

## CHAPTER - I

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### A BRIEF SURVEY OF INDO-ANGLIAN FICTION AND ARUN JOSHI'S CONTRIBUTION

CHAPTER - IA BRIEF SURVEY OF INDO-ANGLIAN FICTION AND  
ARUN JOSHI'S CONTRIBUTION**1.1 INTRODUCTION:**

The story of English in India begins on March 7, 1835, with an announcement of Lord William Bentinck's decisions to favour English Education alone and knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of English language. One of the natural results of British Rule in India is the rise and development of literature in English written by Indian writers.

Indo-Anglian writers were handicapped by the necessity of expressing themselves in a foreign language, which many of them had learnt only through books. With all those shortcomings, gradually functional prose gave place to poetry; the novel came last in the field of Indo-Anglian literature. The other forms of writing gradually developed in Indo-Anglian literature. K.R. Shrinivas Iyengar points out, "The forces that co-operated towards developing English into a world language have also been responsible for the growth of Indo-Anglian literature which was a history going to nearly a hundred and fifty years. Considerable work has been produced during this period in poetry, fiction, drama and philosophical and argumentative prose. A few writers in each one of these departments of Indo-Anglian literature have attained international fame. This would not have happened but for the fact that Indo-Anglian literary tradition has had an unquestioned vitality".<sup>1</sup>

Iyengar further observes, "The novel as a literary phenomenon is new to India. Epics, lyrics, dramas, short-stories and fables have their respectable ancestries, going back to several centuries, but it is only during a period of little more than a century that the novel - the long sustained piece of prose fiction - has occurred and taken root in India".<sup>2</sup> A two-fold stream of influences poured immediately on Indo-Anglian fiction. There was the stream of translations of Western masterpieces of fiction which came to the Indo-Anglian novelists through English translations of foreign works of merit - Tolstoy, Balzac, Dostoevsky. The second was the stream of translations and English renderings of notable books from Indian languages. Both the influences brought within the range of the Indo-Anglian novelists the best that India and the world had to offer. But it did not get perfection until 1920. Meenakshi Mukharji rightly says, "The novel, the genre of imaginative literature, which gave artistic form to the relationship of man and society was conspicuously absent until the 1920's".<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 INDO-ANGLIAN MEN NOVELISTS:

The Indo-Anglian fiction passed through many phases. Many scholars have divided it differently. The division of the Indo-Anglian fiction was based on themes, chronological development and art of novel-writing. These phases many times overlap one another; but they are distinctly visible. However, we may trace the history of Indo-Anglian fiction in terms of the following phases:

### 1. Pre-Independence Fiction:

- (A) From 1875 to 1920,
- (B) From 1920 to 1947;

## 2. Post-Independence Fiction:

- (A) From 1949 to 1970,
- (B) From 1970 onwards : Modern Fiction.

### 1.1.1 Pre-Independence Fiction:

#### (A) From 1875 to 1920:

Though the period upto 1920 suffered from technical faults and an overdose of romantic treatment and monotony; there were some good efforts, though imitative. This period gives us a variety of the romantic, the social, the historical and the detective novels. P.P.Mehta comments, "Though we find very few good novels, we can say that this period laid a foundation for an impressive construction of the edifice of the novel. The Indo-Anglian novel started like a toddling child - its steps were faltering but it was trying to imitate the elders and it has abundant energy to learn and improve".<sup>4</sup>

The first Indian novel in English, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Rajmohan's Wife appeared in 1864 and created a history. This melodramatic story of the trials of a long suffering middle class Hindu wife at the hands of her callous husband is obviously designed to point a moral. "The urge for social reform was, of course, significant aspect of the Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth century. It therefore, became an important theme in some early Indian-English fiction",<sup>5</sup> observes M.K.Naik. The social novels written during this period were:

- (a) The Hindu Wife (1876) by Raj Laxmi Devi,
- (b) Sarata and Hinjana (1895) by Kshetrepal Chakrabarti,
- (c) Bjoy Chand (1888) by H.Dutt,
- (d) Vasudeva Sastri (1905) by Rajan Iyer,
- (e) Thillai Govindan (1912) by A.Madhaviah,

- (f) Unfinished Song by Mr. Ghoshal,
- (g) The Fatal Garland by Mr. Ghoshal,
- (h) Hindupore (1915) by Jogendra Singh,
- (i) The Love of Kusuma (1910) by Balkrishna,
- (j) Sun Babies (1910), and
- (k) Between the Twilights (1908) by Cornelia Sorabji.

Social life of those days is reflected in these novels. It was an age of religious reform and emancipation of woman. Political stirrings were there but the desire for full Independence had not caught the minds of the people who were at best demanding a Home Rule. All these stirrings have been mirrored in the novels mentioned above. If The Hindu Wife tries to put the Indian ideal of the Hindu wife before the readers, Nasrin and Sarata and Hinjana show the love and the troubles of Indian families. Vasudev Sastri presents an ideal Brahmin, so common in those days, but not extinct even in our days. Love stories are all dominated by the traditional concept of love in which the beloved is ready to die for her lover. The Love of Kusuma, Nasrin, The Fatal Garland and such other stories illustrate the point. Religious reform was the order of the day and found reflection in novels like Thillai Govindan and Vasudev Sastri. The political outlook of the day is mirrored in Hindupore and some stories from The Tales of Bengal. The life depicted in those novels was highly unrealistic.

Another type of fiction which made a fairly early appearance was historical romance. They are stories of love and hatred, intrigues and murders woven round some historical incidents. Prominent examples are Mirza Moorad Ali Beg's Lalun, the Beragun or The Battle of Panipat

(1909); Jogendra Singh's Nur Jahan, The Romance of an Indian Queen (1909) and A.Madhaviah's Clarinda (1915); Kalikrishan's Padmini (1903) and Dive for Death (1912).

The contemporary fiction also showed autobiographical element. Madhaviah's Thillai Govindan is the best example of autobiographical novel in which the autobiographical element is extremely disguised.

The earlier fiction did not show much technical superiority. "It becomes apparent" says P.P.Mehata, "that the novels upto 1920 are a strange mixture of the good and the bad. None of the novels rise much above the standard of mediocrity. Technical skills various artistic methods of story-telling and stark realism - all these find no place in the novels of this period. The best that we can say about them is that some of the novelists are good story tellers".<sup>6</sup>

(B) From 1920 to 1947:

The First World War ended in 1918 and its impact began gradually to be mirrored in literature from 1921 onwards. This period marks a great leap forward. There is a clear-cut advance in technique, form and style. It is the real beginning of the Indo-Anglian novel. The novelists were serious about their art and there was a conscious awareness of form and experiment. They dealt with the contemporary problems and society rather than history and romances. Political and social themes formed typical trends of this period. Indian struggle for Independence was an epic struggle covering half a century. Mahatma Gandhi was the hero of this movement on both the political and social stage. The Indo-Anglian novel was too much inspired by the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

Social novels of this period show a large variety of subject-matter and a deeper understanding of social problems and characterization. The importance of inner conflict seems to be well realized by the authors of this period. The remarkable social novels of this period are - Sardar Jogendra Singh's Kamala (1925) and Kamini (1931), Ahmad Ali's Twilight in Delhi (1940), D.F.Karaka's Just Flesh (1941) and There Lay the City (1932), K.A.Abbas's Tomorrow is Ours (1943).

The rural novels can not be put in a separate class. These novels dealing with rural life in India belong, in reality, to the class of the social novel. But the agrarian problem has always had special significance for India. Problems of the villagers, whether they be farmers or fishermen, were so far neglected. The writers had either refused to face the grim tragedy of the village life or they had not understood the village problem.

The Gandhian movement put the village in the forefront. These rural novels and short stories have certain definite characteristics. They are highly realistic. Boy-meets-the-girl stories have no place in them. Even love features as an undercurrent in the stories of sorrow and suffering. These stories are the stories of sorrow, because the problems of villages were sad problems, loaded with tragic consequences. This rural theme is best reflected in the novels like Murugan, the Tiller (1927) by Shankar Ram, Men and Rivers (1945) by Humayun Kabir.

This period also saw novels of social reform. Mulk Raj Anand's pre-Independence fiction deals with several aspects of social reform, including the plight of the untouchables in Untouchables (1925), the miserable lot of the landless in Coolies (1936), the exploitation of the

tea-garden workers in Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), and the problems of industrial labour in The Big Heart (1945).

The social novel of the period did not always make itself a vehicle for reform but sometimes aimed solely at faithful portrayal of the changing social scene. K.Nagarajan's Athavar House (1937) is a family chronicle. It is about the fast vanishing joint family. Dhan Gopal Mukherji's autobiographical novel My Brother's Face (1926) offers an equal evocative picture of changing India.

A new dimension was added to the novel of social portraiture when R.K.Narayan began his series of Malgudi novels with Swami and Friends in 1935.

Some historical novels were also written in this period. Only a few writers attempted to produce historical novels; one Mr.Ayyar has touched the richest page in the field of Indian history - The Gupta and Maurya Periods. Baladitya, a Historical Romance of Ancient India (1930) is a story of the King of Magadha. Three Men of Destiny (1939) is another novel of Mr.Ayyar.

Indian struggle for Independence was an epic struggle covering half a century. Mahatma Gandhi was the political and spiritual leader of India. The struggle for freedom was fought on both the political and the social plane. It would be futile to believe that this movement, this struggle which had caught the imagination of the entire nation should fail to inspire the Indo-Anglian writers. With the intensification of the freedom struggle during the Gandhian movement, politics was virtually the daily bread of the age. The political theme looms large in the fiction of this period. The earliest example is K.S.Venkatramani's



Kandan, the Patriot (1934). The other significant works inspired by this struggle are Ingilab (1955) by K.A.Abbas, Waiting for the Mahatma (1955) by R.K.Narayan, Mother Land (1944) by C.N.Zutshi, Into the Sun (1933) by Frieda H.Das, The Sword and the Sickle (1942). Raja Rao's Kanthapura (1938) is easily the first evocation of the Gandhian age in Indo-Anglian fiction. "None of the other political novels of the period, however, attains the excellence of Kanthapura for one reason or another",<sup>7</sup> comments M.K.Naik.

It was the period of the British Raj and the Indian fiction writers were unable to write openly about the Freedom Movement. Therefore, they took the help of historical subjects to present the past glorious history of India. One such effort was by A.S.P.Ayyar whose Three Men of Destiny (1939) and Shivaji (1944) are the best examples of genius.

This period also witnessed the rise of the 'ethnic novel' - represented in this case by a group of Muslim novelists, most of whom wrote evocatively about the life in Muslim households. Their most characteristic note is a nostalgic presentation of the decay of Muslim Culture. Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi (1940) aims at depicting, "a phase in our national life and the decay of white culture, a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes".<sup>8</sup> The other novels of this type are - Ocean and Night (1964) by Ahmed Ali, Humayun Kabir's Men and Rivers (1945), etc.

Indo-Anglian literature, cultivated as it was by some of the best educated people in India, was found to throw up some eminent figures in course of time. The earlier writers like S.K.Ghosh, S.B.Bannerjee, Sorabji Cornelia and others had already broken the ground and the Indo-

Anglian fiction was ripe for a luxurious flowering. This period saw the emergence of the 'Big Three' novelists - Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao.

#### Mulk Raj Anand:

Mulk Raj Anand has the credit of being not only the most prolific but also the most expressly committed writer. He is a man of varied interests and achievements and his life itself reads like an exciting romantic tale full of struggle, quest and accomplishment. "He brought everything new to the Indo-Anglian novel - and the short story - new matter, new technique, new style and new approach", comments P.P.Mehta.<sup>9</sup> Anand interprets Indian material in terms of new universalism and combines all that is best in both East and West. And so, there are in his work, elements of mature poetry, breadth of composition, irony and serenity. And he evolves something new in his work.

Anand is whole-heartedly devoted to the simple life of villagers, whose poverty and caste feeling touch him deeply. He is equally concerned with orphans, untouchables and urban labourers. There is a strong touch of humanism in his writings. "He is a humanist because he rightly thinks that since most of our problems have been created by man, they can also be solved by man. Since man is the reason for the miseries of mankind, he should now become the power-house for processing his own salvation. Superstition, bigotry, caste, class, capitalism, exploitation, over-population, tyranny, Colonialism, Fascism, atomic stock-piling, war, genocide - since man is responsible for all these, man can now fight and undo them too, if he has the vision doubled with the requisite will. And through Anand's writings, his preachings and the example of his own life, he has been trying to awaken man's slumbering

conscience so that he may acquire the true vision and develop the necessary will go engage in the tasks of reconstructing humanity in India and the world", explains K.R. Shrinivas Iyengar.<sup>10</sup> He started the new trends of realism and social protest in Indo-Anglian novel. His early novels are - Untouchable (1939), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), The Village (1939). He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1967 and his novel Morning Face (1968) received the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1971. He is the major novelist having to his credit 15 novels, six collections of short stories and numerous other books on art, painting and literature.

#### R.K. Narayan:

R.K. Narayan is one of the most important figures in the field of Indo-Anglian novel. He may be called the 'father of the regional novel' in India. A.N. Dwivedi argues, "He is the truest artist who does not bother about the contemporaneity of his subject-matter"<sup>11</sup>. "Indian novel in English got prestige in Indo-Anglian literature mainly because of serious efforts of the leading novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao", says Dr. R.K. Badal.<sup>12</sup> He further adds that Narayan has depicted in his novels the life in a hypothetical town of Malgudi, its mediocrity, its pathos and its comedy, with a rare irony and compassion. His only locale is Malgudi, a small imaginary township in South India. All the novels of Narayan are social comedies of a reflective nature.<sup>13</sup> P.P. Mehta places his novels in four categories:

(A) School and College Novels of his earlier days;

1. Swami and Friends (1935),
2. Bachelor of Arts (1937),
3. The English Teacher (1945);

## (B) Domestic Novels:

1. The Dark Room (1938),
2. The Vendor of Sweets (1967);

## (C) Novels dealing with money-hunting men:

1. Financial Expert (1952),
2. Mr. Sampath (1949),
3. The Guide (1958),
4. The Man Eater of Malqudi (1962);

## (D) Political Novel:

Waiting for the Mahatma (1955).

Narayan may be described as a novelist of the middle class. Like Anand, Narayan too is a class by himself. He is 'engaged' too and 'committed' but to his vocation as a man of letters rather than to a programme of social or political action. His novels present a true picture of the Indian intelligentsia confronted with the various problems of life. "He writes for the most part about the smaller professional middle class with a gentle irony and haunting sadness that has gained him the reputation of 'Indian Chekov', says R.K.Badal. <sup>14</sup> Narayan's forte is genial ironic comedy. The sympathetic humour and broad humanity of R.K.Narayan has no parallel in Indo-Anglian fiction. He is essentially a realist and satirist. Narayan was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his famous novel The Guide in 1960, and the Padma Bhushan in 1964. He is the first Indian to have been included in the "Writers and Their Works" - a series of monographs on writers of English. "In narayan's novels," writes K.R.Shrinivas Iyengar, "there is generally a flight and uprooting, a disturbance of order, followed by a return, a renewal, a

restoration of normalcy. Narayan seems to see the world as a mere balance of forces - wrong-doers and policemen keeping one another engaged, light and shadow endlessly chasing each other, hope and failure for ever playing a duet never to be concluded, but the 'soul' of Narayan's fiction is not this delicately self-adjusted mechanism of ironic comedy but rather the miracle of transcendence and the renewal of life, love, beauty, peace".<sup>15</sup>

#### Raja Rao:

Raja Rao, whose fictional corpus is very meagre as compared to that of Mulk Raj Anand or R.K.Narayan, makes 'a remarkable triad', as Prof.Iyengar puts it.<sup>16</sup> He brought the philosophical dimension to Indo-Anglian fiction. He is the finest painter of India and East-West confrontation in all its aspects and he has been accorded a high place by both Indian and foreign critics.

His greatness has received national and international recognition. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his The Serpent and the Rope, which has been called the best Indo-Anglian novel ever written. He has been awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India. Raja Rao is the pride of India, though he is better known and appreciated abroad than in his own country.

Raja Rao is not a very prolific writer. He writes slowly, revises frequently and his works have been published at great intervals, because he wants to achieve perfection.

Kanthapura (1938) is a vivid, graphic and realistic portrayal of the Gandhian struggle for the freedom of the country. This is artistically the best of his novels. The Serpent and the Rope (1960) has

been called the spiritual autobiography of the novelist. Through it, Raja Rao established the new genre of prose fiction and thus enlarged the scope of the novel form. In addition to these novels, he has also written three collections of short stories.

#### 1.1.2 Post-Independence Fiction:

##### (A) From 1947 to 1970:

The year 1947 is the year of great importance in the history of India. It showed great joy and equally great sorrow in Indian history. Naturally, the joy of Independence and more than that, the sorrow of Partition and the stories of bloodshed and human cruelty are depicted in the contemporary Indo-Anglian novel. Along with Partition novels, there came out rural novels, romances, political novels and also some humorous novels.

Some of the best novels of the misery and travails of the poor farmers were published in this era. Bhabani Bhattacharya, the promising novelist from Bengal, has given a brutally frank picture of the hungry Bengal in his novel So Many Hungers (1947). The novel deals with the man-made famine of Bengal of 1942. He Who Rides a Tiger (1954) is another novel in which Bhabani Bhattacharya discusses a variation on the theme of hunger.

The social novel of this period has touched all the strata of Indian life. We find the social life of Delhi in the powerful and entertaining novels of Ruth Praver Jhabavala; humorous and ironic touch is supplied by G.V.Desani's All About Mr.Hatterr (1948) and peasantry and others do not escape mention in the stories of Khushawant Singh.

The trauma of Partition has also stirred the creative genius of some Indian novelists such as Khushawant Singh, Manohar Malgaonkar, Balachandra Rajan, Chaman Nahal and Raj Gill. "Although these novelists have exploited Partition thematically in their respective works which exhibit their characteristic triumphs and failure, there is no doubt that Indian English novelists have noticed the genuine potential and dramatic import of this turbulent political phenomena rather belatedly",

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as Madhusudan Prasad puts it. Khushawant Singh was the first novelist to capitalise on Partition as pivotal theme in his first novel Train to Pakistan (1956), which is by far the best known and the most powerful novel on Partition. Singularized by its symbolic technique, mordant satire, ruthless realism and verbal frugality, his novel depicts the holocaust through a simple plot building upto spine-chilling climax. But the element of romantic love seems redundant and detrimental to the novel. Like Train to Pakistan, Raj Gill's The Rape (1974) and Chaman Nahal's Azadi (1975) also focus mainly on Partition - the factors leading to Partition and its ghastly aftermath. B.Rajan does not seem to succeed well in blending the two themes of East-West Encounter and Partition in his first novel The Dark Dancer (1959), for Partition remains only a subsidiary theme employed mainly for the melodramatic ending of the novel; while the main focus is on the other theme. But Malgaonkar's famous Partition novel, A Bend in the Ganges (1964), conceived on epic dimensions, is impressive and cannot be ignored. H.S.Gill's Ashes and Petals (1978) records a significant facet of Partition - how Hindus and Sikhs on their way to India during Partition killed their own daughters, grand-daughters and women, when they were attacked by Muslims, just to save their honour. But the rest of the novel, having a threadbare love story, is set in post-Partition India.

Major political events do not remain unnoticed to some Indo-Anglian novelists. Rohit Handa who ably dramatized the Naxalite Movement in his Comrade Sahib (1977) and Bhabani Bhattacharya's Shadow from Ladakh (1966) are the best experiments in political novels.

Although the political novel has been flourishing in post-Independence Indo-Anglian literature, the fashion of the historical novel does not seem to have caught on well. There is, in fact, a general paucity of historical fiction in the post-Independence era, as before. However, there are a few good specimens. Malgaonkar's The Devil's Wind (1972), and The Sea Hawk, which are good examples of historical fiction, deal, respectively, with the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the life and battles of Kanoji Angrey, Shivaji's Admiral, who fought bravely against British and Dutch aggression. Bhagwan S. Gidwani has painted a rather idealized portrait of the 'Tiger of Mysore' in his historical novel The Sword of Tipu Sultan (1976).

The trend of social realism which flowered in the pre-Independence Indo-Anglian novel seems to be fading gradually in the post-Independence period. S. Menon Marath realistically records the social life in the early twentieth century of his native Kerala in his two novels, Wound of Spring (1960) and The Sale of an Island (1968), the former powerfully depicts the crumbling of a traditional matriarchal Nayar family, the Gandhian movement and the Moplah revolt of 1921; and the latter, though a weak novel, portrays the tragedy of being uprooted from the native soil. Romen Basu, treating the Ghosh family as a microcosm, successfully evokes the life in a typical sleepy village of Calcutta in his third novel, The Tamarind Tree (1975).



The post-Independence period has witnessed an interesting development of the ethnic novel, which was earlier started by such novelists as Ahmed Ali, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Humayun Kabir. Two minor novelists have made useful contribution: B.K.Karanjia's More than an Indian (1970) engagingly depicts Parsi life in Bombay and Leslie de Noronha's The Mango and the Tamarind Tree (1970) presents a fine study of Colonial Goan life.

Growing cultural interaction between the East and the West and the consequently changing social ethos after Indian Independence have given an added impetus to the writing of novels on the theme of East-West confrontation - a theme still being written on variously. The classic examples of East-West encounter are easily Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope (1960), G.V.Desani's All About Mr.Hatter, though Raja Rao's novel is by far the best. The cultural conflict between the East and the West and the reaction of an Indian on returning home after a sojourn abroad form the subject matter in the two novels of B.Rajan, The Dark Dancer and Too Long in the West (1961). But in both these novels, Rajan fails to exploit the serious potential of the theme and the failure is ascribable to his lack of a well-realized vision. While most of the earlier novels record the reactions of an Indian on returning home from abroad, some recent post-Independence novels focus on a different aspect of the East-West encounter theme. Victor Anant's The Revolving Man (1959), Timeri Murari's The Marriage (1973), M.V.Rama Sarma's The Stream (1956) and Look Homeward (1976), Roman Basu's A Gift of Love (1974) and Candles and Roses (1978), Chaman Nahal's Into Another Dawn (1977) and S.S.Dhami's Maluka (1978), all explore the life of the Indian who goes abroad and how he succeeds or fails to adjust to the alien culture. A

Bhaskar Rao's The Secret (1978) are other variations on the same theme. But the efforts of Timeri Murari and Roman Basu stand out in that they have, each in his own way, infused a freshness in the old theme of East-West confrontation.

(B) From 1970 onwards:

During this phase, the 'Big Three', Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao continued writing fiction. In this period, some new novelists appeared on the scene and the trend of introspective or psychological novel also can be noticed. The reformatory zeal for social uplift gave way in course of time to intensive probe into the self of man. Naturally enough, the next generation of novelists was self-conscious, inward-looking and analytical.

"A remarkable literary phenomenon in post-Independence fiction is the development of the existentialist novels displaying a shift of emphasis from the external to internal, the outer to the inner, etching the contours of the interior landscape of the individual's mind. Although the existentialist element is also traceable, to some extent, in some of the works of Anand, Narayan and Rao, these novelists cannot be called existentialist novelists by any means." observes O.P.Mathur.<sup>18</sup>

In the fiction of last two decades, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi are the only novelists who seem to be committed to existentialist themes. In all his four novels, Joshi treats different facets of alienation. The Foreigner (1968) deals with the alienation of the self and traces Sindi Oberoi's rootlessness and searches for identity; The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971) is a powerful novel that shows Billy Biswas' alienation from the ostentatious, phoney society of today and his resultant quest for a better way of living; The Apprentice (1974)

dramatizes Ratan Rathor's alienation from his soul caused by a strong guilt-consciousness; The Last Labyrinth (1981) is a disappointing novel, as it suffers from several inconsistencies and flaws which make it an artistic failure", comments Madhusdan Prasad. Sasthi Brata, an expatriate living in England, also displays existentialist concerns in his obtrusively autobiographical novels. Confessions of an Indian Woman-Eater (1971), and She and He (1973) which are characterized by angry rebellion against the tradition-bound Indian society, alienation, rootlessness and futile search for moorings. But Brata's existentialist themes are diluted unfortunately by his propensity to indulge in the pornographic and as such, his work fails to attain a high level of artistic seriousness. Y.P.Dhawan, a recent novelist of promise and potential, effectively depicts the existentialist theme of alienation and his concomitant inner angst and agonized quest for meaning in life in his novel Beyond the Guru (1977).

The writing of mythical fiction is yet another noteworthy trend and novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan (in some of their novels) and Raja Rao and Sudhin Ghose (in almost all their works) have already employed both technically and thematically Indian mythical motifs. A.Anantnarayan in his The Silver Pilgrimage (1961) has resorted to a purely oriental narrative technique to relate a story laid in the sixteenth century Ceylon and India. But he could not exploit this technique to highlight the present-day socio-political ethos. In recent Indo-Anglian fiction, Vasant A.Shahane's first novel Prajanapati (1984) stands out as an admirable paradigm of mythical fiction. Adhering to the mode of oral literary tradition, Shahane skilfully weaves in the texture various myths, legends and folk-tales - the Prajapita, myth of the

Upanishada being dominant - of ancient Indian to articulate the socio-political reality of the contemporary scene, pinpointing the steep decline in moral values in our political life.

Indian writing in English in general suffers from a paucity of psychological fiction. However, in the post-Independence era, at least a few novelists have made one modest effort each in this direction, a fact which illustrates that some novelists are now getting attracted to this neglected area. K.M.Trishanku has made an experiment in psychological fiction. His Onion Peel (1973) unfolds the gripping tale of the oversexed protagonist Nathan who is faced with the crisis of being impotent, consequent upon an operation he is to have.

An interesting feature of the last one and a half decades of Indo-Anglian fiction is the growing trend of liberated writing, Sasthi Brata being the leader in this respect. A much freer handling of the sex-theme accompanied by a new frankness which sometimes expresses itself in a frantic attempt to 'tell-all' is a noticeable trend in the recent novels like Sasthi Brata's She and He (1973), K.M.Trishanku's Onion Peel (1973) and Vikram Kapur's Traumatic Bite (1978). "It is surprising that no established Indian English novelist in the pre- or post-Independence era has ever written a novel, capitalizing exclusively on campus life, which exhibits, like any other sphere of Indian life, the pernicious power - politics and lack of values that have come to characterize the Indian ethos of today", writes Madhusudan Prasad.<sup>20</sup> M.V.Rama Sarma's The Farewell Party (1976) appears to be a 'campus novel', but is, in fact, a reverie of the lovable professor Prakasam on the day of his retirement, intermingled with his experiences relating to his life abroad, evils of

caste and creed, the Indian struggle for freedom and the World War-II.

In the growth and development of the Indian novel in English, the 1980's occupy the most significant position. During the last one and a half decades, some very promising novelists have published their first works, which speak about the originality and unprecedented inventiveness of these novelists eloquently along with their capability of doing away with all apishness and complexes and constraints, which the earlier novelists had to suffer from. It is during the 'eighties that Indian English novelists and novels earned unheard of honours and distinctions in the Western academic world.

The fecundity of modern Indian novel in English can hardly be ignored. In the 1980's alone, quite a few meritorious novels have been published, the most important among them being, R.K.Narayan's A Tiger of Malgudi (1983), Talkative Man (1986) and The World of Nagraj (1990); Raja Rao's The Chessmaster and his Moves (1988); Arun Joshi's The Last Labyrinth (1981) and The City and the River (1990); Manohar Malgaonkar's Bandicoot Run (1982) and The Garland Keepers (1986); K.D.Khosla's Never the Twain (1981); Gopalan's Tryst with the Destiny (1981); V.A.Shahane's Prajapita (1984) and Doctor Fauste (1986) and so on. Certain other highly interesting novels that deserve mention in this connection are Vijay Singh's Jaya Ganga (1989, 1985 in French); Gopal Gandhi's Refuge (1989); Balraj Khanna's Sweet Chillies (1991); O.Vijayan's The Saga of Dharampuri (1989); Khushwant Singh's Delhi (1992), etc. All these novelists have made significant contribution to enrich Indo-Anglian novel in respect of both theme and technique. The sheer originality of their works and the effectiveness of their language have established them as major writers of our time.

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 / Probably the most sensational literary event of 1980's was the publication of Salman Rushdie's voluminous novel Midnight's Children (1981). Later, he brought out Shame (1983), The Satanic Verses (1988) and Haroun and the Sea of Stories (1991). By his works, Rushdie extended the Indo-Anglian novel considerably and left indelible imprint on the future course of its development. / In his Midnight's Children, Rushdie conjures up a generation of Indians born at midnight of 15th August, 1947 - that was fiction. But Rushdie's novel, which became an international success, created a real generation of its own in the form of a crop of young Indian novelists eagerly following in Rushdie's footsteps. Among these novelists, the most talented are, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allen Sealy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Farrukh Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry and Firdaus Kanga. 'The New York Times' (16th December, 1991) has called these new Indian writers Rushdie's children. The novels written by Rushdie's children also manifest profound changes affecting the social life of modern India. They demand a serious critical attention, analysis, classification and finally, definition as a distinct genre of fictional literature of our times.

Amitav Ghosh is one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of the new novelists who appeared in the 1980's. He has addressed himself to those areas of darkness that remained hidden from the very beginning of Indo-Anglian novel. Ghosh's The Circle of Reason (1986) is an imaginary fiction, which stretches from rural Bengal to modern mediterranean ports. While describing the predicament of Alu, the boy, the novelist has given us a perfectly sculpted work of considerable worth. The success of the exuberant tour de force has reappeared in the case of Ghosh's another novel called The Shadow Lines (1988). It is a family saga, which

rambles from War-time London to burning Dhaka of the post-Partition period of Calcutta of the riots and makes significant statements on the meaning of political freedom, nationalism, migration and partition of people. Both the novels have been well received in the English-speaking world and in Europe. The French edition of The Circle of Reason won him the prestigious Prix Medici Etranger award. The novels established Ghosh as the finest writer among those who were borne out of the post-Midnight's Children revolving in Indo-Anglian fiction", argues Parasannarajan.<sup>21</sup> In In an Antic Land (1992), Ghose has presented the human dream of extreme psychic intensity in a subtle idiom and imagery. Though a gifted craftsman, the novelist never ceases to be an Indian in his superb flights of fantasy, which impart to his novels the folktale charm of the Arabian Nights.

Vikram Seth began his literary career with Mapping a book of poems and attained dizzy heights of success with The Golden Gate (1986) and A Suitable Boy (1993). The Golden Gate is a novel written in mellifluous sonnets about the West. Set in San Francisco, it is devoid of oriental characters and colours. Seth was lapped up in America and Britain because a novel in verse had not been attempted since Pushkin's Eugene Onegin. Seth goes about with commendable simplicity and ease and the results are astounding. His 'magnum opus', A Suitable Boy, centres around the motif of a young woman's quest for love which suitor she should select. From this centre, the novel meanders in many directions subtly evoking the post-Independence era with communal riots, peasant reform Acts, innocent young college students' world juxtaposed with the adult world of courtesans, politics and violence. Lata Mehra has to choose between three suitors - the unsuitably Muslim Kabir Durrani, the

practical Haresh Khanna and the esoteric Amit Chatterjee, who represent three paths in human life. The novel is endowed with human appeal.

Upamanyu Chatterjee shot on the literary scene with his novel English August : An Indian Story (1988). It faithfully records the protagonist's sense of isolation, rootlessness and cultural dislocation. He belongs to the new generation, the 'generation of apes' and is an absurd combination of 'a boarding-school English literature education and an obscure name from Hindu myths' (p.129). Agastya, called 'augsut' by his friends for convenience in pronunciation, is a probationary I.A.S. officer posted at a mofussil town Madna in West Bengal. He regards himself as one with no special attitude for anything and ultimately, decides to resign his job. His action and conduct stand out in contrast to those of his mythical counterparts. "He enters the dark Vindhyas of bureaucracy, but is incapable of stopping them growing and fails to push the mountain of inefficiency, corruption, artificiality and snobbery even by an inch. English August : An Indian Story is one of the finest novels written by an Indian in English. Upamanyu Chatterjee brings to the Indian novel a style and feel, a conviction and maturity all its own", says Indu Saraiya.<sup>22</sup> He has also published The Last Burden (1993), which is yet another monument to deracine urban India. It is a growing-up story of two brothers and is set in a town by the sea. The strongest point about this novel lies in its exploration of the subterranean emotional conflicts and ties of dependence among modern Indian families. Both the novels portray urban Indians' wranglings about 'identity' and reflect their values in their gory introspection and irrelevance. Chatterjee, in his novels, is fluent, slangy, foul-mouthed and flighty. He avoids obedience to literary fashions and writes in a



poetic, impressionistic prose. The disenfranchized and villified minority - the Indian middle class - seems to have found their chronicler in him.

Shashi Tharoor's The Great Indian Novel (1989) is one of the greatest achievements of the Indo-Anglian fiction. A biting commentary on the political history of modern India, the novel has been regarded as a masterpiece of post-modernism. Khushawant Singh argues, "It is perhaps a best work of fiction by an Indian in recent years. While treating the twentieth century political history of India in terms of the story and the characters of Mahabharata, Tharoor's novel aims at presenting 'multiple realities' and 'multiple interpretations' of reality, that is India".<sup>23</sup>

Tharoor's novel may not be really 'great' or truly 'Indian', but it has made the point that it wanted to make. Shashi Tharoor's reading of the Mahabharata is thus open-ended as it ought to be. There can be no finality about an event which is still going on in one form or another. R.S.Pathak comments, "Literature must refresh memory" and Tharoor's novel ably does it. About the great epic, it has been said, "What is not in it, cannot be found anywhere". Tharoor has appropriated myths and canonical fiction, varying its tone, form and style, to bring us face to face with our past. This, he has done with utmost irreverence and in a racy style with a rare verve. "No more certitudes. Accept doubts and diversity ... Admit there is more than one truth, more than one right, more than one Dharma".<sup>24</sup> This is a great message conveyed by Tharoor.

Certain novels published in the 1980's enable us to have an intimate peep into the life and experiences of the minority community.

Allen Sealy's Trother-Nama (1988) narrates the story of an Anglo-Indian clan from its inception in the eighteenth century. Founded by a French mercenary officer Julein Aleysium Trother, it has its hey-day in the nineteenth century and then came to a sad decline. There have been many books about the Anglo-Indians, but they have been of academic interests only. Sealy, however, has enunciated that Anglo-Indians have been a part and parcel of India and that their contributions to the growth of Indian society have not been meagre.

The 1980's also saw the emergence of three powerful novelists - Rohinton Mistry, Farrukh Dhondy and Firdaus Kanga. Mistry, who had earlier published a collection of short stories, A Long Journey (1991), came out with Such a Long Journey (1991). It is based on facts pertaining to the conspiracy case of the Nagarwala of 1971 fame, which landed Soharab Nagarwala, the chief cashier of the Parliament Street Branch of the State Bank of India, New Delhi, into jail and which earned him four years' imprisonment leading to his death. The title of the novel has been taken from T.S.Eliots, The Journey of the Magi. The story of the novel revolves round some middle-class characters in the contemporary set-up and is set against the background of the 1971 Indo-Pak War. Gustad's sufferings and struggle with fortitude and humanity remind one of the classical tragic hero's awareness of the contemporary socio-political situation of India. The novel has brought to the fore the problem of human loneliness in the modern work. The novel, however, shows that the long journey of life is a journey from hopelessness to hope and from despondency to millennium.

Farrukh Dhondy, widely known for his programmes on 'Channel-4' and short stories, published his maiden novel Bombay Duck in 1990, which tries to throw some significant light on some contemporary issues including communal fundamentalism and predicament of immigrants in England. Bombay, as presented by the novelist, becomes a microcosm of India - or even of the whole world. The foul smell of Bombay Duck drying on the sand is symbolic of deeper corruption. Wit and irony are essential features of Dhondy's prose. The story is labyrinthine and the narrative in the two parts is somewhat confusing, but its remarkable variety and astute narrative technique impart it an abiding interest.

Firdaus Kanga's Trying to Grow (1990) presents the vicissitudes and experiences of a young Parsi artist, who tries to grow into a gigantic talent from his handicapped nature. It deals with interesting eccentricities of members of a joint family living in Bombay's Colaba Causeway. The novel is essentially autobiographical and the hero Daryus Kotwal, nicknamed as 'Brit' because of his brittle bones, shares many features with his creator. The main thrust of the novel is to depict the hero's attempts to find an identity for himself. The characters owe allegiance to everything English and face social problems in contemporary India.

There is also a group of Indo-Anglian novelists who, though not directly influenced by Rushdie, are known for their meritorious achievements in fiction writing and deserve consideration. This group comprises novelists like Vasant A. Shahane, Manoj Das, K.A. Abbas and others, who have made significant experiments in fictional form and narrative technique and are known for their interesting thematic preoccupations. We come across, at times, authors going back to the

traditional mould. R.S.Pathak notes, "Among Rushdie's Children themselves there emerge two clear-cut groups of novelists; those who treat literature as a thought about effort and those who regard literature as an amateur self-expression".<sup>25</sup> Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Allen Sealy, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga and Farrukh Dhondy belong to the first group, while Upamanyu Chatterjee represents the other.

Most of the novelists have tried to reinterpret the history of the modern India and feel as if they are 'hand-cuffed with history'. They have tried to tackle the besetting problems of reality and also fantasy. Moreover, they have made unprecedented innovations in the realm of fictional techniques. "They experiment with the idiom to suit it to their purpose. The clarification of language has been the aim of most of them", writes R.S.Pathak.<sup>26</sup> These novelists have also shown a better awareness of the predicament of the modern man as is clear from their treatment of issues like alienation and immigrant sensibility. Indo-Anglian novel has flourished beyond expectations. "It is now," as Iyengar observes, "aligning and evolving a literary genre, and is trying, in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality".<sup>27</sup>

### 1.3 INDO-ANGLIAN WOMEN NOVELISTS:

The major motivation of the novel from its birth had always been a projection of the social situation and social consciousness. In this sense, the novel has always been a social comment or social criticism. The Indian novel in English is no exception to this. The women writers

particularly shared the experience of Indian woman in general and transmuted them into fictional form.

The last quarter of the 19th century may be said to be a significant period in the history of Indo-English fiction. "The very emergence of women writing in English during this period was of great significance, for their works scanty in output as they were, were qualitatively superior to those of many others who wrote before and after them, remarks K.S.Ramamurti.

The emergence of women writers during this period is of great significance in the sense that it marks the birth of an era which promises a new deal for the Indian woman. The zealous social reforms effected by William Bentinck and Raja Ram Mohan Roy had brought about the Indian women's emancipation from the tyranny of the ages and from cruel customs like Sati. The advent of English education for women changed the status of the Indian woman, who for ages had to be content with playing only a subordinate role. While many of them were called upon to play their roles as teachers, doctors and public servants, even as housewives, educated women began to enjoy greater individuality, recognition and respectability than had been granted them in the past. Enlightened families educated their girls at home and at school and even sent them to universities. But the lot of the average Indian woman still remained much the same; for custom and superstition died hard and only a few parents could be bold enough to break the old barriers and break the shackles of tradition. Evils associated with child marriage, child widowhood and too much control and subordination still persisted and education, which alone could bring them some relief from dependent subservience was still out of the reach of most women. In other words,

the battle of emancipation was not over and this battle was taken over by a few educated women themselves who, in their effort to communicate to the world their own bitter experiences as women as well as their ideas of social reform, turned writers.

Malashri Lal comments on the choice of English by the Indian women writers, "The choice of Indian women's writing in English is deliberate. A reconsideration of this group provides fascinating ground for examining what I call the 'Law of Threshold', which complicates their writing. As inheritors of English learning during the Colonial and post-Colonial period of Indian history, their tool for literary expression was an English, neither indigenous nor alien".<sup>29</sup>

✓According to Meena Shirwadkar, the Indo-Anglian women novelists may be placed into three groups on the basis of the distinct features of their themes, techniques and style of expression, "The early women novelists tried to give their characters justice by posing the social problems; but owing to the lack of experience of writing, they soon turned to didacticism, sentimentalism and romanticism, which weakened their novels. However, considering the sincerity behind their motivations and at the same time, the lack of any guiding tradition, their efforts appear admirable. The second group of women writers offer convincing creations of a world in which characters live and indicate that the novel written by women novelists has reached maturity. They forge a style and project a vision of their own. They reveal a power of artistic selection by which their novels achieve a harmonious effect. Out of this group of novelists, three names have risen to eminence - Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabavala and Anita Desai. The later

women novelists forming a third group give expression to the most recent problems and show remarkable awareness of the challenges of the present. Feminism, free-sex, isolation, alienation, identity crisis or an individual struggling to be oneself, are some of the thematic concerns of the women novelists today.<sup>30</sup> However, it will be convenient to describe these three groups as belonging to three successive phases, such as:

1. Indo-Anglian Women Novelists from 1876 to 1920,
2. Indo-Anglian Women Novelists from 1920 to 1970,
3. Indo-Anglian Women Novelists from 1970 onwards.

#### 1.3.1 Indo-Anglian Women Novelists, from 1876 to 1920:

The women writers who may be put in this group are Toru Dutt, Krupabai Sathianadhan, Sevantibai M.Nikambe, Raj Lakshmi Debi, Smt.Swarnkumari Ghosal and Cornelia Sorabji. Among these, Toru Dutt was certainly the foremost as a writer in English and as an artist, for she was a born poet and highly gifted writer, both in English and French. The last two, Mrs.Ghosal and Cornelia Sorabji, appeared on the Indo-Anglian literary scene, just at the beginning of the 20th century, but they were almost contemporaneous with the other women writers referred to above and their place in the history of Indo-English fiction is more or less of the same significance.

Toru Dutt (1856-77) has a place in the history of the Indian novel in English, the significance of which can never be overemphasized, though she has her place of pre-eminence in the world of Indo-English poetry. Both the novelist and the poet are, in fact, only two facets of Toru's aesthetic personality, two aspects of her genius which are mutually inclusive.

Her understanding of romantic love was largely drawn from literature, while death was something she had seen. When she turned to the writing of the fiction, it was natural that she should draw upon the limited fund of her own experience. In result, her novel Binaca or The Young Spanish Maiden became inevitably autobiographical projection. The unfinished Binaca appeared posthumously in the 'Bengal Magazine' in 1878. The story of Binaca is an attempt to tell the inner tragedy of sisterly love and bereavement. But superimposed on this theme, there is the romantic love motif also. K.R.Shrinivas Iyengar comments, "Although Binaca is supposedly a Spanish maiden, she is, in Toru's delineation, essentially Indian, ardent and sincere and capable of love and equally capable of resignation".<sup>31</sup>

Among other early novels by women writers may be mentioned Raj Lakshmi Debi's The Hindu Wife or The Enchanted Fruit (1876) and Mrs.Krupabai Sathianadhan's Kamala, A Story of Hindu Life (1849) and Saguna, A Story of Native Christian Life (1895). Mrs.Ghoshal (Swarnakumari Debi) was probably the first woman novelist in Bengali and two of her novels were translated into English as An Unfinished Song (1913) and The Fatal Garland (1915), a historical novel. Santa and Sita Chatterjee (daughters of Ramanand Chatterjee, editor of 'Modern Review') had a Brahmo background and wrote novels and short stores in Bengali and had them translated into English afterwards: Tales of Bengal (1922), The Cage of Gold (1923) and The Garden Creeper (1931).

Cornelia Sorabji was the author of a number of stories, some of which appeared in the "MacMillan's Magazine" and The Nineteenth Century and After. Her best work was collected in Love and Life Behind the



Purdah (1901) and Between the Twilights (1908). Coming from a Parsi-Christian background, in her most successful work, Miss Sorabji tried to penetrate the silken curtain of the 'Purdah' and reveal the nuances of femininity. Ecstasy, tragedy, tragi-comedy, comedy are all possible behind the 'Purdah'. The situations are often touched with sadness, melancholy, sometimes even despair; and early widowhood (if not Sati or self-immolation) made woman's life a precarious affair. Woman was easily caught in the meshes of intrigue and social taboos of all kinds and her subservience to man gave her very little freedom of action. Yet, she managed to endure somehow, by sheer power of her womanliness, her gifts of beauty, love, patience, compassion and goodness. Miss Sorabji's disapproval of the evil customs does not affect the humanity of her portraits of the victims of those customs.

K.S. Ramamurti comments on the novels written by these women writers, "They have a distinct sociological and reformistic motivation but the reformer's predilections do not, by any means, get the better of the creative spirit that informs these writings. Another feature common to the novels of all the women writers of this period is that their theme is invariably the Indian woman, the new woman as the writers saw her emerge in the fast changing social milieu".

### 1.3.2 Indo-Anglian Women Novelists, from 1920 to 1970:

It is only after the Second World War that women novelists of quality have begun enriching Indian fiction in English. Interestingly, a group of Muslim women in the 'forties and the 'fifties came forward to offer an authentic presentation of the life of the Muslim women in their novels. Purdah and Polygamy : Life in an Indian Muslim Household (1945) by Iqbalunnisa Hussain reveals the life of Muslim women in the Purdah

system. Zeenuth Feteahally shows in Zohra (1951), the girl Zohra growing up from innocence to the age of marriage and to maturity. The fetters of family life gradually restrain her, resulting in a loss of joy in living. The repressions of the traditional life add a tragic dimension to the story of the heroine. In spite of the narrow framework, Zohra proves a touching novel. Alongwith the sufferings of the heroine, there is a picture of Muslim life and culture. Muslim manners and mores described with sensitivity and realism.

A young girl's growth from fifteen to the age of fifty onwards in a Muslim family in Lucknow is described in Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961) by Attia Hosain. Leila, the heroine, feels that her education alienates her from her people. She feels the forces of modernism and the freedom struggle mingled with the events of Partition entering her family. Though the novelist does not show women directly involved in the social upheaval, she certainly has an awareness of the changing times. However, both the novels end on a note of sentimentality, which weakens the final effect.

Two novelists, namely, Venu Chitale and Santa Rama Rau, have given us a picture of high caste Hindu families of their times with a sensitive narration of women growing up from girlhood to maturity, the vicissitudes the members of the family have to face and the social, economic and political pressures they have to undergo. Their novels show an improvement in thematic presentation and narrative competence and also serve as chronicles of the times.

In Transit (1950) by Venu Chitale shows a Brahmin family in Pune going through the troubled times of the Freedom Struggle, social reform

and economic hardships. The novel is a convincing portrayal of Janki's struggle to keep her family safe against the stress and strains of economic pressures and changing social and political conditions. She is strengthened in her efforts by education, which has enriched her nature and moulded her character. "Venu Chitale has a remarkable ability to delineate her fictional characters, particularly women, including servants, old aunts, widows and sisters-in-law in the joint Hindu families", comments Meena Shirwadkar.

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In Remember the House (1956) by Santa Rama Rau, Baba, the narrator heroine, views the oppressively protective system of the joint family at Jalnabad and yearns for adventure. She runs after romance in the company of a Western man, but soon feels that her grandmother's sound advice is better than romantic excitement and marries a steady youth, Hari. Baba's return to the family-fold and traditions has, however, the background of her mother's broken marriage and subsequent retreat to a Swamiji's Ashram. The novelist fails to offer an adequate projection of the maladjusted parents, their effort on Baba or on her grandmother.

The hard fact of the desire of relatives is the theme of The Little Black Box (1955) by Shakuntala Shrinagesh. Sarla is hospitalized but her worry is the treasure in the black box and her rising resentment against the relatives has to be controlled with the help of the doctor. As a glimpse of reality, this novel is somewhat different from the other novels dealing with life in Indian families. All these novels deal with some aspect of external social reality, whereas The Little Black Box is a psychological study.

Kamala Markandaya offers us a tragic vision of life. In her first novel, Nectar in a Sieve (1954), she takes us to the heart of a South Indian or Tamil Nadu village where life has apparently not changed for a thousand years. Now industry and modern technology invade the village in the shape of a tannery and from this impact, sinister consequences issue. Markandaya writes that fear, hunger and despair are the constant companions of the peasants.

Her second novel Some Inner Fury (1957) is suggestive and feminine. Like her earlier novel, this too is cast in the autobiographical form and exploits the freedom of reverie. It is a tragedy engineered by politics. Her third novel, A Silence of Desire (1961) leaves economics and politics and invades the imponderable realm of spiritual realities. Possession (1963), the fourth novel, is in a sense, a continuation of A Silence of Despair. All 'possession' is slavery, or a perilous precariousness. What we try to possess is taken away, sooner or later. It is giving, not taking; it is losing, not possessing, that paves the way to fulfilment. In her fifth novel, A Handful of Rice (1966), she avoids the disturbing extravagance of possession - extravagance in scene and situation. If the outer theme of Nectar in a Sieve was rural economics, the theme of The Handful of Rice is urban economics. In her latest novel, The Coffer Dam (1969), Kamala Markandaya returns, in a sense, to the theme of her first effort at fiction Nectar in a Sieve with mature craftsmanship.

As an outsider inside India, Ruth Praver Jhabavala enjoys a double perspective. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes, "Jhabavala brings an European sensibility to work on the material which is non-European".<sup>34</sup> She can be detached enough, coming from abroad; yet observant, staying in India, to

combine the comic and the ironic vision and lay bare the follies, foibles, vanities, frivolities and pretenses of the sophisticated and not so sophisticated upper middle class people in Delhi. Jhabavala takes up the chameleon-like society of Delhi as her canvass. Here are seen the elders over-enthusiastic in match-making for their children; the children dreaming of romantic love but ultimately agreeing to the wishes of their parents; the fast money-makers struggling to penetrate the elite circles; the sham of social workers, the inspections and interference of mother-in-law, such is the social vista that she unfolds in her novels.

Amrita does not marry according to her choice but according to the wishes of the elders in To Whom She Will (1955), while what is thought to be passion is ultimately exposed as superficial and ridiculous in The Nature of Passion (1956). In Esmond in India (1958), Jhabavala reveals Eastern as well as Western characters with equal detachment and irony. Mismatched persons separate in Get Ready for Battle (1962), but the irony lies in the fact that the slum-dwellers for whom Sarala works do not want her social work. The Householder (1960) treats a painful problem in Indian family but with admirable dexterity and the mother-in-law is at once pathetic and comic. A foreign girl, Judy, makes efforts to identify herself in her Indian household in a Backward Place (1965). In Heat and Dust (1975), Jhabavala offers a mixture of feudal Nabobs, Colonial wives, Gurus, modern tourists and men and women indulging in free-sex in the pervasive atmosphere of heat and dust.

A daughter of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, **Nayantara Sahgal**, has also published both fiction and non-fiction. In her first novel, A Time to be

Happy (1957), the hero Samad begins by wanting to resign from the British firm of Selkirk and Lowe and ends by forging his links stronger with the firm. In her more natural novel, This Time of Morning (1965), Sahgal liberally draws upon her knowledge, part first-hand, part hearsay, of what happens in the corridors of power, in the drawing rooms of politically very important people, or in the lobbies of the Parliament House. Such knowledge must be second nature for her, for she is her mother's daughter as well as Jawaharlal Nehru's niece. In her Storm in Chandigarh (1969), the scene is set in the exotic city designed by Carbusier as the Capital of the Indian part of the partitioned Punjab. When this state is again cut into Sikh-dominated Punjab and the largely Hindu State of Haryana, Chandigarh being the common Capital, there is an invitation to trouble from the very beginning. In the Day in Shadow (1971), Simrit divorces som and goes to marry Raj, a Christian and a political worker. There is also the affairs of Sumer Singh and Pixies and the politics about oil and business.

The women in the novels of Sahgal with both the options are fraught with suffering and anguish. The Sita-Parvati-Pativrata tradition tells her to suffer in silence; her modern educated mind asks, What if her husband is not like Rama? Is she still to remain a faithful wife?. They also realize that breaking away is also painful. There can be no clean break and no easy solution.

Mrs.Sahgal's feeling for politics and her command over English are far more impressive than her art as a novelist. There is too much contriving and principal characters are hardly convincing; and there are satirical patches that stand out as though they have been lifted from Mrs.Sahgal's journalism.

Anita Desai has a tragic vision of women's life in marriage. She has created an intricate and sensitive style of her own to suggest the frustrations of her hypersensitive characters. There are echoes of Virginia Woolf in the fact that the mind - conscious and unconscious - is the chief theme of her novels. The bored, lonely wife in the urban complex; the unbearably restrictive family and society attitudes towards women; the wish to revert back to childhood and the suicidal or murderous inclinations of an ultrasensitive mind - such is the material for her novels. In Cry, the Peacock (1963), the sharp Maya-Gautam polarization and the double force of the prophesy and the symbolism of peacock's love-death cry manage admirably to hold the novel together. Voices in the City (1965), on the other hand, lacks such controlling forces and the novel for all its powerful articulation leaves an impression of incompleteness behind, of action and characterization, idea and symbols not being fully integrated into artistic form. In her later novel, Bye-Bye Blackbird (1971), Anita Desai moves out of familiar Delhi and Calcutta and vividly projects the prison - physical and psychological - in which the coloured immigrant in Britain is caught; both the difficulties of adjustment there and those of return to India.

Vimal Raina's Ambapali (1962) is an ambitious historial novel set in the ancient India of the Buddha's time. She tries to treat the theme of proud womanhood in this novel and presents Ambapali, the beautiful and celebrated dancer-turned Buddha's devotee and her fiery retaliation upon her seducer.

Hardly had any Indo-Anglian novelist shown woman in her career as a teacher, though women had entered the profession in significant numbers.

Too High for Rivalry (1967) by Muriel Wasi deals with the problem of succession to headship in a girls' school. The contestants are thoroughly convincing and the headmistress has to consider many issues carefully before recommending her successor.

### 1.3.3 Indo-Anglian Women Novelists, from 1970 onwards:

Coming to the third group of women novelists, the selection and treatment of themes reveal their vision of a decadent society. Boredom, which is the bane of empty lives, loneliness, the clash of old and new, and the individual versus society, are the repeated themes. There is also a marked preoccupation with sex.

In Nargis Dalal's Minari (1967), a hill station affair between a former Ruler and a journalist is narrated. In The Sisters (1973), fate in the form of the lovely Nina follows her twin ugly sister Rita to seduce her husband in the house in the hills. The Inner Door (1975) finds Rahul, like Val in Possession return to the hills as a Yogi. In The Girls from Overseas (1979), five foreign girls meet occasionally and compare notes about life in India. Apart from their husbands and lovers, they all have sex with one man who acts as their keeper. Nargis Dalal's novels largely fail to give us any considered view of life.

An outsider's view of the East-West problem is seen in Bharati Mukherjee's novels. The Tiger's Daughter (1973) shows Tara, married and settled in America, returning to India only to find that she is now treated as an alien in her own country. At last, she returns to America. Wife (1976) shows Dimple feeling lonely and frustrated like Maya in Cry, the Peacock, like whom she too murders her husband. That the East and in the West cannot meet seems to be Bharati Mukherjee's conviction.



Veena Paintal, like Nayantara Sahgal, tries to show the plight of woman in the fetters of a man-made code of morals. Roshini or Serenity in Storm (1967) has stereotyped characters and situations - the submissive wife, the callous husband, and the lover ready, waiting at the end to gather the woman in his arms. Link in the Broken Chain (1967) finds Jyoti talking of freedom but entering into marriage. In An Autumn Leaf (1976), Charisma leaves husband and lover and finds peace in life with her children. In Spring Returns (1977), the efforts of Tara, a bored wife, at self-reliance are shown. Midnight Woman (1979) presents the reactions of several acquaintances who find Vishali, a prostitute in Delhi, murdered. However, Paintal's reading of life and character is as conventional as the quality of her fiction is poor.

The Song of Anasuya (1978) by Uma Vasudev has a rake hero - Jagat Sarin, who, because he is jilted by Shanti, has affairs with Priti and Anasuya. The narrative is unconvincing, the characters are morbid and the crude sex-scenes without coherence. Raji Narasimhan's The Heart of Standing Is You Cannot Fly (1973) and Forever Free (1979) are far more convincing narratives of Soman's search for fulfilment. Forever Free is a very good example of establishing a different model of living through defiance. The principal character, the woman called Shree, undergoes discord in marriage. Her husband has strange ways of looking at things for which she is not responsible at all. There is no choice but to hit back. That is what the girl does in the novel.

Jai Nimbkar has written about a variety of themes and problems concerning the Indian woman, particularly in the socio-economic context of the post-Independence India. Inequality of the sexes, place of the woman in her family and society, her search for personal identity, the

meaning of marriage and its effect on the Indian woman, are some of the major thematic concerns of Jai Nimbkar's fiction. She has published two novels, Temporary Answer (1974) and A Joint Venture (1988).

In the growth and development of the Indo-Anglian novel, the 1980's occupy the most significant position. The fecundity of modern Indian novel in English can hardly be ignored. In the 1980's alone, quite a few meritorious novels have been published the most important among them being: Anita Desai's The Village by the Sea (1982), In Custody (1984) and Baumgartner's Bombay (1988), Nayantara Sahgal's Rich Like Use (1985), Plans for Departure (1986), Storm in Chandigarh (1988) and Mistaken Identity (1989), Shashi Deshpande's Come Up and Be Dead (1983), Roots and Shadows (1983) and That Long Silence (1989); Kamala Markandaya's Pleasure City (1982). Certain other highly interesting novels that deserve mention in this connection are: Dina Mehta's The Other Woman (1981), Geeta Mehta's Karma Cola (1980) and Raj (1989); Shobha De's Socialite Evenings (1989), Starry Nights (1991), Sisters (1992) and Obsessions (1992); Leena Dhingra's Amritvela (1991). All these novelists have made significant contributions to enrich Indo-Anglian fiction in respect of both theme and technique.

There is also a group of Indo-Anglian novelists who, though not directly influenced by Rushdie, are known for their meritorious achievements in fiction-writing and deserve consideration. This group comprises novelists like Shashi Deshpande, Nina Sibal and others who have made significant experiments in fictional form and narrative technique and are known for their interesting thematic preoccupations.

The Indian novel written in English during the recent decades has given, beyond any pale of doubt, the proof of its resilience and variety. Many lively and energetic works, display a new confidence in using the fictional mode for creative expression. "What is particular about them is their author's eagerness to invent themes and experiment with the language", remarks R.K.Dhawan.<sup>35</sup> Namita Gokhale's maiden novel Paro : Dreams of Passion appeared in 1984. Nina Sibal's debut novel Yatra (1987) has rightly been acclaimed as a daring work of imagination and complexity. It was justifiably accorded the International Grand Prix for literature (Algiers, 1987) for its bold yet imaginative portrayal of Indians' troubled past and turbulent present. Some recent novels that deserve mention in this connection are: Gita Hariharan's The Thousand Faces of Night (1995), which won the Commonwealth Writer Prize for Best First Novel, The Ghosts of Vasu Master (1994); Shashi Deshpande's The Binding Vine (1993); Sunetra Josson's Circumferences (1994); Sunetra Gupta's Moonlight into Marzipan (1995); Shanta Gokhale's Rita Welinkar (1995); and Amrita Pritam's Village No.36 (1994).

While commenting on the achievement of Indo-Anglian Women Novelists, Meena Shirwadkar observes, "Our women novelists seem to be increasingly concerned mainly with women wallowing in the mire of lust with the rich, the powerful and the corrupt. The novel tends to reflect the contingent reality in an artistic way. Indo-Anglian women novelists of late have not adequately reflected the changing social scene but they will have to, if they wish to attain a lasting place in our national literature as writers of something more than 'books of the hour'". It seems tha the recent Indian women novelists have fulfilled Meena Shirwadkar's wish. They continue writing about Indian woman against the

background of Indian social scene. Rich like us for which Nayantara Sahagal was selected for the Sinclair Prize for fiction in 1985, while Nina Sibal's Yatra (1987) was chosen for the International Grand Prix for literature and Gita Hariharan's The Thousand Faces of Night (1993), which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Novel.

Indo-Anglian novel, which started in 1876 and passed through three successive phases, has successfully handled contemporary, socio-economic, political and psychological themes. Gradually, it has also acquired artistic maturity and superior technique. Now it has become the distinctive part of Indo-Anglian Literature. As R.S.Pathak observes, "Indian English novel has flourished beyond expectations. It is now a living and evolving literary genre, and is trying, in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality".<sup>37</sup>

#### 1.4 ARUN JOSHI - THE NOVELIST:

Arun Joshi is one of the few most significant contemporary Indo-Anglian novelists. He presents Indian life very skilfully. All of his novels are splendid, serious and powerfully disturbing. In his novels, Joshi has very dexterously handled some serious, thought-provoking themes in an unpretentious manner such as rootlessness, detachment, quest for better alternatives in this ostentatious world and self-realization, highlighting our glorious cultural heritage and imperishable moral values.

##### 1.4.1 Life and Career:

Born in 1939, Joshi has had brilliant academic career. He obtained an Engineering degree from the University of Kansas and a degree in

Industrial Management from M.I.T., Cambridge, Massachusetts. For a brief period in 1957, he worked at a mental hospital in the United States. After returning to India in 1962, he joined DCM in a managerial capacity, on the recruitment and training side. He was also Executive Director of the Shri Ram Center for Industrial Relations and Human Resources.

Joshi comes of an enlightened family. His father, an eminent botanist, was the Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University. Joshi got married in 1964 and has three children - two girls and a boy. His wife Rukamini, an entrepreneur herself, has great respect for writers.

Arun Joshi has been influenced by Albert Camus and other existentialist writers like Sartre. He has also been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagvad Gita. He believes that Hinduism is highly existentialist-oriented philosophy, since it attaches so much values to the right way to live, to exist.

In 1979, at the invitation of the East-West Center, he participated in the World Writers' Conference held at Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. In 1983, he was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel, The Last Labyrinth. Arun Joshi has written the following books:

1. The Foreigner (Novel), 1968,
2. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (Novel), 1971,
3. The Survivor (Collection of Short Stories), 1976,
4. The Apprentice (Novel), 1974,
5. Lala Shri Ram : A Study in Entrepreneurship in Industrial Management (Business History), 1975,
6. The Last Labyrinth (Novel), 1981,
7. City and the River (Novel), 1990.

#### 1.4.2 CRITICISM:

Thus, it is clear that the themes in the novels of Arun Joshi are largely full of struggle, tensions and conflicts. In every novel, we find the articulation of these tensions and conflicts. There are fathers not satisfied with children and children, though they have great respect for their parents, not content with their parents. There is also a clash between husband and wife. In his The Foreigner, Sindi Oberoi is quite against the marriage. Though he loves June, he wants to remain detached and rejects the proposal of marriage. In The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, Billy is not satisfied with his wife Meena. He leaves his home and becomes a primitive where Bilasia makes him happy. While in The Apprentice, Ratan Rathor is tired of his wife, Som Bhaskar in The Last Labyrinth is totally neutral to his wife Geeta.

Apart from this, there is a struggle in man's heart itself. He cannot decide what to do, whether one should confess one's guilt or not, whether one should reconcile with his evil spirit or go hand-in-hand with one's soul.

The very sight of death in each of his novels knocks at the door, but the strong spiritual pull affirms the existence of God. In The Foreigner, it is the death of Babu and June; in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, the death of Billy; in The Apprentice, the death of the Brigadier; and in The Last Labyrinth, the death of the old man of the hills and his funeral, filling the heart of Som Bhaskar with realization of God.

But these novels are not at all pessimistic in temper. On the contrary, they rejoice over man's capacity for enduring hardships. Man

turns into shining gold coming out of the fire of hardships. He lives the life not for himself but for the social service. Sindi Oberoi becomes the bread-giver to the factorymen, Billy is adored by the primitives as God and Ratan Rathor shines shoes at the gate of the temple to be of some good use to others.

Fate and Chance also play an important role in the novels of Arun Joshi. Man cannot know its tricks. Billy leaves the civilized society of Delhi and becomes a primitive out of sheer restlessness, possibly due to the irresistible drive of the Fate.

Nature, a prominent factor in Joshi's novels, is presented in its various aspects. Its sensuous presentation is very charming. The novelist sees various colours in nature, enjoys the songs of birds, the steaming ponds, smells flowers like 'Rat ki Rani' and the smell of grass just after rain. The characters are children of Nature, for example, Billy Biswas, Bilasia, Dhunia in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas and the old man of the hills and his retinue and Garagi in The Last Labyrinth. Their friendship with Nature attracts them so much that the America-returned, well-educated, civilized Billy rejects Delhi and enjoys the beauties of Nature. And Nature takes the form according to the sentiments of the characters.

The present social system of India is very well exposed by the novelist. Lying, hypocrisy, bribery, drunkenness, womanising and unfair distribution of money pinch the heart of the writer. Various other problems also come to light in the course of the novels. The problem of unemployment, the increase in the number of the educated unemployed, population explosion, housing problems, etc., are some of them.

Most of Arun Joshi's characters are based on real life. The author lets them develop naturally and does not distort them. They unquestionably suffer from a deep sense of depression and frustration, but eventually emerge heroic and triumphant. The death of Biswas should not be taken as the death of an isolationist but as the triumph of his ideals and principles. Some other well-sketches characters are from The Foreigner - June, Mr. Khemka, and to some extent, Babu. The remaining ones are mere types, not creatures of flesh and blood; for instance, Anna, Kathy, Karl, Mr. Ghose, Sindi's uncle, June's mother.

Arun Joshi unravels the facets of crisis in modern man's life. The central image in all his novels is of a foreigner. His characters are caught not merely in the dilemma of dual cultures, but they are also walking metaphors of alienation - Sindi Oberoi who is a foreigner wherever he goes, Billy Biswas returning to the primitive world to find life essence in Bilasia, Ratan Rathor torn between guilt and confession or finally, Som Bhaskar lost in the labyrinth of death and life; existence and reality, doubt and faith, Darwin and Krishna.

In his novels, Arun Joshi seems to narrow down his study of human world to the portrayal of a few outstanding characters, excluding the wider range of life and action. Most of his characters seem to be moving in a world devoid of values, with blinkers of self-interest. And consequently, they tend to search for their roots. In the portrayal of his characters Arun Joshi introduces an undercurrent of satire. Sometimes, he presents the chief character as a narrator, commenting on his own attitudes and also reacting to other's attitudes.



Hari Mohan Prasad describes Arun Joshi's fiction as, "an odyssey through the labyrinth of chaos and crisis, culture and primitivism, doubt and faith".<sup>38</sup> Oberoi is Hamlet-like. Biswas is Arnold's Scholar Gypsy. Som Bhaskar is the most sophisticated symbol of quest. He is a modern version of the ancient characters, Abhimanyu from the Mahabharat, who endeavours to pass through the Chakravyuha of science and miracle, knowledge and wisdom, doubt and faith, existence and trust.

For Joshi, fiction is neither a source of entertainment nor an instrument of publicizing some sets of ideas. He experiments with the medium of literature for studying man's predicament, particularly in the light of motives responsible for his action and the reaction of his action on his psyche.

Arun Joshi's writing reverberates with the feel of Indian life. As M.Mani Meitel remarks, "His mastery over the treatment of Indian themes, ethos and culture is effectively correlated by his use of a sensuous and picturesque language. A typical Joshian style is really striking".<sup>39</sup>

Most of the novels of Arun Joshi are tripartite (being divided in three parts), prosaic and structured on the deeds and movements of a single outstanding character (inevitably the protagonist). Their action swings between gloom and light, sorrow and happiness, test and triumph.

"The fictional technique of Arun Joshi", writes A.N.Dwivedi, "is kaleidoscopic and moves forward and backward in a swift motion. That's why he does not give us so many sections or chapters in his novels; this is particularly true of the fourth novel, where the continuity of the action is maintained throughout by keeping, above the impeding, artificial barriers of unnecessary divisions. In other novels, we do

have chapters, but they are not too many".

In Indo-Anglian fiction, Arun Joshi and Anita Desai have created 'the outsider' in the significant manner. G.Damodar observes, "The outsiders in the worlds of these writers are concerned with living as it is, not as ought to be. For them, life is what it is. They negotiate with life and manoeuvre certain crucial turns in life almost successfully in each instance. For the outsider, the fundamental condition is a deep consciousness. In his consciousness, the individualistic outsider exists. The outsider in Joshi and Desai says, <sup>41</sup> 'I am conscious, therefore I exist'".

The central themes of Arun Joshi's novels as of Naipaul's novels have a direct bearing on the modern problem of the crisis of identity. C.N.Shrinath explains, "In Mr.Naipaul, this crisis manifests itself in assertion, his hero yearning to carve out a personality of his own, to own a house, in other words. But in Mr.Joshi, it is one of surrender, his hero renouncing his past, his family and the world of everyday life and fleeing from civilization into the jungle to lead the life of a tribal and to create for himself an inner centre of peace and sensitivity". <sup>42</sup> It is interesting to observe that both Mr.Biswas and Billy (Mr.Joshi's hero) defy society, but there is a basic differences in their aims. Arun Joshi seems to be in no hurry to produce a number of raw novels. Consequently, whatever he produces bears the unmistakable stamp of his talent and craftsmanship. His work is usually chiselled and artistic and compels the attention of the reader. No wonder that he has been offered the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award for Literature for The Last Labyrinth.

It has been pointed out that the only drawback in him as a novelist<sup>43</sup> is that he hardly ever accommodates humour or comedy in his works. Nevertheless, Arun Joshi has occupied a distinguished place in Indo-Anglian fiction. He seems to be at the juncture of traditional social, historial, philosophical novels and the personal, psychological and existentialist novels.

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