

Nationalism and Socialism Portrayed in the Novels of the Indo-Anglian Novelist Trio:

Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K Narayan.

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Abstract

History of Indian writing in English significantly accounts the emerging new rich genre in India the novel, which was adopted by the 20th century Indian writers. Indian writers had their native languages, yet writing in English was a product of their colonial encounter and diasporic constructions. In addition, the nationalistic movements for independence during the 20th century, which brought in political and social changes, also brought forth changes in the themes of Indian writers. Therefore, nationalism and socialism were the major issues, which were being dealt with to portray and present the real scenario of India in the colonial and postcolonial times. The contributors to this new literary genre are the Indo-Anglican writers, most famous being the trio—Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K Narayan. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore how English language of the colonial rulers became a language of the Indian writers, who were writing about their native land and people and India of the colonial period using the colonial language. Furthermore it focuses on the dormant nationalistic and social issues in the novels. However, it also tries to understand how nationalism and socialism are portrayed in these novels to bring out the real and desired India.

Introduction

Mother, I bow to thee!
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,
 bright with orchard gleams,
 Cool with thy winds of delight,
 Dark fields waving mother of might,
 Mother free.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (*Anandamath* 1882)

translated by Sri Aurobindo, *Vande Mataram*

Nationalism or “*Desh bhakti*” or loyalty towards nation was a significant belief existing in the minds of the people of India till the 1800s or Bengali Renaissance. In India, nationalism as a concept is connoted with love and passion for the “motherland”, which has been the idea since ancient times. It could be said that in India, nationalism has its emergence from religion. For in Hindu religion, worshiping one’s own motherland was the “dharma” or duty of its members. Therefore, protecting one’s own motherland is also the responsibility of the son or daughter of the motherland or the members of the nation; for example similar idea is delivered in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Anandamath* or *The Abbey of Bliss* (1882) and *Dharmatattva* (1888). Eventually what has happened is that the concept of nationalism changed with the rise of British colonialism in India. Hence, we can also say that the challenge of Imperial rule produced India’s nationalism.

However, the concept of nationalism which people had in mind during the colonial times is said to be influenced by modern ideas. It was not only about patriotism and passion for the country, but also a struggle for freedom and protecting and claiming one's own identity. Also as nationalism in India in the 20th century was resistance towards the British; it was therefore predominant in the nationalistic movements for independence. The rise of nationalism was only after the Mutiny of 1857, which nationally and politically alarmed both the British as well as the Indian educated elite society. The educated class or the members of the Congress Party which emerged decades after the historical first Mutiny, had much in mind the memory of the Mutiny in 1857. The liberal nationalists or the congress members and the national revolutionaries were then active participants of the independence movements. Undesirably both held different views about the Indian nation. In the essay "The Freedom Movement and the Partition of India", Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund discuss that "the national revolutionaries felt that the Indian nation had existed from the time immemorial and that it only had to be awakened in order for it to shake off foreign rule." (278)

On the other hand, the Liberal nationalists believed in "nation building within the framework of British Rule" (277). Moreover, in this essay, it accounts about the "radical nationalists", which were stimulated by the partition of Bengal in 1905. The division was to strike the roots of the nationalist elite of Bengal by the British. Henceforth the agitated Bengali Hindus emerged as the young "extremists".

Moreover, the most striking event after the mutiny of 1857 was the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in 1918, which led to many revolts and unrest in India. This incident led to many important events led by Gandhi, like "Swaraj in one Year" and "The Non-Cooperation Movement". The non-cooperation movement's major feature was a campaign to boycott "British

textiles, British schools, universities and law courts; rejection of all honors and titles bestowed by the British Indians” (286). Furthermore, in 1930 Gandhi led the “Civil Disobedience Movement” and also practiced his “Salt Satyagraha”. Therefore, the historical context of India defines the nationalistic sentiments of the people. India’s struggle for independence against the British colonial powers could be the main cause behind the rise of modern nationalism. However, how and when the Indian nationalists adopted the new idea of modern nationalism is important to understand.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s composition “Vande Mataram”, hailing or personifying the motherland “India” as the “mother” or “Goddess” gives a vivid description of the conception of India as a nation or motherland. For Bankim Chandra, nationalism was a policy for Indians to rely on their own strength in terms of generating national awareness, preparing the people for struggle and the self-sacrifice required for such struggle, and curtailing their dependence on the government as an agency for promoting general welfare.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh in his writings in “Bande Mataram” while narrating about Chattopadhyay had stated that Bankim Chandra had preached religious nationalism which explicated that the land was the Goddess and it was the people’s duty to protect the nation and hence the people of the nation. Also Bankim Chandra had showed the way to achieve oneness between their individual interests and the interests of the national community to which they belonged. Therefore, as a constructive thinker, Chattopadhyay has provided us with a common basis of Indian national identity and cautioned us against playing up our smaller identities around caste, community, language, region and faith. In doing so, he laid the first systematic foundation of nationalism in India.

Even in the religious field, national thought progressed. Religious reform movements and reactions against religious orthodoxy resulted from the settlement of the Christian Missionaries. The teachings of the Christian Missionaries invoked in the people of neo-Hinduism believers the feeling of “universalism”, which led to the reconstruction of “traditional nationalism” of attaining solidarity and glorifying the past. The British thought of the Hindu religion as a “ragbag of superstition”; however Swami Vivekananda greatly stimulated Indian nationalism by propounding the message of his new philosophy called the “Vedanta Philosophy”, which was an inspiration for the national revolutionaries (Kulke and Rothermund 276). Also in Bengal, the cult of Kali or Vaishnava saints was the symbols of emotional nationalism. Figures like Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak and more contributed in developing or growing amongst people the sense of nationalism and duty towards the mother nation through religious embodiments and philosophy. Thus religious nationalism or nationalism, which had its presence in the religion and culture of India, was later brought out with events of nationalistic movements.

Significantly, the modern concept of 20th century nationalism was different from the 19th century. The advent of the modern form of nationalism in India is elaborated in Rabindranath Tagore’s “Nationalism in West” and “Nationalism in India”, in his book, *Nationalism* (1917). The notion of many scholars that nationalism as a concept emerged from Western ideals is also marked by Tagore. Here, nationalistic ideas which emerged mainly from Europe are contested by Tagore, for he believes that India had a completely different concept than Europe. He asserts that politics in the West have dominated western ideals and Indians are trying to imitate it. He completely disagrees with the idea of nationalism and thus states:

Nationalism is a great menace. It is the particular thing which for years has been at the bottom of India's troubles. And inasmuch as we have been ruled and dominated by a nation that is strictly political in its attitude, we have tried to develop within ourselves, despite our inheritance from the past, a belief in our eventual political jesting. (133)

In the light of post colonial discourse, John Mcleod in "Beginning Postcolonialism" comments that attitudes or approaches to nationalism are "wide-ranging" and "conflictual". Like Tagore, he affirms that the idea of the nation is Western in origin and had its effect with western capitalism, industrialization and imperialist expansion. To further understand the theory of nation or nationalism, Mcleod looks at the definitions given by Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Homi. K Bhabha, and in conclusion he describes the idea of "nation" by saying that "central to the idea of the nation are notions of collectivity and belonging, a mutual sense of community that a group of individuals imagines its shares" (69).

Peter Robb, in his essay, "A history of India" comments that imperial nation states and anti-colonial resistance have modern nationalism in common and both identified people by culture and history having their own territory with a self-determined government. More importantly, he explains that a nation has its own "historical narratives" which shapes the nation's past and its origin and thus the national history narrates its victory, past fortune and present identity. Moreover, he articulates that national interest should transcend petty divisions of class, religion, dialect or caste. Likewise the Indian nationalistic movements in the postcolonial context are present in its national history. Historically, divisions existed in the society of India, like class, religion, dialect and caste. However, the struggle for Independence united the people of India, which is portrayed in the novels of the 20th century Indian Literature. Gandhi's "epic fast" was to give the "untouchables" in the society their rights and privileges.

Much of Gandhi's action was to create a casteless, classless society and develop unity in the nation, which is strongly depicted in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R K Narayan and Raja Rao.

India is multicultural, multilingual and has different religions. However, it has been seen that India, although being so diversified in every aspect, has been successful in uniting with the same fervor of nationalism to fight for freedom and independence. Benedict Anderson's remarks in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* that a nation is "imagined" because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (49). Also, according to Anderson, a nation has a standardized language that its members can understand. This is problematic in the colonial context because colonized nations like India had varied languages and dialects. Moreover, he states:

I am not claiming that the appearance of nationalism towards the end of the eighteenth century was 'produced' by the erosion of religious certainties, or that this erosion does not itself require a complex explanation. Nor am I suggesting that somehow nationalism historically 'supersedes' religion. What I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came into being. (51-52)

Evidently in the history of 20th century movements, many rituals and systems were being abolished and uprooted. A more rational approach to attain freedom and liberty was advanced for during the time of colonialism. Benedict disagrees with the notion of nationalism or the modern theory of nationalism because a colonized land had no unified language, for example India.

Satish C. Aikant, in his essay, "Reading Tagore: Seductions and Perils of Nationalism", gives his perspective on how Tagore has viewed nationalism. He defines:

Nationalism is not a sporadic sentiment that suddenly appears, but gradually evolves when a nation's survival becomes threatened by an external power and thus, in an overreaction, harks back to its heritage through a variety of means. (2)

Aikant marks an important point that for India not being a "homogenous country", the people were united in a formal way only during and since the British rule. Moreover, according to him, "determinants of cultural nationhood, at least based on the European model, were either not present in India or took the form of various affiliations." (3) He also points out that India did not have a "major single language to unify its populace" in a way the diversified communities posed a threat to national unity. He agrees with Tagore that British education had forged nationalism in India, therefore he marks that Tagore "felt strongly against the idea of Nationalism derived from the European paradigm and internalized by Asian societies, often as chauvinistic assertion."(55) Although it can be said that it was perhaps not the aim of the British colonial education to unify the Indian populace. However, it can be understood that this dedication to nationalism was accepted by the people not as an acceptance of Western traditions, but as an anti-imperial stand.

Partha Chatterjee, in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, provides contradictions of nationalism as an ideology in a colonial society seeking to free itself, for "nationalism sets out to assert its freedom from European domination. But in the very conception of its project, it remains a prisoner of the prevalent European intellectual fashions" (10). He states that Nehru embraced Gandhi's movement and his mass campaigns "with the demands of nationalism". The need of unity between the people of India demanded a

sense of nationalism in the struggle for independence from British colonialism. Therefore, nationalism was a valuable ideal for Indian leaders. Historically, contributors, leaders and nationalists of Indian independence approached each national movements and revolts differently. Every leader had different ways and views to attain freedom and thus had different ideas of nationalism.

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, in *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates Between Gandhi and Tagore*, shows how Tagore and Gandhi approached different national movements. For instance, Tagore being against the idea of nationalism and violence mentions in reaction to Swadeshi Movement that “we may delude ourselves with the phrases learnt from the West, *Swaraj* is not our objective”. (1) Also he expresses disagreement with the Non-cooperation Movement, where foreign goods and clothes were boycotted. According to Tagore, the struggle for India should have been without violence, moral and rational. The idea of boycotted English education and goods was not a rational approach, which Gandhi had initiated. Tagore maintained that passive resistance was a force which is not necessarily moral in itself since that can be used to either adhere to truth or subvert it. Tagore maintained that the central problematic of Gandhi’s movement was the instrumentalization of the ideas of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, which found their ill-advised way into the boycott of education and the burning of clothes. In response to such views, Gandhi states that Tagore is unaware of the fact that English language had “commercial” and “political value” (278).

Ashis Nandy, in *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self*, points to the fine distinction between nationalism and anti-colonialism. He writes that

“Tagore rejected the idea of nationalism but practiced anti-imperialist politics all his life... at a time when nationalism, patriotism, and anti-imperialism were a single concept for most Indians” (80). Gandhi, agreeing with Tagore’s view of moral position, states that Indian nationalism was not aggressive or destructive.

Peter Robb in a “History of India” had established that “Thus Indian politics and modern parties developed in parallel with government, and colonial rule helped produce its own nemesis, nationalism” (178). It is noteworthy that Robb mentions the fact that this sense of nationalism was not only a “national response”, but it was a new novel idea that a nation’s ruler should be of their own kind and notionally representative. Nationalism, as a spirit, was always present in India as more of a religious and cultural concept than a nation. However, colonial domination with revolts and independence struggles led to the rise of nationalism. The idea of nation or nationalism may be a borrowed concept from the West; however it gave the leaders ways to achieve independence on the basis of the feeling for their own nation or country.

Looking at the history of Indian literature in English, we see that the themes of nationalism and socialism were mainly emerging in the 1930s and 1940s’ novels. The new genera of “novels”, was a new literary form for Indian writers. The 1930s and 1940s was memorable both for Indian nationalism and Indian novels in English. The novels played an important role in “embodying the radical visions of anti-colonial nationalism” (Leela Gandhi 168). They were looking at the nation as modern from the cosmopolitan outlook and dealt with themes of social and political issues. Their aim was not only to portray the political or nationalistic aspects of the condition of India, but also to look at the social issues; it is during that time that India stepped into modernity and hence there was a new outlook growing towards religious orthodoxy and traditional approaches, which later prevailed in India.

Commonwealth literature was a term literary critics began to use from the 1950s to describe literatures in English emerging from a selection of countries with a history of colonialism. (McLeod 10). It incorporated the study of writers from the predominantly European settler communities, as well as writers belonging to those countries which were in the process of gaining independence from British rule, such as those from African, Caribbean and South Asian nations. In commonwealth literature, writers were in one way forging their own sense of national and cultural identity and trying to “transcend” into them too. Indian writers of the early 20th century can be regarded as commonwealth writers, as commonwealth countries have almost always been contemporaneous with the development of a truly nationalist sentiment (12).

The Indo-Anglican writers adopted the language of the colonizers to reach the West and present the real India to them; to portray their nationalism and changes that they could adopt to make a new India. G. N. Saibaba, in his essay, “Indian Colonialist Nationalism in the Critical Practice of Indian Writing in English: A Critique”, marks that “English literature has been a powerful enterprise towards constructing a kind of Indian nationalism mediated through the interpretation of the literary works in particular ways” (61). Saibaba also importantly comments what Srinivasa Iyengar feels is that “English literature is the authentic tool that can represent India as a nation more than any literature of the native language” (61). Hence most critics argue that Indian writing in English has always “portrayed” the social, political and cultural changes that have occurred in India along with Indian tradition and culture.

Although patriotism was the main theme of almost every writer before independence, their literary works had significant impact on the society. The novelists’ themes revolve around social realities that try to capture the real India in contrast to what foreign story-tellers “who, with their limited possibilities of true experience, have seen only the surface of our way of life,

failing to reach deeper into our spirit.” (Shyam S Asnani qtd by Bhattacharya 155) It is only through these novelists that the West has tried to understand and appreciate how India thinks and feels.

Therefore in my following chapters, I shall introduce the Indian novels - Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchables*, R K Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* individually. As my thesis focuses mainly on nationalism and socialism in the colonial phase, my chapters will explore the themes in the light of “Nationalism as a concept” in postcolonial theory. Moreover, it will look at how the writers have tried to incorporate the theme of nationalism and socialism mainly to depict India in the colonial period and thus had given Indian literature in English a new dimension. My paper shall also explore how nationalism or the ideas of independence and socialism have been analyzed in the context of India, and depict whether they portray the country as an as an imaginary nation or an authentic, realistic India.

Chapter 1
Eradication of the Class-System through Gandhi
in *Untouchables*

The novelists of the 1930s and 1940s are inspired by the emergence of two contexts: the social and political upheavals of the “Gandhian whirlwind” and the era of late modernism in Europe. Mulk Raj Anand is one of the commonwealth novelists and a revolutionary intellectual. Born under the British rule, he lived in the dichotomy of ideals of both the old Hindu traditions, which his religious mother preached, while the modern codes of his father had suffered conflicts and contradictions in his early life. However, what made Anand a prolific political writer is his opportunity to pursue Western education and on the other hand, a superior understanding of the Indian society and politics at the time of pre-Independence. Importantly, Karl Marx was a great influence on Anand, who then understood the importance of protecting one’s own identity and fighting class conflicts.

Mulk Raj Anand began his political career in 1921, when he participated in the non-cooperation movement. He later got involved in political actions, wrote journals and followed Gandhi significantly. The novel *Untouchable* is the creation of his experiences during his stay in Sabarmati Ashram.

Mulk Raj Anand’s novel is the product of his experiences in India, which encompasses the differences in the social structure, especially in the Hindu society and the growth of “nationalism”, emerging from the revolts by the subdued class. When he was brought face to face with the narrowness of caste, he was appalled to see how privilege and position dominated

the world, which disturbed him. Anand's *Untouchable* narrates a single day from the life of Bakha, a young sweeper living in the outcaste colony in a small cantonment in Northern India. The protagonist, Bakha, is in a degraded condition and wishes to be released from such a position. Conveniently, the novel covers the span from 1930 to 1940 when poverty, slavery and the inhuman exploitation of the masses were at the peak. It was Gandhi who had waged a war against the forces behind these evils and had given new visions to modernize India, instructing and campaigning against old traditions and customs, which is hinted at in the novels of the Indian writers.

Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable*, being his first novel, was revolutionary. Suresht Renjen Bald, in his essay, "Politics of a Revolutionary Elite: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels", states that Anand being revolutionary in his writings - which appeared before 1947 - was banned by the British Raj because of the political choices that were seen in his novels. (473) He also mentions that Anand's political visions were communicated to the group he belonged to, the Western-educated elite, who were the "core of the politically conscious intelligentsia of pre-Independence India" like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi portrayed in his novels.

The novel *Untouchable* is the narration of one day's incidents occurring in a boy's life Bakha, a sweeper. A scavenger or sweeper then in the Hindu society was not only an "outcaste", but also debased and demeaned in the society. The story develops in the town of Bulashah. The outcaste colony where Bakha lived is described as the "ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it 'uncongenial' place to live in." (Anand 1). Anand, in this novel had brilliantly captured the "double marginalization" of the lower-class Hindu people under the British Raj and

the Hindu society. Also he had not only represented the people of India under colonialism but also had given voice and expressed views and feelings of the subaltern group like Bakha.

Bakha is a scavenger boy and the novel narrates his disastrous day that leaves him disheartened. Firstly, while walking through the streets of the town, a Hindu gets defiled by his touch for which he tries to apologize. Joining his hands in humility, he stands deaf and dumb. The people gather around the scene and abuse Bakha. He pleads, but no one feels pity for him. The defiled man gives a slap on Bakha's face and leaves the place. For the first time in his life, Bakha is made aware of his status as an untouchable in that moment; so much so that "every second seemed an endless age of woe and suffering". (40) It then echoes in his mind "For them I am sweeper, sweeper-untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable!" (43)

Shyam M. Asnani, in his essay, "Towards a Closer Understanding of the Indo-English Novel" says that Anand deliberately uses a "robust style" while exploring the "unhappy vibrations of life" in order to instigate the consciousness of the modern Indian intellectual. His dialogues and descriptions, as Asnani says, have the features of "Indianess" (158) while writing in English.

Moreover, K D Verma, in his essay, "The Metaphors of Untouchable and Coolie in Mulk Raj Anand's Novels *Untouchable* and *Coolie* and His Sense of Social Justice" notes that Indian literature should serve a social purpose, namely, the improvement of the Indian society and the enhancement of its people's well-being, which Anand had been successful in serving to the audience. Intellectuals like Anand were against blind orthodoxy and, as a follower of Marx, understood slavery or the caste system in India well and was absolutely against it. In addition, K. D. Verma remarks that "Gandhi's work appealed to him because the Mahatma was passionately

devoted to the removal of untouchability and the stigma attached to cleaning human waste, by making it a personal duty for everyone. After his stay at the ashram, Anand was completely prepared to write *Untouchable*. All he had felt and thought up to this point about the Indian culture and the treatment of the untouchables in it went into the making of the novel". (191)

Bakha, later in the very day, while roaming outside the temple, curiously looks into the temple. A Brahmin sees Bakha on the steps and shouts at him for polluting the sacred temple premises. While climbing down the steps, he finds his sister Sohini standing in the courtyard frightened and speechless. She tells Bakha about the priest's attempt to molest her while she was cleaning his latrine. She further tells him that she screamed out of fear and the priest came out shouting that he had been defiled by an untouchable girl. An enraged Bakha decides to look for the priest, but Sohini stops him. As both of them realize their helplessness in face of the limitations of their caste, they decide to give up.

Bakha sends Sohini home and goes to an alley nearby to beg for food. When he starts shouting for food, unfortunately nobody responds. Tired and worn out from the hectic day, he sleeps on the wooden platform in front of a Hindu's house. A high caste woman comes out of the house on the call of a Sadhu. She shouts at Bakha for polluting her house saying, "'You eater of masters' 'May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you perish and die! You have defiled my house!'" (63). Later she asks him to clean the drain to get a piece of bread. Bakha completes his work although he feels disgusted and pain-stricken with the humiliation he had to face in front of the Sadhu by the woman, for defiling her house.

Moreover, when the son of a high caste Hindu is hurt in the quarrel that takes place after the match, Bakha takes the wounded boy to his house. The mother, instead of showing gratitude,

shouts at Bakha for defiling her son and the house. Seeing his son wounded she shouts at Bakha and accuses her by saying “Oh, you eater of masters, you dirty sweeper! What have you done? You have killed my son!” (106)

As he returns home in the afternoon, his father welcomes him with abuses for bunking his afternoon latrine cleaning work. Utterly given up to despair, he goes out and sits under a papal tree, cursing himself and the day “I only get abuse and derision wherever I go. Pollution, Pollution, I do nothing else but pollute people. (107), “What a day I had! Unlucky, inauspicious day! I wish I could die! (111)

As an artist, Anand gave expression to the changes taking place in India during the end of the colonial period and also assisted the spirit of progress in the country, which were well marked in his novels. He considered his novels as a powerful literary form to serve as a vehicle of humanism. Anand, a socialist, revealed the condition of the outcaste, who had no voice in the Indian Literature like Bakha. The outcastes are at the mercy of the upper-caste Hindus for not only food, but even for water. For example, they are not allowed to draw water from the communal well, the only source of their water supply, by themselves. They would wait near the well for a caste-privileged person to come by and draw water to give it to them. According to Marx's view of history, civilization has not yet passed the pre-human stage. Verma agrees to Marx's concept that Civilization will become human only when society becomes class-less and human beings have ceased to exploit one another. At that stage, humanity will prevail and manifest itself fully. In the meantime, humanity exists but it is kept suppressed by the dominant classes in society. (Verma 36) Anand himself believed that there was turning point in the civilization of India during the political upheavals, where people would get rid of the unjust social system.

Verma factually states that “contact with the West through the British rule had brought with it a modernizing influence on the Indian outlook” (190). This novel gives a vivid description of the western influence on Bakha and many like him. The advent of British rule not only brought changes in many traditions in the Indian lifestyle, but essentially influenced the fashion –what Bakha called it is “fashun”–which was the art of wearing trousers, breeches, coat, puttees and boots etc” (2). This fashion or imitation of the west started among the elite class of Indian society who were exposed to the West.

Anand named Bakha the “child of modern India” and portrayed him as a character, who feels himself to be in a position where he can find no place in his surrounding society of the upper class, but fancies the English ways and styles and has growing modern tastes. Bakha, although is a mere scavenger, understands the modern ways better than the upper Hindu society. He is ashamed of the Indian way of “performing ablutions, all the gargling and spitting” (10). His idea of the “English fashion” is predominant in his mind and is grateful when Charat Singh offers his kindness and gives him a brand new hockey stick. Bakha has a mind of a modern man as he wants lessons from “babuji”, a fifth grade boy. Therefore, Anand comments that:

The spirit of modernity had worked havoc among the youth of the regiment. The consciousness of every child was full of a desire to wear Western dress, and since most of the boys about the place were the sons of babus, bandmens, sepoy , sweepers, washermen and shopkeepers, all too poor to afford the luxury of a complete European outfit. (92)

Anand presents the priest as a supporter of the British rule, who tries to manipulate Bakha to accept Christianity. Bakha is only interested to hear the priest because of his European clothes. Being a sweeper, he still does not accept Christianity even though he knew he could live a better life. The Colonel not being successful to influence Bakha hints at the gradual failure of the British colonial rule. The Colonel's wife shouts at him for bringing a 'bhangi' at her house. Bakha runs away from the church. While wandering through the railway station, he hears the news of Mahatma Gandhi's arrival in the town. He rushes to Golbagh to hear Gandhi's speech. Renjen Bald, when commenting on Mulk Raj's revolutionary attitude in his novels, mentions that "Marxism also gave Mulk Raj a viable way of coping with the distasteful and appealing West: he could accept scientific and technological achievements yet reject capitalism." (480)

Through Bakha, Anand has tried to portray the Indian society, where the people were doubly suppressed – firstly by the British, next by the caste system. Mahatma Gandhi is presented in the novel as the figure that has knowledge of the modern world and thus instructs the path to self-government or "Swadeshi". This novel also suggests how the growing nationalism among the people and leaders brought about great transitions from the old ways to new ones and the modern India. Anand had tried to bring in the "policy of Divide and Rule", where the British Government wanted to give the untouchables a separate legal and political status and to alienate them from Hinduism.

Historically, Gandhi regarded untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism and also considered this division of the Hindu caste as one of the major drawbacks for which India was not being able to overcome the British rule. Here, Gandhi's main concern was the removal of untouchability and so he called the untouchables "Harijans", people of God; to unite the people. Bald examines that Anand's novel mainly focuses on the injustices of society; his abortive and

misdirected attempts for a better life in the existing unjust state; and the appearance of the revolutionary hero, who shows him that realization of a good life is only possible after the destruction of the present order(480). This was mainly because of the situation at the time of Mulk Raj's writing. With the sight of Gandhi, the character Bakha forgets all his miseries from the whole day. In his long speech, Gandhi expresses his wish to be reborn as an untouchable. He calls them 'Harijan' and the cleaners of Hindu religion. He also warns them against their bad habits and asks them to stop accepting the cooked food for their work. Through the conversation between the two pro- and anti- Gandhi groups, Bakha comes to know that the only solution to eradicate untouchability is the use of machines or the flush system. Anand wanted to awaken the exploited, suppressed and dehumanized class of the society. Anand's suggestion of the flush system and changing of the old habits of the sweepers hints at what Bald mentions: "Mulk Raj's treatment of industrialism, though influenced by Marx-ism, possesses uniquely Indian ingredients" (27).

It seemed their insides were concentrated in the act of emergence, of a new birth, as it were, from the raw, bleaky wintry feeling in their souls of the world of warmth. The taint of the dark, narrow, dingy little prison cells of their one-roomed homes lurked in them, however, even in the outdoor air. They were silent as if the act of liberation was too much for them to bear. (27)

Like the above statement by Anand, Bakha, although unaware of the conditions of India or the act of independence, understands less about what Gandhi instigates. However, Anand, in his *Apology of Heroism* reflects that the revolutionary heroes of his novels are supposed to have this awareness, and are expected to set an example for their followers. As revolt against authority is the central theme of Mulk Raj's novels, Gandhi is the pathway to Bakha's independence.

Characters are projected in Anand's novels as representatives of the 'marginalised class' and 'subaltern class' searching the way of self-identity. Characters like Bakha always breathe under the dark shadow of identity crisis. The protagonist of *Untouchable* is gravely colonized by the social, political, religious and traditional structure of the Hindu society. He suffers because of his low caste birth. One of the speakers from among the crowds professes to the people that "We must destroy caste, we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone". (145) *Untouchable* is the representation of human suffering and man's inhumanity to mankind, who are under the hegemonic structure. Also with modernity, religious nationalism gave its way to Indian nationalism as old tradition and orthodoxy changed to modernity. In the end what is important to understand is to find one's own identity, which Gandhi as a revolutionist in Anand's novel has given Bakha by liberating him from the status of an 'untouchable'.

Anand's *Untouchable* under the critical theory and post-colonialism studies is regarded as one of the novel which has given voice to suppressed class. The way the marginalized society is projected and the issues of colonialism is explored is interesting. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is been read as illustrating her own position as a postcolonial intellectual, who is concerned to excavate the disempowered and silenced voices of the past from the material and political context of the present. Similarly, Anand's novels thus can be studied as subaltern studies where the dominant class has been given voice for the first time in English novel before Independence. Anand had tried to depict his novel *Untouchable* in the social context of India's rigid class and cast system or the subaltern which is eradicated by the events European colonialism and national independence.

Chapter 2

The Gandhian spirit in the *Waiting for the Mahatma*

R. K. Narayan is one of the Indo-English novelists and a realist fiction writer, who had succeeded in the portrayal of real India and its people in many of his novels located in his imaginary place “Malgudi”. Narayan’s novel *Waiting for the Mahatma* is one of the novels, which had used the idea of basic nationalism and depicted the problems with identity and India’s journey towards independence during the colonial rule. Although many critics and Narayan himself claims that he always intends to avoid political and social commentary in his novels, *Waiting for the Mahatma* does cast sufficient light on the larger social and historical setting of his fiction, the major historical events and about British colonialism and Indian independence in a larger context.

Waiting for the Mahatma tells the story of two young people of Malgudi, Sriram and Bharati. Sriram is an orphan young man brought up by his pampering grand-mother, whom he called Granny. On his twentieth birthday, his Granny entrusts him a considerable amount, which she had kept in her account. The money was the pension from Sriram’s father, who had been killed in the War. He came into contact with Bharati and fell in love at first sight. He met her as she was making a tin collection for the freedom movement. Bharati’s father had been shot dead while offering Satyagraha against the British during the first Non-cooperation Movement. She was then an infant and later adopted and brought up by the Sevak Sangh, a Gandhian institute, as a foster daughter to Gandhi.

The love of Sriram and Bharati went on in the background of the struggle for independence launched by Mahatma Gandhi. Bharati's first loyalty was to the Mahatma and the marriage between Sriram and Bharati could be possible only when Gandhi gave his blessings to it. Meanwhile Sriram, a pleasure seeking man, was totally changed to a freedom fighter and a follower of Gandhi. He was imprisoned for several years as punishment for derailing a train. Finally he is freed from the prison as India wins independence. In the end, Sriram and Bharati wait for the Mahatma at the Birla Mandir in New Delhi to obtain his final consent for their marriage. Having received the consent, they attend the prayer meeting of Gandhi, where a young man shoots Gandhi dead.

Fascination for the West has been a common feature of the people of the Orient. As the novel is situated in the colonial setting, Sriram's admiration for the West is prominent in the novel. He always admired the portrait in Kanni's shop "of the lady with apple cheeks, curls falling down the brim of her coronet, and large, dark eyes." (6) and also he wished his dead mother looked like "that portrait of European queen with apple cheeks and wavy coiffure" (5). In *Gandhism and Indian English Fiction: The Sword and the Sickle, Kanthapura and Waiting for the Mahatma* Patil, V. T. and H. V. Patil comments on Sriram's attraction towards white complexion that "This is typical of many young people who were (perhaps even now are) more in love with the glamour of the West than with the culture of their own poverty-stricken mother-country" (87).

R K Narayan's novels mostly capture the individual and spiritual growth of his characters in Malgudi. In this novel Sriram transforms from a selfish modern materialist to a spokesman of

traditional values, swaraj and nationality in this book. Sriram in the beginning lives a moderately lavish life however, by following Gandhi, Bharti and Gorpad he completely changes. Eventually, in the novel Sriram finally learns to spin with the help of Bharti and in exchange of the yarn, he gets warm clothes of the same count. Thus, one day he gets his Khadi clothes, a simple dhoti and a *jibba* stitched by the village tailor. He takes off his mill manufactured clothes and “heaped them in the middle of the street, poured half a bottle of kerosene over the lot, and applied a match” and he says:

Sriram explained to the gathering, fascinated by the leaping flames: ‘I will never again wear clothes spun by the machinery.’ The Dhoti and *jibba* were heavy, it was as if a piece of lead were interwoven with the texture. But he felt it was something to be proud of. He felt he had seen and reached a new plane of existence. (99)

Also, Sriram’s encounter with the timber-contractor makes him say that “ This is not the time to for acquiring wealth. This is the time to join in the fight for Independence” and explains the manhours on elephants that the work that they were doing by cutting down timber was for the destruction of this world and in the end asserts, “Don’t strengthen the hands that is oppressing you” (107). Moreover while advocating “Quit India” in the village of Solur he meets a Shopman who sells foreign goods. Agitated by the shopkeeper’s ignorance affirms:

“I am very sorry that you are a liar, in addition to being a seller of foreign black market stuff. I am prepared to lay my life at your threshold, if it only will make you truthful and patriotic. I will not leave this place until I see you empty all your stock in that drain, and give me an undertaking that you will never utter falsehood again in your life. I am going to stay here till I drop dead at your door.” (118)

Furthermore he explains to the crowd present there about Gandhi's "Dandi March in 1930" (120) which were only to repeal salt tax. Hence, Sriram's words and actions show that he was totally transformed into a disciple of Gandhi; his transformation was from materialism to spirituality and to a patriot.

In the novel, Gandhi's modern views on democracy were in conflict with the traditional views of the characters. As Satish C. Aikant writes:

Much of the narrative rests on the divergence between Gandhi's teachings and the manner in which the people adopt these in practice. They have their own individual motives for joining Gandhi. Sriram joins the movement because he wants to remain close to Bharati in order to follow her wherever the movement may lead them. The chairman entertains Gandhi to show off his palatial house and exhibit his worldly wealth against Gandhi's spiritual wealth. Mr. Natesh wants to wear the halo of Gandhi's words by interpreting his speech to Tamil. (94)

When Mathieson offers Sriram a glass of juice, it appears so tempting to Sriram that he could not but accept it:

Sriram could merely mumble. 'Thanks,' and drained his glass. The passage of the juice down his throat was so pleasant that he felt he could not interrupt it under any circumstance. He shut his eyes in ecstasy. For a moment he forgot politics, Bharati, strife, and even Mahatmaji. Just for a second the bliss lasted. He put down his glass and sighed. (113-114)

This passage shows how Sriram was tempted. In the conflict between spirituality and materialism, falls victim to materialism though only for a few minutes.

In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Narayan presents Gandhi not as a symbol, but as a character, who took part in the development of the plot. Gurugopal Mukherjee in “R. K. Narayan’s Mahatma Gandhi in *Waiting for the Mahatma*” agrees that “The incidents of the novel were interwoven with such historical incidents as Gandhiji’s struggle for Indian independence, the Quit India Movement and that fatal evening of the 30th January, 1948, when the great devotee of non-violence fell a victim to the assassin’s bullets” (45). Narayan did not present Gandhi in terms of great political events, but in relation to ordinary events, while retaining his historical authenticity. “He showed how ordinary people with no pretence to any idealism reacted to this great man”, comments Mukherjee (48). We see Gandhi, as the eyes of the millions of his countrymen would see Gandhi; as a saint, a Mahatma, a living legend, inspiring veneration and worship. When such a character as this is introduced into the novel, inevitably he overshadows and dwarfs all the others in it.

Although Narayan knew that Gandhi was no mere politician, he bought in good measure the political development in Gandhian decades in his novels. For, as a writer of fiction, Narayan’s interest in politics and political ideologies had always been minimal. He himself had testified more than once that politics does not interest him as a creative writer (Pankaj Mishra 196). However we can say that R K Narayan is not indifferent to political happenings. The several incidental references to the political events in his works, early and late, demonstrate how observant he is. In this novel, although there is mention of Gandhi but it is not political. However, Uma Parameswaran in “*A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists*, for instance, has asserted: “It is a Gandhian novel...and the theme is Gandhism.” Therefore we can say that *Waiting for the Mahatma* is a controversial and mature novel. Gandhian politics, of

course, are not left out, because they cannot be, but played down and relegated to the background.

Later in the novel Gandhian ideas like ‘Satyagraha’, and political developments such as the ‘Dandi Salt March’ and the ‘Quit India movement’ are brought in, in so, far as they can be understood by people who are ordinary and average. In fact it is through the eyes of Sriram, whose perception and understanding are very limited, that Gandhi and the struggle for freedom are seen. Thus the novel gives with effortless ease a faithful account of Gandhi’s habits and routine activities—his walks, his spinning, his hours of prayer and rest, his love of children and his disarming ways with people of all kinds.

Though the title proclaims that it is a novel about Gandhi it is not a “Gandhi-Novel.” Some critics argue that the readers, especially Indians are dissatisfied with the novel since they do not find the warmth and glorification of Gandhi in it. People do not find in the novel the same Gandhi who is seated in their minds like a god. Similarly *Waiting for the Mahatma* is not a “political novel” properly called. As R. A. Jayanta in “Portrayal of Gandhi in *Waiting for the Mahatma*” writes “As is his wont, Narayan aims at telling a straightforward story of some belonging to Malgudi, the town of his mythical imagination” (57). Hence it explicates that Narayan only wanted to focus the humane qualities of Gandhi in this novel.

Thus we can say that *Waiting for the Mahatma* is the study of a Gandhian disciple’s, Sriram’s struggle to accommodate Gandhian principles in his life. The novel presents a study of the bewilderments, the uncertainties, the struggles and the human failures of the disciple who only imperfectly understand his master, and whose attempts to follow the latter’s teaching involve a battle not only against external circumstances but also against deeply ingrained

unsaintly aspects of his own imperfect nature. Above all, the novel throughout is a call for modernity—a fight against traditional suppression, as because it is resistance against oppression by the British colonialism. Here, Gandhi's revolutionary ideas and practices are contrasted with the views of the orthodox traditionalists like the shopman, timber-contractor, the teacher and the villagers. The freedom struggle in India under his leadership was aimed at making India a free democratic country. The noble democratic values of liberty, fraternity and equality were embodied in him.

Chapter 3

The Gandhian Whirlwind in *Kanthapura*

Kanthapura is the first and major novel of Raja Rao before Independence. It is one of the few novels by an Indian writer in English that is almost entirely untouched by Western values or attitudes. The novel's foreword discusses Rao's difficulty as a writer not only in writing in English language, but also using the style of the English novels. Rao in his foreword of *Kanthapura* states that "One has to describe in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own", which is difficult. Therefore he thinks that appropriation of style and language to the English language and the literary form, novel has been quite difficult; as in to maintain the "Indianness". *Kanthapura* was discovered and read with interest after independence, and gradually came to be recognized as a classic of the Indo-Anglian fiction as one of the most remarkable village novels ever written by an Indian in English. *Kanthapura* is a realistic and impartial presentation of the impact of the Gandhian movement. The novel has a history of inducing wild patriotism and presents the change in the social structure with the advent of nationalism.

Raja Rao's first novel *Kanthapura* is the story of a village in the south of India named Kanthapura. The novel is narrated in the form of a 'sthalapurana' by an old woman of the village, Achakka. Kanthapura is a traditional caste ridden Indian village, which is away from all modern ways of living. Dominant castes like Brahmins are privileged to get the best region of the village whereas Sudras and Pariahs are marginalized. The village is believed to have been protected by a local deity called Kenchamma. Although the caste system is maintained, in this

novel, Rao portrays how the national struggle changes the framework of the caste structure in the society as later the village unites to fight British rule.

As Benedict has discussed in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, that novels have inspired “nationalism” among the colonized people and evidently Raja Rao’s novels are typically nationalist. In *Kanthapura*, the action is restricted to the village itself with none of the characters venturing too far out, yet the village is not insulated against the happenings in other places. In fact, the stimulation for action is not local. The grand events that form the focal points of the novel take place in response to events elsewhere – Lahore, Bengal, Gujarat, etc. The village community moves from an insulated identity towards a national identity. The village in *Kanthapura* is divided along caste lines, but is, at the same time, harmonious and united. All the villagers are mutually bound in their social and economic functions. Religion plays an important part in the village, and the two main religious influences are 'Kenchamma', the village Goddess, and Himavathy, the river flowing near Kanthapura. The various ceremonies and festivals held in the village hold the villagers together religiously.

The real resistance in the village comes from the British, symbolized by the white man at the Skeffington Coffee Estate, and Bade Khan. Their actions in the novel in the beginning itself creates a negative impression towards them. “The Sahib says that if you work well you will get you will get sweets and if you work badly you will be beaten- that is the law of the place.” (50) Bade Khan quarrel with Patil and calls him “traitor to salt-givers (!5) which shows his loyalty towards the British Raj.

The novel begins its course of action when Moorthy leaves for the city where he gets familiar with Gandhian philosophy through pamphlets and other literatures. He follows Gandhi

in letter and spirit. He wears home spun khaddar, discards foreign clothes and fights against untouchability. As Moorthy expands his committee in the village the British get impatient, and finally send policemen to arrest Moorthy. The villagers protest, but Moorthy gives himself up silently and peacefully, and urges the villagers to do the same, if and when the need arose. He is taken to Karwar, where he refuses the services of a lawyer, thinking that the truth shall protect him. When he finds out it will not, it is too late. It is the character Moorthy who brings in Gandhism in Kanthapura, who despite resistance from the village orthodoxy, systematically works upon the women to spin their own clothes and to liberate themselves from the unwholesome caste prejudices, which have dominated the society in India for centuries. The character Moorthy brings *Kanthapura* at the center stage of national politics, embraces non-violence and becomes a true 'satyagrahi' and he ends up spending three months in jail.

Interestingly, the women forms Women's Volunteer Corporation under the leadership of Rangamma, who instilled patriotism among the women by presenting the historical figures like Laxmi Bai of Jhansi, Rajput princess, Sarojini Naidu and more.

Timothy Brennan, in "The National Longing for Form" in cultural studies says "nation has often lurk behind tradition, community and folklore" (176). Also here, the narrative of the novel takes up the Vedantic texts and Puranas and inserts nationalist struggles into them. For example, in a harikatha, Jayaramachar brings in an allegory between Siva, Parvati and the nation and the three eyed Siva stands for Swaraj, which explains the concept of nationalism present in their religious preachings. As we see later that Rangamma standing in as the commentator of Vedanta after the death of her father reads the Puranas allegorically, interpreting hell as the foreign rule, soul as India and so on.

In this novel, the congress workers, who so passionately are 'swadeshi' and give up anything foreign, unwittingly embrace the European model of nation. This notion requires a nation-state to have a singular form. A nation is a community of people who have a common language and is imagined (Benedict, *Imagined Community*). Thus in Kanthapura, Congressmen including Moorthy follows the same model of the nation-state. The village although class ridden, unites to fight for freedom from British rule. Franz Fanon in his essay, "National Culture", says that "To fight for national culture means to fight for liberation of the nation" (154). He defines national culture as "the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence (155) Also, Fanon discusses in "National Culture" that "there is national literature, literature of combat. . .fighting for existence as a nation." (155) This conception of the nation informs that of everyone in the novel are fighting for nation by accepting 'swadeshi', for example in the novel the narrator visualizes Moorthy (when in prison) to be wearing 'kurta pyjama' instead of 'dhoti'. The Hindi teacher here is not from any Hindi speaking region but is a Malayali (Surya Menon). The character Sankaru epitomizes this: his insistence on speaking Hindi even to his mother instead of the local language Kannada; his fanatic resistance to the use of English and so on is examples of his urge to blend into the uniform. Thus, the very conception of 'Nation', which is conceived after the European model of the nation-state, undermines the 'Swadeshi' spirit of nationalism.

Rao like many of the writers of his time was much influence by Gandhian principles and ideals for fighting nationalism. Interesting the novel depicts how the whirlwind of Gandhian revolution shakes the little village to its very roots. Rama Jha in "The Influence of Gandhian Thought on Indo-Anglian Novelists of the Thirties and Forties" comments:

Rao has recently embarked upon a study of Mahatma Gandhi and, according to what he has told M. K. Naik, the peculiarity of this study is that it will concentrate upon the spiritual aspects of Gandhi's thought. Gandhi invoked the ancient Indian past to awaken the pride of the demoralized nation. Rao also concerns himself with the presentation in fiction of the revitalizing function of India's ancient past and examines our contemporary present, social or political, against that past. It is without any reservations that one would agree with C. D. Narasimha when he says, "The writer who . . . brings to his task of novel writing an understanding alive with intelligence and an awareness of [the] total complex of Gandhi's impact on a demoralized but not dead India is Raja Rao(35)".(qtd by Jha 170).

Rao further discusses how, caught in the tremors of the freedom struggle of the thirties, is transformed completely. As before the village was old and little affected by any happening outside, suffering from all the handicaps of Hindu society, life went on as ever till Gandhi emerges on the national scene. But it was mostly because people do not know what the nationalist movement is. "Once the villagers know Gandhi is a mahatma in the tradition of the Hindu avatars, they join with him. For them Moorthy is the spokesman of the Mahatma. They risk everything for the Mahatma's sake. Even when they have lost everything "there is something that has entered our hearts, an abundance like the Himavathy on Gauri's night, when lights come floating down."(33)

In Moorthy's absence, Sankar takes his place at the head of the Congress committee. The British bribe the Swami with fertile land. The villagers fast for 3 days for Moorthy, and then the women decide to form a Sevika Sangh. Their husbands object, ostensibly because they thought the women would neglect their chores, but actually because they thought they weren't getting

laid frequently enough. The men and women, however, soon reach a compromise (I think they drew up a schedule) and start working together for the greater good. When Moorthy is released, he picks up where he had left off. Soon after, Gandhi launches the Non-Cooperation movement with the Dandi March. The villagers follow the march carefully, and start preparing for their own Non-Cooperation movement.

Significantly it is the role of the National Struggle in changing the very framework under which our society traditionally functioned. Throughout the narrative, we see the gradual blurring of caste lines. We see how the village changed and became a strong unit in the face of crises, and most importantly, how the changes in the village structure came not from the outside or due to any external agent, but from the inside, due to the efforts put in by the villagers. Moorthy plays a very important role in the novel in this regard. The narrator, Achakka, recounts: “We cry out hoarse behind the door, and we cry and moan and beg and weep and bang and kick and lament, but there’s no answer...and...as the afternoon drew on, our stomachs began to beat like drums and our tongues became dry” (160). The women suffer through the rest of the day and all through the night. The next morning a Pariah woman steals a key to the temple and “(rushes) up to the temple to unlock it” (162). A lower-caste woman as a savior to the Brahmin women demonstrates the complete revision of the local social standard. In the beginning of the novel, a Pariah woman would have been scorned and rebuked for even nearing the temple; at the end, she has saved the women from the very temple they would have earlier denied her.

Kanthapura is a political novel. It depicts in microcosm the Gandhian struggle for independence that raged throughout India in the early 1930’s. Moorthy, a young man of the village, sees a vision of Mahatma Gandhi and gets transformed. He forms a congress working

committee in the village, with its help, and with guidance from the congress committee in nearby city of Karwar, he launches a 'sataygrah movement' against the British rules, the toddy booths are picked .land revenues are not paid. The satayagrahis face the police brutalities most heroically, in a non violent manner. Even women, the low caste, take an active part in this Gandhian non-cooperation. In one sense, *Kanthapura* chronicles the formation of a national identity within a remote village. This thematic is also supported by the manner in which the village becomes a kind of a microcosm of the nation (Rao 156).

Conclusion

In my thesis, I have tried to explore Indo-Anglian writers and analyzed the themes nationalism and socialism in their novels. Nationalism and anti-colonialism are concepts which emerged mainly during British Colonialism. In the beginning, I tried to explicate how nationalism emerged, which occurred out of national movements during Independence and its idea promoted by the leaders. Moreover, interestingly, it has been found out that nationalism or religious nationalism amongst the Hindu society was present since Bengali Renaissance. Therefore, it was oppression and domination during colonialism by the British, which brought out the nationalistic aspects amongst the people of India.

Furthermore, it has been researched that a novel, as a literary genre, has been an essential part for promoting nationalism in the people. Therefore, Indo-Anglian writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao promote such concepts in their writing along with socialism as a theme. After their work, critics started to analyze the 'nation' and its importance mainly in the postcolonial studies.

Mulk Raj Anand took the Anglo-Indian novel into the heart of the freedom struggle and simultaneously attempted a brutal exposure of Indian poverty and social injustice. Anand's *Untouchable* depicts the presence of Hindu caste system, which would only be eradicated by equality in the society. Raja Rao, one of the most interesting of contemporary Indian writers in English wrote *Kanthapura* as a brilliant complex narrative of the Indian struggle for freedom under Gandhi in the nineteen thirties. Rao's subsequent writings have confirmed the impression that he was a political novelist only in the sense that most Indian writers except Narayan were overtly political (and nationalist) before the Second World War. *Kanthapura* was an epic novel

about India itself, an India striving for self-realization, for re-discovery. In *Kanthapura* it is the peasantry and Gandhi's 'satyagrahis', who are central and their battle is against history, Nature and the British. After an interval of some years, Raja Rao produced even more ambitious novels on India (Rao 163). R K Narayan, although not being political, depicted the people of India in his mythical place "Malgudi" in his novels. His novels like *Waiting for the Mahatma* looks at the people of real India and how they reacted to the nationalistic movements. The influence of Gandhian thought is incorporated in the vision of life that Narayan's fiction presents. All his novels, without exception, uphold traditional Indian values. Of course, these are not the values of ancient Indian tradition as it used to be in ancient India, but reoriented by the synthetic thought of Mahatma Gandhi.

Through the research for my dissertation it can be seen that the Gandhian thought had a deep impact in a variety of ways on the imagination of the literary writers of India, and it continues to influence some significant Indian writers even today. Especially those writing in English, learned to discover their own country not in the ancient Benaras, but in the slums of Kolkata and Bombay and in the innumerable "dunghills scattered over the land," as Gandhi described Indian villages in their poverty and dirt. The novelists in English received their sense of national identity from Gandhi's way of thinking and were inspired to write novels with greater seriousness of purpose from the thirties onward. Gandhi's thought indeed acted as a catalytic agent in the growth of fiction writing in India. It provided a wider and deeper perspective on the condition of people in the Indian society.

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