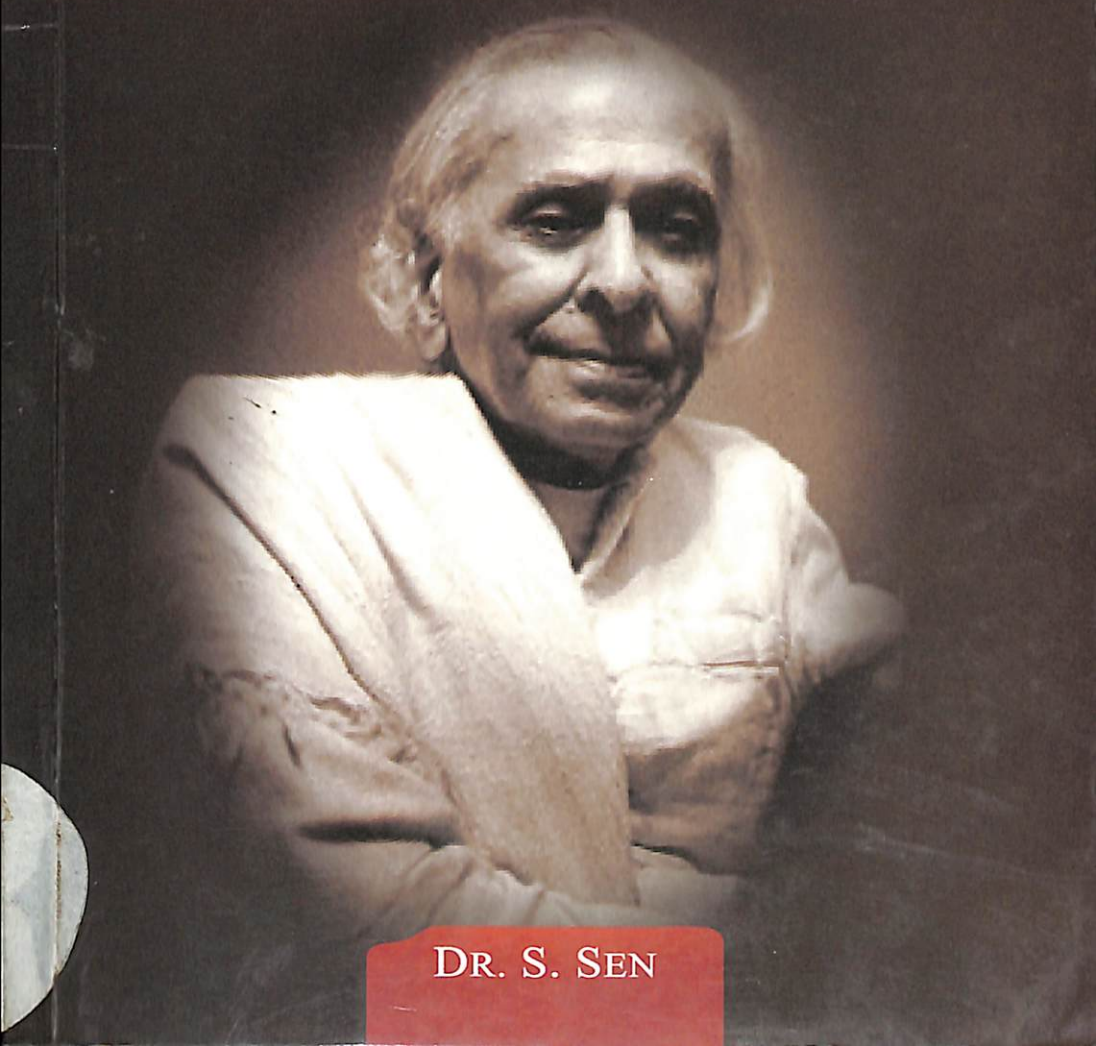
Raja Rao

KANTHAPURA

A Critical Evaluation



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Raja Rao

KANTHAPURA

Introduction to Indo-Anglican Literature,
A Detailed Study of the Author and the Text,
Important University Questions with Answers,
Selected Literary Criticism

A CRITICAL EVALUATION

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Paschim Guwahati Mahavidyalaya
Guwahati
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UNIQUE PUBLISHERS (I) PVT. LTD.

New Delhi-110024

PREFACE TO THE Ist EDITION

Kanthapura was published in 1938 but it was only after the publicatio of Raja Rao's next novel *The Serpent and the Rope* that it catapulated int international fame. And people showed interest in reading it and with tim it was recognised as a classic of Indo-Anglian fiction.

The story was narrated by an old women called Achakka. Whil narrating the story she sometimes goes into unnecessary details. But inspit of these superfluites, the novel has a well designed structure. The nove should be judged as an Indian novel and should not be compared to weste novels.

The novel deals with the Gandhi Movement and its impact on a sma village called Kanthapura. It is a typical Indian village in southern part o Indian and what was happening in this village at that time was happenin in many other parts of the country during those times.

The scope of this critical study is to discuss exhaustively those textua aspects of his novel that are indispensable for the students of Englis Honours and Post Graduate Classes of Indian unversities. Particularl beneficial from the examination point of view are the Select Universit Questions with Answers and the critical discussion of the various feature of the novel. Suggestions for improvement are most welcome and will b favourably considered at the time of the publication of its next edtion.

We also express our heart-felt thanks to the literary illuminaries whos names have been given in Select Bibliography.

NEW DELHI
2004

DR. S. SE

Paschim Gu... Guwahati-17 Date..... Dharapur Charitali

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Or

Elaborate the statement that *Kanthapura* is a Gandhi Epic.

Or

***Satyagraha* was the technique employed by Gandhi to liberate India from the British. Elaborate.**

Or

After reading *Kanthapura* what picture do you form of Gandhi.

Or

Narrate in detail the freedom movement as started by Gandhi. Give examples from your text *Kanthapura*.

Or

Discuss Moorthy as a true picture of a typical Gandhian.

Or

Write a note on all the characters who followed the ideals of Gandhi in Kanthapura.

Q. 2. Write critical comments on the structure of *Kanthapura*. 178

Or

Critically examine some of the important events in *Kanthapura*.

Or

Critically bring out the development of action of the plot in *Kanthapura.*

Or

Some parts of the novel appear to be prolix and irrelevant details. Comment.

Or

Critically assess Raja Rao's technique as a novelist in *Kanthapura.*

Or

Kanthapura is a formless novel. Give examples to justify this statement.

Q. 3. "Making this old woman (Achakka) the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle fact and myth in an effective manner." Discuss this dictum in detail. 18

Or

Comment on the role of the narrator in *Kanthapura*

Or

The fascinating personality of the narrator colours the narration in *Kanthapura.*

Or

What are the advantages and disadvantages of Raja Rao's choice of an old woman as the narrator? Evaluate.

Or

Elaborate the statement : "Is it correct to say that a part of the function of the narrator in *Kanthapura* is that of making comments on the action in the manner of chorus". Substantiate your answer.

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Or

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Or

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Or

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Or

Point out some of the Indian imagery used in *Kanthapura.*

Or

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PART I
INTRODUCTION TO INDO-ANGLIAN LITERATURE

Das Guwahati
Date.....
Bharagur Chariali

CHAPTER 1

INDO-ANGLIAN LITERATURE : SCOPE AND ITS DEFINITION

Definition

Indo-Anglian literature is the term defined as the contribution of Indian writers in the literature in English language. The Indo-Anglian literature is not essentially different in kind from Indian literature. It is a part of it, a modern facet of that glory which, commencing from the *Vedas,* has continued to spread its mellow light, now with greater and now with lesser brilliance under the inexorable vicissitudes of time and history, ever increasingly upto the present time of Tagore, Iqbal and Aurobindo Ghosh, and bids fair to expand with ours, as well as humanity's expanding future.

With the consolidation of the British power in India, English, the language of rulers also began to exercise its influence on the intellectuals of the country. To the educated Indian youth of that generation, a generation finding in English language a gateway to western knowledge. English provided a window for the Indian intellectuals to have a look at the wide world. Despite the fact that English is not their mother tongue many Indian writers in English were able to realise their creative effort through the medium of English.

It may be said that there are three types of Indian writers in English.

(1) Those who have acquired their entire education in English Schools and Universities.

(2) Indians who have settled abroad and are constantly in touch with the living, growing idiom of their country of adoption.

(3) Indians who have acquired English as a second language.

The culture and tradition of India has a distinctive entity of its own, and the enlightened youth of India, though well-versed in English, were not to lose their cultural identity. There were not a few among India's elite who were moved by a genuine desire to present, before the Western readers, a true picture of India through imaginative literature. This literature came to be designated "Indo-Anglian" Literature.

Difference Between the Two Terms: Indo-Anglian a Anglo-Indian

Whereas Indo-Anglian literature is the Indian effort in Engli
Language, the Anglo-Indian *literature* is used to devote the writing
Englishmen in English about India and Indian life. They tried of
interpret India to the west. But the presentation of *Indian life is* of
romantic rather than realistic. Their writings have a picture whe
India is a land of Rajas, Maharajas, God, Jugglers and Snak
charmers. Indo-Anglian literature, on the other hand projects a mo
favourable and truthful image of India.

Indo-English Literature

The translated work of writers into English language from Indi
language is the Indo-English literature. The Indo-English literature
further divided into classical and modern Indo-English literature.

Classical Indo-English literature requires a certain degree
interpretation and adaptation of meaning, to accommodate with so
latitude in translation becomes inevitable. As long as adequa
editorial explanation and documentation accompanies the renderin
the translator will be in no danger of misleading his reader in
thinking that the rendering is literal. Absolutely literal translation
any case, is impossible in literature, whether of ancient works or
modern; but the degree of literalness decreases in inverse proporti
to the distance in time between the original composition and t
translation. Some allowance has also to be made for prevailing litera
taste and scruples at the time when the translation takes pla
Similarly, some freedom may be claimed by the translation of su
works when he has a definite audience in mind.

Modern Indo-English literature is the literal translation
original. The primary concern of translator, here, is the fidelity to t
original. He is not given the liberties of the classical Indo-Engli
literature, because he is not separated in time and space from t
original author as the classical text translator is. The translation
poetry will always require some imaginative alterations in translati
but these should be kept in minimum if the translation is to justi
itself. The literature in translation poses its own problems and has
own attractions and implications. First, there is a question
literature translated from some Indian language into English by t
writer himself. Here many times the word 'translation'
inappropriate, for the writer is under no obligation to stick to t
sense of his original writing. For more than one reason, he takes
number of liberties when writing in English, though the theme a
substance may be taken from his work in the Indian language. T
most notorious example is that of the *Gitanjali*. The English version
Gitanjali is different from the original. The English *Gitanjali* ha
some poems which the Bengali *Gitanjali* don't ha hey are fro

other collection of Tagore's poetry. There is a difference of meanings between the poems of the two. The work is newly created rather than translated. This is a kind of transcreation. Such translation where fidelity to the original work is not the main concern comes between translation and creation. Tagore took liberties with the originals and rewrote them in English rather than attempting a literal translation. He made occasional changes in the original. Sometimes two or three original poems were combined into one. The reverse process of splitting a single poem in the original into two was also followed. But this is not the point of main concern, the applause is there, where the method of translation followed by Tagore and the fact that perhaps he is the only writer in the world who has revolved his own works into English to attract attention of the world to himself so as to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

The Flow of Indo-Anglian Literature

Despite the advise of few English writers and critics to Indian writers, 'Don't write in English, and write in your mother tongue'—Indian writers continued to write in English. Raja Rao described this characteristic of literature as the gift of Goddess Saraswati to the Indians. Various Indian writers have carved out a name for themselves in different fields of literature whatever be their mother-tongue, many Indian writers have chosen English as their medium. Nehru wrote his *Autobiography* and *Discovery of India* in English and not in Hindi. Toru Dutt wrote *The Captive Ladie*, *Visions of the Past*, translation of *Sarmista (1859)* and *Ratnavali* (1858) Sarojini Naidu's *The Golden Threshold*, *The Bind of Tune* (1912). Similarly Sri Aurbindo Ghose came out with his poems like *Who*, *A Vision of Science*, *The Vedanlins Prayer*. Tagore's *Chitra* and *Post-office* are examples of his Indo Anglian genius.

Even Dr. Bhabani Bhattacharya chose to write in English only. But, still, just as there is an American way of writing English, reflecting their own culture and spirit, there should be an Indian way of writing English. Prof. Quirk of the London University remarks that "English is not the private property of Englishmen. There is no copyright in the use of English and we cannot demand the users of English in other countries that they pay royalties of obeisance as though the language, the language carried a British Patent! One may copy the idiom, but not the atmosphere." Language has got to be necessarily dusted to the atmosphere and spirit. That is why Raja Rao, the reputed novelist in his preface to his novel *Kanthapura* says, " One has to convey in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of the intellectual

make up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not for our em
tional-make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us write
our own language and in English. We should not. We can write only
Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. C
method of expression therefore has to be dialect which will some d
prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the America
Time alone will justify it."

Shortcomings in the Growth of Indo-Anglian Literature

Foreign Language

The prejudice against English language made Indian critics to sta
against the use of English in Indo-Anglian Literature. They accept
this use of foreign language as a shortcoming of Indian writers. It ha
always been said that English is a foreign tongue and as such expre
sion of the deepest layers of emotions, which is essential for creati
writing of merit, is not possible for Indians writing in English. Presum
ably, Indo-Anglian literature would also be of inferior worth. Such prej
dices have been inhibiting and frustrating and have diverted th
attention of many a talented writer. Such prejudices are rendered wors
by the unhealthy dominance of regional consciousness, and the wi
claims that are made for regional languages in the name of Indianne
Such prejudices imply (a) that only those who write in the regional la
guages have a monopoly of the deepest levels of experience and the
readers are among the most discerning—deep responds to deep; and (
that those who write in English have neither artistic ability nor inte
rity, of the kind so easily taken for granted in the other writers an
worst of all, (c) that their readers are no more than a herd of gullib
sheep who can swallow any stuff.

Flaw of Imitation

The imitation of English writers in Indo-Anglian literature, con
sciously or unconsciously is another shortcoming or obstacle. Says C
Paul Verghese, "The moment an Indian poet starts writing in Englis
he finds it impossible to get away from the weight of English poeti
tradition even as his American, Australian, Canadian or Caribbean coun
terpart. Neither American poetry nor Australian poetry can be distin
guished from English poetry on the basis of the style or the languag
that is used for writing poetry." Similarly an Indian poet in English lik
Australian the American poet cannot ignore English poetic tradition.

Conservative Publishers

The traditionally conservative and unadventurous publisher
showed their unwillingness and indifference to Indo-Anglian literatur
However, in recent times popular periodicals like *The Illustrated Weekl
of India and Literary Miscellany* of the 'Workshop School' of poets hav
rendered valuable service in this connection.

Conclusion

English and Western science on the whole proved very fruitful. It developed a scientific and rational approach to life and educated Indians could shake off much of their conservatism and narrowness of outlook. Contact with English language and literature was fruitful to the regional languages, as it led to the growth and development of creative literature in these tongues. The use of English led to the Indian Renaissance of the 19th century. In the early decades of the century Indian look to the language with enthusiasm, and many of them tried their hand at literary composition in English. Raja Ram Mohan Rao's writings in English, the first Indian to write in English, brought considerable influence on Keshab Chandra Sen, Dwarka Nath Tagore and their Brahmo friends and others. The growth of English language brought the spurt of translations, number of English classics were soon translated into the various Indian languages and growth of the novel and the short story in regional languages was inspired. The English Classics were the models for the Indian writing in English. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee became the first Indian writer of novel in English. The Indian drama, like the novel and the short story, was the result of the impact of English studies. The first Indian play in English the *Persecuted* (1832) is the gift of English language.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF INDO-ANGLIAN LITERATURE

Introduction

The Britishers came to India and took with them, not only the to of trade and the implements of war, but also their language and liter ture. After the end of eighteenth century they gave their attention the arts of peace, to education. The three factors in the field of educ tion brought English as the primary concern. The first is the new inte lectualism and renascent ardour among the Indians, as symbolized Raja Ram Mohan Roy; second is the perseverance of Christian missio aries and above all the persuasiveness and metallic charity of Macaula English prose style.

English Education: The Necessity

Raja Rammohan Roy and his friends had tasted the fruits of wes ern literature and culture and were persuaded that India required western type of education with English as the medium of instructio With the help of two Englishmen, David Hare and Sir Edward Hyd East, he brought into existence the Calcutta Hindu College which lat developed into the Presidency College (1817). The second factor whic determined the course of education in India was the advent and activ ties of the Christians. English was generally the medium of instructio in these missionary institutions, schools and colleges. The third facto that brought the English in education was Macaulay's 'Minute' urgi that it was necessary and possible "to make natives of this country goo English scholars". It is said that he wanted to make India a 'Cultur Colony' of England and to produce an army of English knowing clerk In 1823, a committee of Public Instruction was appointed by the Go ernment to consider the question of the improvement in the educatio imparted to the natives, and it allotted all the funds available for edu cation to the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. Against this step, enligh ened reformers, like Raja Rammohan Roy, protested vehemently an petitions were filed demanding, "the imparting of the best and mo modern European education through English." Sanskrit and Persia which were the chief subjects of study, were felt to be entirely ina equate. Raja Ram Mohan Roy himself founded a number of schools teach Bengali youth through the medium of English. By the time Macaulay, the demand for the introduction of English as the medium education was wide-spread. Macaulay's language policy is to be judge

against this context, it resulted basically from the demand of educated and enlightened Indians for the Anglicisation of education, and not from any villainous desire to serve the ends of British Colonial rule.

Macaulay's Success in the Field of Education

Macaulay's 'Minute' on Education is a landmark in the history of English education in India. In the Minutes Macaulay advocated the cause of English and said, "We have to educate those people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands prominent even among the languages of the west.. In India English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of native at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East." In his task, Macaulay was helped by the Christian missionaries, who founded schools and published grammars and dictionaries, by the English mercantile community, and by the educated Indians and enlightened reformers. No doubt the lure of getting government service also helped the rise of the English language. But it was certainly not an imposition but something which was gladly welcomed and accepted. K.K. Datt asserts that, "The enlightened Indians in the early nineteenth century had come 'to realize the need of linking their countrymen with the progressive cultural forces of the outside world'." Extracts from contemporary Bengali papers like *Samachar Darpan, Samachar Chandrika, Bangadutta* etc; published in *Sampadpatre Sekaler Katha*, are quoted extensively by Datt in support of his view in his work *Dawn of Renascent India* 1964. In March 1835-it was decided that all the funds for education will be used for English education alone with the object of promoting western science and literature among the natives. Macaulay did his best to carryout this policy.

Spread of English

It is remarkable that Macaulay's views about the importance of English hold good even today. There were several factors which contributed to spread English in education of India, quite apart from the help and patronage which the government extended in this direction for which English was certainly a most advantageous qualification. The English traders played a prominent part in this, right from the early days of the trading settlement as the East India company. It may be expected that even those who wanted to oppose the activities of the English missionaries had to learn English in order to understand their methods. It may be eye opener for those who violently oppose English education, to realize that it was not foreign imposition but something which the most patriotic and enlightened among the Indians considered necessary for the progress and modernisation of India.

English Writings in India

The study of English and western science on the whole proved ve fruitful. Besides education, it brought a scientific outlook, rational a proach to life, ignorance towards much of conservatism, narrowness outlook, development of creative literature. Raja Ram Mohan Roy w the first Indian to write in English. He could speak and write Engli fluently and forcefully as is clearly brought out by his works on religio *The Precepts of Jesus*, and *The Guide to Peace and Happiness*. But was a social reformer and much of his writing is utilitarian rather th creative. His prose has lucidity, clarity and flexibility, and compar favourably with the prose of many contemporary English men. Throu the English prose writings many reformers came into light: Kesh Chandra Sen, Dwarka Nath Tagore, Rama Krishna, Vivekanand Dayananda, Sri Aurbindo, Gandhi and Radha Krishan.

THE FIRST PHASE OF INDO-ANGLIAN WRITINGS

Before Macaulay's Minutes policy in education few Indians h begun to use the English for creative expression. Henry Derozio's v ume of poems was published in 1823 and Kashiprasad Ghose publish his volume of poetry entitled *The Shair and the Other Poems* in 183 These two poets are not great in their writings but their work is large imitative of English writers. Derozio inevitably came under the spell Byron and Thomas Moore. His most ambitious work, *The Fakir Jungheera*, is full of Byronic echoes. While the language of these ea poets is reminiscent of Byron and other English poets, the ardent lo for their country, their passion for social reforms and their tender a courageous humanity are entirely their own. Their historical imp tance is great, for they belong to that small group of Indians who wr in English much before Macaulay. Before the middle of the century t drama, short story and novel were practically non-existent in the I dian languages. The English came in India and brought with them t number of translations. English classics were soon translated into va ous Indian languages and the growth of the novel and the short story regional languages was inspired by these translations. The English Cla sics were the models for the Indians writing in English, and their wor were moulded closely on these masters. Bankim Chandra Chatterji b came the first Indian writer of a novel in English. He made his ma with *Raj Mohan's Wife*, published in 1964. *One Thousand and One Nigh* by S.K. Ghosh and *Indian Detective Stories* by S.B. Bannerjee are oth works of prose-fiction in English from Indian hands. Toru Dutt's no *Bianca* was published in the columns of the *Bengal Magazine*. Rame Chandra Dutt wrote many novels in Bengali and two of them were tra lated into English by the novelist himself. These are: *The Slave Girl Agra* and *The Lake of Palms*. In field of Drama the translations

Shakespear's works came into regional languages, and these translations stimulated the growth of Indian drama. They also served as models to the early Indian dramatists. The Indian drama, like the novel and the short story, was the result of the impact of English studies. The first Indian play in English the *Persecuted*, was written in 1832. But the solid contribution to Indian drama in English upto date is that of Tagore and Shri Aurobindo Ghosh. Srinivas Iyengar attributes the paucity of good actable English plays written by Indians to the fact that the natural medium of conversation with us—except for the super sophisticated who live in the cities and the larger towns, in the universities or in certain Government offices on business houses—is the mother tongue rather than English. According to him 'unless the characters and situations are carefully chosen, it would be difficult to make a dialogue between Indians in English seems convincing'.

THE SECOND PHASE OF INDO-ANGLIAN WRITINGS

(a) **Toru Dutt**: The delicate and charming poetess Toru Dutt is an inheritor of unfulfilled renown. She was a precocious girl with a touch of genius. She was one of the Indian poets who gained recognition, inspite of her short literary career. Her poetry reveals the soul of India. She entered the literary world with her first collection of poems *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* which was published in 1875. It is a collection of translation of about 200 French poems from various hands. The collection is not a mere translation but a "transcreation" and volumes speaks for the genius of the young poetess. One of Toru's most beautiful translations, which also gives vent to her grief at losing her sister, is a poem entitled *Death of a Young Girl*. In Edmund Ghosh's words, Toru's chief legacy to posterity is her verse collection.

Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (1883) written by her includes the ancient Hindu stories of Savitri, Sita, Prahlad, Dhruva etc. The poems appeal to the primary emotions of love, filial piety, devotion, gratitude etc. It is for the first time that we find the Indian themes treated in English against a purely Indian background. This verse-collection in an important landmark in the history of Indo-Anglian literature. Besides this, Toru wrote two novels, one in English named *Bianca* and *The Young Spanish Maiden* and another in French, entitled *Le Journal de Mademoiselled Arvers*. In her early death at the age of twenty-one, Indo-Anglian poetry suffered an irreparable loss.

(b) **Behramji Malabari** is a great writer. In his collection of verses entitled *The Indian Muse in English Garb* (1876), he frequently deals with the blessings of the British rule. Dr. John Wilson remarked that the verses "displayed an uncommonly intimate knowledge of the English language" and that they were "the outcome of a gifted mind, trained to habits of deep meditation and fresh and felicitious expression." Many

of the poems are occasional. But his Indianness is seen in those poems in which he bewails the loss of the virtues of Indian character. In such verses speaks the heart of India yearning for freedom from the foreign yoke. Of Malabari's prose writings, special reference should be made to *Gujrat and Gujratis* (1882) and *The Indian Eye on English Life* (1893). *The Indian Eye* is a disarming account of Malabari's European tour. No Indian journalist has done more than Mr. Malabari to maintain between the two races a feeling of friendliness based upon reciprocal respect.

(c) **Sashi Chandra Dutt** is another early poet who in his *A vision of Sumeru and other poems* tried to achieve Indianness. The Indian gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are brought in, but there are also constant references to Christian and Greek mythology. This divided allegiance weakens the effect of Indianness the poet seeks to create, and makes it ridiculous and unconvincing. The poems, at best, remain a pale imitation of Milton.

(d) **Romesh Chandra**, a brother of Sashi Chandra Dutt, gained greater renown as an administrator and as a Bengali and English writer. His works include Bengali novels, English renderings of Ramayana and Mahabharata and various other publications dealing with the economic condition of India in the nineteenth century. Few of his works are *Lays of Ancient India* (1894) and his classic renderings of *Ramayana* (1900) and *Mahabharata* (1898).

(e) **Michael Madhusudan Dutt** was a Bengali poet of talent whose one ambition in life was to win recognition as a writer of English verse. He has left behind two volumes of poetry *Visions of the Past* (1848) and *The Captive Ladies* (1848). The English romantic poets, particularly Byron and the classics like Homer, Ovid, Dante, etc were the main source of his inspiration.

He is a mere versifier, but historically he is important for he is the first to make a conscious effort to use Indian imagery, express Indian sentiments, and tells an Indian story. Frequent references to Hindu Mythology accentuate the Indian atmosphere of his verse. His failure arises from the fact that he failed to harmonise Indian and foreign elements.

(f) Another great poet at the turn of the century is **Manmohan Ghosh**, the brother of the renowned Aurobindo Ghosh. His *Songs of Love and Death* was published after his death in 1926. The bulk of his poetry expresses his personal sorrows and sense of loneliness, and except for a few poems expressing nostalgia for India, there is very little of India in his poetry. But "the technical perfection and the lyrical quality," of his poems have earned for him an abiding place in Indo-Anglian literature. George Sampson calls him the most remarkable among Indian poets who wrote in English.

THE THIRD PHASE OF INDO-ANGLIAN POETRY

The third phase starts from the early twentieth century.

(a) **Sarojini Naidu**, an outstanding woman of her generation, a gifted poetess. Her poetry is pictorial, has the romantic colouring and smooth rhythms of the Georgians, and shows perfect mastery over her chosen medium. She achieves success in the handling of Indian imagery and the expression of Indian personality. Her *Indian Weavers, Corn Grinders* and such other poems are noted for their rhythmic flow and characteristic Indian imagery. Dr. Iyengar writes: "she tried to catch and reproduce in English lilt and atmosphere of some of the folk-songs, in her early poems like the *Bangle-Sellers, Palanquin-Bearers* and *Snake Charmer*."

Love and death form the themes of many of her poems. *Indian Weavers* presents the journey of life in twelve lines:

> Weavers, Weaving at break of day
> Why do you weave a garment so gay
> Blue as the wing of halcyon wild?
> We weave the robes of a new born child.
> Weavers, weaving at fall of night,
> Why do you weave a garment so bright?
> Like the plumes of a pea cock, purple and green
> We weave the marriage, veils of a queen
> Weavers, weaving solemn and still
> What do you weave in the moonlight chill?
> White as a feather and white as a cloud
> We weave a dead man's funeral shroud.

Here an allusive and symbolic journey of life from birth to death is depicted. The weavers, here, are the three Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Sarojini is profoundly aware of her own tradition, admirable poise, economy and an ear and eye for striking rhythm image and symbol.

Prof. Viswanathan feels that "perhaps she realised like Keats that fine doing was the top-thing in the world, that poetry should be Deed, not Dream, that poetry is burning oracle only to those that pursue it, not to others." She began with imitating Keats and other English Classics. Her early poetry was found by Edmund Ghose to be western in feeling and imagery and totally without individuality. He advised her to attempt to reveal the heart of India and to be a genuine Indian poetess of the Deccan and not a clever machine, made imitator of the English classics. She took the advise seriously; for the bulk of her poetry in *The Golden Threshold, The Bind of Time* and *The Broken Wing* are Indian in spirit, thought and imagery. *The Festival of Serpents* and *Leili* are two example of the Hindu accent of Sarojini's poetry.

Sarojini Naidu has described Indian evening in *Leili* as

A caste—mark on the azure brows of Heaven,
The golden moon burns sacred, solemn, bright
The winds are dancing in the forest-temple,
And swooning at the holy feet of Night,
Hush! In the silence mystic voices sing
And make the gods their incense-offering.

Commenting on the image of the moon as "A caste—mark on the azure brows of Heaven", J.H. Cousins remarks: "The symbolism in Mrs. Naidu's poems of the dancing winds as devotees in the temple of nature must surely stand among the fine things of literature; still good as it is, it is poor in comparison with the splendidly daring piece of anthropomorphosis of the first two lines. The figuring of the moon as a caste-mark on the forehead of heaven is in itself a unique achievement of the imagination in a poetry in the English language." Sarojini has immortalised the familiar scenes of everyday life in Modern India. She may lack depth a little, but she always writes gracefully. Her metrical dexterity and craftsmanship mark a distinct advance in the handling of English language and versification. Use of suggestive similies and metaphors, and telling images are other distinctive features of her art.

(b) **Tagore** is a great phenomenon in the Indian Literary Renaissance. He combines in himself three distinct roles—that of a poet, a philosopher and a patriot. The special feature of Tagore's lyrics in English is that they are prose poems. Speaking of his prose poems he says: "There is a weight and restraint in the language of poetry. That is what is called metre. Prose is not squeamish. It goes about everywhere with its head erect." His chief poetical works include the *Gitanjali, The Gardener, The Crescent Moon, Fruit Gathering, Lover's Gift* and *Crossing*. His fame as a poet in English rests chiefly on his *Gitanjali* which is a transcreation of the Bengali original. It was with this work that he achieved international fame winning Nobel Prize for Literature. The *Gitanjali* is full of rare charm. The one hundred odd songs in it form a mighty piece of prayer and pleading exultation. They are mainly poems of Bhakti in the great Indian tradition. Yeats says, "The lyrics of *Gitanjali* display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life." *The Crescent Moon* is a book of poems about children, secret of child's life and thought. One of these *'Bless this little heart'*—has a matchless beauty and tenderness:

> "I know not how he chose you from the crowd, came to your door, and grasped your hand to ask his way. Forget him not in your hurry, let him come to your heart and bless him."

Tagore is one of the greatest lyric poets of the world, and Edward Thompson calls his handling of poetic prose an "impeccable metrical achievement". His thought and imagery are Indian, and his poetry is in tradition of Indian devotional poetry. His message is spiritual. According to Verghese the main features of his poetry are, "its humanistic essence combined with a spirituality, a love of nature and man, and the expression of the beauty and splendour of the earth. The poet's spiritual message does not, however, enjoin us to run away from the 'fret and fever of life' and seek shelter in a hermitage, but insists on our full participation in the joys and sorrows of life. Stress on Tagore's mysticism has led to a neglect of his poetry as poetry, it has tended to obscure his greatness as a poet and artist. He perfected a kind of incantatory rythmic prose and demonstrated that Indian sentiment, thought and imagery can be as well expressed in English as in any Indian language."

(c) **Aurobindo Ghosh**, a versatile genius and an intellectual giant, his outstanding achievement in prose, poetry and drama rank him as the great figure of Indo-Anglian literature. In his long stretching career from 1890-1950 he has written lyrics, narrative poems, a comic epic and a large body of philosophic poems. Though he wrote in English only his poems like *Urvashi, Love and Death, Savitri* are Hindu in setting, sentiment and expression. These poems are full of sensuous images and sweet music. He is great metrical artist who tried to adapt a number of classical metres to English. *Savitri* is symbolic of the true wife's unflinching devotion and power to overcome even the greatest of evils—Death and Satyavan is Truth. Thus Beauty, love and power of devotion and chastity allied to truth can dare anything and achieve anything.

His mystic poetry has a *mantric* quality, very close to the Vedic mantras. He is an adapt in the use of blank verse and other English metres. "But his greater achievement lies in the fact that his poetry carries an aroma of the spirituality of India and achieves a rare fusion of personal vision and spiritual personality of India." He constantly reminds one of the poetry of the Vedas.

THE FOURTH PHASE OF INDO-ANGLIAN POETRY OF THE POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

A good deal of poetry continues to be written in English and there is much experimentation in an effort to achieve modernity. Modern techniques derived from such English Craftsmen as Eliot, Auden and Dylan Thomas, as well as from the film industry and the advertising industry are being used. This experimental approach, this quest for originality and newness, this stress on individuality and the rejection of all that is traditional, often leads to fantastic results. There is much 'image-hunting' and 'word-hunting' in contemporary Indo-Anglian poetry, and one often doubts if anything really meaningful is being done. But there are

a number of good poets like Dom Maraes, Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, R
mala Das, A.K. Ramanujam and others. *The Writer's Workshop P*
have done and are doing, commendable work. Giving an estimate
contemporary Indo-Anglian poetry Amalendu Bose writes, "As a h
torical phenomenon, it is engrossingly interesting that since 1947 a gr
deal of poetry has been written by Indians in English; that in both qu
ity and quantity, this poetry compares very well with the English p
etry that Indians wrote from the days of Derozio and Kashiprasad Ghos
till 1947; that in both quality and quantity, this poetry perhaps co
pares well also with the poetry of quite a few of the current Indi
languages; and that this poetry is the expression of certain attitud
and values believed in by certain sections of today's Indian Society, who
urban and metro-politan, middle class, familiar with the Euro-Amer
can World, either by direct personal experience or in a derivative ma
ner that claims the validity of direct experience. The poetry, in respe
of its purposive sense of direction as much as of its balance-sheet
achievement, deserves the attention of the serious students of Indi
poetry."

Indo-Anglian Novel

The novel took a later start, still the novel has gone far ahead
poetry both in quantity and quality. Very few Indians seem to have
tempted fiction in English till the beginning of the present centu
During the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was consid
able literary activity.

Toru Dutt's *Bianca*, Ramesh Chandra Dutt's *The Slave Girl of Ag*
An Indian Historical Romance (1909) deals with Mughal times and gi
a picture of social life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lo
hatred, intrigue, jealousy, all these are shaken into a compound in
novel.

A South Indian T. Ramakrishana published two romances *Padm*
(1903) and *The Dive for Death* (1912). The first is a romance of the
teenth century and narrates the historical events leading to the gr
battle of Talikote. *The Dive for Death*, on the other hand, is based
certain South Indian superstitions and has on the whole an eerie at
sphere. Some other famous writings of early twentieth century are
S.B. Banerjee's *Tale of Bengal* (1910) Mr. K.S. Venkataramani's *Pa*
Boats (1923) and *On the Sand Dunes* (1923).

It was only with the Gandhian struggle for freedom that In
Anglian novel really came to its own. The ideals of the Indian strug
for freedom are reflected in such novels as K.S. Venkatramani's *Aun*
The Tiller (1927) and *Kandan, The Patriot* (1932). *Kandan the Patri*
a novel of new India in the making and dedicated to the unknown
unteer in India's fight for freedom.

With the publications of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), the novel in English may be said to have come of age. R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and the next novel *The Bachelor of Arts* is a more mature work and invokes variegated claim of character and incident. Few more writers of fiction in English are K. Nagarajan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khuswant Singh, Kamala Markandya and Anita Desai. All these novelists and many more, have considerably enriched Indo-Anglian fiction. While many good Indo-Anglian novels and many more short stories have already demonstrated the feasibility of Indians writing English fiction, it is nevertheless true that the unique intricacies of social life and the untranslatable nuances of conversational speech are better rendered through the medium of one's own mother tongue. It is therefore certain that much of creative work in fiction in the India of the future will be only done in vernaculars; but good English novels and short stories too will continue to appear, either as translations or as original works.

Obstacles in the Path of Success of Novel

The first problem which was faced by the Indian writers writing in English was the language. The flexibility of language to suit different fictitious characters drawn from most varied professions and strata of society was very essential. The Indian atmosphere on the other hand was even most important. Mulk Raj Anand has tried to solve the problem of medium by Indianisation of English words by literal translation into English of Indian expressions, proverbs, etc., and result has not always been a happy one. Raja Rao has more successfully solved this problem. He doesn't write Baboo English but successfully transmutes into English the idiom, the rhythm and the tone of natural speech of his characters. He thus achieves an Indian idiom with its distinct echo of regional speech, without however, lapsing into vulgarisms which mar the work of Anand. Other Indian novelists in English have solved, and are trying to solve, this problem in their own way, so that their language may become a suitable medium for the expressions of the emotional and intellectual life of Indians. R.K. Narayan, for example, writes "admirably clean English", an English which he finds, serves his purpose admirably. It is perfectly adopted to communicate Indian sensibility. The next problem that Indo-Anglian novelist faces is that of creating an Indian consciousness. These Indian novels are not only a source of reading for Indians but, it, also depicts the Indian image in front of world. The authentic, national, rational and truthful identity of Indian needs to be depicted but the problem is further complicated by the cultural changes due to the impact of the west. In this relation C. Paul Verghese says, "The dynamics of her contemporary evolution vis-à-vis

her traditions, and the realities of her modern life naturally are r
flected in the novels written in modern India consequently, the India
novelist faces the problem of giving artistic expression to the effect
economic changes and industrialization on the community, the cla
structure, the old relations among occupations and professions and abo
all on family ties." Cultural contact and cultural change must be fai
fully expressed by the Indo-Anglian novelist.

Indian Drama in English

Indo-Anglian drama is not so rich as Indo-Anglian poetry is. Th
number of great dramatists in the world, as compared to great novelis
and great poets, has been very small. Moreover, the difficulty about th
language in dialogue, which exists even in the novel, becomes mu
more significant in drama. Also the dramatic tradition has not be
particularly rich even in the regional languages of India. In point
chronology, Indo-Anglian drama has a somewhat impressive record, f
the first Indian drama in English, *The Persecuted*, was written far ba
in 1832. Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh are the only two writers wh
have made contribution to Indian drama in English. Tagore's plays ha
been failures upon the stage because they are excessively symbolic
lyrical poetic plays. They have musical qualities, but even these qua
ties have been lost in their English 'transcreations'. One of Tagor
most famous plays is the *Post Office*, though *Chitra*, *The King of Da*
Chamber and *Sacrifice* are also widely known. *Chandalika* has do
very well both as a play and as a ballad. Tagore has tried to impart ne
values and symbolic significance to ancient Hindu myths and legend
Whatever may be the literary value of such plays, they are not succes
ful stage plays. However, plays like *Sacrifice* have been quite successf
on the stage also.

Aurobindo Ghosh, the saint, mystic has also written some dramat
works, though they are in the tradition of poetic plays and are not fit f
stage. He has employed blank verse as his medium. Among such pla
are *Perseus, Eric* and *The Deliverer, The Viziers of Bassora*.

The failure to capture speech rhythms and consequent artificial
characterizes Indian verse drama in general. G.V. Desani's *Hali* a
Bharati Sarabhai's *The Well of the People* fail in respect of naturalne
of speech and convincing characterization. They might have litera
poetic qualities but they do not have dramatic qualities. Drama shou
have graceful and speakable dialogues. It should be racy and close
the spoken language. Whatever be their ranking as literature, they a
decidedly weak as dramas. This is unfortunately true of writers w
are undoubtedly great otherwise, e.g. the well known poets Harindran
Chattopadhyaya and T.P. Kailasam, authors, respectively, of *The Pr*
lamation and *The Brahman's Curse*. Kailasam, a major Kannada writ

as chosen to base his English plays on epic themes. As a critic has said, Kailasam had undoubtedly the making of a great dramatist in him—a upreme power of the imagination, a sure sense of the dramatic in char- cter and situation, an intimate knowledge of the theatre and a world iew which was deeply personal in spite of its classicism. And yet, he ever wholly mastered his art, and his English plays though they are mong the best in Indian writing, do not achieve greatness."

The reason for this lies in Kailasam's failure to find for himself an riginal style of writing suited to his matter and sensibility. The ab- ence of a living theatre where the plays could be put to the acting test f informed criticism made it impossible for him to realise his own inad- equacies. Kailasam, perhaps thought that his lasting contribution in he field of literature was the English plays but his surest claim to im- mortality are, undoubtedly, the epoch making plays in Kannada, where he does achieve originality as well as greatness. If this has a moral for all English writers seeking creative expression in English, well, it is a moral which deserves to be shown a great deal of respect. As a matter of fact the 'moral' has undisputed application to drama only, for Indian writers in English have been able to achieve real greatness in all other fields of literature.

Indian Prose Drama

Indian prose drama in English also suffers from these very faults. Harinadranath's *Five Plays, Fyzee*, Rahamin's *Daughter of India*, A.S.P. Ayyar's *The Slave of India* and *Other plays*, Asif Currimbhoy's *The Tour- ist Mecca, The Doldrummers* and *The Dumb Dancer* and many others do not rise above ordinary conversation in their dialogue, and are dull, drab, flat and artificial. There is too much of speechifying, too frequent intrusions of colloquialism and wrong use of Indian phrases and idioms. Such plays are the products of craft rather than of art. The dramatists have no individual vision of life, or at least they fail to communicate it through their works.

A dramatist who has risen above mediocrity is Pratap Sharma, who has written some actable plays like *A Touch of Brightness* though even his plays are full of loopholes. Patel's plays like the *Princess* have been able to avoid most of these pitfalls. Another dramatist who may be men- tioned in this connection is Shanta Rana Rau whose *Passage to India*, an adaptation of the famous novel of that name, really comes to life, though a great deal of the credit for this goes to Forster than to Rana. The well-known poet, Nissim Ezekiel has also written plays which are interesting in the sense that they succeed where most other Indian plays in English fail, namely, dialogues. His plays *Nalini* and *The Marriage Poem* may in this respect be regarded as models for other Indian writ- ers. Still one must confess that in the field of Indo-Anglian drama a

great writer has yet to appear and no convincing achievement has made so far.

Conclusion

There is considerable poetic activity in India at present in the of Indo-Anglian poetry. The influence of English poets like Eliot Dylan Thomas can be seen in the Indo-Anglian poetry of the last decades. The natural result of this influence has been fastidiousnes form and an abundance of the intellectual element, which, unfortuna is quite often contrived. The experimental note has been struck in cent Indo-Anglian poetry quite often. Sometimes there seems to craze for originality, though the result might be only eccentricity. most prolific among recent poets are P. Lal Nissem Ezekiel, A Ramanujan, Dom Moraes and Kamla Das. In many cases the best In Anglian poetry can stand by the best English poetry that is being w ten anywhere in the world, although there is also quite a lot which trivial. The writer's workshop has been of much-help to the poets, es cially in the matter of publication. It is quite probable that Indo-Angl poetry will continue to march from strength to strength. The Ind novel characterized by a variety of themes and techniques, continue change and grow, and adapt itself to the changing Indian environme Social, political, technological and industrial changes have brought responding changes in its substance. However, in the field of charac ization the Indian novelist in English has not been quite so success because of their stereotype characters. The failure of creati individualised character is one major deficiency among novelists. S ondly they are carried away by the lure of creating the image of a mantic and glamorous India. Such novels distort reality and the novel must guard himself against such dangers.

PART—II

A DETAILED STUDY OF RAJA RAO

CHAPTER - 3

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF RAJA RAO

Early Life : Education of Raja Rao

Raja Rao belongs to an orthodox Brahmin family and his father was a professor of Canarese at Hyderabad. Raja Rao was born on November 5, 1908 in the village of Hassana in Mysore. He received his early education at Hyderabad and after matriculation he went to Aligarh for higher education. There he came into contact with Prof. Dickinson. He inspired him to study French language and literature. He did his graduation from Nizam College, Hyderabad. He was granted government scholarship by the Hyderabad University, and on this scholarship, he went to France to continue his study of French literature there. He studied at the University of Montpellier. Then he worked for a Doctorate degree at the University of Sorbonne under the supervision of an eminent scholar Prof. Cazamian.

Life in France

It was in France that Raja Rao wrote his first novel, *Kanthapura* (1938). His second novel *The Serpent and The Rope* (1960) was also written in France and has France as its setting. The stories that appeared in the collection *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947), were also written in France during the 1930's.

He first went to France when he was only twenty years old. He stayed in France for more than a decade (1928-39).

It was during this period that the first collection of his short stories, entitled *Javni* (1930), was published. After a brief stay in India he went back to France again. He married an American actress called Katherine. The second phase of his stay in France also lasted a decade. He was influenced by French culture but he did not forget his roots.

Impact of America on Raja Rao

He visited America for the first time in 1950. Raja Rao w
greatly influenced by America and found the country very fascinat
According to Raja Rao, "America has great splendour. Once this na
finds itself, it will be truly magnificent". He once said that to
America has the makings of a great classical civilisation which
symbolise the true worth and dignity of man. As a visiting profes
Raja Rao gave lectures on Indian philosophy at various Americ
universities. Then Raja Rao settled in the U.S.A. and his
assignment was teaching Indian Philosophy at the University
Texas. Raja Rao's favourite writers were Emerson, Thoreau and W
Whitman. He found the young Americans and their ideology fa
nating. He cherished the hope that they would usher in an im
revolution in the world. Raja Rao sees the brighter side of what
generally termed as the 'materialism' of the west. He tends to l
upon this country as a sort of brave new world.

His Deep Root in India : His Visit to Many Important Pla

Inspite of the fact that he stayed in foreign countries for ma
years, Raja Rao didn't forget his motherland. He didn't forget
roots. He made a deep and thorough study of Indian philosophy.
studying Indian philosophy, he went to Benares which is the se
of ancient Indian philosophy. For some time he lived the life of
semi-ascetic in Benares.

His Guru Swami Atmanand who was a great scholar of Vedan
philosophy influenced him to a very great extent. Raja Rao also spe
some time at the ashram of Mahatma Gandhi. He even practic
transcendental meditation.

His Literary Career

Among the Indian writers writing in English, Raja Rao is o
of the greatest. The other popular and great writers apart from hi
are Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. Raja Rao was not a ve
prolific writer. The number of literary works of Raja Rao is very fe
but if the quality of his works is considered, he is one of the greate
Some people are of the opinion that the reason for his not givi
much output in terms of quantity is the lack of creative fertility
him. This however, does not appear to be a logical explanation. T
first collection of his short stories was published in 1930. His fi
novel *Kanthapura* was published in 1938. His collection of sho
stories which was named *The Cow of The Barricades and Other stori*
was published in 1947. These stories were written in France. Ra
Rao's second novel, *The Serpent and the Rope*, was published in 19

The *Cat and Shakespeare* was published in 1965. *The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories* was published in 1978.

His Reputation Increasing Day by Day

Raja Rao has been awarded the Padma Bhushan and he won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *The Serpent and the Rope.* Most critics consider *The Serpent and the Rope* to be the best Indo-Anglican novel ever written. For sometime, his name was being considered for the award of The Nobel Prize for literature. Raja Rao has received national and international fame and recognition. Santha Rama Rao says about Raja Rao that he is : "perhaps the most brilliant and certainly the most interesting—writer of modern India". He was appreciated much more abroad than in his own country.

His Personality and Outlook

He is hardly five feet tall but has a good personality and his appearance is like that of a great intellectual. His features are aristocratic. He is a great philosopher and novelist and is full of life.

A Cosmopolitan Person

Raja Rao may be regarded as a bridge between the East and the West. Raja Rao wrote in an article published in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (1963) that he is obsessed with Sanskrit and fascinated with Malayalam, while his mother tongue, Kannada, naturally touches elemental chords in him. He looks upon French as the language of the aristocracy of the spirit; he considers Italian as the musical language of golden humanity. He values English because Shakespeare wrote in it, and Urdu because it has Ghalib, while Hindi seems to him to have the young rolling cadence of Ganga at Hardwar. Hence Raja Rao is a true cosmopolitan in the world of letters. He was greatly influenced by literary works and epics both of the eastern part of the world as well as the west.

Impact of Various Literary Works

He was influenced by Andre Malraux's novels and aesthetic essays. According to Raja Rao, the writer who seems to be the closest to the spirit of India is Anand Coomaraswamy. Raja Rao was a lover of Sanskrit poetry. Raja Rao was also influenced by Shakepeare. He was particularly influenced by *Hamlet, Lear* and *The Tempest.* He was also greatly influenced by Plato.

Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov,* Romain Roland's *Jean Christophe* and Mazzini's *Duties of Man* are his favourite books.

Raja Rao was greatly influenced by Gandhi's *My Experiments With Truth*. He was also influenced by French writers Paul Valer and Andre Gide. He liked the works of Rainer Maria Rilke and W.B. Yeats. Kafka, Gorki and Walt Whitman also are among the writers who have influenced Raja Rao.

His Works at a Glance

1. ***Kanthapura* (1938)**

It was his first novel. According to E.M. Forster it was "the finest novel to come out of India in recent years". The novel depicts the impact that the Gandhi movement had on the people of the village called Kanthapura. What was happening in Kanthapura was happening in many other parts of the country during those years.

2. ***The Serpent and the Rope* (1960)**

This novel was published twenty two years after *Kanthapura*. This novel has been called the spiritual autobiography of the novelist. He got the Sahitya Akademi Award for this novel.

Raja Rao's first novel *Kanthapura* remained unknown and obscure till Raja Rao won international fame and recognition with the publication of *The Serpent and the Rope* in 1960. *Kanthapura* was then read with interest and recognised as a classic of the Indo-Anglian fiction.

3. ***The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories* (1947)**

It is a collection of nine stories written between 1933-1944 in France.

4. ***The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965)**

It's setting is provided by the famine of 1942. It is sub-titled "*A Tale of Modern India*". Raja Rao has called it a "Philosophical Comedy".

5. ***The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories* (1978)**

This collection contains the later stories of Raja Rao which were written subsequent to those which were published in *The Cow of the Barricades*.

CHAPTER - 4

THE NOVELS OF RAJA RAO

eagre Output

Raja Rao has written only three novels and he has two collections short stories to his credit. There was a gap of twenty-two years tween the publication of his first novel and his second novel and gap of thirty one years between the publication of the two llections of short stories.

Even though his output has been unusually meagre Raja Rao s an important place among Indian writers writing in English. me critics have expressed the opinion that the reason for the output ing less is that he wanted to achieve perfection, and consequently ote slowly and revised frequently.

Kanthapura

The novel gives a realistic and vivid description of the Gandhi ovement during the 1930's and its impact on the masses of India. ie setting is a typical South Indian village called Kanthapura.

Kanthapura was published in 1938. It was Raja Rao's first novel id was written by him in France. In many ways it is regarded as s most perfect and satisfying work.

The novel begins with a graphic description of the village and ie areas surrounding it. The narrator is an old woman called chakka. She tells about the location of the village and then goes to describe the village itself. The village is divided into the rahmin quarter, the potter's quarter, the weaver's quarter and the ariah quarter. The society is caste-ridden. The people are described general. Then the main characters are introduced one by one. Thus, efore introducing the freedom struggle the narrator gives a very vid description of the background and setting.

The novel is not the story of any particular individual or his life. is the story of the people of Kanthapura taken as a whole. It is e story of the village called Kanthapura and thus the title is apt id suggestive.

Moorthy is the most prominent among the characters in the novel. oorthy left his studies and decided to dedicate his life to India's

struggle for Independence after he had a vision of Gandhi
Gandhi Movement was brought to Kanthapura by Moorthy and
city boys. Slowly, more and more people of Kanthapura be
members of the Congress. The Congress committee was forme
Kanthapura. By the time the Satyanarayan Puja was organise
had become a mass movement. The people of Kanthapura fough
their own way for the independence of the country. Ultimately
had to leave Kanthapura and settle in another place called Kashi
It seems as though they had failed but they still had a sense of
and a feeling of having achieved something.

(2) *The Serpent and the Rope*

This was Raja Rao's second novel and was published in
The setting in time is around the year 1950 and a part of the a
takes place in India and the rest of the action takes place in Fra
and England.

Ramaswamy or Rama who is the main character of the n
is also the narrator of the novel. Many readers find the novel tires
and boring because in this novel Raja Rao's philosophical, metaph
cal and religious concerns become too obtrusive at places. This n
belongs to a new genre founded by Raja Rao himself called
physiological novel. The action constantly shifts between In
France, and England.

Rama is an educated young man and belongs to a rich *zamin*
family of South India. He is an M.A. in history and goes to Fra
on government scholarship to earn a Doctorate degree from
University of Sorbonne. He meets Madeleine in France and falls
love with her. This young woman is a teacher in one of the univer
colleges. He soon marries her. A son is born to them but un
tunately he dies soon after birth. This becomes the reason of g
mental torment for Madeleine and she cannot be her usual self ag

The other characters in the novel include uncle Charles and a
Zoubie and Madeline's half-sister Catherine. Then there are the
young men Goeorges and Lezo. Raja Rao builds up a realistic
convincing picture of the western culture and way of life.

Rama's father dies and he has to come back to India. He g
to Benaras for the last rites of his father. He takes his father's th
wife and his baby brother, Sridhara to Benaras with him for the
rites of his father. From Benaras they go to Allahabad where t
stay for sometime with an old friend of Rama's father. Here, he me
Pratap Singh, who is betrothed to Savithri the daughter of the R

of Surajpur. Savithri is educated in the west and does not want to marry him. She has come home from Cambridge at the time of vacations and she is introduced to Rama so that he may try to change her views. Rama finds her really fascinating. Rama has two sisters—Saroja and Sukmari. Sukmari studies in school. Saroja is an educated young lady of progressive views and is dissatisfied with their orthodox ways and conventional life. She longs for the kind of freedom that women in the west enjoy.

Rama returns to France after having settled the affairs at home. Rama expects his thesis to take one more year. Later, Georges marries Catherine. Savithri comes to them on a short visit on her way to Cambridge from India. Rama also visits Cambridge in connection with his research work. He falls in love with Savithri. Savithri is ready to run away with him but, Rama tells her that she must go back to her home and marry the husband destined for her. Savithri ultimately marries Pratap Singh.

Rama comes to India again and here his lung trouble gets aggravated and he falls seriously ill. Madeliene loses her second child also. This shock is too much for her to bear. When Rama returns to France he finds that she has changed drastically. Madeleine embraces Buddhism. Rama again goes to London and falls seriously ill. Savithri is also there and visits him frequently. Rama and Madeleine's marriage is ended through divorce. Rama continues to suffer from illness. Catherine and her husband befriend Rama. He completes his thesis which he has to submit for a Doctoral degree. Then he plans to go to Travancore and find a guru. It is not clear whether he actually returns to India or not.

(3) *The Cat and Shakespeare*

Raja Rao had described this novel as "a philosophical comedy". It was published in 1965 and was Raja Rao's third novel. In the novel, there are many digressions and many things which are superfluous.

It is the story of two friends Govindan Nair and Rama Krishna Pai. Both of them are clerks and live in adjacent houses in Trivandrum. Nair's boss dies of heart attack when a cat jumps on his bald head. Nair is charged with corruption and fraudulent practices. Nair pleads that whatever he did, was done by him under the orders of his boss. He says that it is because of the cat that his boss died and it cannot be interrogated. He insists that the cat should be brought to court as part of evidence. Ultimately Nair's innocence is proved. The story goes on even after no interest is left in it. The novel has certain faults but it has some strong points also.

Raja Rao's command over language and his assimilation of philosophy and metaphysics into the very structure of the novel is remarkable.

About the ending of the novel the author comments, "Normally the story should have stopped here. But is life normal? Is the cat in the court normal? Is death normal? Is Santha's life with me normal (she is not married to me as a wife)? And Saroja such a married spouse (and living for away where the Dutch once landed), and she keeps telling Vithal : 'Your father is no father. Your real father is the sun, worship him.' Are the wars normal? And the one plus one that makes two is that normal, tell me? What then is normal? My new baby is normal. He feeds on his mother's breasts and for the rest he sleeps or cries. Usha looks after him as if it were her own child. So Pai in the end lives with Shantha, his mistress, and his wife, Saroja, lives in a village with her son.

The novel is a mixture of fantasy and realism. The plot suffers from many absurdities and crudities.

CHAPTER - 5

SHORT STORIES OF RAJA RAO

The short stories of Raja Rao can be put into two categories. The early stories and the later stories. The basis of classification is the period during which they were written. Although his short stories have great range and variety, they have somehow failed to attain the popularity which his novels have won. In his short stories, he deals with different levels of consciousness and with every aspect of life. The timeless and the temporal, the metaphysical and the social are of equal interest to him.

The earliest collection of his short stories, *The Cow of the Barricades,* 1947, contains nine stories written in France during the early period of his career from 1930 onwards. The stories written after 1947 have been published in the collection called *The Policeman and The Rose and Other stories, 1978.* These later stories reflect the metaphysical and religious concerns of Raja Rao.

Early Stories

These stories were written in France during the early and mid 1930's. The collection includes remarkable stories like *Javni, Akkyya, Narasiga, The Little Gram Shop, Kanaka* and *The Cow of the Barricades.* The story, *The Cow of the Barricades* which supplies the title to this first collection, and *Nimka* are transitional in nature and herald the maturer Raja Rao of the second phase.

(1) *Javni*

In *Javni* and *Akkyya* the novelist's sociological concerns are uppermost. *Javni* is one of Raja Rao's most popular works. It deals with the suffering and the misery of the under-dog in Hindu society. Raja Rao has been able to give a very vivid and sympathetic presentation of the central figure, Javni. It depicts the happy domestic life of educated Indians of middle class. The brother and sister in this story are ideal in their mutual love and affection. It is only when Javni's plight is contrasted with this domestic harmony and peace that one realises the pathos inherent in her life. The village atmosphere has been evoked very skilfully.

Javni is one of the best stories of Raja Rao. It is the character

of Javni and the social environment in which she lives, which a the central in the story. Plot interest is minimal.

(2) *Akkyya*

The heroine of this story is a widow who is dependent on h brother and lives with his family. The novelist has depicted t wretched plight of widows in Hindu society. She does all t household chores and looks after the children with selfless devoti Her childhood was very different. She was a pretty and intellige girl. According to C.D. Narasimhaiah, "Woman here is far from bei idealized : with all the senility, stink and stench of disagreeable a age she is rendered worse by the callousness of brothers and brothe children, neglected in life and neglected in death, Akkyya is the m excruciating example of the impending disintegration of the fam which have held Indian society from the very dawn of history, b today when the country is on the threshold of a technological e characterized by what social scientists call counter-culture, a ne relation in a family can well run the risk of dying with no dece funeral, much less the necessary ceremonies. The story enacting h life and death, tells the author quite poignantly, may be the on funeral ceremony that unaccommodated man or woman is destin to have in this traditional society. What the author bemoans is much the tragedy of life as the breakdown of old values which on gave stability to Hindu society." In this story stark reality is depicte

(3) *The Little Gram Shop*

This story depicts the misery and silent suffering of the wife a miserly shopkeeper who lives in a typical Hindu household. Her Raja Rao vividly depicts the life of three generations in a single famil which seems to be under some sort of curse.

Narasimhaiah says about this story, "Within the limits of a sho story the writer has deftly condensed the lives of three generation from grandfather to grandson so as to suggest that a curse was o the family. Motilal's grandfather squandered his property among h ten concubines; Motilal himself died of a road accident in his gree for money; and his son Chota inherited his full share of the vic of both his great grandfather and father, and the circle was complet when towards the end of the story we are intimated that Chota mistress who had run away with another man with a mouthful curses of Chota was seen presiding over the Little Gram Shop wit the father killed and the mother and wife dead, himself unmentione as though it mattered not whether he was alive or dead."

(4) *Narasiga*

The Mahatma and the freedom struggle provide the background for *Narasiga and The Cow of the Barricades. Narasiga* is the story of a shepherd boy who in traditional Indian style mythicizes Mahatma Gandhi as Rama and the British as Ravana. Narasiga is a follower of Mahatma Gandhi.

(5) *The Cow of the Barricades*

The theme of *The Cow of the Barricades* is similar to that of *Narasiga,* but in *The Cow of the Barricades* the expression is more powerful. The story basically deals with India's freedom struggle. The Master in the story, who is the prototype of Moorthy in *Kanthapura,* strives hard to cling to the path of non-violence and goes into meditation to avert bloodshed. Verghese says, "The cow in the story is the symbol of Mother India. The tradition and religion, mysticism and sacredness associated with the cow in India becomes in Raja Rao's hands the linchpin of a story about the spiritual regeneration of India."

(6) *Nimka*

In this story also there is mingling of realism and fantasy. In the story, Gandhi is glorified and romanticised as Ram and the Englishmen are spoken of as Ravan. Thus, in this story Raja Rao has used the mythical technique. The story reveals Raja Rao's sociological concerns and his pre-occupation with the oppression and suffering of the under-dogs. It is the sad story of a beautiful young Russian woman, a mere waitress in a restaurant which paid her just enough for her and her mother's keep. *Nimka* is the work of a mature artist. By the time Raja Rao wrote this story he had already become a major novelist.

The Later Stories

The later stories of Raja Rao were collected and published in the volume called *The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories* (1978). This and the other collection together do not contain all the short stories written by Raja Rao. Apart from the one's which form a part of these two collections, he had written other short stories also.

(7) *The Policeman and the Rose*

This story is highly symbolical, though the symbolism is too personal and intricate. There is vagueness, but in the story, there is also great artistic merit. Says Narasimhaiah, *The Policeman and*

the Rose suggests the themes of *The Serpent and the Rope* and *Cat and Shakespeare*, but in its evocation Raja Rao lets into the much unassimilated material. In other words, artistically speak it does not share the excellence of *India : a Fable* with which it affinities potentially; much less can it be compared with *Nimko* a story of his later phase."

(8) *India : A Fable*

In the story Raja Rao mingles fact and fiction. The story m simultaneously on several planes and is rather perplexing. Th the finest story of the second phase.

(9) *The Premiere of Shakuntla*

This is a story within story, a personal story containing wi it the famous story of Shakuntla. It is an enchanting reconstru by a 20th century literary descendant, of a great poet, the wa loved, lived, wrote, rejoiced and realized the transience of it a the larger scheme of things—the time-honoured Indian ideal of h the parama purushartha, the supreme end, that which makes else meaningful. In fact the Indian epic poet's personal life receives attention in the story. A part of the interest of this s is that of literary criticism in addition to that of creative litera for here we have Rao's comments on India's classical literatu

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CHAPTER - 6

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF RAJA RAO AS A NOVELIST

OR

MERITS AND DEMERITS OF THE NOVELS OF RAJA RAO

(His Contribution and Achievement)

Introduction

Though the bulk of his published work is small he is considered the greatest among Indian novelists writing in English. He has achieved international fame and recognition. For his novel, *The Serpent and The Rope,* he got the Sahitya Akadami Award in 1966. The Padma Bhusan was awarded to Raja Rao in 1969. Only two other Indo-Anglican writers—Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, come anywhere close to him as writers. Raja Rao's style of writing is very different. There is not much in common between him and Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. Raja Rao has not conformed strictly to the conventions of the novel. Both Narayan and Anand understand and portray Indian life well but they seem to dwell merely on the surface. Rao goes deep into it and communicates its quintessential quality. Raja Rao is characteristically Indian.

Narasimhaiah says that if one considers his work as a whole one wonders at the, "range of life as well as the levels of consciousness he has brought into the novel form, along with the creation of a suitable medium for his concerns which are at once timeless and temporal, metaphysical and social, immediately local but also international, so as to enlarge the frontiers of the fictional form itself and justify the name of an innovator in modern Indian fiction which, thanks largely to him, more than any other single writer, has been ushered into the mainstream of twentieth century literature."

Development of Rao's Genius : Two Phases of His Literary Career

Raja Rao's works can be broadly classified into two categories—

the works belonging to early phase of his career and those belonging to later phase of his career. This kind of division into two categories makes the study of his works much easier. His later works are different from his earlier works in many ways but, the germs of his later art and later manner can be seen in his earlier work also.

The works of early phase consist of short stories published in 1947 in the collection called *The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories* and *Kanthapura* published in 1938.

To the second period belong *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) and *The Cat and Shakespeare (1965)*. Some of his short stories were published in 1978 in the collection, *The Policeman and the Rose and other Stories.*

THE EARLY PHASE OF HIS LITERARY CAREER

Literary Importance of His Short Stories

According to Srinivas Iyengar, in *The Cow of the Barricades* "cow's mother-gait and silent tears are symbolic of India's, mother's travail, and the cow's infinite patience and veiled power are symbolic of the mother's genius for surviving her sorrows and transmuting them into the great joy to come." About *Nimka* he says that it is, "the work of one who is already a major novelist and has learnt to range through countries, classes, ideologies and can look into the heart of darkness which nevertheless holds promise of the dawn. The story, because of its poetic treatment of the material eludes easy identification with any period or movement. And what gives distinction to it is the sensibility of a master, here an Indian writer, who is not stranger in France or Russia, among the poor as the aristocracy. Raja Rao's art as a short-story writer is yet to receive full recognition and appreciation. Certainly, it cannot be dismissed as a mere foil to his fiction, not worth much by itself, as U. Parameswaran tends to do."

In his early stories, Raja Rao deals with social and political problems existing in India, during the 1930's. In them he depicts the plight of women and the people belonging to the lower strata of society—the poor and the deprived.

Kanthapura : His Masterpiece

Kanthapura can be described as a miniature representation of India, as it was during the 1930s. *It reflects all aspects of Indian* village life—the division of society on the basis of caste, the ignorance and superstition and the petty rivalries and jealousies among the people.

It is a unique novel in its own way. It is the most successful work of art among the works inspired by the Gandhian movement.

The novel depicts the early phase of India's freedom struggle and its impact on the people of a small village called Kanthapura. The narration is episodic and there are many digressions and many details which are superfluous. The narrator is an old woman called Achakka and the style of narration is akin to the Puranas. The novelist has suitably modified the English language to express the Indian sensibility and create the typically Indian atmosphere. The language of this novel may be regarded as a significant contribution to Indo-Anglian literature. Another contribution of Raja Rao is the blending of a western art form with an Indian theme. He has created almost a new form as a result of it.

The Intervening Period

Kanthapura was published in 1938 and after that there was a long gap. *The Serpent and the Rope* was published in 1960 after a gap of twenty two years. In an interview Raja Rao said, "For me literature is *sadhana* not a profession but a vocation." Raja Rao has himself said that it was so, even when he wrote *Kanthapura,* but he was then a confused and lost person and that was why he gave up writing for a long time.

Though most critics considered *Kanthapura* a major achievement, Raja Rao himself considered it confused and immature. Raja Rao wrote *The Serpent and the Rope* after he met his guru, Sri Atmananda.

According to Raja Rao, one must be a man first and a writer afterwards. By 'man' he means a metaphysical entity, one who has realised the Absolute Truth. According to him this truth can be realised only through a guru, who is himself a realised being. After writing *Kanthapura* Raja Rao gave up writing for a long time, because then he had not realised his spiritual entity. Raja Rao has himself said, "*The Serpent and the Rope* came as a result of spiritual fulfilment—that is to say it was born after I had met my guru."

SECOND PHASE OF HIS CAREER

Literary Significance of *The Serpent and the Rope*

One of the reviewers said that it is, "certainly an epic and could....have been a great novel. Even as it is, it remains a magnificent guide to India and for those who are prepared to work for their pleasure, a book to read and re-read."

The reviewer in the *Times* said "It is rather as if the wis
of Sanskrit had been done into story-book form.....The writing
utterly beautiful. No other word will do."

The novel reflects Raja Rao's learning and knowledge of a num
of literatures, mythologies, philosophies and religions. A critic
rightly said that if *Kanthapura* is Raja Rao's *Ramayana* then
Serpent and the Rope is his *Mahabharata* and if *Kanthapura*
a recognizable epic quality, *The Serpent and the Rope* is more th
a miniature epic—it is almost encyclopaedia in it scope. A part
the action takes place in India and it partly takes place in Fran
The novel is loaded with discussions of subtle metaphysical proble
It is a work of Raja Rao's maturity and the novelist has been hail
as a pioneer in the field of metaphysical fiction. According to Srini
Iyengar, "Never before has the subtle and tortuous mind of
cultivated Indian who is caught in the narrows of the ambigu
agonizing present—the junction of the old and new, the East
the West—been presented so engagingly and excitingly in a w
of fiction."

A learned critic has said that *The Serpent and the Rope* is
ambitious and meritorious effort at achieving a total projection
India in vivid fictional terms; and perhaps, it is the most impress
novel yet written by an Indian in English.

In one of his sudden digressions, Rama describes the novel
"the sad and uneven chronicle of a life, my life, with no art
decoration, but with the objectivity, the discipline of the histori
sciences; it is an attempt really to make the imponderables of in
life seem reasonably logical and concrete; and it is, besides,
attempt—a bold, adroit, sustained attempt—to set the Engli
language to a prolonged articulation of Indian or Sanskritic mod
of thought and speech." Rama is the hero of the novel and also th
narrator. David McCutchion made the following remarks on the nov
: *"Is this a novel at all?.....All the central concerns of the Weste
novel are absent—social relations, psychological motivation, chara
terization, judgement, a passion for the concrete."*

This novel has all the distinctive qualities of Indo-Anglican no
and it should not be judged by western standards. This novel w
read and appreciated all over the world and made the writer popul
world-wide.

aja Rao's Theme of East—West Encounter

Meenakshi Mukherji has pointed out, "As the title suggests, the
vel involves two ways of apprehending reality: the recognition of
e object as object and the recognition that the object exists because
e perceiver perceives it. The novel merely presents the confron-
tion of these two modes, but does not come to a definite preference
one over the other. Madeleine slowly excludes Ramaswamy from
r life, and Ramaswamy brings his burden of infinite pathos back
India. And there is just a hint towards the end that in Travancore
might find a new mode of apprehending reality and a new meaning
life. With admirable restraint, Raja Rao has steered clear of the
cile solution of concocting in easy assimilation of two cultures. If
ere is an enduring solution, it is a private solution, and may not
eld its secret to any public discussion. Such a solution can be
orked out only through a *Guru* and it is hinted at the end that
ama hopes to find him in Travancore.

In this novel, the theme of East-West encounter assumes a kind
depth and validity which has never been achieved in Indo-Anglican
tion. A reviewer has rightly said, "In the marriage of Rama and
adeleine, two contrary world-views, two contrary epistemologies,
me together, and the novel is a study of that encounter. In spite
their sharply differentiated attitude towards life, Ramaswamy and
adeleine have one striking similarity as characters: they are both
tensely self-conscious about the epistemologies they represent.
ardly ever do they regard themselves or each other simply as
dividual human beings. Instead, they are constantly interpreting
eir own and each other's nations in terms of their national and
ltural differences, invariably ending up with generalisations about
dian and Western traits of character.

rtistic Downfall : *The Cat and Shakespeare*

According to C.D. Narasimhaiah, "While in *The Serpent and the*
ope, the intellectual pre-occupations did not always get accommo-
ated into the structure of the novel, and often stayed out of it, thus
xposing the author to uncritical attack for considerable bits of
nassimilated philosophy and metaphysics, here in *The Cat* the
bstractions have invariably found their concrete equivalents, thanks
rgely to the symbolism and the allegory which have transmuted
bstractions into felt sensations. The cat, the wall, the ration shop,
e scales, the accounts, are symbols, but also facts which make
cidents and episodes which form the stuff of the story. *The Cat*
in that sense the most mature of his novels—Raja Rao has found

in it the most adequate concrete equivalent of a profound visio
life which has its validity not only for the contemporary Ind
situation, but for our entire fragmentary civilization."

The Cat and Shakespeare was published in 1965. Most cr
are of the opinion that in this novel one can see a decline in
artistic skill of Raja Rao. It has baffled the critics. Raja Rao
called it a metaphysical comedy and said that it is a sequel to
Serpent and the Rope. Raja Rao has said that it is not mere fant
but based on actual events. The significance of the title does
become clear and there is not much of a story. The actions
reactions of the central figure remain vague and unrealised. A cr
has said that the novel is, "all too chatty and catty; illustory n
plot; Raja Rao is caricaturing himself; a perfect mouse-trap; who c
say what's happening and what's not happening?"

According to Srinivas Iyengar all Raja Rao's writing, "is part
Raja Rao's *sadhna* or spiritual experience, and so *Kanthapura,* T
Serpent and The Cat should be viewed as steps—or paths—towar
realization. If *Kanthapura* could be described as a *Purana,* as
Gandhi Purana, and *The Serpent and the Rope* as an *epic,* a mi
Mahabharata in the idiom of our age, then *The Cat and Shakespea*
is more like one of the longer *Upanishads,* part narrative, pa
speculation and part dialogue or discussion." In the novel t
description zig-zags rather than progressing straight on, the spec
lation is not so much analytical and the dialogue is dialectical rath
than an exchange of confidences. A learned critic says about the nov
that there are words, words, words, a whirl of words, but their tr
meaning is understood only when there is inner illumination, sudde
flashes of lightning illuminating the dark and the unknown. Th
is the way of the *Upanishads,* and this is also the way of *The C*
and Shakespeare.

Raja Rao's Art of Narration

Compared to *Kanthapura* the narrative technique in *The Serpe*
and the Rope is much more complex. If one goes through Raja Rao
works, one can see that there is constant evolution of his art an
technique.

In *Kanthapura* the narrator is an old woman called Achakk
She is narrating the events to another woman long after they actuall
happened. Her stream of memory forms the narration of the nove
She is a garrulous old woman and while narrating the events sh
includes many things that are superfluous and irrelevant. There ar
many digressions but all this seems natural because the narrato

an old woman. Raja Rao's choice of the narrator is perfect. Things
at seem natural coming from her mouth would not have seemed
atural if the narrator had been an educated and sophisticated
erson. Achakka is an uneducated and simple woman and is
perstitious like the other people of Kanthapura. She is a religious
d woman. Raja Rao himself says in the Preface to *Kanthapura* that
e narrative technique is akin to the Puranas. It is in the traditional
ndian style of oral story-telling. The narration is chronological and
e action moves steadily forward. There is no incoherency or
nfusion despite the frequent digressions.

In *The Serpent and the Rope* the hero of the novel is also the
arrator of the novel. Rama, who is the hero of the novel is an
tellectual and a well read man. Naturally the style of narration
not simple as in the case of Kanthapura. He has included myths
nd legends of different civilizations and used them to glorify, criticise
illumine the present. According to Srinivas Ieyngar, "Rama is dry-
-dust as well as a poet, he is terribly introspective and can also
e detached when necessary and he is sensual at one moment and
aintly at another. No wonder his way of telling his story makes
emands on the reader though there are not wanting rewards as
ell. Scraps from his diary mingle with narrative, dialogue (which
metimes reads like a catechism), description and reportage; he zig-
ags disconcertingly in space and time, he mixes memory and reverie,
e jostles recitation and speculation, he scatters with a seeming
ecklessness aphorisms, witticisms, cynicisms, scholarly jottings and
ems of recapitulated song. Yet, in spite of all this riot of apparent
relevance and irrepressible loquacity, everything—given, that is, the
haracter, with the elements so tantalizingly mixed in him—seems
fit perfectly.

The action has a physical as well as a psychological aspect, and
e psychological or inner action is much more important. The
hysical action has global sweep and moves to and fro between the
ast and the West. But it is, "the psychological action which is far
ore important and takes place really in the theatre of Rama's heart,
ind and soul. We see places, men and phenomena as Rama sees
em, we see the world and its movements as they are reflected in
e mirror of his sensibility, we peer into the crater that is his mind
t times, and we gaze—at rare moments—at the still depths of his
ul, its vast sufficiency and total strength. So far as the novel is
ncerned, Rama is the reality, the rest is illusion."

Art of Characterisation

In *Kanthapura* characterisation has a secondary place h
Raja Rao's main aim was to depict the Gandhi Movement a
impact on the people of Kanthapura. Highly individualised cha
would have diverted attention from such a depiction. If there
hero of the novel it is Kanthapura or its people and not any indiv
character. Among the characters in the novel Moorthy plays a p
role but he is not the hero of the novel.

It is not that he lacked the art of characterisation. With a
stroke of pen he could bring a character to life. His characte
real and convincing and this is true of his minor characters
The characters are drawn from all sections of society. They c
divided into two broad categories. The supporters of the Brit
the one hand and the followers of Gandhi on the other. The
many other divisions also. There are the orthodox and those
are in favour of reform. Then there are the oppressors and
oppressed. To highlight his goodness, advocate Sankar is
against advocate Seenappa. Raja Rao uses nicknames or epi
For instance; waterfall Venkamma, nose-scratching Nanjamma,
house Akkamma, gold-bangle Somanna etc. This is one of the de
that the novelist uses to impart life to the characters. The chara
seem very real and vivid.

These epithets sometimes describe the appearance of a pe
sometimes the profession and sometimes the location of the h
It is because of the presence of advocate Sennappa that the good
of advocate Sankar is highlighted even more and thrown into
relief. The characters in Kanthapura lack depth. Raja Rao
depicted only their surface personalities. He has depicted
outward manner and way of speaking and outward idiosyncr
very vividly.

In *The Serpent and the Rope,* Raja Rao penetrates below
external impressions. The characters are more complex compare
the characters in *Kanthapura.* In *The Serpent and the Rope* t
is in-depth analysis of the characters. The characters are drawn f
different races and nationalities and hence are much more va
compared to the characters in *Kanthapura.*

Unlike the characters in *Kanthapura,* the characters in
Serpent and the Rope have depth and subtlety. Prof. Harish Ra
says in this context, "He is no more concerned with delinea
characters in their private aspects. He now portrays them in rela
to the broader and more impersonal objects that occupy mankin
their relations to public affairs, philosophy, art and religion".

Raja Rao's Treatment of Women Characters

Madeleine in *The Serpent and the Rope* is an educated woman. She is a reserved, cold and intellectual. She is not simple-hearted or loud mouthed like the women characters of *Kanthapura.*

In the *Serpent and the Rope,* in addition to Madeleine there is Savithri, Saroja and the little Mother.

In *Kanthapura* there are a number of women characters and they have been very skilfully delineated.

Rangamma plays a major role and is one of the important characters in the novel. She is well-read and has a certain degree of general awareness. She reads newspapers regularly. She is a follower of Gandhi and actively participates in the work of the Congress. Her house became the meeting point of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. After the death of her father she started doing what her father used to do. She started explaining the Vedantic texts to the people. She was able to do it amazingly well. Rangamma is a widow and is economically well off.

Ratna is only fifteen years old and she is a widow. She had seen her husband only for a day. People expected her to dress up and behave like a widow but she refused to do so. Ratna is educated and very modern in her thinking and outlook. Like Rangamma, Ratna is also a supporter of Moorthy. In the absence of Moorthy she became the leader of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. Ratna played a major part in organising the women of Kanthapura into a Savika Sangha.

Then there is Achakka who is a widow like Rangamma. She is an uneducated and simple old woman. There are other women characters like Narasamma and waterfall Venkamma. Venkamma is a malicious old woman and both Narasamma and Venkamma are widows.

Raja Rao's Style and Use of English Language

Even those who do not consider him a great writer, appreciate his genuine concern for a distinctive style. He is one of the three stalwarts of Indo-Anglican fiction. The other two being Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. He is one of the few who are well informed about Indian myths, folklores, fables and religious literature. Quotations from scriptures and Sanskrit literature and devotional literature of modern India have been used by others also but, it is only Raja Rao who has used them on such a large scale and in so appropriate a style.

Seeing the way Raja Rao uses English no one can make out t it is not his mother tongue. He uses English like a master. Engl syntax and structure is modified and broken by him to suit purpose. Only the words are English, their organisation is Ind and totally his own. S. Nagarajun says, "Raja Rao's aim is to cre a style which will reflect the rhythms and sensibilities of the Ind psyche, and since it is in Sanskrit that the Indian mind has fo its most consummate linguistic expression, he has tried to adapt English style to the movement of a Sanskrit sentence."

Narasimhaiah writes in this connection, "the emotional uphea that overtook Kanthapura could only find expression by breaking formal English syntax to suit the sudden changes of mood and sh contrasts in tone, by establishing a correspondence between perc tions and the images he could readily lay his hands on in the around and by a fresh emphasis on old images and a complet different, in this case Kannada, intonation to English sentence

Raja Rao developed a highly original style and his most signi cant contribution to the Indo-Anglican novel is the evolution o suitable medium for the expression of essentially Indian sensibil Sometimes he uses Indian words without translation. For examp *kumkum, ahimsa, dhoti, maistri, hariskatha, mandap* etc. T language is saturated with Indian idioms and Indian Image Sometimes, there are literal translations from Kannada. Ma proverbs commonly used by peasants in their speech have been us by Raja Rao. For instance :

(1) *Saw you like a rat on your mother's lap.*

(2) *You cannot straighten a dog's tail.*

(3) *There is neither man nor mosquito in Kanthapura.*

Raja Rao uses such devices to create an Indian atmosphere a express the Indian sensibility but he does not overdo it. They not seem unnatural in the context in which they are used and sou natural coming from the mouths of the village people or the narrat who is a simple and uneducated village woman.

Sometimes Raja Rao uses expressions which are obviously n English and which have no counterpart in Kannada. For instanc "He gave her a very warmful bed." This can be regarded as a serio fault but such expressions are much less frequent in his writing tha in the writings of novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharia.

There are many translations from Kannada. For instance :

(1) *Postman Subbayya, who had no fire in his stomach, and was red with red and blue with blue....*

(2) *You are a Bhatta, and your voice is not a sparrow voice in your village and you should speak to your people and organize a Brahmin party. Otherwise Brahminism is as good as kitchen ashes....*

(3) *.....and mother and wife and widow godmother went to their lighted lizard-clucking homes.*

Writes Meenakashi Mukherji, "The important point in these three nstances is not that the expressions used are literal translations, ut that they serve their purpose in their context, and they are more ivid than any other accepted English expressions that might have een used in their place. In quotation 3, the words, "lighted lizard- lucking homes" for example, convey a completely satisfying sense f security associated with the interior of a house after lighting time which is essential to these women (mother and wife and widow odmother) who have spent a long and uncertain day of struggle, icketing toddy-booths. Moreover, these sentences contain nothing hat would be unintelligible or jarring to the reader who does not now Kannada, and that is more than what can be said about the inguistic experiments of most other Indo-Anglican writers."

Raja Rao's metaphors and similes are drawn from day to day ife. Images are drawn from things that are familiar to people living n Indian villages. Meenakshi Mukherji writes in this connection, 'Images and metaphors are his natural mode of expression, and very ittle influence of English literature is discernible. His earlier work was full of fresh perception and a first-hand response to life. His anguage in the first two books is so richly strewn with similes that ny passage quoted at random will serve to illustrate this element f his style. Consider, for example, the following from *Kanthapura:*

.....and when Moorthappa comes let the rice be fine as filigree and the mangoes yellow as gold, and we shall go out, horn and trumpet going before us and break coconuts at his feet.

The imagery here touches upon objects and experiences that are distinctively Indian, and faithfully conveys Indian sensibility."

In the early phase of Raja Rao's career he uses concrete imagery which is later replaced by general reflections and abstract specula- ions. His style in later phase is marked by sublimity and high

seriousness. V.Y. Kantak says that Raja Rao's use of English has
us regain our faith in Indian's creative use of English. V.Y. Ka
says, "His English seems to spring from the Indian scene, the In
manner of gesture and speech, absorbs it, and yet suffer
distortion. Word, phrase or sentence structure, the shifts and
modulations—all grow from that root. And it is English, ch
English not borrowed and applied but taking the shape of the
material. The fluent, simple, prose has a harmony which is the
of a complete interpenetration of matter and manner. His early cl
Kanthapura shows him at his best in this respect."

Raja Rao's Contribution to Indo-Anglican Literature

According to Raja Rao, "the Indian novel can only be epic in
and metaphysical in nature. It can only be story within story to
all stories are parables". Raja Rao has followed this technique
thus given a western art-form a distinctively Indian character.
Rao's contribution to the language of Indo-Anglian literature
tremendous. Uma Prameswaran says, "One might say he has
us a Blakean trilogy with *Kanthapura* as the day of Innocence, wh
man is sinless and protected, *The Serpent and the Rope* as the N
of Experience, where man in self-division and anguish nevertheless
reaches out towards unity, and *The Cat and Shakespeare* as
eternity of Higher Innocence, where man is sinless and prote
because he has become a little kitten held by the Mother Cat
thereby won for himself the kingdom of heaven."

PART-III

A DETAILED STUDY OF *KANTHAPURA*

CHAPTER - 7

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

Publication

Kanthapura was published in 1938 but it was only after the publication of Raja Rao's next novel *The Serpent and the Rope* that it was catapulted into international fame. Till that time it remained unknown and obscure. People showed interest in reading it and with time it came to be recognised as a classic of Indo-Anglican fiction.

When *Kanthapura* was published Raja Rao was twenty eight years old. It was his first novel but before that he had written a number of essays and short stories. His short stories were published in the form of a collection called *The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories* in 1947.

Raja Rao was in France when he wrote this novel. He was miles away from the land where the events described in the novel took place. That perhaps, is the reason why he has been able to present the freedom struggle so realistically and objectively. This kind of artistic detachment and objectivity would not have been possible otherwise. This novel is free from philosophical and metaphysical concerns of the novelist which became too obtrusive in his later novels. It has been read and appreciated by people all over the world and it truely is a great work of art.

Title

The novel deals with the Gandhi Movement and its impact on a small village called Kanthapura. It is a typical Indian village in the southern part of India and what was happening in this village at that time was happening in many other parts of the country during those times.

Raja Rao not only depicts the freedom struggle but also describ the village and the people of the village. The various customs a traditions of the people are brought out by the novelist ve beautifully. The rituals and ceremonies are graphically and vivi described.

The novel does not deal with the life of any particular individu Though Moorthy plays a pivotal role in the novel and the eve described in the novel centre around him it is not the story Moorthy. Moorthy is not the hero or the protagonist of the no It is the story of the village called Kanthapura and the people this village. The novel depicts the life of these simple and ordina villagers and how their lives are changed due to the Gand Movement. They realize that they need to rise and should be unit in their fight against the British. Ultimately they are forced to lea Kanthapura and settle in another place called Kashipura. The efforts end in failure but still they feel good about what happen and perhaps also have a distant hope. Thus, the title is apt for th novel

Historical Background

Kanthapura deals with the early phase of India's freedo struggle when the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its heigh It concerns itself with the non-violent, non-cooperation movement *of 1919-22 and 1930-31* and its impact on the social and politic *life of the country. The movement was launched under the guidan* and direction of Mahatma *Gandhi as an expression of resentmen* to the reforms of 1919.

Before Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene, efforts had been made by Indians to press their demand for liberal administration Many movements had been launched in the last hundred years *Kanthapura* traces the growth of feeling of dissatisfaction with the British regime and dramatizes the conflict consequent upon the non payment of taxes. It covers the history of the whole decade of 1920's and ends with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. Gandhi-Irwin Pact itself was a formula of compromise between the Congress and the British Government. The pact was a consequence of the second upsurge of Civil Disobedience Movement that started in 1930 after the adoption of the resolution moved by Jawahar Lal Nehru for complete independence. The novel ends without completing the history of the movement for freedom, but it does convey in definite terms the change of temper that the country had experienced on hearing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Narrative Technique

The narrator is an old woman called Achakka belonging to Kanthapura. She is narrating the events described in the novel long after they actually happened. Achakka was either a part of the events she describes or had merely witnessed them. The manner of story-telling is akin to Puranic tales of the past. Raja Rao says in the Preface to *Kanthapura*, "We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are paths interminable. The *Mahabharatha* has 214,778 verses and the *Ramayana* 48,000. In Puranas these are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us-we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode and when our thoughts stop our breath stops and we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story-telling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story."

Preface

In the Preface to *Kanthapura,* Raja Rao talks of the difficulties faced by Indian writers writing in English :

"The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that s not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated *in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an* alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it."

After talking about language Raja Rao talks about the problem of style and about the narrative technique used by him in the novel.

"After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are paths

interminable. The Mahabharatha has 214,778 verses and
Ramayana 48,000. In Puranas these are endless and innumera
We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons
bother us—we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows and
our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to anot
thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story-telli
I have tried to follow it myself in this story:

It may have been told of an evening, when as the dusk falls
through the sudden quiet, lights leap up in house after house,
stretching her bedding on the veranda, a grandmother might
told you, newcomer, the sad tale of her village."

Thus, he talks about his creed as a story teller and talks ab
the type of novel he has written. He calls it a *sthala-purana*
says that every village has a legendary history. The Preface beg
thus :

My publishers have asked me to say a word of explanation.

There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a
sthala-purana, or legendary history of its own. Some god or godd
hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under th
pipal-tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on t
yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his many pilgrimag
through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one,
the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present, a
the gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grandmoth
always bright. One such story from the contemporary annals of
village I have tried to tell.

Life in Kanthapura

The novel begins with the description of the village and
surroundings and village life is depicted very vividly and realistical
The narrator describes the exact location of this village call
Kanthapura. It is divided into the Brahmin quarters, the pari
quarters, the potter's quarters and weaver's quarters. This brings
the divisions of the village society which is cast-ridden like m
villages in India.

The Indo-Anglian fiction is mainly addressed to the weste
readers and one of the constant concerns of the novelist is f
explain as many rituals, customs conventions, habits and typi
characteristics as possible in the novel for a clear and comprehens
grasp of Indian background. Raja Rao had kneaded the pertine
social customs and conventions in the main dough of the theme

kilfully that one does not feel that one is reading any extraneous
aterial.For instance, the dress of Indian men and women and the
cial customs of Indian widows keeping shaven head is simply
entioned:

"Tell me", said Venkamma one day to Akamma, bringing forward
er falling sari over her shaven head, "Why should our family feed
eirs? If her parents are poor....

In south India coffee is a common beverage and is served in metal
ps. Important guests are served in silver cups. Nanjamma gives
ffee to Moorthy in a silver cup. Sari being one-piece cloth, Indian
omen carry small things tied to their sari fringes.

These examples show how a number of details about Indian social
fe which could not be incorporated in the novel otherwise have been
sed in such a surreptitious manner that the picture of Indian life
comes complete. Through small hints we come to know about the
fe style and habits of villagers and the way they judge things. They
re ignorant and simple people. They are uneducated, superstitious
nd deeply religious.

he National Movement of India

Kanthapura is dominated by the freedom movement and its
npact . Apparently this movement organised by Moorthy failed but
here is a national consciousness among the people. This movement
as further developed in neighbouring areas. It was a very intense
ovement called Civil Disobedience Movement. There was a country
ide demonstration of solidarity and patriotism among Indians.
oreign clothes were rejected and there were bonfires every day;
lleges and universities were boycotted by students. Most of the
dian bureaucrats resigned from their positions. Moreover alcohol
as also prohibited because the poor people used to waste their
rd earned wages in buying alcohol. The British government
sued many repressive laws. Gandhi himself organised many dem-
nstrations. One of them was the Dandi March. Salt laws were
olated. All these facts are referred to in *Kanthapura* the novel of
aja Rao.

Gandhi also observed fast. In this novel we get a vivid picture
Indian National Movement. *Kanthapura* is a symbolical world
hich gives an accurate picture of the Indian National Movement.
here is reference to the Dandi March and other happenings like
e Jalliawallah Bagh. The Congress Committee was set up in
anthapura which used to get orders from the Congress Committee

at Karwar. Moorthy had links with the Congress Committee
Karwar. The Women's Volunteer Corps was organised in Kanthap
It was named the Savika Sangha. Initially it was difficult for Moo
to convince the people of Kanthapura to take the *charkhas* distrib
by the Congress free of cost. But with time more and more pe
joined the Congress and by the time the Satyanarayan Puja
organised by the city boys it had become a mass movement.

Politically Dominated by the British

The novel deals with early phase of the freedom struggle.
main aim was political freedom but it was also closely linked w
religious reforms and removal of social evils.

A critic has rightly pointed out that *Kanthapura* is no po
novel at least not more than is Gandhi's movement a mere po
movement. It pictures vividly, truthfully and touchingly the sto
the resurgence of India under Gandhi's leadership; its relig
character, its economic and social concerns, its political id
precisely in the way Gandhi tried to spiritualise politics, the cap
for sacrifice by the people in response to the call of one like Gan
not the spectacular sacrifice of the few chosen ones who later bec
India's rulers, but the officially unchronicled, little, name
unremembered acts of courage and sacrifice of peasants and
hands, students and lawyers, women and old men, thanks to wh
Gandhi's unique experiment gathered momentum and grew int
national movement. *Kanthapura* is India in microcosm : w
happened there happened in many places during India's fight
freedom.

Complicated Plot : Intricate Web

Narasimhaiah asserts, "There are at least three strands
experience in the novel : the political, the religious and the soc
and all the three are woven inextricably into the one complex st
of Kanthapura." The plot is woven into one organic whole.

It is not just a political novel dealing with a phase in the his
of the Indian struggle for Independence. It also deals with social
economic transformation of the people. The village and its people
their day-to-day lives are vividly described. The novel begins w
a graphic description of the location of the village. The people
religious and superstitious. The society is divided into compartme
on the basis of caste and religion. The Brahmins live in separ
quarters of the village. The potters the weavers and pariahs live
separate quarters. There are people like Range Gowda who are w
off inspite of the fact that they belong to lower castes. The peo

re illiterate and superstitious but their lives do not seem to be as
iserable as the lives of coolies living in Skefflinton Coffee Estate.
hey live comfortably within their means though most of them are
ot rich.

ominating Role of the Swami : Protected by the British overnment

Bhatta met the Swami on one of his visits to the city. The Swami
ever came to Kanthapura but the amount of influence he has on
he people of Kanthapura is amazing. He is at the head of religious
fe in Kanthapura. When Moorthy's mother hears that the Swami
as said that he will excommunicate Moorthy she becomes very upset.
he tries to stop her son from working for the upliftment of the
ariahs but Moorthy does not listen to her. He continues to work
r the pariahs. The Swami is an orthodox brahmin and believes caste
istinctions to be the very basis on which Hinduism rests. He says
Bhatta that the movement for removal of untouchability should
e curbed at this stage itself because otherwise it will go out of hand.
e is an agent of the British government and is a supporter of the
ritish. Though actually it is not true he says that he has nothing
gainst the Gandhi Movement but his only objection is to the
ovement for removal of untouchability. When Moorthy's mother
ears that the Swami has excommunicated Moorthy and his family
nd their coming generations she is shocked. The people of Kanthapura
ke the Swami and his excommunication of Moorthy very seriously.
ne of the supporters of the Swami even goes to the extent of praising
e British rule in a public meeting. The Swami is actually concerned
nly with his own profit and monetary gain. That is all that matters
him.

eligious Activities in Kanthapura

There are religious activities in Kanthapura which we observe
re and there. People are very religious minded and are uneducated
nd superstitious. They actually believe in the various stories
nnected with goddess Kenchamma who is the presiding deity of
e village. When the villagers pray to her, she always helps them.
he villagers have complete and unshakable faith in the goddess.
hey believe that the goddess will protect them from disease and
arvation and all kinds of evils. The narrator says that it is only
very rare cases that any deaths occur due to disease. She further
ds that in one case they were outsiders. They had not contracted
e disease in Kanthapura. In one case she says that the person
ncerned, was not virtuous and in certain other rare cases the people

were too old. The way the narrator tells about all this shows
she actually believes in what she is saying. She is a typical wo
woman. Most people of Kanthapura are like her though some
changed due to education. She is a simple, uneducated old wo
The water of river Himavathy also has religious significance.
goes on to tell about the legend. The temple is centre of all activ
People gather there and discuss about things. It was the centre
religious activity. Later, it became the centre of political activi
well.

Atmosphere of Kanthapura Village : Local Colour

In *Kanthapura* Raja Rao has depicted the manners, customs
ceremonies of a small village in southern part of India. He has
the language of the people who are living there and has mentio
the names of the houses and other epithets being used by
villagers.

Raja Rao has given references to the marriages and various
ceremonies related to married life. He has narrated how a
is to be selected for a daughter, even though she may be less
ten years old. The petty jealousies and heart burning which
acterises village life are well presented. Raja Rao faithfully de
the activities of a brahmin in everyday life. Moorthy's mother
been presented very vividly. The villagers are very ignorant. T
are various references to ceremonies. Raja Rao mentioned sev
month ceremony relating to the feasting at the time of marri
Sati is the wife of Sidanta. He tears a rag from her sari and
a three piece bit into it along with little rice and nut which he
to the roof. She feels that through this ritual, her son would be c
of fever. Some of the villagers do not take medicines out of the
that god may be displeased if they do so.

Indianness of *Kanthapura*

The subject that is dealt with is Indian and the treatment
is Indian. The style of telling the story is also typically Indian
is akin to the Puranas and other ancient Indian literary wo
Narasimhaiah maintains, "*Kanthapura* is a breathless tale from
beginning to the end and fascinatingly told in the age-old In
tradition of story-telling."

The language used is English but he has modified the syn
very beautifully to suit his purpose. He has created Indian envi
ment and in order to convey an essentially Indian sensibility
Rao has evolved a suitable style. The words are English but

ganisation is Indian and the novelist had to organise it himself.
he language is saturated with Indian idioms, imageries and rural
lours. Sometimes there are literal translations from Kannada, and
ometimes there is breaking up of the English syntax to convey
motional upheavals and agitations. *Kanthapura* is an Indian novel
ritten by an Indian who understands the Indian environment and
ndian sensibility.

he Problem of Style in the Novel

He was encountering great hardship regarding style to be
dopted. In the preface to *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao talks of the problem
f style.

"After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of
ndian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the
empo of American or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs.
ve, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, when we move, we move
uickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes
s rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are paths intermi-
able. The Mahabharata has 214,778 verses and the Ramayana
8,000. In Puranas these are needless and innumerable. We have
either punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us—
ve tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our
houghts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought.
his was and still is the ordinary style of our story-telling. I have
ried to follow it myself in this story." There is no obscurity. The
ollowing passage from Kanthapura indicates his style.

"The call of the Big Mountain.... bhajan"

One must be intellectual when one is writing in English language.
ndians are instinctively bilingual, because they write in English as
ell as their own language. Raja Rao stresses that Indians should
rite English like an Englishman. Indians should have broader
utlook when they write English. Hence, his way of telling a story
very distinctive and appreciable. In *Kanthapura*, his style is par
xcellent. He has used lucid and simple language.

Raja Rao says that it is very difficult to tell the present story
hat he is writing. He admits that it is difficult to tell the story using
oreign medium. English language is not his mother tongue hence
is a great hindrance in narrating the story. English is an alien
anguage for Indians. He confesses that as Sanskrit or Persian is
ifficult to write, same is the case with English Language.

Gandhi

The novel deals with the early phase of the freedom str
At that time Gandhi had not become a popular leader. With
more and more people joined the Congress and it became a
movement. He converted a whole country into an army of fre
fighters. People treated him like god. A phase had come in
freedom struggle when many of the young Satyagrahis had ste
feeling that the British are very easily able to cheat Gandhi
that, by following his ways they cannot achieve their aim. Th
shown in the novel by Raja Rao.

In his Harikathas Jayaramachar says, "And lo, when the
was till partaking of the pleasures Brahma offered him in hospit
there was born in a family in Gujarat a son such as the world
never beheld. As soon as he came forth, the four wide walls b
to shine like the kingdom of the Sun, and hardly was he in the c
than he began to lisp the language of wisdom. You remember
Krishna, when he was but a babe of four, had begun to fight ag
demons and had killed the serpent Kali. So too our Mohandas be
to fight against the enemies of the country. And as he grew up,
after he was duly shaven for the hair ceremony, he began to go
into the villages and assemble people and talk to them, and his w
so pure, his forehead so brilliant with wisdom, that men follo
him, more and more men followed him as they did Krishna, the fl
player; and so he goes from village to village to slay the serp
of the foreign rule."

Mythical Elements in the Novel

In case of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Manohar Malgon
the use of myth is casual and isolated. It doesn't form the integ
and spinal design of the novel. But in case of Raja Rao one can
ignore his mythical designs. M.K. Naik maintains that the Savit
myth in *The Serpent and the Rope,* "is so vital at the centre of
novel that any criticism which ignores this is itself bound to appe
peripheral....."

Meenakshi Mukherjee has said : "*Kanthapura* is narrated by
old woman to a hypothetical listener..... Raja Rao's choice of
narrator serves several purposes at once. Making this old woma
the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle facts and myth in
effective manner. For the old woman, Jawaharlal is a Bharata to
Mahatma who she believes will slay Ravana so that Sita may
freed. For her Gandhi has attained the status of god. Moorthy

ot ordinary, he is presented as an ideal man who is much above
e ordinary people. Just as in a myth, some of the chief characters
e gods or godlike people in this novel".

Don't touch the Government' Campaign

The people of Kanthapura refused to pay taxes inspite of repeated
minders. Ultimately their lands were auctioned and they had to
ave Kanthapura. Coolies were brought from the city and they
aped the crops grown by the people of Kanthapura. The people
Kanthapura did not submit they kept fighting till the last.
hey showed a lot of courage. This movement made a significant
pact on the government and led to the first Round Table
onference which ultimately led to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Many
ung Satyagrahis including Moorthy felt that the British had been
ccessful in cheating Gandhi. The respect in their hearts for Gandhi
as still there and they still regarded him as a saint but they felt
at by following Gandhi's ideas and way of working they may not
able to achieve what they wanted. Many of them appreciated
ehru's ideology and his ideas. These events were of historical
portance.

oorthy as the Gandhi of Kanthapura

Mahatma Gandhi devoted his life to India's struggle
independence. He neglected his family for the sake of his
otherland. He was not interested in monetary gains or in
rldly things. He converted the whole country into an army of
edom fighters.

Moorthy also left his studies and hope of a glorious future for
e sake of the country. He devoted his life to the struggle for
dependence after he had a vision of Gandhi. He was a follower
Gandhi and worked for removal of untouchability and removal
other social evils. Moorthy worked for upliftment of pariahs.
ndhi had started the movement for removal of untouchability.
e novel depicts the impact of Gandhi on the village called
nthapura and the impact Gandhi had on the country as a
ole. The villagers rightly call Moorthy, the small mountain and
ndhi, the big mountain. They call him the Gandhi of Kanthapura.
ough he is very young with time he becomes the leader of
e freedom fighters in Kanthapura. He is loved and respected
the people of Kanthapura. The people have full faith in Moorthy.
en the people who are older than him, respect him. Moorthy
a follower of Gandhi and tells the people of Kanthapura
out the views and ideas of Gandhi. After the violence at the gate

of the Skeffington Coffee Estate when Moorthy had tried to
the Estate, he kept a fast for three days. He kept the fast be
he felt that he had not been able to live up to the ideals o
Mahatma. Moorthy actually tries to follow Mahatma's doctri
loving one's enemies.

He really respects Gandhi. Though at one point of
Moorthy like many other young Satyagrahis started feeling
the ideals of Gandhi cannot help them achieve their aim
still respected Mahatma Gandhi. They felt that the Briti
were able to befool him because he was a simple and sain
man.

Well Designed Novel : Not Formless

According to some critics the novel is formless. This is not to
correct though it apparently seems to be formless. The narrat
an old woman called Achakka. While narrating the story
sometimes goes into unnecessary detail. There are many digres
which seem to be unnecessary. For instance, there is a
long description of different types of snakes and their characteri
Even if this part is removed from the novel it will not do
harm to the novel. Sankar is a minor character and does
play any significant role in the story but, there is a very
and detailed description of his nature and personality in the n
But inspite of these superfluites and digressions, the novel h
well designed structure and it is not formless. The novel shoul
judged as an Indian novel and should not be compared to we
novels.

Raja Rao says in the Preface to the novel :

"After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of I
life must be infused into our English expression, even as the temp
American or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs. We, in I
think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. T
must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tu
and run on. And our paths are paths interminable. The Mahabharatha
214,778 verses and the Ramayana 48,000. In Puranas these are end
and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor treacherous 'ats'
'ons' to bother us—we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows epis
and when our thoughts stop our breaths stops, and we move on to ano
thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story-telling. I h
tried to follow it myself in this story:"

The happenings on the Skeffington Coffee Estate are not un
nected with the main story though it may seem to be so to s

readers. It is an integral part of the main story as it talks of the
attrocities suffered by the Indians at the hands of the British and
the main plot also deals with the same thing. The main plot and
the sub-plot are fused into an organic whole. The novel has a proper
beginning, a middle and an end. It is well-structured and cannot
be called formless.

CHAPTER - 8

SHORT SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

The narrator is an old woman who belongs to Kanthapura, which is a small village in the southern part of India. She begins with a description of the village and the people living in it.

Kenchamma is the presiding deity of the village. The village is divided into the Brahmin quarter, the pariah quarter, the potter's quarter, the weavers quarter and the Sudra quarter. There is a small temple in the village called the Kanthapurishwari temple. The temple which has become the centre of village life was built many years ago. The people of Kanthapura are uneducated and superstitious and the society is caste-ridden.

Near Kanthapura, there is a coffee estate called the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Hundreds of labourers work in this Coffee Estate. The condition of these labourers is very bad. They are badly exploited and treated like animals.

The present owner of the estate is less cruel and in many ways better than his uncle, but he has a weakness for women and he thinks that he can have any woman he wants. If any woman says no, her family members are tortured and harassed by the Sahib. The condition of the coolies is graphically described. Moorthy wanted to educate the coolies living in the Coffee Estate and for that reason he wanted to enter the Estate, but he was not allowed to enter the Estate. He was stopped at the gate by Bade Khan. Slowly many people gathered at the gate. There was a lot of cursing and swearing and hurling of abuses. There was a fierce fight between the supporters of Moorthy and the supporters of the Sahib.

Bade Khan was a policeman and he had been sent to the village after the arrest of Jayaramachar to keep a watch on the activities of the freedom fighters living in Kanthapura and give information to the government regarding their activities. Bade Khan started living in the Estate because in Kanthapura he could not find a place to live. The reason was that he was a Mohammedan.

Moorthy was a follower of Gandhi and he had given up foreign

clothes and stopped going to college. He distributed *charkhas* among villagers free of cost and told them about the views of Mahatma Gandhi and worked for the upliftment of pariahs. His mixing with the pariahs was not liked by many Brahmins and also not liked by his mother. He himself was a Brahmin. His mother died of shock when she heard that he and his entire family and his coming generation had been excommunicated by the Swami. But Moorthy continued to work for the upliftment of the pariahs. With time he got the support of many of the villagers. The Congress committee was formed in Kanthapura by Moorthy. The women of Kanthapura formed a Women's Volunteer Corps called the Savika Sangha. After his mother's death Moorthy started living in Rangamma's house. Rangamma's house had become the office of the Congress. She was a rich widow who was a supporter of Moorthy. Ratna was the daughter of Rangamma's sister and she also was a supporter of Moorthy. Later, in the absence of Moorthy, Ratna became the leader of the freedom fighters of Kanthapura. She was fifteen years old and her husband had died when she was merely ten years old. Moorthy's chief supporter among the pariahs was Range Gowda.

Rachanna was a worker in the Skeffington Coffee Estate. He was thrown out of the Estate after the violence that took place on the day on which Moorthy tried to enter the Estate, because he was a supporter of Moorthy. After being thrown out from the estate he started living in Kanthapura. After the incident, Moorthy kept a fast for three days. Bhatta was against Moorthy and had become an agent of the government. At one time he was a supporter of Gandhi. He arranged the marriage of Venkamma's daughter in order to win her support. He wanted to form a lobby against the followers of Gandhi. Bhatta did not like the formation of the Congress Committee. He was very poor when he was a young man but with time he had become very rich. Bhatta and Venkamma were Brahmins.

Moorthy started the "Don't touch the Government campaign", after he was released from prison. He had been sentenced to three months imprisonment. The people of Kanthapura under the leadership of Moorthy picketed toddy booths and Boranna's toddy grove. People were beaten mercilessly by the police, and many people were arrested. Many toddy booths were closed down. The people of Kanthapura refused to pay taxes to the government. Only seven families paid taxes. They did not pay taxes inspite of repeated threats. Many people were arrested and taken away by police. People were beaten up mercilessly. Women were molested, raped and also beaten.

The streets of Kanthapura were filled with policemen. The nar
gives a very vivid description of the brutalities of the police
to take part in the auctioning of land. Three days later, people started coming to Kanthapura from
lands of those people who had refused to pay taxes were t
auctioned. Coolies were brought from cities to harvest the sta
crops. Freedom fighters came from the city to help the peop
Kanthapura in preventing this auction. They organised a mar
prevent this. Government had deployed policemen and armyme
large numbers. In the clash between the villagers and the po
many people were wounded and a large number of people died
were beaten mercilessly by the police. The police resorted to fi
in order to disperse the crowd. It became very clear to them at
stage that they will have to leave Kanthapura for good and so
people of Kanthapura set fire to their houses. Many people
arrested. The people who survived crossed into the state of My
and settled down in Kashipur. They did not come back to Kanthap
Range Gowda was the only one who went to Kanthapura again
went there to get his jewellery which he had buried under the ea
Kanthapura was in ruins. The houses were empty and ruined
lay crumbling. The new settlers had built new houses in another a
in the village.

When Mahatma Gandhi reached a compromise with the Vic
many Satyagrahis were released. Many of the followers spec
young people were disappointed and they felt that the method
Gandhi were not right. They felt that he was being fooled by
English. The people went through a lot of suffering, but th
suffering brought the victims a chastening, ennobling feeling and
also perhaps had a distant hope.

CHAPTER - 9

DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Section - I

The Village - Kanthapura

The novel opens with the description of a village called Kanthapura on the slopes of Western Ghats. This village which is in the province of Kara in southern part of India is situated on steep mountains that face the Arabian Sea. The roads that lead to this village situated by the river Himavathy are narrow and dusty. Coffee and cardamom grown in the area is exported to Britain. The produce is carried by slow-moving carts through the narrow lanes of the village to the sea-shore very late at night. Forests of Teak, Sal, Sandal and Jack are also there in the region in which the village is situated.

Then, the narrator who is an old woman living in Kanthapura tells about Kenchamma the presiding diety of the village. She had saved the villagers from a demon who was making life difficult for them. The demon demanded the young men as his food and women as his wives. Kenchamma came from the heavens and waged such a battle and fought so fiercely that the blood soaked and soaked into the earth and that is why, Kenchamma hill is red.

Not only did she slay the demon but also settled down in Kanthapura. She has always come to the rescue of the people in their grief. She grants every wish of the villagers. If they pray to her, she even blesses them with rainfall. She cures every disease including small pox and cholera when the villagers pray to her. The villagers make offerings to her and promise things like they will walk the holy fire on the annual fair.

The narrator who is one of the villagers says that every person who prayed to the Goddess was cured. No one except the widow of Satamma's child and drunkard Dhirappa's brother's son ever died of small pox. Some old people die of disease but they would die one way or the other. Young Sankamma, barber Channau's wife died of disease, but she was not faithful to her husband and such a woman

does not deserve the blessing of the Goddess. Ramappa and Subb
are people who have caught their disease in the city. Thus, p
who do fall prey to disease and die inspite of the blessings o
goddess are either sinners or people who have caught their di
in the city.

The people of the village have full faith in the goddess and
superstitious. People from surrounding areas also came to
prayers to the goddess.

The Four Quarters or Sections of the Village

Kanthapura is a small village consisting of twenty four ho
It is divided into four quarters.

First the narrator speaks of the Brahmin quarter. In the Brah
quarter some houses are quite big like those of the Postma
Suryanarayana and Patwari Nanjundia. The house of Pat
Nanjundia is very attractive and beautiful. The house of the Kama
family is the biggest and has a high veranda and although the ho
was built many years ago it still looks fresh and new.

Then the narrator goes on to tell about Venkamma. The
characters Moorthy and Dore are also introduced at this point.
narrator is an old woman called Achakka. She is Seenu's mot
Venkamma is called waterfall Venkamma because, she is alwa
moaning and weeping about something or the other.

Venkamma has a grudge against Rangamma a childless wid
who is Venkamma's sister-in-law because she lives in a very big hou
She claims that the big house in which Rangamma lives, was bu
not by Rangamma's father but by her own husband's ancestors. S
does not like the fact that Rangamma lives in such a big house.
reality, Venkamma's own house was as big and strong as her siste
in-laws. Even then, she said it was not large enough for her fami
Venkamma had two sons and five daughters. Besides she could
bear that it was occupied by Rangamma's father and mother, an
when the vacations came Rangamma called all her younger brother
and the children of the elder brother to spend the summer with h

Dore had the habit of bragging about himself. Dore was common
referred to as the 'university graduate'. His parents died when h
was still young and his two sisters had already got married. He ha
fifteen acres of wet land and twenty acres of dry land. He neve
passed even the intermediate but he had learnt city-ways and calle
himself a Gandhi-man.

He had taken to *dhoti* and *khadi* two years back. He had also given up smoking. People liked Moorthy, but Dore was not liked by other people. He was not like corner-House Moorthy who was quiet, generous and serene and was loved by all. Coffee-Planter Ramayya had offered his daughter to Moorthy but it did not work out because horoscopes did not match.

The Other Quarters

Besides the Brahmin quarter, there are also the Pariah quarter, the Potters' quarter, a Weavers' quarter and a Sudra quarter.

In the Pariah quarter, Beadle Timmayya's house is the most important. There might be fifteen or twenty huts in all in this quarter. There is also the house of pock-marked Sidda who owns a lot of land. Earlier he was the richest man of the village but his wife went mad and a lot of money was spent on her treatment and in this way he lost his money. Bhatta, profited much from the illness of Sidda's wife. The Potters' quarter is the smallest one. There are only five houses in it. The four big houses are owned by Lingayya, Ramayya, Subayya and Chandrayya, while old Kamalamma has a little broken down house at the end of the street where she lives with her only son. The potters used to flourish once but the availability of Mangalore tiles has hit them hard and so they have had to take to agriculture for a living. One of the potters, Chandrayya, still makes festival pots as well as images of deities. The rest of the potters till their lands and occasionally go to the neighbouring villages to help people make bricks.

The Village Patel

Patel Range Gowda is a rich man who is loved by the people. He often helped his fellow Sudras when they were in trouble. If one goes across the Temple Square from Potters' Street the first house one can see is that of Patel Range Gowda. His three married daughters live with him. His sons-in-law work with him and live like slaves. So far as physical appearance is concerned he is a fat, sturdy man who looks like a tiger among the inhabitants of Kanthapura.

Section II

Moorthy one day found a half sunk Shiva-linga in the narrators backyard and he dug it out. He suggested that it should be washed and consecrated in a temple built in its honour. The others agreed and so in the holidays when the city boys were in the village, they built mud-walls and put a tile roof over it. Thus, the Kanthipurishwari

temple come into existence and the consecration ceremony performed by Bhatta. Rangamma gave a feast to celebrate occasion. This small temple slowly became the centre of village The narrator tells us that this temple on the main Street Promon was built three years ago.

The Postmaster Suryanarayana suggested that they should a *Sankara-Jayanthi* and he said that he has the texts. He sugge that they should read the *Sankara-Vijaya* every day and somet should offer a dinner on each day of the month. They all ag Rangamma offered to give dinner on all those days on which else will be offering it. So the *Sankara-Jayanthi* was started very day and it went on day after day. It was agreed by all Ramakrishnayya who was Rangamma's father would read out *Sankara-Vijaya* every day. He had a deep voice which was liked everybody. The narrator adds that they always went to dis Vedanta with him in the afternoons. They gathered at the Iswa temple on the Promontory. After the *Sankara-Vijaya* was read they had dinner and after that the younger women sang discussed the *Maya-vada* [The philosophy of *Maya* or of the illu nature of our experiences].

After that they all went home. Day after day was spent the whole village was having a marriage party. Occasionally, t used to be *Harikathas*. Sastri who is a poet and a good singer a remarkable *Harikatha* performer. They felt bad when the *Sankara Jayanthi* was over. After it was over it seemed as if something missing in this lives.

After *Sankara-Jayanthi* was over, Moorthy suggested that should have *Harikathas*. He suggested that they should bring *Harikatha* man from the city. He said that he would gladly co to the village if he is paid ten-rupees and cart and railway fare. villagers had full faith in Moorthy who was considered an hon man by them and so, they agreed to the suggestion. Moorthy collec money for the purpose by going from house to house. He even visi the Pariah quarter Moorthy was a follower of Gandhi who was again untouchability and any kind of discrimination on the basis of ca Moorthy was in favour of inter-caste marriage and widow marriage. He collected one hundred and forty-seven rupees. The ma of the *Harikatha* man whom Moorthy brought from the city Jayaramachar.

He told very different kind of *Harikathas*. He always would bri

n Gandhi, the freedom struggle and the British along with the stories of gods and goddesses. Through his *Harikathas* he tried to motivate he people to fight for freedom. His *Harikathas* were actually political propaganda in disguise. Jayaramachar was soon arrested as the government got information about what he was doing. After he was arrested, Moorthy looked calm & sorrowful. After this, Moorthy and he other youngmen of the village threw away their foreign clothes and became active foollowers of Gandhi. Policeman, Bade Khan came o live in Kanthapura two days later.

Section III

Bade Khan

Bade Khan came to stay in Kanthapura after Jayaramachar was arrested by the police. As he was a Mohammedan, he could stay neither in the Potter's Street nor in the Sudra Street and there was no question of his being allowed to stay in the Brahmin Street. Within Kanthapura he was finding it difficult to find a place to live. He was very angry. So he went to Patwari Nanjundia and told him what his problem was. The Patwari told Bade Khan that only the Patel could do something about this matter. Then Bade Khan went to the Patel and told him that the government had sent him there and that he was finding it very difficult to get a house to live in. Patel said that he could not help him in finding a house to live in. He asked Bade Khan to look around and search for a house for himself on his own. He showed total indifference towards Bade Khan. Bade Khan was irritated and angry and said to the Patel that as a representative of the government it was his duty to find a house for him as Bade Khan also was a government servant. Patel Range Gowda replied that his job was to collect revenue. He had not been employed by the government for finding houses for policemen. At this, Bade Khan called Patel a traitor to his employers and went away giving threats that he will set him right.

Bade Khan realised that he had no chance of getting a house to live in within Kanthapura. So the policeman went to the Skeffington Coffee Estate and requested the proprietor to help him in finding a house to live. Mr. Skeffington gave him a hut to live in. Bade Khan found a lonely pariah woman and started living with her in the hut provided by Mr. Skeffington. For the next few days the people of Kanthapura heard nothing about Bade Khan. Later, they came to know that he was living at the Skefington Coffee Estate.

A few days later, he was seen sitting on a cot on the village platform and smoking quietly. He was not in uniform. The villagers

could guess that he had been sent to Kanthapura by the governm to report to them regularly about the activities of the freedom fig living in Kanthapura. He was a hefty man with a beard and not liked by the villagers.

Section IV

Moorthy Distributes *Charkhas* among Villagers

Rangamma's house had slowly become the centre of activiti the Congress. The freedom fighters, including Moorthy had bro books and *charkhas* from the city. Moorthy and his fellow-wor went from house to house and distributed *charkhas* free of Moorthy who was a follower of Gandhi was working whole heart for the freedom movement. The house was full of books and spin wheels brought from the city. When Bade Khan had come to in Kanthapura after the arrest of Jayaramachar, waterfall Venkan felt that he had come because of Moorthy and the other free fighters. His job was to report to the government about the activ of these men.

Venkamma had a daughter for whom she was looking f bridegroom as she was nearing 'the age'. She had developed a k of hatred for Moorthy because he had refused to marry her daugh

The news of the arrest of Jayaramachar had spread in the and the Karwar Congress committee had written to Moorthy t and see them. When he had gone to see them, they had given books and papers and spinning wheels totally free of cost to distrib among the villagers. The boys associated with the freedom mover started distributing these things among the villagers.

In case of some villagers, they had to say a lots of things order to convince them to take the spinning wheels. For insta in case of Nanjamma, it was difficult for them to convince her b she ultimately agreed to take the spinning wheel.

The *charkha* was given to her free of cost. During the first mo even the cotton was free. From the second month onwards the p of cotton would be adjusted against the spun yarn that she wo give back. Nanjamma found it hard to believe that the *charkha* w actually be given to her free of cost. When she asked Moorthy wh this was being done, he told her that the reason was that a lar quantity of foreign cloth was being imported into the country a if this went on the country will become poorer and poorer with ti

Moorthy gave her the example of rice and tried to explain h they will become poorer with time if things go on the way they a

oing on now. Nanjamma was not able to understand what he said ut on the whole, she was convinced and agreed to take the spinning heel. She was convinced that it was a good thing when Moorthy old her that the Mahatma himself spins for two hours everyday mmediately after prayers. Moorthy gave two *charkhas* to the ostmaster who was already a follower of Gandhi. The Postmaster ad himself asked for them. He gave *charkhas* to many other villagers hom he could convince. The pariahs were really grateful to him hen he gave them free *charkhas* with the help of which they could pin cloth and earn money.

Section V

Bhatta

In this section Bhatta is introduced. The narrator gives a vivid description of his life and character. He is a rich man who is respected by the villagers but earlier when he was a young man he was very poor. He is a Brahmin and is in league with the Swami in the city. He is against the Gandhi movement and freedom fighters in general and is an agent of the government.

In his youth, he used to go about the village in a lion cloth and with a copper pot in his hand. He used to take very small fees from people for telling the days of the important festivals and the most auspicious days for marriage. He used to work as a priest in marriage ceremonies and always made it a point to attend all funeral dinners. He was never late for these dinners. In fact he was always the first Brahmin to arrive on such occasions. Ramanna used to be the second Brahmin to arrive. He was polite and smooth tongued and so, he was liked by the people. He was not very good to his wife. He was not at all bothered about her whether she had eaten anything or not did not matter to him. He used to save as much as possible.

With this money that he had collected, he started the business of money lending. He charged very high rate of interest from people and he exploited needy people. In this way, he was able to earn a lot of money and by the time the novel opens he owns almost half of the village. Now he is a rich man. He is no longer a poor Brahmin. Now he is a landowner.

His wife Savithri died and after her death he married a second time. His new wife was only twelve and a half years old. She was the daughter of a rich landlord and so after his marriage to her he gained lot of social prestige. He got one thousand in cash and five acres of wet land as dowry. The girl came of age earlier than expected.

She attained puberty within two months after marriage. With
his wealth kept increasing. He was so clever that he was act
able to make the people to whom he used to lend money feel
he was doing a great favour on them. In order to earn extra m
he also did some work for the illiterate people.

Earlier, Bhatta used to take interest in Gandhi *bhajans*. Sud
his views towards it and the Gandhi Movement changed drasti
This happened after one of his frequent visits to the city. He t
hostile to the Gandhi movement. He became a government
and worked against Moorthy and other Gandhimen of Kantha

Hence, Moorthy and his friends represent the freedom move
Whereas Bhatta and Bade Khan represent government repre
of this struggle for freedom.

He introduced the people who needed lawyers, to the law
known to him. In certain cases, he himself settled disputes bet
people. He did exploit poor people but people like Subba Chet
Rama Chetty charged much higher rate of interest from peo

Bhatta was a follower of the Swami who was against
movement for giving more rights to the pariahs. He had met
Swami during one of his visits to the city. The Swami feared
if this is not stopped a day will come when the Pariahs will c
to be the equals of the Brahmins and they will demand that
should be allowed to enter temples. He wanted that Bhatta sh
try to suppress this movement in Kanthapura. The Swami said
every Brahmin *who is seen talking to a Pariah should be exc*
municated.

Section VI

Bhatta Visits Rangamma's House

After coming back from the city Bhatta went to Rangamm
house. Initially he started with general talk but then started talk
about Moorthy and the Gandhi Movement. He expressed his disg
for the freedom fighters who he said weave coarse hand-made cl
not even fit for a mop and bellowed out *bhajans* and mixed w
the pariahs. He said that the pariahs will become bolder with t
if they are not stopped now. They will start demanding that th
should be allowed to enter the temple. By saying all this, he tr
to incite her against Moorthy but was not successful. Ramakrishnay
and Rangamma defended Moorthy. On realising that saying anythi
against Moorthy was of no use he changed his tone and said th
he was only speaking in a momentary fit of anger.

Then Bhatta went on to tell them about the city where girls fit to be mother of two children go to universities and also speak to boys. Bhatta said that they do not know anything as they do not go to the city. He said to them that actually the situation was such that if nothing was done about it now soon a time will come when the pariahs will start thinking that they were equal to Brahmins.

On hearing about what is going on in cities Satamma says that it is horrible. Rangamma says that certainly the Mahatma does not support this kind of pollution. He always says that castes should be allowed to exist, separate-eating should exist and that he is not in favour of marriage between people belonging to different communities. On hearing this Bhatta asks angrily if that is why Mahatma has adopted a pariah girl as a daughter. He tells them about the Swami whom he had met when he was in the city. The Swami was against giving more rights and more freedom to pariahs. He was of the opinion that this movement for upliftment of pariahs should be stopped before it gets out of hand. He asked Bhatta to do something to stop it in Kanthapura. He told them that the Swami will excommunicate every Brahmin who has touched a pariah.

Bhatta says he sees no fault in spinning cloth but he does not like their trying to educate and uplift the pariahs. Bhatta is not successful in inciting her against Moorthy. She has a lot of knowledge about what is going on in the world around her as she reads newspapers regularly. She could argue with Bhatta confidently.

Then Rangamma's sister Kamalamma came alongwith her widowed daughter Ratna. Bhatta rose up and left the house when they came in. Bhatta did not like the ways adopted by Ratna.

Ratna used to roam about on the streets like boys. She wore her hair to the left. Though she was a widow she wore bangles, nose rings etc. like married women. When she was asked why she did not dress up like a widow she said that it was nobody's business. She said that if they thought that seeing a man for a day when one is ten can be called marriage, then they should better eat mud and drown themselves in the river.

Kamalamma silenced her and called her a shameless and wicked tongued creature. Kamalamma said that by sending Ratna to school she had done a very wrong thing. She said that if Ratna continues to behave in this manner she will surely bring dishonour to the family. The village women said wicked things about Kamalamma behind her back because of her daughter Ratna. Bhatta, however did not say foul things about Ratna like the women did. Ratna's father

was Bhatta's second cousin. Ratna had lain in his lap as a child played in his courtyard. She was rough in her speech but still had a soft corner for her. He ignored what people said about Moor and Ratna. But somehow he found it difficult to bear her 'mod ways'.

What Bhatta had said about excommunication was discussed the river the next morning. Narsamma was very upset on hear that if her son does not stop mixing with the pariahs the Swa has sent a word through Bhatta that he will be excommunicat Bhatta told them that the Swami had said that any Brahmin mixes with the pariahs will be excommunicated.

Moorthy's mother, Narasamma was a pious old woman. She tall and thin and nearing sixty five years of age. She had borne el children, five of them were dead and of the remaining six Moor was the only son. The rest were daughters and all were marrie Moorthy was her favourite. She had thought that he would be a ve highly educated and highly placed man when he grows up but th did not happen. Proposals for marriage started coming wh Moorthy was just sixteen years old but he did not want to ge married.

Nasamma wanted him to get married but he refused to marry anyone. He became a follower of Gandhi and active participant o the freedom struggle. He gave up foreign clothes and foreign book and adopted *khadi*. Narasamma felt disappointed when Moorth discontinued his studies and returned to the village. She wanted hi to study further but he wanted to devote himself to the freedom struggle. Initially she was very upset but later allowed her son t do what he wanted. She said that he need not be a Sub-collecto or an Assistant Commissioner. He can look after their hereditary lands and have two meals a day. Moorthy had twenty seven acre of wet land and fifty-four acres of dry land, and a cardamom garde and a mango grove and small coffee plantation.

Section VII

Death of Moorthy's Mother

On a summer morning, Moorthy came back to Kanthapura. He had a bundle of *khadi* on his back and a bundle of books in his arms. He went to the well expecting to see Ratna there but, she was not there at the well. Then he went to Rangamma's house but seeing that Rangamma had not yet returned from the river, he kept the bundles in the Congress-room and went home to see his mother. When he reached home he saw her sitting by the threshold with

a bundle of dirty clothes beside her. She looked sad and it seemed as if she had not taken bath. Moorthy went forward to touch her feet but she pushed him away and told him that he should never show his face to her again. At least not until he had been purified by the Swami himself. She said that he should stand at the door like a pariah.

She was angry with him because he treated the pariahs and the people of other castes in the same way. She was an orthodox Brahmin and a superstitious woman and for her the fact that people were talking of excommunication of her son was something that was distressing and unbearable. She wanted him to stay away from the people of lower castes and she was in favour of maintaining the difference in treatment of people of different castes.

She rose up and rushed to the river and she started washing her clothes. After washing her clothes and taking bath she came back home telling her beads and went straight to the kitchen and began to cook as usual. She was feeling bad for what she had said to her son and waited for Moorthy to come. She sat there looking at the main entrance. It occurred to her now when her anger was a little pacified that he must be hungry. She went to see if he was on Rangamma's veranda but he was not there. Bhatta came to her house and told Narasamma that Moorthy was very angry with him for having said that the Swami was going to excommunicate Moorthy. He told Narasamma that he had said to Moorthy that this was not true and that the Swami had only said he would excommunicate Moorthy if he continued to treat Pariahs the way he does and does not follow the norms that are normally followed by Brahmins. Bhatta told Narasamma that Moorthy's reply was that the Swami can do what he wants. Moorthy said that he will do more pariah work. Moorthy said that the Swami has no heart and no thinking power. Narasamma found all this very distressing and shocking. When Narasamma asked Bhatta if nothing could be done, his reply was that if he goes on like this he will have to tell the Swami about it as he does not want their community to be polluted.

From that day onwards Narasamma and Moorthy stopped speaking to each other. He sat and ate his food by the kitchen threshold and she in the kitchen. Narasamma grew thinner and thinner. Moorthy went more and more to the Pariah quarters. When Pattayya's wife died he even carried the body for a while. This was done by him openly in front of everybody.

Bhatta rushed to the city and came back two days later with

a word from the Swami that Moorthy and his family was exc
municated and all the generations to come were also excomm
cated. Narasamma died that night. She was burnt where she
She had fallen down unconscious in a field at night. She was fo
dead in the morning. Bhatta refused to perform funeral rites.
very night Moorthy went to some other unknown place away f
the village where the last rites were performed.

On coming back to the village Moorthy started living
Rangamma's house. They gave him food by the kitchen door
Narasamma did. He continued to go to the pariahs and contin
to help them and educate them. It was decided that Moorthy
go to Skeffington Coffee Estate to teach the pariahs who live th

Section VIII

Condition of Coolies in Skeffington Coffee Estate

Coolies came in large numbers to work in the Skeffington Co
Estate. This estate was spread over a very vast area of land.
original owner of the estate was called Hunter Sahib by the pe
After his death his nephew became the owner of the estate.

The *maistri* used to present a very different picture to the cooli
initially. They were told that their only work would be to pick coff
seeds. They were offered four-annas for a man and two-annas f
a woman. The *maistri* said that the Sahib was a generous man. B
when they actually came to the estate they realised that the reali
was very different. It was not what the maistri had said. H
behaviour towards them changed very drastically once he reache
the estate.

Raja Rao gives a graphic description of the journey of the coolie
from their villages to the Skeffington Coffee Estate and the way the
are treated by the Sahib when they reach the estate. Rao describe
the way they all sat under the Banyan tree and the way the Sahi
spoke to them.

They were given huts to live in and they all slept peacefully tha
night. To them it seemed to be a fine place. They were told tha
they should be ready for work at five. They began their work th
next morning. The men had to dig pits and hew wood and the wome
were made to kill vermin. The estate was full of snakes of differen
kinds. The workers were made to work continuously without an
break. They were not allowed to rest even for a single moment an
no wages were paid to them. They were only given ragi and ric
water. The afternoon sun was very hot and they had to work in th

un without any break. Many of them suffered from fever. There were
eavy rains and due to this also there were many kinds of diseases.
Many suffered from stomach-ache and dysentry. Some people even
lied due to diseases. The coolies were superstitious people and they
lid not eat the medicines given to them by the Sahib. No one who
ame from the Godavery ever went back to it. Many of them wanted
o go back home but they did not have any money.

The new Sahib was better than his uncle in some respects. He
lid not beat the coolies like his old uncle did. But he had a weakness
or women and wanted any woman who caught his fancy. As such
e was kinder than his uncle but if a woman said-no to what he
vanted, he created problems for her family members and made life
ifficult for them. He normally stayed away from Brahmin girls. This
vas because of an incident that took place once. He had killed a
Brahmin who had refused to give his daughter. He had wanted to
ive money to the widow of the Brahmin. He himself had gone to
he District Superintendent of Police and got a case registered.
Ultimately, he had to pay nothing as the court acquitted him. After
this incident he never touched a Brahmin girl. People knew that even
if a pariah girl refused he hardly ever sent anyone to bring her
forcibly to him. But many times he even went to the extent of raping
young girls in the field and then giving them five rupees. The coolies
were beaten mercilessly if they dared to ask for wages. Presence of
Bade Khan on the estate helped the Sahib and he could do whatever
he wanted without any fear. Most of the coolies living in the Coffee
Estate were pariahs but some Brahmins were also there.

In this part of the novel, there is a long digression giving a description of different types of snakes which seems to be totally unnecessary and superfluous. This according to many critics creates the impression of formlessness.

Section IX

Moorthy is Not Allowed to Enter Skeffington Coffee Estate

One evening the coolies were waiting eagerly for Moorthy. He was supposed to come to the Skeffington Coffee Estate to teach the pariahs living in the estate. Ultimately, when he came, he was not allowed to enter the Coffee Estate. He was stopped at the gate by Bade Khan. Moorthy said that he had every right to go in and Bade Khan said that he will not cross the gate. Moorthy refused to go back without entering.

By that time Vasudev, Gangadhar and other people including the *maistri* had come to the gate where all this was going on. Moorthy

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Moorthy tried to convince him that it is right but he was
convinced.

There were some people in Kanthaura who were forming a gr
of their own. These people were against the followers of Gand

Venkamma, Rangappa, Patwari Nanjundia, schoolmas
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requested him to sit inside their house. Moorthy had never enter
a Pariah's house. He had always spoken to the pariahs from th
gutter-slab. So he was hesitant and felt very awkward and uncom
fortable but inspite of his hesitation he entered the house. Rachanna
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That will purify him. He can do this every time he goes to the pariahs. Moorthy says yes to this.

Seenu is very happy when Moorthy tells him about the Congress committee. Many potters and weavers became members of the congress. They decide to hold a meeting of the Congress in which the Committee is to be elected . They decided to hold god's procession and then a *bhajan*. They decided that the committee will be elected after the bhajan. Moorthy is unanimously chosen the President. Range Gowda is made the Super-President and Protector. Rangamma is made the third member. Rachanna becomes a member. Seenu is the fifth member of the committee. So, the Congress-committee consists of Moorthy, Range Gowda, Rangamma, and Rachanna and Seenu.

Two days later Moorthy made a list of members. There were twenty three members. Five rupees and twelve annas were sent to the Provincial Congress Committee. The people of Kanthapura started working for the Congress wholeheartedly. They were totally involved in the work of the Congress.

Section XII

Advocate Seenappa's Marriage

Moorthy had become very popular. He had many followers and the sway that he held over the hearts of the people was alarming. His fasting had made him even more popular and he had become the leader of the freedom fighters living in Kanthapura. In spite of the Swami's excommunication he was respected by the people of Kanthapura. Bhatta did not like this. The formation of the Congress Committee and the popularity of Moorthy was not liked by him. He felt like harassing and punishing the people who joined the Congress and so decided to charge higher rate of interest from them.

He knew that some people like Temple Rangappa, Patwari Nanjundia, Schoolmaster Devarayya, Rama Chetty and Subba Chetty and the Swami were with him. He knew that all these people were against the movement for upliftment of the pariahs. He knew it that Venkamma was not a supporter of Moorthy.

Bhatta needed supporters in the village. So in order to please Venkamma he arranged her daughter's marriage with advocate Seenappa. Bhatta wanted to curb this movement started by the supporters of Gandhi, and, for this purpose he needed a strong supporter in the village. Venkamma seemed to be the right person for this and so he wanted to please her.

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Venkamma, Rangappa, Patwari Nanjundia, schoolmaste

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Seenappa was above thirty. His wife had died recently and
had three children. But he was rich and that is why Venkamma w
very happy with this marriage. His being much older than Ran
or having three children did not matter. Venkannama was hap
because her daughter would have a comfortable life after marria

The marriage festivities continued for many days. The marria
party was grand and entertaining. Venkamma spent a lot of mon
for the celebration. A French sovereign was given to every woma
All the guests were very happy. They all had a grand time. Th
were disappointed when they saw the bridegroom. He was a midd
aged man, with two fallen teeth and a big twisted moustache. H
they soon forgot all this and became busy in the celebration. Th
all had a great time. They thought that Ranga was really lucky th
she was getting married to such a richman. Moorthy was not invit

Section XIII

Moorthy is Arrested

It was the month of *kartik*. People were sleeping and very la
at night a noise was heard in Rangamma's house. People were woke
up by the noise. They went to Rangamma's house to see what w
going on, but Bade Khan did not allow them to enter the hou
The villagers went to another house from where Moorthy's room co
be seen. They saw Moorthy standing against a wall and a policem
standing beside him with a notebook in his hand. There was a he
of books *charkhas* and cotton and folded cloth in the middle of t
room and the policemen were turning them this side and that. Th
were opening the tunrks and slitting boxes. They were not able
hear what was being said. They could see Moorthy nodding his he
from time to time.

The police inspector than asks Bade Khan to arrest Moorthy. B
this time many people had gathered around Rangamma's hou
There was a lot of cursing and hurling of abuses between the village
and the policemen.

When Moorthy is brought out of the house and is seen on th
threshhold Rachanna cries out '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai !*' and th
policeman rushes at him and hits him with his lathi. Rachanna cri
out louder '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai !*' The villagers tried to stop th
police from arresting Moorthy. The people were beaten by the poli
with lathis. The people kept shouting slogans.

Rachanna was arrested by the police. Seventeen other peop
were arrested and taken to the police station. They were beaten b

the police and then released one by one. Everyone except Moorthy was released by the police. Moorthy was taken to Karwar. Many advocates offered to help Moorthy. They wanted to defend him but Moorthy refused to take their help. Moorthy said that truth does not need any defence. People tried to convince him that he needed an advocate but they were not able to convince him. Students collected money for helping him.

A meeting was organised in the Gandhi Maidan. Speeches were delivered by Sankar, Rangamma and Dasappa about the incorruptible qualities of Moorthy and how the foreign government wants to crush all self-respect and then they spoke of *charkha* and *ahimsa* and Hindu-Moslem unity. A man who was a follower of Swami was in the crowd. Sankar allowed him to stand on the platform and address the people. He said that if the British leave India it will not be Ram-rajya. We will have the rule of Ravana. He continued to speak in favour of the British though there were many shouts and booings against him. He did not deny the fact that the Swami had accepted land from the government. He said that the Swami is neither for the government nor against it, but he is for all who respect the ancient ways of our race but not for Gandhi and his principle.

Then speeches were delivered by youngsters. They said that Moorthy was excommunicated by the Swami because Moorthy was a supporter of Gandhi and he worked for the upliftment of the untouchables. The Swami was paid by the British to do their dirty work. Then Advocate Rangamma got up to speak. He said that he too had been excommunicated because he had lately thrown open his private temple to the pariahs. He told the people about his visit to the Swami and what they had talked about. He said that they want to fight against the anti-untouchable campaign. He said to the people that the choice is between a saint like Mahatma Gandhi who has given up all comforts of life and dedicated his life to the country and the fattened Brahmins who want to frighten them with their excommunication once the government has paid them well.

Rangamma is arrested by the police. The people shout slogans. Processions are taken and they walk through the *bazaar* and the streets shouting—'*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*' '*Vande Mataram*'. The police cars were waiting by the Imperial Bank building and the crowd was violently dispersed.

It was through the newspaper that the villagers came to know what was going on. The villagers realised that Bhatta was an agent of the government. Seenu sometimes went to Karwar and from him

Seenappa was above thirty. His wife had died recently and h had three children. But he was rich and that is why Venkamma w very happy with this marriage. His being much older than Ran or having three children did not matter. Venkannama was happ because her daughter would have a comfortable life after marriag

The marriage festivities continued for many days. The marriag party was grand and entertaining. Venkamma spent a lot of mon for the celebration. A French sovereign was given to every woma All the guests were very happy. They all had a grand time. Th were disappointed when they saw the bridegroom. He was a middl aged man, with two fallen teeth and a big twisted moustache. B they soon forgot all this and became busy in the celebration. Th all had a great time. They thought that Ranga was really lucky th she was getting married to such a richman. Moorthy was not invite

Section XIII

Moorthy is Arrested

It was the month of *kartik*. People were sleeping and very la at night a noise was heard in Rangamma's house. People were woke up by the noise. They went to Rangamma's house to see what w going on, but Bade Khan did not allow them to enter the hous The villagers went to another house from where Moorthy's room cou be seen. They saw Moorthy standing against a wall and a policema standing beside him with a notebook in his hand. There was a hea of books *charkhas* and cotton and folded cloth in the middle of th room and the policemen were turning them this side and that. Th were opening the tunrks and slitting boxes. They were not able t hear what was being said. They could see Moorthy nodding his hea from time to time.

The police inspector than asks Bade Khan to arrest Moorthy. B this time many people had gathered around Rangamma's hous There was a lot of cursing and hurling of abuses between the village and the policemen.

When Moorthy is brought out of the house and is seen on th threshhold Rachanna cries out '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai !*' and th policeman rushes at him and hits him with his lathi. Rachanna cri out louder '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai !*' The villagers tried to stop th police from arresting Moorthy. The people were beaten by the poli with lathis. The people kept shouting slogans.

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the police and then released one by one. Everyone except Moorthy was released by the police. Moorthy was taken to Karwar. Many advocates offered to help Moorthy. They wanted to defend him but Moorthy refused to take their help. Moorthy said that truth does not need any defence. People tried to convince him that he needed an advocate but they were not able to convince him. Students collected money for helping him.

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the villagers came to know what was going on there. They all pray for the release of Moorthy. Rangamma and Nanjamma went Karwar to see Moorthy. Rangamma's cousin Seetharamu who an advocate lived in the city. Sankar was looking after Moorth case and he told Rangamma that they had done all they could the police was accusing him of arranging the assault of the pari on the police. Rangamma did not go back to Kanthapura for harvest. She came back for corn-distribution. After harvest, Bha went on a pilgrimage to Kashi.

When Rangamma went to Karwar after the corn-distribution stayed with Sankar instead of staying with her cousin Seethara She helped Sankar by arranging his papers and looking after Congress correspondence. Venkamma did say foul things about when she came to know about this but Rangamma simply said, 'O cannot stitch up the mouths of others. So let them say what th like'.

Sankar's wife died when he was twenty six years old. He refu to marry again. He had a daughter. His parents were living w Sankar in the same house. Sankar never took a false case and he discovered in the middle of the case that his client had lied him, he immediately dropped the case. Once, he even forced his cli to make a confession when he discovered that his client was guil He was a successful lawyer but he charged very less compared other lawyers. He was respected by the people. Unlike other lawye he was not rich. His father was a follower of Gandhi. Sankar w of the opinion that Hindi should and will some day become national language. He was against the use of English by the India He believed that fasting was a good thing and made his family k fast on various occasions. He refused to go to a marriage party unl every one in that party including the bride was dressed in *kha*

Rangamma came back from Karwar for the *Magh* cattle fair, a two days later, they got the news that Moorthy had been senten to three months rigorous imprisonment. Ramakrishnayya died a he was cremated the next morning.

Section XIV

Sevika Sangha

Ramakrishnayya used to explain the Vedantic texts to village After his death Ratna was chosen for the purpose of reading t texts and Rangamma was chosen for explaining them to the village The villagers were really impressed by the way Rangamma explai

the texts. Rangamma told them that Sadhu Narayan had taught her how to meditate. She showed the villagers how to control their breath.

Rangamma was able to convince the women of Kanthapura that they should organize a volunteer corps like they do in the city. It was decided that this group of volunteers will be called Sevika Sangha and the women will call themselves *Sevis*. Their main purpose or aim was to work for the nation. Rangamma said that the women should not neglect their household work. They were taught that they should always remain non-violent whatever may be the circumstances. They should not resort to violence under any circumstances and whatever may happen they should remain calm.

Seenu wanted to form a similar group by collecting the boys of the village but he was not able to convince the boys to join the group.

Section XV

Moorthy Returns to Kanthapura

It was the month of *Vaisakh* and the rains had come. It was time for ploughing the fields. They all prayed to goddess Kenchamma for a good harvest. Before beginning their work they worshipped the goddess and performed many religious ceremonies.

It was time for Moorthy's release and they all made preparations for giving a grand welcome to Moorthy. They were very happy and excited because Moorthy was coming. They wanted to give him the kind of welcome that is given to a king.

Venkamma did not like this and she consulted Rangappa about her daughter's nuptial ceremony. Her daughter Nanja had come of age only a few days back. Her daughter's nuptial ceremony was on the same day on which Moorthy was coming back to Kanthapura and this was done by Venkamma deliberately. She did it because she thought that this way at least the Brahmins will not go to welcome Moorthy. She did not like the idea of giving a grand welcome to Moorthy. The people were in a fix. They found it hard to decide where to go. It was difficult for them to decide whether to go to Venkamma's daughter's nuptial ceremony or to go to welcome Moorthy. In a nuptial ceremony the presence of married women was necessary and so many of the women decided to attend the nuptial ceremony instead of going to welcome Moorthy. So in a way, Venkamma was successful in getting the results she wanted.

On the day on which Moorthy was supposed to come back to Kanthapura many people gathered at the village gate to give a warm welcome to Moorthy on his return. There were pariahs, weavers,

potters and betel sellers. Range Gowda, Rangamma and Ratna wer
also there. Very few Brahmins had come. They kept waiting for hi
but he did not come. Later, they came to know that he had be
brought by bus upto Madur and from there he had been brough
by car. He was already in Rangamma's house and they all went t
meet him. Some people started shouting slogans and the policem
present there asked them to disperse peacefully without creating an
problem.

Rangamma asked them to disperse and Range Gowda asked th
people to obey Rangamma. The people dispersed quietly witho
creating any problems. The policemen did not leave Rangamma
house till the nuptial dinner was over. They left the house a
midnight. Another policeman who was called young Bade Khan wa
sent to the village. He started living in a hut in Skeffington Coff
Estate. He lived there with a woman.

Section XVI

Dandi March : Its Effect on the People of Kanthapura

Moorthy told the villagers about Dandi March. He told them th
the Mahatma will walk to the Dandi Beach and manufacture sa
on the beach. The villagers waited eagerly for news about Mahatm
They got news mainly through newspapers.

Moorthy addressed the people of Kanthapura. He said to th
people of Kanthapura that they will have to be strong and they wi
have to swear that they will always speak the truth and will sp
one hundred yards of cloth daily and will treat all men as equa
He said that in reality all men are equal. On the morning on whi
Mahatma made salt on Dandi beach the people of Kanthapur
gathered at the river bank early in the morning.

They took bath in the river at the very minute at which Mahatm
Gandhi was supposed to made salt at Dandi beach.

The people of Kanthapura got the news that Mahatma Gandh
had made salt and broken the law. After that hundreds of peop
went to the sea to make salt. Cartloads of salt was brought ba
and distributed among people. There was a lot of celebration an
clapping of hands. Many people were arrested by the police. Day aft
day men went to the sea and made salt. People were beate
mercilessly and arrested by the police but still more and more peop
fearlessly did what the Mahatma had done. They went to the s
and made salt. The people of Kanthapura also wanted to do the sam
The people of Kanthapura including the women were eager to fig

for freedom from British rule and they were preparing themselves for fighting by using non-violent means. They were waiting for orders from the Karwar, Congress-committee and for the call of the Mahatma.

Section XVII

Toddy Picketing

Mahatma was arrested by the police. The people of Kanthapura got this news. There was a meeting of the Congress Panchayat in Kanthapura and in that meeting Moorthy addressed the people of Kanthapura. He said that they will have to begin the 'Don't touch-the-Government Campaign'. Moorthy said that they will not pay taxes even if the government attaches their lands. He also talked about toddy booths. He said that toddy trees are government trees and toddy booths are there to exploit the poor Indians. He said that the toddy booths are to be picketed. He said that they will establish a parallel government and it is this government which will rule. The first act of their government will be to appoint Range Gowda as the Patel again. He said that they should refuse to give revenue dues to the Patel appointed by the British government. He further added that they are to follow the path of non-violence. Moorthy repeatedly requested them to remain calm when beaten by the police and even when the leaders are arrested they should remain calm. Moorthy told them that the Panchayat had decided that they will begin their fight on Friday. So they had three days before that.

The narrator adds that two days later the people of Kanthapura marched to Boranna's toddy grove. There were hundred and thirty nine people. They went with drums and trumpets and horns. This group was led by Moorthy, Rangamma, Range Gowda and Rachanna. They were in a beautifully decorated cart. Many people had come to see them pass by.

Policemen on duty tried to stop them from entering the toddy grove. This clash between the *Satyagrahis* and the police lasted for quiet some time and amidst shrieks and crying and sobbing and shouting the people of Kanthapura huddled and moved on shouting "*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*" and "*Vande Mataram*". Policemen were deployed there in large numbers and to stop them they resorted to the use of violence. Consequently the *Satyagrahis* were arrested. They were beaten up by the police and even the women and children were not spared. Rachanna, Lingayya and Siddayya were sent to the lock up and the others were taken in lorries in different directions to far away places and left there. They had to walk back to Kanthapura.

Venkamma ridiculed them and made fun of them for picketin toddy booths. But the Satyagrahis felt that they had done somethi great. They felt as if they had walked the holy fire at the Harve Festival. Next morning after coming back to Kanthapura, they ke before the temple the five twigs of toddy trees and the toddy-p that they had brought with them. To them these things were li trophies won by them. There was a sense of achievement and a sen of satisfaction.

XVIII

Toddy Booths in Vicinity of Kanthapura Closed Down

Tuesday was market-day in Kanthapura. On that day th *Satyagrahis* planned to picket the toddy shop of the Skeffingt Coffee Estate. So on that day they gathered at the temple early the morning and marched towards the Skeffington Coffee Esta There were seventy seven people in all who went to picket todd shops.

They waited for the coolies to come out and go to toddy sh when they saw the coolies going towards the toddy shop Moorth asked them to squat down before the toddy booth. Many policem were present. The coolies refused to walk over the *Satyagrahis* a the policemen began to beat them in order to force them to do The *Satyagrahis* were beaten mercilessly by the police. The *Satyagrah* lay down on the ground so that no space is left. The struggle betwe the police and the *Satyagrahis* went on for a long time. T *Satyagrahis* tried to prevent people from entering the toddy sh and they requested the coolies not to drink. Water was thrown the *Satyagrahis*. Siddayya, Seenu, Vasudev, Nanjamma's husba Subbu and Range Gowda were taken to prison. Sixty seven peop including Moorthy were taken by a lorry to the Promontory and fro there they had to walk back to Kanthapura.

Many coolies came to live in Kanthapura. They lived in the pari street. Thus, the number of followers of Gandhi was steadi increasing.

Section XIX

Villagers Refuse to Pay Taxes

Many toddy booths were picketed in neighbouring villages. T *Satyagrahis* used many different ways to make people leave the hab of drinking. Twenty four toddy shops were closed as a result of th efforts made by the *Satyagrahis*. In spite of repeated reminders fro the government the people of Kanthapura refused to pay the

revenues. They were threatened by the police but inspite of repeated threats they refused to pay taxes. Only seven families paid their revenue dues. Rangappa, Venkamma, Postmaster Suryanarayana, shopkeeper Subba Chetty, agent Nanjundia and Devarai were the only people who paid revenue.

The villagers did their best to hide their belongings so that they are not found by the policemen who may come to attach their property.

However, no policeman ever came to their houses after that. One morning all the roads, lanes and cattle-tracks were barricaded. Policemen were standing on guard. It was announced that if revenues were not paid and the laws were not obeyed, every man, woman and child above six in Kanthapura would have to pay one rupee and three paise as punitive tax because new policemen were there to protect them. It was further added that the troublesome ones would be sent to prison.

Rangamma, Ratna and Moorthy went from house to house and told the people that the fight had really begun and if the Patel or a policeman or agent enters the house they should take the sanctum bell and ring so that the rest of the villagers immediately know they are there and the villagers immediately reach on the spot to help them.

Section XX

Police Atrocities

The freedom fighters were tortured in jails. The coolies of Skeffington Coffee Estate who had come to live in the Pariah quarter were tied up and made to march in a slow moving procession to the Skeffington Coffee Estate. They were whipped and made to walk through the streets with their heads bent. This was done to show them who the "true masters" were. They were humiliated. The pariah women tried to stop them but could not do anything.

Women were molested and raped by the policemen. One of the *Satyagrahis* set fire to the house of Bhatta. Even the children were beaten mercilessly. There were policemen everywhere. The streets were filled with policemen. Shouts and lamentation could be heard everywhere. People ran here and there to seek refuge. It was a state of total chaos. Many men had been taken away by the police during the night. Majority of men of the village were in prison. An elephant was used by the police to break the door of Rangamma's house.

The writer gives a graphic description of the atrocities of the police and how the people of Kanthapura tried to save themselves from the police. Moorthy had been arrested. Rangamma's house had been sealed by the police.

Section XXI

Satyanarayan Puja

Many people came to Kanthapura from the city. Among them there were soldiers, coolies and also some were looking like Sahukars. Ratna had now become the leader of the Satyagrahis. Boys from the city had come to help the people of Kanthapura and they were living in Ratna's house. It was announced that the lands of those people who had refused to pay taxes would be auctioned.

One of the boys who had come from the city told the villagers that they knew that the government would auction the lands the next day and that their men are going to come from the city. Hundreds of men are going to come and they are planning to hold a Satyanarayana Puja in Ratna's house. He said that no land will be sold. The Government will not be able to do anything. He said that they will not allow the auction to take place. The villagers felt sad if their lands have gone out of their hands. Some of the women blamed Moorthy for what they were going through. Men and women came from the city in large number for the auction.

The Satyagrahis drew two carts across Sami's courtyard so that nobody could see the preparation for the procession. Sankar came to Kanthapura to help them in preventing the auction from taking place.

The procession started after Ratna blew the conch from the top of the Promontory. As the procession went through the streets, more and more people joined it. They all cried out '*Satyanarayan ki Jai*'. People carried the procession throne turn by turn and the cries of '*Satyanarayan Maharaj ki Jai*!' filled the air. When the policemen saw the procession they came forward to stop it but, when they saw that it was a religious procession, they did not say anything. The policemen started walking alongwith them. Ratna stopped after every hundred steps and blew the conch three times. Camphors were burnt, coconuts were broken. The policemen tried to find out where they were going, but, they did not get any answer. The people shouted '*Satyanarayan Maharaj ki jai*!' As they marched on the shouts of '*Satyanarayan Maharaj ki Jai*!' changed to shouts of '*Vande Mataram*'. They all shouted '*Vande Mataram-Mataram Vande*!' Then suddenly

from the darkened Brahmin Street and Pariah Streets and Weaver's Street and the lantana growths came back the cry '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*'.

The policemen were furious and ran here and there not knowing what to do. Many people were hiding in the area. Many men suddenly appeared and joined the procession.

Among them, there were men from the city, householders, peasants, Mohammedans and also city boys. The police started beating them with lathis. They kept shouting slogans. There were thousands of men. They marched on. The lathi blows of the police could not stop them from marching on. They were going to the Skeffington barricades. The police found themselves heavily outnumbered. The soldiers tried to stop them but they moved on. The peasants of Kanthapura had ploughed and watered the fields but the pariahs from the city were reaping the crops. The soldiers started firing to disperse the crowd. Many shots were fired. The struggle went on for a long time. Many demonstrators were killed and many were wounded.

They kept walking on towards Maddur. There were policemen in Maddur also. They were attacked by the police but were helped by the people of Maddur. The people who were wounded remained in Maddur and the rest of them moved on. They reached the state of Mysore. They decided to settle in Kashipur.

Section XXII

New Life

The narrator says that one year and two months have passed after the events described in section XXI took place. Life in Kashipura is same as it was in Kanthapura. Many people from Kanthapura are now living in Kashipura. Seethamma and her daughter Nanja now live in Malur Shanbhog Chikkanna's house. They are searching for a bridegroom for Nanja. Pariah Rachanna's wife Raihi lives in Kanthenahalli Patel Chandrayya's house. Her grand-daughter Mari is working in Chenna' house. Timmamma and the narrator live in Jodidar Seetharamiah's house. They are now leading normal lives and there is peace at least for the time being. Rangamma is to be released soon. Seenu also will be soon released. Ratna has been released and has come to spend some time with them in Kashipur. Ratna left for Bombay after a few days. No one except Gowda ever went back to Kanthapura. Range Gowda's wife was living in Patel Chenne Gowda's house and waiting for her husband.

Range Gowda actually went to Kanthapura to bring his jew which he had burried under the earth. When he came back Kashipur, they all came to know what state Kanthapura was

He said that their houses in Kanthapura were destroyed and w in a very bad state. He said that men from Bombay had built hou on the Bebbur Mound for coolies and now they owned most of land. Bhatta had sold all his lands and gone to Kashi. Venkam it seems had gone to stay with her son-in-law. Concubine Chi was still living in Kanthapura. Range Gowda settled in Kashi

Mahatma made a pact with the Viceroy. Most prisoners includ Moorthy were released very soon due to this pact. When they as Ratna about Moorthy, she said that she did not know when he coming, but she had received a letter from him.

In that letter Moorthy had written about Jawahar Lal Neh He still respected Mahatma Gandhi but his views about cert things had changed. The freedom struggle had been suspended most young *Satyagrahis* including Moorthy did not quite like the id They felt that the Britishers had cheated Gandhi.

Moorthy also like many other youngmen were disappoint Moorthy, no longer believed that by using the methods of Ga they could achieve their goal. They got the news that the Maha was going to Britain and the people thought that he will bring *Sw* with him when he will return.

It was very difficult to forget what they had gone through what they had lost. They had suffered a lot, but after all, suffering they felt as if they had achieved something inspite of *defeat. There* was a chastening ennobling feeling in them and *also perhaps had* a distant hope.

CHAPTER - 10

CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL OR BRIEF STUDY OF THE CHARACTERS

1.	Achakka	- She is an elderly woman of Kanthapura and is the narrator of the story.
2.	Seenu	- He is Achakka's son and is a supporter of Moorthy.
3.	Moorthy	- He is Narasamma's son. He is a freedom fighter.
4.	Narasamma	- Moorthy's widowed mother.
5.	Rangamma	- A rich widow living in Kanthapura who is a supporter of Moorthy.
6.	Venkamma	- Rangamma's sister-in-law who is a widow.
7.	Kamalamma	- Rangamma's widowed sister.
8.	Ratna	- A girl of fifteen who is a widow and a supporter of Moorthy. She is Kamalamma's daughter.
9.	Bhatta	- A rich brahmin of Kanthapura. He is a money-lender.
10.	Savithramma	- Bhatta's first wife.
11.	Chinnamma	- Bhatta's second wife.
12.	Seenappa	- A lawyer. He married Venkamma's daughter Ranga.
13.	Nanja	- Venkamma's daughter.
14.	Rangappa	- A priest living in Kanthapura.
15.	Subbe Gowda	- The young man who was asked to initiate the plowing ceremony.
16.	Dore	- A young man of Kanthapura.

17. Ramakrishnayya	-	Rangamma's father.
18. Range Gowda	-	He is the Patel of Kanthapura a belongs to the pariah community.
19. Bade Khan	-	A policeman. He lives in Skiffingto Coffee Estate.
20. Jayaramachar	-	The Harikatha-man who came t Kanthapura from the city. He is follower of Mahatma Gandhi.
21. The Sahib	-	The owner of Skiffington Coffe Estate.
22. Ramanna	-	A Brahmin living in Kanthapura
23. Rachanna	-	A pariah who came to live i Kanthapura after he is thrown ou of Skeffington Coffee Estate. Earlie he was a worker in Skiffington Coffe Estate. He was thrown out fro there because he had supporte Moorthy. He was elected member o Congress Committee of Kanthapura
24. Rachi	-	Rachanna's Wife.
25. Madanna	-	A worker in Skeffinton Coffee Es tate.
26. Sankar	-	An advocate. He is a follower o Gandhi.
27. Advocate Ranganna	-	An advocate who is a follower o Gandhi.
28. Seetharamu	-	He is Rangamma's cousin who lives in Karwar.
29. Boranna	-	Owner of toddy grove.
30. Puttamma	-	A woman living in Kanthapura. She is a supporter of Moorthy.
31. The Swami	-	He is against the movement for the upliftment of the pariahs.
32. Kenchamma	-	Presiding goddess of Kanthapura.
33. Venkatnarayana	-	A Coffee planter.
34. Nanjundia	-	Patwari of Kanthapura.
35. Nanjamma	-	A Brahmin woman of Kanthapura.

CHAPTER - 11

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS OF THE NOVEL

MOORTHY

Moorthy gave up his education and devoted his life to the struggle for independence and the upliftment of the poor and uneducated people. Inspite of opposition, he worked for upliftment of the Pariahs living in Kanthapura. According to Narasimhaiah, the author's own self is projected in the character of Moorthy. Moorthy was a follower of Gandhi. He had never met Gandhi personally. It was a vision of Gandhi which transformed him. It was as a result of this that he decided to leave college and join the thousands of men who had decided to devote their life to the struggle for independence. He organised the work of the Congress in Kanthapura.

He went from door to door and tried to convince them to spin cloth for atleast two hours everyday. He gave them the *charkhas* which the Congress had given free of cost. He tried to inspire them to join the Congress. Moorthy also kept a fast after the violence at the Skiffington Coffee Estate. He organised picketing of toddy grove and toddy booths. He organised meetings and Satyagrahas and was sent to jail like other freedom fighters.

Like many other youngmen Moorthy was in the end a little disillusioned with the ways and ideas of Gandhi. He started feeling that by following the path showed by Gandhi they will not be able to achieve their goal. Nehru's ideas appealed to him. But he still respected Gandhi the way he did earlier.

He is kind and considerate and respected his elders. He is honest and has a strong will power. Even the death of his mother could not prevent him from working for the pariahs. He works with a lot of devotion and dedication. He had the ability to convince people and inspire people. He had leadership quality. He was the leader of the freedom-fighters living in Kanthapura. He formed the Congress Committee of Kanthapura and was chosen its President. Even Range Gowda gives regard to him and has full confidence and faith in him.

He works for the upliftment of pariahs and wants to remo untouchability. He is a Brahmin and even his excommunication d not have any effect on him. Even then when Rachanna's wife ask him to come in, he was hesitant. Ultimately, he did enter Rachanna house but he found it very difficult to sip the milk given to hi by Rachanna's wife. He somehow did it but his hesitation revea the fact that he is human and has human weaknesses. In fact, th hesitation is natural in case of any Brahmin and, Moorthy was al like all others in this respect.

It is clearly shown that he is attracted towards Ratna. He is a ordinary youngman and not a god. Though he has been shown be a good man, it is not that he is without any negative qualiti Though he has been idealised to a certain extent, it is shown th he also is after all human like everyone else.

RANGE GOWDA

Like Bade Khan he also was an employee of the governme That is why, Bade Khan had expected that Range Gowda will he him in finding a house in Kanthapura. But, he bluntly refused help Bade Khan.

Range Gowda was a supporter of Moorthy. He was on the si of the freedom fighters. When the Kanthapura Congress commit was formed Range Gowda was made the super President a protector of the Congress Committee. He actively participated in t Congress work in Kanthapura. Range Gowda says to Moorthy th he is not able to agree with Gandhi's view that enemies can be w over by a loving attitude but even then he is a follower of Gandh

Rangi Gowda is rich man and an esteemed elder of his commun as well as the whole village. That is why when Moorthy wanted form the Congress committee Range Gowda was the first man whom he went. The reason was that Moorthy thought that if Ran Gowda joins the Congress many other people will join the Congre Range Gowda was respected by the people. He had a lot of influen on the people. People did not dare to oppose him. He had thr daughters, and all three of them were married. His daughters liv with him and his sons-in-law also lived and worked with him. Thou they also owned as much land as he did, but they were afraid him and lived like slaves. Range Gowda was an honest man a helped the poor people of the village. He was a kind and sympathe person. He is a sort of a bully who protects the people of t community. He is a courageous and fearless person.

He was a fat and sturdy man with a powerful voice and good personality. He was a pariah but was very different from the way pariahs were in general. He was the Patel of Kanthapura, and his duty was to collect-tax. Though Moorthy was much younger, he respected Moorthy and had a lot of faith and confidence in him. Range Gowda proposed the name of Moorthy for the Presidentship of the village panchayat. He gave his full support to Moorthy. In Moorthy's absence he guided and encouraged the people of Kanthapura. He gave them strength to carry on. Range Gowda was later dismissed from Patelship. This was because he had started actively participating in the activities of the Congress.

He was the only one among the people of Kanthapura who went back to Kanthapura after they had started living in Kashipur. He went there to get jewels that he had burried under the earth. When he came back to Kashipur he told the rest of them about Kanthapura. He described the state it was in. He told them that men from Bombay had built houses on the Bebbur mound and all the land is owned by them. Even Bhatta had sold his land and gone to Kashi. Venkamma had started living with her son-in-law. Concubine Chinna was still living in Kanthapura. He said that the corner-house, Rangamma's house and Nanjamma's house were in ruins. Their houses were desolate. None of the original residents of Kanthapura were there. The novel ends with his words. Range Gowda is lovable inspite of his shortcomings.

BHATTA

Bhatta became rich after he started the business of money lending. Earlier he was a priest and used to take very small fees from people for telling the days of important festivals and the most auspicious days for marriage. He used to work as a priest in marriage ceremonies. He always made it a point to attend very funeral dinner. He was never late for these dinners. In fact, he was always the first Brahmin to arrive on such occasions.

He was very fond of food and very greedy and this was evident from the way he used to eat the obsequial dinner. ".....But Bhatta goes on munching and belching, drinking water and then munching again."

He tried his best to save as much as possible. In this way he was able to save three hundred and fifty rupees. Bhatta did not bother about his wife. On such days when he used to have invitation for dinner, his wife used to have only dal-soup and rice. On such days she never used to cook dinner for herself. Bhatta never bothered

to see what she was eating. In fact he was rather happy if some money was saved in this way. After her death, he married a girl who was just twelve and a half years old. He got one thousand rupees and five acres of wet hand as dowry. After this marriage, he also gained a lot in terms of social prestige.

Bhatta was polite and smooth tongued and so he was liked by the people. He could recite *the Gita* in a very impressive manner. He was adept in this art.

With the money that he had saved, he started the business of money-lending. He was extremely covetous and greedy and wanted to make more and more money. He charged very high rates of interest from people. He exploited the poor and the needy. He did not leave any opportunity of fleecing the needy and the poor when they came to him for loans. He was a 'blood-sucker' and tried to profit by every occasion.

In this way, he was able to earn a lot of money and by the time the novel opens, he owns almost half of the village. He is no longer a poor Brahmin. With increasing prosperity he lost interest in priesthood. In order to earn some extra money, he introduced the people who needed lawyers. In certain cases he himself settled disputes between people. He is a symbol of corrupt humanity. He is cunning to a certain degree. Beauty and goodness and other soft sensibilities do not evoke any response in him as he has no eye of appreciation for them.

Earlier, Bhatta used to take interest in Gandhi *bhajans*. Suddenly, his view towards the *bhajans* and the Gandhi Movement changed drastically. This happened after one of his frequent visits to the city. He turned hostile to the Gandhi Movement. He became an agent of the government to work against Moorthy and other Gandhi men of Kanthapura. Hence, Moorthy and his friends represent the freedom movement whereas Bhatta and Bade Khan represent government repression of this struggle for freedom.

Bhatta was a follower of the Swami who was against the movement for upliftment of pariahs and giving more rights to pariahs. He had met the Swami during one of his visits to the city. He wanted that Bhatta should try to suppress this movement in Kanthapura. Bhatta was against Moorthy's mixing with Pariahs. Bhatta tried to suppress this movement in Kanthapura but was not successful. He also tried to form a lobby in Kanthapura against the freedom fighters led by Moorthy. Therefore, he was against the followers of Gandhi. He sees to it that Moorthy is excommunicated.

Bhatta was not in favour of radical social reforms. He did not like the idea of boys and girls studying together in schools and colleges. It is true that he had a soft corner for Ratna but did not like her modern ways. He wanted her to behave like the other girls in her position did. He is self centred and a despicable creature and a villian though of a mild type. The character belongs to a type, but there are some qualities which individualise him. It is not that he does not have any goodness in him, otherwise he would not have sent Fig-tree house Ramu to the city for studies. He gave him money when he needed it and did not charge any interest.

The character of Bhatta cannot be categorised as black but is certainly grey.

THE SWAMI

The Swami is against the movement for the upliftment of the pariahs. He is of the opinion that the movement should be crushed before things get out of control. He asks Bhatta to stop this movement in Kanthapura. Bhatta does his best to stop it. Bhatta met the Swami in the city. Initially, Bhatta was a follower of Gandhi. It was after one of his visits to the city that he turned against Gandhi.

The Swami is a supporter of the British government. He received twelve hundred acres of wet land from the government. He outwardly pretends that he respects Gandhi and if there is anything that he does not like about Gandhi it is his movement for upliftment of Pariahs.

The Swami never comes to Kanthapura. The Swami remains in the background throughout the novel. He never appears on the scene but he does have an influence on the events which take place in the novel. He is a conservative man who is very traditional in his views and ideas. He is an orthodox Brahmin and is able to influence the Brahmins living in Kanthapura. When the people of Kanthapura heard that anyone who mixes with the pariahs will be excommunicated, they were terrified. Moorthy was not effected by this and he continued to work for the Pariahs. When Moorthy's mother got the news that Moorthy and his family and coming generations had been excommunicated she was shocked. It ultimately led to her death. This clearly shows the kind of influence which the Swami had on the people.

BADE KHAN

Bade Khan came to live in Kanthapura after Jayaramachar was arrested. The government had sent this policeman to Kanthapura

for a purpose. His main job was to give information to the government about the activities of the freedom fighters of Kanthapura. He found it very difficult to get a house for himself in Kanthapura. The main reason for this was that he was a Mohammedan. He approached Patwari Nanjundia and then Patel Range Gowda but he was not able to get a house to live in within Kanthapura. Ultimately he found a hut in Skeffington Coffee Estate. He started living there with a pariah woman.

When he had approached Patwari Nanjundia, he had sent him to Patel Range Gowda saying that he was the only person who could help him. Patel Range Gowda was not very polite to him. He bluntly refused to help him and said that his duty was to collect revenue. Finding houses for policemen was not his duty.

He is an agent of the government and does his duty sincerely. The novelist does not give much information about the kind of person he is. He is described as a hefty, bearded man. Nothing else is said about his physical appearance.

Though he is an Indian, he is against the freedom fighters. He is a loyal and faithful servant of the Britishers and does his best to oppose the freedom movement. His presence on the Skeffington Coffee Estate was helpful to the owner of the estate because he did the job of terrorising the coolies. When Moorthy tried to enter the coffee estate it was Bade Khan who stopped him. He is uneducated and crude in his manners and speech. He is foul-mouthed, vulgar and unrefined. Instead of being on the side of his countrymen, he is with the British. To a certain extent this may be due to his ignorance but even then people like him cannot be forgiven. Inspite of the fact that he does his work sincerely he cannot be termed as a positive character.

NARASAMMA

Narasamma is Moorthy's mother. Moorthy is her favourite child. Out of her eleven children only six are alive. Five of them are daughters and they are all married. She is a widow and lives with Moorthy who is her only son.

She had thought that her son will be a highly educated and well placed man, but nothing of this sort happened. She was really disappointed when Moorthy decided that he will not continue his education and came back to Kanthapura. But later, she consoled herself and accepted the idea. She said to Moorthy that he could look after the ancestral land and lead a comfortable life in the village. She wanted Moorthy to get married but he refused to marry.

Guwahati-17 Date.....

When Bhatta tells her that the Swami has said that he will excommunicate Moorthy she is terrified. In her anger she says to Moorthy that she does not want to see his face. She says to him that she does not want his shadow to fall on her. Later she felt bad for what she had said. She cooked a meal and waited for him. Bhatta told her that Moorthy was very angry with him for saying that the Swami was going to excommunicate him. He told her that Moorthy had said that he will do more pariah work and will go and eat with them if necessary. Moorthy did not care about what the Swami said or did. From that day onwards Narasamma and her son did not speak to each other. He ate his food at the kitchen doorstep and she took her food in the kitchen. Narasamma's health kept deteriorating day by day.

When Bhatta told her that the Swami had excommunicated Moorthy, his whole family and all the generations to come, she could not bear it. She herself was an orthodox Brahmin. She died that very night. After her death Moorthy started living in Rangamma's house. He continued to work for the upliftment of pariahs.

She was a very mild and good natured old woman. She was tall and thin and looked like an ascetic because of the ash marks on her forehead. She is not involved in the freedom movement and not educated but still she is on the whole liked and respected by people.

RANGAMMA

She is a childless widow and is very fond of Moorthy. After his mother's death, Moorthy starts living in her house. She is a very rich and educated woman. She reads the newspapers regularly and is aware of what is going in the world. She tells the villagers about the freedom movement, about Gandhi and what is going on in the rest of the country. Her father Ramakrishnayya used to explain the Vedantic texts to the villagers. After his death, Ratna was chosen by the people for reading the texts and Rangamma for explaining the texts to them. She explained the texts in an impressive manner which was liked by all. They were all surprised to see that she was able to explain the texts so well. She even started teaching them how to meditate. She was a supporter of Moorthy and was actively involved in the freedom struggle. She was a follower of Gandhi and her house became the office of the Congress party in Kanthapura. In Moorthy's absence she and Ratna formed the Sevika Sangha. She taught the women to bear the lathis of the police calmly. She became a member of the Congress committee of Kanthapura. She actively participated in all activities of the Congress.

When Moorthy is arrested and taken to Karwar she tries her best to save him. She even goes to Karwar and meets the lawyer who is handling Moorthy's case. Moorthy does not want a lawyer to defend him. She tries to convince him but is not able to do so. Moorthy is sentenced to three months imprisonment. She also leaves Kanthapura like the other people of Kanthapura after the no-tax campaign. Unlike Moorthy, till the end she remains a follower of Gandhi. She does not start questioning his ways like Moorthy and the other young people do. Venkamma feels jealous of her and dislikes her, but in general, she is respected and liked by the people of Kanthapura.

Ratna

Ratna is Kamalamma's daughter. She is bold and very blunt in her speech. Though she is a widow, she does not dress up like a widow. She has never actually lived with her husband but, people expect her to behave like a widow. She wears bangles, uses *kumkum* and wears colourful *saries*. She does not care. She wanders freely in the village just like boys do. She dresses up the way, she feels like and behaves the way she wants. People who asked her why she did not behave like a widow, she said that it was nobody's business and if they thought that seeing a man for a day and that too when one is ten years old could be called marriage; they had better eat mud and drown themselves in the river. Her mother always tries to stop her from saying such things to people.

Ratna wears her hair in the style of concubines and wears nose rings and ear-rings. Her mother says that Ratna's behaviour is the result of her going to school and, she made a big mistake by sending her to school. The other women do not like her. Bhatta also does not like her ways but still he has a soft corner for her. Bhatta is Ratna's father's second cousin. Bhatta had seen her as a baby and seen her grow up gradually. She has now come of age and he wants her to behave like other girls do.

Ratna's mother is a widow. Her mother is Rangamma's sister. After his mother's death, Moorthy started living in Rangamma's house. Rangamma likes Moorthy. Both Ratna and Rangamma are supporters of Moorthy who is a freedom fighter. In Moorthy's absence Ratna became the leader of the freedom fighters of Kanthapura.

After Ramakrishnayya's death people chose Ratna for reading the religious texts. Ratna used to read them and Rangamma used to explain them to the people. She played an active part in the formation of the women's group called the Sevika Sangha. She had a lot of

courage and determination. She was also intelligent and resourceful. She was modern in her thinking. After being released from jail, she went to Kashipur. She seemed to have become maturer and wanted to play her part in India's struggle for freedom. She was disappointed when Gandhi reached a compromise with the Britishers. After staying in Kashipur for sometime, she went to Bombay.

She was very close to Moorthy and there certainly was a kind of attraction between them but very little is said about this aspect.

THE OWNER OF SKEFFINGTON COFFEE ESTATE

The present owner of the Skeffington Coffee Estate is the nephew of the earlier owner of the estate who was popularly known as the "Hunter Sahib" because he always used to carry a hunter or whip in his hand. The nephew is less cruel compared to his uncle. He does not beat the coolies. He distributes medicines among the coolies to prevent fever or to cure people who are suffering from fever. The coolies are uneducated and superstitious people and do not take the medicines given to them by the Sahib. It is not that the life of the coolies is very good and very comfortable under this Sahib. The workers are economically exploited and they live under inhuman conditions but still, the nephew is better than his uncle. But the nephew has a weakness for women. He wants any woman who catches his fancy. If any woman dared to say-no, her family members were harassed and tortured by the Sahib.

The Sahib may be a villain but still he does have some good qualities in him.

ADVOCATE SANKAR

Sankar was the lawyer who was looking after Moorthy's case when he was arrested. This was when he was arrested the first time and taken to Karwar. Many advocates offered to help Moorthy They wanted to defend him but, Moorthy refused to take their help. The police had accused Moorthy of arranging the assault of the pariahs on the police. He was ultimately sentenced to imprisonment for a period of three months.

Sankar was an honest man. He never took a false case and if he discovered in the middle of the case that his client had lied to him, he immediately dropped the case. Once he even forced his client to make a confession when he discovered that his client was guilty. He was a successful lawyer but he charged very less compared to other lawyers. He sometimes even paid the court fees on behalf of

his clients. Unlike other lawyers he was not rich. He was respected by the people. He was a successful lawyer but he led a simple life.

He was a follower of Gandhi and actively participated in the work of the Congress. He was in fact Secretary of the Congress Committee of the town of Karwar and was patriotic and also an idealist. He is such a staunch follower of Gandhi that not only does he himself wear *khadi* but also does not go to functions where people are not dressed in *khadi*. He believes in the principle of non-violence. Like Gandhi, he also believes in good for everyone. It leads to self purification and gives spiritual strength and enlightenment. It was his firm belief that some day Hindi would be the national language of India. That is why he spoke to everyone including his mother in Hindi. His mother did not know Hindi and wasn't able to understand even a single word. He spoke to his daughter only in Hindi. In his spare time he used to teach Hindi to people. He had made it a rule that if any of his friends or family members even by mistake used a single word of English, they would have to pay a fine. Sankar also made his family members keep fast on several occasions. Occasions like the anniversary of the day on which Jallianwallabagh massacre took place or the day on which Tilak died. These actions and ideas of his, sometimes made people think that he was crazy but on the whole, he was a good human being.

Though he was just twenty six years old when his wife died, he did not marry a second time. His parents wanted him to marry again but he refused to do so. He had a daughter. Sankar and his daughter lived along with Sankar's parents. His father was a follower of Gandhi.

Sankar was very healthy and cheerful and looked much younger than he actually was. It was because of him that Rangamma could gain the confidence to speak on stage. He used to spin three hundred yards of yarn every morning instead of spending his time in praying to gods.

The novelist has given a very detailed description of the personality and character of Sankar. Apart from being the lawyer dealing with Moorthy's case, he does not play any other role in the novel. Therefore, according to some even if the part of novel which gives a description of Sankar is removed, it will not harm the novel in anyway.

Waterfall Venkamma

She is Rangamma's sister-in-law. Both Rangamma and Venkamma are widows. She is called Waterfall Venkamma because she is always

crying and shouting at people. She has a grudge against almost everybody. She has a grudge against Moorthy because of his refusal to marry her second daughter. So she is always making fun of him, ridiculing him and saying unpleasant things to him. She goes and says to Moorthy's mother, if the coffee planter's daughter and Moorthy actually get married, she will badly insult Moorthy.

She is jealous of Rangamma because she has a big house. According to Venkamma, the house had been built by her husband's ancestors and not by Rangamma's husband. Venkamma has five daughters and two sons and Rangamma is a childless widow and even then she lives alone in such a big house. Actually Venkamma's house was equally big but her grudge against Rangamma was because she was living alone in such a big house, and Venkamma had a big family and they were living in a house which was of the same size as Rangamma's house. She feels that the house should have belonged to her instead of Rangamma. She could not bear to see other people happy. She is petty minded and is an orthodox Brahmin. She is very conservative and traditional in her way of thinking. She hated Rangamma so much that she even felt like killing her.

She was against the Gandhi movement and she sided with Bhatta and the others who were against the followers of Gandhi. Bhatta arranged the match of one of Venkamma's daughters with advocate Seenappa. He did this to please her and get her support. Bhatta was against the freedom fighters. He was against Moorthy and the others who were followers of Gandhi.

She was loud-mouthed and always said foul things about people. When Rangamma stayed for some days in advocate Sankar's house, she made many foul comments on her. She said that Rangamma has now started openly living with her lover. She also spreads the news that the Swami has said that because of what he is doing Moorthy will be excommunicated. Moorthy's mother becomes very upset on hearing this. A rift is created between Moorthy and his mother. Ultimately Moorthy's mother dies. Venkamma does not like Ratna. Later when the people of Kanthapura settled in Kashipur, she also left Kanthapura and started living with her son-in-law.

CHAPTER - 12

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND BACKGROUND OF *KANTHAPURA*

The Era of Gandhi

Kanthapura is a political novel; hence it is located in a specific period of the history of India. It concerns itself with the non-violent non-cooperative movements of 1919-22 and 1930-31 and its impact on the social and political life of the country. This movement was launched under the guidance and direction of Mahatma Gandhi and an expression of resentment to the reform of 1919. The novel basically deals with the impact of this movement on the people of Kanthapura. What was happening in Kanthapura was happening all over the country during that period. In the novel, there are references to important events of the day such as Dandi March and the Jalliahwala Bagh Massacre. To be able to really understand and appreciate the novel one must know about the important events of the freedom struggle and also know about Mahatma Gandhi.

With a view to educating the Indian mind several movements had been launched in the last hundred years, therefore, this time when Mahatma Gandhi launched Non-cooperation Movement it was an expression of deep anguish and resentment. It had the backing and the support of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and also the entire country. But after some time finding the movement taking violent turn at certain places, Mahatma Gandhi withdrew this movement to the resentment of Jawahar Lal Nehru and many others.

Kanthapura traces the growth of the feeling of dissatisfaction with the British regime and dramatizes the conflict consequent upon the non-payment of taxes. It covers the history of the whole decade of 1920's and ends with the Gandhi -Irwin Pact of 1931. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was a formula of compromise between the Congress and the British Government. The pact was a consequence of the second upsurge of Civil Disobedience Movement that started in 1930 after the adoption of the resolution moved by Jawahar Lal Nehru for complete independence. However, the novel ends without completing the history of the movement for freedom, but it does convey in

definite terms the change of temper that the country had experienced on hearing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Social Reformers and Patriots of Early Phase

It was in the early phase of the nineteenth century that the British culture started influencing the Indians. The Indians were influenced by English education and the culture of the British.

Though the revolt of 1857 proved to be a failure, the fight for India's freedom continued to be fought on the social and economic fronts. Social workers and reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekanand, Shri Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindra Nath Tagore and many others like them were instrumental in bringing about the Indian Renaissance of the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born in a conservative Brahmin family but was fascinated by the Western Civilization and the New Learning. These social reformers tried to inculcate in Indian mind the feeling that they were in no way inferior to the western counterparts. Brahmo Samaj was an electic movement to emphasize the essential similarity of all religions, Eastern and Western. The social reformers worked for the eradication of social evils such as child-marriage, *sati*, Untouchability, *purdah* system and ill-treatment of widows. They worked for the removal of illiteracy and superstition.

Religion and Freedom Struggle

For exposing the evils of foreign government religion was pressed into service. Various religious leaders, reformers, poets, writers combined to develop the emotional basis of a true energetic nationalism. People came to develop a consciousness of their greatness in preceding ages and a sense of cultural superiority over their rulers, who were depicted as mere barbarians. Their lectures, articles and poems did as much to educate the Indian mind as the popular political movement started in the guise of religious festivals.

Tilak introduced the Ganapati festival with the purpose of exploiting the religious feelings of rural folk and also to create in them a spirit of courage, patriotism, discipline and unity. Even students were induced to participate in these celebrations so that they might develop love for their country. At a time when modern means of mass propaganda were yet unknown (it was as early as 1893) this festival was turned into a potent instrument for mass education and political awakening. In 1895 Tilak started the Shivaji festival to encourage the Marathas to emulate their beloved leader. These festivals instilled in the mind of the people a new yearning

for liberty and resolute inclination for a united national movem
Besides athletic performances, patriotic and religious songs were s
and *kathas* and ballads were recited. Political speeches were
delivered. The purpose was to develop national feeling among Indi
Like Tilak, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee also preached the relig
of patriotism to inspire people to a sense of self-sacrifice and
discipline. He developed the conception of motherland as the Div
Mother which is greater than heaven and, inspired his countryme
through his writings to break the shackles that bound her.

Raja Rao used this aspect of politico-religious awakening as
background of the story of *Kanthapura*. These movements of festi
started by Tilak and *Vandemataram* by Bankim Chandra Chatte
did not remain confined to Maharashtra and Bengal. They spre
all over the country. Religion played an important role in Indi
struggle for independence. It also has a very significant place in
novel. In the novel also *Harikathas* are used for political purpo
They are used for telling the people about the Gandhi moveme

Demand of the Moderates for 'Home Rule'

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the demand for 'Ho
Rule' gained ground. In 1885 the Indian National Congress
founded by an Englishman A.O. Hume. Indians like Surindra N
Bannerjee, Feroze Shah Mehta, Dadabhai Naroji and many oth
voiced the Indian demand for 'Home Rule'. These leaders w
moderates, for they were aware of the benefits which the cont
with the Britishers had done in bringing about a political and cult
regeneration in the country. The division in the rank and file of
party was perceptible at the Surat session of the Congress in 19
The extremists led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak assailed the moder
and the session broke up in confusion. The Congress remained un
the leadership of the moderates from 1907 to 1917, but it was evid
from now onwards that it was actually the extremists only w
reflected the true sentiments of the people.

**Gandhi's Arrival from South Africa : First Civil Disobedien
Movement**

Gandhi had used non-violent non-co-operation as a politi
weapon in South Africa. After coming back from South Africa,
used the same method in India. In the beginning he tried to sec
an honourable place for India in the British commonwealth by
operating with the British. During the First World War he made
plea for giving all possible help to the British in the hope that a
the war ends some degree of autonomy would be granted to

Indians. His moderate approach was not liked by the extremists. When the war ended the ungrateful British government did not fulfil the promises it had made to the Indian leaders. Instead the Rowlatt Act, 1919 came into being.

After this, Mahatma Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience Movement. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee etc. freely voiced the demand for *Swaraj*. At first the leaders demanded home rule under the patronage of the British but it soon grew into a demand for total independence. Even the Muslims were unhappy with the British Government for having engineered the fragmentation of the Turkish empire. At this stage when Muslims also were ready for a *Jehad* or religious war against the British, Mahatma Gandhi lent support to the Muslim cause and advised them to adopt non-violent non-co-operation as the means of fighting injustice and imperial domination.

The First Civil Disobedience Movement : Suspended

Non-violent demonstrations were taken out but the tragedy of Jalianwalla Bagh was perpetrated on April 13, 1919. Non-payment of taxes was combined with picketing of foreign cloth shops and those selling intoxicants. The foreign clothes were thrown into fire and *khaddar* was worn instead voluntarily. The Non-cooperation movement could not remain non-violent everywhere. The incident of Chauri Chaura was so tragic that the continuation of the whole movement of Non-co-operation, except *swadeshi* and *khaddar*, was suspended. This action of Mahatma Gandhi was criticised by many including Jawaharlal Nehru. When the nation was emotionally ready for a total collision, it was impolitic to withhold the national upsurge. *Swarajya* had been a moral revolt against alien domination till then on the basis of truth, fearlessness and non-violence. Civil Disobedience was meant for the assertion of Indian will for self-rule in the true sense. There was a sudden decline in the popularity of Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi himself realised that his people wanted *swarajya* total and unconditional.

Social Reforms Stressed by Gandhi

Gandhi realised that unity among the Indians was essential if the country is to be made free from foreign rule. Therefore Gandhi started a movement for removal of untouchability and upliftment of the lower castes. He worked for removal of social evils like the *purdah* system. He worked towards removal of poverty and illiteracy among the people of India. He believed that unity among the Hindus and Muslims was essential if they wanted to fight against the British

rulers. Mahatma Gandhi stressed on boycott of foreign goods a
foreign clothes and weaving of one's own cloth.

Thus, he worked for the economic and social upliftment of t
Indian people.

Second Phase of Gandhian Movement

The second phase of the Gandhian Civil Diobedience Movem
began in 1929. Though Gandhi still insisted on non-violence, this ti
the movement was more militant. There were meetings a
Satyagrahas all over the country. There were many boycotts a
demonstrations. Toddy booths and plantations were picketed a
foreign clothes and goods were destroyed. Farmers refused to p
land revenue. Gandhi undertook the Dandi March.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact : Indian's Dissatisfaction

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact left the people dissatisfied. Jawahar L
Nehru also regarded it as a failure. This pact was significant in ma
ways. It was the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which paved the way for th
establishment of the Indian federation, and the formation of Congre
ministries both at the centre and the states. It soon became cle
that India will achieve political independence in near future.

Nehru was educated in the west and brought up like a prin
but he had romantic love for freedom and he believed in socialis
On the one hand he was influenced by Marx and Lenin, on the oth
hand, he was fascinated by Mahatma Gandhi's personality. H
declared that the goal of Indian National Congress was *Poor
Swaraj*. He enlarged the perspective of the Indian freedom moveme
by interpreting Indian aspiration for freedom as a part of univers
revolt against bureaucracy and repression. He popularized th
socialist thought of the Marxian kind. In the novel also Raja Ra
has shown this general dissatisfaction of the people with Mahatm
Gandhi's conciliatory tone in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact as also at th
Round Table Conference.

Paschim Guwahati Mahavidyalaya
Guwahati-17
Date.....
Dharapur Chariali

CHAPTER - 13

PREFACE TO *KANTHAPURA*

Introduction

The Preface to *Kanthapura* is a minor classic in itself and an important critical document. In the Preface Raja Rao talks about the difficulties faced by Indian writers writing in English and then he discusses about the style and the technique of narration.

Use of English by Indian Writers

Raja Rao writes, "One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American...."

Raja Rao has actually done this in his novel. He has modified and broken the English syntax and structure to suit his purpose. Raja Rao uses English like a master, as though it is his own mother tongue. S. Nagarajan says in this context, "Raja Rao's aim is to create a style which will reflect the rhythms and sensibilities of the Indian psyche, and since it is in Sanskrit that the Indian mind has found its most consummate linguistic expression, he has tried to adapt his English style to the movement of a Sanskrit sentence".

He has used English in a truely creative manner. The words are English but their organisation is Indian and entirely his own. Raja Rao has expressed the idea very beautifully in the passage that Indians are basically bilingual. They use two languages, one for the expression of ideas, and the other for the expression of emotions. English is the language of their intellectual make-up. When they have to express their thoughts and ideas they use English. There was a

time when Sanskrit or Persian was used by them for the purpo
But when emotions are to be expressed they find it easier to expre
their emotions in their mother-tongue. Raja Rao says that becau
of this reason the Indian writers writing in English must adapt the
English so as to make it a suitable instrument for expression
Indian sensibility. They should write like Indians and not try to wri
like the English. The result of this will be that a new dialect whi
can be called Indian English will be developed. Raja Rao says th
English is to be adopted and Indianised to suit our purpose.

Narrative Technique : Art of Story-Telling

The narrator is an old woman called Achakka who original
belonged to the village called Kanthapura. Like others belonging t
the village, she also left Kanthapura and started living in anothe
village called Kashipura. She is narrating the events to anothe
woman long after they actually happened. Achakka had actuall
witnessed the events she is narrating and in most cases even sh
was a part of the whole action. She is an ordinary village woma
She is uneducated and simple woman and is not one of the prominen
people of the village. While telling many things that are imagina
are mixed with the factual. Certain things are modified and glorifie

Raja Rao says in the Preface, "After language the next proble
is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into ou
English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life ha
gone into the making of theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we tal
quickly, and when we move, we move quickly. There must be
something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble an
run on. And our paths are paths interminable. The Mahabharata ha
214,778 verses and the Ramayan 48,000. Puranas there are endle
and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherou
'ats' and 'ons' to bother us—we tell one interminable tale. Episod
follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, an
we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary
style of our story-telling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story

The narrator is a talkative and garrulous old woman. In th
process of narrating the events she adds details which seem
superfluous and unnecessary. The style of narration is akin to the
Puranas. There are many digressions. There are many details and
many episodes which can be removed without harming the novel in
any way. Inspite of these superfluities and digressions, the nove
cannot be called formless. The novel should not be judged accordin
to western theories regarding the novel-form. It should be judge
with reference to Indian tradition.

Indianness

The novel is characteristically Indian. Raja Rao has been successful to a great extent in capturing the very flavour and tempo of Indian life. Raja Rao has done this with the help of many devices. He uses imagery which is familiar to Indians living in villages. The images are drawn from everyday life and natural surroundings familiar to Indians. He uses Indian idioms and phrases. He makes use of legends and historical associations. In the preface Raja Rao says that he is writing the Preface because his publishers asked him 'to say a word of explanation'.

He starts the Preface thus, "There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich *Sthala-purana* or legendary history of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under this pipal-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 is a great regional novel, as well as an interesting *Sthala-purana*. The novelist rises from the particular to the general. The weaving of ancient myths into the structure of the novel, gives to it the quality of timelessness which all great works of art have. The novel illustrates how new legends or *sthala-puranas* are made, how the ordinary and the commonplace acquires larger than life dimensions in the imagination of poets and bards.

CHAPTER - 14

PLOT AND STRUCTURE OF *KANTHAPURA* OR *KANTHAPURA* : A FORMLESS NOVEL

Many critics have called Raja Rao's novels formless. So far as *Kanthapura* is concerned it has a definite form. It has a well-organised structure and a coherent and well-knit plot. Its form is not loose, it is well-directed, intelligently contrived and forcefully presented. It is an account of India's freedom struggle. It deals with the impact of Gandhi movement on a small village called Kanthapura.

The Exposition of the Novel

The novel begins with the description of the village Kanthapura and a description of its social life and gives a graphic description of India's rural society. We are told where the village is located and what crops are grown there. It is a small village in the southern part of India. The people are uneducated and superstitious, the narrator tells us about the presiding deity of the village and the legends connected with the goddess. Thus, first the background is prepared before introducing the individual characters and before saying anything about the *Satyagraha* movement.

The novel has a beginning, a middle and an end. After the background is prepared the various characters in the novel are introduced and they are briefly described. The narrator also tells us about the kind of relationship—each character has with the others. Petty rivalries and jealousies among people come to surface. Ratna is not introduced in the beginning. She is introduced much later. Some minor characters like advocate Sankar and Boranna are also introduced at a later stage.

Rising Action or Development of Action

The story of *Satyagraha* moves forward steadily till it reaches its climax. It is the story of the people of a small village who realise that they need to rise and fight for the freedom of their motherland. They make efforts in this direction and they fail. They leave Kanthapura and settle in Kashipura. As a result of the final clash

between the freedom fighters and the soldiers many people died and many were injured. After this clash, the whole village was set on fire and destroyed and many people were arrested. The remaining people left the village and never came back again. The loss was irreparable. People from the city came and settled in Kanthapura.

As such the action develops only after Moorthy comes to Kanthapura. Building of the Kanthapurishwari temple was his idea. Celebration of events like Sankara Jayanti was started. On such occasions there was a grand feast and they all enjoyed it.

Conflict

Moorthy was a follower of Gandhi and he had contact with the city Congress. *Charkhas* were brought by him from the city for distribution among the villagers. They were distributed free of cost and Moorthy went from door to door to convince people to take the *charkhas* and spin cloth for some time everyday.

The villagers were told about the events that were taking place all over the country by Moorthy. Moorthy told them about Gandhi and his ideals and views. He told them about important events like the Dandi March. He motivated the people to fight for the freedom of the nation. Mahatma Gandhi never appears on the scene but his presence is felt all the time throughout the novel. The Congress-committee was formed in Kanthapura. Rachanna who was a pariah was also made a member of the Congress committee. Moorthy worked for the upliftment of pariahs. There were people like Bhatta and Venkamma who were against Moorthy and the other freedom fighters. Bhatta was not happy when the Congress-Committee was formed in Kanthapura. Bade Khan had been sent to Kanthapura to keep watch on the activities of the freedom fighters of Kanthapura and report to the government about their activities. He was obviously against the freedom fighters. The Swami also belonged to this group. The action develops through the conflict between these two groups of people. Those who were supporters of the British Government and those who were followers of Gandhi.

The Fusion of the Main Plot and the Sub-Plot

The novel has a main plot and a sub-plot. The main plot deals with the impact of the Gandhi movement on a small village called Kanthapura. What was happening in that village at that time was happening in many other parts of the country. The sub-plot deals with the Skeffington Coffee Estate and the exploitation of the coolies living in the Coffee Estate. The two plots are fused into a single

whole for both expose the way in which Indians are treated by Englishmen.

Later, the coolies of the Estate joined the freedom fighters of Kanthapura. Coolies of the Coffee Estate joined the *Satyagrahis* from Kanthapura in their *Satyagraha* outside the toddy booth. They also built huts and started living in Kanthapura. But they were made to march back to the Estate. They were made to walk through the streets with their heads bent. A critic has rightly commented "Life on the Red-man's estate with its brutalities and humiliation is, speaking in a limited way, like the sub-plot of a tragedy. It is part of the general tragedy depicted in the rest of the book; with this difference, though, that while their suffering brought the victims a chastening, ennobling feeling now and then, and left them with perhaps a distant hope, if any, suffering on the estate was soul-destroying and absolutely devoid of compensations."

Sub-plot

Before the action actually begins the Skeffington Coffee Estate is described. A long passage is devoted to description of the march of the coolies to the Skeffington Coffee Estate.

"Half-naked, starving, spitting, weeping, vomiting, coughing, shivering, squeaking, shouting, moaning, coolies, with the children clung to their mothers' breasts, the old men to their sons' arms, and ..." They realised what life on the Estate was like only after coming to the Estate. They were very happy that they were going to the Estate and thought that they will have a very good life once they start living on the Estate.

Then, there is a description of the torture and humiliation these coolies suffer on the Coffee Estate. They were made to work without any break and the money that had been promised was not given to them. They suffered quietly and were totally helpless. The narrator gives a detailed description of the life of the coolies on the Estate and the way they suffered.

Climax and Denouement

The people of Kanthapura led by Moorthy go for picketing the toddy grove. People are mercilessly beaten up by the police and many people are arrested. Then there is picketing of toddy booths. Many toddy booths around Kanthapura are closed down due to this. Then there was the refusal of the people to pay taxes. Many people were taken away by the police and the people of Kanthapura were badly harrassed, beaten and tortured by the police. Women were molested and raped by policemen. Police brutality reached a climax. Coolies

were brought from the city. The coolies reaped the crops in the fields belonging to people of Kanthapura and took them away. Houses were destroyed and burnt. The whole village of Kanthapura was in ruins and the people were forced to leave Kanthapura. They settled in Kashipur.

There is no doubt about the fact that the people suffered but after this suffering they felt as though they had been chastened and ennobled and there was a sense of fulfilment. It also perhaps left them with a distant hope.

Three Threads of *Kanthapura*

It is a novel which depicts struggle for political freedom. However, the novel is not just concerned with the political aspect it also depicts the social religious and economic aspects. According to Narasimhaiah, "There are at least three strands of experience in the novel : the political, the religious and the social, and all the three are woven inextricably into the one complex story of Kanthapura."

Thus it is not merely a political novel. The Gandhi Movement also was not just a political movement. The religious, social and political aspects are depicted equally realistically and vividly.

Some Defects

In *Kanthapura*, episode follows episode in quick succession till the end of the novel is reached. The plot of the story is episodic there are many digressions and many things are included which seem to be irrelevant and superfluous. For instance the narrator gives a very detailed and long description of the life and character of Advocate Sankar and Advocate Seenappa. They are minor characters and do not play any significant part in the action. This description seems unnecessary and could have been shortened. This would not effect in anyway, the overall impact of the novel on the reader. There is a long description of the different kinds of snakes which seems totally unnecessary and superfluous.

In spite of there being some digressions, on the whole the novel has a well organised structure. The novel cannot be called formless just because there are some digressions of this sort.

The long mythological stories may be regarded as digressions, but since Rao's model of narration is the Puranas such digressions are not unexpected. Moreover, they serve their purpose in underlining the theme of the novel. The subject with which the novel deals is very vast. It is extremely difficult to give artistic form and unity to a work which aims at chronicling this freedom struggle. Raja Rao has certainly succeeded in doing so.

CHAPTER - 15

THEME OF THE NOVEL

The novel basically depicts the impact of Gandhi Movement a remote village in the southern part of India called Kanthapu What was happening in that small village was happening in ma other parts of the country at that time. It depicts the brutality which the Indian people were subjected by the foreign rulers.

The novel gives a graphic description of India's rural society a vividly describes the Indian customs and traditions. It deals wi a specific period of the history of India and basically deals with t impact of the non-violent, non-cooperative movements during t period from 1919 to 1931. It depicts the social conditions in Indi villages during this period. It also gives an insight into their wa of thinking their views and attitude towards things in general. M people are uneducated and superstitious. The society is cast-ridde Religion is very important to them and basically they are deep religious people.

Impact of Gandhi on the Masses

The novel depicts the Gandhian era very realistically. The amou of influence that Gandhi had on the masses was unbelievable. H had the ability to motivate people and was able to make an ent nation follow the path showed by him. Gandhi was able to transfo an entire nation into an army of non-violent freedom fighters. Neh gave a description of the impact of Gandhi on the masses in T *Discovery of India*. 'He was like a powerful current of fresh air beam of light that pierces the darkness, like a whirlwind that upse many things, but most of all the working of men's minds.

No Personal Appearance of Gandhi

In the novel, Mahatma Gandhi remains in the background a never appears on the scene but his presence is always felt throughou the novel. Raja Rao did not commit the mistake that Mulk Raj Ana committed by introducing the Mahatma in his novel the *Untouchab* The effect of introducing Mahatma on the scene was quite melodr matic.

Presentation : Impartial and Objective

The novel was written in France thousands of miles away from the land where the events took place. It is because of this reason that he was able to achieve the artistic detachment. The events are depicted objectively and realistically. It is not that only what is good and positive is presented. The negative aspects are also presented. The freedom movement as a whole is seen from a distance-objectively and impartially. Even the ideas and the ideals and views of Gandhi are seen objectively and at certain points they are criticized. Gandhi's methods are questioned and his ideas are compared to the ideas of Nehru. The following comment is worth noting :

"While the author is quite involved in it, his stay abroad six thousand miles away at the time he was writing it, gave him the necessary perspective and detachment and helped him see also all that violence and waste and futility and that terrible beauty that was born of it, all as manifest in our abiding faith in non-violence, religion and what one vaguely calls idealism. For Kanthapura is India in microcosm : what happened there is what happened everywhere in India during those terrible years of our fight for freedom."

In the novel idealisation is there but along with it criticism is also there. For instance, Moorthy is idealised to certain extent but even in him, certain faults and human weaknesses are shown.

Conversion of Moorthy

During that period in history which the novel depicts many young men gave up their studies and became freedom fighters. They joined the movement led by Gandhi for the freedom of the nation. Moorthy also did the same. He was in college when he was influenced by Gandhi and gave up his studies. Moorthy was a Brahmin and the only son of his widowed mother. She had thought that her son will be a highly educated and well placed man. She was shocked and really disappointed when Moorthy told her about his decision to give up studies and be a part of the freedom struggle. Moorthy had not met Gandhi personally. It was a vision of Gandhi which changed his life. He became a follower of Gandhi and started taking interest in the work of the Congress. A distinguished critic has commented,

"The impact of Gandhi on our villages was an impact of a dynamic religion, through one of its supreme practitioners..."

Pivotal Figure of the Story : Moorthy

Though Moorthy is young man who hardly has any experience, he soon becomes the leader of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. It is Moorthy who first takes the initiative for the formation of the

Congress Committee. He has contact with other Congressmen fr... cities. He went from door to door spreading the message of Gand... and trying to convince the villagers to take the *charkhas*. T... *charkhas* were given to Moorthy by the city Congress free of co... Moorthy organised the Congress work in the village. He told th... villagers what was going on in other parts of the country. He to... them about Gandhi and his ideas and views and the methods chos... by him to free the country from foreign rule. Moorthy plays a pivot... role in the whole drama that takes place in Kanthapura.

Immense Tumult and Upheavel, Suffering and Pain

Under the leadership of Moorthy, the people of Kanthapura uni... and rise and follow the path showed by their leader. They went fo... picketing the toddy grove and there was picketing of toddy booth... The *Satyagrahis* were mercilessly beaten up by the police. Eve... women and children were not spared. Many people got injured and... many were arrested but all this could do nothing to dampen the... spirits. After all this, there was a sense of achievement. They fel... as if they had done a great deed. Then the villagers refused to pay... taxes. Inspite of repeated reminders they refused to pay taxes. They... refused to accept the Patel appointed by the government. In the... absence of Moorthy, Ratna became the leader of the freedom fighters... It was Ratna who organised the women's group called the *Savitri... Sangha*. Boys from the city came to help the people of Kanthapura... when it was announced that the lands of those people who had not... paid taxes will be taken away by the government. They planned a... Satyanarayan Puja. Many people joined the procession including... people from the city and Muslims. Ratna was their leader.

So the movement continued inspite of the arrests and the... brutalities of the police. Their spirits were high. It gradually became... a mass movement. People from all sections of society joined the... movement. Coolies had been brought from the city to reap the crops... growing in the fields of the people of Kanthapura. Many people had... come from the city to take part in the auction. As a result of the... clash between the police and the *Satyagrahis* many people were killed... and a large number were injured. The houses were burnt whole the... village was totally destroyed. The people of Kanthapura had to leave... their homes and flee. They settled in Kashipura.

The people who were arrested were released soon as a result... of the pact made by Gandhi with the British. As a result of this... there was dissatisfaction among the younger *Satyagrahis*. Many of... them including Moorthy started questioning the methods and ideas...

of Gandhi. Gandhi was still respected by them like before but they had a feeling that the British had been successful in fooling him. They liked the views and ideas of Nehru.

Three Threads of *Kanthapura*

It is a novel which depicts struggle for political freedom. However, the novel is not just concerned with the political aspect, it also depicts the social, religious and economic aspects. According to Narasimhaiah, "There are at least three strands of experience in the novel : the political, the religious and the social, and all the three are woven inextricably into the one complex story of Kanthapura."

Thus, it is not merely a political novel. The Gandhi movement also was not just a political movement. The religious, social and political aspects are depicted equally realistically and vividly.

CHAPTER - 16

ART OF CHARACTERISATION

In *Kanthapura* Characterisation has Secondary Place

In *Kanthapura*, the main focus is not on creation of striking and memorable characters or characters that are unique. The basic aim of the novelist was to depict the impact of the freedom movement on a small village in the southern part of India. What was happening in that small village was happening in many other parts of the country during those years. In fact, the scenario was the same throughout the country. So, the emphasis is on people, it is not on individuals and characterisation has a secondary place.

Two Types of Characters

In *Kanthapura,* there are basically two types of characters. Characters like Bhatta and Venkamma who are against the Gandhian Movement and those characters who are followers of Gandhi. Some neutral people like Narasamma are also there. There are other divisions also. For instance, the people who are orthodox and those who are in favour of reform. The people who exploit and those who are exploited. The rich and the poor.

Multifarious Characters; Gods Plenty

The number of characters is very large. They belong to various sections of society. There are people belonging to different castes. There are Hindus and also Muslims like Bade Khan. There are rich people and also people who are very poor. The characters are drawn from the masses. They are simple and uneducated villagers. They are superstitious people and understand only the ritualistic value of religion. People like Moorthy are also there who are not superstitious. The Swami who belongs to the city is also there. Then we have advocate Sankar who is a learned man.

Characters Lack Depth

Though the number of characters is very large the characterisation of individual characters is not elaborate. The characters lack depth and lack intensity.

We see only their exterior. The characters do not reveal much about themselves. Their personality is manifested through their conversation with people. We come to know about their ideas and views about life. We see their reactions to the new ideas introduced by Moorthy and also see their actions. Their actions reveal certain things about the characters but we see only what is visible on the surface.

The characters are ordinary and of only a single dimension. They are not complex characters. Each character is a product of environment and also of heredity. The sorrows of the characters is due to poverty and due to circumstances and not due to their personality. There is no in depth analysis of personality of the characters. Therefore, showing that they are suffering due to their personality is out of question.

The Characters are Types but have Considerable Individuality

The characters are static and do not develop with the passage of time. The characters remain the same from beginning to end, they do not evolve or develop due to their experiences in life. They are types but also have characteristics which make each individual distinct. The basic aim of the novelist is to depict the freedom struggle and its impact on the small village called Kanthapura. Therefore individualisation is not important. Even then the characters acquire considerable degree of individuality. They are types but each has certain characteristics which distinguish that character from the rest of the characters. In drawing his characters Raja Rao maintains the balance between their individuality and representative nature.

Moorthy, Rangamma and advocate Sankar are followers of Gandhi. They belong to one type of characters but even in the way they follow the ideals of Gandhi there is some difference. Though they are all followers of Gandhi their views and ideas differ in certain respects. Rangamma plays an active role in the work of the Congress and follows the ideals of Mahatma like *ahimsa* and is a supporter of his views on the steps needed for economic upliftment. However unlike Moorthy, she does not work for upliftment of pariahs. On the other hand, Moorthy mainly concentrates on upliftment of pariahs and removal of untouchability. This particular thing distinguishes him from Rangamma who does not approve of Moorthy's mingling with the pariahs. Moorthy's mother too did not like his mixing with the pariahs and had tried her best to stop him from

doing so. She died after she got the news that Moorthy and his whole family and coming generations had been excommunicated by the Swami. Even after her death, Moorthy did not stop working for the pariahs or mixing with them. But even then Moorthy also has some hesitation in entering Rachanna's house when he is invited by his wife to come in. He sips the milk given to him by Rachanna's wife with great difficulty and he feels bad later as well. Sometimes the character of Moorthy seems to be over idealised, and it is because of things like this, that the character of Moorthy seems real. He seems to be human like everybody else.

Rangamma herself does not visit the pariahs and does not approve of Moorthy's going there but, she does allow him to come into her house even though she thinks that he has become polluted because he entered Rachanna's house.

Advocate Sankar also has certain characteristics due to which he becomes highly individualised. For instance, his refusal to go to a marriage party if the guests wear anything except *khadi*. He insists that the bride also should wear *khadi*. He is of the opinion that Hindi will some day become the national language and so he insists that everyone should speak in Hindi. When he speaks to his mother or to his daughter he always speaks in Hindi though his mother does not understand a single word of Hindi. As such he belongs to the type to which Rangamma and Moorthy belong, but he is also an individual with characteristics which make him different from everyone else.

Bade Khan belongs to the other group of characters. He is a typical policeman and a supporter of the British government. Though he is an Indian, he is against the freedom fighters.

The Swami and Bhatta also are against the freedom fighters and against the movement for upliftment of pariahs. Initially Bhatta was a follower of Gandhi but it was after one of his visits to the city that he became a supporter of the Swami and the British government. He starts working against the freedom fighters.

Bhatta has a soft corner for Ratna and he once gave money to a boy without charging any interest, for the purpose of his education. These are traits which individualise Bhatta. Venkamma who is commonly called waterfall Venkamma also belongs to this group. She is against the Congress but this is not based on reason. It is without any basis. The character of Venkamma is highly individualised. She

is an uneducated and superstitious widow. Her basic characteristic is that she is always cursing people and shouting at them. She is jealous of Rangamma and cannot bear the prosperity of other people. She is not merely a type. The owner of the Skeffington Coffee Estate is a typical Englishman and obviously a supporter of the British government. He also has certain traits like his weakness for women but his distributing medicines among the coolies which individualise him. He is not simply a type. Among the pariahs Range Gowda's character is highly individualised. He is not weak and helpless like other pariahs. He is a rich and influential man and has a very good personality. His word is law for the pariahs and also for others. Among the coolies though they are mostly taken as a class or a group Rachanna has some distinctive characteristics which are highlighted by the novelist.

Device of Character Contrast

The negative characters are shown so that the positive characters are highlighted even more due to this contrast. For instance, the character of advocate Sankar is highlighted due to presence of other lawyers like advocate Seenappa. His goodness is highlighted even more due to presence of bad people like advocate Seenappa

The present owner of the Skeffington Coffee Estate is compared to his uncle. Range Gowda is shown in contrast with other pariahs. His character shines out even more due to this reason. Ratna is compared and contrasted with other women.

Methods of Enhancing the Characters and Making Them Vivid and Real

It is not that Raja Rao is not good at the art of characterisation. He can do this job very skilfully. Just by using some small phrases or by adding epithets or nicknames, he is able to make the characters vivid and real. His characters are living characters. They are concrete, real and individualised. They are types as well as individuals. Even the minor characters are imparted life and individuality. The epithets sometimes describe appearance. For instance, pock-marked Sidda. In some cases the epithet tells us what the profession of the person is or the location of his house. For example, rice-pounding Rajamma, front-house Akamma and corner-house Moorthy. Sometimes the nickname describes the habit of a person. For instance, nose-scratching Nanjamma.

The nickname waterfall Venkamma is also very suggest
Sometimes a single phrase sums up a character or even the wh
social milieu. It makes the character real and vivid.

Conclusion

In *Kanthapura*, the emphasis is on themes and ideas and
on individual characters. Even then the characters are very real
it is clearly seen that the novelist did have the power to create liv
and concrete characters.

CHAPTER - 17

THE NARRATOR OF *KANTHAPURA*

Introduction

Raja Rao had to capture the tempo of Indian life in a language which is not Indian, and so the task was not easy. Raja Rao says in the Preface to the Novel, "We, in India think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly." The writer believes that this is something that is typically Indian. His task was to capture this swiftness of movement and he has done it very skilfully and effectively.

The Narrator : *Achakka*

In *Kanthapura* the narrator is an old woman called Achakka. Nothing is said about her personal life. She is telling the story to a woman who is new in Kashipura. This is after the people of Kanthapura had left the village and gone and settled in Kashipura.

She is telling her about events that took place in the past. They are narrated as they emerge out of the memory of this old woman.

As such the events are narrated chronologically in the sequence in which they took place and in a straight forward way but, in some places the narrator does give some backward glances.

She tells the story in a very natural and spontaneous manner, episode follows episode and this goes on endlessly. There are many repetitions and digressions. In some places details are given which seem unnecessary. She herself was a part of the events narrated by her but she was not among the principle figures.

She is an ordinary woman of Kanthapura who is uneducated and with no particular distinguishing quality. However, she is intelligent enough to understand the implications of what Moorthy was doing and the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. She has a very good power of observation and a very good power of expression if we consider her education and her background. Some passages do not seem to be in keeping with her background and accomplishment. An example of this is the passage describing the outbreak of monsoons on the Skeffington Coffee Estate. It is a beautiful passage. The description

can be given only by a great writer. A person who is a master of the art.

The reader is not given any information about the kind of life she had lived or about her personal life. The only information given to us is that she is a widow and has no one except Semu. She has seven acres of wet land and twelve acres of dry land. She is never sharply individualised. She is one of many women of Kanthapura. She has a representative nature and in this sense she has a choric function.

Certain Things Revealed About the Narrator from What She Says

From her narration many things are revealed about her. It is obvious that she is fond of Moorthy. She is clever and sympathetic towards the people. She is a follower of Moorthy who is freedom-fighter. She is able to understand the people around her. This is seen in the description she gives of the various characters. She may not be educated but has common sense.

Manner of Telling the Story

She tries to make her story full of suspense so that people find it interesting. She tells us about everything that happened in and around Kanthapura and the Skeffington Coffee Estate. She not only narrates the events but sometimes also comments on them. The instances where she makes any comments are very few because her aim is to narrate what actually happened without complicating it. Her comments are very clever and accurate and help the reader in seeing the events and characters in the right perspective. For instance, she says, "Bhatta left us after harvest on a pilgrimage to Kashi. I tell you that he was not a bad man, was Bhatta?" A comment like this does effect the way we see Bhatta.

The narration and description and the evaluation of the action and the characters is done simultaneously. Achakka's evaluations of the various events and characters are actually the evaluations of the novelist. The story is narrated simultaneously on two levels. It acquires a dramatic character. Srinivas Iyengar is of the opinion that Achakka's manner of telling the story is, "characteristically Indian, feminine with a spontaneity that is coupled with swiftness, raciness suffused with native vigour, and exciting with a rich sense of drama shot through and through with humour and lyricism".

He further adds, "The narrative is hardly very straight forward: there are involutions and digressions, there are meaningful backward

glances, there are rhythmmical chains of proper names (Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna; Satamma and Rangamma and Puttamma and Seethamma), there are hypnotic repetitions and refrains, and there are also sheer poetic iridescence. A village, a picturesque region, an epoch of social political change, a whole complex of character and motive, reason and superstition, idealism and cold calculation, all spring up before our eyes demanding recognition and acceptance; it is almost a *tour de force*. Although Raja Rao has put the story into the mouth of a grandmother-although the feminine touches and mannerisms, the seemingly effortless rotation of the tongue, the meandering sentences and massive paragraphs are characteristic of the narrator—there is nevertheless consumate art in all this riot of artlessness, there is careful selection behind the apparent abundant detail."

Benefits of Making Her the Narrator

Meenakshi Mukherji is of the opinion that making Achakka the narrator serves many useful purposes.

Meenakshi Mukherji says, "Making this old woman the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle fact and myth in an effective manner. For the old woman, Jawaharlal is a Bharata to the Mahatma—the Mahatma who, she believes, will slay Ravana so that Sita may be freed. For her, Gandhi has attained the status of God, and Moorthy is regarded as his *avtar* in Kanthapura. The characteristically concrete imagination of the uneducated mind pictures the Mahatma as large and blue like the Sahyadri mountains on whose slopes the pilgrims climbed to the top, while Moorthy is seen as the small mountain. To her, the Satyagraha becomes a religious ceremony to which she devotes her sacred ardour".

According to Meenakshi Mukherji. "The second advantage derived by this choice of narrator is that the language used by her is of an elemental quality. Her reaction to things is direct and vivid, not literary and second-hand". The images like "young boys bright as banana trunks"; "the pumpkin moon" are taken from her everyday life. She is a village-woman, the character has helped the novelist in reproducing the rhythm of Indian speech in English. It has also helped in coming close to the oral tradition of story-telling.

The narrator while narrating the events many a times goes back in time. Due to this, it seems like a leisurely manner of story telling. The things that sound natural coming from her mouth would not have sounded natural if the novelist or any other person had said

the same. The choice of language also is appropriate if we consid... her background.

The Manner of Narration is Varied According to Requirement...

The language, the tone and the accent of the narrator change... according to the situation. The narrator creates a vivid picture o... the environment and the characters in such a skillful manner tha... one does not feel that one is reading extraneous material. One o... the methods that she adopts is to give short epithets to the name... of the characters in the novel. This gives the characters a distinctive... uniqueness because of which we do not confuse between the various... characters. In some places, she gives long descriptions and in some... places where she wants just to state a fact she uses plain and simple... language. The length of description also varies according to the... situation. The description is sometimes pointed and sometimes prolix... depending on the event that is being described. Images used by the... narrator to depict change in appearance or attitude are concrete and... taken from life. The following passage is an example of this:

"Narasamma was growing thin as a bamboo and shrivelled like... a banana bar." These are images which are familiar to people living... in villages.

His Habit of Piling Up Images and Epithets in the Story

Sometimes the novelist in order to create the sense of largeness... of numbers uses a multiplicity of images and epithets. This is seen... in the passage describing the coolies coming out of the Skeffington... Coffee Estate.

> "Then the police inspector saunters up to the Skeffington gate and... he opens it, and one coolie and two coolies and three coolies come... out, their faces ...."

He always uses language which is fit for the occasion.

Conclusion

The technique of narration used in *Kanthapura* has been liked... by critics and readers alike. It is perfectly suited for the purpose... that the novelist had in mind. He himself tells us in the preface... to the novel that telling has not been easy. He has not only done... it successfully but also done it amazingly well and very skilfully.

CHAPTER - 18

KANTHAPURA IS INDIAN : BOTH IN THEME AND TREATMENT

Introduction

Raja Rao is one of those Indo-Anglicans who are known for writing truly Indian novels. His intellectual make-up was not purely Indian because from the age of twenty five he was living outside India. The influence of the west was very much there in him but he was basically an Indian and his attitude was Indian. He consciously wanted to understand from Indian point of view the western attitude to life.

Raja Rao consciously tried to write typically Indian novels either by using Indian locale and narrative style as in the case of *Kanthapura* or typically Indian sensibility as in the case of *The Serpent and the Rope.*

Narrative Technique : Like Ancient Indian Writings

The narrator is an old woman called Achakka. She is narrating the story many years later to a woman who is new in the village. Her style of narration is akin to Indian writings of the past, like the Puranas. Episode after episode is narrated without any breakes in a breathless manner till the end of the narrative. Mulk Raj Anand makes a very beautiful comment, "the reader can almost hear grandma talking. Episode follows episode, and each one is integral to the story." There are many digressions and many things that seem superfluous but the novel cannot be called formless.

In the Preface to the novel Raja Rao says, "We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly and when we move we move quickly. Achakka's inordinately long, meandering sentences, use of blanks, digressions and expressions like 'this and that', 'here and there' are meaningful."

A distinctive feature of the novel is the rustic touch of the narrator. The following comment about Achakka is worth noting :

"Achakka is more articulate than her predecessors, indeed, her garrulity is ear-splitting, if taken in large doses; her narrative style

is the novel's crowning charm and also the greatest threat to its success. Those familiar with the vernacular and with the circumlocation of Indian speech habits will be delighted with Achakka's narrative style and its gossipy digressions." She makes the narrative more interesting by her special manner of speech. The occasional hesitations, repetitions, excitement etc make the narrative even more exciting. At places lines of poetry are included in the narrative.

Use of Vulgar Language

The vulgar, abusive language which Raja Rao uses in some places forms a part of natural speech of the poor peasant's. Mulk Raj Anand also uses such language in his novels and he uses it in less restrained manner compared to Raja Rao. Raja Rao does not have any hesitation in using such language when the occasion demands it. For instance, "May your house be destroyed—may your wife die childless—I'll sleep with your mother".

Raja Rao has said in the Preface to the novel, "The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language." The use of such language is one of the means by which Raja Rao has been able to get over this difficulty of conveying in a language that is not one's own a spirit that is one's own.

Indian Legends, Folk Tales and Mythological Stories : Referred in the Novel

Raja Rao has placed an Indian myth at the centre of the novel. The myth he has used is the Rama, Sita and Ravana myth which Indians are very familiar with. Indians have this story on the tips of their tongues. In the course of the narrative many Indian folk-tales, legends or mythological stories are mentioned or sometimes just casually referred to. Some critics are of the opinion that the comparison of Moorthy's position with Harishchandra or Krishna in *Kanthapura* does not flow spontaneously from the narrative and it seems to be a defect in it. This also is one of the devices which make the novel typically Indian.

Indian Phrases Translated Directly into English

He has translated Indian phrases directly into English. He has used English words but the way, the words are organised is typically Indian.

For instance :

(1) "He would not even have dirt out of the body of the second daughter...."

(2) "Narasamma was growing thin like a bamboo and shivelled like a banana bar...."

(3) "God has not given me a tongue for nothing....."

(4) ".....loin-cloth wide of land....."

(5) "As hale as a first calved cow....."

(6) "Every enemy you create is like pulling out a lantana bush in your backyard....."

Raja Rao has used some expressions which are typically south-Indian. There are literal translations from Kannada. Some Indian words like *Ahimsa, Dhate, Mandap* etc are used without any translation. Many Indian idioms have been used by the novelist and the imagery used is familiar to people living in Indian villages.

For Instance :

(1) our hearts beat like the wings of bats;

(2) every squirrel has his day

(3) the youngest is always the holy bull

(4) a rasping hiss as though a thousand porcupines have suddenly bristled up.

The animals and birds used in these similies are very familiar to people living in India.

Like Mulk Raj Anand, he also uses swear words for creating the effect of local colour, like "the son of my woman", "those sons of concubines" etc.

To impart Indian touch to the English expressions some new words have also been coined. For instance "Gandhi-man", "Harikatha man", "obsequial gross-rings", "leaf cups" etc.

He also uses some proverbs which are commonly used by peasants in their speech.

For example :

(1) saw you like a rat on your mother's lap;
(2) the first daughter milks the cow when the mother is ill;
(3) land, lust and wifely loyalty go badly together.
(4) the policemen are not your uncle's sons.

In the novel there are usual references to Indian life and habits, and Indian social customs. For instance, the sari fringe pulled on the face, shaven head of a widow etc. References of this sort help in creating the Indian atmosphere.

Then there are references to adornment of threshold and worship of cow every morning or clucking of lizard as propitious and many such references. References are also made to Indian history. This also is one of the things which makes the novel typically Indian. When Ramakrishanyya sees a shooting star sweeping across the sky he says, "some good soul has left the earth". A distinctive Indian sensibility is expressed in the English language.

The Theme is Indian

The novel basically deals with the story of a small village in the southern part of India. This village called Kanthapura is a typical Indian village where most of the people are poor, illiterate and superstitious and the society is caste-ridden. The theme of the novel is the impact of the Gandhi Movement on this village.

The novel begins with the description of the village and its location. Then the people of the village in general are described. Then the characters in the novel are introduced one by one before the Gandhi Movement as such is mentioned. The people of the village realise that they need to fight for political freedom. They became united to fight for the cause. Ultimately the people are forced to leave Kanthapura and settle in a place called Kashipur. Inspite of this, they have a feeling that they have achieved something and perhaps also a distant hope. The village is depicted realistically. The rivalries and jealousies between the people are revealed. The Gandhi movement is presented objectively and impartially.

Conclusion

Indian writers writing in English face many difficulties and it is very difficult for them to be successful. Raja Rao has been able to get over these difficulties and create a work of art that will always be read and appreciated by people not only in India but all over the world. *Kanthapura* is Indian both in theme and treatment. Raja Rao has used an Indian locale and a narrative style which is akin to Indian writings of the past. He has used many other devices to make the novel a truly Indian novel.

CHAPTER - 19

KANTHAPURA AS A STHALA PURANA *OR* *KANTHAPURA* : A REGIONAL NOVEL

Meaning of the Term 'Regional Novel'

Thomas Hardy is considered to be one of the greatest writers of regional novels in English. Hardy spent his childhood in the country-side of Dorsetshire. The characters in his novels belong to the south-western part of England which he renamed as Wessex. The locale chosen by him for his novels was also the south-western part of England. Hardy gave a description of the countryside and the clothes and manners of the people living in the countryside. In English, Maria Edgeworth was the inventor of the regional novel. She created a new kind of fiction. The novelists belonging to the eighteenth century lacked a sense of place and did not go beyond London and Bath. It was Maria Edgeworth who gave to fiction a local habitation and name. She discovered that Ireland and the Irish peasant could be used in fiction.

A regional novel deals with and emphasises the unique features of a particular locality. Plots and characters are set in a particular locality. *Kanthapura* introduces the readers to a village in southern part of India and gives a vivid and graphic description of the village and the people living in the village. It is the story of a village called Kanthapura. So the novel can be classified as a regional novel and it can be called a *sthala-purana*.

Sir Walter Scott writes about the border countries, William Wordsworth, sings of the lake districts of Cumberland. Maria Edgewroth and Hardy's novels also are regional novels. In his novels and short-stories, R.K. Narayan writes about the town of Malgudi and its surroundings. R.K. Narayan is the father of regional novel in Indo-Anglican fiction.

Art is a synthesis of reality, myth, fantasy and imagination. Just as in other forms, in this also there is constant selection and ordering of material because a regional art is also creative. Regionalism is

not mere factual reporting. Through proper selection and ordering of material the novelist stresses the distinctive spirit of his chosen region and shows further that life in its essentials is the same everywhere. The selected region becomes a miniature representation of the world at large.

Every Village has a Legendary History or *Sthala-Purana*

Raja Rao says in the *Preface* to the novel, "There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich *sthala-purana*, or legendary history of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under this Pipal-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 is the name of a small village in the southern part of India. There are legends and stories attached to this village. It is a typical Indian village and in this matter also it is not different from other Indian villages in general. This village also has a *sthala-purana*. For instance, there is the legend concerning the goddess Kenchamma which has been described in detail.

"Kenchamma is our goddess. Great and bounteous is she. She killed a demon, ages ago, a demon that had come to take our young sons as food and our young women as wives. Kenchamma, came from the heavens—it was the sage Tirpura who had made penances to bring her down—and she waged such a battle and she fought so many a night that the blood soaked and soaked into the earth, and that is why the Kenchamma Hill is all red. If not, tell me sister, why should it be red only from the Tippur stream upwards, for a foot down on the other side of the stream you have mud, black and brown, but never red. Tell me, how could this happen, if it were not for Kenchamma and her battle? Thanks heaven, not only did she slay the demon, but she even settled down among us, and this much I shall say, never has she failed us in our grief. If rains....she has never failed us, I assure you, our Kenchamma."

Local Rituals and Customs

In the novel, a number of local customs and rituals are depicted. Some of the rituals are depicted graphically by the novelist. Meenakshi writes, "There is the ritual of yoking the bulls to the

plough under the Rohini star or of the traditional belief that at the beginning of *Kartik*, gods can be seen passing by,—"blue gods and quiet gods and bright eyed gods" or to the different modes of appeasing the goddess Kenchamma. All these make up the fabric of living of which the narrator is a part. Thus the reference to the rituals of ploughing, of worship and sacrifice, becomes a means of establishing the atmosphere in which the villagers live, as well as a device for concretising the point of view, i.e., delineation of the character of the unsophisticated narrator who can assimilate all facts into a mythical structure, for whom no fact becomes really significant unless it can be identified as part of a myth."

Mythicism

In a myth, "some of the chief characters are gods, others being larger in power than humanity". The same is the case in this novel. Moorthy has been presented as someone who is like a god and much superior to common people. Kenchamma is the presiding deity of the village. Gandhi is raised to the level of god :

"You remember how Krishna when he was but a babe of four had begun to fight against demons and had killed the serpent Kali. So too our Mohandas began to fight against the enemies of the country....Men followed him, as they did Krishna...."

The kind of image that people have in their minds of Moorthy is seen in passages like the one quoted below.

"He is our Gandhi. The state of Mysore has a Maharaja.....Moorthy who has been caught in our knees playing as a child is now grown up and great, and he has wisdom in him and he will be our Mahatma."

Advantage of Mythicising Facts

Meenakshi Mukherji has pointed out that "This mythicising of facts serves a two-fold purpose in *Kanthapura*. Its narrator is an old illiterate woman, and mingling of myth and fact would be her natural manner of observation and reflection. Thus, it is a device of characterization. Secondly, Raja Rao adheres to the Indian classical tradition by idealising or mythicising the central character. Moorthy is an idealized character, who like Christ, takes all the sins of the people upon himself and undergoes a penance for purification, a young man who conquers physical desire and self-interest. Indeed, in the context of modern European realistic tradition, he will appear unreal as a character. But this is not meant to be fiction in the realistic tradition; it is a local legend, and therefore the presence

of a god-like hero is more appropriate here. A myth necessarily deals with an idealised man or a man larger than life and Raja Rao uses the device of mythicising facts in order to give his hero that exalted status."

Kanthapura : A Miniature Representation

The novel begins with the description of the village and its location. It is a small village in the southern part of India. The narrator describes the area surrounding the village and the crops grown in that village. The people are uneducated and superstitious. The society is caste-ridden and the village is divided into four quarters called the Brahmin quarter, the Potters' quarter, the Weavers' quarter and the Sudra quarter.

Then the individual characters are introduced and the characters are described. The narrator also gives information about the relationship of each character with the other characters. The jealousies and rivalries between the characters is brought out. However, some characters like Ratna and Advocate Sankar are introduced much later. The characters in the novel are concrete and real. They are not [illegible] they lack depth and are flat characters. If all major and minor characters are included then the total number of characters in the novel is very large. The Gandhi movement is introduced only after giving a picture of the Place where the events described in the novel take place. The novel basically deals with the impact of the Gandhi Movement on this village called Kanthapura. In fact, what was happening in that village at that time was happening all over the country. So, this village is only a miniature representation of the whole country. Kanthapura is symbolic of a wider and larger world. It is a microcosm of India. The people of this village realised that they must fight for the freedom of the country and for this, unity among the Indians was essential. Like the lakhs of people all over the country, the people of Kanthapura did also fight for the freedom of the country. Ultimately, they had to leave Kanthapura and settle in Kashipura and it was as if they had failed in their efforts, but still, they felt that they had achieved something and they still had hope.

Conclusion

Kanthapura is a regional novel as it deals with the physical features, people, life, customs, habits, manners, language, traditions etc. of particular locality. But it also rises from the particular to the general. There are certain things in human beings and human life which are universal and present in human beings irrespective of caste

creed, religion or the country they belong to. Such universal human weaknesses, sorrows and passions are depicted in novel and this adds to the appeal of the novel. So in a way, it is also a representation of humanity in general. The characters in the novel have certain basic characteristics because of which they have such universal appeal. They have certain things in their personality which is the result of the environment in which they live but there are certain things which are basic in them which have nothing to do with the village or country to which they belong.

CHAPTER - 20

THE ELEMENTS OF POETRY, FANTASY AND LYRICISM

Kanthapura : A Remarkable Achievement

Among the Indian writers writing in English, Raja Rao has a special place and the novel *Kanthapura* will always be read as a classic of Indo-Anglican fiction.

The tale in Kanthapura is a breathless tale from the beginning to the end and is fascinatingly told in the age-old Indian tradition of story-telling. The language is highly original and it is full of life.

According to Narasimhaiah, "When it comes to style, the breath-taking long sentences, page-long sentences, repetitions of names and words, while sometimes necessary to build up the tempo of the commotion in Kanthapura, can also sound highly mannered and they do. But the author is not impoverished of stylistic devices to suit a wide range of emotional or mental states. In fact, the one outstanding contribution of Mr. Raja Rao to Indian writing in English is to have struck new paths for a sensibility which is essentially Indian. While R.K. Narayan has invented a language which suits his purpose most adequately, it is not likely to be of much help except in minor ways to those that write fiction in English after him, unless they bring to fiction writing gifts like his. Indian fiction in English can, it seems to me, make headway by continuing the Raja Rao line, which is to say one must have not merely his technique, but his amazingly high intellectual equipment and awareness of Indian tradition—all of which should be possible to acquire varying degrees by serious aspirations."

Personification of Natural Phenomenon

As such the language is suffused with poetry in many of the descriptions, like the description of the coming of rains in *Vaisakh*. It is described in highly poetic terms, rain is personified in the following passage which is a marvellous piece of poetry.

"In *Vaisakh*, men plough the fields of Kanthapura. The rains have come, the fine, swift-footing rains that skip over the bronze mountains, tip toe the crags, and baking into the valleys, go splashing

and windseveng, a winnowed pour, and the coconuts and the betel-nuts and the.....and begins to paw upon the tiles and the cattle...."

Poetic Element

The narrator is an uneducated and simple village woman. Some descriptions are so beautiful and such exquisite pieces of poetry that it does not match the narrator's background. Especially the description of the first monsoon rain on the Skeffington Coffee Estate : "It churns and splashes, beats against the tree-tops, reckless and wilful, and suddenly floating forwards it bucks back and spins forward and pours down upon the green, weak coffee leaves, thumping them down to the earth, and then play fully lounging up, the coffee leaves rising with it, and wholing and winnowing, spurting and rattling, it jerks....."

The description of Diwali is equally poetic :

"*Kartik* has come...with the glow of lights, and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods; while lights from claytrays and red lights from copper-stands, and diamond lights that glow from the bowers of entrance-leaves; lights that glow from banana trunks and mango twigs, yellow lights behind white leaves, and green lights behind yellow leaves, and white lights behind green leaves; and night comes through the shadow streets, and hissing over bellied boulders and hurrying through the dallying drains, night curls through the Brahmin Street and flapping through the mango grove, hangs clawed for one moment to the giant Pipal, and then shooting across the broken fields, dies quietly into the river-and gods walk by lighted streets...."

Politics Charged with Poetry : Is Transmuted and Glorified

Politics is also charged with poetry and hence it is glorified. Srinivas Iyengar made the following comment, "In a passage like the following describing the people of Kanthapura waiting at the roadside for Moorthy on his release from prison, nervous agitation wings itself into appropriate language : And hearts began to beat, and yet we saw no Moorthy and yet no Moorthy, and yet not a hair of his head was seen, and we were silent as though in the sanctum at the camphor ceremony. Yet no Moorthy, and no Moorthy, and the bus had surely passed by the river...."

The description of the coolies being asked to walk over the *Satyagrahis* lying prostrate is also worth nothing:

".....the police frightened, caned and caned at the coolies till they pushed themselves over us; and they put their feet here and they put their hands there, but Rangamma shouted *Vande Matram*.....and

the coolies would not move, and we held their hands, and we held to their feet, and we held to their *sarees* and *dhoties* and all, while the rain poured on and on. And the police got nervous and they began to kick us in our backs and stomachs, and the crowd shouted, *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* and someone took a kerosene tin and began to beat it, and someone took a cattle-bell and began to ring it, and they cried, "With them, brothers with the," and they....."

Heightening of Reality

The novel depicts the freedom struggle very realistically. The presentation is impartial and objective and the characters are real and life like. The village that is described is a typical Indian village. This is how Indian villages normally are and the people that are described are common people and seem very familiar because they are like average Indians were during that period of time. But the things that are so common and familiar are made to look uncommon and unfamiliar due to addition of some amount of imagination or fantasy. The reality is not distorted but it is shot through and irradiated by poetry and fantasy. If certain degree of imagination or fantasy had not been added the novel would be rather dull. Raja Rao has used certain methods for heightening reality. One way was mingling the past and the present and the future. Swaraj is compared with *Ram-Rajya*. Rama and Shiva become synonymous with Gandhi. The reality of Gandhi as a selfless patriot and great freedom-fighter is mixed with the mythical fantasy of his birth as an incarnation of Shiva.

Childhood of Gandhi is compared to Lord Krishna's childhood. Krishna's killing the serpent Kali is taken to be synonymous with foreign rule. This is done in the *Harikathas* which were actually political propoganda in disguise. These *Harikathas* were used to tell the people about Gandhi and about the freedom movement.

Scientific Knowledge

Rangamma tells the villagers about various scientific facts in a very simplified manner and used expression which they can understand. Science also is poetised and the entire account seems to be like a piece of poetry.

"She knows so many many things too, of the plant that weep, of the monkeys that were the men we have become, of the worms, thin-as-dust, worms that get into your.....She told us, too, about the stars that are so far that some have poured their light into the blue space long before you were born, or your father was born or your grandfather was born, and just as a day of Brahma is a million years

of ours, the day of the stars is a million million times of our day, and each star has a sun and each sun has a moon, and each moon has an earth and some there are that have two moons...."

Jagdish Chandra Bose's discovery has been referred to as the plants that weep; and Darwins theory of Evolution as the monkeys that were the men we have become. According to Narasimhaiah, "A purely scientific sensibility is absorbed into a unified sensibility and the dichotomy of Sir C.P. Snow's two cultures disappears with only different degrees of one cultural consciousness resulting from such an absorption of science and religion. History and myth meet with effortless ease and merge in one another".

CHAPTER - 21

KANTHAPURA IS A MICROCOSM OF MODERN INDIA
OR
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE
OR
THE PRESENTATION OF LIFE IN A SOUTH INDIAN VILLAGE IN THE NOVEL

Introduction

The novel tells us about a small village called Kanthapura and the impact of the Gandhian Movement on this village. This village is a miniature representation of the whole country. What was happening in Kanthapura was happening in thousands of villages all over the country at that time. This village is a typical Indian village and we get a very vivid and realistic picture of life in Indian villages. This is how Indian villages mostly were at that time. The title of the novel is apt and suggestive as *Kanthapura* is actually the name of village in which the events described in the novel take place. The novel is about the people of Kanthapura and the village called Kanthapura. It is the story of a small village.

Location of the Village

The narrator gives a detailed description of the village and the area surrounding it. The novel begins thus :

"Our village—I don't think you have ever heard about it—Kanthapura is its name, and it is in the province of Kara. 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 sugercane. Roads, narrow, dusty, rut-covered roads, wind through the forests of teak and of jack, of sandal and of sal....."

Society is Caste-Ridden

The village is divided into the Brahmin quarter, the Pariah quarter the Potters' quarter, the Weavers' quarter and the Sudra-quarter. The people are superstitious and uneducated. The people are divided on the basis of caste. Indian villages are caste-ridden and Kanthapura is no exception. This fact is highlighted by the novelist. The narrator who is a Brahmin has never visited the pariah quarters. Most people are in favour of maintaining this system and continuing to follow the traditional norms of behaviour followed by people of different castes.

Moorthy works for the upliftment of the pariahs and removal of untouchability but most people are against this movement for upliftment of pariahs. The caste distinctions are embedded very deeply in the psyche of the Indians. Even Moorthy has hesitation in entering Rachanna's house. This is true not only of Kanthapura but of every Indian village. Bade Khan is not able to get a house to live in within Kanthapura because he is a Muslim. This is how the Indian society was at that time.

The People are Deeply Religious

The people of Kanthapura are deeply religious. Kenchamma is the presiding deity of the village. They have full faith in the goddess and blindly believe in the legends and stories connected with the goddess. They are uneducated and superstitious people. The narrator herself is an uneducated and superstitious old woman just like the rest of the villagers. And this is how the people living in Indian villages are. So, when he describes the people of Kanthapura the novelist is infact describing the people of Indian villages in general.

The narrator tells about Kenchamma the presiding deity of the village. She had saved the villagers from a demon who was making life difficult for them. The demon demanded the youngmen as his food and women as his wives. Kenchamma came from the heavens and waged a battle and fought so fiercely that the blood soaked and soaked into the earth and that is why Kenchamma hill is red. Not only did she slay the demon but also settled down in Kanthapura. The narrator further adds that the goddess has always come to the rescue of the people in their grief. She grants every wish of the villagers. Every person who prayed to the goddess was cured of disease.

Almost all Indian villages have such stories connected with gods and goddesses in which the villagers believe without any doubt.

The People

After giving a description of the village and a general idea about the people living in Kanthapura, he introduces the characters of the novel one by one.

Achakka is the narrator and she is an old woman belonging to Kanthapura. Waterfall Venkamma is introduced. She is called Waterfall Venkamma because she is always moaning and weeping about something or the other. Venkamma has a grudge against Rangamma, a childless widow who was Venkamma's sister-in-law. She claims that the big house in which Rangamma lives was built not by Rangamma's father but by her own husband's ancestors. She does not like it that Rangamma lives in such a big house. In reality, Venkamma's own house was as big as her sister in laws house but even then she said that it was not large enough for her family because she had a big family. Besides she could not bear that it was occupied by Rangamma's father and mother, and when the vacations came Rangamma had all her younger brothers and the children of her elder brother from Bombay to spend the summer. She was against the Gandhi Movement. Achakka is Seemi's mother. Dore and Moorthy are also introduced at this point. Moorthy plays a pivotal role in the novel. He ultimately became the leader of the freedom fighters living in Kanthapura. The life of this simple Brahmin boy was totally changed after he had a vision of Gandhi. He had never met Gandhi in person. He gave up his studies and decided to fight for the freedom of the country. When he came back to Kanthapura and told his mother about his decision. She was very disappointed and shocked. With time, she accepted the idea. Moorthy started wearing *khadi*. He went from door to door for distributing *charkhas* and telling the people about the Gandhi Movement. He worked for the upliftment of the pariahs. He did not stop mixing with the pariahs even after the death of his mother. His mother was a simple woman and did not know much about the Gandhi movement. She was uneffected by the Gandhi Movement. She was an orthodox Brahmin woman and became very disturbed when she heard that the Swami had said that Moorthy will be excommunicated if he does not stop mixing with the pariahs. When she got the news that Moorthy and his whole family and coming generations had been excommunicated she could not bear it. She died of shock.

The characters are introduced one by one. Ratna is introduced at a much later stage. The description in some cases is short and in some very long, and in some cases the characters are just

mentioned. But they are all real and concrete characters. The description is vivid.

A distinguished critic has said, "The villagers are depicted in realistic colours. Their names are made descriptive in nature—it is a typical rural way. For instance; Bent-legged Chandrayya, Cardamom-field Ramachandra, Coffee-planter Ramayya, Corner-house Moorthy, Front-house Akkamma, Gold-bangle Samanna, Nine-beamed house Range Gowda, Nose-scratching Nanjamma, Temple Rangappa."

People like Waterfall Venkamma and Rangamma and Moorthy are found everywhere. By describing these characters he gives us a glimpse of India. Such people are found in every village in India and all over India. This is how people in Indian villages normally are. Raja Rao describes only some important people. According to Narasimhaiah, "These stand out among the men and women of Kanthapura. As for the rest, one could not say, the novelist tells us at the end of the introduction of his *dramatis personae*, wheather they were rich or poor—they were badly dressed and always paid their taxes after several reminders. It is obvious he knows them just as well but, if he does not individualize them it is obviously because he doesn't like to crowd his canvass. But even then he would not dismiss them without a thought, for he has felt for them in their wretchedness. It is by means of such concrete particulars that the inhabitants and their residences are known to us and these are helpful in visualizing the scene of action." By describing the people of Kanthapura Raja Rao gives a miniature representation of the whole of India.

Microcosm of the Macrocosm

India is a country of villages. Majority of the people of India live in villages. Raja Rao gives a vivid description of Indian village life. People are poor, uneducated and superstitious. By describing the life in Kanthapura he infact describes—how life is in all Indian villages in general. The jealousies and tensions between the people are also depicted. This kind of jealousy is there everywhere, not only in villages but in any place where there are people. Hence, it becomes a microcosm of the macrocosm.

The Gandhi Movement

With time more and more people of Kanthapura became involved in the Gandhi Movement. Moorthy was their leader. Moorthy, Dore and the other city boys told the villagers about Gandhi and about the struggle for independence. They went from door to door for

distributing *charkhas*. The *charkhas* were distributed free of cost but they found it difficult to convince the villagers to accept the *charkha* and to start spinning cloth. The Congress committee of Kanthapura was formed. The Savika Sangh was formed. In the absence of Moorthy Ratna became the leader of the freedom fighters of Kanthapura. The people of Kanthapura picketed toddy booths and as a result of their efforts many toddy shops were closed down. By the time the Satyanarayan Puja was organised by the city boys, it had become a mass movement. Most of the people of Kanthapura had joined the Congress. Only a few people who were against the Gandhi Movement and had not joined them.

Srinivasa Iyengar has commented thus, "In the end it truly becomes a mass movement, the villagers comprising men and women of all the castes and professions and the labourers of the Coffee Estate readily meeting the onslaught of the bureaucracy. An unequal fight it inevitably proves to be, for the *Satyagrahis* are maimed and broken and scattered, and a remanent reaches after sore trials and vicissitudes—another village Kashipura, beyond the border where they settle down. Some of the *Satyagrahis*—Rangamma, Ratna, Moorthy—spend an allotted span in jail, but the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the political truce that comes in its wake, hasten the release of the *Satyagrahis*. Young men like Moorthy doubt the wisdom of the truce, and would rather follow the lead of Jawaharlal Nehru, "the equal-distributionist"; for the mass of the people, however Gandhi can do no wrong, he can be guilty of no miscalculation, and they accept the truce contentedly and wait further developments patiently."

CHAPTER - 22

RAJA RAO'S USE OF MYTHICAL TECHNIQUE

Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Manohar Malgaonkar have used myth in a casual and isolated manner in their literary works. It doesn't form the integral and spinal design of their novels. In case of Raja Rao his mythic design cannot be ignored. Raja Rao's myths are an integral part of his novels. M.K. Naik has said in his article "The Achievement of Raja Rao" (Special Number on Indo-English Literature, *The Banasthali Patrika,* January 1969) the Savithri Myth in *The Serpent and the Rope,* "is so vitally at the centre of the novel that any criticism which ignores this is itself bound to appear peripheral...." Raja Rao will be most ineffective if the central myths that integrate and shape his experiences into artefacts are ignored.

The use of the mythical technique means that the past is juxtaposed with the present and in this way, the past might serve as a criticism of the present, or it may be used to heighten or glorify the present. In *The Waste Land,* T.S. Eliot has used the mythical technique to criticise the present and in *Kanthapura,* Raja Rao has used the technique to glorify the present and to impart to the novel the dignity and status of an epic or Purana.

In a myth, some of the main characters are gods, some characters are super human. In Kanthapura, Moorthy is presented as someone who is much above the common people. He is idealised to such an extent that he seems to be much above humanity in general. Rajeev Taranath in "A Note on the Problem of Simplification" (*Fiction and Reading Public in India,* ed. C.D. Narasimhaiah, 1967) has commented on Raja Rao's habit of simplifying myths and fables :

"Raja Rao's treatment of myths resembles that of the Eliot in the fact that the myths and the fable are included as sustained qualities of consciousness but, it would be unjust to assert that Raja Rao's use of the myths is modelled on Eliots. For one thing there is a difference in approach and cognate disciplines. Secondly, Raja Rao's treatment of myths and fables is a reminiscent of Indian tradition of a story-within-the- illustrative-story. Note one distinction

however, Eliot's use of myths is part of the essential structure of his creation, in Raja Rao it is subsidiary. Where he attempts essential connection in the private myth of the bull and the elephant he doesn't succeed. I would attribute lack of success in this direction to his reliance on other quickly rewarding means. That is, the problem of simplification spreads into his use of myths and fables and makes them successful usually at the periphery of experience and not at the centre. The structuring of an elaborate creative tension is harmed by the presence of self-consciousness at the wrong places." It is somewhat difficult to accept Rajeev Taranath's view. It is in itself questionable how a poetic technique is compared without qualification with narrative technique. Meenakshi Mukherjee has commented in *The Twice Born Fiction (1967)* :

"*Kanthapura* is narrated by an old woman to a hypothetical listener....Raja Rao's choice of this narrator serves several purposes at once. Making this old woman the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle facts and myths and in an effective manner. For the old woman, Jawaharlal is a Bharatha to the Mahatma who she believes will slay Ravana so that Sita may be freed. For her, Gandhi has attained the status of God and Moorthy is regarded as *Avatar* in Kanthapura. The characteristically concrete imagination of the uneducated mind pictures the Mahatma as large and blue like the Sahyadre mountains on whose slopes the pilgrims climb to the top, while Moorthy is seen as a small mountain. To her the *Satyagraha* becomes a religious ceremony to which....."

Not an Allegory

In Kanthapura, the comparison between Gandhi-British rule and Rama-Ravana situation is not elaborate and complete. So it cannot be called an allegory. It is only a convenient comparison. A villager born and brought up in Indian tradition understands a contemporary problem easily if it is explained through a fable or an episode of the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* or the *Gita*. These books have gone deep into the blood of any average Indian. Moreover, the narrator being an old woman found it easier to explain subtle thought of Mahatma Gandhi and the complications of the contemporary situation through the widely known fables, legends and religious stories of gods and demons. It is natural that a novel dealing with political awareness takes into consideration the rural vocabulary.

Past and the Present Brought Together

In *Kanthapura* the past and present is juxtaposed and the characters from epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and Hindu

gods and goddesses are mentioned along with contemporary characters. A distinguished critic has said, "The distinction between the time past and the time present is thus obliterated, and both are projected into the time future. Mahatma Gandhi is Rama, the red-foreigner or the brown inspector of police who flourishes a lathi is but a soldier in ten-headed Ravana's army of occupation and oppression. Nay more : the *Satyagrahi* in prison is the divine Krishna himself in Kansa's prison. Events gather significance after the passage of some years, the humdrum becomes the unique, the trivial becomes the heroic, and the hectic excitement of a day becomes a permanent communal passion."

In the *Harikathas* of Jayaramachar the past and the present are juxtaposed and contemporary events and personalities are linked with Puranic gods and epic-heroes and heroines. Due to the use of mythical technique Gandhi is made a god and Moorthy is made into an *avtar*.

This juxtaposition of the past and the present and of men and gods is there throughout the novel. By the use of the mythical technique the novelist has enriched the texture of his novel and imparted to it a rare expansiveness.

The Myth of Rama-Ravana

In the *Ramayana,* Rama is presented as a man who has all the good qualities that one may expect in any human being. He is presented as an ideal man. Rama is the reincarnation of God who was born for destruction of evil. The battle between Rama and Ravana was a battle between good and evil. Ravana was a very powerful king and an evil man. A very powerful man with super-human powers was needed to defeat him. Only someone as powerful as Rama could do this. So, god sent Rama for the destruction of Ravana.

The situation was similar during the British rule. India was under the British rule and Indians were exploited and ill-treated by the British. The Indians were treated like animals by the Britishers. When Gandhi appeared on the scene the people looked at him as Rama. They looked at him as someone who will free them from British rule. His humiliation by Englishmen in Africa was like the humiliation of Rama when his wife was kidnapped by Ravana. Freedom was like Sita soiled and dishonoured and Mahatma Gandhi like Rama had to fight for her dignity. The weapons of Gandhi were truth, non-violence and self control. Mahatma Gandhi's visit to England to attend the Round Table Conference in 1931 was like the

visit of Rama to Lanka after defeating Ravana, to bring back his wife. The people of India waited anxiously for the return of Mahatma Gandhi. In a similar manner the people of Ayodhya waited anxiously for the return of Rama and Sita. The Indians had deep respect for Sita. Just like Rama had Bharatha who was sincere and devoted to him Mahatma Gandhi had Nehru. People compared Jawaharlal Nehru with Bharath and Laxman.

Other Analogies

The Britishers were the demons and Moorthy was an *avatar* who had come to free the people from the atrocities of the demons. The clash between the *Satyagrahis* and the British was a clash between good and evil forces. Moorthy who was an avatar like Rama needed a Hanuman. Seenu was a sort of Hanuman to Moorthy. Seenu was a follower of Moorthy. He was a worker, a messenger and also a devotee. The agent of the Swami who wanted to dissuade the people from joining the freedom movement used the same logic, but by inverting the situation. He was actually an agent of British government. He tried to convince them by saying that the British Rule was like *Rama Rajya* and the British Government was like Rama who had come to help the Indians who were living in misery. If the British had not come to India the Indians would have remained backward, and, the progress that it has made would not have been possible. He said that he therefore, prayed that they should forever rule over India.

Other Myths

Apart from those that are mentioned already, there are other myths in the novel which are used to diversify the *Harikathas* and also to make them more interesting and to draw the attention of the readers of the novel towards them.

For instance, a comparison is made between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Krishna. Mahatma Gandhi was named Mohandas by his parents which is another name for Krishna. He took birth to destroy the serpent of foreign rule like Lord Krishna who killed the serpent named Kaliya.

When he was a child Moorthy had seen a vision. He saw that like the child Krishna, he was sleeping on the leaf of a Pipal tree when the holy flood had spread in the whole area and he was safe. He saw another vision in which he saw that he was thrown like child Prahalad from the hill and was saved by God. He also saw a vision of the Mahatma and felt as if he was filled with primordial light. Swarjajya is compared with Lord Shiva. "Shiva is the three-

eyed and *swarajya* is also three-eyed : self purification, Hindu-Muslim unity and *khaddar*." Even Mahatma Gandhi is three-eyed i.e. endowed with the wonderful gift of foresight. Gandhi is Siva himself in human shape. Under his influence even persons like Moorthy became three-eyed and shared in his wisdom.

Mythologizing of Historical Characters

Historical characters such as Rani Laxmibai, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi were freedom fighters. They are presented as people who are super-human.

In the novel, Moorthy is exalted by the use of the device of mythologizing the facts of life. His stature is raised to such an extent that he seems to be the God. He is presented as someone who is much above ordinary men and who is an ideal man. He is compared to Rama, Krishna, Christ and Mahatma Gandhi who had taken upon themselves to wear the mantle of the sins of mankind and undergone penance for improvement of human lot.

Conclusion

Raja Rao was well informed about Indian myths, folklores, fables and religious literature. Except S. Ghose probably no one has tried to use mythic design on so elaborate a scale. Quotations from scriptures and Sanskrit literature and devotional literature of modern India have been used by others also but, it is only Raja Rao who has used them on such a large scale and in so appropriate style. Missing the central myth amounts to missing the central nerve of Raja Rao's fiction.

CHAPTER - 23

EAST - WEST THEME IN *KANTHAPURA*

Political Confrontation : Between the British and the Indians

The novel depicts the impact of the Gandhian movement on a small village called Kanthapura. The presentation of the Gandhian movement in the novel is impartial and objective. The novel was written in France which is thousands of miles away from the land where the events of the novel took place. This perhaps was the reason why Raja Rao was able to achieve the artistic detachment and present everything impartially and objectively. Both the positive and the negative aspects are presented.

Hatred for the British and Sympathy for the Gandhi Movement

There are two threads or strands in *Kanthapura*. They are : the hatred for the British and the sympathy for the Gandhi movement. The dislike for the British grows with passage of time and the sympathy for the Gandhi movement is generated. With time more and more people became a part of the Gandhi movement. People were finding the atrocities of the government unbearable and thus realising how important and necessary political freedom was. Many people like Moorthy discontinued their studies and joined the freedom struggle. There were incidents, which took place almost everyday which made them realize what their condition and status was in their own country and the kind of government that was ruling the country. For instance, the Sahib of the Skeffington Coffee Estate had shot a Brahmin who had refused to let the Sahib take his daughter. He was not given any punishment by the court. He did not even have to pay a fine. It was very clear that the courts and the proceedings which took place there were just for show.

The condition of the coolies living in the Skeffington Estate was very bad. They were tortured and made to work without any break. They were treated like animals by the Sahib who was the owner of the Estate.

Thus, the hatred of the British increased with time and so more and more people joined the Gandhi movement. Gandhi to them was like a god who could make their lives full of happiness and worth living. He was the one who could make their lives better.

Moorthy and the other freedom fighters of Kanthapura make efforts to convince the people that there is a need for change. They are able to rouse the people of Kanthapura to fight for the freedom of the country. With time more and more people of Kanthapura join the Congress. They decide to fight and to make efforts. They try but ultimately the situation is such that they are forced to leave Kanthapura and they settled in Kashipur. Inspite of the failure they still have hope and also have a sense of achievement.

Anti-Gandhian Feelings within the Indian Community.

It is shown that Anti-Gandhian feelings exist within the Indian community. The Indian society is caste-ridden. There are many people who may otherwise be supporters of Gandhi but do not approve of his movement for upliftment of pariahs or movement for removing untouchability. They want the caste system to be maintained as it is. For instance, Rangamma is a follower of Gandhi and is involved in the work of the Congress but is not in favour of disturbing the existing norms with regard to people belonging to different castes. To many people Gandhi's desire to remove untouchability poses a more serious danger than the British rule. Unity among the people belonging to all castes and all religions was necessary for achieving political freedom. But, the Indians were not willing to accept social equality with the untouchables as something that was necessary.

The novel is not merely a tirade against the British, it also tells us about the Indian villages and Indian society and Indian culture in general.

Racial-Cultural Conflict between East and West

No doubt, the racial cultural conflict between East and West is rather understated but it does exist. It is much more than a tangential issue in *Kanthapura*.

In the novel there is a graphic description of the brutalities of the English and the way the English treat the Indians. The owner of the Skeffington Coffee Estate is an Englishman and many coolies live in his estate. These coolies who are Indians are treated like animals. They are ill treated and exploited in every possible way. They live and work under inhuman conditions. They are forced to work constantly without break. The present owner of the Estate is

less cruel compared to his uncle. He does not beat the coolies and is in certain respects better than his uncle but he has a weakness for women and wants any woman who catches his fancy. He could just randomly pickout any woman for himself from the women working in his estate. No one could stop him and if any woman said—no, her family members were harrassed and tortured. He wanted a new woman every day. The feeling of being racially superior to the Indians which was there in the British is clearly seen in the way they treat the Indians. It is seen in the way the coolies fall down to touch the feet of the Sahib. When some of the coolies came to live in Kanthapura they were tied and made to march back to the Estate in form of a procession with their heads bent. This was done to show who the true masters were.

The coolies were superstitious people and did not eat the pills given to them by the Sahib. Untouchability and discrimination on the basis of caste was a typically Indian problem. Social equality with untouchables is totally unacceptable to Indians. This is a predominant racial cultural issue.

Accepting Tenets of Christianity

The non-violent freedom fighters are "soldier-saints" or like true Christians who turn the other cheek to receive more blows instead of hitting back. Moorthy says to them that they should learn to love their enemy. He says that all men are equal. There is an implicit irony in India's acceptance of the tenets of the west to achieve freedom from the west. The followers of Gandhi are actually accepting the tenets of Christianity.

CHAPTER - 24

THE STYLE—RAJA RAO'S ENGLISH

Problem Faced by Indo-Anglian Writers

Raja Rao says in the Preface *to Kanthapura,* "the telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American."

Thus, the problem faced by Indians writing in English is that they have to convey the feel of Indian life by using a language which is not Indian. So, a new kind of English is developed which is distinctively Indian.

Raja Rao further adds, "After language the next problems is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move, we move quickly. There must...."

So it was not easy to express the Indian sensibility or the flavour of Indian life by using English. Raja Rao had done this very skillfully. Meenakshi Mukherjee has rightly said that he has done it so effectively and skillfully, "that even those who are not closely acquainted with the rigid social structure of a south Indian village will notice how a man's caste can be ascertained from his mode of speech. The evolving of an Indian-English which is adequate enough to express Indian, even regional flavour, without ceasing to be English, is Raja Rao's most significant contribution." Raja Rao has been able to achieve this by making literal translations of Indian

idioms, phrases, proverbs etc. and using them in the novel. He has introduced changes in the syntax or structure of the language. According to the specific requirement modifications have been made. He has used imagery which is familiar to Indians and is typically Indian.

Raja Rao has Used Indian Words Without Translation

Though very sparingly he has used words from Indian languages without translating them.

For example : *Ahimsa, Dhoti, Harikatha, Mandap* etc. are not English words. They are words from Indian languages.

Syntax is Indian

The way he has modified the English syntax is really amazing. Only his words are English, their organisation is Indian and entirely his own. S. Nagarajan made the following comment which is worth noting, "Raja Rao's aim is to create a style which will reflect the rhythms and sensibilities of the Indian pysche, and since it is in Sanskrit that the Indian mind has found its most consumate linguistic expression, he has tried to adapt his English style to the movement of a Sanskrit sentence."

Dramatic Use of Language

Narasimhaiah writes, "the emotional upheaval that overtook Kanthapura could only find expression by breaking the formal English syntax to suit the sudden changes of mood and sharp contrasts in tone, by establishing a correspondence between perceptions and the images he could readily lay his hands on in the life around and by a fresh emphasis on old images and a completely different, in this case Kannada, intonation to English sentences. In other words, it had to be a highly original style, a technical innovation indistinguishable from an essential Indian sensibility. Consider the wide range of feelings and attitudes from the behaviour of an Indian crowd. First, under police atrocities : 'While policemen beat the crowd this side and that side and groans and moans and cries and shouts and coughs and oaths and bangs and kicks are heard, while there is heard '*Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai*, M.....Ki.....Jai."

The massing of words corresponds to the massing of men in a crowd and the massing of up surging emotions in response to police treatment.

But a temple atmosphere is different, though there will also be a flow of men to and from the temple:

'People came and people went; they banged the bell and touched the bull and took the flowers.'

Is it a devotional prayerful approach to the goddess? Well, it sounds like a prayer in our own languages, so intimately personal and fervent:

'O Kenchamma, protect us always like this through famine and disease, death and despair. O most high and bounteous. We shall offer you our first rice and our first fruit and we shall offer you *saris* and bodice cloth.....' This has close affinities with poetry, indeed it sounds like the chanting of hymns, approximately to mantric poetry.

And what a far cry from this to the lingo of the cartman : "he-ho, cries the cartman and the bulls shiver and start." Or the vigorous, musical counting of measures of rice or ragi in the villages :

"One, two, three, Hm-Four Hm, and the superstition which forbids the mention of six (in some parts of the country) seven and so six becomes God's extra, Hm."

Now the more intimately used language of the dining hall : 'Take only this much milk, just this much, or take it Bhattre, only one cup more, just one.' Just consider what the English equivalent would have meant for a people like us who need coaxing : "Won't you have a second helping?" Would not merely be annoying but ineffective. Similarly, it would be absurd for a poor peasant to be known by his initials, but names become descriptive :

The bent-legged Chandrayya, Waterfall Venkamma, front house people, fig-house people, nine beamed house Range Gowda, etc., etc.

But the status which birth, wealth and society confer on Bhatta don't stand him in good stead spiritually. And here is the homely equivalent of 'Not all the perfumes of Arabia can sweeten this little hand'" 'the sinner may go to the ocean but the water will only touch his knees,' but it bespeaks a distinct Indian sensibility—water as a time-honoured symbol of purification and the vivid image of the insufficiency of an ocean of water to wash this man's sins away, both the symbol and the image conveying an immediate comprehension of all they stand for to the illiterate villagers. Where the sensibility is different, unless the expression also is different from English—the experience itself does not come through. Where the Englishman says, 'nip it in the bud', Raja Rao, perhaps because of its aesthetically offensive imagery in the Indian context, has recourse to the Indian

idiom, "crush it in the seed," which will not fail to have its startling effect in an agricultural community."

Raja Rao's Use of Imagery

The novel is full of similes and metaphors and they are drawn from things that are familiar to people living in Indian villages. They are mostly common objects which people come across in day to day life. According to Meenakshi Mukherji, "Images and metaphor are his natural mode of expression, and very little influence of English literature is discernible. His earlier work was full of fresh perception and a first-hand response to life. His language in the first two books is so richly strewn with similes that any passage quoted at random will serve to illustrate the elements of his style. Consider, for example, the following from *Kanthapura* : .....and when Moorthappa comes let the rice be fine as filigree and the mangoes yellow as gold, and we shall go out, horn and trumpet going before us and break coconuts at his feet.

The imagery here touches upon objects and experience that are distinctively Indian and faithfully conveys Indian sensibility. Raja Rao's style shows two distinctive phases of development. In the earlier phase (in *Kanthapura,* and *The Cow of the Barricades)* there is a fond dwelling upon the concrete and the particular, be it the sky ("as blue as a marriage shawl", *Kanthapura)* or women ("some beautiful as new opened guavas and the others tender as April mangoes", *The Cow of the Barricades*) or young boys ("bright as banana trunks", *Kanthapura),* which is markedly absent in the two later books published after an interval of about twenty-two years. In *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare* this concrete imagery is replaced by general reflections and abstract speculations."

Use of Indian Imagery

Raja Rao has used imagery which is very familiar to Indians, specially people living in south Indian villages. He used certain terms and certain phrases from Kannada which help in creating the whole atmosphere and feel of an Indian village.

The following sentences from the novel are worth noting :

(1) Postman Subbayya, who had no fire in his stomach, and was red with red and blue with blue.

(2) You are a Bhatta, and your voice is not a sparrow voice in your village and you should speak to your people and organize

a Brahmin party. Otherwise Brahminism is as good as kitchen ashes....

(3) .....and mother and wife and widow grandmother went up to their lighted lizard-clucking homes.

Meenakshi Mukherjee points out, "the important point in these three instances is not that the expressions used are literal translations, but that they serve their purpose in their context, and they are more vivid than any other accepted English expressions that might have been used in their place. In quotation 3, the words, "lighted lizard-clucking homes," for example, convey a completely satisfying sense of security associated with the interior of a house after lighting time which is essential to these women (mother and wife and widow godmother), who have spent a long and uncertain day of struggle, picketing toddy-booths.

Moreover, these sentences contain nothing that would be unintelligible or jarring to the reader who does not know Kannada, and that is more than what can be said about the linguistic experiments of most other Indo-Anglian writers."

Literal Translation of Indian Proverbs, Idioms Phrases etc.

Both Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand have used literal translations of Indian proverbs, phrases, idioms etc. Mulk Raj Anand has infact overdone it and used them too frequently. Raja Rao has done it very skilfully and it does not seem to the reader that he has overdone it. Such phrases and idioms only add to the beauty of the novel Kanthapura. The dialogues that he puts in a particular characters, mouth are always such that suit the overall personality of that person and do not seem unnatural.

The following are some examples of translation directly into English :

1) ....Lion-cloth wide of land.

2) He wanted me to be his dog's tail.

3) He would not even have dirt out of the body of the second daughter.

4) No, not till I've poured by shoe-water through the throat.

5) Every enemy you create is like pulling out a lantana bush in your backyard.

6) Range Gowda had a golden tongue and a leather tongue....

Some of the expressions used in the novel are typically South Indian. Like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Raja Rao also has used some expressions which are definitely not English and have no counterpart in Kannada. For Instance, "He gave her a very warmful bed". Critics consider this to be a defect but inspite of such minor flaws Raja Rao has been successful in creating a great literary work.

Raja Rao's Contribution to Indian Writing in English

Many critics have praised Raja Rao's style and language.

For instance Narasimhaiah expresses the opinion that, "When it comes to style, the breath-taking long sentences, page-long sentences, repetitions of names and words, while sometimes necessary to build up the tempo of the commotion in Kanthapura, can also sound highly mannered and they do. But the author is not impoverished of stylistic devices to suit a wide range of emotional or mental states. In fact, the one outstanding contribution of Mr. Raja Rao to Indian writing in English is to have struck new paths for a sensibility which is essentially Indian. While R.K. Narayan has invented a language which suits his purpose most adequately, it is not likely to be of much help except in minor ways to those that write fiction in English after him, unless they bring to fiction-writing gifts like his. Indian fiction in English can, it seems to me, make headway by continuing the Raja Rao line, which is to say one must have not merely his technique, but his amazingly high intellectual equipment and awareness of the Indian tradition all of which should be possible to acquire in varying degrees by serious aspirants."

V.Y. Kantak says that Raja Rao's use of English has made us regain our faith in the Indian's "Creative use of English". His English seems to spring from the Indian scene, the Indian manner, gesture and speech absorbs it, and yet suffers no distortion. "Word, phrase or sentence structure, the shifts and the modulations—all grow from the root. And it is English, chaste English, not borrowed and applied but taking the shape of a new material. The fluent, simple prose has a harmony which is the fruit of a complete interpretation of matter and manner. His early classic *Kanthapura* shows him at his best in this respect. Raja Rao has added a new dimension to his language, that of symbolic suggestion. "The language has shaken off all traces of foreign acquisition and begun to assert its inalienable rights as an independent idiom. The word has become the perception."

Paschim Guwahati Mahavidyalaya Guwahati-17 Date..... Dharapur Chariali

PART - IV

SELECT UNIVERSITY QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

Q.1. Narrate the impact of Gandhi and his ideals on the events depicted in *Kanthapura*.

Or

Elaborate the statement that *Kanthapura* is a Gandhi Epic.

Or

***Satyagraha* was the technique employed by Gandhi to liberate India from the British. Elaborate.**

Or

After reading *Kanthapura* what picture do you form of Gandhi.

Or

Narrate in detail the freedom movement as started by Gandhi. Give examples from your text *Kanthapura*.

Or

Discuss Moorthy as a true picture of a typical Gandhian.

Or

Write a note on all the characters who followed the ideals of Gandhi in Kanthapura.

Introduction: It is a Pure Gandhi Epic

Ans. An epic is a long narrative poem telling of heroic acts, the birth and death of a hero or of nations etc. It is large-scale and imposing. Like *Paradise Lost* which tells of the heroic acts of Satan, *Kanthapura* also is an epic. It tells of the impact that Gandhi had on the nation. He converted the whole nation into an army of freedom fighters. The impact that this simple man clad in a *dhoti* had was amazing. He was no less than the hero of an epic. Without Gandhi India could perhaps never have become independent. The freedom

struggle of India was an epic struggle. Thousands of people sacrificed their lives. It was a heroic struggle and though he remains in the background throughout the novel, Gandhi is no doubt the hero of the epic. The novel basically depicts the impact of the Gandhi movement on a small village called Kanthapura. Ultimately the people of Kanthapura leave the village and settle in another place called Kashipura.

Gandhian Tactics : *Satyagraha* etc.

By reading the novel one gets an idea about the methods and principles of Gandhi. Moorthy and the other freedom fighters of Kanthapura are followers of Gandhi and use Gandhian methods in their struggle against the government. They follow the path of non-violence. The people of Kanthapura picketed the toddy grove. Many toddy booths in and around Kanthapura were picketed. This was done to show that they wanted toddy trees to be destroyed because they were used to make toddy which brings about economic and moral downfall of the poor workers who cannot afford to squander their hard-earned money in this manner. They wanted that the sale of toddy should go down and wanted to make the coolies understand that toddy is very harmful for them, while doing all this they used non-violent methods and did not loose control even when they were being manhandled and beaten mercilessly by the police. Even women and children were manhandled.

Personality of Gandhi : The Dominating Character in the Novel

Gandhi never actually appears on the scene. He remains in the background throughout the novel but the influence he had on the people was tremendous. Gandhi was a national hero and it is not without reason that he is called the Mahatma. This saintly man selflessly devoted his life to the struggle for independence. We form an image of Gandhi from the impact and influence he had on his followers. He was able to motivate his countrymen to lay down their lives for the country. Thousands of men and women sacrificed their lives. Following the path of non-violence is extremely difficult and this man was able to convince lakhs of people to follow this path. This was an experiment made by him which was very successful. The kind of personality Gandhi had, can be judged from the influence he had on the masses.

Moorthy : Minor Gandhi

Like thousands of young men all over the country Moorthy gave up his studies and joined the freedom movement. He decided to

dedicate his life to the struggle for independence after he had a vision of Gandhi. Moorthy tried to follow the principles of Gandhi. He burnt his foreign clothes and started using *khadi*. He did not marry and devoted his life totally to the struggle for Independence. He sacrificed his personal life and happiness for the sake of his country. He became the leader of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. Though he was very young, he was loved and respected by the people of Kanthapura. Even the people who were much older than him respected him and had full faith in him. So, he is the most prominent and most important among the followers of Gandhi depicted in the novel.

The Gandhi Movement was brought to Kanthapura by Moorthy and the city boys. He went from door to door to tell people about Gandhi and his views and principles. He distributed *charkhas* among the people of Kanthapura free of cost. He had contact with the city Congress and the *charkhas* were given to him by them free of cost for distributing among the villagers. In the beginning, he found it difficult to convince the villagers to take the *charkhas* and start spinning cloth on a regular basis. Ultimately he was able to convince most of them that it was essential not only for them but also for achieving political freedom. With time more and more people joined the Congress. The Congress Committee was formed in Kanthapura. The villagers regarded Moorthy as the Gandhi of Kanthapura. They called Mahatma Gandhi the "big mountain" and Moorthy the "small mountain".

Moorthy does not stop working for the upliftment of the pariahs even on being asked by his mother to do so. She was shocked when she heard that the Swami had said that Moorthy will be excommunicated if he does not stop working for the pariahs. Moorthy did not take this seriously. He did not stop mixing with the pariahs even after the death of his mother. Inspite of all this, it is worth nothing that he had hesitation in entering Rachnna's house and found it very difficult to sip the milk brought to him by Rachanna's wife.

Moorthy kept a fast for three days because he felt that he had not been able to live up to the ideals of the Mahatma. He held himself responsible for the violence that took place at the Skeffington Coffee Estate. After the fast he started the 'Don't-touch the Government campaign'. Under his leadership the people of Kanthapura picketed toddy booths and Boranna's toddy grove. He followed the path of non-violence like a true follower of Gandhi. He was arrested by the police many times and during his trial, he behaved like a true Gandhian. He said that he did not need an advocate to defend himself.

Like many young *satyagrahis* all over the country at one point of time he starts feeling that by following Gandhi's methods they may not be able to achieve their aim. He still respected the Mahatma but he felt that the Britishers were able to fool him very easily. Moorthy was attracted by the ideas and thoughts of Nehru.

Other Gandhian Characters : Gandhi's Ideology Followed

The characters in the novel can be basically divided into two categories. There are characters like Advocate Sankar, Rangamma and Ratna etc. who are followers of Gandhi. And the other category consists of characters like Venakmma and Bhatta who are against the Gandhian movement.

Rangamma actively participated in the work of the Congress. Her house became the office of the Congress in Kanthapura. The freedom fighters used to assemble at her house and discuss their plan of action. She took active part in organising the women of Kanthapura and forming the Savika Sangh. She motivated the women to fight and tried to prepare them mentally to bear the atrocities of the police calmly. She succeeds in this to quite an extent. She asks the women not to neglect their house hold work. She is able to talk in a very impressive and convincing manner. For instance she says, 'When you and your daughters and your husbands walk the holy fire, does it scorch or not sisters? and we say, 'No, no, Rangamma'—'When Madanna and Rajanna and Siddayya smite their bodies with swords, when the grace of Kenchamma has touched them, does it cut them, sister,' and we say, 'No, no, Rangamma'—'When that-house Srikantha was graced by the goddess every Tuesday and fell flat on the ground in adoration, did you ever see a bruise on his skin, sisters?', and we say, 'No, no, Rangamma'—'Well, we shall fight the police for Kenchamma's sake, and if the rapture of devotion is in you, the *lathi* will grow as soft as butter and as supple as a silken thread, and you will hymn out the name of the Mahatma. ' And we all grow dumb and mutter 'yes, sister, yes'.

She reads the newspapers regularly and is aware of what is going on in the world. She tells the villagers about the various things she reads in the newspapers. She is able to explain the contents of the religious texts to the villagers in a very impressive manner.

Ratna also is a follower of Gandhi. She is a widow and only fifteen years old. She becomes the leader of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura in the absence of Moorthy.

Advocate Sankar tries to follow the principles of Gandhi and is a very honest and upright man. He is a lawyer like Mahatma Gandhi.

He does not take up false cases and if at any point he comes to know that his client has lied to him and is actually guilty, he gives up the case immediately and in some cases he even made them confess. According to some critics, the character of Advocate Sankar is based on Gandhi himself. The novelist has given a very detailed description of Advocate Sankar and his views and personality though he is only a minor character and does not play a significant part in the events described in the novel. This long description may seem to be unnecessary to most people but it gives us an idea of what Gandhi's views and principles were. From this we come to know what Gandhi really stood for.

Sankar leads a simple life and is in favour of *khadi* being used by all Indians. He insists on this because he knows that the purpose of the *khadi* movement is to put a halt to the exploitation of India by western Industrialists. He refuses to go to any marriage party to which the people are not dressed in *khadi*. It was his belief that Hindi will someday become the national language and speaks in Hindi to his family members. He believes that fasting is a good thing and even makes his family members fast on several occasions which are important dates in India's freedom struggle.

There were many other people in Kanthapura like Rachanna, Range Gowda etc. who were followers of Gandhi. By the time the Satyanarayan Puja was organised, it had become a mass movement and most people of Kanthapura had joined the Gandhi movement.

Barbarism of Police : Manhandling of Women

The barbarism of the police is seen in the way they manhandle and torture the women at the time when the people of Kanthapura went for picketing the toddy grove and the toddy booths. They forced dirty water into their mouths and under their *saris* when the women, went with the men for picketing the toddy-booth outside the Skeffington Coffee Estate.

The narrator gives a graphic description of the atrocities of the police on the people of Kanthapura after they refused to pay taxes despite of repeated reminders. Many people were arrested. The whole village was full of policemen. The police arrested Rangamma and Moorthy. Many men had been taken away during the night and their women had been tied up and gagged. The pariah women and children threw stones at the policemen. They picked up a little boy by his leg, turned him upside down and beat him so violently that when he threw the child down on the grass only blood and sobs came from his mouth. Women were whipped and kicked by the police. Women

were molested and raped. They rushed here and there frantically to save themselves. They desperately tried to find places to hide to save themselves from the police. Even pregnant women were not spared. Ratna was lucky that the people arrived just on time and she was saved. Otherwise she would have been raped by the police.

They later discovered that all their menfolk had not been taken away by the police. Many of them had hidden themselves in the dense jungle and bushes on the outskirts of the village and had watched from there all through the night. That was why pariah Siddayya could come to the rescue of Puttamma when the policemen tried to dishonour her.

Conclusion

This novel is an epic as it is concerned with Gandhi's achievements and struggle for liberation of India. Moorthy who is the main character is a Gandhian. He is not an ordinary human being. He struggled hard and encountered his enemies. He was a brave freedom fighter hence, we can conclude that he championed the cause of India's freedom. We should treat him as someone as great as Satan of *Paradise Lost*. British beaurocracy was very forceful and Moorthy cowed down the British Officials.

Q.2. Write critical comments on the structure of *Kanthapura*.

Or

Critically examine some of the important events in *Kanthapura*.

Or

Critically bring out the development of action of the plot in *Kanthapura*.

Or

Some parts of the novel appear to be prolix and irrelevant details. Comment.

Or

Critically assess Raja Rao's technique as a novelist in *Kanthapura*.

Or

***Kanthapura* is a formless novel. Give examples to justify this statement.**

Ans. Introduction

In the Preface to *Kanthapura* Raja Rao states : After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone into the making to theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are paths interminable. The *Mahabharata* has 214,778 verses and the *Ramayana* 48,000. *Puranas* there are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us—we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story-telling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story."

The novel should not be judged by western standards and criteria because it is a novel in the Indian tradition. David McCutchion makes this mistake and so he asserts that Kanthapura is no novel at all, for in it, "all the central concerns of the western novel are absent."

His Unifying Devices and Technique in *Kanthapura*

The narrator is an old woman called Achakka. She is narrating the events long after they actually happened, to another woman. The narrator belongs to Kanthapura and was a part of the events or witness to the events narrated by her. She is a gossipy and garrulous old woman and while narrating the events she includes many things which are irrelevant and superfluous. There are numerous digressions but, inspite of such digressions and superfluities, the novel cannot be called formless or amarphous. The novel has a well organised structure and a well-knit plot.

The narrator first gives a description of the village and the people living in the village. Then she gives a graphic description of the Skeffington Coffee Estate and the exploitation of the coolies living in the Estate. We get a very vivid picture of the atrocities and brutalities of the British which were endured by these coolies. Then the characters in the novel are introduced one by one and the narrator gives a brief description of the characters. Some characters like Ratna and advocate Sankar are introduced much later. The plot is unfolded through dialogues which are natural and racy. Many legends, folk tales and myths are included in the narrative. These things add to the beauty of the narrative and make it more interesting. The freedom movement is introduced by the narrator only after giving the background. Gandhi remains in the background

throughout the novel. Important events like Dandi March and Jallia Wallah Bagh are introduced indirectly. The narrator uses episodes from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to explain the contemporary situation.

The subject that the novel deals with is India's struggle for independence. It is a very vast subject and difficult to manage. To get over this problem, Raja Rao had to use some unifying devices. Firstly, it is not an account of India's freedom struggle all over the country, but of its impact on a limited part of it—the village of Kanthapura. So, Raja Rao just speaks of the events taking place in Kanthapura and in areas surrounding it. The extent is limited and so the story becomes manageable.

The area is limited and so the task of the novelist has become much easier. This shows the amount of ingenuity and skill that Raja Rao possesses. At the same time he does not allow the story to become isolated from national developments. To save the story from being isolated from national development, there are references to historic events like the Dandi March or the refusal of sepoys in Peshawar to open fire on their countrymen.

The novel deals only with a particular phase of the freedom struggle and not the total span of India's freedom struggle. This further simplifies the job of the novelist and gives a definite outline and shape to the plot of the novel. As such the plot is episodic and event after event is narrated without any break in a rambling and seemingly incoherent manner.

Exciting and Sensational Events in the Novel

The novel is not dull and colourless. There are many sensational events in the novel. One of the events was the arrest of Jayaramachar. After his arrest, Bade Khan came to live in Kanthapura. He was sent to Kanthapura to keep a watch on the activities of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. His job was to give information to the government regarding their activities.

This brings in a note of conflict. Then there is also the conflict between Moorthy on one side and Bhatta and the Swami on the other. The Swami is opposed to the movement for the upliftment of the pariahs and removal of untouchability. Ultimately, the Swami excommunicated Moorthy and his family and coming generations. When Moorthy's mother heard this, she was very upset. She was an uneducated and simple woman and took Moorthy's excommunication very seriously. Moorthy did not take it seriously. His mother died, but even after her death Moorthy did not stop working for the

upliftment of pariahs. The death of Moorthy's mother was sensational. Another sensational event was the violence which took place at the gate of the Skeffington Coffee Estate. This happened when Moorthy had gone to the Estate to teach the coolies living there and he was stopped at the gate by Bade Khan. Moorthy was not allowed to enter the Estate and this resulted in a scuffle between supporters of Moorthy on one side and Bade Khan and the Maistri on the other. After this, Moorthy kept a fast for three days for self purification because he felt that he had not been able to live up to the ideals of the Mahatma.

The Fast and Picketing

After the violence at the gate of the Skeffington Coffee Estate, Moorthy observed a fast for three days. For three days, he just had salt water and nothing else. He kept the fast because he thought that he was responsible for what happened. He felt that he had not been able to live up to the ideals of the Mahatma. After the fast, he felt lighter both in body and soul.

After this, with renewed energy and vigour he started the 'Don't-touch-the-Government Compaign'. The Congress-committee was formed in Kanthapura. The people of Kanthapura went for picketing the toddy grove and the toddy booths under the leadership of Moorthy. They picketted the toddy booth outside Skeffington-Coffee Estate. Within a few days, many toddy booths in and around Kanthapura were closed down. The people of Kanthapura showed a lot of courage and determination. In Moorthy's absence the charge was taken up by Ratna and Rangamma. Ratna became the leader of the *Satyagrahis*. With time, more and more people joined the Congress. The *Savika Sangha* was formed.

No Tax Campaign : Decisive Incident

Inspite of repeated reminders, the people of Kanthapura refused to pay taxes. An announcement was made that the lands of all those who had not paid taxes will be auctioned. The boys from the city came to help the people of Kanthapura to prevent the auction. A Satyanaryan Puja was organised by them as a part of the plan devised by them to prevent the auction. By this time it had become a mass movement. It was an incident which had a lot of impact on the lives of the people. There is confrontation between the Satyagrahis and the authorities and many people are injured and many are killed and the remaining people of Kanthapura ultimately had to leave the village. Many people were arrested and they were released within a short time. Before leaving Kanthapura the villagers set fire to their

houses and granaries. They settled in Kashipura. It apparently seems as though they were defeated but, it is not that the movement ends at this point. They still have hope and do not have the feeling of not having achieved anything.

Superfluities

It is true that there is some amount of superfluity in the novel but because of this the novel cannot be called a formless novel. There are many digressions like the long description of different types of snakes and the description of the character and personality of advocate Sankar who is a minor character. Even if the portion on snakes is removed it does not harm the novel in any way and such a long description of Sankar seems to be unnecessary because he is a minor character and does not play any significant part in the plot of the novel.

Then there are the long mythological stories which seem to be digressions. But, since Raja Rao's style of narration is akin to the *puranas,* such digressions are not unexpected and they also serve the purpose of underlining the theme of the novel.

The description of Advocate Sankar can be justified by saying that through Sankar, Raja Rao projects the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and so he deserves the space given to him. So, there is only one description which can really be called superfluous and that is the description of snakes. However, this is only a minor fault and surely the novel cannot be called formless because of this.

Conclusion

The subject that the novel deals with is very vast and it is not easy to give artistic form and unity to a work which aims at chronicling the freedom struggle. also gives a graphic picture of India's rural society. Raja Rao has been successful in doing so by adopting certain devices. Raja Rao's artistic standards are not totally western. It is western to certain extent. It is a blend of Indian classical norms and western standards.

Q. 3. "Making this old woman (Achakka) the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle fact and myth in an effective manner." Discuss this dictum in detail.

Or

Comment on the role of the narrator in *Kanthapura*

Or

The fascinating personality of the narrator colours the narration in *Kanthapura.*

Or

What are the advantages and disadvantages of Raja Rao's choice of an old woman as the narrator? Evaluate.

Or

Elaborate the statement : "Is it correct to say that a part of the function of the narrator in Kanthapura is that of making comments on the action in the manner of chorus". Substantiate your answer.

Ans. Introduction : The Narrator

The narrator is an old woman called Achakka who belongs to Kanthapura. She is narrating the events to another woman long after the events actually occurred. Achakka was actually a part of the events she is describing and in some cases she was a witness to them. She is an ordinary Brahmin woman and is not one of the prominent figures or key participants. She is a part of the events but does not play any significant role. She is an uneducated and simple woman and has a straight forward and apparently artless manner of narration. All these characteristics make her perfect as a narrator for the kind of events that Raja Rao wants to narrate. The things that she says seem natural coming from her mouth. It would not have seemed natural if the narrator had been an educated and sophisticated person. In the preface to Kanthapura, Raja Rao himself states that the style of narration is akin to the Puranas.

Raja Rao's Choice of Achakka : Advantage

Meenakshi Mukherjee says, "the choice of such a narrator serves several useful purposes. Making this old woman the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle fact and myth in an effective manner. For the old woman, Jawaharlal is a Bharata to the Mahatma—the Mahatma who, she believes, will slay Ravana so that Sita may be freed. For her, Gandhi has attained the status of god, and Moorthy is regarded as his *avtar* in Kanthapura. The characteristically concrete imagination of the uneducated mind pictures the Mahatma as large and huge like the Sahyadri mountains on whose slopes the pilgrims climb to the top, while Moorthy is seen as the small mountain. To her the Satyagraha becomes a religious ceremony to which she devotes her sacred ardour.

"The second advantage derived by this choice of narrator is that the language used by her is of an elemental quality. Her reaction

to things is direct and vivid, not literary and second-hand. She talks of "the pumpking moon"; "the stream of milk splashed on a moonlit night"; "Young boys bright as banana trunks"; all are images taken from familiar phenomena which would come naturally to a village woman. The character also enables Raja Rao to achieve his professed aim of reproducing the rhythm of Indian speech in English, as well as of coming closest to the oral tradition of story-telling."

In the Preface to the novel, Raja Rao says that this style of story-telling is not only an oral tradition, but is also part of the literary tradition in India.

This old woman tells the story in a very leisurely manner. Though she narrates the events in the sequence in which they occured she also sometimes shuttles back and forth in time. While telling the story she makes comments on what she is narrating. The imagery used by her is drawn from everyday life. The imagery used by her is very familiar to people living in Indian villages. The things put into the mouth of the narrator by the novelist suit her nature and background. She is perfectly suited for the subject matter dealt with in the novel. Things that sound very natural when spoken by this village woman, will seem unnatural and incredibly superstitious if spoken by the narrator himself.

Mode of Description

Srinivasa Iyengar says that in the poetic passages in *Kanthapura* there is a lilt and seductive rhythm. They possess some curious incantatory power which seems to coil round the reader or listener more and more, and involves one inextricably in the experience. In such cases, words no longer remain mere words, they are not blocks of stone but streams of suggestion, or waves of sound making haunting music. There are many beautiful passages in the novel like the one quoted here—

"And the women stopped their sobbing, and one here and one there they rushed towards the child and they laid him on their laps and wiped the blood from his mouth and they said, 'Rangappa, Rangappa, wake up Rangappa!' but only slobber flowed from his mouth, and all of a sudden a tearing, gasping yell came from the women again, while the coolies marched blinking and blank before them and even the voice of God seemed to have died out of their tongues."

Implications of the Narrator

The events are being narrated by her long after the people of

Kanthapura left the village. The events are narrated the way, they now emerge out of the memory of the old woman. In the process of telling the story there are many repetitions and many unnecessary details are added by her. There are many things that are superfluous and many long digressions.

All this makes everything seem more real and natural because this is how an old woman like her is expected to tell a story. From the way in which she narrates the events many things are revealed about her. It is clear that she likes Moorthy a lot. She is able to judge the people around her and has a very keen eye. She observes every small detail and has a very good power of observation. She is a supporter of Moorthy and actively participates in the work of the Congress. She is intelligent enough to know the implications of the views of Gandhi. She is sympathetic towards other people and does not misbehave with people. She is an orthodox Brahmin woman and has full faith in god and believes the legends and stories related to goddess Kenchamma. She is ignorant and superstitious like other common people of the village. She is in favour of following the norms of behaviour specified for people of different castes. Thus, in every way she is a typical village woman. She has nothing special about her and is like most other women of her age. There is no indepth analysis of her character or the way her mind works. Not much is said about her personal life.

Achakka's Manner of Telling the Story

She is a gossippy and garrulous old woman and tells the story in a very natural and spontaneous manner. She herself had been a part of the events she is narrating. According to a critic : "The telling of the story gives the whole affair an *itihasic* (historical) or at least a *puranic* dignity...there are involutions and digressions, there are meaningful backward glances, there are rhythmic chains of proper names (Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna; Satamma and Rangamma and Puttamma and Seethamma), there are hypnotic repetitions of refrains, and there are also sheer poetic irridescences. A village, a picturesque religion, an epoch of social and political change, a whole complex of character and motive, reason and superstition, idealism and cold calculation, all spring up before our eyes demanding recognition and acceptance; it is almost a *tour de force.* Although Raja Rao has put the story into the mouth of a grandmother—although the feminine touches and mannerisms, the seemingly effortless rotation of the tongue, the meandering sentences and massive paragraphs are characteristic of the narrator—there is

nevertheless consummate art in all this riot of artlessness, there is careful selection behind the apparent abundant detail." If one reads the novel carefully and makes a thorough study of it, it will be seen that he is right. In the Preface Raja Rao says about the style of story telling :

"After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone into the making of theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are paths interminable. The *Mahabharata* has 214,778 verses and the *Ramayana* 48,000. *Puranas*, there are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us—we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story-telling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story."

The manner is racy and her speech is full of Indian idioms and proverbs. She used stories and characters from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*. In some passages and descriptions the language is so beautiful that only a master of the language could have used such poetic expressions so skilfully. Here, of course, she is a transparent substitute for the novelist. An uneducated woman like her cannot possibly write such beautiful poetry.

Poetic and Dramatic Touches in Achakka's Narration

There are some very beautiful passages in the novel. The most noteworthy among them is the description of the outbreak of the monsoons on the Skiffington Coffee Estate. It is a remarkable piece of poetry.

> the trees begin suddenly to tremble and hiss and as Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna and Siddayya strike their axes against the wood, there is gurgle and grunt from behind the bamboo cluster—and the gurgle and grunt soar up and swallow in the whole sky. The darkness grows thick as sugar in a cauldron, while the bamboos creaks and sway and whine, and the crows begin to wheel round and flutter, and everywhere dogs bark and calves moo, and then the wind comes so swift and dashing that it takes the autumn leaves with it, and they rise into the juggling air, while the trees bleat and blubber. Then drops fall, big as the thumbs, and as the thunder goes clashing like a temple cymbal through the heavens, the earth itself seems to heave up and cheep in the monsoon rains.

> It churns and splashes, beats against the tree-tops, reckless and wilful, and suddenly floating forwards it bucks back and spits forward and pours down upon the green, weak coffee-leaves, thumping them down to the earth, and then playfully lounging up, the coffee-leaves rising with it, and whorling and winnowing, spurting and rattling, it jerks and snorts this side and that; and as Rachanna and Madanna and Chandranna and Siddayya stand beside the jacks, the drops trickel down the peeling bark, then touch the head; then the back and the waist, and once when the trees have all groaned down as though whipped to a bow, there is such a swish of spray that it soaks their *dhotis* and their turbans, and they stand squeezing them out. Then somewhere there is a lightning again and suddenly the whole Himavathy valley becomes as clear as under the moon, and in Kanthapura the smoke is seen to rise from every house and curl round the golden dome of the temple, and the streets look red and clear and flat, except for a returning cow or courtyard cart. Then the darkness again and the trees bend and shiver and the bamboos creak.

The passage describing the beauty of the Kartik night is also very beautiful but it is ordinary if compared to the passage describing the outbreak of the monsoon on the Skeffington Coffee Estate.

> *Kartik* has come to Kanthapura, sisters—Kartik has come with the glow of lights and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods; white lights from clay-trays and red lights from copper-stands, and diamond lights that glow from the bowers of entrance-leaves; lights that glow from banana-trunks and mango twigs, yellow light behind white leaves, and green light behind yellow leaves, and white light behind green leaves; and night curls through the shadowed streets, and hissing over bellied boulders and hurrying through dallying drains, night curls through the Brahmin Street and the Pariah Street and the Potters' Street and the Weavers' Street and flapping through the mango grove, hangs clawed for one moment to the giant pipal, and then shooting across the broken fields, dies quietly into the river—and gods walk by lighted streets, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods, and even as they walk in transparent flesh the dust gently sinks back to the earth, and many a child in Kanthapura sits late into the night to see the crown of this god and that god, and how many a god has chariots with steeds white as foam and queens so bright that the eyes shut themselves in fear lest they be blinded. Kartik is a month of the gods, and as the gods pass by the Potters' Street and the Weavers' Street, lights are lit to see them pass by. Kartik is a month of lights, sisters, and in Kanthapura when the dusk falls, children rush to the sanctum flame and the kitchen fire, and with broom grass and fuel chips and coconut rind they peel out fire and light clay-pots and copper candelabras and glass lamps. Children light them all, so that when

darkness hangs drooping down the eaves, gods may be seen passing by, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods. And as they pass by, the dust sinks back into the earth.

In the description of the atrocities of the police, there are touches of poetry, drama, excitement and pathos. When the coolies were being taken away by the police one of the women laments :

He'll never come again, He'll never come again,
He'll never come again, Moorthappa.
The God of death has sent for him,
Buffalo and rope and all,
They stole him from us, they lassoed him at night,
He's gone, He's gone, He's gone, Moorthappa.

Rachanna's wife cries ;

He, leave us our men, He, leave us our souls,
He, leave us our King of the veranda seat,
But say, sisters, He's gone, He's gone, Moorthappa,
He's gone, He's gone, He's gone, Moorthappa.

Achakka's Varying her Manner of Narration

She always uses language fit for the occasion. She varies her manner of narration according to the kind of thing she is narrating. She tries to make her story full of suspense and interesting so that it does not become boring. In her sweep, she takes all that was happening in and around Kanthapura from the temple of goddess Kenchamma to the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Sometimes she adopts a confidential tone as if she is telling a secret.

Sometimes she describes things in a matter-of-fact manner, and, sometimes gives poetic descriptions. At times she is detached and there are times when she seems to be involved in the things she is describing. Although terseness is not in keeping with the nature of this chatty old woman at times, she is terse and at other times she is loquacious.

While narrating the events she tries to impart the feelings of the people of Kanthapura through unobtrusive reference in place of long, elaborate descriptions. For instance, there is the description of the villagers waiting for Moorthy after his release from jail :

"And people will say who is he that people wait on him?" O, if only we were there....and when he would take the road to Kanthapura and we said he would be firm and soft-eyed and pilgrim-looking, and we imagined him with this look on his face and that flash in his eyes, and pariah Lachhamma said, 'May be the goddess will send a wide rainbow and rain of flowers to welcome him,' and she

stood there gaping at the skies and murmuring funny things to the goddess. And hearts began to beat and yet we saw no Moorthy, and yet no Moorthy, and yet no Moorthy, and yet not a hair of his head was seen, and we were silent as those in the sanctum at the camphor ceremony, yet no Moorthy and no Moorthy, and the buses had surely passed by the river over the bridge and up the Santur Valley, and Rangamma got so anxious that he sent pariah Lingayya to run and see, and pariah Lingayya ran and ran, and from the top of the road cried out, 'No, no', and we all looked to this side and that and no Moorthy and no Seenu either was to be seen. And our hearts began to beat like drums, and Ratna said, 'I'll see if he is come by the mango grove'. And Ratna ran like a boy, and behind her ran young Chenna, and Chenna was followed by cowherd Sidda, and then came a voice from the Promontory, it was Seenu's and he was calling us, and we cried out, "what is it? What? and he rushed with the *kumkum* water spurting and splashing, and the flower garland tearing in our hands and the coconuts heavy, and what should we see in the Brahmin quarters but a cordon of policemen round Rangamma's house."

When she describes the death of Moorthy's mother, her manner just appropriate for what she is describing :

"'What? Never to go to the temple or to an obsequial dinner, never to a marriage party, or a hair cutting ceremony?....Oh!' moaned Narasamma, and that very night, when the doors were closed and the voices had died away she ran through the Brahmin street and the potters' street and standing at the village gate she spat once towards the East, and once towards the West, once towards the South, East, and once towards the West, once towards the South, and once towards the North, and then, spitting again thrice at the pariah huts where the dogs began to raise a howl, she ran over the fig tree bound, and she had such a shiver at the thought of all the ghosts and spirits and the evil ones of flame, that she trembled and coughed. But there was something deep and desperate that hurried her on, and she passed by Rangamma's sugar-cane field and the mango grove to the river, just where the whirlpool gropes and girgles, and she looked up at the moonlit sky, and the winds of the night and the shadows of the night and the jackals of the night so pierced her breast that she shuddered and sank unconscious upon the sand and the cold so pierced her that the next morning she was died."

This passage may be contrasted with the matter of fact and detached statement of facts of Narasamma's death :

"And when Moorthy came back he lived on in Rangamma's house. They gave him food by the kitchen door, as Narasamma did and

he still went to the pariahs and he still gave them cotton to spin and yarn to weave and he taught them alphabets and grammar and arithmetic and Hindi....."

Where she just wants to state a fact, she states it in a plain and simple manner. For instance, when she wants to state that Bade Khan was given a hut in Skeffington Coffee Estate :

"Bade Khan went straight to the Skeffington Coffee Estate and he said, 'Your Excellency, a house to live in?' And Mr. Skeffington turned to his butler and said, 'Give him a hut', and the butler went to the maistris' quarters and opened a tin shed and Bade Khan went in and looked at the plastered floor and the barred widows and the well nearby and he said. 'This will do', and going this way and that, he chose a pariah woman among the lonely ones, and she brought along her clay pots and her mats and her brooms, and he gave her a very warmful bed."

When the action described, continues for some time or the novelist wants to create a sense of largeness, he multiplies objectives and images. For instance, in the description of the coolies coming out of the Skeffington Coffee Estate :

'Then the police inspector saunters up to the Skeffington gate and he opens it, and one coolie and two coolies and three coolies come out, their faces dark as mosque and their blue skin black under the clouded heaven and prespiration flows down their bodies and they seem fixed to the earth—one coolie and two coolies and three coolies and four and five come out, eyes fixed to the earth, their stomachs black and clammy and bulging, and they marched towards the toddy booths; and then suddenly more coolies come out, more and more and more like clogged bulls clattering down the byre steps they come out and the women come behind them, their *sari* fringes drawn over their faces, and eyes fixed on the earth, and policemen walked beside them, they walked beside the police with bulging stomachs and bamboo legs, coolies of the Godavari banks, and they are marched on to the toddy booth, to Boranna's toddy booth to drink and to beat the drum and to clap hand and sing they go, the coolies, their money tied to their waist and their eyes fixed to the earth...."

At times the presentation is dramatic and the effect is created with the help of fluency in the use of words describing the situation or vivifying its different aspects. For instance, the passage describing the indifference that Range Gowda showed to Bade Khan :

"Then, straight went Bade Khan to the Patel and said : 'He, Patel. The government had sent me here and I need a house to live in.'

'Hm', said Patel Range gowda, crossing the threshold on to the

verandah, 'A house. Well, you can look round and see I can't think of one at the moment.' He opened his betel bag and carefully taking a tobacco leaf he seated himself, and wiping the tobacco leaf against the *dhoti,* he put it into his mouth, then put on areca nut with it and began to munch.

Bade Khan was getting restless. Not only did the Patel look indifferent but he had not even asked Bade Khan to seat himself. So, he went up the three steps and sat by a pillar, his feet hanging down the verandah and his stick between his legs."

Another example is Bhatta eating the obsequial dinner :

"Bhatta is very learned in his art. It will be all over within the winking of an eye. Then the real obsequital dinner begins with fresh honey and solid curds, and Bhatta's beloved Bengal gram *khir.* 'Take it Bhattare, only one cup more, just one? Let us not dissatisfy our manes. The children are playing in the shadow by the byre, and the elderly people are all in the side room, waiting for the holy Brahmins to finish their meals. But Bhatta goes on munching and belching, drinking after and then munching again 'Rama, Rama, Rama,, one does not have an obsequital dinner everyday.'

There are some very beautiful passages which are remarkable pieces of poetry. For instance the description of coming of monsoons at the Skeffington Coffee Estate :

".....And as Rachanna and Madanna and Chandranna and Siddayya stand beside the jack, the drops trick down the peeling bark then touch the head; then the back and the head, and once when the trees had all ground down as though whipped to a bow there is such a swish of spray that it soaks their *dhotis* and turbans and they stand squeezing them out."

Descriptions become short or lengthy, pointed or prolix according to what is being described. At some places there are very vivid and beautiful descriptions of the scenario.

When the *Harikathas* had ended, excitement was gone and life was dull; "the air looked empty." After exposing the hypocrisy and duplicity of the Swami (who called the foreigners *Mlechchas, i.e.,* untouchables but at the same time thought that they were morally and mentally superior to Indians), the narrator made a pithy comment in most guarded language lest she should offend the superstitions and fanatical regionalists : "and, therefore, brothers, know for sure that religion is wearing behind its saffron robes." The *Satyagrahis* while picketing the toddy booths of the Estate thought that the "quick and strong, the rain patters on the leaves and the thatch on the earth," was probably "the blessing of the gods". But their hopes were belied : "with the rain came the shower of *Lathi* blows....." such contrasts are a common feature in the novel.

When the police inspector came to make an inquiry about the activities of Moorthy in *Kartik*, "a month of lights", his presence created "dark fears" in the hearts of people. They were beaten and pushed out by policemen but they were advised by Moorthy to withdraw in their home and shun retaliation. When he came in along the verandah to speak of peace and love and order to his brethern there was perfect silence and "the *Kartik* light glowed brighter."

Those who were killed or wounded in the clash between the *Satyagrahis* and the soldiers were many. It was difficult to recognise faces or describe at length individual suffering, so the narrator's glance takes a sweep :

"And then more and more men crawl up, and more wounded are brought up on shoulders and arms and stretchers, and on stretchers are they brought up, naked, half-covered, earth-covered are they brought up, with dangling heads, dangling hands, and bleeding hands, and with bleeding mouths, and bleeding foreheads and backs are they brought up, city boys and peasant boys are they young and bright as banana trunks, city men and peasant men, lean ribbed, long toed, with cut moustaches and long whiskers—peasant women and the city women are they, widows, mothers, daughters, step daughters—and some speak in free voices and some in breathless sputters, and some can do no more than wallow and wail."

Conclusion

Almost all people who have read the novel will agree with Srinivas Iyengar. Srinivas Iyengar says that her manner of telling the tale is, "characteristically Indian, feminine with a spontaneity that is coupled with swiftness, raciness suffused with native vigour, and exciting with a rich sense of drama shot through and through with humour and lyricism." The learned critic adds, "the telling of the story gives the whole affair an *ithihasic*—at least a *puranic*-dignity. The narrative is hardly very straightforward : there are involutions and digressions, there are meaningful backward glances, there are rthythmic chains of proper names. (Rachanna and Chandranan and Madanna; Satamma and Rangamma and Puttamma and Seethamma), there are hypnotic repetitions and refrains, and there are also sheer poetic iridescences. A village, a picturesque region, an epoch of social and political change, a whole complex of character and motive, reason and superstition, idealism and cold calculation, all spring up before our years demanding recognition and acceptance; it is almost a *tour de force*. Although Raja Rao has put the story into the mouth of a grandmother, although the feminine touches and mannerisms, the seemingly effortless rotation of the

...gue, the meandering sentences and massive paragraphs are ...aracteristic of the narrator—there is nevertheless consummate art ...all this riot or artlessness, there is careful selection behind the ...parent abundant detail."

Q. 4. Raja Rao successfully heightens reality by contrast- ... or blending it with poetry and mythology (fantasy and ...agination) in *Kanthapura*.

Or

Critically analyse the emotional impact of *Kanthapura* on ...e reader.

Or

"Raja Rao's greatness in *Kanthapura* is because of fusion ... science, superstition, religion, patriotism and politics." ...scuss this dictum by giving examples.

Or

"Atmosphere of the novel is very congenial and effective." ...borate this statement.

Ans. Introduction : *Kanthapura* is a novel in which Raja Rao ...ds multifarious feelings sentiments and idiosyncrasies. He has ...cessfully fused various elements of diverse nature which are not ...atical to each other. But his work is highly appreciable because ... has blended science, superstition, politics and religion. All the ...aracters are depicted keeping in view these elements. The feelings ...spired by *Kanthapura* include intense patriotism, asceticism, self- ...crifice, poetical visions of landscape, great reverence for religion. ... conveys the ideas of foreigners who are totally against the Indians. ...eir inhumanity and barbarity has been depicted.

He conveys to us great compassion and fellow feeling for Indians ...o are victims of all these atrocities. A great sense of awe and fear ... the British which was removed by great Mahatma and his ...ology. Gandhi made us fearless by his ideology of patriotism and ...tionalism. Thus, this novel is considered to be great and distin- ...shed because of dominating personality of Mahatma Gandhi.

...ligious Feeling

The villagers are religious people and religion forms a very ...portant part of the lives of these people. This love of religion is ...minant feeling in Kanthapura because to a certain extent all ...er feelings arise from it. It was moorthy who found the *linga* in ...akka's backyard. He suggested that a temple should be built and

the *linga* should be installed in it. The city boys together built the Kanthapurishwari temple. They had come to Kanthapura to spend their holiday and so they had plenty of free time. Bhatta performed the consecration ceremony. This temple later became the centre of activity. This was the place where people gathered and discussed the various issues which effected their lives.

The Temple and the Atmosphere

Prayers were held in the temple every morning and evening and *bhajans* were held and people from Kanthapura and areas around Kanthapura, gathered at the temple for prayers. Sometimes there used to be *Harikathas*. It was Moorthy's suggestion that religious festivals and *Harikathas* should be held regularly. Ramakrishnayya explained the vedantic texts to the people.

The *Harikathaman*, Jayaramachar was invited from the city. He used the *Harikathas* to tell the people of Kanthapura about Gandhi and about the activities of the freedom fighters. His basic purpose was to tell the people about the principles and ideals of the Mahatma. His *Harikathas* were very unique and interesting and, the villagers listened with rapt attention.

In the great heavens Brahma the self-created one, was lying on his serpent, when the sage Valmiki entered, announced by the two doorkeepers. 'Oh, learned sire, what brings you into this distant world?' asked Brahma and offering the sage a seat beside him, fell at his feet. 'Rise up, O God of Gods! I have come to bring you sinister news. Far down on the Earth you chose as your chief daughter Bharatha, the goddess of wisdom and well-being. You gave her the sage-loved Himalayas on the north and the seven surging seas to the south, and you gave her the Ganges to meditate on, the Godaveri to live by, and the pure Cauvery to drink in. You gave her the riches of gold and of diamonds, and you gave her kings such as the world has never seen! Asoka, who loved his enemies and killed no animal; Chandragputa, who had the nine jewels of wisdom at his court; and Dharmaraya and Vikramaditya and Akbar, and many a nobel king. And you gave her too, sages radiating wisdom to the eight cardinal points of the earth, Krishna and Buddha, Sankara and Ramanuja. But, O Brahma! you who sent up the Prince propagators of the Holy Law and sages that smote the darkness of ignorance, you have forgotten us so long that men have come from across the seas and the oceans to trample on our wisdom and to spit on virtue itself. They have come to bind us and to whip us, to make our women die milkless and our men die ignorant. O Brahma! deign to send

us one of your gods so that he may incarnate on Earth and bring back light and plenty to your enslaved daughter....'—'O Sage' pronounced Brahma, 'is it greater for you to ask or for me to say "Yea"? Siva himself will forthwith go and incarnate on the Earth and free my beloved daughter from her enforced slavery. Pray seat yourself, and the messengers of Heaven shall fly to Kailash and Shiva be informed of it.'

And lo! when the Sage was still partaking of the pleasures Brahma offered him in hospitality, there was born in a family in Gujarat a son such as the world has never beheld. As soon as he came forth, the four wide walls began to shine like the Kingdom of the Sun, and hardly was he in the cradle than he began to lisp the language of wisdom. You remember how Krishna, when he was but a babe of four, had begun to fight against demons and had killed the serpent Kali. So too, our Mohandas began to fight against the enemies of the country. And as he grew up, and after he was duly shaven for the hair ceremony, he began to go out into the villages and assemble people and talk to them, and his voice was so pure, his forehead so brilliant with wisdom, that men followed him, more and more men followed him as they did Krishna the flute-player; and, so he goes from village to village to slay the serpent of the foreign rule. Fight, says he, but harm no soul. Love all, says he, Hindu, Mohamedan, Christian or Pariah, for all are equal before God. don't be attached to riches, says he, for riches create passions, and passions create attachment, and attachment hides the face of Truth. Truth must you tell, he says, for Truth is God, and verily, it is the only God I know. And he says too, spin everyday. Spin and weave everyday, for our Mother is in tattered weeds and a poor mother needs clothes to cover her sores. If you spin, he says, the money that goes to the Red-man will stay within your country and the Mother can feed the foodless and the milkless and the clothless. He is a saint, the Mahatma, a wise man and a soft man, and a saint. You know how he fasts and prays. And even his enemies fall at his feet. You know once there was an ignorant Pathan who thought the Mahatma was a covetous man and wanted to kill him. He had a sword beneath his shirt as he stood waiting in the dark for the Mahatma to come out of a lecture-hall. The Mahatma comes and the man lifts up his sword. But the Mahatma puts his hands on the wicked man's shoulders and says, 'Brother, what do you want of me?' And the man falls at the feet of the Mahatma and kisses them, and from that day onwards, there was never a soul more devoted than he. And the serpent that crossed the thighs of the Mahatma, a huge serpent too....."

Jayaramachar is arrested by the police. After the arrest of Jayaramachar, Bade Khan came to stay in the village. His main work was to keep watch on the activities of the freedom-fighters in Kanthapura and give information to the government.

Religion and politics are very closely interlinked. Along with the struggle for political freedom, Gandhi also worked for removal of untouchability and removal of caste distinctions. People who were supporters of this movement were in favour of opening the gates of the temple to the pariahs. Swami who was basically a religious head was against Moorthy. The Swami was an agent of the government. He wanted Bhatta to see to it that the movement for upliftment of the pariahs was curbed at the right time. He was thus a religious leader and was also connected with politics. Bhatta who was against Moorthy and the Gandhi Movement was the first Brahmin of Kanthapura. Thus, the temple and religious ceremonies were connected with the freedom struggle.

Before starting the 'Don't-touch-the Government-campaign' Moorthy fasted for three days and, during these three days stayed in the temple and meditated there. Later when the city boys came to Kanthapura to help them prevent the auctioning of their lands they organised a Satyanarayan Puja. Thus, it is through the aid of religion that the people succeed in staging a Satyagraha.

Rich Elements of Art

In the novel, imaginative colouring is imparted to the ordinary and the commonplace and the known and familiar things are made to look unfamiliar and uncommon. The reality is not distorted and falsified but it is shot through and irradiated by poetry and fantasy. The atmosphere of the play is very effective. It gives us relief from the sordid realities of life. There is emmense realism but various types of sentiments feelings, emotions are dove tailed or blended.

After reading the novel, there is purification of our soul. In every chapter we feel that we are not in Kanthapura but India as a whole is presented by the distinguished novelist.

Fact and Fiction in the Novel

In a work of art there is always realism and some degree of imagination. There is myth and fantasy. In this novel fact and fiction, science and fantasy get mixed up. The past and present is juxtaposed. Rangamma tells the villagers what she reads in the newspapers. Facts of astronomy are blended with fictitious things :

She told us too, about the stars that are so far that some have

poured their light into the blue space long before you were born, long before you were born or your father was born or your grandfather was born; and just as a day of Brahma is a million-million years of ours, the day of the stars is a million-million times our day, and each star has a sun and each sun has a moon, and each moon has an earth, and some there are that have two moons, and some three, and out there between the folds of the milky way, she told us, out there, there is just a chink, and you put your eyes to a great tube and see another world with sun and moon and stars, all bright and floating in the diamond dust of God.

She oversimplified the things. She said to the villagers that she had read about plants that weep. The Darwins theory of evolution is referred by saying that Rangamma knows about monkeys that have now become men.

Poetic Element

Though it is a prose work there are some passages in the novel which are beautiful pieces of poetry. The most noteworthy among such passages is the description of coming of monsoons at Skeffington Coffee Estate.

There is gurgle and grunt from behind the bamboo cluster—and the gurgle and grunt soar up and swallow in the whole sky. The darkness grows thick as sugar in a cauldron, white the bamboos creak and sway and whine, and the crows begin to wheel round and flutter, and everywhere dogs bark and calves moo, and then the wind comes so swift and dashing that it takes the autumn leaves with it, and they rise into the juggling air, while the trees bleat and blubber. Then drops fall, big as the thumb, and as the thunder goes clashing like a temple cymbal through the heavens, the earth itself seems to heave up and cheep in the monsoon rains. It churns and splashes, beats against the tree-tops, reckless and wilful, and suddenly floating forwards it bucks back and spits forward and pours down upon the green, weak coffee leaves, thumping them down to the earth, and then playfully lounging up, the coffee leaves rising with it, and whorling and winnowing, spurting and rattling, it jerks and snorts this side and that; and as Rachanna and Madanna and Chandranna and Siddayya stand beside the jacks, the drops trickel down the peeling bark, then touch the head; then the back and the waist, and once when the trees have all groaned down as though whipped to a bow, there is such a swish of spray that it soaks their *dhotis* and their turbans, and they stand squeezing them out. Then somewhere there is a lightening again and suddenly the whole Himavathy valley becomes as clear as under the moon, and in Kanthapura the smoke is seen to rise from every house and curl round the golden dome of the temple.....

In the language also there is poetry because Achakka quite often speaks in rhythmic poetic prose. The names are uttered in a series like Rangamma and Satamma and Puttamma which creates a musical effect. The narrator rarely follows the normal word order. Inversion is her style. The sentences are rhythmic. In some places however, the narrator's statements are prosaic. On the whole the novel is a well structured and beautifully created work of art. The passage describing the beauty of month of *Kartik* is also beautiful.

> *Kartik* has come to Kanthapura, sisters—*Kartik* has come with the glow of lights and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods; white lights from clay-trays and red lights from copper-stands, and diamond lights that glow from the bowers of entrance-leaves; lights that glow from banana-trunks and mango twigs, yellow light behind white leaves, and green light behind yellow leaves, and white light behind green leaves; and night curls through the shadowed strees, and hissing over bellied boulders and hurrying through dallying drains, night curls through the Brahmin street and the Pariah Street and the Potters' Street and the Weavers' Street and flapping through the mango grove, hangs clawed for one moment to the giant pipal, and then shooting across the broken fields, dies quietly into the river—and gods walk by lighted streets, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods, and even as they walk in transparent flesh the dust gently sinks back to the earth, and many a child in Kanthapura sits late into the night to see the crown of this god and that god, and how many a god has chariots with steeds white as foam and queens so bright that the eyes shut themselves in fear lest they be blinded. *Kartik* is a month of the gods, and as the gods pass by the Potters' Street and the Weavers' Street, lights are lit to see them pass by. *Kartik* is a month of lights, sisters, and in Kanthapura when the dusk falls, children rush to the sanctum flame and the kitchen fire, and with broom grass and fuel chips and coconut rind they peel out fire and light clay-pots and copper candelabras and glass lamps. Children light them all, so that when darkness hangs drooping down the eaves, gods may be seen passing by, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods. And as they pass by, the dust sinks back into the earth.

Heightening of Reality

Although it is a prose work there is poetic vision due to rich imagination of Raja Rao. Kanthapura depicts reality but if merely reality had been depicted the novel would have become really dull and uninteresting. So in the novel, reality is heightened in various ways. Reality is mixed with mythical fantasy. Then there is also the

mingling of the past, the present and the future. For instance the Mahatma is compared with Lord Krishna:

> You remember how Krishna, when he was a babe of four, had begun to fight against demons and killed the serpent Kali. So too our Mohandas began to fight against the enemies of the country. And as he grew up, and after he was duly shaven for the hair ceremony, he began to go out into the villages and assemble people and talk to them, and his voice was so pure, his forehead so brilliant with wisdom, that men followed him, more and more men followed him as they did Krishna the flute-player; and so he goes from village to village to slay the serpent of the foreign rule...

The novel is a beautiful piece of art and it is made beautiful because of blending of these elements of poetry, fantasy, myth and imagination.

Patriotic Fervour and Enthusiasm

The people of Kanthapura show exemplary patriotic fervour and enthusiasm. They are united in their fight against the British government. They are ready to sacrifice their personal happiness for the sake of the country. Even women and children actively participate in the activities of the Congress and the picketing of toddy grove and toddy booths. By the time of the Satyanarayan Puja, it had become a mass movement. The people are detered by nothing.

Ultimately, the people of Kanthapura leave the village and settle in another place called Kashipura. Though, apparently it may seem like a defeat they feel good after all this. The novel ends with a sense of hope. There is catharsis in the novel.

Q. 5. Raja Rao used the technique of myth to make the novel attractive and fascinating.

Or

The technique of myths is efficiently used by Raja Rao in *Kanthapura*.

Ans. Symbolic and Mythic Design

In the case of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Manohar Malgonkar, the use of myth is casual and isolated. It doesn't form the integral and spinal design of the novel. However, in case of Raja Rao, his mythic designs cannot be ignored. M.K. Naik has rightly said that the Savithri myth in *The Serpent and the Rope*, "is so vitally the centre of the novel that any criticism which ignores this is itself bound to appear peripheral....."

Meenakshi Mukherjee has rightly pointed out in *The Twice Born Fiction* :

"*Kanthapura* is narrated by an old woman to a hypothetical listener....Raja Rao's choice of this narrator serves several purposes at once. Making this old woman the narrator enables Raja Rao to mingle facts and myths in an effective manner. For the old woman, Jawaharlal is a Bharata to the Mahatma who, she believes, will slay Ravana so that Sita may be freed. For her Gandhi has attained the status of God and Moorthy is regarded as *avatar* in *Kanthapura*. The characteristically concrete imagination of the uneducated mind pictures the Mahatma as large and blue like the Sahyadri mountains on whose slopes the pilgrims climb to the top, while Moorthy is seen as a small mountain. To her, the *Satyagraha* becomes a religious ceremony to which she devotes her sacred ardour."

According to Rajeev Taranath, "Eliot's use of myths is part of the essential structure of his creation. In Raja Rao it is subsidiary." This view cannot be accepted.

Kanthapura is not an Allegory

In *Kanthapura*, the comparison between Gandhi-British rule and Rama-Ravana situation is not elaborate and complete. So, it cannot be called an allegory. It is only a convenient comparison. A villager born and brought up in Indian tradition understands a contemporary problem easily if it is explained through a fable or an episode of the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* or the *Gita*. These stories have gone deep into the blood of average Indians. Moreover, the narrator being an old woman found it easier to explain subtle thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and the complications of the contemporary situation through the widely known fables, legends and religious stories of gods and demons. It is natural that a novel dealing with political awareness takes into consideration the rural vocabulary.

In addition to the use of the myth of Rama-Ravana battle, there are other myths also that are used not only to diversify the *Harikathas* and make them more interesting to people of Kanthapura but also to engage the interest of the readers of the novel. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, was compared with Lord Krishna. When Mahatma Gandhi was born he was named as Mohandas which was a synonym for Krishna. Mohandas was born to kill the serpent of foreign rule in the same way as child Krishna to subdue the serpent Kaliya. The *Harikathas* were used for telling villagers about Gandhi and the British rule and the political situation that existed at that time.

Past and the Present Brought Together.

In *Kanthapura* the past and present is juxtaposed and the characters from epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and Hindu gods and goddesses are mentioned along with contemporary characters. A distinguished critic has said, "The distinction between the time past and the time present is thus obliterated, and both are projected into the time future. Gandhi Mahatma is Rama, the red-foreigner or the brown inspector of police who flourishes a *lathi* is but a soldier in ten-headed Ravana's army of occupation and oppression. Nay more : the Satyagrahi in prison is the divine Krishna himself in Kansa's prison. Events gathered significance after the passage of some years, the humdrum becomes the unique, the trivial becomes the heroic, and the hectic excitement of a day becomes a permanent communal passion."

In the *Harikathas* of Jayaramachar, the past and the present are juxtaposed and contemporary events and personalities are linked with Puranic gods and epic-heroes and heroines. Due to the use of mythical technique, Gandhi is made a god and Moorthy is made into an *avtar*. This juxtaposition of the past and the present and of men and gods is there throughout the novel. By the use of the mythical technique, the novelist has enriched the novel and imparted to it a rare expansiveness.

The Myth of Rama Ravana

In the *Ramayana,* Rama is presented as a man who has all the good qualities that one may expect in any human being. He is presented as an ideal man. Rama is the reincarnation of god who was born for destruction of evil. The battle between Rama and Ravana was a battle between good and evil. Ravana was a very powerful king and an evil man. A very powerful man with super-human powers was needed to defeat him. Only someone as powerful as Rama could do this. So, God sent Rama for the destruction of Ravana.

The situation was similar during the British rule. India was under the British rule and Indians were exploited and ill treated by the British. The Indians were treated like animals by the Britishers. When Gandhi appeared on the scene, the people looked at him as Rama. They looked at him as someone who will free them from British rule. His humiliation by Englishmen in Africa was like the humiliation of Rama when his wife was kidnapped by Ravana. Freedom was like Sita soiled and dishonoured and, Mahatma Gandhi like Rama had to fight for her dignity. The weapons of Gandhi were

truth, non-violence and self control. Mahatma Gandhi's visit to England to attend the Round Table Conference in 1931 was like the visit of Rama to Lanka after defeating Ravana to bring back his wife. The people of India waited anxiously for the return of Mahatma Gandhi. In a similar manner, the people of Ayodhya waited anxiously for the return of Rama and Sita. The Indians had deep respect for Sita. Just like Rama had Bharatha who was sincere and devoted to him Mahatma Gandhi had Nehru. People compared Jawaharlal Nehru with Bharatha and Laxman.

Other Analogies

Like Mahatma Gandhi, Moorthy, the local leader of Kanthapura was also an *avatar*. The Britishers or the Red-men were the *asuras* or the demons. The clash between India and England had its counterpart in the clash between the *Satyagrahis*, (followers of Mahatma Gandhi) and England, the ruler of India. This was further a symbol, as it were of the clash between the gods and the demons, between the forces of good and evil. Moorthy, the *avatar* of Rama, needed a Hanuman to complete the picture of the body and mind. Seenu, messenger, devotee and worker, was a sort of Hanuman to Moorthy.

Other myths :

There are other myths in the novel which are used not only to diversify the *Harikathas* and thereby to hold the interest of the inhabitants of Kanthapura, but also to draw the attention of the readers of the novel towards them. A comparison was drawn between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Krishna. At the time of Mahatma Gandhiji's birth, he was named by his parents as Mohandas, which is another name for Krishna. He was born to destroy the serpent of foreign rule like Lord Krishna who killed the serpent named Kaliya. Moorthy had seen a vision in childhood, like child Krishna, that he was sleeping safe on the leaf of the *Pipal* tree when the holy flood had spread in the whole area in his imagination. He had also seen in imagination how he was thrown like child Parhlad from the hill and was saved by God, the omnipotent. He also saw another vision of the Mahatma and felt as if he was filled with primordial radiance. *Swarajya* is compared with Lord Shiva thus : "Shiva is the three-eyed and *Swarajaya* is also three-eyed : self purification, Hindu-Muslim unity and *khaddar*." Even Mahatma Gandhi is three-eyed i.e., endowed with the wonderful gift of foresight. "Gandhi is Shiva himself in human shape." Under his influence even persons like Moorthy became three-eyed and shared in his wisdom. "And we

all said, "The army of the Mahatma is an increasing garland. May our hearts be pure as the morning flowers and may he accept them. For after all sister, when one has a light on the forehead one can search a thousand leagues. Shiva is poison-throated and yet he is the three-eyed. May the three-eyed Shiva protect us...."

Mythologizing of Historical Characters

In addition to using legendary characters of Indian mythology Raja Rao is fond of mythologizing even historical characters as, fighters and saviours of freedom. Rani Laxmibai, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi and Mrs. Annie Besant were no less super-human as freedom-fighters. As a *sthala-purana* the novel portrays the birth of the goddess Kenchamma, the mother of Himavathy. At the request of the sage, Tripura, he descended from the heavens. She was bounteous, as such she had killed a demon ages ago, which visited their village to ask their young sons as food and young women as wives. A war was waged by her for many nights to kill the demon, and when he was killed, the whole earth had become red with the blood which oozed out from his body. Kenchamma hill was red on this account. People regarded her since then as the presiding-deity of Kanthapura. It was also blessed by Rama visiting it during his fourteen years exile in the jungles of south India.

Mythologizing the Facts of Life

The status of the hero is exalted in the novel by the use of the device of mythologizing the facts of life. Mortal Moorthy's mental and moral stature came to be raised and he was endowed with a symbolic significance consequently. He is more than a man, he is a superman, an angel, an ideal man. He is compared with Rama, Krishna, Christ and Mahatma Gandhi, who had taken upon themselves to wear the mantle of the sins of mankind and undergone penance for improvement of human lot. Moorthy in his effort to conquer physical desire and self-interest had vowed to remain non-violent and dedicated to celibacy and truth. He had gone through life like a noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent, and Brahmanic, a very prince." In a legendary tale of a locality like the *Kanthapura* it sounds quite normal, and there is nothing artificial or incredible about it.

Use of Symbols

Symbols which Raja Rao uses in his novels add to the beauty of the work. Without them his novels would not be what they are.

a Brahmin

A Brahmin in his novels is a symbol of wisdom and purity of

mind. In *Kanthapura,* Moorthy is called a prince. He is impressive in his manner and very dignified. He is simple, pious, honest and innocent and so, he is compared to a cow. The cow is treated by the Hindus as a mother and is worshipped by them. The imprisonment of the cow in *The Cow of the Barricades* is symbolic of the enslavement of the Indian people.

Temple

A temple is a symbol of ancient culture. A temple is a place where man discards rational thinking in preference of emotional acceptance and forgets his differences. The people of Kanthapura have always been going to the temple of Kenchamma to pray for love, guidance and charity. They have been doing this for centuries. Now, they gather in the same temple to discuss and find ways for protecting the interest of the country. They gather in the temple to discuss various issues and in this way, they get knowledge about what was happening in the country and come to know about Gandhi and the struggle for freedom.

The Image of Lord Shiva and His Bull Nandi

Himavathy in *Kanthapura* goes round the village, which means that life flows continuously around. There is a description of Himavathy at the beginning of the novel and it flows as before quietly around the town wearing a deserted look at the end. People may come and go but the river continues to flow and will continue for ever. The people who originally lived in Kanthapura left Kanthapura and settled elsewhere. They were replaced by other people who came to live in Kanthapura but the river flows on as it did before and the hills also have not changed. They are the same as they were earlier. Hills represent strength and stability. Gandhi and Moorthy are firm like rocks or mountains. In the novel these two people are reffered to as mountains.

Symbols of *Kumkum*, Bangles and *Sari*

These are symbols of traditional India and references to these are found throughout the novel. A shaven head without *kumkum* is an inauspicious sign. Widows in southern part of India have shaven heads. Married women wear coloured saris and widows wear white saris. In Indian tradition it is believed that the chances of happiness of the newly married couple are spoiled if a widow attends or takes part in the marriage ceremonies.

In *The Serpent and the Rope,* Rama the hero of the novel puts the toe-ring round the toe of Savithri with his own hands and, he

also puts the *kumkum* on her forehead as a mark of acceptance of her as his wife and coconut is broken when some auspicious beginning is to made.

Kashi

Kashi represents two things in the novel. It stands for a miniature, traditional and conservative India. It also symbolises a place where a Brahmin received a rupee for 'every hymn and hiccup'.

Local Rituals

In addition to myths and legends the novelist makes use of local rituals to create the atmosphere. Local rituals are described graphically and vividly and they add to the beauty of the novel.

Q. 6. Critically comment on the depiction of women characters in *Kanthapura.*

Or

Critically analyse the minor characters in *Kanthapura.*

Or

Most of the characters are marred by over idealisation in *Kanthapura.* What are your comments? Whom do you consider the best drawn character in *Kanthapura.*

Or

Critically examine *Kanthapura* as a portrait gallery.

Ans. Nature of Characterisation in *Kanthapura*

In this novel the main focus is not on characterisation. It has a secondary place in the novel. The main aim is the depiction of freedom movement and its impact on the people of Kanthapura. It is not that the novelist lacks the skill of characterisation. The characters in the novel are credible and life like. However, the characters lack depth and are flat characters. The characters do not change or develop with time. This is not because the novelist lacks the skill of characterisation but, because in this novel, he wants to concentrate on depiction of freedom struggle in a realistic and objective manner.

Qualities of Hero in *Kanthapura*

The novel deals with the impact of the Gandhi Movement on the people of the village called Kanthapura. It is not the story of the life of any particular person but the story of the village. Hence, if there is any hero of the novel it is the village of Kanthapura itself

and not any single person. But among the characters in Kanthapura, Moorthy plays a pivotal role and is the most important. The villagers called Moorthy the 'small mountain' and Mahatma Gandhi the 'big mountain'. They called him the Gandhi of Kanthapura.

It was after he had a vision of Gandhi that he was transformed. He gave up his studies and dedicated his life to the freedom struggle. It was Moorthy who brought the Gandhi Movement to the village of Kanthapura. The dreams of his mother were shattered when she heard that Moorthy had given up his studies. His mother wants him to marry but he refuses to do so. Moorthy is a follower of Gandhi and tries his best to follow Gandhi's principles and ideas. At one stage however like many other young men all over the country, he starts feeling that the Britishers were able to fool the Mahatma very easily. Though he still respected Mahatma Gandhi, he started doubting whether by following his methods they will be able to achieve their aim. He was drawn towards the ideas and principles of Nehru.

Idealisation of Characters in *Kanthapura*

The character of Moorthy seems to have been over idealised. He is presented as someone who is above ordinary human beings. He is loved and respected by everybody. Even people like Range Gowda who are much older than him, respect him and have full faith in him. They trust him and do not have any hesitation in accepting Moorthy as their leader, though he is very young.

He is soft-spoken, honest and upright. He is sincere in his work and is very confident. He is a follower of Gandhi and his ideal to love even his enemy. Even people like Bhatta and Venkamma who apparently seem to be against him, like him as a person. Venkamma was ready to marry her daughter to him. Bhatta also was not against Moorthy initially. Rangamma is very fond of him and so is Range Gowda.

It is true that Moorthy is idealised to a great extent but, it is shown that he is also a human and has human feelings and weaknesses like all other human beings. He works for the upliftment of pariahs inspite of opposition and does not stop doing so even when his mother asks him to do so. His mother is horrified when she hears that the Swami has said that he will excommunicate Moorthy. Later, she dies of shock after hearing that Moorthy and his entire family and coming generations have been excommunicated by the Swami. Moorthy does not take the news of his excommunication by the Swami seriously. He does not stop working for the pariahs even after

the death of his mother. However, he has hesitation in entering Rachanna's house when his wife asks him to do so. He enters his house with a lot of hesitation and finds it really difficult to sip the glass of milk given to him by Rachanna's wife. This was the first time that he entered the house of a pariah. Otherwise, normally he used to talk to the pariahs only from the gutter-slab. This shows that he has not been able to overcome his consciousness of being a Brahmin entirely. This particular thing makes the character of Moorthy seem real and credible. The way Moorhy feels on entering the house of Rachanna has been expressed very beautifully by the novelist :

> He smells the stench of hide and the stench of pickled pigs, and the roof seems to shake, and all the gods and all the manes of heaven seem to cry out against him, and his hands steal mechanically to the holy thread, and holding it, he feels he would like to say, 'Hari-Om, Hari-Om'. But Rachanna's wife has come with a little milk in a shining brass tumbler....'Touch it, Moorthappa, touch it only as though it were offered to the gods, and we shall be sanctified'; and Moorthy, with many a trembling prayer, touches the tumbler...."

Minor Characters in *Kanthapura*

The minor characters in the novel have been very skilfully delineated. Advocate Sankar does not play any significant role in the novel yet his character and personality has been described in great detail. Some minor characters are described in great detail and some are like sketches which have been dashed off in a hurry. The characters however are life-like and real.

There are other minor characters in the novel like Bade Khan, Rachanna and the Sahib of the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Not much is said about Bade Khan except for the fact that he is a policeman sent by the government to keep watch on the activities of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. He could not get a house to live in within Kanthapura and started living with a woman in Skeffington Coffee Estate. His physical appearance is described but nothing is said about the kind of person he is.

Women Characters in *Kanthapura*

As such there are large number of women characters in the novel. Among them Rangamma, Ratna and Venkamma are the most prominent. Then there is Moorthy's mother, Rachanna's wife. Many other minor women characters are just casually mentioned. Ratna and Rangamma are supporters of Moorthy. Ratna is just fifteen years old and a widow. She got married at a very young age and had seen

her husband only for one day even then she is expected to dress up like widow and follow the norms that widows are supposed to follow. Ratna does not do so and she does not dress up like a widow. Ratna is very modern in her views and ideas and her elders do not like all this. Moorthy has a soft corner for her. Ratna became the leader of the freedom fighters of Kanthapura in the absence of Moorthy. She was not uneducated like other village women.

Rangamma is a follower of Gandhi and like Ratna she also is a widow. She actively participates in the work of the Congress. She reads newspapers regularly and so is aware of what is going on in and outside India. She tells the villagers about the things she reads in the newspaper. She is very fond of Moorthy and loves him like her son. Moorthy started living in her house after the death of his mother. Rangamma's house became the office of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. It was in her house that they gathered and discussed their plan of action. She is a follower of Gandhi but is against the removal of caste distinctions. She is in favour of maintaining the caste system as it has existed in India for centuries and also continuing to follow the norms of behaviour supposed to be followed by people of different castes. After meeting Sankar she becomes more confident and becomes a good speaker. After the death of her father who used to explain the Vedantic texts to people she started doing the same. She did it amazingly well. She played a major role in organising the Savika Sangh. She asks the women not to neglect their household duties and says that only after completing their household work they should come to the meetings of the Savika Sangha.

Venkamma is jealous of Rangamma and is a malicious woman. She is against Moorthy and the Congress. Venkamma also is a widow.

Then there is Narasamma who is Moorthy's mother. She is an orthodox Brahmin and a very simple woman. She is uneducated and superstitious.

Achakka who is the narrator of the story is a simple, uneducated, superstitious old woman. She also is a Brahmin. We are not given much information about her personal life. Then there are other women characters like Rachanna's wife who are just mentioned. They are not described in detail.

Comments

The characters are types but they acquire considerable individuality inspite of and in addition to their typical role. The characters

are flat-characters and do not develop or change with time. The characters are skilfully delineated and are real and life like. *Kanthapura* may be described as a portrait gallery if one considers only the number and variety of characters in it, but this title seems inappropriate if one considers the depth of the characterisation.

Q. 7. Narrate the signs of the exploitation of the coolies in the Skeffington Coffee Estate. How far is it relevant to the theme of *Kanthapura*? Elaborate

Or

Discuss the role of Coffee Estate Workers in the Gandhi movement in *Kanthapura*.

Ans. Introduction

During that period in the history of India with which the novel deals there were many such estates all over India which were owned by white men. Many workers were employed in these Estates and they were mostly Indians. They were exploited by the owners and this kind of exploitation and ill treatment was there in all Estates whether they were coffee plantations or tea plantations or other plantations. This is an example of economic exploitation of the Indians by the British. So, by depicting the condition of workers in the Skeffington Coffee Estate the novelist gives us a glimpse of the atrocities of the Britishers. In fact, it won't be right to describe it as a 'glimpse' because a very detailed and vivid description of the estate is given. Just as Kanthapura is a typical Indian village, the Skeffington Coffee Estate is representative of hundreds of such coffee estates all over the country.

Setting of the Coffee Estate

The Skeffington Coffee Estate is situated near Kanthapura. The present owner of the estate is the nephew of the earlier owner who is referred to as Hunter Sahib by the people. In the novel, there is a very vivid description of the setting of the Estate :

"The Skeffington Coffee Estate rises beyond the Bebbur Mound on the Bear's Hill, and hanging over Tippur and Subbur and Kuttur, it swings round the Elephant valley, and, rising to shoulder the snow mountains and the Beda Ghats, it dips sheer into the Kanavathy, and follows on....Nobody knows how large it is or when it was founded; but they all say it is at least ten thousand acres wide, and some people in Kanthapura can still remember having heard of the Hunter Sahib who used his hunter and his hand to clear the first fruits of his plantation; and then it began to grow from

the Bear's Hill to Kantur Hill, and more and more coolies came from beneath the Ghats, and from the Bear's Hill and Kantur it touched the snow mountains, and more and more coolies came; and then it became bigger and bigger, till..."

The Coolies

When the coolies actually reached the estate and started living there they used to realise that they had been misled and fooled by the maistri who had made many false promises and created the impression that they were going to have a very comfortable life once they reach the estate. These coolies came from far-off places. Some of them spoke Tamil or Telugu. The people of Kanthapura spoke Kannada. They came from the plains below the Ghats stretching upto the river Godavary. The *maistri* promised them that they will be given a four-anna bit for a man and a two-anna bit for a woman. The maistri told them that they will just have to pick up coffee seeds. They were told that the Sahib was a good man and a generous man. People came in large numbers to work on the estate. The march of the coolies to the Estate has been described by the novelist very vividly :

"armies of coolies marched past the Kenchamma Temple, half-naked, starving, spitting, weeping, vomiting, coughing, shivering, squeaking, shouting moaning coolies—coolies after coolies passed by the Kenchamma Temple, the maistri before them, while the children clung to their mother's breasts, the old men to their son's arms, and bundles hung over shoulder and arm and arm and shoulder and head; and they marched on past the Kenchamma Temple and up to the Skeffington Coffee Estate—coolies from below the Ghats, coolies, young men, old men, old women, children, baskets, bundles, pots, coolies passed on and winding through the twists of the Estate path—by the Buxcom-pipal bend, over the Devil's Ravine Bridge, by the Parwatiwell corner—they marched up, the maistri before them, the maistri...."

Life on the Skeffington Coffee Estate

The coolies living in the Estate were exploited and ill-treated. They had to go through all kinds of physical torture and humiliation. They had to get up at five o'clock in the morning and work the whole day without any break. The maistri did not allow them to rest even for a single second. They were beaten mercilessly. The men had to dig pits and to hew woods and the women were made to pluck weeds and to kill vermin. The weather was very hot and there were many snakes in the Coffee Estate. They had to work in the scorching heat

with perspiration flowing down their bodies.

Then when the rains came though the people got relief from heat, they suffered from diseases. The Sahib distributed medicines among the coolies. The coolies were uneducated and superstitious people and they did not eat the medicines given to them by the Sahib.

Compared to his uncle the present owner of the Skeffington Coffee Estate was less cruel. He was in many ways better than his uncle. He did not beat the coolies but he had a weakness for women. He wanted any woman who caught his fancy. If any woman said no, her family members were harassed and tortured by the Sahib.

After the incident in which a Brahmin workman refused to send his daughter, the Sahib was so furious that he shot the Brahmin with his pistol. The Brahmin died. The Sahib himself went to the District Superintendent of Police and reported the matter. The Sahib wanted to give two thousand rupees as damages to the widow and children. Ultimately he did not have to pay anything as he was forgiven by the court.

After this incident he never sent a maistri to drag a girl to his house if she refused to come. He had a new woman everyday and never the same two within a week. He even went to the extent of raping teenage girls in the fields. He then took the girl to his bungalow and gave her a five-rupee note or a basket of mangoes and sent her home to rest for two days.

Whatever life may be like on the Estate, no one that came from the Godavery has ever gone back to it. They were given small huts to live in and no wages were paid. They were exploited and treated like animals. They were given just ragi and rice water.

Interlinking of Kanthapura with Coffee Estate

The novel has a main-plot and a sub-plot. The main plot deals with the impact of Gandhi Movement on a village called Kanthapura. The village is a miniature representation of the whole of India. What was happening in this village at that time was happening all over India. The subplot deals with what was happening on the Skiffington Coffee Estate. The condition of the coolies living on the Estate is depicted. They were exploited and treated very badly by the owner who was an Englishman. It shows the exploitation and brutality to which the Indians were subjected by the British. The two plots are fused into a single whole, because both expose the brutality of the Englishmen and the various ways in which they exploited the people.

The Skeffington Coffee Estate was near the village called Kanthapura. Among the coolies who lived in the Estate, there were some Brahmins as well, who were enlightened and progressive in their views. Most of the coolies were pariahs. Gangadhar and Vasudev took the other coolies to Kanthapura to take part in Gandhi *bhajans*.

Moorthy wanted to educate the coolies of the Estate and do something for their upliftment. With this in mind Moorthy went to the Coffee Estate but he was not allowed to enter. He was stopped at the gate by Bade Khan. Many people gathered at the gate and among them there were some supporters of Moorthy. There was a lot of swearing and shouting of abuse. There was a scuffle between Bade Khan and the *maistri* on one side and supporters of Moorthy on the other. They even fought physically.

Moorthy considered himself responsible for the violence that took place and kept a fast. He felt that he had not lived up to the teaching of the Mahatma. He felt that he himself was not pure, and that's why so much of violence had taken place at the Skeffington Coffee Estate, so he should purify himself by fasting. After this incident Rachanna, who was a worker at the Coffee Estate was thrown out of the Estate with his wife and grand children because he was a supporter of Moorthy. After this, he started living in Kanthapura.

He was even elected a member of the Congress committee at Kanthapura. He actively participated in the work of the Congress. He took part in picketing the toddy grove and later in picketing the toddy booth near the Skeffington Coffee Estate. The coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate refused to walk over the *Satyagrahis* when the policemen present there tried to make them to do so. During the no tax compaign the coolies of the Coffee Estate sided with the *Satyagrahis* from Kanthapura. Thus, in the end the coolies of the Estate became closely linked with the people of Kanthapura.

Q. 8. *Kanthapura* is an Indo-Anglican novel. Justify this dictum.

Or

There is Indian setting in *Kanthapura* as depicted by Raja Rao.

Or

How does Raja Rao visualise Indian environment in this novel?

Or

Point out some of the Indian imagery used in Kanthapura.

Or

How does Raja Rao Indianise English in Kanthapura ?

Or

What are the efforts of Raja Rao to adopt English to express Indian sensibility?

Ans. Introduction : Raja Rao's Unique Success

Kanthapura is a distinguished novel in Indo-Anglican literature. It reflects the deepest and profoundest urges and problems of Indian life. The theme is Indian. This novel is thoroughly Indian in style and form. The expression is thoroughly Indianised although it is written in English. Often rhymes of speech are from Kannada rather than from English.

In a nutshell *Kanthapura* is embodiment of Indian sensibility in English creative writing. Illiterate Indians are presented in Indian style.

Sthala Purana

Kanthapura is an example of a typically Indian art form called *Sthala-purana*. In the preface to *Kanthapura* Raja Rao says :

There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich *Sthala-purana*, or legendary history, of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under this Pipal-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.

Raja Rao's Art of Creative Expression

Almost every Indo-Anglican novelist has tried to create Indian atmosphere to give his novel that solidity which makes fiction seem authentic. But Raja Rao has been hailed as the most Indian of the Indian novelists writing in English. Raja Rao's contribution to the language of Indo-Anglican writing is tremendous. While reading his English, foreigners find it almost normal but the Indians can hear the echo of regional phrases and typical Indian expressions. Raja Rao

is really skillful as an artist and has created a work of art which has been read and appreciated by people all over the world.

Descriptive Passages about Indian Life

In the novel there are descriptions of habits and manners of the people of Kanthapura. They are simple village people and live very simple lives. We get a vivid picture of the customs and traditions of the people. The various ceremonies and rituals performed by the villagers are graphically described. We get a very authentic and realistic picture of life in Indian villages in general. Kanthapura is a typical Indian village and the people are also typical village people.

The novel contains some beautiful passages which help in creating the environment and also add to the beauty of the novel. Raja Rao skilfully brings the whole environment to life. It seems as though we can actually see and feel and touch the things being described. For instance, the description of coming of monsoons is really amazing :

> Trees begin suddenly to tremble and hiss...there is a gurgle and a grunt from behind the bamboo cluster—and the gurgle and grunt soar up and swallow in the whole sky. The darkness grows thick as sugar in a cauldron, while the bamboos creak and sway and whine, and the crows begin to wheel round and flutter.....and then, the wind comes so swift, and dashing that it takes the autumn leaves with it, and they rise into the juggling air, while the trees beat and blubber. The drops fall, as big as a thumb, and as the thunder goes clashing like a temple cymbal through the heavens, the earth itself seems to heave up and cheep in the monsoon rains. It churns and splashes, beats against the tree-tops, reckless and wilful, and suddenly floating forwards it bucks back and spits forward....

There are many such passages in the novel like the one quoted above. Raja Rao has used Indian imagery in this passage and the language is exceptionally beautiful.

Freedom Movement of India in *Kanthapura*

The novel depicts that phase of India's freedom struggle in which the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its height. This was an early phase in India's struggle for independence when Gandhi had not become that popular. With time the number of his followers increased in number. Some actual events which took place in the 1930's have been depicted in the novel. In the novel Raja Rao has depicted the impact of the Gandhi Movement on the people of a village called Kanthapura. The brutalities and atrocities suffered by the Indians under the British Rule has been depicted in the novel. The Indians

were ill-treated and exploited by the British. The condition of the coolies working in the Skeffington Coffee Estate has been graphically described by Raja Rao. They were treated like animals and were forced to live under inhuman conditions.

It was Moorthy who told the villagers about Gandhi and about his views and ideas. With time more and more people joined the Congress. The Congress-Committee was formed in Kanthapura. Though Moorthy was young and inexperienced he became the leader of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. The villagers called him small mountain and refered to him as the Gandhi of Kanthapura. The Gandhian principles and ideas have been discussed in the novel. Gandhi's philosophy and his ideas and views are talked about. A reader who does not know anything about Gandhi or the freedom struggle will get a very fair idea about it if he reads the novel.

The freedom struggle has been depicted realistically and objectively in the novel. Both positive and negative things have been depicted. As depicted in *Kanthapura* for sometime, there actually was something like a parallel government in some parts of India. Thousands of people were put into jails. The various things depicted in the novel are based on actual facts. The phase of Indian freedom struggle that is depicted in the novel ends with the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Many young *Satyagrahis* including Moorthy at one point of time started feeling that the Britishers were successful in fooling Gandhi and they will not be able to achieve their aim by following the methods of Gandhi. They were drawn towards Nehru and his ideas. These are things that actually happened. Art is intensification of heart-up feelings. There is realism and also some degree of imagination.

Social Abuses in the Novel

Many social abuses like untouchability, ignorance, superstition, child marriage etc. which existed in India in the pre-independence era have been highlighted by Raja Rao in the novel. The fact that most people belonging to the upper castes were against Gandhi's movement for removal of untouchability or the upliftment of the people belonging to lower castes has been shown. Just like majority of Indian villages the society of Kanthapura is caste-ridden. The people are illiterate and superstitious. The village is divided into the Brahmin quarter, the Pariah quarter, the Potters' quarter and Weavers' quarter. Thus, there is a very clear division of society on the basis of caste. The narrator is a Brahmin woman and she tells the readers that being a Brahmin she naturally has never visited

the Pariah quarter. Inspite of opposition Moorthy continues to work for the upliftment of pariahs. He does not stop mixing with the pariahs even after the death of his mother. His mother was an orthodox Brahmin woman and she could not bear it when she heard that the Swami had excommunicated Moorthy and his family and coming generations. Moorthy even wanted to teach and educate the coolies living in Skeffington Coffee Estate.

But even a man like him had hesitation in entering Rachanna's house when his wife asked him to come in. With a lot of hesitation he sipped the milk given to him by Rachanna's wife. So, in this matter even Moorthy was no exception. He was like other Brahmins. He could not help it because it was deeply embedded in his psyche. Before this Moorthy had never entered the house of a pariah. The Swami was against Gandhi's movement for removal of untouchability. He wanted Bhatta to do something to stop it so that it does not get out off hand. Inspite of opposition, in the neighbouring town of Karwar, Advocate Rangamma threw open the gates of the temple to the pariahs.

Ratna's case is a glaring example of the evil of child-marriage and it is also perhaps an indirect plea for widow remarriage. There are hints in the novel which clearly show that Moorthy loves Ratna. She was married at the age of ten and she saw her husband only for a day. Even then she is expected to dress up like a widow and follow all norms meant for widows. She does not do so and is criticized by people because of this. Her family members also want her to undergo the suffering that widows have to undergo.

It is because the workers are uneducated and ignorant that their employers are able to exploit them. Moorthy makes efforts to remove illiteracy and ignorance. Rangamma also does something similar. She reads newspapers and tells the villagers about the happenings in different parts of the country.

Vivid Description of *Kartik* Landscape

The landscape in the month of *Kartik* has been very vividly and beautifully described :

Kartik has come to Kanthapura, sisters—*Kartik* has come with the glow of lights and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods; white lights from clay-trays and red lights from copper-stands, and diamond lights that glow from the bowers of entrance-leaves; lights that glow from banana-trunks and mango twigs, yellow light behind white leaves, and green light behind yellow leaves, and white light behind green leaves; and night curls through the shadowed streets,

and hissing over bellied boulders and hurrying through dallying trains, night curls through the Brahmin Street and the Pariah Street and the Potters' Street and the Weavers' Street and flapping through the mango grove, hangs clawed for one moment to the giant pipal, and then shooting across the broken fields, dies quietly into the river—and gods walk by lighted streets, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods, and even as they walk in transparent flesh the dust gently sinks back to the earth, and many a child in Kanthapura sits late into the night to see the crown of this god and that god, and how many a god has chariots with steeds white as foam and queens so bright that the eyes shut themselves in fear lest they be blinded. *Kartik* is a month of the gods, and as the gods pass by the Potters' Street and the Weavers' Street, lights are lit to see them pass by. *Kartik* is a month of lights, sisters, and in Kanthapura when the dusk falls, children rush to the sanctum flame and the kitchen fire, and with broom grass and fuel chips and coconut and they peel out fire and light clay-pots and copper candelabras and glass lamps. Children light them all, so that when darkness hangs drooping down the eaves, gods may be seen passing by, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods. And as they pass by, the dust sinks back into the earth....

Indian Idioms and Expressions

In the Preface Raja Rao talks of the problem faced by Indian writers writing in English :

The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.

Raja Rao has Indianised the English language successfully to suit his needs. The words are English but the organisation is Indian and the novelist had to organise it himself. Many Indian expressions have been literally translated into English. In many places forms of

address are used which are from indian languages. The language is saturated with Indian idiom and Indian imagery. Sometimes there are literal translations from Kannada, and sometimes there is breaking up of the English syntax to convey emotional upheavals and agitations.

Some words like *ahimsa*, *dhoti*, *mandap* are Indian words which are used without any translation. Some proverbs which are commonly used by peasants in their day to day speech are used by Raja Rao in the novel. For instance, (1) saw you like a rat on your mother's lap. (2) there is neither man nor mosquito in Kanthapura. (3) Only a pariah looks at the teeth of dead cows.

Many Indian idioms are literally translated into English. The true flavour of these expressions can be appreciated only by someone who knows Kannada. These are some of the various devices employed by the novelist which make his novels typically Indian.

Q. 9. Justify the title of *Kanthapura*. How far is it apt?

Or

'*Kanthapura* contains the characteristics of the village'. Elaborate this dictum giving examples.

Ans. Introduction

Kanthapura is the story of a small village called Kanthapura and its people. The novel depicts the impact of the Gandhi movement on the people of this small village. It is a typical Indian village and has all the characteristics of a typical Indian village. Every Indian village has a story attached to it. Raja Rao has expressed the idea very beautifully in the Preface to the novel.

"There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich *sthala-purana*, or legendary history, of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under pipal-tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself....."

In the novel we get a picture of the customs and traditions of the people of the village. Their habits and manners are described. The people are typical village people. Their jealousies and internal conflicts are brought out.

Its Location

The novel opens with the description of the location of the village

and the description of areas around it. The story is narrated by an old woman named Achakka. The novel begins thus :

"Our village—I don't think you have ever heard about it—Kanthapura is its name, and it is in the province of Kara 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 cordamom and coffee, rice and sugarcane. Roads, narrow, dusty, rut-covered roads, wind through the forests of teak and of jack, of sandal and of sal, and hanging over bellowing gorges and leaping over elephant-haunted valleys, they turn now to the left and now to the right and bring you through the Alambe and Champa and Meena and Kala passes into the great granaries of trade. There, on the blue waters, they say, our carted cardamoms and coffee get into the ships...."

The Village

Then the village of Kanthapura is described. It is divided into the Brahmin quarter, the Potters' quarter, the Weavers quarter and Pariah quarters. The people are uneducated and superstitious and the society is caste ridden. There are many legends and stories associated with the village and the people of the village actually believe in these stories. The people are religious and have faith in God. The narrator herself is no exception in this matter. Kenchamma is the presiding deity of the village. The narrator talks about the legend associated with goddess Kenchamma and from the way she describes it the fact is quiet evident that she too actually believes in it.

"Kenchamma is our goddess. Great and bounteous is she. She killed a demon ages, ages ago, a demon that had come to ask our young sons as food and our young women as wives. Kenchamma came from the heavens—it was the sage Tripura who had made entreances to bring her down—and she waged such a battle and she fought so many a night that the blood soaked and soaked into the earth, and that is why the Kenchamma hill is all red. If not tell me, sister, why should it be red only from the Tippur stream upwards, for a foot down on the other side of the stream you have mud, black and brown, but never red. Tell me, how could this happen, if it were not for Kenchamma and her battle? Thank heaven, not only did she slay the demon, but she even settled down among us, and this much I shall say, never has she failed us in our grief."

The village in general is described and the people are described and then he introduces the characters of the novel one by one. The

freedom struggle is as such introduced much later only after giving a rough idea about the place and the people.

Society : Caste Divisions

In the novel Raja Rao gives a very vivid description of the society and Indian customs and traditions. Many rituals are graphically described. The divisions of the village into the different quarters shows how the society is divided into different sections. The fact that being a Muslim, Bade Khan did not get a house to live in within Kanthapura shows the nature of society that existed at that time.

Ratna is just fifteen years old and she is a widow. She saw her husband only for a day and that too when she was just ten years old but she is expected to dress up and behave like a widow and also follow all the norms that widows are supposed to follow. She does not do so, and so, she has to hear foul words from people. Things like this give us glimpse of Indian society. Girls were married at a very early age. They were married at the age of eleven or twelve years.

The Impact of the Freedom Movement

Message of Gandhi is brought to the village of Kanthapura by Moorthy and the city boys. Moorthy, like thousands of young men all over the country left his studies and joined the freedom struggle. He sacrificed his career and devoted himself totally to the freedom movement. He went from door to door and distributed *charkhas* free of cost. Initially it was difficult to convince the villagers and make them accept the *charkhas*. Moorthy told them about Gandhi and his views and ideas. He told them about Dandi March and the activities of the Congress. With time, more and more people of Kanthapura joined the Congress. The Congress committee was formed in Kanthapura. The womens volunteer corps was formed. It was named Savika Sangha. By the time the Satyanarayan Puja was organised, it had become a mass movement.

In the absence of Moorthy at one stage, Ratna became the leader of the *Satyagrahis* in Kanthapura. The people of Kanthapura picketed Boranna's toddy grove. Many toddy booths in and around Kanthapura were picketed. Many booths were closed down after that. Srinivas Iyengar has rightly commented, "In the end it truly becomes a mass movement, the villagers comprising men and women of all the castes and professions and the labourers of the Coffee Estate readily meeting the onslaught of the bureaucracy. An unequal fight it inevitably proves to be, for the *Satyagrahis* are maimed and broken and scattered, and a remanent reaches—after sore trials and

Paschim Guwahati-17 Date.....

vicissitudes—another village, Kashipura, beyond the border where they settle down. Some of the *Satyagrahis*—Rangamma, Ratna, Moorthy—spend an allotted span in jail, but the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the political truce that comes in its wake hasten the release of the *Satyagrahis*. Young men like Moorthy doubt the wisdom of the truce, and would rather follow the lead of Jawaharlal Nehru, the equal-distributionist"; for the mass of the people, however, Gandhi can do no wrong, he can be guilty of no miscalculation, and they accept the truce contentedly and wait further development patiently."

the Story of an Individual

The novel *Kanthapura* is not the story of any single individual any family. Moorthy plays a pivotal role in the events which take ce in the novel. It is only after the arrival of Moorthy in thapura that the action begins but it is not the story of Moorthy's It is the story of the people of Kanthapura. We see how their s are effected by the freedom struggle. These simple villagers are orant and superstitious and lead very simple lives.

They become a part of a mass movement which swept the whole ion. The individual characters are introduced but there is no pth analysis of the characters. They are flat characters and they ot change in the course of the novel. It is the story of the people he village called Kanthapura. Hence, the title *Kanthapura* is opriate and suggestive.

Q. 10. Illustrate that *Kanthapura* is a novel of India's ial and Political Renaissance. Give examples from the text.

Or

Justify the statement that Rao has treated and presented freedom movement very vividly.

Ans. Introduction

The first impression that any reader has on reading the novel at it is a propaganda novel written during the pre-independence for spreading the message of Mahatma Gandhi and to elicit pathy for the cause of Indian freedom.

Kanthapura is the story of the commencement and failure of agrah movement in a village of Mysore. It is also the story of disappointment of a young idealist like Moorthy with the policies Mahatma Gandhi who demanded impossible sacrifices from his wers. The climax of the story is brought through the real ntation between the Satyagrahis and the soldiers of the British

government which was an occasion for testing the Satyagrahis in regard to their ability to control themselves in the face of bullets and humiliation. The Satyagrahis showed tremendous self-control and proved to be worthy disciples except one woman Rachi, old Rachanna's wife, who in a fit of anger, set fire to the whole village. Thus, the novel presents through the experiences of the Satyagrahis, what actually Mahatma Gandhi's ideology did to the nation.

The author himself is largely projected in the character of Moorthy. Moorthy is an idealised character. He was a devoted disciple of the Mahatma and was completely dedicated to the struggle for independence. The author of the novel, Raja Rao, was also a young man of twenty five at the time of writing it. He himself had come under the influence of Gandhi. Therefore, probably he wanted to tell the western readers what was happening in India.

If one reads the novel carefully it becomes very clear that the aim of the writer was not just to present a thesis novel but also to depict the life of the people of the village specially how their lives were effected by the freedom struggle.

Theme of the Novel

In this novel Raja Rao was concerned not with the depiction of life of any particular individual but the life of the people of Kanthapura.

The novel begins with the description of the village and its various quarters and also ends with the description of the ruined Kanthapura by Range Gowda. Goddess Kenchamma and the river Himavathy are mentioned in the beginning of the novel and also at the end of the novel, where Range Gowda offered his prayers to goddess Kenchamma and drank three or four mouthfuls of Himavathy water. Whatever the fate of the people of Kanthapura the two symbols remain and will always remain in the village. Even if particular individuals die life continues. The novel presents a circle of growth and destruction of the village. It gives a microscopic view of the larger reality of birth, growth and destruction of nations and still larger realities of the growth of civilizations and their destruction. Kanthapura is thus a microcosm of India and hence of any civilization.

Kanthapura depicts a particular period in the history of India. The period that is depicted is the early stage in Gandhi's career when he did not have many followers. In the novel we see the growth in popularity of Gandhi among the people. With time the people realise that they must be united and must fight for the freedom of the nation. Moorthy, like many other youngmen all over the country left his

college and joined the freedom struggle. He dedicated his life to the nation. Moorthy tried to spread the message of Gandhi among the people of Kanthapura. The ideas of Gandhi were brought to Kanthapura by Moorthy and the city boys. The novel basically depicts the impact of the freedom struggle on people of the village.

The British Rule

The condition of the Indians and the brutalities suffered by them at the hands of British is depicted very vividly in the novel. For instance, the condition of the coolies living in the Skeffington Coffee Estate is described in great detail. The present owner of the Coffee Estate is the nephew of the earlier owner who was referred to by the people as Hunter Sahib. The present owner is not as cruel as his uncle and does not beat the coolies but he has a weakness for women. He wanted any woman who caught his fancy. He wanted a new woman everyday. If any woman said—no, her family members were tortured and harassed. But, after the incident of the Brahmin girl in which the Sahib had shot the father of the girl when he refused to give his daughter, he stayed away from Brahmin girls and even if a pariah girl refused to go to him, he did not send his maistris to get her. In the case of the Brahmin girl the Sahib had himself offered to give two thousand rupees to the family of that girl. Ultimately he did not have to pay anything. From this incident it is evident how biased these courts under the British Rule were.

The coolies were made to work from morning till night without day break. The maistri did not allow them to rest even for a moment. They were not paid any wages and given a very frugal meal just good enough for survival. They had to work in scorching heat continuously and were beaten mercilessly if seen resting. They were made to live under inhuman conditions and were treated like animals. There was no end to their suffering and anyone who came to the Estate once could never escape from there.

In the novel, there are references to events taking place in other parts of the country like the Dandi March or the Jallianwallah Bagh. There were many laws like the law relating to the ban on making of salt which was extremely discriminatory against the poor people. Inside the jails people were treated very badly and humiliated and were forced to salute the Union Jack.

There were many people like the Swami and Bhatta who were agents of the government and opposed the freedom movement. It was the presence of Indians like them that made the job of the British much easier. The Britishers very effectively used the policy of divide

and rule. The suffering that the Indians had to undergo was unbearable. With time the Indians realised that they can fight against the British only if there is unity among the Indians.

The Caste System

The novel not only depicts the impact of the freedom movement on the people of the village but alongwith it also depicts the life and culture of the people. It is a typical Indian village. In the novel the brutalities suffered by the Indians at the hands of the British are depicted very realistically and vividly because the novel also aims at social reform. If not reforming society in general it atleast aims at bringing out the evils existing in society. The society is caste-ridden. This is so not only in Kanthapura but in all Indian villages. The village is divided into the Brahmin quarter, the Potters' quarter, the Weavers' quarter and the Pariah quarter. The narrator who is a Brahmin woman has naturally never visited the pariah quarter. Moorthy who is a follower of Gandhi works for the upliftment of the pariahs. Inspite of opposition he continues to work for them. He did not stop doing so even after the death of his mother but, even a man like him has hesitation in entering Rachanna's house when his wife asks him to do so. Inspite of hesitation he somehow enters Rachanna's house. This was the first time that he had entered the house of a pariah. Rachanna's wife brought a glass of milk for him to drink. The way he reacted to this shows that though he was working for the upliftment of the pariahs these things were there in his blood just like in the case of other Brahmins. Only the extent differs.

The caste system and discrimination on the basis of caste was one of the evils existing in Hinduism. In the novel this particular aspect of Hinduism has been criticised. Rangamma is as such a follower of Gandhi but she does not like Moorthy's working for the pariahs. She is in favour of maintaining the caste system and the prevailing norms of behaviour of people belonging to different castes.

Bhatta and the Swami are orthodox Brahmins and they are agents of the British government. Not only these people but most Brahmins were against the removal of untouchability. Bade Khan could not get a house to live in within Kanthapura because he was a Muslim. He had to stay in the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Thus, the Indian society was divided on the basis of religion as well as caste. There was need of unity among the people. Otherwise freedom from British rule was not possible.

Most Indians were uneducated and superstitious. The Swami's

threat to excommunicate anyone who mixes with the pariahs was taken very seriously by them. Moorthy's mother was very upset when she heard that the Swami had said that if Moorthy continues to mix with the pariahs he will be excommunicated. When Bhatta told her that the Swami had excommunicated Moorthy and his family and coming generations she could not bear the shock. At that time the pariahs were not allowed to enter temples. There was a movement that the doors of the temples should be opened to all classes. Though these things are highlighted in the novel, the main focus is on the freedom struggle and its impact on the people of Kanthapura.

The Freedom Movement

The freedom movement has been depicted vividly and impartially and objectively. When Raja Rao wrote the novel he was in France, thousands of miles away from the land where the events described in the novel took place. This perhaps, is the reason why he has been able to depict the movement impartially and objectively. He has shown both positive as well as negative aspects.

Like thousands of youngmen all over the country, Moorthy gave up his studies and carrier and joined the struggle for Independence. His mother was shocked and very sad when she came to know about this. She was disappointed but later accepted it as their destiny. Moorthy became the leader of the freedom fighters in Kanthapura. He went from door to door to tell people about Gandhi and about the events that were taking place all over the country. He distributed *charkahs* among the villagers free of cost. Initially it was very difficult to make them accept the *charkahs* but with time more and more people joined the movement. The Congress Committee was formed in Kanthapura. By the time the Satyanarayan Puja was organised, it had become a mass movement.

There was picketing of toddy grove of Boranna and many toddy booths were also picketed. Many toddy booths in and around Kanthapura were closed down as a result of this. The people of Kanthapura refused to pay taxes inspite of repeated reminders. Ultimately they had to leave Kanthapura and settle in Kashipura. They were unsuccessful but they had a sense of achievement and also perhaps a distant hope. The fact that many young Satyagrahis like Moorthy were disappointed and at one point of time started thinking that they will not be able to achieve their aim by following Gandhi is also mentioned in the novel. They were drawn towards Nehru who was now present in the political scene.

PART—V

SELECT LITERARY CRITICISM

1. H.M. Williams : *Epic Pattern*

The novel is based on the pattern of an Indian epic, the *Ramayana*. India is Sita in the toils of the British (Ravana, the many-headed *rakshasa)*. To rescue her, the gods send an *avatara*, another Rama in the shape of Mahatma Gandhi, to lead the people of India against the British (who are called the 'Red-men'). Gandhi's message is one of *ahimsa*, non-violent protest, but paradoxically he is spoken of in terms of the warrior Rama and the heroic fight against Ravana. The idea is that the epic tradition can somehow be absorbed into *Satyagraha*. In fact, the non-violent protest of the villagers is met by imprisonment and the *lathi* charges, when the village allies itself with rebel coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Though the villagers suffer defeat, the dream of the Ramayana sustains their hope of ultimate success. 'They say', says the village narrator of the novel, 'the Mahatma will go the Red-man's country and he will get us *Swaraj*. He will bring us *Swaraj*, the Mahatma. And we shall be happy. And Rama will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharata will go to meet them with the worshipped sandal of the Master on his head.'

2. H.M. Williams : *The 'Real' India depicted*

Kanthapura, which looks in many ways like a realistic epic-novel of the freedom struggle, turns out on inspection to be the first of Raja Rao's explorations of the 'real' nature of India. A realistic level is supported by numerous underlevels of metaphysics, history, folk-memory, 'racial self-consciousness'. Raja Rao constantly invites us to see life as constantly reflecting and repeating the past as in the Hindu concept of successive re-births and the return of the gods as *avatars*. In this sense we are moving with Rao once more back to the older view of India as magical and mysterious which Anand took such pains to reject in Iqbal's comments at the end of *Untouchable*.

'Kanthapura' is the name Raja Rao gives to the south Indian

village of his novel, a village intended, we discover, to symbolize Hindu India herself, an ancient slow-moving village—'High on the Ghats it is, high up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian sea, up the Malabar coast....' The novel tells us how this remote backwater of a place is stirred to life by the impact of Mahatma Gandhi until through a catharsis of violence it becomes the living epitome of the Satyagraha before being crushed by the ruling power.

3. Dieter Reimenschneider : *British Characters in Kanthapura*

Turning to Rao's *Kanthapura* and Narayan's *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher,* we realize the different approaches in their writings to the portrayal of British characters. Rao chooses a loquacious old village woman to narrate the story of the villagers' fight against the colonizers. It is the choice of this point of view which does not permit a searching and penetrating analysis of the Sahib, the owner of a big Coffee Estate, who rules supreme but is never made to appear in person. Rather, for the narrator he assumes a symbolical role of all those vices against which Indians are struggling, the violence and greed, the racial arrogance and selfishness of colonialism. The Sahib thus serves her aim to bring to the fore what India means when juxtaposing the two opposing forces. This means, if we look at *Kanthapura* as a novel contributing to the tradition of Indo-English literature, the portrayal of British characters takes a new direction: it is not man in general, as with Anand, whose problems are the concern of the author but *Indian* man in particular; British characters are made to serve the writer's purpose of working out the essential Indianness of his people. Narayan's novels, too, indicate the shift in emphasis; however, there is an essential difference between him and Rao. While the latter is more interested in India as an idea, it is individual man whose growth and whose search for identity form the theme of Narayan's novels, of his Bildungsroman. Again, as with Rao, his British characters remain rather lifeless and serve as a means rather than in their own right.

4. William Walsh : *Kanthapura is very different from the Novels of R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand*

How different in every particular from any novel by Mulk Raj Anand is *Kanthapura* (1938) the first novel of Raja Rao, a member of an old Brahmin family, born in Mysore in 1909, and roughly a contemporary of the two senior novelists Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. He has, however, a completely different literary character.

He is not, like Anand, a politically committed writer and he is very different from Narayan in being poetic, metaphysical, Lawrencian.

Kanthapura unlike *Coolie* focusses on the intensity of Indian life, its physical immediacy, its traditional swaddling and its religious murmurations. The action is located in a single village and told in the traditional way by a grandmother, a weathered and humorous old lady, whose relation makes racy and natural connections between the event of the fiction and the ancient myths. The one becomes translucent to the other, Gandhi is the God as well as the politician marching to the salt pans, Moorthy the God's manifestation as the non-violent frantic young leader, the policeman is the whole negation and evil of life. The novel is dense with the actualities of village existence and brilliant with an impassioned light of spirituality.

5. H.M. Williams : *The Characters in the Novel*

Though it is a tale of Gandhi's charismatic effect on the village, the Mahatma himself does not appear in the novel. His spokesman is his disciple Moorthy who follows his master to the extent of fasting and preaching against caste in favour of a universal brotherhood. Even Moorthy is more like a walking slogan than a real character. In the same way the British are pitifully represented by the two officials of the Skeffington Coffee Estate, one a whip-weilding 'Simon Legree', the other a weak woman-chaser. They have no real individuality or conviction (though to be fair they are supposed to be seen through the eyes of a simple peasant); and all the violent action is perpetrated by the police who are merely tools of the distant oppressors. Real lively characterisation is only found in the villagers, especially in the villagers who join Moorthy in the great struggle, the gentle reformer Rangamma, Kamalamma and Ratna, and in Bhatta, who goes over to the British. Raja Rao's purpose is to make us see the conflict as a conflict of peoples and principles, not of individuals, and to erect the village into a kind of corporate character. This fits in well with the timeless quality of Kanthapura, the uniting of the Gandhian revolt with the Ramayana and the Bhagvad Gita (Krishna's coming down to earth as Gandhi). Ancient and modern Kanthapura meet in the 'Harikatha' man, Jayaramachar, the story-teller who retells the Rama epic, equating it with Gandhi's struggle for Swaraj.

6. H.M. Williams : *Raja Rao as a Person and as a Novelist*

Where Anand sticks to social realism, excluding religion and Indian philosophy as irrelevant to the struggle for economic and

litical power by the underprivileged, Raja Rao constantly discusses nationalist struggle and its revolutionary implications in terms Hindu mythology, religion and culture. If Anand reflects Gandhi's manism (his sympathy with the powerless and the casteless), Raja o reflects his conservatism and his charismatic religious conscious-ss, his essential Hinduism. Raja Rao was born in 1909 of good hmin stock in Mysore. After graduating....he went to France, dying at Montpellier and the Sorbonne. He returned to India in rch of spiritual peace. He has used both French and English as media for literary expression though it is in English that he has de by far the weightier contribution. There is a good case for arding him as the most ambitious and brilliant Indo-Anglian velist of the twentieth century.

7. T.D. Brunton : *Indianness of the Novel*

In the earlier *Kanthapura,* a social novel describing the impact the Gandhian movement on a south Indian village, the author's ner grasp of his subject is apparent in the more convincing control d economy of the narrative. But the book is gravely flawed and ain I fear, largely due to a confused ambition to create an 'Indian vel'. In the interesting foreword, Mr. Rao, discussing the problem style, turns for a model to the Puranas : "We (Indians) tell one erminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts p our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was d still is the ordinary style of our story-telling. I have tried to ow it myself in this story." To anyone but the most rigid ditionalist, this must seem a startlingly trivial narrative model a novelist to follow. Fortunately, Mr. Rao is too accomplished a ter to follow it consistently. But his old-woman narrator is a msy expedient, compelling him to write for pages at a time in d syntactic pattern of short, hurried clauses. The illusion created certainly not that of living speech and it is followed to no purpose e the psychological immediacy which is the main purpose of this hnique is not 'notably achieved'. The author surrenders to the focussed flux of reminiscence (it cannot be called consciousness) his narrator. The result is that though a medley of village folk briefly characterised most of them are little more than names. only 'character' in the book is Moorthy, and the most moving ssages describe his inner struggles as he enters a pariah dwelling d tests himself by fasting. He rather than the narrator is the book's al point and when he disappears from the scene the narrative mes impressionistic and impersonal. The climax, in which the ge is destroyed and the peasants are brutally beaten and shot

on the orders of the British rulers, is fragmentary and emotionally unrealised. The affair is horrifying in itself, but gains little in the telling. Afterwards the book fades sway : the villagers are scattered, while Moorthy, we gather, is being drawn towards the congress activities led by Jawaharlal.

Despite its laboured evocation of the busy bustle of village life, *Kanthapura* lacks the analysis and probing of human motives which is the stuff of fiction. Too much of the best writing is descriptive and, as Dr. Naik remarks in his article in the *Karnatak University Journal* for 1966, this is decidedly the least satisfactory means of evoking 'Indianness'.

8. H.M. Williams : *Symbolism*

By choosing to develop the character of an Indian village, Raja Rao moves inevitably from realism to symbolism. Helped by the parataxis of the sentence structure and by the flow of the Indian narrator's stream-of-consciousness, the novel conveys an uncanny impression of the uncanny longevity of Indian history and the essential survival into the twentieth century of aeons of customs dating back to before the arrival in India of the Aryans. This makes inevitable the conflation of the Ramayana and Mahabharata with the Swaraj movement; but it does more, it makes us aware of the timeless and eternal quality of the Hindu consciousness beyond the contingency of the political struggle. Kanthapura is a symbol of India past, present and future; Gandhi is the present, but he is also an *avatara* of Rama and Krishna and Shankara (his picture is put next to these three in the fair carts of the Kartik festival).

9. John–B. Alphonso-Karkala : *The Myths in Kanthapura*

Let us take some of the myths that Raja Rao has knit into his creative matrix—myths relating to the unknown and unknowable; myths relating to the partly known and vaguely recollected past; and myths relating to not easily discernible psychic, social or natural phenomena. In dealing with the unknown or the power above and beyond us (divinity in some form of comprehension in form image, and function or simply "god"). English language and most modern European languages, generally take into account the myths of the Sumerian-Semitic tribal consciousness, as modified by Egyptian monotheism, and the usual image one associates is of a patriarch or tribal chief and old man with a big beard, sitting up there above the clouds in his bachelor heaven, alone, angry and zealous, ready to punish faltering people among his followers with tortures of hell, or corrective action in purgatory or just pleasure in heaven. This

the general cultural myth that underlies, to a great extent, the erary creation and criticism. Therefore any creative or critical ference to God, heaven, hell, or purgatory, creation, or judgment immediately communicates the necessary cultural meaning rough unconscious non-verbal communication. Raja Rao does use is Judaeo-Christian-Islamic myth of the unknown and unknowable. stead, to make his tale of modern India more meaningful, he goes p down into the roots of continuing Indian cultural tradition, and ws out from the most ancient of mythic conceptions, rooted in re sophisticated understanding of the diversity of the cosmos in ms of the unitary principle and its energy (an idea to which stein subscribed in the twentieth century in his Generalized ory of Gravitation); such a view symbolized in the human imagery Siva or *Matha-dev* (great God), and conceived in the form of dancer suggest the Unmoved First Mover sustaining all movements in cosmos in the rhythms of the dance, the only dance that there the rhythm of change from numena to phenomena and into mena. The creative energy that flows from the dancer, or Shakti, the evolution is traced in the dissolution or *pralaya*. Such an agery of Siva as Nataraja, though evolved from the tribal sciousness is still capable of including the most modern scientific ories of cosmos or science myth, namely the so-called "Doughnut ory" of expanding universe after the first big bang and then raction of the expanded cosmos into the unmoved centre, the black e in space. Or put the science myth in term of Indian culture th about the unknown, "Siva" dancing into creation and evolution er the big bang, and dissolution of the cosmos into *pralaya* upon ening the third eye absorption into Siva in meditation or "Sava". other words these are the two phases in the cyclical process of tinual creation and dissolution, unexplainable totally from human nt of view. Such a myth that leaves something unsaid about the known is more dynamic than the more neatly concretized hovah or Yawhe myth even though both are basically myths or man explanation of the existential condition.

10. H.M. Williams : *The Metaphysical Aspect*

We see the great metaphysical questions coming to the fore again, ugh they are masked by the romantic realism of the novel. By ating the freedom movement with the *Ramayana* and with the spel of Shri Krishna in the *Gita*, Raja Rao probes the deeper stions of good and evil, order and disorder, that lie beneath the gled web of the political struggle. Gandhi himself had seen the itical struggle in ethical terms, as the *Harikatha* man had seen

it in mythological terms and as Moorthy sees it in Marxist-apocalyptic terms. Even in little Kanthapura there is doubt about the wisdom, the validity or even the morality or nationalism. The village schoolmaster and the village prostitute (an interesting 'duo') are both against the nationalists, preferring the relative placidity of the British rule. A serious case for the British is put by 'a lean, tall man in durbar turban and filigree shawl' at a meeting of the Karwar Congress. This old man turns the nationalists' arguments against themselves by suggesting that it is the British who represent order Ram-Rajya and *Swaraj* the rule of the ten-headed Ravana. The British have, like Rama, protected the Indian *dharma*. Ironically for the nationalists he quotes the Gita : 'Whensoever there is ignorance and corruption I come, for I, says Krishna, am the defender of *dharma*, and the British came to protect our *dharma*.' Naturally the young men reject this view with scorn, but the case has been put with some eloquence and doubt has been cast on any necessary connection between Indian nationalism and the gospel of Krishna. In the old man's intervention, reactionary though it is, we have a glimpse of the questioning of what India stands for that Raja Rao was to take up strongly in his next novel *The Serpent and the Rope.*

11. H.M. Williams : *Ideology of the Novel*

All this fits in with the essential Gandhian conservatism : return to the Hindu roots in the *Vedas*, *ahimsa*, spinning cloth, simplicity, national self-sufficiency, agriculture, rejection of modern technology. It does not go so well with Moorthy's socialism, his praise of the 'Hammer-and-Sickle country' and the aspirations of the coolies of the Coffee Estate. Mulk Raj Anand was able to unite nationalism with socialism into one humanitarian movement, a single revolt against oppression. But Raja Rao's novel suggests here and there a conflict between the conservatism of Gandhi and the socialist aspirations of many of his followers including Moorthy. What will happen when India is finally free? Moorthy begins to ask this question before the struggle has scarcely started and his answer is that independence from the British will be a prelude to the liberation of the toiling masses. 'Oh, no Ratna, it is the way of the masters that is wrong....' So we see the Satyagraha Movement of the village merging with the revolt of the coolies. The result is violence, bloodshed, death. Yet, Raja Rao's conclusion is optimistic. Though the villagers depart from the stricken village, victory for Rama is inevitable.

12. H.M. Williams : *Interior Conflict between an Impersonal and a Personal Way of Looking at Life.*

Raja Rao's aim is to translate the personal adventures of his characters Rama, his wife Madeleine and their Indian and European friends, into an interior conflict, at once psychological and metaphysical, between an impersonal and a personal way of looking at life. Rama, by nature a philosopher and seeker, is constantly haunted by the Hindu quest for salvation through knowledge. According to the great sage Shankara (9th century A.D.) true release from suffering comes only from an awareness of the highest truth—the *Advaita Vedanta* (Non-dualism) which argues that there is only one reality or existence, the idea or *Brahman-Atman,* God. The existence of millions of separate entities, of a dualism between the one who experiences and the world he experiences, is an illusion bred of man's ignorance (which in many ways resembles the Christian idea of the fall. Rama, coming to accept the truth of Shankara's idealistic monism, keeps on insisting that from the true Hindu point of view, only a monistic view of life makes sense. Either the world is real and nothing else (and *you* are the world), or the self alone is real and the world is an illusion. In the imagery of the title, 'The world is either unreal or real—the serpent or the rope.' When we look out at the phenomenal world we see a universe of multitudinous objects. When we think all this is 'real' we are like men in the dark who mistake a rope for a serpent. The *Guru* comes with a lamp and shows us that it is only a rope after all.

13. R. Shepherd : *Moorthy*

Raja Rao's main characters are also social rebels of a sort. In *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope* there exists in Moorthy and Ramaswamy a curious mixture of the conservative and the revolutionary. Moorthy "had gone through life like a noble cow, quiet, generous, serene, deferent and Brahminic, a very prince"; on the other hand it is he who repudiates many centuries of Hindu tradition by entering the house of an untouchable family and accepting a tumbler of milk to drink. Rao's acute perception of Moorthy's agitated behaviour brings out the struggle of conflicting loyalties taking place in this young Brahmin's mind.

It attests the author's masterly control of psychological verisimilitude, a habit of understatement which is developed further in *The Serpent and the Rope.* Moorthy is divided between an inherited and deeply felt fear of defilement in accepting pariah hospitality and more modern Gandhian interpretation of Hindu morality which

proclaims the brotherhood and equality of mankind. Moorthy's revolutionary idealism accurs well within the framework of a fixed and determinate social and philosophical system, since the Gandhian moral code is in most other respects just as austere in its orthodoxy as any other school of Indian thought of past or present. Moorthy is an example of the conservative rebel a type of Indian hero whose revolutionary vigour is directed towards selective innovation within the broad traditional system. *Kanthapura* centres on the main role Moorthy plays in the Satyagraha movement at village level and focuses on the pressures operating against him—government, police, fat landlords, and his own deeper nature. Were he a professed Nazi or die-hard Communist supporter, the protagonists ranged against him could hardly have been more varied or more hostile. His dedication brings personal pain, the ostracism and excommunication of his family leading to his mother's death and finally a pitched battle between village supporters and government agents terminating in the destruction of the village.

14. John B. Alphonso-Karkala : *Literary Devices used by Raja Rao*

How does Raja Rao, in addition to telling a story in a language, create denser meaning in his tale? What myths and other literary devices does he knit into the matrix of his work to make a symbolic tale of modern India, not disconnected with the continuing culture from the ancient past, epic age and puranic world? Some of the obvious aspects of his elaborate matrix and myths are stated by the author in his preface :

> There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich *sthala-purana,* or legendary history (mythified fictionalized facts) of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under this pipal-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 grand-mother always bright. One such story from the contemporary annals of my village I have tried to tell.

If we are to take a comparable example of a living village in West Asia, one could say the *sthala-purana* of such a village could make reference to the continuing culture of the region in terms of Judaeism, Zorastrianism, Christianity, and Islam. One could point to the tree under which Isthar's priestess gave the fruit of knowledge

upon *nish-kama-kriya*, or non-involved-dispassionate action, for the sake of the action, of the kind Krishna enjoined upon doubting Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Consequently, the *Harikatha* that Raja Rao has knit into the matrix of his tale is not simply an outlandish anachronism (as some anglophiles would attempt to laugh at instead of explaining it) but an essential aspect of Indian cultural experience, wherein Truth or the Law or *Dharma* of the spiritual nature does not become fossilized in a written statement, in a linear culture, in words and book, but remaining fluid in the oral tradition continues to express itself over and over again in fiction. *Harikatha* then has a way of communicating the truth by making them experience it, like the last statement at the end of a logical argument, in the Upanishads, that the rest is to be understood in silence.

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About the Book

Kanthapura was published in 1938, but it was only after the publication of **Raja Rao's** *The Serpent and the Rope* that it catapulted into international fame. In the course of time, the novel came to be recognised as a classic of Indo-Anglian fiction. ***Kanthapura*** deals with the Gandhi Movement and its impact on a small village called Kanthapura. The novel depicts the early phase of India's freedom struggle when the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its height. It concerns itself with the non-violent, non-cooperating movements of 1919-22 and 1930-31 and its impact on the social and political life of the country.

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- Detailed Study of Raja Rao and *Kanthapura*
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ISBN 978-93-5187-825-4
ISBN 93-5187-825-2
7.5.2 ₹ 140