

Indian Fiction in English
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Lecture - 07
Rajmohan's Wife to Kanthapura

So what will do today is take a very brief look at Rajmohan's wife; we are not looking at the plot structure; we are not looking at the text at all. Just to show you what the novel look like in the late 19th century. Basically, when it began to emerge and how it changed by the time you know the actual flowering the actual emergence happens in 1930s with the triumvirate Raja Rao Anand and R. K. Narayan, right.

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Interest in *Rajmohan's Wife*

- o Rajmohan's Wife: The First Indian English Novel
 - o From Perishable Empire, Meenakshi Mukherjee
 - o P.30-49
- o Introduction to the novel by Meenakshi Mukherjee
- o Preface by Brajendra Nath Banerji

So that is been very little critical interest as far as this novel Rajmohan's wife is concerned. And (()) (00:50) little we find is you know, we can mostly attitude to the writing is a Meenakshi Mukherjee. She is the one who wrote the introduction to the later editions of the novel. She is also one who wrote fairly an essay length work on Rajmohan's wife looking at it from a mostly from a historical perspective from a cultural social cultural perspective, yeah.

And who is the fellow Brajendra Nath Banerji? What is his connection with Bankim Chandra's novel? There is an entire preface that he has written, a very big preface. You see this page with this preface to the novel this novel in fact was first serialized in 1864 when it came out it was a serialized and only in 1935 was it published in a book form which is like you know, given the

time lag it is pretty late in the, like early 20th century it is pretty late given the time lag from 1864 to 1935.

And it is not as if you know the novel enjoyed any kind of success a commercial success or it enjoyed wider readership. But nevertheless they said that compared to many other novels of those times it is a highly readable novel that is a plot structure which you can follow that is something you can relate with, yeah. So that is Brajendra Nath Banerji is the one who is supposedly you know who took care of those missing links the gaps in the novel.

Published book long edition in 1935, the novel was incomplete as a Bankim Chandra had left it so he had also you know taken care of all those missing aspects and missing links as well, yeah. So this was neglected in such a way that—

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Neglected novel

- o “Out of the 75 essays included in the massive 700-page centenary volume Bankimchandra: Essays in Perspective published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1994, not one focuses on Rajmohan’s Wife”
- o ‘False start’
- o Serialized in 1864 – as a book in 1935

Meenakshi Mukherjee writes in her work, “Out of the 75 essays included in the massive 700-page centenary volume Bankim Chandra: Essays in Perspective published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1994, not one focuses on Rajmohan's wife.”

And this work has generally been seen as a ‘False start’ for BankimChandra. **“Professor - student conversation starts”** Why was it seen seemed as false start? Yeah, as a rest of the work also enjoyed Hema lasting position Bengali literature but this work was neglected, it was-- not

one of it, it was not seen as one of his commendable work that too for a very long time.
“Professor - student conversation ends”

Even today when you look at it, it is mostly in terms of historical archival interest though Meenakshi Mukherjee also tries to do a different kind of reading with it. But otherwise when we talk about Indian Fiction in English it is very unlikely that one would find this novel interesting to discuss, yeah that it could be for you know the limitations which were part of the (()) 03:41) which was a very (()) (03:42) then it was just beginning to emerge. She was also experiment to get some level.

So-- but anyway Meenakshi Mukherjee looks at the novel in a very different way all together. Even if we are not interested in the novel parse I encourage you to take a look at that essay which she writes about Rajmohan's wife the first novel. Because the way she is been able to vive in the lot of things and using this novel as an entry point that is you know, in terms of a methodology in terms of the narrative and the argument that she is building a bits good too follow those.

So I just like know she does with most of her other essays what she does is she begins to focus on the genealogy of the novel. She says, it is very important to trace a genealogy because it would not be entirely right to see this always is an offshoot always as by-product of colonial modernity alone.

And in terms of in a complicated ideas of modernity; complicating the ideas of empires, I mean I do not know how many of you aware had attended yesterday's day before yesterday's keynote address, the last keynote addresses part of a conference, yeah so she was also in telling is extensively about we need to focus on the other kinds of modernity the other kinds of colonial interventions which when available directly.

Though Meenakshi Mukherjee is not directly engaged with those sorts of alternatives. I think for a larger reading it is also important to be alert to the possibility of different kinds of modernity is available. So here in Meenakshi Mukherjee work we also find some of the initial steps been

taken to move away from the only way of looking at Indian English Novel as your offshoot or the by-product of British colonial modernity.

She also gives a very interesting description for the novel. (05:30) shaped in India by the contending pulls the colonial education and Indigenous traditions of storytelling. And these are indigenous traditions of storytelling we find some of it getting reflected in manifested in Rajmohan's wife and also getting extensively used in Kanthapura as well as narrative techniques. So even when a Meenakshi Mukherjee (05:50) was neglected novel and now maybe we do not have much of an interest in the novel except for the archival historical interest.

She gives four specific reasons to go back to the novel again. First of all, it is, in terms of its approaches, it is a realistic novel. So its realism in the representation of East Bengal and she says you know, this has been very useful and giving us an insight of what have been happening particularly in the middle class life of East Bengal during that time in the late 1800s or rather from the mid 1800 onwards.

And she also says that it goes beyond a mere you know, focus on realism it goes beyond realism and uses make-- makes use of every different way altogether evocative use of nature as she said and she says, it also anticipates many of the BankimChandra's later novels in Bengali. And secondly, this novel Rajmohan's wife, she argued, that it is an attempt to foreground the ways in which home and the world are inextricably linked, yeah.

On the one hand, we have a very domestic oriented plot where this story is about this female protagonist Matangini and also about how you know her choice is house is confined in the domesticity and how her personal choices are also brought with a lot of other compulsions. Familial compulsions, societal compulsions and also the largest scene of the colonial administration, the legal interventions all of those they play a role at a various level.

So here Mukherjee identifies a novel where this tension is brought about quite effectively and at some level we can even see that you know this tension is more evident in Rajmohan's wife. The tension between the home and the world; the ways of the home and the ways of the world, yeah

and how this tensions brought about beautiful in Rajmohan's wife maybe even compared to a novel like Kanthapura where we do not have a lot of complications getting foregrounded, yeah.

The author has not really complicated the idea of nationalism on the other hand we find Bankim Chandra complicating the idea of tradition; the idea of modernity even having a protagonist a female protagonist who is even willing to go beyond the boundaries of whole, boundaries of domesticity and thirdly she says, this is an early statement about the status of women in India; status of women in colonial India where they were fraught within you know, these aspects of helplessness of claustrophobia and about incompatible marriages.

So it was rather bold, given that this was one of the first attempts and also talked about all of these concerns, at a later point also we can see that these concerns they come back to Indian English fiction they are recreant themes about the women cotton in compatible marriages, women who are trying to get out of the traditional boundaries of home et cetera. And finally, the aspect of language. She says, language is a very important concern for us to go and revisit this novel Rajmohan's wife.

And she also asked this question, why did he write in English; why did you choose to write in English? Because we really is very well know why he moved away from English and adopted his native tongue. So why then he in the first place starts writing in Bengali itself. What is the need to approach English as the first choice to for his creative expression? She says, maybe there was this possibility of having a reader in the British administrator of India, yeah so.

So it is not told at length on that and she talks about how all of these is like interconnected, in her own word interconnectedness of culture, language, narrative voice and implied a leadership, yeah. For example, we do not time to delve a length on it about the connection between the narrative voice, the descriptions and the implied reader.

For example, if you are giving and Rajmohan's wife, he gives the detailed expressions of the Courtyard about the everyday village seems that everyone is used. So to a native Indian reader, those sort of descriptions are not needed, yeah. So-- but to a foreign reader, to a British

administrator many of those things required, it is like you know giving a glossary along with the novel but the glossary is not separate from the novel it is built into the novel.

So there would be a number of descriptions which would seem redundant to the Indian reader. The same case- to a very certain extent we can to a largest extent we can find in Kanthapura a number of other novels as well. Because there is this-- because even when the authors are writing there is it sense of you know the author could be someone who is not familiar with whatever you know our native traditions or our native geography at also.

It is becomes important to give certain sense of adopt with certain kind of a narrative and also give descriptions in a particular way. And she also like she does in most of another works brings together brings together the literary and the non-literary enquiries. Though this is a dated text in terms of you know, in terms of many contemporary events that we talk about.

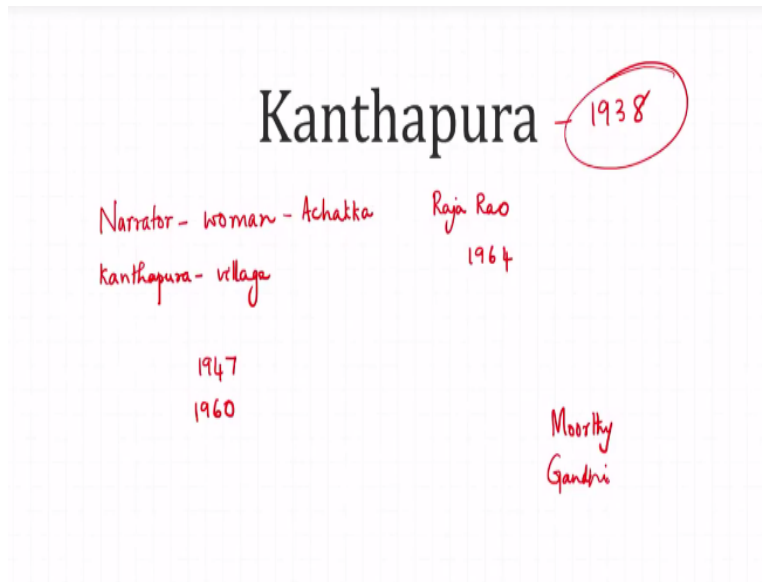
She also said to wait Rajmohan's wife in the complicated scenario of publication, distribution, marketing all of that about the idea of readership; how that influences certain kinds of writing how that privileges certain kinds of authorial voices etc., yeah. And also (()) (11:30) upon you know, the various aspects of the novel and she also in between alerts to the fact that by 1870s it was not as if Bankim Chandra entirely gave up writing in English, yeah.

He was convinced that English is a language for Pulimix; you can have any kinds of discourses, argumentative discourses; writing is about you know the tassel between tradition and modernity. English he thought is a useful medium for that but not for this creative expression, yeah. And he also in his own words you know, he used to think that you know if I do not write in English how will that be accessible to the others, yeah.

So it continues to be though he gives up writing in English it continues to be fraught within you know these various things, yeah. So we will not go into the details of Rajmohan's wife has a novel. Now we come directly to Kanthapura. **“Professor and student conversation starts”** Before I start speaking anything about Kanthapura I wanted to quickly tell me what do you have gathered about Raja Rao or Kanthapura?

Any of those initial thing that you have gathered about the novel? Yes, Rani, you want to begin? (()) (12:46) it is suppose to be only the reading the incidence and so she-- there is this in narrative he could—

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--and it is which is already assumed it is already assumed that the person she is talking to is very, very much aware of the Kanthapura people or the even though describe few behaviour of people. City or a village? Village. And also Kanthapura is the village. Kanthapura is the village. Yeah, Yeah. Any other thing? Yeah. Anything about Raja Rao? The sentence structure is slightly funny. Yeah. It was different from how we write the punctuation marks and the continuity of, yeah choice of words.

Very different kind of, though it is English language very different king of English language than the one that we are using now but you need not come as a surprising even that whereas it was in 1930s, we are now just about you know maybe another 50 years—2030, yeah. So anything about Raja Rao that you gathered? Yeah, somebody was telling Gandhi. Yeah, he was. He was what? Gandhi. Okay, but where did he lived? (()) (14:40).

He taught in the US as a professor there. Yeah, he was in, in 1929 it is when the nationalist movement-- yeah he was a Gandhian and take (()) (14:51) nationalist movement was gaining

momentum 1929 he leaves India, he lived in France for a while, he taught philosophy in Texas I think and continue to live there till his death. He was not residing in India at all, he married thrice, yeah to three different comparing to three different foreigners and there was very little connect in that sense that he had with India, I want you to keep this at the back of your mind when you are talking about the novel.

About this novel which is also seen as you know, the novel which gives us a microcosm of the nationalist India, yeah. The novel which is talking very fervently about everything that is Indian, not even the urban metropolitan India that you know which was also part of India, it was not a part of Calcutta, it was not about you know one of those the tradition modernity (()) (15:56) it was about a village which was responding to who? Gandhi and various other aspects of the nationalist's movement. **“Professor to student conversation ends”**

But anyway Raja Rao also is a legitimate Indian English writer in the sense you know he received the Sahitya akademi in 1964 and most of these writers if you also see the strange ways in which it work most of the writers won Sahitya akademi award they are also part of the curriculum and-- in different ways, yeah. But if you look at any of the universities in India or abroad where Indian-- writing in English is offered as a course, we can also see this (()) (16:43).

All these award winning novel Sahitya Akademi or the booker they were are all part of the canon in that sense; the part of the syllabus in that sense which is why we also find it a little difficult to talk about those novels which are not part of you know, this award winning company of novels, yeah because the Framework has already been set, yeah. So the moment you bring in a different kind of write--

And the same reason you would also find that most of these women novelist except for you know the-- say Arundhati Rao's novel or the very off talked about novels such as a couple of Kamala Markandaya work, Anita Desai's works other than that for example if you suddenly bring in a novel like a “Heat and Dust” yeah, who is about to present on Heat and Dust, yeah “Heat and Dust” Ruth Praver Jhabvala.

He does not know like which framework she would suddenly fit she would fit into, yeah. It was her identity is it is her identity is contested, yeah. So I want you to keep all of these things at the back of your mind even when we begin talking about the actual beginning of Indian English writing with the novel Kanthapura, Kanthapura yeah. So this was not the only work.

He wrote-- there are three major works which are considered as the representative of all his work he written extensively prolifically Kanthapura 1938 and the cow of the barricades that is the it has a very different a narrative tones mode, it is more hilarious, it is more satirical, not very prosaic a matter of fact like he does in Kanthapura, cow of the barricades was in 1947 and The Serpent and the rope in 1960.

So we also find that he is writing style has changed radically in the 1960s from the way he wrote and 1938. And we do not know whether it was about you know the way in which he himself emerged as a writer or whether he was responding to the Nation and its context that particular points of the time, yeah. If you come to the novel, yeah.

“Professor to student conversion starts” Do you want me to give me a maybe 1 or 2-line description of the novel what is this about what does Kanthapura, about? (()) (19:10) I think it is just part of the courtesy to at least you will go through the Wikipedia, just to get a sense of what it is all about otherwise you know it is—just not acceptable. Yes, yes. It is about how Gandhi’s influences reach the (()) (19:40).

Yeah is there a protagonist? Yeah, Moorthy is the protagonist and it is about and there is also (()) (19:58) almost like a character of novel and there are few women placed on the narrator and there is another woman figure who is also more accommodated to that Gandhian changes. Basically it is about what Kanthapura undergoes during this phase of nationalism under the leadership of with the village under the leadership of Moorthy who is heavily inflected by Gandhi, yeah. So there is nothing else in this novel.

So what is the need to write such an extensive narrative yeah about Kanthapuram about village which also many have said you know the microcosm of India during those times, yeah. So if you

have the novel with you now there is a preface there is a sort of a preface that he writes. What does he-- there is a four words, a four words that Raja Rao has written. It is a very good rationale for writing in English.

Yes. it is not exactly an Indian language, it is a language of a (()) (21:02), Sanskrit or Persian which is equally (()) (21:09) our own language and in English, we cannot write in English which should not. Yeah. So (()) (21:22). Okay. Why is he doing this? I think he was again thinking of you know is it good by writing in English language and this was something which (()) (21:49) so this was something which he was the struggling with what is life. **“Professor to student conversion ends”**

Yes, because the other writers started writing in English Bankim Chandra (()) (22:01) he could not really make it being English for his own reasons of conviction and also this is there the cultural fabric of the nation at that point of time. But writing in English also means colonial observance.

Writing in your own language is being loyal to the nationalist of course. So all the more reason for him to use English and write about the very traditional aspects, write about the native nationalist movement that is going on and also using a technique which is indigenous in a certain way, yeah. It was like you know, in between the novel there was also an instance where when Moorthy wants to tell the villages about Gandhi he uses he adopts his Hari Katha tradition to uses those narratives skills to talk about Gandhi.

And there is very little sense of colonial modernity that we get in a direct sense. There is a way in which the novel questions certain hierarchy related to cast; whether they talk about the need to you know get rid of the superstitious beliefs but those are not presented as part of colonial modernity those are presented as part of Gandhian Reform movements; those are presented as part of the initiative by Indian National Congress, yeah.

So today what we will do is you know, we will just go through some of the aspects from the first part of the novel and before that-- how many of you have this addition has an introduction by C

D Narasimha. So this introduction by C D Narasimha is also considered as an introduction which made sure that this remains is part of the Canon.

It is a very traditional reading of the novel which really celebrates the novel in different ways, it is not in different kind of reading at all but important for us to know what were the aspect that C D Narasimha highlights to be able to identify Kanthapura as one of the earliest as well as the most significant output of the 1930s and 1940s year. And coming to the novel this how it began.

Our village, I do not think you ever heard about it Kanthapura as its name and it is in the province of Kara. **“Professor to student conversation starts”** Who is the narrator I? The name. Achakka. Yeah, so this woman is Achakka. It is actually what? I never could figure out what is the name was. Okay. How did you figure out Anant? It is mentioned, somebody calls. Yeah, so this is Achakka and who--apparently she gives a very non-objective, very objective and very non-communicable reporting of the entire scene. **“Professor to student conversation ends”**

But on hindsight when we look at the novel the sort of techniques that it employees to tell the story, yeah it is a very clear sends that we get you know it's a privileging of the Nationalist historiography. Like if you just take away the characters and even if you replace all of those characters with the set of other characters. Even if you replace the setting of Kanthapura with another village Rangapura for instance it will not really make much of a difference, yeah.

So and--even if the narrator is another woman, yeah it really will not make much of a difference but maybe at a later we will also talk about maybe there will be a difference if the narrator is a Dalit character, yeah. Here cast you would figure out from the beginning till the end, yeah there is cast but that got that telling of that cast, the projection of that cast is also made invisible because, it is being upper caste rhetoric which is their throughout which is seen mere incidental presence.

So at a later point on lot of critics began to talk about that there is an entire book length work on Kanthapura by Rumina Sethi, S-E-T-H-I. So her book is title “Myths of The Nation.” So there she talks about only this novel Kanthapura in that sense it is a fantastically written work and she

talks uses this novel to show how history slides into fiction and how that becomes a very important tool in order to propagate again you know the same Nationalist historiography as well.

So coming back to the novel in the first paragraph it is detailed description, yeah Rani is there yeah it is a long and widening discussion most of the sentences they begin somewhere and then you have to really struggle to find the way through the sentence, yeah. And again, you know let us admit it this is not a highly readable novel, yeah. So unless you know this is part of a course like the many have also spoken about that, yeah.

Unless it is part of these courses unless it is a part of the curriculum there is very little that a reader would find interesting about such a novel due to various reasons, yeah. The narrative technique is no one thing it is very compelling, yeah. And there is lot to reputation. It is like one an India Saga about Gandhi and his efforts and sometimes in certain description you would feel little bit of same sort of thing which you read again and you will get a feeling you are going to read the same thing again, yeah.

And about the descriptions of the geography the landscape it is very evident which also intended it is also gives the impression that there is an implied foreign non-Indian reader as well because that is how the description is go to make us familiar with, right from the beginning you get the sense, okay. Because many of the things that we otherwise take for granted are being used as the description about you know the cards going through the village about how the, the village road muddy, yeah.

Because otherwise even to our mind the moment we talk about the, the moment we here about the village in the 1930s in India, rural setting in 1930s in India nobody has to really tell us, it was the money road or they were using cards to as means of transportation, so these things are there in our imaginary so these sort of descriptions which you would come across the novel it also implies that there is a non-native reader that he has not mind, yeah.

And just like Gandhi towering figure from the beginning even before Gandhi comes in there is religion which is so very predominant, overarching thing in the village and who is this god is that

they talked about Kenchamma, yeah. So it is a typical village setting. He has invoked every possible thing to give us that feel about a typical village which is not yet initiated into modernity, a little hesitant to engage with modernity as well, totally you rooted in all those cast redundant, religious redundant aspects, yeah.

And I do not know if we will be having the same set of page numbers. What I have is fourth page, it talks about you know the village, our village have 4 and 20 houses, not all where big like postmaster Suryanarayan's double storied house by the temple corner somewhere really not bad to look at it Patwari Nanjundia had a varanda with two rooms built it on to the old house. He had even put glass paints to the windows which even postmaster Suryanarayana could not boast off.

So they are these characters which are being introduced to it talks about to know how just like any other village; it is not a very homogeneous setting; people from all classes with different kinds of lifestyles are all part of this village. Now in page 7, it makes a very interesting turn. Till now I have spoken only about the Brahmin quarter. Our village had a Parayar quarter too, a potter's quarter, a weaver's quarter and a Shudra quarter.

How many huts had been there, I do not know? There may be 90 or a 100, though 100 may be the right number. Of course, you would not expect me to go the parayar quarter, but what I have seen from the street corner, be till timmaya's hut; it was in the middle. So let me see, there were 4 in the side and about 6, 7, 8 that side that makes some 15 or 20 huts in all. And a description follows about certain others also who inhabit; those non-Brahmin quarters.

So though this has been presented as the microcosm of India, so right at the outset, this compartmentalization is there. The narrator clearly identifies with whatever happens in the Brahmin quarters and you also know the way she talks about it. Though the writer is trying to be very conscious about this fact and trying to include them and trying to make her talk in a very perhaps a ironical way and uses that a mile satire as well irrespective of that, the rest of the novel also, the I is always representative of the Brahmin quarters.

Also about how this division was very much there, there is also an impossibility of having a neutral narrator. So here, you know this also brings us to this question, why cannot Chakabi, the author, he can use his own liberty, to make a Chaka Brahmin or one of the inhabitants of the potter's quarter or the Shudra quarter or the weavers quarter.

Why was that not done? If he was trying to emulate the things that Gandhi was talking about, or was Gandhi also talking about things in the same rhetoric. Was it always about the sense of agency being invested on the upper caste character with the others being incorporator? So those are some of the questions that we should come back to.

And by page 9, we can introduce to Moorthy. **“Professor - student conversation starts”** There is a para which begins to—are we in the same page Rani? Does not look like, know? Okay. Because there are no other ways in which the text is organized. There are no parts nothing of that sort you know, it is just paragraph by paragraph. And there are these different sections again those sections which are not really numbered.

So we are very soon in the first part itself, introduced this main character Moorthy, and this is what, that Moorthy has the corner house, Narsamma's son. **“Professor - student conversation ends”** So also think about the address, the ways in which he gives us a sense of the locality. Every house is described in connection with another house, those are all you know, very village like setting as well.

And Moorthy, our Moorthy as we always called him. **“Professor - student conversation starts”** And he is-- what kind of a person is he? Anybody, Moorthy? He is very active in all the village affairs. He is at the hem of every single affair and before Gandhi comes in at religion where religion is not shown as a religious affair as such.

It is shown as a part of culture, tradition and Moorthy is there at the hem of all affairs and also how he was known as the Harikatha man. He was the one who would be narrating all these things using the religion to talk about the many other things which are happening in the nation and in that sense Kanthapura is also a village which is a little cut off from the nation, when you

talk about it because otherwise we don't see any signs of unrest. We do not even find any ways in which the British are intruding directly. **“Professor - student conversation ends”**

So it is also about something which happens in a distant India, and they are also participating in that struggle, in certain ways or the other. So there is no direct contact between the colonial administrators and the villagers. We do not find that much in this novel and in Page 13, it is in the same section where Moorthy is first introduced. Here, Moorthy is being introduced as a very different kind of a character who does not mind going to those potter's quarter and weaver's quarter and the shudra quarter.

The narrator says, I closed my ears when I heard he went to the Paraya quarter. We said to ourselves, he is one of these Gandhi men, who says, there is neither caste, nor clan, nor family, and yet they pray like us and they live like us. Only they say, one should not marry early, one should allow widows to take husbands and a Brahmin might marry a Paraya and Paraya might marry a Brahmin. Well, well, let them say. How does it affect us? We shall be dead, before the world is polluted. We shall have our eyes closed.

So, we are also given to understand that this is not a village open to any of these changes. They really cannot accept what Moorthy is saying or what Gandhi is saying, or what Moorthy is following in that sense and about our being introduced to Mahatma, the things such as Swaraj, and the need for it. Swaraj too is a three eyed-- what Gandhi speaks about Swaraj; Self-purification, Hindu-Muslim unity and about this Hindu-Muslim unity.

So the village is predominantly Hindu, and we also get a sense that we are not being told directly that there are no Muslims at all. But we get a sense of ongoing rivalry not just in Kanthapura but across the nation because there is repeated focus on Gandhi, calling for the need for Hindu-Muslim unity and many finding it a little absurd. So, far, we have been doing well on our own.

So what is this new need to integrate with others and all and about the reference to Mahatma as a saint, as a holy man so this again in many of the works in the form the subaltern studies point of view. Many have argued that this positioning of Gandhi, both as a political leader, more as a saint

and less as a political leader, that did a lot of good to the nationalist moment in a certain way. That was also responsible for the moment being restricted in certain ways.

Not taking into account the peasant rebellion or not taking into account the alternate kind of things that emerged as part of it. So, this image of Mahatma, being not just a political leader, but also a saint, that's also being invoked throughout the novel as well. So, little further into the novel, in between, we also get a sense of how Mahatma is a person who spends a lot of time, spinning for two hours immediately after his prayers and also trying to popularize charkha in the village those sorts of things are happening.

But people really do not have much of an idea of who Mahatma is, who Gandhi is, except through the interventions made by Moorthy. And there is this character Rangamma who is introduced because, it is in Rangamma's house was something which was becoming a congress house. There they were always filing books and books. They even had brought spinning wheels from the city. In the national congress, and the ones who are supporting the congress, are also being seen as agents of modernity as well.

The other ones who read, the other ones who are not just imitating Mahatma, and his ideas, but they are also giving us a new way of living. There Rangamma is also seen as a outsider in certain way, but she cannot entirely be an outsider, because of the caste status and the other privileges that she enjoys. There is a kind of legitimacy with the presence of the upper caste, and their involvement with the congress and with the Gandhian moment is also brings in.

There is also a character Bade khan, who is also the only Muslim character throughout the novel. And he is very unapologetically presented as the villain of the novel. Throughout, the character was not even, as if, some he is presented with certain shades of grey. It is very black and white description of Moorthy vs Badekhan; or the inter-nation congress vs Badekhan.

The choice of Badekhan, as a Muslim character; again one begins to wonder whether that is entirely like assailant pictures or whether it was just an incidental fact, given that Moorthy is a Brahmin figure, and Badekhan is a Muslim villainous character. So, at some point in the novel,

even this caste business is coming in as a threat, from the Indian National congress and from Gandhi. So when there are boys like Moorthy, who should safely get married and settle down, they begin this Gandhi business.

What is this Gandhi business? Nothing but, weaving, because handmade cloth not fit for a mop and vellowing Bhajans and Bhajans, and mixing with Parayas. Parayas are not allowed to come to the temple door and tomorrow they are likely to be in the heart of it. They will one day put themselves. In the place of the Brahmins and begin to teach Vedas. I heard only the other day, that in the Mysore Sanskrit college some parayas sought admission. Why are (()) (39:50) these days to ask my daughter in marriage. Why should not he?

So this fear of the other, this fear of the lower caste invading the spaces which the upper caste is dominating that is very much part of the narrative. He is trying to reject it in many ways, but what is very alarming is not the way in which this novel presents it. At a later point when we talk about Arundhati Rao's 'God of small things' it's the same thing which comes in again.

There are these upper caste characters in which wonder, these lower castes, these Paraya's over there, what will he do, he will also get educated and tomorrow he will also want to sit in the same table with us which the upper caste are dominating. That is very much part of this narrative. He is trying to reject it in many ways but what is alarming is not the way in which this novel presents it.

At the later point when we talk about Arundhati Rao's god small things it is the same thing which comes in again, yeah. There is there are these upper caste characters who wonder these lower caste, these over there these parayas what he will do he will also get educated and tomorrow he will also want to sit in the same table with us college just like one us look, so the has not really changed when it comes to the responses to modernity in terms of caste, yeah.

So this, these sort of interventions are useful in identifying those sort of ways in which you know caste and the attitudes to caste have remained frozen in time at least in the space of Indian English Fiction if not in the other spaces. If we can say that you know that novel is a

representation of what we see outside even at a later stage whatever is being written in the English Fiction or in the other kind of fiction that is the mirroring of whatever we see outside.

These attitudes you know is useful to identify the trajectory of those kinds of attitudes and about you know how just like the lower caste are being located at the other there is a way in which you know the Muslim the novel talks about those times of Mohammad and same way they are talking about somebody who married a Mohammad and that is horrible and they also like wondered.

Here what is very interesting is while all of these discussion is going on Rangamma who is a supporter of Indian National Congress, who sort of opened up her house for all of these things. Rangamma from the Konnam, have the Mahatma approved it. He always says that the caste exists let the separate eating exists let no one community marry with the other no, no, no mahatma is not for all these pollution, yeah.

So at some level though the normal is conservative to a very large extent there are these critics that merge occasionally, because this is no active amount of critic available even from the nationalist Gandhian rhetoric for promoting inter-dining – inter-dining is something that Ambedkar and his followers talk about. Intermarriages are again you know not promoted by the Gandhian followers it is again something that the Dalit leaders were talking about, yeah.

So these sorts of thing they do emergent between but they not really allow to take up much of a space. And also very conveniently whether we do not really know there is no way in which we can know whether Raja Rao had put in inserted those things deliberately but the way in which the earlier critical writing was been promoted let us say from C D Narasimhan Rao onwards.

They just chose to not to look at those things, yeah and only highlights the ways in which the novel glorifies nationalist movement and glorifies the image of Mahatma in many different ways. And caste continuous to be a central issue in a number of a case in the novel it comes into being you know in terms of inter-dining in terms of marriage, in terms of you know, because the moment they began to talk about the Indian National Congress or the Gandhian ideology trying to include everyone.

The concern of the dominant caste is also about you know are they also going to come in, yeah. So it again we are also being introduced to that point of time in history when everybody was not equally locating the colonial other as the enemy, yeah. The colonial administrator was not even there, it was the other caste and the other religion which were emerging as the more you know formidable enemies, compare to the ones they are living in the potter's quarter or the one they are living in the paraya quarter or the Mohammad and the Badekhan,

Yeah the colonial administrator in comparison came across more (()) (44:12) and more acceptable as well, yeah. And this was only thing the only in the caste aspect we find the villages also rebelling a lot when it comes to accepting the Gandhian rhetoric whether the Gandhian rhetoric is the you know the right kind of anti-caste rhetoric available that is certainly a different question to come back to. So these sort of concerns mostly dominate the novel. So we will not be looking at all of the things that the novel talks about.

So one is the thing that we will focus on which we will do in the next session, yeah. About the way the novel talks about caste and how women are being appropriated into this movement, yeah. So this sort of initiation into the anti-caste rhetoric into the gender question, it will be useful to keep that is a framework even when we talk about certain other novels at a later point, yeah.

And more importantly as a corollary to all of these things how the figure of the Mahatma is emerging yeah. It is not even, there is no reference to him in any other way, yeah. It is mostly Mahatma in just a couple of places Gandhi, yeah. It is the figure of the Mahatma emerging as the, the most important figure of the nationalist movement. And also how?

Many unapologetically very critically the space of Indian English Fiction has also adopted that stunts, yeah because if you look at any of the novels of the early period of time 1930s or 1940s which do have a resonance of the Gandhian movement. We do not come across any active discussion of the dichotomism which were part of that time. The Gandhi versus Ambedkar debate, yeah for instance.

Which is why a lot of Dalit writers, they really could not accept these as the starting point, the narrative which were completely dismissive of the other stories which were part of it, not as this is absent and just one or two points, it is the absent is there throughout and very briefly these things have been discussed again; not discussed them as 2 different points of you but to discuss them as opposing points of you visa we the Mahatma rhetoric or the Indian National Congress rhetoric. So we will call it a day.