Chapter I

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Literature coming from bilingual cultures demonstrates how the tension or interaction between different cultures, languages and systems can be utilized for narrative purposes. The fiction itself is a cross cultural phenomenon. It follows the models of the West. It is the result of the meeting of two cultures. Therefore, we witness in the culture contact two sets of values coming into conflict with each other, each struggling for its own supremacy over the other. The cultural consciousness represents a healthy blend of authority and experience in a complex human situation though the situations have been aggravated by social, historical and economic changes. In fact, the logic of cultural transition compels new ways of self-differentiation, new forgings of identity, continuity and affiliation.

Cultural crisis has been one of the most favourite themes of Indian-English as well as Anglo-Indian writers. It presupposes an awareness of the interaction between two cultures and an attempt to come to terms with them. The Indian-English writers such as B. Rajan, Mulk Raj Anand, Santha Rama Rau and Raja Rao have dealt with it in a uniform manner. There is usually a hero who has stayed in the West and, on his return, is faced with the problem of adjustment. The protagonist is initially enamoured of the West but soon realizes that it is his own country where he belongs. In The Twice Born Fiction Meenakshi
Mukerjee studies how the theme is handled by individual writers and comes to the conclusion that "the Indo-Anglian novelist more often than not is trying to reconcile within himself two conflicting systems of value."

Cultural crisis in Jhabvala's fiction has social, cultural and spiritual dimensions. In the social context Indians and Europeans meet, fall in love, get married, and face either mutual dissonance or familial friction. In the cultural context they face the problems of adjustment of diverse backgrounds. Jhabvala is, of course, very much concerned with the problems of European men and women trying to get adjusted to Indian society and its mores. In the spiritual context she portrays Europeans who are fascinated by gurus, the torch-bearers of India's ancient spiritual heritage. The spiritual element in these gurus may be bizarre or genuine, yet the charm they hold for Europeans is unmistakable. The relationship between Indians and Europeans is thus varied; it has at least three prominently portrayed dimensions in Jhabvala's fictional world. Jhabvala as an artist in the realism of fiction thus seeks three kinds of reality, the social reality, the cultural reality and the spiritual reality. She is pre-eminently a novelist of domestic life, its joys and sorrows, its harmony and friction, its fulfillment and frustration. Since she is concerned with a money-civilization in its domestic setting, she seeks to present the material reality which is significant in the metaphysic of her art. However, this metaphysic in her cosmos has also a spiritual dimension partly revealed in the charm that Europeans feel about the gurus, the inheritors of India's spiritual glory. In this way Jhabvala's quest for the material
reality is supplemented by, and harmonized with, her search for a spiritual reality. This dual quest finally leads to the basic unity of her art in which the real and the ideal, the material and the spiritual are harmonized into a unified vision of her art.

The Expatriate tradition evolved out of Britain's encounter with India and found its most powerful expression in the genre of fiction. Through the two centuries of British rule fiction writers have analysed this encounter. Though some have supported and others criticized the Imperial policy of separatism with regard to India, nearly all the writers have raised significant questions about its validity. Being in a state of exile themselves, the possibility and desirability of assimilation in an alien land was a dominant concern in the writing of the expatriates. India became independent in 1947, but the concern persisted. Writers like Paul Scott, Philip Mason, Jon Godden and Rumer Godden continued to question the ideology that had kept the two races apart for two centuries and to analyse its effects on both.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is one of the European writers currently writing about India. Born in a Jewish family, she was awarded, from her childhood, of her racial history of rootlessness, and having married a Parsee was exposed to a racial history of exile. She has also been an expatriate thrice over. In consequence, she brings a greater degree of personal involvement to her exploration of assimilation in India than her predecessors of the expatriate tradition for most of whom their state of exile was incidental and temporary. The extent and nature of
Ruth Jhabvala's involvement is perceived in her complex response to the question of cross-cultural assimilation as revealed in her autobiographical writing and the manner in which this response is transmuted into the varied responses of her Western characters. In her last novel written in India, *Heat and Dust*, the novelist structurally interlocks two planes of time, fifty years apart, in order to examine the differing depths of the alien's penetration into the separate India's of 1923 and 1975. Drawn from different segments of Western life both past and present, her Western characters represent, each in a special way, some aspect of their creator's quest for assimilation in an alien country. With Ruth Jhabvala's racial and personal history of exile this amounted to a compulsion.

Her Indian characters also represent aspects of this quest. One of Ruth Jhabvala's major contributions to the fiction written by expatriates in India is her introduction of the Intra-Indian context into a tradition of writing that obsessively viewed India as it affected the European. In her first five novels and in many of her early stories, Ruth Jhabvala explores Intra-Indian inter-actions on the cross-generation and cross-familial levels. The clashes and resolutions she depicts, in this early phase of her writing career, reflect in a vicarious way, her own predicaments and their resolutions vis-à-vis India.

The expatriate novelist is, by and large, conditioned to grapple only with the issues that relate to his own race in India. The Englishman's position and prestige, his burdens and predicaments, his joys and
sorrows, his strength and his weakness, his inability to understand the
native character, his obsessive race-consciousness and his faith in the
rule Britannia are all reflected in expatriate writing. What is conspicuous
by its absence is the intra-Indian context which lay well beyond the
boundaries of British social life in India. Nowhere at any point, prior to
the fiction of Ruth Jhabvala, has this tradition revealed an interest in the
culture, religion or psyche of the native except as it affected the
European.

The novels, like other literary species, emerges to of our interest
in other human beings, in other men and women, their thoughts and
passions, their problems-social and emotional. Our delicate manners,
complexities, idiosyncrasies, abnormalities and other finer and subtler
things of life are examined by a mature artist in his creations. The novel
is comprehensive in its convas. It is a complete picture of human life
both inner and outer. It studies human life on every plane of its existence,
moral, social and political. It also studies our inner life i.e. thoughts,
passions, emotions and feelings. Meredith rightly defines: "it to be an
actual summary of including both The Within and Without of us."

The modern novel has traveled on diverse paths leading to different
directions and some pointing to no destination at all. We are confronted
by different schools of fiction, different types of novels, different
techniques or plot construction and characterization, and different angles
of approaching the problems of modern life.
The twentieth Century novelists have laid great stress on the art form of the novels. In the first few decades of the twentieth century the novels were mainly confined to the discussion of problems confronting us in social life. The Edwardian novel was essentially a novel of ideas including in its scope a free discussion of all kinds of ideas, scientific, social, political, industrial and so forth. The Edwardian novelists considered it to be a sin to escape into a world of romance and psychology when the gaping wounds of social life were clamouring for reform and healthy treatment.

The note of disillusionment with material values of life was sounded by the psychological novelist of the age such as Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf, and by a few critics or modern life like Samuel Butler, Aldous Huxley and E.M. Forster. In their novels we notice the tendency of scoffing at material values and realistic portraiture of the sordidness of life. E.M. Forster is a severe critic of this materialism, and his Howard End is a bitter attack on the business mind and worship of business in industrialized England. Forster attacks the upholders of moral and aesthetic values of life.

In respect to the above mentioned facts we can see the artistic skill of novels in Indian writers. Not only the writers of abroad but also of India have written many novel in English language. Indian writers have adopted English as a mode of expression. Their composition is
known as Indo-Anglian literature. Indian writing in English, therefore, certainly opens the doors of cultural contact between his own country and the rest of the world.

Indo-Anglian literature is rich in every direction of literary branch, but it is the ‘Indo-Anglian’ fiction that has put India on the literary map of the world and brought her home to foreigners as never before in the history of international cultural relations. It is the Indo-Anglian fiction that has opened a window for the foreigners through which they can see India as Indians themselves would like to see her.

The Indo-Anglian fiction opens out a strange exotic field of racial intermixture and mutual impact of two cultures rooted in two entirely different back ground: one very ancient and conservative, the other modern, scientific and progressive; the one surrendering to the supernatural, destiny or the theory of ‘Karma’, the other trying to make best of life in the worst of circumstance. The conflict and resolution of these two cultures form an interesting study of the Indo-Anglian fiction.

Among Indian novelists of the pre-independence period Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Kumara Guru, K. Ahmad Abbas, Ahmad Ali, S. K. Chettur, S. Nagarjun, A.S.P. Ayyar are important figures. For other novelists of the post independence era, special mention may be made of Bhawani Bhattacharya, Dilip Kumar Roy, Khushwant Singh, Rama Rao, Ruskin Bond and Sudhin Ghose.

The women novelists of the post-Independence era, special mention be made of Kamala Markandaya, Prawar Jhabvala and
Shakuntala Shrinagesh, promoted Indian writing in English to an admirable height. Jhabvala has six novels to her credit e.g. *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1958), *The Householder* (1960), *Get Ready For Battle* (1962) and *A Backward Place* (1965). As she is a lovely dweller of Delhi, she expands her vision to the whole of Indian landscape. She is both Indian and Anglo-Indian. She touches the East and the West. Relationship between men and women is her forte. But over-consciousness for such relationships at times confuse the emotion and sentiments of the characters in her novels. She has either been abroad or has deep and lasting impact of the English life and culture upon her. Her novels display rare and happy blend of the cultures of the East and the West. They disapprove Rudyard Kipling's maxim, "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet".

R.P. Jhabvala is indeed a very talented artist. She has achieved an international reputation as a novelist and short story writer, though she seems better known abroad than in India. The achievement of Ruth Prawar Jhabvala as a literary artist is distinctive and rather limited at the same time. It is distinctive because she has cultivated and demonstrated the qualities of a literary artist which are her own and which naturally emerge from a social and cultural milieu peculiar to herself. This peculiar paradox of her attainment as an artist is, in a way, rooted in the field of her literary effort, and is also co-extensive with the range and quality of her fiction.
Jhabvala has sometimes been described as an 'inside-outsider', and other times as an 'out-side insider'. These apparently contrary expressions are more meaningful than mere high-sounding literary labels since they impinge especially on her personal and literary situation. She is essentially a European writer who has lived in India and who has given to her experience of life and society in India an artistic expression. From the European, literary vantage point she may seem an 'outside-insider', while from the Indian artistic viewpoint she seems an 'inside-outsider'.

Whether Jhabvala is an 'inside-outsider' or outside-insider' is not, however, the most significant characteristic of her literary achievement. What is perhaps far more fundamental is her awareness of man, society, human and moral dilemmas and the aesthetic design that she projects on her experience. This awareness also includes her knowledge of the human heart, both in its individual and universal contexts, as well as the inward understanding of the social and cultural patterns and values.

It is the purpose of this study to inquire how for Jhabvala's fiction demonstrates this quality of awareness and to what extent her art may be considered enduring and valuable. Since no work has been done on this aspect of Jhabvala, this thesis is an humble attempt to assess the cultural crisis in her fiction and also to assign her due place among women writers of Indo-English Fiction.