1. Discuss Raja Rao’s art of characterization in Kanthapura.

Ans: Everything in Kanthapura proceeds from the point of view of Achakka, the narrator of the novel, whether it be the story of the village or the political struggle in which the villagers get involved. The characters too are projected from the same point of view. Since Achakka is a respectable grandmother of the village, most of the main characters of the novel are personally known to her, and she treats them as her children and grandchildren. She loves to describe them in familiar terms, and has a habit of giving their family and professional backgrounds when introducing them to the reader. Raja Rao himself has no opportunity to make direct comments on any of his characters as Kanthapuru is a first person narrative. Whatever he would like to say about a person is put in the mouth of Achakka. However, there are occasions, when the characters make comments on each other, or they reveal themselves through their actions as reported by Achakka.

The characters in Kanthapura are villagers who have little experience of the city life. They are shown to be not highly educated, not very cunning, but mostly innocent, simple and truthful people. Prayer, worship, and religious practices sum up the way of life for them. That is the reason how their leaders find it easy to take them towards politics by the path of religion. While their blind faith is a positive point, it has a negative side in making them superstitious and reluctant to give up tradition. In the face of an appeal to give up old habits and customs, they are likely to be unreasonable and headstrong. Human nature being such a variable thing, the Kanthapura community has its quota of good and evil figures. To contrast the goodness and nobility of Moorthy, Rangamma, Ratna and others, there are evil characters like Bhatta and Waterfall Venkamma. The latter, in particular, has a vicious tongue, which is capable of turning against its victims like a waterfall of malicious words. But, in the ultimate analysis, she is not all that bad -4s for the policeman, Bade Khan, he is evil incarnate.

Raja Rao presents his characters as sharing a common nature. Their broad acceptance is an essential element of the spirit of India. What the British writer, E.M. Forster, fails to understand about the national character of India is clear as daylight to Raja Rao, and he projects this understanding through his depiction of the characters in Kanthapura. He does not emphasize their individual traits, but presents them as a group with common inherited traditions and common goals. Moorthy, in spite of his revolutionary zeal, cannot totally cut himself off from tradition and common belief. Following the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, he takes up the cause of the untouchables, but is still beset by doubt if he is doing the right thing by mixing with them. Similarly, Bhatta is not depicted as a person who is all bad. Some of the villagers consider him to be 'a fine fellow.’ One has to consider him in the general perspective of human nature that Raja Rao presents in Kanthapura. He makes us look at the ‘Red-man,’ the master of the Sleefington Coffee Estate, not in anger, but from a humorous and ironic point of view.

2. Discuss the structure of Midnight's Children.

Ans: Midnight's Children is a 1981 novel by British Indian author Salman Rushdie. It deals with India's transition from British colonialism to independence and the partition of British India. It is considered an example of postcolonial, postmodern and magical realist literature.

The story is told by its chief protagonist, Saleem Sinai, and is set in the context of actual historical events. The style of preserving history with fictional accounts is self-reflective.

Meanwhile, Saleem's family begin a number of migrations and endure the numerous wars which plague the subcontinent. During this period he also suffers amnesia until he enters a quasi-mythological exile in the jungle of Sundarbunt, where he is re-endowed with his memory. In doing so, he reconnects with his childhood friends. Saleem later becomes involved with the Indira Gandhi-proclaimed Emergency and her son Sanjay's "cleansing" of the Jama Masjid slum. For a time Saleem is held as a political prisoner; these passages contain scathing criticisms of Indira Gandhi's over-reach during the Emergency as well as a personal just for power bordering on godhood. The Emergency signals the end of the potency of the Midnight Children, and there is little left for Saleem to do but pick up the few pieces of his life he may still find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his still-young nation, a chronicle written for his son, who, like his father, is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history.

Midnight's Children was awarded the 1981 Booker Prize, the English Speaking Union Literary Award, and the James Tait Prize. It also was awarded The Best of the Booker prize twice, in 1993 and 2008 (this was an award given out by the Booker committee to celebrate the 25th and 40th anniversary of the award).

The book went on to sell over one million copies in the UK alone.

In 1984 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi brought an action against the book in the British courts, claiming to have been defamed by a single sentence in chapter 28, penultimate paragraph, in which her son Sanjay Gandhi is said to have had a hold over his mother by his accusing her of contributing to his father Feroze Gandhi’s death through her neglect. The case was settled out of court when Salman Rushdie agreed to remove the offending sentence.

3. Compare and contrast the autobiographies of Nehru and Chaudhuri.

Ans: Nirad C. Chaudhuri has created an emotional reaction through his works. There are so many controversies and unanimity about the appraisal of his work. Swapan Dasgupta’s Nirad C. Chaudhuri: the First Hundred Years: A Celebration presents fascinating pictures of Chaudhuri’s personality, as observed by eminent writers and critics like Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Khushwant Singh and Keki N. Daruwalla. They comment on his writings in both English and Bengali, in addition to describing the man.

Among all the critics, it is C.D. Narasimhaiah who has possessed a lesser opinion on Chaudhuri’s autobiography. He finds absolutely nothing admirable in it. He has compared Nehru’s autography with Chaudhuri’s, and believes that they demonstrate “two kinds of Indian writing: one pulsating with human warmth, the other abstract, ponderous and dully academic; one meant for Indians, another for an English-speaking world abroad” (Narasimhaiah, 1995, y.64). According to him, “Chaudhuri’s writing betrays an immaturity that