CHAPTER -II
THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN FICTION IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

It is generally agreed that the twentieth century consciousness grew simultaneously with the First World War. There was rapid spread of education. The proletariat was gradually recognised as a force throughout the globe. Rapid industrialization and revolutionary trends in economic distribution led to greater purchasing power. The printed matters got a wider sale and in such an atmosphere the novel as a form in literature became popular, as K.S. Rammurti observes:

The rise of the novel in India was not purely a literary phenomenon. It was a social phenomenon as much, rather the fulfilment of a social need. It was associated with social, political and economic conditions which were comparable to those which favoured its rise in England. The appearance of the novel as a literary form in nineteenth century India as it did in eighteenth century England synchronised with the rise of individualism and with all the consequent political and social reorientations which followed. Also, its rise was one aspect of the dawn of what may be called the modern era in Indian literature, an era which was itself ushered in by a fast changing social order.1

Literature is never created in a vacuum. It is the consistent endeavour of the creative writer, living in a particular time and space, and responding to a community, of which he is an important and articulate participant. The relation between literature and society is always
Amongst all other literary forms, the novel is a more socially conditioned form of writing than any other genre. It intends to depict an exact picture of the society of the day. Therefore, the study of the novel, from the sociological point of view, may be said to be significant. The sociology of novel shows a deeper and more important concern for society. If this is not taken into account, the utility of the novel as a means of developing sociological inquiry, is deprived of the greater part of its interest. The deep affinity between society, novel and the novelist can be brought into use as a means of sociological research by relating the content of the text to the society and its social structure.

The relation between society and literature has been studied by literarians and critics. They generally assume that a correlation exists and could also be found out in the moments of change, but they have not paid much attention,
as to how the social process enter into literary creations. A sociological interpretation of the novel elucidates the contemporary life as depicted in the novel, and also tries to know how far the literary account is helpful in anticipating new dimensions of social change.

The writer, more particularly the novelist, can play a vital and effective role in the presentation of culture, and in the reconstruction of society by expressing and depicting the thoughts and ideologies which would speak of new values. The Indo-anglian novelists are not mere mouthpiece for ideas and thoughts; their writings are never created in a vaccum. They are the outcome of sensitive minds and, therefore, there is a deeper involvement of society in its varied forms.

The Indo-English novelists, by presenting new progressive, rational and scientific values, the values of freedom and equality, are trying to induce awareness in the society. They have depicted the deteriorating condition of the country, the oppressive system of the society, the condition of man as a social being and as a private individual, who in both cases, apparently seems to be adjusted and well equipped, but is actually exploited and oppressed. Almost all the Indo-English novelists like R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao,
Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgonkar, through their writings, have attempted to change this condition of man and his surroundings and therefore have induced revolutionary ideas and ideologies in their writings. In this context speaking about the Hindi novelists of the pre and post independence era Sulochana Rangaya Raghava observes:

They have tried to project the revolutionary ideologies through the younger generation, because they feel that, it is the young blood, the progressive mind which would be able to do away with the old, outdated traditions, which have become meaningless and which are disorganizing the social set up.3

The principle also holds good in case of Indo-Anglian novels. The Indo-English novelists by projecting the realistic conditions of the Indian society, have served as an instrument of social change.

Though realism in Indo-Anglian novels has had certain connections with the European novels, the art of fiction or novel writing is not entirely new as assumed by certain critics. In fact the art of story telling was a regular phenomena in the ancient Indian soil. In this context Dr. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar observes.
Who can resist even in these days of sophistication the Ramayana, the Mahabharata or the Iliad? The banishment of Rama on the very day fixed for the coronation, the outrage of Draupadi in the Kuru Court, the vengeful Bhima slaking his thirst in the blood of Dhusasana, the killing of the sleeping warriors by Asvitham, these are among the archetypes of human agony and superhuman endurance that take us back to dawn of 'civilisation', the ultimate springs of the Jungian collective consciousness.

There can never be a dispute about the fact that India has a rich and hoary tradition of storytelling. Without being chauvinistic or prejudistic one may claim that some of the Indian legends and tales which have come down to us in the form of epics and puranas are not only the oldest but the greatest in the world. But the tradition was essentially an oral one. The novel as a medium of story-telling and art form is essentially of the West and represents a tradition of fictional writing which is totally different from India's time-honoured traditions of story-telling. In this context V. S. Naipul rightly observes:

The novel is of the West. It is part of the Western concern with the condition of men, a response to the here and now. In India thoughtful men have preferred to turn their backs on the here and now to satisfy what Dr. Radhakrishnan calls 'the basic human hunger for the unseen.' It is not a good qualification for the writing or reading of novels. It is part of the mimicry of the West, the Indian self-violation.
The art of story telling appealed more to the heart than to the mind. It was fully moral, mysterious, supernatural and real. It was never a realistic trend. Because the ancient Indian society was a group society. It never granted the individual human being the significance attached to him in the West.

But as K.S. Ramamurthi observes:

The average Indian predilection for the mysterious and the unseen, for understanding human life in terms of destiny, 'Karma' and after life rather than in terms of character, in terms of human virtues, failings and weaknesses militates against the writing of the kind of realistic prose fiction whose principal concern is man in society, man in relation to forces which are naturalistic and mechanistic rather than supernatural or superpersonal.

Hence realistic prose fiction or the novel first reached India in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century. At that time it might have appeared to the Indian intelligentsia as an alien form. But the trend, if at all it existed, did not remain for a long time. During the late nineteenth century it was absorbed into the Bengal literary tradition. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's [Rajomohan's wife] was in English. It was followed by the English translations of Durgeshmandini, Kanalkundala, Vishavriksa or The Poison Tree, Krishnakanta Uvil or Krishan Kanta's will), Andadamath and Devi Chaudharani.
Bankim's reactions to the changing Indian society was vivid in all his novels and finally it got a concrete shape in his *Bande Mataram* though not a novel. His primary concern was how to restore the national self-respect. While creating a new tradition and attempting to restore the self-respect he never forgot the Indian society of the time. While he was a master of the romantic and the historical novel, he also frankly confessed, "I am a teacher or nothing." Speaking on the Western influence on Bankim's mind K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes:

If romance was his forte, he was no stranger to comedy or humour either. In both *The Vasco Tree* and *Krishnakanta's Hill*, a married man falls in love with a young widow, and there are the usual consequences. The sad plight and disturbing influence of the widow in Hindu joint families and, generally, in Hindu society is to prove a recurrent motif in Indian fiction. In his historical novels, Bankim was obviously inspired by *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan* and Scott's historical romances.

By now it is evident that the novel is adapted to any culture which shares some of the rational, scientific, inquisitive tendencies of the West, and also the modern, almost worldwide, curiosity about society. In the modern world all such interest develop with education and literacy. So the novel is becoming international. Arguing on banal
of the Indianness of Indo-English fiction, T.D. Bruntton observes:

India had many of the cultural conditions favourable to the novel before she came into contact with Europe. But now she has social forces actively favourable to the production of fiction: a large audience, an educated class, a new questioning of age-old socio-religious dogma, and a consuming urge for knowledge and interpretation of society. Henry James's complaint about the difficulties for the practising novelist inherent in the amorphous monotony of American society is well-known. The Indian novelist has, instead, an extraordinary cultural multiplicity to contemplate, embracing differences of age, caste, religion, wealth and politics. It is a common mistake, to regard these factors as background or social setting, the raw material for the scenario-painting against which the action is set. On the contrary, these divisions and contrasts are dynamic; the novel's drama has to contain them and concretely objectify them. The novelist is complementary to the modern sociologist, psychologist, even economist (one thinks of 'Robinson Crusoe'). The Marxian novelist will seek to propagate a doctrine, but even he, if his work is to be worth anything, must objectify his dialectic and describe his reactionaries (who need not be villains) with dramatic sympathy.

After Bankim Chandra it was Rabindranath Tagore who came into prominence in the literary field. Though he is renowned as a poet, he was a fine novelist too. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar in this context observes:
Rabindranath Tagore is for the many the author of the English *Gitanjali*, a poet incarnating the spirit of India, a prophet of the religion of Man. But Tagore was a very considerable novelist too.

Tagore achieved success with his *Choker Bali*, translated into English as *Binodini* by Krishna Kripalini. By the time Tagore wrote novels individualism in life and literature had come to be realised. Out of the three major novels *The Wreck*, *The Home and the World* and *Gora*, the last one certainly merits distinction. It was written with a view to projecting his vision of the individual's role in resurgent India. *Gora*, the hero of the novel, grows up as an orthodox Hindu till he discovers that he is but a foundling, his mother being an Irish lady. His father had been killed in the Sepoy Mutiny and she had taken shelter in a Hindu home. She also died after giving birth to a child. He grew up under the care of Krishna Dayal and Anandamoyi, his foster parents. He has a very similar background as that of Tom Jones. *Gora* by losing all, gains all. He declares "Today I am really an Indian: in me there is no longer any opposition between Hindu, Mussulman and Christian. Today every caste is my caste, the food of all is my food." He also salutes his foster mother Anandamoyi as the image of Mother India. It has been described by Krishna Kripalini as the epic of India.
in transition at the most crucially intellectual period of its modern history. It is to Indian fiction what Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is to the Russian.

Rabindranath sincerely desired that the East and the West should be brought together. His 'Shantiniketan' was a new experiment in living. In the words of Iyengar,

The cultures of the East were to be brought together, and a living relationship was to be attempted between the West and the East: the East was first to find its own soul, and then help the world to transmute the seeming West-East dichotomy into a creative unity and thus achieve a broad base for human understanding and purposive activity.

Tolstoy had a great influence on the writings of Rabindranath. As Tolstoy painted the Russian society in the seventies, a society that he always condemned, similarly, Rabindranath painted the late nineteenth and early twentieth century society of rural India. Love and intrigue along with romance is dealt nicely by both the novelists as it existed in respective societies and, thereby, revealing the strength and weakness of the human characters. The stage of *War and Peace* is more than Russia; it is Europe. Tolstoy is concerned with the meaning of the vast conflict of forces which were then sweeping across the continent.
Tolstoi views men as the tools of history, not its creators. Generals and politicians do not understand the forces they fancy they control, and even Napoleon in Tolstoi's view is only a posturing adventurer, helpless once the tide of events runs against him. The historic protagonists in the history for whom Tolstoi shows most sympathy is not the Czar, not Speransky, the brilliant liberal Minister, but Kutuzov, an old, sluggish soldier who will not fight if he can help it. But at the same time he has enough instinctive sense of the Russian character to know when the momentum of history is in his favour. Likewise, Gora is a victim, a tool in the hands of the changing history. He is not the creator. He succumbs to the changing Indian society which is subtle and affectionate and at the same time revolutionary. Gora is a byproduct of the changing Indian society and a representative of a realistic secular India.

After Bankim and Rabindranath came forward Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. He was a bold imitator of both till he came into prominence. Some of his novels like Srikanta have been translated into English. As Iyengar observes:

Sarat Chandra identified himself with the down and outs, and boldly portrayed the tears and sweat of the lower middle and have not classes.
After Sarat Chandra the prominent names that illuminated the literary sky of Bengal are Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyaya, Manik Bandyopadhyaya, Tarasankar Bandyopadhyaya, Manoj Basu and Naini Bhaumik. More or less all of them were influenced by West either through their education or the influence of the British regime.

Till independence the common villain of the novels was the British rule. Whatever may be the theme or the plot the river of nationalism and 'Swaraj' flowed with an anti-British undercurrent. The novelist immediately after independence felt a kind of void so far as theme is concerned. However as India's independence and partition came simultaneously the novelists shifted their attention from 'Inquilab' and 'Indi' to 'Partition' and 'Pakistan'. Partition brought about a different kind of misfortune — that is religious fanaticism, fundamentalism and communalism — to a point of climax.

During the pre-independence days the novelist in India had the English novelist as his model for its form while his theme, story and plot remained essentially Indian. But after independence the novelist in India showed more inclination towards American and European model. The Russian influence is equally vivid at this period of growth of the
English novel in India. At the same time the Gandhian influence that existed since 1920 till independence had not lost its impact on the novelists of the time. Because Gandhi still continued to be the accepted and adored superman of both the Hindus and the Muslims except a few fanatics. Hence Gandhian literature enjoyed a wide readership.

Just as the pioneers of the English novel, like Defoe, Richardson lost their importance and significance in the history of the English fiction all because they were followed by more famous writers like Scott, or Jane Austen or by more sophisticated writers of fiction like Henry James or Joyce or Woolf, the pioneers of India fiction in English, even with all their inadequacies and limitations do have an important and significant place in the history of that fiction.

But when the writers of English fiction made their appearance on the Indian literary scene they had an advantage which neither Defoe nor Richardson had. They had very good models of English fiction to look up to in the novels of Scott, Jane Austeen, George Eliot and a number of Victorian novelists. Their acquaintance with English literature, with the fiction of the pre-victorian and victorian eras should have been good enough to warrant a tendency to imitate these models. But the question is whether they imitated it or not.
There are two different views, one favouring the theory that many of the novels of the earlier periods were 'sorry imitations of the early Victorian novels' and another reiterating that Indo-Anglian fiction has not been imitative though Indo-Anglian poetry has been. In this context Prof. Alphonso Karkala observes:

Most of the verse writers, piously imitating the English poets, wrote only mediocre poetry; but the prose narrators, less imitative in their attempt to write fiction in English, looked homewards to Indian life and Indian scenes with which they were familiar. None of them followed the more popular Victorian novelists.12

The charge of imitativeness is a general charge made against all Indian English writing. But it can never be said that the novelists of India directly imitated their Western counterparts. Rather most of them were educated in English medium public schools either in India or abroad, and had a keen sense of love for the English language as they had a strong feeling of hatred for the British regime. In this context K.S. Ramamurthi observes:

......it has to be admitted that if Indian fiction in English had really been imitative in the pioneering stage, it should have been only more successful and less susceptible to adverse criticism. The fact is that it was anything but imitative. Thematically, formally and structurally, they were experiments and not imitations.13
It is also an accepted fact that the novel in English grew up as a literary genre almost simultaneously with the novels in regional literature. This leads us to the view that the rise of the Indian novel in English was not the result of mere imitative tendencies but part of a general creative surge which, favoured by certain definite social conditions, manifested itself in almost all the literatures of India including the literature in English.

Though Bankim Chandra’s *Rajmohan’s Life* happens to be an earlier work, Lal Behari Dey’s *Govinda Samanta* is also an equally significant attempt at painting social realities of the time. *Govinda Samanta* is not a great novel which merits a certain distinction equal to *Rajmohan’s Life*. But it is a realistic story of a Bengali raiyat, Govinda Samanta, the son of Badan Samanta of Kanchanpur, a village in Burdwan. The Samantas are a typical joint family of rural Bengal and Badan lives with his mother Alanga, his wife Sundari and his brothers Kalamanik and Gayaram whose wife is Aduri. The novel is a succession of events and incidents extending from the birth of Govinda Samanta to his death. There are marriages, childbirths, funerals and festivals, all of them described most colourfully and vividly. One of the most important events in the family history is the sudden death of Gayaram by snakebite, leaving his wife Aduri a widow. She suffers as did all
widows in those days, but her sufferings and the death of Gayaram himself were only part of the scheme of things which the rural society had learnt through the ages to accept passively. Similarly, Malti, the daughter of Badan suffers under mother-in-law, a 'rayabhagini' whose real name is Madhamukhi which means 'the nectar-mouthed'. But Malati does not accept suffering unquestioningly and pleads with her husband for separation from his mother. But Madhwa, her husband, is almost a fatalist and he rules out the idea of their living away from his mother.

The mother in her turn protests all at once that she would get a better and more thankful wife and Madhwa faces from his mother 'an inundation of nectar and whirlwind of ambrosia'. All these revelations are typical of the rural society of the times. Govinda is betrothed to Dhanmai. Adhuri, the widow, goes on a holy pilgrimage with Alanga and two others. Alanga dies on the 'holy field of Orissa'. Aduri, now called to join the mendicant order, wanders about the country, in the company of her 'pious lover', Prem Bhalta. Govinda clashes with the Zamindar of Kanchanpur who is a 'Bengal Tiger' when the later forces his raiyats to make the customary contribution (known as 'mathot') for the wedding of his son. Kalamanik too revolts against the Zamindars. Madhava revolts against Mr. Murray, the indigo planter and both of them lose their lives in the encounters that follow.
Finally, an epidemic in 1870 claims countless lives and an attack of this disease leaves Govinda Samanta utterly weak and prostrate. The hero braves trial after trial, but as misfortunes come in terrible succession, he succumbs to ill-health and suffering.

Arguing on behalf of the stark social realities that Lal Behari Day has attempted to paint in his novel Govinda Samanta K.S. Rammurti observes:

Thus Govinda Samanta is more a tale, a saga than a novel with a well-developed form. Its value lies chiefly in its ethnographical realism. It is one of the few novels of that period which give us authentic ethnographical information. We get descriptions of food, dress, pastimes, social and religious customs, expressions of endearment, terms of vituperation etc., and they help us to know a great deal about institutions, interpersonal relations, attitudes and values relating to that period. Govinda Samanta is full of such pictures and accounts. It tells us about the 'ghataks' or match makers, the marriages, festivities with their 'horida' (turmeric), the 'chandimundap', the 'amudaphoja', the 'amudaphoja', the 'andarmahal' (zenana), 'rangmahals' (Bengal lights), the horrors of 'sati', the 'hats' or weekly markets, the bathing tanks the parliament of women with their 'Kalasis' and about the pastoral scenes. It is so rich in its ethnographical description that it takes on the shape of a saga, almost an epic of rural India. Kanchanpur (the 'golden town') need not be a particular village in Bengal but ethnographically a typical Indian village.
One thing is visibly clear with the publication of Govinda Samanta, i.e., individualism and realism as two important features were realized in Indo-English literature. The novelist in India as well as the readers were interested in the individual's crisis in a changing Indian society. The individual's voice as a protest and prophecy as well as a victim and sufferer of the prevailing systems and customs were duly appreciated by the readers in India. Because the situations were very near to the real life of the times. In this context K. S. Rammurthi once again observes:

Govinda Samanta adopted with studious preciseness the manner and tone of actual biography and came very near indeed to the genuine novel in a manner comparable to that of Robinson Crusoe. Like The Coverly Papers and Robinson Crusoe, Govinda Samanta marks too the birth of the new democratic spirit which compels the writer to turn his attention to the individual life and individual character in relation to their environment and sets the seal of literary approval on heroes of economic individualism as did the works of Addison, Steele and Defoe. Again, if 'imitation of reality' be a test, it should not be difficult to call Govinda Samanta even a tolerably good novel, for it is a good illustration of what may be called 'formal realism'.

However, after the advent of independence the choice of theme took a different shape for the Indo-English novelist. Because, the Englishman in India was no longer
the traditional villain. The joys of freedom was clouded by the sorrows of partition. The nation was filled with an air of corruption, communalism, inefficiency and poverty. The post-independence scene of India is observed in the following words:

"Communal, linguistic, casteist passions were seen to come into the open with accelerated frequency. While talk of 'emotional integration' filled the air, the terra firma only witnessed the agonizing spectacle of a divided house with a deceptive floor and a precarious roof." 

The speed at which partition was accomplished with very little regard to an orderly and systematic transfer of population between the two new states led to a holocaust. Even ten million people took to the road in search of a new home. Trains packed with Muslim refugees, all of them killed, arrived in Pakistan with messages scribbled on the sides of the carriages reading, 'A gift from India.' In turn the Muslims sent back train-loads of butchered Sikhs and Hindus with the message: "A present from Pakistan." So, the horror accompanying the transfer of population has been a major theme with the Indo-Anglian writers. This has been treated differently by Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khuswant Singh and K.A. Abbas.
Though this theme need not be treated adequately here, one thing deserves mention in this context, the influence of Gandhian thought and literature was still massive on all these post-independence writers. Gandhi personally, as has been mentioned earlier, hated the English rule in India but not the Englishman or the English language. He came to be influenced by Western ideas in three ways: by reading, by experiences derived from the political protests and movements he led in South Africa and by personal contact with the like-minded people.

His curiosity about the London vegetarians resulted in close friendship with the vegetarian group and led to diverse intellectual activities. It is through the vegetarian group that he came in contact with people of various professions and interests in London, some of whom were to play an important role in the shaping of young Gandhi's mind. In this context Rama Jin observes:

His encounter with the vegetarian group served his compelling need to comply with and justify the vegetarian diet in a country where meat-eating was considered to be natural.17

As it has been stressed earlier that Indo-Ingian novels are never direct imitations of the West. But the Western influence on the progressive English writers of India is an accepted truth. The influence may not be
direct, but the indirect influence, as is evident from a closer study of Gandhian mind and literature, excells even the limit of what a direct influence could have possibly achieved. And the Gandhi-influence prevailing from 1920 to 1947 and even after that on Indo-English writer's can never be denied. For this reason let us have a closer analysis on the Western influence on the thinking and shaping of Gandhi's mind.

Gandhi was deeply influenced by Mr. Hill's recommendation for self-control and purification. He was in constant intellectual contact with those Western humanist thinkers who criticised modern industrial civilisation. The intellectual atmosphere in the London of the 1880s and 1890s was surcharged with many other issues such as Darwin's theory of evolution, Bentham's utilitarianism, Morris Dobb's Fabian socialism, Marxism and so on. Gandhi was thoroughly acquainted with all the 'isms' of his times and letting only those views influence him which agreed with him. For example, when asked about Marx in 1943, he said that he could not share with Marx the view that the use of violence could usher in non-violence. He was equally sceptical of Art for Art's sake, the basic concept of the aesthetic movement led by Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde. Gandhi believed in the doctrine of 'art for life's sake' and not 'art for art's sake'. In this context Rama Jha observes:
For Gandhi, art had a purposive function to perform. In this regard he seems to have been influenced by artists like Tolstoy whose "what is art", Gandhi claims to have read in the bibliography of "Hind Swaraj".18

Gandhi was introduced to the Bhagavad Gita through Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of it as "The Song Celestial". Tolstoy's argument for personal simplicity and reduction in materials and his idea of a planned programme for attaining moral righteousness through self-control reinforced Gandhi's own view of life. And finally, to conclude the Western influence on Gandhian thought, life and literature, Rama Jha's observation needs to be quoted:

It is accepted by most of the interpreters of Gandhian thought that Gandhi was a well read man though he was not a systematic reader. Being a social and political activist he used to refresh and deepen his contact with Western as well as Indian thought mostly during his jail terms. . . . . . . . . . . .

This list includes works of Tolstoy, Carlyle, Ruskin, Edward Carpenter, Max Norden, Thoreau and Emerson and Indian scriptures like Patanjali's Yogasutra, Upanishads and Manusmriti, etc. 19

The Gandhian influence on the English writings in India is felt at various levels. The writers in India have chosen simplicity in sentence patterns which is a definite Gandhian influence. The writers have also occasionally
preferred bilingualism to monolingualism. They can handle their own mother tongue as well as English with equal ease. In the words of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar:

"......the stress has been more on simplicity and clarity and immediate effectiveness than on ornamentation or profundity or laborious artistry, and this has been as marked in English writing as in writing in the regional languages."

On the thematic level there was a considerable shift of attention from the city to the village as Gandhi was a lifelong champion of the cause of the villagers and the downtrodden. Such themes were nicely treated by novelists like Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

Anand was the son of a coppersmith, and his mother came from the rural peasant class. He had a thorough knowledge of the plight of the rural folk. Sometimes he is described as belonging to the lowly and the lost in the traditional rural Indian society. In his novels the pains and sufferings of the freedom movement along with its allied features and happenings like the Satyagraha movement, the three round table conferences, the Indian National Congress, the movement for the upliftment of the Harijans and such other things found proper place and, thereby he delineates a realistic picture of India of that time. His famous novels
Untouchable and Coolie essentially speak for and on behalf of the lowly and the lost. Speaking on behalf of Anand as a novelist of the downtrodden Indian man Iyengar observes:

In his special preface to the second Indian edition of Two Leaves and a Bud (1951), Anand has given us a hint of this early fire and drive behind his first novels. In writing of the Pariahs and the bottom dogs rather than of the elect and the sophisticated, he had ventured into territory that had been largely ignored till then by Indian writers.

Anand himself was educated in London and Cambridge. He also obtained a Doctorate in Philosophy, and was well-versed in European literature. But he preferred to become a writer, and devoted his life as a committed artist writing and fighting for the cause of the underprivileged Indian rural man.

Mulk Raj Anand's contemporary R.K. Narayan also preferred to live in a world of journalism and writing. Those were the days when journalism as a profession did not pay much dividends. That is why he chose writing. His works like Swami and friends, Bachelor of Arts, The Dark Room, The English Teacher, Mr. Sampath, Waiting for the Mahatma, The Guide and other works merit distinction. R.K. Narayan was more interested in probing psychological factors though the political atmosphere prevailed in his novels as in
Anand's. By probing deep into the psychology of the human characters he could give us a clear picture of the group of people with whose psychology and background he was most familiar. 'Malgudi' became his 'Casterbridge.' But its inhabitants are essentially human and have their kinship with the entire humanity. His stuff was essentially Indian though the language was an alien one. Justifying the need for 'Indianness' of the Indo-Anglian novels, James H. Cousins observes:

"... if they (Indians) are compelled as an alternative to writing in their own mother tongue, let it be not Anglo-Indian but Indo-Anglian, Indian in spirit, Indian in thought, Indian in emotion, Indian in imagery and English only in words... Let their ideal be the expression of themselves but they must be quite sure that it is their self, not merely faint echoes and shadows, from others or from the transient phases of desire."  

R.K.Narayan bears ample testimony to the force of English as his creative medium of expression when he remarks:

"... I am able to confirm, after nearly thirty years of writing, that (English) has served my purpose admirably. This is further confirmed even by the Western writers as well, Warner states,"
Indian writing in English shows a definite character and is in no way more or less suited as a mode of creative expression than American or Australian English.23

Another contemporary of Anand and Narayan is Raja Rao. Raja Rao happens to be a child of the Gandhian age. His works like The Serpent and the Rope and The Cat and Shakespeare are deeply philosophical. Dr. A.V.Krishna Rao states with reference to Kanthapura:

Raja Rao has made an effective literary transcript of the Gandhian myth by artistically attaining the reality of his tale to the poetry of truth. Narrated by an Indian grammar, the prose is naturally racy with a rhythmic quality and a certain poetic sensibility throughout the novel.24

And Dr. L.S. Krishna Sastry describes it as,

the gamut of the whole of the Gandhian revolution.25

And Iyengar is of a similar kind of opinion when he says:

Kanthapura is a veritable grammar of the Gandhian myth—the myth that is but a poetic translation of the reality. It will always have a central place in Gandhi literature.26

Anita Desai occupies a distinguished place among the Indo-Anglian writers whose maiden novel Voices in the City
put her in the front rank of contemporary novelists. She is more concerned with the inner world of sensibility rather than the world of action.

Ruth Prawor Jhabvala is one of the liveliest and most urbane of fiction writers. Born of German parents she lives in India. As she is conditioned to a background very similar to that of the Indian writers, she brings a different kind of outlook to bear on the contemporary situation in urban India - the traditional codes of conduct vis-à-vis modern aspirations.

K.A. Abbas and Humayun Kabir have also made significant contribution to Indo-Anglian literature by their writing in English language. Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandeya have established themselves as good women writers describing the beautiful scenic as well as the ugly and superstitious countryside of India. Nayantara Sahgal's best contribution to Indian writing is her Prison and Chocolate Cake. It is a beautiful book in spirit and style giving charming and vivid picture of India. In the words of Dr. B. Shyamala Rao,

It is a book that no one can read without pleasure. And the severely beautiful description of the Indian countryside would alone make it a treasure. She has established herself as a leading
example of India's emerging writers — possessed equally of a cool, analytical mind and broad human sympathies. In her novels she portrays the complete human relationship against the backdrop of India's current political discontent. Her novels add a new dimension to her literary excellence.  

Ahmed Ali, Salchandra Rajan, Shanta Kumar Rao, Saroj Cornsnon have each one of them made a definite impact in their respective branch of this genre of Indo-Anglian literature. Each one of them has attempted to present before us the conflict, dilemma and crisis facing India after independence. The other two novelists, who have made distinct achievement in this field are Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgonkar who deserve special treatment in the following chapter.  

To trace the lineage of realism in relation to society in novel form we must look back to Western, more particularly to the European, and Russian novelists like Kafka, Balzac, Tolstoy, Zola, Ibsen and others.  

Balzac has been called one of the most necessary authors of this century. This ambiguous adjective indicates his key position as a writer in touch with the chief currents of romanticism and realism. Sometimes he is called as the chronicler of French society. It is said
that no one can profess to know anything about the age of Louis Philippe who has not studied the work of Balzac. In the words of Abraham H. Lass and Brooks Wright,

The characters are drawn from all classes, from the aristocracy to the underworld. In all, there are about two thousand of them, and their careers can be traced from one novel to another. Not all the books were completed; we have the titles of fifty more works which were sketched out or merely projected. The novels are grouped together under broad headings: scenes of private life, of provincial life, of Parisian life, of military life, of country life, philosophic studies and analytic studies. Balzac's classification suggest the work of great taxonomists of natural history, like Linnaeus. He conceived humanity as a group of related species, the provincial being different from the Parisian as the peasant is from the shopkeeper, all of which he proposed to describe and catalogue.

If the Western influence is traced out in the novels of Manohar Malgonkar, we find a similar kind of treatment of various aspects in his novels; the provincial life being completely different from the palace life, and the civilian life being treated as nicely and clearly as the military life of the times.

So far as realism is concerned Balzac is famous for his excellent example of the description of the Maison Vauquer in his novel Pere Goriot, with its air of shabbiness,
respectable poverty. Every spot on the curtains and every flyspeck on the picture frames is enumerated. Yet the total effect of such a description is more than realism. One feels that Balzac's description is not so much a boarding-house as a state of mind, and that the seedy drawing room is a projection of the personalities of Mme Vouquer and her lodgers. Similarly Paris is not just a city, but a spiritual condition, brilliant, corrupt, built on broken hopes and ruined lives, the city of Baudelaire's poetry. Balzac is certainly a realist, and yet most readers sense that his novels are a little more than real. What brings these social documents to life is the author's powerful poetic imagination.

This kind of portrayal of a realistic picture of the society in which the novelist lives or shares with the customs and traditions can be viewed in most of the pre- and post-independence novelists like R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya and others. Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers* is a wholesome picture of the multifaceted hunger facing India during the war. The novel deals with the destiny of a whole populace and not that of an individual, while the hunger for food is depicted among the villagers of Baruni, Kajoli hungers for love. While
the soldier who enjoys Kajoli hungers for lust, Kajoli's hunger for fame remains unsatiated. Abala Bandhu and Samarendra are epitomes of the hunger for money. Rohoul's involvement in the discovery of science and Kunal's sincere involvement in the war can be definitely said as their hunger for fame and fame. The hunger of Devata is for the general welfare and upliftment of the entire humanity. The cow Mangala symbolizes the supreme hunger for sacrifice.

As K.K. Sharma observes:

Published in 1947, Bhabani Bhattacharya's first book, So Many Hungers, an authentic record of the Bengal Famine of 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942, it has as its central theme man's hunger for food and political freedom. Since Bhattacharya is a staunch believer of the theory that the novel should have a social purpose, his stories abound in realities, quite often bitter such as the Bengal Famine of 1943 in So Many Hungers, the tragedies of freedom struggle and partition, the evils of poverty, corruption, ignorance, superstition, exploitation, greed and sexual perversion in his other novels.

In the early nineteenth century Tolstoi could influence the whole of Russia, the Europe and the Asian countries with his publication of War and Peace. The historical background of the story is dominated by Napoleon who had
declared himself emperor and was moving towards Central
Europe. Domestic politics in Russia is reflected in the
chain of events that take place in the novel. The Czar
had come to the throne in 1801, when Russian culture, at
least among the aristocracy, was permeated with French
influence. Alexander himself was stirred by the ideals of
European liberalism, and, for a time, under the ministry
of Count Speransky, Russia saw the beginnings of
constitutional reforms. After 1812, a nationalist reaction
set in, and a revulsion against things of French Speransky
was dismissed and the conservatives came into power. By
1825, the tyranny was so oppressive that some of the
nobility attempted an abortive revolt (the Decembrist
Conspiracy), which ended disastrously.

As Tolstoi made a nice study of the Russian society
in War and Peace and Anna Karenine depicting the lives of
the Russian nobles, aristocrats and military men, Manohar
Malgonkar made a meticulous study of the nobles, lords and
military men in a fast changing Indian society in his
novels like A Bend in the Ganges, Bandicoot Run and
The Princes. Tolstoi may not be a model for Malgonkar,
but he is certainly an example to derive inspiration so far
as historical background in novel form is concerned.
Through this historical background the good story-teller
brings out a realistic picture of life as Tolstoi did.
Realism as a trend in the novel form can also be traced in the works of Flaubert. By temperament Flaubert was a romanticist who forced himself to be a realist. Because, deep at heart he was concerned with the social problems of his times. His unhappy marriage and feeling for Platonic love brought for him a melancholic temperament. Besides, he shared with the writers of the romantic generation a melancholy temperament, a taste for irony, a dislike of the bourgeoisie and a love of exotic places like Egypt. On the other hand, his native romanticism was disciplined by studied objectivity, by the care with which he excluded his own personality from his writing, and by the meticulous realism with which he recorded the minutiae of ordinary life. An interesting thing about his novels is that the tension between romanticism and realism appears in the alternation of themes of his novels. In *Madame Bovary* the alternation is played by Charles Bovary and Emma. Charles Bovary's life is a transition, which he forced upon himself, from romanticism to realism. Emma, a true romantic by temperament is a victim of the realities of life. She is a victim of debauchery, fraud, fornication and disloyalty. As Abraham H.Lass and Brooks Wright observe:
Maclams Bovary, in short, is the classic novel of the realist movement, whether one reads it for its psychological insight, for its solid use of realistic detail, for its masterful handling of irony, or for the authoritative control of its style. Some critics have argued, and with reason, that it is the most perfect novel of its century.

Flaubert is a good European model who appeared just in time to influence and give direction to the novelists of India who have ventured to portray the struggle between individual and the society, like R.K. Narayan in The Guide, Bhabani Bhattacharya in He Who Rides a Tiger and Music For Mohini. There is an alternative flow of romance and realism in The Guide. Raja, the individual, is nicely portrayed and developed as a character influencing and being influenced by the society. The mystic elements are but a touch of Indianess in the novel. 'Kalo' and 'Lekha' in He Who Rides a Tiger are individuals who fight against a caste-ridden society. The romance of conquering the higher-ups in the social system is ultimately shattered, though the lower-castes view 'Kalo' as a conquerer. The protagonist plays an active role against the caste-ridden society and the novel brings before us the hard realities of the social systems prevailing in India. While commenting on He Who Rides a Tiger, Dr. Ram Sewak Singh observes:
Bhattacharya not only records the misery of the poor, but misery of the rich also. The irony of situation very ably presents the ghastly contrast between affluence and poverty, power and helplessness, goodness and hypocrisy.

Similarly "Mohini", the protagonist in *Music for Mohini* goes on fighting amiably against the old traditions that permeate the atmosphere of the 'Big House'. Her music, the single echo of the flute is contrasted with the discordant orchestra of the "Big House" till the echo of the Flute becomes a part of the orchestra. And in all these novels we find the novelist taking an objective view of life, like Flaubert or Tolstoi.

Leaving aside the influential novelists of the nineteenth century, the twentieth century novelists, theorists and critics had made an immense contribution in shaping the mind and art of the Indo-English novelists, though the latter have never imitated the West in detail. Speaking on Forster's love for realism in novel, L. Chazamian observes:

A novelist, therefore, must not seek beauty in itself, 'art for art's sake' is excluded; he must strive for an equilibrium and harmony from which beauty will emerge of its own accord if the novel is well wrought. No hard patterns then, no absolute principles; only wide windows on the universe in order to be able to construct a fictional world true to reality.

In the modern times the human being no longer remained the simple social animal bounded geographically and
physiologically. Man has become an element of the compact globe whose spatial frontiers have been abolished. Whether this angle of approach is directly apparent or not, it inevitably colours all contemporary work. It has made the novelist a kind of submarine diver plunging solitary towards the depths of interior oceans. In the words of F.R. Leavis therefore,

"Modern artist is the centre of social consciousness."

Henry James, theorist of the novel as well as novelist, casts his shadow over the present day scene. As L. Cazanlian observes:

Around the signwar situation represented by his twofold heritage, by the refinement of his perception, and by his tireless quest for elucidation, he created an aesthetic of fiction, which, while not excluding existent concepts, asserted itself with sufficient strength to justify our regarding him as the 'Shakespeare' of the English-speaking novel. His influence on the general evolution of that genre, more than his residence in London and his tardy naturalization, assure him a place in British Literature.

Leaving aside the world of novels, realism and naturalism remained as a predominant trend in the plays of twentieth century playwrights like Ibsen, Shaw and H.G. Wells. As instruments of social criticism in literature, realism and naturalism became a consistent trend in the problem plays.
As no literary genre of a particular time can ever remain completely uninfluenced by the other genre, trends in drama and criticism of twentieth century had its influence on the novel form. So the novelist came closer to the individual, the society and its problems. And a concern for society led to a concern for problems arising out of socio-economic conditions, poverty, the world wars, the Bengal Famine, the Gandhian movement, independence and partition that India witnessed in her history. It is in such an atmosphere emerged the major social novelists like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Kamala Markandeya, Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, K.A. Abbas, Khuswant Singh, Anita Desai and many other lesser known novelists in India.
NOTES


9. K.R. Srinivasa Lyengar, Indian Writing in English, p. 317

10. Ibid, p. 101


14. Ibid, p. 59
16. Ibid, p.320
18. Ibid, pp.16-17.
23. A. Warner, A Short Guide to English Style, p.180
27. Dr. B. Shyamala Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya and his Works, p.5.
33. Ibid, p.1314