CHAPTER 2
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Part-I

Literature has thousands of threads which can weave the beautiful piece of art. Each thread has its own importance in the creative work. In the same way, there are different narrative techniques for the narration of literature. Among the narrative techniques, Realism, in literature, is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. Although realism is not limited to any one century or group of writers, it is most often associated with the literary movement in 19th-century France, specifically with the French novelists Flaubert and Balzac. George Eliot introduced realism into England, and William Dean Howells introduced it into the United States. Realism has been chiefly concerned with the commonplaces of everyday life among the middle and lower classes, where character is a product of social factors and environment is the integral element in the dramatic complications in literature, an approach that proceeds from an analysis of reality in terms of natural forces.

Realism, a style of writing that gives the impression of recording or ‘reflecting’ faithfully an actual way of life. The term refers, sometimes confusingly, both to a literary method based on detailed accuracy of
description and to a more general attitude that rejects idealization, escapism, and other extravagant qualities of romance in favor of recognizing soberly the actual problems of life. Modern criticism frequently insists that realism is not a direct or simple reproduction of reality (a ‘slice of life’) but a system of conventions producing a lifelike illusion of some ‘real’ world outside the text, by processes of selection, exclusion, description, and manners of addressing the reader. In its methods and attitudes, realism may be found as an element in many kinds of writing prior to the century ago.

It was also found in theater. Realism established itself as an important tradition in the theatre in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the work of Henrik Ibsen, Bernard Shaw, and others; and it remains a standard convention of film and television drama. In the drama, realism is most closely associated with Ibsen’s social plays. Later writers felt that realism laid too much emphasis on external reality. Many, notably Henry James, turned to a psychological realism that closely examined the complex workings of the mind. Despite the radical attempts of modernism to displace the realist emphasis on external reality, realism survived as a major current within 20th century fiction, sometimes under the label of neo realism.
Realism in literature is the theory or practice of fidelity to nature or to real life and to accurate representation without idealization of everyday life. The 18th-century works of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett are among the earliest examples of realism in English literature. It was consciously adopted as an aesthetic program in France in the mid-19th century, when interest arose in recording previously ignored aspects of contemporary life and society. The realist emphasis on detachment and objectivity, along with lucid but restrained social criticism, became integral to the novel in the late 19th century. The word has also been used critically to denote excessive minuteness of detail or preoccupation with trivial, sordid, or squalid subjects.

The twentieth century, prevailing models of literary criticism drew a line between realist and anti-realist literature, placing realist works on one side of the line and fantastic works on the opposite side. Despite this inherent questioning of the boundaries and construction of reality, the international literary scene has been largely uniform in its placement of magical realism in the anti-realist category, thereby opposing it to realist fiction. Furthermore, the current critical climate furthers the division between realism and magical realism in the premium that it places on magical realism at the expense of the earlier social realist
tradition, which is defamed for producing artistically stunted narratives without any enduring aesthetic value.

This hierarchical and oppositional division of social and magical realism into the categories of “real” and “anti-real” literature, respectively, is too simple and that this attitude of dismissal of social realist fiction must be understood within the context of the historical trends of literary criticism, as it goes hand-in-hand with the languishing of Marxist criticism.

The term “social realism” is a term that derives from Russian-inspired beliefs about the function of literature in a revolutionary socialist society. The international production of social realist fiction is characterized by a belief (now regarded as naïve) in the power of the word and in the writer’s ability to portray in a satisfying documentary fashion the structure of social reality. Social realism is inspired in various ways by the Russian revolution, Soviet communism, international Marxism, and the need to respond critically and in a denunciatory fashion to the various mechanisms of repression and the frustration of personal and collective aspirations. According to Dictionary of Literary terms by Coles;
Realism, in literature, is a manner and method of picturing life as it really is, untouched by idealism or romanticism. As a manner of writing, realism relies on the use of specific details to interpret life faithfully and objectively. In contrast to romance, this concerned with the bizarre and psychological in its approach to character, presenting the individual rather than the type. Often, fate plays a major role in the action. Realism became prominent in the English novel with such writers as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Anthony Trollope and William Makepeace Thackeray.¹

The term ‘Realism’ is widely accepted according to need and time. Realism in literature and the visual art used to describe a variety of approach in which accurate depiction of reality is the aim. Each of these uses involves a contrast between human thought or imagination and an external reality independent of mind. The notion that reality has
a cognitive or normative authority over the mind is also generally present.

Arnold Kettle remarks as Victorian novel is characterised by realism that the novel by its very definition “is a realistic prose fiction, complete in itself and of a certain length” wherein the word ‘realistic’ is meant to ‘indicate’ relevant to real life as opposed to… ‘Romantic’.

There is difference between social realism and socialist realism. According to Galsworthy, “the word ‘realist’ characterizes that artist whose temperamental preoccupation is with revelation of the actual spirit of life, character and thought with a view to enlighten him and others”. The main difference between social realism and socialist realism is between ‘is’ and ‘should be’. Social realism means the depiction in literature of social reality as it is; there should be a point one to one correspondence between the society depicted in literature and the real actual society.

Socialist realism means the depiction of the social reality not as it is but as it should be: idealized. The second kind of approach is typical Marxist approach to literature. The theory of Socialist Realism was adopted by the Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Approved by Joseph Stalin, Nikolai Bukharin, Maxim Gorky and Andrey Zhdanov,
Socialist Realism demanded that all art must depict some aspect of man's struggle toward socialist progress for a better life. It stressed the need for the creative artist to serve the proletariat by being realistic, optimistic and heroic. The doctrine considered all forms of experimentalism as degenerate and pessimistic.

Socialist realism had its roots in neoclassicism and the traditions of realism in Russian literature of the 19th century that described the life of simple people. It was exemplified by the aesthetic philosophy of Maxim Gorki. His novel *Mother* is usually considered to have been the first work of socialist realism. Gorky was also a major factor in the school's rapid rise, and his pamphlet, *On Socialist Realism*, essentially lays out the needs of Soviet art. Other important works of literature include Fyodor Gladkov's *Cement* (1925) and Mikhail Sholokhov's two volume epic, *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *And Quiet Flows the Don Summary* (1934) and *The Don Flows Home to the Sea* (1940). It has been noted that the realism in Indian context or in context of post colonial would have been treating literature in better way at present scenario.

Realism in art and literature is an endeavor to portray life as it is. It shows life with reality, omitting nothing that is ugly or painful, and idealizing nothing. To the realists, the writer's most important function is
to describe as truthfully as possible what is observed though the senses. Realism began as a recognizable movement in art in the 18th century. By the mid 19th century, it was a principal art form. In past, realism has been an upheaval against classicism and romanticism – artistic movements characterized by works that idealize life. Classicism shows life as being more rational and orderly than it really is while Romanticism shows life as being more emotionally exciting and satisfying that it normally is. While it was an attempt through realism to present life as it is. This ‘life as it is’ is what realism is.

In this literary approach of literature, writer is keeping in mind the basic reality while narrating a piece of art. It is a unique literary observable fact which never allows believing anything by the force of formulas of art. However, in the process of selecting and presenting their material the realists cannot help being influenced by what they feel and think. Even the most through-going realism is the result of observation and personal judgment. Even there is no place for the writer’s own belief and thought to present. It means writer without being prejudice of anything narrates what it is.

It is surprising that realism became very popular recently. It has two major factors; the development of modern science with its emphasis on facts and figures and the other is an increasing desire of artists and
readers for a realistic understanding of different social problems. Even so realism is not an object, to be identified, pinned down, and appropriated. It is rather a way of describing certain methods and attitudes, and the descriptions, quite naturally, have varied in the ordinary exchange and development of experience.

Realism is the acknowledgment of the fact that a work of literature can rest neither on a lifeless average, as the naturalists suppose, nor on an individual principle which dissolves its own self into nothingness. The central category and criterion of realist literature is the type, a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations. What makes a type a type is not its average quality, not its mere individual being, however profoundly conceived; what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development, in the ultimate unfolding of possibilities latent in them, in extreme presentation of their extremes rendering concrete the peaks and limits of men and age. True realism depicts man and society as complete entities instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects. It is not just an echo but the real sound of an individual or society or jointly voice of their being. Thus, it is very much true what Mulk Raj Anand, a great realist in fiction accepts;
And I was confirmed in my hunch that, unlike Virginia Woolf, the novelist must confront the total reality, including its sordidness, if one was to survive in the world of tragic contrasts between the ‘exalted and noble’ vision of the blind bard Milton to encompass the eyes dimmed with tears of the many mute Miltons. 2

As it is mentioned earlier that realism is three dimensional – an independent life, characters and human relationships. There is no place for emotions and intellectual. All it opposes is the destruction of the completeness of the human personality and of the objective typicality of men and situations through an excessive cult of the momentary mood. The struggle against such tendencies acquired a critical importance in the realist literature.

The major problem of realism is the satisfactory presentation of the complete human personality. Literature is saturated with social and moral humanistic problems and the expectation for a realistic creation of types is in contrast to the trends in which the biological being of man, the physiological aspects of self-preservation and procreation are dominant. In this case if the writer depicts any other aspect of life with
his own creative mind then it may divert it from realism and lead to other type. So the scope for imagination in this style is quite less.

Realism is nothing but an acute observation of life as it is. It is a simple recording process from which any deviation is voluntary. Now we know that we literally create the world we see—is necessarily dynamic and active. Reality is that which human beings make common by work or language. Thus, in the very acts of perception and communication, this practical interaction of what is personally seen, interpreted and organized and what can be socially recognized known and formed is richly and subtly manifested. Reality is continually established by common efforts and art is one of the highest forms of this process. Yet the tension can be great in the struggle to establish reality, and many kinds of failure and breakdown are possible. The recording of creative effort to explore such breakdowns is not always easy to distinguish from the simple exciting exploitation of breakdown. It is challenge for realist to establish the form without any characteristics of any other style of literature and yet to maintain the charm of realism. There are different obstacles in the path of realist to prove it as per expectations. It is very difficult to achieve this at the first attempt. Not only a great deal of hard work but also a serious moral effort is required for this.
It is the desire of the reader to share in the lives of the millions around him. It may be worthwhile to read romantic fiction for thrill, relaxation or amusement, but for a proper appraisal of life the realistic novel alone provides the answer. Characterization grows in complexity as realism advances as in the case of Mulk Raj Anand, Dickens and Premchand.

The political changes gave rise to social realism in Europe. The political reformation of nineteenth century Europe was fostered by social factors such as the spread of literacy and especially the increasing power of the bourgeoisie as it became enfranchised to vote and as it gained in economic stature as a result of business and manufacturing growth which created greater prosperity for it and greater hardships for the exploited laborers. This change has attracted all the man of letter to focus on them and as a result some of the best work of literature came out during this time. A brilliant picture of working conditions from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards is given in such realist novels as Elizabeth Gaskell’s Mary Barton (1848), Dickens’ *Hard Times* (1854) and Gola’s Germinal (1885). Even the modern science discoveries in all the fields have given a great comfort to middle class and laborers. Scientific inventions and specially the discovery of photography technique have provided the exact reproduction of reality. The
bourgeois were the primary readers of realist writing whose tone and content were geared to appeal to an audience convinced of its capacity to master the physical world.

The realists place truth-telling at the core of their beliefs, implying thereby certain directness, simplicity and unadorned artlessness well attuned to the mid-nineteenth century preference for facts and figures. The reiterated emphasis on truth is the central motif of all contemporary views and reviews, even though the exposition of its meaning undergoes modification between the early 1830s and the late 1880s. The notion of truthfulness is taken most literally by Balzac who likes to cast himself in the role of recording secretary to the nineteenth century, and by Edmond Duranty, who adopts truth as the dominant slogan of his short-lived journal *Realisme* (1856-57). He also upholds sincerity, modernity and prose along with truthfulness as the distinguishing feature of realism in contrast to the idealization, historical remoteness and verse typical of Romanticism.

This basic theory of art as merely truth-telling is came to be qualified in the writings of some of the great realists themselves as they realized its inherent shortcomings. George Eliot, for example, in *Adam Bede*, declares her desire ‘to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind’. Eliot is already
conscious of the crucial quandary of literary realism, which has become the fulcrum of present-day examination of its writing. Eliot comments on the ease of describing an imaginary description while the reality which is very difficult to present. According to her, for imaginary writing there is free flaw of thought and fantasy while for reality there are obstacles. She extends that it is very difficult to narrate our daily conversation in as it is way as real and true.

The interest in realism was sparked by a significant book, *Mimesis* by Erich Auerbach, subtitled as *Represented Reality* in 1946. He puts forward the assumption that the essence of realism lies in its completeness and truthfulness. Realism denotes above all the serious portrayal of everyday occurrences among the lower social strata at a specific moment in the history of their time. Realism is quite differing from the Classicism and Romanticism. Here the presentation of life is what life is while the same situation in the hands of classicists can take place in the style of classicism and it can not adore the truth and reality alone.

Edmund Duranty says that Realism bans the historical in painting, the novel, and the theater so that no lie may creep in and the artist cannot borrow knowledge from others; Realism demands of artists only the study of their period; in this study of their period it asks them not to
distort anything, but to keep everything in its exact proportions; the best way not so err in this study is to think always of the idea of representing the social side of man, which is the most visible, the most comprehensible and the most varied, and to think also of the idea of reproducing the things affecting the lives of the greatest number, which happen often in the realism of instincts, desires, and passions; realism thereby attributes to the artist a philosophical, practical, useful aim, and not that to amusement, and consequently raises him up. That, in demanding of the artist useful truth, it demands of him particularly the intelligent feeling and observation which sees a lesson, an emotion in a spectacle at any level, low or high, according to convention, spectacle at any level, knowing how to represent it completely, and to embed it in its social cadre. A distinction is drawn between Art and Reality and an antithesis established between general do not lose sight of the fact that art is a representation of reality – a representation which must be limited by the nature of its medium; the canvas of the painter, the marble of the sculptor, the chords of the musician, and the language of the writer, each bring with them peculiar laws but in all laws, art always aims at the representation of what is true.

Realism is thus the basis of all art. When our painters represent peasants with regular features and irreproachable linen, when their
milkmaids have the air of keep-sake beauties whose costume is picturesque and never old or dirty, an attempt is made to idealize but the result is simple falsification and bad art. To misrepresent the forms of ordinary life is no less an offence than to misrepresent the forms of ideal life. Either gives us true pictures, or leave them untouched, either paint no drapery at all or paint it with the utmost fidelity; of their class. In the same way, a novelist express his mind in and his novels, according to his poetic disposition, with the choice and treatment according to his poetic disposition, with the choice and treatment of his subject to be poetically but it must always be real-true. If he selects the incidents and characters of ordinary life, he must be rigidly bound down to accuracy in the presentation. He is at liberty to avoid such subjects, if he thinks them prosaic and uninteresting, but having chosen, he is not at liberty to falsify under pretence of beatifying them; every departure from truth in motive, idiom, or probability is to that extent a defect. His dressmaker must be a young woman who makes dresses, and not a sentimental heroine, evangelical and consumptive; ‘she may be consumptive, she may also be evangelical, for dressmakers are so sometimes, but she must be individually a dressmaker. If the writer’s knowledge or sympathies do not lead him in the direction of ordinary life, if he can neither paint town nor country, let him take to the wide fields of history of Fancy. Even there the demands of truth will pursue him; he must
paint what he distinctly sees with his imagination; if he succeeds, he will create characters which are true although ideal. It is a greater achievement for a work of art to represent the ordinary life truly than the extraordinary life incompletely. Echoing a similar note, George Eliot confesses:

I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing indeed but falsity which, in spite of one’s best efforts, there is reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult. 

It is very much true the depiction of truth requires perfect knowledge of the situation or emotions while for fantasy there is no barrier at all. It just requires lots of vocabulary and imagination and there is no need to care for its bonafide or its relevance with contemporary world.

Realistic fiction has been primarily a revolt against the sentimentality and melodrama of romantic idealism. Characters in realistic fiction tend to be more complex than those in romantic fiction. Settings are more ordinary, plots are less important, and themes are less obvious. A realistic fiction deals with probable commonplace events
and believable people; it presents unpleasant and even offensive subject-matter. This sordid quality is especially associated with ‘Naturalism’ which is but an outgrowth of realism.

Social realism is concerned with dynamic interpretations of life with the purpose of changing the existing reality. In the 19th century England Dickens and George Eliot, Meredith and Thackeray endeavoured in this direction; in India, Sarat chandra, Premchand and Mulk Raj Anand blazed the trail in Bengali, Hindi and Indian English languages respectively faced political persecution, but were ultimately recognised. The concept ‘social realism’ in the strictly scientific and philosophic sense has come to us with the philosophy of Marxism. Indian novelists are not Marxists; the Victorian writers are close to socialist interpretation of the problems of their time while some of the Indian writers appear deeply influenced by the leftist ideology in the creation of their world of fiction.

Leo Tolstoy also the follower of social realism theory admits that the real world presented for the sake of art is also not up to the purpose. Reality for the sake of art is like fantasy only. The works of Hugo, Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dostoevsky, George Eliot, Cervantes, Moliere, Gogol, and Pushkin have produced examples of art that seem good to Tolstoy, but he attaches no ‘importance’ to his own taste. He,
like Dickens and Anand votes for the destruction of “art for art's sake” and admits “art for ourselves”.

The welfare society, as has been lately envisioned, is in principle, fertile soil for the realization of the ideal of art. Something of this sort happened in Russia but not in England and India—because Russian Society struggled to its feet and followed revolution. The art there had a position not unlike that in the best organic societies. They integrate with institutions enshrining a widely supported unity of belief which the artist dedicates himself to the artist and audience is eliminated. Consequently the art is carried to farm and factory, e.g. Mulk Raj Anand brought it to the Assam Tea Gardens and Dickens brought it to the London Chimney house and Red Light Area. Then the great figures of art such as the Pushkin and the Gorky become the greatest national heroes. Art becomes the tool not only of nationalistic interests but also the relation of the art to the life of the people.

Realism thus appears as in part a revolt against the ordinary bourgeois view of the world; the realists make a further selection of ordinary material which the majority of bourgeois artists prefer to ignore. Thus ‘realism’, as a watchword, passes over to the progressive and evolutionary movements and Mulk Raj Anand is a writer of this movement.
In realistic novels, the society is not a background against which the personal relationships are studies, nor are the individuals merely illustrations of aspects of the way of life. Every aspect of personal life is radically affected by the quality of the general life, yet the general life is seen at its most important in completely personal terms. We attend with our whole senses to every aspect of the general life, yet the centre of value is always in the individual human person-not in an isolated person, but the many persons who are the reality of the general life. It is a kind of personal or general portrayal which finally leads to represent entire society or mankind as a whole. Dickens’ David Copperfield and Mulk Raj Anand’s Bakha are examples of this ‘individual human person’ the ‘type’ and the ‘representative’.

The realist novel is separated into the social and the personal novels; social novel is further separated into social documentary and social formula. The same point holds for the ‘personal novel’. Some of the best novels of our time describe selected personal relationships in a careful and subtle manner. Mulk Raj Anand’s social setting is obvious example: Anand’s village, Assam Tea Garden, Industries, Bombay Red light area, Military cantonment, worker’s colony etc. are very much unique which relate not to their actual ways of life but to the needs of his characters and of his own emotional pattern. There the characters are
aspects of the society; here the society is an aspect of the characters. The balance is that in which both the general way of life and the individual persons are seen as there and absolute.

It has been established in literature that ‘the proper study of mankind is man’ so we ourselves are both the subject and the object of art; art is the expression of ourselves for our own sake.

Mulk Raj Anand, from this point of view, seems to be socialist messiah of his time and society. He considers that the only real literature is the expression of the historically developing nation spirit, the dialectic movement of the political and economic idea. That movement provides a norm for distinguishing between the eternal and the ephemeral in literature. So, the greatest author is most closely identified with the community and its evolution, one who divines the need of one’s time, express its spirit, and represent his contemporaries.

The realist novel needs a genuine community: a community of persons linked not merely by one kind of relationship – work of friendship or family but many interlocking kinds. It is commonplace in Anand’s novels. Coolie, The Big Heart, Untouchables and The Two Leaves and A Bud are the complex of personal, family and working relationships, and draws its whole strength from their interaction in an
indivisible process, the links between persons in most contemporary novels are relatively single, temporary, and discontinuous. And this is a change in society, at least in the part of society. The contemporary novel has both reflected and illuminated the crisis of our society; only a different society can resolve our literary problems. It is true for literature also that it is a reflection of life and our experience. Realism is nothing but the reaction of Romanticism and Classicism. It is a kind of presentation of life as it is. The difference between Romanticism and Realism is like the difference between painting and photography.

Part –II

As realism is nothing but a reaction against the romantic excess consolidate the position of it in literature in general and in fiction in particular. The drawn of realism in literature proceeds the morning of clarification in education and learning. Even the expectation in life is a longing for liberty, equality and fraternity – the three humanistic gospels of the French Revolution. The charm of reading the book of realism is the finest real picture of life described by the real words of an author which is a photographic narration of our life and surroundings.

A realistic novel is more or less not for the sake of art but for the sake of life of an individual or a mass presented by a common character
as we find in the Dickens’ *Hard Times* or Mulk Raj Anand’s *
*Untouchable*. Which make reality more real for our own sake and for the
sake of life. Quite a few of the Indian English novelists try to give a
graphic picture of the contemporary rural or urban scene. They have, to
some extent, been instrumental in adding another dimension to our
awareness and insight. We finish the reading of a realistic novel with a
feeling that such things have been happening in the world for ages past
without our being conscious of them for one reason or the other. More
so, in a realistic novel we can easily transfer our own identity to some of
the characters and derive vicarious pleasure out of this identification.
While continuing to live our own life we share to the full the experiences
of the characters in the novel – thus enriching our own personality. But
such a pleasure has obviously to depend on a sensibility.

Mulk Raj Anand is the greater novelist, the typical classist of his
time. This kind of a literary judgment is not merely a matter of taste—it
involves all the central problems of the aesthetics of the novel as an art
form. With the finding for the realism or realistic aspects of Anand, it is
also very important to look into the contemporary social, political,
religion, traditional, cultural and economical issues in India. As it is a
representation of the real social life of Indian, it is counted as a social
document painted with rustic brush and dipped into the colour of social
and religious layers. As Mulk Raj Anand, a committed social realist, states firmly:

My conversion to truth in Sabarmati Ashram was not a conversion to Gandhiji’s proposition, ‘God is Truth’. I had been converted to the truth which I saw in human relations. When he said ‘God is Truth’, I saw in human relations. I said ‘God is Love’. I wanted to reveal beyond the spent up, redundant systems and categories of the philosophers and beyond organized religious the intricate, contradictory emotions, feelings moods and events, so that the experience of my characters may represent some sort of the totally of life. ⁴

Mulk Raj Anand is humanist and always concerned for the downtrodden narrated the central problems posed in aesthetics which is why realists in fiction have considered literature and art as the instruments of humanism. For this humanist approach of Mulk Raj Anand, he accepts it;
One writes perhaps because one love and wants to make contacts with other human beings... I have written ... about the agony of aloneness of people, in the depths of degradation, in wretchedness beyond wretchedness, forced upon human beings by other human beings through causalities often unknown to them both.⁵

Realism, however, is not the tricky way which comes out from the opposite direction of Romanticism but it is opposed to all such pseudo-dilemmas. Mulk Raj Anand also holds a similar view that the novel form is inevitably somewhat amorphous for it presents life in different frame of mind and style as well. However, true realism not only realization and depiction of the situation but realists do more than that; they set it up as a demand to be made on men. They know that this distortion of objective reality due to social causes, this division of the complete human personality into a public and a private sector is a disfigurement of the essence of man. That is why they protest not only as painters of reality, but also as humanists. This great passion for the betterment of mankind is the valuable aspect of realism. This tasks and responsibility
of literature are exceptionally great. But only truly great realism can cope with responsibility of betterment of mankind.

It is very important in realism that the picture conveyed by the work from both points of view-of the self-recognition of the present and of history and posterity; the question to what extent this picture conforms to the views of the author is a secondary matter. This self recognition is nothing but realism which is felt and adopted by the writer where he keep himself away from his own personality, thoughts and prejudices which we finds in the works of Mulk Raj Anand. If the intrinsic artistic development of situations and characters he has created come into conflict with his most cherished prejudices or even his most sacred convictions, will set aside his own prejudices and conviction and describes what he really sees, not what he prefers to see. This ruthlessness towards own subjective world picture is the hallmark of all great realistic.

Mulk Raj Anand, the great realist confesses that he has worked very hard to attain genuineness and emphases on the truth of life;

The compulsion to pursue the truth of human relation has, I confess, become the mission of my life. I could not have written all the twenty or
so novels, and hundred of short stories, if I had not been possessed from the sources of love which Gandhiji touched off in me, and if I had not had the deep inner desire to reveal the beauty, terror and tenderness in the lives of my characters.6

Realism became popular as it is presents the emotion of mass and every member of the mass relate the subject matter with himself. Realist writers in fiction always take the most important burning problems of the community for their starting point; their pathos as writers is always stimulated by those sufferings of the people which are the most acute at the time; it is these sufferings that determine the objects an direction of their love and hate and through these emotions determine also what they see in their poetic vision. In the process of creation their conscious world view comes into conflict with the world seen in their vision and what really emerges is that their true conception of the world is only superficially formulated in the consciously their deep ties with the great issues of their time, their sympathy with the sufferings of the people can find adequate expression only in the being and fate of their characters which is the real charm of realism.
As literature is mirror of life which can be justify through realism only. Only realism reflects the life of an individual or mass with humanistic approach and zest of their betterment. In this way great realism and popular humanism are merged into an organic unity. If we regard the classics of the social development that determine the essence of our age, from Goethe and Walter Scott to Gorky and Thomas Mann, we find mutatis the same structure of the basic problem. Every great realist finds a different solution for the basic problem in accordance with his time and his own artistic personality. But they all have in common that they penetrate deeply into the great universal problems of their time and inexorably depict the true essence of reality as they see it. From the French Revolution onwards the development of society moves in a direction which renders inevitable a conflict between such aspirations of men of letters and the literature and public of their time. In this whole age a writer could achieve greatness only in the struggle against the current of everyday life.

The present study examines carefully the real social foundations on which Anand’s existence rests and the real social forces under the influence of which the human and the literary personalities of the writer developed. It is the social and political revolution in India which affected Anand’s viewpoints and approach. In India, the Freedom struggle
movement, reformers and thinkers like Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekanand, and Gandhi made a vigorous attempt to break the age-old shackles of colonial dominance, social evils and political orthodoxy. The father of the Indian Nations calls Tolstoy his Guru. It is no accident that this attempt at regeneration which does not at first confines itself to literature but strives to create healthy conditions in all ideological spheres, is at the same time the period in which Tolstoy grows to be an influence in India and England along with Dostoevsky and Gorky. It is interesting to note that the foreign influence in the awakening of Indian consciousness has provided much more to the Indian society and the socially affected people. It is India or world at large but the basic interest behind social development is same as the emotion and feeling of mankind is same across the globe. This turning point in social development is mirrored in literature and considered one of the finest elements of realism.

The panoramic intensity and gravity of social experience starting from Ram Mohan Roy down the ages through which India passed in its struggle for freedom from the white Racism has made Indo-English writers’ approach realistic and down to earth. There was a wave of disgust of blowing against the colonial Yoke of foreign rule but a few writers for example, M. R. Anand, Krishan Chandar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Chaman Nahal, Ahmad Ali peeped into the inner
recesses of Indian social hierarchy as did Dickens and George Eliot into those of Victorian social systems.

In this respect Anand and his contemporaries followed the tradition of realism set by 19th century novelists like Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy. They endeavoured to depict life in an entirely honest manner, without prejudice and glamour, so to hold a mirror to society.

The picture of India as painted by these Anglo-Indian novelists leaves much to be desired. Often it barely scratches the surface of Indian reality and means to give altogether an exotic image of this country so much cherished in the west-through touches of romance, mystery, satire, farce, and fantasy-even melodrama. The ‘Trimurti’-M.R. Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao-have by their herculean efforts tried to retrieve the true realistic ‘inside’ view of India and her people. We can hardly deny that there are fundamental differences in their perspectives; yet we have to concede that their ‘common endeavour’, with its elements of propaganda, art and philosophy, has challenged the current norms of realism as understood and practised in the west.

In India, Munshi Premchand was perhaps the first Urdu author to write European-style short stories. He believed that the standards of
beauty needed to be changed, that literature should be an instrument of social reform, and explored with considerable realism social problems such as rural and urban poverty, the oppression of women, and the caste system.

Hence the social realist movement was at its peak in India at his time, the same time when social realism had achieved a high degree of international prominence in Latin America and elsewhere. With its emphasis on the realistic depiction of such social problems as hunger and poverty, social backwardness, and political subjugation, Indian social realist literature would hardly seem to contest reality or to allow for the opening up of a third space between reality and fantasy. Social realist literature did not attempt to question the boundaries between reality and fantasy, as it was focused entirely on the accurate portrayal of empirical reality.

The realism of Anand is an innovation in the technique of Indian novel too, for it advances the Indian novel from where Premchand left it. The earliest pioneer of the Indian novel, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, wrote historical romances after the style of Walter Scott. In his social novels which are characterized by romantic realism, he betrays the lack of artistic detachment and very often stains his balanced judgments by his socio-religious prejudices. Rabindranath Tagore contrives a
dramatic representation of human relationships but the treats mainly upper class life in his novels and being an aesthete analyses human conduct and motivations stressing the universal values of truth, goodness and beauty and generally, overlooking socio-economic conflicts of the age. Saratchandra Chatterjee discerns the evils infecting the Indian middle class society very keenly and analyses them very artistically. His characters are, however, unable to find any modern solutions to their age-old social problems and hence for the most part remain mere passive spectators to their miseries rather than turn into radical heroes capable of changing the society. It is Premchand who, for the first time in the Indian novel, selects peasants and the underdog as the protagonists of his novels. He even observes the class and caste-antagonism in the Indian society and describes the exploitation of the poor by the imperialists, feudalists and capitalists successfully. He is, however, unable to understand the historical significance of the change from the feudal society to the industrialism in India hence believes in social evolution rather than radicalism in human endeavors. Mulk Raj Anand extends the frontiers of the Indian novel by adding his revolutionary and humanistic outlook on life to the social consciousness and realistic treatment of life in the novels of Premchand and the artistic perspective in those of Rabindranath Tagore. Anand’s realism is based on the synthesis thus attained.
Realism comes to be used primarily as the antonym of 'idealism', and this sense, which is a reflection of the position taken by the enemies of the French Realists, has in fact colored much critical and historical writing about the novel. The use of ‘realism’ however, has the grave defect of obscuring what are probably the most original features of the novel form. If the novel is realistic merely because it sees life from the seamy side, it will only be an inverted romance; but in fact it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective: the novel’s realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it present it.

This, of course, is very close to the position of the French Realists themselves who assert that if their novels tend to differ from the more flattering pictures of humanity presented by many established ethical, social and literary codes, it is merely because they are the product of a more dispassionate and scientific scrutiny of life than has ever been attempted before. It is far from clear that this ideal of scientific objectivity is desirable; and it certainly cannot be realized in practice; it is become critically aware of its aims and methods, the French Realists draw
attention to an issue which the novel raises more sharply than any other literary form – the problem of the correspondence between the literary work and the reality which it imitates. This is an epistemological problem, and it seems likely that the nature of the novel’s realism can be clarified by the help of those professionally concerned with the analysis of concepts, the philosophers.

The term ‘realism’ in philosophy is strictly applied to a view of reality diametrically opposed to that of common usage – to the view held by the scholastic Realists of the middle ages that it is universals, classes or abstractions, and not the particular, concrete objects of sense-perception which are the true ‘realities’. At first sight this appears unhelpful since in the novel, more than in any other genre, general truths only exists posters; but the very unfamiliarity of the point of view of scholastic Realism at least serves to draw attention to a characteristic of the novel which is similar to the changed philosophical meaning of ‘realism’.

The concept of realistic particularly in literature is so general that it cannot be capable of concrete demonstration; for demonstration to be possible the relationship of realistic particularly to some specific aspects of narrative technique must be established. Two such aspects suggest themselves as of special importance in the novel – characterization and
presentation of background; the novel is surely distinguished from other
genres and from previous forms of fiction by the amount of attention it
habitually accords both to the individualization of its characters and to
the detailed presentation of their environment.

In the exploration of contemporary realism not only persists but
thrives, at least in many postcolonial contexts, is that contemporary
postcolonial realist novels are capable of resistance. Realism is seldom
established as a viable form for resistance narratives. In spite of many
examples of recent politically charged realist texts, (Rohinton Mistry's A
Fine Balance, Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, Randolph
Stow's Tourmaline, Keri Hulme's The Bone People, Zoë Wicomb's You
Can't Get Lost in Cape Town, Michael Ondaatje's In the Skin of a Lion,
or even Nalinaksha Bhattacharya's Hem and Football, to name only a
few) the critical expectations about the form often hold that it is a
reinforcement of conservative ideology. On one hand, this assumption
has led to the cooption of literary realism by right-leaning critics. On the
other, it has led to the virtual dismissal of the realist novel by those left-
leaning critics looking for an apparently radical form to hold disruptive
content. In contrast to both these positions, realism is a feasible,
perhaps even indispensible, form for political and social engagement in
postcolonial contexts.
The postcolonial theoretical tendency has been to overlook the elements of realism in texts that have been perceived by critics as either postmodern, on one hand, or a kind of comfortable humanism, on the other. In addition, as Susanne Baker argues, the desire to read realism out of a novel is frequently an eroticizing maneuver perpetuated by an audience uninitiated in the specificities of a given culture. While the desire to read the plurality of the non-real narrative is understandably often motivated by a desire to read past a monolithic world view that places the postcolonial subject in a position of alterity, such a notion is inevitably based on the premise that the form of realism reinforces such a monolithic view.

Many critics indict realism on the grounds that it lends itself to an imperializing function because it does not appear overtly to question the normalization and naturalization of otherness in its representation of the quotidian. While this is an understandable fear, it does not take into account the many recent uses of realism by writers from formerly colonized countries who actually use the form to present a critical depiction of the problems of the everyday in spite of, or in reaction to, its antecedents. Surely many postcolonial authors have sufficient consciousness of western literary history and enough political agency
that they can produce realist fiction that supersedes its roots in the propagation of a European sensibility.

Literary realism is often viewed in current critical circles as "a mode which attempts to pass off as 'natural' the signifying system within which the literary work is constructed, and thus to stabilize the dominant social values of a work's time and place. It is possible for a writer to depict a situation as unnatural even in its representation as ordinary and normal. It is interesting to look at the distinction between the normal and the natural in postcolonial realism because it is in this context that the accusation against realism as normalizing altered is levied.

Different types of realism found in the works the great novelist like Balzac, Tolstoy and Gorky. They have both the types of realism—socialist and critical overlap in the works. Dickens uses the two types of technique as and when it suits him. Dickens is a novelist of working-class; he delights in portraying the plebeian characters in his novels from the inside which is but the socialist way and the upper middle class characters from the outside which is but the critical way. Tolstoy furnishes pictures of the life of the oppressed peasant even though he is a member of upper class. A true realist conceives of a class as dynamic but a improper sociologist as static. It is the perspective of socialism which can help the critical realist understand his own age from
the inside as a dynamic reality yet it cannot help him assess the future from the same angle, but the very basis of socialist realism is the desire to probe into the future to portray from the inside people on the march to build their future. Mulk Raj Anand belongs to this category through his observation. It is his view that writer should observe inner and outer parts of life and try to feel the present state of mind of mass. In his view;

The novel should interpret the truth of life from felt experience, and not from books. And one should adventure through new areas of life and always try to see, in the intricate web of circumstances of human existence, the inner core of reality, or at least attempt to probe the depths of human consciousness.⁷

The social commitment is a motto of new socialist perspective is realism. It is aware of the structure, development and the ultimate goal of human society—a sense of totally of things. In this way socialist is less committed to the probing of a totally—a process which may never come to an end and remains an ideal to be achieved constantly. With the blossoming of a socialist state, the negative element of critical realism will develop the positive, socialist trends and even as Lukac’s thinks get merged into the socialist realism.
Even it is a duty of any writer to listen the mass and should be socially committed like Marxism places man in the centre of its philosophy, for while it claims that material forces may change man, it declares most emphatically that it is man who changes the material forces and that in the course of so doing he changes himself. Further, Ralph Fox explains that each man has a dual history. So Marx and Engels thought Shakespearean characterization of men and women to be highly realistic. No great writer living in a great period of human history can afford to neglect the social tensions and the economic pressures of the age in the formation of character; Mulk Raj Anand stepped out into a regenerative humanism which he is still pursuing with vitality and assurance.

**Part-IV**

Literature emerges out of life and records our dreams and ideas, hopes and aspirations, failures and disappointments, motives and passions, and experiences and observations. Over the years, literature has reflected the prevailing social issues in many eminent works of literature under the shadow of realism. In Realism, social reality is one aspect of the picture but it cannot be isolated as though it were an entity by itself. It cannot be taken out of the context of the general cultural pattern of a period. Even there have been honest attempts to recreate
incidents from great literatures of the past ages. It is again due to a certain vulgarization on a different level. With all their immense resources of visual presentation, the makers of our soul of art. Yet that reality has been conveyed for hundreds of years by the art players of Bengal's countryside who work without a stage or scenic effects, almost without any kind of equipment, relying entirely on the simplest dramatic devices. They convey truth, the truth of emotion, which is the ultimate of realism. This aspect of realism is lacking in the works of some of the writers. Realism as it should be truthful and honest picture of society. It should be true attempt to focus on reality with the concern to make it superior world.

It is also very important to note here at this junction that the fast advance of the modern age with its new technology is accompanied by far-reaching changes in cultural orientation. Even if world peace is maintained at the edge of the abyss, the economic aspect of living is completely refashioned because of the new conditions of industrial productivity. The changes reach farther than those that mark the onrush of the era of capitalism over the decay of the feudal order. Hence it is appropriate to note how that new age reacts to the literature of its yesterday and that is why Realism is nothing but the reaction of the past, a true picture of life against the rosy picture of Romanticists.
Writers have started focusing on common reader and made common people as a hero in their work to feel their echo but they have moral purpose of their welfare.

Realist has a moral purpose. He may denounce injustice and oppression; he may demand freedom for his people, he may plead for the universal brotherhood of man. In all such cases he is called tendentious. The creative writer can well afford to wear that label. The stern realist is addicted to ideals. He wants to make life better. He dreams of a great destiny for humankind, and not of its ignominious end under nuclear fission. But the mankind is at center of it. The most heroic character must have his feet on common earth as Mulk Raj Anand's Bakha, Gangu, Ananta have. or Charles Dickens' David Copperfield, Miss Betsey Trotwood or Oliver Twist has; the dastardly villain, even more difficult to create, needs to redeemed by the 'human touch'.

Writer should not draw his material from contemporary reality, since he is too close to it to be able to read its meaning and assess its inward nature. This is absurd. The creative writer has well-developed sensitivity though this does not mean that he understand or shares all emotions. The things he witnesses, the things he experiences, are likely to move him more intensely than what may be called recollection at second hand. Even the historical novel relies as much on the writer's
personal experience as on imaginative evocation. Tolstoy in his *War and Peace* has provided good example. It was description of the war as he has seen during his life time. The writer has to know that war from the recorded word to give realistic picture of war. The same impact of real experience in Mulk Raj Anand's life reflected in his works. He was participated in the Spanish Civil War and his breaking of curfew at Amritsar in the wake of Jallianwala Bag Massacre testify Tolstoy's role in the defense of Sevastopol for a novelist of commitment. For Mulk Raj Anand it is the choice between life and death. If the events of today move him so deeply that he must have a creative outlet for his feelings, he should not put those feelings in cold storage and leave them there until the present time has slipped into the vista of dim yesterday.

Reality has its own meaning in art with human significance and without which no artistic or literary product can excite any positive, lively response in the reader is the necessary of ‘realism’, and all literary forms, the novel with its capacious width is expected to give an authentic account of life. This authenticity is the measure of its value. A poem may experiment with symbolic modes, with a dramatist may experiment with symbolic modes, with an oblique, almost tenuous bond with reality. But a reader of the novel insists on veracity, on the
delineation of the familiar world in its particularly, heterogeneity and complexity.

All the work of art is surrounded by life of human being. Which reflects in literary practice and literary criticism, as in life, wisdom begins with the acceptance of the limits of the possible. It is sensible to start with the assumption that the potency of the human mind is not unbounded. Rousseau’s saying that man, born free, is everywhere in chains can be reversed – man is born a prisoner and all his life he struggles to be free. Again, the craving for unrestricted freedom and unbounded knowledge may yield hallucinatory phantasms and lead to a total displacement of normalcy. The artist’s divided loyalty, his failure to attain the unitive experience, the inadequacy of the tool with which he works, the circumscribed area of human awareness and the inhibiting influences of external factors – these are facts in which the sensitive artist has to acquiesce has its pain and reflected in his conscious mind and finally in his works.

The only one of its kind privilege of man is that he can watch with a lucid vision the boundary by which he is hemmed in; he is also driven by a restive anxiety to cross the boundary by an empathic stretch of imagination, and it is this pressure that never lets the writer rest. Whether he knows it or not, the picture of life that he portrays can never
be a faithful document of life; and yet he can produce a document that gives us at least a distant impression of what life may potentially be and also enriches our insight into the conditions of mortal man having immortal longings. This is a privilege without which human life can be considerably impoverished. Submission and rebellion: the novelist moves uncertainly between two poles- and his attitudes that take on various forms and manifestations mirror a moving chronicle of the mind’s journey that runs parallel to the actual human journey and perhaps at certain brief moments the two intersect. With views and reviews of life and zest to feel pain and pleasure of mankind, writer depicts life in his work of art.

The Realism and realistic trend in literature began in the early twentieth century, in places such as Britain, the USSR, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, China and India. A characteristic of this trend was that it encompassed writing for the masses by the masses. One indication of the importance of this trend is the broad scope of the subject matter. ‘Proletarian literature’ dealt with nearly every aspect of society from the standpoint of the working class, drawing a complete picture of the class struggle, its participants and their aspirations.

The wave of Western proletarian literary tradition washed ashore in India, though with reduced fury. It questioned the then prevailing
social, economic and political climate of the country and addressed caste questions, the freedom struggle and working class life. Anand’s Major novels are belonging from this trend.

Coolie (1931) a novel on the life of a boy Munoo, from a poor but rotten village, and his exploitation by distant kinsmen. He witnesses exploitation and abuse throughout his life. Fate buffets him from place to place and dresses him up as a poster boy, as a circus boy, as a labourer in Bombay cotton mill, and lastly as a man servant of all sorts.

Two Leaves and a Bud (1937) is a novel dealing with the story of an Indian peasant family, which loses its land and migrates to work on a British-owned tea plantation in Assam, and the working-class struggles that take place there. The ineffectiveness of the struggle to change the system is portrayed.

Mulk Raj Anand’s The Big Heart (1945) is a novel about a village of artisans in South India in the early 1940s whose livelihood is destroyed by the establishment of a factory producing copper utensils. How the factory brings about a shift in their life, family and psyche is something which cannot be explained.
These insightful, empathetic, reflective and poignant stories grew from an emotional consciousness of social reality and are actuated by a sense of social reformation. The troubles and tribulations of the suppressed and the oppressed have always been a major concern of writers and intellectuals. They could not adopt an armchair approach to these problems and challenged them through the powerful tool of literature.

Mulk Raj Anand belonged to a generation of writers committed to the democratic ideals of egalitarianism and social justice. He was inspired by the Gandhian identification with the marginalised and the Marxist principle of the struggle for class justice. His time begins with Premchand and Saadat Hassan Manto, and whose lineage can ultimately be traced back to the Bhakti and Sufi poets such as Basava, Kabir, Raidas, Chokha Mela, Gora, Bulle Shah, Baba Farid and Sheikh Abdul Lateef who rebelled against every form of hierarchy on earth, created their own epoch of secular and socialist literature with its own aesthetic of resistance. By portraying the rural India’s poverty, ignorance, privation and perpetual suffering on the one hand, its enduring heroism, purity of heart and fellow-feeling on the other, Anand can be said to have achieved in artistic terms what Charles Dickens – the social realist in England could not encompass in his works. From
the social transformation point of view he did something new combining all that is best in the East with that in the West.

Anand was to Indian people what Anton Chekhov was to Russians: a profound interpreter of their lives, an analyzer of their deepest conflicts, a verbalize of their agonies. Traditionalists criticised him for his departure from tradition; and dogmatic Marxists called him an ambivalent modernist and a liberal humanist. But he believed to the end in people's ability to change themselves and the world. Anand is fighting humanist and focus on the social problems of his society and also concerned about the scientific solution of it. He is considered as scientific humanist. He followed the Gandhian ideals of self-help and self-renewal, rejected the consumerist civilisation of the West and fought against the forces of revivalism. Anand was critical of much of what is written in English in India today; he was all for developing a literature of concern, of awareness, of intellectual opposition. He was more concerned with the passionate moment than the rigors of form. His bardic manner, however, finally achieved an effect analogous to a musical rhapsody: familiarity and elevation coalesced in his fiction giving it a `composed matter-of-fact magnificence'. He was different from both his eminent contemporaries, R.K. Narayan, with his urbanity of style, and Raja Rao, with his sacred, confessional vision. For Anand,
literature was a force that released men and women from pre-ordained fate. In his hands, metaphysics became an ethics without God as when Gandhi said: "God comes to the poor in the form of bread."

One can level the charge that other Indian English novels e.g. by Narayan, Raja Rao and Others, unlike that of Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya, neglect the fact of the individual in a particular human situation—thus do not deal with a personal and private predicament. But it is remarkable to note that such novels, dealing with the social milieu, are more concerned with presenting the entire picture of the society rather than with individual’s personal history. The characters in their novels tend to be, therefore, types rather than individuals as is true of the nineteenth century socio-political novels of England.

The Indo-English Writer, like any creative writer, writes with a social consciousness born of the phenomena enacted around him. He is essentially a realist who moves around the society and experiences the crisis and tensions of the struggling classes.

In the literature of an age, its conflict, tendencies, obsessions are uncovered and made manifest to a degree which is continually astonishing; good writers are, so to speak, mediumistic to the deeper stirrings of life of their time. While they are still unknown to, or at any
rate unsuspected by, the public, politicians and current received opinion-contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very special kind of mirror, a mirror that reflects not nervous system, coursing of its blood and the unconscious prompting and conflicts which sway it.

The second word war, the Independence and the partition of the country were great historical forces that gave further impetus to Anand. There was enough material in the society torn by communal frenzy, political maneuverings, social disparities, and corruption in bureaucracy for the thematic treatment by the novelist to stir the imagination of the countrymen to a new awakening. And this could best be done through the medium of the novel. Anand, like Shelley, well realized that so long as the imagination of people is not stirred, the seeds of reform will keep lying on the road to be trodden upon by the unwary traveler.

In recent time in India, in spite of the fascination for Magic Realism, fiction of social realism still flourishes, and will perhaps always flourish, because the novel, born of social reality, may derivate from it, but will always continue to find external reality. It is therefore hardly surprising that in the heyday of Salman Rushdie and Magic Realism, we have an equally strong school of social realism led by Vikram Seth. His novel A Suitable Boy is a novel of large dimensions in the tradition of
War and Peace and Middlemarch. As the title indicates, the central action of the novel is concerned with the search by a middle-aged society lady, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, for a suitable bridegroom for her daughter Lata. Her search ends successfully when Lata finds Haresh Khanna, a young tanning expert quite suitable. But the main strength of the novel lies not in the business of match making, but in the depiction of the social panorama of the decade after Independence. Vikram Seth’s achievement is in A Suitable Boy, one wonders whether the very nature of his central theme has not hamstrung him in his engagement with social milieu. Society is a fluid entity, and social forces can best be presented against changing times. Fiction of social realism has several ramifications. When the narrative is restricted mainly to a particular ethnic group it has a distinctive flavor of its own. Realism sharply focused on a distinctive social section, bound by ties other than those of ethnicity, creates its own world which is real.

Amitav Ghosh’s The Glass Palace (2000) annexes a new territory to Indian English Fiction. Set in Burma, along with India, it tells the story of the deposition of King Thebaw of Burma in 1885 by the British, who then interned him in Ratnagiri, in Maharashtra, where he died two decades later. There are two other strands in the long narrative. The first concerns Rajkumar, a Hindu orphan who comes to Burma at the
age of eleven, and rises to become a big businessman. He marries Dolly, one of the waiting maids of Thebaw’s queen. In the second, we meet Uma, wife of the Collector of Ratnagiri. She later becomes an active member of the Indian League in London. The book is thoroughly researched, but the Thebaw story comes to life in a way the other two do not; and the chronicle aspect of The Glass Palace seems to overshadow the fictional one.

While the novel of social realism has flourished, its opposite, i.e., the fiction of the interior landscape of the mind has also had some able practitioners. Amitav Ghosh, whose versatility is enviable, has produced in The Shadow Lines (1988) a novel entirely In an Antique Land (1992). The “Shadow Lines” are the lines that divide people and nations and they are often insubstantial like shadows; but they can create a lot of misery and even death, as in the case of Tridib, the protagonist, who is killed in a communal riot in East Pakistan. The motif of the lines that divide begins with the partitioning of the family house in Bengal and is repeated with variations as the narrative ranges over four countries including India, East Pakistan, Sri Lanka and England. Perhaps the picture of family life in Bengal, seen through the eyes of the narrator when he was a child is far more evocative than the larger concerns to which he sets an example of social realism.
In recent time, in India, Social, Political and historical fiction generate their own ambience; and so does regional fiction, which has the additional advantage of the setting being so evocatively realized that it becomes a fictional value in itself. And when the main emphasis is less on action than on the depiction of states of mind, on the apprehension of their own experience by the major characters, realism travels inward of it.

The Parsi writers in India and abroad wrote much about their society. Parin C. Bharucha’s The Fire Worshippers (1968) was perhaps the earliest example of Parsi fiction. Boman Desai’s The Memory of Elephants has already been considered as a novel of Magic Realism. Social realism has attracted more Parsi novelists. Trying to Grow (1990) by Firdaus Kanga is a semi-autobiographical novel by a very unusual protagonist: a boy born with bones as brittle as glass. He breaks his legs eleven times before he is five, is undersized and confined to a wheel chair. Several cures are tried without much success, including the blessings of a miracle man called “Wagh Baba” who is finally exposed as a sex-crazy fraud. Kanga writes with remarkable objectivity and total absence of self pity, and observes the social scene acutely, as when he records the typical Parsi way of snapping the middle finger and the
thumb to ward off the evil spirit, the importance of the number 101, and the habit of translating literally Gujarati Idioms into English.

Rohinton Mistry, who lives in Canada, has written two novels in which Parsi characters play a major role: Such a Long Journey (1991) and A Fire Balance (1995). Such a Long Journey is the life of a middle aged, middle class Parsi bank clerk living in Bombay. His humdrum life is suddenly disturbed when his best friend is involved in a bank fraud, in which he too unwillingly became partner. He is lucky enough to go scot free, but his friend dies in mysterious circumstances in prison. These events are obviously based on the notorious “Nagarwala Case” during the regime of Indira Gandhi. More appealing is the detailed picture of middle class Parsi life in Bombay. We feel the complete picture of the class narrated by the author.

A Fine Balance is a much longer work, but is perhaps far less achieved. The “Fine Balance” is that between hope and despair, and the major characters experience both, until ultimately, life is seen to go on, in spite of everything, including the suicide of one of them. The setting is the mid seventies, when a state of Emergency was proclaimed, suspending the fundamental rights. Mistry’s picture of the expresses of the Emergency is graphic, but in his understanding of the
lives and mores of the rustic he betrays an urban expatriate’s ignorance at its worst.

Parsi life in Bombay is also the theme of Ardesir Vakil in his Beach Boy (1997), the story of a middle class Parsi boy in Bombay. Cyrus Readymoney is, in many ways, a typical urban teenager, interested primarily in food, films and flirtation, but he is also blessed with a high-flying imagination, which compels him to fantasize all time. Vakil’s style has a strong visual quality, but there are so many factual inaccuracies in his depiction of the Indian scene that one suspects it is a case of an expatriate writer trying to jog half-forgotten memories of things with which he has lost touch long ago.

Like the Parsi, the Anglo-Indians are another minuscule minority in India, their best representative in Indian English literature so far was Ruskin Bond. I. Allan Sealy has also contributed. They have portrayed their novels with the shade of social realism. In the similar way, the novels on bureaucrats and business executives often touch each other at more than one point, and both by their very nature invite satirical treatment. English, August: An Indian Story (1988) by Upamanyu Chatterjee is one of the most appealing of these. Ashok Banker’s Vertigo (1993) deals with the world of Jayesh, a young marketing
executive, whose colleague, Meera, represents the “new” emancipated working woman.

In addition of these types of novels which present social realism through different types of theme is the political theme, which has very prominent place in Indian English fiction before and just after Independence, and though an older novelist like Chaman Nahal returned to it in his Gandhi Quarter ending with The Triumph of the Tricolour (1993). The world of diplomatic missions abroad had been scarcely touched upon earlier, except in Aamir Ali’s Via Geneva (1967) and Ahmed Ali’s Of Rats and Diplomats (1985). Kiran Doshi’s Birds of Passage (1998) is a worthy successor to these novels.

The above mentioned different themes in novels of social realism in Indian English literature have unique contribution. In addition of that there are other themes, where we found social realism, are the historical novels, the international issues, the Regional fictions, the Science fiction and the Mystery novels.
Part-V

In the profoundness of the term Realism, there can be diverse conclusions. Form the beginning; the reflections entertained by the realists themselves betray fundamental tensions within the concept of realism. On the one hand, they put forward views in opposition to classical and romantic ideals, seeing the content of realism as a concern with the particular and the ordinary, with the ways contemporary heroines and heroes function in and are determined by their social context, on the other hand, they are gradually forced to realize the insuperable difficulty of capturing the nature of reality through the medium of language, and equally to acknowledge the role of form in creating an ‘air of reality’ and endowing a work with aesthetic and philosophical significance.

Apart from that realism has focused on different aspects of content and form. The humanist readings, the Marxism, the feminism and the postcolonial context are tools to categorize and criticize the content of realist novels, emphasizing their relationship to and determination by previous traditions and contemporary social forces.

Realism encompasses variety of meanings. It has been taken to epitomize unusual authors. We have to realize the fluidity of the term as
a historical category and its many local variations across time and between writers. Realism can be seen both as a specific historical moment and as a far broader technique that plays a role in different ways in most of the narratives.

Aspects of all these approaches take us forward from earlier notions of realism as a direct and uncomplicated reporting of the truth of everyday life to a more differentiated understanding of the writer’s partial relationship to his or her world to the complexities, constraints and artifices involved in trying to depict it; they include the role of literary form in determining a writer’s options, and the dynamics of reader’s responses to those strategies.
References:


5. Ibid., p.8.

6. Ibid., p.9.