CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Realism in Conventional Sense

Realism was the means by which the novel consolidated its position as a serious literary genre, selecting certain features from previous manifestations of fictional prose narrative which variously announced that they were ‘history of …’, letters of ‘…’, gothic novel, romance or fielding’s description of Joseph Andrew (1742) as an epic poem in prose. Realism in literature cannot be surely too far removed from the way people talk about something real during the normal course of life. Realism is often presumed to be easy because the people live in the real world and know what is real when it is seen. People do not expect to be told what is real and what is unreal because they already know it — and nobody can tell them any different. Some kind of help may be sought after to understand other ‘isms’, when the study on literature or art is done. Romanticism, Surrealism, Modernism, Postmodernism, for instance; may require some kind of elucidation but surely not Realism which itself sounds as if it is based on the very existence of human being. In conventional sense, in literature, Realism presents stories, characters and background that are similar to those commonly found in the contemporary everyday world. This requires incidents to take place in the
present or recent past, and the events are normally organized in a linear, chronological sequence, and located in places familiar to author and reader either through direct observation or report.

The characters and storylines are plausible, and in this they are therefore common place rather than out of the ordinary. The desire to paint contemporary day-to-day life entails and requires a breadth of social detail, and as a consequence, the classes portrayed tend to be those categorized as working class and common men from middle class, since these constitute the majority of population. The medium of representation of reality is prose fiction or novel and the prose itself should be functional rather than poetic, accessible rather than elevated or ornate. It may be the language of newspapers and parliamentary reports, for instance, and aims to accurately represent the real life it draws upon. In the same manner; rendering of dialogue should be authentic and convincing. The subject matter should be whatever which is found in everyday life, good and bad. The theme or the central idea is characteristically omniscient. It may be any of the social issues of the day; for example: employment, relations or the feminism thereby offering some moral viewpoint. The Realist sensibility pressures the moral viewpoint to be subordinate to neutrality and impersonality as the piece of composition strives for accuracy in its representation. As part of the effort to be accurate the descriptions are made in detail. Characters, incidents, milieu, diction should all be true in
The sense of being verifiable, where that means being true to the experience of the readership, or to what it knows or believes to be true. The world of Realism is one in which cause and effect answers everything, in that one incident takes place as a direct result of an event or events that have preceded it.

“The Realist novel’s overriding principle is a faithful copy of reality. This find expression in metaphor such as those of ‘the mirror’, and in the difference to the methods of science, particularly those of observation.”

In conventional sense, a Realistic piece of fiction is often opposed to romantic fiction. The less realistic romance is said to express an ideal life, which is more picturesque, adventurous, fantastic and heroic than actuality; whereas Realism, on the other hand, is said to unfold life as it really is. The distinction in terms of subject matter, though relevant, is inadequate. Some biographies of the real people like Winston Churchill, Casanova and T.E. Lawrence show that truth can be stranger and outlandish than aesthetic Realism.

“It is more useful to identify realism in terms of the effect on the reader: realistic fiction is written so as to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader, evoking the sense that its character might in fact exist, and that such things might well happen.”
In order to obtain the effect of the Realism, the realist novelists may or may not be selective in subject matter. Although a majority of them love to deal with the ordinary, common place and everyday over rarer aspects of life but they must deliver their material in ways that make them quite apparent to their readers the very stuff of ordinary experience. In great novels from England the same may be found every now and then. For instance, the father of English novel, Daniel Defoe in the first half of early eighteenth century dealt with the extraordinary adventures of a shipwrecked sailor named Robinson Crusoe and with the extraordinary misadventures of a woman named Moll Flanders, but the novelist made his fictions seem to readers a mirror held up to reality by his reportorial manner of delivering all the incidents, whether ordinary or extraordinary, in the very same circumstantial, matter-of-fact and seemingly unselective way. The fictions of Franz Kafka, Milan Kundera and the recently popular novels of magic realism acquire their effect in large part by exploiting a realistic manner in describing incidents that are fantastic in themselves, absurd or impossible, sometimes by representing complex characters with mixed motives who are rooted in a social class, operate in a highly developed or underdeveloped social structure, interact with many other characters and undergo plausible and everyday modes of experience. From Henry Fielding and Daniel Defoe of Eighteenth century this novelistic mode achieved a high development in the master novelists
of the nineteenth century; including Jane Austen, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, and William Dean Howells in England and America. Stendhal, Balzac and Flaubert in France and Turgenev and Tolstoy in Russia.

‘Vanity Fair’ by William Makepeace Thackeray is a realistic novel. Theoretically, the aim of this novel was to represent all that is there in the affairs of the world, but in reality it is circumscribed by literary and social decorum. At the time of describing Becky’s very lone life the omniscient narrator affects not to know the details of it, in contrast to the immense detailing elsewhere in the novel.

“She was in fact, no better than a vagabond upon this earth. When she got her money she gambled; when she had gambled it, she was put to shifts to live; who knows how or by what means she succeeded?”

This decorous constrain changes after the 1870s, but until then, while it is hardly ‘the drawing room’ which is the sole focus of the English Realist Novels, it is still the case that subject matter is constrained to whatever is acceptable there. So, in conventional sense, while everyday life among the middle and working classes provides the bulk of subject matter for the Realism in novels, certain aspects of it remain taboo, particularly material of a sexual nature. Anything that relates to improper sexual behavior is simply glossed over as some passages from ‘Vanity Fair’ indicates. Even though the suggestion in ‘Vanity Fair’ is that Becky Sharp openly exploits her sexuality for financial gain to fund her
gambling habit, it is nonetheless decorous but its preference for allusion over detail. Traditionally, in the making years of English fiction and after quite a long time, the Realism may proclaim that it can represent everything that passes before it in an open, objective manner, even something like prostitution or other unacceptable sexual behavior but, in practice, it cannot really escape the same cultural and social blinkers that it sets itself up to address. Therefore,

“An objection to Realism, or perhaps an identifiable fault in realism, is that what purports to be an accurate representation of the real world, a ‘faithful copy’, is nothing other than the reproduction of cultural norms.”

The Growth of Realism: From Realism to Modernism

A group of writers after 1870s regarded themselves as living in a new age, which needed a new kind of art – one attuned to the more dominating science after the impact of origin of species, materialism and social urgencies of the nineteenth century rather than the eternal verities and idealism that underpinned Romanticism. The succeeding generation or artists, from 1880s onwards until 1930s – a group subsequently referred to as Modernists – also felt that the Realism of the bygone days needs to be regenerated as it had outlived its usefulness. Some writers who straddled both periods gradually moved away from Realism to Modernism: Henry James, for example, whose writing overlapped with
that of George Eliot at the beginning of his career became increasingly Modernist. His works are attentive to their own construction through language in such a way as to draw attention to this aspect of the writing. Set this alongside a greater attention to the organic form of the novel, narrative points of view restricted to the consciousness of the characters and an interest in the working of consciousness itself, moving away from the purpose of representing a consensual view of a plausibly constructed, contemporary social world. George Gissing expresses this shift in the following lines:

“Is it artistically strong? Is it good as a picture”? There was a time when I might have written in this way with a declared social object. That is all gone by. I have no longer a spark of social enthusiasm. Art is all I now care for, and as art I wish my work to be judged.”

The much talked about greater focus on the tools of the novelistic trade – language, narrative, role of the narrator, the characterization-started to shift novels and other art forms away from accessible, representational social art into one interest in art itself, and modes such as expressionism took elements of Realism to non-realist conclusions and realization.

**Realism Before, During and After Postmodernism**

Oscar Wilde made a frank comment on the condition of Realism when he said “As a method, realism is a complete failure.”
Realism gains hold as prominent aesthetic move in the mid of the nineteenth century, partly as a reaction against Romanticism, as a reaction to the understood issues of the age and the need for socially-responsive and responsible medium, partly as the continuance of the development of the novel form, and partly as a response to scientific developments and thought. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century a new aesthetic, predominantly European in its earlier incarnations, reacts against Realism and produces what is now collectively termed as ‘Modernism’. In general it is thought that Modernism is exhausted by the 1930s, and that decade sees the height of the Modernism in works like Finnegan Wake(1939) as a logical dead-end where the attention to language, for instance, predominates over other concerns, and leads to often impenetrable, inaccessible literature. In England, an interesting reaction against Modernism has been seen which came into being at the end of the 1920s and continues beyond the Second World War. It is characterized by the perception that Modernism has a part been a failed experiment in that its difficulty means it has lost the readership, but also the perception that there are certain achievements from the techniques of Modernism that can enhance the novel in its Realist form. The more broadly recognizable ‘realist novel’ takes shape as it assimilates modernist techniques to realist ends. Novels such as those by George Orwell, Elizabeth Bowen and Rosamond Lehmann are
predominantly realist, but are not afraid to use free indirect discourse extensively and to use disjunctive time shifts, yet still remain and maintain a commitment to an accessible, transparent language and a return to a belief in a common phenomenal world. In a wake of Freud and psychoanalysis, and in the midst of heated debate about the nature of Capitalism and the merits of Marxism, writers in the 1930s are equally engaged by the workings of the mind and the workings of society; and an attenuated realist form offers a means of handling both of these concerns. Such broader social and cultural influences might be quite indirect, but they are arguably quite prevalent in literature of the time. George Orwell’s ‘Keep the Aspidistra Flying’, is a good example of the return to Realism by way of Modernism. The Composition of Orwell describes the life of Gordon Comstock; a man who is a poet by temperament but forced to earn his living out of writing verse for promotion of products, for advertising to be more precise. It shows a return towards Realism after the extremes of Modernism by dealing with outer and elaborated descriptions of setting of London, firm temporal identification of the year 1936, a male lead with full personal history, psychological consistency and attitudinal plausibility and a typical phenomenal world. It renders detail at the level of minutiae, and shifts between external description and a free indirect discourse which shades into stream of consciousness:
“His heart sickened to think that he had only five pence half penny in the world, three pence of which couldn’t even be spent. Because how can you buy anything with a three penny-bit. It isn’t a coin; it’s the answer to a riddle. You look such a fool when you take it out of your, unless it’s in among a whole handful of other coins. ‘How much?’ you say. “Three Pence’, the shop-girl says. And then you feel all round your pocket and fish out those absurd little things, all by itself, sticking on the end of your finger like a tiddley-wink.”

Towards the end of 1950s and at the beginning of 1960s the world of literature started to experience the dominance of a new literary trend called ‘Postmodernism’. The term itself is suggestive of its relationship to Modernism as one which, up to some extent, continues the project while going beyond it. However, if Modernism and Realism had some common points to share, the relationship between Realism and Post Modernism is completely antithetical and antagonistic. Modernist works are often self-consciously difficult to understand because they assume that ‘reality itself is not self-evident.’ The Realists showed confidence in the observable world, even if they made description to the ideas such as ‘human spirit’ and sympathy, forces which are not necessarily visible. The observable world for the Realist was informed by invisible forces. The Modernist on the other hand sensed that there was a ‘behind’ or ‘beneath’ to the world which was more important that what was visible, so this created some
difficulties and they believed that the tools to present what was not observable might be faulty or not up to the job, hence the disposal of elements such as linear chronology, plot, stable identities, reasoned and proportionate narrative perspective. Nevertheless, Modernists sustained a belief that the world was knowable and describable in some fashion, and that this, after all, could be communicated.

What is real? What is reality? This realist assumption has been radically questioned since long. Does language has the power to describe a world that pre-exists the language or does language in some way or other create the world, or worlds? This foregrounding of language in the twentieth century is called ‘the linguistic turn’ and has dominated a considerable amount of thought about the relationship of the human being with the world and with each other. And specially in literature, if the world is made out of the language people use, it might follow the way that people engage with the world is not just linguistic but textual. Simultaneous with this shift to the linguistic and the textual is the question of how the world is disclosed to us by ourselves. Later on, critical thought accompanied by artistic productions that concurred with these premises, began to see the world as constructed not just out of language but out of narratives and discourses. The narrative and discourses that unfold the world to us do not simply describe the world but constitute the world that people understand and these narrative and
discourses are deemed to be politically biased or all of such things as race, gender, class, nationality, religion and sexual orientation: there is no narrative or discourse which is independent of some vested interest, and this includes such discipline as science and philosophy. These two disciplines are often regarded as not compromised by subjective consideration. The consequence of this is that there is no objective ground and no objective perspective from which the world can be talked about. The argument is that one cannot ultimately defend his views of the world as right and somebody else’s views as wrong or that one culture is right and another wrong, because from what ground would one be starting defending his views? The apparent reaction may be that science can offer concrete facts about the world, but a certain strand of philosophy of science in the twentieth century has cast doubts on the certitudes that science might even offer this as a solid starting point. For a long time, Newton was right about the nature of Universe, and then Einstein showed that this view of time and space was not the case. Is Einstein wrong? Could there be another view of the Universe to supersede Einstein? And if this is how science operates, to what extent can it describe the real world. Who or what can tell us what the Universe is like? Just as there are doubts over how one can access the world through language, discourse, representation and narrative-all elements that construct the world rather than neutrally and objectively mapping the world-what a human is, and
what a human’s identity might be, have been continually put into doubt, so much so that the competing version of ‘self’, ‘subject’ and ‘person’ for instance means that there can be a little consensus on ‘character’, a feature that is central to Realist representations. Part of Post Modernism has been a concerted anti-humanism, one that does not treat a human as an autonomous being able to have a say in his or her life, and does not see the possibility of progress through the advance of science and technology, or see the Enlightenment reason as the way forward. Instead, there has been a strong post-war sentiment which sees the self as constructed by forces outside the individual self or beyond the control of the self. One can take his choice for what might be the most significant external force; from: economic system (Marxist thought), the unconscious (Freudian and Post–Freudian thought, Psychoanalysis), cultural discourse and representation. The argument here is that people do not make their own lives but they are born into language, culture, gender, race, class, discourses and representations which construct the self and identity. Although many of these ideas can be discerned in modernist literature, there predominance over other elements makes for a fairly coherent and identifiable postmodern aesthetic.

The point of views and literature described as ‘Post Modern’ arguably held sway in arts, science, humanities and other areas from the 1960s to the 1990s. As a well perceived aesthetic movement, rather like Realism
and Modernism before it, it has perhaps now run its course, although many of its characteristics and features continue into the present, even when the critics may not wish to use the term Post Modernism. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the heat has gone out of many of the debates surrounding the more extreme relativist versions of Post Modernism. Whatever the case, the Realist impulse, and Realism has remained throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and possibly remains popularly dominant, if still on the periphery of critical respectability. It is still the case to work with Realism is perceived by some critics to be the equivalent of using a mode which has long been superseded.

Indian contemporary literature is colossal in its scope and encompasses literature of various genres and styles. Contemporary literature in India is influenced considerably in content by the western philosophy and thought. However, it knows how exactly to maintain its unique Indian flavor and assorted richness. In the arena of international literature, contemporary literature occupies a position of pride for its sumptuous affluence and originality. Literature of India still bears some of its ingrained colonial impact and present day writers often base their works in the colonial backdrop. However, this is not something heavily peculiar for a nation under colonial rule for such an extensive period of time. Contemporary Indian writers have taken to writing in English but
time and again their themes are based upon an Indian backdrop and household.

Post independence; Indians faced a number of crises including social, political and economic. The society was in a continuous state of flux. This time the writers were no more eulogizing their nation. Rather they were bringing to the forefront the reality through their works. Both verse and prose were time and again emphasizing on the dominant crises. In order to establish a new narrative, to break away from the colonial mind set, Contemporary Indian writers adapted new narrative patterns to put through their notions.

Making a move from the 18th or 19th century, that had indeed sowed the budding phase of then referred Contemporary Indian literature, writers belonging to Contemporary Indian are additionally very conscious about their own culture and traditions. Hence, can be witnessed a massive body of vernacular language and literature flourishing in it. While some of the author’s pen in English, most of them continue to write in their colloquial languages. The philosophy and thought behind their works exhibit influences of western thoughts and principles. It is quite laudable that these authors have been successful enough to maintain the unique flavor of their region in their works and tinge it further with a modern dimension.
**Realism Literature as a Distinctive Mode of Writing and Criticism**

Realism offers an accessible account of literary realism as a distinctive mode of writing. Setting out the defining attributes of genre and exploring the critical debates surrounding it. In ‘Humanism’ (1997), Tony Davis describes “Realism” as one of those words whose range of possible meanings runs from pedantically exact to the cosmically vague. Realism as a literary form has been associated with an insistence that art cannot turn away from the more sordid and harsh aspects of human existence. Realism participates in the democratic impulse of modernity. As a genre, it has reached out to a much wider social range, in terms both of readership and of characters represented, than earlier more elite forms of literature. Literary realism as any writing that is based upon an implicit or explicit assumption that it is possible to communicate about a reality beyond the writing. Aesthetically, Realism refers to certain modes and conventions of verbal and visual representation that can occur at any historical time. Realism is associated particularly with the secular and rational forms of knowledge that constitute the tradition of the enlightenment, stemming from the growth of scientific understanding. Novels written in realist mode can function to naturalize a banal view of the world as familiar morally and socially categorized and predictable. Such stories reproduce the gender, class and racial stereotypes that predominate in society at large, way weirdness and unconventionality of
any kind are shown by means of the plot structure, to lead to punishment and failure of some kind, while morally and socially condoned patterns of behavior are those rewarded by wealth and opportunities in the case of heroes and love and marriage in the case of heroines. “Realism is a mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or ‘reflecting’ faithfully an actual ways 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 in 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 life like illusion of some real world outside the text, by process of selection, exclusion, description and manners of addressing the reader. Realism remains a standard convention of film, television and drama. Despite the radical attempts of Modernism to displace the realist emphasis on external reality (notably in the movements of expression and surrealism), Realism survived as a major current within 20th century fiction, sometimes under the label of Neo-realism.”

One effect of broadness of the term "Realism" is that most fiction can be understood to be "Realist" in some sense. For example, a storyline quite like a traditional romance—dealing with improbable and idealized
people and events—could be deemed "Realist" because the descriptive style is realist. However, this broad range of characteristics of realism in literature have fueled its rise to literary prominence in and throughout the nineteenth-century and on into the twentieth, and have become almost synonymous with the novel itself. Realism is faithful to our experience of life lived in a physical and social environment, and governed by causes and effects. The most powerful argument for Realism is that it represents life as we live it - sequential, contextualized and rooted in the concrete. It can be argued that Realism is to be found everywhere in literature, especially when the high mimetic forms such as the epic give way to a feel for the life of the common person - in scripture, in comedy, in historical texts, in fabliaux. Realism brings us close to the physical, to our material existence, and so is less likely than other forms of representation to be distorted by ideology or mystification. It is responsible directly to the life; we recognize that we live. The language we speak in our ordinary life -- our explanations, our accounts and our vocabulary -- is the same kind of language-use that one finds in Realism.

Comparing Realism to Magic realism; the latter is a colorful carnival approach to the art of storytelling, embracing one or more of myth, folklore, the supernatural, the inexplicable, the irrational and the surreal. It is termed magic realism because the techniques of realist writing are used to describe incidents, objects and characters which are fantastic,
unethical and nightmarish in nature that blur traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic. Similarly, seemingly normal items can seem quite magical in an alien cultural background. “The term magic realism, originally applied in the 1920s to a school of painters, is used to describe the prose, fiction of Jorge Luis Borges in Argentina, as well as the work of writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez in Colombia, Gunter Grass in Germany and John Fowles in England.”

Magic realism is sometimes described as part of Post Modern aesthetic, but also regarded as dealing with a separate agenda, largely political and more in keeping with post colonial art and literature. What distinguishes magical realist writing from other related forms is; its insistence on making no ontological distinction between what is ‘real’ and what is ‘magical’, that resulted in a challenge to the worldview of the realist aesthetic, since it does not defer Enlightenment reason and rationality, and does not feel bound to separate fact from fiction in order to arrive at truth. Gabriel Garcia Marquez is its most famous exponent and Borges one of the notable influence. A European tradition is also often advanced with the works of Franz Kafka, with later writers such as Gunter Grass, Salman Rushdie, Angela Carter, Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor.
The elements of apparent Realism in Indian writing is found since one and half century as the long sustained piece of prose fiction had entered the scenario of Indian writing. Fables, lyrics, dramas, epics and short stories have their deep roots going back many centuries but it is only during a period of little more than a century that the novel has occurred and spread fast. The Western impact on India’s cultural front had resulted in the development of formal written prose in its artistic form.

“It was in Bengal that the literary renaissance first manifested itself; but almost immediately afterwards the signs of new life were to be seen in Madras, Bombay and other parts of India as well.”

The ‘Jack Wilton’ of the history of the novel in India is ‘Alaler Gharer Dulal’ (Spoilt son of a Rich Family) a Bengali novel. The great Bankim Chandra Chatterjee made the real beginning with the publication of ‘Rajmohan’s Wife’ (1864), Anandmath, ‘Devi Chaudharani’ and other novels that appeared between 1866 and 1886 with strong elements of Realism in them. The other novels which flooded the Indian literary front were Raj Lakshi Devi’s ‘The Hindu Wife’, Toru Dutt’s ‘Bianca’, Kali Krishna Lahiri’s ‘Roshinara’, H. Dutt’s ‘Bijoy Chand’, and Kshetrapal Chakravarti’s ‘Sarata and Hingana’. These novels were, of course, dominated by the spirit of Realism but have no more than an antiquarian
or historical interest. The sad plight and disturbing influence of the widow in Hindu joint family is found to be the recurrent motif in Indian fiction. Like Hindu widow the Sanyasi, as in ‘Anandmath’ by Bankim Chandra, too figures often in Indian fiction sometimes as a beneficent, sometimes as a malevolent and sometimes as a comic character. Since Bakim’s time, the Sanyasi or Swami has often figured in realistic Indian fiction. In ‘He who Rides a Tiger’ by Bhabani Bhattacharya the bogus ‘Swami’ takes advantage of human gullibility so as to settle the score with society who had given a raw deal to him and his daughters in the days of Bengal famine. Raju in R.K. Narayan’s ‘The Guide’ is a Swami by mistake. By the end of the novel the life has wonderfully taken the shape of truth. Sometimes the Swami or Sadhus has no more than a decorative role. Sometimes for the sake of Realism to show the dominance of Sadhus and Sanyasi in Indian society and sometimes because Western readers look for the mystic elements in novels on India. In Bankim Chandra the master idea was the religion of patriotism. ‘Anandmath’ had the element of moral strength with the infusion of religious feeling into patriotic work. The patriotism was the need of that time and the most real aspect of the undercurrent emotion.

The novel in India may be said to have passed through three stages. First, the age of Bankimchandra, when the chief question was the restoration of national self-respect. Second, the age of Rabindranath, the
time when the major question under consideration was bridging the East and the West. Thirdly, came the most dynamic age where the chief point to ponder over was the identity of self among the common people. There may be some overlapping and there is also an age, which has witnessed the crash of all hopes, death of human will and enervation of deepening despair. ‘Chocker Bali’ by Rabindranath has the actions and reactions arising out of the impact of the minds of individual. Binodini, the leading female of the novel is a young widow who has no right to love, and no right to happiness. But at last the marriage of a widow would have shocked the orthodox public. Rohini in Bankim’s novel, Binodini in Tagore’s and Abhaya and Kiranmayi in Sarat Chandra’s are widows all, but there is an increasing bolder approach to the actualities of life having defiance of convention and affirmation of the widow’s right to life, freedom and love. Like Rabindranath, Sarat Chandra Chaterjee also went through a Bankim stage. Sarat Chandra identified himself with the down-and-outs, and frankly pictured the pain and passion of the lower middle and have-not classes. This Realism however, never got parched; in this the work of Sarat Chandra foreshadowed the best fiction of Mulk Raj Anand. Leaving behind the glory of Bankim, Tagore, Sarat and some other outstanding novelists from Bengal have been scouring the ocean of everyday life in society and people around them and presenting their realistic views artistically.
After independence in 1947, the novelists in India have shown themselves susceptible to the influence of American and European models. The impact of Russian models and also models from oriental countries were tremendous. After the advent of independence, the Realist novelists have shown how the joy of independence has been more than neutralized by the tragedy of the partition, how in spite of the freedom, there is continuing corruption, in competence, inefficiency, poverty and cumulative misery, how the mere replacement of the white sahib by the Indian sahib cannot effect a radical cure for the besetting ills of India. When India won freedom, a group of novelist, in a way found themselves jobless for the easily available hated-by-all the traditional villain was no more in the picture. However, it is gratifying to note that in India, the novel is a living and evolving literary genre, and is lying in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form substance and expression that is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality.

The real life struggle in tea gardens of Assam has been painted realistically in Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Two leaves and a Bud’. ‘Kandhapura’, a novel by Raja Rao, pictures a coffee estate in South India. Manohar Malgonkar also beautifully depicts the life in tea-estate in his composition ‘Combat of shadows’. Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Sword and the sickle’ and Khwaja Ahmed Abbas’s ‘Inqilab’ both roughly covers the politics of twenties. K.S. Venkatramani’s ‘Kandan-the patriot’ and Raja Rao’s
‘Kanthapura’ can be described as the two best novels depicting the Gandhian civil disobedience movement with the touch of utmost Realism. The Bengal famine, the growing rift between the Hindu and Muslim communities, the second world war period in India, the ‘Quit India Movement’ and the sky rocketing frustration and misery are covered in novels like N.S. Phadke’s ‘Leaves in the August wind’, Bhabani Bhattacharya’s ‘So Many Hungers’, R.K. Narayan’s ‘Waiting for Mahatma’ and Kamala Markandaya’s ‘Some Inner Fury’. Novels on the partition of Indian subcontinent are legion. In spite of dealing with hate and prejudice some of the partition novels transcend sensationalism and achieve the discipline of Art. Khushwant Singh’s ‘Train to Pakistan’ is a satisfying realistic record of the bifurcation. The whole horror is there but humanity and compassion are there too. In ‘The Dark Dancer’ by Balchandra Rajan and in ‘Disant Drum’ by Manohar Malgonkar, the veil is lifted a little over what happed in those fateful days. Malgonkar’s ‘A Bend in the Ganges’, explores more fully the origin of the two-nation theory and presents in some detail the sheer frenzy that possessed people in either side of the border. Realism alone cannot paint that bestial horror of partition. Like war and revolution, the civil strife of the kind of partition was verily a bull-dozer that leveled up things, leaving an ominous calm in the wake of the precedent destructive storm. Humanity uprooted, humanity mutilated, humanity massacred: For the realistic
projection of the incidents in artistic way not even the images of Dante’s ‘Inferno’ can possibly prove inadequate.

Social life in a country of the size of India is so full of vagaries and varieties that the novelist with an observant eye will find the subject matter spread out before him to be literally inexhaustible. Urban life in India attracts the novelists by its excitements, perversions, sophistications and violent alternations between affluence and poverty, splendor and squalor; but the interior, the areas of obscurity and inaccessibility have their attractions too and sometimes bring out the best in the creative Realistic novels. There are regional novelists who have tried to immortalize the genius of particular regions or locality. Munshi Premchand revealed in ‘Godan’ and other fictional narratives; his sense of intimacy with the sons of the soil. Sivasankar Pillai’s ‘Two Measures of Rice’ details the life of the farmers in the hard time of transition from the old feudalism to the new age economy. The laborers are involved in conflicts and has to make the uneasy passage from innocence to experience. In ‘The Village has no Walls’ by Vyankatesh Madgulkar has done the similar service. Like peasants in out-of-the-way tracts, fisher-folk living by the seaside since thousands of years have known the same bare nude hard life struggling; yet being at peace with the elements. T.S. Pillai’s ‘Chemmeen’ is a wonderful record of the life of the seafaring folk on the coast of Allepey fringing the Arabian Sea. The undaunting spirit of
the fisher folk’s life, their heroism, fatality and humanity is brought out with vividness, a sense of mounting crisis and the tremors of tragedy reminding Hemingway’s ‘The Old Man and the Sea.’ K.B. Vaid’s ‘Steps in Darkness’ is the image of childhood as it wakes up from the world of innocence to the rude realities and sordid cruelties of life among the world of grown-ups.

Pure sanctity is as difficult to realize in a work of fiction as pure villainy, for the web of a human character is seldom all white or all dark. The Indian novelists are not usually attracted to new techniques in plot construction, narration or art of characterization. As a rule, description of sex life used to be prudish, but the kind of writing is less inhibited in the fictional works published in recent years. But norms are changing everywhere and they are changing in Indian writing as well. Guarded experimentation is going on. Zigzag in narration, jumbling the past, present and future, characterization on the basis of purposeful inconsistency and functionally experimental prose style. Numberless novels with the elements of Realism are being published, but “the best novels they are not many.”

The efforts of several generations of Indian writers writing in English have resulted in International success, particularly with the publication of Salman Rushdie’s ‘Midnight Children’ the Indian novel in English has ultimately been accepted as literary endeavor that the world cannot afford
to neglect any more. Indian women writers, who are more realistic in their approach; have begun to earn recognition especially with the winning of Booker Prize by Arundhati Roy for the extraordinary work ‘The God of Small Things’. Prior to that, many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity, in order to establish an identity. Santha Rama Rao’s ‘Remember the House’, Ruth Prawar Jhambwala’s first novel ‘To Who She Will’ and ‘Heat and Dust’, which was awarded Booker Prize, and Kamala Markandaya’s ‘Two Virgins’ are good examples. Sex is implied in these novels, but depicted more dominantly in ‘Socialite Evenings’ by Shobha De, in which she describes the exotic sex lives of the high society in Mumbai. A number of women novelists are writing the kind of novels that reveal the true state of Indian society and its treatment of women. Their work is marked by an impressive feel for the language and an authentic presentation of Contemporary India detailing the urban middle class, the stratum of society they know best. Many of these writers such as Chitra Banerjee in ‘The Mistress of Spices’– use Magical Realism in their novels. Suniti Namjoshi stands out for her use of Fantasy and Surrealism and Anuradha Marwah Roy’s ‘Idol Love’ presents a chilling picture of an Indian dystopia in the twenty-first century. Other novels deal with various aspects of college life, such as Meena Alexander’s ‘Nampally House’, and Rani Dharker’s ‘The Virgin Syndrome’. Another realistic theme to emerge is that of the lives of
women during India’s struggle for independence; as seen in Manju Kapur’s ‘Difficult Daughters’. Anita Desai presents the image of a suffering woman preoccupied with her inner world, her sulking frustration and the storm within; the existential predicament of a woman in a male dominated society. In her psychological novels, Anita Desai makes a plea for a better way of life for women. Her novels have Indians as central characters, and she alternates between female-centered and male centered narrative. After her migration to USA, she reveals all the characteristics of Diasporic fiction, that is a concern with the longings and fate of immigrants and a growing distance, day by day from the reality of India, which is observed, most often painfully, from outside. There are many women writers based in Britain, Canada, USA and other parts of the world. Some are recent immigrants, while – such as Jhumpa Lahiri – others are second generation immigrants. These authors mainly relate about their situation in cross-cultural contexts that is the state of in-betweeness. Most expatriate writers tend to recreate the realistic conditions in contemporary India through the lens of nostalgia. Distancing lends objectivity, but it can also lead to the ossification of cultural constructs, and even if memory is sharp and clear, the expatriate is not directly in contact with the reality of India. The East-West confrontation or the clash between tradition and modernity is the impulse behind the composition of acclaimed migrant writers such as Meera Syal,
Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Uma Parameshwaran, Chitra Banerjee, Anjana Appachana and Kiran Desai. The theme of migration that leads to self-discovery, with a negation of the traditions of the country of origin is a recurrent one among the Diasporic authors like Bharti Kirchner, Ameena Meer and Bharati Mukherjee.

**A fusion of Realism in Indian English Literature: A Milestone to Contemporary World**

Indian English Literature is an endeavor of showcasing the rare gems of Indian writing in English. From being a curious native explosion, Indian English has become a new form of Indian culture, and voice in which India speaks. It refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in English language and whose native and co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Indian writers as well as Diaspora writers from other nations have now turned towards English to show the world that they have the ability and intellectual power to express themselves and above all they want to reveal India and Indianness according to their perception and mark their presence in the Western Society. While Indian authors, poets, novelists, essayists, dramatists – have been making significant contributions to World literature since the Pre-Independence era, the past few years have seen a massive flourishing of Indian English writing in the international market. Not only are the works of Indian authors writing in English are soaring on
the best seller list, they are also receiving a great deal of critical acclaim. Early Indian Writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. Among later writers; most famous ones like Salman Rushidie ushered a new trend of writing. He used a hybrid language-English generously peppered with Indian terms to convey a theme that could be seen as representing the vast canvas of India. Then came, Vikram Seth who uses purer English and more realistic themes. But a younger generation of authors now appears to have emerged in English Language literary sector whose common development manifests a kind of Caesara. They write about the sense of connection in new and innovative and all times surprising ways. A marked turn towards localism, observation, meaning towards the micro cosmos of one’s own lived world, to the history of the individual atmospheres in which these authors lead their lives. In literary terms, this return is associated with an opening towards genre literature and towards what might be referred to as the small form in Contemporary world of literature.

This Research emphasis on the work of Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat, the new generation authors.

**Biography and Major Works of Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat**

Born to Nilanjana Sudeshna and Amar Lahiri; Bengali Indian immigrants in London, Jhumpa Lahiri moved with her family to the United States
when she was three years old. She grew up in Kingston, Rhode Island. The influence of frequent childhood visits to India and parents who are still a part of the Indian world despite their immigration to America thirty years ago shaped her book. (People Weekly 138). Growing up in America under the supervision of a mother who wanted to raise her children to be Indian, it is no surprise that Jhumpa Lahiri puts so large an emphasis on the: 'stories of Indians in what for them is a strange land'.

Lahiri's role as a writer developed in grade school when she began to '[write] 10-page “novel” during recess with her friends'. Later in her school years, Lahiri busied herself with the school newspaper. After graduating from Barnard college in 1989, she went on to earn an M.A. in English, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, an M.A. in Comparative Literature, and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies from Boston University. From 1997-98, she held a fellowship at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Center.

In 1999, Lahiri published her first short story collection entitled ‘Interpreter of Maladies’. It dealt with the issues of Indians or Indian immigrants, including their generation gaps in understanding and values. ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and sold 600,000 copies. In 2003, Lahiri published her first novel, ‘The Namesake’, originally a novella in The New Yorker. It is the story of
the Ganguli family, comprised of parents who immigrated to the United States from Calcutta and raised their children in the USA. The story follows the family over the course of thirty years in Calcutta, Boston, and New York.

She published another collection of short stories called ‘Unaccustomed Earth’ in 2008. With this collection, Lahiri broke from her previous literary focus on first-generation Indian immigrants to the United States and their family problems. The stories in ‘Unaccustomed Earth’, focus instead on the second and third generations of immigrants and their assimilation into the culture of the United States.


She has won many awards, including the TransAtlantic Award from the Henfield Foundation (1993), the O.Henry Award for the short story ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ (1999), the PEN/Hemingway Award for Best Fiction Debut of the Year for the ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ collection, and the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award (2008) and the Asian American Literary Award (2009), both for ‘Unaccustomed Earth’. 
The New Generation author Chetan Bhagat was born in New Delhi in a middle class Punjabi Family on 22 April, 1974. The major part of his education was done at Delhi. After doing his Mechanical Engineering from IIT, Delhi, he then pursued MBA from IIM business Schools, Ahmedabad. After completion of the studies, Chetan Bhagat joined a job in Hong Kong as Investment Banker with Deutsche bank. He worked there for about 11 years and later quit the job and came back and settled in Mumbai in 2008.

Chetan Bhagat published his first novel ‘Five Point Someone’ (2004) and this very first venture took him to the peaks of fame and popularity. The book depicted the story of an IIT student who considers himself to be below average than all the other students in IIT. This book won the Society Young Achiever’s Award and Publisher’s Recognition Award. The story was adopted into a film named ‘3 Idiots’ directed by Rajkumar Hirani and starred famous Bollywood stars like Aamir Khan, Madhavan, Sharman Joshi and Kareena Kapoor. His second book ‘One Night @ The Call Center’ (2005); too was a great success. This book was made into a movie named 'Hello' and Chetan Bhagat; himself scripted it. The movie featured special appearance of Bollywood star Salman Khan. His third novel ‘Three Mistakes of My Life’ (2008) has cricket as the major theme. His fourth book is named 'Two States of My Marriage Life’ (2009) talks about the difficulties faced by both the families in love marriage and that

Chetan Bhagat's contribution to the field of entertainment is noticeable. He never confined his literary talents to just writing novels. As a responsible social person, he also writes columns in newspapers, citing and dwelling on various social and national issues. Many of his columns were noticed by parliamentarians and triggered serious discussions in the Indian Parliament. He has addressed issues like corruption by sending an opening letter to Sonia Gandhi and also has spoken about the political issues that revolved around Baba Ramdev. Chetan Bhagat has also found himself place in the Time magazine's list of "World's 100 Most Influential People" in the year 2010.

**New Generation Realism in Contemporary Fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri**

The theme of New Generation Realism in Contemporary fiction is a continuation of the progressive literature of the bygone decades, but definitely more militant in its approach. It is an outcome of the creation of reading mass which was trying to construct an identity in the context of finding a name and place in the society. This attempt combined liberal reformist ideology with an affirmation of an Indian cultural specificity. The new generation Realism, as found in contemporary fiction, is both
liberal and humanist. The realist novels focus on growth and individual freedom. It is transformed in the context of India with the economic conditions of uneven capitalism, therefore the economic political as well as the social conditions serve to provide the basis for Realism in the fictional works of contemporary Indian writers like Chetan Bhagat, the bestselling author, who resides in India and Jhumpa Lahiri, the second generation immigrant throwing light on the lives of imaginary characters in her fictional works as a diasporic author. In a burst of innovation, new generations of young, iconoclastic and cosmopolitan authors are rapidly expanding India’s literary horizons in the area of prose fiction. These authors have the ability and courage to unfold their disarmingly intimate and often unconventional images of India to readers beyond the national borders. The new generation Indian writers have dipped into a deep well of memory and experience far removed from that of their fellow novelists working in English. Truly Americans, English men and Australians have at different times set their fictions in distant lands, but Indians write about India without exoticism, their insights undimmed by the dislocations of foreignness. The contemporary story of the rise of India is intertwined with the Indian Diaspora, which has played a vital role in the economic resurgence of the country. The prominent diasporic author Jhumpa Lahiri shares a diasporic consciousness generated by a complex network of historical connections, spiritual affinities and unifying racial memories.
and that this shared sensibility is manifested in the cultural productions of the Indian diasporic communities around the world.

“Existential dilemma forms the crux of human experience, and cultural encounter, anguish of alienation along with the reality of hybridity and multiculturalism grasp the core sensibility of most of the authors living in diaspora.”

Diasporic reality is reflected throughout in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri. ‘The Namesake’ follows the Ganguly family through its journey from Calcutta to Cambridge to the Boston Suburbs. Ashima and Ashoke Ganguly arrive in America at the end of 1960s, shortly after their arranged marriage in Calcutta, as Ashoke has to finish his degree in Engineering at MIT. Ashoke is forward thinking ready to enter the American culture, if not fully at least with an open mind. His young bride is far less malleable. She is isolated, desperately missing her large family back at home in India, she will never be at peace with this new world. Soon after the couple arrives in Cambridge their first child is born, a boy. Ashoke choose a name for the boy that has a particular significance for him: on a train trip back in India several years earlier, he had been reading a book by one of his most beloved Russian writers, Nikolai Gogol, when the train derailed in the middle of the night killing almost all the passengers on board. Ashoke had stayed awake to read, and he believes that the book saved his life. His child will be known, then, as
Gogol. Lahiri brings her enormous power of description to her first novel, infusing scene after scene with profound emotional depth. Condensed and controlled; ‘The Namesake’ covers three decades and crosses continents, all the while zooming in at very precise moments on telling detail, sensory richness and fine nuances of character. The crisis of identity, at other places, has been the prominent theme of Lahiri’s work. ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ is the package of short fiction about the lives of Indians and Indian Americans who are caught between the culture they have inherited and the new world they now find themselves in.

“Whether set in Boston or Bengal, these sublimely understated stories, spiced with humour and subtle detail, speak with universal eloquence to anyone who has ever felt the yearning of exile or the emotional confusion of the outsider.”

The very spirit of ‘Unaccustomed Earth’ has been expressed in nutshell on the introductory page that reads:

“Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and, so far as their fortune may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth.”

‘Unaccustomed Earth’ is a superbly crafted collection of eight stories that take the readers from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand.
detailing the lives of sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers, daughters
and sons, friends and lovers. In the stunning title story, ‘Ruma’, a young
mother in a new city, is visited by her father, who carefully finds the earth
of her garden, where he and his grandson form a special bond. But he is
harboring a secret from his daughter, an amorous relation he is keeping
all to himself. In ‘A choice of Accommodation’, a husband’s attempt to
turn an old friend’s wedding into a romantic gateway weekend with his
wife takes a dark, revealing turn as the party lasts deep into the night. In
‘Only Goodness’, a sister eager to give her younger brother the perfect
childhood she never had is overwhelmed by guilt, anguish and anger
when his alcoholism threatens her family.

“She clipped the ribbon with scissors and stuffed the whole thing into
the garbage surprised at how easily fit, thinking of the husband who no
longer trusted her, of the son whose cry now interrupted her, of the
fledgling family that had cracked open that morning, as typical and as
terrifying as any other.”

And in ‘Hema and Kaushik’, a trio of linked stories a luminous,
intensely compelling elegy of life, death, love and fate – the novelist
relates the lives of a girl and boy who, one winter, share a house in
Massachusetts. They travel from innocence to experience on separate,
sometimes painful paths, until destiny brings them together again years
later in Rome. Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing illuminates the experience of first
and second generation Americans who trace their roots to South Asia, and how the quest to become successful in this country can extract a price. Characters in her books experience the cultural as well as the generation gaps. She therefore comments on the effects of Western colonialism on Indians and Indians in diaspora. Lahiri displays a wonderful capability to draw her readers into the story not only through her detail but also by making them feel the emotional, physical and mental needs of the characters.

The bestselling English author, Chetan Bhagat basically writes about the generation that doesn’t oil its hair i.e. the young people just coming out of their teenage, dealing with their pain and passion, longing and desire to secure a name and place both in society and in the hearts of their beloved. His novels have shown that the basic difference between the culture of a writer and the culture of a reader is no barrier to communication. It is the shedding of the over anxiety to interpret India in its most modern sense that makes Chetan Bhagat assume a commanding position in the present scenario of the Literary World. His first novel ‘Five Point Someone’ won him many awards and above all recognition as a new and impressive signature, a rising star. His second novel ‘One night@ the Call Center’ is less concerned with literariness as such and far more with the possibilities of identification. ‘Three Mistakes of My life’, his third attempt as novelist, have young, ambitious and passionate
characters sharing the same moral, social and religious dilemma with millions of young population of India. His entire writing has come up as a potential blockbuster delighting the new generation to find reality in his work. His ‘Two States of My Marriage Life’ is fictionalized autobiography revolving around the incident of love marriages taking place in typical Indian condition. On the back jacket of the book the description of love marriages in India in comparison to the rest of the world has been depicted in humorous way.

“Love marriages around the world are simple: Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy. They get married. In India there is a few more steps: Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy. Girl’s family has to love boy. Boy’s family has to love girl. Girl’s family has to love boy’s family. Boy’s family has to love girl’s family. Girl and boy still love each other: They get married. 19

‘Five Point Someone’ is a story about three friends in IIT, who are unable to match up with the pace of the grand institute. They have five-point-something GPA out of ten, ranking near the end of their class. Their GPA is stucked to them as a tattoo that will remain with them, and like a worst nightmare will keep on haunting them in the way of anything that matters in their real life i.e. their friendship, their future and their love life.
“While the world expects IITians to conquer the world, these guys are struggling to survive, how screwed up your college years can get if you don’t think straight.”

Three hostel mates Alok, Hari and Ryan get off to a bad start in IIT. They screw up the first class quiz. And while they try to make amends, things only get worse.

‘One Night@ the Call Center’ is an interesting romantic comedy with an element of surprise that take the readers to the journey of one International Call Center, where cultural cross-wires entangle together with perfect pathos, hilarity and spice. All the people working at the Call Center have some personal problems in life, however, they are friends rather colleague working together. Their call Center was under the threat of closure because of the economic slowdown and other reasons. That is another worry that this group of people share together. One can imagine the looming threat of the pink slip by the expectation of the blackmailer boss. Who knows the worth of job for his employees? The email from Subhash Bakshi, the boss, to Esha, the employer, is a real life situation. The email read as follows:

Dear Esha,

Don’t be upset. My offer is simple – just spend one night with me. You make me happy – I’ll save you from the right – sizing. My pleasure for
your security – I think it, is a fair deal. And who knows, you might enjoy it too. Let me know your decision soon.

Your admirer

Baksh* 21

Both the writers, Chetan Bhagat and Jhumpa Lahiri, taken for the present study form a unique and interesting group. They write about the sentiments and realistic problems of people living in contemporary society. Chetan Bhagat should be taken as a writer dealing from India about the psychological and social trouble often posing a threat to existence to the young generation. Chetan Bhagat has just started his promising literary career.

“Whatever you think of Chetan Bhagat’s books, his success provides valuable insight into the needs and aspirations of a large readership whose engagement with literature is still at the grassroots level.” 22

Whereas a diasporic writer, Jhumpa Lahiri attempts to unfold the inner state of her characters who struggle hard for the search of their roots or establishing their identity. Jhumpa Lahiri, the winner of Pulitzer Prize for fiction in the year 2000, makes a sensitive exploration of the lives of Indian immigrants and expatriates in her epoch-making contribution to literature. Her bi-cultural perception makes interesting reading of her work that refuses specific cultural pigeon holding. The next chapters of
this research study will describe in detail the thought process and building of extraordinary narrative by Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat.
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