novel does have its own set of defects. Structurally it has no balance and proportion. Despite its very small dimensions it lacks closeness and concentration, and tends to be diffused and tenuous. It is too conscious of the reader to whom it makes frequent addresses. There are in fact too many long descriptions, addresses and letters and entries from private diaries.

The diaries present the Indian social situation not as the author sees it but as the characters see it and feel it. Entries from the diary of Panju, private talks and arguments are only various devices employed by the novelist to bring

home to us the intellectual and moral stature of his hero which may be an unconscious projection of the writer's own intellectual and moral personality.

Lieut. Panju has in it what may be called the highest common factor of all novels, namely a good story. It does not have a well-constructed plot but tells us a good and interesting story which is the result of growth rather than manipulation. All that the author has done is to create the characters and let them grow and develop as they do in real life.

Besides the plot, character and the social and moral purpose of the writer that blend together with the least tampering of the unity of impression, the greater merit of the novel lies in the fact that it broke through many age-old barriers in Indian thinking which were stumbling blocks to a realistic portrayal of life, and showed for the first time in Indian fiction in English, a bold preoccupation with sharp characterization, instead of with mere incident or adventure or with fate, destiny and forces outside and beyond the control of man. Thus *Lieut. Panju* is remarkable for its significant contribution to the Indian novel in English at a crucial stage of its emergence.

XVII

There exists writing in this period in which the writers are Indian and the subject is Indo-British relationship or what can be termed as colonial encounter. Some of the writers of English fiction in India have taken up this colonial encounter as their theme in which the scene of social and cultural confrontations between the Englishmen and the natives is depicted. S.M. Mitra

and Sarat Kumar Ghosh belong to this category of writers of the colonial encounter.

S. M. Mitra's *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest; An Anglo-Indian Romance* (1909) is as the title suggests, a romance in which the British are among the major characters. There are British characters in most of the other Indo-Anglian novels of this period, particularly in the novels of Madhaviah, but their roles are only secondary and they remain in the background of events. But in Hindupore they are among the principal characters. The aim of this novel is to explain India and Indians to the British and to plead for their better understanding and sympathy between the two nationalities.

'Hindupore' gives his (S.M. Mitra's) readers 'a peep behind the Indian unrest'. The novel is interesting as giving an Indian view on the subject. The author brings out Lord Tara to India and takes him to Hindupore enabling him to see things for himself. Lord Tara falls in love with Princess Kamala, a 'perfection of womanhood' and marries her. The novel seems to have been written for propaganda purposes. The rulers are described as callously indifferent to the most cherished feelings of the people. They do not know the people around them. They trust unscrupulous Eurasian inspectors more than princes of ancient blood. The government itself creates unrest and then it appoints commissions to inquire into its causes. According to the novelist it is officials like Eurasian Hunt, heads of Departments like Col. Ironside who told a Raja to his face 'that after shaking hands with a Hindu he always had a hot

bath' and non-officials like Toddy who embitter relations between Indians and Englishman.

The characters, though lightly drawn, do come to life in the pages of the novel and they are realistic portrayals too full of life and verve to be brushed aside as 'not living men and women'. The so-called monotony of the novel is broken by flashes of irony and humour which even if they are not a refined kind, tempt the reader to laugh heartily.

The following passage throws light on the style of the novelist:

> Hunt was an honest fellow: he admitted having kissed Dukhia; he assured the colonel it was an innocent kiss. The colonel smacked his lips, remembering how a Lepacha girl had given him a kiss at Darjeeling 25 years ago. (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p-44)

In another similarly suggestive passage, the novelist delineates:

> Even a servsant's veranda kiss in India is a much more serious affair than a Hyde Park kiss…In the month of May, the advent of a white baby with black hair in the servant's quarters of Col. Gilchrist's bungalow reached the ears of Mrs. Gilchrist. (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p-44)

It is interesting to note here that unlike the British writers who saw and pictured Indians only as Indians and not as men, as individuals, the Indian writers of 'Anglo-Indian' novels saw them and pictured them as human-beings first and as Englishmen or Eurasians only later.

The comic irony inherent in situations involving the English in India is brought out in a number of places in *Hindupore.* For instance, Col. Ironside of the Intelligence Department faces a serious problem at the birth of his seventh child.

No woman is ready to nurse poor little Miss Ironside:

> There were no English nurses in the place, so the doctor decided that the baby must be fed on asses' milk-they (asses) would not object to nourish Miss Ironside. (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p-203)

This is a situation which is near tragic for a powerful English Colonel but he is made to look comic and ridiculous by the suggestion that only asses would not object to 'nourish' his child. The humour is stretched too far when Sarju Prasad, the subedar is asked to fetch an ass for the purpose providing ass's milk for the child. The subedar brings in a jack ass where a jenny is required and he finds himself on the horns of a dilemma when he is reprimanded by his master, for the colonel tells him, "I wanted not an ass like me, but a lady-ass like my wife." (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* 207)

It is strange that an Englishman should speak like this but perhaps he found no other way in which he could explain it to his Indian subordinate. But the colonel ends up confounding the subedar to such an extent that the latter ultimately runs away giving up his job finding himself unequal to the task of finding a 'lady-ass' like the colonel's wife.

In a similar vein the chapter "Secret Police Reports", while full of tiring details is memorable for its humour. A 'native spy' by the name of Hashmat Khan, who has to send weekly reports on his work, finds nothing to 'report' in particular

and hence produces a fake report built on bazzar gossip. The report reads as:

> Confidential
>
> From Hashmat Khan…(Detective Chief Constable)
>
> "…According to Tartar Law, he (king of Tiakistan) must add to his harem on every birthday – there must be one for every year of the age of the king.
>
> In his travels in India he fell in love with the wife of the judge of Bundlewara (as your majesty knows, a very stout lady with ruddy cheeks) considered a great beauty from the Tartar point of view. He offered the judge four lakh rupees, but he demands six lakh for his wife. The Tartar prince was willing to pay the sum; but Masud Alka, the chief of his harem is hopeful of securing a stouter lady for half the money. Besides, the judge's wife when dyspeptic squints, which is bad omen. I shall report further development of this important intrigue which may shake the foundation of the Indian Empire.
>
> I have the honour to be,
>
> Sir,"
>
> (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p. 207)

The comic reason of fabricating such a report by the Indian official too is provided. The novelist states:

> If he (a native spy living on 5 shillings a month) did not send in a fair "weekly report," he would be dismissed. So he had to fall back upon bazaar gossip. Oriental imagination was often of great value to satisfy strict disciplinarians like Colonel Ironside. (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p.204-05)

These passages daringly satirize the unpleasant side of the British imperialistic machinery and its impact on India, illustrate the author's gift for blending irony and humour to produce effects which are grossly comic. Thus both the Indian as well as the British characters provide amusement to us and are presented in their best as well as the worst forms.

The language of the novelist is simple and it finds its expression in words of adoration which reveal the depth and sincerity of Lord Tara's love and passion for Kamala. The novelist delineates:

> She is to him, "the perfection of womanly grace and charm, one to be adored as the worship of our God, in her innocent purity and sweetness"…My father and mother would love her dearly but her people would be my people too, and I would not ask her entirely to give up her beautiful country for me. (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p. 58)

As these words are coming from an Englishman, is an illustration of the author's ability to see and picture an Englishman as a noble-minded human being rather as a specimen of race conscious ruling class.

Celitia Scott, who sails to India in the same ship "Nur-Jehan" in which Lord Tara travels, has been full of romantic emotions about India. She has been entertaining some romantic sentiments in respect of Lord Tara too, but she seems to appreciate the Lord's deep love for Kamala. Her visit causes a lot of sensation in the palace but unlike most other Englishwomen Celitia develops a tender intimacy with Kamala and learns to love the members of the royal family. The subject of this novel is Lord Tara's love for Kamala, an Englishman's love for an Indian princess and it is a love affair which runs smooth without serious obstacles or impediments. Hence the dimensions of the novel are rather simple and modest, and do not warrant sensational events or incidents.

The principal achievement of *Hindupore* lies in its realism, a realism which borders most often on the gross and the vulgar but appeals to us by its essential irony and humour. Jamunabai ('a stately beauty of fifty'), consults an astrologer on the prospects of her finding a lover. The unblushing consultation makes even the hard-boiled professional fortune-teller blush:

> But he was a businessman. In business sentiment does not pay. Any definite answer in the affirmative or in the negative meant the end in

> business. In a long case, the brilliant advocate gets "refreshers. It is the same with an astrologer of reputation. (*Hindupore, A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest, An Anglo-Indian Romance* p. 259)

If the test of a good novel is its realism and its closeness to life, *Hindupore's* claim to that title cannot be poor. The realism of *Hindupore* is one which is set off by fine touches of romance here and there, as for the instance in the scenes of youthful love-making between Tara and kamala. What we find iin this novel is, therefore a happy mixture of the gross and the delicate, of the comic and the serious, and of romance and realism.

Besides an important novel depicting the socio-political conditions of the contemporary India the work is also significant from the point of East-West encounter. Critically acclaiming these works of East–West encounter, K.S. Ramamurti observes:

> Novels with intrinsic value of their own, they are concerned with intrinsic merits of their own, they are concerned with Indo-British social and cultural relationships broadening into a study of East-West encounters…They show a deeper understanding of and greater sympathy for English men and women than the novels by British writers could show for India and Indians. (*Rise of the Indian Novel in English* 198)

The novelist can be credited for laying the foundation of presenting realism in the Indian Writing in English. The realism that was later to be taken to new heights in the writings of Mulkraj Anand and later by Khuswant Singh. His is not the social realism of Mulkraj Anand. The realism of *Hindupore* has in it a touch of grossness and it is down to earth and ruthless in its graphic description of human behaviour. But Mitra's realism is different from the kind of 'social realism' or 'progressive realism' which arises from the motif of social reform or social regeneration which runs through the novels of Anand. It

is a realism which just tears open the curtain on certain human situations in a ruthless manner without any serious intention of social criticism and brings the reader face to face with the situations themselves.

XVIII

Sarat Kumar Ghosh's *The Prince of Destiny* (1909) was perhaps the first Indian novel to deal with the East-West confrontation. Meenakshi Mukherjee in her book *The Twice Born Fiction* refers to this novel as 'a variety of historical fiction'. Tracing the development of this trend in Indo-Anglian writing to a shift of interest from the public to the private sphere, Meenakshi Mukherjee comments:

> This private search often constituted a quest for a satisfactory attitude towards the West, and for a realistic image of the East that would at the same time be emotionally valid. This search has taken varied and complex forms. At its lowest, it has often descended into sentimental chauvinism and neurotic rejection, at its highest it has attempted a reintegration of personality, a revaluation of all values. (*The Twice Born Fiction*, p. 79)

Prince Barath who is the protagonist in *The Prince of Destiny* is the Rajput ruler of a princely state in the last years of the ninteenth century. Having absorbed the best of the both the East and the West, he rejects his 'destiny' to lead a revolution against the British, and adopts the life of a holy man in order to preach the doctrine of peace. This is a novel which is highly romantic with a number of main characters who are British and according to the publishers' preface it reveals the Indian view of the causes of the present unrest, and Britain's unseen peril in India. The setting for this novel is, therefore the nineteenth century socio-cultural scene which has been rendered rather

romantic and unreal by the introduction of characters who wear the names and garbs of historical personages.

Prince Barath, the hero, shows right from his childhood strange ways of absorption into the world of thought and speculation. His first experience of the outer world, of pain and suffering and of its soul-stirring effects on his being, reminds us of the story of Siddhartha turning Budha. Barath's eyes are opened by the sight of a sightless leper. His guru Vishwamitra, who believes that the Prince has come into the world as the successor of Lord Krishna, having been informed of the secret in a vision, is struck by the precociousness of the child. The young prince gets his first experience of 'pain' in hunting when he happens to wound a peacock. In the pain of the bird is revealed to him the pain of the world. The novelist describes:

> He saw the vision of the world's pain in the eyes of the peacock he had wounded, and thus found his destiny. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna*, p. 108)

The experience leaves him with the conviction that he is set on a mission of pain. He believes that someone must suffer for the sake of the world even if it be a bird, and recalls the words of Valmiki, "Henceforth thy *shoka* (pain) shall be my *sloka*."

Barath's remorse is doubled when he meets Suvona, the young girl whose peacock he has wounded. The sight of that lovely child stroking the peacock's neck and of the bird spreading out its tail in the sun and walking away to the flower-beds moves the guilty prince. This brief encounter is not without its effect on the youthful passion of the prince and the young maid.

Love is awakened in their hearts, and there rises in the heart of Suvona the deeper urge to give herself to someone, to sacrifice herself and all, while in Barath the urge to protect something weaker asserts itself more than an urge to possess the object of his love. This brief episode, while it is a romance of youthful innocence and love, is also an interesting study in the complex interactions of love and pain. It makes the reader think and wonder if it is protectiveness or possessiveness which is the basis of true love.

Barath goes to England for higher education. Both he and his friend Madhava feel the need to look to the West where reasoning is dialectic unlike the intuitive method of reasoning obtaining in the East. The parting words of Barath's father are very significant. He remarks:

> Aye, but it is the good that is in England that I fear most; the evil could never touch thee. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna*, p. 110)

This is followed by a touching scene of separation from Suvona who is full of anxiety and concern for Barath. She kisses him farewell, and seeks consolation of the darkness and silence of the night like a wounded gazelle.

Barath is little aware of the destiny that awaits him in England. His destiny seems to be in the hands of loving souls who have been waiting for his arrival there. They are Colonel Wingate and Lady Ellen, his thirty-eight year old niece, who had held Barath as a child in her arms. Lady Ellen's dreams of being a wife and a mother were shattered when her fiancé, a foster son of Wingate was killed in the Plymouth train disaster and ever since the fateful event she has found her solace and comfort only in waiting for Barath. When Barath rushes to her with the words, "Mother mine – your son has come to

you," the mother's instinct in Ellen which was crushed in the wreck of Plymouth leaps into life, having never been awakened by any voice till now. To awaken the mother in her seems to be the first manifestation of Barath's destiny in England.

Barath meets a number of other persons who exercise great influence on him. Among them are Lord Menlor, the liberal-minded brother of Ellen and Francis Thompson, the poet. He discusses with these men and Wingate great questions relating to *Karma* and reincarnation. He hears the candid view expressed by Menlor, "England was made by foreigners" and links it with his own dim perception of Fate making him the instrument of England's destiny in India, may be the Europe's mission in Asia. A whole chapter is devoted to Barath's chance encounter with Francis Thompson, the poet, and the entire account though purely imaginative hardly seems so. But the most important of Barath's encounters is the one with Nora.

Nora is Lady Ellen's niece and Barath sees her beautiful image first in a picture. Later on he meets her in person and falls in love with her. Even their first meeting has about it an idyllic charm and romantic tenderness. The novelist delineates:

> "I – I am – so happy to know you!", he stammered. "Of course, you are", she said reassuringly, "So let's be friends at once." She looked full at him. "What beautiful deep blue eyes you have!" he exclaimed quite inconsequently, "And yet your hair is dark." "My eyes are violet, not blue," she said with pout, and then blushed deep. "I am half Irish," she hastened to explain, "My grandmother was Irish. But please don't discuss me. I must gather flower's for Aunt Ellen." (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna*, p. 108)

The brief love scene has nothing in it which can be called unnatural either by Indian or English standard. It interests us particularly as a meeting of youthful East and youthful West attended by a most natural blending of two totally different sensibilities, and leaves us with the feeling that youth alone can blend like this, breaking through all cultural and anthropological and epistemological consciousness. The strength and purity of Barath and Nora's love for each other leaves us with a feeling that the real hope for the East and the West coming together lies only in the younger generation with its comparative freshness and purity.

Instances of cultural barriers do crop up but they are not an obstacle in the union of their hearts. Nora sees no special significance in her act of throwing a garland around Barath's neck in playful innocence while Barath sees a world of significance in the act and wonders whether he is a new Adam or Krishna, or both. Several other such incidents are experienced by Barath during his stay in England and every one of them brings him nearer to the people of that country both emotionally and intellectually.

A striking feature of the descriptions is that wherever there is a meeting of persons occasioning a brief exchange of words, we find that the spirit and feel of the English spoken word is admirably recaptured. When Francis Thompson meets, for instance, a boy of six in Kensington Gardens, he introduces him to Col. Wingate:

> "This is my god-child, he lives across the road. Francis, this is Col. Wingate." The boy stretched out his hand like a man, saying, "Delighted to meet you colonel. I know you by reputation, although I was in nursery when you called on father and mother; but now I can go to the drawing room." Barath stoops down and kisses the child plump

> on the cheek and the latter protests with a pout. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna*, p. 250)

The language and the style are rather striking and have nothing 'Indian' about it and have a characteristic English flavour.

Barath depicts intense curiosity to understand England. This curiosity is strongly depicted in the words where he observes:

> One should be born outside England to know her objectively and subsequently become an Englishman. After that objective vision he will love her still. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna* p. 253)

The words spoken by Col. Wingate in his last moments are a powerful expression of an Englishman's apprehension of the destiny of England in India. He states:

> I see England's peril in India. Barath, Barath promise me in the hour of England's peril you will judge her generously? Generously for the intention, if you cannot for the deed? For the sake of your own belief in your possible former birth in England? Remember your words when you felt that wave of memory in your early days in England – that you had seen the self image things before the lilac and the laburnum, perchance in a former birth!... I die in the faith of Christ! Knowing of Krishna and Buddha I die in the faith of Christ. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna*p.287-88)

The last utterance of Wingate is a happy contrast to Kipling's belief that East is East and West is West, and two can never be one. This is a message of reaffirmation of one's own faith through the knowledge of other faiths.

When Barath leaves England he is not shaking the dust of England off his feet nor does he throb with the joy of home-coming. It is with a heart full of pain and grief that he bids farewell to his 'second home'. He carries with him a little of English soil and also a portrait of Nora in her presentation dress. The

portrait has been presented to him by Ellen on condition that it should be opened only after leaving England.

Barath's homecoming is eagerly awaited by Suvona whose high-spirited declaration of her love for the prince convinces even Vasistha, the high priest, that she is the real one carved out by destiny for Barath. The prince is on the throne very soon. He has resumed his life where he left it off before he went to England, but the arrival of Lord Melnor awakens the memories of his English life, of Kensington and Boscombe. Lord Melnor becomes his counselor and this provokes the jealousy of Vasistha. Vishwamitra, Barath's real guru, tries to save the palace from an imminent crisis by counselling patience and love. Advising Vasistha to love even the Englishmen he observes:

> Brother, thou didst teach me once the beginning of wisdom and of all things. Read to us again the beginning of all things. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna* p.409)

Vasistha brings out the book and reads anew the words as he had read them twenty-five years ago: the building up of the earth, the birth of Krishna, and the promise of the New Krishna. Thus finding enlightenment, Vasistha states:

> Yea, the child shall fulfill his mission. Let us now prepare him for his confirmation in his mission. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna* p. 409)

A number of mystic and symbolic rituals and ceremonies are arranged by Vasistha to initiate the Prince into the secret mysteries of Brahmanism. In one of the rituals so arranged, Barath is asked to unveil the image of his bride arranged by Vasistha and when he does it, both the Prince and Vasistha stare –

Barath at the face and Vasistha at the strange garland in its hands. Thanks to the part Kamona and Madawa have had in it, the image has the face of Suvona and carries the garland of Nora in its hands. The act of unveiling is described as the Prince's mystic nuptial and the Prince's apostrophe to the image make the whole scene mystifying and unreal. The novelist delineates:

> My unknown bride, who art thou? Reveal thyself to me! I am weary of waiting! Five long years…Reveal thyself to me that I may practice love." He kisses the feet of the golden image. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna*, p. 429)

In these passages the novel gets lost in a cloud of mysticism and symbolism, and though, the symbolism itself is not without its relevance to the theme of the novel. It is even possible to interpret the words of the Prince, addressed to the image, as an echo of his painful search for an earthly image of love. He sought it first in Suvona and then in Nora. His search seems to have led him to the realization that love transcends human limitations and that one has to wait endlessly if one seeks its fulfillment through early image of it. The reader wonders if the Prince is on the point of arriving at this truth through intuitive reasoning …

There is sudden swing to reality when the political crisis deepens as a result of Barath's refusal to attend the Durbar. The unexpected arrival of Nora complicates the situation further. Barath's behaviour assumes new patterns which draw the jealous attention of Vasistha who plots against the life of Nora. Barath renounced Nora long ago, and turned wholly eastern but now comes the crisis of his destiny. Under Melnor's influence Barath tries to save Dalini from satee but Vasistha speaks: "No, neither Delhi nor Dalini" and warns Barath

against interposing between Dalini and her martyrdom. In situations like this Barath finds himself in a great moral and spiritual dilemma, torn between two sets of values, totally opposite to each other – the Western and the Eastern symbolized by Melnor and Nora who herself has turned half eastern and has learnt to appreciate and accept many eastern values and ideals. Her own motives are far from flesh and blood and she actually works for the "awakening of the East". Hence, it is that she is tempted to weave one more tie with the East. She wants to do it not for her own sake but for England's sake. She is not disturbed in the least when an astrologer, who reads her palm, declares that it is unique and suggests the life of a living martyr, *satee*. She who condemns *satee* is herself on the point of becoming a victim of it and is least worried about it, too.

Prince Barath under the influence of Vasistha, fancies himself as the New Krishna and this is his grand temptation. But disillusionment follows very soon and the spell breaks. He calls the high priest and his men all foul tempters. He rushes to the curtains, to the corridors, into the palace crying, "Nora, Nora – you are my destiny." The novelist delineates:

> Nora, do you hear me? East and West are but one. Then fulfil your mission: together let us unite East and West…Together let us discover a newer world – the world of East and West wedded together in peace and love. Come, beloved, together let us be immortal. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna* p. 439)

These are, but, mere words and Prince Barath is still helpless against the forces which are hostile to Nora, hostile to the British. Despairing of finding a solution to the great crisis in the court precipitated by Vasistha, Barath attempts

self-immolation which is averted by the timely intervention of Suvona. Unlike Ramaswamy, Barath is saved not by a guru but by an act of renunciation issuing from pure love, the love of Nora. Making a grand gesture of love and renunciation Nora appears more eastern than western. Suvona herself is so deeply touched by the gesture of sacrifice made by her English rival that she rushes to Nora and kisses her again saying:

> Let the future decide the future; in this life be my sister. Return to me in the years to come with thy children and children's children and dwell with me till death. Yes, my sister, thy love has conquered. Henceforth, I too am thy country's friend: When the peril comes to England on her Eastern shore, a million of our sons will hasten to her rescue. I shall labour to that end…Nora struggled inwardly, silently. Turning suddenly she put her arms round Suvona. Held in each other's embrace they stood a moment, pouring out their hearts to each other. Then with bowed head Nora turned to depart. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna* p. 620)

It is Nora's love which brings about the crisis in the novel and it is her love again which acts as the *taveeze* or amulet which resolves the crises. Vasisitha's plans to ruin the British by helping the Mutiny of 1857 are thwarted by the reconciliation brought about by Nora's gesture of renunciation and the ruler of Barathpur, like the ruler of Gwalior, sides with the East India Company. The revolution of Barathpur fails because of Barath's love for England and Nora's love for India. Melnor resigns and returns home a sadder and wiser man. His destiny lies in the new role he is to play as a member of the House of Commons and a mission he has to fulfill which is the salvation of both England and India.

Kamona is married to Madawa and Vasistha dies in the temple. Vishwamitra lives with his perpetual message of gentleness and love. He lives,

but lives waiting for the end of his worldly life. Regarding the Barath and Suvona union, the novelist delineates:

> And that final lesson was that, even as the essence of love was the union of souls, the manifestation of love in the supermost degree of renunciation. Resigned renunciation. (*The Prince of Destiny, The New Krishna* p. 623)

Barath now goes out of the palace, into the world. The world waited for the new Krishna now waits for the New Buddha. Shanti!

The ending of the novel is not satisfying or convincing. The long address to the reader in the concluding chapter detracts from the dignity of the work and makes it artistically unimpressive. It leaves the reader with the feeling that if S.K. Ghosh had employed a different narrative technique it would have been easier for him to make the ending more forceful and acceptable. Notwithstanding some of the defects and shortcomings, the novel does remain one of the best novels on the the East-West encounter and the contemporary reviewers had not failed to realize that S. K. Ghosh's treatment of the theme of East-West conflict had been more realistic and truthful than that of the Anglo-Indian writers. One of the reviews reads as:

> He (S.K. Ghosh) is able to see the West thro' Eastern spectacles, and what is of most importance, he is able to view the East thro' the concave glasses of the West…He protests kindly, but nevertheless firmly, that the English view of India and the Indians has been largely moulded by the immature writings of brilliant author (Rudyard Kipling)…This book is not a mere treatise. On the contrary, the story is one of peculiar power, often thrilling to a degree and its dramatic situation and its intensely passionate emotions serve to bring into stronger light and fuller perspective the deep and laudable motive with which it was written. (*The Liverpool Post and Mercury*)

The novel has received equal praise from Indian critics. Dr. Iyengar avers:

> It is for all its purpose, a good story with a fair blend of action, characterization and scenic description. (*Indian Constitution to English Literature*, p. 174)

Praising it in even stronger terms Bhupal Singh observes:

> This is obviously a novel with a purpose…The human interest of the story has not been sacrificed to the main purpose of the book. Vasistha is well drawn and so is Barath. The scene entitled 'The madness of Kamona', depicting the abandonment of a passion-tossed girl, is a remarkable piece of art. For the vivid glimpse of Francis Thompson that the book gives, and as an Indian's sympathetic reading of the unhappy life of a famous English poet, the book will always remain valuable. In style and subject matter, and in the variety of its scene and vividness of its description, the book is above the ordinary. (*A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* p. 306)

By and large, Anglo-Indian fiction suggests that 'Englishmen have a very poor, even contemptuous opinion of Indian character' and little patience with their 'Aryan friend'.

This is exactly where the Indian writers of English fiction differ from them, for we find in S.K. Ghosh's *The Prince of Destiny* as well as in the novels of Madhaviah a genuine understanding of the English character and an earnest attempt to bring the East and West together not through artificial situations but through the one principle which can always bring any two individuals or races together – the principal of pure love, love that transcends all barriers of time and space. Thus, *The Prince of Destiny* throws valuable hints on the possibilities of reconciliation between the Indian and Western ways of thinking.

XIV

A few historical romances and novels with a historical background find their presence in this age too. One such illustration is Sardar Jogender Singh's

Nur Jehan: The Romance of an Indian Queen (1909). It is an important contribution to Indian-English historical fiction. The historical novel ends with the marriage of Nur Jehan to Jahangir and attempts to depict the courtly life of Akbar. The novel begins with the birth of Nur Jehan to Ghias Beg and his wife traveling on foot to India. The parents name the beautiful child as Mihr-ul-Nissa ("Sun among Women"). Ghias Beg who gains entry into the court of Akbar rises to the position of the Lord High Treasurer. Fifteen years pass and Mihr-ul-Nissa is now a beautiful young girl. Then follows the story of Prince Salim's love for Mihr-ul-Nissa. The cunning king sends away his son to war and in his absence Salim's beloved is married to Ali Kuli Beg, the brave Persian warrior. Salim is furious but helpless. On the death of Akbar, Salim succeeds to the throne and tries every means of winning back his beloved from Ali Kuli, who however is too brave a soldier to be cowed down by the intimidation of Salim. But Ali Kuli is killed at last in a duel into which he is drawn by Qutb-ub-din – the true friend of Emperor Jahangir – who acts on behalf of the emperor out of his love and concern for the latter. The very same night, after Ali Kuli's funeral, approaches Mihr-ul-Nissa but the latter spurns him and hates him. She is condemned to live in the palace as a maid on a meagre income. Time passes and brings its own change of seasons and days, and change of heart too. Lovers unite Jahangir marries Mihr-ul-Nissa. The last two chapters are beautifully written and they transport the reader into world of idyllic charms, tender pathos and tragic dignity.

The story moves ahead with a rapidity that well becomes the swift movement of events in court and palace during the regime of Akbar and Jahangir. This is a romance based on history and the focus is on romance itself and not on history. What is really admirable in the novel is that the romance has been presented without the least injury to historical facts.

The real theme of the novel is Jahangir's love for the incomparable Persian beauty and its influence on his life and character. The story of Prince Salim's love for Mihr-ul-Nissa as presented in the novel is historically true except that the Jahangir of history did not surrender all his power's to Nur Jehan and was content to remain a lover and love's slave rather than rule over earthly kingdoms as suggested in the novel. Nur Jehan's influence on the life and character of Emperor Jahangir has been accepted by all historians. R.C. Majumdar avers:

> In May 1611, Jahangir married Nur Jehan, originally known as Mihr-ul-Nissa, who considerably influenced his career and reign. Modern researchers have discarded the many romantic legends about Mihr-ul-Nissa's birth and early life and have proved the reliability of the brief account of Mutamid Khan, the author of Iqbal-Nama-i-Jehangiri. Sher-afghan (Ali Kuli Beg) was in his turn hacked to pieces by the followers of Qutb-ud din ar Burdwan and Mihr-ul-Nissa was taken to the court with her young daughter. After four years, Mihr-ul-Nissa's charming 'appearance caught the king's far-seeing eye and so captivated him' that he married her, and made her his chief queen. The emperor who styled himself Mire-ud-din, conferred on his new consort the title of Nur Mahal (Light of the Palace) which was soon changed to Nur Jehan (Life of the World). It is sometimes said that this infatuation for her cost Sher-afghan his life. The truth of this opinion has recently been questioned. But the cause of Mihr-ul-Nissa being brought to the court, and not to her father, who held an important post in the Empire, has not been explained. (*An Advanced History of India* pp. 465-66)

Jogender Singh's novel makes little departure from the account given and from the facts accepted by all historians and yet his handling of the

historical material is as original and imaginative as it can be expected to be in a good historical novel.

Historical novels leave little scope for character development. Similarly the scope and dimension of the novel do not call for a three-dimensional development of any of the characters in the sense in which characters are developed in other kind of novels. There is in the characters of both Jahangir and Nur Jehan a consistency which is not only in keeping with historical truth but also explains that historical truth. They may not be very 'living' but they are true and convincing portrayals

Thus Jahangir is consistent in his passionate determination to possess Mihr-ul-Nissa and no power on earth can contain his passion. He cannot rest until he possesses the priceless gem of his dreams. Mihr-ul-Nissa's own love for the prince is no less ardent, but she accepts Kuli Ali Beg as her husband because she is forced to believe that the Prince himself has failed to show any interest in preventing the marriage. She remains in the dark of the shrewd game played by the emperor Akbar. The scene in which she meets Jahangir on the very night of her being widowed reveals the characters of both admirably well. The novelist delineates:

> There stood Mihr-ul-Nissa before him flushed with anger and yet how beautiful. She had no doubt changed. The innocent light of budding womanhood, which two years before hung like a glory round her beautiful face was now no more; it had been replaced by a dignity of expression and stateliness of form which no words can describe. Jahangir stood spell bound his eyes riveted on her beautiful face.
> Mihr-ul-Nissa was the first to speak. 'Sir,' she said in a calm and dignified tone, "will your majesty express to me your pleasure?"
> "My pleasure?" repeated Jehangir vaguely approaching her with slow and faltering steps. "I see you at last after long ages of waiting."
> "Your majesty perhaps is aware that I have just lost my husband."

> "Husband!" murmured Jahangir dreamily, "do not tell me of him. It is cruel of you to remind me of him at this moment."
> "Why should I not speak of my husband?" asked MIhr-ul-Nissa angrily. "He who was my very own, the memory of him is dear to me. I shall cherish it all my life, we women are not fickle and faithless as men."
> Again speaks Mihr-ul-Nissa:
> "There was a time when I waited for you, counting every moment and expecting you, but you forgot my very existence, and the nobleman who became my husband tolerated my love for you and forgave me all. He won my heart by his pure selfish love and I became his and shall always remain his. Why are you giving me unnecessary pain?" (*Nur Jahan: The Romance of an Indian Queen* pp. 246-47)

These lines throw light on the character of Mehr-ul-Nissa. There is no quarrel between Jahangir and her, nor is there any open reference to the fact that the former was the cause of Sher Afghan's death. The tragic intensity is conveyed to the reader by the silence and the measured words of Mihr-ul-Nissa who shows a majestic restraint even in giving expression to her pain and suffering. Jahangir loves Mihr-ul-Nissa to the point of being ready to place his whole empire at her feet but she makes a dignified withdrawal spurning the love of the Emperor of Delhi whom she had once passionately loved. Jahangir has to wait for years before there is a change of heart on the part of the lady of his dreams and wait he does. It is only when time and nature heal the wounds of Mihr-ul-Nissa and make her heart melt for Jahangir that the latter's dreams come true. Her love for prince Salim (now emperor Jahangir) which suffers a rude shock and is crushed almost to death revives and shoots into life like a withered plant that comes back to life revived by the gentle hands of nature. The novelist avers:

> Slowly as hues of life shifted and changed around her, and a new spring burst through newly-budding trees and appeared with its crown of flowers all radiant, glorious and triumphant, Mehr-ul-Nissa found

> the veil of sadness melting away as if it had no reality, much though she wished to keep it as a part of her life. Her thoughts became active, her soul seemed rising and longing her life and its sweet pathetic poetry. (*Nur Jahan: The Romance of an Indian Queen* p. 249)

Once the change has been wrought, the beautiful Persian begins to wait for love to come back to her and even begins to yearn for the man whose love she spurned not long ago. She looks forward to the grand moment when the offer of love will come back to her almost with the trepidations of a young girl in whose heart love has opened for the first time. Describing this emotion, the novelist narrates:

> Mihr-ul-Nissa saw him enter and all her pulses bounded with joy as she wished he could look at her and was conscious of a strange desire to take his love as a gift from life, fighting furiously against her faith to her late husband. (*Nur Jahan: The Romance of an Indian Queen* p. 252)

Besides the characters of Jahangir and Nur Jehan there are other characters that are portrayed in an equally interesting manner. The character of Akbar serves as an illustration. The pictures of Akbar in his death bed when he is tortured by apprehensions of his wayward son have a significant impact on the readers. The last days of the emperor have been rendered gloomy specially because he is now a lone soul bereft of the glorious company he enjoyed in the past with great men like Todar Mal, the astute financier, Faizi, the charming Bul-Bul, and the learned Abul Fazl who alone was the light that constantly led the Emperor to Truth. Now he is a solitary pathetic figure in the shadow of death. But the gloom of his last days is relieved at last by the promise of reformation given by Prince Salim, and notwithstanding all his serious

differences with his son, he shows great wisdom and a sense of justice by naming him as his heir.

The early Indian writers of historical fiction as they were, imitated Walter Scott and other writers of the West. If their novels do not attain the stature of those of Scott or Lytton or Tolstoy, they do succeed in recapturing the life and spirit of the times though on a smaller canvas without any distortion of historical facts and with very little injury to the historical reality. The past is revivified as effectively as in Scott or Tolstoy and the historical figures come to life as impressively as in the novels of any good historical novel of the West.

Though the first Indian novel in English, *Govinda Samanta,* met all the demands of modern realistic prose fiction, most of the novels which appeared in the three decades that followed showed a predilection for romance, dream and poetry, not to speak of adventures and escapades of an incredible sort. The novels of the women novelists were more poetic and lyrical than realistic though they had literary and artisitic excellences too. The reassertion of realism in Indian Writing in English is observed to come with the publication of sketches like those of Malabari and Nagesh Vishwanath Pai. As a pioneer of journalism in India, with a writer of sketches with a satirical and reformistic purpose and as a 'pilgrim reformer', Malabari pioneered the evolution of the English prose fiction in India in a manner comparable to that in which Addison, Steele and Goldsmith pioneered it in eighteenth century England. Nagesh Vishwananth Pai, on the same lines opened up new dimensions of creativity in

the little town of Chakmakpore, and anticipated Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. Parallel to these realistic sketches romances like *Padmini, The Dive for Death, Sarala and Hingana*, and *The Love of Kusuma* also made their appearance, though these novels made their appearance after 1889.

Though the efforts of the early novelists were genuine, they did contain certain drawbacks. The themes of these novels are basically social. They wrote these novels with the sole aim of exposing the tyrannical social customs or superstitions or the sad economic plight of the peasants, with a view to bring about social or economic reform. Such didactic novels could be made interesting by the introduction of well knit interesting plot or vivid characters. These novels often lacked both these elements. The same theme was repeated again and again with no stylish novelty.

The drawback is evident on the language front as the early Indain English writers were not able to handle a foreign language as a medium of expression. Though most of these writers selected English as a language of their intellectual make-up, their mother tongue often remained the language of their emotional make-up. They failed to communicate their feelings and emotions appropriately, consequently the readers failed to grasp the full meaning of their text.

The two parallel flows of romance and realism reflect the transitional nature of the Indian novel in English. Along with it was the struggle of expressing in English. Thus with compromises in theme and expression, the Indian writer emerged as a novelist writing in English.

CHAPTER –VI
THE TRIUMVIRATE AND THEIR IMPACT ON PRE-INDEPENDENCE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

Indian fiction in English emerged out of almost six decades of intellectual and literary gestation that had begun in 1930's with the triumvirate of R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. It is with their advent that the actual journey of the Indain English novel begins. The early Indian novels which were merely patriotic gained a rather contemporary touch with their arrival.

The nineteen thirties were the beginning of the fertile era in Indian Writing in English. The political scene dominated by Gandhiji, the Satyagraha movements, the Round Table Conferences and various other social and cultural factors ignited the spirit of the Indian writers that earned international renown. The novelists, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan form a trilogy of early Indian Writing in English and with their advent ushered a new era in this field. Under the profound Gandhian influence, Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable *(1935),* Coolie *(1936),* Two Leaves and a Bud *(1937),* The Village *(1939) take up the issues concerning the exploitation of the underdogs and the have-nots of the Indian society and treats them with the sympathy and respect due to human beings. The sweeper, the peasant, the plantation labour, the city worker, the sepoy; all emerge alive from his novels, anguished, wretched yet human and vividly portrayed in spite of their sufferings.*

R. K. Narayan too began his career as a writer in the same year 1935 with Swami and Friends. *His other works* The Bachelor of Arts *(1936) and* The Dark Room *(1935) appeared in quick succession but the next publication of* The English Teacher *(1945) came after a long gap.*

The third of the great trilogy is Raja Rao. His novels are few and of them only Kanathapura *(1938) is published in the first half of the twentieth century.* Kanthapura *is simple in plot, structure language and philosophy. The novel set in the 1930's in Gandhiji's golden decade, when the spark of genuine nationalism and awakening, typically Indian in its yoking of social and spiritual values, swept through out the country, razing all barriers-communal, religious and intellectual.*

I

Untouchable *(1935), the shortest of Anand's novels, is a poignant recordation of a days experience in the life of Bakha. Born into a family of sweepers, one of the neglected communities of the traditional Hindu caste structure, he is a sweeper with a difference. He is young, intelligent and sensitive and thus more prone to suffering. Like all the untouchables, he is condemned to live in a world where "the day is dark as the night and the night pitch-dark". Surprisingly, his presence in the midst of dirt has not stained the innocence, purity and responsiveness of his heart.*

The day begins, like all his days, with bullying from his father, Lakha, and loud shouts from the sepoys reminding him of his duty. His sister Sohini's tribulations are no less severe. She has to wait for hours to get a pail of water

from the well. The low caste-men are not allowed to draw water, for their touch meant pollution even to water, the great purifying element. They have to depend upon the charity of somebody. If men like Pandit Kalinath draw water for them, it is not out of mercy on their part, but as an occasional cure for their constipation. If he favours Sohini by offering the bucket of water, it is meant more than sympathy and less than consideration for her.

Bakha often thinks of retaliation against the injustice and exploitation meted out on him and the lower castes but his father, Lakha pacifies him. His is the voice of servile humility and he cannot entertain any thought of retaliation against a high caste man. The difference in the reaction of Bakha and Lakha to the exploitation is the difference of the old and the new generations. Belonging to an older generation, he is apt to accept the law of untouchability with less resentment than Bakha. For Bakha it is a curse which has to be fought and destroyed.

In the afternoon, Bakha attends the marriage of his friend Ram Charan's sister – the girl of a higher caste whom he couldn't marry. Ram Charan the washerman's son, Chota the leather-worker's son, and Bakha forget for once the caste discrimination and differences and share the sugar-plums, and plan to play hockey in the evening. The only comfort Bakha derives is from the house of Havildar Charat Singh when he goes to receive the promised hockey-stick. When the havildar asks him to bring coal from the kitchen for his hookah, he simply cannot believe himself. Anand gives a graphic description of Bakha's reaction-his excitement and admiratrion for the man

who has such a unique gesture and also the furtive circumspection that the Havildar, after all might not be in his senses. He reflects:

> *He might be forgetful and suddenly realize what he had done. Did he forget that I am a sweeper? He couldn't have done, I was just talking to him about my work. And he saw me this morning. How could he have forgotten? (*Untouchable *39)*

Bakha is only partly the prototypical 'untouchable', for he is also himself, a unique individual, even in some measure an exceptional 'untouchable'. The many things that happen to him in the novel could have happened with anybody. The dramatic telescoping, the juxtaposition, the linking up, of so many events in the course of twelve hours is of the novelist.

Bakha's quest is a quest for identity, in a world which refuses to recognize him as anything more than dirt. At the end of the novel we find that he has succeeded to some extent. In the presence of Gandhi, people seem to forget all their differences of caste and creed and high and low. Gandhiji's concern for the untouchables adds new dimension to the outlook of Bakha. He has become altogether a different man for he has seen a new world. There is a noticeable growth in the consciousness of Bakha and his adoration for the Englishmen stands shattered under the impact of Gandhi-touch.

Anand's treatment of untouchability has both a merciless clarity and tonal objectivity which transfers a whole range of inherited feeling associated with the practice from the victim to the social structure and its moribund quality. Towards the conclusion, we begin to wonder as to who are the real untouchables. Is it Bakha and his men or the people who insulate themselves with petrified traditions? Thus the attention of the readers is shifted from the

exploited individual to the exploitative system which denies man his simple natural sense of worthiness.

Anand's picture of Bakha has a clear ring of authenticity about it. Thus E. M. Forster remarks:

> *Untouchable could only have been written by an Indian, and by an Indian who observed from the outside. No European, however sympathetic, could have created the character of Bakha, because he would not have known enough about his troubles. And no untouchable could have written the book, because he would have been involved in indignation and self-pity. (Preface to* Untouchable *p.vi.)*

Untouchable *is the novelist's shortest novel, and the unities in it are admirably preserved, as in a classical play, for* Untouchable *covers the events of a single day, twelve hours from dawn to dusk to be precise, in the life of the 'low-caste' boy, Bakha, in the town.. Anand achieves the maximum effect by strictly observing the classical unities and this economy and the severe discipline with which he organizes the material is not equally evident in* Coolie.

In any satisfactory work of art, form and content are inseparable parts of a single whole. Thus the form of a structure of a work of art should correspond to the requirements of the theme and the elaboration of that theme in that work of art. There must be a close correlation between the formal or technical side of a work and its subject-matter. Anand's first novel is a great success because in it the unities of time and place have been observed, in addition to the unity of action.

Untouchable *strikes us as the picture of a place, of a society, and of certain persons not easily to be forgotten: a picture that is also an indictment of the evils of a decadent and perverted orthodoxy.*

II

From the plight of the social outcaste, in Untouchable *Anand in* Coolie *(1936) turns to the lot of another class of the underprivileged in modern Indian society. But in* Coolie *the range and scope of the novelist's fiction widens, his canvas expands and there is the orchestration of the themes barely touched upon in* Untouchable. Coolie *(1936) is the odyssey of Munoo, an orphaned village boy from the Kangra hills, who sets out in search of a livelihood. His several roles include working as a domestic servant in an urban middle-class household in Shamnagar, as a worker in a pickle-factory and a coolie in the bazaar in Daulatpur, as a labourer in a cotton mill in Bombay and a as a rickshaw-puller in an Anglo-Indian household in Simla.*

The central theme of the novel is the refusal to a simple, landless peasant of the basic right to happiness. Delineating the miserable past of Munoo, the novelist writes:

> *He had heard of how the landlord had seized his father's five acres of land because the interest on the mortgage covering the unpaid rent had not been forthcoming when the rains had been scanty and the harvest bad. And he knew how his father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment and left his mother a penniless beggar, to support…a child in arms. (*Coolie *p-6)*

It is not that Munoo was a below-average child. He was full of zest for life and quite promising. Describing his intelligent activities that could be compared to any of the bright children the novelist delineates:

> *…was a genius at climbing trees. He would hop on to the trunk like a monkey, climb the bigger branches on all fours, swing himself to the thinner offshoots as he were dancing a trapeze, and then, diving dangerously into space, he would jump from one tree to another. (*Coolie *p-7)*

Poverty leads Munoo to begin his tryst with destiny at the age of fourteen. He begins working as a domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram at Shamnagar. The lady of the house Bibi Uttam Kaur underfeeds and humiliates him. Ultimately he is forced to run away from this house after realizing his position in this world. The novelist remarks:

> *He realized finally his position in the world. He was to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten. (*Coolie *p-33)*

But the Shamnagar episode is only the beginning. It is his stint at Sir George White Cotton Mill in Bombay that exposes Munoo to the full forces of modern capitalistic machine. The British management offers no security of tenure and retrenchment is carried out frequently. The British foreman is at once the recruiting authority, a landlord who rents out ramshackle cottages at exorbitant rent, and also a moneylender-all rolled into one. The Pathan doorkeeper practices usury with even severe methods. The Sikh merchant exploits his position as the only provision store-keeper in the colony to his full advantage. M. K. Naik: observes:

> *The ill-paid, ill-housed, under-nourished and bullied labourer is broken, both in body and mind, as Munoo finds his friend Hari is, though his own youthful vitality saves him from this ultimate fate. (*Mulk Raj Anand *p-41-2)*

It is not only capitalism and industrialism that exploit the likes of Munoo, but communalism too does not spare them. A worker's strike is easily broken. Casual rumours of communal disturbances divert the objective of the workers from their rights to communal issues.

The novelty in this work is the depiction of the relationship shared between the colonizers and the colonized. The relationship which has

exploitation at the core is depicted with its dimensions of prejudices, embarrassment and inhibitions on both sides. Thus the theme of the exploitation and the underprivileged is presented in depth in Coolie and the picture is drawn with vividness, but the temptation to lay on the colours too thick is on the whole avoided.

The social panorama against which Munoo moves gives Anand an opportunity to deal with a cognate theme such as the relationship between the Indians and the British in pre-Independence days, a relationship in which the element of exploitation is mixed with prejudices, misunderstandings and inhibitions on both sides.

The setting in the novel moves briskly from the Kangra hills to the plains of Bombay and back to the Punjab hills. The novel depicts the people belonging to different cross sections of society from the landless peasants to the aristocratic Anglo-Indian and British and its varied spectacle from the scrupulous to the mean. This too is depicted in a period of about two years. So zealously has the novelist attacked the social system that M. K. Naik finds its impact to an extent of crippling the art of the novel. He remarks:

> *A sensitive and intelligent rustic adolescent, uprooted from the heaven of his native hills and thrown into the maelstrom of the varied urban world would undergo nothing short of a total transformation of personality within the space of two years, which can actually constitute an age in terms of development at that impressionable period. Of this transformation there is no sign in Munoo. The change brought by puberty and the loss of vitality consequent on the onset of the disease are duly noted, but the inner development of Munoo is totally neglected. Things happen to him and, he reacts to them, but strangely enough, the growth of the mind is nowhere shown. The only explanation possible is that Anand is so busy painting his picture of social inequality that the artistic danger in leaving his protagonist a static and passive victim escapes his notice altogether. (*Mulk Raj Anand *p-45)*

The novelist has a dual role to perform. He has to tell a tale and also with it convey his philosophy forcibly, without in any way mitigating his artistry. He tells us of the class-conflict between the rich and the poor, of the individual's right to work and of the worker's right to share the produce. Anand's art, owing to the tension between humanism and his radicalism, is ever on the point of being impaled on the horn's of a dilemma; but his fidelity to the fact of life and to the interior modalities of the human personality saves him from being a mere propagandist. Even his socialist view of art serves as an alembic rather than as a screen between the detail and the pattern of the felt life. But the artistic balance is rather precarious, and in this novel, the novelist seems to fall a prey to his political instinct. He portrays exploitation at various levels, including the one which thrives in the name of Trade Unionism and thus universalizes the theme. By over-emphasizing the sincerity and integrity of the Red Flag Union and showing Onkar Nath, who happens to be the President of the Indian Trade Union Congress in an unfavourable light, Anand the propagandist seems to have taken precedence over Anand the artist.

Anand's portrayal of these characters lacks objectivity. They are not full-blooded characters but only skin-deep and transparent. Yet they do conform faithfully to the quaint image into which a ruled nation forces the personality of the ruler. The comic epiphany orders into a viable focus the subversive feelings which the folk-mind entertains in respect of the pretentious superiority of the master-race. In a country's fables of identity, low-mimetic

images of power constitute a kind of counter-myth, and Anand seems to be sub-consciously operating at this level in his delineation of the English characters.

The novel cannot be said to possess the unity of which we expect from a well built plot as Anand pays more attention to the content of his novels than to the form. Anand makes no special effort to build up or construct his plot as a true craftsman should do. Having decided upon a theme Anand proceeds to invent a plot to develop, to expand, to elaborate and to illustrate that theme; but, while inventing a plot, he does not take pains to bind the plot into a unified whole. The theme in Coolie *is poverty and unemployment. An offshoot of this theme is the contrast between the rich and the poor. This theme has been comprehensively and exhaustively dealt with by Anand in this novel.*

The plot which Anand has built in this novel does not have organic unity. The plot here consists of long strings of incidents, events, situations and episodes. The incidents and the events involve persons, individuals, groups of people who have certainly been made to live and who are integral to these incidents and events. But the incidents and the events have not been closely inter-woven and do not even follow one another according to logic of cause and effect. The incidents happen just by chance and without any design either on the part of the characters or on the author. For instance, while Munoo does get a job in Babu Nathoo Ram's house as a domestic servant in accordance with a plan formed by Munoo's uncle, the rest of the story is a matter of chance happening. Munoo meets Prabha Dyal and Ganpat just by chance; he happens to receive the help of circus elephant-driver just by chance: he saves the life of

a child in Bombay just by chance, thus becoming acquainted with Hari; he comes to know Ratan just by chance; he is knocked down on a road by a passing car just by chance and is taken to Simla. The only unity about this string of chance-happenings lies in the fact that the protagonist stands at the centre of all these happenings, so that it is the personality of the protagonist which imparts to the novel whatever unity it does.

The chapter dealing with his life in Bombay is by far the longest chapter and it depicts not only the plight of Munoo but also of Hari, Lakshmi, Ratan and thousands of other workmen. The last chapter deals with Munoo's experience in Simla where he dies a premature death. In each of these sections of the novel we meet a different group of characters and the only common character in all of them is Munoo. The characters we come across in the second chapter are forgotten when we come to the next chapter. It is only Munoo who imparts some kind of unity to the novel. Thus the real theme of the novel is the experience of Munoo and his reactions to these experiences in different places. But the incidents and the happenings of the different chapters of the novel have not been interwoven into an artistic design or pattern; and no device has been employed for a close inter-linking of the various events of the episodes. The incidents and the events do not follow one another logically and are the result of mere chance and accident. Actually chance and fate play too prominent a role in the novel. Munoo is a passive character. Things happen to him and he has no role in determining the course of events.

The novel has succeeded in serving the purpose which the author had in writing it. The wretchedness and the misery resulting from the poverty and the exploitation of the unemployed and the under-privileged by the capitalists and also the affluent middle-class have most effectively been conveyed to us through the experiences of Munoo and also through the experiences of others at various places and in various contexts. Munoo the domestic servant at Babu Nathoo Ram's house; Munoo, the factory worker in Daulatpur; Munoo as a mill-worker in Bombay; and Munoo as a rickshaw-coolie in Simla – in short, Munoo as a victim of the social system in the country has been portrayed in detail and most convincingly. Others belonging very much to the same category are Tulsi, Maharaj, Ratan, Hari, Lakshmi and Mohan. They all belong to suffering and their exploiters are Bibi Uttam Kaur, Ganpat, Jimmie Thomas, the Pathan gate-keeper, the Sikh shopkeeper and the Sahiblogs of Simla- have been depicted in a realistic manner as the tyrants and the blood-suckers. Besides, there are thousands and thousands of other coolies whose wretched existence has been described.

Munoo, by temperament is the kin of Bakha. He shares with Bakha his sensitivities, imagination, love for life and fellow-feeling for others. But the difference between the two is that the problem of Bakha is peculiarly Indian, Munoo's is of a more universal nature. Bakha's experience is limited in time and space whereas, Munoo's life is painted on a large canvas and his struggle for survival takes him through the cross-section of the country. If Bakha is an untouchable, Munoo too, is an untouchable in a different sense: he is poor.

Coolie *is about double the size of* Untochable, *and the action is spread over some years and moves from village to town, from town to city, and from city to Bombay, and from Bombay to Shimla. The pace of writing, as in* Untouchable, *is swift, and has scenes follow in quick succession. Thus* Coolie *is a picaresque novel presenting the journey of the protagonist and the cross-section of India. It highlights the pains and predicaments of poor working people. If the* Untouchable *is the microcosm,* Coolie *is more like the macrocosm that is Indian society.*

III

The next work of the novelist to come in chronological order is Two Leaves and a Bud *(1937), which presents the theme of the exploitation of the underprivileged with the far greater concentration than* Coolie, *since in the earlier novel the scene shifts from one stratum of society to another, while in the latter work, the entire tragedy is unfolded against the background of the tea-plantation which is a microcosm in itself, a world in which British officials and their Indian subordinates on the one hand and the coolies on the other are ranged in two separate camps of the exploiters and the exploited. Thus the issue of racism looms large over the novel than in any other works of Mulk Raj Anand.*

The starting point in his novel too is a village, as in the case of Coolie. *But here we travel from a village in the Punjab to a tea-estate in Assam. The protagonist in this case is a middle-aged man by the name of Gangu. He travels from his village to Assam in the company of his wife Sajani and his two*

children, Leila and Buddhu. Ganga begins to work as a labourer on the tea-estate and becomes a victim of the exploitation which is going on there. It is double exploitation. There is exploitation of the labourers by their foreign masters, but there is also the exploitation by certain well-placed Indians. Among the British masters some are really good men, while some are evil. The worst of the evil Britishers is a man called Reggie Hunt, who is the assistant manager of the tea-estate where Gangu has found employment. Reggie Hunt is hated by the labourers and not much liked even by the fellow Britishers. The devil of a man, he tries to seduce Gangu's daughter Leila who is now a charming, grown up girl. Thwarted in his nefarious attempt he fires at Gangu killing him on the spot. At the trial this villain is acquitted of the charge of murder and even of culpable homicide.

Gangu's exploitation begins when he is lured to the tea-estate with a grand promise by Sardar Buta who recruits labourers for the tea-estate, with a promise of receiving a plot of land free of charge. Once he reaches it, the promised land turns out to be a prison where he just receives starvation wage and is compelled to live in unhygienic conditions and undernourished, he and his wife fall a prey to disease of which she even loses her life. On his intervention when the British Assistant Manager attempts to molest his daughter, he is shot dead and ends up by paying with his life rather than beginning a new one.

Gangu is a victim of the exploitation by the forces of capitalism and here too the exploiters are the British colonizers. The British attitude towards

the Indians is revealed by the treatment meted out on them by the British tea-estate officials namely Croft-Cook and Reggie Hunt. M. K. Naik observes:

> *For them the Indian labourer is just a piece of property, a sub-human being with no rights and all duty, whose only utility is to be a serviceable tool in the vast machine of the plantation.* (Mulk Raj Anand *p-47)*

The British officials totally mistrust the Indians. Every coolie is for them a potential agitator. Even a simple quarrel between the two collie women is magnified as an uprising and severely dealt with, and when the coolies come peacefully to seek redress, they are branded as revolutionaries and shot down. The consequence of utterly failing to understand the difficulties of the coolies is resorting to suppression as the panacea to all issues that arise in the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized.

Besides the British feeling of superiority is represented the deep-rooted feeling of inferiority in the colonized Indians. Such a feeling is not limited to the illiterate coolies who have been the victims of the feudal Indian structure since generation but even the educated middle-class Indians. Thus Babu Shashi Bhushan Bhattacharya cannot assert himself in the presence of a kind doctor

like de la Havre. De La Havre rightly summing up the situation observes:

> *If only the British had begun by accepting these people from the very start on terms of equality, as human beings…But there it was, the British had exaggerated the worst instinct in their own character, and called out the worst in the Indian.* (Two Leaves and a Bud *p-154)*

In the picture of race-relationship the novelist presents an effective counter-balance to Reggie Hunt through the young doctor de la Havre. He is depicted as sensitive, fair-minded Englishman, as opposed to the shrewd, sly and selfish Reggie Hunt. He can analyze the problems of the coolie and of the

*Indo-British relationship in all its aspects, such as the historical, the economic, the political, the sociological and the psychological; at the same time he can put himself in the coolie's place and feel for him. Thus de la Havre is, indeed one of the finest portraits of one aspect of British character in Indian fiction in English***.**

Gangu, the protagonist of the novel is comprehensively sketched. He rightly represents the class of the pre-independence peasants. He is credulous enough to believe the exaggerations of Buta regarding the plantation to which he is being lured and simultaneously he is aware that Buta is laying it on thick. Years of misery have converted him into a meek, passive and abject fatalist. But the instinct to live is still very strong in him. This instinct is clearly stated in the delineation by the novelist wherein he observes:

> *He gripped the handle of his spade with an unwavering faith and dug his foot into the sod made by a furrow, and sensed the warm freshness of the earth that would yield fruit. In the white emptiness of his mind there was the sudden pulsation of a wild urge to live. (*Two Leaves and a Bud *p-146)*

The characterization is sharp and angular- Reggie Hunt and de la Havre are two extremes and the pointedness of the indictment of an inhuman system blurs the lines of humanity in the picture.

*Structurally the novel is unified and well-developed. It opens with Gangu's arrival at the tea-estate, with the thought, "Life is like a journey" in his mind and by the end of the novels the journey is ultimately over. In spite of its wealth of character and episode, the novel maintains its unity, as every detail is woven round the central theme of Gangu's exploitation***.**

The two strands of the plot, consisting of the life and the fortunes of the Indians and those of the English, run concurrently, but they are never closely interwoven into a texture of the novel. The novelist devotes his energy to a faithful representation of facts on the physical plane of occurrence.

Similar to the previous works Two Leaves and a Bud *may be regarded as a brilliant piece of naturalistic fiction. It has little or no use of irony, which alone could compass the whole range of feeling from the sublime to the ridiculous. It leans rather on pathos, making it do the work of irony. Comparing it with the previous novels of the novelist, Iyengar states:*

> *If* Untouchable, *since it explores the impact of caste cruelty on the adolescent mind of Bakha, has a sort of piercing quality that is akin to the lyrical; if* Coolie *with its enormous range and multiplicity in action and character, has an almost epic quality; then* Two Leaves and a Bud *may be said to be essentially dramamtic novel and certainly it culminates in a tragic clash of interests and destinies, and what is fine is put out, and what is dark is triumphant. (*Indian Writing in English *p-343)*

The logic and the intellectual framework of the novel triumphs over the human content. The atmosphere of suspicion and strife, the racial intolerance and the antagonism shares similarity to Forster's A Passage to India. *It is evident that in portraying the unpleasant colonizer characters, the novelists' writing is infiltrated with hate and disgust. But the novelist narrates this unvarnished tale of plantation life in the thirties with some unsavoury aspects of the contemporary age.*

IV

After having described the plight of the landless peasant in Coolie *and* Two Leaves and a Bud, *Anand sets for himself a far more ambitious task in the trilogy dealing with Lal Singh. The three novels,* The Village *(1939),* Across

the Black Waters *(1940), and* The Sword and the Sickle *(1942) constitute a trilogy in which the protagonist is the same throughout and the action of which covers a period of several years. The protagonist is Lal Singh, the youngest son of a Sikh farmer, living in a village called Nandpur, which however may be regarded as symbolizing any Indian village. In these three novels he tries to deal with the theme of tradition versus modernity on a much more extensive scale. The novelist follows the career of his protagonist over half a dozen years, and the fact that unlike the passive Munno and the aged and ineffectual Gangu, Lal Sing is a fiery rebel against old world values.*

The Village *(1939) is a vivid picture of life in a typical Punjabi village during the early decades of the twentieth century, seen through the eyes of the young protagonist, an insider turned outsider, as he is a rebel against all the village mores which he finally escapes by running away from home. The simple peasant cheated at the fair by the quack who tempts to buy the "Elixir of Life" is for Lalu an archetype. Lalu smart, intelligent and progressive diagnoses this complex disease and the various forms it takes and is exasperated to find that the patient did not even know that he is ill, let apart his seeking the appropriate cure for his malady.*

Lalu finds the rustic a victim of all-round exploitation by numerous agencies - the landlord, the money-lender, the trader, the lawyer, the religious leader, the Government official, and also the unjust laws and policies of the British Government. Delineating the despair of Lalu, M.K. Naik observes:

> *What exasperates him is the fact that the rustic, grown fatalistic, abject and passive, refuses to better his lot by modernity. (*Mulk Raj Anand *p-58)*

*His aged father thinks that the "machine is the devil", and the age of Science is for him "the age of darkness". Lalu hates the dirt, the stench and the squalor of the village and thinks that if a fire could come and burn the wretched hovels to the ground. He would like to see the village rebuilt with brick, as the houses of the mechanics near the Power House were built. His elders are actually afraid of education and sincerely believe that education is not only useless but positively harmful for a peasant's son, for "learning spoilt the boys and enfeebled them, and made them useless for work in the fields by giving them the air of babus". (*The Village *p-26)*

The repudiation of modernity taking a dangerous form is depicted through the unquestioning submission to traditional religion, blind faith and superstition. The custodians of religious values in the community have degenerated into hypocrites. Mahant Nandgir, the religious guru of the village, is a confirmed glutton, drug addict and lecher, who yet masquerades as a religious teacher; and so strong is the hold of religion on the minds of the people that they accept him as their religious head, though they know him in his true colours.

The Mahant consolidates his position by exploiting the credulity of the common man, as in the incident where a victim of snake-bite is apparently cured by the recitation of the mantras. Superstition and blind faith are not the only ills from which true religious faith suffers. Religion and ethics have, for

most people, come to mean doing lip service to God and fanatically vigorous observance of empty forms and rituals. Thus Lalu remarks:

> *They were always forbidding you to do this and that, these elders, always curtailing your liberty. Always frustrating your desires. You couldn't even laugh in their presence. You had to join your hands gravely and say, "I fall at your feet." And they were ridiculous fools, ugly, uncouth lumps of flesh, wide-eyed, open-mouthed simpletons, saying prayers and mentioning the name of God all day, even as they lasciviously eyed the young girl passing in the bazaar. (*The Village *p-55)*

Lalu rebels against the village mores through the form of eating meat from a Muslim shop in the town and cutting off his long hair which his Sikh religion enjoins him to wear. Condemning the age old conventions Lalu observes:

> *The* Katch, Kara, Kripan, Kesh *and* Kanga *might well have been necessary when Guru Govind Singh was fighting Aurangzeb. Then it was said he enjoined his men to wear shorts because he couldn't get clothes; bangles and swords for symbols; and long hair because he couldn't get barbers to shave them, and combs to tidy their hair. Such provisions were dictated by necessity and common-sense. But as every one with a grain of intelligence said, what was the use of observing these conventions now and that there was no further need for them? There was no religion in doing so. (*The Village*p-28)*

It describes Lal Singh's career till the time of his joining the British Indian army in order to get away from the environment in which he has incurred the enmity of many people and the displeasure of his own father and other relations because he has committed the impious act of having his hair cut off even though he has tried to make amends to this act. But misfortune still dogs him when his brother murders the son of a landlord in the village on account of a feud between his family and that of the landlord, and when his brother is hanged for having committed the murder. Lalu Singh's father dies broken-hearted and Lalu sails away from India to fight with the British soldiers against the enemy in World War I which has broken out. Thus the incident of

this first of the three novels relating to the protagonist contains an account of the kind of life which is lived in the typical Indian villages of the Punjab. There are family rivalries and enmities; there are religious traditions and prejudices; there is even a murder which is not something very unusual in the villages of the Punjab. Joining the army too was nothing unusual even in those days. Thus the whole account is most realistic even though some of the incidents are melodramatic. The incidents are quite exciting, and some of the situations are very dramatic and moving.

The novel presents critically the characters and situation in which the miserly landlord, Sardar Harbans Singh; the lascivious priest, Mahant Nandgir and the sly money lender, Chaman Lal are fully realized. But the novel depicts characters such as Nihal Singh, the father of Lalu who in spite of all his erring and pathetic clinging to traditionalism and his obstinate rejection of modernity, is a noble figure having qualities of scrupulousness, integrity, tenacity, courage and faith that is very characteristic of any Indian peasant.

The Village *is, thus, a memorable picture of pre-independence Indian rustic life, drawn with understanding and objectivity. The weaknesses of traditionalism are exposed through the observer who is alive to modernity and its possibilities for a fuller and happier life; yet the saving graces of the old world values are not forgotten.*

V

The second novel of the trilogy Across the Black Waters *(1941) holds a unique place not only among the novels of Anand but in the entire gamut of Indian Writing in English. It opens with the protagonist along with his*

regiment disembarking at Marseilles to fight in Flanders, and concludes with his becoming a German prisoner of war. The entire action of the novel takes place in Europe and Lal Singh and his comrades are shown in actual action. Yet it would be unfair to term the work as only a 'war-novel'. Besides painting an authentic picture of war it also presents a complex mosaic of several other themes which recur in Anand's works - themes such as the contrast between the Indian tradition and Western modernity, the relationship between Indians and white men and the exploitation of the lowly by those in power and authority.

The moment he sets foot on the soil of Europe, Lalu starts comparing what he sees of European life with its Indian counterpart. His observation at first mostly corroborates his pet belief in the general superiority of the modern West over the East. He concludes that there is more equality in this land as he sees two sweepers drinking wine by two Tommie sans also a woman. He admires the cleanliness and the attention paid to hygiene in the hotels and the houses of the villagers, in direct contrast to the Indian conditions. Labusiere's farm with its "clean red and fat pigs", "hefty, small horned, well polished cows", "milked by machine", "mettlesome horses with dark, velvety winter coats;" and the spotlessly clean sheds, stables and barns fill him with great admiration. The novelist narrates:

> *If it was typical of Vilayati peasant households, then all his righteous indignation against his own village folk had been justified and his aspirations to live as European farmers lived a great ideal. He wished some of the old fogies of his village were here, for then he could show them how true had been his talk about reforming the village. (*Across the Black Waters *p-177)*

Lalu notices the general freedom from inhibitions and the zest for life exhibited by the Europeans and compares it with the scene at home. The author delineates:

> *Lalu could not keep his eyes off the smiling pretty-frocked girls with breasts half showing, bright and gleaming with …happiness…. Such a contrast to the sedate Indian women who seemed to grow old before they were young, flabby and tired…Why even the matrons here were dressed up and not content to remain unadorned like Indian wives, who thought that there was a greater dignity in neglecting themselves after they had had a child or two. (*Across the Black Waters *p-14)*

Allied to this theme of the contrast between the East and the West is that of the actual contact with them. As Lalu comes into contact with both the British and the French, the theme of race relationship takes on a new dimension in the Lal Singh trilogy. Variations appear on the constant theme of the unhappy relationship between the Indian and the white man. Mr. Hercules Long, Deputy Commissioner, so hectic in his efforts to "ameliorate the lot of the peasantry" and so comic in his disastrous encounter with the buffalo, in The Village *is a far more complex figure than the Englishman neatly divided into sheep and goats in the earlier novels. In* The Village, *the sensitive and humane Capt. Owen saves Lalu from prison and admires his skill at hockey; in* Across the Black Waters *the Captain continues to befriend Lalu, who almost hero-worships him. Lalu's sojourn in France makes him shed many of his pet illusions about the white man. When he sees the French farmer's wife who had lost her eldest son in the war break down, narrating the feelings of the protagonist the novelist writes:*

> *He did not know until this moment that sahibs and mems were also human. They had always seemed like gods, distant and self-assured…But from the sorrow of this mother with tears trickling down her cheeks at the memory of her dead son, he knew that these people were also susceptible to sorrow as*

> *well as to joy, and to every kind of inward tumult, that they also broke down when they were struck by the hand of fate. (*Across the Black Waters *p-197)*

Though the relationship between the Indian and the white man is much more harmonious here than it was in the earlier pictures of it, one unpleasant feature of it is present here too. Among the exploiters of the poor Indian, the white man continues to top the list. The Indian soldiers in the trenches often sullenly asks himself why should he fight this "bitch of a war" in a foreign land for a "dirty Sarcar" which asks him to risk his life but does not even bother to tell him for what cause. The relationship between Major Peacock and the Indian soldier is typically described as one of the few officers who could talk Hindustani well and who remembered the names of the sepoys, he was yet somewhat un-understanding of the sepoy heart. He was an old style officer who lived to a formula, to the extent to which the contacts between the sahibs and the sepoys at work and play had assumed certain traditional modes, his attitude evoked a workable response and the rest did not matter.

But by the very nature of his lowly position, the common Indian soldier suffers more at the hands of his immediate superiors who are his compatriots than he does at those of the British officers, who are remote like Gods. Lalu's own tormentor is Lance-Corporal Lok Nath, a coarse and brutal officer. Lok Nath is jealous of the fact that Lalu has a smattering of English, is intelligent and sensitive and has won the favour of Capt. Owen. He loses no opportunity to pick on the young man, and the only language he employs in dealing with all his subordinates in general is the language of choicest abuse.

Lok Nath is not a solitary example of a power-drunk tyrant. Young Suhab Singh, son of Subedar Major Arbel Singh is even worse. A friend and former class-mate of Lalu's, Subah soon brings home to him the truth of Henry Adam's shrewd observation: "A friend in power is a friend lost." The moment he is promoted Jemadar, Subah starts lording it over all, but over Lalu in particular, detailing him for fatigue duty.

As a war-novel, Across the Black Waters *can easily challenge comparison with other well-known works of fiction set against the backdrop of World War I with all the gory and gruesome incidents. Thus when "tall, lemur-like Hanumant Singh," who has fever, funks and refuses to fight, Subedar Suchet Singh shoots him in cold blood. Old Kirpu's reaction to the news that Lachman Singh is to receive the posthumous award of the Indian Order of*

Merit is:

> *A life pension addressed to Havildar Lachman Singh, Village Pool of Blood, Tehsil Purgatory, District Hell—Wah, don't speak of it" (*Across the Black Waters *p-187-88)*

The novelist describing Lalu's reaction as he gets his first taste of battle avers:

> *He would have to kill if he did not get killed first…Anyhow, whether he killed or did not kill he would have to go there where the enemy was…Involuntarily he trembled. Then he tried to remember the tactics of bayonet fighting, like a schoolboy recalling his lessons just before entering the examination room. And like the frightened schoolboy, he felt he had forgotten, and the dread loomed before his eyes, occupying the hollow of his body which shook against his will. (*Across the Black Waters *p-128)*

A realist to the core, the novelist scrupulously avoids offering a prejudiced picture of war, or an entirely one-sided treatment of his major

themes in the novel. Even in the holocaust there is a silver lining of Lalu's friendship with the French farmer's family and the affection he receives from them. Besides the tragic absurdity that war is, there are absurdities of a less somber kind, as when an Indian soldier crawling by a German trench is surprised by the enemy:

> *Behold, the brother-in-law though to take his hand to his head and salaamed the Germans. They beckoned him…He thought his end had come. So pointing to our trenches he abused the Angrez sahibs and made a sign as if he meant to cut the throat of the whole Angrezi race. Whereupon the German's were pleased and gave him sweets and coffee. Then, by using gestures, he told them that there were other traitors like him in the Hindustani Army and got permission to go and bring them back with him. The Germans feasted him…on meat and wine, and allowed him to creep back. (*Across the Black Waters *p-246)*

Similarly Lalu's rapturous adulation of all things Western is tempered by old and wise Kirupu's ironic comment on them, which lower the temperature considerably. Even Lalu himself admits that "he was inclined to forget the good things at home", after the first flush of his admiration for the brave new world has passed. Again, the cold and distant Major Peacock is counterbalanced by Capt. Owen, who is all sympathy and understanding for the Indian soldiers. Even the fiendish Corporal Lok Nath is harsh and malevolent.

Across the Black Waters *has a well-controlled, taut structure in which the major themes are blended together harmoniously, and the central figure of Lalu gives unity to the entire picture. The novel holds a unique place in the entire gamut of Indian fiction in English.*

VI

The Sword and the Sickle *(1942) is in continuation of the previous novel* Across the Black Waters*, shows Lal Singh coming back from a German prison*

after the war and getting discharged from the army without any benefits; is united to his old flame Maya; becomes associated with a communist set-up, and ends again in prison. The setting of the novel is the second decade of the twentieth century in India, one of the most seminal periods in modern history that witnessed the star of Tilak set and the sun of Gandhiji rise, leading to a new and intense phase of the freedom struggle.

The novelist here adequately handles the theme of the exploitation of the peasantry by various agencies. A new touch added to the work is the depredations of feudalism, which was a factor largely absent from the earlier pictures. The episode of Chandra's death is typical. He is ill and therefore refuses to do forced labour for the Nawab of Nasirabad. He is then dragged before the Manager of the estate, flogged and forced to cut wood. He collapses and dies. When under Lalu's leadership the peasants protest, they are literally hounded out and one of them is shot. So strong is the hold of the feudal tradition on the mind of the peasants that they rally round the 'Count' Kunwar Rampal Singh, not so much because they subscribe to his revolutionary socialistic ideology, but because obedience to the princely patriarch is deeply ingrained in them. The usual other exploiters are also very much at work: the repressive laws, Government officials, landlords and money-lenders among others. The age-old limitations of peasant characters noted earlier are again understood here - its fatalism, its ignorance and stupidity and its abjectness in the face of oppression.

But the resistance movement organized by the Count and Lalu has its impact and a definite change is observed in the peasants. Describing the change the novelist delineates:

> *They had become different from the broken, demoralized, backboneless creatures who would abjectly catch hold of the feet of a policeman and grovel in the dust with joined hands, completely unlike the gentle, kindly men with bottomless souls who were for ever sunk in the misery to which they always resigned themselves. The new movement seemed to have given them a new faith. (*Across the Black Waters *p-279)*

*The significance of the change is brought out in the episode where the peasant Sukhua turns like the proverbial worm that attacks his landlord, shouting, "The old days have gone…The old days have gone." (*Across the Black Waters *p-330-31)*

The Count seeing a future full of hope remarks:

> *Once we have abolished the notion of our superiority, we shall begin to see that they are human beings; once we have broken the barriers that subsist between them, there will arise a new morality among them, a new sense of right and wrong. (*Across the Black Waters *p-248)*

The protagonist himself is a good example of this new sense. The peasant lad has undergone a sea-change as a result of his experience and his contact with the wide world. In his own career, he exemplified the impact of modernity upon tradition. In a passage of evocative self-analysis Lalu avers:

> *What was the destiny of man without a sense of right or wrong! Throughout his life he himself had struggled to perfect himself, if not according to the pietistic ideas of his father, who told the beads of a rosary every minute of the day, or like his brother Dayal Singh, who quoted the works of Guru Nanak, but according to his own ideas of well-being and those which he had found good in the teaching of the Church Mission High School. He had been in revolt against the limitations of his own nature as well as the prejudices of religion in Nandpur, and he had sought to perfect himself in the face of evil though he had suffered. He had struggled, and always would go on struggling to remove his own ignorance and all the defects in his own nature. And since self-perfection was not enough, he would try to cleanse the blurred minds of all the peasants, to open their eyes to the iniquities which were practiced on them. (*Across the Black Waters *p-247)*

The novel is not without its ambivalences as on one hand the novelist would like us to take the Count seriously as he puts into his mouth many of his favourite ideas and theories, regarding the nature of the Indian peasantry, feudalism, the effects of the British Raj on the Indian economy and other matters; on the other, he introduces a strong note of irony in his description of the activities of the Count and his followers. The Count himself seems to enjoy the irony in the situation in which he, a representative of feudalism, finds himself at the head of an anti-feudalistic campaign. Hints are continually dropped, suggesting that revolutionary and altruistic zeal is not the only motive behind his actions – personal vanity, love of power, and a sense of the absurd which revels in the incongruity of his own situation perhaps being far more potent factors. This impression of persistent irony is confirmed when one considers the portraits of the Count's followers. For an organization committed to revolution they are surprisingly ludicrous bunch of clowns. They include the small, bookish and over-serious Professor Verma, described as "quick witted buffoon"; Comrade Ram Din, who according to the Count, "looks like a camel"; Comrade Nandu, "murderer and hunter"; Pandit Ram Kumar Mishra, whom the Count introduces as a man beaten by his wife with a broom because he "went to bed with a cobbler woman"; and the monkey of this strange menagerie – Comrade Gupta, with his "fair, monkeyish face, with rare blue eyes, which were brimming over with mischief". M.K. Naik, over this characterization reflects:

> *When one remembers that the farce of the ceremonial slapping of Gupta by order of the Count is an almost monotonously regular part of the assembly when the Count holds his communist court, one begins to have serious*

> *misgivings about the effectiveness of the role of these characters in furthering the central concerns of the novel. (*Mulk Raj Anand *p-74)*

*An equally persistent irony is present in the novel in the portraits of Comrade Sarashar and the sanctimonious Congress leader, Sirjut Ladli Prashad Tiwari. Gandhiji and his associates too do not escape the irony of the Count and his associates. When Lalu and his friends go to see the Mahatma, they manifestly go to mock and not to pray. They are "amused at the incongruity of the European lifestyle in the house of Pandit Motilal Nehru and the deliberate simplicity cultivated by the mahatma's followers." (*Across the Black Waters *p-201)*

The contrast between the gardener using a machine to spray water on the flowers beds and the members of the Mahatma's entourage plying primitive spinning wheels nearby too attracts attention in its contradiction. Lalu finds the Mahatma's talk of suffering, self-discipline and non-violence, and the solemnity in his tone as he speaks about cows, irritating and ridiculous, though the force of the great man's personality, his sincerity and his sense of humour do not fail to impress the young revolutionary. These ludicrous details do more harm than any good to the work; neither to the thematic concern nor to the structure of the novel. If the intention is to show the protagonist faced with the dilemma of choosing between revolutionary violence and Gandhian non-violence, what possibly is gained in presenting both these in ludicrous light? Does the writer wish to present a hero hopelessly confused by the welter of the post-war situation in India?

The Lalu Maya relationship is another element that proves negative to the structural imbalance and the artistic integrity of the novel. The love story, which has its beginning in the The Village*, is an integral element in that novel, since it is one of the factors in Lalu's rebellion against the village. The continuation of this episode in* The Sword and the Sickle *starts promisingly, as Maya elopes with Lalu and they get married, thus crowning atleast one part of Lalu's rebellion with success. But then Maya is forgotten for a long spell, which is only broken by her complaints and her quarrels and reconciliations with her husband. The story of Lalu and Maya is totally unconnected from the major concerns of the novel. Similarly the lengthy speeches of Comrade Sarashar and others in the novel too is another indication of the artistic failure of the work. Thus M.K. Naik, on* The Village *trilogy remarks:*

> The Village *trilogy thus makes an excellent beginning and continues along the lines of sure artistic progress in* Across the Black Waters*, until it comes to a heavy cropper in* The Sword and the Sickle*. What starts by promising to become a memorable picture of the development of an Indian peasant's cosmos, ends up in chaos and confusion. (*Mulk Raj Anand *p-76)*

Government against the people, the people themselves cut up into divisions, the play of political and personal rivalries, the clash of ideologies, the pull of selfish greed and the pull of idealism and the need for sacrifice form the ingredients of the need for a revolution, is the picture presented in The Sword and the Sickle.

The Lalu trilogy, although it lacks the concentrated power of the Untouchable*, the vast comprehension of* Coolie*, or the propagandist edge of* Two Leaves and a Bud*, is an impressive work nevertheless, taking within its*

purview the vastly distant Indian village and a French farm, covering local and national issues in the backdrop of the global war.

VII

The novelist in The Big Heart *(1945) deals with a totally novel theme than the ones raised in his earlier works. He presents a low class Indian youth boldly championing modernity against tradition and losing his life in the process. It creates a special niche in the heart of its creator since it presents an intimate picture of a segment of society to which Anand himself belongs.*

This novel again depicts a conflict between two classes of society, though the conflict here is not between the untouchables and the caste Hindus but between a class of artisans and a class of capitalists. However, this novel does resemble Untouchable *in so far as the action here also covers one single day. The capitalists, Murali Dhar and Gokal Chand, have set up a factory to produce the copper products which traditionally were produced by coppersmiths with their manual labour. Many of the coppersmiths are rendered unemployed as a consequence of the factory being established by the two capitalists. In a state of desperation one of the coppersmiths by the name of Ralia begins to smash the machines in the factory and, on being stopped in this destructive action by his friend Ananta, batters Anant's head against a broken machine, killing him on the spot. Ralia is taken into custody and his protest, though murderous and violent fails miserably. The machine appears as the victor over manual labour. Ananta is the hero of the novel and his fate is made to appear perfectly tragic. He is an innocent victim of a protest which too had*

its justification though not in the form it took. Anant in this novel fights a two-fold battle. He has to fight against the prejudice of his fellow coppersmiths, against the installation of machinery and he fights also against the two factory-owners who seek to exploit the manual workers. A romantic element enters the novel when Ananta's love for, and devotion to a woman called Janki, who is suffering from tuberculosis, becomes an ingredient in the plot of the story. Thus here, again we find the hero devoted to his mistress as well as to a cause. A side-interest in the novel is split or the division among the coppersmiths themselves. The better-off among them exploit the weaker members of their fraternity.

Once again the realism of the whole picture is one of the great strengths of the novel. In the novel, again we have a multitude of characters, all of whom have been made to live – the coppersmiths, the communists, the religious reformers and the capitalists.

The confrontation between the old and the new is not only a feature of the environment of Billimaran; it is also a factor which seems to govern the lives of all those who live there. Most of the older inhabitants here try to cling to the old. The novelist writes:

> *Caught in the mousetraps where they are born, most of them are engaged in the bigger cage of Fate and the various shadows that hang like thunder clouds over their heads. (*The Big Heart *p-9)*

Those who have ventured to leave Billimaran and sought to better their lot in the wide world outside have either been worsted and have returned home beaten, or have made good but left for good. The older generation pursues its

ancestral vocation, bending over furnaces and crouching in the doorways; most of the younger set is employed in factories with their polished and intricate machines. The older generation believes:

> *…this is the iron age, the age of Death, which is to culminate in the doomsday. (*The Big Heart *p-11)*

For the young men in the factory, however, the "iron age" is "the machine age." Celebrating it they sing:

> *We are the men who will master it,*
> *We are the new man of the earth of all the evil old ages.*
> *(*The Big Heart *p-11)*

The novelist subjects both tradition and modernity to extremely close scrutiny in the novel. Though his humanistic creed with its firm faith in Science as one of the chief instruments for producing a better world makes him show a distinct preference for modernity against tradition, he does try to give tradition its due by showing what is worthwhile in it, even while exposing its weaknesses. The narrowness and obscurantism, the defeatism and fatalism of the tradition-bound life in Billimaran are shown with stark realism.

Ananta is the most emancipated member of his community. He has been to Bomaby and Ahmedabad; is acquainted with trade union movements, and all this together with an inborn rebelliousness and natural high spirits makes him a sworn foe to tradition, in all its forms. Janaki calls him the "machine man", and he glorifies the machine as a wonderful gift given by Science to modern man. Sharing his vision of the West as one of an industrial utopia to Janaki, he reveals:

> *I should like to go to Vilayat one day and see what conditions are like there…I should like to see those steps which walk, and railways which run in*

> *the bowels of the earth. I should also like to go and see the giants of Roos…They have learnt to grow wheat in the snow-fields and extract power from the coal in the earth without any one having to go into the mine. In all those things the earth is coming to be more and more like heaven. (*The Big Heart *p-78)*

Unlike his comrades who blame the machine for taking away their traditional occupation and therefore regard it as an unmixed evil, Ananta believes that the machine is only a neutral tool, to be put to the right use by man. Simplifying the acceptance of machines Ananta avers:

> *When one is married off to a girl and she brings in her dowry with her, one does not refuse the bedstead because it is too high to get on easily. If one has a heart and really capable of love, one likes a polished bridal bed better than a broken old string charpai. Like the fashionable Vilayati bride we have accepted the dowry of the machines she has brought and make use of them, provided we keep our hearts and become the masters. Machines don't think or feel, it is men who do. (*The Big Heart *p-32)*

Another aspect of modern machine civilization he approves of is the freedom it brings from old moral taboos. He recalls how in Bombay no one was worried about his liason with Janaki, which has brought him so much opprobrium in a small town like Amritsar.

Since Ananta is no intellectual, his well-nigh visionary faith in the machine is complete, though he is not unaware of the seamy side of industrialism. In his simplicity and native optimism, he however, believes that these evils can easily be overcome, once the proletarian revolution gets going. It is left to the poet, Sardar Puran Singh, to expose the other side of the shield. He points out how the machine has become a tool in the hands of exploiters to tyrannise over the under-privileged, how it can be "a death trap which alters the whole character of man" and what are the difficulties and dangers in adopting the machine for a traditional community.

Anands rebellion against tradition and his militant championship of the machine would not perhaps have resulted in tragedy, but for certain contributory causes which spring from the limitations of his own character. He is betrayed by much that is "false within." He flaunts his atheism and his disregard for moral taboos in the face of his community and becomes notorious as a "whore monger, flesh eater and drunkard" – a reputation of doubtful value to a would-be Messiah of a new dispensation in a tradition bound society. Quick-tempered and excitable, he lacks the tact and patience to carry reluctant comrades with him. Lacking moral authority, he is also wanting in the intellectual resources which would have enabled him to achieve his mission against so heavy a set of odds. To make matters worse, a tragic misunderstanding about the money he receives as wages for work done from Khushal Chand leads his comrades to suspect that he is in the pay of the enemy.

The Big Heart *emerges as a memorable presentation of the theme of the clash between tradition and modernity; and several factors contribute to the effectiveness of the picture. To begin with, Ananta is an unforgettable portrait. In spite of his many limitations, he impresses us as a Triton among the minnows. The zest for life, the high spirits and the love of mischief of this youth of a 'giant frame' endear him to children; his generosity is so great as to be a subject for fun, his sympathy for the poor and his zeal for reform are as strong as everything about him. His sudden death at the hand of his friend is the stuff of Shakespearean tragedy, for both destiny and character have a share in it;*

and the final sense of the terrible waste of unrealized potential it leaves is also pure tragedy. Furthermore, the suggestion in the last chapter that though Ananta is dead, his mission will be carried on by Janaki and the Poet is also indicative of the birth of a new order in the death of the old – a characteristic of the true spirit, which is something far more than sheer pessimism.

Similar to Untouchable, The Big Heart *too has a fine, well-knit structure; and as in earlier work, the entire action here also takes place on a single day. The Clock Tower, which rivals the two temples on the other side of Billimaran, tolls the hours of this last fateful day in Ananta's life with measured strokes, heard at intervals throughout the whole narrative. We first meet Ananta working in his shop in "the sombre half dark of the dawn"; when he goes to the tank to take his bath, the Tower-clock stands at a quarter to seven; "an hour and half later" he is "outside the house of bungalow of the famous Amritsar leader, Sheikh Abdul Latif". As he is taking the finished cauldron to the merchant, he hears the Tower-clock strike "huge gong notes of the hour" and from the way the shaft of sunlight was falling across Billimaran, he concludes that it is now eleven; the lunch with the friends at the shop, the abortive visit to Makham Chand's grainshop and the siesta in the Kali temple occupy the afternoon; when the Sub-Inspector of Police arrives on the scene of Ananta's murder, he notes the time in his book, "quarter past six" and finally, in the last chapter:*

> *The relentless fury of the sun had burnt itself over Billimaran by the time the Clock Tower struck the half-hour past seven. (*The Brave Heart *p-21)*

Not only does the narrative move swiftly towards the final catastrophe; during the course of its rapid movement, it also throws out suggestions indicating the inevitability of the tragedy at the end. Ralia's ultimate attack on the machines is well prepared for in an earlier episode which shows him abusing the machine age in the filthiest language; and Ananta's destiny of being a victim of misunderstanding is indicated much earlier in the episode in which, in trying to help two beggar boys, he is unwittingly responsible for depriving them of the leftovers they are fighting for. Again, the fact that Ralia breaks the machine with a hammer taken from Ananta's shop is both ironical and symbolic of Ananta's own contribution in other ways to the final tragedy. Ananta's own contribution in other ways to the novel is thus seen to be more than a stock romantic device.

Highlighting the drawback of the novelist M.K. Naik avers:

> *The only possible flaw in the otherwise well-ordered structure of the novel is once more Anand's penchant for resorting to direct statement, as if he occasionally feels the inadequacy of the fabric of situation and character in externalizing his vision. (*Mulk Raj Anand *p-85)*

The novel adopts a rational attitude to the incursion of the machine; it is the last will and the testament of the tradition and modernity, Gandhian distrust of the machine as Frankenstein, conflict between communism and capitalism and the predicament of man, telescoping entire socio-economic-political situations, seeking total transformation of man.

Similar to the end of Untouchable, *here also the Poet holds forth with distressing frequency and at elaborate length on Anand's favourite topic of exploitation, modernity, the humanist faith and like. Notwithstanding this,* The

Big Heart *is a notable achievement. Set firmly in Billimaran, it is true of many other times and climes also. Hence, the extract from Byron's speech on the Luddite movement in 1812 which forms the motto to the novel fits the narrative admirably.* The Big Heart *has thus both a local habitation and a universal name.*

Anand is famous chiefly as a writer of sociological novels. His novels deal with some of the most glaring social evils which include untouchability and the exploitation of labour. Anand's picture of poverty and of the wretchedness and the misery caused by poverty are most vivid and poignant. By vividly and forcefully describing the suffering of the people, Anand appears before us an uncompromising critic of the whole class of the perpetrators of injustice and cruelty. Every novel of his seems to have been designed by him to arouse the social conscience. There is hardly any ugly or depressing aspect of fiction which has not been attacked by Anand in his novels. He is the leading practitioner in India of the novel of protest. His novels aim at denouncing social evils of all kinds and it is this aspect of his fiction that has won him the esteem and admiration of the novel reading public in India.

In addition to exposing the social evils which are eating into the vitals of the Indian society, Anand has always advocated, by implication if not in explicit terms, the need of national integration. Almost all the major novels of Anand reflect his strong opposition to orthodoxy which includes communal discrimination and caste prejudices.

It is by his portrayal of the human character that a novelist is chiefly judged. Anand is a great creator and delineator of characters. He is able to infuse life into all the characters who figure in his novels; and the number and the variety of the characters in his novels is multitudinous. Anand does not write fanciful stories and he does not indulge in fantasies. Nor are his characters figments of imagination. The stories correspond to the facts of Indian life, and the characters are real human beings, men and women of flesh and blood, by no means puppets manipulated by the author. And therein lies the real greatness of Anand as a novelist. He is a writer of realistic and convincing stories, and he is a delineator of characters who strike us as real and convincing human beings.

As Anand forte lies exposing social evils in Indian life of the past and the present, it is logical for him to portray his heroes as rebels who become alienated from their environment because of their radical and revolutionary views. Alienation of Anand's early characters like Bakha and Munoo is obvious and inevitable as all his heroes are youthful and energetic, sensitive, and somewhat idealistic persons possessing an awareness, to a greater or lesser degree, of the follies and the injustices which are rampant in a tradition bound and caste bound society. Bakha and Munoo win our sympathy because they are helpless victims of injustice, and because their alienation is chiefly the result of social barriers. But the characters in Anand's subsequent novels, characters like Nur, Lalu Singh and Maqbool constitute a more complex hero-type who combines the vigor of Bakha and Munoo with a certain difference. In these

later characters we find a paralyzing moodiness, a fear of loneliness, a sense of guilt and an inclination to believe in superstitions. These tendencies inhibit opportunities in these heroes for clear thought and direct purposeful action. Another feature of Anand's characterization is his mature humanism and his sympathetic understanding of the characters he has created. What distinguishes Lalu Singh, the hero of The Sword and the Sickle*, is the intensity of his inner life, despite his confusion and his periods of despair. Lalu Singh's self-awareness has an important bearing on the question of awareness. In the earlier novels, alienation resulted chiefly from social barriers, imposed on the individual from the outside. But the sense of alienation which Lalu Singh experiences is more complex because of his human isolation and rootlessness. He has returned to India, from the war to find both his parents dead and the family property dispersed; and there are, of course other handicaps which he suffers from too.*

Anand has made use of the technique of the stream of consciousness in some of his novels. The thoughts passing through a person's mind do not necessarily possess continuity or any logical interconnections. Such thoughts are always random. However Anand does not go the extreme of describing the thoughts of his characters in such a way as to confuse and bewilder us. Thus the thoughts passing through Bakha's mind in the novel Untouchable *are continuous, coherent and logical. If an intellectual novelist tries to render the stream of consciousness of a simple minded character like Bakha, the novelist runs the risk of falsifying the ill logical logic of his character's mind by*

inserting into it his own intellectuality. While writing Untouchable, *Anand was confronted with the problem of maintaining an artistic detachment to make sure that his own experiences did not intrude into Bakha's stream of consciousness. Thus Anand follows in his novels the conventional modes of narration.*

Anand possesses an unusual command of the English language. It is certainly needless to point out that he is one of the great Indian masters of English language. He has developed a style of his own. He has been advised by Gandhiji to avoid decoration and embellishment of all kinds in the writing of a language and Anand has shown his capacity to express himself effectively through a style which is shorn of literary ornamentation and embellishment. His style is not ornate or flamboyant but it is certainly forceful and highly expressive. When occasion demands Anand can become rhetorical and bombastic.

Alongwith R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, Anand is credited with establishing the basic forms and themes of modern Indian literature written in English. At the core of his writing is a humanist philosophy that incorporates elements of socialist, political and economic theory. His sociologically conscious works have shed keen insight in Indian affairs and enriched the country's literary heritage.

VIII

A contemporary to Anand is R.K. Narayan, whose first work Swami and Friends *(1935) was published in the same year in which was published Anand's*

Untouchable. *He published his first novel,* Swami and Friends *(1935), and in a quick succession appeared* Bachelor of Arts *(1936) and* The Dark Room *(1938); thus forming a trilogy of sorts. After a long silence comes* The English Teacher *(1945). The three novels* Swami and Friends, Bachelor of Arts *and* The English Teacher *form a trilogy.*

Swami and Friends *(1935) was Narayan's first novel and it was at once hailed by competent critics as a great work of art. Graham Greene called it "A book in ten thousand" and Compton Mackenzie avers, "I have never read any other book about India in the least like it."*

The novel describes the life of boys in South India schools, and much of R. K. Narayan's personal experience has gone into the making of the novel. We get a vivid portrayal of thoughts, emotions and activities of school boys. The plot revolves round the activities of Swami, the hero of the novel and his friends Mani, the mighty good for nothing, Shanker, the most intelligent boy of the class, Somu the monitor, Samuel, the short-statured, and so called the Pea, and Rajam, a late arrival, intelligent and charming, the son of the Police Superintendent.

Swami is a boy of ten years, a student of First Form (A) in the Albert Mission High School. He is not a bright student rather an average one and every Monday is a black Monday for him, for he does not like to go to school after the delicious rest and the vagabondage of Saturdays and Sundays. At school he is constantly rebuked by his teachers for his unsatisfactory work, and at home he is ever on the watch for the departure of his father so that he may

run away and loaf about. But he is quite happy in the company of his friends, particularly, Rajam and Mani. They exchange visits, or loaf about happily even in the hot sun.

Ebenezer, a teacher of the school, is a fanatic Christian and one day, quite early in his school career, Swami comes into clash with him. Unable to bear the abuses hurled on the Hindu deities by this fanatic Christian, Swami tries to heckle him and consequently gets beaten and his left ear injured. He, however, avenges the insult by delivering to the Head Master his father's complaint against the teacher. There is further trouble. His very close friend, the powerful Mani, who is in the habit of bullying the new-comers, takes it into his head to bundle up Rajam, and throw him into the river Sarayu. Swami agrees to help his mighty friend in his dangerous plan. Luckily for him the proposed fight does not take place. Fear on both sides brings the two enemies together and in no time they turn fast friends, eating biscuits and sitting on the bank of the river.

When Rajam arrives, the M.C.C. (Malgudi Cricket Club) is formed with Swami and his fiends as members. The advent of Rajam marks a crisis in Swami's life. Swami falls in love with the boy, and is distressed that his other friend Mani has to fight with the newcomer just to put him in place. The party at Rajam's house where the young man order's his cook about just to show-off his importance; the excitement of asking Rajam to the house and the way Swami sets about this, educating his grandmother as he goes along - every reader recollects. The crisis in their relation is reached when Swami, without

intending it, lets down his team by not turning up for the crucial match between the M.C.C. and the Young Men's Union. The result is that Rajam is very angry with him and the friendship between the two comes to an end. Soon Rajam's father is transferred, and he is to leave the town. Swami goes to bid him farewell at the station.

With a copy of Anderson's Fairy Tales *in his hands Swami reaches the station in time but hesitates in approaching Rajam. A little later before the train starts, Mani discovers him standing in the crowd and takes him to Rajam, but the train steams off. With great difficulty Mani succeeds in handing over Swami's present to Rajam who acknowledges it by waving his hands towards Swami.*

The final chapter is quite touching but the scenes in the school are full of fun, very natural and convincing. When two boys quarrel they withdraw straightway all diplomatic relations and if they have to talk to each other do so as at the international level through a third party. The fact that the boys are actually standing face to face and can easily hear each other, without the message having to be received and transmitted by the third party is simply irrelevant. One day when the work for the day was over, Swami, Mani and Rajam, adjourned to a secluded spot to say what was in their minds. Swami stood between them and acted as their medium of communication. They were so close that they could have heard each other even if they had spoken in whispers. But it is customary between enemies to communicate through a medium. Mani faced Swami steadily and asked, "Are you a man?" Rajam

flared up and shouted, "Which dog doubts it?" Swami turned to Mani and said ferociously, "Which dirty dog doubts it?" The novelist delineates:

> *"Have you the courage to prove that you are a man?" asked Mani.*
> *Swaminathan turned to Rajam and repeated it.*
> *"How?"*
> *"How?" repeated Swaminathan to Mani*
> *"Meet me at the river, near Nallapa's Grove, tomorrow evening."*
> *" - Near Nallapa's Grove," Swaminathan was pleased to echo.*
> *"What for?" Asked Rajam.*
> *"To see if you can break my head"*
> *"Oh to pieces", said Rajam. (*Swami and Friends *p-44)*

Swaminathan's services were soon dispensed with. They gave him no time to repeat their words. Rajam shouted in one ear and Mani in the other.

The novel is remarkable for the author's understanding of child psychology and for his depiction of the carefree, buoyant world of schoolboys in a most realistic and convincing manner. It renders peoples and their actions as they appear to boys at the school-stage. Swami is one of Narayan's immortal creations. Besides displaying Narayan's skill in characterization, the novel also brings out the brilliance of his humour. There might be some looseness in construction, still the novel is creditable first achievement and, it fully displays Narayan's peculiar genius.

Swami is the central figure in the novel, and the action has been looked at throughout from his point of view. To this extent, one would be justified in calling him the hero of the novel, but he is an unheroic hero, one who has nothing heroic in his character. By and large, he is a passive character, like railway Raju in The Guide, *a character who does not act but is acted upon, who has no control over his circumstances, but is controlled by them.*

Swami rarely initiates action himself, but acts upon the suggestions made by others. He is easily taken in by the story of the coachman that he can easily turn twelve paise into six rupees, and so produce the hoop for which he yearned. Thus he is easily fooled and robbed. Later in order to recover the money, he acts upon the suggestion of Rajam and Mani by decoying the coachman's son by pretending to be hostile to Swami. The result is that he is abused and beaten by Mani, and all to no avail. The coachman's son is more than a match for them, and easily robs them of a top. Swami had not liked the idea of meddling with the coachman's son, he was afraid of him and would not have liked to keep away from him, but he could not say 'no' to Rajam and the result was his discomfiture at his hands. This is so because he is a passive character who does not act himself but is acted upon by others. Similarly, the initiative for founding the M.C.C. is taken by Rajam, he simply accepts it and acts according to the dictates of Rajam. His running away from the school, from Malgudi and from home, is again a sign of passivity. Unable to face harsh reality he takes the much easier course of escape, and when hunger, fatigue and terrors of the forest are too much for him he decides to return home. Passive and unheroic he is a slave to the circumstances. He drifts about and makes no effort to master them or to chalk out a definite course of action.

The fact is that though a boy of ten years, he is essentially a child. On the face of it Swami and Friends *is a straightforward school-boy story, a story of boys for boys. Family relationships, particularly Swami's relations with his doting granny and to lesser extent with his constantly exasperated father,*

Swami's friendship, his quarrels, his teachers, his idleness, his homework, his examinations, his running away, make up what seems the fairly orthodox material of a school-boy. Swami is basically a child, he has a more individual and spontaneous existence than a school-boy. He has begun to look at the adult world around him, he tries to understand it also to come to terms with it, but still his responses to it are his own, rash and impulsive. Thus he is again and again involved in troubles while his friends, who are more mature, are not. He absents himself from the class and indulges in a spree of smashing windows-panes. The result is he is in trouble and when the Head-Master canes him, he acts rashly, catches his hand, and runs away from school. Equally rash and impulsive is his response at the Board High School with the result that life in Malgudi becomes impossible for him, and he decides to run away.

A child's imagination is highly excitable and poetic. Things petty and insignificant in themselves are exaggerated beyond all proportions. The result is that the child is prone to hero-worship and is terrified by purely imaginative terrors having no basis in reality. Thus for Swami both Rajam and Mani are heroes, he admires them and follows them. He really believes that Mani can and will break heads with his club, that Rajam is superior being to whom all homage is due, and that when two boys fight in the school compound, they are likely to murder each other, and is very much surprised when they are easily parted by the Head Master. He has all the credulity of a child, believes the coachman can multiply money by his tricks, and further that if he prays to the gods, they will turn his pebbles into coins. He is frightened by the threats of the

coachman's son, and goes about in terror of his life, as is obvious by his reactions to his presence in the father's club. Swami is in panic at the sight of him, and imagines that he would either stab him in the back, or collect his friends and assassinate him.

Thus the novelist depicts great penetration and skill in depicting the rainbow world of childhood and early boy-hood. There is hardly anything about child-life which has not been depicted in this novel. Not only is the child's world vivified, but Narayan has revealed the world of the adults as it appears to the children.

Narayan has always been a student of human-relationships. In his early novels he deals with such simple relationship as the relations between students and teachers, between friends and class-mates, or relationships within family, between the father and son, husband and wife etc. Swami and Friends *is his first novel and the novelist has explored relationships of simpler kind.*

Swami's relationships with his friends have been explored in great detail. Swami's friendship with Mani and Rajam, is personal and human, and they are seen together even after school hours, and in the vacations. They exchange visits and loaf about at ease even in hot summer sun. Swami's relationship with Somu, Shanker and the Pea is scholastic and impersonal. It is limited only to school-hours, and they drop out of his life in the beginning of the next session. Only Swami, Mani and Rajam remain together and when at the end of the novel, Rajam leaves Malgudi, Swami and Mani are left together.

A definite thematic pattern can be traced in Swami and Friends. *It can be termed as the quest for identity. Each of Narayan's novels depicts the struggle towards maturity, the education of the central figure, who is not at all heroic, but an ordinary human being with common human virtues and weaknesses. As the action proceeds he strives to achieve maturity and each stage in this struggle is defined carefully, minutely and precisely. The impression created is that of ordinary individual living his humdrum day to day life, struggling with circumstances, growing wiser and maturing through his struggle. Thus at the end of the novel he is entirely changed. He has grown and matured from a rash and impulsive child into a boy whose responses would be more patterned, controlled and disciplined.*

The plot of the novel is loose and episodic. Swami is not a picaro but in its construction the novel is largely picaresque. There is a string of episodes and incidents, and the only unity they have is provided by the fact that they all cluster round Swami, the chief protagonist. The stress is more on the incident rather than the character and most of the characters remain thin, shadowy figures. There are a number of incidents and their order can be easily changed as in most cases the logical unity of cause and effect is lacking. However none of them is superfluous for each serves to illuminate some one facet or the other of Swami's character.

Further, the action is not confined merely to the boys' world but is equally concerned with the domestic world of Swami. The action moves from the home to the school and from the school to the playground. Later, the scope

of the novel is further widened by bringing in the Indian struggle for freedom and showing its impact on Malgudi, particularly the world of Swami and his friends.

Another important feature of the novel is the invention of the fictional locale of Malgudi. It is neither a village nor a city, but a town of modest size. The river Sarayu flows by its side. Just beyond it are Nallappa's Grove and and Memphi Forest. There is a trunk road to Trichinopoly. Within the town there is a Market Road, a municipality, a Town Hall, club and two schools – the Albert Mission School and the Board High School. The town appears and reappears in successive novels of the novelist and provides unity and continuity to his work.

The irony and criticism against the colonial system is mutely uttered in Swami and Friends. *The dexterously etched characters teamed with unique style, which was truly innovative, offered* Swami and Friends *a dimension which is not just original but also matchless. R. K. Narayan's stylized language and ironical humour sets the mood of this fiction, which further takes this novel to greater heights of mellowness.*

After a gap of two years appears the second work of the novelist, The Bachelor of Arts *(1937).*

X

His second novel The Bachelor of Arts *(1937), is a mature work and deals with a later stage of life in a young man's career when he is about to leave college and enter life when he is neither a boy nor a man, but somewhere*

in between. It is divided into four parts. Part I, divided into five chapters, gives us a vivid account of the college life of the hero, Chandran. Practically every aspect of college life is covered up to illuminate the personality of the hero. Chandran is a brilliant speaker, and thus is appointed the secretary of the College Historical Association, by Raghavachar, the professor of History. These extra-curricular activities come in the way of the studies. However, it goes to his credit that somehow he manages to pass the B.A. examination.

Part II deals with the young man in search of a job, and his several frustrations. Within the six months of his becoming a graduate, Chandran is faced with the problem of finding a job for himself. Unable to find a job, he passes the time by sleeping for long hours or walking on the banks of the river. During one of his walks he sees Malthi, a beautiful girl of about fifteen years and instantaneously falls in love with her. The parents of the girl are prepared to accept the proposal of Chandran's marriage with their daughter, but the horoscopes do not tally and the proposal is ultimately dropped. Chandran is very disappointed and upset by this incident that he falls ill and is confined to bed for several days. On recovering from this severe blow, he goes to Madras for a change.

Part III describes his aimless wanderings in Madras and other parts of South India. He does not go to his uncle's house in Madras but puts up at a hotel for the night. He visits the house of a prostitute in the company of a degenerate youth. But disgusted, he sets out for Maylapore and sees the magnificent Kapaleswar temple. The peace of the temple attracts him and he

turns a sanyasi. He then visits several South Indian villages and districts on foot and lives on alms. After eight months of these purposeless wanderings, he gets tired of his new role and returns to his parents in Malgudi.

Part IV, deals with Chandran's marriage and settling down in life. On return to Malgudi he finds that all his friends are scattered and possibly already settled in life. He also accepts a humble job secured for him by an influential uncle, forgets Malthi, and marries another girl, Susila, and is full of thoughts of his wife. Thus the novel ends on an optimistic note and gives us the message of the continuity of life – of life flowing on in spite of setback and shocks which threaten to block its way.

It appears, as if nothing ever disturbed his life. Malthi who had once upset him much is totally forgotten. The wayward, irresponsible and care-free graduate of olden days is now a responsible man with a sound profession to provide him the wherewithal of life and a wife to look after his house-hold affairs.

The novel with its detailed characterization and deftly knitted style stands apart as a journey from fantasy to reality. The very concept of the gradual growing of a boy and then becoming busy with worldly affairs is beautifully depicted with utmost tenderness. The novel is also remarkable for its skilful mingling of humour and pathos. It is a great work of art and well-deserves the attention that has been given to it.

XI

The Dark Room *(1938), Narayan's third novel is a moving tale of a tormented wife. Ramani, the office secretary of Englandia Insurance Company is a very domineering and cynical in his ways and hence governs his house according to his sweet will. As he is always irritable, the atmosphere in his house is always gloomy and his wife, children and servants always remain in a state of terror. His wife Savitri is a genuine symbol of traditional Indian womanhood, very beautiful and deeply devoted to her husband. Ramani does not respond to her sentiments even with ordinary warmth. Though they have been married for fifteen years, his wife has received nothing from him except rebukes and abuses. Even the children receive more rebukes from him than his fatherly love.*

All goes well, till there arrives at the scene a beautiful lady, Shanta Bai, who has deserted her husband and joined Englandia Insurance Company. Ramani succumbs to her beauty and coquettish ways. This upsets the peace of his family life. Seeing no other method of correcting her arrogant and erring husband, Savitri revolts against him and in despair leaves the house to commit suicide.

She goes to the river and throws herself into it. The timely arrival of Mari, the blacksmith and burglar, who, while crossing the river on his way to his village, sees her body floating on the river, rescues her and saves her life. Persuaded by Mari's wife Ponni, she goes to her village and embarks upon an independent living of her own by working in a temple. The feelings of home sickness and tormenting anxiety for her children, however soon make her

restless. She realizes the futility of her attempts to escape from her bonds with the temporal world and returns home.

Ramani is depicted as a man who has little else to do other than roam about in Malgudi in his Chevy, and is shown to have little concern for his children. The little children are too scared and prefer not to come in his way. He believes that the man of the house is always right and has the liberty to do anything he wishes. He also believes that having a status as big as he had in society it was okay to have a few flings outside his marriage.

For a modern day reader it does turn out to be surprising the way Savitri is shown to be a dutiful wife. The author has nearly given the impression that she is the perfect prized wife that every man must have given the fact that wife accords such high regard for her husband. Yet at the same time, the underlying message for woman's emancipation becomes evident as the story progresses. The character of Savitri depicts a change as the novel progresses. The reader first sees a dutiful wife and a caring mother in her, who later rebels against her husband's actions. These traits are blended well as she returns home and realizes that life is meaningless without husband and children.

The work leaves the readers with some thought provoking questions. What is more important for a married woman: her identity or the welfare of her family? Can Savitri's return to her home be regarded as her rebirth given the fact that she had strong bonds with her old life through her children? Is it impossible for a woman to attain freedom? Is she really helpless?

The Dark Room *offers a feminist view of the contemporary South Indian society. The very essence of the autobiographical tone is not there in the dark room. The story of a middle class female set against the backdrop of South India, the dark room echoes the frustration of a tormented wife. The main female character Savitri retires to the dark room which is there at the house whenever the frustration, disgust, pain and torment becomes too much to bear. The dark room here acts as the catharsis whilst aiding the main character to vent out her frustration. The dark room epitomizes Savitri's revolt against her husband's inhuman nature*

Ideally the title therefore matches with the symbolism of the novel. The novel is also full of different feelings of life like hypocrisy, deception, kindness and desperation. Thus the novel deals with the sorry fate of Indian womanhood. It suggests no solution to the problem, still it clearly brings out Narayan's concern for the Savitris of our country. Its plot is more coherent and well-knit than that of the earlier novels, the characterization is excellent and there is skillful blending of humour and pathos. The novelist has not preached any sermons but has vividly and realistically presented a slice of life as he saw it.

XII

The novel The English Teacher *(1945) is a love-story different from the conventional ones, delineating the domestic life of Krishna, a lecturer in English, in the Albert Mission College, Malgudi. At thirty years of age, he feels bored with life in absence of his wife and daughter. They arrive after a few*

months, along with his mother. Krishna and Susila lead a happy life for several months. But as the house is not upto the mark, and so on an ill-fated day they go house hunting. As ill-luck would have it, Sushila is stung by a flea, develops typhoid and dies after a few days.

It is a great shock to Krishna. He is much upset, and loses all interest in life and in his work. The only comfort to him is his little daughter, Leela, who now takes up most of his time and attention. He frequently wanders about a lotus pond, where he meets a sanyasi who can communicate with the spirits of the dead. Through him Krishna is able to communicate with the spirit of his wife, is thrilled, and regains his interest in life.

Krishna now meets the head-master of a new Children's School. He is very much impressed by his educational theories, gives up his job in the college to serve the new institution. That very night he can commune directly with his wife. For the first time an ineffable bliss descends upon his soul.

The description of Krishna's married life – the first few years of happiness, the excoriating agony during the weeks of Sushila's illness, 'the last journey' to the cremation ground – is one of the most moving and flawless pieces of writing in modern English fiction. Not a word is wasted, and not a word rings false. The second half of the novel, on the other hand, takes us to unfamiliar regions. Krishna's numbed misery and his anxiety to be mother and father both to Leela are understandable enough. But the experiments in psychic communication with Sushila with the help of the medium introduce a "whimsical or fanatical" element into a story that has so long been

transparently true to life. The eccentric headmaster of the 'pyol' school and his termagant wife and wild children make for further variety. Automatic writing and attempts at psychic contacts with the dead are not altogether uncommon: and the soil of India doubtless breeds every type of idealist and eccentric, waif and vagabond. Nevertheless it is difficult to feel that the first and the second halves of the novel blend naturally and make an artistic whole. The theme of the novel is obviously the death of Sushila in the first half and her resurrection in the second half. He is one of the few writers in India who take their craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instruments, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may often seem to be a mirage of technical perfection. There is a norm of excellence below which Narayan cannot possible lower himself.

Thus Krishna, the central character of The English Teacher *(1945) undertakes an emotional, intellectual and spiritual journey during the course of the novel. He learns and changes during the course of the novel in a way which could not have been predicted at the beginning. The journey takes him from a lifestyle which he found unsatisfactory to finding a set of values and a way of life that he feels he can believe in wholly.*

Krishna's change comes about not as a result of any grand plan or ambition, but as a result of his response to a series of challenging circumstances which arise once he begins to take steps away from the cloistered and protective environment of his school. This day-by-day, unforeseen-event by unforeseen event progress is reflected in Narayan's

approach to the novel itself. Narayan gives the impression that he has no pre-planned plot in mind when the story opens, but instead focuses on a meticulously detailed depiction of Krishna's experience, keeping to the observable surface reality of his perceptions, thoughts and feelings, without digression or analysis or interpretation. This rigorous unadorned focus on observable phenomena results in some stunningly beautiful writing.

Although Krishna's journey takes place as a result of a series of unpredictable events, a number of recurring themes are being worked out in the course of the novel. These themes might be said to be Krishna's progress from predictability to unpredictability, from the academic world to the real world of life and death, from adulthood to childhood, and from a western mentality to an eastern mentality.

Krishna repeatedly finds himself being drawn out of situations which ought to have been predictable and ordered by events which are spontaneous and unpredictable. It is clear that he finds spontaneity and unpredictability to be stimulating and life-enhancing, while predictability and order, although providing a cushion of comfort and security, is ultimately stifling and deadening.

The turning point of the story arises from Sushila's unpredictability. When they go to look at the house we could not possibly predict that she would go for a walk on her own, get stuck in contaminated lavatory, and then become ill. When they prepare for the journey it might have seemed that Narayan was preparing for a plot in which something bad happened to their child while they

were away, but in the event the important incident is not something that could have been guessed beforehand, either by the reader or by Krishna, but an unpredictable event which arises on the spur of the moment. Krishna's intention was that their visits to view houses should proceed in an ordered, predictable, rational way, but Sushila brought unpredictability to the occasions, resulting in moments of beauty, such as the walk by the river, but also in the awful tragedy of her becoming infected by a fatal illness. She brings reality into his life which was previously protected from reality by the enclosed ordered world of the school, and later she initiates the most unpredictable event of all, the psychic communion with him from beyond death.

The episodes of Sushila contacting typhoid and the headmaster's belief in a prediction made by astrologer fail to provide Krishna with anything rational to believe in, they do bring him face to face with the reality of life and death, and confronting the realities of life without retreating into the safe cerebral world of literature and philosophy is an important component of his journey. His unsatisfying immersion philosophy is a sterile literary approach to life is shown in a number of ways through the incidents of his wearily facing the fact that he is reading Milton, Carlyle and Shakespeare for the fiftieth time and the love poem he tries to write to his wife is simply a copy of a poem by Wordsworth. Now he is discovering how ordinary people encounter the big issues of life and death, not as seen through the perspective of literature or philosophy, and not in a way that would imply that some profound universal conclusions could be drawn, but as they actually experience it in everyday life.

Narayan as we can identify him with the character of Krishna, is writing at the level of those ordinary people. He does not adopt the position of a novelist presenting the reader with fictitious characters which he has created, and which are under his control, as for example Charles Dickens does, but in the guise of Krishna he places himself firmly among the ordinary people and breaks down the boundaries between real life outside his novel and the life within the novel. Just as Krishna faces life without illusions, so Narayan seems to create his novel without the usual illusions of the novelist, such as pre-planned plot and fictitious characters. In an outburst with one of his students Krishna remarks of literature:

> *Don't worry so much about these things – they are trash, we are obliged to go through and pretend we like them, but all the time the problem of living and dying is crushing us. (*The English Teacher *p-438)*

In coming to terms with the death of his wife, literature, philosophy and rationalism are no use to him. They are all illusions, and the journey he is on involves leaving illusions behind. Krishna avers:

> *Living without illusions seemed to be the greatest task for me in the life now…humanity, nurtured in illusions from beginning to end! The twists and turns of fate would cease to shock us if we knew, and expected nothing more than, the barest truths and facts of life. (*The English Teacher *p-387)*

In the final chapter the issues of the novel come to a head with Krishnan's resignation from his post as English teacher and his psychic reunion with his wife. In his attack on the system he is rebelling he criticizes not English literature itself but India's adherence to an educational system which stifles the spirit of its students and alienates them from their native culture.

Narayan's writing style, which is inseparable from the observations of Krishna, the first person narrator, has been showing us this all along. The truths Krishna wants to discover cannot be found in Shakespeare, Carlyle, or Plato, it is found only among real people leading real lives, it is 'the law of life'.

Thus The English Teacher*, as an autobiographical novel, completes a trilogy along with his other two novels* Swami and Friends *and* The Bachelor of Arts. *It depicts the protagonist bearing the sweet and the bitter fruits of life.*

There is a streak of the ruffian and the cad in Ramani of The Dark Room – *and indeed in many respects he is much in contrast to Krishna of* The English Teacher. *Savitri of* The Dark Room *is not simply a Sushila of* The English Teacher *who has reached the thirties: she lacks the ineluctable poetry of Sushila, the capacity to be at once a goddess and a woman, the eternal feminine and the womanly woman. Ramani blows hot too often, and Savitri sulks too readily.*

Swami and Friends, Bachelor of Arts *and* The English Teacher *are, for all practical purposes, trilogy of Malgudi on Sarayu.* The Dark Room, *which appeared between the* Bachelor of Arts *and* The English Teacher, *is a novel apart, a study of domestic disharmony. On closer scrutiny, even the characters in these novels seem to achieve a sort of transmigration from body to body, name to name and ultimately to blur the sharpness of the distinctions under the haze of general acceptance. Swami is also the Bachelor of Arts; he is presently*

Krishnan the English Teacher – though he couldn't be Ramani, of The Dark Room.

Narayan's novels are characterized by Chekhovian simplicity and gentle humour. He told stories of simple folks trying to live their simple lives in a changing world. The characters in his novels were very ordinary, down to earth Indians trying to blend tradition with modernization, often resulting in tragic-comic situations. His writing style was simple unpretentious and witty, with a unique flavour as if he were writing in the native tongue. Many of Narayan's works are rooted in everyday life, though he is not shy of invoking Hindu tales or traditional Indian folklore to emphasize a point. His easy going outlook on life has sometimes been criticized, though in general he is viewed as an accomplished, sensitive and reasonably prolific writer. He almost always writes about India in some way, and usually puts cultural influences about Indian life in his works and literature.

XIII

Among the Indian novelist writing in English, Raja Rao in his debut with Kanthapura *(1938) breaks new ground by adopting a free form that develops out of native ingredients of experience, to the expression of an essential Indian sensibility. Besides the very syntactical innovation introduced by Raja Rao in the language of fiction, the important thing about* Kanthapura *is the approximation of the fictional form to the totality of the regional experience.*

The novel begins with the graphic details of the place, which is just a village of South India, and the people inhabiting the same. The social climate of the village is roughly divided into the Brahmins and the Pariahs. It is a traditional village which becomes the microcosm of the universal rural conditions all over the country. The villagers are believers of the Goddess Kenchamma who they believe is their protector. Moorthy, a village young man imbued with the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi wages the struggle for independence. The novel has a moral theme and moves on from one issue to another. Among the social problems discussed is that of widowhood, the problem of labour exploitation, both localized and of foreign source, the British Raj.

In the village Bhatta, a Brahmin and Waterfall Venkamma are on one side looking at the whole issue of untouchability with considerable misgivings. They fail to understand the idea of removal of untouchability. Moorthy is the first Gandhian to mix freely with the pariahs of the village that proves to be an eyesore for the village Brahmins. Bhatta the moneylender and the land-owner cannot tolerate this form of pollution and therefore gets Moorthy excommunicated through the Swami. But Moorthy does not budge and despite the appearance of the police, Bade Khan and the Jemadar, in the village he goes on propagating the Gandhian ideals. Now life is not the same in the village. Women have started spinning Khaddar on the spinning wheel. They are even prepared to cooperate with the men in the struggle against the authorities.

There is the Skeffington Coffee Estate owned by an Englishman and this becomes the place of the battling forces, the natives and the authorities. The issue of addiction to toddy has also been raised by the novelist. Moorthy also raises the issue of the exploitation of the coolies by the Britishers. A real fight takes place and the passive fighters among the volunteers of Gandhi bear the brunt. Thus Kanthapura *comes before us as a novel of revolt against the traditional follies of the villagers, the exploitation both local and foreign and the vice of drinking. It is the fight for the ideal as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi.*

The novel is a work in which the fictional form is endowed with the freedom of the romance, the amplitude of the epic and the symbolic centrality of the fable. It is 'itihasa' and 'purana' both unified into a 'kavya'. As 'itihasa' it is packed with historical action while as a 'purana' it is full of legendary memory and archetypal imagery. But above all as a 'kavya' it integrates historical action and racial consciousness in such a way that its temper is at all levels equal to that of the Indian life itself. Basic to Raja Rao's achievement in the novel is his total awareness of the Indian tradition and the Indian personality, through which the narrative action and its dramatic tones are transformed into a symbolic organization of the materials of Indian life.

The novel also avoids the mistake on Indian experience, by not isolating the individual traits of the Indian tradition, but by viewing them as an organic totality in a living human consciousness. The three levels of action represented in the novel – political, social and religious – are all related not only to a

conceptual but an operative condition of the Indian personality. Reality in India, rooted as it is in the spiritual consciousness, does not yield itself to the easy dichotomies on which Western experience is based, at any rate, in terms of cultural analysis or aesthetic isolation.

Raja Rao calls his novel a 'Sthalpurana', a legendary history, restricted to a specific locality. In the foreward of the novel, he observes:

> *There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich 'Stalapurana', or a legendary history, of its own. Some god or god-like hero has passed by the village – Rama might have rested under this peepal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his many pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present, and the gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grandmother always bright. One such story from the contemporary annals of my village I have tried to tell. (*Kanthapura *p-4)*

Thus the sense of place dominates with the Kenchamma Hill, Skeffington Coffee Estate, the Temple of Kanthapurishwari, the river Himavathy and Cauvery – all geographical realities and not mere artistic contrivances.

The novel is rooted in the deep-seated custom and authority, superstition and ritualism of Indian folk-life. Moorthy, the village Mahatma, Bhatta the pontifical Brahmin, Bade Khan the policeman, Range Gowda, the patel of the village – are all individuals as well as representative symbols. Around this tenor of life and concourse of humanity, the action of the novel gets threaded.

The story is narrated by a grandmother who herself had taken part in the momentous struggle for freedom. The woman narrator with all her antics and garrulity is a symbol of the Indian sense of past. She is a superb mythmaker, who combines art and acumen, and the narration accordingly

takes a meandering course flowing backwards and forwards, "mixing memory with desire".

Kanthapura *is a penumbra of a village significantly called Kanthapura, with its life and politics, its entrenched orthodoxy and extreme conservatism. The action of the novel dates back to the 1930's when the tremors of the Gandhian revolution were shaking the whole village to the very roots, and the spirit of nationalism was a ground-swell of such contradictory states of popular emotion and sentiment that the whole structure of the imperialistic bureaucracy lay shattered under its impact.*

The very description of the village is brilliant and evocative and there is a physiographic authenticity in all the details given. The novelist narrates:

> *High on the Ghats is it, high up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian Seas, up the Malabar coast is it, up Mangalore and Puttur and many a centre of cardamom and coffee, rice and sugarcane. (*Kanthapura *p-9)*

This is where Kanthapura is situated. At a distance beyond Bebbur Mound and Bear's Hill, there is the Skeffington Coffee Estate, symbolizing the impact of industrialization on this little bucolic village. And across it flows the sacred river Himavathy. In the main street Promontory is the Temple of Kanthapurishwari, the centre of the people's life and later a rendezvous when the villagers are relentlessly hunted down by the "Red-men" in the fight. The benign and bounteous Kenchamma is their goddess "who protects the village through famine and disease, death and despair."

The novel is thus a fluent and colourful presentation of the village and its changing moods and its unchanging spirit. It projects a spatial image of

India, binding the differing sinews of the country's complex religious and social custom into a knot of time so intense as to indicate duration rather than passage in the human consciousness. The novel acquires an atemporal significance because the past enacted by it annotates the present and projects it into the future. The legendary heroes and heroines are linked up with the historical personalities. Thus Mahatma Gandhi is Prince Rama resisting the demonic rule of Ravana, the "Red-man". He is again the Divine Krishna, in human incarnation, "engaged in killing Kaliya, the serpent of the foreign rule."

The novel also picks up the "puranic" spirit and rhythm, and there is a deliberate naiveté and old-world whimsy in all its narrative progression and digression. The classical stories and legends are originally inserted into the novel, thus leading it an "itihasic" and "puranic" flavour. Raja Rao deftly manipulates several devises, such as weaving into the narration the classical stories and legends, the digressions and episodes, recalling the "puranic" strain. For instance the Kenchamma legend is celebrated with much gusto; it also lends the story a fitting bucolic atmosphere. And Sidda's serpent-lore is full of hyperboles, which again is in its purport typical of the classical episode. The descriptions have a classical flavour and saliency. The narration is never angular; there are breathless involutions and elaborate passages of lyrical beauty suffused with epic vividness and powerful imagery symbolizing seasonal renewal and cyclical return.

The action of Kanthapura i*s essentially a projection of time on the canvas of space. It represents duration in time which is singularly unaffected by the physical changes introduced by the passage of time. It is the still-point at which changes dissolve into a pattern and detail subsumes change into a design. The village and its topography remain apparently the same. The hill and the river, the land and the sky and even the racial experience in its larger sense, remain what they have always been. The human configurations of experiences are subjected to the alterations of time. But the spiritual personality of the evolutionary life represented by* Kanthapura *continues in the perennial growths of "being".*

In characterization, Raja Rao maintains the balance between their individuality and their representative nature. There is no dichotomy between people, but rather a fusion of all human differentials into the steady flow of a single racial personality. As on all communities, in Kanthapura too there are good and evil characters, heroes like Moorthy and petty persons like Bhatta. But Raja Rao's attitude to his characters enables him to present all of them as sharing a common nature from which none can be excluded. Moorthy, the reformer, is not so much a stormy zealot as a forward-looking young man in search of a "usable past" consistent with the modern outlook and who, as such, cannot effect a harsh and abrupt break with tradition. He is still the devout Brahmin wearing the yagnopavita *and visiting the pariah colony to spread the message of the universality of equality in religion. Similarly in the delineation of Bhatta, Raja Rao does not present him as entirely black, but as*

a complex enough individual in him his essential humanity can converge upon a focus, albeit through a self-exhausting indirection. The characters conform to the reality of the village life. The characters have not been probed from within which is the modern trend. They do not have much depth and flatten themselves. The characters have the outer coating of social dust which sticks to them and the ones which try to change in the light of modernization still carry it indispensably.

Raja Rao's penchant for the regional Kannada, its rhythm and spirit, interpolating themselves into the English idiom create a unique literary style which claims some distinctness and international appeal. Clarifying in the foreward, he writes:

> *After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of the Indian life must be infused into our English expression even as the tempo of Americans or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs. (*Kanthapura *p-5)*

One of the difficult things in the plot construction is the observance of the unity of time. In Kanthapura there is not much of the unity of time and the novelist has handled it in the plot without bothering much about it. He is much more obsessed with the new social ferments in the plot than with anything else in the novel. The unity of place is easily manageable as a few streets, fields, the coffee plantation are not of the great distance, hence they are controlled with an ease which needs no great efforts. The plot covers the action and not a chain of actions which builds the plot.

The plot of the novel is also without any twist or trick. It is grounded on a plain level. There is hardly any suspense in it. We are never on the

tenterhooks to know what is going to happen next. The things inside the plot happen with a design but they do not tax the mind of the reader. The singleness of the locale makes the task of the novelist easier.

The beginning of the novel is not the beginning of the plot. It exposes the locale full of people who will matter directly and indirectly in the future course of the events. With the advent of the hero, the plot begins to quicken into a programme to the chagrin of the government men. The coffee plantation becomes the scene of the struggle if not the battle-field. Other Gandhian items too get picked up by the rural enthusiasts. It serves to thicken the plot with the yoking of the villagers to accomplish their objective.

The novel may be regarded as a tribute to the Indian tradition. The novelist skillfully introduces the mythological elements in chronological order, thus receiving the identity of "Gandhi Puranas". It will have a central place in Gandhian literature.

XIV

A gifted writer, Cornelia Sorabji besides having three volumes of short-stories to her credit also published two other books, India Calling *(1935) and* India Recalled *(1936). What makes them particularly interesting is that for all their sociological motivation and reformist bias, they have the best element of good fictional writing.*

Both the works India Calling *and* India Recalled *in their own way are autobiographical and valuable pieces of social criticism. They can be termed as sociological treatises with a fictional interest.* India Calling*, besides being*

an autobiography and telling us about incidents and events in the life of writer is also a record of the growth and the development of her mind and sensibility which were exposed early, and later to two different settings, cultures and ways of life and of the diverse influences and inner cravings which give a shape and direction to the creative impulse in her.

The works depict a strong attachment for her own culture as well as strong impressions created on her during her stay at Oxford. Oxford days make her as nostalgic as they would anyone born to that country and its life, but equally strong is her attachment to the charms and beauties she has known and experienced in her own country. The following passage clearly indicates the above mentioned fact. In India Calling *she delineates:*

> *I can never forget Oxford seen for the first time in the October with the reds and russets and tawny greens of the Virginian creepers against the grey-worn stone. London, and the way it caught one's heart, first seen…the feeling of standing at the core of the traffic, one morning at the Exchange, and knowing one's self utterly insignificant and alone, yet alive and perfectly companied. My first robin: my first fall of snow: the ache when snow melted and got dirty: the Irish crossing-sweeper with her bonnet awry, who smiled at me – "One must keep up one's spirits and one's appearance" – the exhilaration of London fogs: dream cities: the Towers of Westminster in a white mist: the lion in the Trafalgar Square with whom I shared all my jokes and anxieties – the one nearest the Strands…things seen, loved, felt, admired: and last of all Friendships everywhere, and the faces of little children. (*India Calling*, Intr., p.IX to XI.)*

Her attachment to her own home country was no less strong is evident from the passage describing her home, the summer cottage in Poona, in the Lanowli Woods with its deep verandahs set in gardens of flowers and shady trees. She delineates:

> *I remember chiefly the champak, white-limbed, adorned with exquisite ivory-petalled flower that held a golden secret in the bottom of the cup…And among the garden people my favourites were the red hibiscus, pink ragged-robin, stephanotis, jasmine, heliotrope, mignonette, quisqualis, a tangle of pink and red and white, the blaze of the tomato-coloured flowers in crisp*

> *bunches, the Indian honeysuckle, the "Elephant Creeper",…the sweet scented geranium and verbena that one crushed between the fingers…(*India Calling*, Part I, "Faites Vos Jeux" – 'At Oxford')*

The introductory pages of India Calling *reveal the writer being haunted by memories and impressions of the happy days spent in the various parts of India. She nostalgically states:*

> *I inhale the past in great whiffs. The eyes of my Mother, whatever her mood: my Father's laugh: the clearings in the woods near our home and the many games we played as children: the branches of the forest trees on moonlit nights as we swung from one another; the stars hanging like lamps out of an indigo sky reaching immeasurably…the smell of the earth after the rains, the wonder of thunder and lightning: camping in India and waking in the dawn hour to sniff the sour-sweet mango blossoms and hear the lovely sounds of a camp astir…Dawn at Darjeeling with the snows coming alive with colour, early morning rides in the hills, the trees dripping dew-"And all growing things I offer, thus before the world has soiled them…" (*India Calling*, "Faites Vos Jeux", Intr., pp. ix to xi.)*

Interstingly the writer could entertain such passionate love for two homes, two countries at the same time and more surprisingly that she should have completely identified herself with the women of her country and dedicated herself to the cause of their well-being and upliftment without being carried away by the glamour of the West. It was always the land of her birth which called to her with utmost insistence.

India Calling *and* India Recalled *bear ample testimony to the very dynamic way in which she was involving herself in the social problems of her mother country, particularly those relating to women. The incidents of the Burning Ghat in Part IV of* India Calling*, the gruesome story of Anarkali, the child daughter-in-law who was being prepared for the ordeal of "Suttee" even from childhood or again the plight of the 'co-widows' in joint families or the*

misfortunes of Giribala Dasi, the young widow who is condemned to miserable isolation, is best summed up in the words of K.S. Ramamurti as:

> *…we feel that we are reading fiction which is poignantly human.*
> *(*Rise of the Indian Novel in English *p.88)*

These works show that Sorabji with her English background and upbringing had not only made the English language and culture part of her own intellectual and emotional make-up but had also sought to bring about a fusion and reconciliation between the language and the culture and the demands of a thinking and sensibility which were unmistakably Indian.

*Thus the women writers of the beginning of Indian Writing in English candidly touched upon the issues relating to women of their times and attempted through their writing to bring a change in society by education and awareness***.**

Almost by the end of the mid-twentieth century Indian Writing in English also witnesses bold experimentation with the novel form. G.V. Desani's All About H. Hatterr *(1948) serves as an appropriate illustration of this innovative style.*

XV

All About H. Hatterr *(1948) is a classic novel by G.V. Desani chronicling the adventures of an Anglo-Malay man in search of wisdom and enlightenment. Wildly funny and wonderfully bizarre, it is one of the most perfectly and strangely absorbing works modern English has produced. H. Hatterr is the son of a European merchant officer and a lady from Penang who*

has been raised and educated in a missionary school in Calcutta. His story is a search for enlightenment as in the course of visiting seven oriental cities, he consults with seven sages, each of whom specializes in a different aspect of "Living". Each teacher delivers himself of a great "Generality", each great Generality launches a new great "Adventure".

The mad English of All About H. Hatterr *is a thoroughly self-conscious and finely controlled performance. The book is a comic extravaganza, but as Anthony Burgess writes in the introduction:*

> *…it is the language that makes the book…It is not pure English; it is like Shakespeare, Joyce, and Kipling, gloriously impure. (*All About H. Hatterr *- Introduction)*

The content and literary importance of this work are nearly inseparable. Salman Rushdie, in his preface to Mirrorwork *anthology of Indian Writing has placed Desani at roughly at the same rank of importance as R.K. Narayan. He remarks:*

> *…all modern literature descends from either Richardson's* Clarissa *or Sterne's* Tristram Shandy*, and if Narayan is India's Richardson than Desani is his Shandean other. Hatter's dazzling, puzzling, leaping prose is the first genuine effort to beyond the Englishness of the English language…Hard to imagine I. Allan Sealy's* Trotter-Nama *without Desani. My own writing too, learned a trick or two from him. (xviii)*

Desani's importance was to take the colonial bequest and turn it against itself . Salman Rushdie observes:

> *The instrument of subservience became a weapon of liberation. It was the first great stroke of the decolonizing pen. (Mirrorwork x)*

One of the most outstanding characteristics of Indian Writing in English is that the background is Indian and the language though foreign, has adapted to the needs of the Indians. The issues, concerns and the themes too are Indian.

This has provided a distinct identity to Indian Writing in English. Though the triumvirates are instrumental in providing this distinct Indianness and identity to the writings, these concerns and issues raised in their works are different and their treatment of the issues too is different.

The modern Indian writer of the Indian Novel in English has shown a capacity to accommodate a wide range of concerns. Owing to the peculiar situation in which he finds himself the Indian writer in English, who wishes to deal with significant modern experience, finds himself preoccupied with one major theme and its ramifications, whatever his ostensible subject may be.

The usual theme of Anand's novels is social or economic or the political expression of the individuals. Before him, numerous novels of social protest were written, but it was Anand who for the first time wrote about the waifs, the disinherited, the lowly and the have-nots. In his novels, Anand is wholeheartedly devoted to the life of the poorest of the poor and the lost. He is also concerned with the orphans, untouchables and urban labourers and it is he who is credited with being the first to depict them as protagonists in his works. His works highlight the suffering of the poor Indians and emphasize on the need for restoration of sympathy and compassion in the world lost in industrialism, capitalism and communalism.

Anand is a master in writing about the miseries of the have-nots, but that does not mean that he is blind towards the social, economic or the political issues concerning the middle-class. Thus in the next three novels The Village, Across the Black Waters *and* The Sword and the Sickle, *he changes his focus*

to Lalu Singh, the son of a village farmer who becomes a soldier. Lalu's boyhood, youth and early manhood are the themes of the trilogy.

Anand's novels are written with a specific purpose of discussing a special problem. Thus it can be safely stated that Anand emphasized the problem novel. At the same time as he uses his works to convey his political, social and economic views to the readers, the element of propaganda is obvious on the very surface of his novels.

Distinct from Anand, R.K. Narayan has no other motive in his works than giving his readers the delight and joy of creative art. Though he does not deal with certain human problems, his treatment of the novels is incidental, mild and casual. Unlike Anand he does not believe in presenting the full magnitude of the tragedy and the poignancy of the situation. Narayan is satisfied with depicting the contours of Malgudi, that provides the background of all his fourteen novels.

Narayan is matchless amongst the novelist of his age in characterization. He is also an excellent story-teller. The plots of his works revolve around human relationships. Although his plots are often slender and there is rarely anything spectacular or distinctive about them, yet Narayan has the power of keeping the readers in suspense and playing on their curiosity. He entertains his readers by evoking genuine and simple laughter.

The contribution of Raja Rao, the third of the triumvirate is very meagre compared to his counterparts as only Kanthapura *is published before independence and majority of his works are in the post-independence period.*

The political, social and religious aspect of the general run of the people has been selected by Raja Rao in his novel Kanthapura *which deals with the political events of the thirties. The novelist artistically presents the political, religious and social awakening that was witnessed in the Indian subcontinent in the twenties and the thirties of the twentieth century. Mahatma Gandhi was the main inspiration behind this awakening. In the novel, Gandhiji's impact is conveyed through Moorthy, the hero, who is able to transform the life of an entire community from the bondage of highly conservative orthodoxy to struggle and sacrifice for an ideal.*

The individual contribution of Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao to the Indo-Anglian novel, as well as its development, is very great and outstanding. There were other talented writers during their time and even before them, but they were happy to produce a stray novel or two only and were engaged in their profession of law, teaching, politics, civil service, journalism etc. They lacked the stamina, stern consistency of purpose which is observed in the triumvirate. It is these three writers who steered the course of the Indian Writing in English. They established its assumptions, sketched its main themes, freed the first models of its characters and elaborated its peculiar logic. Each of these writers used an easy, natural idiom which was unaffected by the opacity of the British inheritance.

CHAPTER–VII

CONCLUSION

It has been my endeavour in the earlier chapters to attempt a systematic investigation of the genesis and the growth of the Hindi and Indian novel in English relating them to the emergence of the novel as a genre on the Indian literary scene under changing socio-economic-cultural conditions. The study aims at understanding history of the Hindi and the Indian novel in English in terms of natural emergence and perceives a basic continuity in the creative process which has formed their growth. It is obvious that a study of this kind should help one steer clear of theories suggesting a simple transmission of this genre from the West through the imitative tendencies of the English-educated Indian writers and oft-repeated easy generalizations and arbitrary chronological classifications which have blurred and distorted one's impressions of the works of pioneers and early writers.

In tracing the genesis of the Hindi and the Indian novel in English, the study seeks to establish the view that their rise was but a significant first phase in the development of the novel as a genre in the Indian literary scene as their emergence was not an accident nor the outcome of the imitative impulses of a few writers but a steady and natural process set in motion in the various parts of the country almost simultaneously, by a number of socio-economic changes and re-orientations which, largely originating in Bengal, spread to the other parts of the country. The most significant of these changes were the emergence of the individualistic social order, the rise of the middle classes, spread of

education, the development of the printing and spread of journalism, the birth of the age of reason and the liberation from the tyranny of custom and blind faith, the emancipation of the Indian woman, and all the great social and socio-economic changes and re-orientations which brought about the rise of the novel in England in the eighteenth century.

Many literary historians hold the view that the novel as a literary form came to India by a simple transmission from the West and that its emergence should be explainable from in terms of a process of ready adoption of the Western form. But none of the earliest novels either in Hindi or in Indian English are imitative of the English models which the writers of this period might be expected to have followed. Neither Rani Ketki ki Kahani, Shyamaswapna *and* Bhagyawati *in Hindi nor* Govinda Samanta, Rajmohan's Wife, Bianca *and* An Unfinished Song *are imitative of the English novel of the West. Thus the Hindi or the Indian English novel followed its own pattern of gradual evolution under a set of socio-economic conditions and did not appear on the literary scene all of a sudden under the impact of the Western literature. Neither were all the early Hindi and Indian English novel works tales rather than novels but were the novel of the Indian kind. Thus* Shyamaswapna *is attributed to be the first novel of the Indian kind in Hindi while* Govinda Samanta *and* Rajmohan's Wife *can be credited to be amongst the first novels of the Indian kind in Indian Writing in English. In the same manner* Pariksha Guru *and works of Premchand in Hindi and the works of the triumvirates in*

Indian Writing in English can be classified into the category of the novel of the English kind.

The novel is an essentially alien form and the form itself is related to the Western concept of society and the place of the individual in that society. As in characterization, so in form, the Hindi and the Indian novel in English has to adapt itself to its own basic philosophy of life and in them is found a variety of bold experimentations with form. Thus these works become allegorical pictures of India, the rural India which one finds in the villages. The fact can be confirmed with Govinda Samanta, Kanthapura, Godan, The Village *and* Two Leaves and a Bud *among others.*

The initial work of Indian Writing in English and the Hindi novels share a striking similarity in their form, content and style. Most of the novels which appeared showed a predilection for romance, dream and poetry, not to speak of adventures and escapades of an incredible sort. The reassertion of realism in the novels of Indian Writing in English is observed to come with the publication of sketches like those of Malabari and Nagesh Vishwanath Pai. As a pioneer of journalism in India, with a writer of sketches, with a satirical and reformistic purpose and as a 'pilgrim reformer', Malabari pioneered the evolution of the English prose fiction in India in a manner comparable to that in which Addison, Steele and Goldsmith pioneered it in eighteenth century England. Nagesh Vishwananth Pai, on the same lines opened up new dimensions of creativity in the little town of Chakmakpore, and anticipated Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. Parallel to these realistic sketches romances like

Padmini, The Dive for Death, Sarala *and* Hingana, *and* The Love of Kusuma *also made their appearance. Hindi novel too has a fair mix of the fancy and fantasy with the magical works of* Chandrakanta *and* Chandrakanta Santati *by Devkinandan Khatri and Thakur Jagmohan Sinha's* Shyamaswapna *and works of realism such as Shraddharam Fillori's* Bhagyawati. *Surprisingly the journey of both the writings begins initially with realism and later gets digressed towards romanticism. Lala Srinivasdas'* Pariksha Guru *and Lal Behari Day's* Govinda Samanta *the contenders for the first novel in Hindi and Indian English respectively of the kind of the West are realistic depictions of the contemporary prevailing conditions. But as they move ahead both the writings diverge towards fancy and fantasy.*

The lack of women novelist in the pre-independence Hindi novel is striking as the pre-independence English women are sizeable in number from Toru Dutt, Cornelia Sorabji, Sewantibai Nikambe and Krupabai Sathainathan. The women represented in these works are essentially of Indian sensibility, endowed with the traditional feminine qualities of sincerity, love and resignation. The autobiographical element in these novels, the transition from a concern with objective social reality to an exploration of the feminine sensibility find its echo in the works of these women writers and they established their position as the forerunners of the Indian literary tradition in Indian English literature.

These first generation women novelist depicted women that were traditional in outlook and resigned to their fate. Under the influence of the

popular British writers, these writings tended to be imitative while some focused on the idealization-reformation zeal. On the whole these women writers wrote mainly to voice their concern and sympathy for the suffering of Indian women rather than to censure the society. Hence there was no room for anger, irritation or tension in their works despite intense sociological and reformatory motivation.

Prior to Premchand the Hindi novel were generally romances, magical mysteries of the entertaining kind and either inclined to Sanatani ideology or of its opposing reformist ideology, lacking the elements of a full fledged novel. The same applies equally to the novel in Indian Writing in English. They earlier lacked a co-relation or association to the contemporary social, political and economic conditions prevailing during their time. In the struggle for supremacy between the Sanatani dharma inclined writers like Mehta Lajjaram and others and the reformist writers, it is the reformist that triumph and Premchand provides this writing a new direction and identity with the term adarshonmukh yatharthvaad *that can be translated roughly into English as "idealistic realism". The works by earlier Hindi writers that were either entirely didactic or entirely with the purpose of entertainment are fused together by Premchand and made more realistic, entertaining, authentic and meaningful. Premchand's views regarding the novel are vastly different than his predecessors and in the same manner the difference is manifested in the triumvirate of the Indian Writing in English too from their predecessors.*

The entire phase from 1915 to 1936 in Hindi literature is so dominated by Premchand that no other writer even comes close to him in literary standards. So immense is the contribution of Premchand to Hindi literature and such a vast number of issues ranging from poverty, mismatched marriage, farmer zamindar relationship, social evils like dowry, extravagance, exhibitionism and the political issues like rejection of capitalism among others have been raised by him in his works that leave aside Hindi novel even novel in Indian Writing in English lacks such a dynamic writer representing such authentically the then contemporary prevailing conditions. He has a very comprehensive understanding of the various sections of society ranging from the aristocratic feudal characters, the poor village peasants, the women characters such as Dhania in Godan or Suman in Sevasadan, the teenagers psychology as depicted in Nirmala*, the intellectuals like Professor Mehta and the capitalists represented by Tankha and Khanna in Godan. The realism, artistry and tenderness with which he has created the characters in his works is unparalleled and unsurpassed in the entire fiction.*

He is the founder of a new trend in Hindi fiction. He depicted with deep understanding, the tragedy and pathos of their dark lives, their rare smiles and unceasing sorrows, their frustrations and their hopes. His works throw up strongly contrasted characters seldom seen in any other writer, surpassing the chaos of the still feudal rural setting with its profound faith in future renewal.

The major writers of Indian Writing in English appear on the literary scenario almost two decades after the arrival of Premchand in the Hindi

fiction. Premchand's age almost ceases by the time they publish their first work. These writers too under the Gandhian influence take up issues such as untouchability, independence struggle, social vices and exploitation of the underdogs by the various forces of capitalism, communalism, racism and political forces. The long stint with Indian fiction going beyond half a century gives them ample time and scope to mature and raise vivid issues that are observed in society from time to time. Thus Raja Rao can write on diverse issues such as the struggle for independence and the social reformation pioneered by Gandhiji in his Kanthapura *to such as the amalgamation of cultures and religion of the East and West, full of religious and philosophical symbolism in* The Serpent and the Rope. *The existing social situations are depicted in* The Serpent and the Rope *while* Comrade Kirillov *deals with the story of misguided Indian youth whose unflinching faith in communism eludes him to believe in the theory of Karl Marx.* ***(Add the similarity in the theme of karmabhoomi and rk narayans The English teacher)***

Similarly Mulk Raj Anand highlights the pitiable condition of the down trodden people in Indian society and the existing Brahmin hypocrisy. His Coolie *is a picaresque novel adding some novelty to the form, highlighting the pains and predicament of the poor working people. If the* Untouchable *is a microcosm,* Coolie *is more like the microcosm that is Indian society.* Two Leaves and a Bud *embodies the tragic clash of interests and destiny. He is a minute observer of society who looks at every aspect which an ordinary eye is*

prone to miss. He can be regarded as one of the greatest novelists of Indian English Literature.

R. K. Narayan exposes the ills of society and probes them too, but never for sadistic pleasure or for creating the feeling of disgust in the readers. His chief objective is to highlight the hypocrisy of ideals, ambitions and pride and not to guide the society in any particular direction but simply to make us realize the social evils and ills. We thus come to the conclusion that Narayan is an unidentified social reformer who is keenly aware of the various absurdities and eccentricities of society and suggests ironically the ways of their removal.

The contemporary political system plays an instrumental role in the evolution of the Indian English and Hindi novel. A critical study of the novels especially of Premchand and post-Premchand age in Hindi and the triumvirate in English makes it obvious that they are the by-product of the contemporary socio-political culture which finally shapes or chisels the intellectual make-up of the novelists. Therefore the novels of the pre-independence India in Hindi and in English broadly discuss the socio-political situation in the contemporary society. The sociological study of the pre-independence era novels establishes that the nature of the novel, primarily is political; though there is the element of historical romance too. In this way the literature or art in such a case becomes the tool in the hands of the novelist to propagate their ideological views or commitments.

The novel being the ideal form for presenting the picture of human experience, in particular the problems that beset the individual in society. The

writers of the Hindi novel as well as of Indian Writing in English are keen to reveal the socio-cultural complexities of modern India. Majority of the Hindi and Indo-Anglian novelists seem to show the verve and vigour to explore the new challenges that have emerged because of the modern technology. Therefore the responsibility of the novelist is challenging as how to respond or to treat the complexities of socio-political and cultural life of India so that the novel writing may be a mirror of the society rather than a slice of life.

The Hindi and the Indian novel in English have retained their individual identity not only in the modes of story-telling and narrative techniques but also in the values and the traditions they have been upholding and in the concept of man and his relationship to the world. The two class of fiction take up almost similar issues and their treatment varies from writer to writer and from Hindi to English literature. Undoubtedly the Hindi novel and novel in Indian Writing in English together besides adding vividness to literature enrich the readers with a better understanding of the issues faced by the people in the Indian subcontinent.

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