DRAMA

Romantic Tendency.
Idealistic Reaction.
(Farces and Satires).
Idealistic Reaction.
(Historical Phase).

Realistic Tendency.
Dramatic Technique.
THE ROMANTIC TENDENCY

47. In the period under discussion, contact with the West created new forces in all spheres of life. It gave birth to the spirit of renaissance in literature, to a new language, and to a literary technique and tradition based on romanticism which dominated English literature in the first half of the nineteenth century. As a result of a comprehensive scheme of education in the English language, Indian students had to acquaint themselves not merely with the works of romantic poets but also with the writers of various social, political, religious, literary, intellectual or aesthetic movements on the continent. “In every town, university men as pleaders, teachers, or officials became agents for distributing progressive ideas, and set the tone of social and moral life. Western culture came to be recognised as the necessary equipment for securing progress, railways, newspapers, and civic and political life began to destroy old barriers and prejudices. The uplift of women became an accepted fundamental of the new outlook. The education of girls, though resisted by a few, was favoured by many among the educated.”\(^1\)

48. In the realm of drama these university men and others were fascinated by the study of Shakespeare

\(^1\) Munshi’s (K. M. ‘Gujarat and its Literature’ p. 253.)
who exercised a great influence on the technique and content of Indian drama. About ten versions of his comedies and tragedies which have a close affinity with the traditions of classical drama appeared in the Hindi language. At the beginning of Renaissance the writers who were stirred by the imaginative drama translated some of the Sanskrit plays characterised by a romantic spirit. Attempts have also been made at original plays with themes from mythology. They also indicate the romantic tendency in dramatic literature. The strangeness which is an essential element of romantic art is achieved by selecting mythological themes far away from the exigencies of real life. And this sense of remoteness which is an indispensable element of romantic art can be the remoteness of time, place, or culture. Romanticism is also a 'cult of the past'. It became a definite tendency in drama for three main reasons. The yearning for the remote past as a purely cultural revival is an important factor in the growth of romantic tendency in Hindi literature, especially in Hindi drama. It is also a reactionary force, symbolising the spirit of protest and revenge against the domination of Western civilisation. Another basis for the expression of romantic tendency in drama is the psychology of escape from the present-day life.

49. In the representation of mythological charac-

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2 (N. K.) Yājnik’s ‘Indian Theatre’ Appendix C.
3 Raja Laksmana Singh’s ‘Sakuntala’.
4 Articles No. 50, 51, 52, 54.
ters the human element has been stressed, but the characters still retain the qualities of romantic art marked by a lack of coherence and profusion of poetic sentiments resulting in melodramatic and sentimental effects. As drama cannot exist in health without a serious representation of human character, a greater emphasis is bound to be laid on those mythological characters who can be shorn of some of their exaggerations; but there is a limit to this process. The writers therefore have turned to history for a more serious representation of human character to satisfy their craving for the past. The romantic tendency thus persists in the historical phase of Hindi drama characterised by a heroic conception of life. It gratifies the imagination; it satisfies the human desire for heroic action and character; and it invests its substance with a glamour of the past. In spite of the numerous varieties of romanticism, "It tends, in the main, to be idealistic, optimistic, and liberal. It sees life in general as glamorous, exciting and admirable. Whether it emphasises or ignores the conflict between good and evil in the universe, it feels that the conflict is an enthralling one, and that there is a possibility of an admirable and happy destiny for mankind. To the romantic, man is a complex being with great powers in the direction of either good or evil; at his worst, he is neither ignoble nor petty; at his best, he is

5 Article No. 52.
6 Articles No. 52, 54.
7 Article No.
50. ‘Satya Hariścandra’ (1875) is the first original attempt at mythological drama. Hariścandra (Babu), the acknowledged father of modern Hindi drama has portrayed in this play the eternal conflict between the ideal of truth and the attempt to overthrow it. Hariścandra, the hero of the play, is a mythological king who represents the ideal of truth. In order to uphold it, he has to forsake his all and undergo a life of privation; through which he comes out chastened and morally triumphant. Viśvāmitra, another mythological character, in the play, is responsible for the king’s ordeal. The characters are not invested with any human motive; but they symbolise the ideal of truth on the one hand and the attempt to frustrate it on the other. It is an eternal war between the angel and the devil. The devil in this case is the angel in disguise. (Viśvāmitra). The dramatic rendering of this ethical theme has been prompted by a desire to eschew the erotic element from the story and to provide the young readers with a theme which can improve their morals. Its construction is loose, characterisation meagre, and the theme thin in its execution; but the play significantly represents the romantic tendency in drama as illustrated in its poetical description of rivers, women, and palaces. The shower of flowers from the heaven and the floating of aerial

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8 Bentley’s ‘The Art of Drama’,
9 Foreword to the play.
chariots thrill the imagination and invest the play with a spirit of romance.

51. 'Candrāvali' (1876) is another attempt at mythological drama by the same author who, in the garb of a woman, pines for the love of his Lord. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the romantic character in mythology, is the object of his love. The Lord represents for him the ultimate principle of spiritual love which sustains the universe and upholds it. Candrāvalī, the heroine, symbolises the eternal yearning of man to realise this ideal. She represents 'the devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow.' Although a sublime principle forms the theme of the play, yet it is far from success as a piece of dramatic literature. The inordinate length of speeches, extending to as many as six hundred words, destroys the dramatic illusion.\(^\text{10}\)

The playwright, in the production of these and other plays has followed neither the classical canons of dramaturgy nor the principles of Western dramatic technique.\(^\text{11}\) He has employed any combination of different techniques which have taken his fancy. And this haphazard combination of classical, 'Pārsi' and 'Bengāli' features of drama has resulted in inorganic construction, incoherent characterisation, disharmony, and cheap entertainment. In spite of these flaws, he remains the pioneer of the romantic tendency in modern Hindi drama.

\(^{10}\) Act III.
\(^{11}\) Śyām Sundarādhnāratanḍu Nāṭakāvalī' p. 70.
52. 'Āñjanā' (1923) marks a definite advance over the previous mythological plays on account of a greater stress which has been laid on the human motivation of characters and incidents. Aāñjanā, the female character, represents the ideal of chastity, service, and sacrifice in the play. Her husband has gone to war for a period of twelve years. In the meanwhile, he pays a flying visit to his wife and stays with her for a few days without informing the other members of the family. It complicates the situation and her chastity is challenged by the elderly ladies in the family. She is exiled and the remaining part of the story relates her subsequent sufferings in banishment and the ultimate vindication of her honour.

Another minor theme relating the story of a revengeful woman, who, in spite of her mother’s resistance wants to marry a husband of her choice has been introduced to complicate the course of events. Pavana, the hero, is torn between two loyalties—to marry this passionate and assertive woman who loves him or to marry the woman of his parent’s choice. He is married to the latter. It provokes the former woman to wreak vengeance on her rival. In the end of the play she is dispensed with by the writer and the whole piece ends with the ringing of joyous bells.

53. "Āñjanā" is a definite advance on other mythological plays. In the first place the playwright has consciously omitted the convention of introducing ‘couplets’ which were being freely employed in the
plays to create a theatrical effect. The Alfred Theatrical Company, enjoying the great popularity among the audience, was catering to the taste of the age, by employing such couplets. Sudarśana, the author of this play, felt the deadening influence of this convention and did away with it to a great extent. He also claims to have introduced human motivation in the tale of mythology. The Bengali and foreign drama have been responsible for this greater emphasis on human motivation in mythological incidents and characters. Dvijendralal Roy, the Bengali playwright, set a standard to the dramatists of other languages and thus exercised a great influence on their dramatic technique.

As a consequence of this influence, the play is singularly free from extravagant elements, with the exception of a few coincidences relating to Añjana’s arrival to save her ‘rival’ and her husband from suicide. Although the author deplores the tendency of writing the dialogue in ‘couplets’ and of introducing songs at inopportune places; yet at a few places the rhyming and alliterative dialogue has been employed to create a rhetorical effect in the play. It has remained an indispensable device to satisfy the groundling’s love for the spectacular and rhetorical. In spite of a few flaws, the writer has anticipated the realistic tendency in drama.

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13 Introduction to the Play, p. 3.
14 Introduction, p. 6.
16 Ibid, pp. 6.
54. ‘Varamālā’ (The Wedding Garland) is another attempt at mythological drama. The theme of this play has been taken from a ‘purāṇa’ where it occurs in the form of an episode. It deals with the heroine’s sudden change of love into hatred and hatred into love. This fact has been poetically executed in the play which can successfully be represented on the stage. The stage success of this play can be attributed to the writer’s knowledge of stage-craft, which he acquired as a dramatic writer of a theatrical company.\textsuperscript{17}

55. “Prāñesvari” (1931) is a solitary instance of the musical comedy which represents the romantic tendency in drama. It possesses the essential characteristics of romantic literature. The story is set in a fanciful realm, built upon highly improbable situations.\textsuperscript{18} The play belongs to the ‘literature of escape.’ In this respect the musical comedy continues the traditions of mythological drama. The atmosphere is adroitly created by love songs. The audience, being enraptured by the melodious music, does not notice the improbability of the story; as for instance the epileptic fits in the present play. The play tells the love-story in an atmosphere of music. As Jack must love his Jill, Madana loves Mālati. She has invited a business magnate to a musical performance arranged by her father and is definite about his joining the function. The whole story revolves around her bet that he must come. To complicate the plot he does

\textsuperscript{17} Foreword to the Play, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{18} The Play, pp. 26, 28, 30.
not arrive in time, and his part is impersonated by another character who betrays his real person and creates many humorous situations. When his wife arrives on the stage, the situation become still more comic. In a fit of epilepsy, she embraces Mālati's lover, thereby causing misunderstanding between them. The fit is repeated in the presence of the girl who is thus convinced of his fidelity and the lovers, as usual, are united in the end.

56. ‘Kāmanā’ (1927) is a symbolic play. Symbolism of which this play is a solitary example is also a variety of romantic art. The ethical significance of this play gives it a definite tone by offering a positive comment on the meaning of human destiny; and the futility of civilisation. In this respect, it differs from romanticism which merely creates a glamorous picture but does not generally build up a specific indication of the intellectual, emotional or ethical significance of the work of art. ‘Kāmanā,’ despite this, is a continuation of the romantic tendency. It is also a manifestation of the historical phase of drama and the phase of dramatic satires and farces.

The theme describes a young man who goes into a primitive floral island to spread civilisation among the ignorant and unsophisticated dwellers of the island. They are drilled into the ways of modern civilization. Wine and gold are the invincible weapons which he em-

19 Cf. 'Kāmāy.
20 Articles No.
ploys in ‘civilising’ them. In course of time they acquire a sense of sin, jealousy, property, power and marriage which were unknown to them before the process of civilisation began. In this play, Prasāda has cast a satire on modern civilisation. He has spun an intricate plot which is full of suspense up to its end. The idyllic atmosphere on the island has been created by the introduction of enchanting music, free love, flowers, rivers, and the artless poetical conversation of simple girls who do not know the conventional ways of life. It is a race of people who are free from the conflicts of life. They have descended from the heavens and the stars. The process of civilisation brings along with it the trailing cloud of misery, poverty, class consciousness, and military subjugation. In the end of the play, a note of disillusionment is rung by the Queen of the island who parts with her crown which has been a symbol of power and therefore of ‘barbarism’. The whole theme is thus lifted to a cosmic height by a character who sums up the struggle of the islanders as a colossal illusion in the scheme of the universe.

57. All the characters in the play are symbolic. Vilāsa stands for the epicurian way of life, Viveka is the wisdom of ages, Santoṣa is the symbol of contentment, Kāmanā is the will to live, Karuṇā brings in

21 ‘Kāmanā’ p. 27.
22 Ibid. p. 17.
23 Ibid. p. 15.
24 Viveka (wisdom).
a note of suffering, and Lilā represents the sportive and playful spirit in man. The symbolic drama is the expression of the literary movement which was started by Rabindra Nath Tagore in Bengali literature. “The Bengali Symbolist Movement takes us back to the whole metaphysical system of Hindu religion and æsthetics which was in existence thousands of years ago. The movement takes its origin in Vaiṣṇava cult of æstheticism and romanticism which perhaps is the strongest tradition in Bengali art and literature.” ‘Kāmaṇā’ seems to have been inspired by the symbolic dramas in Bengali literature which took the Indian public by storm.

25 Cf. ‘Prabodha Candrodaya’ in Sanskrit.
THE IDEALISTIC REACTION

FARCES AND SATIRES

58. The impact with the West had a far-reaching influence on the life and literature of this country. It gave birth to two simultaneous movements: a revolt against the institutions of the old social order and a reaction against the Western mode of life which began to permeate the life of the people. The clash between the two civilisations provided rich material for the production of dramatic literature. The ‘idealistic reaction’ has assumed three phases of expression, overlapping one another. In the first phase there was reaction against the material civilisation of the West and its social institutions. It was a natural tendency based on the fear of a new culture which began to make its presence felt through educated persons of the country, but the wholesale indictment of Western life did not attract a large number of literary minds. As this reaction expressed itself chiefly in farce and melodrama, its influence spread only among the mass of average minds. Men of aesthetic tastes found it hard to appreciate the inartistic features of these two forms of drama with their inconsistent characterisation, episodic plot, and an exaggerated portrayal of life,

1 Article No. 47.
resulting in cheap entertainment.

59. In 1873, Hariścandra (Babu) set the ball rolling by writing his first farce at the age of twenty-three. In "Vaidiki himsā, himsā· na bhavati" he has ridiculed those 'progressive persons' who take meat and wine and advocate the cause of widow remarriage. At one place he remarks that a person who has a nodding acquaintance of the English language and has married a Muslim wife considers himself a 'free' person. Some of the critics have pointed out that this remark was prompted by a desire to wreak personal vengeance on one of his opponents. It is however a clear indication of the spirit of the age.

60. In "Bhārat-Durdaśā" (1880) which is his next important farce, he has presented a very gloomy picture of this country. In the fourth act he enumerates, in the form of symbolic characters, all the ills which the country suffers from. Among them are disease, indolence, wine-habit, ignorance and poverty. The play of 37 ordinary printed pages has been divided into as many as ten acts. Some of the dull speeches extend to a more than a page and a half. A few versified harangues have been inserted for purpose of recitation and of reformation of the audience. "Andhera Nagari" is another farce of minor importance. In this play the character of

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2 'Bhāratendu Nātakāvālī' p. 51.
3 Ibid, p. 51.
4 'Bhārata Durdaśā' p. 611. One speech extends to a page and a half. The examples can be multiplied.
the king is not merely inconsistent but also highly improbable. The play is interspersed with ethical reflections and general comments on the sad plight of the country. Hariścandra who released new forces in almost every domain of modern Hindi literature (poetry, drama, prose) was also a pioneer in expressing the idealistic reaction in dramatic literature. His farces do not possess any artistic or literary merit even as farces; but they are significant for purposes of critical research and historical investigation.

61. Bhaṭṭa (Badarīnātha) is another important writer who has continued this tendency of idealistic reaction in his satirical farces. In "Vivāha-Vigyāpana" (1927) he narrates the story of a widower who resorts to advertisement for his second marriage. The wording of the advertisement and the manipulation of the situations in the play are such that they are bound to provoke fun and laughter in the groundlings. The climax of this cheap fun is reached, when the letter containing the matrimonial proposal is beaten with a shoe. In the end the proposed couple is duly married; but the ‘lady-love’ turns out to be an old woman; sans teeth, sans nose, sans youth, and sans beauty. All these were artificial and made up; but then it was too late. The curtain falls with the remark that ‘wiving and hanging go by destiny’. In this play the writer has indirectly cast a slur on the Western ideal of artificial make-up and form.

62. "Miss American" (1929) is another important farce of Bhaṭṭa in which he attempted to ridicule
THE IDEALISTIC REACTION

the West and its civilisation. The American characters represent Westernism in this play. They do not stand by anything in life, except money which is their religion. Their daughter may marry any person, provided it brings them money. The American parents as portrayed in the farce do not understand, the spiritual culture of the East. They are blinded by a veil of gross materialism. At the same time they suffer from a colour prejudice. Bohārilāl, who represents the civilisation of the East does not like his own society. In Hindu society women do not enjoy any status. Again the Hindus are Jews and a community of liars. Incidentally Bohārilāl is a poet and he offers his ‘valuable’ opinions on the art and function of poetry. Vulgarity to him is the soul of poetry. The Hindi poets are dull in their works for want of obscenity. Bhāṭṭa is perhaps satirising the tendency in the Erotic school of poetry for the deep delight which its writers took in the unæsthetic expression of beauty. As the play is a farce, the writer has not cared to introduce a logical sequence of events which is not essential to a farce, where the plot is episodic in construction, characterisation inconsistent in development, and portrayal of life invariably dishonest and

6 'Miss American' p. 104.
7 Ibid. p. 68.
8 Ibid. p. 100.
9 Ibid. p. 25.
10 Ibid. p. 74.
11 Ibid. p. 44.
12 Ibid. p. 45.
13 Article No.
improbable. As a consequence of these features of the farce, he has introduced a hunting scene in a jungle, and a court scene in the first act which have little bearing on the main theme. A notable feature of the farce is that the writer has considerably cut down the number of characters. Only five male and three female characters of significance are introduced in the play.

63. "Sāhitya kā Sapūta" is another important farce of this cycle, representing the first phase of the idealistic reaction. Srīvāstava (G.P.) has made an attempt to satirise the conservative tendencies in language, humour, and poetry from the modern standpoint. A love-theme has been introduced to add colour and variety to the play. Samsārī represents the modern tendency in literature; Sāhityānanda stands for the old pedants in literature. He has a daughter to marry. Samsārī loves her. As usual, there are obstacles in the way. In the course of overcoming these obstacles, the author provides many comic and farcical situations, arising out of physical maladjustments.14 It fulfils the highest aim of farce.

In all these farces there is little demand for thought to appreciate them. They depend for their humorous effects upon the exaggeration of a few simple character traits and upon action which is frequently, though not always, physically violent. They make no pretence to depict reality, and constantly resort to gross improba-

14 ‘Sāhitya kā Sapūta’ pages 3, 3
ibilities in action and characterisation. In spite of it, the very simple appeal of the farce has made it a popular form of dramatic literature for a certain section of the audience. In Hindi drama this form has been consciously employed by the writers to ridicule Western civilisation and exalt indigenous culture in an inartistic manner.
THE IDEALISTIC REACTION—(Contd.)

THE HISTORICAL PHASE

64. The misrepresentation of Western culture and the exaltation of Indian civilisation was a negative reaction which did not satisfy the writers. They looked back to their past to derive inspiration for a fresh outlook on life. "The past is not only felt as a period apart, it stands in direct conflict with the present, as a reactionary force, symbolising the spirit of protest and revenge. When the age is one of wounded sensibility, with all the vitality of life on the ebb, the soul must turn towards the past, in order to find the contentment so necessary to the cravings of its emotional nature. And of all the varied periods which such a past has to offer that which affords the greatest satisfaction will be the first to be explored." Apart from this psychological reason of escape from the hard and depressing facts of contemporary life which can be attributed to a clash against the civilisation better fitted for the struggle of existence, the revivalist movement, was also the outcome of a desire to pick up the lost thread of cultural development which had been arrested for many centuries.

\[1\] Legouis and Cazaimian's 'History of English Literature' p. 940.
idealistic reaction expressing itself in historical drama was the growing dissatisfaction with mythological tales farther away from real life than themes from history. In addition to these bases of historical drama, there is another strong reason for its popularity. The country was pulsating with nationalistic ideas. The new men who wanted to interpret life in history felt the pulse of the age and ransacked ancient history in search for suitable themes for their plays.

65. Dvijendralal Roy, the Bengali dramatist, whose works have been translated into four Indian languages, was the leader of the new movement. “He was deeply stirred by the national movement, and for a time almost completely threw himself into it; but at heart he was too genuine a realist to be overcome by it. He was mentally so constituted, that he could not for a moment lose his own individuality and so he escaped from becoming a bigoted patriot or a fanatical demagogue.”

Although his plays in Hindi are mere translations and therefore beyond the scope of the present survey, yet they have exercised such a deep influence on the Hindi dramatists that they deserve a close study for forming a proper perspective of the historical tendency in Hindi drama. He is practically known as a Hindi writer. Almost all his important plays have been translated into Hindi and he is extremely popular with Hindi playwrights.

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2 Article No.
3 Guha Thakurta, "Bengali Drama" pp. 157, 158.
4 Article No.
Roy, who was deeply influenced by Shakespeare, started a significant cycle in drama with history as its central idea. He tried to awaken a sense of life in man as the latter appeared in history. In one aspect the historical movement was a continuation of the romantic tendency, with its characters emerging out of the vistas of the past. Roy selected the Ancient and the Mughal periods of history to represent the spirit of their respective ages, by creating ideal characters who could inspire the audience with new life.

66. ‘Rañā Pratāpa,” a theme which has been dramatised by another dramatist, is his first attempt at historical drama. In this play, the writer is not “so much interested in the objective facts of history as in the characters of the period with which he deals. At the same time his interest is not merely psychological. He does not so much aim at tracing the development of the hero’s personality, but rather represents him to his contemporaries as an ideal for the present day. The play is a mirror of contemporary life, in which the hopes and aspirations of the politically conscious section of the people are reflected.” In “Durgādāsa” and “Mevāra Pātana” he has also idealised the heroic characters of history and translated its spirit in terms of the present situation. In “Nurjahān” he made the first attempt at

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6 Guha Thakurta ‘The Bengali Drama’ p. 159.
7 Article No. 76. By Jagan Nath Malind.
8 Thakurta’s ‘Bengali Drama’ p.
character portraiture by subordinating the incidents to the psychological analysis of the heroine’s character. “In the play she appears like an elemental spirit, reveling in her reckless passion, and crushing everything that obstructs her insatiable ambition for power. As an act of self-revenge she is prepared to wreck the whole empire. In her mechanisations she is pitiless and ruthless, yet she is not without a touch of the grandeur of a heroine. In the end when she is defeated and disgraced, she succumbs to the elemental call of motherhood.” The writer has thus penetrated into the half-lights and half-shades of a human heart and ended the play with a human note.

67. “Shāhjahān” is the finest product of his mature art for its psychological portraiture of historical characters, its faithful representation of the facts of history, and its artistic structure which lends itself to a successful presentation on the stage. Shāhjahan is torn between two conflicting forces; the tender emotions of a father’s heart and the feelings of pride and justice. In the psychological language, the writer has artistically portrayed the eternal Oedipus situation. In his helplessness the brave old father, like a caged lion, groans and growls and raves in “madness”. In “Candragupta” Roy has depicted the character of an empire builder. Cāṇakya, like a superman, does not spare anybody, including his own person. ‘In spite of the ruthlessness of his own

9 Thakurta’s ‘Rajputam’ p. 162. Also R. K. Yajnik’s ‘The Indian Th
indomitable will to power, he has shown himself capable of deep emotions, when justice has deprived him of his daughter. In this conflict, the human note is struck by the dramatist who started by idealising his characters of past history to arouse national consciousness in the country; but began to subordinate incidents to the study of character and thus revealed the spiritual continuity of history.

68. When his dramas were read in the original and translated into other languages, they created a stir among the contemporary and succeeding dramatists. Ancient periods of history began to be searched and ransacked for suitable themes. In the chronological order, Hariścandra (Babu) attempted the first historical drama Nildevī in the year 1881. While expressing the aim of writing this play, he writes in a lengthy preface to it. "It is the Christmas day... All the Christians are full of joy, but I am in grief. It is jealousy from which I am not free. When I see European women in their complete make-up, strutting on the road by their husbands' side; I am reminded of the simple, unfortunate, women of my country. And this is the cause of my grief. No body should apprehend that I want our women to forsake their bashfulness and to walk hand-in-hand with their husbands. It is not desire that they should come out of their indolence on the road to progress by following Western women in their wisdom, education,
self-respect, and patriotism. It is our belief that our women were not in this deplorable state from eternity. To dispel any doubt about it, the play has been written and dedicated to the readers."\textsuperscript{11} The claim is big, but the work falls short of its claim. In the story Abdulsharif Khān defeats his opponent and arrests him. Nildevi, the wife of the defeated prince, penetrates into the enemy's camp in the guise of a dancing girl. Abdulsharif Khān, the Muslim chief, is infatuated by her beauty and art. While he is in a state of intoxication, she ends him to save her honour. The play is obviously scattered with patriotic sentiments.\textsuperscript{12} But the theme which pivots on revenge does not satisfy the aim outlined by the author in the Preface.

69. In 1921 Jaya Sankara Prasāda entered the field. He was so much involved in the maze of historical facts that he was lost in them. A careful study of his plays will reveal that he has always subordinated characters to incidents in the plays. In his enthusiasm to uphold the objective facts of history which he reproduces in an embarrassing detail he has sacrificed the more valuable features of plot-construction, characterisation, and naturalness of dialogue. Into the midst of historical facts he introduces long declamatory speeches which really express his own views. The writer does not possess even in an ordinary degree a sense for the dramatic situation which would lead them to a denoue-

\textsuperscript{11} Preface to
\textsuperscript{12} "Bhāratendu," pp. 661, 662, 669, etc.
ment, having the characteristics of clarity, plausibility, and interest.

70. 'Viśākha' is one of his early attempts at historical drama. The theme has been 'carefully' selected from the decadent period of Buddhistic history. In the beginning of the play the hero who has been educated in an atmosphere of high social ideals, seizes an opportunity to offer his services to a starving girl who has been imprisoned for trespassing the field of a haughty 'Bhikṣu': Viśākha approaches the king to report against this proud monk. The king verifies the information and frees the girl. The Bhikṣu's 'vihāra' is ordered to be burnt. In course of time, Viśākha develops a love for the girl, who finds it difficult to be 'weaned' from her father. She at last surrenders to his love when he threatens suicide. After having conquered her, he loses interest in her and engages himself in social work; but the girl tenaciously clings to him. In the meanwhile, the king takes a fancy to her; but she repulses his love. To save her honour she wishes to elope with her lover. The king sends his court-jester to abduct the girl for the satisfaction of his lust. The poor jester loses his life at the hands of the hero. It is curious to find that just after having murdered the jester, the hero begins to recite couplets which jar upon the ears of the reader. The heroine's aunt musters courage to publicly accuse the king of an attempt to rape the girl. The public insists

18 Introduction to the Play.
that the sentence should be commuted. In a scuffle the king is hurt. He begs pardon of the hero and the heroine to the surprise of the audience. What a reformation and transformation of the king's character!

The theme has been taken from 'Rājātraṅgini' which is an important book of historical significance. The character of the 'sādhu' in the play represents the spirit of idealism which is the rich heritage of this country. Again, the author does not pretend to preach a sermon from the pulpit, although in the play the king is made to succumb to reformation at the cost of his honour and dignity and also at the expense of realism. At every step in the play a song is provided for the entertainment of the audience. The language is stiff and ornate and it therefore mars the realistic effect of the dialogue. As a pedant, a purist, and a classical scholar, the author does not encourage the colloquial and therefore the vulgar expression to destroy the chastity of his style. Another serious flaw of plot-construction has crept into the play. The play can be divided into two parts having little organic relation between them. In the first part the climax is reached by the consummation of marriage between the hero and the heroine. It is again threatened by the king's interference which serves as an anti-climax to the first part.

71. In "Candrāngā", the playwright has depicted the rise and growth of the 'Maurya' dynasty. The
execution of the theme is far from an artistic success. Dvijendralal Roy has treated the same theme with great literary skill. He has chosen only eleven characters from the records of history to suit his artistic ends. Pras̄da in the present play has culled as many as thirty characters, male and female, in order to become comprehensive in historical details. The play succeeds as an objective treatment of historical facts; but has not much value as a piece of dramatic literature. The whole gamut of characters is lost in the crowd of people in the play. Cānakya is the only character which has been developed to a small extent. He is the conventional empire builder who does not spare any person in realising the ultimate ideal of imposing a crushing defeat on his enemies. He resorts to a variety of means for tricking his opponents. In the art of diplomacy nobody can match him.

72. In the next important play ‘Nāgayagya’ (1926), the author has selected an obscure historical theme to justify his literary ideal of presenting the unknown periods of Indian history. The Aryans and Nāgas are at war. The Aryan king has committed a crime by accidentally murdering a Brahman boy. In order to expiate for the sin, he orders a ‘yagya’ to be performed. In a conflict with the Nāgas, he incites their massacre. In the end of the play, a plea for cultural synthesis between the two warring races is voiced by the wife of a

18 Article No. 67.
'sādhu'. As usual, the characters in the play are wooden and flat. They are so hopelessly confused that it is difficult to recognise them. The language is laboured and artificial. It does not possess the ease and flow of dramatic dialogue. The author appears to have laboured a good deal in putting the stiff dialogue in the mouth of his stammering characters. The play has been haphazardly divided into acts and scenes which mostly stand isolated from one another. They are series of static pictures which reduce the play to a melodrama.

73. "Karbalā" (1924) is a maiden and solitary attempt of Premchand at historical drama. The significance of this play is twofold; it represents the spirit of the age and it also shows the perpetual struggle between the life of spirit and that of the flesh. Hussain stands for the higher ideal of sacrifice and truth; Yazīd symbolises the baser life of lust for power and wealth. The execution of the theme, which has been selected from the memorable historical battle (Karbalā) falls short of its greatness. The dramatist who has been indirectly influenced by Shakespearean tragedies has missed the essential quality of his tragic characters who always must end by a flaw in their character. Hussain does excite a feeling of admiration by his heroic struggle; but he does not excite a feeling of pity for want of a human weakness in him. He is not essentially a tragic character. The play is therefore a tragedy of idealism.
rather than a tragedy of character. In the story, there is little development of characters who represent different types in life. The minor characters in the play flit like mushrooms on the stage. The introduction of female characters is forbidden on religious grounds.17 The Muslim community would have strongly objected to the inclusion of female characters in a drama of religious importance. As the writer has no knowledge of the dramatic technique and stage-craft,18 the play remains a reading play. Premchand whose genius is essentially epic even in his novels, finds it difficult to present his theme on a small canvas. He does not make use of the impressionistic methods with its growing emphasis on situations rather than on a mere sequence of events. The play has been divided into five acts which are further divided into forty-three scenes of considerable length. It would not take less than six hours to perform it on the stage, which would exhaust the patience of the audience. In addition to the inordinate length of the play, the battle scenes consisting of huge armies, camels, and tents make it impossible for stage action.

74. In “Durgāvati” (1925), the character of a widow queen has been portrayed to describe her administrative capacity, her shrewd mind, her courage of heart, and her skill in the use of army in a conflict with the Emperor (Akbar), she impressed him with these qualities. In spite of the defeat, she not lose courage; but

17 Introduction to the Play.
18 Appendix B, Letter No. 1
fights till she is killed by her own man who has turned a traitor. At the fall of the curtain she ascends to heaven. In a review attached to the play, it has been remarked that the portrayal of this brave woman is in tune with the national movement pulsating the life of the country. The patriotic sentiments expressed in the play arouse the national spirit of the audience.\(^{19}\) In this respect it forms an integral part of the historical cycle which was started to express the ‘idealistic reaction’ in literature. Although the theme has been selected from history, yet the play as such is lacking in adequate historical setting and background. The writer has inserted as many as ninety passages, each consisting of many couplets with a view to create a rhetorical effect on the stage.\(^{20}\)

75. In “Utsarga” (Sacrifice), the sacrifice of a brave Rajput princess who penetrated the enemies’ camp in the guise of a songstress has been described. Her sacrifice consists in her voluntary death which is caused by her ascending the funeral pyre after she has been defeated. In the thick of the battle, Akhila, a character in the play inspires her lord with the ideals of bravery and courage.\(^{21}\) The proverbial heroism of the Rajput community is the chief motive in the selection of this theme. The historical research by chroniclers such as Colonel Todd, Duff and others has often

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\(^{19}\) The Review, p. 9.
\(^{20}\) The Urdu stage is responsible for this element. Vide N. K. Yajnik’s “The Indian”, p. 107-108.
\(^{21}\) ‘Utsarga’ p.
provided material for historical productions.²²

76. Jagannāth Prasāda is the next dramatist who has written a successful historical play. "Pratāpa-pratigyā" describes the well-known episode from the Mughal period. In the reign of Akbar, the Rajputs rise in revolt against him, but they are a house divided against itself. Pratāpa who has been entrusted with the honour of his motherland symbolises the spirit of patriotism in the play.²³ The crown to him is a symbol of duty and a bed of thorns. In a combat with his powerful opponent, he loses everything till he is reduced to dire poverty.²⁴ His life has been represented as one long-drawn out tale of suffering. He breaks; but he does not bend²⁵—a true hero who flings away everything for his ideal.

Akbar who is a foreigner to this land has been painted in varied colours. He is not only represented as a weaver who would spin the whole people into one web and thus achieve a cultural synthesis of the two races,²⁶ but also as a diplomat who knows that battles are not always won by bravery alone. He must divide and rule.²⁷ The minor characters are also persons of blood and flesh; they grow and breathe in the play. Sākta who turned a renegade his brother and joined

²² 'The Indian Theatre' p. 944
²³ 'Pratāpa Pratigyā' p. 62.
²⁴ Ibid. p. 65.
²⁵ Ibid. p. 79.
²⁶ Ibid. p. 28.
²⁷ Ibid. p. 58.
the hostile camp falls a victim to a feeling of remorse. He touches some tender chords of the audience when he utters the universal truth that a man will always remain misunderstood for his motives in life. Amar Singh, the heir-apparent, realises the emptiness of his life after having fought and lost the battle. He is deeply impressed by the horrors of war and finds an escape into pacifism. The theme has been selected with a purpose. It helps to arouse the national consciousness of the people by voicing the democratic sentiments and ideals of the modern age.\textsuperscript{28} The soliloquies, which have been written at a high poetical pitch, possess the potentialities of emotional stresses and strains, of intellectual elevation and aesthetic appeal.\textsuperscript{29} The language is rich in metaphors and similes.\textsuperscript{30} The whole piece lends itself to a successful representation on the stage.

77. 'Sindha-patana' or 'Dāhara' (1933) is the last play of the historical cycle. Bhāṭṭa (Udaya Śankara) has selected his theme with a view to revive the spirit of ancient culture.\textsuperscript{31} He has analysed the causes of the fall of a province at the hands of foreign invaders. The conflict of the Hindu rulers of Sindh with foreigners has been depicted and the causes of their fall attributed to mutiny in their ranks. The Hindu generals are also prompted by residual ambitions rather than

\textsuperscript{28} 'Pratāpa Pratigya'
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. p. 43.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid. p. 6.
\textsuperscript{31} 'Dāhara' pp.
inspired by national aspirations. Buddha is shown as responsible for creating a spirit of decadent pacifism and spiritual indolence. The Brahmans suppress the people of the lower classes who are naturally the backbone of the nation. They revolt against the supremacy of the higher classes and join hands with the foreigners. The foreigners have to retreat in the beginning; but in the end they are able to overpower the people of this province, who are a pack of traitors. The writer has introduced a few patriotic songs, inspiring the audience to die for their motherland. A notable feature of this play is that it is claimed to be the first tragedy in the domain of Hindi drama. In spite of the classical traditions which forbid the writing of a tragedy, the author has deliberately violated them and selected a theme suitable for this form of drama. It is a claim which is not entirely correct.

32 'Dāhara' pp. 31, 123.  
33 Ibid. pp. 35, 78, 79.  
34 Ibid. pp. 67-69.  
36 Introdution.  
37 Article 68. 'Niladevi (1881) is tragic in a crude form.
THE REALISTIC TENDENCY

78. The documentation of historical events is inherently less real than the actual observation of contemporary life. The dramatist gradually have ceased to deal with historical subjects and have turned their attention to a world susceptible of realistic treatment. The contact with Western culture has led the writers to a critical attitude towards the old social order. The spirit of enquiry has compelled them to analyse the existing institutions of society. A comprehensive analysis of the causes and characteristics which have led to the birth of realism has been attempted in another chapter.¹

79. Lakṣmi Nārāyaṇa Miśra is practically the first Hindi dramatist who studies man in the new social conditions and analyses the fresh problems of the day. It is obvious from the prefaces to his problem-plays that he has been inspired by continental and British dramatists. Ibsen and Shaw have considerably influenced his mode of art.² A reaction against the romantic idealism of the nineteenth century and a revolt against historical drama which does not solve the problems of the day characterise his dramatic prose.³ In spite of his professed

¹ Articles 98-100
² Introduction to Rahasya', pp. 1, 6.
³ 'Sanyāśi' pp.

pp. 2, 3, 7. Also 'Mukti Kā', preface to 'Rākaśasā kā Mandira'.


intellectualism, he essentially continues the idealistic reaction against Western materialism. The idealism of the East has a great fascination for the author.

80. ‘Sanyāsi’ (1929) is his first play in which two parallel conflicts are separately shown. Māltī, a girl student, who falls in love with her young class-mate strikes the major key in the play. To complete the ‘sexual triangle’, her professor develops a weakness for her; outwits the boy; and marries the girl. The disappointed young man becomes a ‘sanyāsi’. Hence the title of the play. Another interesting problem is created by an oldish professor who marries a very young girl. An earnest effort for overcoming marital mal-adjustment is displayed by either party; but the attempt ends in smoke. In the meanwhile, the young girl attaches herself to an editor who is her husband’s friend. One day the unfortunate girl is staggered to find that the editor dies of consumption in a jail. This conflict is abruptly given up in pursuit of the major theme of the play.

Māltī and Kirāṇa, the female characters in the play are very bold towards men. Perhaps they resemble the Shavian women, representing the ‘life-force’ in their persons by hunting after men. But old girls are rarely to be found in Hindu which has so far known and idealised shy and specimens of female humanity, especially marital relations. The other characters are intended to represent certain ideas. The old professor is a
order; the disappointed young man is a satire on romantic love; and the two girls are the typical product of modern age characterising personal liberty in marriage and sex.

The dialogue is notably simple and terse. It is seldom poetical, rhetorical, or literary. It is talk, broken and fragmentary as in real life. At moments the sentences are so broken that they jar on the ears. Although with a slow development of realism in the drama, the prose dialogue has approached closer and closer to the style of real conversation; yet the accurate reproduction of conversation runs the considerable risk of boring the audience. The dramatist tires out his audience for the sake of being linguistically precise. In his enthusiasm for realism or more correctly naturalism, he has avoided the frequent use of asides, soliloquies and impassioned harangues which have been a common feature of drama. In a simple language he has also scattered very brilliant and deep reflections on life in the play.

81. ‘Rākṣasa kā Mandira’ which does not bear any date of publication appears to be his next play. Asagari, a concubine, is the pivot of interest in the first half of the play. She is the keep of a lawyer who stands for a life of pros and sham respectability. The wayward woman is the son of the lawyer. The banishment of the father and the attempt of the father at suicide hold other extravagant notes in the play. The woman ensnares the latter victim in her net. Munī-

4 ‘Sanyāsi’ pp.
5 ‘Sanyāsi’
śvara who is already married takes a fancy to her. When they make love to each other, his wife appears on the scene to intensify the piquancy of the delicate situation. When he is reminded of the sacred vow of monogamy he ridicules it. He is a nihilist, out to destroy every sacred institution of the society. Bazrov⁶ is another well-known character of a similar type in literature. The latter half of the play is a series of episodes which are meant to create thrills. The curtain drops upon many a disillusioned soul who has been seeking to snatch a few episodes of happiness in this general drama of pain.

82. ‘Muktī kā Rahasya’ (The Secret of Salvation, 1932) is his latest drama in which he has led a revolt against the ‘sacred’ institutions of society. In the introduction to this play, he has definitely stated that the function of art, especially of drama is social reform.⁷ The theme of the play is the ‘eternal triangle’ of sex. Āśā is torn between the love of two men. She lives in the house of a widower whom she loves. The illegitimate relation between them gives rise to a public scandal. The plot is further complicated by her conspiracy with a doctor to murder the previous wife of the widower. To expiate her past sin Āśā makes a futile attempt to commit suicide. She confesses her love for the doctor. In a fit of brutality he divulges the secret of her love to the wife who retires in favour of the doctor. He decides to die as all gods do.

⁶ In Ivan Turgenev’s ‘Fathers
⁷ Introduction p. 6.
It is a secret of their salvation. It might bring about his salvation. Sharma who is the protagonist of the play in a fit of sentimentalism is ready to part with money which is a hindrance to the ideals of socialism. He is extremely cold to women, a robot existing to uphold a few principles of life. He is a person who is sincere to a fault. In this play too, the author has not introduced any song to entertain the audience. As he is out for realism, he has discarded the Shakespearean technique employed by his predecessors. As exits and entrances are not manipulated in real life, he has dispensed with the scenic construction of the play.

83. In these plays and others, Misra is a dramatic satirist who claims to draw a faithful picture of contemporary life. An analysis of his plays has shown that he does not paint life as it is; nor as it ought to be. He is, therefore, neither a naturalist, nor an idealist; yet he has affinities with both of them. He observes the world of actuality like the naturalists, and dreams of a better world like the idealist; but instead of insisting on either of these phases, he creates with a definite purpose an exaggeration of life. In his attempt to exaggerate life, he creates types of men who are frequently inconsistent and are invadably tasted by the plot. It is almost inevitable for intellectual thrills into his plays. In spite of these techniques, sold out credit of looking squarely at the social problem, not expressing opinions on them.

¹Dvijendral
belongs to him. No other Hindi playwright has shown so much of courage in leading a tirade against the false ideals of duty, marriage, monogamy, and romantic love. Shaw who put an end to the epoch of shortsighted optimism and exposed the snobbery and hypocrisy of the pseudo-respectable classes has exerted a profound influence on him and other young Indian playwrights.9

84. ‘Samāja’ (Society 1930), one of the few social plays is a campaign, without any artistic claims, against the evil of untouchability. Viśuddhānanda represents the radical class, Dhanadās stands for the conservative mass in society. In the beginning of the first scene, these opposite tendencies are expressed in a trenchant dialogue “In God’s eyes all are equal” is the chief argument advocated by the social reformer.10 “To break the social order sanctioned by divinity is a sin” is the counter-argument asserted by the reactionary.11 Gyān Saṅkara who has taken a vow of celibacy and who, later on, begins to love an “untouchable” girl is another social reformer who attributes the rigidity of the Hindu social order to the ‘high priests.’12 To this main theme have been tagged some of the minor social problems of child marriage,13 intercaste marriage,14

9 ‘The Indian Theatre’ p. 23.
10 ‘Samāja’ p. 3.
11 Ibid. p. 3.
12 Ibid. p. 9.
13 Ibid. p. 13.
14 Ibid. p. 73.
gary and the problem of the new bourgeoisie class aiming at prudery and a blind imitation of Western manners.

The characters in the play are either one-dimensional or two-dimensional; Viṣuddhānanda is a typical social reformer who is wedded to his cause; Gyān Saṅkara belongs to the same type of men; but the human side is shown by his response to the love of the untouchable girl. Yār Ali, the epicure, is the villain of the play. The construction of the plot is immature. When the characters enter on the stage, they are neither introduced by the stage-directions, nor is their identity revealed in the course of the dialogues. The fourth scene of the first act, relating the woes of a poor beggar from his own mouth appears to be undramatic and bathetic. In the end, all the lost persons are collected at one place to make the play melodramatic. In a foreword to this play, P. Sheshadari explains the reasons for the inartistic end of the play in the following words. “If the author is still somewhat under the glamour of romance and the incidents in his play shape themselves in the end in a manner convenient to the artist and not as they generally turn out in the real world, it must be remembered that he still young, and has not yet had opportunities of;

15 Ibid. p.
16 Ibid. p. 9.
ability as merely a social problem, having little relation to the economic order which is the real cause of this problem. It also explains his humanitarian attitude to the problem. The attitude is the direct outcome of the idealistic view of life sponsored by Mahātmā Gandhi and his followers.
THE DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE

85. The modern dramatic technique has been fashioned by three main influences. (1) The dramatic theory and practice of the classical drama. (2) The technique of the medieval performances in villages. (3) The Western influence. In the mythological plays a stress on the human motivation of characters is laid.¹ It is a step towards the realistic portrayal of the dramatic personage. In historical drama a greater emphasis is generally laid on the national traits of human character ideally conceived to inspire the audience with courage and bravery.² In the realistic plays the characters have comparatively an individual existence; but they have a tendency to revert to the category of social types.³ “In fact such a complete severance of type and individual is incredible. It can only happen on a logical plane; but not on the artistic and practical plane. In actual life, every living organism is an individual, no matter how completely his individual nature may be submerged of the class or type to which drama the meagre characteri- by appearance where the

size, the details of feature, and the manner of clothes are immediately recognised by the spectators. In the historical plays it is achieved by soliloquies, action, and opinion of other characters. It is the only realistic drama in which the speech is the chief means of achieving characterisation.

86. In the selection of characters the passion for the representation of a chaste wife passing successfully through the ordeal of manifold trials has been an important feature of the numerous medieval romances and mythological plays. The choice of devotional characters who suffer untold miseries and who triumph over sorrows in the end has also been an important feature of some of the minor devotional plays which have not been analysed in the present survey. The Indian audience has been seeking satisfaction in witnessing times without number the picturesque vicissitudes of devotees who suffer such miseries at the hands of tyrants. In the medieval performances characters were also selected to inspire the spirit of heroism among the audience. This tendency persists in the historical plays. In the realistic plays an earnest attempt those men and women who

87. The 'aside' whic

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5 Article No. 54, 'Varamalā'
6 Article No. 76.
7 Article No. 83.
8 Article No. 52. 'Anjanā'.
9 Prahlāda, Sūr Dās, Chandra
the classical and medieval drama, forming an important part in the history of comedy and farce for emphasising the element of incongruity has been totally abandoned in the realistic plays.\textsuperscript{10} The ‘soliloquy’ which has been frequently employed for the revelation of characters has also fallen into disrepute. The Western influence is responsible for the infrequent occurrence of the aside and soliloquy in the realistic drama. With the gradual coming of realism, the function of the dialogue has become more and more utilitarian, resembling the everyday speech selected for the furtherance of the plot and the development of the character.\textsuperscript{11} The setting in the plays is gradually becoming natural. In mythological drama there is little geographical obligation;\textsuperscript{12} whereas the setting in the realistic plays is comparatively localised. The songs which formed an integral part of the classical drama and medieval performances have been very popular in all the phases of Hindi drama; except in Miśra’s plays from which they have been eschewed much against the popular demand for music. \textsuperscript{13} The scenic basis of dividing the play has also been given up in the realistic drama.\textsuperscript{13} As a result of the Western influence which was assimilated first by Bengali dramatists, the modern drama has been entirely fashioned; only a few characteristics
of the village and classical drama.14 Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Shaw have largely contributed to the evolution of the technique of Modern Hindi drama.

14 "The Indian Theatre" p. 66.
NOVEL

Romantic Tendency.
Historical Phase.
Realistic Tendency.
Realistic Tendency—(Contd.). ♦
(Minor Novelists). ♦
THE ROMANTIC TENDENCY

88. The Novel as a form of literature is almost wholly a foreign product. It is, indeed, true that the talent for story writing was not wanting in ancient literature; but the Hindu writers never developed the art of the novel as it is understood to-day. The Hindu genius is essentially imaginative and mystical and its artistic energy almost invariably expressed itself in fables, fairy tales, and other types of legends which were totally divorced from real life. These stories were essentially episodes with no unity either of plot or atmosphere.

89. It is an interesting fact that the first Hindi novel should be realistic in its treatment, though the main tendency of the time was romantic. "Prīkṣā-guru" stands isolated from the romantic tendency in fiction characterised by adventures in love and romance. It portrays the life of merchants and traders of its age. r, who was born in a merchant pical attitude of the middle problems. The utilitarian c of the class has been ex- head of each chapter, des-
cribing wise platitudes of life. Each chapter of the novel begins with such maxims. Also the industrialisation of the country, the exploitation of its natural resources, and the organisation of the economic life of the country are portrayed by the middle-class mind of the characters who see everything as a means for self-preservation, and as a possibility of rendering life pleasant. Each chapter is a sermon on some aspect of the middle-class life. In conversation the ideal friendship between two males, the sensual life of the rich, the nature of good and evil, the necessity of shrewdness in life, the knowledge of municipal administration, the etiquettes of a gentleman, the grounds for revenge, and the metaphysical aspect of pain and pleasure are discussed with restraint and precision by a character who is a typical product of the new class which was coming into power as a result of Western contact. The story describes a rift which has taken place between two friends who are ultimately reconciled to each other. The characterisation in the novel is meagre and done at a single breath. The characters do not grow in the course of the novel. The dialogue has been written in a single language in order to retain the natural writer has written, in the two paragraphs for the benefit of punctuation which he

8 The Novel p. 12.
4 Ibid. p. 52.
8 Ibid. p. 133.
90. In the earliest stage of growth, the tendency in fiction has been chiefly romantic in its content. Devakīnāndana Khatri was one of the earliest novelists, who set the ball rolling by writing the serial romantic novel. In “Candrakānta” (1891) which runs into as many as twenty-eight parts, the author describes how a romantic prince falls in love with a beautiful princess and how obstacles are placed in the way of their love which eventually result in their marriage. The prince possesses all the characteristics of a romantic lover; e.g., a burning and passionate longing for the princess, a sensuous fascination for her beauty, bitter jealousy, self-denial and nightly loiterings before the beloved’s house. "The reason for this manifestation of love is simple. In the nineteenth century and even before it, marriage was not a personal but a family affair. The choice of the mate lay entirely in the hands of the parents, especially the father who generally decided in favour of the rich suitor, belonging to the same caste. In an age of sexual repression the nature of love was bound to be romantic.

The mistaken indentities, which cause swoon, theacco, and the smelling of the common tricks which their frequent repetition.
The intrigues and counter-intrigues follow in such quick succession that they almost take away the breath of the reader. The ingenuity of the writer in devising complicated situations compels the reader into a mood of wonder and admiration. Candra-kāntā, the heroine, is made to disappear for presenting further difficulties of her restoration. The locks are complicated, the doors magical, and the chambers mysterious. All these elements combine to create a world of miracles and romance with little human interest. In such novels of romance there is slight characterisation. The characterisation is an important feature only of the realistic novel. In this novel, the predominance of plot appealed to countless readers. It was acclaimed by its readers with unbounded enthusiasm. Many millions of illiterate persons learnt the alphabet to read it. It is the only novel which enjoys the privilege of running into as many as twenty impressions.

In the following words the author has expressed the aim of writing this serial novel, "In many Hindi novels of to-day the diplomatic ways of royal princesses have been described; but the institution of clever confidants who are versatile has not been des to sing, play, run, wield w prepare intoxicating drugs, these persons end quarr and without a drop of blo for their art and skill... trayal of such detectives has
were to enjoy this treat, they will also profit by it. To the readers of such books the greatest advantage will be that he will never be tricked or duped. I have penned this novel with these aims in view."

92. In this age of thrillers and detective novels, characterising the romantic tendency in a crude form; Khatri has played an important role by satisfying the reader's craving for sensation and adventure. In "Bhūt Nāth" which is another serial novel, running into twenty parts, he has continued the sensational and thrilling exploits of the brave detectives of his previous novel. In the end of this novel the opponents of the hero had to eat humble pie by declaring themselves dead. "Narendra Mohini" by the same author is a departure from the main type of his fiction abounding in the exploits of detectives. In this novel he has depicted the relentlessly revengeful character of a woman dissipated in love; the sacrifice of a friend for his friend; the love of a brother for his brother, and the luck of characters on whom fortune smiles. The treatment of the novel is obviously didactic. "Kusuma Kumāri" is another attempt. In this novel he has contrasted from a cheap ethical point of view serves as a foil to a treacherous ill to persons grossly selfish cter ultimately suffers when The ideal character of a
chaste wife who endeavours to save the life of her husband serves as a beaconlight to those women who have always upheld this ideal of chastity. In "Virendravir" (three parts) the writer has narrated the downfall of a faithless officer of the King. The officer murders his master along with his relatives and ascends the throne. "Poetic justice" is an important fact in the novel. In "Kajar Ki Koṭhari" the author has described the treacherous ways of prostitutes who cast their net very wide to catch their prey. It is an early novel dealing with the life of prostitutes who have been contemptuously treated by the author. In this age of prudery and artificial morality, public women have always been treated with undisguised disdain. In "Sevāsadana" which deals with the life of a girl driven to this profession of prostitution, another writer who possesses a liberal spirit does not look upon her with sneer, but with pity. In "Ma" which also deals with a similar theme, prostitution has been more or less treated as a product of the social environment and economic order. This novel is by a different author. It has been exhaustively discussed in a later article. "Sevāsadana" liberal outlook on the problem product of modern thought nor so conventional as the

* Article No. 103.
* Article No. 119.
THE HISTORICAL PHASE

93. The historical phase in fiction is not so rich in variety and content, as in drama.\footnote{1} It is less significant as a continuous tendency from romantic to realistic fiction. It serves as a gap between the realistic and romantic fiction. \textit{The psychological bases of this phase are similar to those in drama.\footnote{2}} The Rajpūt period of history has obviously given the greatest satisfaction to the writers of the historical novel. \textit{“Gaṛhakuṇḍār” (1929) is an important historical novel. In the preface, the writer has given a bare outline of the theme in its historical setting. In 1192 “Kuṇḍār” fort which forms the background of the novel proved impregnable to the assaults of foreign invaders.} The “Khangār” princes became the owners of this historical fort, and they collected tributes from the neighbouring ‘sardārs’ who were semi-independent. In the opinion of the author, the “Bundhels” made tremendous sacrifices to retain their independence and save the ancient culture.\footnote{3} To revive the history of the Bundhels, the ‘Ashtākra’ used historical data and sources.
The writer has personally visited the various places of historical importance in the novel.\textsuperscript{4} At present they are lying in a dilapidated condition in the woods. He has also heard from the lips of an old native the story of conflict between the two clans.\textsuperscript{5} He has endeavoured to arouse the patriotic sentiments of readers by imposing a crushing defeat on foreign invaders,\textsuperscript{6} by showing a generous treatment of the vanquished by the victors, and by portraying women participating in the battle.\textsuperscript{7} The Rajputs represent the spirit of bravery and sacrifice in the annals of Indian history.

94. The theme refers to the supreme heroism and daring of this tribe. Hurmatsingh, the owner of the fort, has a son to marry. Sohan Lāl who is one of his ‘sardārs’ and who has a daughter of marriageable age comes to him for help. The help can be given only on the condition of a matrimonial alliance which is an eye-sore to the father of the girl for reasons of his belonging to a higher caste.\textsuperscript{8} “The Bundhels” are worried to death by their powerful opponents; they think of an underhand trick to smother their is agreed to by them. A ceremony, a wet feast is arran\textsuperscript{g} groom. The “Khangars

\textsuperscript{4} Introduction.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{6} The Novel p. 44.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid. p. 38.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. p. 16.
for wine go tipsy and are destroyed on the spot.

Into this historical theme the writer has weaved three webs of romance; and out of these romances only one of them ends in success. The Nāga-Hemvatī romance, which is the predominate episode in the story, has been frustrated by rigid restrictions of caste. It is an indirect satire on the Hindu social order. The Agnidatta-Mānvatī love is smothered by the parents of the girl who is betrothed to a person other than her lover. In the end Agnidatta, who is desperately disappointed in love turns neurotic and changes his coat in the battle which ensues between the two opposing camps. The Divākara-Tārā episode is the only successful love-adventure in the novel. As usual, obstacles are placed in their way; but they overcome them to be united in the end.

95. ‘Kuṇḍār’ the fort, is the chief protagonist governing the destinies of men and women in the novel. The ancient traditions, which are intimately associated with the fort inspire the characters to deeds of bravery and heroism. If the fort is the hope of their rise, it is also the despair of their fall. Joseph Conrad has simi-

which brings out the best in

is an artistic background of characters are thrown to test

rt of Darkness’, etc.
Nāga and Agnidatta, the two main characters have been described in simple strokes in two pages and illustrated by the subsequent pages of the novel.\textsuperscript{12} Nāga is rude, brave, proud, cruel, and generous. Agnidatta is curt, secretive, proud, and a man of determination possessing radical views on social problems. A modern note is struck in the story, when the author represents him differing from his father in holding liberal views on the problems of caste and untouchability.\textsuperscript{13} The female characters who have not been individualised are shown as 'nature women' whose whole attention is instinctively focussed on the mate. They seem to be content with the role of fulfilling the biological function. They have not evolved towards a greater consciousness through a development of their personality. In short, they are not individual women but a means to a biological end.\textsuperscript{14} It is only in the realistic fiction that women have attained the status of individual persons.\textsuperscript{15}

At times, the analysis of these characters probes to the depths, but Varmā is not preoccupied with the psychology that penetrates; he does not seek for complicated tangles of the soul. One stroke the personality it with a vigorous hold, with a broad and firm touch.

\textsuperscript{12} The Novel pp. 13, 14, 138
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid p. 138.
\textsuperscript{14} Tārā, Mānvati, Hemvati.
\textsuperscript{15} Article No. 121.
it, he leaves it to give life to the very end. In this way, his characters do not change. As a revivalist of the past, he possesses to some degree the gift of an essentially historical imagination. He does not revel in ancient records to produce a work full of uninteresting details. He goes beyond the surface of mere details, endeavours to reach the very heart of the age of chivalry and makes it live again in its glory. He has a perception that the past is not something distinct from the present, but of a piece with it. His men and women, who do not belong to a very distant past, people the streets of the present only in a different dress.

96. 'Kena' (1930) is another novel, belonging to the historical phase of fiction. Kena is the name of a river which still cuts across the mountain and flows into the valley to remind the neighbouring villages of the pathetic tale of a couple. The river forms the background of the tragic drama which was enacted on its banks. In an appendix to the novel, the author cites the historical source from which he has taken the outlines of the theme. In about 1927 he read in a district gazetteer the origin of the name of the river.

"An Ahir fell in love with a 'Kürmi' boy. The secret love, killed the boy in the dam of the river. Of it, he pleaded innocence of her lover’s dead body.
God heard her prayer, the river swelled, the dam burst, his dead body became visible, and the girl allowed herself to be carried away by the current of the stream. And thus Karanavati, the original name was changed into Kanyā (girl) which again was changed into Kena.

The author has departed from the actual historical version to animate the theme with motivation and characterisation. The difference of caste and the tribal jealousy are described as powerful obstacles in the way of lovers. A soldier is introduced as a rival of the hero to complete the ‘eternal triangle’. The parents decide to marry her to a third person. In the original story it is stated that it is the father who kills him. In the novelist’s version, the brother is substituted for the father. Jamna, the girl, puts on a male attire and plunges into the river; and this device removes the supernatural element in the original story. The novel has been included in the phase of historical fiction for its pseudo-historical theme; the writer has neither recreated the spirit of the time nor painted the local atmosphere. He appears to be lacking in historical imagination.

97. “Khavāsa kā Vivāha”
Saṅyogito is to be given away shall choose her husband have been invited to a Yaś Prithivirāj, the protagonist tionally, insulted by the fat who is fixated on the Prince in his absence, not once but
other princes. The subsequent story relates the fight which ensued between the rival camps. Prithiviraj defeats his enemy and wins the bride.

The whole composition is faithfully based on the original epic from which the theme has been taken. In his fidelity to the source which is primarily narrative and descriptive in its treatment, the novelist has lost sight of his aim and made a prose version of the epic. The poetic theme as such is incapable of a suitable and comprehensive treatment in the form of a novel; but to complete the ordinary length of the novel, the writer has stuffed it with poetic description of men, women and towns with elaborate narratives of many fights and battles. Cand, the court poet in the original epic, accompanies the hero to prolong the length of the story by his description of things and persons that fall in their march to the town. It is a crude device of padding the novel with irrelevant matter. At places the reader is reminded of India's glorious past to arouse in him sentiments of patriotism and nationalism.
THE REALISTIC TENDENCY

98. The new order has slowly but surely exercised a deep and wide influence on the life of the country-people who are ridden with the rigidity of caste. In an average village the population chiefly consists of (1) the priest class, (2) the petty merchants and traders (3) the agriculturists or Zamindars (4) and the landless labourers. Some members of a caste received education, or by change of occupation acquired better economic advantages. As new avenues were opened in the towns as a consequence of the new order, these people migrated to the towns and almost severed their relations with the members of their caste living in the villages. They began to show that they were ‘brand-new’ people in a brand-new house. “Everything about this class was new. All their furniture was comparatively new, all their friends were new, all their servants new, all their plates were new, their religion was new, their moral code was new, their women were new, their..."

The opening of new schools, universities, by the middle began to effect a silent revol new middle-class. The devd

1 Bombay, Madras, Calcutta 185
it easy to send boys and even girls to distant establish-
ments where they could be herded together and standard-
ised according to the new patterns.

99. The middle-class began to enjoy greater in-
dividual liberty in social matters. The sub-castes began
to fuse; interclass marriages took place, though they
were by no means common; the age for marriage rose;
restriction on interdining disappeared; the old gods and
goddesses fell into disrepute; a new puritanical moral
code was evolved; and nationalism and patriotism be-
came their religion.

The whole training and circumstances of the middle-
class were calculated to create and foster the habit of
concentration. The stress of keen competition, fierce
beyond all precedent, kept its nose to the grindstone.
Work became worship. A greater emphasis came to
be laid on ‘Karma’ (action). Ārya Samāj preached it.
Mahātmā Gandhi extolled the value of action in life.
The cult of work generally got detached from its reli-
gious moorings and became a gospel truth. And
herein the middle-class differed from those landed gentle-
men (zamindar) whose rents lifted them above all anxiety

公网: it in the light of religion.

provinces, Central Provinces and
was the purity of heart, the chastity of women,\textsuperscript{5} and the respectability of family life. It was a seriousness too often impervious to humour. It hardened into a spiritual pride. The marriage became still more religious in its purpose. The bond between husband and wife was sacred, rising above fleshly passion as the flower rises above the manured earth in which it strikes its roots.\textsuperscript{6}

The people believed that passions ought to be under control, and self-sacrifice was better than self-indulgence. In matters of religion there was not the sustained white heat of passion that was burnt during the great ages of ‘bhakti’. The middle-class way was to examine the old bottles and patch them up wherever required. The new morality and religion were a discipline of rules, imposed from the outside, and did not well up spontaneously from the depths of the soul. As the middle-class felt the weakness of the basis of its superiority, which was wealth, they began to seek restlessly compensations for it. They built religious places of worship, donated for schools and colleges, aided the philanthropic projects, and protected art and culture.

They also pinned their faith in reason and science. The doctrine of utility began to have a much wider influence on public opinion of life of the people, which

\textsuperscript{5} Appendix B Letter 2, (6).
\textsuperscript{6} All the divorce bills have Assemblies on account of this (9)
new class. The rationalistic and positivistic outlook widened the gulf between science and traditional theology. In this trial the faith of many was shaken, but there was always a compromise—an essential characteristic of middle-class psychology. The Árya Samāj, the Brāhma Samāj, the Prārthnā Samāj were the outcome of the liberal movements started in the West, which were filtered to the Indian soil through the process of Western education.

100. As a consequence of the scientific outlook realism became a dominant tendency in literature, especially in the realm of drama, novel, and the short story. The general influences of the age tended to favour the taste and search for truth in art. The example of science and the prestige of a rational philosophy gave a more methodical character to the current conception of truth. Realism was also a conscious reaction to romanticism. The realist objects to the limitations on subject-matter imposed by the romantic point of view. He objects to the amount of idealisation inherent in the process of investing the chosen subject-matter with only a negative reaction to the ro-

side, the new scientific and emphasis on truth and fact

alism which is a dominant realism apes the impartiality

*The Art of the Drama* p. 146.
and impersonality of the scientist, it imitates the scientist’s freedom and prejudice, his lack of conventional, intellectual or moral inhibitions. Its aim, at its clearest, is to represent life as nearly as the scientist sees it. To the realist, as to the scientist not only the universe but man also is a mechanism; his personality, an inevitable product of the forces of heredity and environment; his physique, a psychophysical organism; and his conduct, not the product of character and free-will but of chemical and physical processes over which he has no control. The realist who follows his theory to its logical conclusion does not concern himself with morality. His rendition of life has the objectivity of science. But there are varieties of realists. The right-wing realist, who grasps only partially the implications of the scientific point of view is likely to share a sentimentalist’s view of human character to judge their behaviour in accordance with the morals of his own social group."

102. Premchand and his contemporaries who belong to the new social group espouse a particular standard of morals and use the novel to express their social purpose and social criticism. These social novelists, technique and sharing some realist, have brought their moral and social judgment departed much from the

9 Bentley and Millett’s ‘The Art'}
Premchand who is the pioneer of the realistic fiction represents the idealistic reaction by the spirit which animates his works. The central appeal of his novels is predominantly social. He is the first novelist who has treated the peasants and the lower middle-classes in an earnest and sincere way. He studies them not as a detached superior observer; but as one of them. A sympathy thus impregnates his study. In the inner realms of his realism there is an anguish of soul-debasing poverty of the peasants. It turns his works into a gospel of humanitarian love for the poor and suffering humanity. At every turn in the novels, he offers a sentimental comment in favour of the victims of social injustice and oppression. His art has a deep human quality. As his chief instrument is tears, he belongs to the line of sentimental realists.

103. "Sevāsadana" (1914) is his first novel with vivid character studies and interesting side-lights thrown on the problems of the social and domestic life. It relates the sufferings of a middle-class girl who is married to a cold, stingy, and jealous husband. In a fit of jeal-
turns her out on a flimsy pretext. The tiny boat is thrown overboard. The Hindu society has no place for a child of prostitutes. Sadan, who is in search of sexual
adventures appears on the stage. Sumana develops a liking for him; but she is not completely reconciled to the new ways of a public woman. A terrible conflict between a life of sin and that of chastity gnaws her heart. Gajādhar, the husband of the girl, becomes a “sādhu”, knowing that his wife has adopted the life of a prostitute. He refuses to persuade her to abandon her new mode of life. It is the weakest link in the chain of events in the novel. To compensate for the ill-treatment of his wife whose happiness has been ruined by him, he promises to arrange for a thousand rupees for the marriage of his wife’s sister. Sadan is going to marry this girl, but the marriage ends in smoke on account of the ignoble profession of the bride’s sister.

The girl’s father who has been kept in the background for a pretty long time, cannot show his face to the world. He begins to entertain suicidal thoughts. When he has decided to end his life on a river bank, his son-in-law suddenly appears to save him and to confess his guilt before him. Kusama, the heroine, also finds an occasion to attempt suicide; but the guilty husband arrives to frustrate her attempt. It is another improbable coincidence in the construction of the story between the guilty husband and the heroine. She has not been described with

In the course of the story, much attention is paid to social reform

10 'Sevāsadana' p. 246.
11 Ibid. 276.
titutes; but vested interests stand in the way of this 'purification campaign'. Biṭṭhaldās is the typical social reformer who has taken upon himself the burden of the society. Padma is another puritanical character who wishes to rid marriage of its evil customs. In the end of the novel a general reformation of the prostitutes has been brought about by a magic wand. Kusama has been appointed a Superintendent of a Rescue Home which has been started to harbour such unfortunate women.

104. All the important characters in the novel belong to the middle-class, characterised by a puritanical outlook on life. The father has all the virtues and vices of this class. He is honest and truthful. He suffers from pangs of conscience when he is compelled by adverse financial circumstances to accept bribe, for which he is sentenced to five years imprisonment. In the court, he confessed his guilt and naively believes in the doctrines of retribution. Sumana, the heroine of the novel, is a vivacious girl. She is married to a comparatively ordinary person who is cold, jealous, and suspicious of her charm and vivacity. At a place the writer has realistic picture of the married couple by affecting economy. It is an observation of middle-class homes. full of coincidences. The
sudden appearances of the ‘sādhu’ at the time of suicides are highly improbable, the frequency of coincidences in a work of fiction is apt to create the impression that the movement of the plot is being deliberately manipulated to bring out a preconceived end. The novels of Thomas Hardy, especially his earlier ones, suffer from a similar fatal defect.*

The social purpose of the novel is quite transparent. The age-old institution of prostitution has been ruthlessly assaulted from a moral and sentimental standpoint. In the opinion of the author who comes of a lower middle-class and who has acquired a puritanical outlook of his class; the causes leading to this evil are not deeply rooted in human nature but are the offspring of the social system; and given understanding and sympathy women can be saved from a life of sin and shame. The fundamental polygamous nature of man, of which prostitution is the product is completely ignored by him. His is a feeble analysis of this social evil, and the remedy suggested by him is equally temporary. If one prostitute is saved from the pit, their class still continues to thrive in all cities.

In “Raṅga-Bhūmi” (1903), which is considered to be his masterpiece, the three social Sürdās, the blind beggar, the novel. He owns a pit bone of contention between

* Viz. ‘Trumpet Major’, ‘The Eyes’, ‘The Mayor of Casterbridge’
who use it for grazing their cattle, the Christian who wish to erect a leather factory on the suitable site. For Sūrdās it is a problem; should he sell it or retain it for the common good of the poor people? The ‘Sūrdās’ theme which describes the struggles of the blind hero is desperately realistic in its treatment; but the hero has been painted as faultlessly ideal and noble from the beginning to the end, without showing any psychological transformation of his character. He has been lifted to the moral heights of great prophets; but he still remains a beggar. It is the writer’s enthusiasm for pure idealism which is responsible for this fundamental flaw in his conception of heroes. In a letter which he wrote to me, he says, “I have in each of my novels an ideal character with human failings as well as virtues; but essentially ideal. In “Raṅga-Bhūmi” there is Sūrdās....”. In this actual creation of the character, he forgets the dark side of human nature and presents only the bright aspect of it, defeating thereby the very aim of realistic art. Whenever there is a temptation in the beggar’s way, he is bound to overcome it without much mental struggle which is so necessary in such ordeals. Only on one important occasion when he realises his helplessness in think of selling his land for per-

ise a ‘sublimated’ soul which ice.’ At last his piece of a government official. The

212, 230, 597, 887.

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blind beggar sings out his wounded heart in his rounds of the village, exciting thereby the pity of a Christian girl who awakens to his suffering.

Sophia, the Christian girl, is the prominent character of the second social group in the novel. She is no less a psychological improbability than the character of the blind beggar. In the beginning of the story she has been described as a religious rebel who refuses to attend the church and to have blind faith in all the doctrines of Christianity.\textsuperscript{18} And for this difference of opinion the mother of the girl has turned against her. As usual, Premchand resorts to a sensational and melodramatic device of getting rid of a character in the story. In order that Sophia should leave the home, a house is set on fire. She renders help with her tender body which is bruised in her attempts to put out the fire. After the incident she is harboured in a Hindu family which constitutes the third social group in the novel. It seems so improbable that the parents of the girl should not search for her or make any efforts to trace her.

In the Hindu family, Vinaya, a young man, leads an ascetic life according to the ancient ideals of life. A strange note is struck, when love develops between Sophia and the young coming her lover, he turns who represents the autho

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid. pp. 46, 48.
Government leaves the girl behind him to render social service to the victims of oppression. In his attempt to help the people he is arrested in a jungle on a charge of dacoity. It is an uncalled for event in the story. Perhaps the writer has inserted this episode to give a nodding acquaintance of jail life. It was a necessary asset for leadership in the non-co-operation movement which forms the background of the novel. Sophia, who feels crestfallen at his departure starts on another voyage to meet him. After many improbable adventures which include her flirtations with the political agent and the stopping of railway trains to see her lover, she meets him in the end. In a political riot he is killed. She also jumps into the river. Death and suicide are the writer's chief devices for disposing of his characters whom he can neither control nor dispense with in other ways.

106. In this novel the writer has employed the early nineteenth century technique of the double or treble plot. The three parallel series of adventures, in which three separate groups of people are concerned, have no deep organic connection or link among them. The 'Sūrdās' theme has no other point of contact with other two themes except the keenly-contested In fact, the blind beggar’s story stands regated to the other two which also on the surface. The old con- the double or treble plot persists in the progress of each series of
events and detracting the reader's attention. The artificial trick of keeping three stories going like a juggler's balls is entirely different from the attempt to follow the interwoven movements of typical social groups. In this case the separate groups impersonate the protagonist of the tale; and their fates are closely interwoven.

107. In "Premāśrama" which is another important novel, a strife between two classes of society is depicted on a large canvas. The scene of the action is laid in a village. Gyan Shankar is the representative of the landlords; Prem Shankar, his real brother, is the spokesman of the peasants. The theme of the novel has been lifted to a conflict of classes from a clash of individuals. The appalling poverty of the peasants has been depicted with a cruel insight.17 Manohar, who represents the peasants, does not yield to the threats of red-tapes and petty officials.18 In portraying the life and problems of the villagers, Premchand has shown his intimate knowledge of the petty officials, of the institution of 'forced labour' (begār) and of the helplessness of the poor villagers against the spread of an epidemic in the area.19

Another thread relating to the disruption of adle-class family of 'zamindar' is introduced with the story of peasant. An uncle, an old fossil,
happens to be the head of the middle-class family. Gyan Shankar, his nephew, out of jealousy spends as much as his uncle in the joint family system. The rivalries in the family lead to a partitioning of the property. Gyan Shankar’s brother has gone abroad; and he hears from him that he would come back. It disturbs his plans of swallowing the entire property; especially when his brother must have been influenced by the Western outlook on life. Prem Shankar, during his stay abroad, has specialised in agriculture, and he wishes to start an experiment on a farm. (Hence the title of the novel). In spite of his being outcasted from the society and separated from his wife, he wholeheartedly devotes himself to social reform. The end of the novel rather takes the reader’s credulity. The sudden transformation of the character to a religious life, the religiously precocious behaviour of his son who has become a mendicant, the sudden suicide of his wife at the adoption of their son by an issueless rich widow; and the beheading of his son by the second son in the hope that he would be able to revive him by occult powers are some of the instances which have marred the realistic nature of the novel.

108. Gyan Shankar is a typical character of the idle-class. He is a simple and real portrait in the novel. An inherent contradiction between his intellectual convictions and his conservative emotional
behaviour presents a human contrast to the ideally wooden character of his brother. As a victim of ‘inferiority complex’, he has to lift his toe to meet his superiors on an equal footing.²¹ To assert himself he writes social satires which create a stir in the town.²² It is the real portrait of a person who is swayed by jealousy, hatred, love, and generosity. Without realising his limitations, he wishes to ascend the endless ladder of ambition; so much so that he poisons the ears of ladies against his brother by spreading false stories about him. At his instance, his brother is arrested by the police.²³

109. Among the female characters in the novel, Vidyā is broad-minded,²⁴ sympathetic,²⁵ shrewd, and well-versed in the ways of life;²⁶ The Hindu woman who represents the protestant middle-class view of life marked by an utilitarian and rationalistic and monogamic outlook cannot bear the extra-marital relations of her husband, and the adoption of her son by a rich widow. Sraddhā, Prem Shankar’s wife, is an old-fangled orthodox lady who is not properly adjusted to her liberal husband. She had led a life of patient and silent suffering sacrificing her joy at the altar of chastity. Gāyatri, the condemned widow, is the most baffling character in the novel. She is a

²¹ ‘Premāśrama’ p. 150.
²² Ibid. p. 153.
²³ Ibid. p. 320.
²⁴ Ibid. p. 37.
²⁵ Ibid. p. 119.
²⁶ Ibid. p. 221.
neurotic who has neither been able to gratify her sexual desires nor to sublimate them. She flirts with the hero; but suffers from a sense of sin and remorse. She tries to be charitable and religious; but this life does not satisfy her. To fulfil her yearning for an issue, she adopts a child at the cost of his mother's life. In the end, she dies an obscure death which is simply announced by the writer.

110. 'Kāyākalpa' is another stout volume of fiction which is a strange combination of real and supernatural elements. In Jagdishpur, a village, the drama of life is staged. Chakradhar, the apostle of love and non-violence, is the conventional hero. He belongs to the lower middle-class of which the author has an intimate knowledge. While coaching the daughter of a rich landlord, intimacy develops between the two which soon matures into love. The girl is married not to him but to a rich person with already three living wives. Chakradhar is married to a girl who was lost by the parents at a fair and brought up by a social reformer. It is a world of marital misfits. The congress leader is not properly reconciled to his wife. He loves his mother more than his wife. In the non-co-operation movement which forms the background of the novel, he frequently comes into conflict with the authorities.

The introduction of the supernatural element relating to the story of a woman who knows how to stay

27 'Premāśrama' pp. 107, 117.
ever young by taking a dose of medicine, and the life of a prince who undergoes successive transformations of his body digresses from the main theme. The construction of the plot has become melodramatic and the characterisation improbable on account of this supernatural theme. The purpose does not remain entirely social, the novel deals with the social and political unrest of 1921 and the revolt against the institution of polygamy as practised by the rich people.

III. "Karma Bhūmi" (1932) portrays life as action. Amarkānt is the conventional hero who represents the author’s conception of the typical protagonist. While a student, he is married to a wrong woman. As an escape from his dull married life, he joins the Congress movement to free his country from foreign yoke. Sukhdā, his wife, dissuades him from participation in the national movement and disarms him by her trenchant arguments. His wooden idealism is lifeless. A strange episode storying—a revengeful assault on military soldiers by a ‘beggar woman’ whose modesty has been outraged by them is introduced to provide an opportunity for the hero to render help to her. A public trial is conducted; she is honourably discharged.

Amarkānt is attached to a Muslim girl. She refuses to marry the man to whom she has been engaged. The son comes into conflict with his father and rents a...
parate house. Somehow he quits the house to tour in the villages where he discovers appalling poverty. He builds a hut, conducts a night school for the benefit of villagers, and brings about reform among them. It so happens that the beggar girl also comes to stay in the same village. She is his third love. In a dull manner she relates the story of her past life. Sukhdā, the wife of the hero, enlarges herself in social work.  

Amarkānt is arrested for spreading discontent against the Government established by law and order. His wife too is locked up behind the bars. A woman, who is maltreated in the prison-land turns out to be the same beggar woman. A gross inequality of life is shown in the prison where there is one law for the rich and another for the poor; as in Galsworthy’s 'Silver Box'. A peep into the hardships of prison life is also given by the author with his usual deep insight. When the curtain is about to drop, the story becomes still more improbable and melodramatic. The author picks up all the lost threads by collecting all the characters—the hero, his wife, the muslim girl, the beggar woman at one place, the Jail. The hero is reconciled to his father. The couple is properly adjusted, the muslim girl gives up her claims upon him and treats him as her brother. Divorce has thus been avoided. Premchand has a strong prejudice against the institution of

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30 'Karma Bhūmi' p. 225.
31 Ibid. p. 153.
divorce. He writes, "Divorce is common among the proletariat. It is only among the so-called higher classes where this problem has assumed a serious shape. Marriage even at his best is a sort of compromise and surrender. If a couple mean to be happy, they must be ready to make allowances. While there are people who can never be happy even under the best of circumstances. In Europe and America divorces are not uncommon, in spite of all courtship and free intercourse. One of the couple must be ready to bend, male or female, does not matter. I refuse that only males are to blame. There are cases where ladies create trouble, fancy grievances. When it is not certainty that divorce will cure our nuptial evils, I do not want to fasten it on society. Of course there are cases when a divorce becomes a necessity. But 'misfit' is nothing in my opinion but fastidiousness. Divorce without any provision for the poor wife! This demand is only made by morbid individualism....."32.

112. "Gabana" (1931) is a maturer and more realistic attempt to relate the story of a young husband who buys for his newly married wife a costly necklace and is involved in debt without her knowledge. He is forced to commit forgery to get rid of this debt. As he is a victim of middle-class respectability and his own egoism, he does not disclose the secret of his debt and forgery to his wife who could have easily saved

32 Appendix B Letter 1 (9).