

LIBERTY WITHIN AND WITHOUT:
A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF RAJA RAO'S
KANTHAPURA

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Liberty Within and Without : a Semiotic Study of Raja Rao's Kanthapura" submitted by Ranu Uniyal in partial fulfillment of six credits out of total requirements of twenty-four credits for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) of the University, is her original work according to the best of my knowledge and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Raja Rao's Kanthapura¹ is a novel depicting the Indian people's struggle for freedom from the British colonial rule. In the early 1930s the freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi had become very strong. Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of non-violence and truth gave a new direction to the national struggle. The British had tried to perpetuate exploitation by creating socio-economic barriers in the society and by encouraging cultural alienation among the masses. Mahatma Gandhi perceived the socio-cultural reality of the Indian society and endeavoured to preserve the positive cultural values by giving them a new dimension. He laid emphasis on the rekindling of the human spirit and the restoration of lost identity.

Kanthapura is set against the pre-independence background. The novel depicts a host of rural commoners defying the colonial forces. As the people begin identifying themselves with the problems and demands of society they seek not only political freedom but also socio-economic and cultural refinement. They confront countless obstacles on their way such as threats, arrests and deaths, yet none of these outer forces deter them. They do not waver from the aim of winning freedom.

Mahatma Gandhi emerges as the icon of liberty. Moorthy, the protagonist of the novel initially encounters several phases of dilemma and conflict. But later, under the influence of Gandhi he chooses to fight not only against the imperialist forces, but also those that are responsible for creating an écart between man and man. The people of Kanthapura struggle unitedly for political freedom as well as for the preservation and survival of India's rich cultural values. They strive to create a bond of fraternity among the various sections of the Indian society.

In his other novels like The Serpent and the Rope,² Comrade Kirillov³ and The Cat and Shakespeare⁴ too, Raja Rao is mainly concerned with the individuals for whom the need for self exploration becomes an urgent one. The quest for freedom forms the basis of this need for self exploration. Raja Rao's characters are men and women living in a particular set of conditions, vacillating between several doubts and conflicts. A certain feeling of 'enttäusern' grips them and they consciously fight against it.

I.2 A literary critic questions a text as to what it says and by doing so reveals a deeper meaning that points to its essential truth. Each text is complete in itself and is imbued with meaning. Kanthapura is examined at

the three levels of syntagmatics, semantics and pragmatics.

The syntactic analysis aims at a careful reading of the text. It tries to lay bare the latent relationships which are not apparent in the first reading. Here each text is observed not as a complete production but as a production in progress. The syntactic organisation of a discourse follows a linear progression of events in a narrative. By following the text in a linear motion, a certain attempt is made to study the problematics in progression.

A literary critique first indicates the elements of the narrative which establish turmoil or alienation and focus on the dialectics of conflicting psychic attitudes. These tend to get resolved as we follow their progression and dénouement. The syntagmatic analysis is an attempt to decode the text and thus study the existential predicament at a metonymic level. Each sign as a potential signifier leads us to the kernel situation.

The second level, semantic in nature, requires a more comprehensive and coherent study of the text. The critic after studying the form, explores the thematic aspects of the text through a semantic method. By trying to interpret the thought and action of the individual one hopes to discover the main cause of estrangement. As the signifiers are identified they are studied in rela-

tion to the other signifiers. The field of significance gradually emerges and reflects our understanding of the text.

The third form of understanding is pragmatic in nature. A discourse is placed in historical relationship with other discourses. This brings out a new structure of significance. By evaluating a text in a pragmatic framework of the other texts we can understand its literary relevance more concretely. For example, how have certain ideologies of the author evolved and taken shape in the lives of the characters in different texts. There is an attempt also to see the growth of similar concerns in the text.

Through the process of mediation a relationship of one text with another is shown. The real importance of a discourse lies in its mediatory role. Each discourse is not only unique but also an instrument of change in the author's consciousness. Lastly, we try to study the fundamental *écart* between the author's conceptualization and realization.

I.3 The syntactic analysis of Kanthapura has been attempted in the second and the third chapters of the dissertation. They unfold the problematics in a linear progression. The essence of the two chapters remains the

same; nor does the essential methodology undergo any change. However, for the purposes of convenience the title has been further expanded. The second chapter is entitled 'Problematics in Progression: From Apathy to Protest'. As the people gradually become conscious of their rich cultural heritage they try to shed their complexes which constrained them in their struggle for liberty both within and without. The second chapter is divided into twelve sections, while the third one is divided into seven. The third chapter entitled 'Problematics in Extension: A Crusade Against Oppression' unfolds the meaning as we go through it carefully. These sections are divided still further into smaller segments.

The syntagmatic process is metonymic in nature and manifests itself in contiguity. The messages consist of words put together in a sequence. The propositions form the basic elements of syntax and a sequence is a series of propositions capable of constituting a meaningful story, complete in itself. Each section has a kernel situation which is analysed in detail with the help of various signifiers. Each message is made up of signs. Each sign consists of a signifier and a signified.

An effort is made to unfold the several layers of structure metonymically. Beyond this unfolded artefact lies the essence of the text. We accept the autonomy of

the literary artefact. We do not speak of the author. On the contrary, we cover the text step by step, in a linear progression. The ensembles of signifiers in each section reveal the tension which exists between the signifiant and the signifié. Each section begins with an introduction and is followed by a detailed analysis of the problematics. The respective sections of the novel are summarized as follows :

II.1 Section one describes the simple life of villagers in Kanthapura. Their strong religious life reflects their inner harmony. The arrest of Jayaramachar, a follower of Gandhi, leads to the burning of foreign clothes by the young men of Kanthapura.

II.2 The policeman, Bade Khan, comes to stay in Kanthapura. Moorthy encourages the women to become self-sufficient by spinning.

II.3 The vision of Mahatma Gandhi in his dreams brings Moorthy back to the village to fight against colonial oppression. He gives up his studies in the city. Moorthy's mixing with the Pariahs creates resentment among Brahmins.

II.4 The news of her son's ex-communication fills Moorthy's mother with shame and she dies. Despite several oppositions, Moorthy continues teaching the Pariahs to read and write.

II.5 The followers of Gandhi like Vasudev and Gangadhar come from the city and take the Pariahs of the Skeffington Coffee Estate to Kanthapura. They inspire the coolies to participate in religious activities.

II.6 The policeman, Bade Khan refuses to let Moorthy enter the Estate. Moorthy's resistance leads to violence. Rachanna is expelled from the Estate for he had raised his voice against the police. Moorthy, begins his 'Don't touch the government' campaign.

II.7 Moorthy holds himself responsible for creating chaos inside the Estate. He tries to atone his sins by fasting and meditation. A certain change takes place within him and he begins his struggle against the government with greater enthusiasm.

II.8 Moorthy propagates the ideals of truth, non-violence and untouchability. But unfortunately his being rebels at the last ideal. A Congress Committee is formed in Kanthapura and Moorthy is made its President.

II.9 The marriage of Venkamma's daughter to a middle aged man is celebrated with great splendour.

II.10 Kartik is celebrated with gusto in Kanthapura. Moorthy's arrest and the raid at Rangamma's house forms the central core of action. People resist the police

force and in turn they too are arrested. Later, all except Moorthy are released. Moorthy is taken to Karwar and imprisoned for three months.

II.11 Ratna and Rangamma take over the charge of reading and interpreting the Vedantic texts after Ramakrishnayya's death. Sevika Sangha is formed in Kanthapura. Women begin preparing themselves for the struggle.

II.12 Moorthy is released from prison. Another policeman comes and settles in Kanthapura.

III.1) Moorthy creates in the people an urge to struggle collectively against repression. The day Gandhi manufactures salt, Kanthapurians too sing and celebrate. They wait anxiously for Mahatma's call for action.

III.2 The news of Mahatma's arrest fills people with a greater need for action. The people in Kanthapura refuse to pay their revenue dues to anyone but Ranga Gowda. Men and women decide to picket toddy groves. They go picketing Boranna's toddy grove. The police intervenes, several beatings and arrests take place. The women march back to Kanthapura after an adventurous journey.

III.3 Picketing at the Skeffington Coffee Estate forms the major core of action in this section. The coolies too join the people against the police. A few men are arrested.

Next morning a few more coolies from the Estate join the Pariahs in Kanthapura.

III.4 Resistance against the British forces becomes prominent all over India. The people in Kanthapura too fast and pray for the success of the Gandhian movement. The news of colonial oppression fills them with a greater need for resistance.

III.5 One morning the women discover that their men have been taken into custody. The coolies are forcefully carried to the Estate. Both the Brahmin and Pariah women resist the attacks made on them by the police.

III.6 The auctioning of the lands takes place in Kanthapura. The people are gripped with feelings of being uprooted and becoming landless as their land is sold. The village fields are set on fire by the women and they flee from the village to other places.

III.7 The narrator describes how the people have shifted to other areas, leaving the village bare. A year has passed ever since the trouble began in Kanthapura. The reading of Upanishads is continued in Kashipura. The narrator's son Seenu is still in prison. Moorthy's letter to Ratna reveals his loss of hope. His faith is restored in Nehru. Ranga Gowda's visit to Kashipura reveals the state of Kanthapura. New houses are being

constructed there. There is not a familiar face in the village now. Bhatta has settled in Kashi. Range Gowda seeks Kenchamma's blessings asking her to protect all of them. The novel ends on a note of doubt and fear, yet, there is no loss of hope, for Range Gowda's heart beats like a drum.

As we read the text carefully, the kernel semanteme is identified and the proposition is described in extension. Later the semiotic proposition in comprehension reveals the proper understanding of the situation. The meaning is unrolled as each word follows its predecessor and is not complete until the final word comes into place. An utterance in a text is interwoven with meaningful codes. Each code emits a meaning. The doubts, fears and conflicts of the people in Kanthapura are significantly revealed in the syntactic analysis.

Taking significant signs as tools of interpretation an effort is made to unravel the basic existential issues. An example can be given to illustrate the analysis.

'The Estate' is the kernel semanteme in the fifth section. It signifies the presence of a cage where coolies are trapped by the Other. As the problematics becomes more intense, we discover that in the proceeding chapters

coolies become conscious of their being. Their actions later become an attempt towards realization of one's being. Through a kernel semanteme there emerges a chain of associations linked together. For instance, the signified 'repression' which takes place inside the Estate triggers off the development of numerous associations. Repression of the people forms the central core of the problematics. It not only signifies oppression and powerlessness but also brings into focus the presence of the authoritarian forces or the unrelenting Other inside the Estate. Through the syntagmatic analysis we have focussed on the problematics of human situation. An attempt is made to study how man is existentially situated vis-a-vis his environment.

I.4 The fourth chapter of the dissertation is entitled 'In Search of Paradigmatic Truth'. Signification is possible only if there are signs loaded with meaning. These signs refer to ideas and their presence makes an utterance meaningful. Through the semantic procedure an endeavour is made to comprehend the major themes. Both the syntactic and semantic procedures function collectively in this chapter. The main thrust of this interpretation is towards a better understanding of the text. The singularity and uniqueness that mark the text are thus recognised. The fourth chapter is both inductive

and deductive, analytical and dialectical. We have studied the major problem of alienation and thus attempted to analyse the behaviour of the individuals in the text. These individuals cooperate with each other in meeting a common menace despite many differences among themselves.

The three major themes reveal the essence of the text. We find the people caught in a vortex of struggle. What they fight for is the right to live free from the British oppression. What they fight against is the danger of becoming an 'Us' object, of being used by another 'We' - subject for the exploitation of that other's needs. The phenomenon of conflict is at the basis of all encounters with the rulers. The three major themes are as follows :

1. The Women of Kanthapura: From Slumber to Awakening.
2. Coolies: From Bondage to Freedom.
3. Moorthy: The Self-explored.

The entire struggle is directed towards a certain path by Gandhi. His ideas not only guide the protagonist but also motivate the others to action. What is of central importance is the fact that though Gandhi remains in the background, his presence cannot be ignored. There is never a direct confrontation between him and Kanthapurians yet we can see him permeating their conscious selves.

The themes are further sub-divided into smaller sections. The first theme describes the emergence of women as freedom fighters. We see them fighting against the oppressive forces both at home and outside. The entire action is motivated towards the realization of being. It is their commitment to Gandhi and the urge to fight which despite having uprooted them from their land and family does not kill their hope. The desire to struggle and resist remains in them even after the complete destruction of the village Kanthapura.

The second theme is entitled 'Coolies: From Bondage to Freedom'. It describes the way coolies are lured from different areas to the Estate. Later on, their existence at the Estate is controlled by the Red-man's government. They become mere tools in the hands of the colonial forces. When the coolies discover that the ruling class is interested in its own apotheosis rather than in the welfare conditions of the workers, there appears a direct confrontation with the Other. From an earlier state of apathy and indifference one sees the coolies raising voices of protest. They demand the amelioration of their existing conditions. Alongwith the people of Kanthapura they make a call for freedom.

The third theme 'Moorthy: The Self-explored', significantly deals with the protagonist's dilemma. As he is exposed to the evils present in the society, he

revolts against them. The most crucial incident in his life is the vision of Mahatma Gandhi in his dreams. Gandhi becomes the major influence in his life. We have attempted to analyse his relationship with Ratna, Naresamma and others. As we delve deeply into his character, we find him protesting vehemently against the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and the unending hatred of Brahmins towards the Pariahs. We see the protagonist pondering over issues like 'how is one an outcaste?' The main source of Moorthy's alienation is the écart he sees between his concept of liberty and the liberty which others are striving for. Moorthy's final realization that the basic contradictions in life cannot be resolved completely by ousting the British from India forms the central core of the existential predicament. The major cause of estrangement is purely socio-economic. He feels it is rooted in and dependent on oppression. As long as the society has 'haves' and 'have nots' as well as un-touchables, freedom would remain an illusion. An effort is made to study the fundamental conflicts which force Moorthy to fight against the entire system created by the ruling class.

Thus the semantic interpretation of the text encompasses it as a complete unit and not as mere parts.

I.5 The fifth chapter is entitled 'Intertextuality: A Pattern of Similar Concerns'. Intertextuality is an

essential aspect of communication. It discloses an awareness of how a particular text may function in a complex and vigorous interrelation with other antecedent texts and the generic prototype they comprise. In this concluding chapter of the dissertation we have tried to analyse the other texts by the same author in relation to Kanthapura. The chapter offers a preliminary attempt to highlight the similarities which exist in the other works of the author. Kanthapura, the first novel by Raja Rao, and his other works reveal a gradual development of similar concerns. Every discourse has a mediatory role and is set against other discourses. It not only mediates but interacts with forms as well as ideas.

The confrontation of East with the West, forms the basis of the novels of Raja Rao. While trying to analyse the major cause of estrangement between the Being and the Other, he has also focussed on the basic contradictions which are responsible for creating unrest in the individual and society. Taking into consideration Raja Rao's three other novels The Serpent and the Rope, Comrade Kirillov and The Cat and Shakespeare we have tried to discuss briefly the basic issues. All his characters, whether it be Moorthy in Kanthapura, Ramaswamy of The Serpent and the Rope, Padmanabhan Iyer of Comrade Kirillov, or Ramakrishna Pai of The Cat and Shakespeare suffer

from a deep sense of insecurity. Their excruciating self-analysis is an attempt to understand their present predicament and the means to resolve it. They aim at a restoration of their lost identity. The metaphysical quest which guides their actions has a deeper urge for the realization of truth. The novels of Raja Rao place individuals in a particular socio-historical situation. The protagonist in his novels finds himself alienated from the entire set-up. He tries to transcend the limits of his being by attempting to liberate himself. This appears as the conscious mediation of man.

The present study is an attempt to analyse Kantha-pura and thus bring out the conflicts which form the basis of the struggle for liberty both within and without.

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CHAPTER - II

PROBLEMATICS IN PROGRESSION : FROM APATHY TO PROTEST

The following analysis is an attempt to understand the problematics as it is unfurled gradually through syntactic progression. The first twelve sections of the novel are thoroughly dealt with in this chapter.

II.1.a. Introduction

II.1.a.i. Section one begins with a description of an unknown village situated in the province of Kara. Carts, full of merchandise and men pass through the roads of Kanthapura.

People pray to Kenchamma, the village Goddess to bless them with good luck and fortune. She had fought a battle and killed a demon ages ago. Whenever there is drought or the appearance of small pox or cholera, people pray to her and make several promises to her. She punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous.

II.1.a.ii. The narrator tells us that her village has twenty-four houses. The house of Patwari Nanjundia has a big verandah. The postmaster Suryanarayan has a 'double-storied' house. The other houses are small and

some are not bad to look at. 'Kannaya house people' have a big house which has sheltered many generations of theirs and yet it looks very new. Venkamma does not like Rangamma, a widow, staying in that house. Akkamma, another village woman, has guests at her place. Coffee planter Ramayya is a cousin of Akkamma's sister-in-law and on his way to Karwar he has dropped in to see them. Several other people from the village are invited over by Akkamma. Dore, another villager has now become a 'Gandhi-man'. The narrator does not like him as much as she likes Moorthy, who is quiet and serene. Had she not been a daughterless widow, she would have offered her granddaughter to him. To the narrator Achakka, Seenu and Moorthy are like Lakshmana and Rama. Only a Sita is needed to make it complete. Moorthy's horoscope did not match with that of coffee planter Ramayya's daughter.

II.1.a.iii. The village has a Pariah quarter, a weaver's quarter and a Sudra quarter too. Bhatta had begun his life with just a loin cloth around him but would soon own the entire village. The potter's street is the smallest street in the village. The potter's business has flopped due to the introduction of modern Mangalore tiles and they turn to land. During the Gauri festival Chandrayya makes festival pots for them.

Range Gowda is the Patel of the village and his word is law in the village. Range Gowda helps the Pariahs whenever they are in trouble. The Brahmin street is on the opposite side and the narrator's house is the first on the right.

II.1.a.iv. Kanthapurishwari's temple has become the centre of their life. Moorthy has discovered a half-sunk linga and he, along with the city boys, decides to consecrate it. Bhatta performs the consecration ceremony. A grand feast is held and Sankara Jayanthi begins that very day.

Ramakrishnayya, Rangamma's father reads out the Sankara Vijaya every day. People discuss the philosophy of Maya and then go home. Amidst bhajans and prayers Harikathas are held. Sastri is a grand Harikatha man. The day Sankara Jayanthi was over the 'air looked empty'.

II.1.a.v. Moorthy decides to hold the bhajans daily and the people readily agree to it. Moorthy goes from house to house and collects money from the people. His going to the Pariah quarter shocks the Brahmins. Jayaramachar, the famous Harikatha man, comes and narrates the story of 'Bharatha' - how a land of wisdom is now being ruled by men from an alien land. The birth of 'Gandhi' like the birth of 'Krishna', heralds the death of evil. He

asks people to spin and weave everyday. One evening, when he is about to light the camphor to the God, the police from Sankur comes and talks to Moorthy and Jayaramachar. From that day people never see Jayaramachar again. The youth of the village give up their foreign clothes and become Gandhi's men. The first section ends with the arrival of the policeman, Bade Khan in Kanthapura.

II.1.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.1.b.i. Kenchamma: Faith

Kanthapura is a small unknown village where the people have a deep seated faith in Goddess Kenchamma. If ever there is drought, cholera or small pox they pray to her for respite. This faith in the Goddess signifies the strong trust which the people have bestowed on her. Kenchamma as a complete signifier stands for faith, trust, hope and strength.

II.1.b.ii. House: Possession

The second part of the first section reveals the kernel situation. 'Kannaya house people' have a big house which is many generations old; it still looks as though it has been recently built. The fact of Rangamma being a widow and yet living in such a big house forms the central core of the conflict because it subtly

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touches the basic existential issue. Venkamma's disgust is revealed in the following ensembles:

"Why should a widow, and a childless widow too, have a big house like that?" (p.4).

"And it is not her father that built it" (p.4).

"It's my husband's ancestors that built it" (p. 4).

"I've two sons and five daughters, and that shaven widow had'nt even the luck of having a handicoot to call her own" (p. 4).

"And you have only to look at her gold-belt and her Dharama-war sari. Whore!" (p.4).

These ensembles signify Venkamma's desire to possess the Other. A note of discord indicates the conflict here. We can see a complete proposition expressing a judgement. Rangamma's being a widow and that too a childless one poses the real problem. The two sets of signifiers being (a) widow: Rangamma (b) childless widow: Rangamma. One set of signifier signifying Rangamma's state of existence and the other as a complete signifier, showing her present status in society. Her being a widow and that too a childless one gives her no right to live in a big house.

'House' as a kernel semanteme stands for possession. The opposition between Rangamma's house and

Venkamma's house is a significant one. Venkamma as the Other, here questions the right of Rangamma to stay in a big house. The argument is evident to us from the satirical remarks of Venkamma. One can see in her the quest for possession. The desire of Venkamma is to annihilate the existence of Rangamma. Venkamma feels that since her husband's ancestors and not Rangamma's father had built the house it belongs to her. The fact that she has seven children whereas Rangamma has none further intensifies the situation. Her being a 'childless widow' signifies barrenness.

'Bandicoot', though a carrier of plague, here as a signifier signifies the barrenness of widow Rangamma. She cannot even call this harbinger of dirt and filth her own. Rangamma being a childless widow is a proposition which brings in progression the opinion of the Other. The fundamental argument is related to the social context. Rangamma's widowhood also signifies curtailment of certain rights. She negates such restrictions as have been imposed on her by the society and sees to it that her wishes are not thwarted. Her living in a big house, wearing expensive Dharmawar saris and gold belt is an act of freedom and we can see that she chooses to live life according to her wishes. She endeavours to realize her being and her identity which has been made possible only through her willingness and strength.

'Dharmawar Saris' and the 'gold belt' are both the signified meaning and the signifying sign. A sign of her love for good things in life and also a sign of her strength which encourages her to defy the norms of society that are imposed on a widow.

There is a fundamental dichotomy between the way she lives and the manner in which Venkamma, a member of society wants her to live. Venkamma's objection to her wearing expensive things is a sign of a socio-cultural situation. The society has imposed certain restrictions on widows. It has forbidden them to wear expensive saris and jewellery. Venkamma regards herself as the rightful owner of the house. She thinks that she being mother of seven children should be allowed to live in it. Constant conflict goes on as the problem emerges in full focus. The narrator herself says:

"Venkamma's own house was as big and well-built as her sister-in-laws. But she said it was not large enough for her family. Besides, she could not bear the idea that it was occupied by Rangamma's father and mother, and when the vacation came Rangamma had all her younger brothers, and the children of the elder one from Bombay - 'all those city-bred fashionable idiots' - to spend the summer"
(p. 4).

The contradiction does not solely aim at a relationship between the 'haves' and 'haves-nots' but also underlines the conflict between who should exist and who should not.

'City-bred fashionale idiots' signifies Venkamma's contempt for city life and for the class of people which is not her own. To Akkamma who appears as a passive listener, Venkamma says:

"why should our family feed theirs?
If her parents are poor, let them
set fire to their dhoti and sari and
die. Oh, if only I could have had
the courage to put lizard-poison
into their food ! Well that will
come too" (p. 4).

The final outburst presents the proposition in extension. Being poor, these people have no right to exist. As her desire remains unfulfilled it is transformed into violence.

II.1.b.iii. Fire and Lizard-Poison: Annihilation

Fire and Lizard-poison as signifier signify the desire of one to kill the other. The annihilation of one, by the Other i.e. Rangamma and her family is motivated by Venkamma's psychic component. It is not simply an emotional reaction of a subject to inflict violence or destroy the other. Venkamma's hatred and jealousy manifests, at a conscious level, her strong instinct of self-preservation and her aspiration for greater attainment of wealth.

The narrative thus deals with basic existential issue of a right to exist despite being poor, right to

live in luxury despite being a childless widow. Social issues like widowhood and poverty are highlighted. What emerges out of all this probing is the fact that society has its own foibles. Petty jealousies, contempt and hatred of one towards the other can result in thoughts of complete annihilation of the other. Rangamma's refusal to adhere to societal norms leaves her estranged from the others. Her actions prove that she is capable of transcending the problems posed by society. On the other hand, Venkamma's anger and vengeful attitude reveal her mental state wherein she is unable to bear the existence of the other.

The basic human predicament reveals the écart which exists, due to several opposing and intimidating forces, in this section.

II.1.b.iv. Sankara Jayanthi and Harikathas: Deep Religiosity

Holding of Sankara Jayanthi and rendering of Harikathas signify the growing awareness of their state of dependence in the people. The young men's giving up their foreign clothes signifies the beginning of a struggle in Kanthapura. Jayaramachar's arrest and the arrival of the policeman, Bade Khan in Kanthapura reveal the government's attempt to suppress the voice of the people.

Thus the section slowly reveals the birth of the Gandhian movement in Kanthapura. By giving up the wearing of foreign clothes, the youth of the village show their dissatisfaction and hatred for the rulers. The entire section reveals to us the way an awareness of their existing status as slaves in the country makes the coolies react against it.

II.2.a. Introduction

II.2.a.i. Bade Khan cannot stay in Kanthapura as he is a Muslim and therefore Mr. Skeffington at the Coffee Estate arranges a hut for him where he settles down with a Pariah woman.

II.2.a.ii. Bade Khan's sudden arrival and then his disappearance give rise to several speculations. Venkamma is of the opinion that 'Gandhi-affair' in Kanthapura is responsible for this trouble. She blames Moorthy for it. Moorthy's refusal to marry her second daughter and his frequent visits to Rangamma's house anger her. Moorthy speaks of Mahatma Gandhi and his spinning habits. He begins encouraging the people to spin. He also meets the Pariahs and gives them spinning wheels to spin the yarn. The second section ends on a note of fear and doubt, as the people see Bade Khan prowling on the platform and later on in the Brahmin's street.

II.2.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.2.b.i. Bade Khan: Authority and Force

Bade Khan is a Muslim and is therefore shunned by the entire village and is not allowed to stay in Kanthapura. The way he is treated by the Patel Range Gowda signifies the status of a 'Mohammedan' in a small Hindu village. The fact that he does not belong to their caste and is also a policeman is the major cause of this indifference. The proposition reveals to us the cause of antagonism towards Bade Khan. The following ensembles reveal that Bade Khan's being a policeman has led to such antagonism:

'....but the government does not pay me to find houses for the police. I am here to collect revenue' (p.14). "I know I have the honour of speaking to a policeman", the Patel answered in a singsong way' (p. 14). Speaking in terms of existential psycho-analysis the two ensembles - the police and the government signify power and authority, i.e. *etre*.

The policeman symbolizes force and power. Range Gowda despite being a 'representative of the government' (p. 14) defies the orders of the policeman. Bade Khan's settling outside Kanthapura on the Estate with a Pariah woman is a sign of his being rejected by the people in Kanthapura.

II.2.b.ii. Red-men: Exploitation

The kernel situation in section two deals with the exploitation of the villagers by the Red-men. Bade Khan's arrival and then his sudden disappearance creates several doubts in the minds of the people. Policeman versus 'Gandhi' affair' conceptualizes the opposition, chaos versus peace. Venkamma's statement reveals the conflict going on in her mind:

"Policemen do not come along like that in these civilized days" (p. 15).

"I know why they have come. They've come because of Moorthy and all this Gandhi-affair. He with his kitchen she-friends and all this bragging city-talk" (p. 15).

To her the policeman symbolizes power and civilization. She feels that they are living in civilized days. 'Civilized days' is signified by the British rule. Her antagonism towards Moorthy is a deep seated one. His talking of the 'Gandhi affair', mixing with Rangamma and his refusal to marry her second daughter, all combine together and are responsible for this antagonism. The dialectics is evident to us in 'She had no particular love for Moorthy. He had refused her second daughter....' (p. 15). One can easily visualize the feelings of jealousy, resentment and hatred for 'Gandhi-affair' in Venkamma's heart. She is more concerned with

personal gains like the expansion of wealth, the marriage of her daughters and is afraid of her being challenged by the society. She realizes that the 'Gandhi-affair' thwarts the existence of the old pattern of society and her refusal to change is the cause of her mental conflict.

II.2.b.iii. Foreign Cloth: Dependence

Spinning: Independence and Self-Reliance

Moorthy's thought provoking attitude forces the people to think about their plight. He asks them to become independent by spinning. Jayaramachar's expulsion is a sign of the British trying to assert their power over the people by generating fear in them. Congress Committee in Karwar has strongly reacted to it. Moorthy's visit to Karwar is significant as it reveals several changes in his thinking. Moorthy's efforts to propagate spinning signify his growing faith in Mahatma Gandhi. Moorthy meets the people and tells them that the Congress provides free cotton and free spinning wheels to the people. Nanjamma's serious question is followed by an explanation from Moorthy:

"And why should the Congress give it free?" "Because millions and millions of yards of foreign cloth come to this country, and everything foreign makes us poor and pollutes us. To wear cloth spun and woven with your own God-given hands is sacred, says the Mahatma. And it

gives work to the workless, and work to the lazy. And if you don't need the cloth, sister-well, you can say, 'Give it away to the poor', and we will give it to the poor. Our country is being bled to death by foreigners. We have to protect our mother" (p.16).

The above ensemble reveals that Moorthy's thinking has however, been influenced by Gandhi's ideology.

'Foreign cloth' versus 'cloth spun and woven with your own God-given hands' - this opposition signifies, denial versus gratification. 'Foreign' stands for something which is not a part of one's own being but has been taken from outside, whereas cloth spun with 'own god-given hands' is a source of satisfaction and respect. Anything 'foreign' not only makes us 'poor' and 'pollutes' us but also fills us with a sense of dependence. Moorthy holds that 'foreign cloth' is responsible for poverty in India. Here 'being bled to death by foreigners' (p. 16) signifies the domineering attitude of the rulers which has been responsible for creating several conflicts in the minds of the ordinary men. Industrialization has not only left the men jobless but has also made them a slave of their rulers. He speaks of the importance of independent labour which alone can make man reject the assertiveness of the Other, i.e., his rulers, and thus realize his existence in totality.

Feelings of resentment and anger which are directed towards the British are visible in this section.

'The Mahatma' is another potential force emerging and he seems to be directing Moorthy's way of thinking. The act of 'spinning' is something unthinkable for a simple and orthodox village Brahmin like Nanjamma. 'Brahmins do not spin, do they?' She says - 'My son, we have weavers in the village. There is Chenayya and Ranga-yya....' (p. 16).

Nanjamma's query that Brahmins do not spin and why should they when there are weavers available in Kanthapura is a logical one. It reveals to us the division of labour which took place on the basis of the caste system. A Brahmin 'spinning the yarn' is unthinkable as the weavers are already there to do the work. Moorthy tells her that 'our money' is being taken from India to the West. 'Our money', 'Our Country', 'Our gold' and 'Our cotton' signify things which belong to the people of India and therefore no outsider ought to have claims over it. There is a constant opposition between 'our' and 'they'. There is a conflict visible between the 'exploiters' and the 'exploited' and it is because of this exploitation that there is a demand for conscious awakening. Moorthy speaks of the way mill agents coming from Bombay offer tempting rates and buy paddy from the farmers.

Later, using their own machines, they husk and prepare the rice and sell it to the Banias like Ramanlal and Chotalal. This realization by the villagers that they have no rice left for their daughter's wedding compels them to buy rice at heavy prices from Subba Chetty. So the money instead of being given to Rangī is taken by the Red-men.

The entire proposition in extension reveals to us the way in which labour of the working class is usurped by the British, i.e., the ruling class.

Even in the years in which the harvest is good the villagers are being lured by the British to sell it. For the villagers looking after the rice is a real problem for they have to keep it safe from rats, worms and the cattle, and later, Bhatta's interest and the revenues are to be paid, the result being that the 'granary is empty as a mourning-house' (p. 18). The entire proposition reveals the way people allow themselves to be cheated by the foreigners. When 'Husking Rangī' asks when should she come for paddy, the villager's answer that 'we've still last year's rice' leaves her unimpressed for she knows the truth. She, with her husband, has to work on the fields. The fundamental opposition emerges as her children starve whereas the foreigners thrive on profits. The entire proposition in comprehension highlights the

way exploitation of farmers has been going on by the rich bourgeoisie. With the arrival of modern machines and technology from the west landless labourers like 'Husking Rangi', who are dependent on the farmers for work, are left unemployed. 'Husking Rangi' signifies the presence of men who are totally dependent on the rich for their existence.

The dichotomy which is visible between the city and the village is further extended in the novel. The city people bring clothes, sugar and bangles that have been manufactured abroad and sell it to the rural Indian folk. The purchase of these imported perfumes and soaps has made Indians poor. Except for men like Bhatta and Subba Chetty, the rest will become poorer day by day. Moorthy makes them realize the gravity of the situation and the consequences it would lead them to. He voices his anguish at their ignorance. The 'Mahatma' signifies the presence of an individual holding complete sway over Moorthy. The act of 'spinning' not only makes one independent but also purifies the human soul. The 'Mahatma' spins everyday.

Thus we can observe that 'spinning' not only brings about the fulfilment of human needs but also the spiritual regeneration. It purifies and elevates the soul to a higher level of perfection. 'Spinning yarn' with hands

as against using cloth manufactured by machines abroad signifies the attempt of a Being to reject the authority of the Other. Spinning is an act of self-reliance and independence whereas the use of imported cloth is the acceptance of economic dependence and dominance of the British. Moorthy's reaction to the whole situation reveals his inner conflict which has been aggravated by his rational being.

The Congress provides free spinning wheels to all. The 'Charka' is a symbol of Gandhi's non-violent revolutionary movement. It embodies an important spiritual truth. The objective of spinning your way to independence can be attained only if you know how to spin yourself into the hearts of your enemies through love.

One notices Moorthy successfully influencing the villagers to spin. The Brahmins finally relent and agree to do so. He then goes to the Pariah quarter. The Pariahs are overwhelmed on seeing a Brahmin among them and willingly agree to do as he wishes.

The Pariahs who have been alienated by the other sections of society warmly receive a Brahmin who approaches them. The last paragraph of the second section significantly announces the appearance of the policeman in Kanthapura. His presence is symbolic of the fact that trouble lies ahead.

Thus the kernel semanteme in this section shows what exactly 'spinning' stands for. People are made aware of the fact that they are being exploited by the foreigners and this awareness instils a desire of freedom and economic self-reliance. 'Spinning' as a complete signifier not only stands for economic independence but also for self-purification. The 'wheel' represents dharma, the unity of moral law, and it also represents the 'Sunayata' or the 'Nirvana'.

Moorthy, through the signifiers 'spinning' and 'Charka', tries to bring about a kind of harmony and self-restraint into the hearts of people. It fills them with love for their fellow men and thus inspires them to work for independence. 'Everything foreign makes us poor and pollutes us' (p. 16) says he to the villagers. A perpetual conflict goes on in the mind of an Indian like Moorthy who has begun realizing the extent to which the Indians are being exploited by the foreigners to achieve their selfish ends.

II.3.a. Introduction

II.3.a.1. The third section begins with a portrayal of Bhatta's feelings towards 'Gandhi-bhajans'. Earlier he used to listen to 'My Experiments with Truth' with great interest but his last visit to the city has made him resentful towards the 'Gandhi-business'. He begins lend-

ing money to the people in the city. As a moneylender he is always 'smiling and ready'. His going to the city quite often is the main reason for his non-availability during the obsequial dinner. Ramanna, the second Brahmin assisted him in performing the ceremonies. His wife would cook no meals but 'dal-soup and rice' knowing that the master would bring some odes after the ceremony once at home. Bhatta would count the money he received and put it in his casket. After the death of his wife he is flooded with offers of marriage from the families of many young girls. Finally, a twelve and a half year old is betrothed to him. The marriage is a grand affair. Bhatta is no more a pontifical Brahmin but has become a landowner. He arranges for the advocates and settles disputes among people. He also sends 'Fig-tree-house Ramu', a distant relative of his to the city for studies. The narrator Achakka is surprised at his dislike for 'Gandhi-bhajans'.

II.3.a.ii. The second paragraph introduces Bhatta's visit to Rangamma's house. He expresses his grave concern at the change which is coming over the society as result of 'Gandhi-business'. Rangamma is unable to influence Bhatta whose beliefs are strengthened by his visit to the Swami in the city. Kamamma's arrival with her daughter Ratna to Rangamma's house makes Bhatta uncomfortable and he goes away. Ratna's way of living is however not appreciated by Bhatta.

II.3.a.iii. Moorthy's mother Narasamma is completely ignored by the women at the river bank and no greetings are exchanged. Narasamma is a pious woman and of her six children, Moorthy is the youngest and the only son. She loves him the most and has pinned high hopes on him.

II.3.a.iv. The 'vision of Mahatma' in his dreams inspires Moorthy to give up his studies and join the Gandhi movement. His return from the city and his calling schools 'corrupt' shocks Narasamma. His refusal to marry and his constant mixing with the Pariahs shocks her intensely. Venkamma's spiteful attitude and shocking revelation that her son would be 'excommunicated' leaves Narasamma weeping incessantly.

II.3.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.3.b.i. Bhatta: Accumulation of Wealth

The problematics in the third section is a deep seated one. Bhatta's growing hatred for 'Gandhi-Business' is due to several reasons. His visits to the city and meeting the Swami influences him deeply. Bhatta has rigid beliefs. Being a Brahmin and a moneylender too, his interests are somehow challenged as he visualizes the emergence of the Pariahs i.e. the untouchables and the growth of their movement of human rights and civil liberties in the society. The following ensembles

reveal the change which has come about gradually in Bhatta's economic status:

'....Bhatta began life with a loincloth at his waist, and a copper pot in his hand' (p. 21).

'with his smiles and his holy ashes, we said he would one day own the whole village' (p. 20).

The death of his wife Savitharamma in an accident results in several new proposals coming up for Bhatta. His marriage to a rich man's daughter from Alur takes place in a grand way. His marriage to a young girl of barely thirteen years signifies the socio-religious conditions of a society where minors are married off without any qualms.

'Bhatta became richer and richer. He could lend out more money. And now he was no more a pontifical Brahmin. He was a land-owner' (p. 23). His marriage results in greater accumulation of wealth. His status has changed and he goes to the river accompanied with friends like Temple Rangappa and Front-house Suranna. With the passage of time it can be seen that Bhatta's role is no more confined to conducting obsequial ceremonies but his being a moneylender and a settler of disputes as well makes him a prominent figure in Kanthapura. The fact that he never charges more than Chetty brothers, is

forever smiling, and, has sent 'Fig-tree-house Ramu' to the city for further studies, reveals the other side of his personality.

"...this Bhatta who has been a pontifical Brahmin cannot be on the side of the Pariahs.... 'I shall speak to our people'. 'And that is why I've come to see you'" (p. 24).

He justifies the reason behind his visit to Rangamma's house. Bhatta is afraid of his existence which is endangered by the change running through the society. His visiting Rangamma and arguing against 'Gandhi-business' shows his fear and contempt for change. The conflicts have been going on in his mind for long. The following ensembles reveal his state of mind:

"...what is this Gandhi-business? Nothing but weaving coarse handmade cloth, not fit for a mop, and bellowing out bhajans and bhajans, and mixing with the Pariahs. Pariahs now come to the temple door and tomorrow they would like to be in the heart of it. They will one day put themselves in the place of Brahmins and begin to teach the Vedas. I heard only the other day that in the Mysore Sanscrit College some Pariahs sought admission. Why, our Beadle Jimmayya will come one of these days to ask my daughter in marriage! Why shouldn't he?" (p. 26).

The conflict is further intensified as Bhatta is found influenced by the Swami.

"...The Swami says he will outcaste every Brahmin who has touched a Pariah" (p. 27).

His saying later "....I see no fault in Khadi and all that. But it is this Pariah business that has been heavy on my soul...." (p. 28) further clarifies the real conflict going on in his mind. Rangamma is an educated woman who does her own thinking and reading. She is, therefore, not influenced by Bhatta's viewpoint. She tells women about countries where 'air vehicles moved', and 'speech that goes across the air', and a country where 'men and women work together', women are given 'three months' holiday during child-birth', the state provides the children with milk, education, jobs and homes, all free of cost. She speaks of the equality which exists there between men and women: 'there were neither the rich nor the poor...'(p. 29). The proposition reveals that ideas of socialism are being propagated in the papers published from the city. Thus, the people are made aware of their state of dependence, oppression and humiliation under the foreign rule.

Ratna's meeting Bhatta at Rangamma's house is significant for in Ratna's presence Bhatta could never feel comfortable.

II.3.b.ii. Ratna: Rejection

Ratna has defied the norms of widowhood by living according to her wishes:

'....she still kept her bangles and her nose rings and earrings, and when she was asked why she behaved as though she hadn't lost her husband, she said that, that was nobody's business, and that if these sniffing old country hens thought that seeing a man for a day, and this when she was ten years of age, could be called a marriage, they had better eat mud and drown themselves in the river' (p. 30).

The proposition reveals to us that Ratna's act of defiance, her living life as she wishes, despite being a widow, is a sign of her rebelliousness. Her wearing ornaments on her body is a sign of rejection and non-acceptance. She thinks and acts according to her wishes. Her reason does not permit her to live a life full of restrictions. Therefore, one can see Ratna transcending the limits of her being and thus realizing her Being. The opposition presented by the two signifiers, Brahmins and Pariahs, signify the presence of pure, holy, high caste people on one hand, and dirty, impure, unholy, low caste beings on the other. The socio-religious context of the period in which this novel was written is revealed here.

II.3.b.iii. Kaliyuga: Perversion and Suffering

Satamma's statement: "...it is the Kaliyuga-floods, and as the sastras say, there will be the confusion of castes and pollution of progeny" (p. 27) reveals the entire

problem. The conflict is not just personal it has a wider connotation. Brahmins like Bhatta and Satamma are afraid not only of their own existing status but also that of the entire community. Inter-mixing with different castes is strictly prohibited in Hindu mythology. 'Kali-yuga' signifies the period of complete degeneration of human values. It stands for total loss of faith in God and therefore, results in famine, hunger, insecurity, unhappiness and misfortune.

II.3.b.iv. Untouchability: Discrimination and Impurity

The following ensembles show the fear of change which has gripped Brahmins like Bhatta.

"...we live in a strange age. What with their modern education and their modern women. Do you know, in the city, they already have grownup girls, fit enough to be mothers of two or three children, going to the universities? And they talk to this boy and that boy; and what they do amongst themselves, heaven alone knows. And one, too, I heard, went and married a Mohammedan". (pp. 26-27).

And when Rangamma defends Mahatma by saying that the Mahatma is not in favour of this pollution, he says further:

"...is that why the Mahatma has adopted a Pariah girl as a daughter? He is a Vaisya and he may do what he

likes. That does not pollute me.
 But, Rama-Rama, really if we have
 to hang the sacred thread over
 the shoulders of every Pariah...
 it's impossible, impossible...
 (p. 27).

Believing that once the distinction between the Brahmins and Pariahs is removed, his own existence would be that of a nobody, Bhatta is driven by a terrible sense of insecurity. He attempts to assert his identity i.e. a Brahmin's existence, by showing grave concern for their status in society. Bhatta opposes the 'change' which has begun as a result of Gandhian movement. His vindictiveness towards Gandhi is due to the ideas of untouchability being propagated by him. 'Untouchability' as a signifier suggests impurity, discrimination and sludge.

Rangamma's remaining un-influenced by Bhatta's remarks reveals that she is a rational human being. It is untouchability which has created barriers among people in the novel. The existential situation emerges in full focus as we see Venkamma revealing to Narasamma 'that the village will be excommunicated' (p. 37), if the Pariah business is not stopped. 'Excommunication' comes as a terrible shock to Narasamma.

Narasamma who always nurtures high hopes regarding her son and wants him to be a high-official like a sub-collector or an assistant commissioner sees her hopes

being shattered when he comes back from the city after having left his studies. Like any simple ordinary woman she wants her son to attain high status in society and then get married to a rich Brahmin girl. But her anguish and turmoil is evident when the truth dawns upon her, that he has refused to marry and is likely to be excommunicated from the Brahmin caste.

The 'vision of Gandhi' that Moorthy has in his dreams signifies the presence of a potential force which guides and inspires. The 'vision of the Mahatma mighty and God-beaming...' (p. 32). stands for the light and love which emanates from Gandhi's personality and thus inspires several young men like Moorthy to give up their struggle for selfish ends, and, join the greater struggle for freedom.

II.3.b.v. Venkamma: Rigidity and self-Preservation Excommunication: Rejection

Venkamma's question to Narasamma reveals the proposition in comprehension: "He, Narasamma. Do you know what your son is bringing to this village?" (p. 36) and then she says further:

"...It's for nothing you put forth into the world eleven children, if you do not even know what your very beloved son is always doing. I will tell you what he is doing: he is mixing with the Pariahs like a veritable Mohammedan, and the Swami

has sent word through Bhatta to say that the whole of Kanthapura will be excommunicated. Do you hear that? A fine thing, too, it is, you with your broad ash-marks and your queer son and his ways. If he does not stop mixing with the Pariahs, this very hand-do you hear? - this very hand will give him two slaps on his cheeks and one on the buttocks and send him screaming to his friends, the Pariahs. Do you hear? And I have daughters to marry, and so has everybody else. If you have none, so much the worse for you. And we shall stand none of this Pariah affair. If he wants to go and sleep with those Pariah whores, he can do so by all means. But let him not call himself a Brahmin, do you hear?" (pp. 36-37).

The entire speech signifies her fear of change, strong instinct of self-preservation and apathy towards the lowly i.e. the Pariahs. A strong conflict is visible between the two sets of people. On one hand there are Venkamma and Bhatta who prefer clinging to old values and beliefs as it suits their interests and on the other there are Moorthy, Ratna and Rangamma who realize the serious repercussions of such evils which perpetuate the economic and political exploitation of the poor by the ruling class. Venkamma tells Narasamma about the way her son has been freely mixing with the Pariahs. Being a Brahmin she is afraid of the fact that this will have an adverse effect on the entire community. She has daughters of marriageable age and this aggravates her concern and fear.

Venkamma warns Narasamma that if her son Moorthy does not amend his ways he would have no right to call himself a Brahmin or enter a Brahmin street. This is an outburst in desperation of a community which is on the verge of losing its superiority. The Brahmins live in a street exclusively meant for them and the Pariahs are not allowed to enter it. The 'Muslims' and the 'Pariahs' are placed together as 'Untouchables' by Venkamma.

"Truly, excommunication?' asks Narasamma, 'Truly?' and a tear big as a thumb ran down her pouchy cheeks, "No, not my son. No. Never will my son bring dishonour to his family. He has promised me. No dishonour to his family. Never. Never". And as she began to unroll her bundle, something came up from her stomach to her throat, and she burst out sobbing. She sat herself down and she began to sob" (p. 37).

The above ensemble signifies her inner anguish, her faith in her son, but her constant weeping reveals that a doubt has been created in her mind. 'Excommunication' as a complete signifier signifies that if a Brahmin like Moorthy does not stop mixing with the Pariahs, he would be thrown out of his community. Being a staunch Brahmin, her caste is very important to her. She is afraid of the repercussions which would follow after the excommunication: "Oh, Moorthy, if your departed father were alive what would he think of you, my son, my son, my son?...." (pp. 37-38). The fear of excommunication grips her and

the attempts of Rangamma to console and pacify her are unsuccessful. The conflict goes on in her mind and the very thought of excommunication is unbearable to her. It appears as the worst form of disgrace to her. Here again we can see the domination of one being over the other individual. As we examine the proposition in progression we find several conflicts, both in the minds of Venkamma and Narasamma. The two sets of signifiers being Brahmin: Venkamma and Bhatta, and Brahmin: Moorthy. Venkamma and Bhatta are visible as symbols of the orthodox Brahmins to whom any kind of change is repelling. They do not want to accept reforms in society and wish to cling to age old traditions and values. Venkamma's vengeful attitude directly stems out of Moorthy's refusal to marry her daughter. He frequently visits Rangamma whom she terribly dislikes. Averse to the change in society she criticises the Gandhian ideology. To her 'Brahminism' is the supreme form of existence and rich childless widows have no right to exist.

On the other hand, is Moorthy who has seen the negative influence of caste system and has understood it. He defies social norms and goes and mixes with the Pariahs. The basic argument is why does he mix with the Pariahs despite being a Brahmin. The argument is deeply related to the socio-cultural context. Here again is the proposition in comprehension which explains as to who has a

right to exist and who does not. The dialectics is concerned with the intermingling of Moorthy with the Pariahs.

The narrative thus deals with basic existential issues which are in confrontation with each other. On one hand are biased and proud people like Venkamma and on the other are devoted, self sacrificing men like Moorthy who give up their personal gains to achieve bigger ends. In between are simple, God fearing people like Narasamma for whom social status and religion are primary considerations. All the three forces of rebellion, fear and jealousy are visible in this section. The situation is extremely powerful as it shows these forces in constant conflict with one another.

II.4.a. Introduction

II.4.a.i. The fourth section begins with the description of a morning in Kanthapura. As the day sets in, dust starts flowing and carts from the other areas enter the village. Moorthy too, comes on one of them carrying a bundle of Khadi and that of books in his arms. He walks round Boranna's toddy grove to Seethamma's backyard in search of Ratna. Finally after keeping his bundles in Rangamma's congress room he goes home to see his mother,

expecting a warm response from her. But she pushes him away saying that unless he seeks 'Prayaschitta' from the Swami he should not show his face to her.

II.4.a.ii. Narasamma rushes from her home towards the river side and as she washes the clothes her anger subsides. She comes back home to cook as usual and waits for Moorthy.

Bhatta's visit to her home again infuriates her. Bhatta complains of her son's rude behaviour towards him. The mother and the son stop talking to each other.

II.4.a.iii. The news of her son's excommunication reaches Narasamma's ears one day and hastens her death. Nobody is willing to officiate over the obsequial ceremonies. Moorthy leaves Kanthapura and when he comes back he lives on in Rangamma's house. He, alongwith Seenu, the narrator's son continues teaching the Pariahs to read and write.

II.4.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.4.b.i. Pariahs: Pollution

The kernel semanteme of the fourth section lies in the last paragraph. Moorthy's statement, that he would not stop mixing with the Pariahs shocks Bhatta and he tells this to Narasamma. Bhatta warns her that if he does not stop this Pariah business he would have to ask

Swami to 'excommunicate' Moorthy from the community. When Narasamma claims that he is a 'reasonable boy' Bhatta speaks of the pollution in cities which has corrupted young men like Moorthy. He condemns the life and ways of the city. The basic proposition lies in this section. Bhatta is against the mixing of the Brahmins with the Pariahs. The proposition can be seen in extension as we find Moorthy refusing to obey the Swami. He says:

"Let the Swami do what he likes. I will go and do more and more Pariah work. I will go and eat with them if necessary. Why not? Are they not men like us? And the Swami, who is he? A self-chosen fool. He may be learned in the Vedas and all that. But he has no heart. He has no thinking power" (p.41).

II.4.b.ii. Swami: Self-assertion

The Swami is a symbol of cruelty and selfishness. Moorthy questions the existence of the Swami and calls him 'a self-chosen fool'. The Swami reveals the presence of rigid religious and dogmatic tendencies which work for self-interest. Being a guru he may be highly learned and well acquainted with Vedas but 'he has no thinking power' which could enable him to reason out powerfully and cautiously what is right and what is wrong. According to Moorthy 'he has no heart' (p. 41).

Moorthy's opinion of the Swami not only shocks Bhatta but also Narasamma. To God fearing orthodox Brahmins like Bhatta and Narsamma, 'Swami' signifies the presence of a spirit in whom God resides. He has the right to throw anyone out of the community. Bhatta is afraid that if Brahmins like Moorthy continue mixing with Shudras the entire community would be polluted.

II.4.b.iii. Gandhi: Change
Gandhi: Pollution

The proposition in extension reveals that Bhatta and Narasamma hold city life and Gandhi responsible for the pollution. To them city is significant of dirt, pollution, chaos and change. 'Pollution' as a signified is a result of Moorthy's mixing with the Pariahs. Moorthy's mother serves him outside the kitchen, as she would to a servant. The conflict continues between the mother and the son. Moorthy's attitude towards the threat of ex-communication is a fearless one. He continues his struggle for Pariahs as a result of which the communication is snapped off between the mother and son. The unrelenting attitude of her son shocks Narasamma and she says in a state of helplessness: "Oh, this Gandhi ! would he were destroyed!" (p. 42).

On examining the existential situation keenly we realize that finally the mother holds 'Gandhi' responsible

for Moorthy's behaviour. Had it not been for the influence of 'Gandhi', Moorthy would not have given up his studies and joined the fight for freedom and equality. Had it not been for 'Gandhi' Moorthy would never have questioned the status of Swami or favoured the Pariahs saying - 'Are they not men like us?' (p. 41). In statements like these we can see a strong character emerging which has started questioning the presence of old values and obsolete religious dogmas in society. His is a rebellious spirit which tries to reason out things for himself.

II.4.b.iv. Gayathri-mantra: Self-purification

Mother's death: Loss of Hope and Identity

Moorthy: Rejection and Courage

To Narasamma her community is very precious and excommunication appears most disgraceful. The signs like 'gayathri-mantra', and 'prayaschitta' are symbolic of self-purification and purgation. Narasamma recites 'gayathri-mantras' to pacify her soul and cool her temper. She asks Moorthy to do 'prayaschitta' which signifies special purificatory rites that are to be performed by his defiled soul. His mixing with the Pariahs has significantly been responsible for such defilement and if not performed it could lead to excommunication. The conflict which goes on between the mother and son is significant of the conflict between the old and new.

Narsamma is unable to accept Moorthy's ideas of change, equality and liberation. Moorthy signifies the presence of reason and thought in the new generation. What appears right to him is however unacceptable to Narsamma. Thus the conflict goes on and the news of his excommunication hastens her death. According to the Vedas, no, worse fate can befall a Hindu, as excommunication is symbolic of the loss of identity. The death as a signifier is signifying the negation of ideas and change.

The death of Moorthy's mother suggests physical death, her moral death had taken place much earlier. Her snapping off of all communication with Moorthy has been a sign of her dissatisfaction. The news of excommunication only accelerates her death, thus revealing the tension which she had been undergoing. Her death is not a form of acceptance but a sign of rebellion. Life has become extinct for there is no hope left.

Moorthy openly rejects the caste network by freely mixing with the Pariahs. He also offers his condolences at the death of Puttaya's wife. He even carries the body for a while. "Oh ! he's lost" (p. 42) said the Brahmins. Moorthy, by refuting the norms of his society and rejecting them, appears as a symbol of dauntlessness and courage. He does not deviate from his path and even after the death of his mother continues teaching the Pariahs to read and write.

Bhatta, a superstitious Brahmin, refuses to officiate in an obsequious ceremony of Narsamma saying: "You can offer me a king's daughter, but never will I sell my soul to a Pariah" (p. 43).

Thus we see that the existentialist position of this cultural situation points only to those reflections which are responsible for such a conflict.

II.5.a. Introduction

II.5.a.1. The fifth section begins with a description of the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Nothing is known about its area and the time when it was founded. The coolies from several nearby areas and distant lands speaking different languages come and settle here. They are lured to the Estate by the Maistri. Hoping to get better wages and good treatment from their master they settle in the Estate.

II.5.a.ii. The presence of snakes in the Estate terrifies them. The coolies listen wide-eyed as Pariah Siddayya narrates several incidents of men being attacked by snakes.

II.5.a.iii. They work continuously without any respite in the hot weather. Variations in weather is an entirely new phenomenon for them. Continuous rain for three

nights brings fever. The coolies refuse to take pills offered by the Sahib and pray to Goddess Kenchamma for relief.

II.5.a.iv. Days pass, the coolies are still hopeful that they will get money which would take them to their homeland. Death and suffering has become a regular feature. Siddayya who has been working at the Estate for long knows that whoever comes to the Estate is trapped there forever. For the coolies spend their money on deaths, festivals and toddy.

II.5.a.v. The change in sahibs and maistris have taken place on the Estate yet the coolies coming from Godavery have never gone back to it. The exploitation of women at the hands of new sahibs continues. Seetharam prefers death and refuses to give his daughter to the sahib. A case is filed against the sahib who has shot Seetharam dead. He however, escapes for the Red-man's court forgives him. But after this incident the master stops harassing the women.

II.5.a.vi. The arrival of Bade Khan has pleased the sahib. The Brahmin clerks Vasudev and Gangadhar begin taking the Pariahs to Kanthapura for bhajans. They also encourage the Pariahs to read and write.

II.5.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.5.b.i. Estate: Perfect Harmony and Better Treatment Estate: Misery, Oppression

The problematics in this section emerges at the Skeffington Coffee Estate. There is an aura of mystery around the Estate for nobody knows its exact area or when it was founded. The coolies are hired from several parts of the country to work in the Estate. There lies a conceptual opposition, between what they are promised and what they actually get. We can see their hopes being raised as the maistri leads them towards the Estate.

The following ensemble reveals the way maistri lures them :

"...there he came and offered a four-anna bit for a man and a two-anna bit for a woman, and they all said, "is there rice there?" and he said, "there is nothing but rice around us", and they all said "that is a fine country, for here, year after year, we have had neither rain nor canal water, and our masters have left for the city", and so he gave them a white rupee for each and they said, "this is a very fine man..." (p. 45).

The 'Estate' signifies life full of perfect harmony, happiness and contentment. It signifies an endless supply of food and amenities to the coolies :

"...and when the children cried, the mothers said, "I'll leave you here with the tigers, but if you don't

cry, I'll take you over the mountains where you can have milk like water-just like water", and the child stopped crying, (p. 45).

The hopes of the coolies are slowly belied as they become victims of fever and oppression. The 'Estate' becomes a cage for them. The life inside this cage is full of misery and oppression as against what had been promised to them. The attitude of the maistri also changes as he enters the Estate with them: 'And the nearer they came, the harder became the road and the stiffer the maistri...' (pp. 45-46). The Other who attracted and lured the coolies now uses them as mere Objects.

II.5.b.ii. Rain: Inactivity

Fever: Death and Despair

The 'rain' and 'fever' are the two prominent signifiers which are related to each other. The rain signifies the period of destruction and misery. Not only does it bring fever but it is also a harbinger of sorrow and death. Having left their past behind, the coolies still hope for a better future. Several coolies die due to fever, yet hopes of others remain alive. They are waiting anxiously for the day when they would receive their wages and then proceed towards their home.

II.5.b.iii. Siddayya: Submission
 Seetharam: Resistance, Protest
 Sahib: Lust, Brutality

There is a conceptual opposition between the two coolies Siddayya and Seetharam. Having stayed in the Estate for ten years, Siddayya signifies the presence of the Being who, without raising any hue and cry, has submitted himself to the Other. He has neither protested against nor resisted the oppression of the women by the master. His acceptance and attitude of servility make him a passive being. The given ensembles reveal his familiarity with the things as they were in the Estate: "He knew that when one came to the Blue Mountain one never left it" (p. 54). "This much I know, nobody who sets foot on the Blue Mountain ever leaves it. That is her law" (p. 54). He appears before us as a man who has accepted things as they are in the Estate. Siddayya does not have the strength to fight against the state into which he has been immersed. He has allowed himself to be carried along by the colonial forces. It is the Estate and the rulers inside the Estate who determine his life and that of the other coolies.

However, Seetharam is a character in contrast. Exploitation of the women folk by the new sahib provides another conflicting situation in the section. 'Sahib' signifies the presence of lust and brutality: "I want your daughter Mira" (p. 55). There is in him a desire to

crush and oppress the weak. Seetharam refuses to bow down to the sahib's wishes. The following ensemble reveals his strong sense of integrity :

"I am a Brahmin. I would rather die than sell my daughter" (p. 55). Here 'Brahmin' as a potential signifier stands for the presence of a being who places his pride above every other thing. His refusal to 'sell' his daughter is a sign of protest : "Impudent brute" ! shouts the sahib and bang ! The pistol-shot tears through the belly of Seetharam..." (p. 55). Despite being poor he refuses to sell his daughter and accepts death. The 'death' of Seetharam signifies two important truths. On one hand, it is the physical death of a being who has resisted the rape of his wishes by not offering his daughter to the sahib, on the other, it stands for the victory of the Being. His death creates a certain fear in the mind of the sahib. Though the court forgives the sahib yet he has been defeated by the coolies:

'But everybody in the Skeffington Coffee Estate knows now he'll never touch a Brahmin girl. And when a Pariah says, "No", he hardly ever sends the maistri to drag her up at night' (p. 55).

The atrocities, the violence, the constant conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed creates major existential situation. Seetharam struggles to maintain his

honour and refuses to be treated as a mere commodity by the Other. His acceptance of death not only elevates him to a higher level as a Being but also brings a certain change in the affairs of the Estate. He could not annihilate the oppression yet his attempt to do so makes him an active Being. His refusal is an attempt to claim the right of an individual which has been usurped by the Other. He chooses death and thus makes a vehement attack on the psyche of the Other. This single act of Seetharam is not only a mere sacrifice but it also brings an end to further repression of the women.

II.6.a. Introduction

II.6.a.i. The people at the Estate are anxiously waiting for Moorthy one night. The vessels have been cleaned and 'the embers put out'. Bade Khan can be seen guarding the Estate.

II.6.a.ii. The people get restless as time passes. Some feel he will not come that night. As Moorthy is entering the Estate, Bade Khan forbids him to do so. Moorthy pays no heed to his warning and insists on his right to go in. As he forces himself inside, Bade Khan hits him. The people are unable to watch it silently and they fall upon Bade Khan and beat him up. The maistri intervenes and

Moorthy asks the people to be non-violent. The women, in a state of anger, refuse to obey him and keep on attacking the policeman and the maistri.

II.6.a.iii. The next morning Rachanna is asked to leave the Estate. He refuses to do so unless his seventy-six rupees are paid, as a result of which he is beaten up by Bade Khan and the butlers. He is driven out of the Estate along with his wife and children. As they reach Kanchamma's grove they prostrate before the Goddess and move towards Kanthapura. Moorthy takes them to Patel Range Gowda who arranges for their minimum requirements. But Moorthy has become more calm and sorrowful after the incident and begins his "Don't touch the government" campaign^o.

II.6.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.6,b.1. Estate: Authority

The kernel situation revolves around the Estate. The conflict evolves as we see Bade Khan guarding the Estate. The people at the Estate are gladly awaiting Moorthy's arrival. It is an exciting moment for the Pariahs. The problematics is revealed to us as we see Bade Khan refusing to let Moorthy enter the Estate. The kernel semanteme is the 'Estate'. It signifies authority and restraint.

The following ensemble reveals Moorthy's reaction:

"I am a free man, police sahib. I can speak" (p. 58).

His fearlessness and undaunted courage is shown in his action as he forces himself through the gate.

"Free man you may be in your palace. But this is the Skeffington Coffee Estate. And these are Skeffington Coffee Estate coolies. You'd better take care of your legs. I've orders" (p. 58).

Bade Khan's threat to Moorthy signifies the power which is being misused by the policeman. Bade Khan signifies the presence of the Other who believes in repression through sheer muscle power. His statement in extension reveals the fact that within the boundaries of the Estate each coolie is owned by the Estate and has no right to disobey the law. One can see the way the labourer is alienated from his own self.

II.6.b.ii. Free Man: Estate
Coolie: Estate

A 'free man' according to Moorthy signifies the right of an individual to speak and move. Moorthy strongly objects to Bade Khan's statement by saying:

"Coolies are men, police sahib. And according to the laws of your own government and that of Mr. Skeffington no man can own another. I have every right to go in. They have every right to speak to me" (p. 58).

The confrontation between Free man and Estate suggests an opposing force. 'Estate' signifies that no man has a right to remain free inside it. The Estate curbs the right of the individual to express himself. The coolies are not treated as 'men' but as mere commodities in the hands of the rulers. The coolies have become the slaves of the Estate, partly due to the work here and partly because they receive the means of subsistence. Their two levels of existence as coolies and as free men, on the Estate, are in conflict with each other. On one hand is Bade Khan who being a policeman claims he has orders not to allow Moorthy to enter the Estate and speak to the Pariahs and on the other is Moorthy who insists on his right to speak to them. Moorthy's forcibly entering the Estate is a sign of his defiance of authority. The Gandhian ideology, that each individual possesses the liberty to speak and act is projected here. Moorthy's "I shall!" to Bade Khan's "you will not cross this gate" (p. 58) is a sign of defiance. Bade Khan's resorting to violence, and later the men and women collectively resisting the attack made on them are both signs of dominance and resistance. Bade Khan tries to assert his authority by beating up Moorthy and the others. The coolies on realizing that injustice cannot be borne silently for long, resort to action.

II.6.b.iii. Expulsion: Repression

Refusal: Defiance

Silence: Submission

Rachanna's expulsion from the Estate and his refusal to leave unless his wages are paid to him, is a sign of resentment and protest at the exploitation. The use of force to overpower the Being who resists exploitation clearly signifies the brutality of the ruling class and its desperate need to assert itself over the others. The dialectics is revealed in the last paragraph where Rachanna is beaten up and none of his friends come to help him. In the process of trying to resist the police force and the ruling class, we find the labourer is alienated from his own class. Afraid of the capitalist who has provided them with work, the labourers refuse to support their own friend and watch his ordeal quietly.

The ruling class believes in complete annihilation of the others who protests or refuses to comply with its wishes. The silence of his fellow workers while Rachanna is being beaten up shows their submission to authority.

II.6.b.iv. Campaign: Non-acceptance, Rejection

Moorthy being a 'Gandhi man' decides to begin a "Don't touch - the government" campaign. His decision to begin this campaign signifies his refusal to accept the society as it is. It is a sign of protest of a human being who seeks to establish his identity through such

an action. The protagonist, through the campaign, shows his unwillingness to yield to apparently overwhelming forces. There is only one choice before him and that is to clear his way by renewed action.

II.7.a. Introduction

II.7.a.i. Moorthy holds himself responsible for violence which took place at the Estate and decides to go on a fast for three days in the temple. He begins his fast by reciting the 'gayathri-mantra'. Rangamma and the others persuade him not to give up food but they fail. So deep is the influence of Gandhian ideology that he firmly decides to follow it. A kind of peace permeates his being as he sings the bhajans of Kabir.

II.7.a.ii. While he is meditating he remembers his childhood days when he had a vision of Hari. As a child he had a deep faith in God and had asked his mother to throw him down the mountains, confident that Hari would save him from all dangers. Once, during the floods, he had prayed to Himavaty as a result of which the waters had abated. Ratna comes to see him and he asks her to pray. The realization that he had once thought of her as anything but a sister, shocks and mortifies him. Moorthy's refusal to eat makes him weak. He tells Rangamma that only by giving up hatred can one become stronger and it is only through love that one can convert the enemy.

II.7.a.iii. The next day he feels weaker and Bhatta mocks at him alleging that he is pretending to be pious.

On the third day he feels very light, his eyes grow dim and his entire body begins reacting to the surroundings. Ratna and Rangamma take care of him. As the evening draws nearer Moorthy asks for bhajans to be recited. Very few Brahmins come for the bhajans. Next morning he breaks the fast, 'feeling lighter in limb and soul' and then he walks out to preach the 'don't-touch-the government' campaign.

II.7.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.7.b.i. Fasting: Repentance and Salvation

Moorthy's decision to fast signifies his desire for repentance and salvation. He holds himself responsible for the violent confrontation which took place between the coolies and Bade Khan. The people of the village react variously to his fasting, thus revealing the opposition which constitutes their being. The people like Rangamma and Ratna persuade him to give up the idea for it would make him weak. Whereas Venkamma and Bhatta's attitude signifies their mockery and hostility, Venkamma's statement expresses her contempt :

"Ah, the cat has begun to take to asceticism" (p. 62). "...Only to commit more sins. He, son! when did you begin to lie to your neighbours? As

though it were not enough to have polluted our village with your Pariahs ! Now you want to pollute us with your gilded purity ! wait! Wait ! when you come out of this counting of beads, I shall give you a fine welcome with my broomstick !" (p. 62).

Moorthy says: "The fault of others, Rangamma, is the fruit of one's own disharmony" (p. 61). Here we find a situation of conflict, guilt, dissatisfaction and disharmony. Moorthy is suffering from an acute sense of guilt and he feels that the violence committed by others has been due to his own state of disharmony. 'Disharmony' here suggests the protagonist's sense of loss and failure. It also reveals the *être* between what the people want and what they get from life. 'Disharmony' makes the protagonist realize the bitter truth that nothing is in accord with his being. It also reveals Venkamma's growing unease at the changes taking place in the village. Moorthy's free mixing with the Pariahs has made him unholy in the eyes of Venkamma. Her reaction to Moorthy's fasting reveals her own sense of insecurity. She is dissatisfied with those who seek change and therefore cannot help but condemn them.

To Moorthy, 'fasting' is the only means of purifying his body, mind and soul. 'Fasting' signifies his desire for purification and repentance. Through 'prayer' and 'meditation' he wishes to give up hatred and thus redeem himself. 'Fasting' as a tool becomes necessary for

without it Moorthy is unable to get rid of extreme distress and restlessness. It appears as a means of ordering his thoughts:

"I shall love even my enemies. The Mahatma says he would love even our enemies", and closing his eyes, tighter, he steps back into the foldless sheath of the soul, and sends out rays of love to the east, rays of love to the west, rays of love to the north, rays of love to the south...." (p. 62).

Moorthy is deeply influenced by the Gandhian philosophy. 'Gandhi' symbolises a permanent source of love and non-violence. 'Fasting' signifies a restraint in diet as also a restraint in thought and speech. He feels as if his entire being is transformed, his repeating the words "Sivoham, Sivoham. I am Siva. I am Siva. Siva am I" (p. 63) gives him strength. 'I am the Absolute' an expression of total non-dualism, and later on 'vision of Hari' while he is meditating and the reminiscences of the past 'visions' collectively signify the inward communion with God which is what he is seeking.

II.7.b.ii. Ratna: Femininity and Distance

As we examine the situation in progression we discover Moorthy and Ratna are deeply attached to each other. Meditation and fasting make him realize the final truth

that love should not be restricted to physical relationships only:

"Her smile did not seem to touch his heart with delicate satisfaction as it did before. She seemed something so feminine and soft and distant, and the idea that he could ever think of her other than as a sister shocked him, and sent a shiver down his spine" (p. 64).

Moorthy while meditating reflects over the man-woman relationships. Moorthy's analysing his contingency and his attempt to think of Ratna as a sister signifies his refusal to possess or be possessed by anyone. He consciously tries to assert his supremacy over his unconscious desires.

II.7.b.iii. A. Prayer: Purification

B. Prayer: Prostration

While correlating the signifying ensemble A and B, we can see what prayer means to two different individuals:

A. "Pray with me that the sins of others may be purified with our prayers" (p. 64) says Moorthy.

B. "She could hardly grasp his idea. She was but fifteen. Praying seemed merely to fall flat before the Gods in worship. So she said she would make ten more prostrations before the Gods..." (p. 64).

The comparison between A and B suggests what 'prayer' as a complete signifier means to Moorthy. To him it is a way of seeking communion with the divine. It is an evocation of that divinity within his heart which would enable him to love even his enemies.

Though 'prayer' appears as a powerful tool to Ratna, the difference lies in the objectives and understanding. Prostrating before the Gods is the only way of praying to her. As we examine the proposition in extension we find that Ratna's prayers are for Moorthy. She prays for his welfare as her world revolves around him. "God, God", she said;

"keep him strong and virtuous, and may he rise out of this holier and greater; God, I shall offer ten coconuts and a Kumkum worship. God, keep him alive for me" (pp. 66-67).
 "Then she rose and fell prostrate before the Gods in the sanctum" (p. 67).

The above ensembles, if on one level signify her unconscious desire to be possessed by him, on another level, signify her love and complete devotion to Moorthy. Her utter simplicity is reflected as she prostrates before the Gods.

II.8.a. Introduction

II.8.a.1. The first person Moorthy goes to see is Range Gowda. Moorthy seeks his help saying that the number of Brahmins attending the bhajans is getting fewer day by day, for the fear of ex-communication has gripped them. Waterfall Venkamma, Temple Rangappa, Patwari Nanjundia, School Master Devarayya and Bhatta are the ones showing disinterest. Range Gowda prefers being with the Mahatma and he thinks that the laws of God are not the same for all. Moorthy talks to Range Gowda about the formation of the Congress group in Kanthapura. One would have to pay four annas, or two thousand yards of yarn per year to become a Congress member. The only condition would be that he must promise to speak the truth and wear nothing but khadi cloth. It is difficult to get Range Gowda's consent for he feels that without being beaten, the Pariahs do not agree to work.

Moorthy tries to convince him by saying that he is an esteemed elder of the community and if he followed the ways of the Congress the others too would follow him. Finally Range Gowda agrees to do what Moorthy says. Then Moorthy goes to the Weaver's street and the potter's street. The elders are ready to be with the patel and the panchayat.

II.8.a.ii. Moorthy rushes towards the Pariah quarters to see Rachanna. Rachanna's wife greets him and he enters the house rather hesitatingly. He can smell the 'stench of hide and pickled pigs'. She offers him a cup of milk. Moorthy takes a sip and puts it aside. The news of Moorthy's arrival to a Pariah quarter spreads fast and soon all the women of that quarter come to greet him. His attempts to make them promise that they would spin everyday are to no avail. Rachanna's wife says she would spin only if her husband asks her to do so. Moorthy, feeling desperate, leaves the place and on entering the temple seeks the blessings of the Goddess and then goes to talk to Rangamma.

As he is going up the steps, he remembers his having gone to the Pariah-home and the tumbler of milk, so he calls out for Rangamma from outside. He goes to the backyard and after having a bath purifies himself with the Ganges water.

In the evening he goes to the Pariah-night-school and talks to Seenu about the formation of the Congress Committee. Finally Moorthy is successful in influencing the Pariahs, the Potters and the Weavers. Rangamma and Ratna too, along with Seethamma, like the idea of the Congress Committee.

II.8.a.iii. The next evening bhajans are recited and vows are made. Moorthy is declared the 'Gandhi of Kanthapura.' The Congress Panchayat is formed. While Moorthy is made its President, Range Gowda, Rangamma, Rachanna and Seenu are the other members of the Committee.

Two days later, a list of twenty three members is made by Moorthy and sent to the provincial Congress Committee. Moorthy's photograph in Rangamma's 'blue paper' fills the people with pride and they agree to work for him. Soon they are all spinning bundles of yarn and making the saris, bodice cloth and dhoties for themselves. Moorthy tells them that the Mahatma is pleased and people wish that he would remember and commend their efforts.

II.8.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.8.b.i. Moorthy: Brahmin: Superiority
Moorthy: Gandhian Ideology

The problematics here is that Moorthy, despite being an ardent follower of Gandhi, is acutely aware of his superiority. Being a Brahmin, he is in a state of confusion and indecision, when Rachanna's wife invites him to sit down. He had never before entered a Pariah's house. The following ensembles signify his mental state:

"...and Moorthy, who had never entered a Pariah-house he had always spoken to the Pariahs from the gutter - slab - Moorthy

thinks this is something new, and with one foot to the back and one foot to the fore, he stands trembling and undecided, and then suddenly hurries up the steps and crosses the threshold and squats on the earthen floor" (p. 71).

The conflict goes on in the mind of the protagonist whether he should enter the house/or not. His entering the hut is a sign of his boldness. Though he has entered the house he is unable to get over the feelings of dirt and filth with which the Brahmins tend to associate the Pariahs.

'But Rachanna's wife quickly sweeps a corner, and spreads for him a wattle mat, but Moorthy, confused, blurts out "No, no, no, no," and he looks this side and that and thinks surely there is a carcass in the back yard, and it is surely being skinned, and he smells the stench of hide and the stench of pickled pigs, and the room 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" (p. 71).

All that has been said above signifies the contingency of the protagonist. It reveals the proposition that his religious brahminical upbringing revolts at the sight of 'carcass being skinned' (p. 71). The society he has lived in has always looked down upon the Pariahs. The caste to which he belongs is the superior one. Therefore

the dilemma which he faces while entering a Pariah-house is reflected in his actions. It is a strange experience for him.

II.8.b.ii. Holy Thread: Strength and Faith

The 'holy thread' signifies the presence of a guiding force, which Brahmins wear to prevent themselves from committing sins. While Moorthy is in a state of confusion and fear, he seeks strength in the holy thread and touches it with his hands. The presence of holy thread signifies the strong religious ethos.

"Hari-Om, Hari-Om" expresses the strong urge in him to communicate with the divine. "Hari-Om, Hari-Om" (p.71) as a signifier stands for peace and solace which Moorthy is seeking at that precise moment. According to the Indian religious scripts 'Hari-Om' is the first sound which came out when 'Ishwara' or God made his first movement away from himself in order to create the universe.

II.8.b.iii. Milk: Acceptance

The proposition creates stronger conflicts in the mind of the protagonist as we see the Pariah woman offering him a tumbler of milk. The signifying ensembles like:

"Accept this from this poor hussy!"
(p. 71)"... and Moorthy says, "I've just-taken coffee, Lingamma..."

but she interrupts him and says, "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 and brings it to his lips, and taking one sip, lays it aside" (p. 71).

The above ensembles reveal the two sets of signifiers - Pariah: Moorthy and Woman: Moorthy. His being a Brahmin and then entering a Pariah-home is enough to raise several voices of protest in the entire community. We can see the self-i.e. the protagonist going through several phases of indecision, confusion, fear and doubt. His own being realizes the gravity of the situation and for a moment he is unable to decide whether he should accept the offer or not. The dialectics is evident to us as we see the mind of the protagonist undergoing several conflicts. The self has started asking whether what he is doing is right or wrong. His being a Brahmin has aggravated the tension in the mind of the protagonist.

The opposition between the Pariah woman and Moorthy signifies the struggle going on between the two individuals. His hesitation as juxtaposed against the insistence on Lingamma's part "Touch it, Moorthappa, touch it only as though it were offered to the Gods, and we shall be sanctified" (p. 71) signifies Lingamma's desperate need to be recognized and identified. Her offering him a

glass of milk and persuading him to take just a sip expresses her strong need for affiliation. She has been aware of the painful rejection by the Other i.e. the Pariahs being rejected by the Brahmins.

Moorthy's touching the tumbler and bringing it to his lips is a sign of acceptance of one by the Other.

II.8.b.iv. Ganges Water: Purification

Moorthy, after he goes back to Rangamma's house, remembers his visit to the Pariah-home. His entering the house through the backyard and purifying himself with a 'bath' and 'Ganges water' signify his inability to accept Gandhian ideology in totality. His refusal to change the 'holy thread' reveals his desire to overcome his weaknesses: "Now that I must go there everyday, I cannot change my holy thread every day, can I?" (p. 73). We encounter another existential situation as we see Moorthy accepting the 'Ganges water'

"...and taking the Ganges water he feels a fresher breath flowing through him, and lest anyone should ask about his new adventure, he goes to the river-side after dinner to sit and think and pray, after all a Brahmin is a Brahmin, sister !" (p. 73).

The 'Ganges water' signifies purity and holiness which Moorthy's soul is seeking. His preaching that all castes are equal, and on the other hand his hesitation

while entering a Pariah-home, his confusion as he accepts the milk tumbler and later on his act of purification with 'Ganges water' reveal the predicament which has not yet been resolved.

The proposition in comprehension reveals the fact that despite being a 'Gandhi-man' Moorthy is unable to give up the 'samskaras' which are too deep-seated in him. The protagonist, however, realizes that it is this untouchability that separates one man from another and creates an écart between human beings.

Moorthy's going to the riverside after dinner indicates his desire to escape from the queries of the people. It also signifies his quest for freedom, his inner need to purge his heart of the taint of untouchability. The struggle within his heart is metaphysical one. His consciousness makes him aware of N'eant, the discrepancies present in the society between a Pariah and a Brahmin. He is repeatedly drawn into active confrontation between the old 'samskaras' and the new ideas. It is this tension between varying attitudes that creates contradictions and conflicts.

II.9.a. Introduction

II.9.a.i. Bhatta decides to increase the rate of interest for every Congress member. He realizes that Moorthy's

excommunication has not been able to deter him from his Congress business. Infact, Moorthy's sway over the people has increased. He decides to arrange a match for Venkamma's daughter and make her conform to whatever he says. The advocate Seenappa who has just lost his wife seems a suitable match to him. As he makes further plans, he feels elated.

II.9.a.ii. The women at the river side make plans to dress elegantly and sing songs at the wedding of the daughter of Venkamma. Earlier Venkamma had thought she would not invite the widows to her daughter's wedding, but as the marriage day draws closer she compromises on her rigidity and invites all. The women feel that their daughters have not had such good luck as Venkamma's. As the procession comes nearer they see that the 'advocate groom' is a middle aged man with 'two fallen teeth and a big twisted moustache'. Venkamma says that he is only twenty-five and had got married at the age of seventeen and his daughter is merely seven. But Bhatta tells them he is about thirty and owns quite a lot of land. Every woman is given a French sovereign each, and 'every Pariah and cur', in Kanthapura is happy at the grand reception. They now have second thoughts about Venkamma and Bhatta and think that they are not so wicked after all.

II.9.a.iii. Moorthy wanders by the riverside the whole day long. As the evening comes he goes back to Rangamma's place deeply disturbed. 'How, how is one an outcaste?' he ponders.

II.9.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.9.b.i. Wedding: Security and Rejection

The problematics here is that a young girl is married to a man old enough to be her father. The kernel semanteme is the 'wedding'. Bhatta has become so afraid of the changes taking place due to Gandhian influence that he decides to mobilize people like Venkamma, towards his side:

"I shall find a bride groom for her daughter, and she will be always with us, and what with her tongue and her tail, she will set fire where we want" (pp. 77-78).

This shows that Bhatta suffers from a sense of insecurity. It has intensified as a result of Moorthy's excommunication. Moorthy's holding sway over the people fills him with fear. Venkamma is worried about her daughter's marriage and when Bhatta brings in the proposal of Seenappa she accepts it joyfully.

The proposition is the wedding of Ranga. Bhatta's devious mind reveals the problematics rather clearly to us.

He is thinking of making Venkamma his follower and therefore makes plans for convincing Venkamma:

'After all Venkamma, what does it matter whether it is first marriage or a second marriage? What we ask is that your daughter will have enough to eat, and be blessed with many children and perform all the rites, isn't it? Seenappa is thirty-four, but you would say he is twenty-one if you saw him, and he has only three children, and one of them is soon to be married and will go away to her mother-in-law's and your daughter will have the two godlike children to live with' (p. 78).

The contradiction is evident to us as we see a young girl getting married to a middle aged, widowed Brahmin.

Marriage as a complete signifier stands for permanent security and rejection. It also indicates that the girls are regarded as a burden in the families and parents are keen on getting rid of them as soon as possible. Getting married to a rich man, howsoever old, is regarded fortunate. On one hand we have example of Bhatta and Seenappa who are getting married to girls, young enough to be their daughters and on the other, the society looks down upon young widows like Ratna if they transgress the limits of decorum. This hypocrisy reveals the basic setup of the society which has different norms and rules for the two sexes.

Bhatta's handling the matter reveals his authority over the Brahmins. The proposition in extension reveals the reaction of the other women.

The following ensembles throw light on the other's reactions:

"Venkamma's daughter, Ranga has at last found a husband, sister!" "Where does he come from?" asks nosescratching Nanjamma of Satamma. "Oh, it seems he is from a well-to-do family. May the Goddess bless the girl. If not what should we have seen before we closed our eyes?" (p. 79). And people say "well, Venkamma is going to have a rich son-in-law". (p. 79).

One can see that the settling of the marriages is not based on the merit of the boy or the girl. The caste and material conditions of the boy, irrespective of his age, are the main criteria. Whereas a girl who is soon going to attain puberty 'come home in a few week's time', (p. 78) is considered suitable for marriage.

Ranga's marriage is held in great splendour. The 'French sovereign' signifies the prosperity of the bridegroom's family. In the ensemble: 'every Pariah and cur in Kanthapura was satisfied' (p. 80). 'Satisfied' signifies the treatment they receive at Venkamma's house during her daughter's wedding. It signifies contentment and bliss. Their being received with warmth at her place makes them accept Venkamma and Bhatta as good individuals.

"This Bhatta and Venkamma are not so wicked after all" (p. 80).

The above ensemble also signifies their change of attitude.

II.10.a. Introduction

II.10.a.i. Kartik, the festival of lights, is celebrated with real gusto in Kanthapura. The lamps are lit. Kartik, being a month of Gods, children wait to see them moving about.

When the Kartik lights fade out, hushed voices of men and women are heard enquiring as to what's wrong. Policemen have come to Rangamma's house and are talking to Moorthy.

Moorthy's arrest creates a furore among the people and they resist the attack being made on them. Finally, seventeen men from different quarters are taken to the police station and after a sound thrashing, all, except Moorthy, are released. After he is taken away to Karwar, people pray and fast for his release.

II.10.a.ii. Moorthy refuses to accept the help of advocates. He believes that truth needs no defence. Advocate Sankara who is also the secretary of the Karwar Congress Committee appreciates Moorthy's decision, saying that

Gandhi too is of the opinion that a true satyagrahi needs no advocates. Sankara leaves the prison promising to hold meetings for Moorthy.

II.10.a.iii. Volunteers dressed in 'Khadi kurta and Gandhi cap' along with a huge crowd assemble at the Gandhi maidan. Speeches are made by Sankara, Ranganna and Dasappa and they speak about the incorruptible qualities of Moorthy, Hindu-Moslem unity, charka and ahimsa.

A tall man dressed in 'darbar turban and a filigree shawl' speaks in favour of the British government. Being a Swami man, he is more afraid of the corruption wrought by casteism, than the disorder in the material world.

Ranganna speaks of the way Swami tried to influence him, and later excommunicated him for opening his temple to the Pariahs. He asks people to choose between Gandhi, who had sacrificed his comforts at the altar of the country and the rich exploiting Brahmins.

Ranganna is arrested by the police while he is making his speech. He offers himself for arrest amidst cries of 'Vande mataram' and 'Gandhi Mahatma ki jai'.

II.10.a.iv. The people in Kanthapura read about the meeting and the arrest of Ranganna in the blue paper.

They are shocked to know that the government tries to manipulate men like Swami and Bhatta, by offering them financial baits. Ramakrishnayya, pacifies them and sends them home.

Besides Rangamma, more and more people start reading the newspaper. Each evening, the villagers listen to Ramakrishnayya's explanation of the 'Vedanta Sutras' and discuss the government's activities.

The people going to Karwar bring news of Moorthy. Prayers are offered to Kenchamma for Moorthy's release. One Pushya night, Rangamma and Nanjamma get ready to go to Karwar. On being informed that Sankar is looking after Moorthy's affair, Rangamma goes and meets Sankar. Sankar says that the police has alleged that Moorthy had arranged the assault of the Pariahs on the police. The decision was still pending.

On her return to the village for corn distribution, Rangamma faces queries from the villagers about Moorthy's welfare, on hearing that the case is still pending they curse the government. The dismissal of Range Gowda from patelship creates an uproar in the village.

II.10.a.v. Rangamma stays at Sankar's place during her next visit to Karwar and helps him in the Congress work.

The news of her staying with Sankar reaches Kanthapura and people like Venkamma criticise her vehemently. The others have faith in her as well as Sankar.

Sankar had refused to marry after his wife Usha's death. Sankar lives a simple life. He wears khadi and speaks the truth and also insists on other villagers to do the same. He never takes up a false case. He takes the lowest fee and if the client is poor, he also pays for his stamps. Sankar works wholeheartedly for the Congress and insists on Hindi becoming the national language of India.

He speaks to his mother too in Hindi confident that she would learn it one day. He has a 'little closed pot' and, if ever he utters an English word he drops a coin into it. He forces his friends to do the same. He is very active and punctual in his daily routine. Rangamma, too, has never looked so healthy as she is now.

The day Rangamma gave her first speech, she could not go beyond a few words and her eyes were filled with tears. But she is confident that if ever asked to speak again she would have no such fears.

Rangamma returns from Karwar for the Magh Cattle fair and two days later people hear the news of Moorthy being sentenced three month's rigorous imprisonment.

That afternoon, the people remain inside their homes and fast.

II.10.a.vi. The next day 'the rain set in' and Ramakrishnáyya dies. The Pariahs work and prepare a 'mango pandal' and as the corpse is being tied up, the skies clear and the pyre is lit. Rangamma decides she would carry his bones to Kashi but all of a sudden the river begins to swell and sweeps the bones away. People pray to Kenchamma to protect them. Bhatta leaves for a pilgrimage to Kashi soon after the harvest.

II.10.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.10.b.i. Arrest: Suppression and Authority

The kernel semanteme lies in the subsection a.i. of the tenth section. Moorthy's arrest alongwith the seventeen men of Kanthapura reveals the proposition in extension. 'Kartik' signifies light and prosperity. Moorthy's arrest expresses the desire of the one to dominate the other's existence.

The manner in which people resist the brutal forces suggests the growth of consciousness in the minds of the villagers. Their refusal to accept the authority leads to their arrest. The following ensemble signifies the conflict between men and the Red-man's government:

"...and as the morning cattle were going out to the fields, and the women were adorning the thresholds for a Kartik morning, Brahmins and Pariahs and Potters and Weavers were marched into the police station-seventeen men of Kanthapura were named and locked behind the bars".
(p. 85).

This signifies a collective struggle in Kanthapura. People from different castes and sections of society court arrest. The 'bars' signify authority and the confrontation of être with autrè i.e. the confrontation of the Being with the Other. The men of Kanthapura refuse to accept the Red-man's authority and this refusal leads to their imprisonment.

"And the policemen twisted their arms and beat them on their khuckles, and spat into their mouths, and when they had slapped and banged and kicked, they let them out one by one, one by one they let them out, and they all marched back to Kanthapura, all but Moorthy" (p. 85).

The signifiers 'twisted', 'beat', 'spat', 'slapped', 'banged', 'kicked' signify the atrocities perpetrated on one by the other. They also signify authority and coercion. The arrest of the men is an act of vengeance especially on those who refuse to accept the British authority and disapprove of its existence. Later on, the men are released and their being 'let off' signifies the inability of the Other to control the Being for long.

All but Moorthy are released. Moorthy's imprisonment and later transfer to Karwar signifies the desire of the Other to crush the irrepressible Being by inflicting a higher degree of violence on him.

II.10.b.ii. Truth: Defence
Refusal: Defence

The proposition in comprehension shows the protagonist facing the atrocities with dauntless courage. The refusal to accept the authority leads to prison.

The given ensemble reflects the strength which Moorthy has derived from Gandhi:

"But if truth needs a defence, God himself would need one, for as the Mahatma says truth is God, and I want no soul to come between me and truth" (p. 86).

Truth: God
Truth: Moorthy

Moorthy's refusal to accept the help of the others, i.e., the advocates, signifies his truthful stance and his aspiration to come closer to God. By refusing to employ a defence he asserts that truth alone triumphs and that it does not require any external help to vindicate its stand. It also expresses his urgent need to assure himself of his own strength and power.

II.10.b.iii. Gandhi: Truth

'Gandhi' as a cult figure in this section can be seen as an external influence, which disturbs the inner pattern of Moorthy's life. The image of Gandhi is so portrayed that he no more remains a human being but transcends into a mythical figure. Though Moorthy has never met him personally, he has accepted the Gandhian faith and ideology: To him 'Gandhi' signifies the truth. The fact that the Mahatma has often gone to prison is enough to provide him with strength and he prepares himself for further eventualities. 'Gandhi', as a source of sustenance, is also responsible for changing the thought pattern of Kanthapurians.

II.10.b.iv. Moorthy: Gold
Moorthy: Saint

Moorthy symbolises goodness and perfection. He emerges as a hero who has sacrificed his life for a good cause. 'Why, he is the saint of our village' (P. 93) says Rangamma and Sankar said, 'some day he will do holy deeds' (p. 93). 'I love him like a brother, and I have found no better Gandhist' (p. 93). Not only the villagers but the hopes of others too are pinned on him.

Brutal police force try to pull him down by levying false charges against him and accusing him of instigating Pariah assault on the police. So strong is the peo-

ple's faith in Moorthy that they refuse to believe the police. Moorthy's refusal to employ an advocate after his arrest shows the faith he has in his own self. The following ensemble reveals his state of mind:

'If truth is one, all men are one before it' (p. 86). 'Between me and truth none shall come' (p. 86). 'I shall speak that which truth prompteth, and truth needeth no defence' (p. 86). 'Judges are not for truth, but for law, and the English are not for the brown skin but for the white, and the government, is not with the people but with the police' (p. 93).

The following semiotic oppositions emerge: the brown skin: The white, Government: people. The brown skin signifies rejection. The English refuse to accept the brown men and their rules are in favour of the white. 'White' signifies domination and authority. The 'government' which is of the white men signifies repression of the wishes of the others.

'Our Moorthy is like gold - the more you heat it the purer it comes from the crucible' (p. 93). Moorthy's being compared to gold expresses the confidence which villagers have in him; gold symbolises permanence, purity and malleability. Like gold, Moorthy has accepted the changes taking place in the society and yet he retains the old Indian tradition. Moorthy no longer remains an

ordinary mortal but attains the heights of perfection. God fearing women hope for the evil, which is perpetuated by the government, to be destroyed.

II.10.b.v. Imprisonment: Repression
Fasting: Purification and Negation

Moorthy receives three months' rigorous imprisonment. His 'imprisonment' signifies the desire of one to curb the freedom of the others. The imprisonment is followed by 'fasting'. 'Fasting' as a cultural code stands for purification of the mind and body. The decision of the people to fast is a sign of protest. 'Fasting' becomes a regular phenomenon as the movement gains momentum. It provides the people with necessary strength and a desire to unite and fight against the evil. A sign of purgation, it symbolises to the Hindus a powerful tool of struggle in life.

II.10.b.vi. Rain: Death and Disaster

Ramakrishnayya's death signifies the end of the rich Indian past and the destruction of the good. The 'pains' herald death and disaster. The death of Ramakrishnayya, suggests his acceptance of freedom and the end of his struggle with life. It does not, however, kill hope but creates a new awareness in the people.

'...Lord such may be the path of our outgoing soul!' (p. 101).

The above ensemble expresses the wish of the villagers to meet their end as peacefully as he did.

II.11.a. Introduction

II.11.a.i. After Ramakrishnayya's death, Ratna begins reading the texts and Rangamma explains them with a reference to the British government and the atrocities perpetrated by them on the Indians. Inspired by Rangamma's example, several other women adopt the act of meditation. Yoga exercises lighten their hearts and fill their minds with a deep sense of spirituality.

Rangamma prepares the women folk for action by instilling courage in them. She tells them stories of Rani Laxmi Bai who had valiantly fought against the British. Unlike Sarojini Naidu, Kamladevi and Annie Besant who have joined hands with the Congress in this struggle for freedom, the thinking of the women of Kanthapura is limited to 'broomstick and the milking of cows'. The Sevika Sangha is formed in Kanthapura. Their workers are called the Sevis.

II.11.a.ii. The men in the village resent women's joining the volunteer's corps. They beat their wives if they neglect domestic work. Rangamma after having talked to the men tells the women that their first duty is towards

their home and husband. But nevertheless they decide to go picketing at cigarette and toddy shops. Not only the women but the children too are so fascinated with Laxmi Bai's legend that they play her role with great fervour.

As Rangamma prepares the women to face the police, Nanjamma becomes so fear-stricken that even in her dreams she sees herself being attacked by Bade Khan. Rangamma says that once they are willing to face all atrocities for the sake of Kenchamma the lathis that would strike them would be as 'soft as butter'. Venkatalakshmi's query whether Moorthy would be there or not reveals the simple faith and trust which these women have bestowed on him.

II.11.a.iii. Seenu and Vasudev tell Rangamma that after the arrest of Moorthy the young men at Pariah-school are refusing to come forward. They are afraid of the prison and police brutality. Vasudev and others decide to hold bhajans once again. Men, women and children rush towards the temple as they hear the conch blowing. Their hearts are filled with religious sentiments.

II.11.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.11.b.1. Change: Tradition

There is a reversal of the traditional role as we find women interpreting the holy scriptures. After the death of Ramakrishnayya, which signifies the complications in religious life of the people, there is a great change

in Kanthapura. Women like Ratna and Rangamma have taken up the task of reading and explaining the Vedantic texts. This change in the society which has been brought about by the women is widely acclaimed. We find the women of Kanthapura no longer clinging to the images of Moorthy and Gandhi. The proposition in extension reveals to us the fact that the women are deriving strength from a past historical figure like Laxmi Bai and the present cult figures like Kamla Devi and Annie Besant. Rangamma's attempt to identify herself with them is a highly connotative sign expressing her desire to be like them. Rangamma's presence acts as a vital force in the eleventh section for it has brought forth the participation of the women in the struggle.

II.11.b.ii. Sevika Sangha: Collectivity

The formation of Sevika Sangha in Kanthapura signifies the need for action. It has created a new consciousness among the women. They no longer remain confined to their homes but the new ideas and thoughts seem to have enlivened their spirits. They become aware of what they are and what they want to be. 'Meditation' as a complete signifier is a significant spiritual code. It not only stands for self control but it is also a powerful motivating force which goads them to action.

The 'Sevika Sangha' as a complete signifier stands for unity and collective action. It reveals their desire

to strip away the old order and replace it with a new one. Its formation gives rise to several conflicts at home. Satamma's husband complains that his wife is not serving him meals on time. Rangamma's ability to influence the men signifies her strength. A new light of responsibility and service dawns upon them and they refuse to accept their secondary status any more. Their lives now take a new dimension. Their practising the yoga, meditation, and forming a sevika sangha are codes of actions which determine the growth of their thought processes. They feel that a great change has come over them. Rangamma's statement: "We should do our duty. If not it is no use belonging to the Gandhi-group" (p. 106) not only signifies the importance of Gandhian ideology but also attributes the difference in roles between the men and women. The women's statement: "we shall not forget our children and our husbands" (p. 106) is an indicator of the fact that a woman's first duty is towards her husband and children and that every collective action should start from home.

"But how can we be like we used to be?" (p. 106) reveals their existential predicament. It expresses their refusal to go back to the state they came from. What is happening to them at present is a highly complex change. Their husbands initially resent their active participation and preparation for struggle. But they relent when they see the enthusiasm of their women to reassert their identity for the national cause.

Not only do the women decide on a further course of action but they also prepare themselves for it.

II.11.b.iii. Gita:Karmayoga

Exercises: Preparing for Struggle

The 'Gita' as a complete signifier not only stands for eternity but it also appears as a most significant tool in the hands of women. Through its sayings Rangamma instils courage in the women and dispels the fear which has gripped them. 'Exercises' as a complete signifier signify the need to be ready for the worse. The proposition in comprehension shows the way women agree to fight against the police force. "Does not the Gita say, the sword can split asunder the body, but never the soul? And if we say, we shall not move a hair, we shall not move a hair" (p. 106).

Rangamma's determination, her sense of courage, her seriousness towards the entire movement have made her a pivotal figure. The 'Gita' to her remains an infallible guide of conduct. Not only does the reference to Gita reveal the strong Hindu religious ethos but it also brings out the revelation that life, as a permanent phenomenon, resides in the soul. It is significant of the Hindu mythology which claims that 'Atma' is soul and is an eternal entity.

'Gita' as a mantic code not only leads us to the unknown but is an assimilation of the 'Karma Yoga' and 'Nishkam Karma'. It signifies that man must work hard for in 'Karma' lies the true essence of manhood. Both 'split' and 'move' are two contradictory forces. Rangamma quotes from Gita and interprets it by saying that though the body can be destroyed permanently by means of a sword soul cannot be 'Sword' as a mantic code is not only a sign of destruction but also that of violence. Her saying 'we shall not move a hair' (p. 106) signifies her indomitable spirit and convinces us of her deep involvement in the entire struggle. Here the most abstruse aspect of non duality has been dealt with.

II.11.b.i.v. Lathi: Force
Moorthy: Home

Religion plays a vital role in bringing the women together and fighting jointly for a cause. The 'Lathi' which contains the kernel semanteme has two conceptual oppositions. On one hand, it is a symbol of sheer brutality and force and on the other, it stands for resistance. The fear of the 'lathi' has deterred the women from action. The following ensemble elicits, reveals and develops the change in their attitudes :

"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" (p. 107).

Moorthy, the protagonist, though physically absent from the place is still a source of inspiration to the women. They hope that his presence would not only guide them but also guard them against all dangers. The predicament is completely exposed as Venkatalakshmi says - "But sister, there will be Moorthy, too, and he will defend us" (p. 107). The protagonist has receded into the background after his arrest, yet, the fight which he initiated has not ended with the arrest.

'But Rangamma merely waves her hand and says, "we shall see, we shall see" (p. 107) constitutes a codified ensemble; it reveals her uncertain state of mind.

II.12.a. Introduction

II.12.a.i. Vaisakh is a period of ploughing the fields. Priest Rangappa determines the auspicious day for the people to yoke their bulls to the plough. Chenna informs the people about it by beating a drum. All the villagers have come to the temple to seek Kenchamma's blessings. Patel Range Gowdas' presence is highly significant for then only begins the ceremony. Subbe Gowda's bulls are the youngest and therefore tied to the yoke. Amidst the chanting of hymns and the breaking of coconuts, 'the

plough cuts the earth'. The people feel happy and excited at the prospect that they would now till the earth.

II.12.a.ii. The people ask for Kenchamma's blessings so that when Moorthy comes the crop would be ready. Elaborate plans are made to welcome Moorthy. The same afternoon Postmaster Subbayya informs Rangamma that Moorthy has been released.

II.12.a.iii. Venkamma fixes up her daughter's wedding for Tuesday, the day of Moorthy's arrival. She asks women to choose between the two - a Brahminic feast, and a feast for Moorthy who has been ex-communicated. Women finally decide to go and bless the newly weds, afraid that if they tarried now their own daughters might go unblessed in future.

II.12.a.iv. Except for the Brahmin women who go to Venkamma's house for the marriage ceremony, the rest of them gladly await Moorthy's arrival. The Pariah's, the Potter's and the Weaver's quarters are decorated to welcome him. Seenu informs the people that Moorthy has already come and is in Rangamma's house. People feel that they have been tricked wickedly and amidst cries of 'Vande Mataram' and 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai' they voice their anguish. The police inspector's voice fails to

pacify them. Finally Rangamma's plea calms them down and they leave for their respective homes. Moorthy is not allowed to go out of Rangamma's house unless the marriage dinner at Venkamma's place is over. At mid-night the policemen leave the place. The younger Bade Khan has joined the elder one and he settles in the Estate too, in a hut with a woman. The next morning people see Moorthy as unchanged as ever. His stay in the prison had hardly left any mark on him.

II.12.b. Analysis of the Problematics

II.12.b.i. The kernel situation is revealed in the subsection a.iii. of the section. Soon after the rains have set in, worshipping of the bulls and the ploughing of fields take place amidst prayers. The offering of flowers, rice and coconuts to the Goddess signifies the Indian religious ethos. Such rituals signify the strong desire to come together by cutting off all barriers of caste and creed. The rituals held before the actual ploughing of the fields signify a strong socio-religious code.

II.12.b.ii. Wedding: An attempt to undermine the other's presence

The kernel semanteme is the 'wedding'. Venkamma's arranging her daughter's wedding on the same day when Moorthy is being released presents a conflicting situation. The women who have been anxiously waiting for

Moorthy's arrival are now being placed in an extremely delicate situation. Venkamma's goading them to a decision is revealed in the following ensemble: "Well, choose between a Brahminic feast and a feast for a polluted pig" (p. 114). There lies an opposition between the two feasts: 'a Brahminic feast' signifies a feast which is religious and sacrosanct in nature. The Brahminic feast is held in honour of Venkamma's daughter's wedding, a very auspicious occasion. The 'feast for a polluted pig' signifies the holding of a grand welcome for a man who has been disgraced and is an outcaste. This decision of Venkamma to hold her daughter's wedding on the day of Moorthy's arrival expresses the jealousy and hatred which permeates her being. She has noticed people gladly awaiting his arrival. Unable to bear this, she connives with priest Rangappa and makes an attempt to ignore his arrival. She tries to impose limits on the freedom of others. Her psyche reveals the presence of a Being unable to bear the existence of the Other.

II.12.b.iii. Excommunication: Rejection

The Brahmin women had forgotten all about Moorthy's being ex-communicated. "Why, of course, Moorthy was ex-communicated, but how funny that we forgot all about it since he's been in prison?" (p. 114).

Moorthy's excommunication is that socio-religious code of action which makes him an outcaste in his own society. The women had forgotten about it but Venkamma's painful reminder stirs their memory. Venkamma says: "That's it, sister. You forget it, but this body that has borne eight children cannot forget it. If you had a daughter to marry, you would not forget it, would you?"

(p. 114). The significant conclusion which one can draw from her statement is that the existing circumstances have influenced her behaviour. Her resorting to vindictiveness suggests her selfish, monocentric obsession with her family's welfare at the cost of the village. One would not blame her totally for resorting to such means. Her acute sense of jealousy and inability to understand the necessity of being with and helping others goads her into action.

II.12.b.iv. Nuptial Feast: Acceptance

Keeping the importance of the occasion in mind the Brahmin women decide to attend the 'nuptial feast'. They have been placed in a conflicting situation, i.e., on one hand is their desire to go and welcome Moorthy, on the other is the solemn occasion wedding. They feel that their presence is essential at the wedding for their absence would not only be inauspicious but would have graver consequences.

"Why, you cannot refuse a nuptial feast. If there's not married woman to offer kumkum water to the wife and husband, well, tomorrow you may have your own daughter's marriage and she may go unblest !" (p. 114)
 'and they all say, "Of course ! Of course !" (p. 114).

The realities of the socio-cultural situation in which they have been placed, cannot be ignored, and therefore they accept the invitation of the wedding of the daughter of Venkamma.

The acceptance of the 'nuptial feast' against their wishes signifies the stronger bonds of communal feeling and deep religiosity which binds the people of the same community to one other. Knowing that refusal of the feast would not only be an act of sacrilege but also the repercussions would affect their own daughter's future, they accept it. Thus one sees that, living in a society, their existence has been controlled by greater traditional forces.

II.12.b.v. Moorthy's Confinement: Fear and doubt in the mind of the Other

Moorthy's presence has horrified the Other. Therefore, he is confined to Rangamma's house until the nuptial dinner is over at Venkamma's place. His confinement signifies the fear of rejection in the heart of the Other

i.e. Venkamma. Venkamma prefers to hold on to the old values. The two individuals are diametrically opposed to each other. On one side is Moorthy who transcends the limits of his Being and remains unchanged despite being in prison, (The author here has tried to project a conceptual contrast between the desires of the individuals), on the other side is Venkamma whose actions are motivated by petty hopes of accumulation of wealth, arranging of son's-in-law and complete annihilation of the forces which impede her progress. The disparity between the two not only reveals the differences in ideas but also in motives. In Venkamma we see the presence of the Other who tries to find external justifications for her inner confusions, and therefore chooses to do what appears most appropriate in the present circumstances.

PROBLEMATICS IN EXTENSION: A CRUSADE AGAINST OPPRESSION

The following analysis unfolds the problematics metonymically as we delve deeper into the last seven sections of the novel. The crusade against the oppression gains momentum after Moorthy's release from the prison.

III.1.a. Introduction

III.1.a.i. Moorthy asks the people to come together and fight against the government. He informs the villagers that Gandhi has gone on a long pilgrimage with his eighty-two followers who wear Khadi and are teetotalers. Moorthy decides to pray collectively for Gandhi's success. He speaks to them of the oneness of being and asks them to be ready for action.

III.1.a.ii. Moorthy tells the people about Gandhi and from the white paper he reads out the news of Gandhi's actions. Youngmen from the city visit Moorthy and after their departure Moorthy asks Seenu to ring the gong for the bhajan. He informs the villagers about the number of patels who have resigned from their jobs and have become followers of Gandhi. Gandhi's Dandi march has created excitement in the hearts of the people. As the day draws nearer, they become more anxious. Unable to sleep at

night they come to the riverside early in the morning and bathe. Priest Rangappa laughs at them and they know that he too, like Bhatta, is no more with them. After a wash they sit and meditate and later have special meals.

Through white papers, the next day, they are informed of Gandhi's success in manufacturing salt. More and more people begin coming to the sea side to make salt. They are beaten up and put into prison, yet the number of people who are joining the ranks of the Mahatma is increasing day by day.

III.1.a.iii. People in Kanthapura become fearless and prepare themselves for action. Moorthy is waiting for the orders to come from the Karwar Congress Committee. Women begin practising the drills more often and are now less afraid of Bade Khan's 'lathi'. Faith in the Mahatma has made them courageous. Nanjamma compares Mahatma to 'Sahyadri Mountains' whereas the people following him are the 'pilgrims of the Mountain'. Moorthy is called 'The Small Mountain'. The section ends on a note of hope where the people are still waiting for the call of 'The Big Mountain' (Mahatma).

III.1.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.1.b.i. The kernel situation in the given section expresses the hope, the fear, the anguish and the strength

of the people of Kanthapura. Moorthy, after having realized that a man could not succeed in attaining freedom alone, asks the people to fight collectively against the oppressive forces. The following ensemble reveals the existential situation:

'A cock does not make a morning,
nor a single man a revolution, but
we'll build a thousand-pillared
temple, a temple more firm than any
that hath yet been builded, and
each one of you be ye pillars in
it, and when the temple is built,
stone by stone, and man by man,
and the bell hung to the roof
and the eagle-tower shaped and
planted, we shall invoke the
mother to reside with us in dream
and in life. India then will live
in a temple of our making' (p. 118).

Realizing that the struggle could not be successful without coordination among the people, Moorthy tries to bring the people closer to each other. The signifying ensemble: 'the temple of our making' reveals that the protagonist has a strong desire to be free within him. 'The temple' as a complete signifier stands for a holy place. It signifies the country which will be built and ruled by Indians. The possibility of being left alone is necessarily the most serious threat to Moorthy's existence. He, therefore, asks people to unite and pray for Gandhi's success.

III.1.b.ii. Pilgrimage: Defiance and Rejection

Gandhi: Strength, Hope

Mahatma: Hope

Gandhi's pilgrimage to the Dandi beach signifies an act of defiance. Breaking the salt law is a symbolic act of protest. The people are anxiously waiting for Gandhi to realize his mission. The anxiety, the hope and the concern which the men and women of Kanthapura show towards Gandhi signifies not only their love but also their faith in him. The signifying ensembles reveal their state of minds and the faith they have bestowed on Gandhi:

"Oh no, the Mahatma need not go as far as the sea. Like Harishchandra before he finished his vow, the Gods will come down and dissolve his vow, and the Britishers will leave India and we shall be free, and we shall pay less taxes and there will be no policemen" (pp. 119-20).

"It is not for nothing the Mahatma is a Mahatma and he would not be Mahatma if the Gods were not with him" (p. 120).

'Mahatma' as a complete signifier signifies indomitable courage and goodness. The faith which people have placed in him has made him a 'Mahatma', an epitome of kindness and strength. People of Kanthapura realize the truth that Gandhi's guidance and perseverance alone could resolve their predicament.

'He says he likes our ancient ways, and like the ancients he will make the pilgrimage on foot' (p. 120). The proposition in comprehension shows that the figure of 'Gandhi' is a source of sustenance and he seems to have permeated their conscious selves. For in the figure of Gandhi it is not simply one individual protesting against the atrocities but we can see even the simple illiterate people of Kanthapura identifying themselves with him. They are people living in a particular time-period, facing similar problems. As individuals they may have different problems but seen from a broader perspective the most crucial situation they have been placed in is the same. All are living under British regime and undergoing suppression, estrangement and depression. Britishers: We

The 'Britishers' in the present context signifies authority, wealth, domination and assertion. 'We' signifies the Indians who are working as slaves under the British regime and who stand for subservience, obedience and suffering.

It is their social being, their lives as slaves which has awakened or rather determined their consciousness. They are hopeful that under the influence of Gandhi things would soon change. Rangamma's hopes are visible in the ensemble:

'...Britishers will leave India,
and we shall be free, and we shall
pay less taxes, and there will be
no policeman (p. 120).

Her simple statement reveals her inner self where despite undergoing constant conflicts engendered by a specific historical situation, she still has faith in Gandhi. The Britishers signify the presence of the Other - the Other to whom the Indians have begun reacting violently.

III.1.b.iii. Dore: Disillusionment and Loss of Hope

Dore's disillusionment is significant of the fact that he is not completely satisfied with the things as they are. There is a shift from an earlier enthusiastic stance to that of indifference beneath which lies the loss of hope. The following ensemble signifies the contingency of the character: "This is all Ramayana and Mahabharata, such things never happen in our times" (p. 120). He has however, begun realizing that even after the attainment of freedom, life would not be happy. Rangamma's earlier statement that things would change soon has not been able to instil hope within his heart. His statement: 'I do not know' signifies that he is in a constant state of uncertainty and despair. Dissatisfied with the situation he reflects on the écart between the past, present and the future.

III.1.b.iv. Salt: Defiance, Rejection, Independence

Gandhi's success at the Dandi beach is a sign of protest. By breaking the salt law, not only is he able to voice his protest but he also successfully receives the support of his countrymen. The people in Kanthapura have become enthusiastic. Though the villagers have never confronted him personally, he has become the most potential force in their lives. The following ensemble reveals the success of the pilgrimage :

"And so day after day men go out to the sea to make salt, and day after day men are beaten back and put into prison, and yet village after village sends its women and men, and village after village grows empty, for the call of the Mahatma had sung in their hearts and they were for the Mahatma and not for the government" (p. 121).

The code of action ranges from "go" to "make salt", "beaten back", "put into", "sends", "grows empty" to "had sung". The above ensemble carefully reveals the reaction of the people. They prepare themselves for the struggle and this preparation is a political code which denotes their desire to fight for and claim their freedom. The women begin practising "the drill" and Rangamma is seen emerging as their leader. This awareness of the lack of freedom and constant suppression under British regime not only fills the women with a desire to struggle but also to reject the authority.

III.1.b.v. Gandhi: Sahyadri; Big Mountain

Moorthy: Small Mountain

People: Pilgrims of the Mountain

The 'Call' is a potential signal for which the people are waiting anxiously. Gandhi to them stands for strength, firmness and stoicism. His being compared to Sahyadri is a cultural code: "No, sister, I do not imagine the Mahatma like a man or a god, but like the Sahyadri mountains, blue, high, wide and the rock of the evening that catches the light of the setting sun" (p. 122). The narrator's comment reveals the same idea: "That's what he is. High and yet seeable, firm and yet blue with dusk..." (p. 122). Moorthy's being called "the small Mountain" signifies the presence of source which derives its strength from a bigger source. The people of Kanthapura are strongly convinced that the 'Big Mountain' and the 'Small Mountain' are there to 'protect' them. This faith signifies their strong instinct for self-preservation. The presence of Gandhi and Moorthy not only provides them with strength but also makes them ready for action. The 'Call' as a code of action reveals their desire to act and thus prove their worth. Their waiting for the 'call' expresses their intense longing to struggle for and seek liberation. The predicament reveals to us the fact that after having realized the cause of their alienation, all the villagers are making a sustained effort to resolve the problems of their existence i.e. refusal to be treated as mere objects before the eye of the Other. They

wish to bring an end to the life of enslavement under the foreign rule which prevents them from realizing their lost identity.

Calling themselves 'pilgrims', they associate themselves with Gandhi and Moorthy. Under the guidance and leadership of the two they hope to attain freedom. Strong sustained optimism not only minimises their fear but also makes them reject the British authority.

III.2.a. Introduction

III.2.a.i. The people do not receive any call for action. The news of Mahatma's arrest creates a furore in the village. The villagers decide to fast and hold bhajans that evening. Men like Vasudev, from the Estate join hands with the people of Kanthapura. Moorthy asks them to begin the "Don't touch the government campaign" which includes picketing the toddy booths, establishment of parallel government, appointment of Range Gowda as patel, and refusal to pay revenue dues to anyone but him. People's eyes are filled with tears for never before has any Harikatha touched them so deeply.

III.2.a.ii. Two days later women march on towards Borna's toddy grove singing songs. One hundred and thirty nine men and women under the guidance of Moorthy refuse

to bow down before the police and march forward amidst cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai'.

III.2.a.iii. The police showers lathis on Pariah Rachanna as he runs to climb a toddy tree. The people remain undeterred by the blows falling on them. Finally the women are left on the roads looking for their husbands and children. Later, they are all taken to the Santur police outpost.

III.2.a.iv. Pariah Rachanna, Lingayya and Potter Sidd-ayya are held while the rest are released. Left in the middle of the jungle the women become scared and Rangamma pacifies them and asks them to march forward, singing. The cartmen agree to take them to Santhapura. They sleep in each other's arms on their way to Santhapura, where Rangamma's cousin gives them a warm welcome. With Imam Khan as their guide they reach Kanthapura and feel as if they have returned from a pilgrimage.

III.2.a.v. The next morning, the women are filled with a sense of achievement. They plant their trophies, five twigs of toddy trees and a toddy pot before the temple. Venkamma remains as unrelenting as ever. Her mocking overtones, however, does not dampen their enthusiasm.

III.2.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.2.b.i. The kernel situation lies in the picketing scene which takes place at Boranna's toddy grove. "Don't

touch the government's campaign is a political code of protest. Mahatma Gandhi's 'arrest' is the kernel semanteme around which the entire action of the people revolves. The people have decided to disobey the rules of the government. The following ensemble reveals the inner state of the mind of the protagonist Moorthy:

"...Brothers and sisters, remember we are not out to fight the white man or the white man's slaves, the police and the revenue officials, but against the demoniac corruption that has entered their hearts, and the purer we are the greater will be our victory, for the victory we seek is the victory of the heart. Send out love where there is hatred, and a smile against brute force like unto the waters of the Himavathy that spread over boulder and sand and crematorium earth" (pp. 125-126).

'White man' signifies corruption and hatred. Moorthy asks the Indians to struggle and fight against hatred and win the heart of the Other i.e. the British government through love. Moorthy propagates Gandhi's doctrine of 'revolution through change of heart'.

Moorthy, alongwith the villagers, decides to defy the policies of the government. Their deciding not to pay taxes to anyone but Range Gowda and making him the patel are the significant codes of rebellion which reveal their desire to break away from the shackles of colonialism.

III.2.b.ii. Moorthy: Pebble

Moorthy has become aware of his insecure existence:

'Brothers, remember, too, I am but a pebble among the pebbles of the river, and when the floods come, rock by rock may lie buried under, and yet there are some that stand out pointed and dry, and it is they that give you a hold for your slippery, seeking feet...'. (p. 126).

'Pebble' as complete signifier not only signifies the insecure existence of Moorthy, but also reveals his sense of nothingness. The signifier 'buries', in opposition with 'stand', 'give' and 'hold' signifies the sense of estrangement. As a result of the ensuing struggle against the British some people would be destroyed for ever. The signifier 'buried' signifies the defeat of certain individuals and their passing into oblivion. On the other hand there would be some who would not only 'stand', but also 'give' and 'hold' the others. 'Slippery, seeking feet' (p. 126) signifies the uncertain existence of the others who need perpetual guidance and encouragement. A feeling of nothingness, emptiness, and desolation has made the protagonist, Moorthy, conscious of his temporary existence. His statement '...my time too will come' (p. 126) reveals the self being torn between doubts and conflicts. On the one hand he is confident of victory and on the other he, as an individual, can be seen alienated from the rest of the village. His autonomy and

existence are always in question. The proposition in comprehension reveals the protagonist as partially divorced from the company of others despite being physically with them.

Moorthy has a differential hierarchy of significance from that of the other people. He realizes that the villagers have put all their trust in him and is uncertain about the retention of this trust. Therefore, he says: "...follow the one who follows me, for he is your chief and the Congress has made him your chief" (p. 126).

The 'waters of Himavathy' as a complete signifier stands for purity and the source of sustenance, for not only does it represent the spirit of the lord but it, also has the power to erase all the dirt and filth from this earth.

III.2.b.iii. Picketing: Defiance, Rejection

As we see one hundred and thirty nine men, women and children marching toward Boranna's toddy grove we realize the influence of Gandhi and Moorthy on them. They resist the 'attack' made on them by the police force:

'...and we deafen ourselves before the onslaught, and we rush and we crawl, and swaying and bending and

crawling and rising, we move on)
and on, and the lathis, rain on us,
and the cartmen have come back....'
(p. 129).

Signifiers 'deafen', 'rush', 'crawl', 'swaying', 'bending', 'crawling', 'rising' and 'rain on us' clearly signify their rejection of the British authority. Picketing Boranna's toddy booth is a major step towards one such rejection. It symbolises their refusal to be dehumanized further. Their 'shrieks' and 'shouts' and 'cries' and 'sobs' juxtaposed with their desire to 'move on' signify the unique predicament of these people. They have been suppressed for too long, and now, they simply refuse to walk back to where they came from. 'Picketing' as a code of action signifies their wish to give up whatever is harmful to their existence.

III.2.b.iv. Trophies: Success, Satisfaction 'Venkamma: Insecurity, Fear

Once the women return to Kanthapura they proudly display their trophies. The following ensemble reveals their pleasure and satisfaction at what they had achieved:

'The next morning, with bell and camphor and trumpet, we planted our trophies before the temple. Five twigs of toddy trees were there, and a toddy pot' (p. 133).

'Trophies' signify the sense of achievement which filled their hearts. 'We planted our trophies before the temple'

(p.133) is a significant religious code. After having achieved success the women go to the temple and place their trophies before the lord. A strong socio-religious code, this action of theirs signifies their deep faith in God without which they feel they could not have attained their goal. Their offering the best they could perform, to Kenchamma, expresses their desire to be in perfect communion with the Goddess. It also reveals their wish to solicit the sanction of the divine.

Venkamma's statement reveals her unconscious state of insecurity, she feels that the world, which she is living in, is in a perfect state of disharmony.

"Look, look, a toddy God have they made of a moon-crowned God" (p. 133). Signifiers 'spat' and 'called' signify her predicament. The proposition in comprehension reveals that her hatred, her words full of vengeance and mockery are a sign of her own insecurity. The argument expresses her desire to preserve her own existence. She has been noticing the changes coming over the village and herself, and being unable to identify with the changes, she discovers that she has been alienated from the entire milieu. Her getting into an argument with Rangamma or the others is a necessity, for, without an argument she feels she would jeopardize her existence.



Each change in society threatens her with a loss of identity and values.

The narrator's statement expresses her sense of satisfaction:

'Yes, yes, sister, we are toddy people ! But we don't marry our daughters to gap-toothed sons-in-law. Nor like Bhatta do we go on Kashi-pilgrimage with toddy contract money. Do we ?' (p. 133).

The marriage of Venkamma's daughter to a 'gap-toothed son-in-law' is made fun of. Bhatta's leaving the village on a pilgrimage, after making money, signifies his strong sense of guilt and insecurity which has forced him to leave his home and settle in alien lands. While in the company of the people of Kanthapura, he was painfully becoming aware of the fact that he would be soon rejected by the Other. Unable to bear this harsh reality he tries to escape. His pilgrimage signifies his strong desire to escape, and the inability to face the real world.

Thus, as the sections proceed, one notices the simple village folk becoming aware of their plight. They are devoting themselves whole heartedly to the cause of freedom. The struggle gains momentum as we see them rejecting the opposing authoritative forces.

III.3.a. Introduction

III.3.a.i. The following Tuesday being a market day in Kanthapura, people get up early and finish their chores. They decide to go picketing toddy shops. On their way several men and women greet them warmly. This is their first visit to the coffee Estate and the place seems to have an aura of mystery around it.

III.3.a.ii. As the men coming in carts hear what Moorthy intends to do they laugh at him. Soon they see maistri coming out of the Estate and following him are the coolies. They are all being marched to Boranna's toddy grove and policemen are walking beside them. Moorthy signals his followers to squat on the ground before the booth.

III.3.a.iii. With the rain, lathi blows too are showered on them. The policemen beat the coolies. Amidst loud cries of "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" more men are heard arriving. Finally, the coolies join the people too and are beaten up by the policemen. As the women and men of Kanthapura plead with the coolies and ask them not to drink, the coolies promise in the name of Kenchamma that they will not. The 'rain still pours on'.

III.3.a.iv. The last part of the section reveals how, except for Seenu, Vasudev, Range Gowda and Nanjamma's husband and Subbu who are taken to prison, the others are

turned back home from the promontory. Moorthy is still with the people. Next morning over 'three and thirty' or more coolies leave the Estate and join the Pariahs in Kanthapura. People pray to Siva to protect them. More and more people now join hands with the Mahatma.

III.3.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.3.b.i. Revenue Collector: Corruption, Cruelty

The existential predicament of the protagonist which makes him so unsure of himself is visible in the beginning of the section itself. The people begin to march on towards the toddy booth with a firm determination. As Moorthy and his followers are heading towards the Estate they meet Betel Lakshamma. She asks them whether they are the soldiers of the Mahatma and Moorthy says, "yes, mother" (p. 134). Her agonising query in the following ensemble, reveals to us the exploitation and the violence inflicted on the common man by the Other:

"Then you'll free us from the revenue collector?" (p. 134).

"Why, Raghavayya, the one who takes bribes and beats his wife and sends his servants to beat us" (p. 134).

Raghavayya, the revenue collector, signifies dishonesty and cruelty. His dishonesty manifests itself in his taking bribe from people while his cruelty is seen in

his acts of beating his wife and sending his servants to beat the others. His actions signify his desperate need in the changing circumstances to dominate others. His resorting to violence reveals the fact that by no other means could he thus gratify himself. The Being of the revenue-collector is manifest in his attitude towards the Other.

III.3.b.ii. Moorthy: Indecision, Sense of Failure

Moorthy's inability to offer full support to the suffering individuals like Lakshamma reveals his sense of failure and the realization of it. His "we are against all tyrants" (p. 134) as an answer, in no way, reveals his strength. When Lakshamma says - "Why, then, come to our village, son, and free us from this childlike monster", (p. 134) here Raghavayya's being called a 'childlike monster' not only classifies him as a heartless being but also suggests what he is from within. The given ensembles reflect Moorthy's weakness as an individual. He refuses to fight without the consent of the Congress: "I shall write to the Congress and if they say yes, I shall come" (p. 134). His source of strength lies not in himself but is derived from the Congress. He seems to be moving in a particular direction where his own individuality would merge itself into a bigger reality i.e. the Congress. His statement - "We shall see" (p. 134) is a confession of his own weakness to take an independent decision. It is also a con-

fusion since it shows the protagonist being caught in a bog. Moorthy realizes that he is fighting a tough battle and it cannot be fought alone.

III.3.b.iii. The socio-political context plays a vital role in the development of characters. In Kanthapura we see Moorthy's unreflective consciousness moving into the reflective consciousness. One also notices that the historical macrocosm and the individual microcosm are dialectically related i.e. there is a constant interaction between the historical progression of socio-political structures and the life and ideas of Moorthy, the individual.

III.3.b.iv. Coolies: Repression, Fear

The coolies coming out of the Estate and marching towards Boranna's toddy grove reveal the existential predicament of the labour class. Living in a state of terror, repression and constant fear they have been completely desensitized:

"their faces dark as mops and their blue skin black under the clouded heavens, and perspiration flows down their bodies and their eyes 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 march towards the toddy booth; 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 their eyes fixed on the earth, and policemen walk beside them, they walk beside the coolies with bulging stomachs and bamboo legs, coolies of the Godaverī 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 hands and sing - they go, the coolies, their money tied to their waists and their eyes fixed on the earth..." (p. 137).

So terror stricken have they become that their "eyes seem fixed to the earth". This statement and the repetition of the phrase "eyes fixed to the earth" reveals the gravity of the situation. For so long have these coolies, both men and women, been tortured and suppressed by the Other i.e. the policemen and the Red-man's government, that they have lost all desire to fight and protest against the atrocities perpetrated them. They do not even possess the strength to look into the 'eyes of the other' for it has nothing but hatred and arrogance in them. The coolies have ceased to exist as human beings not only in the eyes of the Other, but, also in their own eyes. Unable to assert their existence over the Other they live a life of complete repression. So tired and exhausted has their work and life at the Estate made them that they appear completely dehumanized.

The proposition in extension reveals the alienation of the labour class. Fear, estrangement and ignorance have made the coolies unable to realize their worth. The impact of events at home and on the Estate has decomposed them both physically and mentally. They find they are unable to exert themselves to remedy the situation and modify their existence. A feeling of misery and dissatisfaction makes them feel homeless at work and therefore one sees them seeking satisfaction elsewhere. 'The toddy booth' signifies an escape from reality. It is a place where the coolies go to drink, dance and sing and to forget for a while their wretched living hours. It also expresses their desperate need to be themselves. The coolies are being marched to the 'toddy booth' by the policemen. This time they are being compelled to go there. Thus one sees a strong contradiction between what they want and what they are forced to do. There is also an attempt at seeking some sort of relaxation. 'The toddy booth' remains a very complex sign. To the coolies it is a place where they forget themselves and the drudgery of their work. To the maistri and the Red-men it is a well calculated sign which aims at, making the labourers weak, both physically and economically. Their spending the entire money at the booth not only restricts them from going home but also makes them impotent emotionally.

III.3.b.v. Squatting: Protest
Coolies: Resistance

The proposition in comprehension reveals the consequences of the action taken by Moorthy and his followers. Their squatting before the toddy booth is a most vital form of protest. The people bear the lathi blows and yet remain firm. Amidst cries of 'Vande Mataram' and 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai' they march forward pleading to the coolies "Oh don't go, brother! don't go, sister ! - 'oh, don't go, in the name of the Mahatma !" (p. 138). "Do not drink, do not drink, in the name of the Mahatma" (p. 139). Mahatma's name signifies the presence of that potential force which not only enlightens the hearts of men but also guides them in the moment of crisis. The coolies, on having realized the futility of their existence at the Estate, not only fight against the colonial forces but later on, quite a few of them, go and settle with the Pariahs in Kanthapura. Their taking the pledge not to drink is an act of protest: "By Kenchamma's name, we shall not" (p. 139). We see the coolies exerting their consciousness against this fear of the ruler. Picketing is an event, a major step, which has changed them and made them realize their existence as passive beings on the Estate. The coolies, on having realized that to be something they would have to do something, join the followers of Moorthy and Mahatma against the police force. Picketing as an

action not only activates their consciousness but also their thinking. They, therefore, decide to resist the colonial rule.

Their coming and settling in Kanthapura is an essential step towards their rehabilitation as human beings and not mere objects. This choice amounts to a decision to live consciously and struggle against the oppressive forces. They sequester themselves from the Estate in order to be a part of those forces that are trying to reassert themselves against the foreign rule.

III.3.b.vi. Siva: Protection, Faith

The narrator ends the section by telling how the army of Mahatma is increasing in number day by day. Her asking 'Siva' to protect them from peril is a strong sign of faith in the powers of the divine:

'Siva is poison-throated, and yet he is the three-eyed. May the three-eyed Siva protect us...' (p. 140).

'Siva' symbolizes the strength and permanence of the divine. It is this faith of the people in the supreme being, this realization of the supreme being i.e. Siva as a boundless space of consciousness, which instills courage in the hearts of Kanthapurians. Indian religious ethos thus portrays a resolute will not only to know the truth but also to live up to the vision of truth.

III.4.a. Introduction

III.4.a.i. Gaining inspiration from the people of Kanthapura, the people in Rampur, Siddapur and Maddur too begin picketing their respective toddy booths. People sing songs declaring Mahatma as their king. People in Kanthapura wait anxiously for further action. Fasting has become a regular feature. Chandrayya tells them of his life in prison and the change it has brought about in him. He tells them of the city boy who had hoisted high the national flag and was later taken to a solitary cell and was never seen again. Despite being a Brahmin he ate with the non-Brahmins and worked with them.

III.4.a.ii. Seetharammu too narrates the tale of his woe in prison and the way he was ill-treated by the police despite being down with fever. They had to release him after his condition worsened. Moorthy, giving Seetharammu's example, asks people to fight courageously. Soon Boranna, Satanna and Madayya close their toddy shops. The blue paper mentions that twenty-four shops have been closed in Kanthapura. June tax assessments are likely to bring trouble and the people pray to Kenchamma to protect them.

III.4.a.iii. People refuse to pay the revenue dues despite several threats from the police. The police begins beating the Pariah women who protest. Except for a few

men like Rangappa who also pays for Bhatta, Venkamma, Agent Nanjundia, post master Suryanarayan and Shopkeeper Subba Chetty, 'terror stricken Devaru and concubine Chinna the others do not pay their taxes. People hide their jewel and rice thinking that the police force would come looking for them. One fine morning they find that all the roads to Kanthapura are barricaded and policemen are surrounding the entire village. A tall white man, the chief, stands with them.

III.4.a.iv. That afternoon, amidst the beating of drums, a new beadle announces the imposition of one rupee and three pice as punitive tax on each man, woman and child above six, if the revenue dues are not paid. Warning is issued that the ones who create trouble for the government will be sent to prison. Rangamma, Ratna and Moorthy go from house to house at night asking the people to be prepared for the fight that will soon begin. People remain awake the whole night and with dawn comes the sleep.

III.4.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.4.b.i. Picketing: Nonacceptance and Protest

Gandhian movement can be seen becoming a mass movement not only in Kanthapura but also in the nearby areas. People are picketing the toddy shops. Picketing is an elaborate action which people resort to in order to obtain

a particular result. It appears as a sign of protest and non-acceptance. Here 'call to the drinkers' (p. 141) is a signal which pronounces the evils of drinking. The following is a statement in extension, defining the need for giving up drinking:

"Oh, brothers in the name of the Mahatma do not drink, for drinking is bad and the Government profits by your vice and the usurer profits by your debt and your wife goes unclothed and your children unfed and never again will you see a hut and hearth" (p. 142).

Here 'profits', 'unclothed' and 'unfed' are significant codes of action which signify the evils of drinking. Thus the dialectical situation can be seen as questioning the old order and further making an effort to create a new one by asking people to give up drinking.

III.4.b.ii. Songs: Collectivity

Singing songs is a symbolic ritual which signifies collectivity. People in their songs voice their protest and dissatisfaction. They participate in this ritual not as 'individuals' but as a group signifying the coming togetherness of people who have common aspirations:

"The toddy tree is a crooked tree,
And the toddy milk a scorpion milk,
And who is it that uses the scorpion milk, sister?"

And who uses the scorpion milk, sister?
 Why, the wandering witches of the marshes,...
 O king, O king, why won't you come?" (p. 141).

'Singing songs' is a ritual which signifies the need to commune. In the present context its aim is to demonstrate the singleness of purpose of the entire community.

'Toddy' as a complete signifier not only signifies drinking but also the evils attached to it. Picketing as the most significant code of action is an attempt to effect change in the society which has encouraged drinking. Each day is taken as a day of protest. Fasting too becomes a regular phenomenon.

III.4.b.iii. Prison: Self-realization

Many people disobey the government's orders and are taken to prison. Prison does not remain a symbol of fear any more but the people begin taking it as an experience. Inside the prison, men like Chandrayya, Seetharammu or the city boy remain undaunted by the brutal police force. This courageous stance instills strength in the people outside the prison. 'Prison' reveals an attempt of the colonialists to suppress the voice of the others. It also signifies their desire to estrange the strong opposing forces from the midst of the people. Men being put inside the prison is an act of seclusion which brings them closer to their own selves. It signifies self-

realization of the Being. In the worst moment of their existence protagonists like Seetharammu and Chandrayya are forced to go in search of a justification which the world outside the prison cannot provide. They have now begun making a realistic appraisal of their actions and the liabilities of their personality. One can see them becoming aware of the dynamic potentialities of their existence and constructively developing them with a view to gaining freedom.

III.4.b.iv. Revenue Dues: Refusal: Defiance
Sanctum Bell: Warning

People in Kanthapura refuse to pay the revenue dues and this refusal signifies defiance of the authority. Oppressed and alienated individuals of Kanthapura somehow realize that any reconciliation with the government will simply not be possible. 'But day after day, revenue notices fell yellow into our hands, and we said, "Let them do, what they will, we shall not pay our revenues" (p. 144). Their refusal to pay the revenue dues significantly emerges as a strong code of protest. 'Yellow' as a partial sign signifies the ineffectiveness of the threat. Their not paying heed to what the rulers threatened them with is a silent way of condemning the oppression. 'Refusal' is a poly-semantic code which inevitably signifies not mere defiance but also voices the discontent, the

anger and the rejection of one by the other. Men choose to defy the rules imposed by the government and this defiance is their refusal to accept things as they are under the British regime.

Ringing of the 'sanctum bell' is a codified ritual which not only issues warning to the others but also signifies the people's need to come closer to each other during any moment of crisis. It is also a code of action which prepares people for the struggle. It signifies growing awareness in the hearts of men and therefore reveals a strong desire to resist any kind of oppression.

III.4.b.v. Barricades: Suppression

White Man: Authority, Absolute Power

The entire village is barricaded one morning. The police force surrounding the village is an act of suppression of the individuals. By not allowing them to move out of the village the colonial forces try to snap off their contact with the outside forces. An act of complete frustration, it signifies the fear of the Red-man's government and the power to assert itself amidst all odds. The given ensemble shows the gravity of the situation :

'...stones upon stones were piled on the road and tree upon tree was slain and laid beside them, and canal banks

were dug and the water let through, and thorns were laid where cactuses grew and earth was poured over it all, and one, two, three, four, five, six policemen stood behind them, bayonets and bugles in their hands, and for chief had they a tall white man" (p. 145).

Signifiers 'piled', 'slain', 'laid', 'dug', 'let', 'poured' and 'stood' significantly present the proairetic code. This is a code of action which is the outcome of a struggle begun by the others i.e. the Indians. The proposition in comprehension reveals the transfer of power from one to the other. Earlier Bade Khan and other Indians were leading the police force but now the presence of a 'white man' as 'chief' shows who the true oppressor is. 'White man' symbolizes absolute power and authority. Barricading the village and levying of punitive tax on the people are attempts of the colonial forces to crush them.

The only quick and subtle effort expended in order to crush the movement is alienation of the defiant forces from the outer world. Indians now present themselves as a threat to Red-man's existence and identity. Therefore, feeling rather insecure amidst the rebellious spirits, the ruling forces attempt to curb their movement.

III.5.a. Introduction

III.5.a.i. The next morning people discover that the coolies who had joined the Pariahs in Kanthapura, with their hands and arms tied, are forcibly marched back to the Estate. Except for the 'shrieking and weepings and bellowings' of the Pariah women nothing can be heard. They squat on the floor and cry for Moorthy's support. But they also know that he cannot come for he has been arrested at night. Coolies are beaten up badly by the police. Rangappa is one of their victims.

III.5.a.ii. The ones at the promontory could not bear the sight of torture any more and they curse the police. The policemen not only beat the women but also molest them physically. Puttamma becomes a victim of their lust Seethamma too is beaten up. There is commotion every where as the men are nowhere in sight and the policemen resort to violence towards women. The entire village is full of shrieks coming from the Weaver's as well as the the Brahmin street. All their men had been taken away as prisoners while women were fast asleep at night. Amidst sheer confusion Radhamma gives birth to a baby. Ratna escapes from the clutches of a policeman when the other women come to save her at the right moment. Ratna becomes the leader of the women and under her guidance they take refuge in the temple. Bhatta's house is set

on fire by the Pariahs.

III.5.a.iii. Just as Ratna is rushing to get a blanket from Seetharammu's place for Vedamma, who is down with fever, a policeman sees her. She rushes inside the temple and closes the door. After beating the door for some time the policeman puts a lock outside and turns the key. The women begin feeling hungry after sometime. They still have hopes that men from other areas would come to free them. As it grows dark they light the camphor and sing bhajans. Ratna tells them stories of the freedom struggle like Rangamma used to tell them earlier. Radhamma is protected against the chill by the other women, who stay close to her. They spend the night inside the temple and finally when the door opens they find Rachanna's wife Rachi at the threshold. She, on hearing their screams and moans at night, manages to get the key from the Patel's house. By jumping over Satamma's wall and Temple Rangappa's fence she rushes and unlocks the temple door. As they go home they find Karwar road empty and Bhatta's house burnt down.

III.5.a.iv. That morning they hear of Puttamma's plight. She is now in bed and is wailing. Mere words can not console her and she is repressed with feelings of guilt and wrong. Nanjamma then tells the others of the way Siddayya

saved Puttamma from the policemen's clutches. At night women sleep confident that their men are wide awake and not far away from them.

III.5.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.5.b.1. Procession: Dominance and Assertion

Whip: Cruelty and Ruthlessness

A procession of coolies is taken out on the streets by the police. Coolies who had left the Estate and joined the Pariahs in Kanthapura are, forcibly being taken back to the Estate. The following ensemble signifies their helplessness:

"the blue, pot-bellied, half-naked coolies, tied hand to hand and arm to arm - boys, old men, fathers, brothers, bridegrooms, coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate who had come to live with us and to work with us and to fight with us - they marched over the bouldered streets, their blue bodies violet in the glittering sun, and with one policeman to every two men and one armed soldier at the back and one armed soldier at the front, they marched through the Brahmin street and the Weaver's street, and the Potter's street, ... the coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate were marched bent headed through our streets to show who our true masters were, and we knew... they would be pushed behind the gates, for the white master wanted them" (p. 147).

The section in progression reveals the growing indignation towards the ruling forces. The code of action

ranging from 'tied hand to hand', to the more signifying action of their being 'marched over the bouldered streets' to a still more consequential action of their being 'marched bent headed through our streets' implies a definite attempt on the part of the rulers to suppress the identity of the coolies as human beings. Later on their being 'pushed inside the gates' thematizes the connotative code of assertion. In order to remind them as to whose command they ought to follow, the colonial forces punish the coolies.

The signifiers 'true masters' and 'the white master' signify assertion and the strong desire to dominate. By forcing them out of the village, the rulers are trying to set a limit to what the coolies being can become.

'Whip' as a complete signifier signifies the ruthlessness of the rulers. Their being whipped is a sign of cruelty. So averse to any kind of rebellion have these masters become, that they use every possible means of repressing the action of the coolies.

The arrest of the men at night is a strong code of action which connotes the feelings of fear and insecurity which is growing in the hearts of the Red-men. In trying to escape from the Estate the coolies not only try to seize their freedom but also refuse to be subser-

vient. This refusal infuriates the Red-men, who, unable to bear defeat, first arrest the men of Kanthapura at night and the next morning physically force the coolies out of the village. 'Whip' appears as a tool in their hands with which they try and suppress the actions of the others.

Violence becomes an end in itself in the hands of the colonial forces. Through sheer force one sees the Other generating fear in the coolies. Coolies are being treated as slaves. There lies a conceptual opposition between the two forces posited by absolute power: complete equality; absolute independence; abject dependence. On one side are the rulers i.e. the white-man's government who desires complete surrender from the coolies and therefore forcibly tries to take them back to the Estate. On the other side are the coolies, who, after having defied the rulers of the Estate, had, in order to realize their desire to be free joined the Pariahs in Kanthapura and begun a life of their own.

There is a constant juxtaposition of conflicts and desires which gives rise to the development of tension in this particular section.

III.5.b.ii. Women: Resistance

The arrest of men, beating up of coolies and the women results in a further serious action. Unable to bear

the torture of their people any more, even the Brahmin women join the Pariah women in the struggle. Their accusing the police of being "Butchers, butchers, dung-eating curs !" (p. 148). signifies their wish to condemn all oppressive forces. The women are actively fighting against the external forces. Puttamma resists all attacks from the policeman i.e. the external force but is filled with an inner sense of guilt. The pain which she has been subjected to makes her weak.

The policemen, by inflicting physical wounds on the women, try to assert their superiority. Physical molestation of the young women takes place. Amidst this confusion Radhamma gives birth to a child. Birth of the child is significant of the fact that the struggle would not end with these women but future generations are also being brought forth to carry the struggle later on in life.

Ratna escapes from the clutches of a policeman just in time. Her escape signifies not only the desire to carry the struggle further, but, also the emergence of Ratna as a leader of the women. She strikes us as someone who is too firm in her project and, by refusing to exist on terms dictated by the others, she asserts the individuality of the Being.

Women later take shelter in the temple and are locked up inside the temple by the policeman. They, despite being in a state of absolute isolation, do not give up hope. Their lighting the sacred flame and singing bhajans is a ritual which signifies the strong religious bond which has brought them closer to each other. Their clapping and singing in a moment of complete seclusion and repression signifies their wish to be one with God. Singing of bhajans not only provides them with strength but also a hope that they would soon be freed. Their patience is rewarded and the next morning Rachanna's wife Rachi manages to get the key and sets them free from the temple.

The women in Kanthapura, collectively or individually, fight against a common enemy i.e. the British. They had earlier lived lives confined to their homes but soon we notice a change coming over them. On having realized their actual state of existence, they struggle to fight against the colonial forces. Absence of their men from the scene fills them with the desire to carry the struggle forward.

III.5.b.iii. Puttamma: Anger, Guilt and Fear

Violence is inflicted on 'Puttamma'. Unable to overcome the feeling of guilt and fear which has gripped her, one sees her completely shattered after the incident:

"She had fits and fears and tearing angers, she asked for her child and pressed it to her heart and threw it over the bed, saying, "I am not your mother, the earth is your mother, your father is your father - I have sinned" (p. 156).

This conviction that she has sinned fills her with remorse and guilt. The memory of the physical pain inflicted on her by the policeman is still fresh in her mind. The sinister consequences of her rape by the policeman leave her completely shaken and disillusioned with life. The struggle which she is undergoing within her inner self has not only torn her to pieces but also made her a sinner in her own eyes. So full of remorse has the individual become that no words console her. The trouble with Puttamma is that her consciousness has been full of contradictions. Her having been subjected to violence is a central cause of her frustration. Her feelings of guilt doom her to live with her fears and apprehensions. To her there seems to be no way out and she disowns her child.

The section ends on a note of faith which lets the women fall asleep:

"And when the beds were laid and the eyelids wanted to shut, we said, "Let them shut", for we knew our men were not far and their eyelids did not shut" (p. 156).

The above ensemble expresses the faith women have in their men. This realization that they are not alone in their struggle for freedom keeps the will to fight in them alive and is enough to console their hearts.

III.6.a. Introduction

III.6.a.i. Three days later, policemen along with the white-men come to Kanthapura, and they begin to auction the lands of the farmers. Satamma blames Moorthy for creating problems in Kanthapura. Despite her reluctance she decides to go with the other women to Ratna's house. Ratna is now living at Sami's place. Rangamma's house has been locked and sealed. The women are confident that the city boys would be there to win back their houses. Their hearts heave with joy as they find that several men who had been imprisoned are back home. The city boys too come to protest against the auctioning of lands. They speak of the way shops are closed, and bonfires lit and Khadi sold in different cities. The Gandhian movement has spread all over India) and the people are, willing to accept only the Congress and the Mahatma as their ruler.

III.6.a.ii. Slight resentment and loss of hope is visible in the people's attitude towards Satyanarayan Puja. But finally they ask the Mahatma and Moorthy to forgive

them and prepare themselves for the fight. They prepare for the procession with gusto. There are several people of Kanthapura who come for the auction. As the land is sold off people are gripped with a feeling of having lost something precious.

III.6.a.iii. Ratna blows the conch and invites people for the Puja. They take out a procession singing songs, but are surrounded by policemen from all sides. Despite the lathi blows, they are undeterred. Finally they march towards the Skeffington barricades singing songs and with flags in their hands. The entire crowd goes out of the police's control. They shoot in the air to frighten the people. Despite warnings, the people, along with the city boys, march on towards the Estate. Coolies keep on 'cutting the harvest' with their heads bent. All of a sudden, the coolies too join the movement and are seen running with flags in their hands towards the barricaded Estate. Skeffington coolies from the city also stop work, and amidst 'yells and growls and gun shots' people march on. The tension has mounted to such an extent that it is difficult to cool down. People are scattered all over and can be seen looking for their kith and kin.

III.6.a.iv. The next time the attack begins from the people's side and shots can be heard being fired at

night. The boys refuse to bow down before the government flag and shout 'Inquilab Zindabad'. Several men are shot by the police. People of Kanthapura desperately keep on looking for Moorthy but he is nowhere to be seen. They reach the village gate moaning and weeping and find several others there. The entire village fields are set on fire by the women and they run away from the village and reach Maddur. Maddur people provide them with food and shelter. Leaving the wounded with the people of Maddur they cross the Beda hills and the Ghats and settle down in Kashipura.

III.6.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.6.b.i. The novel reaches its climax as we see the women along with the men of Kanthapura and city boys preparing for a procession. The auctioning of the lands by the white-men in Kanthapura signifies the assertion of power of the strong over the weak. The people of Kanthapura protest against the Red-man's government by refusing to pay the revenue dues to the new Patel. The Red-man's government punishes the people for this breach of law. Their lands are auctioned and the people look on helplessly. The conflict grows in the minds of the individuals and some of them start blaming Moorthy. Satamma's disgust is visible in her plans to go away from Kanthapura and settle in a town. "She said she had done nothing

and she was not a Gandhi person and it was all this Moorthy, this Moorthy who had brought all this misery upon us" (p. 158). The proposition in extension reveals that people are not holding themselves responsible for all the trouble which has been taking place in Kanthapura. The entire blame has been put on Moorthy and Gandhi. Satamma is caught in a dilemma. She wants to get away from trouble and has no faith in Ratna. On the other hand one can see her reconciling to the situation. Earlier she had refused to go to Ratna's house saying, "What, to that bangled widow? She will lead us all to prostitution, and I am not going to have my daughters violated... (p. 158). 'Bangled Widow' as a complete signifier signifies the status of a widow in society. Despite being a 'widow' she wore 'bangles' which is a sign of breaking away from tradition. Finally Satamma agrees to go to her place 'All right, I'll come' (p. 158). Her reconciling to the situation is a sign of acceptance despite her unwillingness. She accepts it not because she is willing but due to the fear of the police 'for she knew there were barricades and policeman at every foot path and cattle path' (p. 158). As the news of the city boys coming to help them reaches their ears, the women feel elated. The news of the Gandhian movement having spread all over the country and the Indians being tortured and arrested by the

police shakes them. Gandhi's magic has not worn out and they feel that one day they will be able to win over the enemy through their love and prayers.

III.6.b.ii. Puja: Strength, Sustenance and Protest
Auctions: Estrangement

The people in Kanthapura pray regularly. 'Prayer' as a complete signifier stands for strength and sustenance and builds up courage in the hearts of the villagers. Conflict goes on in the minds of the villagers. A disillusionment can be seen creeping in and they are observed struggling with their own selves. They are questioning their actions:

"...of what use all this Satyanarayan Puja - and all these Moorthy's prayers - and that widowed Ratna's commands. Prayers never paid revenue dues. Nor would the rice creep back to the granary. Nor fire consume Bhatta's promissary notes. Mad we were, daughters, mad to follow Moorthy. When did Kenchamma ever refuse our three morsels of rice - or the Himavathy the ten handfuls of water?..."(p. 161).

This doubt and the fear of leaving their homes makes them realize the futility of their past actions "...we are not cattle to leave our homes and our fires and the sacred banks of the Himavathy" (p. 161). The fear of being rendered homeless has become too strong in them. But so committed are they to Gandhian ideology that backing out of it would be a sign of betrayal.

"...But some strange fever rushed up from the feet, it rushed up and with it our hair stood on end and our ears grew hot and something powerful shook us from head to foot, like Shamoo, when the Goddess had taken hold of him; ...such a terror took hold of us, that we put the water jugs on our hips, and we rushed back home, trembling and gasping with the anger of the Gods... Moorthy forgive us ! ...we shall go. Oh, we shall go to the end of the pilgrimage like the two hundred and fifty women of Bombay. We will go like them, we will go!

Men will come from the city, after all, to protect us ! we will go..."
(pp. 161-162).

This realization that they are not alone in the struggle for freedom, but several women from other areas too are fighting for their rights, instills courage in them. They seek forgiveness from Goddess Kenchamma. As a symbolic act it reveals the trust which they have bestowed on their deity. They derive strength from the fact that men from the city would come to protect them.

The women prepare for the 'Satyanarayan Puja'. 'Satyanarayan Puja' as a complete signifier stands for protest. Men from the city had started coming for the auction. The predicament of the people has placed them in a dilemma. So deeply attached are they to their lands that the thought of separation is unbearable to them. The proposition in extension reveals that they have come

to accept the painful truth. They know that their lands will be taken away from them soon and they will have no claim over their property.

The farmers to whom the land belonged have not been able to claim the land as their own because of their refusal to pay the revenue dues to the government. Absolute power lies in the hands of the government. It exercises this power by auctioning the lands without consulting its owners. The real owners of the land are not the people but the state i.e. the government. Freedom from the oppression of the state is possible only when the British rule is over.

To these simple village folks 'land' is not only a symbol of 'Laxmi' i.e. wealth, but also prosperity and well-being. To an Indian farmer land is a sacred ancestral heritage, which passes on from generation to generation. Giving up the land is not only an act of sacrilege but also a sign of being rendered homeless. The villagers who have joined hands with the Gandhian movement try and console themselves by saying: "only a Pariah looks at the teeth of dead cows. What is lost is lost, and we shall never again look upon our fields and harvests" (p. 162). By dint of sheer courage, in spite of a deep-seated feeling of resentment towards the British, they

accept the truth. One can see a real conflict going on in the minds of the villagers. On one hand, they regret having lost their lands and on the other, they try to overpower their love for the land by showing a greater love for the nation. They are filled with remorse for those who have joined hands with the British and come for the 'auction'.

There is another set of people in Kanthapura who do not join the movement but live secluded lives. To them the extension of property is the only form of prestige. Their desire for material gains drives them to participate in the auctions. This becomes, in a sense, a betrayal of the masses by them. The ruling class has successfully lured them with promises of material gains. The dominant interest of a few members like Bhatta, Rangappa, Agent Nanjundia appears to be profit and expansion of power while that of the Pariahs working in the fields is a better treatment and adequate, timely wages.

III.6.b.iii. Slogans, Song: Protest and Hope

A procession is taken out by the enthusiastic people in Kanthapura. The religious procession signifies the Indian reality. It reveals the way religion becomes a potential force in their lives, through which they try and achieve freedom. The 'religious procession' taken

out in the name of 'Satya Narain Maharaj' signifies protest, resentment, faith and hope of the people. In a village where few own and rule, while the rest are owned and ruled, the struggle becomes intense. The 'police', being a representative of absolute power, does not allow them to move further. Religious fervour changes and is transformed into the present reality. Instead of chanting God's name, 'Vande Mataram' and 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai' are the main slogans. The city boys too join the procession: "City boys with floating skirts and Gandhi caps, and they swarmed around us like veritable mother elephants around their young" (p. 165). The villagers feel protected in the company of the city boys. There is a bond of mutual interest, an affirmation that empowers and enhances their existence. Cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai' and 'Vande Mataram', 'Inquilab Zindabad' fill the air and the people march forward towards Skeffington Coffee Estate which has been barricaded. Such cries create a complex sign situation. It leads people towards one goal i.e. the attainment of freedom. As a communicative sign it indicates some kind of action is required. As a moralizing agent, this tool i.e. national songs gives rise to shared meanings and it serves common values. Such cries are necessary for they define and give direction to the villager's actions. The policemen stand blocking their way and despite having been given a warning, the people march

forward fearlessly. The women are beaten up and bruised in a scuffle "...we whirl in shrieks and shouts and yells, and we leap into the harvests. And a first shot is shot into the air"(p. 168). Violence means conflict. As we see the proposition in comprehension we can notice the way violence takes place in Kanthapura. The villagers are not allowed to march across the fields for they are no more their owners. As the boys protested, "The fields are ours", and the soldiers said, "The fields are bought, you pigs", a farmer's voice raises and he says "It's we who have put the plough to the earth and fed her with water" (p. 168). The entire crowd marches forward and refuses to disperse. Thus we can see that the conflict leads to struggle. Passing from Bhatta's fields they march towards the Estate, confident that, "the Skeffington coolies will not let us down" (p. 169). The struggle becomes violent as the city coolies stop their work, and the Skeffington coolies march forward with flags in their hands. Braving the attack, the Skeffington coolies join the struggle ensued by the people of Kanthapura. The people struggle collectively because they have been thwarted for long by the government and now their only objective is to fight for liberation. The women march forward too and are badly wounded. They all march with flags in their hands. There is utter chaos and commotion as shots are fired in the air. The people have all disper-

sed. Moorthy, Ratna and others are nowhere to be seen. '...There seems to be not a beating pulse in Kanthapura' (p. 173) suggests the fact that the village is now completely surrounded by the police and white-men.

The attack begins from both sides. The men's refusal to accept the British rule instigates the latter to resort to violence. The Indians refuse to bow down before the 'Union Jack'. Instead, several of them try to hoist their national flag. This violation of law results in violence:

'And men are kicked and, legs tied to hands and hands tied to legs, they are rolled into the canal, and the waters splash and yells rise up, "Help, Help, Ammayya"...' and a bayonet is thrust at one and he falls, and again through the night rises the lamentation, "Ammayya - he's gone - he's gone, Moorthappa",... (p. 175).

The women along with the men creep out through the village and at the village gate several others join them. Thus we can see that the entire struggle is rooted in the disposition of men to affirm their individuality and cooperative powers in their common interests and their hope for a better future i.e. Swaraj. The struggle is not only for the present but also for the future. We can see the oppressed men, women and coolies unite to remove power from the hands of foreigners, thus undertaking to guard and preserve the roots of human morality.

The predicament reveals the fact that the villagers know that they have been uprooted from their lands. "Who will ever set foot again in this village?" (p. 176) reveals the existential predicament. Their refusal to bow down has led to violence and conflict: "Even if you want to, the police are not your uncles' sons, are they? For every house and byre is now attached" (p. 176). The entire village is guarded by the police.

III.6.b.iv. Fire: Extinction

As more and more wounded are brought out, the people start moving out of the village. Rachanna's wife Rachi's reaction reveals her anguish and anger:

"...she spits once, twice, thrice toward the Bebbur mound, and once, twice, thrice at the village gate, and she rushes towards the Pariah lines, and Lingamma and Madamma and Boramma and Siddamma follow her, crying, "To the ashes, you wretch of a village!" and they throw their bodices and their sari-fringes on the earth and they raise a bonfire beneath the tamarind tree, and they light this thatch and that thatch, and we cry out, "our houses, our houses", and they say, "Go, ye widows, don't you see the dead and the dying?" and more and more men and women go this side and that and say, "If the rice is to be lost let it be lost in the ashes," and granary and byre and haylofts are lighted" (p. 176).

This action reveals the fact that violence and conflict lead to total disgust. This wish for the extinction of the village and the crops signifies the desire of

the people to destroy what is no more their own. As a sign of protest it reveals their pain, their sense of having lost what they had produced.

This alienation of life is painfully felt. People like Rachi feel estranged from their own product i.e. the rice crops. Setting the houses and the crops on 'fire' signifies their total disillusionment with the entire ruling class. They feel that no one else should benefit from their toil. They are filled with a sense of satisfaction as they see that what could not belong to them would also not be consumed by the others. It also reveals the powerlessness, the sense of being uprooted and disoriented from their own land and village.

'The shots are fired in the air'. Both the 'burning fire' and the 'gun shots' as signifiers stand for complete extinction. The desire of one to destroy the other is inherent in their actions. Groups of men, women and children march on from Kanthapura to Maddur. After having left the wounded there, they proceed from Maddur to the Ghats:

"...we walked down to the banks of the Cauvery. Across it was Mysore State, and as dawn broke over the hissing river and the jungles and the mountains, we dipped in the holy river and rose, and men came to greet us with trumpet and bell and conch, ...They hung garlands on our necks, and called us the

pilgrims of the Mahatma. Then we ate and we slept, and we spoke and we slept, and when they said, "stay here, sisters", we said, "We'll stay, sisters", and we settled down in Kashipura' (pp. 177-178).

The section thus ends on a note of stability. The narrator Achakka along with some others has settled down in Kashipura. Thus we can see the people are collectively opposed to what hinders and destroy them.

The police and the Red-man's government are bent on annihilation of all those who stand against them. The people of Kanthapura are aroused and awakened to a new critical consciousness and practical activity by the fetters of their oppression. They struggle to destroy the crippling and dehumanizing contradictions in their lives. They are driven by an instinctive and socially produced desire to be free from the British and thus realize themselves as individuals capable of independent thought and action.

III.7.a. Introduction

III.7.a.i. The coming Dasara will make it a year and two months since all this happened, and yet, things here are as they were in Kanthapura. The section opens giving the time which has passed ever since the movement took place in Kanthapura. Some people have shifted from the village

to Kashipura. Seethamma and her daughter Nanja live at Shanbhog Chikkanna's house and Chikkanna is searching a Mysore B.A. groom for Nanja. Nanjamma is staying alone in temple Vishveshvarayya's house. Pariah Rachanna's wife Rachi is staying at Patel Chandrayya's house. The narrator Achakka and Timmamma are living in Jodidar seetharamaiah's house and are treated warmly. Timmamma prepares pancakes for the children whereas Achakka tells stories to them.

In the afternoons Temple Vishwanath's son Shamu reads out the Upanishads. Rangamma is to be released soon. Seenu has been sent to another jail. Ratna received a year's imprisonment. Moorthy's letter to Ratna reveals his loss of hope. His faith has been restored in Nehru. Ratna leaves for Bombay after her release from the prison. All the women are for the Mahatma and have faith in him.

III.7.a.ii. Only Range Gowda had gone back to Kanthapura and one day he comes to meet them in Kashipura. He speaks of the way the entire village has been destroyed. New houses are being constructed by the men from Bombay. Bhatta has sold his lands and left for Kashi. He says that he had sought the blessings of Kenchamma and asked her to protect all of them: '...But to tell you the truth, mother, my heart it beat like a drum'.

III.7.b. Analysis of the Problematics

III.7.b.1. Dasara: Victory

The concluding section narrates the way people leave Kanthapura and settle in other areas. The movement's aftermath has left not a soul in Kanthapura. It has been a year and two months since the trouble began. 'Dasara', has come. 'Dasara', one of the most important festivals celebrated in India, is symbolic of the victory of Rama over Ravana i.e. good over evil. Some people from Kanthapura have settled in Kshipura. Nanjamma is staying alone at Temple Vishveshwarayya's house and the narrator is confident that even now she has not been able to give up her old devious ways. Pariah Rachanna's wife Rachi has settled at Patel Chandrayya's house. Her daughter's marriage to Kotwal Kirita's son would take place as soon as the girl's father is out of prison. The narrator, along with Timmamma, is staying at Jodidar Seetharamiah's house. The proposition in extension reveals that people have adjusted well outside Kanthapura. But the oppression has not ended since their men are still in jail.

Their religious fervour prevails in a new form even in Kshipura. Women hear the 'Upanishads' from Temple Vishwanath's son, although he is not as good as Ramakrishnayya. Listening to 'Upanishads' signifies that women's interest in Indian philosophy is still alive.

They are trying to retain the best traditions of Kanthapura. Rangamma is to be released soon. The narrator Achakka's son had fought vehemently against the oppression by going on hunger strikes and raising cries of 'Vande Mataram'. Therefore he is sent to a northern jail and his term is extended for another six months.

III.7.b.ii. Jail: Oppression and Denial

Truce: Submission

'Hunger strike' and 'Vande Mataram' are not just tools in Seenu's hands but they signify a certain purpose and direction in life. Thus the Gandhian movement emerges as a movement of the common man and his wish to abolish the present state of things. An extension of Seenu's punishment for another six months is a sign of oppression. Seenu is sent to a northern jail. 'Northern jail' stands for attempt on the part of the government to suppress the voice of Seenu.

The British government denies him freedom, self-expression and a right to exist as an independent being. They are afraid of his strength and power. Therefore he is sent to a 'Jail'. 'Jail' signifies repression and a desire of one to control and overpower the other. Not only Seenu but Rangamma, Ratna, Moorthy and the others who fought for their rights are thus put into prison. Ratna after being released from the prison comes back and

narrates tales of torture. The opposition here signifies the acceptance of British rule versus the rejection, or the acceptance of authority versus the defiance of authority. Inside the prison they are beaten up and forced to 'salute the Union Jack' (p. 180). This reveals the proliferation of crimes inside the jail. The Red-man's government has failed in its efforts to achieve the people's confidence and therefore has to take recourse to fighting out the differences with physical force. Beating the people signifies an attempt to deny and destroy the power to protest in man. Mahatma Gandhi has finally made a 'truce' with the Viceroy according to which the peasants would pay back their revenues and the young men would not boycott the toddy shops.

'Truce' signifies an attempt to establish peace and order in society. As we examine the proposition in comprehension we find that 'truce' is not merely an attempt on the part of Gandhi to maintain peace but is an act of submission. Earlier their refusal to pay revenue dues and picketing the toddy shops had been a sign of resentment, an attempt to destroy the prevailing order which had led to the suppression of the other beings. Submission here sets in a vague defiance as is visible in the next statement of the narrator "...and everything they say, will be as before. No sister, no, nothing can

ever be the same again. You will say we have lost this, you will say we have lost that" (p. 180).

Not even the signing of the pact with the Viceroy could resolve the predicament. People have become more alive and conscious of their surroundings after the movement. Their way of thinking and reasoning out has undergone a complete transformation. The women of Kanthapura are no more confined to the kitchen but have started reflecting on what should be and what is. This newly developed consciousness has made them realize the fact that things could never be the same. Even the Mahatma's assurance could not stem the tide. The following statement reveals their sense of achievements:

"Kenchamma forgive us, but there is something that has entered our hearts, an abundance like the Himavathy on Gauri's night, when lights some floating down from Rampur and Maddur and Tippur, lights lit on the betel leaves, and with flower and kumkum and song we let them go, and they will go down the Ghats to the morning of the sea, the lights on the betel leaves, and the Mahatma will gather it all, he will gather it by the sea, and he will bless us. They have burnt our dead, too, by the Himavathy, and their ashes too have gone out to the sea" (p. 180).

A sense of achievement combined with an awareness of their present state of repression and the faith in Kenchamma, has given them hope and generated their trust

in the Mahatma: "...But there is something that has entered our hearts" (p. 180). "They have burnt our dead too, by the Himavathy, and their ashes too have gone out to the sea" (p. 180). The above ensemble signifies the Hindu tradition. After death the body is burnt to ashes and then thrown into the river so that all that which is temporary is destroyed for ever. The soul passes out from the body into the realms of eternity. 'Ashes' here signify the impermanence and the illusory reality of human life.

'Sea' as a complete signifier stands for permanence, vastness, open heartedness and purity. The 'sea' accepts everything which comes to it and is eternal. Even the 'ashes' of the dead 'have gone out to the sea' and merged into the unknown.

III.7.b.iii. Moorthy: Disillusionment and Despair Masters: Oppression and Dominance

Moorthy is one of the prisoners released after the pact with the Viceroy has been signed. "You know, sister, Moorthy is no more with us" (p. 180) reveals that he has gone far away from his own people. His letter to Ratna reveals the existential predicament. Moorthy's disillusionment, his anguish, loss of hope and despair are visible in his words -

"...they all say the Mahatma is a noble person, a saint, but the English will know how to cheat him, and he will let himself be cheated. Have faith in your enemy, he says, have faith in him and convert him. But the world of men is hard to move, and once in motion it is wrong to stop till the goal is reached" (p. 180).

His faith in Gandhian idealism somehow seems crushed for he has realized that the authorities are ruthless and cunning. 'But the English will know how to cheat him, and he will let himself be cheated' (p. 180). The opposition between the Mahatma and the English signifies the écart between innocence and wickedness. It is manifest from the way English have successfully tried to cheat Gandhi and he has allowed himself to be cheated by them.

Acceptance and rejection are the two opposing forces. Morthy has started analysing Gandhi's idealism and he feels that "...the world of men is hard to move, and once in motion it is wrong to stop till the goal is reached" (p. 180).

These signifying ensembles reveal his reflections on freedom:

"And yet what is the goal? Independence? Swaraj? Is there not Swaraj in our states, and is there not misery and corruption and cruelty there?" (p. 180). The

protagonist realizes that the entire system of living has to change. The 'goal' here signifies the aim in life. The struggle which has ensued is not merely a struggle for freedom or Swaraj, but has a deeper connotation. He sees the socio-historical contradictions which are responsible for man's oppression even in states where Indians are the rulers. He has realized that mere attainment of Independence from the British rule would not solve their predicament. Misery, corruption and cruelty have always been there, in the lives of ordinary people. But as long as oppression exists in one form or the other, absolute freedom would remain a dream.

The protagonist's statement reveals the conditions responsible for such a state of existence:

"Oh no, Ratna, it is the way of the masters that is wrong. And I have come to realize bit by bit, and bit by bit, when I was in prison, that as long as there will be iron gates and barbed wires round the Skeffington Coffee Estate, and the city cars that can roll up the Bebbur mound and gaslights and coolies cars, there will be Pariahs and poverty" (pp. 180-81).

Moorthy's stay in prison has given a new dimension to his thinking. This is already revealed in his earlier statement. 'Prison' not only has stood for oppression but has created a new consciousness and an awareness.

There is a strong defiance directed towards the 'masters'. This realization that 'it is the way of the masters', (p. 180) which is responsible for misery and corruption on earth comes forth as a shock. As long as there are people living in 'barbed wires' on the Estate there would be oppression. 'Barbed wires' signify chains and suffering. Coolies living on the Estate are surrounded by 'barbed wires'. They have not been able to live and act according to their wishes. Their very existence is controlled by the Other, thus leading to an estrangement. There exists an écart between their lives and the lives of men controlling their existence. City cars: coolie cars.

'City cars' signify the authoritative and dominating attitude of the masters, coming from cities, to rule the coolies. 'Coolie cars' signify the oppressed class who has lived under the domination of its masters. The 'Pariahs' and 'poverty' signify the weak and oppressed. The Pariahs and poverty would exist in society as long as there is a disparity between the ruler and the ruled.

III.7.b.iv. Nehru: Equality and Change

The protagonist's loss of hope is not complete. There is a ray of hope in what he says later:

"Ratna things must change. Jawaharlal will change it. You know Jawaharlal is like a Bharatha to the Mahatma, and he too, is for non-violence and he, too,

is a satyagrahi, but he says, in Swaraj there shall be neither the rich nor the poor. And he calls himself an 'equal distributionist', and I am with him and his men..." (p. 181).

Moorthy has taken it for granted that change alone would free them. He feels that Jawaharlal would be capable of bringing in such a change. 'Change' here signifies the breaking away from old shackles of oppression and leading one towards new horizons. 'Jawaharlal' as a potential force stands for strength, tenacity and equality. He is a symbol of all that is lacking in others. A representative of India, he has been compared to 'Bharatha' in the freedom movement. For, like 'Bharatha' who ruled Ayodhya during the absence of Rama, Nehru would guide the people, following the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. The protagonist Moorthy feels that until there was an equal distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor, things would remain as bad as ever. The ruling class must realize that the disparity among the masses is the cause of all trouble. Thus one can see him trying to trace the root cause of all misery and poverty. The predicament can be related to Marx's concept of "alienated labour" where he says in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 :

"If the product of labour does not belong to the worker, if it confronts him as an alien power, then this can only be because

it belongs to some other man than the worker. If the workers activity is a torment to him, to another it must give satisfaction and pleasure. Not the gods, not nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over man".¹

Thus we see that the problem has been created by men and only a collective effort on their part would resolve their predicament. 'Nehru' becomes his leader and Moorthy's hopes are pinned on him.

Soon Ratna leaves for Bombay, Rangamma is yet to be released from the prison. The narrator's statement: 'we are all for the Mahatma' (p. 181) reveals her confidence in Gandhi. The ensembles express the confidence of people in Gandhi:

"He will bring us Swaraj, the Mahatma. And we shall all 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 Bharatha will go to meet them with the worshipped sandal of the Master on his head. And as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers.

Like Bharatha, we worship the sandals of the brother saint" (p. 181). The narrator along with the others, has confidence in Gandhi. Despite the destruction and the tensions which result due to the Gandhian movement

in Kanthapura one sees that a ray of hope for a better future is still burning bright.

'Gandhi' has been compared to 'Rama' the Hindu God who had freed his wife 'Sita' from the demon 'Ravana'. 'Sita' stands for purity and innocence. 'Sita' here symbolizes the motherland i.e. India. The demon who has captured Sita or the motherland is signified by the British. The British stand for suppression and evil. The village women have faith that, like Rama the figure of Gandhi would save them from evil and a day would come when they would all be free. 'Swaraj' signifies the rule of the people and not of an individual. 'Chariot' signifies the seat of victory on which Gandhi would reside with his country. Bharatha would welcome him. 'Bharatha' signifies the presence of a young ruler who would take care of the people. 'Ayodhya' stands for the motherland. 'And then there will be a rain of flowers' (p. 181).

'Rain of flowers' here signify the welcoming hands of people who would greet the victorious Gandhi. 'Flowers' are a sign of life, contentment and happiness. 'Rain of flowers' symbolizes the hope for a betterment of future once freedom is attained.

III.7.b.v. Kanthapura: Desertion and Destruction

Range Gowda is the only one who goes back to Kanthapura. This indicates the fact that the village has

been completely deserted by the people. His wife Lakshmi too has come to Kashipura and is now staying with Patel Chenna Gowda's family: "You are one of our community, come in and stay with us all this life and all the lives to come, sister!" (p. 181). The statement reveals the brotherly feeling that the Indians have for the people of their own community and it enables them to help each other in times of distress. Range Gowda's arrival at Kashipura takes place one evening: "There's a tall man at the door, and he's frightening to look at", (p. 181) said the children. His physical appearance reveals his inner state of mind and is manifested by a signifying ensemble: 'and he was now lean as an areca nut tree' (p. 181). His statement after he comes back from Kanthapura: "could'nt leave, till I had drunk three handfuls of Himavathy water", (p. 182) reveals his faith in God. 'Himavathy' is a symbol of purity and strength to the people of Kanthapura. Two contradictory situations emerge as we read the narrator's statement: 'but he had gone to tell you the truth, to dig out his jewels,..." (p. 182). This statement betrays Range Gowda's love for money and wealth. The signifier 'his jewels' signifies the wealth which Range Gowda had accumulated as a patel and found difficult to part with. The narrator's comment reveals the real motive behind his visit to Kanthapura. Range Gowda further describes how the corner-house had fallen

and several other people's houses destroyed. "All said in a knot, he concluded, 'there's neither man nor mosquito in Kanthapura!... (p. 182).

Man and mosquito signify life and action which are absent in Kanthapura. The entire village has been deserted by its people. The whole place is now empty, permeated with a sense of loneliness.

III.7.b.vi. Bhatta: Escape

Kashi: Holiness and Money

The people from Bombay have come over to nearby areas like Bebbur mound and are building houses like the ones in the city. The revelation of the fact that the owners of the land, after having been estranged from their property, are uprooted whereas infiltration of the foreigners i.e. men from city has begun. Men like Bhatta and Maddur Chenayya have sold their lands. Bhatta leaves Kanthapura and settles in Kashi: 'In Kashi, for every hymn and hiccup you get a rupee' (p. 182). Bhatta, being a moneylender thought always in terms of profit. His settling in Kashi is symbolic of his desire to hide from his people. He is gripped with complexes and therefore does not support his own people and prefers settling in an alien land. 'Kashi', a religious city, is a symbol of holiness, purity and redemption.

The opposition is signified by the fact that while on one hand it is a place of holiness where people go to

purify their souls, on the other its being a religious centre also makes it a money minting place where priests are paid heavily by pilgrims. Bhatta's motive is therefore two-sided - both purification and material gains. Venkamma settling at her son-in-law's house is another form of escape. Concubine Chinna is the only one left in Kanthapura 'to lift her leg to her new customers' (p. 182) shows her low status in society.

III.7.b.vii. Heart: Drum: Life and Action

Range Gowda's seeking Kenchamma's blessings is symbolic of his faith in God which has remained alive. His spitting 'three times to the west and three times to the east' (p. 182) signifies the Indian way of expressing disgust. 'But to tell you the truth, mother, my heart it beat like a drum' (p. 182).

The last sentence in the novel which is spoken by Range Gowda reveals the existential predicament. The struggle which had begun against the oppressors still continues. Despite the fact that the village has been deserted and destroyed completely, one can see that the desire to struggle is still alive in the characters of the novel. '...my heart it beat like a drum' (P. 182) reveals the pulsating force, i.e. life, which is still alive. Beating of the 'heart' like a 'drum' signifies the presence of hope, action and the strength to fight in

Range Gowda. Though Range Gowda has been left homeless like the other Kanthapurians in this struggle for freedom, yet he is full of hope and courage. This confrontation between the Being and the Other has resulted in alienation. The alienation has not only left him weak but has also awakened him to the reality of his individual existence. The self has started realizing its insignificance in an alien rule i.e. that of the British and therefore it believes in liberating itself by rejecting the authority. 'Beating of the heart like a drum' (p. 182) signifies the confrontation of life with action. 'Drum' is therefore a powerful force which stands not for emptiness but action in life. Life without struggle is meaningless. The self has realized the importance of struggle. As a choosing, creative moral individual he ought to rise up and realize his being.

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IN SEARCH OF PARADIGMATIC TRUTHIV.1.a. The Women of Kanthapura: From Slumber
to Awakening

IV.1.a.i. Emergence of Women

In the novel this particular theme is relevant to its entire meaning because it expresses the severance of bondage both from past traditions and colonial legacy. Moorthy is one such revolutionary spirit whose movement in the temporal sequence of the novel leaves a blazing trail behind. The growth of the women is a result of the continuous repression by the Red-man's government. Ratna, Rangamma, Narsamma, Venkamma, Achakka, Puttamma, Rachi and several others react differently to the same socio-historical problem. Each reaction is different and of vital importance for it is these characters which are held responsible for the emergence of unrest and chaos in Kanthapura.

IV.1.a.ii. Towards Self-Reliance

The inevitability of conflict as an underlying fact of human struggle is one of the main currents in Kanthapura. The people in the village were living an uneventful life. The celebration of religious rituals like Sankar Jayanthi and the rendering of Harikathas begin in Kanthapura. With the Harikathas comes Jayara-

machar. He, not only tells them the story of Bharatha, the motherland, but also of the sages who had graced the land with their birth. He then speaks of the birth of Mahatma to fight against evil just as Krishna had come to kill the demons on this earth. The arrest of Jayaramachar by the policemen signifies the growing unrest in Kanthapura. The arrest signifies that whosoever raises his voice against the existing authorities will be crushed.

Moorthy becomes the enigmatic force in the lives of the women who had earlier lived a life of passive indifference. Kanthapura presents a panoramic picture of exploitation. It appears as a background where coolies men and women fight against the demands of social reality. Moorthy, by making these women aware of their state of dependence, urges in them the need to break away from bondage.

The Red-man's government signifies the presence of the being which has not only profited financially by suppressing the others but has become extremely callous after declaring its superiority over the others.

The British think that they are born to rule and the Indians to be ruled. Import of consumer goods from England, specially cloth, has not only made Indians too dependent on the other but has also made them forget their own potentiality for weaving cloth. Moorthy contact:

the women of Kanthapura and makes them aware of the major need for self dependence. He brings them out of their homes and inculcates in them the desire to be self-sufficient. His providing the women with the spinning wheel and free cotton to spin is a code of action which signifies the desire to act according to one's needs:

"Sister", says he to Nose-scratching Nanjamma, "Sister, the Congress is giving away free spinning wheels. Will you spin, sister?... just one hour a day, you can have a bodice-cloth of any colour or breadth you like, one bodice-cloth per month, and a sari every six months. And during the first month, the cotton is given free" (p. 16).

And when asked :

"...And why should the Congress give it free?" Moorthy says - "Because millions and millions of yards of foreign cloth come to this country, and everything foreign makes us poor and pollutes us. To wear cloth spun and woven with your own God-given hands is sacred, says the Mahatma. And it gives work to the workless, and work to the lazy. And if you don't need the cloth, sister - well, you can say, 'Give it away to the poor', and we will give it to the poor. Our country is being bled to death by foreigners. We have to protect our Mother" (p. 16).

This is the essential revelation of the paragraph: the inevitability of protection. For good or ill one must protect the 'Mother', for she is slowly being tortured to death by the foreigners and this, according to

Gandhi, can only be possible if there is a total boycott of foreign goods. Moorthy, the protagonist of the novel, becomes an ardent follower of Gandhi and he tries to build up this faith in others. He asks the women to spin and says that even Mahatma does it: "Why, every morning he spins for two hours immediately after his prayers. He says spinning is as purifying as praying" (p. 18).

Earlier they lived a secluded life inside their homes. A growing awareness of the problems being faced by the world outside, later, not only makes them conscious of their existence as mere objects but creates in them a powerful desire to seize their individuality.

IV.1.a.iii. Rangamma and Transcendence of Being

Rangamma as an individual has not only defied the norms of society but by living according to her wishes, she has asserted her existence over the others. Her silence at what the others say about her is a significant code of protest, for, by not retorting, she creates an acute sense of hostility in others. Though the orthodox Indian society has imposed several restrictions on widows, she fights consciously against them. Trying to fashion her life in her own way, she refuses to be treated as a mere Object. The fact that Rangamma lives in a big house,

wears Dharmawar saris and gold belt despite being a widow, creates strong conflicts in Venkamma's mind. Her desire to kill Rangamma and her family with lizard-poison signifies the fear of her own loss of identity. Venkamma, afraid of her own insecure existence, feels that Rangamma has no right to live. We can witness one trying to analyse the others right to exist. Venkamma sees Rangamma's behaviour as a menace to her own solidity and durability.

To the women of Kanthapura Moorthy appears as a guiding force. What occurred in the lives of these women underscores a tension which couldn't be resolved easily, because the tension was between two contradictory forces i.e. life at home and the life outside. After Moorthy's arrest, Rangamma emerges as the most powerful influence over the villagers. Not only does she go to Karwar from Kanthapura and stay with Sankar helping him in Congress business, she also makes her first speech from the platform. Her exposure to reality outside home makes her more conscious of her passive existence at home. Once out into the open, she refuses to go back and resists all attempts of the Other to suppress her. Her going to the prison with other freedom fighters and their continuing the struggle against the Other signifies their urge to be free from dominance.

Not only did she learn yoga, an act of self control but she also encouraged the other women to practise it daily. The life in the city has not only made her conscious of her existence but also has created a new awareness in her. Her mission subsequently becomes the complicated and contradictory one of trying to establish courage and will to struggle among the women as is visible in the following ensemble :

"In the city there are groups and groups of young women, girls, married women, and widows, who have joined together and have become Volunteers - Volunteers they call them - and they practice exercises like the police, and when meetings are held they all get together and maintain order" (p. 103).

Rangamma's act of encouraging women to be ready to respond to Mahatma's call and fight for him creates some doubts in the minds of the other women. They feel that only men have the right to fight. Taking examples from the history of India, Rangamma refers to the valour of Rani Laxmi Bai who had fought against the Red-men. This fight would mean not fighting for personal achievement but for a wider cause i.e. for the freedom of the motherland. The formation of Sevika Sangha in Kanthapura shows the need to be consecrated for a greater cause i.e. freedom.

The women after being filled with a sense of purpose, are motivated to action. Their practising of yoga and other exercises are codes of action enacted with full awareness of the goals to be achieved. Their excited chatter about how they are going to dress for the occasion when Moorthy is released from prison expresses their admiration for Moorthy. It also signifies the desire of the women to look beautiful and feminine.

We see that the women are better prepared than men to meet the atrocities later on in the novel simply because they had realized it as an eventuality from which they could not get away.

The men had disapproved of their preparing themselves for action saying that they should confine themselves to their homes:

"Was there nothing left for our women but to vagabond about like soldiers? And everytime the milk curdled or a dhoti was not dry, they would say, "And this is all because of this Sevi business", and Radhamma's husband beat her on that day he returned from village inspection, though she was seven months pregnant". (p. 105).

Several men raise voices of discontent and disapproval. It is mainly because they feel that the women have specific roles to perform and that is of serving the family within the confines of the house and the way in

which they had begun transcending the limits of their being was disapproved by them. Rangamma tries to influence the men of Kanthapura. Here we can see the object i.e. the woman trying to determine the thought processes of the subject i.e. men.

The men feel it is not for a woman to affirm or impose herself and when she tries to do so they beat her, thus trying to restrict her from further action. The apparently unending waves of conflict and the struggle at home between men and women are also due to the neglect of work at home by women. Rangamma asks the women to give first priority to their family and then to the Sevika Sangha. Revolutionary spirit of the women is filled with a sense of revolt. The conflicts at home and outside serve to tighten their bonds with the Sevika Sangha. The women feel that for them going back to their kitchen is not possible; they are now better informed and more conscious of their existence as human beings. They have been so weighed down with troubles created by the Other that this need to continue the struggle becomes all the more intense. The given ensemble reveals their state of mind:

"But how can we be like we used to be?" (p. 106).
The will to struggle against the oppressive forces becomes active in the minds of the women. Their practising yoga

and preparing themselves for action through the Sevika Sangha are significant codes of action which signify their decision making power and urge to resist. Rangamma's being able to influence both men and women projects the command she has over the others. She receives the assent of men to plunge into action when required. Her determination and tenacity of purpose enable her to maintain an identity of her own.

Rangamma's getting blue paper from the city and informing women about different places and things signify her wish to broaden not only her own horizon of thought and knowledge but also that of others. Being open to new ideas, she refuses to accept ready-made principles and values and tries to transcend the limits of her being by using her power to reason and question the action of others. Reading of blue papers makes her aware of the status of women in other parts of the world. Socialism in Russia had given women equal rights and they were being treated as men's equals in every sphere:

"...and there in that country there were women who worked like men, night and day; men and women who worked night and day, and when they felt tired, they went and spent their holiday in a palace - no money for the railway, no money for the palace - and when the women were going to have a child, they had two months' and three months' holiday, and when the children were still young they were given milk

by the Government, and when they were grown up they were sent free to school, and when they grew older still they went to the universities free, too, and when they were still more grown-up, they got a job and they got a home to live in and they took a wife to live with and they had many children and they lived on happily ever after" (p. 29).

This desire to radically reorganise the Indian society along socialist lines is too deep-seated in Rangamma. The wish to fight for equal rights for women is too strong and therefore creates in her a necessity to intensify the struggle.

Rangamma is one character in the novel who not only retains the sanctity of religious traditions even after the death of her father but interprets the texts by bringing in Gandhian ideology into each and every page. Gandhism had become deeply rooted in the ancient traditions of India and therefore the women did not find it difficult to identify themselves with Gandhi. Gandhi had been able to establish an affinity with the Indian masses and it is in this affinity that the secret of his influence lay.

IV.1.a.iv. Ratna: From Defiance to War

Ratna is another very powerful individual in the novel who despite being a widow lives a most unconventional life. She defies the norms imposed on widows by society

and her refusal to accept society as it is, is a strong form of protest:

Ratna lives life according to her wishes. She "...not only went about the streets alone like a boy, but even wore her hair to the left like a concubine, and she still kept her bangles and her nose-rings and ear-rings, and when she was asked why she behaved as though she had't lost her husband, she said that that was nobody's business, and that if these sniffing old country hens thought that seeing a man for a day, and this when she was ten years of age, could be called a marriage, they had better eat mud and drown themselves in the river" (p. 30).

Ratna's keeping 'nose-rings', 'ear-rings' and 'bangles' on her body is a gesture of assertion of herself to herself. She questions the social norms imposed on her as a widow, and that too when she had hardly known what marriage was. By refusing to bow down before societal norms she poses several important conflicts in the minds of the others. She refuses to accept what fate has assigned to her. She is reprimanded for being outspoken and rebellious. She remains undeterred by what people say about her. According to people like Bhatta and Venkamma, Ratna's behaviour is most shocking. Bhatta feels uneasy in her company because Ratna is forever setting herself off as "different" from the others 'and when her sari fell over her shoulders and bared her bodice, it always made him feel uncomfortable' (p. 31).

Her spontaneous love of life, her unconventional living pattern, her bluntness of speech and her down right honesty make the others feel uncomfortable in her presence. The manner in which Ratna counters their protestations makes her more conscious of her existence. Her exuberance of life is unrestrained and her vigour makes others fearful of her. The sphere to which she belongs in the society is an enclosed one, limited and dominated by the socio-religious barriers. Certain rules which have been imposed on widows have also been placed before her, but Ratna tries to raise and transcend herself from such societal barriers which impede her way to self-realization. She refuses to let others rape her wishes and thus, in trying to be herself, is in some way refusing to accept things as they are.

Ratna has a soft corner for Moorthy. This is quite apparent from her behaviour towards him. Ratna's praying for his release after he had been arrested, and later on, her plans to welcome him after his release show her attachment towards him. The desire in her to be loved by him is intense and that is why we see her actions directed towards pleasing him. The day Moorthy sits on fast, she promises to do as per his wishes. Her prostrating before the Gods and praying for Moorthy's welfare is an act signifying the love and respect she has for him:

"God, God", she said, "keep him strong and virtuous, and may he rise out of this holier and greater; God I shall offer ten coconuts and a kumkum worship. God, keep him alive for me" (pp. 66-67).

The above ensemble reveals the fact that Ratna's world centres around Moorthy. She is willing to submit to him without any resistance and this reveals the other aspect of her personality. On the one hand she defies norms imposed on widows by the society and on the other the desire to be loved and admired is strong in her. Though the writer has not brought forth any development in Moorthy's relationship with Ratna, it is quite apparent that the two are emotionally attached to each other.

The struggle for freedom becomes too intense and everything else except the resistance by the people recedes into the background. Ratna undergoes gradual transformation in her entire outlook on life. Earlier she did what Moorthy said. To her life had a different meaning: "She could hardly grasp his idea. She was but fifteen. Praying seemed merely to fall flat before the Gods in worship" (p. 64).

Ratna's naivety shows her inability to understand things at a young age. But despite being young she does not become what others ask her to. Despite being asked to follow certain rules of deportment and forbidden from certain things, she does not repress her spontaneous

movements and lives as she wishes. As the struggle for freedom in Kanthapura gains momentum and Moorthy, after his arrest, is not present physically in the village any more, a new Ratna can be seen emerging from this particular background. She is the one who takes the movement ahead. She along with the other women goes picketing the toddy booths and the Estate. Later on, a policeman tries to assault her and fortunately she is freed from his clutches by the other women. She then goes to seek refuge in the temple along with the other women. Ratna becomes their leader and guide. She had begun reading the religious texts which Rangamma had started interpreting after her father's death. The women find something very powerful and strong in Ratna:

"and somehow we said there's the voice of Rangamma in her speech, the voice of Moorthy, and she was no more the child we had known, nor the slip of a widow we had cursed...."(p. 152).

The above ensemble reveals the gradual change in the opinion of the other women. To them she is no longer just a young widow but something more than that. The others tend to look up to her for guidance. They seek her advice and act accordingly:

'and Timamma turns to her and says, "Oh where shall we go, daughter, with this new mother and child?" and Kamamma says, "why, to the temple", and Ratna says, "wait, I shall go and see if the path is safe..!" (p. 152).

The faith which she has in the Congress is projected in her dealings with people. It is this faith which takes her to Bombay after her term inside the prison is over. She goes from the village Kanthapura to a city like Bombay to fight for freedom and equality. She has refused to become a prey and she tries to seize freedom by seeking for it. Not being confined to a conjugal sphere, her reality is no more concentrated inside the house. Just like her, the other women too fight against oppression. War provides a chance to fight against the oppression of society at home and against the British rule outside. Gandhian struggle, which Ratna later joins wholeheartedly, is an exposure of a young village widow to a new level of experience and outer space.

IV.1.a.v. Narsamma's March Towards Extinction

Besides Ratna, Rangamma and the other women there are Venkamma and Narsamma who have not been able to adjust to the changing patterns of the society. Narsamma had nurtured high hopes for her only son but his coming back to the village without completing his studies in the city leaves her distressed. His refusal to marry and his continuous mixing with the Pariahs is responsible for the growth of unrest and despair in her. Mother and son stop communicating with each other. This snapping-off of communication signifies the unrelenting attitude of both

the mother and the son. There lies a conceptual opposition between what Narsamma had expected her son to do and what he really does in life. His not having been able to fulfill her specific needs is the cause of frustration in her. Being a Brahmin, the thought of excommunication is unbearable to her. The possibility of her son being excommunicated destroys something in her and she becomes too distant a person:

"From that day on they never spoke to each other, Narsamma and Moorthy. He sat and ate his food by the kitchen threshold and she in the kitchen, and everybody saw that Narsamma was growing thin as a bamboo and shrivelled like banana bark" (p. 42).

Narsamma's not speaking to her son, her 'growing thin' and her 'shrivelled' appearance are the mantic codes which signify her not being able to accept things as they were at that time. The clash between the old and the new is an important one. She becomes isolated and detached from her own son. When she hears the news of her son's excommunication, the desire to live is completely crushed in her:

"...Oh ! moaned Narsamma, and that very night when the doors were closed and the voices had died away, she ran through the Brahmin street and the Potter's street, and standing at the village gate, she spat once toward the east and once toward the west, once toward the south and once toward 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 field bund, and she had such a shiver at the thought of all the ghosts and the 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 sugarcane field and by the mango grove to the river, just where the whirl-pool gropes and gurgles, 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 sands, and the cold so pierced her that the next morning she was dead" (pp. 42-43).

Her desire to die is partly defensive and partly an attempt to endorse the crushing sense of having done something wrong. Her entire self has split and lost its integrity and identity. She has become too oppressive and frustrated. The above ensemble clearly reveals her anguished state. Her mental set up has been totally shaken and she, having lost all interest in life, ends it. It is simply not a question of how she would have lived after hearing such a news, more disturbing has been the fact that she, after having realized the futility of her existence, had stopped eating for days. Death to her was the only situation beyond which lay no other. The simple fact that she lived alone and the other i.e. Moorthy could do nothing for her reveals that his act is cause neither for regret nor for sorrow. It is the outcome of two forces genuinely opposed to each other. Hope

had long been frustrated in her by the rebellious attitude of her son. Therefore her demise is a sign of protest against the manner in which the world is proceeding. Her death does not come as a surprise since she had been haunted by the fear of being excommunicated and therefore doomed for ever. From 'moaned', to 'ran', 'spat', 'trembled', 'coughed', 'hurried', 'looked', 'pierced', 'shuddered', 'sank' and 'dead' all these codes in succession reveal that in her case there was no way out. All these codes create a frequently recurring image of extinction. She no longer fears being crushed, engulfed, since she has been long dead. Clinical death has come days after the death of her personal being. Death as an ultimate possibility in Narsamma's case is the final form of protest and rebellion.

IV.1.a.vi. Venkamma: The Unrelenting Other

Venkamma as the Other in the novel resents the changes taking place in society. So concerned and scared has she become of her existence that she openly criticises the other women. For Venkamma, women's protestation is just another cause of shame, another of those forces which come to shake her up without having received her approval. Her major concern is her family and therefore whenever she feels her existence being challenged she retorts venomously. Her demanding to live in a big house

only because she has children and Rangamma has none shows the tendency in her to assert her supremacy. She feels that Rangamma, being a childless widow, has no right to exist. It is only a woman with children who can and should live:

"I've two sons and five daughters, and that shaven widow had'nt even the luck of having a bandicoot to call her own" (p. 4). Important signifiers being 'have' and 'had'nt' they signify what one has and the other has been deprived of. The very fact that she has children and Rangamma has none fills her with a sense of achievement and makes her conscious of her status in society.

She argues with others over the 'Gandhi-business' and tries to convince them that Moorthy alone is responsible for breeding trouble in Kanthapura. Her hatred for Moorthy is due to one major reason - Moorthy's refusal to get married to her daughter:

"And, as everybody knew, she had no particular love for Moorthy. He had refused her second daughter, for whom bridegroom after bridegroom was being sought - and she was nearing the age" (p. 15).

Venkamma exists only for herself and her family. Her main wish is to see her daughter married. She tries to curb all actions which demand any kind of participa-

tion, which would result in hindrance of personal aims. Her daughter's marriage to an old advocate is significant of the fact that she wanted to get rid of that burden as soon as possible. The daughter represents the Other to her. She is no more than an Object which has to be given away in marriage. Any act or conflict which demands change terrifies Venkamma. She seems rather contented in her shell of brahminical upbringing and dreads to see any kind of change. Life to her means stability and rigidity in every possible way. Therefore she rejects Gandhi and whatever Moorthy strives for. The kind of warm treatment the people receive at her daughter's wedding reveals the strange and different facet of her personality. To her, happiness means fulfillment of material needs, and the fact that her daughter is going into a rich family is enough to make her proud of herself. Later on, her going to stay at her son-in-law's place once the village is destroyed, seeks to project some kind of security which Venkamma had always been looking for. It is the fear of being left alone and isolated with her unmarried daughters that makes her resist any change in society.

IV.1.a.vii. Spirit of Rebellion in Women

Gandhian movement in 1930s had taken the people under its spell and collectively the individuals resorted to action. The struggle for equality which the women

insisted on, is there, not simply as a conflict but also as an idea. It is a projection of the fundamental hostility between the one and the other. All the women, except for a given few under the influence of an outside force i.e. Gandhi, become conscious of reality and of their existence in a group with a common concern. The struggle goes on not only between the British and the Indian but also between the Pariahs and the Brahmins, the widows and the non-widows, the coolies and their masters, and more than that it is a struggle between man and man.

The way these women are uprooted from their lands and driven to alien places shows the effects of the struggle. The aftermath has left them as refugees and even as refugees the women continue to sing bhajans and hold readings of Vedantic texts. Even though they are estranged from their lands, complete alienation does not take place in their case for they have still retained their old traditions. Their singing of bhajans and listening to Vedantic texts even in Kashipura is an indication of the fact that they have refused to accept the oppression of the government. The wish to fight, to reflect, to oppose and to revolt is still kindling within their hearts despite their complete uprootal from home. The women have been responsible for a temporary dislocation of the Other. They know that they have committed themselves to Gandhian

ideology. They accept Gandhi as their leader. He conceived of spinning as a religious principle to be followed by all. The women's commitment to Gandhian ideology keeps their hopes alive. Though this commitment has not been able to dispel either confusion or complexity, yet it is that force which keeps them moving.

IV.2.a. Coolies: From Bondage to Struggle for Freedom

IV.2.a.i. Trapped in a cage

The coolies inside the Estate present another form of estrangement. The Skeffington Coffee Estate is the cage to which the coolies are lured by the hunter. The Red-man's government tries to capture and to cage the very life of the coolies. Once inside the cage they are unable to free themselves and live in perpetual imprisonment. Maistri lures them to the place by promising them better wages and better prospects for life.

The description of the Estate by the narrator has an aura of mystery around it:

"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 reap the first fruits of his plantation" (p. 44).

"...more and more coolies came - coolies from below the Ghats that talked Tamil or Telugu and who brought with them

their old men and their children and their widowed women - armies of coolies marched past the Kenchamma temple, half-naked, starving, spitting, weeping, vomiting, coughing, shivering, squeaking, shouting, moaning coolies - coolie after coolie passed by the Kenchamma temple, the maistri before them, while the children clung to their mother's breasts, the old men to their sons's arms and bundles hung over shoulder and arm and arm and shoulder and head; and they marched on past the Kenchamma temple and upto 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..." (p. 44).

The Estate becomes a place where conflicts multiply because of the hostilities which develop between maistri and labourer, between master and servant. The Estate appears as a battleground where coolies fight against the demands of social reality. Maistri had promised them 'two anna bit for each woman and four anna bit for each man hand' but as he approaches the Estate along with the coolies a gradual change comes in his behaviour:

"...and the nearer they came, the harder became the road and the stiffer the maistri" (pp. 45-46). Coolies had been uprooted from their homes, they had come from far off places expecting a better life in the Estate. Maistri tries to convince them by saying "There is nothing but rice around us" (p. 45). He creates strong hopes

in them. Mothers promise their children "I'll take you over the mountains where you can have milk like water - just like water" (p. 45).

The Estate has been projected to them as a place where there would be less work and more to eat. Disillusionment creeps in slowly as the master tries to assert his supremacy over them.

"The sahib says that if you work well you will get sweets and if you work badly you will get beaten - that is the law of the place" (p. 46). Next day the coolies begin their work and there is no respite for them. Mai-stri appears as a symbol of tyranny as he beats them asking them to work without any rest. The presence of snakes in the Estate is a sign of the presence of the Other which moves around fearlessly creating fear in the coolies. The cobra is not only a symbol of absolute power but also of pity. It has never harmed an innocent person. The hot blazing sun and the hard work tire them soon. The arrival of rains heralds the coming of disaster in the Estate. There is fever and death all over the Estate. Coolies find themselves menaced by problems from without as well as from within. Their arrival inside the Estate has plunged them into a situation from which there is no escape. The master has invaded their lives. In one way or the other they have to face the coming problems. Their

refusal to take pills offered to them by the sahib ~~shows~~ shows their unrelenting attitude. Their praying to Kenchamma reveals their unflinching faith in the supernatural. Having always thought that mother Kenchamma would look after their welfare they persistently refuse to take the pills. Despite all these problems, hopes within their hearts have not been crushed. Coolies feel that soon they will return to their homes with lots of money. This fact, that their dreams could never materialize, is known to Siddayya. Pariah Rangayya's statement -

"We'll make three hundred rupees in all - three hundred rupees each, and we shall take our money and scuttle down the passes like kitchen bandicoots;" (p. 53)

reveals a strong desire to escape. They have realized the danger within the Estate and seek, by all means, to free themselves from the Estate. They do not know that ^{setting} ~~them-~~ themselves free from the Estate is not an easy task. Siddayya knows that once inside the Estate there would be no going back the irony being that they are all tempted to the toddy booths and will spend whatever they earn on 'deaths and festivals and caste-dinners' (p. 54). Siddayya has stayed here for ten years and witnessed a lot. Their escape becomes a dream unrealized; to attain it they can apparently do nothing.

IV.2.a.ii. A Desire to Escape Leads Towards
Resistance

A change in sahibs has taken place but the exploitation of the coolies continues in one form or the other. If the earlier sahib assaulted them with sticks, the newer one would physically assault the women on the Estate. Thus we can see that a change in sahibs has brought no change in the plight of the coolies. Violence is inflicted on them and the rape of their wishes takes place intermittently. Another strong form of oppression is the sahib shooting Seetharam, when he refuses to give up his daughter to him. The death of Seetharam becomes a protest against the atrocious attitude of the master. His giving up his life to save the honour of his girl implies that the daughter is worth such a sacrifice. "I am a Brahmin. I would rather die than sell my daughter" (p. 55) says he.

Seetharam's death is an act of revenge. His death appears purposeful in its own way for we can see that no Brahmin's daughter was ever touched by the sahib, 'And when a Pariah says, "No", he hardly ever sends the maistri to drag her up at night' (p. 55).

Though the sahib is set free by the Red-man's court, we see that Seetharam's resistance has created fear in him. Death as a point of departure reveals the

success of the coolies. It offers a justification and as a strong symbol of protest is a complete negation of submission.

Life inside the Estate is however dominated by the master and his maistri. By refusing to bow down to his master's wishes Seetharam reveals his wish to be himself. His desire to be free results in his death.

Labour of the coolies is no longer a free activity. They have been estranged from it because it's not they, but the owners of production, who decide what and how they have to work and produce. Coolies are unable to realize themselves through their work and therefore this desire in them to escape becomes stronger.

Moorthy's arrival inside the Estate is stopped by Bade Khan. Bade Khan as the Other dominates the existence of the coolies. His statement reveals the coolies' state of existence:

"Free man you may be in your palace.
But this is the Skeffington Coffee
Estate and these are Skeffington
Estate coolies. You'd better take
care of your legs. I've orders"
(p. 58).

It is quite apparent that the colonial rule has spread its tentacles too far. Men have been divided as the owners and the owned, the deciders and the decided-for

the determiners and the determined, the few and the many. Coolies, once having entered the Estate, have given themselves and the fruit of their labour to their masters. They are seen being used by the Red-man's government, and exploitation continues to oppress the people. Some have offered themselves to be treated as objects (for example, Siddayya) whereas men like Seetharam and Rachanna refuse to be reduced to objects and thus protest.

Rachanna's expulsion from the Estate along with his family and then later on his settling in Kanthapura is an act of defiance. His confrontation with the Other is watched silently by his friends and they raise no voice at his expulsion. Expulsion is an act which seeks to reveal the desire of the Other to curb whatever dominant force is present in the coolies. It is a reflection of one's desire to oppress and rule the others. Rachanna's refusal to be dictated is an indicator of the fact that despite being a coolie he wishes to be free. He is accepted by the people of Kanthapura and this creates a new consciousness in him.

The picketing of Boranna's toddy booth by enthusiastic followers of Moorthy and the participation of coolies in this act is symbolic of their desire to struggle. The Estate has an unknown and fearful appearance to the outsiders. Therefore, while women along with men were

marching towards it, their hearts were filled with fear. The coolies, once out from the Estate with 'their eyes fixed to the earth' (p. 137) and 'money tied to their waists' (p. 137) 'they marched on to the toddy booth^o to drink and to beat the drum and to clap hands and sing' (p. 137).

As the men squat on the floor, the coolies refuse to walk over them. They are beaten up by the police in return. They promise not to drink in the name of Kenchamma. It seems as if they have started asking themselves what exactly is right and wrong? The simmering discontent and disgust at the behaviour of the Other has surfaced.

IV.2.a.iii. Suppression of the Being through Force and Violence

As the novel proceeds we see the coolies caged inside the Estate. A large section of this oppressed class throws off its old role and begins to assume the role of free men by determining a course of action for itself and by moving out from the Estate. These coolies, who had left the Estate and settled in Kanthapura, were one morning forcibly marched towards the Estate. The narrator's statement reveals her state of helplessness as well as those of others around her :

"...coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate who had come to live with us and to work with us and to fight with us - they marched over the bouldered streets... the coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate were marched bent-headed through our streets to show who our true masters were, and we knew they would be driven over the Bebbur mound and the Bear's hill and the Tippur stream, and two by two they would be pushed behind the gates, for the white master wanted them" (p. 147).

The domination of the English over the Indian labourers by means of brutal force, simply for the sake of satisfying its own desires, without any regard for the wishes of the others, is a most significant form of colonial oppression. Raja Rao focusses on this exploitation of one man by the other. He has tried to bring to light those forces which are responsible for creating unrest in the minds of the working class.

Coolies, who knew that they were being exploited by the Bourgeoise, had tried to break away from its tyrannical clutches but were forcefully driven back to the Estate. But as we see later, the Estate is unable to hold them any longer and they pine for freedom.

They join the struggle with men and women of Kanthapura and are further subjected to pain and fortune.

Coolies from the city have come and started reaping at the Estate. Their arrival signifies the fact that

once slavery is established inside the Estate "it is maintained by coercion, by the war of the ruling class against the ruled and all others who threaten it".^①

The coolies who had run away from the Estate and revolted are forcibly brought back to the Estate, the police employed by the Red-man's government uses force on the disrupters of the law and order. Underlying the struggle is an intense desire for freedom. The coolies realize that they are being treated as means by the Other. This increases their suffering and oppression. It creates in them a hatred for the colonial rule.

IV. 2.a.iv. Gandhi: A Symbol of Non-violence
Coolies: The Lost Identity

Gandhi, on the other hand, becomes a symbol of intense struggle. He has become a part of people's consciousness. Though the coolies have never met him personally, yet like the people of Kanthapura, they join hands and collectively seek to attain their ideal. Gandhi believed non-violence to be the only possible form of resistance to the colonial-racialist oppression. The coolies had resorted to violence, when once, Moorthy was not allowed to enter the Estate and was beaten up by the police. Their resorting to violence at that time is a crucial action which is responsible for Moorthy's arrest and Rachanna's expulsion.

If we look deeply into the cause of unrest within the Estate we find that certain conditions were responsible for the agitation. Economically deprived, physically exploited and mentally tortured, the coolies had earlier been living a totally suppressed existence. The arrival of Moorthy inside the Estate, and their constant mixing with Gandhi's men makes them conscious of their plight. After having been stripped of all identity, history, family and human rights by the Other they realize the futility of their existence. Through the ideals of Gandhi and under the guidance of Moorthy, the coolies strive hard for emancipation. In seeking refuge at Kanthapura, the coolies have sought to avoid a destruction of their identity. The coolies are illiterate and ignorant at the time of oppression. A gradual change comes over them as they begin mixing with the people of Kanthapura.

Their refusal to walk over the people who had squatted on the floor and then going to Boranna's toddy grove is a sign of their growing awareness of the problems present in the country. Later on, as they cry 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai' and promise never to drink in the name of 'Kenchamma', we can see an essential step being taken in the positive direction.

The coolies had walked 'bent headed' from Kanthapura back to the Estate. They had refused to bow down before their masters. 'Their eyes fixed on the earth' - repetition of this psychological code signifies the state of repression the coolies have been forced to live in. Later on, their 'escape' from the Estate signifies the desire to live and be themselves. The coolies being forcibly taken back to the Estate is another significant political code which brings to light the existential predicament. On the one hand are the coolies who after having realized their predicament refuse to accept the situation where they find themselves trapped by the Other. The desire in them to get out, to say 'no' and still survive creates a fear in the mind of the Other. On the other we find the existence of the Other who has dehumanized the being i.e. the coolies. What results is rebellion. Unable to bear the oppression any longer, the coolies seek to become individuals and not mere objects. By trying to defy the norms and rules set by the Other, coolies like Vasudev, Rachanna, Madanna have realized the importance of their being. After having become aware of the *raison d'être* they seek to bridge the *écart* which lies between the subject and the object.

The project of living under the Other has promised nothing but disillusionment. Earlier they had been lured to the Estate by the maistri who promised them good money,

and better treatment with less work. But soon they realize that Gandhi alone can fulfill their dreams. This discovery sets them on a very different path. In agreeing to be with Gandhi the coolies come into conflict with the Red-men.

The coolies have become aware of the existence of the Other who treats them as mere means. The Other is the cause of fear and proves to be a menace in the life of the coolies. The coolies collectively cooperate with men and women of Kanthapura in opposing the organized force of the Other who is regarded as enemy. This sort of a situation is revealed in the picketing scene where coolies refuse to walk over the men and women who have squatted on the floor. Later on, as they bravely face the shots fired at them and cry 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai' one feels that they have begun to identify themselves with Gandhi.

"Stop, or we shoot", says a voice to which "shoot" answers one of the coolies, and a shot bursts straight at him..."(p. 170). In this direct confrontation between the being and the Other is visible a change in the attitude - from that of servility to a state of defiance. This defiance and refusal to be cowed down by the Other appears as a most significant action on the part of the being.

The forceful removal of men from Kanthapura and then their being taken to the Estate, in brief, signifies the fact that the Other needs the being. Without the coolies they would not have been able to fulfill their wishes and thus attain material gains. This forcible taking away of the coolies from Kanthapura also strengthens the belief that the Other, i.e. Red-man can not exist without the support of the being i.e. the coolies.

IV.2.a.v. Towards Self-realization - Struggle for Fulfillment of One's needs

Thus we can see that Raja Rao has successfully tried to portray the predicament of the coolies inside the Estate. From a state of complete acceptance of conditions they had been placed in, we see a gradual change occurring as the coolies, after having been sub-consciously motivated by Gandhian ideology, begin acting as individuals by insisting that their wages should be paid and they be allowed to remain free.

What saves them from oppression, both physical and psychological, inside the Estate, is their own decision to escape from the place. The coolies have no choice but to defend themselves against those who have trapped them inside the cage i.e. the 'Estate'.

Their struggle against colonial rule forms the basis of the novel. Though the movement led by Moorthy

has no immediate positive recourse in sight, the impetus behind the struggle proves to be a source of optimism.

IV.3.a. Moorthy: The Self-explored

IV.3.a.i. Influence of the Vision of Gandhi

This theme clearly deals with the rapid influence of Gandhi on Moorthy, the young protagonist. Gandhi, as a political signifier, has been capable of influencing the Indian masses by delicately handling their conscious selves. Moorthy was one such individual of Kanthapura who had come to the city for higher education. He left his studies incomplete and joined the struggle for freedom along with Gandhi. Gandhi stands not only for struggle but also for change and it is the potential weapon of Ahimsa which enables him to hold sway over the people. Moorthy once had a vision of Gandhi in his dreams, which invoked him to join the struggle:

"For, as everybody knew, one day he had seen a vision, a vision of the Mahatma, mighty and God-beaming, and stealing between the volunteers. Moorthy had got onto the platform, and he stood by the Mahatma, and the very skin of the Mahatma seemed to send out a mellowed force and love, and he stood by one of the fanners and whispered, "Brother, the next is me". And the fanner fanned on and the Mahatma spoke on, and Moorthy looked from the audience to the Mahatma and from the Mahatma to the audience, and he said to himself, "There is in it

something of the silent communion of the ancient books", and he turned again to the fanner and said, "Brother, only when you are tired?" and the fanner said "Take it, brother", and Moorthy stood by the Mahatma and the fan went once this side and once that, and beneath the fan came a voice deep and stirring that went out to the hearts of those men and women and came streaming back through the thrumming air, and went through the fan and the hair and the nails of Moorthy into the very limbs, and Moorthy shivered, and then there came flooding up in rings and ripples, "Gandhi Mahatma ki Jai": "Jai Mahatma": "and as it broke against Moorthy, the fan went faster and faster over the head of the Mahatma, and perspiration flowed down the forehead of Moorthy. Then came a dulled silence of his blood and he said to himself, "Let me listen", and he listened, and in listening heard "There is but one force in life and that is truth, and there is but one love in life and that is the love of mankind, and there is but one God in life and that is the God of all..." (pp. 32-33).

The above ensemble reveals that the visionary contact with Gandhi has not only brought Moorthy closer to the Mahatma but has also made him choose a particular destiny. The power that the 'vision' filled him with invokes him to take a decision. Mahatma Gandhi's vision as a powerful signifier not only guides his later actions but also invokes him to decide for himself what he wants in life. The protagonist, after having realized that he has been thrown into a world where liberty and individuality are curbed by alien forces and man harassed by

strong colonial forces, elects to respond to his environment by acting upon it. His decision to act and the choices he makes are to some extent influenced by Gandhi.

IV.3.a.ii. Growing Consciousness and the
Persisting Dilemma

His throwing his foreign clothes and his foreign books into the bon-fire and walking out as a Gandhi's man all are the actions expressing his disgust with the present set of circumstances. From indifference he awakens to a state of rejection. 'Bon-fire' suggests complete destruction of all that is evil and harmful to existence. This single step of Moorthy makes way for several other actions. Earlier he had once seen a linga and said, "Why not unearth it and wash it and consecrate it?" (p. 7).

'Linga' signifies the presence of absolute power and is a symbol of Siva. A pervasive religio-cultural symbol throughout all phases of Hindu life, it stands for continuity of life. 'Unearth', 'wash' and 'consecrate' reveal the desire of the protagonist to revive and bring back to life that which has been left hidden from the ordinary eye.

Moorthy, the protagonist, becomes the centre of the novel not simply because it is principally concerned

with him but also because it's his wish to provoke change in the world in which he exists. Moorthy's trying to revive the old Hindu traditions through Harikathas and celebrating festivals is a cultural code which helps in uniting the people of the village. His refusal to get married to Venkamma's second daughter not only infuriates her but also makes her antagonistic towards him. Venkamma holds Moorthy responsible for breeding trouble in Kanthapura. Moorthy asks people to spin and thus be self-reliant. 'Spinning' is not an indifferent act but there are certain motives behind the act. He tells the village women of the ways in which the foreigners have been exploiting the Indians. He asks them to be independent and self-sufficient. 'Spinning' as a code of action would not only make the people self-reliant but would also do away with despotism and the evergrowing colonialism under which the masses are being trapped.

Moorthy voices Gandhi's opinions and whatever Gandhi does or says is sacred to him:

"The Mahatma, sister ? Why, every morning he spins for two hours immediately after his prayers. He says spinning is as purifying as praying" (p. 18).

Moorthy's refusal to marry is a polysemic code. 'When Narsamma said, "You are a grown-up boy, Moorthy, and if you don't marry now, you will take to evil ways"

(p. 34). Moorthy's refusal is a sign. Behind that sign is the significant act which produces the sign. Moorthy's statement is also a promise. "No, mother. I swear upon my holy thread I shall keep pure and noble and will bring no evil to my ancestors" (p. 34).

'Holy thread' as a religious code signifies the superior status of a Brahmin in Hindu society. Moorthy's wearing a 'holy thread' and swearing upon it are both codes of actions whereby Moorthy seeks to protect himself from the consequences of his own acts. Later on, as he entered the Pariah Rachanna's house 'his hands steal mechanically to the holy thread, and holding it, he feels he would like to say, "Hari om, Hari om" (p. 71).

'Hands steal mechanically', 'holding it' are all signs of the strong bond which he and the holy thread have with each other. 'Holy Thread' not only stands for purity but also one sees him immobilized as he enters the Pariah house. Moorthy wants to bring in a change in society. He appreciates the importance of changing social conditions; he believes in the need to be involved in action which will bring reform and freedom. Yet one sees the protagonist in a dilemma as he is being put into the most conflicting situations. His entering the Pariah-house for the first time is one such situation:

"Moorthy thinks this is something new, and with one foot to the back and one foot to the fore, he stands trembling and undecided, and then suddenly hurries up the steps and crosses the threshold and squats on the earthen floor" (p. 71).

The protagonist 'thinks', 'stands trembling', 'undecided', 'hurries', 'crosses' and 'squats' - all these codes of actions reveal his inner state of mind, his confusion and indecisiveness. Rachanna's wife offers him 'milk' and it is this offer from a Pariah which creates fear in the Brahmin's heart. 'Moorthy' with many a trembling prayer, touches the tumbler and brings it to his lips, and taking one sip, lays it aside' (pp. 71-72).

'Trembling', 'touches', 'brings', 'taking', all these significant codes of action reveal the existential predicament of the being. He still feels committed to the Brahminical fold and therefore drinking what has been offered to him by a Pariah is unthinkable. Yet we see that where he wishes not to function, he cannot escape. His action of acceptance activates not only his consciousness but also his thinking. His old 'samskaras', though put to critical question, have not been totally dispelled with. He is after all Moorthy, and his being brought up as a Brahmin is a fact which cannot be totally dismissed.

His inability to influence the Pariah women to spin makes him more restless and sad. Later on, his going to the backyard of Rangamma's house and taking a bath and purifying himself with Ganges water signify his inability to give up his religious fears. In his refusal to change the 'Holy Thread', "Now that I must go there every day, I cannot change my holy thread everyday, can I?" (p. 73) One sees that Moorthy still knows fear and it is against this fear that he now tries to exert his consciousness. He knows that to be something, he will have to do something and this something is his decision to go to the homes of Pariahs every day.

IV.3.a.iii. Moorthy: The Individual Estranged

In his attempts to be himself we have seen that Moorthy has already been alienated from his mother, and the Brahmin Bhatta along with the Swami has excommunicated him. Moorthy had refused to marry and this has created fear in his mother's mind. His constant mixing with the Pariahs disturbs her. Her greatest fear is that of excommunication. The fear of his being excommunicated is in Sartrean terms her 'anguish in the face of the future'.² Moorthy's mother seems to have a synthetic apprehension of the situation, therefore she forbids him to mix with the Pariahs. But Moorthy as a being has

already started doubting and thinking. Therefore he acts according to his wishes. He consciously makes a choice by refusing to adhere to his mother's requests, as a result of which communication between mother and son is snapped. This breaking up of relationship between the two signifies the gravity of the situation. Each believes what he or she did was right. Both are conscious in their own ways. The choice of Moorthy's mother is identical with the self-consciousness which she has. To her, being a Brahmin and living like one is a primary need whereas Moorthy feels that by mixing with the Pariahs one need not lose his identity as a Brahmin. Thus perpetually threatened by the nihilation of her son's existence as a Brahmin she severs all communication with him. The news of Moorthy's 'excommunication' brings a complete separation between the two. His mother's death again signifies her choice. In her choosing death she seeks freedom. There seems to be no reason to live with others, since the Other can do nothing to help her.

Thus we see Moorthy, who has abandoned almost every idea which he regarded worth abandoning, himself being abandoned by those around him. He has been sequestered by the others like his own mother, Bhatta and the orthodox Brahmins. Severance of his relationship with others is because of his mixing with the company he wants.

Moorthy consciously tries to give up age old values of the society which had been proving a hindrance to freedom. He holds himself responsible for the violence which broke out inside the Estate. He cannot cease being an individual; he justifies his entering the Estate and says to Bade Khan:

"Coolies are men, police sahib.
 And according to the laws of your
 own Government and that of Mr.
 Skeffington no man can own another.
 I have every right to go in. They
 have every right to speak to me".
 "You will not cross this gate".
 "I shall" (p. 58).

Moorthy's forcing himself inside the Estate demonstrates in a memorable way that he has a strong will to act. He acts when it is necessary for him to do so. His refusal to be cowed down by the policeman shows his inner strength. As we go about judging him methodically, we discover that this strength which he has, has been inculcated in him by Gandhi. 'Gandhi' to Moorthy has become one chief force without whose assistance no struggle can go ahead.

IV.3.a.iv. Moorthy: Growing Influence of Ratna

His fasting for the violence which occurred inside the Estate is his conscious attempt to redeem himself. 'Fasting' as a tool appears to Moorthy as one socio-religious code which not only purifies the heart but also

the soul. Three days of fasting had left him free as a bird. Though Raja Rao has not developed the relationship between Ratna and Moorthy, yet as we read the pages of the novel the truth emerges that both Ratna and Moorthy are deeply attached to one another.

Earlier he had gone looking for Ratna as he came to the village 'with a bundle of Khadi on his back and a bundle of books in his arms' (p. 39).

'May be Ratna would be at the well, he thought' (p. 40). His search for her signifies his need to communicate and thus be close to her. But later on, as a result of fasting we find a change in his attitude to her:

"That was why, when Ratna came to see him, he felt there was something different in his feelings toward her. Her smile did not seem to touch his heart with delicate satisfaction as it did before. She seemed something so feminine and soft and distant, and the idea that he could ever think of her other than as a sister shocked him and sent a shiver down his spine" (p. 64).

'Something different' signifies that what he is feeling for Ratna at present was not what he felt before. He had looked upon her as a man looks upon a woman. That she was not just a friend to him but he had desired her presence, is evident from his earlier attitude to her. Her smile had once filled him with 'delicate satisfact-



ion'. He had considered her as someone other than a sister. Ratna had reciprocated his feelings for she considered him as her master and accepted his decision. This too is visible in her actions while she promises to do whatever he wants. He discovers the Other to be 'feminine', 'soft' and 'distant'. In his confrontation with the Other, he rejects the Other and thus tries to be for itself. The idea that he could think of her as anyone but a sister shocks him. In his admission that he thought of her as someone other than a sister he admits his weakness for her. It is quite evident that Moorthy was attracted to Ratna. He rejects her as a woman and accepts her as a 'sister' thus trying to fight against the forces which would impede him from becoming a true Gandhi man. What he is afraid of is his becoming an Object, and therefore he alienates himself from her. The truth has dawned upon him that the fusion between himself and the Other will not be possible. Therefore he slowly solves the difficulty by asking her to pray:

"Pray with me that the sins of others may be purified with our prayers" (p. 64). In Sartrean terms one can say that unable to comprehend the mystery of the Other, for he finds her distant, he turns her into a 'sister':

"The objectivation of the Other, ... is a defense on the part of my being which, precisely by conferring on the Other a being for-me, frees me from my being-for the Other".³

In asking her to pray with him, he also asks her implicitly to pray for him so that sins of others may be purified. Through prayer and fasting, the two socio-religious codes, Moorthy tries to equip himself against all the threats from the others.

What he experiences is 'shock' when Moorthy discovers that Ratna exercises a kind of superiority over him. He feels a need to estrange himself from her, yet, in some ways, feels close to her. By asking her to 'pray' he is in one way trying to exert his power over her: "She could hardly grasp his idea. She was but fifteen. Praying seemed merely to fall flat before the Gods in worship" (p. 66).

Ratna's inability to 'grasp his idea', in totality reflects her innocence. In brief, by agreeing to his wishes, she tries to identify herself with Moorthy. In order to satisfy the needs of their own subjectivity both Moorthy and Ratna want to possess each other but in different ways.

Raja Rao has not developed the relationship between the two any further. We see Ratna emerging as a

powerful influence with the absence of Moorthy from Kanthapura.

IV.3.a.v. The Journey Ahead

Moorthy's forming a Congress Committee in Kanthapura is an act showing the people that only Congress can bring back their freedom to them.

"One cannot become a member of the Congress if one will not promise to practice ahimsa, and to speak truth and to spin at least two thousand yards of yarn per year" (p. 70). Here 'promise', 'practice', 'speak', and 'spin' are significantly signifying the presence of 'ahimsa', 'truth' and 'yarn' as political signifiers. 'Truth', 'Ahimsa' and 'Khadi' are the tools in the hands of the protagonist through which he hopes to overcome the Other.

Range Gowda's statement shows his disapproval:

"Learned master, at this rate I should have to go and bow down to every Pariah and butcher and, instead of giving them a nice licking with my lantana switch, I should offer flowers and coconuts and betel leaves in respect and say, 'Pray plough this field this wise, maharaja ! Pray plough this field that wise maharaja ! ...No learned master, that is not just' (p. 70).

He believes that mere submission would not solve the problem. Range Gowda knows that submission gives birth to frustrations. He therefore refuses to accept

Moorthy's logic. But later on, one sees him accepting the superiority of the Other i.e. Moorthy. He knows that common action alone can produce satisfaction and allow for cooperation in action:

"If you want me to be a slave, I shall be your slave. All I know is that what you told me about the Mahatma is very fine, and the Mahatma is a holy man, and if the Mahatma says what you say, let the Mahatma's word be the word of God" (p. 70).

Moorthy knows that unless he seeks the help of the other people he will not be able to achieve success and therefore he approaches Range Gowda. Joint action can lead to fruition and without the cooperation of others all roads to freedom seem blocked. As a result Moorthy forms a Congress group in Kanthapura. Range Gowda's submission to him and his willingness to do what Moorthy asks for suggests that Moorthy has been accepted as a leader by him. 'Gandhi' has not only entered his consciousness, but has also become a part of him. 'Gandhi' therefore becomes a symbol for Moorthy with which he tries to exert his influence over the people. His perception of life has changed and one sees Moorthy replacing Gandhi by becoming him. People say 'He is our Gandhi' (p. 74). Moorthy becomes an ideal for them. In so doing not only does he lose his ownself but consciously imitates Gandhi.

IV.3.a.vi. One With Truth

After his arrest which takes place in Rangamma's house, Moorthy is sent to Karwar. His refusal to accept the assistance of an advocate is an indication of the fact that he wants to merge his identity with that of an ordinary man and be what Gandhi had wanted his followers to be.

When Rangamma says to him: "Judges are not for truth, but for law, and the English are not for the brown skin but for the white, and the Government is not with the people but with the police" (p. 86). One notices a fundamental écart between the two signs of identity 'brown' and 'white'. 'Brown' signifies the Indian whom the 'white', i.e. the English regard as inferior to themselves. It also signifies the distance - psychological and physiological one which has been responsible for this écart between the two. It also brings out the tendency of the English to oppress the Indians and thus assert their being. Moorthy's refusal to have an advocate is also an aesthetic code through which he tries to overcome the other: "But if truth needs a defence, God himself would need one, for as the Mahatma says, truth is God, and I want no soul to come between me and truth" (p. 86).

Moorthy, as one can see in his fight against the Other, makes his choice dependent on Gandhi. By doing what Gandhi prefers not only does he succumb to another powerful force but also reveals his desire to be in sole communion with God. 'Truth' as a political signifier is one such force which can lead him to God and he admits it frankly '...I want no soul to come between me and truth' (p. 86). Using 'truth' as his weapon, Moorthy wants to direct the Other so that ultimately the Other would respond to his needs. How deeply is he influenced by Gandhi can be seen from the similarity between his and Gandhi's ideas. As Gandhi once said -

"When you want to find truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, that is non-violence. And, since I believe that ultimately means and ends are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is love"⁴

Moorthy in his attempt to be a true Satyagrahi refuses the help of advocates and is later given a rigorous imprisonment of three months. His 'imprisonment' signifies the impending war. It also indicates that the path of escape for the protagonist is a narrow one.

Moorthy's physical absence from the village has in no way diminished his psychological presence. He has embedded himself in the consciousness of the people

of Kanthapura. "Our Moorthy is like gold - the more you heat it the purer it comes from the crucible" (p. 93).

The use of the term 'gold' exemplifies a particularly well structured and coherent code. Moorthy's being compared to 'gold' signifies his purity and malleability. Like 'gold' alone he has retained his purity even after mixing with the Pariahs. The news of his release from the prison creates a happy atmosphere in Kanthapura. Venkamma connives with the priest Rangappa and fixes the date for her daughter's wedding on the same day: "Well, choose between a Brahminic feast and a feast for a polluted pig" (p. 114).

To Venkamma, Moorthy signifies nothing but pollution and dirt. For her Moorthy is the Other which cannot be dismissed or avoided. Her daughter's marriage is the test through which she wishes to find out whether people would come for her daughter's wedding or go to receive Moorthy. She deliberately chooses the same date in order to humiliate the Other.

Moorthy comes having undergone a major transformation in the prison. He has realized the futility of one man's struggle against the British who are well equipped:

"A cock does not make a morning,
 nor a single man a revolution,
 but we'll build a thousand-pill-
 ared temple, a temple more firm
 than any that hath yet been built,
 and each one of you be ye
 pillars in it, and when the temple
 is built, stone by stone, and man
 by man, and the bell hung to the
 roof and the eagle-tower shaped
 and planted, we shall invoke the
 Mother to reside with us in dream
 and in life" (p. 118).

Moorthy has discovered that without any collective action of some kind freedom will not be achieved by them. He tells the people about the pilgrimage of the Mahatma to the Dandi Beach to manufacture salt. The people collectively participate in prayers. Seenu rings the 'gong' for the bhajan. The villagers listen to Moorthy. 'Holding of bhajan' is a ritual whose main motive is to commune. It demonstrates the solidarity of the individual's relative to national and religious obligations contracted by them. Thus we see that holding of 'bhajans', the ringing of 'gong', dipping in the 'river' and the eating of 'paysam and chittranna' for the mid-day meal are highly conventionalized signs which establish a link between the villagers and Gandhi. It signifies the hope, the wish and the desires of the people.

Moorthy had never taken a decision to march on his own. After having led people to heights of frenzy, he leaves them there waiting for the orders to come from

the Karwar Congress Committee: '...but I am a small man in the Congress, and I wait for the orders',... says he (p. 121.).

The code 'small' signifies the inability of the being to lead the others. He has discovered the smallness of his being. He cannot by himself create circumstances which will carry the struggle movement forward but waits for the 'orders'.

People refer to the 'Mahatma' as a 'Big mountain' which not only guides but also protects the ones under him. They call Moorthy 'The Small Mountain'. Here again the use of the significant political signifier 'The Small Mountain' in contrast with a 'small man' reveals the predicament of Moorthy. Moorthy had all this time been aware of his limitations and the smallness of his existence. The hopes which others have pinned on him and their calling him 'the Small Mountain' signifies the trust which people of Kanthapura have in him. Next only to Gandhi, Moorthy to them appears as a symbol of strength and solidity.

He leads the "Don't touch the government" campaign in Kanthapura and propagates the famous Gandhian doctrine of 'revolution through change of heart'.

"...the purer we are the greater will be our victory, for the victory we seek is the victory of the

heart". (p. 125). Moorthy's words seem to be similar to Gandhi's thoughts:

"And remember always, the path we follow is the path of the spirit, and with truth and non-violence and love shall we add to the harmony of the world" (p. 126).

Gandhi's originality lies in his effort to extend the scope of suffering to mass political action. Moorthy too in his speech and actions seems to be echoing Gandhi. Gandhi had said, "The conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone but have to be purchased with their suffering... suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason. The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering - not the sword is the badge of the human race".⁵

Through Gandhian thoughts Moorthy is capable of motivating people to act. Picketing at Boranna's toddy grove and the collective march to the Estate are significant acts of protest.

IV.3.a.vii. Conflict Unresolved and the Struggling Souls

As we delve deeply into the character of Moorthy, we discover him as a complex being. One sees that people have put all their trust in him but Moorthy, after having discovered his inability to do anything alone against the tyrannical Other, follows the path of Gandhi. He knows that he cannot let people live in a world of illusions. Therefore, when Betel Lakshamma asks him to come and save them from Raghavayya, "the one who takes bribes and beats his wife and sends his servants to beat us" (p. 134), Moorthy does not know what to answer and he says, "We are against all tyrants" (p. 134). He evades her request by a simple "we shall see" and when she says "we ask you to come" (p. 134), Moorthy's answer "I shall write to the Congress and if they say yes, I shall come" (p. 134) shows his uncertainty.

His inability to give a confident positive answer is an indication of the fact that the protagonist is himself left without an answer to such questions. After having been exposed to such fundamental questions as 'how is one an outcaste?' (p.80) the protagonist finds himself left with no answer to these questions. It is obvious that in his efforts he has had some success, yet he has made no real gains. What he is left with after all this contemplation is a series of questions with no answers.

Moorthy's growth represents his growing sense of estrangement which even Gandhi has not been able to dissolve.

The proletariat at the end of the novel realizes that mere protests against the bourgeoisie world of the Other cannot lead to freedom and even if it does, the freedom attained would not be a freedom as long as there was a big *écart* between the rich and the poor.

As the action progresses in the novel Moorthy recedes into the background. The entire village suffers as a result of this struggle. Moorthy is blamed for the destruction of the village. The reactions of the people of Kanthapura vary. People like Satamma and Venkamma feel it to be a futile act fighting against the Other who has more power to defeat them. They blame Moorthy for bringing trouble for they know that defeat would mean annihilation. Satamma had, already begun feeling insecure and plans to go away to the town. She feels that "it was all this Moorthy, this Moorthy who had brought all this misery upon us" (p. 158).

Her trying to escape in the midst of the struggle turns her against Moorthy as well as Gandhi. Terror forces her to take such a decision. But then when we see her joining the other women and seeking escape we discover that it is fear which motivates her to act as she does. She knows that for her escape would be impossible

and therefore she is forced to cooperate with the women: 'she knew there were barricades and policemen at every footpath and cattle path' (p. 158). Her blaming Moorthy for the trouble signifies her fear of the struggle and its aftermath.

The struggle against the Other results in a complete destruction of the village. People had to flee from the place and settle in other areas. Kanthapura no more remains their own village after the Gandhian movement. Forced to leave the place, they seek refuge elsewhere. Many men and women are imprisoned and some settle in Kashipura and other neighbouring areas. Life is no more the same for them. Everything has altered considerably. After a year and two months since all the trouble began much remains to be achieved. Women who had settled in Kashipura have not given up their old ways. Reading of Upanishads and other texts is being done by Temple Vishwanatha's son each afternoon. 'Rangamma is to be released soon' (p. 180). Ratna was released after a year from the prison and she came to visit the people in Kashipura and then left for Bombay. Her leaving for Bombay signifies her strong desire to fight against the Other. Moorthy has been writing letters to her. "...Moorthy is no more with us" (p. 180) narrator Achakka's statement reveals her sense of loneliness. Her own son

Seenu's term in the prison is extended. Mahatma Gandhi's signing the pact with the Viceroy is a compromise. The pact symbolizes the intention of the Other to reduce his opponents to inaction. Several prisoners are freed once the pact is signed. Moorthy is one such prisoner. In his letter to Ratna, Moorthy voices his disgust at the way things have been proceeding. His anguish and despair lead him to think about the usefulness of Freedom. He has realized the futility of being simple and saintly. His experiences have made him discover the fact that the other is hard to move:

"Since I am out of prison, I met this Satyagrahi and that, and we discussed many a problem, and they all say the Mahatma is a noble person, a saint, but the English will know how to cheat him, and he will let himself be sheated. Have faith in your enemy, he says, have faith in him and convert him. But the world of men is hard to move, and once in motion it is wrong to stop till the goal is reached"
(p. 180).

The simplicity and nobility of Gandhi would not be powerful enough to drive the enemy away. Moorthy has begun contemplating the actions of his leaders. He knows that the enemy is not a weak force and cannot be won by simple means. The protagonist feels that going back to where one came from, before the goal is achieved, is not only a sign of defeat but also an act of cowardice. He refuses to accept defeat. The question that haunts him

has a deeper dimension. He has realized that mere attainment of freedom by driving the British away from the country will not bring an end to conflicts. Moorthy has begun to discover the questions posed by freedom. In his letter to Ratna he asks himself:

"And yet, what is the goal? Independence? Swaraj? Is there not Swaraj in our States, and is there not misery and corruption and cruelty there?" (p. 18). Moorthy's introspection leads him to a state of disgust and dissatisfaction. The self seems to be asking itself what exactly is the aim of all this struggle. The protagonist has become aware of the social forces which influence and shape man's life. It is his confrontation with the environment which is responsible for the vacillations within him. He, after having discovered that misery and corruption are also present in states ruled by Indians, realizes the futility of his actions. Not only does he begin analyzing his actions but he also tries to find out the root cause of all conflicts:

"Oh no, Ratna, it is the way of the masters that is wrong. And I have come to realize bit by bit, and bit by bit, when I was in prison, that as long as there will be iron gates and barbed wires round the Skeffington Coffee Estate, and city cars that can roll up the Bebbur mound, and gaslights and coolie cars, there will always be Pariahs and poverty" (pp. 180-181).

His stay in 'prison' proves to be a blessing in disguise for Moorthy has once again been made aware of his state of existence. He has realized that so long there is oppression in any form being practiced by the rulers there would be poverty and presence of the Pariahs. Unlike the others who feel that the horizon would be beautiful to look at once freedom is achieved, Moorthy has begun realizing that they are living in a false world. Their moral optimism would soon be eroded by the continuous economic disparity which exists among individuals. There is a subsequent alienation of the Being from the masters, i.e. the Other. Moorthy feels that rulers would frustrate the freedom achieved. The proletariat seems to be making protests against the presence of the bourgeoisie world which has been responsible for economic disparity among the masses.

'Iron gates' and 'barbed wires' as logical codes signify the desire of the one to rule the other. The 'city cars' and 'coolie cars' and presence of 'gas lights' indicate the presence of 'Pariahs' and poverty. 'Pariahs' signify the socio-cultural code. 'Pariahs' are the suppressed and neglected members of society who have lived in sheer poverty as mere objects. Moorthy, on having realized that economic disparity is the main cause of all problems, thinks of ways to get away from it. Moorthy begins focussing his attention on the barriers which

exist as a result of an écart between the ruler and the ruled. His attitude indicates that his consciousness has given him a better understanding of the existing problems. He craves for change in society. The protagonist has realized that mere attainment of freedom by driving the British away would not satisfy human needs at all levels. The protagonist Moorthy repudiates, authoritarianism of any kind. In economic terms one could classify it as capitalism; in political terms, fascism; in social terms class oppression; and in human terms, exploitation. He feels that driving the red-men away from India would only be a temporary attempt to free oneself from the tyrannies of the rulers. The demand for freedom is followed by a call for equality, for to be equal men have to be freed from a system imposing inequality on them. The struggle against poverty, exploitation, apathy, hopelessness, authoritarian attitudes, alienation, dehumanization would always continue as long as the evils remained in society. Moorthy regarded the treatment of the Pariahs by others as the gravest evil in society. Like Gandhi, he in his letter to Ratna gives a clarion call to rebel against untouchability.

IV.3.a.viii. An Intricate Web: From Despair to Hope

Despite having been disillusioned by the presence of 'Pariahs' and 'poverty' in the country, Moorthy tries

to assure himself that things will change. His last words to Ratna in his letter indicate that the flame of hope has not been extinguished in him. He feels that there is a way out and the struggle has just begun. Moorthy realizes the necessity of change and we can see him placing his faith in Jawaharlal Nehru:

"Ratna, things must change. Jawaharlal will change it. You know Jawaharlal is like a Bharatha to the Mahatma, and he, too, is for non-violence and he, too, is a Satyagrahi but he says in Swaraj there shall be neither the rich nor the poor. And he calls himself an 'equal-distributionist', and I am with him and his men. We shall speak of it when you are here" (p. 181).

Jawaharlal's comparison to Bharatha is a symbol of duty and devotion. Like Bharatha was to Rama, Jawaharlal is devoted to Gandhi. His being an 'equal distributionist' makes Moorthy his ardent follower. Like Prometheus, Moorthy takes Nehru as his hero. He has placed his trust in Nehru for he feels that he has the courage to fight against oppression of any kind:

"To defy power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates;
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates."⁶

Moorthy, the protagonist has discovered the main cause of estrangement. His discovery that the struggle has

just begun and will continue much further leads him to unknown paths. The protagonist like the world seems to be moving in circles and returns always to where it started, to conflict.

Like Moorthy the faith of others has also not been killed. Their hopes are alive and they do have confidence, that Mahatma would bring them 'Swaraj'. Despite their being uprooted from their homes, their estrangement from their kith and kin, their loss of property there is this wish in them to struggle and fight which means the presence of the hostile Other. Under the presence of external threat, not only have they been dislocated from their families but also their homes. Unlike Moorthy who has discovered the presence of several other conflicts within the main one, the simple people of Kanthapura still dream of the arrival of 'Ramarajya' once the Other i.e. the Britisher are totally ousted from India. Beating of narrator's 'heart' as a 'drum' is a logical code. It signifies the presence of hope, a desire to struggle and overpower the Other. It also reveals that the predicament of the protagonist has not yet been resolved. Amidst fear and confusion and insecurity there still burns bright the flame of hope.

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CHAPTER - V

INTERTEXTUALITY: A PATTERN OF SIMILAR CONCERNSV.1 Introduction

The novels of Raja Rao display the remarkable depth of the author's identification with the Indian ethos. His novels, Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope, The Cat and Shakespeare and Comrade Kirillov are a testimony to his awareness of the Indian culture and milieu. His familiarity with the Indian traditions and his interest in the metaphysical reality, enabled him to create such powerful and extraordinarily unique sagas of Indian reality. Raja Rao focusses on the individuals who have been estranged from the society in which they live and persistently explore the possibilities of overcoming such an estrangement. Raja Rao's "voluntary exile sharpened his awareness of his native heritage".¹ His stay in France made him more conscious of the diversities which existed between the two cultures. The confrontation of the East with the West, both at political and cultural levels and the sharp distinction between the Gandhian and Marxian ideology are dealt with extensively in the novels of Raja Rao. The need to seek his roots in his native soil becomes so acute that one sees Raja Rao trying to revive the glorious Indian past through his characters.

V.2 Estranged Being and the Need for Self-exploration:
Development of Thought in the Novels of Raja Rao
with Special Reference to Kanthapura, The Serpent
and the Rope, Comrade Kirillov and The Cat and
Shakespeare

Kanthapura was inspired by the struggle which ensued as a result of the movement led by Gandhi. From the very beginning one sees there is an écart which exists between the two worlds, i.e. the East and the West. In Kanthapura the main cause of struggle is the systematic oppression of the Indians by the British. In The serpent and the Rope the protagonist desires to be himself, i.e. a need for self-exploration is too intense in him. In Comrade Kirillov the individual 'P' uprooted from his native land seeks stability elsewhere. He turns into a communist and oscillates between excessive love for India on the one hand and commitment to Marxian ideology on the other. In all these major figures there is a desire to realize themselves by reviving the glorious Indian past. In Kanthapura the struggle is triggered off by the reading of the Vedantic texts and the singing of bhajans. The protagonist Moorthy has created in the people a need for self-identity. The strong force of Indianness unites them and thus the fight against the colonial forces gains momentum. India to them signifies a powerful orbit in which their existence revolves. Faced with the same kind

of conflicts, the same desires and a more or less similar anguish, the masses join hands with each other to oust the oppressive Other i.e. the British. The signifying ensembles like: '...Our country is being bled to death by foreigners. We have to protect our Mother' (p. 16), signify the need for self preservation. Gandhiji's vision too said to Moorthy: "You can help your country by going and working among the dumb millions of the villages" (p. 34). 'Dumb' as a connotative code signifies the state of mute existence of the oppressed beings under the authoritative Other. Moorthy, growing aware of the forces of oppression repudiates their repressive tendencies. He gropes for a way out and under the influence of Gandhi he not only gives a clarion call for action but also that of self-reliance. 'Gandhi' is his guru and only after he surrenders himself before the guru is he able to realize the gravity of his mission. The protagonist refuses to be an Object and the Red-man's tyranny over the Indian masses fills him with a growing hatred.

The protagonist Ramaswamy in The Serpent and the Rope is an individual who, though physically at a distance from India, is too close to it psychologically and not even the love of his wife Madeleine can retain him in France. A strong desire in him urges him to go back to his country. The given ensemble reveals his anguish at

being away from the country: "...For me India is Freedom"² Rama was unable to Be-himself and wants to return to his soil to realize himself. So strong is this wish to go away from the alien world that he proposes to Madeline to go to India, whereas she feels that to her "India is Paradise".³ The East is something unreal and unattainable and, therefore, she wishes to stay away from it. The East has an aura of mystery around it, therefore, the people from the West could not understand it completely. To them India remains incomprehensible and unapproachable:

"India has no history, for Truth cannot have history. If every battle of France has been fought for humanity, then it would be honest to say no battle in India was ever fought for humanity's sake. Or if fought, it was soon forgotten. Krishna fought against Bhisma by giving Bhisma courage. Mahatma Gandhi fought against the Muslims by fighting for them. He died a Hindu martyr, for an Indian cause. He died for Truth".⁴

There is a gradual progression from Raja Rao's earlier treatment of struggle in Kanthapura, the struggle there was against colonial forces and to some extent Moorthy tried to analyse the basic cause of repression. The final truth which haunted him was:

"...as long as there will be iron gates and barbed wires round the Skeffington Coffee Estate, and the city cars that can roll up the

Bebbur mound, and gaslights
and coolie cars, there will
always be Pariahs and poverty"
(p. 181).

He protests and says: '...it is the way of the
masters that is wrong' (pp. 180-181). The protagonists in
the novels of Raja Rao yearn to collectively eliminate the
forces that threaten and undermine their existence. In-
dia to them represents the truth. Moorthy in Kanthapura
emphasized on the value of truth. Truth is that strong
weapon in the hands of an Indian which alone can bring
change: 'Between truth and me none shall come' (p. 86).

"The whole of the Gangetic plain
is one song of saintly sorrow, as
though Truth began where sorrow was
accepted, and India began where Truth
was acknowledged. So sorrow is our
river, sorrow our earth, but the
green of our trees and the white of
our mountains are the affirmation
that Truth is possible; that when
the cycle of birth and death is over,
we can proclaim ourselves the Truth.
Truth is the Himalaya, and Ganges
humanity. That is why we throw the
ashes of the dead to her. She deli-
vers them to the sea, and the sun
heats the waters so that, becoming
clouds, they return to the Himalaya.
The cycle of death and birth goes
on eternally like the snows and the
rivers. That explains why holy
Badrinath, is in the Himalaya: it
proclaims the Truth".⁵

Raja Rao believes in truth being God and according
to Rama, who voices Rao's opinions, this truth resides in

India. India to him symbolizes an abode of knowledge and nothing exists beyond this truth.

The quest for knowing himself is too deepseated in Moorthy and Ramaswamy. In Comrade Kirillov we come across an individual Padmanabhan Iyer who becomes a Communist after being appalled at the state of existence of men in Indian society. The presence of Pariahs and the inhuman treatment meted out to them pricks his consciousness. Like Moorthy who was made to think "...How is one an outcaste?" (p. 80), 'P' too thinks of the evils present in society and turns towards Marxism for a solution. The novel aims to show the protagonist in sheer confusion: 'a communist can be very sincere but his sincerity is confused. There is intellectual confusion',⁶ states Raja Rao. P is caught between two opposing forces, on the one hand he believes that a revolution like the one in Soviet Union alone could solve the problems of Indians; on the other he feels proud of India's cultural heritage, for it has much to offer.

There is a desire in him to revive the Indian classics. Comparing the rich East with the shallow West, he says:

"Unlike Europe, it is not sincerity that goes a - begging in India - we are not yet that corrupt. But we shall soon reach the requisite standards. We are human like all. But

one thing I felt sorry for when I was in India - the neglect of our classics. I forgot my politics for a time and jumped into the classics. It was such a joy to go back to Uttarramma Charita, and to Kalidasa".⁷

Kirillov too, like Moorthy and Rama, is very fond of India '...his Indianhood would break through every communist chain'.⁸ His being a communist did not in any way loosen his bonds with the Indian culture. There is a desire in him to see India free. Like Moorthy he pines for its freedom, but unlike him, he regards Marxism as the greatest possible weapon on earth:

"Death makes of intelligence a willing martyr to truth. Kirillov will die - but India shall be free. Kirillov will kill himself - but the new Communist state will rise."⁹

Future for him shall be bright only if one follows Communism and not Gandhism. He does not see eye to eye with Gandhian ideology yet he extends blind support to him and is unable to hear a word uttered by the other against Gandhi:

"...Kirillov was an Indian, and he had peculiar reactions which no dialectic could clarify. He could almost speak of India as though he were talking of a venerable old lady in a fairy tale who had nothing but goodness in her heart, and who was made of morning dew and

mountain honey. He could not bear a word said against Mahatma Gandhi...."10

This implies his subconscious love for Gandhi. Gandhi to him remained an epitome of goodness and love. There remains an affinity between Kirillov and Gandhi. He calls him -

"...friend and fool of the poor, the Sadhu reactionary who still believed in caste and creed and such categories, and whose birth in this world had set history many centuries backwards!"11

Gandhi to him represents backwardness and old ideas: "Mahatma Gandhi should have been born in the Middle Ages, and he should not have bothered us with his theology in this rational age of ours".¹² The protagonist Padmanabhan Iyer, later known as 'P' is torn between several conflicts. Raja Rao's three protagonists are Brahmins, Moorthy, Rama and P, who consciously try to bridge the écart which existed between them and the others, yet are unable to give up their age-old beliefs. They are making vigorous attempts to realize their being and in this process undergo gradual transformation. To Ramaswamy 'Brahmin is he who knows Brahman'.¹³

A true Brahmin is one who seeks the ultimate truth and this can be attained only if he negates the outer

reality and probes into the inner one. There continues a constant search for the realization of this truth. Comrade Kirillov, by becoming a communist, resorts to a new programme of action and hopes for a better India. He chooses to be ^a follower of Marx, just as Moorthy had chosen Gandhism as his form of action. His being a Communist implies that he is on the side of the proletariat:

"Marxism had given a strange ascetic incision to his Brahminic manners and his sweetness had that unction, the theological compassion, of a catholic priest".¹⁴

But even the Marxian influence had not destroyed his faith in the concept of nondualism. During moments of despair and crisis he would sing:

'Manobuddhi ahankara cittani naham
cidananda rupah Shivo ham - Shivo ham'.¹⁵

Uttering of 'I am Siva, 'I am Siva' provided him with strength. 'Shivo ham', 'Shivo ham', as chanted by Moorthy, Ramaswamy and Kirillov, signifies the strong faith in the powers of the Supreme. Brahmin through the strong force of nondualism, attains the highest state and in doing so realizes his entire being and thus knows perfect bliss i.e. himself. As we see Moorthy encouraging people to read Vedantic texts, Ramaswamy trying to explore the residues of meaning of life through them and Kirillov too

showing interest in them, we can feel Raja Rao himself trying to attain 'moksa' through nondualistic approach. The entire thrust of the chanting of mantras is the supreme significance of a ritual action, through which the protagonist tries to assure himself of his existence on the earth. There is an underlying assumption that these individuals are torn between several conflicts and that the meticulous performance of several rituals like singing bhajans, reading religious books, going to the temple and discussing philosophy are essential to the proper understanding of one's self. The struggle becomes intense as the cultural affinity is established among people.

Raja Rao in his novels has also done a detached analysis of the relationships between the Being and the Other. The conflicts arise in the protagonists' mind due to several reasons. The struggle ensues not only between the British and the Indians, the East and the West, the Brahmins and the Pariahs, but it is also a struggle between man and woman to understand one another. Their inability to understand each other leads to several doubts and conflicts. The protagonist in Raja Rao's novels through his relationship with the Other i.e. a woman, tries to analyse himself. All the female characters emerge as powerful individuals and their attitude towards life also brings a change in the behaviour of the protagonist. Woman is the Other to him, and caught

between the desire to possess the Other and also to be free from the Other, we find the protagonist going through several phases of uncertainty and confusion.

In Kanthapura Moorthy's relationship with his mother is snapped off because of his progressive ideas. She, being an orthodox Brahmin, is unable to accept the fact that he had begun mixing with the Pariahs. The dreams which she had built around him had no chance of being realized in the near future. He had given up his studies and his refusal to marry aggravates the tensions in her mind. Life to her becomes overshadowed with ennui and disappointment. The news of her son's ex-communication leaves her distressed. She accepts death as a consolation because she has nowhere else to go. The unremitting attitude of one leads to the complete destruction of the Other.

As we analyse Moorthy's relationship with Ratna, Ramaswamy's relationship with Madeleine and Savithri, and Kirillov's relationship with Irene, we find the men in Raja Rao's novels unable to comprehend the mysterious Other. Woman has always been revered and held in high esteem by these protagonists. She is a part of the reality on this earth, yet appears unreal and dream-like to the protagonist at times. Moorthy had loved Ratna but had never disclosed his love for her. He realizes the power she has over him. Afraid of his being possessed

by her, he refuses to be an Object in his own eyes and the relationship takes a spiritual turn: 'She seemed something so feminine and soft and distant....' (p.64).

○ As she comes to see him, he realizes the impact of her presence on him. The struggle goes on in the mind of the protagonist. She appears to him as someone soft yet aloof. In his attempt to realize what feelings he had for her, we find Moorthy drifting away from the Other. This distance, which gradually develops between the two on a physical level, does not separate them mentally. Moorthy by refusing to succumb to his physical desires, is able to continue the freedom struggle and yet maintain an affinity with Ratna by writing to her. His writing a letter to her signifies the urgent need (in him to be remembered and understood by the Other.

The conflicts which arise in the minds of Ramaswamy due to his confrontation with the Other i.e. women are also responsible for creating the need for self exploration in him. He marries Madeleine and even the strong bond of marriage does not let him penetrate the depths of her being:

'Madeleine was altogether unreal'.¹⁶ It was the Brahmin in him that had appealed her. Ramaswamy tries to see himself in her: 'Madeleine was like the palace of Amber seen in moonlight. There is such a luminous mystery the deeper you go, the more you know yourself.'¹⁷

Ramaswamy has become so dependent on Madeleine that her absence makes life meaningless to him. On his return from India, Ramaswamy is unable to see Madeleine immediately and this leaves him estranged from the outer world:

"It makes all the difference in the world whether the woman of your life is with you or not; she alone enables you to be in a world that is familiar and whole. If it is not his wife, then for an Indian it may be a sister in Mysore, or little mother in Benarès."¹⁸

It is her presence that makes the world a happy place to live in. The man in Raja Rao's novels discovers that he is helpless without her. Ramaswamy is attracted to the silence which a woman possesses. It is her quality of silence which makes her so different and yet so loving. Comparing Madeleine to his little mother he says, "They both had the same shy presence, both rather silent and remembering everything; they loved, too, more than is customary".¹⁹

Of Savithri he says, "...she never says anything that really matters",²⁰ and 'her presence never said anything, but her absence spoke".²¹

The mutual passion between Ramaswamy and Savithri creates their own world, separate from others:

"For her, I could see, everything was gesture and symbol,... All was secret to her but herself - so all was a legend, and every event a wonder".²²

During her visit to France, Savithri's relationship with Ramaswamy takes on a spiritual aspect. He gives her the toe rings of his mother. The spiritual marriage between the two signifies their desire to remain rooted to their inner most self. Even his sister Saroja appears as an unknown being to Ramaswamy:

"And her silence had a quality that made living cervine. Saroja would never say anything important to anyone, and yet by some abrupt inconsequentiality she would say something you had been waiting to name".²³

There was this desire in her: 'to hide something of her own'.²⁴ She would never reveal herself completely before the Other. The silence of the woman as a significant sign can be conceived as a bearer of meaning. Through her 'silence' one can give meaning to several other actions of hers. A woman is that incomprehensible Other and in Madeleine we find a desire to own Ramaswamy. She treats him like a God and worships him: "To amount oneself in worshipping another is the basis of all love.

We become ourself by becoming another".²⁵ Just as Ratna worshipped Moorthy and was willing to do anything for him, we can see an attitude of subservience visible in

Madeleine. Deep down in her heart lies the wish to possess him. This realization that she understands him far too well grips Rama with fear:

"I could be bent by the knowledge she had of me - the knowledge of my silences, the vigorous twists of my mental domain. But further down, where the mind lost itself in the deeper roots of life, she waited like an Indian servant at the door, for me to come out. Then would she know what was told".²⁶

As Sartre has also pointed:

"There is a relation of the for - itself with the in-itself in the presence of the Other".²⁷

She loved him and there became intense in her the desire to grab hold of his being. Love becomes an enterprise to her. It is an attempt at realizing herself and this leads to her alienation with the Other.

She talked of him to the others like Tante Zoubie and Catharine and says:

"I spoke especially of the respect you show to me - for you, a woman is still the other, the strange, the miracle. You could never show the familiarity European men show, towards their wives. You worship women even if you torture them. But I like to be tortured and to be your slave."²⁸

This confession of Madeleine reveals her inner sight. Analysing this sort of relationship, Sartre says:

"...in Love the Lover wants to be "the whole World" for the beloved. This means that he puts himself on the side of the world; he is the one who assumes and symbolizes the world; he is a this which includes all other thises. He is and consents to be an object. But on the other hand, he wants to be the object in which the Other's freedom consents to lose itself, the object in which the Other consents to find his being and his raison d'être as his second facticity - the object - limit of transcendence, that toward which the Other's transcendence transcends all other objects but which it can in no way transcend".²⁹

The protagonist on having realized the incompatibility between him and the Other refuses to become an Object for what he wants is different from what the Other can give: 'No, of course I did not want a slave. I wanted a companion of pilgrimage...'.³⁰

Gradually we see the protagonist Rama trying to understand the philosophy of life. He severs all connections with Madeleine and decides to come back to India. He feels that: "Life is made for woman - man is a stranger on this earth".³¹ This realization that a woman is intimate to another woman in a way a man could never be to another man, fills Ramaswamy with a sense of isolation. His entire being finds itself alienated from the material world and the search for the unknown persists. He finally comes to a conclusion that what separated him from

Madeleine was India. India he feels stands '...vertical to space and time, and is present at all points.'³²

'India' to Ramaswamy represents that whole beyond which lies no other truth. 'India' as a socio-cultural code represents not only Brahman but also the absolute. The protagonist after having been unable to identify himself with the West pines to go back to his roots. It is the Indianness in him which makes him accept the superiority of woman over the Other. She represents an entirety to him:

"Woman is the earth, air, ether, sound; woman is the microcosm of the mind, the articulations of space, the knowing in knowledge; the woman is fire, movement clear and rapid as the mountain stream; the woman is that which seeks against that which is sought... woman, that which reminds man of that which he is, and reminds herself through him of that which she is...."³³

The woman, therefore to Ramaswamy represents not only the 'Panch Tatvas' but also the entire universe. She is a being who makes the life on earth meaningful; she is the know all and the end all of life.

It is only through his contacts with the Other that Ramaswamy realizes the final truth. Life and death to him appear as the two integrated forces and there

remains a continuity between the two. The revelation to the protagonist comes as a surprise. The solitary man who had been living amidst doubts and fears and had fallen back into the multiple problems raised by his facticity comes to realize his needs. He discovers that he is living amidst contradictions and there exists this desire in him to explore himself. As a being he knows he possesses the capacity to transcend his present situation and its possible limitations. Yet part of his individuality is infected with a desire to be loved and this seems paradoxical. He accepts what he wants and says in his diary: "5.5.54. 'No', not a God but a Guru is what I need".³⁴

To such a Guru he was taken:

"...It sits on a river bank, it sits as the formless form of Truth; it walks without walking, speaks without talking, moves without gesticulating, shows without naming, reveals what is known. To such a Truth was I taken and became its servant, I kissed the perfume of its Holy feet, and called myself a disciple".³⁵

Through his Guru he hopes to find answers to several existential issues like: "Life is a pilgrimage, I know, but a pilgrimage to where - and of what?"³⁶

The Guru, he tells Madeleine, can let him distinguish the Serpent from the Rope. He alone would be able to light his path and lead him towards perfect bliss i.e.

attainment of the absolute. For him: 'India is the Guru of the world'.³⁷ He tells Madeleine:

"One - the Guru - brings you the lantern; the road is seen, the long, white road, going with the statutory stars. 'It's only the rope'. He shows it to you. And you touch your eyes and know there never was a serpent. Where was it, where, I ask you? The poet who saw the rope as a serpent became the serpent, and so a saint. Now, the saint is shown that his sainthood was identification, not realization. The actual, the real has no name. The rope is no rope to itself".³⁸

Thus we see the protagonist in The Serpent and the Rope is in quest of the ultimate reality. He discovers at last that the problems he is facing have a spiritual connotation and this unrest due to spiritual conflict in the mind cannot be easily resolved. His pilgrimage ends with the discovery of truth, the Guru. Self knowledge being the goal of his life he decides to return to India for complete discovery of oneself.

This crucial need to understand, results from a slow evolution in Raja Rao's thought. In Kanthapura Moorthy after having understood that change alone would result in proper freedom raises his voice against the inequality which exists in society at several levels. In The Serpent and the Rope, Ramaswamy's predicament and his ultimate realization of what he wants from life

resulted from his ties with his past, the irresistible urge in him to go back to India from France and his incapacity to give up his Indianness. The implication being that his quest for knowledge could never be fulfilled unless he found a Guru i.e. truth and this truth resides only in India.

Comrade Kirillov is much more than the chronicle of an Indian turned Marxist. The book reveals the conflict of commitments. In Comrade Kirillov we find Padmanabhan Iyer trying to adhere to the communists programmes. By doing so he tries to break away from the old order and bring in a revolution. In communism lies an answer to all human problems. He derives his conviction from Marx but this alone does not fulfil his being in totality. We see 'P' caught between several unsolvable dilemmas. Even communism is unable to give an answer to his questions. His love for India draws him back to its roots. Proud of its cultural heritage, he finds it difficult to break away from the familiar grounds. The protagonist in Comrade Kirillov is unable to set himself free from all bonds of Indianhood. 'He was ever conscious of his skin',³⁹ in England. After having been treated as a mere object of ridicule by the British,

'The brahminic sensibility of Kirillov had such antennae inward and outward that a fierce anger fose in his belly,

and he cursed the British race,
wished it a sepulchral fire, and
the red, ruinous tongue of Hell'.⁴⁰

Comrade Kirillov's hatred towards the British is too intense and he wishes their complete extirpation. Both Moorthy and Kirillov strive for a change in society. Nevertheless they differ in their ideologies. Moorthy, a follower of Gandhi, believes in non-violence and hopes to transform the enemy through love. Comrade Kirillov however feels contempt for British race and believes that:

"The communist, the true Marxist, is above all a realist. ...Mahatma Gandhi should have been born in the Middle Ages, and he should not have bothered us with his theology in this rational age of ours".⁴¹

Like Moorthy, he craves for a classless society where all individuals would be their own masters and wealth be equally distributed among them. To him communism is a genuine resolution of the conflict between one man and the other.

A brief survey of The Cat and Shakespeare reveals that it is a sequel to Raja Rao's other novels. Raja Rao calls it 'a metaphysical comedy'. The author has tried to give a comic flavour to serious philosophical issues. The protagonist, Ramakrishna Pai, is advised by Govindan Nair not to worry, for:

"Life is a riddle that can be solved with a riddle. You can remove a thorn with another thorn, you

solve one problem through another problem. Thus the world is connected"⁴²

The woman to the protagonist as always here too remains 'a puzzle'. The novel is full of symbolic allusions from the Upanishads and parables taken from the Puranas. The life to Govindan Nair is 'a rationshop' and "Shakespeare knew every mystery of the rationshop".⁴³ Shakespeare's penetrating soul had looked deep into the recesses of human thought. The 'Cat' in the novel symbolizes the Prakriti or the Mother or the Guru or the Divine. The brief narrative while trying to grapple with a wide range of ideas has become too complex and obscure to an ordinary reader.

The protagonist is seen in search of an answer to his existential predicament. Various questions haunt him. However, all of them have only one answer and that lies in the discovery of the divine. His final realization is that God alone can save the world from peril and complete resignation to him can provide salvation to the searching souls. He realizes that "the unknown alone resolves the unknown".⁴⁴

The Cat and Shakespeare, as Naik puts it:

"...has its moments of dazzling brilliance and sudden glory, but the brief blinding lighting flash, with its searing white splendor, though impressive, can never take the place of the midday sun".⁴⁵

Concluding Remarks

The most striking feature in the novels of Raja Rao is his use of a variety of signs and symbols which embody a vast network of meaning. Through the use of signs and symbols not only has he probed the personal and cultural relationships which form the basis of our social codes but also the hidden, secret recesses of the human psyche.

The characters in his novel come alive through the narrative process. In Kanthapura it's an old woman narrating the villager's struggle for freedom. The narrator's style may seem tediously repetitive to the hasty reader, but this is not so: the manner in which she unfolds the story forms the very essence of the novel. The narrator, Achakka, subtly draws our attention to an interminable tale where one episode follows another and gradually the problematics is unfolded. Raja Rao tries to justify his technique when he says:

"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. Time alone will justify it".⁴⁶

The people in Kanthapura after having launched a struggle against the British try to strengthen their political consciousness by seeking socio-cultural inte-

gration. Raja Rao has focussed on several important problems of the society. Raja Rao successfully highlights on certain socio-economic issues which have been responsible for cultural and political estrangement.

The characters in Kanthapura strive to eliminate certain social evils like untouchability, social inferiority of women, suppression of widows, those rites and practices which hinder the national character of the struggle. The protagonist Moorthy is seen pondering: "How, How is one an outcaste?" The women of Kanthapura refuse to be submissive and fight vigorously for their upliftment. Once an awareness of their state of suppression is created in them they begin questioning themselves: "How can we be, like we used to be?" Moorthy realizes the futility of freedom as long as there is economic disparity among men. His final question: "What is the goal?" leaves one totally disgusted with the ruling class.

The Gandhian struggle brings about many profound changes in the life of the people. Once they discover their rich cultural values they acquire a clearer awareness of the economic realities of the country and the sufferings of the common people. Thus we see people in Raja Rao's Kanthapura striving for political independence, which would also include their economic, social and cultural progress.

The final realization dawns upon Moorthy that no political liberty can come without the inner being achieving freedom.

The novels of Raja Rao portray such protagonists who try to resolve their inner turmoil. Their psychological upheavals are caused by forces both within and without them. They begin their journey, the exodus towards the realm of self-knowledge. Ignorance of the self, the tentacles of society are the sources of man's misery. The means to resolve such issues appear too idealistic; we notice that the author's protagonists embody the futile meanderings in a labyrinth of darkness that occasionally admits a streak of hope.

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