CHAPTER ONE

NOSTALGIA AND INDO-NOSTALGIA: A THEORY AND CONCEPT
It does not matter where I am
   The sky is always mine
Windows, ideas, air, love,
   Earth all mine,
Why does it matter if sometimes
The mushrooms of nostalgia grow?
O India! We would not have come without you.
The elusive word 'Nostalgia' is formed from the two Greek roots: nostos (return home) and algia (pain). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1998) defines nostalgia as “A form of melancholia caused by prolonged absence from one’s home or country; severe homesickness.” The *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998:41) defines Homesick as “Experiencing a longing for one’s home during a period of absence from it,” and nostalgia as “A sentimental longing for the past.” In other words, the Greek term ‘Nostalgia’ means ‘to return home’ and ‘algia’ is a painful condition. It is that type of yearning which makes an individual restless to reclaim and reinvent the past. Zlatko Skrbis (1999:41), in his book *Long Distance Nationalism* defines nostalgia as “A painful condition related to the homeland.” Moreover, Robert Rubenstein, in her book *Home Matters* describes it as a temporal separation; whereas Davis F. (1979:18) opines nostalgia as “A positively toned evocation of a lived past,” and argues that:

> The nostalgic experience is infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love …nostalgic feeling is almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative, for example, unhappiness, despair, frustration, hate, shame, and abuse.

Other theorists like Ortony, Clore and Collins (1988) view nostalgia as a part of the negative subset of well-being emotions. They categorise nostalgia under the distress and lost emotions. The affective signature of nostalgia is considered to be sadness or mourning about the past. Best and Nelson (1985), Hertz (1990) and Peters (1985) also endorse the view that, nostalgia involves the wounding realisation that some desirable aspect of one’s past is irredeemably lost. Johnson Laird and Oatley (1989:81) define nostalgia as positive emotion with tones of loss. They view nostalgia as a complex emotion, characterised by high-level cognitive appraisal and propositional content. In their opinion, nostalgia is happiness related emotion; yet at the same time, it is thought to invoke sadness because of the realisation that, some desirable aspects of the past are out of reach. Werman (1977:393) proposes a similar view that nostalgia involves “Wistful pleasure, a joy tinged with sadness.”

Though Skrbis opines nostalgia as a painful condition related to the homeland, Marcos Piaso Natali (2005:25) in his article notes that, it was in fact, the Swiss doctor, Johannes Hofer, who in 1688, coined the term ‘Nostalgia’ from
Greek roots. Actually, it has origins in medical history where it had been originally regarded as a disease with physical symptoms that were the result of homesickness. In their article, *The Dimensions of Nostalgia*, Malcom Chase and Christopher Shaw (1989:3) acknowledge that, today the term nostalgia bears ‘metaphorical meaning’ as the home we long for is not geographical but rather a state of mind. They also argue that certain classes or strata within a society (especially those whose situation has changed to the worst) are likely to experience a more public and collective nostalgia.

In her remarkable book *The Future of Nostalgia*, Harvard professor Svetlana Boym (2001) says that the word is coined in 1688, by the Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer to identify the homesickness of Swiss soldiers who reacted physically to the hearing of certain folk melodies and the eating of rustic soups while on missions away from home. She centers her study on the effects of leaving one’s culture and residing in another and of exploring cities, rich in archaeological layers of memory. She also distinguishes nostalgia as either being restorative, as in recovering a lost home, or reflective, as in shaping a certain way of thinking about a particular time and place; in the latter memory becomes a transformative and a reconstructive power.

Actually, the Swiss Physician Johannes Hofer used it to refer to the adverse psychological and physiological symptoms displayed by Swiss mercenaries who plied their trade on foreign shores. He conceptualised nostalgia as a medical or neurological disease. Symptoms were thought to include persistent thinking of home, bouts of weeping, anxiety, irregular heartbeat, anorexia, insomnia and even smothering sensations. Further, He regarded it as ‘A cerebral disease’ caused by “The quite continuous vibration of animal spirits through those fibers of the middle brain in which impressed stress of ideas of the Fatherland cling.” It was no longer considered as a neurological disorder but instead, came to be considered as a form of melancholia or depression.

Scholars in the psychodynamic tradition, such as Frost (1938:801) describe nostalgia as an ‘Immigrant psychosis;’ whereas Fodor (1950:25) contends that nostalgia refers to “A mentally repressed compulsive disorder.” It is the issue of
loss in terms of loved object which sometimes cause a person mental disorder. In the opinion of Castelnuovo Tedesco (1980:110) it is:

A regressive manifestation closely related to the issue of loss, grief, incomplete mourning and finally depression.

Nostalgia as a historical emotion came of age during the time of Romanticism and is coeval with the birth of mass culture. In the mid-nineteenth century, it became institutionalised in national and provincial museum, heritage foundations and urban memorials. The past no longer remained unknown. It became heritage and the rapid pace of industrialisation and modernisation increased the intensity of people’s longing for the slower rhythms of the past, for social cohesion and tradition.

There are two types of nostalgia: the restorative and the reflective. Restorative nostalgia stresses nostos (home) and attempts a trans-historical reconstruction of the lost home. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia thrives on algia (the longing itself) and delays the homecoming, wistfully, ironically and desperately. Restorative nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.

Restorative nostalgia is at the core of recent national and religious revivals. It knows two main plots: the restoration of origins and the conspiracy theory. Restoration signifies a return to the original stasis; to the lost moment. It returns and rebuilds one’s homeland with fixed determination. The conspirational worldview reflects nostalgia for a transcendental cosmology and a simple premodern conception of good and evil. This worldview is based on a Menichaean battle of good and evil. To understand restorative nostalgia, it is important to distinguish between the habits of the past and the habits of the restoration of the past. The rhetoric of restorative nostalgia is not about the past but rather about universal values, family, nature, homeland and truth. It is about taking time out of time and about grasping the fleeting present.

Reflective nostalgia does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones. Reflection
means new flexibility, not the re-establishment of stasis. It is concerned with historical and individual time with the irrevocability of the past and human finitude. It loves details, not symbols. It can present an ethical and creative challenge based on a single version of national identity and social memory. The focus here is not on the recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth, but on the meditation on history and the passage of time. The nostalgic persons of this kind are often, in the words of Vladimir Nabokov (1990:185):

‘Amateurs of time, epicures of duration,’ who resist the pressure of external efficiency and take sensual delight in the texture of time not measurable by clocks and calendars.

1.1 Nostalgia as the Idiom of Exile:

In politics, art, music, literature, psychology and even pop culture, nostalgia is the idiom of exile, as Boym (2001) says, Adam and Eve as prototypes, while it may be a stretch to imagine their longing for the prelapsarian apple after they left the Garden of Eden, it is certainly true that, through the years, the exiles and emigrants that followed their path from their paradise to another country either tried to replicate the foods of their homeland or they taste sensations of their childhood. Almost without exception French chefs, especially when transplanted to America, nostalgically craved the simple soups, daubes, and pot-au-feux of their childhood. The four-star chef Fernand Point believed that, his mother’s cooking was the best kind of cooking and his disciples Paul Bocuse and Alain Chapel also went back to the simpler foods of the countryside in a movement called *nouveau cuisine* that captured immediate attention in France and abroad, known as *cuisine de meres*, these ancestral cooking ideas perpetuated in their respective provinces fed their souls as well as their bodies. Nostalgia proved to be a powerful force there. Though historians often consider ‘nostalgia’ to be a negative word, or an affectionate insult at best, it is frequently used dismissively. It is seen as an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, an ethical and aesthetic failure. Nostalgia produces subjective visions of afflicted imagination that tend to colonise the realm of politics, history and everyday perception. In this connection, Michael Kammen (1991:688) comments:

Nostalgia is essentially history without guilt. Heritage is something that suffuses us with pride rather than shame.
1.2 Nostalgia: A Feature of Global Culture:

The most common currencies of the globalisation exported all over the world are money and popular culture. It is a feature of global culture, but it demands a different currency. After all, the key words defining globalisation – progress, modernity, and virtual reality are invented by poets and philosophers. The concept of ‘modernity’ created by Charles Baudelaire and the notion of ‘virtual reality’ referred to the planes of consciousness, potential dimensions of time and creativity that are distinctly and inimitably human. Globalisation encourages stronger local attachments. In counterpoint to our fascination with cyberspace and the virtual global village, there is a global epidemic of nostalgia, an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world.

Technology that once promised to bridge modern displacement and distance and provide the miracle prosthesis for nostalgic aches has itself become much faster than nostalgic longing. In a precise manner, technology and nostalgia have become co-dependent. New technology and advanced marketing stimulate nostalgia - for the things you never thought you had lost and for the present that flees with the speed of click. The study of nostalgia does not belong to any specific discipline; it frustrates psychologists, sociologist, literary theorists and philosophers, even computer scientists who thought they had gotten away from it all until they too took refuge in their home pages and the cyber-pastoral vocabulary of the global village.

1.3 Nostalgia in Literature:

Literature abounds with powerful nostalgic works like, Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* and Henry David Thoreau's *Journal* - both motivated by early memories of a purer, more innocent, psychological as well as physical place, to which there is no possible return except through memory. It was Marcel Proust, however, who irrevocably linked the subjective and often unreliable vagaries of memory with the particularity, sensory modality and physical presence of food. In pursuit of vanished time, he found a transfiguring moment in the taste of a madeleine dipped in a cup of lime flower tea. Although he often had passed the golden shell-shaped French cookies in patisseries, it was not the sight or taste of
the madeleine itself or even the tea, but the sensation, that immediately took him back to those Sunday mornings in Combray with his Aunt Leonie, when he was a treasured child and not the world-weary adult he had become. The remembrance of food and more specifically, the eating of a meal became a trigger point to his self-discovery through the mode of nostalgia.

Memories of a wistfully longed for earlier time, exist not only in novels, but also in the various autobiographical forms. In Memories of My Life, Auguste Escoffier remembered his childhood in Villeneuve-Loubet and wrote about watching his grandfather, toast bread and spread it with a particularly strong local cheese called brousse. One Sunday, when the young Escoffier tended the fire while his grandfather went to church, he prepared the same cheese toasts, which he then savoured with a glass of sweet wine. Seen from the perspective of the mature and successful chef he had become, the incident was an example of how easy it had been for him to satisfy both his curiosity and his gourmandise. In other personal narratives, odors rekindled memories of other kitchens. Writing about growing up in his mother's boarding house in a Feast Made for Laughter, Craig Claiborne described the smell of chopped onions, celery, green sweet peppers, and garlic sautéing together in butter or oil. The smell pervaded the kitchen and in his memory seemed the basis for seemingly hundreds of dishes his mother prepared and that he always identified with 'Southern cooking' and home. And in James Beard's article Delights and Prejudices, beach breakfasts of sautéed razor clams gathered along the Oregon coast with the Welsh rabbit of the family's Chinese cook to epitomise all that was wonderful about his childhood in Portland. The sights, smells, and tastes of the holidays almost without exception, evoke nostalgia.

In his testament to childhood, My Father's Glory; and My Mother's Castle: Memories of Childhood, Marcel Pagnol, recreated his Provencal childhood through the eyes of an aging and successful film-maker. In this autobiography, there are scenes about a small boy exploring the streets of Marseille and about the family's trips to their rented vacation home in the hills; where the young Pagnol learned to hunt, trap and explore the caves and the forest. Neither before nor since was the Christmas holiday in that place so exciting and memorable, thrushes that,
he and his friend had trapped ‘Tumbled from branch to spit,’ a small pine tree from the forest occupied the corner of the room and on its branches hung hastily assembled presents and after the Christmas Eve meal, the family feasted on dates, crystallised fruit, whipped cream, and the marrons glaces that his uncle had brought from the city. Seeing his father and uncle greet each other, Pagnol felt a new emotion and as a child recognised real friendship for the first time while savouring the marrons glaces.

Autobiographies and memoirs that are driven by taste, by memory and real life, communicate reality. When asked about why she wrote about food rather than love, war, sorrow and death, M. F. K. Fisher simply said that, our human hungers for security, warmth, love and sustenance were inseparable. And she, more than any other American gastronomical writer, combined autobiography and her philosophy of the art of eating to create a hybrid genre called the culinary memoir. Whether she gently folded recipes into her narratives or simply explored the bliss or misfortune of family feasts, vegetable snobbism, the best oyster stew she ever ate, or learning to dine alone, she established the familiar ‘I myself’ pattern that echoes through contemporary culinary food writing. The note of nostalgia or longing for an ideal past that can only be repossessed symbolically by familiar foods, a note that pervades the most memorable memoirs, has been given a voice in her distinctive first-person style. And the unremitting use of gastronomy as a kind of surrogate to ease all human longings has found a varied expression in her narratives.

1.4 Nostalgia and Anglo-Indian Writers:

The recent nostalgic writings produced by the Anglo-Indian community remember, idealise and pine for the colonial past: a time when the Anglo-Indian community felt a sense of belonging in India. Some historians claim that, nostalgia is “Perhaps the most dangerous...of all the ways of using history.” Because ‘it glosses over the past iniquities and indignities.’ However, Rubenstein points out that nostalgia can also ‘Fix’ the past and recover it in narrative terms, with this insight we can argue that via nostalgic writings the Anglo-Indian community writer like Shashi Tharoor, can revisit and reclaim India as a home.
The Anglo-Indians are the Indian-European minority of India whose origins, development and social positioning are inextricably interwoven within the political, racial and cultural problematics of the English colonisation of India. Anglo-Indians have historically endured an unsettled position in India. From the beginning of their formation as a group, the Anglo-Indians are regarded as Feringhees (Foreigners). Although in independent India the Anglo-Indian community is constitutionally recognised as one of India’s six minorities, the community continues to occupy the contentious position within the discourse of Indian national identity and thus has historically been regarded as ‘Unhomed’ in India but in fact, India is the homeland of the community since it is their birthplace and the domain of their experiences constituting historical memory of community.

Thembisa Waetjen (1999:662) in her *The Home in Homeland* writes about the idea of unhomeliness as:

Unhomeness is not explicitly homelessness but rather a state of exile, of being removed from a place of belonging.

In her book *Home Matters* Robert Rubenstein (2001) explains that home is “Not merely a physical structure or a geographical location but always an emotional space.” Anglo-Indians have been denied this emotional space through the refusal of Indian groups to allow them to be a part of the expression of Indian national identity. In *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, Avtar Brah (1996:190) identifies the strong relationship between ‘Diaspora’ and the need to belong to ‘Home.’:

The concept of diaspora embodies a subtext of home.

Moreover, Brah (1996: 193) asserts that, home and belonging may be integral to the diasporic condition, but how, when, in what form, questions surface or how they are addressed, is specific to the history of a particular diaspora. She goes on to note that while one may want to feel at home in a place, the “experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations of the place as home.” This insight is particularly pertinent to the Anglo-Indian situation. However, in recent years, there has been an increased attempt to reflect upon the diasporic condition of community, through reconstructing the history of community and subsequently ‘Remembering India.’ She also argues that “Land becomes national territory, infused with a political identity through the stories that relate it to people.” She
constructs a nationalism centered on the marrying of ideas of historical memory, nationality and home. In this connection, Thembisa Waetjen (1999:666) explains:

A homeland is the landscape...of historical memory that offers tangible images of rootedness and grounded community.

Scholars agree that, for diasporic people, the process of recovering homeland through narration (history-making) is imperative for counterfeit identity, maintaining cultural ties with the homeland and for re-establishing cultural links with a place of prior experience. In his book, *Long Distance Nationalism*, Zlatko Skrbis (1999:40) acknowledges that, it is possible to be a ‘well-integrated’ migrant in a new country to love and express the culture of a homeland. He argues:

...The relationship between ethnic group members and their homeland and its political establishment...is one of the main indicators of their connectedness to their ethnic pasts. The relationship between people’s loyalties to an ethnic homeland and their integration into the new host society is not necessarily a mutually exclusive one...or put another way, it is possible to retain a rootedness in the past with successful integration into a new society.

Akhil Gupta (1997:39) in his chapter, *Beyond Culture: Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference* states that, speaking of “Remembered places have...often served as symbolic anchors of community for dispersed people.” He clearly argues that, “Homeland...remains one of the most powerful unifying symbols for mobile and displaced people...” However, scholars like, Lindemeyer Antje (2001:423) contend that, for diasporic people, it is not possible to fully recover the homeland the connections made with points of origin will be mythic in nature, what Aparna Rayaprol (1997) in her book, *Negotiating Identities*, claims it as ‘Part real and part imagined.’ In *Migrants of Identity*, Nigel Rapport (1998:8) states:

Home brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global.

The point Rapport makes here is that, home is the culmination of various aspects of human experience and interactions with the tangible world. In her article *The Re-writing of Home: Autobiographies by Daughters of Immigrants* Antje Lindenmeyer (2001) states that, Home can never be fully recovered, but has
to be reclaimed through the writing, that is the production of history. The histories Anglo-Indians relate demonstrate that, as a community, their historical memory is embedded in India and that India is embedded in the memory of each Anglo-Indian. This realisation is paramount to the community attaining a place in India as home. With this consideration in mind, the Anglo-Indians can be viewed as typical candidates for becoming nostalgists. Indeed the social situation of community changed from ‘tolerated’ during the English occupation of India to being despised as pseudo-colonialists in post-independent India, making the Anglo-Indians lament for India of yester-years. So, the community uses to delineate their history as a natural consequence of their homeliness. In embracing this vehicle of historical expression, Anglo-Indians reclaim India as homeland. However, Rubenstein (2001:6) thinks about nostalgia in a more positive light. She argues that, “Narratives that engage notions of home, loss or nostalgia confronts the past in order to fix it...” She further explains:

To ‘fix’ something is to secure it more firmly in the imagination and also to correct, as in revise or repair it. Even though one cannot literally go home again...it may be recoverable in narrative terms.

This insight enables us to understand how a history constructed through nostalgic lens can allow the Anglo-Indian community to revisit and recapture India as home. In the deeper register, it is a painful awareness, the expression of grief for something lost, the absence of which continues to produce significant emotional distress. She (2001:5) further acknowledges:

Culturally displaced or exiled people may mourn their separation from homeland, community, language or cultural practices that contribute to identity.

These people may be more inclined to employ nostalgia to re-enter their identity about a homeland. According to her, a nostalgic response to this condition of unhomeliness is more acceptable. She (2001:5) uses:

The phrase ‘Cultural mourning’ to signify an individual’s response to the loss of something with collective or communal associations: a way of life, a cultural homeland, a place or geographical location with significance for a larger cultural group or the related history of an entire ethnic or cultural group from which she or he feels served or exiled, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.
However, Chase and Shaw (1989:2) explain:

Nostalgia involved a special way of being involved in the past: one had to be connected to the object of scrutiny, perhaps through kinship or through a broader feeling of identity...these were in some way my people and my present.

This way of thinking about nostalgia is clearly evidenced in the history of the Anglo-Indians. Within the nostalgic mode, India and her people become the objects of scrutiny; the objects of longing and kinship. The nostalgia experienced by the Anglo-Indian community produces a history which creates a window to the unique experience of community. However, the history relies greatly upon memory and the ability to recall those memories. Further, Rubenstein (2001:5) makes this point as she states:

Implicit in the deeper register of nostalgia is the element of grief for something of profound value that seems irrevocably lost...in the form in which it is ‘remembered.’

In his book *Imaginary Homelands* Salman Rushdie (1991:10) makes the same point clear:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge- which gives rise to profound uncertainties- that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages but invisibles ones, imaginary homelands, India of the mind.

Although nostalgic history is told predominantly via recollection and therefore, to some extent through imagination, it is a voice which demonstrates and celebrates the connectedness of the community to its birthplace: India. What remains important then, is that, the connection to place, culture and people is established through the narration of historical memory.

1.5 Writing about ‘Home’:

In recent years, an earnest attempt has been made by the key members of the global Anglo-Indian community to use the ‘Voice of individuals’ to construct and record a new, localised version of the history of community. One of the ways in which they have tried to achieve this goal is by organising an Anglo-Indian
literary contest in which Anglo-Indians are invited to submit short stories and poetry. Selected contributions are subsequently published into an anthology of Anglo-Indian prose and poetry titled *Voices of the Verandah*. In the preface to the anthology a prominent Anglo-Indian community member Blair Williams (2004:6) writes:

We are the custodians and purveyors of our community’s history, its culture and values. And we owe it to ourselves, to our future generations...to provide them with source material which goes beyond distortions of fact and derogatory literary stereotypes. Before the last generation of Anglo-Indians born in British India fades away, the need to document our stories and our way of life thus assumes paramount importance.

In his statement, Williams recognises that, personal stories and experiences of individual Anglo-Indians constitute historical knowledge. He, therefore, invites his community to speedily usher this knowledge into the public space of literature so that, it can become a part of what he hopes and will become a canon of especially Anglo-Indian history. The poem “*I Remember When*” by Daphne Ruth Clarke (2004:135) is an example of how nostalgic writing constructs a history that privileges local knowledge and individual experience, which can ultimately be seen as functioning to reclaim India as home.

Through these writings, the Anglo-Indian community finds a speaking voice for the articulation of its own history. Through the process of narrating home, Anglo-Indians can challenge the notion that, the community was simply a ‘Lackey’ of the English and prove their knowledge about India, and share their perceptions and emotions about life. In this connection, we can cite another example of a poem by Anglo-Indian writer, Margaret Deefholts (2003:115) whose *Homesickness* cries:

I want to walk again along the city streets
Thronged with people;
The hawkers, the beggars, the urchins,
The hurrying office workers
All jostling by me.

In the poem, Deefholts’s memories come alive as she calls the various elements of her life in India. Her desire to live the experiences again through aesthetic recollection and even literally, is obvious. The most powerful line is “India is my blood, my bones.” In this passionate statement, the reader can see
that, from an Anglo-Indian perspective, ‘India’ is not only a physical, exterior experience but that ‘Living in India and leaving India’ is internalised so that, it becomes the very core of Anglo-Indian identity and the Indo-nostalgic mode in an emotional and spiritual sense.

As nostalgia is a culturally acquired feeling, it can be conceptually linked to some basic emotions most notably those of grief and depression. This is particularly so in Freud’s discussion of these emotions in his *Mourning and Melancholia* (1914) where melancholia may be represented in current usage by the term depression. Grief and depression are reactions to the loss of a loved object, though in depression the sufferer may not be able to perceive what the actual lost object was; because it may be masked by repression. There is some similarity between the depression reaction and the nostalgic reaction, since both are responses to loss. It would be possible to see the nostalgic feeling as a stage in the healing process of grief. The symptoms of both involve feelings of misery focused on the lost object. The pain is accompanied by withdrawal of interest in the world and loss of the capacity and the desire to form or sustain relationship with other people. In this connection, Freud (1914:244) explains:

> Reality-testing has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and it proceeds to demand that all libidos shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object. This demand arouses understandable opposition...This opposition can be so intense that a turning away from reality takes place and a clinging to the object through the medium of a...wistful psychosis.

The following two points are important in the construction of nostalgia:

1. It is often connected with the notion of childhood.
2. It is frequently associated with nature and countryside.

Nostalgia, by contrast with a historical perspective, does not seek to be analytic but is allusive. The quality of allusive vagueness exists because nostalgia is primarily a feeling and not a cognitive process. Some commentators have applied the term to literature that expresses intense feeling about the past. As a secondary emotion, it is tender rather than an overpowering feeling. In his novel, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the French novelist, Proust talks about his feeling about the past. The narrator is recalling the emotions, he experienced, when he and
his parents returned later than usual from a walk and he was told that his mother would not be able to visit him when he had gone to bed to offer a goodnight kiss:

How readily would I have sacrificed them all (pleasures in life), just to be able to cry, all night long in Mamma’s arms! Quivering with emotion, I could not take my anguished eyes from my mother’s face, which would not appear that evening in the bedroom.

At the core of nostalgia, it is a sense of loss, that is both mourned and accepted and the social and personal conditions that are associated with feeling. Current research practices often rigidify subject boundaries. Auto-biographical and life history studies are two of the few areas that allow research protocols to extend beyond a subject base and permit a rigorous comprehensiveness. In this connection, Brockmeier (2000:55) contends:

This is the process by which an individual, in reflecting on and living through his or her life course, ‘constantly links the past with the present...in the light of events and future expectations.

Generally, a nostalgic memory yearns for something that has gone forever, except in memory. The yearning of nostalgia originally formulated as a longing for a specific place, need not be for a real place, or indeed a place at all but may be for past relationships or people, real or imaginary. However, places, specific locales are consistently important in nostalgic memory and a psychological perspective is valuable in showing that locales often represent people and forgotten or repressed relationships with them. The central features of nostalgic feeling are the contemplation of an experience in the past that was valued and will not return, accompanied by a mourning of loss that is less anguished than the misery of grief. There is pleasure as well as pain in the contemplation. In a profound sense, nostalgic yearning in combination with negative and traumatic memory – pleasure and affection layered with bitterness, anger and aversion are internalised by the children of the exiles and refugees, members of the ‘second generation.’

Today, the term ‘Nostalgia’ has been absorbed into everyday speech and has shed its pathological connotations of depression and obsessive disorder. Nostalgia can mean a passing mood and one which may be partly pleasurable: a feeling of wistful reminiscence or the bitter-sweet recollection of episodes of
personal history. In this sense, the nostalgic person may be open to accusations of sentimentality or self-indulgence (i.e. wallowing in nostalgia) but is hardly suffering from an affliction. On the other hand, nostalgia sometimes signifies something more permanent than a mood, but still less than a disorder: something more like a lifestyle choice. A liking for retro-fashions, in 1970s or 1980s evenings, or ‘period’ domestic items purchased from shops such as ‘past times’ might make others want to groan or scoff, but not to call for a doctor.

From a historical perspective, the thread of nostalgia appears to be woven deep into our society and collective memory, for as a broad cultural phenomenon (as opposed to a medical diagnosis) it is coeval with post-enlightenment modernity. Nostalgia, in this sense, emerges from the shadow of the ideal of progress. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it appeared in literature and philosophy as a protest against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, the expansion of state bureaucracy, the early stages of the division of labour and the society of the modern metropolis. It came of age in the turbulent early decades of the nineteenth century following the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution in England. In relation to secularisation, Shaw and Chase (1989:3) comment:

Redemptive histories are infertile ground for nostalgia.

The most eloquent nostalgist of the eighteenth century was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who called into question the very premises of the Enlightenment, insisting that advances in science, technology and the arts had corrupted rather than improved human behaviour. Rousseau lamented the passing of earlier societies, in which people’s desires were simpler, their compassion more sincere and their relationships more transparent. In the wake of the terror unleashed by the French Revolution, Friedrich Schiller voiced a similar critique of modernity in his writings on aesthetics, arguing that modern human beings are fatefully divided, not just within themselves, but also from one another and from nature. The modern poet cannot portray nature simply and directly, but perceives it as something distant, alien, or seemingly irrecoverable, something to long for rather than to enjoy. Schiller points to the distant, alluring example of ancient Greece for a model of the integrated individual. These classic accounts of modernity and its ills set the coordinates for many of the arguments pursued by its future
discontents. Romantic literature soon became saturated with modes of longing and dissatisfaction, as poets and writers sought a resolution to the perceived modern split between subject and object, mind and nature. Often these impulses had a pronounced atavistic component, such as the idealisation of childhood and of simple people or a longing for the life and art of distant times such as antiquity or the middle ages. Philosophy grappled with dichotomies such as the rigorous dualism of Kant, which separated subject and object, inclination and duty, the world as we can know it from the world as it is. The Romantic poets, novelists ventured that ‘Philosophy is really nostalgia – the urge to be at home everywhere.’ In some quarters, the yearning for a homeland or for the distant past, far from being an illness in need of cure, was seen as fashionable or even progressive. The English middle classes sought out picturesque ruins or admired Strawberry Hill, Horace Walpole’s mock medieval gothic mansion. Under the influence of the ideas of Johann Gottfried Herder, early nineteenth century nationalists aimed to preserve local languages and cultures and to memorise the history of individual nations, however small. These were thought to be the foundations of human identity. Localism – the very sentiment that military commanders had tried to stamp out could now be held up as a patriotic virtue.

The rapid developments in society that began at the turn of the nineteenth century provided yet more fertile ground, where nostalgia could flourish. In this period, for the first time, radical changes in society could take place within the span of a single lifetime. In Britain, the Industrial Revolution and the consequent consolidation of urban centres and depopulation of the countryside meant that the rate and scope of social dislocation were unprecedented. Later, the Victorians came to accept the rapid and fundamental changes wrought by new science and technology as natural and inevitable. Unsurprisingly, then, the nineteenth century cultivated a new sense of time, which was unknown to feudal and even to early capitalist societies. Time was viewed in predominantly linear rather than cyclical terms and could be recorded, monitored and standardised through the use of precise instruments. If the future is a source of unprecedented excitement, then the past, by the same token, could be said to be out of reach in a stronger sense than ever before.
1.6 Indo-Nostalgia: A Concept

Indian past is a land of treasure for rich fictional and artistic creation. Indo-nostalgia cannot be defined in a single sentence. It is more a thing of realisation, of perception. It is a direct access to an Indian mind. It is a striking mania of making and remaking of India through fictional forms and styles. It is a fictional operation to meditate India with all its features of culture, locality, politics, grand epics, rich traditions, so and so forth. It does not lie in exotic content but in the mind behind the organisation of that content. Whether one writes about apples or flowers or mangoes or mountains, the point ‘life attitudes’, ‘modes of perception’ is important in this connection. In other words, ‘It is India in microcosm’. It is the sum total of all that is reflected in the mode of life of Indian people- their thought processes and outlook on life and their needs, aims and aspirations. It is an escaping mode of lamenting for India. Moreover, it is an ‘alien sensibility.’ Indian consciousness is deep-rooted philosophy; hence there is no better yardstick than Indo-nostalgia to measure the culture of the nation and to value Indian fiction. However, Indo-nostalgia is a fictional technique to project the image of India, not only to transmit it, with her own cultural identity but also to create an awareness of this identity in the minds of her own people and the rest of the world.

A large Anglo-Indian Diaspora is the result of the condition of unhomeliness experienced in India. This nostalgia produces the fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry and stories that can function to reclaim India as homeland. Indo-Nostalgia is a culturally derived emotion. Unlike basic primary emotions such as anger and fear, it is a secondary emotion composed of both positive and negative feelings. It is a personal contemplation of a valued experience in the past. It has a dual nature- it is both an experience of pleasure and of regret, is a central theme of Tharoorian fiction.

1.7 Indo-Nostalgic Writing - A Novel Literary Experiment:

Indian novels are thoroughly Indian in treatment and sensibility. What characterises the Indo-nostalgic writing is actually the mind, the soul behind the organisation of the content, the life-attitudes and modes of perception. Rooted in the native soul, the Indian writer struggles to cope with the spirit of the modern
world and puts forth its own peculiar fruit. Bhabani Bhattacharjee (Interview: 1975) expresses the fruit-bearing as:

...has not just been traditional...writer cannot live without roots. An Indian writer deeply concerned with lives of the people cannot get transplanted from the earth of centuries-old traditions despite full exposure to alien influences.

Indian English writers are nourished by the alien consciousness. They state how they have been in the Indian milieu and write about their experiences of today’s Indian society without losing the national identity. Indian literature in English is greatly conditioned by Indian geography, Indian style of life, culture and speech habits in different linguistic areas. An Indian writer can assert that he is right in exploring himself as an Indian English writer - that his landscape is Indian, his thought is moulded by his political, social, economic and philosophical scene, so on and so forth. What they see is the Indian scene- the flowers, the fruits, the trees, the mountains, the gardens, the temples, the huts, the gutter, the multi-coloured, multi-lingual, multi-cultured people and what they feel the effervescence of the Indian temperament. Professor Srinivasa Iyengar (1962:293) rightly points out the true Indian consciousness as:

To be Indian in thought and feeling, emotion and experience, yet also to court the graces and submit to the discipline of English for expression, is a novel experiment in creative mutation. There are successes and failures, and the failures are perhaps more numerous than the successes. All the same, there are the men and women who have bravely run the race and reached the goal, and they deserve due recognition.

Shashi Tharoor has retained close connections with India. His grandmother and mother still live in India, in Palakkad district in Kerala and he visits them often. For him, India is a country; which despite of differences of ethnicity, geography, language and religion holds together through her common adherence to an idea of ‘India.’ He (tharoor.in) avers:

...If America is a melting pot, then to me India is a Thali, a selection of sumptuous dishes in different bowls. Each tastes different and does not necessarily mix with the next, but they belong together on the same plate and they complement with each other in making the meal a satisfying repast.
He rightly says that, Americans, Englishmen or even Australians have often set their fiction in lands outside their own. Indians write about India without exoticism. He (tharoor.in) says:

...I write of an India of multiple truths and multiple realities, an Indian that is greater than the sum of its parts. English expresses that diversity better than any Indian language precisely because it is not rooted in any one region of my vast country. At the same time, as an Indian, I remain conscious of and connected to my pre-urban and non-anglophone antecedents; my novels reflect an intellectual heritage that embraces the ancient epic Mahabharata, the Kerala folk dance and the Hindi movies of ‘Bollywood’, as well as Shakespeare, Woodhouse and the Beatles.

He believes that, his life has been a multi-cultured experience, though not particularly a collision of those various cultures that have been part of his evolution. He lived in England, America, India and Europe and in South East Asia-that is a multiplicity of experiences and different cultures. The diplomat says, “I write for the same reason that a cow gives milk.” As an emigrant, he (tharoor.in) has drawn his literary material only from India:

...I have grown up here. My intellect; my values have been shaped and formed by the experience of growing up in India. So India matters very much to me, and I want in turn to matter to India and the way I can do is through my writings. I have written things that matter to me and I believe matter to other Indians. I am sure at some point in my fiction I will explore, not so much the UN world perhaps yet, but certainly the world of Indians abroad. I have done this to certain extent in my journalistic writings so putting it into my fiction is certainly within the realms of possibility. But not immediately, I still have enough to say about India that in want to say.

In the present research work, major novels of Shashi Tharoor have been examined, analysed and evaluated against the background of the social, political, cultural and literary scene of India to arrive at the much desired conclusion. The conception of Indo-nostalgia is neither a substitute for discipline nor even a deliberate pursuit to create a kind of self-mystification. It is the spontaneous flow of the heritage of Indian culture and not just a trick that develop an imaginative talent. It is an artistic involvement that affects the Indian creative spirit; that is ‘Conscious’s fabrications’ and ‘wistful symbols’ to discover Indo-nostalgia.
In expressing a longing for India, through the recollection of personal relationships and sensory experiences between the community and India, the bond between identity and place is cemented. The process of writing 'home' in a nostalgic mode is central to establish the bonds, as this type of writing produces a culturally specific history. As the experience of nostalgia unveils feelings, associations and ways of living that are a part of the community's memory. So Indian writers like Shashi Tharoor can claim their rightful place in Indian history and India as a home through the production of Indo-nostalgia.

1.8 Myth as a Special Characteristic Technique of Indo-nostalgia:

The word 'Myth' has been so constantly used in literature of the world over the last few decades that it has now become something of a cliché of the literary criticism. Besides, its use in literary criticism, the term is also used in a variety of meanings in sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and in comparative religion, each field of study investing it with different connotations. But its use in literature is more extensive now-a-days and interests the literary critics more widely than anyone else.

One basic question may crop up as to why myths and legends are significant factors in the thought patterns of the writers? The answer to the question is not difficult to find. It is very interesting to speculate why poets and writers have always been drawn towards myths and legends. The first and foremost reason may be their quality of timelessness and antiquity. Myths are old far-off distant things; naturally they lend enchantment and charm to the modern people. The charm of the Indian mythological stories, in spite of their distance from contemporary reality does have a kind of fundamental significance. The Indian writers are aware of this and recreated the myths with all their literary possibilities. Another reason is that, myths along with folk tales and ancient legends provide abstract story patterns. Northrop Fry (1963:27) has made a significant remark as:

> Writers are interested in (them) for the same reason that painters are interested in still life arrangements because they illustrate essential principles of story-telling.

There is another reason in favour of the presence of myths in literature. The view may not be accepted by all but its importance cannot be ruled out
completely. It is the nature of all myths that writers and poets are always attracted to them, mainly because myth is a rich source of literature. Myths are ethical, philosophical, religious and cultural. Indian myths are the part of Indian literature; we can therefore assert that, myth embodies the nature and spirit of entire literature. Hence, Shashi Tharoor makes extensive use of myths in his fiction.

In literature, there are mainly two ways in which myths are used. Of the two uses, the conscious use of myth is a popular literary device. The method is used by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, by E. M. Forster in *A Passage to India* and by O’Neill in *Mourning Becomes Electra* etc. All these writers differ widely in their techniques and intentions, but there is one common element in their diverse methods. Each of them uses mythical or classical situations or characters in a modern context, thereby seeking to illuminate the predicament of contemporary man, viewing him in a larger perspective of time. The uninitiated reader reads the narrative for its own sake, but when the mythical or classical parallel is recognised, his response to the work is enriched by an element of recognition.

To meet our ends in this matter, we shall consider not only the literary myths used by them such as stories from the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas* but also from the local legends, folk-lores as well as primitive rituals like the ritual for rain, for harvest or fertility and similar other sources, in order to add to the novel a special characteristic of Indo-nostalgia.

1.9 The Scope of Myth in Creating Indo-nostalgia:

The thing may not seem to be difficult at all because the people of India are closer to their mythology as the modern Irish or British people are to Celtic or Greek legends. The Indian people are deeply conscious of their culture, their rich past. They still grow up absorbing the myths and legends of the country. Here, it is almost a custom to recite the mythological stories to the children and along with their growth they naturally develop a strong fascination to this golden treasury of the myths. The public recitation of tales from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, pointing out its contemporary relevance is even now a living tradition. The influence of the epics on our national life is so dominating and far-reaching that, if a world view is required to make literature meaningful in terms of
shared human experiences, then the Indian epics offer a widely accepted basis of such a common background which permeates the collective unconscious of the whole nation.

The conscious use of myth is a technique adopted in Indian fiction for enhancing the effect of contemporary situation. Reflecting on the utility of the use of mythical reference in Indo-Anglican novels, Meenakshi Mukharji (1974:8) observes:

...since most of these myths are part of the heritage of all Indians regardless of their language, using myth as a symbol for the Indo-Anglican novelist is an excellent artistic solution of the problems arising out of the heterogeneity of his audience. The contemporary novelist is preoccupied with the idea of expressing the ‘Whole of modern life.’ In undertaking such a feat, James Joyce turned to the traditional framework of the *Odyssey* and the influence of the total European literary tradition...for Indian writers, a preoccupation with the Radha-Krishna legend or an allegory based on Draupadi’s choice of husbands would provide a similar vital connection. The violence before and after partition becomes a re-enacting of the Kurukshetra fratricide.

Myth strengthens the functionality of the fiction; history justifies the claim of the text on actuality. Meaning and truth are influenced by their historical position and cannot be set apart from history. The authenticity of the literary text lies within the reader’s imagination and the structure of the text ensures the place of the reader in the fictional world. Hence, the need for re-writing the epics in terms of contemporary history arises. The writers like Shashi Tharoor with an informed awareness so as to redefine themselves and their identity in the context of their Indo-nostalgic roots, to evaluate and reposition their past assert images of identity, community, myths, history and culture. The fictional text making important attempts to challenge and dismantle the colonial impact on the psyche handle the delicate issues of culture, history, political and economic power structures and their complex ramifications within the personal and public construction of national identity. Myth authorises socio-cultural patterns and sometimes validates and creates new ones. It embodies the rights, duties and obligations of man in relation to his environment and the physical world. It is
connected with the history of man, depicting the present as well as the past. Myth incarnates the world of reality; it is apprehended through nostalgic experience. Myth comprises in itself the fundamental conventions of the cultural and interpersonal relationships. No social culture can isolate them since these myths have become part and parcel of its nostalgic infrastructure. With the strata of culture, the interlocking of myth comes into being. Myth basically expresses those events which throws light on the relationship and privileges of important characters and therefore, indirectly expresses the contemporary ethos. It creates the family, society and the collective unconscious. They are in the light of world-cultures the powerful media to recognise the individual culture. That is why, the writers draw on the inexhaustible vitality of myths. Ultimately myth is concerned with the quest for understanding the significance of nature and culture. Myths make the past intelligible and meaningful. They relate past with the present for the continuity of myth is largely with reference to the present. The function of myth is to serve as an imaginative and symbolic structure yielding Indo-nostalgic sustenance to a society. In the words of Gould Eric (1981:28):

...Myth is a synthesis of values, which uniquely manage to mean most things to most men. It is allegory and tautology, reason and unreason, logic and fantasy, waking thought and dream, atavism and perennial archetype and metaphor, origin and end.

Mythical patterns have been produced by Indian English writers, surviving after the disappearance of the historical tradition. When history is transformed into myth, it loses accuracy of facts but gets lasting effect on human mind. These myths are born out of Indian history. Myth and history being the twin objectives of literature namely delight and instruction which go hand in hand in the new texts cover with both nostalgic considerations and social concerns. The newly liberated writers like Shashi Tharoor evoke the colonial past in an effort to dismantle Eurocentric notions of history and de-mystify colonial heroes. Since literature has its roots in history past or present. Both myth and history posses their own ideological underpinnings. The postmodern text moves back and forth in terms of time-space reality depending on the situation. Such text uses myth both for meditations and subversions accordingly. They elevate or subvert the myths for
delineation of truth. In the words of Raymond Williams (1977:123) the use of
myth in exploring contemporary history:

...in the subsequent default of the particular phase of a
dominant culture. There is then a reaching back to those
meanings and values which were created in actual societies
and actual situations in the past, which still seem to have
significance, because they represent areas of human
experience, aspiration and achievement which the dominant
culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses or even
cannot recognize.

As a matter of fact, the sole function of myth lies in reconciliation of an
original event to interpret and explain human nature in the modern context. And
between the new meaning and the old event, there lies an ontological gap which
fills with an adequate symbolic representation. The ancient myths survive in the
modern times with all their problematic intensity as they deal with the numinous
and the sacred. Myth clarifies man's place in the universe. They are like mirrors
that reflect man's inner self; they touch the dazzling heights of transcendence,
explore the depths of the context, they make clear the modern sensibility or the
modern consciousness. The modern man perceives truth of his own self in
tremendous significance in the contemporary time because of their universal
appeal. In contemporary milieu, the artist's vision encompasses the conventions,
myths, legends and rituals of Indian patterns highlight the peculiar problems that
beset the contemporary society. The Indian English writers have to search
mythical microwaves that facilitate communication in the realm of timelessness
with the experience of the immediate present. It is a creative challenge for them to
discover the mythology of our own ancient culture to forge significant Indo-
nostalgic patterns of fiction. In this regard Meenakshi Mukharjee (1974:131)
avers:

...Because the Indian people...are still closer to their
mythology than the modern Irish or British people are to
Celtic folk-lore or Greek legends.

The use of myth in Indian English writing can be made meaningful if the
novelist shifts, selects and orders the chaotic material by dropping the myth in a
new perspective without spoiling its essence in order to transform it to the
moments of contemporary times. Perhaps the selection in utilising the myths, not
for art’s sake but for the sake of society, will go a long way in evolving a rational attitude towards myths. Most of the Indian writers have tried hard to probe deep into the realm of our past experience and by connecting with the present one; they have succeeded in making the contemporary reality clearer and more meaningful. Indian English writers started making a conscious use of myth much later.

Myth authorises socio-cultural patterns and sometimes validates and creates new one. It embodies the rights, duties and obligations of man in relation to his environment and the physical world. It is connected with the history of man depicting both present as well as the past. The difference between myth and history is the record of occurrences, whereas myth incarnates the world of reality. History implies logical reasoning; on the other hand myth is apprehended through emotional and nostalgic experience.

1.10 A Study of Culture under Indo-nostalgia:

When we talk about Indo-nostalgic portrayal, it is the portrayal of an image of India with the revelation of her culture and its rich heritage. Culture is an exploratory term which means the sum total of all that is reflected in the mode of life of people, their thought processes and outlook on life, social structures, values and customs, their needs, aims, aspirations and national commitment, expressed through the arts and letters of country. So, the best way to measure the culture of a nation is her literature. It is the literature that adequately comprehends and represents the inner and outer life of a nation.

The notion ‘Indian consciousness’ means the awareness that, India historically has her own cultural identity and to project the image of India is not only a means to transmit her own cultural identity but also to create an awareness of this identity in the minds of her own people and the rest of the world. India has undergone profound changes throughout the ages and simultaneously formed and preserved a sense of identity. The dynamics of her contemporary evolution as well as her traditions and the realities of her modern life naturally are reflected in the novels written in modern India. The Indian novelist in English makes an attempt to deal with the cultural traits of modern India. The awareness of India as a nation, is at the head of his mind, mainly because he is writing for a larger audience both inside and outside India. In this regard Shukla (2002:8) admits:
Destiny. T. Ramakrishna's *The Dive for Health* and *Padmini* are the best instances. In this connection, William Walsh (1964:57) frankly confesses:

> It is hard for us to take the references to the Indian scene, the agricultural tradition, the vast distances, the terrible poverty, the profoundly significant relegation...but the very fact that they have gone on creating and not catering with an originality of experience. There is consciousness of their own country's milieu. With their personal experience and theoretical application, they have transformed the material into literature that is universal in its artistic appeal.

**C| Meta Fictionality:**

The postmodern Indian English novels are highly meta-fictional in nature. Their protagonists are self-conscious. These novels bring out the artistic rendering of the sociological, cultural and even the political dimensions of the Indian life. These novels attempt to define new historical dialectic and a sense of place. Using revolutionary technique of Indo-nostalgia, writers like Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and Amitov Ghosh question the existing power structure. These novelists deconstruct well established notions of history, tradition, family and patriarchy.

Exploring the postmodernist and a fashioning technique, Shukla (2002:36) asserts:

> ...In the nineties we can see the attempts made by an Indian writer to natives post modernism, to see how ancient and modern discursive and signifying practices prevalent in the homeland can be interpreted into the novel a western genre. They have framed their narrative in the epic, Puranic or other Indian structures. They have exploited the form as well as the contents of *Panchatantra, Kathasaritsagara* and other Indian narratives.

Contemporary Indian writing acquires special significance in a world identified as 'A Global Village' in which movements of people, technologies, capital and culture constantly establish new traditional links. The publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* heralded a new era in Indian English literature. The following years came Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*, Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate*, Amitov Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*, Upamanya Chatterjee's *The Last Burden*. Commenting on the novelistic revolutionary writers, Narendra Kumar (2002:14) avers:
...A peculiar thing about the Indian novel written in English is its diasporic nature. This trend gets strengthened and confirmed in the nineties. Many novelists like Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Shashi Tharoor, Amitov Ghosh, Gita Mehta and Amit Chaudhari are exploring the life in this country from afar.

1.11 Thematic Preoccupations of Indo-nostalgia:

Indian novel reveals the Indian character and Indian life. The writer and his audience share a similar background and common experiences because the cultural units in India tend to be aliened on thematic lines such as religion and ethnicity. The creation of Indo-nostalgia in Indian novels is a novel experiment specifically done with nostalgic experience and it is the process of progressive self-discovery for the nation. This creation of a distinctly Indian consciousness and its appropriate expression in art distinguishes Indian fiction from that of another nation. In fact, these novels achieve a universal vision through the representation of a real slice of Indian life.

A] The Theme of Hunger:

The theme of hunger is rooted in the Indian novels. The people in Indian villages live from hand to mouth to earn their bread. They face periodic outbursts of hunger and famine and pass through harrowing experiences of starvation and utter poverty. Major novels in English have emerged on the theme of the tragedy of hunger and such novels produce a convincing treatment of this theme which is potentially rich in human interests as well as powerfully imbued with the larger force of Indian struggle for independence. For instance, the hero of Anand’s novel Coolie is a victim of hunger. Bhabani Bhattacharya’s So Many Hungers is a direct indictment of a man made famine. The sad recourse of Ira in Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a Sieve to prostitution to save her dying child and brother is another instance in this regard.

B] The Theme of Portrayal of Rural Life:

A large bulk of Indian English novels portrays rural life of India - the life of the tillers and dwellers of the cottages. India is predominantly an agricultural country and the problems of the village are the problems of the nation. Ramesh Chandra Dutta’s The Lake of Palms and The Slave Girl of Agra, Sardar Jogendra Singh’s Nur-Jehan and Nasrin, A. S. P. Ayyar’s Baladitya, and Three Men of
...Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth, Amitov Ghosh and Upamany Chatterjee are our University wits. Nurtured in the St. Stephen’s milieu, they have given a new direction to Indian English fiction. They are the worthy successors to Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao. What characterizes their fiction is technical innovativeness and linguistic virtuosity.

Thus, Indo-nostalgic writing is somewhat loosely defined term encompassing writings, in the English language, wherein nostalgia regarding the Indian subcontinent, typically about India, represents a dominant theme or strong undercurrent. The writings may be memoirs, travelogues or inspiring arts by real life experiences and in part by the writer’s imagination. This includes both mass-distributed ‘Indo-Anglican’ literatures put out by major publishing houses or literary magazines or poetry, including material published initially or solely in webzines.

Certainly, Indo-nostalgic writings have much overlap with post-colonial literature but are generally not about heavy topics such as cultural identity, conflicted identities, multilingualism or rootlessness. The writings are often less self-conscious and more light-hearted, perhaps dealing with impressionistic memories of places, people, cuisines, only-in-India situations. These writers show signs of ‘long distance nationalism’ concomitant with the rise of nationalism within India against the backdrop of booming economy. Accordingly, another common theme in indo-nostalgic writing is ‘Rediscovery’ or its cousin ‘reconnection.’ Thus, Indo-nostalgic writing is more of a showcasing India with all its fancies and realities of culture and rich traditions. These writings represent all of its Indian outputs with verisimilitude.