A Brief Account of Indo-Anglian fiction

The two terms - 'Indo-Anglian' and Indo-English - are frequently used interchangeably to designate Indian writing in English. The first term 'Indo-Anglian' stands for creative work originally written in English by Indian writers and the second, Indo-English is used only to "translations by Indians from Indian literature into English." Chalapati Rao had claimed in The Illustrated Weekly of India (May 26, 1963) that the term 'Indo-Anglian' was invented by James Cousins, and therefore, the whole credit goes to him for having designated Indian Writing in English. However, there is nothing in terms which are sometimes accepted and subsequently rejected, the most important problem is of describing accurately the complex blending of Indian and English elements within the Indo-Anglian group as a whole.

Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar who popularised the term 'Indo-Anglian' by publishing his three books on the subject - 'Indo-Anglian Literature' (1943), 'The Indian Contribution to English Literature' (1945) and 'Indian Writing in English' (1962) has done a pioneering work to bring to light almost all Indian writers who wrote in English. Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee's 'The Twice Born fiction' has also rendered a valuable service to establish the fact that Indian fiction in English is the amalgamation of two traditions - the native
and the alien, and hence in this book she favours the term Indo-Anglian to include only the writings of those who have written in English. She explains:

"I exclude all novels translated into English from the regional languages even when the translation is done by the author himself."  

It is, therefore, clear enough that the term, 'Indo-Anglian' comprises only those who are Indian and have written in English. Since our main concern is with Indo-Anglian fiction to which R.K. Narayan belongs, we are to deal with the subject only after mentioning how this branch of literature emerged in India and grew as a result of historical and political circumstances which combined to give the educated Nineteenth Century Indian a considerable proficiency in the use of the English language. Undoubtedly, as the century wore on, the creative Indian talents turned to English literary compositions. It was just a matter of chance or an accidental concurrence of unusual environment that a few of the English knowing talents came to try their hands at creative writing.

During the last fifty years the Indo-Anglian fiction has gone ahead of poetry and other forms of literature. It is on account of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the three pioneers of Indo-Anglian fiction that novel experiments have resulted into it. Side by side a critical evaluation
by well-organized groups and individuals — Writers Workshop, Calcutta, Sahitya Akademi, Centre for Commonwealth Literature, Lucknow University, Gulbarga University, Karnataka University, Dharwar, Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, and individuals like Dr. G.S. Balarama Gupta, Annamalai University, Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah Bhvanyaloka, Mysore — has brought to light several talented writers who are engaged in writing fiction. Much has been done to highlight Indo-Anglian fiction, yet more remains to be done ahead.

Indo-Anglian fiction does not have a long history to be delved deep into the past beyond a little more than a century. Barring certain over-simplification of details, the development of Indo-Anglian novel may be divided into three periods —

(1) Upto 1920 — the age of religious and political awakening;
(2) 1920 to 1947 — the Gandhian Era; and
(3) 1947 onwards — Independence and thereafter.

(1) Novelists up to 1920

Indo-Anglian Novel started like a toddling child. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote the first Indo-Anglian novel in 1864, entitled 'Raj Mohan's Wife'. But the novel is a 'Pastiche of the hackneyed literature of trial and injustice which was popular in England and America at the time.
... 'Raj Mohan's Wife' at least demonstrated that Indian language (English) fiction could be written, and become a legitimate branch of Indian literature. Chatterjee's concept of the novel's function is similar to that espoused in the preface to the first American novel, 'The Power of Sympathy' (1789), which ... was written to expose the hazardous consequences of seduction, to stress the need for female education, and to demonstrate the necessity for moral economy in the affairs of life.  

'Raj Mohan's Wife' was followed by Raj Laxmi Devi's 'The Hindu Wife' (1876), H. Dutt's 'Bijoy Chand' (1888), Kshetrapal Chakrabarti's 'Sarata and Hingana' (1895), Rajam Iyer's 'Vasudeva Sastri' (1905), A. Madhaviah's 'Thillai Govindan' (1912), S.B. Bannerga's 'Tales of Bengal' (1910), Mrs. Ghoshal's 'Unfinished Song' and 'The Fatal Garland', S.K. Mitra's 'Hindupore' (A peep behind the Indian unrest) (1909), Jogendra Singh's 'Nasrin' (1915), Balkrishna's 'The Love of Kusuma' (1910) and Cornelia Sorabji's 'Love and Life Behind the purdah' (1909), 'Sun Babies' (1909) and 'Between the Twilights' (1906).

All these fourteen novels and a collection of short stories (S.B. Bannerga's 'Tales of Bengal') are primarily concerned themselves "with religious basis, emancipation of women and social reform. Philosophy and propaganda dominate these novels. -- 'The Hindu Wife' of Raj Laxmi Devi and 'Sarata and Hingana' by K. Chakravarti are flimsy novels
written in a very antiquated style. Their plots are ordinary -
and deserve nothing more than a passing mention. 4

Sir Jagendra Singh and T. Ram Krishna wrote historical
romances. 'Nur-Jahan' (1909) by Sir Jagendra Singh is described
by the author himself as 'the romance of the Indian queen'.
Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar gives his balanced as well as
agreeable opinion:

"Sir Jagendra Singh is a good story -teller. His
novels have a considerable admixture of philosophy and propa-
ganda, but they do not smother the human element in the stories",

T. Ramkrishna is a South Indian writer whose two
romances - 'Padmini' (1903) and 'The Dive For Death' (1912) are
flimsy and based on South Indian superstitions. While in the
romantic story of 'Padmini' the author is concerned with the
historical events, leading to the great battle of Talikote and
bringing to an abrupt and disastrous close 'the history of the
Never-to-be-forgotten Vijayanagar Empire', 'The Dive For Death'
has a weird and haunted atmosphere full of mystery and gloom,
bringing out how the poet Vijis marries Devajani after his
dive for death.

S.K. Ghosh's 'One Thousand and One Night's' (1904) is
important because it seems to challenge comparison with the
great world classic, 'The Arabian Nights'. The sub-title of
the story is 'The Trials of Narayanlal' and the story "recounts
in the manner of an oriental story -teller the supernormal
deeds of Narayanlal". 5
Professor Bhupal Singh's view is quite agreeable that:

"Indian writers and story-teller of this period (upto 1920) on the whole do not compare favourably with Anglo-Indian writers. That they write in a foreign tongue is a serious handicap in itself. Then few of them possess any knowledge of the art of fiction. They do not seem to realize that prose fiction, inspite of its freedom, is subject to definite laws. In plot-construction they are weak, and in characterization weaker still. Their leaning towards didacticism and allegory is a further obstacle to their success as novelists. As writers of short stories they have occasionally achieved success".\(^7\)

It is clear that the novel - the long sustained piece of prose fiction - was conspicuously absent until the nineteen-twenties. Henceforth it gradually gathered confidence and established itself in three decades.

(II) 1920 - to 1947 - Gandhian Era.

The first World War ended in 1918 but its grim carnage had shocked and stirred the conscience of the world. It was after the first World War that Mahatama Gandhi appeared on the stage of the country and inspired Indo-Anglian fiction writers to choose their subject - matter from the native scene. So far as the Indo-Anglian novel was concerned, there was hardly a sudden break from the old tradition. There was not a total
disappearance of old topics, old techniques and remote sentimental didactic novels. But the religious impulse was replaced by political fervour and a burning desire to present the predicament of the country. Themes changed and a genius like Mulk Raj Anand engaged himself to plumb the depth of humble life of the have-nots, untouchables, coolies and of those who were exploited by the privileged class. Besides Gandhi the impact of the two world wars also brought about a sense of penetrative understanding in Indo-Anglian fiction writers who enriched their works with the acute problems confronting the country. This period, therefore, produced meritorious writers like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, D.F. Karaka, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Amir Ali, S.K. Chettur and several others whose noticeable contributions brought about the growth of Indo-Anglian novel. Professor P.P. Mehta points out about this growth.

"In point of technique they brought the Indian novel within hailing distance of the latest novels of the West. A village granny narrates the dynamic times of the Independence struggle in Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' (1938). The autobiographical form of narration so useful in analysing the character is well utilized by Raja Rao. The technique here is Conradian; the grandmother in this novel takes the place of Marlow. Mulk Raj Anand used advanced technique of story-telling in all his novels, at the same time fighting the cause of the poor and the have-nots. R.K. Narayan depicted the middle class men of South India in his Malgudi novels. Karaka, Ahmad Abbas and
others with their journalistic way of writing produced effective stories which were like a blast of crisp fresh air. Mr. S.K. Chettur in his "Bombay Murder" produced a well-turned out detective story on the lines of Agatha Christie. 8

All these novels show a clear-cut advance both in technique and the subject matter. The novelists of this period have displayed considerable knowledge of the technique of the novel and their thematic preoccupations are:

"Portrayal of poverty, hunger and disease; portrayal of widespread social evils and tensions; examination of the survivals of the past; exploration of the hybrid culture of the educated Indian middle classes; analysis of the innumerable dislocations and conflicts in a tradition-ridden society under the impact of the incipient, half-hearted industrialization." 9

The Indo-English novelist now comes to understand the emphasis to be laid on character. He learns that it is the novelist's job, not to describe life line by line but by the exercise of his fastidious selective power, to choose to describe only what is significant. All that would be impossible is avoided. He uses words to indicate and makes us understand what is happening in the minds of those whom he portrays.

The important novels and short stories of this period are: Venkataramani's "Murugan the Tiller" (1927), "Kandan the

Novels based on national struggle for freedom are:
Khweja Ahmad Abbas's 'Inquilab', 'Kanthpura' by Raja Rao, 'Waiting for the Mahatama' by Narayan, 'Untouchable' by Mulk Raj Anand 'We Never Die' by D.F. Karaka, 'Into The Sun' by Frieda M. Das.

R.K. Narayan also published his first four novels: 'Swami & Friends' (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937), 'The Dark Room' (1938) and 'The English Teacher' (1945) during this period. In his 'Waiting For the Mahatama' he presents Gandhiji, but there is hardly any emphasis on the nationalist struggle for independence, as we find in Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura', Abbas's 'Inquilab', and C.N. Tukshli's 'Netherland'.

Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' (1935), 'Coolie' (1936) 'The Leaves and a Sun' (1937), 'Lament On the Death of the Master of Arts' (1939), 'The Village' (1939), "Across the Black Waters" (1940), 'The Sword and the sickle' (1942), 'The Big Heart' gave a new turn to the Indo-Anglian novel, enriching it with new technique and interesting subject-matter - protest,
reform, proletarian progressivism, untouchability, the corruption and parasitism of imperialists, capitalists, money-lenders and black-marketeers.

All the novels and collections of short stories mentioned were inspired by

"-- the struggle for independence -- -- -- Thus, they (the novelists) show sometimes technical advance and sometimes no advance. 'Kanthpura' by Raja Rao is told in a pictorial method -- -- technically it is a superb achievement. 'Waiting for the Mahatama' 'Inquilab', 'Untouchable' etc., also show an advanced stage in the technique of novel writing. -- "We never Die" follows the impressionistic method of writing."10

(III) 1947 Onwards -- Independence and Thereafter.

This period (from 1947 to date) witnesses a great advance in technique and form of Indo-Anglian fiction. It has produced a host of fine novelists like Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Santilal Rama Rao, Attia Hosain, Manohar Mulgundkar, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Balchandra Rajan, K. Nagarajan, Venu Chitale, Anita Desai, Ved Mehta', Arun Joshi, Anandlal, Dilip Kumar Roy, G.V. Dasani, C.I. Nahal and Narendrapal Singh and others who have enriched. The Indo-Anglian fiction with variegated Indian tendencies.

The Independence fiction comprises the following titles: K.A. Abbas's 'Tomorrow Is Ours' (1943), 'Cages of Freedom and Other Stories' (1952), 'Inquilab', (1955) and
'Maria' (1971), Lambert Mascarenhas's 'Sorrows Lies My Land' (1955), Kamala Markandaya's 'Some Inner Fury' (1955), Kushwant Singh's 'The Train to Pakistan' (1956) and 'I shall not Hear the Nightingale' (1959), Nayan Tara Sehgal's 'A Time to Be Happy' (1958), Balchandra Rajan's 'The Dark Dancer' (1959), K. Nagarajan's 'Chronicles of Kedaram' (1961) and Manohar Mulgundkar's 'A Bend in the Ganges' (1964) and Venu Chitale's 'In Transit' (1950).

Almost all the Gandhian and post Independence fiction published in English between 1947 to mid seventies reflects the Indian conditions - political, social, religious and highlights how Indian sensibility had been induced by the Gandhian Movement, the Independence struggle, imperial rule, partition, the emergence of new India and India's relations with the west and her immediate neighbours. So far as the wider spectrum of the later Indo-Anglian fiction is concerned, its growth has involved a shift of emphasis from religious aestheticism to socio-political concern, and the predicament of the individual under these combating traditions.

Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' (1935), R.K. Narayan's 'Swami & Friends' (1935) and Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' (1938) present different images of India and dawn the new age of Indo-Anglian fiction, which begins anew. Anand's stories about poverty, caste and peasantry - 'Coolie' (1936), 'The Village' (1939), 'Across the Black Waters', 'The Sword and the Sickle' (1942) initiate the beginning of a sociological trend coupled
by a compassionate indignation to be subsequently followed in a stereotyped way by the younger group of novelists. For example, Abhásí Bhattacharya's "He Who Rides a Tiger" (1954) and S. Menon Marath's "The Wound of Spring" (1960) deal with the burden of untouchability, echoing Anand's "Untouchable" as the resultant range of achievement. Munshí Mulgonkar's "The Prince" (1963) also complements Anand's picture of feudal anachronism depicted in "The Private Life of An Indian Prince" (1953), Abhásí Bhattacharya's "So Many Hungers" (1947) depicts the crucial experience of a Bengal famine; Kamaśa Markandaya's "A Handful of Rice" (1966) is in consistent with Anand's account in "Coolie" (1936) of the economic hardships of urban life. V.S. Naipaul, though West Indian by birth having roots in India and migrated in Britain, gives a tauntingly poor account of India in his "An Area of Darkness" (1964) and brings out that extreme poverty is the essential part of the Indian reality. He too seems to share Anand's social trend, on the surface, but in the real sense of the term, his profound tension is effected by his own affronted humanity and a sense of compassionate outrage. The difference between Naipaul and the Indo-English novelist is that the former is miserably affected by the reactions of the extreme poverty he has witnessed during his reiterated visits to India while the latter (Anand or Abhásí Bhattacharya or Kamaśa Markandaya) has to overcome such reactions, remaining at the same time utterly sensitive to them. The difference between the expatriate and the native sensibilities is obvious from this example. In "So Many Hungers" Bhattacharya not only
indicts the human culpability involved in the famine but also exposes vicious inhumanity of Calcutta parasites, particularly of the get-to-rich middle-class people who are bent upon exploiting the famine and making black-market fortunes. "So Many Hungers" does not bring about a documentary moral justice, which results in R.K. Narayan's little social fable, "Half-a Rupee Worth" about a black-market profiteer who is buried alive by the monster of his accumulated evil greed.

In addition to this socio-political trend launched by Mulk Raj Anand to expose the existing ills in the Indian society, there are some novelists like R.K. Narayan & Santin Rama Rao who do not intend to analyse sociological problems. They seem to contradict the Western idea of the ineradicability of caste as a result of incorrigible fatalism. According to Santin Rama Rao, there is caste of some sort in almost all societies of the world, and that

"...the ultimate aim of the Hindu is not happiness in the Western sense but the absence of desire." 12

Santin Rama Rao's 'Remember the House' (1956), Anand Lal's 'The House at Adampur' (1956), Attia Hosain's 'Sunlight on a Broken Column' (1961) and Ahmad Ali's 'Twilight in Delhi' (1940) include a further group of novels that, as studies of the transition from the old to the new India, are products of cultural nostalgia and a sentimental remembrance in varying degrees. Many writers have been prompted by the institution of marriage in order to analyse clash between tradition and modernity, of such questions as male independence and female
emancipation. In R.K. Narayan's 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937), 'The Dark Room' (1938) and 'Second Opinion' (1982), Bhabani Bhattacharya's 'Music for Mohini' (1952) and Balchandra Rajan's 'Too Long in the West' (1961) these subjects have been treated comically and with their mellowness of vein. Besides, the most important theme that has remained a centre of attraction to a number of Indo-Anglian fiction writers of this century is the East-West encounter, and it has remained, above all, the special branch of Indo-Anglian novel. Social aspects of this theme have been explored in several novels, including D.P. Karaka's 'There Lay the City' (1942), Kamala Markandaya's 'Possession' (1962), R.K. Narayan's 'The Vendor of Sweets' (1967), Arun Joshi's 'The Forlorn One' (1968), 'The Strange Case of Billy Biswas' (1971) and 'The Apprentice' (1974). The search for man's identity, of course, is the central aspect of the East-West theme. The ambiguity of identity finds the most sophisticated and culturally comprehensive interpretation in Raja Rao's 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1960).

"R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao form a class by themselves."

Both portray an eternal India. Narayan peopled his novels with caricatures rather than characters; his Malgudi epitomises millions of Indian towns. His genius lies in pinpointing the comedy that is life. Raja Rao aims at 'fictionalizing' the Indian Spirit. "The Serpent and the Rope" is certainly the most impressive novel written about India. Its theme is — the effects of various cultures on a sensitive Indian and his effort towards adjustment.  

Its Main Tendencies
Indeed, the bulk of Indian fiction in English has been written basically in response to the religious and political awakening, such historical experiences as the Gandhian movement, the nationalist struggle for freedom, alien rule, partition, the emergence of the modern Indian and India’s relation with the West and her immediate neighbours.

"Within the wider spectrum of the Indian literary tradition, then, the growth of the modern novel has involved a shift of emphasis from religious aestheticism to socio-political concern." 14

The themes – their associated topics and attitudes – which have emerged so far can be epitomized as follows:

1) The stress on religious and political awakening which dominated the Indo-Anglian novel up to 1920.

2) Protest, Reform and Proletarian progressivism: the exposure and censure of social evils like poverty, untouchability, dehumanizing superstition, the economic and moral inequities of the caste system, parasitism of such exploiter-groups such as imperialists, capitalists, money-lenders, landlords, black-marketeers, bogus gurus, saints and spiritualists of high standard. Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Mulgaonkar, Kamala Markandaya, R.K. Narayan reflect all these characteristics in their novels. Anand’s novels reflect a vision of human society emerging forcefully.

3) The vision of human society, socialist utopianism, and a call for the unity of the intellectual class, sense of
revolt and liberation against the prevailing traditions of the privileged class.

(4) India as the emerging force of the modern world; her emancipation.

(A) India's struggle against the British rule, non-violent force of Gandhi, the scientific humanism of Pt. Nehru, at times random terrorism and the subsequent growth of a moral historical sense;

(B) The tragedy of partition and discordant views between Hindu and Muslem.

(C) The emergence of modern India, urban and political life after freedom, and India's relation with her territorial neighbours.

(D) The change in society and cultural transformation.

(5) The East - West encounters and a shift in values of the old old past of India.

(6) Interrogating affirmation of tradition.

(7) Renunciation as an ideal.

Social symbols and the living vitality of religious myth, the aesthetic and ascetic approaches to life, the operations of Dharma, Karma and Moksha, involvement and renunciation, illusion and reality, the Brahmanic consciousness and the theology of faith; the progress from Ashrama to Ashrama, the ideal of the guru, and the pilgrimage to the Ganges and God have come to light through the fictional works of Indo-Anglian authors.
Despite the variegated tendencies and attitudes already mentioned, it is evident that Indo-Anglian fiction has been ramified into two chief directions: the first primarily in response to recent Indian history and socio-political problems with a marked emphasis on human immediacy of the crisis confronting the Modern Indian and also a social realist or documentary form of expression, and the second comprising a body of fiction which is oriented to the Indian cultural tradition and delineates characters, not so much on the basis of political or social or economic representativeness, as in terms of psychologically complex and inter-connected influences of religious belief, social customs and traditional values. Mulk Raj Anand oriented the first direction, to a large extent, and it has been further explored by the succeeding fiction writers, such as Khushwant Singh, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Manohar Malgonkar, Shabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya and Nayan Tara Senegal. The second direction has been represented, to a great extent, by R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Sutirtha Chose, who are not only traditional in their descriptions and delineations, but unified sensibilities in the sense that they have surpassed the divorce of the past and present which in the social protest, or scene-sketching novel, sometimes results in didacticism and social cliches, or a failure to contact with the deep and perpetual sources of human experience in the universe.

Several new writers like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, C.L. Nahal, Narendra Pal Singh, have established themselves and are breaking new grounds in Indo-Anglian novel. The recent novels show a marked advance and a shift of emphasis from impersonal to personal and social to individual yet.
"The longer lasting psychological efforts of partition have not been explored. Except for Anita Desai’s novels, nowhere else in Indo-Anglian fiction do we get the feel of a metropolis like Calcutta or Bombay, where life has a rhythm or tempo so vastly different from the flow of life in the small towns or villages all over India."

These variegated tendencies — mystical, socialist and humanist — have shaped Indo-Anglian fiction. There is no doubt that this hothouse plant, as it was called at the outset, has become widely readable and has proved its worth in comparison to commonwealth fiction, engaging the attention of western critics who are showing so much interest in it:

"The diminished importance of England’s contribution to English literature — which has continued and will continue to diminish ever further during the present century — a brand new English literature will be appearing in Johannesburg or Sydney or Vancouver or Madras."

And the prophecy has proved true. Indo-Anglian fiction, though still exploratory in form, the awareness of its possibilities has made the quest itself vigorous and self-sustaining. The critical books have been written more on Indian fiction in English than on the other branches of Indian writing in English. Since Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar’s book ‘The Novel in Modern India’ (1964) eighteen books on Indo-Anglian fiction have come out, having varied discussions on different aspects of the novel. They are as follows:


(8) Neenakshi Mukherjee: The Twice Born fiction (1971)

(10) S.C. Harrex: The fire and the offering: 2 vols.: 1978

(12) Stephen Hemmeway: The novel of India: 2 vols.: 1975


Despite these books individual studies on R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Mulgunkar, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandya have come out during the last twenty years. R.K. Narayan has been the most popular and widely read and discussed author on whom more than dozen books have been brought out by Indians as well as by international literary critics of repute. It shows how Indo-Anglian fiction has become one of the most popular branches of world literature. The latest novels and short stories of R.K. Narayan - 'Second Opinion' (1982), 'A Tiger for Malgudi' (1983) and 'Sorry No Room' - witness that Indo-Anglian novel is turning to the study of small and particular problems of the individual. There is the search for a personal meaning in life. Recent fiction has become more introspective."

R.K. Narayan's contemporary writers in Fiction

R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao are regarded the 'Trimurti' of Indo-Anglian fiction. Dr. K.C. Bhatnagar points out:

"M.R. Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao (all happily alive) have by their stupendous literary output - each in his own way tried to correct the above glory that was Ind's stance of the West. The highest tributes and awards have been presented to them by a grateful nation, their works have been translated, prized or acclaimed in Russia, U.S.A., France and U.K. and other countries of the West. Much has been written on these novelists at home and abroad. All of them love India - "this side of idolatory" and wish to give an "inside view" of India to the
outside world – in contrast what the Anglo-Indians attempted
to do. Inspite of essential differences in their attitudes to
things, we feel there is a 'common endeavour' – which will go
down to posterity as a unique contribution to a crucial time of
our history – to retrieve the true image of our country to serve
as a corrective to the Anglo-Indian image.¹⁷

Dr. K.C. Bhatnagar's views are agreeable, so far as the
variegated contributions of the triad (Anand, Narayan & Raja Rao's)
to Indo-Anglian fiction are concerned. They started their writing
careers in the same decade of thirties – Narayan's first novel,
'Swami & Friends' came out in 1935, so did Anand's 'Untouchable'
(1935) and Raja Rao's maiden novel was published in 1938. Though
R.K. Narayan is still active (as the latest novel, 'A Tiger For
Malgudi' (1983) and recent short stories which have been published
in the Times of India indicate) and well-disciplined, Raja Rao
and Mulk Raj Anand have not added anything new to their lists of
publications for the last eight years.

The younger generation of the Indo-Anglian fiction writers
Shabani Bhattacharya, Kancher Mulgonkar, Kamala Markandaya, Khush-
want Singh, K.A. Abbas, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Arun Joshi,
Sant Rama Rao, Ved Nahta and C.L. Nahal – has created a beautiful
spectrum through which India can be seen from several points of
view. However, Narayan, Anand and Rao are major writers of Indo-
Anglian fiction & it is on account of their sustaining vitality
and consistency of visions (in the case of Anand and Narayan
particularly) that Indo-Anglian fiction has acquired a definite
place in the history of world fiction. Rao and Anand are the
immediate contemporaries of Narayan in the real sense of the term.

Kulk Raj Anand (1904 – )

Kulk Raj Anand was born in 1904 in the traditional family of coppersmith. His father turned to the army for a living and his mother came of sturdy peasant stock. Anand inherited from his father the 'craftman's industry, and meticulous attention to detail, the armyman's daring zeal and the feeling for adventure, which form the stuff of his fiction.

Anand brought everything new to Indo-English novel, new technique, propaganda motive, didacticism and Marx-oriented Philosophy. His education at Lahore, London and Cambridge enabled him to see the world at large and his doctorate in philosophy gave him a logical penetration to look into the lives of the underdogs and express his rage through novels and short stories of outmatching value. Anand is a versatile genius whose life and writings testify to his participation and achievement in a variety of fields - fiction, editorship, journalism, the academic profession, art, philosophy, literary criticism, oriental studies, drama, film, radio, politics, social welfare and administration.

Despite alround interest, Anand's most ambitious mode of expression has been fiction. However, he is a prolific writer like Narayan, having to his credit fourteen novels, five volumes of short stories besides uncollected pieces and numerous non-fictional works. In order of publications his novels are: 'Untouchable' (1935), 'Coolie' (1936), 'Two Leaves and a Bud' (1938), 'Lament On the Death of a Master of Arts' (1939), 'The Village' (1939) 'Across the Black Waters' (1940), 'The Sword and
the Sickle" (1942), "The Big Heart" (1945), "Seven Summers" (1951), "Private Life of An Indian Prince" (1953), "The Old Woman and the Cow" (1960), "The Road" (1961), "Death of a Hero" (1963) and "Morning Face" (1966).

Inspite of the fact that Anand brought new matter, new technique, new style and new approach, the influence of some Indian masters of fiction cannot be overlooked. Bankim Chandra Chatterji promoted in Anand the message of social reform, Munshi Prem Chand helped him in looking into the wretchedness of the poor and the helpless. Tagore and Sarat also bestowed upon him versatility of outlook and universality of vision. Referring to his intention as a novelist Anand remarked:

"I believe the Indian Universalist attitude enables a writer to comprehend the problem of the individual, at least symbolically from anywhere, because of the sanctions in the human centre."  

Professor C. Paul Vargese expresses his views that the novelist:

"-- writing with the avowed purpose of bringing about social change and reform commits an act of transgression. Perhaps one of the drawbacks of Mulk Raj Anand's novel arises from his concern with the amelioration of the lot of the have-nots. The defect is in evidence more in his later novels. (The Old Woman and the Cow" and "The Road") than in his earlier novels."
There is no doubt that Anand’s deep concern is with the social problems and the eradication of the evils which still prevail in Indian society. But this cannot be a deplorable aim for an artist. 'Untouchable' exposes the evils of caste-system and 'Cooie' reveals the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Saros Cowasjee defends Anand that

"--- propaganda is a term given currency by the bourgeois critic, and loosely used in India to caption any work where the author’s intention is plain". 20

However, Anand is a committed as well as dedicated writer whose chief aim of writing lies in the fact of teaching men to recognize fundamental principles of living so as to exercise vigilance in relation to the real enemies of freedom and socialism. He is a hard realist who chooses his heroes and heroines from the outcasts, pariahs and underdogs of the society. They are downtrodden sweepers, coolies, the unemployed coppersmiths, the debt-ridden farmers and poor simple soldiers. They live and suffer and die unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Dr. Neenakshi Nathakjee points out:

"The heroes of Kulk Raj Anand are rugged individualists who suffer because they refuse to conform. Munoo the coolie, Shukha the untouchable, Shiku the chanak, Lal Singh of the trilogy - all are persecuted by society for their non-conformity, but all of them are indomitable in spirit". 21

Like Narayan’s most of the novels of Anand have no heroines, but both these writers differ very much in their points of view and technique of the novel form. Anand uses English
language more flexibly translating punjabi words or Indian expressions into English, while Narayan seldom indulges in such exercise. Such expletives as 'ari', 'Vay', 'hey', 'Ohe', 'acha', or words indicating mark of respect like 'Huzoor', 'Sarkar', 'Maharaj', 'Sahib' etc., and swear-words and abuses as 'illegally begotten', 'rape-mother' 'rape daughter' and 'May I rape the mother of your mother' are frequently used by Anand in his novels and short stories. In comparison to Anand, R.K. Narayan seldom uses such words and expressions. Both seem to be contradictory with each other in the matter of the use of English language for their creative purpose.

"Dr. Anand, more than any other Indo-Anglian Writer advanced the technique of the novel and the short story as a form. Consistently well-written stories and novels have been coming from his pen. The subtle style, play and interplay of character - all these have put Dr. Anand as the foremost writer, who brought the Western technique and sense of form to perfection in his novels and short stories and put the Indian novel on the map of well-written fiction".

Raja Rao (1908)

Raja Rao hails from Mysore, the same city that has produced R.K. Narayan. He was born in a traditional Brahmin family in Mysore on November 5, 1908. Having matriculated in Mysore, he was sent to the University of Aligarh where Professor Dickinson encouraged him in the study of French. He went to Europe at the age of twenty and researched there in
literature, first at the University of Montpellier and then at the Sorbonne under Professor Gazarian. He published his first collection of short stories, 'Jwami' in 1930 in France.

Raja Rao is neither a full-time author like Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, nor so prolific as Anand and Narayan are. But there is no doubt about his tremendous genius and notable contribution, not in quantity but in quality, which have ranked him among the three greatest writers of Indo-English fiction. However, his novels - 'Kanthpura' (1936), 'The Cat and Shakespeare' (1949), 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1950) and 'Comrade Kirillov' (1976) - and two collections of short stories, 'Jwami' (1930) mentioned already and 'The Gov of the Barricades' (1947) - have flowed from his flow pen.

The two novels of Raja Rao - 'Kanthpura' and 'The Serpent and the Rope', though different to each other in purpose and scope have been widely discussed by the notable critics both at home and abroad. It is surprising to note the gap of twenty years in the publication between Kanthpura (1936) and 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1950). Professor K.K. Williams points out:

"These novels make up for the lack of others in their qualitative and stylistic interest. Raja Rao's idea of a novel certainly transcends the telling of a good tale, and he may be described as the most obviously 'ideological of all twentieth century Indian novelists' ideology was a fashion and something of a fad of writing in the Nineteen thirties when socialist realism flourished in Russia and political and social realism
were strong in Europe and America too and much propaganda was mixed into the literary brew".

Professor Williams' statement bears weight when the novels of both, Anand and Raja Rao, are taken into consideration. Both of them seem to have been affected by the aforesaid fad. Raja Rao enriches his message with Indian religious and spiritual wisdom while Anand protests against the prevailing ills of Indian society.

'Kanthpura' exhibits Raja Rao's intense preoccupation with Indian religiousness which he wants to permeate into the then Indian society at all levels, because it is a key to unlock the immense vitality latent in Indians. Undoubtedly, Raja Rao's ideological commitments are greater and deeper than the Gandhian national movement to drive the British out of India. In 'The Serpent and the Rope' (1960), Raja Rao intellectually as well as passionately examines the essence of Hinduism and how Hindu philosophy renders a formulative effect upon Indian consciousness. Professor C. Premaratne regards Raja Rao's 'Kanthpura' as the Ramayana and 'The Serpent and the Rope' as the Mahabharat. He explains,

"If Kanthpura has a recognizable epic quality, 'The Serpent and the Rope' is more than a miniature epic."

Raja Rao may be affiliated with Anand and Narayan in the choice of Indian themes sometimes but his art as a novelist and his enchanting prose style are different from that of his contemporaries. However, being a roughly contemporary with Anand and
Narayana he makes with them a remarkable triad. His 'Kanthpura' and Narayan's Malgudi, offer a remarkable comparative study of India in miniature, because both of the locales have drawn the picture of South Indian world to which Rao and Narayan belong.

K. Nagarajan

K. Nagarajan, having been neglected for a long time like Sudhin Ghosh, is getting recognition gradually. The articles and research papers are being published on him through journals and critical books (for example Dr. G.S. Balaram Gupta's journal 'The Journal of Indian Writing in English has two articles on K. Nagarajan's 'Chronicle of Kedaram', Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee has also referred to his works in her book, 'The Twice Born Fiction').

K. Nagarajan is not a prolific writer like Anand and Narayan. He has written only two novels and a collection of short stories - 'Chronicles of Kedaram' (1961), 'Athawar House' (1963) and 'Cold Rice and other stories' (1945).

Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee groups both R.K. Narayan and K. Nagarajan together in respect of describing the life which is known to them. Inter-cultural tension exists for them.

"R.K. Narayan and K. Nagarajan are two examples of writers who have been able to write about life as it is known to them, in their particular areas of the earth - Malgudi and Kedaram - without the need to indulge in any generalizations about what is Indian and what is Western."
In K. Nagarajan's first novel the choice of Kedaram (1961) "must have been influenced by Narayan's Malgudi as well as Hardy's Wessex country and Bennet's pottery District". However, 'Chronicles of Kedaram' is a fascinating experiment in Indo-Anglian fiction. His second novel, 'Athawar House' (1945) describes the vicissitudes of a Maratha joint family of Athawar living in South India as one of its members. The Gandhian movement of the 'twenties and the thirties' inspires Raghunath insomuch that he plunges in it. The novel depicts the national upsurge during the historic years between 1919 and 1934, comprising and highlighting the non-co-operation movement and Dandi March launched by Gandhi. Chandra Kanta Day of Bengal who is an ardent supporter of Gandhi exhorts the masses of South Indian town Gandhini to

''Adopt the creed of non-co-operation, which is the only means of our national salvation, eschew the law courts and government-aided schools and boycott foreign clothes for all your worth. Above all, remember the doctrine of Ahimsa and decline to have any truck with violence. Go, good men of Gandhini, fight by peaceful means and help Mother-India to come into her own''.

Bhabani Bhattacharya

Bhabani Bhattacharya was born in 1908. He was 'Once a student in London, later a press attaché' at the Indian Embassy in Washington, (and) an assistant editor of The Illustrated Weekly of India." He has remained a freelance writer, travelled widely
and is a "much translated novelist". The Sahitya Akademi award to him in 1967 was a fitting recognition of his standing and achievement in the field of Indian fiction in English.  

Bhabani Bhattacharya has written five novels - 'So Many Hungers' (1947), 'Music For Nohini' (1952), 'He Who Rides a Tiger' (1954), 'A Goddess Named Gold' (1960), and 'Shadow From Ladakh' (1966). Internationally honoured and widely acclaimed, Bhattacharya's novels have been translated into twenty-six languages.

In his first novel, 'So Many Hungers' (1947), published soon after the transfer of power by Britain to India and Pakistan covers the war years of sorrows, cruelties, frustra-
tions, privations and uncertainties. As the title authenti-
cally proclaims the novel unfolds the story of a horribly man-made hunger which took the toll of two million helpless hopeless and innocent men, women and children in Bengal. The novelist paints the naked horror how blackeaters, profiteers and hoarders were engaged in plying a thundering trade, authority was indifferent and apathetic, the wells of human
pity had dried up, giving imperious to jacles and vultures for jubilant and vigorous action. C. Paul Vaughn's remark
is agreeable that

"Food is the primary requisite of human dignity; hunger degrades and dehumanises man. That is why hunger is the theme of a large number of Indo-English novels. Bhattacharya has dealt quite forcefully with the theme of hunger
and the concomitant theme of human degradation in his novels "So Many Hungers" and "He Who Rides A Tiger."³⁰

His second novel, "Music For Mohini" depicts the vast distinction and poverty. India's old traditions and superstitions which menace her progress have been effectively dealt with. The third novel, "He Who Rides A Tiger" is based on ancient saying that 'He who rides a tiger cannot dismount.' His fourth novel, "A Goddess Named Gold" is a masterly satire on those who live by the lure of gold. The novel depicts how spontaneous kindness is sought to be prostituted for the sake of gold. The fifth novel, "Shadow From Ladakh" deals with India's conflict with China and her response to the thundering challenge.

Bhattacharya's inheritance of sharp eye for East-West dichotomies from E.M.Forster, Anand's concern with social, economic and political problems and Narayan's comic playfulness and exaggeration - are noticeable in his novels. Nevertheless, his main faults

"... are oversimplification, quaintness, over-use of Gandhian character and theme and lack of originality. Still, he does manage to prove as well as Anand and Narayan do that the English language novel is a fit vehicle for the Indian fiction writer. His satire is direct without being vindictive; his language is more than adequate though hardly innovative..." with more resourcefulness and experimentation and with less desire simply to satisfy the appetites of the novel - buying West, Bhattacharya may yet render his
vision of India in a more symbolic and suggestive manner."

Anand imparts deeper indictment of Indian society through his novels and short stories, Raja Rao exaggerates religious and spiritual tendencies of ancient India, Rabindranath Tagore follows the beaten track of Anand, and K. Nagara-
jan’s original approach is full of susceptibility, it is undoubtedly R.K. Narayan who, by virtue of his consistency of vision, deceptive simplicity, universal humour, psychological probing, ironic detachment, and translucent prose, has dominated the Indian world of English fiction, not from the beginning of his emergence on the Indian literary map, but from sixties onwards. Dr. Neenskhi Mukherjee is right in stating:

"Anand was at the height of his power in the thirties and early forties, when a sociological approach to literature was very much in vogue both in India as well as outside — — in almost all the Indian languages, these two decades were predominantly the period of public concern in literature. The independent movement, the uplift of the downtrodden, the reform of social evils; these public occupations were followed in the next decade, by a concern with one’s own self that was basically a private search. Trends in literature do not confine themselves to specific dates and years, but the shift of interest from the public to the private sphere may be regarded as a characteristic of the fifties and the sixties".

Dr. Mukherjee is right because after forties the realm of Indo-English fiction has been dominated by private search,
frequently constituting a quest for a satisfactory attitude towards the West, and for the realistic image of the east so much required for emotional validity. The result is that the quest for the self has given rise to personal as well as individual problems to be solved by psychological probing. Narayan's themes are based on the Protagonist's quest for identity, a typical aesthetic pattern, in keeping with certain philosophic - cultural assumptions, which are the bed-rock of his socio-religious inheritance and psycho-moral ambience.

**Life and Works of R.K. Narayan.**

**Birth and parentage** - As it is customary in the South to use the name of one's village and that of one's father before one's name R.K. Narayan's full name is Rasipuram (in the district of Salem in Tamil Nadu) Krishnaswami Tyre (his father's name), Narayanaswami (his own name). R.K. Narayan has cut-short even Narayanaswami, and uses only Narayan. Though Narayan's family belonged originally to Rasipuram, it had shifted long before his birth to Madras. It was in Madras that this great pioneer of Indo-English fiction was born in 1905. Soon after Narayan's birth his father got a job of a headmaster at Government High School Channapatna, situated fifty-nine kilometres from Bangalore on the way to Mysore. Channapatna deserves a special mention because it was here that Mr. Narayan himself got a job as a teacher in the same Government High School, where he could not stay more than five days. While other brothers and sisters of Narayan lived with their parents, he passed his childhood with his material
grandmother and his uncle, who influenced him tremendously.

**Education:** Narayan was educated at Lutheran Mission School, Madras, Government High School Chennapatna and Maharaja College, Mysore. The novelist failed both in High School and Intermediate examinations and could get his degree only when he was twenty-four. But it does not mean that he had no inclination or aptitude for learning. The reasons were not far to seek as he himself points out about his mental abstractions.

— There was no use questioning me about my "Doubts". How could I tell the teacher, after he had lectured to us a whole morning, that I existed under a whole cloud of unknowing. My trouble was absolute abstraction from my surroundings. My mind was busy elsewhere — watching through the large windows the cows grazing the field.34

Next to religion, education was given due importance as the most compulsive force in Narayan's family. But his outlook on education never fitted with the accepted code at home. Narayan tells us:

"I instinctively rejected both education and examinations with their unwarranted seriousness and esoteric suggestions. Since revolt was impractical, I went through it all without conviction, enthusiasm, or any sort of distinction. Going to school seemed to be a never-ending nuisance."35

It will surprise the enthusiastic reader of Narayan's fiction that this stalwart of Indo-Anglian fiction failed in
English in the University entrance examination when he decided to enter the University for B.A.

"I had failed where I was most confident - English".

And his father, inspite of his strict attitude in school matters, was endowed with one very pleasant quality - that he never bothered about the examination results. He was in the habit of always displaying sympathy for a fallen candidate. But even he was constrained to exclaim in surprise.

"Stupid fellow, you have failed in English. Why?".36

Narayan was opposed to the system of being prescribed a set of books by the soulless body of textbook prescribers. He tells how his natural aversion to academic education was further strengthened when he read an essay by Tagore on education, which pointed out:

"The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. But we find that this education of sympathy is not only systematically ignored in schools but it is severely repressed. — — the greatest of educations for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead". 37

Anyway Narayan attained his belated graduation in 1930 from Maharaja's College, Mysore. At first he toyed with the idea of studying for an M.A. degree in literature and thus
becoming a college lecturer. But his friend advised him not to do so as this would be a sure way to lose interest in literature. He accepted his advice and repudiated the idea once for all, turning his back on college studies.

Practical Life: Passion For Writing.

After having obtained his belated graduation (with History, Economics and Political Science and Literature), life became full of problems to Narayan. It was inconceivable for him to stay at home without some office to attend after graduation. His father was insistent that Narayan should meet his friends and seek their help for an appointment in the railways or in the bank. Narayan tried to meet these friends but in vain. They proved fair-weather friends and instead of becoming of any help they proved nuisance, to young men of Narayan’s calibre. In the meantime his father, who was the only supporting-hand for a family of a dozen members, retired from service. It had meant all sorts of re-adjustments at home. Having nothing to do in Mysore and dreaming himself to be a writer, Narayan moved off to Bangalore and stayed with his grandmother, back again under her care after many years' interval. It was here that he translated his dream of becoming a writer into a reality, and wrote the first line of his maiden novel, 'Swami & Friends' to be published in 1935. How it all happened is interestingly described by Narayan in his memoir:

"On a certain day in September, selected by my grandmother for its auspiciousness, I bought an exercise book and
wrote the first line of a novel, as I sat in a room nibbling my pen and wondering what to write, Malgudi with its railway station even into view, all ready-made, with a character called Swaminathan running down the platform, peering into the faces of passengers, and grimacing at a bearded face.  

This was a satisfactory beginning for Narayan, and he regularly wrote a few pages each day. He had already written a play called "Prince Yuzid" 'the story of an independent-minded Najaf Prince who was tortured and tormented by his father'. But it was returned to him after several decades from the office of his literary agent, David Higham, who had discovered it among the destroyable papers. It shows that Narayan's ambition, as early as his school days, had always been to become a writer. His father did not like this idea that an Indian could become a successful writer in English. Therefore, he advised him to become a teacher and continue to write simultaneously.

Meanwhile, Narayan received a government order appointing him as a teacher at a Government High School in the same Chennapatna where he had studied as a schoolboy and made "grasshopper collections". But he failed to adjust here. He had no patience and tact to tackle problems with the headmaster and the students as well. He decided to return to Mysore and concentrate fully on completing his first novel, 'Swami & Friends'.

**Love-Marriage and short-lived Happiness:**

The most important event took place in 1933 when Narayan
met his future wife Rajan in Coimbatore. Then our novelist
was a romantic youth falling in 'love with all and sundry —
all one-sided of course'. But this time his would-be wife
impressed him so much that he immediately fell in love with
her. She was about eighteen, tall and slim and had classical
features; her face had the finish and perfection of sculpture.
Despite the rigid tradition that any talk for a marriage
proposal should proceed between the elders of families, Narayan
got acquainted with his father-in-law and made a bold and
blunt announcement of his affection for his daughter. After
a lot of fuss over the matching of horoscopes, fluctuations
and hurdles, Narayan was married in 1934. He has referred
to this personal experience in a number of novels (The Bachelor
of Arts', 'The English Teacher', 'The Financial Expert'
authentically have references of horoscopic battle).

The marriage was a happy one, but short-lived. A
number of women - characters in Narayan's novels bear close
resemblance to his wife's character and personality, and
Jushila the heroine of 'The English Teacher' is Mrs. Rajan's
replica. Narayan's daughter, Meena appears as Lila in the
same novel. It was during this period of short-lived happiness
that Narayan fast rose in importance as a novelist and
published his three novels in quick succession - 'Swami &
Friends' (1935), 'The Bachelor of Arts'(1937) and 'The Dark
Room' (1938). They brought him wide popularity, money and
professional happiness. Graham Greene became his champion
from the outset and wrote prefaces to his novels, as there
were no opportunities for publications.
The Irreparable Loss : Suffering : Deliverance.

This happiness ended in the great loss. His beloved wife died of typhoid in 1938, the same black year which brought forth the second world war. Rama Narayan, the only sign of their married life and the apple of their eyes, was hardly two years then. The novelist has depicted the similar experience in his fourth novel, 'The English Teacher' (1945). Narayan himself points out:

"The loss of my wife was sudden and not remotely anticipated by me — although my father-in-law had his doubts while looking into my horoscope earlier. But now I had to accept her death as a fact. — Perhaps death may not be the end of everything as it seems— personality may have other structures and other plains of existence, and the decay of physical body through disease or senility may mean nothing more than a change of vehicle. This outlook may be unscientific, but it helped me survive the death of my wife — — — I could somehow manage to live after her death and eventually, also attain a philosophical understanding."

But this sudden death of his wife proved a shattering as well as a rewarding experience for the novelist who not only passed through the valley of the shadow of death but also plunged himself into the ecstasy of life after death. Whether anyone believes or not, the metaphysical experience which Narayan has depicted in 'The English Teacher' was his own experience, as he points out in his memoir:
"Psychic experience seemed to have become a part of my normal life and thought. In a few months I became an adept -- I could catch telepathic messages or transmit my thoughts to others, and I could generally sense what was coming ahead or anticipate what someone would say -- following the directions given, I practised psychic contacts regularly for some years, almost every night. I found it possible to abstract from my physical body (a process taught by Paul Brunton) and experience a strange sense of deliverance. And then gradually the interest diminished when I began to feel satisfied that I had attained an understanding of life and death." 41

This inner illumination in Narayan brought a new change in his career and helped him to produce more artistic fiction which brought him on the forefront of Indio-Anglian fiction. He wrote his fourth novel, 'The English Teacher' published in 1944 by Eyre and Spottiswood, where Graham Greene was now director. Though there was the rage of the Second World War, and the paper shortage had disrupted the publishing world, Graham Green had managed to find the quota of paper for an edition of 3000 copies. The book has been in print ever since. Narayan's third novel, 'The Dark Room' was published in 1938 and 'The English Teacher' in 1944, but during the gap of six years he edited a journal 'The Indian Thought' and published three volumes of short stories - 'Malgudi Days' (1941), 'Dodu and Other Stories' (1943) and 'Cyclone and other stories' (1944).
Since the publication of 'The English Teacher' in 1964, Narayan became a regular contributor to Indo-Anglian fiction. He had a more mature vision now than before. Since then novels have flowed from his pen in quick succession, in order of one book every two years: 'An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories' was published in 1947; 'Mr. Senapati' in 1949; 'The Financial Expert' in 1952; 'Waiting for the Mahatma' in 1955; 'Lawley Road' in 1956; 'The Guide' in 1958; 'Next Sunday' in 1960; 'My Beloved Diary' in 1962; 'The Man-Sitar of Kipling' in 1962; 'Gods, Demons and Others' in 1965; 'The Venison of Sweets' in 1967; 'A House and Two Gestes' in 1970; 'The Ramayana' (1972); 'My Days' 1976; 'The painter of Signs' in 1977; 'The Reluctant Guru' 1979; 'The Mahabharat' in 1980; 'Second Opinion' in 1982 (serialized in 'The Illustrated Weekly of India - January - February 1982'); and 'A Tiger For Kipling' in 1983. Mr. Narayan has written twenty-six books so far. Thirteen of them are novels, nine collections of short stories, a version of the Ramayana based not on Valmiki, but Kambar (the Tamil poet), 'The Mahabharat', and 'Gods, Demons and Others' are based on Indian classical literature, 'Next Sunday' is a collection of sketches and essays, and 'The Reluctant Guru' is a record of Narayan's visit to America as a visiting professor. The whole writing career of Mr. Narayan stretches over a period of fifty years. That a wonderful vitality and stamina have been displayed by this stalwart of Indian background. Purity, patience, perseverance and love are the four essentials to success, as told by Swami Vivekanand, and R.K.Narayan seems to have integrated them in his personality by all means.
Mention of Narayan's important novels and short stories.

In order of publication Narayan has written thirteen novels and six collections of short stories among which the following are important because they signify different aspects of life on which the novelist confined his focus of attention:

They are:

'Swami & Friends' (1935) is the maiden attempt of Narayan based on a series of episodes, escapades and adventures of Swami and his companions. This novel is primarily important because Narayan introduces in it the ramshackle sort of town called Malgudi, which develops as a region in the subsequent novels and short stories inseparable that it has now become a reality charged with all that is intimate & poignant in human life.

The protagonist, Swami, and his companions, Albert Mission, school, board High School, M.I.C. (Malgudi Cricket club), the river Sarayu, Groves and Streets - all are introduced one by one to frame the picture of Malgudi that world in the mind of the reader. The novelist looks at the world from his protagonist's viewpoint. The action begins and Narayan's ironic humour is diffused in the boastful lecture of the fanatical scripture teacher. The novel is a bitter - sweet tale of Swami who is transmigrated into the protagonists of subsequent novels - Chandra, Krishnan, Girinivas, Nargayya, Natraj, Ananq, Samju, and Tiger - Harriet appear to be the development of this lovable boy. And he is the replica of the novelist.
After 'Swami and Friends' Narayan wrote 'The Bachelor of Arts' (1937), 'The Bard Room' (1938) and 'The English Teacher' which form the first group of his novels. It is really 'The English Teacher' which is not only a mature work but an exquisite record of Narayan's own tragic experience he had undergone after the sudden and cruel demise of his wife.

In 'The Bachelor of Arts' we find the reflection of romantic youth of uncertain nature tossed with the idea that life should be freed from 'disturbing illusions and hysterics'. He goes to and seeks refuge in parental love and surrenders to the old values of life. Chandran, the protagonist of the novel appears to be another Swami with a much potential for the unknown. 'The Bard Room' (1939) is a lament on the futility of domestic life. Savitri is the heroine of the novel. She is tormented by her husband Ramani who is not as poetic and idealistic as Krishna in 'The English Teacher'. Nor Savitri is as divine and mysterious as the heroine of 'The English Teacher', Pushkala is. Instead of utilizing and exploiting her feminine art for the sake of domestic happiness she is in the habit of sulking in her dark room too often, especially when her husband Ramani is cross with her. She is further tormented by her husband who secures an open love affair with his probationer colleague, Shanta Bai, a divorcee from Bangalore. Tension springs from the untoward event.

Savitri abandons home and husband, tries to commit suicide, is saved by a burglar from Sukkur village, and taken to a village where with the help of Hari and Pooni she is able to be employed in a temple as a sweeper.
Her conscience forces her to return to her husband and children Willy Milly. A part of her personality is dead because she is not yet certain whether her husband has got rid of Shantabai or not. She feels happy to resume her domestic duties on a conviction that life is in its major part a tale of tears and it is far better to accept it as it is.

Professor A.N. Kaul considers this novel "weak and insignificant novel — that brings out Narayan's failures, for Narayan has written anti-domestic novel and written it badly". Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah expresses the similar views:

"One may without loss ship the intervening "Dark Room", which for all its pathos develops melodramatically and has a didactic ending. It is probably the only novel in which Narayan has introduced sex overtly, something that would embarrass his admirers, more so, in view of the illicit relationship that occupies a considerable part of the novel".

The novelist is a free person to develop his story according to the requirement of the subject. Narayan tried to make a bold experiment with the serious-comic novel, and when he found the reluctance of his readers and reviewers in regard to the total dependence of a housewife on her husband, he did not repeat the same in his subsequent novels. It shows how adaptable Narayan is according to the demands of his admirers.
The second group of novels - 'Mr. Sampath' (1949), 'The Financial Expert' (1952), 'Waiting For the Mahatama' (1955) and 'The Guide' (1958) - shows a marked advance in the creative genius of Narayan. He is no longer a novelist of the school-boys, graduates and teachers but a mature and elegant delineator of the money-hunting men of the hypothetical world of Malgudi. These novels bring out Narayan's development as an artist and we enter into a period of the 'Novels of experience'.

'Mr. Sampath' and 'The Financial Expert' bring out a very similar construction. The central theme of both novels is the interminable sequence of events related to attachment and the wheel of existence. Such a sequence is highlighted in 'The Bhagavad Gita' - thinking about sense objects is bound to attach man to sense objects. If he is attached, he shall be addicted; if addition is thwarted, it is bound to give rise to anger; if he becomes angry, he will certainly confuse his mind. And confused mind will make him forget the lesson of experience. This forgetfulness will result in the unaccountable loss of discrimination. If discrimination is lost, life's only purpose is missed altogether.

Both Sampath and Margayya are obsessed with the ideas of woman and money. The former breaks away from the normal code of family and the latter considers money as the only source of power to deal with the affairs of the world. Sampath shirks from his duty of a printer and gets lost in the vortex of film-producing so as to bewilder Srinivas and close the journal.
'The Banner', Margayya becomes extraordinary and abandons his job of a moneylender to peasants and embarks on a tempting mission of a publisher of 'The Science of Material Happiness'. He comes under the influence of Dr. Pal who is the real author of 'The Science of Marital Happiness'. Both Sampath and Margayya are sadder at last and are forced by circumstances to return to normalcy and accept life as it is.

'The Guide' won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 and was converted into a successful film. Narayan introduces a triangle of love and lust in this novel - Raju - Rosie - and Marco, and depicts a three-dimensional character in Raju for the first time. Raju, the central character of this novel also leaves his duty as a shopkeeper of books, becomes a guide, impresario of dance, a saint, and dies as a martyr. His involvement with Rosie results into a jail-journey for two years, similarly his setting-up as a sort of ascetic brings about his death as a martyr.

"Technically, 'The Guide' is an advance on the earlier novels; the present and the past are cunningly jumbled to produce an impression of suspense and anticipation".

Dr. S.C.Harrex considers 'The Guide' as a guide to Narayan's art as a novelist. This novel shot Narayan into great prominence to the extent that he became a by-word to the world of novel readers and the general public.

The last group of his novels comprises 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' (1962), 'The Vendor of Sweets' (1965), 'The Painter

In 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' Narayan depicts a tough character, Vasu, H, M.A. who is a taxidermist and a constant source of trouble to the old and peaceful world of Malgudi. Natraj is as unlike Vasu as the hind is unlike the panther. Malgudi continues to be the scene of whole action of the protagonists who fret and toil in the turmoil of life and at last get rid of the evil - incarnate Vasu. There is a galaxy of minor characters in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi'; Sen, the Nehru-baiting journalist, 'the adjournment lawyer' who is ever involved in extorting money from his clients for every adjournment. The Sanskrit scholar Sastri who is endowed with ready-made quotation for every occasion is a rare product of Narayan's creative genius, resembling Enobarbus of 'Antony & Cleopatra', in the matter of sharpening wit. The poet who celebrates the marriage of Radha and Krishna in his memorable book, 'Radha Kalyan', Rangi the seductive temple dancer who tempts Vasu and becomes his paramour, Muthu, the tea-stall-keeper who remarks to Natraj "If people are not slaves (to their wives) before sixty, they become slaves after sixty", the forest ranger of the Mempi forest introduced to Natraj by Vasu and who has a book ready for publication, "Book of Golden Thoughts", and the bus-conductor - at first insulting Natraj for being ticketless and then relenting at hearing that he may have a Morris to sell - all are loveable and realistic people of different varieties. The breakdown of joint-family system is
also described to have affected human relations of the middle class people of South India.

Professor P.S. Sundaram regards this novel as Narayan's 'greatest work'. Undoubtedly "This novel is a perfect piece of workmanship but has a few minor defects which strike at once. For example, the situations are slightly exaggerated for the sake of humour. The waste paper sale takes half-a-day. Even in the leisurely Indian life half-a-day is an exaggeration. Similarly, Vasu's behaviour, and the manner in which it is tolerated by others are not convincing." 46

Similarly, the death of Vasu is also far from convincing. Despite a few minor unconvincing details the 'Man-Eater of Malgudi' can be called a 'Well-turned out Novel'.

'The Painter of Signs' again introduces the enchanting town, Malgudi, now, now city. Raman is depicted as a painter of signs who develops his relation with Daisy, the arch-priestess of family planning. Raman is modest and accommodating with everyone. Raman and Daisy remind us of another romantic pair of Sriman and Bharati appearing in 'Waiting for the Mahatama', though in different circumstances. The unhappy ending is reminiscent of Narayan's other novels — 'The Dark Rook', 'The Financial Expert', 'The Vendor of Sweets' and 'The Guide'. His love for tragic endings in novels was nurtured by his reading of western classics as he points out in his memoir, 'My Days':

"I loved tragic ending in novels. I looked for books that would leave me crushed at the end." 46
"Second Opinion" was serialized in The Illustrated Weekly of India (Jan. Feb., 1982). The theme of renunciation is the largest issue of the story of Sambu and his mother who are poles apart in every matter, and particularly choosing a bride. Sambu is a self-centred individual like other heroes of Narayan's previous novels. He is afraid of losing his own identity if he surrenders to the will of his mother. Thus he refuses to marry a girl of his mother's choice and wants to remain unmarried instead of becoming a henpecked husband doing all the feminine chores. At last, he obeys his mother at least in going to receive the bride's father on the station of Malgudi and showing a sign of respect to the old. Individual and society and philosophies of detachment and renunciation remain to be the main points of interest in this novel.

The latest novel of Narayan 'A Tiger for Malgudi' (1983) brings out the novelist at the altitude of his genius as a creative artist. The novel is based on the fable of 'The Tiger and the Hermit' about which Narayan came to read in the newspaper. Having already the background of the story in his mind Narayan brought out this compelling fable of Raja, the ferocious tiger which develops like a human being and becomes an awakened soul. He greets the reader on the very first page and subsequently tells him the whole story of his development to a living soul within his forbidden exterior. He tells:

"- - - I possess a soul - - can think, analyse, judge, remember and do everything you do, perhaps with great subtlety and sense. I lack only the faculty of speech." (P.12).
There is tiger - Hermit who not only saves Raja from the outrageous crowd of Malgudi, bent upon to kill him, but also transforms his inner being. It appears that R.K. Narayan who has depicted objective as well as dramatic characters in his fiction emphathises himself with Raja:

"-- I have no reckoning of time -- I could only measure it by my own condition -- most of my old associates missing, perhaps dead -- most of my teeth had fallen -- so good-buy for the present". (P.176)

The novelist aged seventy-eight years seems to reflect himself thus.

Still an active contributor, Narayan is in the workshop. We may still hope to read his fourteenth novel, subsequently flowing from his quick pen.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

The term 'Indo-Anglian' is conventionally preferred by Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar who discovered it, and subsequently followed by Mrs. Meenakshi Mukherjee in (The Twice Born Fiction), and Professor P.P. Mehta (Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment).


(7) Ibid ... P.310


(18) In a letter to S.C. Harrex, who has referred to it in his book 'The Fire And The Offering' ; Vol. I, P. 70.


(27) K. Nagarajan : Athawar House : (Higginbothams, Madras, 1945), PP. 75-76.


(33) The Interview of the Fortnight; India Today;
15 February, 1982; P. 41.

(34) R.K. Narayan; *My Days*; Indian Thought Publications,
Mysore; P. 53.

(35) Ibid P. 54

(36) Ibid P. 55

(37) Rabindra Nath Tagore; *Personality: Lectures*
Delivered in America; The Macmillan & Co.; 1977;
P. 116.


(39) Ibid P. 104.

(40) Ibid P. 135

(41) Graham Greene; *Introduction to 'The Bachelor of*

(42) R.K. Narayan; *My Days*; PP. 134-35.

(43) A Poddar (Ed.); *Indian Literature*; Indian Institute
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