

Novel, Progressive Writers' Movement, and the Telugu Public Sphere: The Literary Journey of S. Natarajan

A dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Translation Studies

by

Mallipudi Rajasekharam

10HAPT06



**Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies
School of Humanities
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad, India
August 2021**



CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

Declaration

I, **Mallipudi Rajasekharam** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “**Novel, Progressive Writers’ Movement, and the Telugu Public Sphere: The Literary Journey of S. Natarajan**” submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies embodies veritable research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Shivarama Padikkal, Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies(CALTS), School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad. It is a research work which is free from plagiarism.

I also declare to the best of my knowledge that this dissertation has not been submitted previously, in part or in full, to this or any other university or institute for the award of any academic degree. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhbanga/INFLIBNET.

A report on the plagiarism statistics from Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad is enclosed.

Date: -07-2021

Mallipudi Rajasekharam
10HAPT06

Place: Hyderabad

Countersigned by:

Prof. Shivarama Padikkal
(Research Supervisor)
CALTS, University of Hyderabad



**CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION
STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD**

Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Novel, Progressive Writers’ Movement, and the Telugu Public Sphere: The Literary Journey of S. Natarajan**” submitted by **Mallipudi Rajasekharam (10HAPT06)** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies** from the University of Hyderabad is a bona fide research work carried out by her under my supervision.

This dissertation is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously, either in part or in full, for the award of any academic degree or diploma to this or any other university or institution.

Part related to this dissertation has been:

A. Published in the following:

1. Rajasekharam, Mallipudi. “Marxism and Novel.” In *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, x, no. 3 (2021): 23-31.

Further the student has passed the following courses towards the fulfilment of the coursework requirement for Ph.D. in 2016.

Course Code	Title of Courses	Credits	Pass/ Fail
----------------	------------------	---------	------------

TS-801	Research Methodology	4	Pass
TS-821	The Topic Related to be offered by the Concerned Supervisor	4	Pass
TS-832	Modern Sociological Theory	4	Pass

Date: -07-2021
Place: Hyderabad

Prof. Shivarama Padikkal
(Research Supervisor)

Head of the Department
(CALTS)

Dean
School of Humanities

University of Hyderabad

University of Hyderabad

Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank the following individuals and institutions,

My supervisor Prof. Shivarama Padikkal for his extraordinary commitment to teaching and guiding, which inspired me a lot and also for his consistent encouragement and support;

My Doctoral Committee members, Prof. V. Rajagopal and Prof. P. Ramulu for their valuable suggestions and guidance;

Prof. Sasheej Hegde, for introducing the exciting and problematic idea of modernity and giving comments on the earlier drafts of Chapter-3;

Prof. A Raghuramaraju, for teaching Western political philosophy in the most enchanting manner;

Prof. Francesca Orsini, for giving time, patiently hearing the details of my thesis and raising many queries;

Prof. Arun Patnaik, one of the most responsible and scrupulous public intellectuals of the University of Hyderabad, for teaching that the truth is always politically incorrect and for organizing a Webinar, in which I got opportunity to discuss with Prof. Sudipta Kaviraj;

Prof. Uma Maheswar Rao, Prof. Bhimrao Bhosale Panda. Prof. K. Rajyarama for their support;

Prof. Farina Mir, for her encouraging words;

Staff at Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad; staff at Saraswata Niketanam, Vetapalem and the staff at the British Library, London for their support and assistance;

Prof. Moishe Postone, Prof. Sheldon Pollock, Prof. Francesca Orsini, Dr. Richard Westerman, Dr. Sami Khatib and Dr. Veena Naregal for responding to my queries;

Charles Wallace India Trust (CWIT) for granting the Short Research Grant to visit London;

Richard Alford, former secretary of Charles Wallace India Trust, for his support and concern;

Dr. Nivedita Kalrikkal for discussions and support;

Prof. Andrew McKinnon, Prof. Howard Eiland, Prof. Jane Newman, Prof. Marry Gluck, Prof. Sudipta Kaviraj, Dr. Snehal Shingavi, Prof. Uwe Steiner, Dr. Veli N. Yashin for sending their articles;

Dr. Temaji Dongre, for his warm friendship, leadership qualities and sense of humour;
S. Chinna Babu and A. Padma for their hospitality;

Abbas, Ajmatullah, Ajay Kumar Koli, Ashokan Nambiar, Mursed Alam, Gurram Ashok, SK Akram, Dr. Balaji Belekere, D. Kotes, R. Lakshmu Naidu, Mohanarao Konderapu, A. S.N. Malleswararao, Nagaraju Battini, Vemuri Prashant, Bugga Rajendar, Rameshwar, Santhi Swaroop, Sivaji, Sudarshanam, and Viju for many conversations and support;

Fuzail Siddqi for proofreading the thesis;

My servant maid, Vijayamma, for her support;

My mother, Dadiseti Sugunamani for financial support and for her patience;

S. Natarajan, the key protagonist of this thesis, for learning the Telugu language and writing the most extraordinary novels in it in the most extremely difficult conditions one can imagine.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my friend Koppula Nagaraju, who valiantly fought against the deadly cancer and ultimately welcomed the death in the most dignified manner.

Table of Contents

<i>Declaration</i>		i
<i>Certificate</i>		ii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		iv
Chapter-I	Introduction	1
Chapter-II	Nationalism, Marxism, and Literature	61
Chapter-III	The “Progressive Writers’ Movement and the Novel-Form	80
Chapter-IV	The Progressive Writers’ Association and Translations	127
		133
Conclusion		
Bibliography		135

Chapter-I

Introduction: The Telugu Public Sphere

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Relevance of the Problem

1.1.1 Modern Literary Ideologies and Figures and the Telugu Public Sphere

The main objective of this study is to critically understand the fashioning of literary discourse and genres in colonial and post-colonial Andhra during the 1940s and the 1950s. Another major objective of this study is to critically understand the conditions of possibility for the reception and mediation of modern literary and non-literary ideologies such as Realism, Surrealism, Modernism, Marxism, Socialism, Communism, and others. Colonial Andhra consists of the Telugu speaking districts of the Madras presidency. To achieve these objectives, this study uses the conception of the public sphere which consists of both the literary and the political spheres. My study will try to pay attention to the key developments in both of these spheres in order to look at the socio-political developments which have had an impact on the fashioning of the Telugu public sphere.

My study will also attempt to focus on the important institutions that gave space to the fashioning of literary discourse and genres in Telugu. These institutions include the education system, the initiatives of individuals, journals, associations such as the Andhra Sahitya Parishat (Andhra Literary Organization) and the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham (Progressive Writers' Association), and movements. However, my study will focus particularly on the literary associations which were influential during this period. Their activities included conducting literary schools, publishing literary journals, and translating literary and non-literary texts from other languages.

When an ordinary migrant hotel worker, S. Natarajan (1924–1955), who expressed his anguish over not getting enough time for literary activity, emerged as a prodigious and consummate fiction writer in a very brief period of time; when a poet from an untouchable background Gurram Joshuva (1895–1971) denounced the discrimination faced by untouchables according to the Varna system in a long poem *Gabbilam* (The Bat); and when the whole literary world was vertically divided into two warring camps on the eve of the 1955 elections, these phenomenal literary-political events illustrated that the domain of literature was immensely politicized and intimately connected with the larger socio-political developments in colonial and post-colonial Andhra during the period of study. The focus of this study is on one particular literary association, the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham, as it played an instrumental role in fashioning the literary discourse, genres, and public sphere in colonial and post-colonial Andhra. This study will also try to critically understand how this association achieved a pre-eminent status during the 1940s and the 1950s. Another major concern of this study is to attempt an understanding of how far this organization was successful in fashioning the literary public sphere during this time.

The Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham was started in 1943 and became very influential in the subsequent decades. Although literary historians such as Arudra¹ have pointed out the importance of this association; its efforts and impact have not been studied yet in a full-fledged manner. To fill this lacuna, this study will focus on its activities and initiatives in general that helped in shaping the literary public sphere in colonial and post-colonial Andhra and attempt to understand how it fashioned the genre of the novel in particular. The reason behind choosing this particular genre will be discussed later.

¹ Arudra (1925–1998) was a multifaceted Telugu intellectual. He is a poet and literary historian. He worked as journalist, lyricist, and dialogue writer for Telugu movies. He wrote a monumental Telugu literary history: *Arudra. Samgra Andhra Sahityam* (Complete Andhra Literature). It is considered an authoritative literary history by both scholars and students of Telugu literature.

The time period of the present study was crucial in the history of the social formation² of colonial and post-colonial Andhra for several reasons. This period witnessed various kinds of social movements which include the nationalist movement under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, the Socialist movement, the workers and peasants' movements led by the Communist Party, and others. This period also witnessed the formation of the Andhrarashtram (state of Andhra) on a linguistic basis on 1 October 1953, and the subsequent formation of Andhra Pradesh with the merger of the majority of the Telugu-speaking districts of the state of Hyderabad on 1 November 1956. Andhra Pradesh has the distinction of being the first state to be formed on a linguistic basis.³ This period was also significant for other reasons as it witnessed the transition from a colonial regime to independent nationhood. In recent times, the various dimensions of the process of transition have received attention from a good number of scholars.⁴

Recently, the American scholar Lisa Mitchell⁵ has studied the phenomena of Telugu linguistic nationalism. Mitchell's major thesis is that associating language with a particular group of people is a modern and relatively recent phenomenon. She successfully explains that the causes behind intense emotional attachment towards one particular language is a recent

² I am using this concept as it is defined by Erik Olin Wright in *Classes*. According to him, social formation indicates "the analysis of societies as specific combinations of distinct modes of production or types of relations of production"; in Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1997), 11.

³ Andhra Pradesh survived approximately for 58 years. It got bifurcated and the state of Telangana came into existence in May 2014.

⁴ Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Decolonizing in South Asia: Meanings of Freedom in Post-independence West Bengal, 1947–52* (Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2009); Dipesh Chakrabarty et al., *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Dilip M. Menon, "Lost Visions? Imagining a National Culture in the 1950s," in *Daniel Thorner Memorial Lectures: Land, Labour, & Rights*, ed. Alice Thorner (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), 250–268; Emily Esther Rook-Koepsel, "Unity, Democracy and the All India Phenomenon, 1940-1956" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2010); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Nationalism and the Imagination* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2015).

⁵ Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009). This study has the distinction of the first major study on the phenomena of Telugu linguistic nationalism in South India. It is explicitly influenced by an earlier study on the phenomena of Tamil linguistic nationalism by Sumathi Ramaswamy. See Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

phenomenon and makes it clear that this kind of emotional attachment is not by any stretch of the imagination the result of “primordial sentiment” towards one’s language as has been argued by Clifford Geertz.⁶ She focuses on the linguistic processes that led to the formation of the Andhrarashtram. Drawing on Friedrich Kittler’s *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, Mitchell elaborates on the various discursive processes that led to the fashioning of sentiments towards Telugu and argues that the shifts that took place in understanding language’s relation to people during the nineteenth century led to the emergence of linguistic nationalism in the Telugu-speaking districts of colonial and post-colonial South India (colonial Andhra) in the twentieth century. She attributes this development to the emergence of discourse networks and the impact of colonial linguistic ideologies. This discursive-theoretical approach allows her to point out the important developments in writing technologies during the nineteenth century.⁷ She argues that the new inflexions given to already existing categories of grammar like *desyam*⁸ (words from Andhra region) and *anyadesyam*⁹ (words from other regions) by colonial scholars were instrumental in creating a new distinct identity for Telugu in opposition to other languages. She characterizes these processes as “meta-linguistic movements”.¹⁰ Further, she makes an intriguing interpretation regarding the impact of “meta-linguistic movements”¹¹ on the modern understanding of Telugu literature. She argues that new modes of studying the Telugu language gave it a new

⁶ Clifford Geertz makes this argument in “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiment and Civil Politics in the New States.”; Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States”, in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1963), 105-157.

⁷ “Writing self-contained biographical narratives of poets in relation to a single language paved the way for language to become its own subject”; Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 66.

⁸ Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 104.

⁹ Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 104.

¹⁰ Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 126.

¹¹ Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 126.

kind of identity. In turn, she argues that this newly fashioned identity becomes overarching in how “literatures, histories, and even peoples *are perceived and experienced* today”.¹²

I contend that Mitchell’s analytic position is very essentializing as it tries to explain the wide-ranging transformations in different domains in colonial and post-colonial Andhra through a single factor. As mentioned earlier, Mitchell argues that the new categories facilitated by “meta-linguistic movements” have played a crucial role in how literature, history, and people are understood. In other words, she gives a determining role to them. More specifically, they are conditions of possibility of how present-day subjects encounter and experience “literature, history and people”. I agree that the emergence of linguistic nationalism was largely the result of these processes and it also resulted in retrospectively identifying pre-colonial texts written in Telugu but belonging to widely different traditions as Telugu literature in the latter part of the nineteenth century and twentieth century. Indeed, her study pays attention to some major structural changes in studying the Telugu language, modes of literary patronage, and the literary production in colonial Andhra. But she overlooks other important changes and influences that equally made a great impact on how people understand and experience literature. Mitchell’s analytic position is deeply limiting and provincializing in understanding the nature of the Telugu public sphere as it glosses over the many crucial factors and developments that have a huge role to play in the fashioning of literary genres, discourses, and publics during the 1940s and the 1950s. In other words, Mitchell does not give due credit to the various literary and non-literary factors that had an impact on how the literary public experiences literature.

At this point, I want to adumbrate the six most important factors that were extremely significant and crucial in the fashioning of literary genres and discourses during our period of study. However, these factors are by no means exhaustive. The first important factor was the

¹² Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 126 (emphasis added).

intense mediation of capitalist social relations in colonial and post-colonial Andhra in the first half of the twentieth century. It resulted in the restructuring of the already existing social relations and led to the emergence of new classes. The second important factor was the impact of Western literary figures and genres, and literary and non-literary ideologies such as Romanticism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Socialism, and Marxism, on major Telugu literary figures in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, a very influential and popular modern literary figure, Srirangam Srinivasarao (1910–1983), was immensely fascinated and influenced by the widely divergent modern political and literary ideologies such as Surrealism, Symbolism, Socialism, and Communism.¹³ Another famous literary figure, G. V. Chalam (1894–1979), confessed that he had to put great effort into introducing popular Western genres into Telugu literature.¹⁴ This implies that intellectuals had not only been influenced by various *global* literary and non-literary ideologies but also made conscious choices and calibrated efforts to mediate these influences into their literary productions. Their efforts received varied kinds of reception from the literary public sphere. As a result, the literary public too started experiencing modern literature in widely varied and divergent ways. There is a need to understand these processes in a very critical manner. The third important factor was the interventions of the colonial government and the initiatives of the colonial subjects and political parties. They had a huge impact on the structure of the political public sphere. For instance, the Government of India Act, 1935,¹⁵ was significant as it extended the representation to new groups of people. As a result, colonial and post-colonial

¹³ Some important literary and non-literary figures that influenced him include Karl Marx (1818–1883), Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), Paul Eluard (1895–1952), Max Nordau (1849–1923), Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909), Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), Charles Garvice (1833–1920), Anton Chekov (1860–1904), Anatole France (1844–1924), Sinclair Lewis (1885–1951), and Bernard Shaw (1856–1950). He was also a very popular translator. He was very actively involved with Progressive Writers' Movement.

¹⁴ Arudra, *Samgra Andhra Sahityam: Zamindari Navya Sahitya Yugal: Nalgava Samputi* (Complete Andhra Literature: Zamindari and New Ages: Volume- 4) (Hyderabad: Telugu Akademi, 2017), 560-561.

¹⁵ It intends to extend the electoral representation to new groups of people.

Andhra witnessed various mass social movements which included the nationalist movements, and peasants and workers' movements.

The fourth important factor was the initiatives and activities of the literary associations. Literary associations such as the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham assiduously functioned to cultivate literary habits and tastes in the Telugu public sphere. For instance, it conducted literary schools to train budding and prospective writers. These literary schools were unique initiatives by this organization and helped individuals such as S. Natarajan, who did not have much of a formal education, emerge as significant writers. Moreover, the activities and initiatives of the literary associations facilitated the Telugu literary public's exposure to and reception of new literary and aesthetic ideologies from the West. The fifth important factor was the influence of international political developments such as World War I, World War II, the Great Depression of 1929, and others. More particularly, world-historical events such as the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had their share of influence on Telugu intellectuals. These developments functioned as an impetus for the Telugu intellectuals' fascination with ideologies such as Marxism, Socialism, and Communism. For instance, a very popular and influential literary figure, Srirangam Srinivasarao, was greatly influenced by these events. The sixth important factor was widespread translations from different Indian, Asian, and European literary cultures. Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Telugu intellectuals had been deeply enchanted by literary and non-literary texts from other traditions. They recognized the importance of translation to introduce those literary and non-literary texts to the Telugu public sphere. They actively translated, transcreated, and adopted them into Telugu. These translations had an important role in shaping the new literary tastes and modern discourse in the Telugu public sphere during the period of study. However, there are very few studies that focus on the phenomena of translations into Telugu. I shall argue

that the above-mentioned factors have to be taken into consideration to understand not only the place of literature but also the experience of it by the literary public sphere in colonial and post-colonial Andhra during the period of study. Given the decisive role of the above-discussed factors in fashioning literary tastes, genres, and discourse in the Telugu public sphere during the period of study, it would be risible to attribute “meta-linguistic movements” the determining role. However, by not considering these crucial factors, Mitchell quite unhistorically and unproductively attributes overarching power to “meta-linguistic movements”. In the context of the above discussion, arguing that “meta-linguistic movements” is the sole determining factor in how people experience literature is a great fallacy and is also immensely misleading. I would like to argue that she overestimates and valorizes the impact of “meta-linguistic movements” in shaping contemporary perspectives of literature in the Telugu literary public sphere.

I want to discuss how the impact of the Progressive Writers’ Association (PWA) has been evaluated by earlier scholars. Although this literary association was extremely influential in colonial and post-colonial Andhra, it received relatively partial attention from the existing scholarship. Scholars such as C. Narayana Reddi, and Velcheru Narayanarao studied the impact of this association on Telugu poetry. Narayanrao argues that the impact of Progressive Movement on Telugu poetry is immense and characterizes it as one major revolution among others.¹⁶ But the contribution of the PWA to novels, short stories, and theatre has not received enough attention. Another major lacuna is that translation initiatives by this association have completely escaped the attention of earlier scholars who have worked on this association. In contrast, the influence of the PWA on Urdu and Hindi literary cultures has been extensively studied.¹⁷ More recently, scholars such as Aamir Mufti and

¹⁶ Velcheru Narayanarao’s *Telugulo Kavita Vipalavala Svarupam* (The Structure of Poetic Revolutions in Telugu) (Illinois: Taanaa Prachuranalu, 2008), 130-156.

¹⁷ Talat Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Writers’ Movement in South Asia, 1932–56* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009); Priyamvada Gopal, *Literary Radicalism: Reflections on the*

Priyamvada Gopal have pointed out the importance of studying the impact of this association on different languages in modern South Asia with a comparative perspective. However, this has still remained a distant possibility.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, novels have been translated into Telugu from different languages. Translations mainly took place from Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Urdu, English, Russian, and French. All the major and influential literary figures such as G. V. Chalam, D. Krishna Sastri (1897–1980), and Srirangam Srinivasarao were hugely influenced by the literatures of different countries. Further, they were involved in the activity of translation as well. In this context, it is very important to understand what kinds of texts were translated into Telugu to understand the nature of the literary public sphere. During this period, a wide range of European novels were translated into Telugu. The list includes *Alice in the Wonderland*,¹⁸ *Les Miserables*, *Nana*,¹⁹ *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*,²⁰ and others. The translations of major, important, and influential European novels were done by intellectuals associated with the PWA. They included *A Tale of Two Cities*,²¹ *Crime and Punishment*,²² and others.

1.1.2 The Novel, the Progressive Writers' Association, and the Telugu Literary Sphere

Now, let us consider a set of concerns that structure this study. They are related to the popularity of the genre of the novel in general and the popularity of novels written by authors

Origin and Spread of Nationalism (New Delhi: Routledge, 2005); Rakhshanda Jalil, *Liking Progress, Loving Change: A Literary History of the Progressive Writers' Movement in Urdu* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ania Loomba, *Revolutionary Desires: Women, Communism, and Feminism in India* (London: Routledge, 2019); Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), and Snehal Shingavi, "Agyeya's Unfinished Revolution: Sexual and Social Freedom in *Shekhar: Ek Jivani*", *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies*, 39, no. 03 (2016): 577–591 are some important scholarly studies on the impact of Progressive Writers' Association on Hindi and Urdu literary cultures.

¹⁸ Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (London: Penguin Classics, 1998).

¹⁹ Emile Zola, *Nana*, trans. George Holden (London: Penguin Books, 1972).

²⁰ Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 2004).

²¹ Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

²² Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Richard Peace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

associated with the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham in particular. The Telugu novel came of age and the Telugu literary public sphere witnessed the writing of an immense variety of novels during the period of this study. This is indicative of the varied and divergent interests of the reading public. This can also be seen in the experimentations with the various techniques of the novel during this period. Realist novels such as *Manchi...-Chedu...* (Good-Evil), *Edi Satyam* (What is the Truth?), and *Apaswaralu* (Unfortunate Events) were published during this period. Modernist novels such as *Asamarduni Jeevita Yatra* (Life Journey of an Imbecile), *Chivarikimigiledi* (The Meaning of Life), and *Alpajeevi* (A Man of No Consequence) were also published during this period. They have remained very popular in the Telugu literary public sphere to date. Moreover, authors belonging to immensely different ideological orientations experimented with different modes of writing novels. In this context, this study intends to critically understand the efforts of author(s) affiliated with the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham in fashioning this genre. To achieve that purpose, this study will focus on the novel form as it was fashioned by an author associated with this association. That author is S. Natarajan. His novels *Manchi...-Chedu...*, *Edi Satyam*, and *Apaswaralu* became immensely popular in the Telugu literary public sphere. Although he was a TAMILIAN and started learning Telugu only at the age of 14, he evolved into a prodigious and consummate fiction writer in Telugu and attracted the attention of the literary public sphere. Although different modern Indian languages have had a long tradition of novel-writing and large readerships, the Indian English novel has drawn more attention from the Anglophone academic scholarship. Studies such as Timothy Brennan's "Nation Longing for Form",²³

²³ Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form", in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 44–70.

Tabish Khair's *Babu Fictions*,²⁴ and Dirk Weimann's *Genres of Modernity*²⁵ have focussed on Indian English authors and interpreted their works from various perspectives.

The novel's role in fashioning the nation has received extended attention from several scholars.²⁶ These studies have demonstrated that novels articulated the nationalist ideology through different strategies and played an important role in mediating nationalist sentiments and passions into their readers. There is also an overwhelming consensus among scholars that the novel essentially represents a nationalist ideology. Even the prominent Marxist critic Fredric Jameson insists that novels necessarily take the form of national allegories in the context of the third world.²⁷ I shall discuss a Marxist critique of Jameson's argument in the latter parts of the thesis. Can one characterize the novel fashioned by the PWA along similar lines? This question has great salience in the context of this literary movement's highly critical and contrapuntal stance towards the official Indian nationalism represented by the Indian National Congress. Furthermore, the ubiquitous visibility of nationalist authors in the canon is contrasted by the conspicuous invisibility of authors who took a critical and contrarian stance on the official nationalist ideology. I argue that the "actuality"²⁸ of this

²⁴ Tabish Khair, *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁵ Dirk Wiemann, *Genres of Modernity: Contemporary Indian Novels in English* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008).

²⁶ M. T. Ansari, *Islam and Nationalism in India: South Indian Contexts* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Meera Ashar, "Show or Tell? Instruction and Representation in Govardhanram's *Saraswatichandra*", *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 03 (2016): 1019–49; Chandrima Chakraborty, *Masculinity, Asceticism, Hinduism: Past and Present Imaginings of India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2011); Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995); Shivarama Padikkal, "Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of the Novel in India", in *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, ed. Tejaswini Niranjana et al. (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1993), 220–241; Shvetal Vyas Pare, "Writing Fiction, Living History: Kanhaiyalal Munshi's Historical Trilogy", *Modern Asian Studies*, 48, no. 03 (2014): 596–616.

²⁷ Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text*, 15, Autumn (1986): 69. This article created lot of debate among literary scholars such as Aijaz Ahmad, Madhava Prasad, and others.

²⁸ I drew the idea of "actuality" from Walter Benjamin. Miriam Bratu Hanson explains the idea of actuality in the following manner: "For Benjamin, actuality requires standing at once within and *against* one's time, grasping the 'temporal core' of the present in terms other than those supplied by the period about itself (as Kracauer put it) and above all in diametrical to developments taken for granted in the name of 'progress'".

novel interrogates the dominant ideology of official nationalism represented by the Indian National Congress. Even though the novels written by Natarajan received great appreciation from the reading public of that time, subsequently, the novels have not received much attention from existing scholarship.

The novel as fashioned by the PWA in the context of North India has received contradictory and contentious evaluation and judgement from the existing scholarship. Here, I want to discuss Aamir Mufti's views on the relation between the PWA and the novel as a literary genre as his views represent a very influential post-colonial perspective. He points to the prominence of the short story and "the absence of a canonical novel form in Urdu".²⁹ Mufti explains this fact by Urdu's minor position vis-à-vis Indian nationalism. According to him, the novel as a form is essentially bound to narrate the ideology of an emerging secular nation in the context of South Asia. Further, he argues that the idea of "realist aesthetics"³⁰ was originally formulated during the Soviet Writer's Congress in 1934. The Indian Progressive Writers' Movement wanted to reconfigure them in fashioning the novel which effectively expresses the nationalist ideology. Mufti characterizes it as "*national realism*".³¹ The objective of these narratives is "a secular nationalist consciousness".³² Another major criticism against the novel fashioned by the authors associated with the PWA is that these novels failed to do justice to the realist mode of writing. While discussing how South Asian authors engaged with the realist mode of writing, Javed Majeed argues that the use of the

Miriam Bratu Hanson, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 75–76.

²⁹ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

³⁰ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

³¹ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183 (emphasis in original).

³² Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

realist mode by some Progressive Writers has had “the peculiarly disappointing effect”³³ on the readers. Further, he argues,

They [Progressive Writers] attempt the impossible task of converting realism as a self-conscious mode of writing into an unselfconscious mode of representing social reality. In their attempt, their texts sometimes read not just as *fables* at odds with their realist aims, but almost as *parodies of realism*.³⁴

While Mufti is not claiming that the authors affiliated with the PWA are incapable of fashioning a proper realist novel, Majeed is precisely suggesting that these authors are unable to comprehend the essence of the realist mode of writing and consequently failed to master the realist mode of writing. For Mufti, novels written by the writers associated with the PWA have the same characteristics and ideology as that of the nationalist novel. The Progressive novel too represented the ideology of the newly emergent nation. In other words, the novel fashioned by the PWA could not escape the spell of the nationalist ideology and unwittingly mimicked it. Majeed’s criticisms of the novel are of a different order. According to him, the writers associated with the PWA did not understand the nature of realist aesthetics properly and mishandled it. As a result, they were successful only in producing either “fables” or “parodies of realism”. Although these criticisms are equally severe and damning, their moorings are different from each other. In this context, it is important to assess their validity in the context of the immense popularity of Telugu novels written by an author associated with the Progressive Writers’ Movement in the realm of the Telugu public sphere. My study addresses not only the veracity and legitimacy of these criticisms but also their ideological moorings in apropos of the novel fashioned by an author affiliated with the PWA.

³³ Javed Majeed, “Literary Modernity in South Asia,” in *India and the British Empire*, ed. Douglas M. Peers and Nandini Gooptu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 273.

³⁴ Majeed, “Literary Modernity in South Asia,” 273–274 (emphasis added).

Even in the first quarter of the twentieth century, individuals hailing from traditional elite backgrounds and the English-educated middle class could take part in the Telugu literary public sphere. Influential and popular literary figures like K. Veerasalingam Panthulu (1848–1919), Vedam Venkataraya Sastri (1853–1929), G. Apparao (1862–1915), D. Krishnasastri (1897–1980), C. Ramalingareddi (1880–1951), and U. Lakshminarayana (1877–1958) come under this category. Veerasalingam Panthulu had a traditional education; Apparao had an English education and was an important functionary in the Vizainagaram kingdom; Vedam Venkataraya Sastri was a scholar of traditional Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Telugu literature; Krishnasastri had an English education and was closely associated with rajas of that time; Ramalingareddi studied at Cambridge University, and Lakshminarayana studied law in Ireland.

This state of affairs drastically changed in the second quarter of the twentieth century. The literary career of S. Natarajan spectacularly exemplifies this change. Tenneti Suri (1911–1958), Ravuri Bharadwaja (1927–2013), and Aluri Bhujangarao (1927/28–2013) are some other important literary figures who come from humble backgrounds. Natarajan was an ordinary hotel worker who had had to work more than 12 hours a day and did not have much formal education. Still, he fashioned himself into a brilliant fiction writer. In his very brief and abbreviated literary career, he could write three highly acclaimed and extraordinary novels and several short stories. He was also a columnist. At the time of his death, three of his novels were yet to be completed.

The period of study in this thesis witnessed not only new ways of writing but also individuals from widely different backgrounds taking an active part in the literary and political public spheres. This implies that there was a significant expansion of the Telugu public sphere during the period of study which must be accounted for in order to evaluate its significance. Further, the new articulations need to be critically understood, as they are an

important part of “modern social imaginaries”.³⁵ In the process of expanding and shaping their “social imaginary”, individuals started experimenting with new ways of writing as they were drawn towards and enchanted by new ideologies. As a result, individuals coming from extremely different backgrounds started actively participating in the creation of a “social imaginary”. This raises a pertinent question: Why do individuals invest so much in literary activity in society?

Many scholars argue that literature plays the role of social theory in India. For example, according to Sudipta Kaviraj, modernity demands and effects “an unprecedented transformation of society’s moral imagination”.³⁶ Along the lines of Charles Taylor, Kaviraj also argues that only a few could access and participate in “philosophical and theoretical debates of great intensity”.³⁷ Hence, ordinary people participate in endeavours such as literature and actively take part in the construction of the social imaginary. Further, he points to the pre-eminent role of literature in mediating phenomenological and moral sensibilities of modernity in the context of South Asia. In the absence of social theory in India, India’s engagement with modernity could only be understood when we take literature very seriously. Kaviraj argues,

To understand the intellectual history of Indian modernity, it seems essential to move beyond a conventional sociology of literature which specializes in examining how literature reflected social change. I wish to suggest that we need to widen the scope of this sociology of literature and turn the explanatory point in the reverse direction: to

³⁵ I drew this idea from Charles Taylor. Charles Taylor writes, “There are important differences between social imaginary and social theory. I adopt the term imaginary (i) because my focus is on the way *ordinary people* ‘imagine’ their social surroundings and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends. But it is also the case that (ii) theory is usually the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society”; Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 23 (emphasis added).

³⁶ Sudipta Kaviraj, “Literature and the Moral Imagination of Modernity”, in *The Invention of Private Life*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014), 25.

³⁷ Kaviraj, “Literature and the Moral Imagination of Modernity,” 25.

view how literary discourse forms the directions and contours of our emotions, structures of moral intentionality, and shapes the moral personality of ordinary individuals by celebrating the modern way of being in the world as both intellectually admirable and socially possible. Ethics and emotions are in any case closely, inextricably linked, as I shall try to show by analysing the socially radical consequences of narratives of romantic life.³⁸

I want to end this part of the chapter with a discussion of some of the overarching concerns on the status of literary studies in particular and intellectual history in general in South Asia. These concerns not only point out the limitations in the existing scholarship but also point out the pathways it should take. Although scholars such as Kaviraj enunciated the need for studying literature seriously in order to understand the mediation of modernity in India, political thought occupies the centre stage of Indian intellectual history. The thoughts of political figures such as Gandhi, Ambedkar, Vivekanand, Vir Savarkar, M. N. Roy, and Jinnah are intensely studied.³⁹ In recent times, a major shift has taken place while studying the role of various linguistic practices in a society's literary formation. Individual literary figures such as Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay,⁴⁰ Bharatendu Harischandra (1850–1885),⁴¹ Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938),⁴² Sadat Hasan Manto (1912–1955),⁴³ Kandukuri

³⁸ Kaviraj, "Literature and the Moral Imagination of Modernity", 26 (emphasis added).

³⁹ Janaki Bakhle "Country First? Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) and the Writing of Essentials of Hindutva," *Public Culture*, 22, no. 01 (2010): 149-186; Akeel Bilgrami, *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014), 101–174; Faisal Devji, *The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptations of Violence* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012); Aishwary Kumar, *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi and the Risk of Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); Aishwary Kumar, "Can the Sovereign Gift? Gandhi's Maryada and the Moral Law", *Contemporary South Asia*, 25, no. 04 (2017): 415–422; Kris Manjappa, *M. N. Roy: Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010); A. Raghuramaraju, ed., *Debating Vivekananda: A Reader* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ajay Skaria, *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

⁴⁰ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*.

⁴¹ Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010).

⁴² Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism* (Delhi: Routledge, 2009); Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴³ Ayesha Jalal, *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

Veerasalingam Pantulu (1848–1919),⁴⁴ and Subramania Bharati (1882–1921)⁴⁵ from different linguistic regions have received greater attention. Through these studies, we can comprehend how traditional and modern literary ideologies and local exigencies fashioned these authors. In turn, we also come to know how these literary figures themselves shaped literary publics in their respective languages. These studies emphasize the importance of paying close attention to the efforts and careers of individual authors in order to critically understand the larger milieu.

More recently, Francesca Orsini has argued that the Bengal renaissance remained the dominant paradigm to understand the influence of colonial modernity in other regions and languages.⁴⁶ She emphasizes the need to go beyond the Bengali paradigm. In a similar vein, Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues that Indian intellectual history is deeply impoverished by its focus on the Bengal renaissance.⁴⁷ He also points out that a limited number of intellectuals have received great and extended focus. They include Rabindranath Tagore, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru.⁴⁸ He argues that this provides a very truncated view of Indian intellectual history and emphasizes the necessity of expanding the scope of the intellectual history of India by turning attention to different sets of authors from different languages and regions. In a review article, Dilip Menon points to another problematic dimension of Indian intellectual history that is a bias towards the elites. According to him, it assumes that “intellection is not a subaltern predilection”.⁴⁹ In this thesis, I hope to address the concerns expressed by the above-mentioned scholars and want to become a part of the

⁴⁴ Vakulabharanam Rajagopal, “Fashioning Modernity in Telugu: Viresalingam and His Interventionist Strategy”, *Studies in History*, 21, no. 1 (2005): 45–77.

⁴⁵ A. R. Venkatachalapathy, *Who Owns That Song? The Battle for Subramania Bharati's Copyright* (New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2018).

⁴⁶ Francesca Orsini, “Foreword” in *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras*, Vasudha Dalmia (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010): xiii–xvii.

⁴⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Is Indian Civilization a Myth?* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2013), 29.

⁴⁸ Subrahmanyam, *Is Indian Civilization a Myth?*, 44–45.

⁴⁹ Dilip Menon, “Review of Vajpeyi, Ananya, *Righteous Republic: The Political Foundations of Modern India*, H-Asia, H-Net Reviews, February 2015, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=40651> (accessed May 30, 2019).

efforts to expand the intellectual history of India by focusing on an author who has not received enough attention.

1.2 Theoretical and Methodological Issues

1.2.1 Conundrums of Modernity

Earlier, I had stated that critically understanding the conditions of possibility for the reception of modern literary and non-literary ideologies in colonial and post-colonial Andhra is one of the key objects of this study. In this section, I want to address the theoretical and methodological issues involved with this kind of study. Modern literary and non-literary ideologies such as Modernism, Surrealism, Marxism, and Socialism had their provenance in modern Europe. Most remarkably, these literary and non-literary ideologies, whose emergence was uniquely grounded in capitalist social transformations, became popular in other parts of the world during the second quarter of the twentieth century. If this is so, two pertinent questions may arise in this context: one, why did these literary and non-literary ideologies receive enthusiastic reception in colonial and post-colonial Andhra during the period of study? Two, what were the conditions of the possibility for their reception?

In order to address the above-mentioned questions, first of all, it is pertinent to critically understand what “modern” indicates and its connection with the overarching and ubiquitous idea of modernity itself. It allows us to understand the connection between modern literary ideologies and their place in the articulation of modernity in a particular social context. In the discourse of social sciences, the modern “is characterized by capitalism and industrialization”.⁵⁰ At times, the conception of modernity is confused as being equivalent to modernization. But the conception of modernization is primarily used to address the issue of development in economic and societal terms in third-world countries. In other words, this

⁵⁰ Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6.

indicates shepherding third-world countries in a particular direction on to the path of development. But modernity indicates a much more substantive philosophical-historical idea and has received attention from a good number of scholars.⁵¹ All these scholars have elaborated on the nature of modernity and its connection with literary discourse. This complicates the earlier understanding of modernity. Habermas argues that modernity primarily indicates a form of time-consciousness. According to him, this is new in its form and came into existence in the fifteenth century. The emergence of this time-consciousness indicates a break with the “middle ages”. The most important feature of modernity is that it draws its legitimacy from its internal resources and the texture of it pulsates with new ideas like “revolution, progress, emancipation, development, crisis, and *Zeitgeist*”.⁵² In addition, he argues that “history” as a new kind of discipline emerged with modernity itself. As a result, it also made an impact on how one looks at one’s future. He also argues that the idea of modernization wants to purge modernity of its occidental moorings.

Another important Western scholar, Peter Osborne,⁵³ draws our attention to the philosophical and temporal dimensions of modernity. He avers that modernity is primarily a temporal and temporalizing concept and characterizes it “as a distinct but paradoxical form of historical temporality”.⁵⁴ Osborne argues that “the *intensified sense of the present as modern* associated with the concept of modernity”.⁵⁵ He has grounded the emergence of modernity as

⁵¹ Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Sasheej Hegde, “Is Modernity and unnatural Construct?,” in *Marx, Gandhi and Modernity: Essays Presented to Javeed Alam*, ed. Akeel Bilgrami (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2014), 13-30; Sudipta Kaviraj, “An Outline of a Revisionist Theory of Modernity,” *European Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 03 (2005): 497–526; Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time* (London: Verso, 1995); Taylor, *Modern Socaill Imaginaries*.

⁵² Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 7 (emphasis in original).

⁵³ Peter Osborne is a noted cultural critic and theorist of modernity. His *The Politics of Time* is the most important full-length study of modernity from the perspective of temporality.

⁵⁴ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 5.

⁵⁵ Peter Osborne, “Modernism and Philosophy,” in *The Handbook of Modernisms*, ed. Peter Booker (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 390 (emphasis added).

the “newest time”⁵⁶ in the far-reaching developments in Europe since the fifteenth century. These far-reaching developments include the industrial revolution and the French revolution, and the European expansionist colonialism in different parts of the world. However, modernity as the “newest time ... was condensed and generalized in the second half of the nineteenth century”.⁵⁷ Further, he argues that every society has different levels: political, economic, and legal forms; religious and cultural organization; the structure of the family; the relations between sexes; and the psychological constitution of the individual. These various levels/domains are associated with the forms of temporality. These temporalities are rarely connected with “the temporality implicit in, or proper to, the use of modernity as a periodizing category”.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he did not bother to indicate the place of literary discourse in modernity.

We have seen above that modernity is primarily a temporal and a temporalizing conception. However, Habermas and Osborne’s formulations raise several questions such as: If modernity is a uniquely European phenomenon, what does it mean outside the West? How are the proposals of modernity articulated outside the West? What is the relationship between modernization and Westernization? As principles of modernity were first calibrated in Western Europe, were they interlinked or not? In contrast to modernity, the West is not a philosophical category. Further, Jameson argues that the West always shifts its location in Europe itself. In many parts of the world, modernity is mediated by colonialism. This has resulted in a common understanding that modernity and European colonialism are essentially interrelated. But Harry Harootunian argues that the case of Japan indicates a problem and lacunae in this kind of understanding. He gives the example of the modernization of Japan without the direct intervention of colonialism. In his *Overcome by Modernity*, Harootunian

⁵⁶ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 12.

⁵⁷ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 12.

⁵⁸ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 1.

demonstrates that industrialization transformed feudal Japan into a modern society. Further, he argues that “once Japan seized on modernization and fought a successful war against a Western nation, the geopolitical monopoly of modernity was shattered, even though opinion continued to assume that Japan was simply a copy”.⁵⁹

Now, I turn to the scholarly interventions on the question of mediation of modernity in the context of South Asia. These interventions address the following questions: How did modernity arrive in India? How does it make its impact on native society? How do different social groups receive the idea of modernity in India? Several scholars such as Sudipta Kaviraj and Faisal Devji have addressed these important questions. Kaviraj argues that the “initial conditions” of the mediation of modernity in South Asia are different from that of Europe and that they effectively determine the trajectory of modernity in South Asia.⁶⁰ For instance, he states that the Bengali elite faced a dilemma in receiving the offer of modernity. As they were deeply ambivalent in their acceptance of the superiority or otherwise of modernity, they were mediated by a particularly melancholic feeling. Faisal Devji argues that the Indian Muslims in the nineteenth century tried to interpret the offer of modernity in the light of universal Islam. He points to the fact that Indian Muslims and intellectuals like Sayyid Ahmad Khan did not initiate dialectic engagement with colonial modernity as it had been done by Hindus. Devji characterizes the gestures of the Indian Muslims as “apologetic modernity”.⁶¹ Dilip M. Menon argues that the lower castes of South India were very welcoming about the promise of modernity. In his interpretation of *Saraswati Vijayam*, Menon argues that the lower castes had nothing to lose in the tradition.⁶²

⁵⁹ Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Questions of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 63.

⁶⁰ Kaviraj, “An Outline of a Revisionist Theory of Modernity,” 515–519.

⁶¹ Faisal Devji, “Apologetic Modernity,” *Modern Intellectual History*, 4, no. 01 (2007): 61–76.

⁶² Dilip M. Menon, “Caste and Colonial Modernity: Reading *Saraswativijayam*,” *Studies in History*, 13, no. 02 (1997): 291–312.

1.2.2 Literary Modernity, the Novel Form, and a Hotel Worker

“To write history...means to *cite* history.”⁶³ _Walter Benjamin

Anthony J. Cascardi draws our attention to the fact that the modern subject exists at the “intersection of series of discourses and cultural spheres”.⁶⁴ He criticizes Habermas for reducing modernity merely to the articulation of a philosophical discourse. Further, he argues that the literary domain has a distinct place for the subject(s) of modernity and this is very important in understanding how it articulates in a particular social context. Further, he also argues that the novel is a pre-eminent genre of literary modernity. He encapsulates the significance of the emergence of the novel in a particular social formation in the following manner: “... the formation of the novel may be related not only to the history of subjectivity but also to the process that Weber describes in terms of the *passing of ‘traditional’ societies*.”⁶⁵

As the novel has a unique role in modern literary discourse, this study will try to focus on the novel as it was fashioned by the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham. Understanding the popularity of particular literary genres in particular socio-historical contexts in the framework of the public sphere is pertinent and productive in the light of the theoretical formulation of Fredric Jameson.⁶⁶ According to him, the relation between particular literary genres and particular kinds of publics are complementary to each other. He also argues that the novel as a genre pays immense attention to various dimensions of quotidian life mediated by capitalist modernity. Another noted novel-scholar, Franco Moretti, argues that “... novel exists not as a

⁶³ Quoted in Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin:: A Philosophical Portrait* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 10(emphasis in original).

⁶⁴ Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity*, 2.

⁶⁵ Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity*, 96–97 (emphasis added).

⁶⁶ “Genres are essentially literary *institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artefact”; Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 2012), 92 (emphasis in original).

critique, but as a *culture of everyday life*”.⁶⁷ It implies that novel-writing as a cultural practice has to be grounded in the practices of everyday life.

Harry Harootunian proposes that the everyday has to be taken as a unit to critically understand the articulation of modernity in a particular location/social formation. Further, he alerts one to the fact that great modernist novelists like Fernando Pessoa, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, and several Japanese and Chinese writers turned their attention to the details of the everyday and reflected on them in their works in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century. This implies that the fascination for the details of the everyday is not just restricted to the writers of Europe, but can be found in the writers of Asia as well.⁶⁸ Likewise, great social theorists and literary critics such as Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, and Henri Lefebvre have focussed on the experiences and cultural forms of everyday life in their theoretical projects. Osborne encapsulates the centrality of the everyday for Benjamin’s theoretical project in the following manner: “*everyday life* flows through the whole of Benjamin’s later writings.”⁶⁹

The above discussed theoretical formulations indicate that the novel as a genre, “everyday life”, and modernity are intimately related to each other and that the novel has emerged as a pre-eminent literary genre of modernity as a result of structural and tectonic changes in the nature of the everyday. Several theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Fredric Jameson have argued that the novel as a genre does not have a fixed form and is always in the process of evolution. Jameson writes that “the novel is no longer a closed and established form with built-in conventions, like tragedy or epic”.⁷⁰ Yuri Tynianov argues that “*everyday*

⁶⁷ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: the Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1987), 35 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁸ Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet*, 65.

⁶⁹ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 180 (emphasis added).

⁷⁰ Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 172.

life is interrelated with literature primarily through its speech aspect."⁷¹ Novel as a genre pays meticulous attention in registering the "speech aspect" of different social groups. Taking a cue from these insights, I attempt to argue that the popularity of the novel in the Telugu literary public sphere cannot be explained through the framework of imitation of the Western form.

These theoretical insights also have great resonance in the context of S. Natarajan's "everyday" experiences. S. Natarajan was an ordinary migrant hotel worker. Although his native language was Tamil, he started learning Telugu at the age of 14 and evolved into a consummate and popular fiction writer. His novels immensely fascinated the literary public of that time. My study will pay close attention to his novels. He most remarkably in a column entitled "Naa *Dainika* Samasyalu" (My Everyday⁷² Problems) narrates the traumatic and painful experience of having to work for 10 to 12 hours a day and his dependence on inadequate wages for the fulfilment of basic necessities. He writes,

Often, I feel that if I do this kind of drudgery and think in this manner I will die early. But, I would not get sufficient return for that drudgery at the hotel. Then, I thought to stop writing these stories. Even that was also not possible. As Telugu is not my mother tongue, unless I read profusely, my writing activity will not continue in a proper manner. To read in that manner, I do not have the capacity for buying books. Some good-spirited fellow may give books. But, *finding leisure is like the horns of the horse*. The recent talk is that the eight-hour work per day has come to the hotel workers of Tenali. I do not

⁷¹ Yuri Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution: Selected Essays on Literature, Theory and Film*, ed. & tr. Alinsley Morse and Philip Redko (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019), 277(emphasis in original).

⁷² Harry Harootunian's (2000) studies the transformation of "everyday" life in interwar Japan. In this path-breaking study, he explores how capitalist modernity transformed cultural practices. To understand the impact of capitalist modernity, he focuses on the activities of everyday. Harry Harootunian writes, "In Europe, concern for everyday life after World War I was dominated by the work of two thinkers, George Lukacs and Heidegger, in the shadow of Max Weber's mediations on the identity of modern society. Lukacs had powerfully formulated the way in which the commodity form mediated social relationships and the consequence of its effects for producing a "reification of social life.""; Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 95-96.

know through which route it has come. Ninety-five out of hundred including me have been still doing ten to twelve hours bull-drudgery. In these conditions, how can one read and write? One can see that the laws are being made by the Government, but not their implementation. For the namesake, there is a labour office and a labour officer too.

I came across a number of so-called respectable people who had asked what the need of education for the hotel server is. I have never worn good clothes since my birth. Moreover, this hotel work does not have any guarantee. Till now, I have lost this job more than twenty-five times and starved days together. *As I do not have any doubt that my life in the future is going to be the same, I get an untoward fear regarding how the remaining life-time will be spent.* After having gained independence, I thought that the situation would not be the same. At least, there would be twenty per cent improvement in this life's journey. I was expectant that the money I get from publishers by writing stories would be enough to cure my disease of fits at least. Even, that came to nought. Hence, it would not be a mistake to assume that I am not a citizen of independent India.⁷³

The reason behind quoting this piece at length is that it not only gives a graphic picture of Natarajan's precarious existential conditions but also shows his remarkable skill at writing quite expressively and idiomatically in a newly acquired language. Further, it gives its readers an acute sense that he pursued his literary interests in extremely difficult and uncertain conditions while looking at an equally bleak future. It also shows that the experience of everyday in the form of long working hours structured "the horizon of expectations"⁷⁴ for him beyond measure. Moreover, this brief article presents a remarkable mixture of the various feelings that he had about his condition which include anguish, pathos, irony, despondency, disillusion, fear, and resignation.

⁷³ S. Natarajan, "Naa Dainika Samasyalu" *Telugu Swatantra* (Telugu Independence), 1, no. 29 (1949): 41(my translation) (emphasis added).

⁷⁴ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: on the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 266.

In this poignant piece, S. Natarajan expresses anguish at his present state of life and despair at his prospective future. He also expresses deep disillusionment and disenchantment with the newly acquired independence as it did not result in any improvement in the conditions of his and his co-workers' lives. Despite these insurmountable and extreme difficulties, he also expresses an intense passion to learn and write in Telugu. This indicates not only his deep commitment towards the newly acquired Telugu language and literature but also his enthusiasm to participate in the Telugu public sphere. This also points to the vitality and vivaciousness of the Telugu public sphere at this point of time. Against overwhelming odds, he says that he is driven by a demonic passion and urge to write fiction. This article also shows that he is a paradigmatic example of an author who is dependent on the literary market and remuneration from publishers.

Apart from that, this brief piece of writing throws light on the impact of the long working hours on his life and aspirations. They included his life, death, and literary activity. Kaviraj points out, "death is not something one can name familiarly, something that can be described like other experiences; it is, as the *Tractatus* put it, not an event in life."⁷⁵ Kaviraj is right in arguing that death is not an event in life. Moreover, death is a highly contingent event for any human being. But, death is a looming and menacing presence for the dispossessed, deprived and brutally exploited worker like Natarajan. Most interestingly, Abdul R. JanMohamed elaborates the effects of fear of the imminent violent death on the formation of subjectivity of the Blacks in racially segregated America.⁷⁶ He is extremely traumatized by the prospect of dying young, because of the exhaustion caused by the long hours of tedious labour as a hotel worker and a rigorous literary activity in a newly acquired language. It is not surprising that in his cognitive and existential world, independence meant

⁷⁵ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*. 22.

⁷⁶ Abdul R. JanMohamed, *The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology of Death* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

fewer working hours. We have to recognize that even the fear of death does not deter him from pursuing his literary ambitions. Unfortunately, his fears turned into reality within a short period of time. Making his apprehensions true, he died after six years at the age of 31.

Taking a cue from the above-mentioned theoretical insights, this study will attempt to critically interpret the novels fashioned by Natarajan. The reason behind choosing him is that he not only started his literary journey with Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham but was associated with it till the end of his life. Furthermore, I want to use a Marxian framework in order to interpret the novel form fashioned by this author associated with the PWA. Because, Marxist tradition has consistently produced great works of criticism on novel and expanded our understanding of it.⁷⁷ Further, the question of genre is at the centre of Marxist literary criticism. Jameson writes,

The strategic value of generic concepts for Marxism clearly lies in the mediatory function of the notion of a genre, which allows the coordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life.⁷⁸

I.3 Theoretical Discussion of the Political and Literary Spheres

We have seen that the literary domain has an important and independent place in the articulation of modernity. I also indicated that one of the central objectives of this study is to critically understand the reason behind the popularity of *modern* literary ideologies during the period of study. We also have seen the relation between writers, genres, and the public is dialectic and intimately related. This implies that one cannot understand the popularity of a particular kind of genre without understanding the nature of the public also. Furthermore, a

⁷⁷ Georg Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, (London: Merlin Press, 1988); Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*; Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2015).

⁷⁸ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 92.

particular kind of genre and a particular kind of public constitute each other. In the context of the above discussion, it is important to critically understand the conception of the public itself.

Recently, Charles Taylor has argued that the public sphere is “a central feature of *modern society*”.⁷⁹ This implies that only by understanding the nature of the public sphere can one understand the nature of a particular society. The conception of the public sphere was first formulated and developed by Jurgen Habermas. It is one of the most productive concepts amongst other concepts used to study society. This concept has been used in various disciplines such as history, politics, literary studies, and others. In this part, I want to discuss the lineage of Habermas’s conception of the public sphere.⁸⁰ It is important to understand how he developed this idea. According to Seyla Benhabib, Habermas’s conception of the public sphere is indebted to that of Arendt’s conception of the “public space”.⁸¹ It is pertinent to know how much Habermas is influenced by Arendt’s concept of the “public space”. Hannah Arendt argues that the distinction between the public and private spheres was even known in the Greek city-states. According to her, this distinction explains the distance between the domains of the household and politics in those states. She takes the ancient Greek public as an ideal model.⁸² In turn, this is anchored on “an idealized conception of Greek or Athenian politics”.⁸³ Only male heads of the family were allowed in this public. Women and slaves were excluded from participation in this kind of a public.

Arendt argues that the social realm, which transcends both the private and the public spheres of life, is uniquely modern in nature. Its political form is the nation-state. For Arendt, the “rise of the social” primarily represents the dominance of the capitalist commodity

⁷⁹ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke, 2004), 83 (emphasis added).

⁸⁰ Jurgen Habermas developed this idea in his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into the Category of Bourgeois Society*.

⁸¹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 199.

⁸² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 28.

⁸³ Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 211.

exchange economy. She attributes the division of labour to the emergence of the public domain.⁸⁴ As a result, labouring activity, which had been so far restricted to the household, enters the public domain. According to her, the “rise of the social” is detrimental to the true spirit of the public. The rise of the social made the entry of various sections of the society into the public realm possible. According to Arendt, the entry of women and workers leads to the decline of the public realm as they are not properly trained to participate in the public realm. Because of this conservative and elitist position, she was characterized as an anti-modernist thinker. Benhabib characterizes this model as “agnostic”.⁸⁵

Habermas addresses the limitations in the Arendtian model of the public space and sets forth to figure out “a *socially rooted* form of the public sphere”.⁸⁶ To achieve this object, he surveys various conceptions of the public before the rise of the “social”.⁸⁷ Along the lines of Hannah Arendt, Habermas too points to the importance of the rise of the commodity-economy as the pre-condition for the emergence of the social. It decisively broke the stranglehold of the domination of the landed estate and transferred authority to the state. Habermas studies the growth and impact of the commodity-economy in various parts of England, Germany, France, and Italy. According to him, the commodity-economy resulted in new modes of social organization and the emergence of new groups of people whom he characterizes as the bourgeois that include “the ‘capitalists,’ the merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers”.⁸⁸ Habermas situates his model of the public sphere in

⁸⁴ “Whether an activity is performed in private or public is by no means a matter of indifference. Obviously, the character of the public realm must change in accordance with the activities admitted into it, but to a large extent the activity itself changes its own nature too ... division of labor is precisely what happens to the labouring activity under conditions of the public realm what could never have happened in the privacy of the household”; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 46–47.

⁸⁵ Seyla Benhabib, “Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jurgen Habermas,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 73.

⁸⁶ Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 201 (emphasis in original).

⁸⁷ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992), 5-14.

⁸⁸ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 23.

post-Enlightenment Western European societies. These momentous developments led to new forms of sociality that replaced the older forms of order.

Further, he argues that the newly emergent bourgeois played a key role in the formation of the public sphere. According to him, private individuals as rational subjects take part in the public sphere. This model consists of both the literary sphere and the political sphere. He points to the growing popularity of literary periodicals in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. The growth of print-capitalism⁸⁹ played a significant role in the emergence of the literary public sphere. Individuals from a wide range of sections used to express their opinion in the literary public sphere. He draws our attention to the fact that England witnessed the growth of new institutions such as the private salon, coffee houses, and print in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These are precisely the institutions of enlightenment in Europe that resulted in new modes of socialization among the different strata of the English society. These institutions allowed new modes of interaction among the different sections of society. In this manner, Habermas grounds varied developments in the social, political, and cultural domains in Western Europe with the emergence and consolidation of capitalism. In other words, the growing mediation of capitalism in these societies resulted in widely divergent political and cultural articulations.

The Habermasian model of the public sphere has been highly influential in the different fields of study which include history and literature. However, it has drawn criticism from various scholars. Many of them argue that this model is essentially exclusionary in nature. According to David Zaret, Habermas grounds his model of the public sphere in the radical changes effected by capitalism. The stakeholders of this model are the *bourgeois*

⁸⁹ Benedict Anderson uses this phrase in *Imagined Communities*.

individuals. They are the owners of private property.⁹⁰ Drawing on the revisionist historiography, Nancy Fraser argues that Habermas' conception of the public sphere is de facto exclusionary in nature. She argues that "it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule".⁹¹

Now, let us consider how the Habermasian conception of the public sphere is useful in studying the developments in the context of India in general and colonial and post-colonial Andhra in particular. The capitalist modes of production made inroads into colonial South Asia. Jairus Banaji criticizes the understanding that Indian peasants are still under semi-feudal forms of domination. He argues that the peasants in the Deccan districts came under the capitalist mode of exploitation in the nineteenth century itself.⁹² He calls it the process of formal subsumption under capital. This phenomenon is neither unique nor restricted to the Deccan districts only. Sugata Bose makes a similar argument in connection with colonial Bengal for a relatively later time period.⁹³ More recently, the historian of intellectual history, Andrew Sartori, attributed the popularity of ideologies such as liberalism and culturalism in nineteenth-century colonial Bengal to the mediation of capitalism. While commenting on the modernism of Rammohun Roy, Sartori raises a pertinent question,

If Bengal had failed to make the transition from feudalism to capitalism, what motivated the modernism of a Rammohun Roy? In other words, when Rammohun sat down to think the world around him, what allowed him to find in individuality,

⁹⁰ David Zaret, "Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England", in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT, 1992): 212-235.

⁹¹ Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in *Habermas And the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 116.

⁹² See Jairus Banaji, "Capitalist Domination and the Small Peasantry: The Deccan Districts in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Theory As History: Essays On Modes Of Production And Exploitation* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2013), 277-332.

⁹³ See Sugata Bose, *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure And Politics 1919-1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98-145.

freedom, equality, utility, and property appropriate categories with which to make ethical, political, economic, and, in a word, social meaning out of that context?⁹⁴

In connection with colonial Andhra, A. Satyanarayana argues that commodity production expanded and consolidated during 1900 to 1940. Furthermore, this process was increasingly intimately connected with the international markets and resulted in the creation of new classes in the countryside. These processes resulted in the structural changes in the social formation of colonial Andhra. Commenting on the expansion of commodity production and commercialization and its impact, he writes,

(Certainly), the situation in Andhra shows that commercialization did not necessarily mean either enrichment or continuous growth of peasant indebtedness. We suggest that in the region under study commercialization resulted in a division of labor in agricultural production and differentiation within the peasantry. *The expansion of commodity production also created conditions for the accumulation of capital in the hands of the substantial peasantry.*⁹⁵

Habermas grounds the emergence and articulation of the public sphere in the capitalist transformation of Western Europe. Likewise, my study too will situate it in the expansion and mediation of the commodity mode of production in the social formation of colonial Andhra. Added to this, colonial modernity created a Western-educated middle class who were from different communities. This created a new group called the “middle class”. Sanjay Joshi makes pertinent observations on the intimate connection between the project of modernity and the middle class. He argues,

The definition and power of the middle class in colonial India came from its propagation of ‘modern’ ways of life. Modernity, in this sense, represents more than a fixed set of indicators regarding patterns of economic organization, social relations, or even a single set of cultural

⁹⁴ Andrew Sartori, *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 70.

⁹⁵ A. Satyanarayana, *Andhra Peasants Under British Rule: Agrarian Relations And the Rural Economy 1900–1940* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1990), 6 (emphasis added).

values. To be modern in colonial India, but also perhaps across much of the post-Enlightenment world, was also an aspiration, a project.⁹⁶

Here, it is important to scrutinize the idea of the middle class in the context of South Asia. As has been pointed out by Joshi, the middle class is not “a monolithic entity”.⁹⁷ Middle classes from different regions have very different origins and ideological-political trajectories in colonial and post-colonial South Asia. For instance, the “middle-class bhadralok”⁹⁸ in colonial Bengal was bewildered by the various developments related to the entry of colonial modernity. They rallied around and took comfort in the sayings of Ramakrishna. In his recent study, Markus Daeschel argues that the middle classes of North India were fascinated with consumer culture and imbued with conservative and fascist ideologies in the inter-war period.⁹⁹ In this manner, the middle class played an instrumental role in mediating colonial modernity among the natives. In the process, it articulated various initiatives in the public sphere.

I.4 Review of Literary and Political Spheres in Other Languages

We have seen above that critically understanding the conditions of possibility for the mediation of modern literary and non-literary ideologies in colonial and post-colonial Andhra is one of the key objectives of this study. We have also seen that the public sphere is an important dimension of modern societies. In this part of the chapter, I want to briefly discuss studies by a few scholars who used the conception of the public sphere to understand the mediation of modern literary and non-literary ideologies in different socio-linguistic and historical contexts. This will allow us to understand the divergent articulation of literary and

⁹⁶ Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2.

⁹⁷ Sanjay Joshi, “India’s Middle Class,” 2, oxfordre.com, accessed on 22 April 2021
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.179>

⁹⁸ Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 285.

⁹⁹ See Markus Daeschel, *The Politics Of Self-Expression: The Urdu Middle-Class Milieu in Mid-Twentieth Century India And Pakistan* (London: Routledge, 2006), 162-204.

political cultures in different linguistic regions and the usefulness of this concept in the context of modern South Asia. A common feature among all of these studies is that they throw light on the individual literary and non-literary figures.

The impact of colonialism on the pre-colonial linguistic practices and literary cultures has received much closer scrutiny in the work of Vasudha Dalmia, Veena Naregal, Francesca Orsini, and others. These works clearly demonstrate the complexity of negotiation between the pre-colonial literary practices and those with colonial ideology and initiatives. Their work showcased the significance of languages in creating identity and a feeling of community amongst the people in different regions in colonial times. These studies also emphasized the role of native intellectuals in engaging with Western literary ideologies. These three studies point to the limitations and blind spots in the ubiquitous modes of historiography in modern South Asia which include the Nationalist, Marxist, and Subaltern. For all these studies, the question of fashioning a new mode of language is very central. These studies demonstrate that the fashioning of language and literature is an intensely contentious phenomenon and has long-term consequences.

Veena Naregal (2001) uses the concept of the public sphere in order to critically understand the socio-cultural and political developments in colonial Western India from 1830 to 1881. She argues that she is using this concept in order to address the blind spots in earlier historiographies like the Nationalist, Marxist, and the Subaltern. Nevertheless, she points to the main achievement of the Subaltern collective in the following manner:

... this collective redefined colonial historiography as a project that needed to trace the emergence of contesting narratives of modernity through the mutations of liberal discourses as colonial ideology.¹⁰⁰

Naregal points to the need for “a theory of ideology” in order to understand that “colonial domination operated by altering the structures and categories of discursive production”.¹⁰¹ She emphasizes the need for studying the initiatives and interventions of colonial and native intellectuals in the nascent public sphere of the early nineteenth-century colonial Bombay province. She criticizes the subaltern studies historiography for neglecting these important phenomena which have had a great significance in fashioning political culture in the Bombay province. She points out the fact that the process of vernacularization did not alter the textual hierarchy between Sanskrit and other Indian languages, because of the highly segmented nature of pre-modern South Asia. The colonial government’s language and educational policy had effectively replaced the hierarchical relation between Sanskrit and the vernaculars with that of a hierarchical relation between English and the vernaculars.¹⁰² However, this colonial bilingualism played an important role in creating new hierarchies in the native society. But colonial educational policy faced many obstacles in its implementation. According to her, the distance between English and the vernaculars represents the distance between the state and its subjects. The colonial government recognized that the educational project was central to both the dissemination of liberal ideas and “colonial ideological domination”.¹⁰³ However, the colonial administration realized that it could not communicate with its subjects only through English. It recognized that

¹⁰⁰ Veena Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere: Western India Under Colonialism* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2001), 2.

¹⁰¹ Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere*, 2.

¹⁰² “Paradoxically, the power of English would be secured through its potential to redefine the vernacular domain. The remaking of language, the extension of colonial ideology, the definition of new social norms were inter-related objectives built into the design of the educational project, and the emerging bilingual relations had important political implications”; Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, And the Public Sphere*, 60.

¹⁰³ Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere*, 56.

vernaculars could play this role in a better manner. Native people started giving petitions to the colonial government to start schools in their respective villages and towns. They asked for useful education. The natives' interest in the colonial education policies indicates the importance of the newly emerging political structures. Many debates centred on the obstacles in translating educational material into Marathi. This expanding "vernacular sphere" shows the limitations of the essentially elitist nature of the English sphere. As the natives recognized the importance of taking part in the vernacular sphere, this became "the locus of diverse, contesting, and often irreconcilable claims". The contestation between traditional educated Brahmins and colonial educated Brahmins over the distribution of *dakshina* (honorarium) fund took the form of representations to the colonial government. This also indicates the rift between the native elites. Naregal argues that the English educated Brahmins took the support of Jyotirao Phule in their fight against traditional educated Brahmins. However, this alliance between the Brahmins and the lower caste groups did not sustain for a long time as the Brahmins did not support Phule's efforts in educating the lower caste groups. Furthermore, Naregal elaborates that "policy statements and the historical record contain several cases which show that the colonial government acceded to pressure from the higher castes to prevent lower-caste students from attending government schools".¹⁰⁴ She argues that these new hierarchies created by education and language policy have long-standing political implications and shaped the political culture of the region. This important book demonstrates that the newly emergent language hierarchy between English and Marathi, and educational policy and translation initiatives are crucial in fashioning the political culture in the late nineteenth century.

¹⁰⁴ Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere*, 65.

Vasudha Dalmia's *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions* raises a very pertinent question: how did an idea of "monolithic"¹⁰⁵ Hinduism, that became immensely popular among its urban followers in recent times, get consolidated during the nineteenth century? In order to answer this question, she focuses on the literary and non-literary journey of Bharatendu Harischandra (1850-85) who played an instrumental role in the consolidation of "monolithic" Hinduism. *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions* is also the first major and important study that used the concept of the public sphere in order to critically understand the literary career of an important literary figure in the context of modern South Asia. Incidentally, Harischandra is the founding figure of modern Hindi literature and is recognized as a very innovative literary and public figure of his times. He played a central role in consolidating the status of Hindi as the literary language in opposition to Urdu in colonial North India.

Dalmia begins her discussion by pointing to the possibilities and limitations in the perspective of Ranajit Guha's methodology in understanding the impact of colonialism on the formation of nationalist discourse. For Guha, colonial power "never achieved hegemony"¹⁰⁶ over its Indian subjects. Guha characterizes the colonial power in terms of "dominance and subordination".¹⁰⁷ As a result, "the indigenous Indian idiom"¹⁰⁸ could maintain its autonomy. Dalmia criticizes Guha for assuming that the pre-colonial Hindu tradition is available to modern readers in its original form. Dalmia argues that the engagement between "the indigenous Indian idiom" and the idiom derived from "the metropolitan cultures of the colonizer" resulted in the production of the "third idiom".¹⁰⁹ She argues that "the third idiom" is manoeuvred and fashioned in the nineteenth century. Orientalists and native scholars

¹⁰⁵ Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), 1.

¹⁰⁶ Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 15.

participated in this manoeuvre. In this process, it negotiated with the classical idiom “in the light of present needs and claims” of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁰

Dalmia reconstructs the social, political, and cultural conditions of Benares from where Harischandra operated. She points to the fact that Harischandra belonged to business community. She characterizes the literary journal as a new kind of genre that emerged and consolidated gradually in the course of the nineteenth century and provided space for experimentation of various Western literary genres like the short story and the novel. The literary journals edited and run by Harishchandra played a crucial role in giving Hindi a literary status. Furthermore, these journals plausibilized the emergence of the literary public sphere which subsequently helped in the formation of the political public sphere. Moreover, he experimented with various literary genres in order to make Hindi popular among its readers.

While Dalmia’s study focuses on a key literary figure in the incipient Hindi public sphere, Orsini’s *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920–1940* studies the processes that led to the expansion and consolidation of Hindi as the pre-eminent language of the public sphere in North India during the high tide of Indian nationalism. She uses the concept of the public sphere to critically evaluate social, political, and literary developments in colonial North India. She points to the fact that colonial administrators aggravated the differences between Hindi and Urdu by encouraging the elites to speak these languages. During this period, Hindi vigorously contested with Urdu to become the language of public discourse in colonial North India. Hindi intellectuals wanted to fashion a distinct identity for Hindi in opposition to Urdu which had been the language of elites and literature. Moreover, the proponents of Hindi tried to replace English with Hindi. Even in 1915, the majority of the Hindi publications were of poetry and deliberated widely diverse discourses like religion and social reform. In contrast to

¹¹⁰ Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 15.

this, prose was the medium of public discourse in Urdu. During the 1920s, there was a significant change in this.

Orsini demonstrates that literary traditions associated with different lineages, transmission, and institutional spaces existed during the 1920s to the 1940s. She identifies popular press and the dissemination of nationalist politics as important factors in the expansion of the literary sphere. Added to these factors, modern institutions like the press, literary associations, and education brought structural transformation in the literary system. She points to the need for excavating the diversity in the Hindi public sphere in the early twentieth century as it was represented narrowly in nationalist historiography which itself is the product of this period. In the process of explaining literary spheres in different cities and towns, she focuses on certain aspects. They are the individuals who were taking part in the literary sphere of a town, organizations which were functioning as venues for the literary sphere, the educational institutions, and the papers. According to Orsini, the Hindi literary sphere had represented certain “stratified literary tastes”.¹¹¹ She observes that during the early twentieth century, though the old literary genres were still in existence, intense change and experimentation took place around the 1920s. She addresses the following questions: How did the nationalist perspective influence debates on the nature of language, the nature of literature, and the role of the writer in the Hindi literary sphere? How did Hindi intellectuals respond to the new publicity that came to be attached to the literary sphere?

Orsini also describes the sociological background, class status, and professions of the intellectuals who had a considerable reputation in the literary public sphere.¹¹² She says that Khatri and Kayasthas played a central role in making Benares the centre for Hindi

¹¹¹ Francesca Orsini, *Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40.

¹¹² “Whereas Ratnakar belonged to the old service class and was secretary to the Maharani of Ayodhya, Bhagava Din, though only informally trained in literature, was a salaried literary person.”; Orsini, *Hindi Public Sphere*, 34.

publishing. In contrast to the case of Bengal, individuals from none-elite backgrounds took part in literary activity. She also points to other forms of popular entertainment. They include music and poetry sessions at temples, emerging theatre groups, and films. She also identifies the factors that contributed to the growth of Hindi literature during the 1920s. They include the spread of “Hindi journalism and publishing”, the expansion of readers for Hindi material, and providing space for varied literary writings by magazines.¹¹³

Orsini argues that although the colonial state appeared liberal, it was liberal to a limited extent. As the colonial state used to be responsible for the government and the public opinion in England, it gave limited space for Indians to express their opinions.¹¹⁴ It transacted with native elites and Western-educated civil servants and professionals like lawyers. The Hindi public sphere demonstrates that Khari Boli Hindi could establish itself as the language of civil society, literature, and politics by the end of the 1930s. Its institutionalization through the education system consolidated and continued its hegemony afterwards. While commenting on the impact of the Progressive Writers’ Movement, Orsini argues that it could not question the hegemony of the ideology of the Hindi movement.

1.5 Incidents before the 1940s in Colonial Andhra

1.5.1 Literary Journey of the Telugu Language: the Beginnings

I will begin this part of the chapter with a brief discussion of the status of the Telugu language before the entry of colonialism. We have already seen the normative status of Sanskrit in relation to Marathi as has been elaborated by Veena Naregal. The notion of vernacularization became popular through its use by Sheldon Pollock, who used it in order to understand the changes in different domains like the social, the political, and the literary in pre-modern South Asia. He uses this notion in opposition to the notion of the cosmopolitan.

¹¹³ Orsini, *Hindi Public Sphere*, 66.

¹¹⁴ Orsini, *Hindi Public Sphere*, 313.

He argues that this process is one of the “two great moments of transformation in culture and power in premodern India”¹¹⁵ and started in pre-colonial India without European influence.

Pollock studies the rise of Sanskrit as a preeminent literary language at the turn of the first millennium and its remarkable spread within five centuries from Laos in North-East Asia to present-day Afghanistan in West Asia, and its decline with the emergence of regional languages in pre-modern South Asia. He tries to understand these phenomena with two broad conceptual categories called the cosmopolitan and the vernacular. He argues:

The problem of the vernacular claims some attention in the first part of this book, for without this contrastive category, and contrastive reality of both cultural and political self-understanding toward which it points, the cosmopolitan has no conceptual purchase.¹¹⁶

What we can draw from Pollock’s argument is that both the cosmopolitan and the vernacular are by no means absolute categories but relational and contrastive categories, which are *mutually dependent* on each other. He uses these two contrastive categories in order to understand the significant processes that happened in the domain of culture and its contingent relation to the changes that took place in the domain of politics in pre-modern South Asia and Europe. However, he points to the fact that these same processes, which had simultaneously started both in Europe and South Asia, had divergent consequences for those respective social formations. Pollock writes,

In Europe, vernacularization *accompanied and enabled* the production of the nation-state; in India, it accompanied and enabled a political form we may neutrally call the vernacular polity, in order to signal its difference.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2006), 1.

¹¹⁶ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 19.

¹¹⁷ Sheldon Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History,” *Public Culture*, 12, no. 3 (2000): 592 (emphasis added).

However, he identifies the cosmopolitan and the vernacular as two modes of literary communication that catered to different kinds of audience in the pre-modern world. The former is “unbounded and *potentially* infinite”,¹¹⁸ whereas the latter is “*practically* finite”.¹¹⁹ In this scheme of things, the reach of cosmopolitan literary communication is spatially widespread, whereas the reach of vernacular literary communication is restricted to a small place. Having made this distinction between two kinds of literary communication, he goes on to study the articulation of two historical instances of cosmopolitan literary communication: one is of Sanskrit and the other is Latin. Both of these emerged as literary languages at the turn of the first millennium. Sanskrit expanded through the “circulation of traders, literati, religious professionals, and freelance adventurers”,¹²⁰ whereas Latin expanded “as the language of a conquest state”.¹²¹ Cosmopolitan literary communication remained in vogue till the turn of the second millennium. At the turn of the second millennium, the process of vernacularization started in central Deccan. Pollock describes, “These were developed and even ennobled category termed *desi* (*desi*, *desya*, *desi*, *dese*, etc.) or the practices of Place, came into being, along with or dependent upon a new understanding of the sources of cultural authority.”¹²²

Pollock describes this process in terms of “the vernacularization of the Sanskrit world”,¹²³ “the literary and political promotion of local language”,¹²⁴ “vernacular transformation”,¹²⁵ and “vernacular revolution”.¹²⁶ He identifies two important stages in the process of vernacularization: the first stage is “literization or writing the vernacular”,¹²⁷ and

¹¹⁸ Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History”, 594 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History”, 594 (emphasis added).

¹²⁰ Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History”, 603.

¹²¹ Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History”, 601.

¹²² Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 397.

¹²³ Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History”, 607.

¹²⁴ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 283.

¹²⁵ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 298.

¹²⁶ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 410.

¹²⁷ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 298.

the second stage is “literarization, the creation of new literary discourse”.¹²⁸ This second stage plays an important role in upgrading the language of a place into a literary language, because “the history of what was constituted as the literary in South Asia was profoundly shaped by written textuality”.¹²⁹ Telugu emerged as the political and literary vernacular at the beginning of the second millennium. However, for a long time, the normative influence of Sanskrit on Telugu had been predominant. The relation between Sanskrit and the newly emerging vernacular was a tenuous one. Sheldon Pollock explains the emergence of vernacular languages in pre-colonial South Asia in the following manner:

But vernacularization has to be examined initially as a double moment: when local language for the first time came to be written down for documentary purposes, and when it was first textualized for the *workly* tasks—the task of culture done by literature and the task of power done by political discourse—already defined by the cosmopolitan culture, whose authority the vernacular sought to supplement and eventually to supplant.¹³⁰

Pollock does not explain the regional complexities in the processes that led to the emergence of Telugu as a vernacular of status. The first inscriptions in Telugu did not come from the river valleys of Krishna and Godavari but from “the far southern region of Andhra, in Rayalaseema to the south of and west of the Nallmalai hills”.¹³¹ By this point of time, Nagaraju points to the fact that Kannada and Tamil have already achieved significant literary and political status.¹³² This raises a pertinent question. Why did the ruling elite of this region want to bring inscriptions in incipient Telugu rather than in Kannada or Tamil which had already achieved significant status by that time? Nagaraju argues that regional elites identified themselves with Telugu rather than with Kannada and Tamil. However, literary production in Telugu started with the retelling of Veda Vyasa’s *Mahabharata* by Nannayya

¹²⁸ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 298.

¹²⁹ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 304.

¹³⁰ Pollock, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 283 (emphasis added).

¹³¹ S. Nagaraju, “Emergence of Regional Identity and Beginnings of Vernacular Literature: A Case Study of Telugu”, *Social Scientist* 23, no. 10–12 (1995): 10.

¹³² Nagaraju, “Emergence of Regional Identity,” 13–14.

and developed its own style and aesthetics. However, Sanskrit continued to be recognized as the pre-eminent literary language for a significant period of time. Sheldon Pollock points to the precarious literary status of vernaculars in the following manner:

The decision to make the vernacular speak literarily is so fraught that it requires the direct intervention of a power beyond that of the dominant cultural order: the power of a divine being. Only thus could the king of Vijayanagara himself Krsnadevaraya, be empowered to write his remarkable poem, the *Amukatamalyada*, in Telugu in 1517. In the introduction, a god comes to the author in a dream—a god significantly localized as the “the Great Visnu of Andhra” and announces:¹³³

However, *Amuktamalyada* has a poem that extols the qualities of Telugu beyond measure:

‘If you ask, “Why Telugu?”
It is because this is Telugu country
and I am a Telugu king.
Telugu is one of a kind.

After speaking with all your lords at your court
didn’t you realize-
Amongst the regional languages,
Telugu is the best!”¹³⁴

The above-mentioned poem shows that Telugu got a pre-eminent literary status in the sixteenth century. It is significant to note that Telugu started its literary and political journey after Kannada and Tamil. Why did Krishnadevaraya choose to write *Amuktamalyada* in Telugu rather than in any other language? The pre-eminent literary status of Telugu in his vast empire might be one of the reasons behind Krishnadevaraya’s choice of Telugu in writing *Amuktamalyada*. The poem is also intriguing as it attributes the identity of Telugu to a particular god and a particular place. The poem became very popular in the twentieth century and was celebrated by the Telugu linguistic nationalists in the twentieth century as it eulogized the qualities of the Telugu language.

¹³³ Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 314.

¹³⁴ Srinivas Reddy, *Giver of the Worn Garland: Krishnadevaraya’s Amktamalyada* (New Delhi: Penguin Books of India, 2010), xxiv.

1.5.2 Colonialism and the Study of the Telugu Language

The fall of the Vijayanagara kingdom witnessed the emergence of various local kingdoms. South India came under the direct rule of the East India Company in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, as South India came under the impact of colonialism, the kind of Telugu that was used by village elites since the sixteenth century lost its importance. According to V. Narayana Rao, the British administrators had chosen pundits with Sanskrit training to teach at the College of Fort St George. This clearly shows that the colonial administrators believed that Sanskrit was a superior language and the knowledge of Sanskrit was necessary for a language tutor.¹³⁵ Further, the British administrators prescribed the *Balavyakaranam*¹³⁶ as a textbook at the college level. This book takes all its examples from the Telugu *Kavyas* and systemizes the language of the *Kavyas*. Due to the hegemonic position and colonial institutional support to the *Balavyakaranam*, a whole range of books, which were being written in Karnam Telugu, were discredited.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, various social, religious, and reformatory organizations came into existence. These organizations used to publish journals to spread their respective ideals. For example, Rajahmundry Prardhana Samaj started publishing *The Sathya Sam Vardhani* from July 1891. In its first issue, it expresses its concerns in the following manner:

For some time past, the attention of the members of the Rajahmundry Prardhana Samaj has been occupied with the problem of finding a clue to the miserable condition of the lower orders of Society. The absence of periodical journals in these parts calculated to convey useful information to the people together with the want to bring up the less enlightened

¹³⁵ Velcheru Narayana Rao, "Print and Prose: Pundits, *Karanams*, and the East India Company in the Making of Modern Telugu", in *India's Literary History*, ed. Stuart Blackburn et al. (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 146–166.

¹³⁶ One of the tutors at the college, Chinnaya Suri had written it.

brethren of the community, has all the more urged us to undertake this work of publishing a Monthly journal the “Sathya Samvarthani”.¹³⁷

The pedagogic and patronizing sentiment of the organization is more than apparent in their articulation of their objectives.

1.5.3 Zamindars, Intellectuals, and the Progress of Telugu Literature

Lisa Mitchell points to the high status of poets in pre-colonial times. Poets used to be huge beneficiaries of the patronage of kings. According to Mitchell, such modes of patronage had declined by the early decades of the nineteenth century. While discussing the impact of the colonial rule on the patronage of poets, Mitchell argues that “outside of the colonial state there were few individuals remaining who were wealthy or powerful enough to act as substantial patrons of major literary endeavours”.¹³⁸ This observation is true only to a limited extent. Moreover, it gives a very truncated view of the developments in the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. Rajas and zamindars continued to be patrons of various kinds of literary activities even in the early decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, they took an active part in modern literary ventures like starting literary magazines, literary organizations, and others. For instance, Sri Raja Venkatadri Apparao of Nuziveedu, Sri Kovvuri Chandra Reddi of Nidadavolu, and Sri Kumara Raja of Venakatagiri were key patrons of the Sri Sammodhini Granthamala (Pleasure Enhancement String of Books).¹³⁹ Similarly, Sri Kovvuri Chandra Reddi, the zamindar of Nidadavolu, was the patron of the Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam (Book Centre for Propagation of Andhra).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ First issue of *The Sathya Sam Vardhani* (A Monthly Journal) published on 31 July 1891 (Original in English).

¹³⁸ Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India*, 62.

¹³⁹ Gattupalli Sriramulu, *Sri Chandanalatika Anu Jayakantha* (Guntur: Sri Sammodhini Granthamala, 1916), 3.

¹⁴⁰ Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *Durgeshnandini*, trans. Chaganti Sessaiah (Tanuku: Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911), i.

The zamindar of Polavaram, K. R. V. Krishna Row Bahadar, had shown keen interest in the development of Telugu literature. He had an English education and acquired a degree of the Bachelor of Arts. He published a long essay on Telugu literature titled *The Progress of Telugu Literature*.¹⁴¹ While the title page of the book is in English, the remaining pages are in Telugu. It was originally delivered as a lecture at the fourth anniversary of the Association for the Development of Andhra Language of the college of Chennapuri. As the title itself clearly indicates, the essay is concerned with the progress of Telugu literature. In this lecture, among other things he laments the lack of literary magazines in Telugu. Later, he started a literary magazine *The Saraswati* (a monthly Telugu magazine) and became the editor of it. It was started in January 1899 and was published from Cocanada. This was a literary magazine.¹⁴² While the yearly subscription was three rupees for the general public, it was only two rupees for students and women. He also wrote a drama titled *Anuvaadatarngini* (The Stream of Translation).¹⁴³ Tirupati Venkateswara Kavulu, regular contributors to this magazine were the court poets of the zamindar of Polavaram. The *Kavitha* was another literary magazine published in the early twentieth century. Venkata Ramkrishna Kavulu, the editors of the *Kavitha* (Poem), announced the objectives of their magazine in the following manner, “We established the monthly magazine of *Kavitha* in order to publish great *prabandhas*, plays, enchanting novels, and moralizing histories”.¹⁴⁴ The editors of the *Kavitha* identified themselves as “Durbar Poets”.¹⁴⁵ In the June 1911 issue of the *Kavitha*, the editors write that they were not dependent on subscriptions from readers as their magazine was getting the patronage of the Lord of Pithapuram. Similarly, a very influential modern literary figure at

¹⁴¹ Sree Rajah K. R. V. Krishnarao, *The Progress of Telugu Literature* (Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1896).

¹⁴² Vasudha Dalmia points to the contribution of literary journals in introducing various literary forms in the nascent Hindi public sphere in the latter parts of the nineteenth century. Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 135-136.

¹⁴³ It was published as part of “Saraswati Series” no. 16 in 1901. It was described as “a Telugu prose drama in five acts adapted from Sheridan’s *School for Scandal*.”

¹⁴⁴ Editors, *The Kavitha: A Monthly Literary Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1910), i (my translation).

¹⁴⁵ Editors, *The Kavitha*, i.

the turn of the twentieth century, Gurajada Apparao, dedicated his play *Kanyasulkam* to “His Highness the Maharaja Mirja Sri Ananda Gajapati Raj, Manea Sultan Bahadur of Vizianagaram, G.C.I.E.”.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, he identified himself as “an humble servant”.¹⁴⁷

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, modern professionals such as the “first generations of English-educated lawyers, civil servants, doctors, and schoolteachers”¹⁴⁸ entered into literary activities. Along with the zamindars, they also took initiative in expanding the literary public sphere in the second part of the nineteenth century. They experimented with Western genres and ran voluntary literary associations. K. Veerasalingam Panthulu¹⁴⁹ played a significant role in this period. He was the most significant literary figure and public intellectual of his time. One of the close associates of Kandukuri, N. Subbarau Panthulu, edited a monthly magazine titled *The Chintamani* (The Jewel of Wish-fulfilment). He was a lawyer by profession. The magazine came into existence in the last decade of the nineteenth century. *The Chintamani* used to conduct competitions for writers. It gave a platform to aspiring novelists. Many of them were modern professionals like teachers, lawyers, and others. After the initial publication, it would republish them in *The Chintamani* series. It used to give concession to students. *Dharmavateevilasam*,¹⁵⁰ *Sanjeevarayacharitra*,¹⁵¹ and *Ramachandra Vijayam*¹⁵² are some prize-winning novels. Narasimham emerged as a popular nationalist poet in the second decade of the twentieth century.

¹⁴⁶ Gurajada Apparao, *Gurujadalu: Mahakavi Gurajada Apparao Samagra Rachanlu* (Complete Works of Great Poet Gurajada Apparao), ed. Pennepalli Gopalakrishna (Hyderabad: Emesco, 2012), 125.

¹⁴⁷ Apparao, *Gurujadalu*, 125.

¹⁴⁸ Gautham Reddy, “The Andhra Sahitya Parishat: Language, Nation and Empire in Colonial South India”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 56, no. 03 (2019): 289.

¹⁴⁹ Rajagopal, “Fashioning Modernity in Telugu, 45–77. Rajagopal gives a detailed interpretation of the initiatives of Kandukuri.

¹⁵⁰ Khandavilli Ramachendrudu, *Dharmavateevilasam* (The Glory of Dharmavati) (Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1894).

¹⁵¹ Tallapragada Suryanarayana, *Sanjeevarayacharitra* (The History of Sanjeevaraya) (Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1894).

¹⁵² Chilakhamarthy Lakshmi Narasimham, *Ramachandra Vijayam* (The Victory of Ramachandra) (Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1895).

At the turn of the twentieth century, new jargon was used to assess the condition and status of Telugu literature. Native intellectuals started using concepts like “progress” and “development” in the process of assessing the status of Telugu literature. We have already seen that the zamindar of Polavaram was invoking these concepts. Likewise, Jayanti Ramayya, the deputy collector of Vizainagaram, expresses similar concerns in *An Essay on Telugu Language and Literature*.¹⁵³

1.5.4 Book Organizations and Their Initiatives:

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, a good number of voluntary organizations came into existence. Such efforts mark the recognition among the native intellectuals of the importance of the newly emerging print culture in spreading new forms of knowledge among the natives. These were the first popular organizations with an explicit target of making the book into a quotidian object in colonial Andhra. While some of these organizations had the patronage of zamindars, some were run by individuals from modern professions like judges, contractors, and others. These organizations conducted their activities from many towns and villages of colonial Andhra. They included Berhampur, Guntur, Madras, Nidadavolu, and Rajahmundry. Their main intention was to cultivate and encourage reading habits in colonial Andhra. They catered to widely different needs and tastes of the literary public sphere. What is argued by Ulrike Stark in her study of the Naval Kishore Press is quite appropriate to these organizations of colonial South India. She says,

...the foremost pioneers in Indian commercial publishing were not just savvy businessmen. Rather, they were deeply engaged in the intellectual and literary life of their time who shared its larger cultural, cognitive, and social concerns.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ J. Ramayya, *An Essay on Telugu Language and Literature* (Vizagapatam: S. S. M. Press, 1896).

¹⁵⁴ Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2008), 1–2.

All these organizations could not sustain their activity for a long period of time. These organizations have varied lifetimes. The Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, which was established in 1911, announced that “this association will publish those kinds of novels, which would be helpful for the *development* of language and the teaching of history. It will publish one novel for two months”.¹⁵⁵ The list of the published books included detective novels, domestic novels, social novels, Kavyas, and others. It included translations too. Some of the published books were approved and prescribed by textbook committees as textbooks for students. As a result, these books created further commercial possibilities for the organizations.

However, the quality of the books published by these organizations became a contentious issue among intellectuals. Two of the then prominent intellectuals, C. Ramalinga Reddi and Gurajada Venkata Apparao (1861/1862-1915) (popularly known as Gurajada), were at loggerheads over this. While Ramalinga Reddi appreciated the positive qualities of the books published by various organizations and recommended them as textbooks at various levels, Apparao, as a member of the University Senate, pointed to the problems in prescribing them as textbooks. He was highly critical of the lack of originality in the various categories of books published by these book organizations. He wrote:

With the exception of one book, which is Mr. Ramalinga Reddi’s *Ardhasastra* or Political Economy, all these scientific books are only compilations and lay no claims to originality. As a rule these books were written for teaching the elements of science to the masses and school boys; and neither authors nor the publishers make any claim for them as literature. They are simply adaptations of English text-books or compilations.¹⁵⁶

Further, he dismissed Reddi’s argument of “wide circulation” as one more reason for the prescription of these books as textbooks in the following manner:

¹⁵⁵ Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, “Prakatana” (Announcement) in *Durgeshnandini*, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, trans. Chaganti Seshiah (Tanuku: Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911) 1 (my translation) (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁶ Apparao, *Gurujadalu*, 952.

Mr. Reddi claims for some of these books a wide circulation but that proves little. These Mandalies are patriotic-commercial enterprises whose books are sold by a system of subscription and the scientific books which they publish are brought by many as a matter of patriotism, not to read.¹⁵⁷

1.5.5 Language War in the Telugu Public Sphere

The Telugu public sphere witnessed a protracted and heated language war between different groups during the early decades of the twentieth century. Almost all of the prominent Telugu intellectuals took part in this war. The war was focused on the appropriate Telugu to be used in school textbooks. Gurajada was one of the most significant literary figures and public intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century. His play *Kanyasulkam* is immensely popular till date in the Telugu literary public sphere and was also made into a movie in 1955. He wrote this play in spoken Telugu. In the “Preface” of the play, he explains the appropriateness, necessity, and relevance of using spoken Telugu for writing the play. He writes, “I clothed the play in the spoken dialect, not only that is better *intelligible to the stage-going public* than the literary dialect, but also from a conviction that it is the proper comic diction for Telugu.”¹⁵⁸

He was highly critical of the kind of Telugu historical novels written under the influence of Bankim. He was very critical of the prose of Kandukuri too. He was also one of the key figures of the spoken Telugu movement. He categorized the language used to write

¹⁵⁷ Apparao, *Gurujadalu*, 954.

¹⁵⁸ Apparao, *Gurujadalu*, 127 (English in original) (emphasis added).

Kavyas as the “*Kavya* dialect”.¹⁵⁹ He was appreciative of Chinnayya Suri’s “Telugu prose in the *Kavya* dialect”.¹⁶⁰ But, he criticizes Kandukuri in the following manner,

The faults which Chinnaya Suri avoided by a correct taste rare among Telugu pandits, are found exaggerated in Mr. K. Veeresalingam Pantulu....What the Sanskrit *Hitopadesa* or Chinnaya Suri said in ten words, Mr. K. Veeresalingam Pantulu said in a hundred. Sounds fascinated him, and he indulged in fantastic alliteration. Words were let in merely to fill long drawn alliterative schemes. Synonyms were piled up and unfamiliar words were marshalled to express the simplest ideas of a beast fable.¹⁶¹

However, he also observed that it was very difficult to master the *Kavya* dialect and sees this as the reason why even the educated could not write good prose. He argues that “spontaneous writing is out of question, when one has to write a language which he has to learn from books and is in mortal dread of violating grammar or usage at every step.”¹⁶²

Along with Gurajada Apparao, Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti(1863-1940) (popularly known as Gidugu) was a key figure in the spoken Telugu movement and played a significant role in the Telugu public sphere in the first four decades of the twentieth century. He stressed the importance of using spoken Telugu in textbooks being prescribed to school children and in reducing diglossia between spoken Telugu and written Telugu. He presented a *Memorandum on Modern Telugu* to the governor of Madras in 1913. It was prepared in response to a government order (released on 10 January 1913) which facilitated the use of more of *granthika* (literary) Telugu in education. He expresses his objectives in “Prologue” to *Memorandum* in the following manner.

¹⁵⁹ Gurajada Apparao, “Minute of Dissent,” *Gurujadalu: Mahakavi Gurajada Apparao Samagra Rachanlu* (Complete Works of Great Poet Gurajada Apparao) ed. Pennepalli Gopalakrishna (Hyderabad: Emesco, 2012), 1310.

¹⁶⁰ Apparao, “Minute of Dissent,” 1331.

¹⁶¹ Apparao, “Minute of Dissent,” 1332.

¹⁶² Apparao, “Minute of Dissent,” 1334.

My object in writing it was (1) to vindicate the dignity of *modern* Telugu, the genuine mother-tongue of the educated classes and its right to be used as the best medium of instruction and literary expression; and (2) to refute the arguments advanced by the Pandits and the Academy advanced against *Modern* Telugu Movement.¹⁶³

He rhetorically questions, “is the Modern Telugu Movement” inimical to *progress*?”¹⁶⁴ It is important to note that Gidugu invokes the idea of “progress” to make his case for modern Telugu. This memorandum is a significant document as it lists the reasons for the deplorable condition of education and dismal literacy among native subjects in colonial Andhra. He points to the fact that 925 among 1000 are completely illiterate and sixty per cent are completely illiterate among Brahmins.¹⁶⁵ To emphasize the importance, usefulness, and popularity of spoken Telugu, he assiduously draws support from various sources. He gives the example of using spoken Telugu in epigraphs and other non-religious documents in pre-British times. He writes,

We find the inscriptions and other documents to which we have access, written not in the literary language but in what may be called the current Telugu idiom of the times. We may infer from this, that the records relating to the public and private affairs during the period of, say, the Vizianagram kings, were written in the *spoken dialect* of the officials of those times.¹⁶⁶

In order to support his argument in favour of introducing spoken Telugu in writing textbooks, Gidugu invokes his experience of teaching at different levels for 30 years. He writes,

¹⁶³ Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu* (Hyderabad: Vedagiri Communications, 2012), i.

¹⁶⁴ Ramamurti, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*, iv (emphasis added) (original in English).

¹⁶⁵ Ramamurti, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*, 19 (original in English).

¹⁶⁶ Ramamurti, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*, 9 (emphasis added) (original in English).

I have ventured to invite attention to my views on this subject as I have studied this question carefully and in a lecturing tour discussed it with educated men in several important towns such as Madras, Nellore, Guntur, Masulipatam, Cocanada, Vizagapatam, Vizianagram, Parlakimedi. I have been a humble worker in the field of Indian Education for more than thirty years and have taught pupils in the grades from the Primary to the Collegiate. I have taken an active part in all the educational conferences held in this circle. I have studied books relating to the Progress of Education in England, France and other civilized countries.¹⁶⁷

He points to the benefits of colonial educational policy and identifies *granthika* Telugu as the main culprit in sabotaging the ideals of modern education and argues that traditional pundits completely failed to impart the mother tongue to students. Moreover, he says that traditional pundits find it very distasteful to teach untouchables. Furthermore, he strongly criticizes contemporary literary practices too in the following manner. He argues that due to the blind respect towards Sanskrit literature, these scholars were borrowing from Sanskrit aesthetics even though it did not apply to Telugu. However, they were quite successful in creating the most artificial literature. Enthusiasts for this kind of literature would have a place in kingdoms, where this kind of literature had earlier flourished. For the present age, however, the literature of kingdoms has no use.¹⁶⁸

In response to the memorandum, Jayanthi Ramayya released a pamphlet titled *A Defence of Literary Telugu*.¹⁶⁹ He was a higher official in the Madras government. The majority of the *granthika-vadis* (supporters of literary Telugu) were higher officials in the Madras government. A contemporary scholar argues that the Madras government succumbed to the pressures of these higher officials.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Ramamurti, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*, 5 (English in original).

¹⁶⁸ Ramamurti, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*, 22.

¹⁶⁹ Budaraju Radhakrishna, “Adhunika Yugam: Granthika Vyavaharika Vadamu,” (Modern Age: Debates between Literary and Spoken) in *Telugu Basha Charitra* (History of the Telugu Language), ed. Bhadriraju Krishnamurti (Hyderabad: Potti Sriramulu Telugu Viswavidyalayam, 2018), 269.

¹⁷⁰ Radhakrishna, “Adhunika Yugam,” 269.

The efforts at modernizing Telugu by intellectuals of colonial Andhra have received a contradictory evaluation in recent scholarship. For example, Mantena Ramasundari argues that the underlying assumptions of the philological study of the vernaculars by British administrators made an enduring impact on the way in which natives had started looking at their own languages. Here, the main agency is given to the philological framework. She points to the importance of the philological framework in shaping the views of colonial administrators. This framework delegitimizes and stigmatizes the existing literary and language practices that were prevalent among the natives. The notion of “progress” has been introduced through the philological framework. The thrust of the argument of this article is that native intellectuals blindly followed the framework that was imposed by the colonial administrators. She is critical of the native intellectuals who were trying to reform the Telugu language under the impact of the colonial philological framework. Her criticism is mainly against blindly accepting the colonial framework. She argues:

To reiterate, the impact of Brown’s philological work was felt within the new project of “modernising” Telugu, making the language suitable for “modern” purposes, i.e., language of the state and educational institutions. The Telugu intelligentsia eventually *picked up* on the idea of reforming Telugu in the latter part of the nineteenth century, most explicitly in the Modern Telugu movement. One consequence was that the classical form (*granthika*) came to be seen as stagnant, resisting innovation as well as representing *anti-democratic and conservative* strands in the language.¹⁷¹

In fact, the proponents of the spoken Telugu movement were not blind supporters of the colonial philological framework as it is argued by Ramasundari. However, in a later article, she recognized the importance of the efforts of the native intellectuals in fashioning Telugu as a modern language. Here, she emphasized that it was not just the colonial linguistic ideologies, but native intellectuals’ concern for the progress and development of the natives

¹⁷¹ Mantena Ramasundari, “Vernacular Futures: Colonial Philology and the Idea of History in Nineteenth Century South-India”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 42, no. 04 (2005): 532 (emphasis added).

that propelled them to modernize their native languages. She analyses various works of Gidugu, who steadfastly fought to reform and modernize the Telugu language. According to Ramasundari, Gidugu was influenced by the Western linguistic theories of his times. She appreciates the efforts of Gidugu and argues that native intellectuals' efforts to reform the Telugu language was conscious of the changing times. Further, she claims that the articulation of modernity and political modernity first took place in the domain of the reform of language.¹⁷² But she does not pay enough attention to the other important influences on Gidugu. For example, Ramamurti was influenced by the ideas of the Italian poet Dante.¹⁷³ Ramamurti made a comparison between the attitudes of the scholars in the Middle Ages towards Italian with that of native scholars towards spoken Telugu in the early twentieth century. He argues:

During the Middle Ages when literature and education were in the hands of “pundits” of Europe the vernaculars were looked down upon and neglected, as they are now in our country. The European pundits wrote in conventional language current only among themselves, just as Telugu pundits now write in a conventional Telugu language known only to themselves. When literature and education were in the hands of scholars in Europe in the middle ages, they used to denigrate and neglect the languages of the land as it is happening in our country today.¹⁷⁴

We have to recognize the fact that the leaders of spoken Telugu movement had pursued their agenda against the overwhelming opposition from the supporters of the Kavya dialect. In his recent article, Gautham Reddy shows that the Andhra Sahitya Parishat has received the support and patronage of a number of zamindars and high officials of the colonial administration.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Mantena Ramasundari, “Vernacular Publics and Political Modernity: Language and Progress in Colonial South India”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 47, no. 05 (2013): 1678–1705.

¹⁷³ Dante is the author of *Divine Comedy*.

¹⁷⁴ Ramamurthy, *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*, 23.

¹⁷⁵ Reddy, “The Andhra Sahitya Parishat,” 306-308.

In this context, I want to emphasize that the spoken Telugu movement was primarily against using the “Kavya dialect” for modern purposes. The key figures of this movement, Gurajada and Gidugu, emphasized the problems in learning and using this dialect for modern purposes. They clearly articulated their position in various books, memorandums, representations, pamphlets, and official proceedings. In their objective, the proponents of spoken Telugu movement spectacularly succeeded in getting the support of the reading public. They were not certainly aiming for the imposition of a uniform Telugu as it was attempted in the case of French in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century France.¹⁷⁶

1.5.6 Trendsetters and Trailblazers in the Telugu Public Sphere

Now, I want to briefly discuss the contribution of important writers. U. Lakshminarayana is one of the prominent literary and political figures of the early twentieth century. His novel *Maalapalli* is significant for many of its features.¹⁷⁷ It is the first major Telugu novel which deals with the issue of untouchability. It also explicitly proclaims the socialist ideology for the liberation of poor people. The colonial government banned it because it was proclaiming the Bolshevik ideology. In a letter written to the government, U. Lakshminarayana defended his propagation of the communist ideology and the unification of labourers against capitalism. But, later he compromised and made changes in the novel. Then only did the government lift the ban on this novel at the end of 1928.

Gudipati Venkata Chalam (1894–1979) was one of the most influential literary figures of the twentieth century. He started his literary career in the third decade of the twentieth century. He wrote short stories, novels, and musings. He is one of the most influential novelists of the Telugu literary public sphere in the twentieth century. Some of his

¹⁷⁶ Eugen Weber’s *Peasants into Frenchmen* narrates this process in brilliant manner. See Eugen Weber, *Peasants into French Men* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 67-94.

¹⁷⁷ The first part was published in November 1922. The second part was published in February 1923.

works became very sensational and controversial and created debates among its readers. His most popular and controversial novel is *Maidanam*.¹⁷⁸ Still, the form and content of this novel remains a contentious issue among critics belonging to various schools of thought.¹⁷⁹ *Maidanam* narrates the story of a Brahmin woman named Rajeswari. Due to the growing boredom in her marital life, she elopes with a person named Ameer. Outside the bounds of society, they live happily at the edge of a river for some time. But when Rajeswari becomes pregnant, it creates tension in their companionship. Ameer forces her to go for an abortion. Initially, she resists the idea of an abortion. As a means of emotional blackmail, Ameer leaves Rajeswari all alone. Finally, she succumbs to the emotional blackmail of Ameer and gets her pregnancy aborted. Meanwhile, Rajeswari makes the acquaintance of a younger person named Meera. Ameer cannot bear the relationship between Rajeswari and Meera. In a fit of anger, Ameer commits suicide by stabbing himself. In this manner, the novel has a rather unconventional and radical plot. The novel proposes a radical path for the emancipation of women from the restrictions and limitations of a boring marital life. Furthermore, the novel questions the very basis of the bourgeois family system. Apart from this novel, Gudipati Venkata Chalam wrote a number of short stories, novels, and other pieces. He says that he alone introduced various Western genres into Telugu. He also expresses his apprehension about whether the literary public is receptive to them or not. Chalam's contribution is not restricted to merely the literary domain. The famous first social reformist movie *Malapilla*¹⁸⁰ is based on a story written by him. Another prominent literary figure, Tapi Dharmarao, wrote the dialogues for this movie. At this point of time, most of the Telugu movies were based on mythologies. The movie proclaims, "For goddess of the house character is important but not the caste". This movie has the distinction of being the first Telugu movie based on a pertinent social issue. The success of this movie helped as an impetus to further make these kinds of

¹⁷⁸ *Maidanam* was first published in 1927.

¹⁷⁹ Adluri Raghuramaraju, *Maidanam Lothuloki...: Postmodern Pariseelana* (Vijayawada: Emesco Books, 2003).

¹⁸⁰ *Malapilla* was the first social movie which was released in 1938.

movies. It is also the first movie that used *vyavaharika* (spoken) Telugu for dialogues. Thus, the making of social movies also helped the cause of the spoken Telugu movement.

1.5.7 Literary associations

The Navya Sahitya Parishat was started in 1933 and the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham was started in 1943. The history of these two literary associations was the autobiography of literature in the modern age.¹⁸¹

Since the turn of the twentieth century, literary associations started playing an active role in the public sphere of the social formation of colonial Andhra. The Andhra Sahitya Parishad was found in 1911. It had the patronage of the Maharajah of Venkatagiri and the Rajah of Pithapur. The prime motive of this organization was to support the use of literary Telugu for modern purposes. Literary associations like the Sahiti Parishat, and the Navya Sahitya Parishat wanted to distinguish between traditional literature and ‘navya sahyam’ (new literature). The buzz word was “navya”(new) during the 1930s. Native scholars were increasingly becoming uncomfortable with the existing status of Telugu literature.

In the first issue of the *Prathiba*, run by the Navya Sahitya Parishat, one author writes:

When I was associated with the *Navya Sahitya Parishat*, I had the responsibility to define that (Navya) literature. If I had to do that, first, I had to explicate and prove the nature of earlier literature. Then only, I could discuss the different kinds of Navya Sahityam.... While either translating the *puranas* or fashioning the *prabandas*, writers of traditional literature did not face these kinds of difficulties. For them, the Sanskrit *puranas* and *kavyas* functioned as models. If they could not find an equivalent word in Telugu, they used the same Sanskrit words by adding suffixes like *-du*, *-mu*, *-vu* to them.¹⁸²

Unlike in north India, the Progressive Writers’ Association was formally started in 1943 in Tenali. It intensified its activities during this decade. Even, in the first quarter of the twentieth

¹⁸¹ Arudra, *Samgra Andhra Sahityam*, 660 (my translation).

¹⁸² Panchagnula Aadinarayana Sastri, “Andhra Literature-Its History and Tradition,” *Prathiba: Navya Saahitya Parishat Patrika* 1, no. 1 (1936): 3, 19 (my translation).

century, it was a very common practice to dedicate works to some zamindar or king. A very important and popular literary figure of these times D. Krishna Sastri dedicated his poetry collection *Krishnapaksham* to the local king of Pithapuram.¹⁸³ In his dedication note, he almost eulogized the king. It not only shows the intimate connection between some of the poets and zamindars and rajas but also the patronage that the poets used to get from native elites. In contrast to this, the condition and status of writers completely changed during the period of study. It also witnessed a radical departure from the earlier modes of literary patronage in the period of this study. Earlier, we have seen how S. Natarajan was hugely dependent on the remuneration from publishers for survival. It made the position of writers vis-à-vis publishers very precarious.

Conclusion

The Western educated intellectuals were increasingly concerned about the progress of the Telugu language and literature since the last quarter of the twentieth century. The ideas of progress mediated the efforts of various public intellectuals and literary figures. The two decades 1940s and 1950s were very significant in the history of colonial and post-colonial Andhra for various reasons. The demand for separate state for the Telugu speaking districts of Madras presidency came to fruition during this period. Individuals from very humble backgrounds started participating in the Telugu literary sphere. Writers started operating in a new set of conditions. From the experience of Natarajan, we can say that writers were at the mercy of the literary market.

¹⁸³ Devulapalli Krishna Sastri, *Krishnapaksham* (Hyderabad: Navachethana Publishing House, 2019), x.

Chapter 2

Nationalism, Marxism, and Literature

Introduction

This chapter has been divided into three parts. The first part will critically understand the interaction between the official national movement and the Leftist movement. It will elaborately discuss the politics of historiography and the intimate connection between official nationalism and historiography. This chapter contends that critically understanding the shifts in historiography is very important in comprehending the nature of nationalism in South Asia. This discussion is also pertinent as the historiography of nationalisms in South Asia has witnessed radical shifts and intense, acerbic, and sometimes controversial debates in the last three decades.

Moreover, historiography functions as an analytical optic to critically understand nationalisms in South Asia. The second part of the chapter will pick up a discussion of the Marxist standpoint on literature. Several Marxists have proposed widely divergent theories of literature. This part will focus on two important themes: Marxism's take on the novel as a literary genre and the critical engagement between Marxism and postcolonial theory. The third part will deal with the activities of the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham in colonial and post-colonial Andhra.

2.1 The National Movement and the Left Movement in Colonial and Post-colonial Andhra

“Nationalist movements usually try to show the nation, actually *a product of a conjuncture of modernity*, to be a community which was lost—to be regained”¹⁸⁴

Nationalism is one of the most important modern ideologies and has immensely divergent trajectories in different parts of the world.¹⁸⁵ Scholarship on the phenomena of nationalisms in South Asia is expanding day by day and is delegitimizing existing certitudes and doxas in the field. Sudipta Kaviraj argues that Western political theory cannot explain the nature of nationalism in the colonial world. Further, it functions as an obstacle in understanding the phenomena of nationalism in the colonial world.¹⁸⁶ In the same vein, in his recent work on the formation of Pakistan, Faisal Devji argues that the nature of Muslim nationalism cannot be explained in terms of “the legitimising vocabulary of blood and soil, history and geography”,¹⁸⁷ which is deemed to be the defining feature of nationalism in Europe in the nineteenth century. In addition, Devji questions the understanding that the demand for Pakistan emerged mainly as a response to counter the dominance of the Indian National Congress. Devji argues that the belief that Muhammad Ali Jinnah used the demand for Pakistan as a bargaining counter in his engagement with the Indian National Congress does not explain the nature of Muslim nationalism that resulted in the formation of Pakistan. He argues that both Israel and Pakistan have similar ideological bases and proposes that “the

¹⁸⁴ Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010), 189 (emphasis added).

¹⁸⁵ See John Breuilly, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁸⁶ Sudipta Kaviraj, “Nationalism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Politics in India*, ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), 317.

¹⁸⁷ Faisal Devji, “Young Fogeys: The Anachronism of New Scholarship on Pakistan”. *The Wire*. 4 October 2015. Accessed on 1-2-2016 . <https://thewire.in/books/young-fogeys-the-anachronism-of-new-scholarship-on-pakistan>.

religious nationalisms that gave rise to Pakistan and Israel, took shape in an international arena and cannot be studied as part of regional histories alone”.¹⁸⁸

Sudipta Kaviraj interrogates the assumption of the existence of a nation even before the emergence of nationalism, and argues that a nation is essentially the product of nationalism. In addition, he argues that the retrospective construction of a unitary history of Indian nationalism is spectacularly ideological and extremely problematic in nature as it glosses over the fact that Indian nationalism is imbued with various possibilities and contingencies.

Kaviraj points to the fact that Indian nationalism created “a *sanctioned, official history* of itself”.¹⁸⁹ He enunciates the need to interrogate the narrative of this history in order to throw light on the different strands of Indian nationalism. However, nationalism wants to give a decent history to it. According to Harry Harootunian, “[M]ost history is really driven by the nation-state and that far-from envisaging a history free or rescued from the nation, most history writing ends up reinforcing it”.¹⁹⁰ This theoretical formulation alerts us to the fact that historiography and nationalism thrive on each other.

In recent times, the historical scholarship of modern South Asia is moving toward questioning the official history of nationalism. In this endeavour, Subaltern Studies has played a significant role, as it criticizes the official history of Indian nationalism. Further, it criticizes all the three dominant historiographies—Cambridge/imperial, nationalist, and Marxist—for their elitist bias and attempts to write the history of Indian nationalism from the perspective of the “subalterns”.¹⁹¹ In its first phase, Subaltern Studies focused on tribal and

¹⁸⁸ Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 16.

¹⁸⁹ Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India*, 170 (emphasis added).

¹⁹⁰ Harry Harootunian, *Uneven Moments: Reflections on Japan's Modern History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 177.

¹⁹¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Note Books of Antonio Gramsci* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1996), 54–55.

peasant insurgencies and workers' movements that had not been studied earlier in a very detailed manner. In the second phase, it increasingly focused on community consciousness instead of class. Sumit Sarkar characterizes this phase as the "decline of the subaltern in *Subaltern Studies*".¹⁹² In this phase, Subaltern Studies took a U-turn from its initial positions. With regards to this shift, Sarkar says:

A project that had started with a trenchant attack on elite nationalist historiography had now chosen as its hero the principal iconic figure of official Indian nationalism, and its most influential text after *Elementary Aspects* was built entirely around the (partial) study of just three *indisputably elite figures*, Bankimchandra, Gandhi, and Nehru.¹⁹³

Sarkar attributes this shift to Subaltern Studies' increasing fascination with postmodern theories and the consequent negligence of the formation of the class subject. This shift in the focus of Subaltern Studies led to their ignoring of mass movements such as the workers' movements and the peasant movements against the feudal system under the leadership of the Communist Party of India. Moreover, the historiography of Indian nationalism transformed itself into the historiography of the Indian National Congress. All critics of the Indian National Congress were marginalized and relegated to the shadows. Shalini Sarma writes on this phenomena that "historians across the political spectrum have followed the same logic as the Indian National Congress and confined the Communists and Socialists to the periphery of this period's history".¹⁹⁴ Against the backdrop of the above discussion on the historiography of nationalism in modern South Asia, I turn to a discussion of political movements in colonial and post-colonial Andhra during the 1940s and the 1950s.

¹⁹² Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 82.

¹⁹³ Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, 92 (emphasis added).

¹⁹⁴ Shalini Sharma, "'Yeh Azaadi Jhooti Hai!': The Shaping Of the Opposition in the First Year of the Congress Raj", *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 05 (September 2014): 1360.

2.1.1 Anti-Zamindari Movements in Colonial Andhra during the 1920s and the 1930s

The social formation of colonial Andhra consisted of a number of zamindaris at the turn of the twentieth century. These zamindaris used to play a significant role in the social and cultural life of that time. During the 1930s, the Andhra Provincial Zameen Ryots' Association (APZRA) raised its voice and fought against the economic appropriation and feudal exploitation of the zamindars. In this process, the APZRA took some innovative initiatives to educate the peasants. For instance, it conducted schools to educate peasants in modern ideologies like Capitalism, Fascism, Marxism, Socialism, and others. The fight against zamindars got the support of nationalist leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru attended the anti-zamindar meeting organized by the APZRA at Venkatagiri and spoke against the domination and exploitation by the zamindars. He emphasized the importance of this kind of organization in the fight against the zamindars. Although the APZRA spoke about the rights of the bonded labourers and small tenants, it primarily represented the interests of the rich peasants. The Government of India Act, 1935, was another factor that influenced local politics during the 1930s. However, David Washbrook's comments on this act of the colonial government may be instructive here. According to him, this act did not want to change the existing power relations in colonial India. It wanted to extend the representation to new groups of people.¹⁹⁵ However, the Government of India Act functioned as an impetus for the mobilization of the people during the 1930s.

During the 1930s, colonial Andhra also witnessed the mass movements of agricultural workers, poor tenants, and industrial labourers under the leadership of the Socialists and the Communists. The industrial labourers' protests at the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company at Chirala faced the severe repression of the Congress Government in February

¹⁹⁵ David Washbrook, "The Rhetoric of Democracy and Development in Late Colonial India," in *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*, ed. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 37.

1938. Here, industrial labourers were protesting for the recognition of their labour union. In the measures taken to suppress the protest, three workers died in police firing. In another instance, one labourer was shot dead in the police firing at the Chittivalasa Jute Mills. In this case, the labourers were protesting against the retrenchment as suggested by the Indian Jute Mills Association.

In both of these instances, representatives of the government and the Congress party, such as Rajagopalachary, supported the measures taken by the government. In turn, they blamed the labourers for creating the unrest. The discomfort expressed at the activism of the industrial labourers by the representatives of the Congress party was also reflected in the report of the government. The report stated that the Communists were “trying to foment trouble among various labourers”.¹⁹⁶ During the 1940s, too, colonial Andhra witnessed workers’ and peasants’ movements under the leadership of the Socialists and the Communists. The rivalry between the Congress party and the Communists took a new turn during the elections of 1955. The entire Telugu world was virtually divided on ideological lines. The Progressive Writers’ Association faced brutal repression at the hands of the police.

2.2 Marxism and Literature

We have seen how the Left movement engaged with the national movement. This part of the chapter elaborates on how Marxism as a philosophical and political project engages with literature in general and the genre of the novel in particular. Recently, Marx has been accused of a Eurocentric bias by postcolonial scholars. This section will discuss the validity of the claims of postcolonial scholars apropos Marxism in detail. Karl Marx (1818–1883) was the founding figure of a new intellectual tradition named Marxism and was recognized as one of

¹⁹⁶ A. Satyanarayana, *Society, Economy and Polity in Modern Andhra* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2007), 190.

the most influential philosophers and social theorists of the twentieth century. Etienne Balibar argues that the ideas elaborated by Marx have great contemporary relevance too.¹⁹⁷

Marx was greatly interested in a wide range of literature such as ancient Greek plays, Shakespeare's plays, French novels, and others, and extensively used themes and tropes from them in his philosophical and political works. Although he had not written any full-length treatise elaborating the principles of studying literature, he made very pertinent theoretical formulations on the connection between different art forms and their contexts at different points in his writings. He argues:

It is recognized that where ... the epic, for example ... is concerned, certain significant creations within the compass of art are possible only at *an early stage of artistic development*. If this is the case with regard to different branches of art within the sphere of the arts, it is not so remarkable that this should also be the case with regard to *the whole artistic realm and its relation to the general development of the society*.¹⁹⁸

In this brief passage, Marx argues that the epic as an art form could only develop in the early stages of art. However, he does not explain why this is the case. But from this hypothesis, he deducts a conclusion with remarkable speed, that is, regarding the connection between the forms of art and the particular stage of society. Marx's formulation is also very intriguing, and his understanding of art is guided by his historicist principles.

Later Marxists more systematically developed the Marxist conception of literature in several works. They included both activists such as Georg Lukács, Leon Trotsky, Antonio Gramsci and academics like Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton. Marxists such as Trotsky, Lukács, and others have extensively and systematically worked on the connection between

¹⁹⁷ Etienne Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx* (London: Verso, 2017), xi-xii.

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 464 (emphasis added).

the emergence and flourishing of particular art forms and their respective socio-historical contexts. Lukács is one of the most influential, prodigious, productive, and original Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century. His area of interest encompasses literary criticism, philosophy, and Marxism.

The contemporary Marxist critic Fredric Jameson characterizes Lukács's contribution to the study of literature as "the most developed corpus of Marxist literary analysis in our own time".¹⁹⁹ Lukács in *Soul and Form*²⁰⁰ engages with the ontological nature of literary forms in metaphysical terms. However, his most important and profoundly greatest work in the genre of literary criticism is *The Theory of the Novel*. This has been recognized as one of the most philosophical and complex books on the form of the novel. Scholars point out that the First World War had a great impact on him in making his ideological and political choices. It was written on the verge of the First World War. While meditating on the winning prospects of the various sides in the war, he confesses:

The immediate motive for writing was supplied by the outbreak of the First World War and the effect which its acclamation by the social-democratic parties had upon the European left.... the Central Powers would probably defeat Russia; this might lead to the downfall of Tsarism; I had no objection to that. There was also some probability that the West would defeat Germany; if this led to the downfall of the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs, I was once again in favour. But then the question arose: who was to save us from *Western civilisation*? (The prospect of final victory by the Germany of that time was to me nightmarish).²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 2012), 91.

²⁰⁰ Georg Lukács, *Soul and Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

²⁰¹ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature* (London: Merlin Press, 1988), 11 (emphasis added).

For present-day readers, this statement sounds quite intriguing and paradoxical. After the publication of *Orientalism*,²⁰² the idea of the West has become a very contentious issue and received great attention from a number of scholars. Having been born in Hungary, why was Lukács worried about “Western civilization”? What does it represent for him? Why was he deeply worried about that civilization? What were the defining qualities of that civilization? Are they different from that of the bourgeois? In Lukács’ understanding, is it the Western equivalent to the bourgeois? A prominent Lukácsian scholar, Richard Westerman²⁰³ throws light on these crucial and pertinent questions. He writes:

I have always taken Lukács’s statement regarding “Western civilization” to refer to the *rationalized capitalist system*. When he says “the West,” he’s referring to Britain and the US above all (and partly France)—the nations fighting against the Central Powers—Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empires of the time. As a Hungarian, Lukács might have been expected to support the Central Powers—obviously he didn’t support them, because they were autocratic monarchies. He acknowledges that it would be good for those monarchies to be overthrown.²⁰⁴

As the sub-title “A historic-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature” of the book suggests, Lukács analyses various forms of epic literature. He begins with the world of the Greek epics and argues that the world of the epic appears “like a home” for its residents. This is a world of certainty and fixed forms and without questions. He says that we are separated from the Greek world of epics by “the unbridgeable gulf”²⁰⁵. Further, he says that it is a “homogeneous world”.²⁰⁶ After having elaborated on the nature of the world of the epic, he defines the novel in the following manner: “The novel is the epic of an age in which the

²⁰² *Orientalism* is a very influential and ubiquitous text which defies disciplinary boundaries. Its author is Edward W. Said and it was published in 1978.

²⁰³ His recent work on the philosophy of Georg Lukács is *Lukacs’s Phenomenology of Capitalism: Reification Revalued*.

²⁰⁴ Personal communication. (emphasis added).

²⁰⁵ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 31.

²⁰⁶ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 32.

extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which *the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem*, yet which still thinks in terms of totality”.²⁰⁷

In contrast to the world of the epic, the world of the novel is organized around “the problematic individual’s journeying towards himself”.²⁰⁸ According to Lukács, this feature of the novel makes it a distinct genre from that of the epic. The problematic individual encounters the world as an alien force. As a result, a tension emerges between them, which drives the action and the novel’s movement. For Lukács, unlike in drama and other genres, the consciousness of time is another unique feature of the novel. The heroes of the epics do not experience the movement of time in a direct and existential manner. Lukács encapsulates, “[T]ime does not affect their inner changes; their age is assimilated in their characters, and Nestor is old just as Helen is beautiful or Agamemnon mighty”.²⁰⁹ In contrast, the “problematic individual” of the novel has to encounter the movement of time head on. The representation of “real time” is the unique feature of the novel as a genre.

Aijaz Ahmad is the most influential Marxist literary and cultural critic from South Asia in contemporary times. His work *In Theory* is recognized as one of the most significant and influential texts in recent times. At the very outset of this text, he enunciates his intention in the following manner: “This book is not offered as yet another contribution to literary theory as it is currently constituted, not as an extension of the discussions of colony and empire as they are at present conducted within branches of this theory”.²¹⁰ Among other things, *In Theory* interrogates the dominant ideological positions of post-colonial criticism and subjects them to damaging criticism. Ahmad argues that post-colonial criticism has dominated and eclipsed Marxist criticism in the recent decades.

²⁰⁷ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 56.

²⁰⁸ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 80.

²⁰⁹ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 121.

²¹⁰ Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.

Post-colonial criticism started its career with the publication of *Orientalism*. Ahmad engages with this canonical and ubiquitous text in great length and points to many methodological and ideological problems in it. One among them is that Said's highly eclectic method which draws on extremely divergent ideological sources to make his argument, which ultimately results in contradictory positions on the same issue. Said indiscriminately draws on both the humanist scholar Erich Auerbach and the anti-humanist Friedrich Nietzsche to make his argument. Similarly, Ahmad finds it very problematic to group together both the revolutionary Marxist intellectual Gramsci and the conservative intellectual Benda in the same class. He also criticizes Said for giving the discourse of Orientalism transhistorical proportions.

Said traces the genealogy of Marxian thought in the Eurocentric episteme. Later postcolonial thinkers such as Aamir R. Mufti subscribe to Said's position that Marx was an Orientalist thinker.²¹¹ While commenting on Marx's writings on the impact of British rule on India, Mufti believes that Marx could not overcome his Orientalist and Anglicist prejudices. Mufti argues:

But this struggle in Marx's India dispatches to get beyond the colonial debate does not always end in success. Some versions of the argument about Asiatic or Oriental "despotism" in fact represent an *amalgam* of Anglicist and Orientalist ideas in placing society in precolonial Asia outside the possibility of historical transformation.²¹²

Sudipta Kaviraj addresses the question of the problematic relation between postcolonial theory and Marx. Commenting on the most foundational figure of postcolonial theory, Kaviraj encapsulates that "Said himself gives us confusing signals, at times

²¹¹ See Aamir R. Mufti, *Forget English! Orientalism and World Literatures* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

²¹² Mufti, *Forget English*, 86 (emphasis in original).

dismissing Marx as *a common Orientalist*, at others declaring his own methodological debt to two writers—Gramsci and Foucault—whose thinking bears a strong connection to Marxism, though in quite different ways”.²¹³ In a very innovative reading of Marx’s work, Kaviraj demonstrates how Marx broke with the Eurocentric thought. His article attempts to answer the following important questions: How did Marx make a point of departure from Eurocentric thought in categorizing various cultures outside the West? Moreover, what were the consequences of this point of departure? How far was Marx successful in overcoming Eurocentric notions of other societies outside Europe? If he was successful, what methodological path did he traverse? How did Marx overcome the Eurocentric bias that was so prevalent among great European thinkers such as Hegel and J. S. Mill?

To answer these questions, Kaviraj explores the ways in which Marx expanded his conceptual apparatus to understand the nature of societies outside Europe and argues that Marx’s methodological emphasis on historicity allowed him to analyse different social forms outside Europe in their particularity. For instance, Marx categorized pre-modern modes of production in Asia as Asiatic Modes of Production, instead of calling it feudalism. Many Indian Marxists absent-mindedly used categories that were originally coined to explain the European social realities to explain different kind of social phenomena in the Indian context. For instance, they used the category of feudalism to explain the pre-colonial structures of India. They essentially borrowed categories directly from their study of European feudalism. However, Indian Marxists such as D. D. Kosambi attempted to explain the modes of production in pre-modern India by articulating a “novel distinction between feudalism from above and from below”.²¹⁴ Kosambi also criticized Marx for assuming that village communities in India were in existence from immemorial times and demonstrated that they came into existence at a particular moment in a particular socio-historical context. Kaviraj

²¹³ Sudipta Kaviraj, “Marx and Postcolonial Thinking”, *Constellations* 25, no. 1 (2018): 3 (emphasis added).

²¹⁴ Kaviraj, “Marx and Postcolonial Thinking”, 10.

argues that Marx might look like a common Orientalist at certain points, but one could excavate the methodological moves in his works that essentially moved beyond the Orientalist framework.

We have earlier seen that both Marx and Lukács are deeply concerned with the problem of the connection between particular literary genres and specific socio-historical contexts. Similarly, Jameson makes a theoretical formulation regarding the connection between the forms of the texts and socio-historical contexts. His oeuvre is devoted to interpreting the connection between different kinds of narratives and socio-historical contexts. He argues that while the texts, which are produced in the first world, become part of postmodern culture, all texts, which are produced in the third world, take the form of national allegories.²¹⁵ This theoretical formulation has created many debates among scholars.

Ahmad offers an elaborate critique of Jameson's formulation and questions the rationality behind the division of the globe into three zones. He finds it particularly problematic to define the third world in terms of "its experience of colonialism and imperialism".²¹⁶ Jameson's formulation does not take cognizance of the presence and mediation of capitalism in countries like India. Further, Ahmad characterizes the nature of capitalism in India as "a very miserable kind of capitalism"²¹⁷ as half of its population lives in very degradable conditions. In contrast to Jameson, Ahmad argues that all of us live in a single world since societies both in advanced capitalist countries like America and backward countries like India are constituted by "the division of classes".²¹⁸ Ahmad argues that Jameson's formulation is unproductive as the production of literary texts is crucially determined by multiple factors.

²¹⁵ Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text*, 15, Autumn (1986): 69.

²¹⁶ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 98.

²¹⁷ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 100.

²¹⁸ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 103.

Ahmad points to the cultural effects of the mediation of capitalism in India. It includes the division of the public from the private, individualization, and the emergence of alienated subjects and others. He argues that texts produced for the literary market reflect all these aspects to a certain extent. Furthermore, can these literary texts be asked the same kind of questions as one would ask the literary texts produced in the advanced capitalist countries like England and The United States of America?

Ahmad addresses the immensely problematic nature of the characterization of an author like Salman Rushdie as representative of the “Third World” and his novels as representative texts of the “Third World”. He elaborates on the politics of canon formation of the Euro-American academy and the willing complicity of the intellectuals from recently decolonized countries like India in the process. Ahmad situates Rushdie’s literary imagination in the “contemporary (post)modernist literary imagination”²¹⁹ and focuses on some very problematic aspects of *Shame*, written by Rushdie.

Ahmad criticizes the misogynistic representation of women in *Shame*, which has completely escaped the attention of other critics who have appreciated and characterized it as the representative text of the Third World. In *Shame*, the representation of women either takes the form of idealization or misogyny. He points to the fact that there is no representation of people from the oppressed strata and that most of the women characters in *Shame* are portrayed either as sexual maniacs or mentally unsound. Ahmad grounds this demeaning portrayal of women and equating the ruling class of a country with the country itself in “the general structure of Rushdie’s *imaginative sympathies*”.²²⁰

Ahmad points to the fact that the demeaning portrayal of women is quite prevalent in modernist writing. For this, he gives the example of the famous modernist poet, T. S. Eliot,

²¹⁹ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 128.

²²⁰ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 152 (emphasis added).

and argues that Rushdie draws his narrative techniques both from Indian epics and European modernist texts. Rushdie's ubiquitous emphasis on "Third World" nations like India and Pakistan in his novels, Ahmad argues, has resulted in the "obscuring of his ideological moorings in the High Culture of the modern metropolitan bourgeoisie as well as the suppression of a whole range of questions which have little to do with the 'the Nation' or 'the Third World'".²²¹

There are, however, some highly problematic positions of Aijaz Ahmad that need to be pointed out. While commenting on the politics of the procedure of canon-formation of Third-World Literature and the dominance of English in postcolonial India, he writes, "Really productive kinds of bilinguality are *probably* on the decline, and English is now in the process of emerging as a major language for fiction-writing by the *greatly talented*".²²² This is a problematic position to take on this issue. Of course, there is ambiguity in Ahmad's articulation of his position. Contrary to Ahmad's observation, many Telugu intellectuals and creative writers are bilingual. As Indian languages have witnessed, some of the greatest writers such as Ravi Sastri (1922–1993), Mahasweta Devi (1926–2016), and V. Chandrasekhararao (1959–2017) in postcolonial India, it is risible to assume that "greatly talented" are choosing to write in English. This chapter argues that this is a very problematic, unverified, and biased position on this issue at various levels. It implies that less-talented people choose to write in other Indian languages.

2.3 The Progressive Writers' Association's Views on Literature and its Initiatives

The Progressive Writers' Movement is the most significant and influential movement that has had its beginnings in colonial South Asia. It is also the first literary-cultural movement with a

²²¹ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 127.

²²² Ahmad, *In Theory*, 73 (emphasis added).

pan-South Asian influence and has widely different trajectories in different languages. Its contribution to the fashioning of literary discourse and tastes is immense. The most influential, iconic, and talented writers are associated with this movement. Some of the literary figures belonging to this movement have gained immense popularity among ordinary people. The influence of this movement is not merely restricted to the domain of literature; it expanded to the domain of popular culture too. Some of the literary figures associated with this movement emerged as popular lyricists and scriptwriters for movies.

This organization was started as an initiative of young Urdu writers. The first conference of the All India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA) was organized in Lucknow on 10 April 1936 and was addressed by the famous Urdu-Hindi fiction writer, Premchand. After seven years, the first conference of the Andhra Progressive Writers' Association took place on 13 and 14 February, 1943 at Tenali.

Although the PWA is the most influential literary association in South Asia, it has received scant scholarly attention. Most of the scholarly studies on this movement are restricted to the Urdu-Hindi literary cultures. Further, this literary movement has received adverse criticism from scholars such as Priya Joshi and Aamir Mufti. According to Priya Joshi, the Progressive literary movement had a negative impact in its latter phases. Joshi writes:

The reach of this movement was substantial, so much so that the progressive tendencies it mandated in the 1930s—the insistence on a language the masses understood—persisted in the Indian novel in English for so long that another jolt would be needed to liberate Indian letters from what had become the often *stultifying literary decades* of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.²²³

²²³ Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia, 2002), 210.

Joshi's comments need some attention as she makes some intriguing and problematic suggestions in her observations. In the above-mentioned quote, Joshi unwittingly equates the "Indian novel in English" with "Indian letters". This generalization is very problematic as it equates Indian English with Indian letters itself. The crucial question is whether the impact of the Progressive Writers' movement was equally and uniformly stultifying on different languages in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. According to Mufti, the ideology of the Progressive movement is not much different from that of the official Indian nationalism represented by the Indian National Congress.²²⁴ Mufti's views on the Progressive Writers' Association will be discussed in the next chapter.

The first Andhra Progressive Writers' conference took place on 13 and 14 February 1943 in Tenali. The popular Telugu writer, Tapi Dharma Rao, presided over the inaugural session of the conference. Prominent literary figures of that time were associated with this movement. The Progressive literary movement was the first major pan-Indian literary movement.²²⁵ The Andhra Progressive Writers' Association (APWA) initiated some very innovative programmes to fashion literary discourse in colonial and post-colonial Andhra. The most important initiative was the conducting of literary schools. The APWA conducted the first literary school at Pedapudi near Tenali. Approximately 40 members attended the literary school. The APWA conducted the historic "Andhra Sahitya Pathasala" (Andhra Literary School) from 11 May 1946 to 10 June 1946. This way of conducting a literary school was a unique phenomenon in colonial India. Major literary figures such as Srirangam Srinivasa Rao (Sri Sri), Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao, Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma,

²²⁴ Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 183.

²²⁵ Talat Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Writers' Movement in South Asia, 1932-56* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009); Priyamvada Gopal, *Literary Radicalism: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2005); Rakhshanda Jalil, *Liking Progress, Loving Change: A Literary History of the Progressive Writers' Movement in Urdu* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ania Loomba, *Revolutionary Desires: Women, Communism, and Feminism in India* (London: Routledge, 2019); and Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony* are some important scholarly studies on this phenomena.

Nidadavolu Venkata Rao, and others taught various aspects and trends of Indian and Western literature at this school.

Natarajan attended *the* above-mentioned literary school. He was born in the Tamil speaking region of the Madras presidency. When he was 14 years old, he and his father migrated to Tenali for livelihood during the winter of 1937. Tenali is a small town in the Telugu speaking region of the Madras presidency. By that time, he did not know Telugu at all. As he had to work at his brother-in-law's hotel for his survival, he started learning Telugu in order to communicate with the other workers and customers. Over the years, Natarajan was in various professions related to the hotel. Although he had the habit of reading Tamil literature and translations in Tamil, he would not get Tamil books at Tenali. He did not have any chance of going to school as he had to work at the hotel throughout the day. At this point in time, Tenali was abuzz with literary-cultural activity. Organizing a literary school was a unique phenomenon during this time. It was a unique opportunity for a hotel worker like Natarajan to interact with great literary figures such as Srirangam Srinivasarao. Just a few weeks before his death, he attended the fifth state conference of the Progressive Writers' Association in Vijayawada, which happened on 30 and 31 July 1955. At this conference, he introduced the following resolutions:

It is condemnable that if either magazines or publishers do not give sufficient remuneration to writers even after publishing their works. Every magazine and publisher should publicly announce the details of payment to writers. If writers inform us that they are deceived by any magazine and publisher, Progressive Writers' Association will protest against it.²²⁶

However, the APWA faced various obstacles. We have seen above that the Communist Party fought for the rights of labourers and peasants. As a result, the Communist

²²⁶ S. Natarajan, "Rachaitalku Pratipalam Evvakapovato Garhyam" (Not giving remuneration to writers is condemnable) Abudaya: *Arasam Edupadula Prastanam* (Progress: Seventy Years Journey of the PWA), ed. Saratchandra Jyothisri et al. (Hyderabad: Visalandhra Publishing House, 2013), 33.

Party had to face the anger of the government led by the Indian National Congress. Along with the Communist Party, all the organizations affiliated with it faced repression. V. Ramakrishna writes:

The glorious epoch of the cultural revival in Andhra—both literary and theatre—received a rude shock in 1948 when, along with the Communist Party, all its front organisations, including IPTA, were banned and large scale repression was unleashed. The offices were raided and ransacked, artists arrested and some activists among them killed, printing presses and libraries were destroyed with the result that the whole movement got paralysed temporarily.²²⁷

²²⁷ V. Ramakrishna, “Literary and Theatre Movement in Colonial Andhra: Struggle for Left Ideological Legitimacy”, *Social Scientist* 21, no. 1 and 2 (1993): 79.

Chapter 3

The “Progressive Writers’ Movement and the Novel-Form”

3.1: Introduction

Since the publication of *Imagined Communities*,²²⁸ the novel’s role in imagining and fashioning the nation has attracted the attention of scholars. In the context of South Asia, the connection between these two artefacts has been extensively and intensively studied.²²⁹ Authors such as Bankim Chandra (1838-94), Chandu Menon (1847-99), Govardhanram Tripathi (1805-1907), and others have been rigorously scrutinized for their nationalist moorings. Some of the novels like *Anandamath* have become immensely popular and have been translated into many Indian languages. Moreover, one song from *Anandamath* became immensely popular during the nationalist movement. The Gujarati novelist Kanhaiyalal Munshi (1887–1971) not only actively participated in the nationalist movement but also became a part of the government in independent India. His novels also influenced contemporary ultra-Hindu nationalists such as L. K. Advani, Narendra Modi.²³⁰ Moreover, some of the texts by these authors were canonized in the post-colonial nation-state. However, the nationalist movement faced severe criticism from various quarters such as the Dalits, socialists, communists, and others. The Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham is affiliated with the

²²⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition (London: Verso, 2006) is the path-breaking and influential study of the phenomena of nationalism, first published in 1983.

²²⁹ M. T. Ansari, *Islam and Nationalism in India: South Indian Contexts* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Meera Ashar, “Show or Tell? Instruction and Representation in Govardhanram’s *Saraswatichandra*,” *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 03 (2016): 1019–49; Chandrima Chakraborty, *Masculinity, Asceticism, Hinduism: Past and Present Imaginings of India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2011); Partha Chatterjee, “The Nation in Heterogeneous Time,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 38, no. 4 (2001): 399–418; Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995); Shivarama Padikkal, “Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of the Novel in India,” in *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, ed. Tejaswini Niranjana et al. (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1993): 220-241; Shveta Vyas Pare, “Writing Fiction, Living History: Kanhaiyalal Munshi’s Historical Trilogy,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 48, no. 03 (2014): 596–616.

²³⁰ Vyas Pare, “Writing Fiction, Living History,” 600-601.

Left ideology. Novels by authors, who were affiliated with it, have drawn little attention from scholars and literary historians. The ubiquitous visibility of nationalist authors is contrasted by the conspicuous invisibility of authors who took critical and contrarian stances to the official nationalist movement and ideology. Although novels written by authors affiliated with Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham received great appreciation from *the* reading public of that time and subsequently, the novels have received little attention from scholars. This chapter will try to address this critical bias towards the nationalist novel.

To achieve this aim, this chapter will try to critically understand *Manchi...-Chedu...* (1954) by Natarajan which was serialized in *the* Andhra Patrika (The Andhra Magazine). When it was originally serialized, it exerted great excitement and received appreciation from the reading public of that time. We have earlier seen that Natarajan was a member of *the* Andhra Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham and attended the historic “Andhra Sahitya Pathasala” (Andhra Literary School), from 11 May 1946 to 10 June 1946, conducted by it.

This chapter will briefly discuss the important tropes and ideologies of the nationalist novel. The key objective of this chapter is to critically understand the novel-form as one of the major cultural-forms that was shaped in the hands of a writer with affiliations to the Leftist Literary Movement.

3.2: Novel, Time, and Nation: The Beginning

(Finally), it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.²³¹

Imagined Communities has widely been recognized as the most provocative and important scholarly study on the phenomena of nationalism. It brought about a Copernican shift in the

²³¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 7 (emphasis in original).

way the phenomena of nationalism was being understood and studied. Having historicized the development of the print-forms and their impact on the languages of medieval Europe, it argues that the new status acquired by the vernaculars during the Renaissance and print-capitalism as the crucial factors that contributed to imagining the nation-form. Most importantly, it emphasizes the replacement of cosmological time that is “simultaneity-along-time”²³² with a new kind of temporality that is “transverse, cross-time”²³³ as the most important determining a priori condition for imagining the nation. Borrowing Walter Benjamin’s formulation, Benedict Anderson characterizes it as “homogeneous, empty time”.²³⁴ Furthermore, he characterizes it as the temporality of the “meanwhile”.²³⁵ The temporality of the “meanwhile” is bereft of any kind of religious symbolism or significance and is focused entirely on the present moment. In other words, it is the temporality of the nation.

Anderson argues,

The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.²³⁶

While the novel and newspapers mediate the experiences of a new kind of temporality amongst the huge reading publics, the calendar and the clock represent and measure it respectively. As a result, these cultural forms of print capitalism “conjure” a feeling that

²³² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

²³³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

²³⁴ Benjamin uses “homogeneous empty time” as a metaphor to describe the “Social Democratic notion of historical progress, which only recognizes an infinite series of empty, quantitative transitions, the homogeneous time of the always-the-same...”; Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin, an Aesthetic of Redemption* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 49.

²³⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

²³⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 26 (emphasis added).

“societies” and the “sociological organism” operate in a “homogeneous, empty time”.²³⁷ He argues that this new kind of temporality focuses on the “meanwhile”. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned interesting and intriguing formulations give an impression that the relation between *the* sociological organism and the new kind of temporality is merely external. The “sociological organism” merely moves through “homogeneous, empty time”.²³⁸ He does not explain what constitutes this temporality, how it came into existence, and what is the structure of this temporality. But, he points towards the need to study these issues.²³⁹ Since then, not only the structure of this temporality but also its relation to the nation-form and the novel-form has drawn the attention of scholars.²⁴⁰ Earlier we have seen that the question of the representation of temporality is crucial for the novel as a form.

Partha Chatterjee makes intriguing comments on the implications of “homogeneous, empty time”. For him, this temporality is merely imaginary. People can imagine in this kind of time but cannot live in this time as it does not exist in any real space. He characterizes it as “the utopian time of capital”.²⁴¹ In other words, capital intends to bring this kind of time into existence but does not manage to do it. Furthermore, he characterizes it as the “time of capital”.²⁴² Contrary to Chatterjee, Osborne argues that the emergence of the new kind of temporality intimately connected with the emergence of capitalism.²⁴³ Moreover, the new kind of temporality is not only crucial for imagining the nation-form but also is essential in

²³⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 26.

²³⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 26.

²³⁹ “Our own conception of simultaneity has been a long time in the making, and its emergence is certainly connected, in ways that have yet to be well studied, with the development of the secular sciences”; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

²⁴⁰ Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1994).

²⁴¹ Partha Chatterjee, *Lineages of Political Society* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011), 135 (emphasis added).

²⁴² Chatterjee, *Lineages of Political Society*, 134.

²⁴³ “With capitalism came the homogenization of labour-time: the time of abstract labour (money, the universal equivalent), the time of the clock.” Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 34.

understanding the nature of modernity.²⁴⁴ Drawing on the work of Koselleck,²⁴⁵ Habermas points to the fact that the new time-consciousness is the central element of modernity.²⁴⁶

Homi K. Bhabha engages with the implications of Anderson's formulation of the intimate connection among nationalism, temporality, and the novel-form in the formation of modern individuals at great length. He argues that this new temporality itself produces "symbolic structure of the nation as 'imagined community'",²⁴⁷ which in turn functions as the "the plot of a realist novel".²⁴⁸ Bhabha explains it as "the differential time of the arbitrary sign".²⁴⁹ The idea of arbitrary sign undercuts the understanding that language has "privileged access to ontological truth".²⁵⁰ Furthermore, he asserts that the novelistic narratives interpellate this new temporality among citizens, and thereby, thereafter, turn them into national subjects. However, Bhabha's primary concern is "to write of the *western nation* as an obscure and ubiquitous form of living the locality of culture".²⁵¹ It implies that the identity of the Western nation is structured by both ubiquity and obscurity. Bhabha's project is to narrate the different ways and means through which an imperial and older nation like Britain negotiates and orchestrates its identity for its citizens and immigrants through different strategies. Drawing on his own experience as an immigrant and others in the former imperial country, that is, England, he makes pertinent observations on the experience of the nation for

²⁴⁴ Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*; Osborne, *The Politics of Time*.

²⁴⁵ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: on the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

²⁴⁶ Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 1-22.

²⁴⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 226.

²⁴⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 226.

²⁴⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation", in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 308.

²⁵⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 36.

²⁵¹ Bhabha, "DissemiNation", 292 (emphasis added).

its citizens and immigrants. However, he confesses that he belongs to the class of “an urban bourgeois elite”²⁵² in his own country, that is, in India.

We have earlier seen that Natarajan and the majority of his co-workers experienced the actuality of everyday in the form of long and tedious working hours.²⁵³ Unlike Bhabha, Natarajan was a migrant hotel worker in his own country. He had had to work ten to twelve hours for his bare survival. His location was a small town, that is, Tenali, in colonial and post-colonial Andhra. Then, how did he experience the “meanwhile” temporality of the nation? If that “meanwhile” was ten to twelve hours of hard, tedious, and exhausting labour for survival, how would he look at his life? What would be his aspirations? What would he think about the newly acquired independence if that independence did not bring any relief from these long working hours? How was this experience of temporality different from that of “exiles and émigrés and refugees”²⁵⁴ that Bhabha so emphatically articulates in his article? Why did he want to become a fiction writer? Why did he want to write novels in particular? I argue that the insights of the above-mentioned scholars cannot explain the excruciating experience of time, in the form of long strenuous hours of labour, for S. Natarajan and his co-workers. Here, it would be useful to bring up Walter Benjamin’s formulations on the connection between time and modernity as they were pertinent in understanding Natarajan’s traumatic experience of time. Benjamin writes:

Modernity, the time of hell. The punishments of hell are always the newest thing going in this domain. What is at issue is not that “the same thing happens over and over” (much less is it a question here of eternal return), but rather that the face of the world, the colossal head, precisely in what is newest never alters—that this “newest” remains, in every respect, the

²⁵² Homi Bhabha, “Bombay,” in *The Novel: Forms and Themes* (Volume-2), ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 721.

²⁵³ See foot note-73 of Chapter-1.

²⁵⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, “DissemiNation”, 291.

same. This constitutes the eternity of hell and the sadist's delight in innovation. To determine the totality of traits which this "modernity" is to represent hell.²⁵⁵

Most intriguingly, Benjamin characterizes modernity in terms of the time of hell. Hell is characterized by a certain monotony and tedium. Even new developments cannot change the experience for any better. These lines by Benjamin may be useful in understanding the painful experience of time as it is experienced by individuals like Natarajan and his co-workers. In other words, "the working day"²⁵⁶ structures their experience of *the* everyday. In this context, it would be a great fallacy to characterize "homogeneous, empty time" or clock-time as merely imaginary in nature and as not having any effects on their lives. One may also bring in Karl Marx's ideas on this issue into discussion as he is the most important intellectual and social theorist who engaged with this issue. According to Harry Harootunian, "Marx's *Capital* is still the most detailed accounting of *capital's structure of abstract temporality*, presenting itself as a natural, ordinary time..."²⁵⁷ Furthermore, Marx elaborately discusses workers' struggle against the "capital's drive towards a *boundless and ruthless extension of the working day*"²⁵⁸ and their consequent success in getting "the legally limited working day"²⁵⁹ in England in volume one of *Capital*.

While Chatterjee highlights the teleological and historicist dimensions of "homogeneous, empty time," Homi Bhabha points to cultural effects of this temporality. Although these scholars are aware of the fact that the emergence of "homogeneous, empty time" is essentially connected with the capitalist modernity, their analytical standpoint has certain limitations which does not allow *the* recognition of the most important qualitative change in the quality and experience of time that becomes part and parcel of the capitalist

²⁵⁵ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 842 (emphasis added).

²⁵⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Volume-1) (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 340.

²⁵⁷ Harry Harootunian, *Marx after Marx: History and Time in the Expansion of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 25 (emphasis added).

²⁵⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 411 (emphasis added).

²⁵⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 416.

modernity. Moreover, their theoretical insights cannot explain the excruciatingly painful experience of temporality in the form of long working hours by workers like Natarajan. In this context, it is pertinent to turn to other sets of thinkers who can explain this temporal dimension of the capitalist modernity. The determining role of this new kind of temporality in constituting possibilities for human subjects in capitalist modernity has been emphasized by scholars such as George Lukacs, Moishe Postone, and others. Lukacs writes,

(Thus) time sheds its *qualitative, variable flowing nature*; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable ‘things’ (the reified, mechanically objectified “performance” of the worker, wholly separated from his total human personality) in short, it becomes space.²⁶⁰

In *Time, Labor and Social Domination*, Moishe Postone interprets Marx’s *Capital* and elaborates on the forms that labour and time take with the emergence of capitalist modernity.²⁶¹ Postone argues that the main objective of *Capital* is to make “a critique of capitalism from the standpoint of labor”²⁶² and “the *tyranny of time* in capitalist society is a central dimension of the Marxian categorical analysis”.²⁶³ Marx argues that while different kind of labours produce different kinds of use-values, a form of “homogeneous labour”²⁶⁴ produces the value of the commodities. Each commodity consists of both a concrete or a specific kind of labour and a “homogeneous labour”. While different kinds of labour are categorized as concrete labour, “homogeneous labour” is categorized as abstract labour by Postone. The quantity of abstract labour is measured in terms of abstract time. Furthermore,

²⁶⁰ George Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2016), 90 (emphasis added).

²⁶¹ Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

²⁶² Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Domination*, 29.

²⁶³ Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Domination*, 214 (emphasis added).

²⁶⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 134.

the value of a commodity is determined by “socially necessary labour time”²⁶⁵ to produce it. The “socially necessary labour time”²⁶⁶ to produce a particular commodity is influenced by factors such as the individual skills of labourers and technological innovations. As a result, the labourer loses control over the process of production. Furthermore, the nature and condition of the labour process are entirely determined by capital.

The path-breaking study by Postone makes it clear that the impact of the time of capital is pervasive on modern social formations. He argues that the temporality constituted by capital has a profound impact on social relations as wealth in a capitalist social formation is measured by abstract time. Both value and abstract time are constituted by labour. It implies that abstract time is not merely “homogeneous, empty time” which is measured by a clock, but it is retrospectively produced in the workplace. In this context, we cannot equate “homogeneous, empty time” with abstract time. Contrary to this commonsensical understanding, abstract time is constituted by labour. At the end of the chapter titled “Abstract Time”,²⁶⁷ Postone argues that the modern clock itself is invented to address the needs of capitalism. Furthermore, Postone argues that capital constitutes two kinds of time: Abstract time, which is measured by a clock, and concrete time, which is constituted by capital but cannot be measured by clock-time. The paradoxical nature of the time is constituted by capital. These scholars’ insights on the nature of temporality have great resonance in the context of Natarajan’s experience of long-working hours.

²⁶⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 129.

²⁶⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 129.

²⁶⁷ Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Domination*, 210-212.

3.3: Ideologies, Imaginaries, and Tropes of the Nationalist Novel

In this part of the chapter, I will discuss the dominant ideologies and tropes of the nationalist novel.²⁶⁸ The nationalist novel has drawn immense attention from scholars. Partha Chatterjee rather sceptically refers to the novel-form as “that celebrated artifice of *the nationalist imagination* in which the community is made to live and love”.²⁶⁹ According to him, the bilingual elite of colonial Bengal wanted to fashion a “modular literary form” in such a manner that they could be “modern and national, and yet recognizably different from the Western...”²⁷⁰ It implies that the bilingual elite of colonial Bengal wanted to fashion *the* novel-form which must be non-Western. Scholars such as Shivarama Padikkal²⁷¹ and Sudipta Kaviraj²⁷² have dealt with the relationship between the early novel-form and nationalist discourse at length. Regarding the intimate connection between novel-form and the nation-form, Padikkal argues: “If we take nationalism to be a discourse which constructs its own narrative, we can see how the novel is an inextricable part of this process.”²⁷³

Based on the reading of early Kannada novels, he argues that rationalism is the fundamental structuring principle of the early novels. These novels are primarily concerned with “progress” and posit women as their central character and object of reform.²⁷⁴ Most of the time, the woman’s character is idealized. Furthermore, he argues that upper-caste elites belonging to different regions of present-day Karnataka used the novel as a medium to

²⁶⁸ The nationalist novel primarily indicates a type of novel which consciously or unconsciously represents an incipient nationalist ideology.

²⁶⁹ Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8 (emphasis added).

²⁷⁰ Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments*, 8.

²⁷¹ Padikkal, “Inventing Modernity,” 220-241.

²⁷² Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*.

²⁷³ Padikkal, “Inventing Modernity,” 222.

²⁷⁴ Padikkal, “Inventing Modernity”

represent the aspirations of *the* nation. Kaviraj studies the fictional and non-fictional works of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the most prominent early novelist from colonial Bengal.²⁷⁵

Sudipta Kaviraj's *The Unhappy Consciousness* intends to throw light on the various narrative mechanisms and strategies through which "chauvinistic, pampered and self-indulgent group"²⁷⁶ of "Calcutta babus"²⁷⁷ construct the identity of Indians for themselves. Kaviraj argues that Bankim is traumatized by the fact that a greater civilization is subdued by colonialism and, therefore, subjects the rationality of various colonial institutions to damaging criticism. Furthermore, Bankim's critique of colonialism extends to a critique of modernity itself. He is ambivalent about how to receive colonial modernity which comes in the form of subjugation. Kaviraj characterizes Bankim's oeuvre, in response to colonial modernity in the form of colonialism à la Hegel, as "unhappy consciousness".²⁷⁸

Kaviraj argues that most of the women in Bankim's novels are spectacular in their beauty. Bankim, in his first novel written in Bengali, *Durgeshnandini*, describes one of the characters as "a miraculously beautiful woman".²⁷⁹ He argues that Bankim's novels are closer to traditional dramas than to modern novels and observes that Bankim uses traditional aesthetics to portray his characters by giving them a distinctly modern twist. Further, he argues that Bankim is drawn towards the Mahabharata rather than the Ramayana. The point of attraction in the Mahabharata is its liminal quality. In many of Bankim's novels, the men's world and the women's world are separate and distinct from each other. The alleged rationality of the men's world is ridiculed by Bankim through the discourse of women

²⁷⁵ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*

²⁷⁶ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*, 115.

²⁷⁷ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*, 115.

²⁷⁸ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*, 168.

²⁷⁹ Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *The Chieftain's Daughter Durgeshnandini* (Noida: Random House India, 2010), 7.

characters. Kaviraj argues: “One of the most significant features of this world, the way the world is, is what women do in this general scheme. . .”²⁸⁰

In recent times, the early nationalist novel has received renewed attention from the new scholarship. The new scholarship has thrown new light on the ideologies of the nationalist novel. M. T. Ansari argues *a la* Homi Bhabha that while imagining the nation, the nationalist novel creates its “others”. He demonstrates how the popular Malayali novel, *Indulekha*,²⁸¹ posits the Muslim as an Other.²⁸²

The discussion above shows that much critical labour has been expended in understanding and interpreting the nationalist novel. It also throws light on some of the important tropes and ubiquitous mechanisms of the nationalist novel and helps understand how a migrant hotel worker subjects the tropes of the nationalist novel to profound ideological critique.

3.4: A Reading of *Manchi...-Chedu...*

3.4.1: S. Natarajan : The Hotel Worker as a Novelist

S. Natarajan was born at Pudukkottai in May 1924. When he was two, he lost his mother. Due to the high rate of dowries in Chennai, two of Natarajan’s sisters were married off in distant Tenali. Due to poverty, he and his father came to Tenali for survival in the winter of 1937. At this time, he did not know Telugu at all. But, he had the habit of reading Tamil literature and translations in Tamil. He used to say to his friends that his favourite book was the Tamil translation of Alexander Duma’s *The Count of Mount Cristo*. He could not get Tamil books in Tenali. Moreover, he had to work at his brother-in-law’s hotel for his

²⁸⁰ Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness*, 18.

²⁸¹ O. Chandumenon, *Indulekha* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁸² M. T. Ansari, *Islam and Nationalism in India*, 139-145.

survival. To communicate with other workers, he had to learn Telugu. He could not dream of going to school as he had to work at the hotel throughout the day. He informally learnt Telugu at a street school.

He became a member of the Communist Party around this time. He attended the first literary school organized by the Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham in 1946. That same year, he wrote his first short story, “Prapanchaniki Jabbu Chesindi.”²⁸³ This story is ironic. He wrote several short stories under different pen-names. He died at the age of 31/32 in 1955. By the time of his death, he had published several short stories, sketches, three novels, and left behind three unfinished novels. They were published in various magazines like the *Andhra Patrika*, the *Telugu Swatantra* (The Telugu Independence), the *Abudaya* (The Progress), and others.

Manchi...-Chedu... was serialized from 7 April 1954 to 4 August 1954 in the *Andhra Patrika*. While it was first serialized, it created quite a stir and enchanted the readers. The editor of the magazine writes,

Through the letters from a good number of people asking about the name and place of the author and appreciating the novel, we can understand the reading public’s attachment and affection towards this novel. Author ‘Sarada’ lives in Tenali. His real name is S. Natarajan. Although he is a Tamilian and has to work in a hotel throughout the day, he has learnt Telugu and English through his own effort and has been writing in Telugu and getting the regard and affection from the Telugu reading public. For this, Sarada has to be congratulated.²⁸⁴

A reader of that time recollects the experience of reading the novel in the following manner,

Manchi...-Chedu... was serialized in *Andhra Patrika*. The writer’s name is Sarada. Who is this Sarada? Is she a woman-writer? Or is it the pen-name of someone? Though this question

²⁸³ Sarada, *Sarada Sahityam: Kathalu, Galphikalu, Lekhalu Letters* (Sarada’s Literature: Stories, Sketches, Letters), ed. Vallur Siva Prasad et al. (Guntur: Andhra Pradesh Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham, 2020), 21-22.

²⁸⁴ Editor, “Rachaita ‘Sarada,’” (Author Sarada) *Andhra Patrika*, 47, no. 47 (1954) (my translation).

haunted us, we were completely immersed in the content of the novel. After having read for four or five weeks, the serial created so much curiosity. We used to eagerly wait for the day, when the magazine comes to the market. Even before finishing, we came to a conclusion that *Telugu had a novel with a new trend and style*. Once finished, we had a feeling ‘what a good novel, we have read’²⁸⁵

3.4.2: *Manchi...-Chedu...* (1954): Good-Evil

Manchi and *chedu* are quite frequently used words in the Telugu language. They are idiomatically used in the sense that one *should* discriminate between the good and evil aspects before initiating any action or taking any decision. They can be roughly translated into English as “good” and “evil”. In one of his poems, the famous modern Telugu poet Gurajada Apparao (1861/62–1915) writes “if evaluate and determine and categorise people based on their good and evil qualities there are only two castes among human beings.”²⁸⁶ By keeping these commonly used words as the title, the author underplays the profundity and urgency with which the novel foregrounds the questions which have a great implication for the nation that had only recently come into existence. However, the title gives a deceptive feeling that one is going to read a moral fable. At one level, this novel addresses the plausibility of distinguishing between “good” and “evil” in a reified social world. On another level, it engages with the prominent tropes of the nationalist novel. Sarada skilfully interweaves a complex plot connecting these ostensibly different domains. My reading of *Manchi...-Chedu...* intends to establish the interconnection between the critique of the dominant tropes of the nationalist novel and the reified social relations.

Manchi...-Chedu... narrates the story of Padma who is the protagonist of the novel. It is important to note that in contrast to the nationalist novel, an ordinary woman is the

²⁸⁵ Bamidipati Jaganatha Rao, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, *Sakshi*, 5, (2012) (emphasis added) (my translation).

²⁸⁶ Gurajada Apparao, *Gurujadalu: Mahakavi Gurajada Apparao Samagra Rachanlu* (Complete Works of Great Poet Gurajada Apparao), (Hyderabad: Emesco, 2012), 57.

protagonist of the novel. In the Lukácsian sense, Padma is the “problematic individual”²⁸⁷ through which the author explores the problematic nature of the social world itself. The narration is very dynamic in nature. The narrative moves from one event to another in quick succession and that makes the novel very interesting and exciting to read. The narration pays great attention to the movement of time very diligently. It also pays attention to the features of the characters and surroundings with precise details. These aspects of the novel may be the reason that it created enthusiasm among its readers while it was being serialized. I will argue that this novel proposes a critique of the ideology²⁸⁸ of the nationalist novel. Mannheim argues that intellectuals represent particular social groups and their works represent interests and ideologies of those social groups.

3.4.3 The Domesticity and Desire of a Hindu Wife

The novel begins with the description of Bhaskararao’s arrival at Vijayawada on the Puri Passenger. Bhaskararao is 22 years old and studying in Madras. The author describes the hustle-bustle and ambience of the railway station in great detail. Throughout the novel, this railway station has its presence. He comes out of the railway station and walks towards Governor Peta and encounters his childhood friend Panduranga. Both of them go to a coffee hotel. There, through his friend, Bhaskararao comes to know that his father has married again. Initially, he cannot believe this. But he has to believe it as his friend shows him the wedding card from his father’s second marriage. His father’s marriage, in his absence, greatly shocks him. He cannot understand the reason behind his father’s decision to marry a second time suddenly and the reason for not informing him about it. After having come out of the initial shock, he enquires about his step-mother’s looks and her whereabouts. Panduranga feels uncomfortable describing the looks of a woman to her step-son and informs him that she

²⁸⁷ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 80.

²⁸⁸ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). I am using the conception of ideology in the way Karl Mannheim proposed it in his *Ideology and Utopia*.

looks fine and is from Bapatla Taluka. Bhaskararao thinks about his mother Seetamma and struggles to give a new woman a place beside his mother. He also reflects on how his father could have forgotten his mother even before it has been two years since her death. Then, Bhaskararao asks about the age of his step-mother. Panduranga informs him that she is around 20 years.

Badraiah is Bhaskararao's father. He is a farmer and was an agriculturist in his village, Nagailanka. Having been encouraged and guided by his friend Sudarshanam from the same village, he enters into business and starts enjoying profits. He also shifts to Vijayawada. Since his wife's death, Badraiah has been leading the life of an ascetic for two years. His widowed sister also lives with Badraiah's family. Sudarshanam encourages him to go for a second marriage. Initially, Badraiah resists the idea. But, Sudarshanam is persistent. Furthermore, he provides his example of having been married three times. At last, when Sudarshanam describes the beauty of the bride, Badraiah's desires wake up.

In arranging this match, Sudarshanam has his interests, which we come to know later. A distant relative, Venkataiah approaches Sudarshanam asking for help in getting his daughter educated; Sudarshanam discourages the idea of getting her educated at the age of 20 and suggests that he get her married off. Moreover, he gives the idea of marrying Padma off to his widowed friend, Badraiah. In return, Venkataiah would get two acres of land and she would get ornaments worth 6,000 rupees. Venkataiah feels happy and agrees to this as he has immense trouble in marrying off his fifth daughter. In this context, the Sarada criticizes the reformist rhetoric and shallowness of the younger generation.

Sarada writes:

Having entered the twentieth year, the fifth girl becomes a great burden to him. Even after having tried hard for five years, the unfortunate man has failed to get her married off. All of the youth might emphasize in their speeches that dowries were outdated, but, coming to the

practice, they remain merely as ideals. In front of rupee, ideals are equivalent to dust. Those *so-called idealist young men* (and) their parents did not at all agree to marry the fifth daughter of Mr. Venkataiah, without at least a bag full of money. Padma is beautiful, sings very well. She studied at the secondary school for some time. She can do all the household work very well. Everything is ok. Yet, of what use! Yet, as her father is a person without money, no young man is coming forward to marry her.²⁸⁹

Sudarshanam wants to use the predicament of his distant relative and attempts to arrange this match between his widowed friend and the daughter of the distant relative without much reflection. He intends to appear as a well-wisher to both his friend and the distant relative without any personal loss. While “idealist young men” do not come forward to marry a young woman without dowry, Sudarshanam does not find any problem in arranging the match between a very young woman and a much older person. Sarada writes: “Sudarshanam’s *discretion* decided the good and evil aspects of this issue at the moment as if measured in balance for weighing...”.²⁹⁰

Sudarshanam does not take much time to assess the good and *evil* aspects in arranging the match between Badraiah and Padma. The readers are told that Sudarshanam does not indulge in any action without considering his benefit. In arranging this marriage, he has different intentions, which we come to know about in the later parts of the novel. We realize that his ostensibly altruistic action is motivated by his selfish interests. One can say that his action is structured *a la* Max Weber by “instrumental rationality”.²⁹¹ Later, we come to know that Sudarshanam assumes that this marriage will help him in arranging the match between his daughter and Badraiah’s son. More specifically, I want to argue that Sudarshanam’s

²⁸⁹ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu... Sarada Rachanalu* (Sarada’s Works) (Vijayawada: Visalandhra Publishing House, 2015), 155-156 (emphasis added) (my translation).

²⁹⁰ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 156 (emphasis added) (my translation).

²⁹¹ Rogers Brubaker, *The Limits of Rationality: An Essay on the Social and Moral Thought of Max Weber* (London: Routledge, 1984), 77.

discretion is mediated by a kind of rationality which Georg Lukacs characterizes as reification.²⁹²

While Sudarshanam does not put much thought into arranging this match, it creates a lot of turbulence and turmoil in Padma's mind. However, Padma travels from her native village Lankapalli to Vijayawada one week before her marriage. It was her first journey, followed by many such in the course of the novel. We have earlier seen that travelling is a crucial trope of the nationalist novel as protagonists of the nationalist novel travel to different major cities of India. These sojourns indicate the confidence and smartness of the protagonists of the nationalist novel in exploring and navigating the larger world. And, the protagonist of this novel too participates in many journeys that are crucial to the development of the character and the dynamism of the plot.

Padma stays at Sudarshanam's three-storey house which is a very big house with many rooms. Sudarshanam along with his third wife and daughter from his first marriage lives in that house. The riches, facilities, and luxuries at Sudarshanam's home greatly surprise Padma. Beyond all this opulence and luxury, we are told, immense distress is hidden in Sudarshanam's mind. She also wonders why she could not see anyone other than Sudarshanam for so many hours. Everyone was apprehensive whether Padma would agree to marry a man who is more than fifty years old. As a matter of formality, they arrange to see future husband and wife each other. Although Padma is quite unhappy about the marriage, her family conditions force her to agree to marry an old man as she does not want to be a burden to her parents. After proper arrangements were made, the marriage takes place within a week. On the first conjugal night itself, Badraiah faces difficulty. Due to anxiety, apprehension, and his loss of nerve, and also Padma's disinterest in him, the first conjugal

²⁹² Andrew Feenberg, *The Philosophy of Praxis: Marx, Lukacs, and the Frankfurt School* (London: Verso, 2014), 61–89.

night ends in a disaster. That night, she gets a dream in which her husband has become young again.

Bhaskararao feels uncomfortable asking his father about his second marriage. His father is equally uncomfortable in introducing his new wife to his son as a step-mother. Bhaskararao finds a very young woman at the window of his room in a glimpse. But, he cannot believe that his father has married such a young woman. He also finds it very hard to imagine such a young woman as his step-mother. Instead, he thinks that his sister would have been like the young woman had she been alive today. A kind of uncomfortable atmosphere continues for some time. At last, Bhaskararao's aunt introduces his step-mother to him. As the marriage has taken place in the absence of Bhaskararao, Padma is greatly confused, for a moment, when he is first introduced by her sister-in-law as (her) step-son. She starts looking at her husband and step-son alternately because Bhaskararao looks like the young man who appeared in Padma's dream. Watching her husband and step-son beside each other creates a lot of agitation in her mind. She feels like she has been deceived by somebody. Franco Moretti in his *The Way of the World* argues that marriage creates a certain equilibrium in the social turbulence in the classic European *Buildungsroman* novel.²⁹³ Contrary to that, marriage sets the stage for turbulence in *Manchi...-Chedu...* and profoundly disturbs the equilibrium of the status quo. In the latter parts of the novel, we are going to witness another marriage that also ends as a much greater disaster.

Badraiah visits Padma's room regularly, but they would not have a conjugal relationship. On the one hand, the turmoil in the life of Padma, which has been created by the marriage, is further aggravated by the presence of Bhaskararao. On the other hand, Badraiah is anxious about not fulfilling his conjugal responsibilities towards his wife. Due to this, his health deteriorates. Having been deeply attracted by the beauty of Bhaskararao,

²⁹³ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Buildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 2000).

Padma starts adoring her step-son. At the same time, she is greatly agitated while reflecting on the moral grounds of her love towards her step-son. Bhaskararao feels very bad that his father married such a young woman and feels a lot of sympathy for the fate of his step-mother. In this manner, Padma and Bhaskararao are at cross purposes.

One evening, Bhaskararao meets his friend Pandu at Moghalrajpuram hill and discusses the unhappy state of affairs at his home with him. As night falls, they go back to their respective homes. Here, Sarada makes an intriguing observation about the city of Vijayawada. He writes, "It is the time at which respectable people, thieves, prostitutes surreptitiously enter into the seamy sides of the city of Vijayawada."²⁹⁴ On his friend's suggestion, Bhaskararao asks his aunt and step-mother if they are interested in watching a movie. As they show interest in watching the popular Telugu movie, *Swargaseema* (The Abode of Paradise),²⁹⁵ all three go to the theatre to watch it. There, they come across Sudarshanam along with his wife and daughter, Sarojini. Sarojini's face is covered with a veil. Padma finds it very difficult to concentrate on watching the movie as she is more attracted and fascinated by Bhaskararao's face in the glimmering light reflected from the screen. Throughout the movie, she looks at Bhaskararao's face many a time. Moreover, in the intermission, while taking a cup of tea from the hand of Bhaskararao, Padma intentionally touches his fingers and that creates immense excitement in her.

As Bhaskararao has become the figure of her adulation, Padma eagerly waits for an opportunity to express her passion towards Bhaskararao to him. On the pretext of visiting her parents' home, Padma asks Badraiah to accompany her. However, her intention is different. As Badraiah's health is not good, he asks his son to escort his step-mother. This is another important journey for the protagonist. During this journey, she questions the doxa that

²⁹⁴ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 177.

²⁹⁵ *Swargaseema* is a popular Telugu movie that was released in 1945. It is directed by B. N. Reddi. The time of the action of the novel is explicitly indexed with reference to this famous Telugu movie.

education enlightens people. She also has enough courage to articulate the injustice done to her and indicates how it can be rectified. She feels immensely happy and enthusiastic about getting a chance to travel alone with Bhaskararao. They get on a train at Vijayawada and get down at Bapatla and travel on a bullock-cart to Padma's village. In this episode, she interrogates one of the important forms of modern rationality, that is, education. As education is considered to be the antidote to ignorance and blind beliefs, this episode is very interesting. She asks Bhaskararao what the use of education is. Bhaskararao answers that education is useful for knowledge that will enable one to do the job of *goomestha* (clerk).²⁹⁶ Then she asks "does not this education enhance *vivekam* (discretion)?"²⁹⁷ Bhaskararao says "what *pinni* (step-mother); newly asking as a riddle". Padma replies to Bhaskararao that "yes it is a riddle. Is it not so? People like you are watching and remain silent while an old man who has crossed the age of fifty marries a young woman who is as young as twenty."²⁹⁸ This question greatly shocks Bhaskararao. Further, she suggests that the injustice done to her can be remedied by different means. He senses impending danger in the motives and intentions of his step-mother. He now discerns the sensual sense touch of her hand and slides his hand away. However, he answers that he is not in the favour of this marriage and asks how he and his education would be responsible for the marriage which took place without his consent.

They reach the village at night. After dinner, they go to sleep in separate places. But she is unable to sleep and is intensely tormented by her transgressive desires and strongly believes that injustice happened to her and it should be rectified. Her desire for Bhaskararao forces her to transgress and trespass the morality of the family system. She also feels that somehow she has to satisfy her sexual desires through different means. In a state of mental turmoil about whether to follow social norms or fulfil her desire, she chooses the latter.

²⁹⁶ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 186.

²⁹⁷ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 186. (emphasis added)

²⁹⁸ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 186.

Padma stands up and walks towards the open space of the first floor, where Bhaskararao is sleeping. She stands beside his bed but does not know how to initiate anything. She was much tensed at this moment, loses her nerve and goes back to her bed. Despite her strong desire for Bhaskararao, she does not have the courage to act on it.²⁹⁹

After a few days, Padma and Bhaskararao return to Vijayawada from Lankapalli. Meanwhile, Sudarshanam expresses his intentions to Badraiah that his daughter **is** married to Bhaskararao. This proposal greatly enrages and irritates Padma. She thinks that after having arranged her marriage with an older man, Sudarshanam now wants to get his daughter married to Bhaskararao. Moreover, though not reciprocated, she is in love with him. As a matter of formality, Badraiah's family goes to Sudarshanam's home to arrange the match. Sudarshanam always keeps his daughter veiled. When she takes off the veil, her face shocks everyone. It is completely disfigured and looks very grotesquely. Except for her eyes, her face is completely burnt and dark. Her teeth, tongue, and lips are grotesquely disfigured and bent upward. Bhaskararao causally says "I do not want to marry in my whole life..."³⁰⁰ Padma feels great joy at the insults happening to Sudarshanam. As Bhaskararao's words greatly enrage Sudarshanam, he challenges Bhaskararao that he will get his daughter married to any orphan by giving all of his property to him. In the only flashback of the novel, Sudarshanam remembers how his daughter's face is disfigured. She was being harassed by his second wife. Once, she is thrown forcefully towards a burning stove that results in the burning and the consequent disfiguration of her face.

Sudarshanam is the key to Badraiah's success in business. He has only encouraged Badraiah to enter into a business. As Sudarshanam maintains the accounts of Badraiah, he changes them to suit his purpose. Forgetting his long-time friendship, Sudarshanam cold-

²⁹⁹ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 190-191.

³⁰⁰ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 194.

bloodedly deceives his friend. Due to this betrayal by Sudarshanam, Badraiah loses all of his property, including his house at Moghalrajpuram. Now, they have to shift to a much smaller thatched home for rent. Ironically, Badraiah's family is now only left with the ornaments, which they had given to Padma at the time of her marriage. To survive, they start selling these ornaments one after another. This greatly enrages Padma. Added to these problems, due to a fire accident, their house including Padma's ornaments is burnt. They shift to another smaller thatched home nearby.

While he was affluent, Bhaskararao observed the brighter side of Vijayawada. Now, after becoming poor, Bhaskararao becomes conscious of poor people who lead their lives on footpaths and shop fronts. He recognizes the contradictions between the rich and the poor people. In contrast, Padma is increasingly irritated by the newly arrived poverty. She often picks up a quarrel either with Bhaskararao or with her sister-in-law. Bhaskararao tries hard and gets a job as a goomestha in a clothes shop. Padma starts threatening to return to her parents' home. This greatly annoys Bhaskararao. He is afraid of what people will say if his step-mother leaves for her parents' home.

In a subplot of the novel, Sudarshanam finds a groom for his daughter. His name is Sekharam. Sekharam agrees to marry Sarojini even without looking at her face in the hope that he is going to get a lot of property from his father-in-law. Even during the marriage, Sarojini remains veiled. But she is deeply worried about her future. During the first conjugal night, he asks her to take the veil off. But, she does not concede to do so. When she is asleep, Sekharam lifts her veil and looks at her face. It greatly horrifies him but he gets comfort at the thought of the property that he is going to get from his father-in-law. He spends most of the time outside the home. Whenever he needs money, he asks Sarojini. They start hating each other's presence. The relationship between Sekharam and Sarojini turns very bitter and full of animosity. Sekharam is both a womanizer and a drunkard. Due to this, Sarojini gets

sexually transmitted diseases from him. When Sudarshanam comes to know of this, he gets immensely angry with his son-in-law and develops a great contempt towards his son-in-law.

Due to extreme circumstances, Badraiah falls ill and dies after a few days. The death of his father makes Bhaskararao very sad. Padma cries her heart out. Bhaskararao consoles Padma and his aunt and promises that he will look after them. Gradually, they come out of their grief. Bhaskararao continues as a clerk at a cloth-shop to feed his family. But his salary is too meagre to feed three family members. Although Padma is in love with Bhaskararao, she cannot express it; the reason being the respect and affection shown by him towards her. In these conditions, Padma is gradually getting bored and irritated with the existing state of affairs. Added to this, she is not getting enough food. Due to all these issues, she is increasingly getting dissatisfied with her condition. For some additional income, Bhaskararao starts teaching his colleague's children till 10 at night and, sometimes, he stays overnight at colleague's home. As her sister-in-law goes to bed early, Padma sits at the entrance of the thatched house to think about her problems and her prospective future for many days. One student, who lives at a neighbouring home, starts making gestures to Padma. Initially, Padma gets irritated by the gestures of that student. He starts showing money to attract her. As she cannot resist her desire for money, she starts having a relationship with the student. She goes to the student's room and the student grabs her into his room and closes the door. We are told, as it is her first sexual experience, she greatly cherishes it and eagerly waits for the next night.

After dinner, as her sister-in-law asks Padma to read the *Dakshayagnam*,³⁰¹ Padma starts reading it aloud. While reading the lines which extol the devotion of goddess Parvati towards her husband, she is full of devotion and fascination towards the virtuous Parvati. Sarada comments, "At that moment, her consciousness is very serene and fully concentrated

³⁰¹ *Dakshayagnam* (The Ritual Sacrifice of Daksha) narrates the story of Daksha and his rivalry with Shiva.

on the Parvati's strength of character and constancy of devotion towards her husband. Like every (other) young *Hindu woman*, she too has perfect and complete devotion".³⁰² She would go to the student's room when her sister-in-law fell asleep. The present-day reader might be struck by this abrupt comparison of Padma to the Hindu woman. The nation has been widely represented as a Hindu goddess in nationalist discourse and iconography. As the nation has been widely and prominently represented in nationalist iconography and discourse as a Hindu woman, the irony is more than obvious. A book-length study of Sumathi Ramaswamy's *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* shows the popularity and widespread circulation of the image of a Hindu woman as a goddess.³⁰³

However, Padma is deeply remorseful about her illicit relationship. Yet she tries to justify this relationship because she has no other alternative to satisfy her desires. At the same time, she is also worried about becoming pregnant because of this relationship. Every day, she goes to the river Krishna for a sacred bath in the morning. Throughout the day, she busies herself with various spiritual rituals. By night-time, she is full of sexual desires. Finally, her doubts are confirmed. She recognizes that she has become pregnant. The student suddenly leaves the place. Earlier, she was only worried about her hunger. Now, she is haunted by the fear of what is going to happen to her once the fact of her pregnancy is known to other people. Sometimes, she feels happy at the thought of the child that is going to be born. However, she thinks that she cannot share her happiness with anyone. Now, she cannot go to her parents' home either. As her sister-in-law becomes suspicious of the changes in Padma's face, Padma becomes conscious of the impending danger. One day, she suddenly asks Padma: "do you have any health problems?"³⁰⁴ Padma answers that she has a stomach ache. As Bhaskararao says that he will take her to the doctor tomorrow, she is forced to do something to escape the stigma of having been become pregnant after her husband's death

³⁰² Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 233 (emphasis added) (my translation).

³⁰³ Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2011).

³⁰⁴ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 238.

and through an extra-marital relationship. In these circumstances, she can no longer go back to her parents. Moreover, she is also afraid that people may attribute the pregnancy to Bhaskararao. Throughout the night, she thinks about the future course of action and finally decides to leave the home. Early in the morning, she wakes her sister-in-law up and asks her for her company for a holy dip in the Krishna. As her sister-in-law is taking a dip in the Krishna, Padma sits on the bank. By the time, she comes out of the river, Padma leaves the place. Padma is deeply worried about what is going to happen to her in the outside world. She is intensely anxious about what would be her fate in the outside world. The narrative then shifts to Padma's odyssey in the outside world.

3.4.4 A "Figure of Ill-Repute"³⁰⁵ in the Outside World

We have seen above that Padma's desire towards his step-son functions as "a thematic instrumentality of plot and as a basic motivation of its telling and its reading"³⁰⁶ in the first parts of *Manchi...-Chedu....*. Ironically, Padma turns into a prostitute and thus becomes an public object of desire in order to earn her livelihood in latter parts of the novel. I want to begin this part of the chapter with a brief discussion of above mentioned phrase "figure of ill-repute". Bernheimer uses this phrase to describe the widely prevalent attitude towards prostitutes in various kinds of discourses of the nineteenth century France. Prostitute is being seen as threat to the public hygiene. Bernheimer also points to the prevalent notions of misogyny in writers like Flaubert. He writes, "Since woman's sexuality was essentially prostitutional in the view of Flaubert and his circle, there was no better place to enjoy its

³⁰⁵ I borrowed this phrase from Charles Bernheimer's book with the same title. Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

³⁰⁶ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 143.

animal pleasures than the bordello.”³⁰⁷ In contrast to that, Sarada portrays the prostitutes quite sympathetically.

Padma’s journey in the outside world has great importance in the development of the character and plot as she negotiates with this world. She meets various kinds of people and experiences. In the nationalist novel, while the woman’s place is restricted to the home, the hero negotiates with the outside world. In the process, the hero travels to important places. This travelling also indicates the development and maturity of the hero. Contrary to that, Padma travels from her native village, Lankapalli, to Vijayawada, one week before her marriage. She stays at Sudarshanam’s home, which is closer to the temple, gold ornament shops, and flower shops. After leaving her home, Padma travels to smaller towns such as Gudivada, Bandar. Padma travels from one town to another. Despite the glorification of the nation as a mother in the nationalist discourse, the nation is an immensely dangerous terrain for a single woman without the support of the family. Leaving home becomes a highly traumatic experience for Padma.

She starts walking hurriedly towards the railway station as she is anxious that someone may identify her or her step-son may find her. At the same time, she feels hungry and wants to have something. In front of the railway station, she finds a hotel which has separate space for women and has coffee there. Hurriedly, she takes a ticket to Gudivada and sits in the women’s compartment. As the train starts leaving the station, Padma feels sad for leaving her home and starts crying. An old woman observes Padma and enquires about her. Padma lies that she does not have anyone and is deceived by her lover. That old woman softly consoles and promises Padma that she will help her in finding a job as a cook. Both of them get down at Gudivada. Having been consoled by the woman, Padma gets the courage that she can somehow live in the outside world. After having travelled for two hours, the train

³⁰⁷ Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute*, 130.

reaches Gudivada at nine o'clock. Now Padma feels confident that she received support from that old woman.

After getting down at the railway station, Padma, along with the old woman, walks for half a mile. They traverse various alleys and reach a house with a thatched roof closer to agricultural fields. After reaching home, her voice becomes harsh and her attitude towards Padma changes there suddenly. Padma finds a young woman around the age of eighteen named Venkulu. Padma finds certain kind of recklessness in her body language. As night falls, Padma finds the activities at the home very suspicious. Many men come and speak with the old woman. Finally, Padma recognizes that the benevolent-looking woman is a pimp and enabling the flesh-trade. She could not sleep that night out of fear. She leaves the home early in the morning. From there, she reaches Bandar at about 11'o clock by train. She feels very hungry and dizzy. But she is unable to find 10 rupees which she kept at the end of her sari. She has no idea what to do and where to go. She leaves the platform and stands in the railway shed. One local rowdy named Veeraiah observes the condition of Padma and approaches her. He persuades her to come with him. Initially, she requests him to show some work. However, he threatens her that she will face the same kind of harassment wherever she goes. Finally, Padma is convinced that she has no other option. But, as Padma's pregnancy progresses, Veeraiah loses interest and stops coming to her. She gets angry at the way people use her and then abandon her just like an object.

In another subplot, Sekharam spends most of his time outside the home. He comes to know about Padma through one of his friends who greatly praises Padma's beauty. On the pretext of starting a new business of counterfeit ornaments, he goes to Bandar and brings Padma to Vijayawada. He keeps her as a mistress in a separate home. Ironically, Padma now becomes the mistress of the son-in-law of Sudarshanam. After some time, Sarojini falls ill. As her health deteriorates, Sekharam has to look after her. But, Sarojini dies after some time.

The marriage, which has happened purely through the mediation of money and property, results in deep agony and suffering and untimely the tragic death of Sarojini. Immediately, Sudarshanam throws Sekharam out of his home. As Sekharam stops taking care of her, Padma is left with no option but to prostitute herself. As she tries to sell ornaments given by Sekharam, she realizes that they are counterfeit gold ornaments. As she could not pay the rent of the present home, she has to shift to a hut in the interior part of Vijayawada. Many women like Padma live in that *basti* (slum). The prostitutes' daily activity would start at odd times. Sarada indicates the presence of prostitutes and rowdies in Vijayawada in one of the early chapters of the novel. Further, Sudarshanam's son-in-law is a debaucher. This foreshadows the larger presence of these socially ostracized figures in the later parts of the novel. He narrates the precarious existence of prostitutes at the margins of society. As prostitutes are being stigmatized and shunned by respectable society, they live precariously in the margins of that society. Since the twilight of the day, they access public places in search of potential customers. They loiter at public places like streets, parks, cinema halls, and so forth.

Padma becomes conscious that she can continue in this profession only for some time. Now, she is worried about her future. Again, the question of temporality mediates the anxiety of Padma about the future. She, therefore, decides to focus on earning money. She carefully saves two to three hundred rupees for the sake of her daughter's future. She intends to give her daughter and the money to Bhaskararao, but her plans fail. One day, a police constable comes to the *basti* where Padma lives. Confusing the counterfeit (gold) ornaments of Padma as real gold, the police constable assumes that she has earned a great deal of money. The policeman threatens and asks her to come to the police station. As suggested by another woman in the same profession, Padma gives 50 rupees to the policeman. In another incident, her money is stolen by a rowdy named Daulat. These incidents create a great deal of fear, terror, and agony in her.

Sarada writes,

Padma counted and gave fifty rupees to police from her saved money. That was indeed very carefully saved money. Money earned in flesh trade! Notwithstanding her like or dislike, feeling pain deep inside, having been yielded to harsh men, and suppressing pain inside and laughing outside, earned money! That kind of money ... in this manner ... has to be given freely...³⁰⁸

In the last chapter, Padma encounters Bhaskararao at the cinema hall. Bhaskararao asks her to come to his home. But Padma insists that he should come to her home. Initially, Bhaskararao is surprised that her step-mother is living in such a disreputable place. After having seen her interaction with the customers, he understands her present status and predicament. Although he tries hard to convince her to come to his home, she does not agree to it. Further, she shows the black and red marks on her hands, which are due to sexually transmitted diseases. She explains to him that everyone will recognize that she is a *different* kind of woman and will not accept her. Padma says,

You only invite me. But Bhaskaram! Everyone will not accept. Respectability and status come as obstacles to them. You may lose your job too. On the one hand, you face opposition outside the home. On the other hand, you face opposition inside the home too.³⁰⁹

Bhaskararao takes Padma's daughter with him. The novel ends with Padma crying her heart out bitterly as Bhaskararao leaves along with her daughter. As her future remains uncertain, the novel ends on a tragic note. Padma is the "problematic individual" of this novel. Through this character, the novel engages with the problematic nature of the world itself. The action of *Manchi...-Chedu...* can be divided into two parts: Padma's experiences inside the home and in the outside world. She faces bitter experiences both inside the home

³⁰⁸ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 236.

³⁰⁹ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 238.

and the outside world. Her desire for Bhaskararao constantly transgresses the morality of the family system. The conflict is between whether she should be bound by familial and social norms or to fulfil her natural desires. Her predicament is that if she wants to be bound by these norms, it has to be done at the cost of her happiness and fulfilment. She constantly interrogates the legitimacy of familial norms and also questions the legitimacy of *Dharma*. According to her, these social norms are very old, but the time-span of her youth is very brief. However, Padma's love towards Bhaskararao has various phases. In the first phase, she intensely desires the companionship of Bhaskararao. When her family has fallen into bad times, her love turns into anger and hatred.

Sarada contrasts the character of Padma with that of Bhaskararao. While Padma is deeply dissatisfied and unhappy with her condition, Bhaskararao is content and comes to terms with the new state of affairs. Societal norms do not permit widowed woman of having a relationship with someone; moreover, they characterize that kind of relationship as illicit. But, Padma does not have an option to satisfy her sexual desires in the purview of social norms. She transgresses the familial and social norms by having a sexual relationship outside the marital bond.

Like in the nationalist novel, the central role is given to a woman in the novel. But, unlike the protagonist of nationalist novels, the protagonist of *Manchi...-Chedu...* is an ordinary woman. This is one of the unique features of the novel. She leads a tempestuous life both in the home and in the outside world. At home, she is being treated as an object that can be exchanged with other objects. When she leaves the home, Padma constantly feels insecure in the outside world. When she becomes a prostitute, she is constantly harassed by rowdies and the police for money. It appears over-determined that the central character in this novel is

being represented as a prostitute in view of the fact that the nation is being represented as a mother in nationalist iconography, discourse, and novels. It also indexes the reified social relations in the fictional world of the novel. The narrative interrogates the existential status of these two abstract moral qualities, that is, *manchi* and *chedu* in a reified society. The underlying thread of the novel is that it assesses the status of these supposedly opposite qualities at various levels. Further, the novel raises the pertinent question of whether it is possible to characterize individuals as good or evil based on their actions in the context of reified social relations. The novel-form, in the hands of Sarada, does not merely authorize the values of existing society. It also does not represent the ethical socialization of individuals as it is argued by Aamir Mufti.³¹⁰ In contrast, it scrutinizes the validity of the morals in a reified society, which I shall discuss in the following pages.

In the context of the above interpretation, the scrutiny of Mufti's characterization of the novel fashioned by the Progressive Literary Movement is pertinent. In the following section, I shall discuss Lukacs' concept of reification, Mufti's characterization of the Progressive Literary Movement, and his notion of progressive aesthetics.

3.4.5 Reification and the Fictional World of *Manchi...-Chedu...*

Lukacs elaborated the idea of reification in the seminal essay "Reification and the Consciousness Proletariat" of *History and Class Consciousness* (1922). The first part of this essay is entitled "The Phenomena of Reification". In one of the most original interpretations of Marx's conception of commodity, Lukacs points to the effects of reification on widely different domains of modern society. As reified temporality in the form of long working

³¹⁰ Aamir R. Mufti makes this argument in *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 183.

hours structured the lived experience of Sarada, reified rationality structured the fictional world of *Manchi...-Chedu...*

We have seen above Lukacs conception of reification. Now, I discuss how deep the reified rationality mediated the fictional world of the novel and how different characters engage with it. The widespread reification of social relations results in treating human beings as objects. The effects of reification will be seen much more clearly in the latter parts of the novel. At the beginning of the novel itself, while thinking of manchi and chedu while arranging the match between Padma and Badraiah, Sudarshanam thought only about his interest. Interestingly, for Benjamin, marriage is “one of the most rigorous and objective articulations of the content of human life”.³¹¹ Here, it is intriguing to note that the author compares the functioning of Sudarshanam’s “discretion” with that of a “weighing machine”.³¹² It implies how mechanical, instrumental, calculative, cold-blooded, and causal Sudarshanam is in arranging this marriage as he also does not take much time to think and reflect on the pros and cons of the marriage between a very young woman and a much older man. In other words, his discretion is bereft of human emotions and functions like a machine. Most significantly, he arranges this match in terms of an exchange of a young woman with two acres of land between Badraiah and that young woman’s father. In this manner, reified rationality permeates the discretion of one of the important characters of the novel. As a result, the young woman is being treated as an object which can be exchanged with other objects. As the narrative progresses, we witness the effects of reification in a much more blatant manner. It becomes the common sense of the characters of the novel, so much so that it becomes very powerful and has a profound impact on their lives. The protagonist faces the effects of reification much more blatantly in the outside world.

³¹¹ Walter Benjamin, “Goethe’s Elective Affinities,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 1913-1926* (Volume-1), ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 299.

³¹² Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 131

Later, Padma is owned by many men and is exchanged among many men. In this manner, her helplessness is exploited by many men. Finally, she has to prostitute herself in order to survive and sustain herself and to take care of her daughter. This reification deeply enters into familial relations too. Sudarshanam feels confident that he can get a bridegroom for his daughter using his property. Sekharam marries the daughter of Sudarshanam for the sake of money. As a result, the marriage between Sarojini and Sekharam results in mutual animosity and hatred. Further, it creates immense turmoil and anxiety in Sarojini that leads to her immensely tragic premature death.

Then how do the different characters respond to the effects of reification? At one point or another, all the important characters face moral dilemmas and sometimes regret the acts might or might not have done. Badraiah regrets his action of having married for the second time. But he regrets only when he fails in fulfilling his conjugal responsibilities and when his financial condition has deteriorated due to the deception by Sudarshanam. Retrospectively, he realizes that he has made a mistake by marrying a very young woman. He regrets that he is facing all kinds of problems only due to his second marriage. But he never regrets that he has done injustice to a very young woman by marrying her. In contrast to his father, Bhaskararao feels apologetic towards his step-mother. He does not appreciate his father's action of marrying a very young woman, but he never directly questions his father's action. In the last chapter, he confesses to his step-mother that his family has done great injustice to her. Sudarshanam instrumentally uses the poverty and helplessness of his distant relative to suit his purpose. As his plans fail, Sudarshanam deceives his friend ruthlessly. But, he neither regrets arranging the match between Badraiah and Padma nor deceiving his long-time friend in a cold-blooded manner.

Padma feels a moral dilemma regarding whether it is legitimate or not to have a sexual relationship with her step-son. She recognizes the fact that her desire towards her step-

son is deeply transgressive of family values. Initially, she feels trepidation but resolves it by convincing herself that there is no alternative for her. But, she is afraid of what people would say about her relationship with her step-son if they would come to know. Later, she faces a moral dilemma in having a relationship with a stranger who lives beside her home. On the one hand, she is happy that her sexual desires are getting satisfied and she is also getting money from him. But on the other hand, she is worried about what people would say about this relationship. She is also worried about getting pregnant. When she gets pregnant, she is marred by the dual feelings of both happiness and guilt. She is happy because she is going to become a mother. The thought of going to have a child makes her happy. Her predicament is that she cannot share this happiness with others. She knows that society will never accept a widow becoming pregnant in an illicit relationship. At last, she has to leave her in-laws' home in order to escape the stigma.

The fictional world of *Manchi...-Chedu...* has the larger presence of prostitutes, pimps, thieves, and rowdies whom the middle class considers as evil and looks down upon them. In other words, they are the other of mainstream society. In the first parts of the novel itself, Sarada indicates their presence in Vijayawada who have odd timing for their activities. This foreshadows their larger presence in the latter parts of the novel. Later, in the course of the action, the protagonist of the novel is trapped by a pimp. Sudarshanam's son-in-law is a debaucher. Most remarkably, the protagonist of the novel turns herself into a prostitute as a means of survival. The overwhelming and ubiquitous presence of these stigmatized figures in the novel needs our attention and an explanation. In traditional Marxist understanding, they are characterized and stigmatized as the lumpenproletariat. But, Walter Benjamin gives a

radically different perspective on these “figures of ill repute”,³¹³ which I am going to discuss below. An interesting question would be: What is their role in modern society?

In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Marx argues that “prostitution is only a *specific* expression of the *general* prostitution of the *labourer*, and since it is a relationship in which falls not the prostitute alone, but also the one who prostitutes...the capitalist, etc., also comes under this head.”³¹⁴ In this provocative observation, Marx claims that the prostitution is only a particular articulation of the general condition of the labourer in capitalist society. It implies that the phenomena of prostitution cannot be understood without properly understanding the condition of the labourer. In other words, the unfreedom and brutality experienced by the prostitute are also being experienced by the labourer. Both the labourer and the prostitute are under duress to sell their respective commodities.

The figure of prostitute has received extended attention in the work of Walter Benjamin. In his *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin extensively comments on the figure of prostitute. According to Benjamin, the prostitute/whore is one of the major Ur-forms of capitalist modernity.³¹⁵ For him, she is a “seller and commodity in one”.³¹⁶ The other two are the flaneur and the collector. Flaneur takes many forms in the capitalist modernity. Benjamin makes pertinent comments on the characteristics of the flaneur. He writes,

Empathy with the commodity is fundamentally empathy with exchange value itself. The flaneur is the virtuoso of this empathy. He takes the concept of marketability for a stroll. Just as his final ambit is the department store, his last incarnation is the sandwich-man.³¹⁷

³¹³ Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute*.

³¹⁴ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1993), 94 (emphasis in original).

³¹⁵ Susan Buck-Morss, “The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering,” *New German Critique*, 39, Autumn (1986): 101.

³¹⁶ Quoted in Buck-Morss, “The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore”, 120.

³¹⁷ Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 448 (emphasis added).

While the flaneur is “the privileged bourgeois male, who surveys and dominates the social spaces of the modern city”,³¹⁸ the Sandwichman hangs billboards on his body and advertises for sandwiches. Although the Ur-forms of capitalist modernity look very different from each other, they have many features in common. One important feature is loitering. According to Buck-Morss, “the flaneur is not the aristocrat: not leisure (*Musse*) but loitering (*Musssiggang*) is his trade”.³¹⁹ Benjamin comments that Charles Baudelaire “goes to the marketplace as flaneur, supposedly to take a look at it, but in reality to find a buyer”.³²⁰ Similarly, the prostitute also loiters in search of a buyer of her services. In other words, as the prostitute loiters in public places to find a potential buyer of her services, the author searches for buyers in a literary market.

I argue that prostitution or the prostitute represents the extreme form of reification as this implies the objectification of human beings in the most blatant manner one can imagine. In this profession, one has to sell herself/himself as a means of livelihood. Although this phenomenon has various dimensions, Sarada focuses on some of them. Sexually transmitted diseases are an important dimension to the profession of the prostitute. Sarada’s realism does not overlook this. Like many important phenomena, we encounter them twice in the novel. Initially, Sudarshanam’s daughter suffers from sexually transmitted diseases as she has contacted them through his husband who is a debaucher. Later, Padma suffers from sexually transmitted diseases. Further, Sarada narrates the brutalization and exploitation of prostitutes in the hands of rowdies and the police. This brutalization inculcates deep fear in Padma’s mind and creates insecurity about herself and her daughter’s future. These aspects in the life of prostitutes do not receive the attention of Benjamin.

³¹⁸ Mary Gluck, “The Flaneur and the Aesthetic Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid Nineteenth-Century Paris,” *Theory, Culture and Society*, 20, no. 5 (2003): 53.

³¹⁹ Buck-Morss, “The Flaneur,” 111.

³²⁰ Quoted in Buck-Morss, “The Flaneur,” 112.

While interpreting Sadat Hasan Manto's short stories, Mufti makes an extended discussion on the representation of the figure of the prostitute. He argues that the woman as a mother is instrumentally deployed by the nationalist bourgeois and the ubiquitous figure of the prostitute in Manto's fiction does not indicate the sign of capitalist modernity but is a counter-figure to the representation of woman in nationalist discourse and iconography.³²¹ However, taking a cue from the interpretation of Marx and Walter Benjamin, I argue that the figure of the prostitute has a greater implication than that which is warranted by the interpretation of Mufti. The figure of the prostitute or prostitution also indicates the status of wage-labourers in capitalist modernity. This can be illustrated by the status of Bhaskararao as a small employee in the latter parts of the novel. He constantly expresses his displeasure at the low wages that he gets which does not allow him to even buy a newspaper.

3.4.6 Spatial and Temporal Imagination of *Manchi...-Chedu...*

In recent times, the novel's narration and organization of space have received increasing attention from scholars. Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* analyses the connection between various forms of European novels and geography.³²² Similarly, Vasudha Dalmia's *Fiction as History* analyzes the representation of various cities and towns of North India in the Hindi novel.³²³ While discussing *Indulekha* as a nationalist novel, Ansari interprets the hero's tour of important cities of colonial India as an attempt to fashion a yet to be unified India at a symbolic level.³²⁴ The same can be found in the Telugu nationalist novel Bapiraju's *Narayanarao*.³²⁵

³²¹ Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

³²² Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 2015).

³²³ Vasudha Dalmia, *Fiction as History: The Novel and the City in Modern North India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2017).

³²⁴ M. T. Ansari, *Islam and Nationalism in India*

³²⁵ *Narayanarao* along with *Veyipadagalu* written by V. Satyanarayana was given the first prize in the competition of novels conducted by Andhra University in 1934. Adivi Bapiraju, *Narayanarao* (Hyderabad: Visalandhara Publishing House, 2010).

Manchi...-Chedu... pays meticulous attention towards narrating the space of action. It gives minute details of the place of action. Most of the action takes place in Vijayawada. The action of the novel begins at a railway-station of Vijayawada. Sarada describes the ambience of it. After that, the railway station appears several times. Sarada narrates the ambience of modern institutions like the railway-station, roads, hotels, public places, movie theatres, and so forth. The famous Kankadurga temple along with other temples has its presence in the action of the novel. Badraiah asks his son to visit this famous temple and to do *pooja* in the name of the family. Similarly, movie theatres have their presence in the action of the novel. Padma along with her family members watch *Swargaseema* at Durga Kala Mandir, one of the oldest movie theatres in Vijayawada.³²⁶ In latter parts of the novel, Padma, as a prostitute, loiters and waits at the movie theatres for the potential customers. Bhaskararao often meets his friend Pandu either at the hillock of Moghalrajpuram or at coffee hotels. Sarada gives detailed descriptions of where the main characters live. While Badraiah lives in Moghalrajpuram in the outskirts of Vijayawada, Sudarshanam's home is situated closer to flower and gold shops and the Siva's temple at the centre of Vijayawada. Sarada narrates the street life in the following manner:

Pleasant moonlight of Trayodashi mixed with blue light coming from mercury lamps on the street at Governorpet centre, Vijayawada seems to be in the middle of the day. Whistling enthusiastically and having walked street after street, he arrived at Bandar road. Wherever witnessed, all shops are full of people. Everyone is busy with their work. No one bothers about others. Although it's going to be eight o'clock, coffee hotels are full of people.³²⁷

³²⁶ "The first movie theatre Maruthi Hall was started in Vijayawada in 1921. Later, Durga Kala Mandir was started in 1923..." (Choragudi Johnson, *Mana Vijayawada* (Our Vijayawada) (Vijayawada: Krihnaveni Prachuranalu, 2015), 25.)

³²⁷ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 167.

Similarly, Sarada meticulously describes the houses where the action takes place. The houses reflect the characters' financial status and their changing fortunes too. While Badraiah's somewhat modest house is situated at the outskirts of Vijayawada, Sudarshanam's three-storied building is situated at a very busy centre of Vijayawada. Sarada also describes the inside structure of Sudarshanam's house. His house contains many rooms where eight people can live without encountering each other for weeks altogether. After having lost all of his property, Badraiah has to shift to a much smaller home. After that, he has to live in a thatched-cottage.

Where is the place of women in the fictional world of *Manchi...-Chedu...*? The woman's place is separated from the man's place both inside the home and in the outside world. Sarada pays attention to this aspect of the social world. For instance, Padma feels trepidation to enter a coffee hotel in Vijayawada where there are no separate places for women. Later, she goes to a coffee hotel in front of the railway station, where women have a separate place. In the same manner, while boarding the train to Gudiwada, she gets into a women's compartment.

The representation of time-consciousness and temporality is crucial to the novel. This novel pays profound and meticulous attention to the movement of time and its impact on the thinking of the characters. All important characters evolve as time moves forward. Padma considers the relationship (with her step-son)—which society finds morally wrong—acceptable. To arrive at this conclusion, she finds a strong justification in the nature of temporality itself. She ponders over her passion and desire towards her step-son in the following manner:

If her husband was a person like Bhaskararao!! ... If it were Bhaskararao himself, her life would have been filled and flourished with happiness. Do these kinds of nights come again in

one's life, if wished so? Spring, wintry nights (and) monsoon nights come year after year. Nature's law remains the same for centuries together. But, experienceable nights are only a few in an individual's life! *Do those have to be wasted in this manner by remaining bound to morals and customs created by human beings?*³²⁸

In this deeply intense passage, Padma compares the temporality of nature with that of human beings. While the temporality of nature remains the same for centuries altogether, the lived temporality of human beings is limited and finite. Moreover, the temporality of nature is circular. But, the time of human beings is unidirectional. She points to the fact that the plausibility of various experiences for human beings is mediated by the onward movement of time. The consciousness of this mode of temporality further aggravates her agony of being deprived of conjugal pleasure. She fears that as time moves forward the plausibility of having sexual pleasure wears away. Padma intensely feels a sense of urgency and necessity in fulfilling her desires. Similarly, after having become prostitute, Padma becomes conscious that she can continue in that profession for a short span of time.

3.4.7 Representation of Women in *Manchi...-Chedu...*

We have seen above that the virtuous Hindu woman is one of the central tropes of the nationalist novel. The nationalist novel posited the virtuous Hindu woman as an ideal. Moreover, the woman is viewed as the embodiment of the nation. A good number of scholars have extensively commented on this important dimension. Moreover, many scholars have also pointed to the fact that the question of fashioning the new woman was one of the central projects of nationalism. Uma Chakravarti argues that “the image of an Indian womanhood”³²⁹ is assiduously fashioned in the second half of the nineteenth century. Partha Chatterjee's

³²⁸ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 160 (emphasis added).

³²⁹ Uma Chakravarti, “Whatever Happened to the Vedic *Dasi*? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past,” in *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), 28.

important essay “The Nationalist Resolution of Women’s Question”³³⁰ elaborates the processes that led to the marginalization of women’s issues in the nationalist discourse and movement in the later parts of the nineteenth century.

Similarly, the nationalist novel posited an idealized woman as a role model to emulate. Women characters in nationalist novels are portrayed as extraordinary in their beauty, seductiveness, virtues, and intelligence. Bankim describes one of the central characters in *Durgeshnandini* as “a miraculously beautiful woman”.³³¹ Similarly, after having elaborately described the beauty of the heroine of *Indulekha*, Chandumenon rhetorically asks “can anyone describe the *bewitching* beauty of this Indulekha!”³³² Further, one of the most well-known canonical nationalist novels, *Anandamath*, posits the Hindu Goddess as the nation. This kind of portrayal is highly fetishized and idealized. Furthermore, this kind of fetishization of women indicates the fetishization of the idea of the nation itself.

Now, I want to discuss the representation of women in *Manchi...-Chedu....* Unlike the nationalist novel, the protagonist of this novel is a young woman. The protagonist of the novel, Padma, is portrayed as an ordinary woman. When she is introduced, she is described as a woman of ordinary features. In contrast to the nationalist novel, the portrayal of women in *Manchi...-Chedu...* is not fetishized either in terms of their physical beauty or intelligence or virtue.

We have seen above that Sarada compares Padma with a Hindu woman at a crucial moment of the novel. It is important to understand the context in which he makes this

³³⁰ Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Question of the Women’s Question,” in *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989): 233-53.

³³¹ Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *The Chieftain’s Daughter Durgeshnandini*, trans. Arunava Sinha (Noida: Random House India, 2010), 7.

³³² O. Chandumenon, *Indulekha*, trans. Anitha Devasia (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6 (emphasis added).

comparison. It is in the context of Padma's post-dinner routine of reading of *Dakshayagnam* which extols the virtuous character of goddess Parvathy just before going to the student's room to fulfill her sexual desires. Sarada's comment implies that although she has the qualities of any other virtuous Hindu woman, she has no choice but to have an extra-marital relationship to fulfil her sexual desires. In this manner, Sarada problematises one of the prominent tropes of nationalist ideology. In the context of the above discussion, we fully understand the implication of Sarada's comparison of Padma with any other Hindu woman.

Along with the protagonist, women have a significant place in the movement of the novel. We encounter a good number of women in the novel that include Bhaskararao's widowed aunt, Sudarshanam's daughter, the older woman who tries to trap Padma into prostitution, Venkulu, whose body language Padma finds as reckless, women in the profession of prostitution, and others. Padma gets support from other women in the profession of prostitution in the outside world. In contrast to the characterization of women as desexualized bodies in the nationalist novels, Sarada boldly narrates the sexual desires of Padma. Unlike Nirmala in the social reformist novel, *Nirmala*,³³³ Padma is articulate and vocal about the injustice that she has faced. This is how this novel encounters head-on one of the dominant tropes of the nationalist novel, that is, the mythologization of the nation as a virtuous Hindu wife and mother.

3.4.8 Popular Culture in *Manchi...-Chedu...*

The novel as a genre is not only recognized as one of the most popular of the genres of modernity but is also a part of popular culture. At the same time, the novel also draws on and is also influenced by other forms of popular culture. The mediation of popular culture in the

³³³ The author of *Nirmala* is Premchand. It was first published in Hindi in 1928. Nirmala is married off to a much older widowed person by her mother as she could not afford to give dowry. Premchand, *Nirmala*, trans. Alok Rai (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Western novels has received a great deal of attention from literary scholars.³³⁴ For example, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*³³⁵ is a very famous example to understand the influence of popular culture on the western novel. The protagonist, Emma Bovary, is greatly influenced by books that she has read. The author blames Emma Bovary's reading habits for her euphoria and wishful thinking. *Manchi...-Chedu...* too has the widespread presence of popular culture which includes newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, and movie theatres. It indicates the popularity of new mediums of entertainment then. When Bhaskararao explains the unhappy state of affairs back home to his friend, his friend suggests that one can get some mental relaxation by reading magazines and watching movies. Furthermore, he says that one can get recreation in several ways through the means of money.

Bhaskararao's widowed aunt and step-mother show a good amount of excitement and interest in watching a movie. They also want to see a particular movie, *Swargaseema*. They go and watch it that night itself as that is the last day of the screening. At this point, talkies are still a novelty for certain sections of the audience. For the widowed aunt, this is the first talkie-movie. The last time, she remembers, was when she watched silent movies in the year of *Dhata*.³³⁶ Watching movies is not only an exciting entertainment but it also intimately mediates the imagination of the protagonist. Padma imagines and visualizes the image of laughing Bhaskararao on the moving white curtain of a window. When Padma becomes pregnant, she imagines that her baby will be as beautiful as a "celluloid image".³³⁷

³³⁴ Peggy Blin-Cordon, "High Culture and Popular Culture in *Far from the Madding Crowd*," in *FATHOM: a French e-Journal of Thomas Hardy Studies*, (2019). <https://doi.org/10.4000/fathom.529> (accessed on 03-03-2021)

³³⁵ Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2004).

³³⁶ This is name of a Telugu year as it is specified by *Panchangam* (astronomical calendar). According to this calendar, each era consists of 60 years and each is given a specific name. The New Year starts on the day of *Ugadi* and is given a specific name. The name of the year also characterizes the nature of the year. According to this calendar, *Dhata* years are 1876, 1937, 1997, and 2056.

³³⁷ Sarada, *Manchi...-Chedu...*, 237.

3.5 Progressive Writers' Association and the Question of Realism

At this point, it is necessary to spend some time discussing what realism or realist aesthetics indicates as it is the most recurrent theme on which critical debates and controversies on novels written by authors affiliated with the Progressive Writers' Association have mostly focused on. According to the pre-eminent literary scholar Erich Auerbach, the realist novel is the most important form of the novel that came into existence in the nineteenth century. He identifies the French Revolution as one key factor for the emergence of the realist novel and argues that the realist novel has the distinction of paying attention to the ordinary life of everyday in a very serious manner.³³⁸ Recently, Peter Brooks argued that “our sense of sight is the most reliable guide to the world as it most immediately affects us”.³³⁹ He traces the lineage of this idea to the philosophy of empiricism in general and John Locke in particular. Alex Woloch argues that realism is primarily democratic as it provides “accounting for new histories, under-recognized particularities, emergent subjects”.³⁴⁰ I contend this discussion is by no means exhaustive. However, it gives us an idea of the divergent lineages of modern realism.

Mufti states that various kinds of narratives like *An Autobiography*,³⁴¹ *The Discovery of India*,³⁴² *Untouchable*,³⁴³ and *Godan*³⁴⁴ can be characterized as nationalist narratives as they all have a common object at the centre of them. That common object is nothing but narrating “a secular nationalist consciousness”.³⁴⁵ Both Nehruvian and Progressive

³³⁸ Erich Auerbach, “Romanticism and Realism” in *Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach: Time, History, and Literature*, ed. James I. Porter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 145.

³³⁹ Peter Brooks, *Realist Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 3.

³⁴⁰ Alex Woloch, “Form and Representation in Auerbach’s *Mimesis*,” *Affirmations: of the modern*, 2, no. 1, Winter (2014): 110.

³⁴¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004).

³⁴² Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004).

³⁴³ Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (London: Hutchinson International Authors Limited, 1947).

³⁴⁴ Premchand, *The Gift of a Cow*, trans. Gordon C. Roadarmel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

³⁴⁵ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

ideologues identified it as the “highest form of consciousness possible in a colonial society”.³⁴⁶ To achieve this purpose, they used the means of realism. Further, Mufti argues that the protocols of realism are formulated in the Soviet Writers’ Congress in 1934 and these protocols do undergo mutation when they are transposed to colonial India. In the colonial setting, protocols of realism intend to forge “a specific relationship between writing and the nation”.³⁴⁷ In this context, Mufti argues that it is apt to characterize it as “*national realism*.”³⁴⁸

The close reading of *Manchi...-Chedu...* makes it clear that Mufti’s characterization of the novel fashioned by authors affiliated to the Progressive Writers’ Association has to be qualified. Particularly in the hands of a brutally exploited migrant worker, the novel exposes the shallowness and glibness of the tropes of the nationalist novel. As we have seen above, *Manchi...-Chedu...* is highly critical of the prominent tropes of the nationalist novel at various levels. Sarada skilfully and effectively used the realist mode of novel-writing to propose a critique of the ideology of the nationalist novel. The most dominant and ubiquitous trope of the nationalist novel is the representation of the nation as a virtuous Hindu woman. *Manchi...-Chedu...* encounters head-on the mythologization of the nation as a virtuous mother in the nationalist novel. Furthermore, this novel engages with the effects of reification on social relations.

3.6: Conclusion

Manchi...Chedu... is a path-breaking novel. When it was first serialized in the *Andhra Patrika*, it created a great sensation and enthusiasm in the reading public. It interrogates the ideology of the nationalist novel and proposes a profound ideological critique of it. It

³⁴⁶ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

³⁴⁷ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183.

³⁴⁸ Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 183-184 (emphasis in original).

juxtaposes the trope of the prostitute with that of a virtuous Hindu woman and wife. Furthermore, it shows that the reification of social relations results in treating human beings merely as objects.

Chapter 4

The Progressive Writers' Association and Translations

4.1 Polysystem Theory

It is quite apt to begin this part of the chapter with a discussion of Yuri Tynianov's ideas on the methods of studying literature, as they have played a crucial role in fashioning the polysystem theory. Tynianov questions the rationality of "an individualist psychological approach"³⁴⁹ in explaining the emergence of particular literary texts. This approach tends to attribute the emergence of literary texts to the creativity of individuals. He writes:

Among the disciplines that study culture, literary history continues to languish in the position of a colonial territory. On the one hand, it is ruled to a large extent by an individualist psychological approach (particularly in the West), whereby the question of authorial psychology unjustifiably supplants the question of literature per se, and the *problem of literary evolution* is supplanted by that of the genesis of literature.³⁵⁰

He argues that the study of literature is marred by two extreme forms. One extreme way of studying literature is exclusively focused on great literary figures. This extreme form is driven by "the theory of value".³⁵¹ He finds a problem with attributing value to a particular literary phenomenon transhistorically. Another extreme form of studying literature is exclusively focused on "popular, mass-produced literature"³⁵² without a proper methodology. In order to address the limitations in the methods of studying literature mentioned above, Tynianov proposes that "a literary work is a *system*, and literature is also a *system*".³⁵³ This allows us to understand the interconnections amongst the various elements of both literary work and literature.

³⁴⁹ Yuri Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution: Selected Essays on Literature, Theory and Film* (Brookline MA: Academic Studies Press, 2019), 267 (emphasis added).

³⁵⁰ Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution*, 267 (emphasis added).

³⁵¹ Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution*, 267.

³⁵² Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution*, 267.

³⁵³ Tynianov, *Permanent Evolution*, 268 (emphasis added).

4.1.1 Methodological Innovations of the Polysystem Theory

Itamar Even-Zohar developed the polysystem hypothesis while working on a model for Israeli Hebrew literature. He introduced the term “poly-system” for the aggregate of literary systems. It includes both “high” or “canonized” forms such as poetry and “low” or “non-canonized” forms such as pulp-fiction in a given culture. The polysystem theory proposes that the social norms and literary conventions of the target culture govern the aesthetic presuppositions of the translator.

Polysystem intends to transcend literary borders. To achieve this goal, it studies the semiotics of culture. It introduces a historical horizon into translation theory. In contrast to early translation theories, the polysystem focuses on a comprehensive diachronic description, which would relativize any concept of equivalence. Even-Zohar adopts Tynianov’s concept of a hierarchical literary system and tries to understand how translation functions in various societies to describe the hierarchical cultural system as a whole.³⁵⁴

The polysystem refers to the network of correlated systems—literary and extra-literary—within a society. Even-Zohar stresses the importance of including translated literature in the polysystem. According to him, translations play a major role in the synchrony and diachrony of certain literature. The relationship between translated works and the literary polysystem is variable and depends upon the specific circumstances operating within the literary system. Translation would maintain a primary position when a literature is “young” or “peripheral” or both. Even-Zohar explores the relationship between the translated texts and the literary polysystem along two lines: (a) How texts to be translated are selected by the

³⁵⁴ Edwin Gentzler, “Polysystem Theory and Translation Studies” in *Contemporary Translation Theories*, (London: Routledge, 1993), 114.

receiving culture and (b) How translated texts adopt certain norms and functions as a result of their relation to other target language systems.

4.1.2 Positive Aspects of the Polysystem Theory

The polysystem integrates the study of literature with the study of the social and economic forces of history. The revised polysystem theory considers extra-literary factors such as patronage, social conditions, economics, and institutional manipulation in the translation process. It shows the importance of translation within the larger context of literary studies and in the evolution of culture in general. Even-Zohar's system is not text-specific and does not analyse individual texts isolated from their cultural context. The polysystem theory assumes that the text is never totally autonomous and is involved in a multitude of relationships with other elements of other systems. It embeds translated literature into a larger cultural context.

4.2 Enchantment with the Genre of the Novel in the Telugu Literary Sphere

At the turn of the twentieth century, Telugu intellectuals wanted to introduce the genres that were not in existence in the Telugu literary culture. While explaining the style of *Kanyasulkam*, Gurajada writes, "Dramatic style is, no doubt, determined to some extent by usage, but the *absence of any real dramatic literature* in Telugu, leaves a writer free to adopt that outward form which he deems most appropriate for the presentation of his ideas".³⁵⁵

The novel as a genre fascinated Telugu readers in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Native intellectuals tended to compare the novel with the *Prabandham* (poetic-narrative). Ramayya writes:

The best analogue of the Prabandham in English literature is the novel. In both the subject matter is the ante-nuptial love of a hero and a heroine called Nayakudu and Nayaki in Telugu.

³⁵⁵ Apparao, *Gurujadalu*, 127 (original in English) (emphasis added).

As in the novel, so in the Prabandham, the hero and the heroine are grown up persons capable of loving and being loved.³⁵⁶

Telugu intellectuals started writing various kinds of Telugu novels in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. At the same time, they were very keen to translate novels from other literary cultures. Bankim's novels were translated into Telugu in the early decades of the twentieth century. *Durgeshanandini* was translated into Telugu in 1911.³⁵⁷ Another translation of *Durgeshanandini* was published in 1916.³⁵⁸ Intriguingly enough, they did not mention the name of the translator. In the "preface", the publishers state:

As announced earlier, we started publishing novels gradually. We publish one novel for every three months.... We are the first to translate Bankim's novels into Telugu in the world of Andhra. We published *Anandamath* in 1907. By that time, no one had published the translations of Bankim. Eventually, we published *Unmadini*, *Radharani*, and *Seetaramam*. We have had the aim of making available all the novels of Bankim to the world of Andhra.... Now onwards, not only will we translate all the novels of Bankim, we also made arrangements to publish the translations of the famous novels from Hindi, Karnata, English and Bengali languages gradually.³⁵⁹

Bankim's novels enchanted the Telugu readers. Particularly, the historical novels of Bankim became extremely influential in the Telugu literary public sphere of the early twentieth century. In the "Avatarika" (Preface) to the translation of *Durgeshnandini*, the editor writes:

The novel—it is an enchanting prose-kavya(poetic narrative). As these kinds of works were not in existence in our language, we have to take the name of the "novel" from the language

³⁵⁶ Ramayya, *An Essay on Telugu Language and Literature*, 27.

³⁵⁷ Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, *Durgeshnandini*, trans. Changanti Sessaiah (Tanuku: Andhara Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911).

³⁵⁸ Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Durgesa Nandany* (Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 1916).

³⁵⁹ V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu and Sons, "Peetika" (preface) in *Durgesa Nandany*, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 1916), iii (my translation).

of English.... These kinds of works are very enchanting to the hearts of its readers.... These valuable works are available in a very limited number in our language. But, in teaching morals and for the sake of the development of the nation and language, these novels are very essential.³⁶⁰

The above-mentioned quote expresses some of the overarching concerns of intellectuals in the early twentieth century. Publishers appreciated the fact that the word novel was borrowed from English. They also expressed their view that novels would be helpful not only in teaching morals but also in “the development of the nation and language”. Chalam, a very prominent literary figure of the twentieth century, identifies himself as one of the harbingers of “new channels of thought, and path of art”.³⁶¹ Furthermore, he writes:

I introduced the best of French and Russian stories and plays in the Telugu language. Till now, after Scott, nothing has come from the trends of Western literature. I wrote some good literature. But my technique and ideas represent the Western ethos. So, they would not flourish in our land.... The value of my books would be decided by the way our country is going to transform politically and socially. Like Turkey, if our country imitates Europe both in thoughts and actions, I will be greatly eulogized. If it does not happen, I am not going to have any place. But, I articulated the ways of many individuals in the form of art.³⁶²

Choragudi Johnson narrates an interesting event in his *Mana Vijayawada* (Our Vijayawada). The event is related to the translation and publication of Gorky’s *Mother* by Gadde Lingaiah. As there were restrictions on the translation of Russian literature, publishers had to publish *Mother* surreptitiously in the late 1930s. However, it became hugely popular in

³⁶⁰ Ayyagari Narayana Murthy, “Avatariaka” in *Durgeshnandini*, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, trans. Changanti Seshaiiah (Tanuku: Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911), 3–4 (my translation).

³⁶¹ Arudra, *Samgra Andhra Sahityam*, 560 (English in original).

³⁶² Arudra, *Samgra Andhra Sahityam*, 560–561(my translation).

the Telugu public sphere. 1,000 copies were sold within a single month.³⁶³ This incident indicates the popularity of translations in the Telugu literary sphere.

4.3 The Progressive Writers' Association's Translation Initiatives

Earlier, we saw that a novel written by a writer associated with the Progressive Writers' Association became immensely popular in the Telugu public sphere. Here, I want to discuss the translation initiatives of the Progressive Writers' Association.

Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881) is recognized as one of the most influential novelists of the twentieth century. His novels were translated into various European languages in the early decades of the twentieth century and created “a Dostoevsky mania across Europe”.³⁶⁴ Interestingly, Western readers believed that there were Orientalist elements in Dostoevsky's novels. Dostoevsky's works were viewed “as offering a quintessentially ‘Russian’ soulfulness that counterbalanced ‘cold ‘Western’ rationalism’”.³⁶⁵ His *Crime and Punishment* was translated into Telugu with the title, *Neram-Siksha*³⁶⁶ in 1958.

³⁶³ Choragudi Johnson, *Mana Vijayawada* (Our Vijayawada) (Vijayawada: Krihsnaveni Prachuranalu, 2015), 20–21.

³⁶⁴ Richard Westerman, “From Myshkin to Marxism: the Role of Dostoevsky Reception in Lukacs's Revolutionary Ethics,” *Modern Intellectual History*, 16, no. 3, 2019, 928.

³⁶⁵ Westerman, “From Myshkin to Marxism,” 929.

³⁶⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Neram-Siksha*, trans. Sivam (Hyderabad: Visalandhra Publishing House, 2010).

Conclusion

The two decades 1940s and 1950s were very significant in the history of colonial and post-colonial Andhra. Politically, this period witnessed the emergence of Andhra as the first linguistic state in independent India. Similarly, the Telugu literary sphere witnessed developments that have had their influence till date. Unquestionably, Progressive Writers' Association played a decisive role in shaping the literary discourse, genres and tastes in this period. It conducted literary schools in order to train authors from underprivileged backgrounds. Its activities groomed individuals from ordinary backgrounds and helped them to emerge as significant literary figures. However, individuals associated with Progressive Writers' Association faced severe state repression

This period also witnessed the emergence of novel, the pre-eminent genre of literary modernity, as the dominant genre in the Telugu literary public sphere. The popularity of the genre novel cannot simply be attributed to the imitation of Western modernity. Writers experimented with wide range techniques in writing novels. The popularity of the translations of the novels from divergent literary cultures underscores the popularity of the genre of novel in the Telugu public sphere. Kaviraj argues that modernity brings radical shifts in the moral imagination of individuals. These radical shifts are effectively mediated by literary texts.

Natarajan's brief and abbreviated literary career illustrates the new possibilities that the Telugu public sphere has opened to individuals from ordinary backgrounds. However, his untimely death at the prime of his life and literary journey indicates the wretched conditions that authors were exposed to. His *Manchi...-Chedu...* is a unique novel as it

engages with the effects of capitalist modernity and the phantasmagoria of the triumphant Indian nationalism under the leadership of Indian National Congress. Natarajan used the realist mode to write this novel and became successful in enchanting the Telugu literary public sphere. Although Progressive Writers' Movement was very successful in the Telugu public sphere, this movement faced brutal repression in hands of the Government under the leadership of Indian National Congress.

Bibliography

- Aadinarayana Sastri, Panchagnula. "Andhra Literature-Its History and Tradition," *Prathiba: Navya Saahitya Parishat Patrika* 1, no. 1 (1936): 2-22.
- Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam. "Prakatana" (Notice) in Durgeshnandini, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, trans. Chaganti Seshiah. Tanuku: Andhra Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911: 1.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Ahmed, Talat. *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Writers' Movement in South Asia, 1932-56*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2009.
- Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Hutchinson International Authors Limited, 1947.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso, 2006.
- Ansari, M. T. *Islam and Nationalism in India: South Indian Contexts*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Apparao, Gurajada. *Gurujadalu: Mahakavi Gurajada Apparao Samagra Rachanlu* (Complete Works of Great Poet Gurajada Apparao), edited by Pennepalli Gopalakrishna. Hyderabad: Emesco, 2012.
- _____. "Minute of Dissent," In *Gurujadalu: Mahakavi Gurajada Apparao Samagra Rachanlu* (Complete Works of Great Poet Gurajada Apparao), edited by Pennepalli Gopalakrishna, 1253-1396. (Hyderabad: Emesco, 2012),
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Arudra, *Samgra Andhra Sahityam: Zamindari Navya Sahitya Yugalu Nalgava Samputi*. (Complete Andhra Literature: Zamindari and New Ages, Volume. 4) Hyderabad: Telugu Akademi, 2017
- Ashar, Meera. "Show or Tell? Instruction and Representation in Govardhanram's Saraswatichandra." *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 03(2016): 1019-1049.

Auerbach, Erich. "Romanticism and Realism" In *Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach: Time, History, and Literature*. Edited by James I. Porter, 144-156. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Bakhle, Janaki. "Country First? Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) and the Writing of Essentials of Hindutva." *Public Culture* 22, no. 01 (2010): 149-186.

Balibar, Etienne. *The Philosophy of Marx*. Updated New Edition. London: Verso, 2017.

Banaji, Jairus. "Capitalist Domination and the Small Peasantry: The Deccan Districts in the Late Nineteenth Century." In *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation*, 277-332. Delhi: Aakar Books, 2013.

Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar. *Decolonizing in South Asia: Meanings of Freedom in Post-independence West Bengal, 1947-52*. Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2009.

Bapiraju, Adivi. *Narayanarao*. Hyderabad: Visalandhara Publishing House, 2010.

Benhabib, Seyla. "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jurgen Habermas." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 73-98. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

Benhabib, Seyla. *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

Benjamin, Walter. "Goethe's Elective Affinities." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 1913-1926* (Volume-1), edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings, 297-360. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996.

_____. *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

Bernheimer, Charles. *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Bhabha, Homi K. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation." In *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi K. Bhabha, 291-322. London: Routledge, 1990.

_____. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

_____. "Bombay." in *The Novel: Forms and Themes* (Volume-2), edited by Franco Moretti, 721-727. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Bilgrami, Akeel. *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014.

Blin-Cordon, Peggy "High Culture and Popular Culture in *Far from the Madding Crowd*." *FATHOM: a French e-Journal of Thomas Hardy Studies*, (2019):1-9. <https://doi.org/10.4000/fathom.529> (accessed on 03-03-2021).

Bose, Sugata. *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics 1919-1947*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Brennan, Timothy. "The National Longing for Form." In *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi K. Bhabha, 44-70. London: Routledge, 1990.

Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative: Design and Intention in Narrative*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.

_____. *Realist Vision*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Brubaker, Rogers. *The Limits of Rationality: An Essay on the Social and Moral Thought of Max Weber*. London: Routledge, 1984.

Buck-Morss, Susan. "The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering." *New German Critique* 39, (Autumn, 1986): 99-140.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. London: Penguin Classics, 1998.

Cascardi, Anthony J. *The Subject of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh et al. *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Chakraborty, Chandrima. *Masculinity, Asceticism, Hinduism: Past and Present Imaginings of India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2011.

Chakravarti, Uma. "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past." In *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 27-87. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989.

Chandumenon, O. *Indulekha*. Translated by Anitha Devasia. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Chatterjee, Bankim Chandra. *Durgesa Nandany*. Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 1916.

Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nationlist Question of the Women's Question," In *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*. Edited by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 233-253. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989.

_____. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

_____. 1999. "Anderson's Utopia," *Diacritics*, 29, 4: 128-134.

_____. "The Nation in Heterogeneous Time." *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 38, 4(2001): 399-418.

_____. *Lineages of Political Society*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011.

Chattopadhyay, Bankimchandra. *The Chieftain's Daughter Durgeshnandini*. Translated by Arunava Sinha. Noida: Random House India, 2010.

Cattopadhyay, Bankim Chandra. *Durgeshnandini*. Translated by Changanti Sessaiah. (Tanuku: Andhara Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911).

Cohen, Jean L. and Andrew Arato. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

Collins, Steven. *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Daeschel, Markus. *The Politics of Self-Expression: The Urdu Middle-class Milieu In Mid-twentieth Century India And Pakistan*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Dalmia, Vasudha. *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010.

_____. *Fiction as History: The Novel and the City in Modern North India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2017.

Devji, Faisal. "Apologetic Modernity." *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 01(2007): 61-76.

Devji, Faisal. *The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptations of Violence*. London: C. Hurst & Co, 2012.

Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Translated by Richard Peace. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

_____. *Neram-Siksha*. Translated by Sivam. Hyderabad: Visalandhra Publishing House, 2010.

Editor. "Rachaita 'Sarada,'" (Author Sarada) *Andhra Patrika*, 47, no. 47 (1954).

Editors. *The Kavitha: A Monthly Literary Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1910): i.

Even-Zohar, Itamar. "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem." *Poetics Today*, 11, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 45-51.

Faisal Devji. *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Feenberg, Andrew. *The Philosophy of Praxis: Marx, Lukacs, and the Frankfurt School*. London: Verso, 2014.

Flaubert, Gustave. *Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners*. Translated by Margaret Mauldon. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2004.

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 109-142. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

Friedlander, Eli. *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Geertz, Clifford. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States." In *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, edited by Clifford Geertz, 105-157. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1963.

Gentlzer, Edwin. "Polysystem Theory and Translation Studies." In *Contemporary Translation Theories*. 105-143. London: Routledge, 1993.

Gopal, Priyamvada. *Literary Radicalism: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2005.

Gluck, Mary. "The Flaneur and the Aesthetic Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid Nineteenth-Century Paris." *Theory, Culture and Society* 20, no. 5 (2003): 53-80.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Note Books of Antonio Gramsci*. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1996.

Habermas, Jurgen. "Modernity's Consciousness of Time and Its Need for Self-Reassurance." In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Translated by Frederick Lawrence, 1-22. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990.

_____. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992.

Hansen, Miriam Bratu. *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno*. Berkely: University of California Press, 2012.

Harootunian, Harry. *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Questions of Everyday Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

_____. *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

_____. *Marx after Marx: History and Time in the Expansion of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

_____. *Uneven Moments: Reflections on Japan's Modern History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

Hegde, Sasheej. "Is Modernity and unnatural Construct?" In *Marx, Gandhi and Modernity: Essays Presented to Javeed Alam*, edited by Akeel Bilgrami, 13-30. New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2014.

Hugo, Victor. *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Translated by John Sturrock. London: Penguin Books, 2004.

Jaganatha Rao, Bamidipati. *Manchi...-Chedu...*, *Sakshi*, 5, 2012.

Jalal, Ayesha. *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Jalil, Rakhshanda. *Liking Progress, Loving Change: A Literary History of the Progressive Writers' Movement in Urdu*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

_____. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text*, 15 (Autumn, 1986): 65-88.

_____. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge, 2012.

_____. *The Antinomies of Realism*. London: Verso, 2015.

JanMohamed, Abdul R. *The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology of Death*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Johnson, Choragudi. *Mana Vijayawada (Our Vijayawada)*. Vijayawada: Krihsnaveni Prachuranalu, 2015.

Joshi, Priya. *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India*. New York: Columbia, 2002.

Joshi, Sanjay. *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Joshi, Sanjay. "India's Middle Class," 2, oxfordre.com, accessed on 22 April 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.179>.

Kaviraj, Sudipta. *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

_____. *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010.

_____. "Literature and the Moral Imagination of Modernity." In *The Invention of Private Life*. 22-39. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2014.

_____. "Nationalism." In *The Oxford Companion to Politics in India* edited by Niraja Gopal Jayal et al., 317-332. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015.

_____. "Marx and Postcolonial Thinking." *Constellations* 25, no. 1 (2018): 3-17.

Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Koselleck, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tibe. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Krishnarao, K. R. V. *The Progress of Telugu Literature*. Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1896).

Krishna Sastri, Devulapalli. *Krishnapaksham*. Hyderabad: Navachethana Publishing House, 2019.

Kumar, Aishwary. *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi and the Risk of Democracy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.

Kumar, Aishwary. "Can the Sovereign Gift? Gandhi's Maryada and the Moral Law." *Contemporary South Asia* 25, no. 04 (2017): 415-22.

Lakshmi Narasimham, Chilakhamarthi. *Ramachandra Vijayam* (The Victory of Ramachandra). Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1895.

Loomba, Ania. *Revolutionary Desires: Women, Communism, and Feminism in India*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Lukács, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. London: Merlin Press, 1988.

_____. *Soul and Form*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

_____. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Delhi: Aakar Books, 2016.

Majeed, Javed. *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*. Delhi: Routledge, 2009.

_____. "Literary Modernity in South Asia." in *India and the British Empire*, edited by Douglas M. Peers and Nandini Gooptu, 262-283. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Manjapra, Kris. *M. N. Roy: Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2010.

Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Volume-1). London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1993.

Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

Menon, Dilip M. "Caste and Colonial Modernity: Reading *Saraswativijayam*." *Studies in History* 13, no. 02 (1997): 291-312.

_____. "Lost Visions? Imagining a National Culture in the 1950s." in *Daniel Thorner Memorial Lectures: Land, Labour, & Rights*, edited by Alice Thorner, 250-268. New Delhi: Tulika, 2001.

Mitchell, Lisa. *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009.

Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso, 2000.

_____. *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900*. London: Verso, 2015.

Mufti, Aamir R. *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

_____. *Forget English! Orientalism and World Literatures*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.

_____, ed. 2002. *Early Novels in India*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

Nagaraju, S. "Emergence of Regional Identity and Beginnings of Vernacular Literature: A Case Study of Telugu." *Social Scientist* 23, no. 10-12 (1995): 8-23.

Narayana Murthy, Ayyagari. "Avatariaka." in *Durgeshnandini*, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, translated by Changanti Sessaiah, 3-4. Tanuku: Andhara Pracharini Grantha Nilayam, 1911.

Narayanarao, Velcheru. *Telugulo Kavita Vipalavala Svarupam*. (The Structure of Poetic Revolutions in Telugu). Illinois: Taanaa Prachuranalu, 2008.

Naregal, Veena. *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere: Western India under Colonialism*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001.

Natarajan, S. "Naa Dainika Samasyalu." (My Everyday Problems) *Telugu Swatantra* (Telugu Independence) 1, no. 29 (1949): 41.

_____. "Rachaitalku Pratipalam Evvakapovato Garhyam." (Not giving remuneration to writers is condemnable) In *Abudaya: Arasam Edupadula Prastanam* (Progress: Seventy Years Journey of the PWA), edited by Saratchandra Jyothisri et al., 33. Hyderabad: Visalandhra Publishing House, 2013.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004.

_____. *The Discovery of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004.

Orsini, Francesca. *The Hindi Public Sphere: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010.

_____. "Foreword." in *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras*, Vasudha Dalmia, xiii-xvii. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010.

Osborne, Peter. *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*. London: Verso, 1995.

_____. "Modernism and Philosophy," In *The Handbook of Modernisms*, edited by Peter Booker et. al, 388-409. London: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Padikkal, Shivarama. "Inventing Modernity: The Emergence of the Novel in India." In *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, edited by Tejaswini Niranjana et. al., 220-241. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1993.

Pare, Shveta Vyas. "Writing Fiction, Living History: Kanhaiyalal Munshi's Historical Trilogy." *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 03 (2014): 596-616.

Postone, Moishe. *Time, Labor and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Premchand, *The Gift of a Cow*. Translated by Gordon C. Roadarmel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Premchand. *Nirmala*. Translated by Alok Rai. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Radhakrishna, Budaraju. "Adhunikā Yugam: Granthika Vyavaharika Vadamu." (Modern Age: Debates between Literary and Spoken) In *Telugu Basha Charitra* (History of the Telugu Language), edited by Bhadriraju Krishnamurti, 259-288. Hyderabad: Potti Sriramulu Telugu Viswavidyalayam, 2018.

Raghuramaraju, Adluri. *Maidanam Lothuloki...: Postmodern Pariseelana* (Deep Inside Maidanam: A Postmodern Assessment). Vijayawada: Emesco Books, 2003.

_____. ed., *Debating Vivekananda: A Reader*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Rajagopal, Vakulabharanam. "Fashioning Modernity in Telugu: Viresalingam and His Interventionist Strategy." *Studies in History* 21, no. 1 (2005): 45-77.

Ramachendrudu, Khandavilli. *Dharmavateevilasam* (The Glory of Dharmavati). Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1894.

Ramakrishna, V. "Literary and Theatre Movement in Colonial Andhra: Struggle for Left Ideological Legitimacy." *Social Scientist* 21, no. 1 and 2 (1993): 69-85.

Ramasundari, Mantena. "Vernacular Futures: Colonial Philology and the Idea of History in Nineteenth Century South-India." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 42, no. 04 (2005): 513-534.

_____. "Vernacular Publics and Political Modernity: Language and Progress in Colonial South India," *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 05 (2013): 1678-1705.

Ramaswamy Sastrulu and Sons, V. "Peetika." (preface) in *Durgesa Nandany*, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, iii-iv. Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 1916.

Ramaswamy, Sumathi. *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

_____. *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India*. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2011.

Ramayya, J. *An Essay on Telugu Language and Literature*. Vizagapatam: S. S. M. Press, 1896.

Reddy, Gautham. "The Andhra Sahitya Parishat: Language, Nation and Empire in Colonial South India." *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 56, no. 03(2019): 283-310.

Reddy, Srinivas. *Giver of the Worn Garland: Krishnadevraya's Amktamalyada*. New Delhi: Penguin Books of India, 2010.

Rook-Koepsel, Emily Esther. "Unity, Democracy and the All India Phenomenon, 1940-1956." PhD diss. University of Minnesota, 2010.

Sarada. *Manchi...-Chedu...(Good-Evil)* In *Sarada Rachanalu* (Sarada's Works). 147-284. Vijayawada: Visalandhra Publishing House, 2015.

_____. *Sarada Sahityam: Kathalu, Galphikalu, Lekhalu Letters* (Sarada's Literature: Stories, Sketches, Letters), ed. Vallur Siva Prasad et al. Guntur: Andhra Pradesh Abudaya Rachaitala Sangham, 2020).

Sarkar, Sumit. *Writing Social History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Sarkar, Tanika. 2001. *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Sartori, Andrew. *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Satyanarayana, A. *Andhra Peasants under British Rule: Agrarian Relations And the Rural Economy 1900-1940*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1990.

_____. *Society, Economy and Polity in Modern Andhra*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2007.

Sevea, Iqbal Singh. *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Sharma, Shalini. "'Yeh azaadi jhooti hai!': The Shaping Of the Opposition In the First Year Of the Congress Raj." *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 05, (September, 2014): 1358-1388.

Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2006.

Shingavi, Snehal. "Agyeya's Unfinished Revolution: Sexual and Social Freedom in *Shekhar: Ek Jivani*." *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies* 39, no. 03 (2016): 577-591.

Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Nationalism and the Imagination*. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2015.

Sriramulu, Gattupalli. *Sri Chandanalatika Anu Jayakantha*. Guntur: Sri Sammodhini Granthamala, 1916.

Stark, Ulrike. *An Empire of Books: The naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008.

Suryanarayana, Tallapragada. *Sanjeevarayacharitra* (The History of Sanjeevaraya). Rajahmundry: Chintamani Series, 1894.

Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Tynianov, Yuri. *Permanent Evolution: Selected Essays on Literature, Theory and Film*. edited & translated by Alinsley Morse and Philip Redko. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019.

Venkatachalapathy, A. R. *Who Owns That Song? The Battle for Subramania Bharati's Copyright*. New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2018.

Venkata Ramamurti, Gidugu. *A Memorandum on Modern Telugu*. Hyderabad: Vedagiri Communications, 2012.

Washbrook, David. "The Rhetoric of Democracy and Development in Late Colonial India," In *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*, edited by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, 36-49. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Weber, Eugen. *Peasants into French Men*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976.

Westerman, Richard. "From Myshkin to Marxism: The Role of Dostoevsky Reception in Lukács's Revolutionary Ethics" *Modern Intellectual History* 16, no. 03 (2019): 927-60.

_____. *Lukács's Phenomenology of Capitalism: Reification Revisited*. Gewerbestrasse: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Wiemann, Dirk. *Genres of Modernity: Contemporary Indian Novels in English*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.

Wolin, Richard. *Walter Benjamin, an Aesthetic of Redemption*. California: University of California Press, 1994.

Woloch, Alex. "Form and Representation in Auerbach's *Mimesis*," *Affirmations: of the modern* 2, no. 1, Winter (2014): 110-127.

Wright, Erik Olin. *Classes*. London: Verso, 1997.

Zaret, David. "Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 212-235. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

Zola, Emile. *Nana*. Translated by George Holden. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Course: Ph.D.
Subject: Translation Studies 1897

Month & Year: April, 2016
Semester: II

Sl. No.	Regn.No.	Name of the Student	Course No. Credits - 4	Course No. Credits - 4	Course No. Credits - 4	Course No. Credits - 4	Course No. Credits - 4	Course No. Credits - 4	Course No. Credits - 4
			TS- 801	TS- 803	TS- 821	TS- 831	TS-832	TS-836	TS-871
1	12HAPT01	PRAGYA SENGUPTA	PASS	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
2	12HAPT02	LEVIN MARY JACOB	PASS	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
3	13HAPT01	RENU ELZA VARKEY	PASS	-	-	PASS	-	-	-
4	13HAPT02	APARNA JITH	-	-	-	PASS	-	-	-
5	13HAPT03	G.BALAJI	-	-	-	PASS	-	-	-
6	14HAPT01	KRISHNA PRIYA S	PASS	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
7	14HAPT03	RAJKUMAR	-	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
8	14HAPT07	THOUDAM JOMITA DEVI	PASS	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
9	14HAPT08	SOUMYA SAJAN	PASS	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
10	15HAPT04	LAVANYA NEMANA	PASS	-	PASS	PASS	-	-	-
11	15HAPT05	SHASHI KUMAR G.K	-	-	-	PASS	-	-	-
✓ 12	10HAPT06	RAJASHEKHARA M M	PASS	-	PASS	-	PASS	-	-
13	12HAPT03	DEEPA V.	PASS	-	PASS	-	-	-	-
14	14HAPT09	SOUMITA DAS	PASS	-	PASS	-	-	PASS	-
15	15HAPT08	NIVEA THOMAS	PASS	-	PASS	-	-	-	-
16	10HAPT02	K.EMMANUEL BABU	PASS	PASS	PASS	-	-	-	-
17	13HAPT04	JAYA RAO K	PASS	PASS	-	-	-	-	-
18	10HAPT04	GATLA PRAVEEN	PASS	PASS	PASS	-	-	-	-
19	11HAPT03	BHIMASENA BHOL	-	-	-	-	-	-	PASS

Head
Centre for A.L.T.S.
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad 500046

20-5-16
Controller of Examinations
University of Hyderabad

<u>Course No.</u>	<u>Title of the Course</u>
TS- 801	Research Methodology
TS- 803	Technologies for Language Documentation
TS- 821	The Topic Related to be offered by the Concerned Supervisor
TS -831	Academic Writing
TS- 832	Modern Sociological Theory
TS- 836	Understanding & Analyzing Television & its Audience
TS- 871	Post-colonial Translation & Theory

Dated: 19.05.2016

Adhnam 30-5-16
Controller of Examinations

Copy to:
Head Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies

IMPACT FACTOR: 5.47

ISSN 2278 - 9529



GALAXY

INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH JOURNAL

**Refereed and Peer-Reviewed
Open Access e-Journal**

Vol. X, Issue-3 (May 2021)

Editor-In-Chief : Dr. Vishwanath Bite
Managing Editor : Dr. Madhuri Bite



www.galaxyimrj.com

About Us: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/about-us/>
Archive: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/archive/>
Contact Us: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/contact-us/>
Editorial Board: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/editorial-board/>
Submission: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/submission/>
FAQ: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/faq/>



Marxism and Novel

Rajasekharam. Mallipudi
Ph.D. Student,
Translation Studies,
University of Hyderabad.

Article History: Submitted-10/04/2021, Revised-22/05/2021, Accepted-24/05/2021, Published-05/06/2021.

Abstract:

In this article, I want to elaborate how Marxism as philosophical and political project engages with literature in general and the genre of Novel in particular. Recently, Marx is accused of Eurocentric bias by postcolonial scholars. I want to discuss the validity of the claims of postcolonial scholars apropos Marxism in detail. Karl Marx (1818-1883) was the founding figure of a new intellectual tradition named Marxism and was recognized as one of the most influential philosopher and social theorists in the twentieth century. Etienne Balibar argues that the ideas elaborated by Marx have great contemporary relevance too.ⁱ

Keywords: Orientalism, Novel, Marxism, Modernism, Postcolonial theory.

Introduction

Good number of Marxists, including Karl Marx, wrote on literature. Marx himself was greatly interested in a wide range of literature like ancient Greek plays, Shakespeare's plays, French novels and others and extensively used themes and tropes from them in his philosophic and political works. Although he had not written any full-length treatise elaborating the principles of studying literature, he made very pertinent theoretical formulations on the connection between different art-forms and their context at different points in his writings. He argued,

It is recognized that where . . . the epic, for example . . . is concerned, certain significant creations within the compass of art are possible only at *an early stage of artistic development*. If this is the case with regard to different branches of art within the sphere of the arts, it is not so remarkable that this should also be the case with regard to *the whole artistic realm and its relation to the general development of the society*.ⁱⁱ

Novel, Progressive Writers' Movement and the Telugu Public Sphere: The Literary Journey of S. Natarajan

by Rajasekharam Mallipudi

Submission date: 29-Jul-2021 04:09PM (UTC+0530)

Submission ID: 1625401381

File name: Rajasekharam-thesis.pdf (595.34K)

Word count: 38312

Character count: 204554

Novel, Progressive Writers' Movement and the Telugu Public Sphere: The Literary Journey of S. Natarajan

ORIGINALITY REPORT

2%

SIMILARITY INDEX

1%

INTERNET SOURCES

1%

PUBLICATIONS

1%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

westfieldcomics.com

Internet Source

<1%

2

epdf.pub

Internet Source

<1%

3

RAMA SUNDARI MANTENA. "Vernacular Publics and Political Modernity: Language and Progress in Colonial South India", Modern Asian Studies, 2013

Publication

<1%

4

tempsyndromelive.files.wordpress.com

Internet Source

<1%

5

"Public Space, Media Space", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2013

Publication

<1%

6

www.scribd.com

Internet Source

<1%

7

silo.pub

Internet Source

<1%

8	digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu Internet Source	<1 %
9	eprints.lancs.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
10	Ray Utsa. "Consumption and the Making of the Middle-Class in South Asia", History Compass, 2014 Publication	<1 %
11	es.scribd.com Internet Source	<1 %
12	bib.convdocs.org Internet Source	<1 %
13	jan.ucc.nau.edu Internet Source	<1 %
14	Lawson, Stephanie. "Global Politics", OUP Oxford, 2021 Publication	<1 %
15	Gunaratne, S. A.. "Public Sphere and Communicative Rationality: Interrogating Habermas's Eurocentrism", Journalism & Communication Monographs, 2006. Publication	<1 %

Exclude quotes

On

Exclude matches

< 14 words