Indian fiction in English is about a century old. It started under two rather incompatible influences: the love for the language was imbibed from the British in India and the desire to present and interpret Indian life in fictional terms for the benefit of a much larger audience that availed itself of the international medium than an audience which an Indian vernacular can cater to. In the early stages, the remarkable features were an unsure grip of the alien language and an unconscious inclination to flatter the British by imitation by writing readable stories on the themes which would not be uninteresting to the anglicised. A growing aspiration for achieving the country's freedom and the love-hate relationship with the ruling race further complicated the situation, but this nurtured the next stage of fictional development. The Indo-Anglian novelist had not come into his own, because he had not been able to shed his self-consciousness and sense of inferiority. Moreover, to depict Indian life in its variety and subtlety in English demanded an intimate knowledge of English and of the nuances of expression.

The first — rather faint but definite — notes of protest of resurgent nationalism against alien domination were audible in 1909 in Hindupore and The Prince of Destiny,
which became, under Mahatma Gandhi's potent influence, quite clear and persistent, in Kandan, the Patriot about a quarter century later. The Gandhi-magic had begun to operate and by the mid-thirties these notes became bold, impatient and furious. The Indo-Anglian novel, at long last, had been coming into its own with the emergence of Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao. The Indo-Anglian novelist was aware of his peculiar problems and endeavoured to face the challenges of creating literature in an alien language. Meenakshi Mukherjee has felicitously termed Indian fiction in English - 'The Twice-born fiction'. This is apt, because the Indo-Anglian novelist's sensibility is shaped by two potent forces viz., the indigenous content and the alien form. This sensibility was forked, ambivalent, bifocal and dualistic. He had to prepare an amalgam of the Western form and the Indian content. This was, indeed, an arduous task and would result in an artistic imbalance of too much strain either on the one or on the other. There has been a good deal of experimentation and some novelists have been successful and some others of the younger generation also bid fair to do so.

In such a socio-political context as indicated above, independence would form a vital and rewarding line of demarcation between two distinct phases of the country's literature. The difference, of course, is between the stages of initiation and maturing, between the seed and the blossom. Pre-Independence Indo-Anglian literature
originated under the British patronage and thrived under the cyclonic impact of the campaign for freedom spearheaded by the Mahatma who was a miracle. Post-Independence Indo-Anglian literature, especially fiction, received its greatest impetus from the long awaited winds of liberty. An analysis of Indo-Anglian fiction before and after Independence shows that the most momentous event of Independence has had a definite impact on Indian life and literature. The pre-Independence era marks the period of beginning and early growth of Indian fiction in English and it naturally, therefore, reflects the essential roughness, immaturity, naivete, absence of deliberate technical experimentation and of artistic thematic organisation. It, however, seems to establish some sort of harmony between the Oriental thematic concerns and the Occidental art-forms.

The depiction of the family in pre-Independence Indian fiction in English is unsophisticated and traditional, because like other Indian social institutions viz. caste, marriage, the family also did not come under such stresses and strains as they all did after 1947 owing to the impact of Westernisation, modernity and freedom. R. K. Narayan and K. Nagarajan expressed their faith in the traditional values governing the family, but also suggested, as for instance, in Nagarajan's *Athawar House*, how the separatist tendencies had begun to affect the solidarity of large joint families. Narayan, before 1947, dealt with the family in its mono-tier structure and asserted the ancient
cultural values enabling the family to survive in the teeth even of a grave crisis. Raja Rao seems to put aside the family claims in favour of more urgent and vital national concerns. Anand looks at the family from the viewpoint of economic-political impact and shows its general decline on account of industrial progress.

The Indo-Anglian novel after 1947 indicates that cumbersome family units are now quite out of the contemporary social context. These novelists deal with different aspects of the family, but their attitude is detached and objective. Even those novelists who generally uphold Indian culture and tradition also seem to admit that the days of large joint families are gone for ever. Narayan, the high-priest of the solidarity of the family, testifies to the slow but steady disintegration of the family in *The Vendor of Sweets*. In his latest novel, *The Painter of Signs*, he goes a step further and accords centrality to the theme of family control. Of course, the subtle tone of his irony cannot be missed. Anyway, this shows the novelist's greater regard for the contemporary social scene than for his personal views. The widening generation gap is also critically surveyed. These novelists seem to believe that though the large joint family has lost its sway, the fundamental Indian family values are not going to be fully wiped out. Besides Narayan, Marath S. Menon (*The Wound of Spring*), Romen Basu (*A House Full of People*), Attia Hosain (*Sunlight on a Broken Column*) seriously
study the social changes affecting the course of the family in future.

In pre-Independence times, the caste system is treated in a traditional and orthodox manner. The two points related to this theme that usually recur are the degeneration and devaluation of the Brahmin, especially the priest, and the attitude of the high castes to untouchables. These novelists clearly resent caste discriminations, oppressions, ostracisms and excommunications, but they do not launch their attack against them as furiously as is done in later fiction. They show the loosening of caste bonds regarding interdining. Before 1947, an inter-caste or inter-community marriage was almost a taboo. However, Umrao Bahadur and D. F. Karaka portray such marriages in their novels with cinematographic ease. Nagarajan and K. A. Abbas depict inter-caste marriages and the consequent social reactions in a more convincing and psychological manner. After 1947, the caste-distinctions and discriminations have practically disappeared, except in matrimonial alliances and elections. The Gandhi magic, economic stringency, industrialisation and urbanisation are the major factors that have made the caste system lose its grip. Only a few orthodox Hindus still observe all caste-injunctions regarding taking food etc. The post-Independence Indo-Anglian novel faithfully traces these relaxations in caste-regulations.

These novelists have subtly pointed out the irony of
the lower castes themselves wishing to retain the caste
system and to reach the higher rungs of the caste ladder.

This further complicates this peculiar Indian socio-logical
problem which is viewed with all gravity by the novelists.
The pity is - this is not merely a sociological problem
but a real religio-sociological one which makes confusion
worse confounded. Independence has liberalised the Indian's
general outlook on life and nourished in him a spirit of
cosmopolitan humanism. He aspires to be a world citizen
and to evolve a Pan-Indian social order and this he cannot
hope to achieve unless he begins to be charitable at home.

The Indian novel in English faithfully reflects this socio-
logical metamorphosis and seems to suggest that slowly but
steadily the curse of casteism has been wearing out. The
novel reveals the perspective in which the foreigner
regards the Hindu caste system and comments on the popular
misconceptions of the foreigner - this speaks of the post-
Independence spirit of frank criticism and self-defence.

The pre-Independence Indo-Anglian novel reflects the
conventional standpoint of society regarding the problem
of marriage. However, now and then, a Dutt or Madhaviah
would express his revolutionary views on the problem of
widow remarriage. Anand and Narayan satirise the dowry
extortionists in their different styles. A daughter was
regarded as a 'migratory bird', but also as an unenviable
liability. An arranged marriage was the general rule and
a "choice-marriage" an exception. S. M. Mitra, Umrao
Bahadur, Karaka and Abbas treat an inter-caste or inter-racial marriage with sympathy. Nagarajan depicts an inter-provincial marriage, symbolising the substitution of old orthodox social values by new liberal ones.

Marriage, being a delicate texture of sentiments of love, has come to assume a very complex form in modern times. In India, it is integrally merged with considerations of the family, caste, religion, money, and, therefore, most marriages, until recently, used to be arranged marriages. The novel portrays Indo-Western marriages and their problems and generally indicates the clash of cultures and the consequent failure of marriage. Independence has brought in its wake the claims and compulsions of modernity in a new socio-economic structure and this has had a grave impact on the enlightened and the Westernised. The Indo-Anglian novel reflects this new spirit and is undisguisedly critical of factors having adverse bearing on marital happiness. It also reveals that the age-old cultural bonds are loosening but not broken. The tug-of-war between the forces of tradition and modernity is ostensible in the attitude of the older and younger generations to marriage. The young revolt against authority and want to reshape the concept of marriage in the light of changing ways of life. This indicates their social awareness, but the process of re-assessment and re-establishment of social values must essentially be a tardy one.

Mulk Raj Anand's pre-Independence fiction observes
the sad lot of the pariah with understanding and compassion. Though his views on the lowly are influenced by the Gandhian philosophy, he does not hesitate to criticise what he thinks to be the shortcomings of that philosophy. R. K. Narayan is the same sympathetic but unaffected observer of middle class life. Raja Rao shows how all the three socio-economic classes can unite under the shadow of a national crisis. There is sympathy for the suffering underdogs in Jogendra Singh's *Kamni* - as also in Bhattacharya's post-Independence novel, *He Who Rides a Tiger*, but the later novel has an artistic and well-planned sociological import. These pre-1947 novelists show how the ways of life of the wealthy and those of the poor are poles apart. They seem to show how the underdogs cannot shed their deep-rooted diffidence as well as class-consciousness.

The post-Independence Indo-Anglian novel notices the change in the attitude of one class towards another and expresses in unambiguous terms that class-discriminations and tyrannies must go. It views with sympathy the revolt of the younger generation against unjust class-concepts hugged by the older generation as also the awakening of a new class-awareness among the downtrodden but it also does not fail to bring out their retaliatory acrimony against the upper classes. These novelists appreciate their endeavours for the betterment of their ways of life. On the whole, these novelists feel involved in the process of evolving a Pan-Indian socio-economic order founded on
humanist socialism.

In the pre-Independence period, politics had come to mean chiefly India's fight for freedom. To write about politics in forthright terms would be tantamount to incurring the charge of sedition. The novelists expressed their unrest in a suggestive and indirect manner. Gandhiji's non-violent technique enabled them to depict the political predicament. *The Prince of Destiny* by Ghosh and *Hindupore* by Mitra, written in pre-Gandhi phase, deserve to be mentioned again as also Venkataramani's *Kandan, the Patriot* and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, written in post-Gandhi phase, for their authenticity of content despite their rather naive technique. D. G. Mukherji's *My Brother's Face* introduces a priest who used to incorporate the modern political myth of Gandhiji into the texture of his puranic narration. It seems probable that Raja Rao might have adopted this modern myth-making from Mukherji and made it all his own by his creative adaptability. Some of these novelists cannot keep out the sectarian tone of writing from their novels (e.g. Jogendra Singh and Umrao Bahadur) and survey the Indian political situation from the Indian angle only (e.g. S. M. Mitra). Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is the first significant Indo-Anglian political novel that evinces perfect harmony between thematic validity and technical awareness.

After 1947, many novels have the political situation of India before or after Independence as their background
and in few of these novels, the political theme is treated as the central theme. The political novelist must see to it that his political views do not vitiate the truth. He must substantiate that a moral order is beyond mere political 'commitment', which would grievously impair the artistic integrity of a novel as seems to be the case, for instance, in D. C. Home's *Floods along the Ganges*, *Some Inner Fury* and *I shall not hear the nightingale* present a more suggestive and artistically objective picture of the 1942 situation. Gandhiji aimed at establishing a more order even in the sphere of politics and, therefore, Gandhian novelists are blessedly free from the peril of thorough 'commitment'. Zeenuth Futehally and Attia Hosain show interaction between communalism and Gandhism and present the nationalist Muslim's outlook on Indian politics before Independence. Khushwant Singh, Malgonkar and Rajan (and recently, Chaman Nahal in *Azadi*) are fairly objective and dispassionate and lay bare the homicidal brutalities of Partition riots. Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* does not seem to succeed as much as one would expect owing to its technical flaw of shifting focus. Rajan's professional hyper-sophistication is his creative undoing. Anand comments on the post-Independence political situation in a disillusioned and desultory vein. Naya-ntara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* and *Storm in Chandigarh* depict real contemporary political situations and scenes: viz. the ambassadorial milieu and linguistic divisionism. Markandaya, Anita Desai, Dilip Hiro, Timeri Murari and a few
others indicate the absence of genuine dialogue in the Indo-English encounter by presenting the plight of Indian expatriates.

The pre-Independence Indian novel in English does not present any realistic or convincing picture of the princely Order. It generally deals with the court intrigues and corruption and neurotic princes' distorted and masochist sense of sex and the courtiers who are mere panderers and procurers. The Memoirs of a Maharaja's Mistress by an anonymous author illustrates how rank bad novels most of these were. S. K. Ghosh's The Prince of Destiny and S. M. Mitra's Hindupore – both written as early as 1909 – are exceptions, depicting how some of these princes were liberal and humane in their outlook and yearned to see their country free from the alien bondage. After Independence, the canvas is wider and more crowded in the novels on this theme and there is a tone of gravity rarely discernible in the pre-Independence era. The novel, after 1947, depicts the princely world in all its variety and complexity, glamour and gloom – the personal as well as the public involvements of the native rulers. It describes the political situation at the time of Independence, the repressive measures of the princes to curb the nationalist movement, their resistance against the Merger at first and then their helpless acceptance of it and their 'tragedy' after their being divested of their royal power. These writers are fairly objective and realistic in their treat-
ment and psycho-analytical in their method. There is a vital difference between the concerns of the novelists in pre-Independence and post-Independence times.

The Indian encounter with the foreigner, before Independence, was mainly that with the Britisher on account of the British rule. This encounter, after Independence, has a highly extensive range, because the Britisher is presented in his multiple roles and as an individual. The pre-Independence Indo-British relationship was vitiated by exploitation, misunderstanding, prejudices and inhibitions as revealed in Anand's *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud*. It was not possible then to directly depict the villainy of the British rule and the novelist had to manage to denounce a product or symbol of Western values, from behind some sort of a camouflage. ¹ The Englishman then was regarded as an unpredictable proposition. The Britisher's sense of racial superiority bred in the average Indian subservience, cravenness and toadyism. After 1947, the situation has been reversed. Indians seem to be eager to assert their equality with the English in all circumstances and at all costs. This often results in self-consciousness, self-complacency and the superiority complex on the part of the Indians as also in malice, cynicism and acerbity of the Britishers as revealed in Markandaya's *The Coffer* and *Daams*. The novelist has consistently portrayed the Irishman with sympathy, understanding and regard in pre-Independence as well as post-Independence times. Christian missionary
activities have been surveyed with a sense of grave concern, but this does not deter him from treating the missionary sympathetically on the human plane. The breakdown of dialogue between the East and the West relationships on the individual plane is indicated in the parting or in the feeling of estrangement of lovers from each other in a number of novels. The treatment of the encounter of India with the West brings out two rather incompatible levels of socio-cultural consciousness and ethos. This depiction acquires authenticity, because the novelist is supposed to have such reliable knowledge of Western life as would help him in assessing his Indian cultural heritage. His awareness of a Western audience might also be at the root of this. makes him hover between two cultures, two worlds, as symbolised by Sanad, in Sahgal's A Time to be Happy. The incompatibility and love-hate relationship in the Indo-English encounter is reflected in the failure of immigrants – blackbirds in England and whitebirds in India – to feel acclimatised in their adopted but alien environments.

Pre-Independence Indo-Anglian novelists affirm the average Hindu's firmness of faith which counteracted the missionary overtures for conversion. They criticise the Hindu's merely ritualistic and hypocritical observance of religion by their gesture of a truly religions sense by building orphanages and hospitals. They Hinduism is the best religion in the world as also his superstitiousness,
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blind faith and tyrannies practised in the name of religion. There is some serious effort to comment on the concept of Karma. They satirise the Brahmin priest and the Christian missionary equally. Anand and Raja Rao disapprove of the traditional forms of religion. Humanism is Anand's new faith as the Gandhian campaign for freedom is Raja Rao's.

The post-Independence Indo-Anglian novel not only brings out the modern spirit of questioning and scepticism but also emphasises the value of a real faith in life. It warns against faith degenerating into fatalism or fanaticism. It shows that the popular Western conception of Karma as mere fatalism is misleading and incorrect. The foreigner may favourably or adversely react to Hinduism, but he can never dismiss it as negligible. This analytical interpretation of religious philosophy is a positive boon of the post-Independence era. On the whole, these novelists interpret religion broadly but sometimes rather loosely. Their attitude seems to be one of rational inquiry and dispassionate revaluation; not one of servile acceptance as in the preceding age; it is generally fearless and radical, but sometimes casual and even impudent. They seem inclined to institute democratic and humanitarian values to evolve a new socio-religious conscience and to reorient the traditional religious values by establishing new forms of religion.

Indian novelists writing in English before Independence depict Indian culture from the traditional view-
point. They show now most Indians treat guests as sacred and strive to protect those who seek shelter. They illustrate how Indian culture honours woman and prizes her chastity beyond anything in the world. A stress on brahmaeharya and restraint of senses is an outstanding trait of Indian culture: some idealistic young persons took a vow of brahma-charya till India won her freedom as revealed, for instance, in Kandan, the Patriot. These authors present a very glowing but simplistic picture of Indian culture which sometimes betrays their consciousness of the burden on them to justify and assert the superiority of Indian culture.

Indo-Anglian novelists after Independence illustrate the traditional characteristics of Indian culture — its emphasis on the internal rather than the external, asceticism, unity in diversity, simple living and high thinking, respect for elders and women, regard for all religions, faith in Karma and other-worldliness, spirit of resigned and fatalistic acceptance, desire for conciliation, and synthesis. Traditional arranged marriages are honoured and an inter-caste marriage or a divorce is looked down upon. These novelists seem to suggest that the modern Indian woman is not all Nora, but is also not all Sita. They depict the conflict between authority and revolt and do not think all traditions to be faultless. They are aware of the awakened socio-cultural susceptibilities of the present age and seem to recommend that the traditional
values be reassessed. They view with concern the post-Independence cultural degeneration. They feel that the Western influence should be properly assimilated. Otherwise Indians would lose their identity. They admit the lack of understanding between the East and the West and yet some of them are optimistic about the possibility of cultural conciliation and synthesis. They seem to have rid themselves of their sense of diffidence and inferiority but still not of self-consciousness.

A comparative study of the pre-Independence and post-Independence works of some novelists, who started writing well before Independence and have continued to write since then, would reveal how Independence produced changes in their thematic selection and treatment, modes of experimentation and overall attitudes and approaches. The earlier novels of Mulk Raj Anand show that his writing is marked by freshness, spontaneity, originality, vigour, vehemence and vitality. He seems to be relatively free from ideological pre-occupations which over-weigh his art in the later novels, despite the themes practically remaining the same. It is ironical that Independence turned Anand into an Othello that had lost his occupation! Instead of profitably employing his incisive socio-political awareness and realistic artistic method, he preferred to get lost in the layers of distant reminiscences of his early life. His Seven Summers, Morning Face and Confession of a Lover do not show any thematic advance on the earlier
novels, but artistically they hold out a promise. Anand's post-Independence novels do not reveal any fruitful artistic or thematic change, probably because his creative impetus as well as the topicality of his 'problem' themes had nearly worn out.

There is nothing very spectacular about R. K. Narayan, the champion of the 'average'. Though his objectivity is lauded by all critics alike, it is significant to observe that the springs of his inspiration were autobiographical. His range is not very wide but his simple themes - studies of the middle-class family life - coupled with his unpretentious but adequate comic style furnish him with a broad base of mass appeal. Narayan's fictional world, before 1947, is a simple one: mono-tiered family yarns; fewer characters, incidents, subsidiary themes. His post-Independence fictional world is essentially, comparatively complex: stories related to more than one family; a larger number of characters and incidents; multiple thematic strains such as money, love, sex, power, art, religion, corruption, generation-gap and the crumbling family life along with the human weaknesses of average men and women, reflecting the post-Independence social scene; extension of the Malgudi locale; sophisticated technique culminating in a bifocal mode of narration and achievement of new dimensions in the art of tragi-comedy. Narayan, perhaps the most objective Indo-Anglian novelist, is a remarkable example of an author whose post-1947 fiction faithfully
and artistically reflects the changes brought about by Independence.

Raja Rao writes economically but brilliantly. His writing reveals his commitment to values of art alone. His melancholy, philosophic preoccupations and compassion, symbolic expression, myth-making faculty, nostalgic love for the past — these elements are noticeable in his fiction all throughout. His thematic concern, before Independence, was ardent Gandhian patriotism and he was nearer the reality than ever afterwards. His fiction, before Independence, is ostensibly unsophisticated because of his regard for Gandhian ways of life and the compulsive immediacy of his patriotic concern. His themes and technique, before Independence, are external, concrete, patriotic, simple and objective, whereas these, after Independence, are internal, sophisticated, complex and subjective. Raja Rao's ethereal sublimity, lofty concept of the novelist's craft and responsibility, gravity of his themes and technical experimentation and his unique equipment and attainment hold out a hope that his future fiction will enable Indian writing in English to earn an esteemed and permanent position in the republic of world literature.

K. Nagarajan is only next to the great 'humble' master, R. K. Narayan, in his objective and dispassionate art as a novelist. His pre-Independence novel, *Athawar House*, and his post-Independence novel, *Chronicles of Kedaram*.
both trace the process of social change affecting a joint family and a town respectively. *Athawar House* is a simple study of only one joint family, with a few simple, usual characters, stock situations, the third person singular mode of narration and a simple but adequate style. *Chronicles of Kedaram* has thematic variety and complexity and its canvas is wider, with quite a few interesting, artistic and rather complex characters and incidents, the first person singular mode of narration and a Wellsian sense of humour. His ardour for Gandhian philosophy is evident in both of these novels, but particularly in the later one. As B. Damodar Rao states, 'Nagarajan's novels do not develop into run-away successes,' These novels are unspectacular but sound. Like R. K. Narayan, Nagarajan too is a regional novelist but on a modest level. His themes are chiefly the family, religion and Gandhian nationalist politics and he traces how these are undergoing radical changes owing to the Westernised mode of life. Nagarajan deserves the benefit of the process of critical revaluation.

Some recently published Indo-Anglian novels point to the extension of thematic range and experimentation in the sphere of technique. *The Painter of Signs*, Narayan's latest Malgudi Chronicle, has as its theme an unconsummated, rather quizzical love story against the background of a hectic family planning campaign. It ironically reflects excessive and furious propaganda launched by the Central
Government for two-child families, cut to size. Narayan's ironical stance is clearly revealed in the fact that the impending marriage between Dizzy and Raman — with Dizzy's condition that they should have no children accepted by Raman — does not come off after all. Raja Rao, like Narayan, breaks his long silence with his Comrade Kirillov, caught in a contemporary predicament of emotional national pulls under the stress of his intellectual Marxist obsession. This rather short novel depicts the tug-of-war in the heart of the protagonist between his ambivalent Indianness and unIndian political ideology. Mulk Raj Anand's Confession of a Lover has the tonal sameness that one has come to associate with the already published two volumes of the seven-volume-long autobiographical extravaganza. Its thematic amplitude and intensity of range cannot be ignored in view of the authenticity of actual experience.

R. Prawer Jhabvala's A New Dominion is a satirical picture of the spiritual craze of the West as illustrated in the pseudo-spiritual quest of three alien young women Lee, Margaret and Evie, looking forward to a fake Swamiji's bringing balm to their agitated souls. Lee's sexual intimacy with the Swami supposed to bring about a total spiritual 'merger' indicates her huge self-deceit. The author's depiction of the tangle of the Guru-disciple relationship in the East-West confrontation, indicates her rather harsh and even onesided diagnosis of the ills of contemporary life and the ironic vision of a social realist. The
Indians Mrs. Jhabvala presents in this novel are hypocritical, callous, sex-hungry, — with only a few exceptions — which is rather an unjust picture from an insensitive Westerner's viewpoint. The novel marks a definite advance on its forerunners in respect of technique. R. Prawer Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* spans the historical (Olivia's story) and the contemporary (the narrator, Olivia's granddauther's story) by alternating swings from the one to the other. This novel is a probing kind, linking up the sociological conditions that prevailed in a small Indian town a quarter century before and after Independence and delineates the nature of Anglo-Indian relationship in all its intimacy. Jhabvala has certainly excelled herself in her thematic presentation and technical perfection, deservedly bagging the prestigious Booker Prize for 1975.

Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* depicts the problems of the Immigrants in England, aggravated by racial prejudice and hatred. Dilip Hiro's *A Triangular View*, Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*, Timeri Murari's *The Marriage*, Reginald and Jamila Massey's *The Immigrants* deal with the love-hate relationship of Indian expatriates with England. These novels also express the theme of social ostracism and isolation and Existentialist melancholia and psychedelia, bred and accentuated by the failure of love and marriage. The failure of marriage is also the theme of Chaman Nahal's *My True Faces* and Nayantara Sehgal's *Storm in Chandigarh* and *The Day in Shadow* which also probes into
the post-divorce dilemmatic situation from the viewpoint of a hyper-sensitive divorced woman hampered by children and bleak financial prospects.

Anita Desai's *Where shall we go this summer?* also delineates the same theme, but there is no release from the bonds of marriage in the form of divorce. Anita, with her unique talent and inherent sensibility and awareness of novelcraft, views the interior landscape, explores the estranged, psychedelic consciousness and tape-records the interior inharmonious notes and murmurs. To Sita, her 'pilgrimage' to the island of Manori has a two-fold meaning: an escape from the atrocities of 'civilised' life and a return to the land of innocence. This modern Sita, however, returns with her husband, Raman, back to her sophisticated groove. This is involved writing at its very best, but it certainly, at times, betrays conscious effort. The novelist's adoration of Virginia Woolf and her art is apparent in the symbolic parallels between this novel and Mrs. Woolf's *To the Light House*.

Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* depicts Nanda Kaul's release from the claims, demands and burdens of a sophisticated existence in an elite social set-up and her rehabilitation in her Simla Villa poised, as it were, between the snows of the distant Himalayas above and the sultry, dusty plains below. She has been trying to heal her psychic bruises in her treasured spiritual aloneness and
environmental aloofness. Then comes Raka, her great-granddaughter, as a perturbing influence in her secluded life. Raka's need for solitude is as urgent and compulsive as Nanda's and yet the two of them live their separate lives, drifting away from each other in their disparate worlds. Then, also barges in her former friend, Ila Das, old, lonely and bereft of love - once-rich but now-turned-almost-destitute. The climax is overwhelming in its impact - Ila Das is murdered and raped and Nanda dies of shock when she knows of Ila's grim and dark doom and Raka, in sheer ignorance of the thickening gloom of death, ignites a fire on the mountain which is replete with symbolic import. The novel is an unforgettable portrait of old age - its isolation, its burden, its gloom.

Markandaya's latest novel, Two Virgins, adopts a new method of narration: it is the usual omniscient mode but everything is sifted through Saroja's growing sensibility. Sometimes, Saroja mentally recapitulates her conversations with others, mostly with her co-protagonist sister Lalitha. These crisp, pithy conversations are recorded in the characteristic vein of the villagers. Markandaya started with a story set in a village and has reverted to it in her latest novel to bring out the onslaught of the material and urban civilization on the agrarian civilization. The novel, unfortunately, does not succeed like her Nectar in a Sieve.
Nayantara's *A Situation in New Delhi* deals with the life, career, and love-affairs of Debi, a minister in the Central Government. Her brother Shivraj, a great national leader, is dead but his potent influence is still alive and Debi is undoubtedly benefited by it. Dr. Usman Ali's fascination for Debi and Mrs. Ali's jealousy add a measure of interest to the story as does the sub-plot of Rishad—Debi's son—whose terrorist activities as well as his love for Suvarnapriya end with his death in a grenade explosion. The depiction of the contemporary Delhi life, especially, the ministerial as well as the University scene, has a tone of authenticity because of the novelist's political background and associations.

Nergis Dalal's *The Sisters* also delineates the marital fortunes of quite dissimilar but sophisticated twin sisters under a veneer of psycho-analytical portraiture. Hemal Celebrate, *The Inner Door*, reveals the hoax of a debonair Balyogi who, despite all his pomp of spiritual 'attainment', allows himself to be seduced by an American beauty. The novel is a scathing attack on the recent American craze for Yoga. Santha Rama Rau's *The Adventures* goes beyond Indian characters and locale. It shows how a woman manages to survive in a world of men—in the squalor and sordidness of postwar Tokyo and the intrigue and corruption of Shanghai. This is the first 'non-Indian' novel, in decades, after of course Karaka's *Just Flesh* (1941).
Arun Joshi, like Anita Desai, is one of the most distinguished of the younger generation of Indo-Anglian writers of fiction. His novels bring out the theme of isolation, disillusionment, renunciation, but his third novel, *The Apprentice*, fails to have its proper impact on account of too much stress on technical values under the load of which the creative sensibility seems to be staggering.

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is a worthy successor of B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, Khushwant Singh's *A Train to Pakistan* and Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*. *Azadi* is a vigorous portrayal of the travails of a family persecuted by the haunting psycho-communal forces released by the partition. The subject is full of great dramatic possibilities but Nahal is chiefly interested in portraying how these riots affect the fate and fortunes of the family of Lala Kanshi Ram. The author's depiction of the communal riots, looting and arson at Sialkot and the consequent sufferings of the Hindus is quite realistic. The plight of the refugees conveys and attacks on them and the naked parading of the disgraced, abducted and raped women—all these pass before our eyes like a procession of unending nightmares. The rehabilitation of the refugees described in the *Aftermath* succeeds in only muffling the vast tragic impact. This is a novel of epic proportions and it richly deserves the coveted Sahitya Akademi Prize conferred upon it. Chaman Nahal's *Into Another Dawn* has as its theme the East-West
synthesis which should signify internationalism, cosmopolitanism and universalism. The novel seeks to assert the idealistic, humanistic values of the world as one family. One nation has to make good deficiencies by emotionally integrating into another for mutual fulfilment. This is indicated by the union of Ravi and Irene, symbolizing the Indo-American synthesis, in spite of their surracial inequalities. For Ravi, who is fed up with his family in India, America is like a dawn. He suffers from blood cancer which means his early death. The hero then looks forward to awakening, after his departure from this world, 'into another dawn' in the next world.

H. S. Gill’s *Asnes and Petals* tells the love story of Salma, a Muslim girl and Captain Ajit Singh, a Sikh Cavalry Officer. Their parents do not approve of this inter-community marriage, but Ajit’s death changes his grandfather’s heart and Salma is accepted as daughter-in-law. The novel starts with the 1947 post-Partition exodus of Hindu refugees from Pakistan, an attack on their train and their subsequent rehabilitation. The novel depicts the Indo-Pak confrontation and Gill’s knowledge of military methods and manners imparts a tone of validity to this novel. After his *Via Geneva* that drew the inside story of sophisticated and refined personages manning the International political organisations, Aamir Ali’s third novel, *Assignment in Kashmir* is almost in the vein of sensational romances and fantasies - set in
vogue by paperbacks with lurid jackets sometimes not quite related to the themes. Eg. Cowasjee's *Good Bye to Elsa* and Veena Nagpal's *Karmayogi*.

*Good Bye to Elsa* is, however, a novel with a difference. It is provocative and uninhibited in its treatment of sex. It deals with the rootless protagonist's search for identity. His unhappiness results from the ruthlessness of modern society as also from his unpreparedness to be pragmatic in life. *Alphabet of List* by Kamala Das, the well-known Indo-Anglian poetess, depicts a man's bestial sensuality. Raja, a corrupt minister and man, creates an atmosphere of political intrigue and sensual depravity. He has no scruples in loving both - a young woman and her mother. The novelist, probably, received her 'inspiration' from Nabokov's *Lolita*. Her *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* tells the tragic tale of a pre-pubescent teenager who is forced to lead the obnoxious life of a prostitute.

A serious novelist such as Romen Basu also falls a prey to this current craze and writes a cinematographic romance, *A Gift of Love*. Veena Paintal's *An Autumn Leaf* and *Midnight Woman* and Veena Nagpal's *Compulsion* also follow suit. In spite of his vigorous style, Ruskin Bond's *Love is a Sad Song* provides another instance of the lure of the lurid. The trend of popularity of crime and suspense thrillers and adventure stories depicting love-affairs and intimate sexual scenes boldly and sometimes even brutally in a pseudonaturalistic mode is illustrated by Raj Gill's *The Rape, The Golden*

A word about Malgonkar. His *Spy in Amber* is obviously a thrilling story of espionage, specially written for the screen. His *The Devil's Wind* reveals his penchant for history and reassesses the so-called Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 from the Indian point of view and delineates Nana Saheb, not supporting the British view of him as a villain, but as a human being with his share of foibles and frailties. The novelist brings into play his masterly narrative power in harmonising the historical and the personal themes. This is the first truly historical Indo-Anglian novel after Vimala Raina's *Ambapali* (1962).

The revival of G. V. Desani and Sudhin Ghose must be welcome for their originality and experiments in narration. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* makes unique reading, despite its pronouncedly Joycean style, on account of its linguistic resourcefulness. Its creative chaos and verbal incoherence are central to the design of the novel and its quirky hero. Desani has been rightly revalued and revived and so is Sudhin Ghose, whose novels form a distinct tetralogy of the author's spiritual Odyssey. His penchant for the fantastic gives full scope to his blending of the past and the present by myths, legends, folk-lore and classical literary allusions. He adopts the autobiographical method to suit his
purpose. His contribution to the technique of narration is significant.

Along with the spreading out of the thematic foliage of the Indo-Anglian novel, the architectonic awareness also has grown in some corresponding measure. The Indo-Anglian technical experimentation shows a definitive step in the direction of artistic maturity. After the initial pioneering fictional efforts in the pre-twenties era, the Indian novelist in English seems to be striving to invest his writing with genuineness and authenticity which can only be had by a competent tackling of the grammar of stylistics. He is impelled by an intense craving to be an 'Indian', to express his 'Indianness' which is not a burden but a national identity, a passport to national solidarity. Ghosh, Mitra and Vankataramani reveal their 'Indianness' in their thematic choice and expression.

Mulk Raj Anand has taken up the gauntlet to adopt his English to his Indian sensibility and themes and has thus evolved a 'dialect' of English - Indian English with a mixed native flavour of Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi. There is a dichotomy of stylistic effects, because Anand's narrative or descriptive style differs considerably in the dialogues in his novels. He adopts a simplistic sort of stream of consciousness mode of narration in his very first novel, Untouchable, wherein the whole social reality is filtered
through the narrator - hero's - Bakha's - consciousness. In most other novels, he does not bother to employ this psycho-analytical device of narration. His short stories reveal his penchant for the experimental narrative art based on oriental modes of story-telling, which along with western philosophical and reformist influence seem to have instilled into him a love for preaching and sermonizing. His short stories are fortunately free from this didactic tendency and they illustrate Anand's experimental resourcefulness and originality in his narrative technique. His excessive Indianisms in dialogue and diction tend to distract critical attention from his lucid and effective narrative and descriptive passages. However, in no circumstances, could his stylistic experimentation be understated.

With his average equipment and average susceptibilities, Narayan has fashioned for himself an adequate style in English to express the average, English-educated south Indian sensibility. Narayan's technique in the Pre-Independence novels is quite simple. He adopts here the usual, orthodox omniscient narrative method. In Mr. Sampath, he employs a more complex and artistic device of bifocal narration - the omniscient as well as the autobiographical modes. He also makes use of the flash-back method for the first time. He fashions for himself an extensive bifocal flash back mode of narration to span
the gaps between the past and the present moments, the "Rajuness" that has slipped away from him and the "Swami- 
hood" that is thrust upon him. In _The Vendor of Sweets_, 
there is a rather long flash-back to describe Jagan's 
earlier life, but it is quite relevant and better handled 
than in _Mr. Sampath_. He makes use of the myth of Bhasmasura 
in _The Man-Eater of Malgudi_ which imparts to the novel its 
mytho-poeic character. His depiction of Malgudi as the 
locale of his novels invests them with a sense of continu­ 
ity and consistency to his vision. Narayan's very virtue 
of averageness sometimes becomes a handicap. For example, 
the Raju - Rosie relationship, in _The Guide_, betrays the 
inadequacy of Narayan's linguistic resources. No other 
tool, however, could have done justice to Narayan's simple, 
average, honest and sincere vision of life.

Raja Rao, one of the great 'triaE' in Indo-English 
fiction, writes with a lordly lionine leisure and luxury. 
He writes only when he must, under a compulsive creative 
urge, though he is deliberate, "committed" artist, commi­ 
tted to art alone. He is an Indian novelist in English, 
constantly aware of his Indianness and of his duties and 
responsibilities as an Indian. As early as 1938, he 
declares in his forward to _Kanthapura_: "We cannot write 
like the English. We should not. We cannot write only 
as Indians". He wanted his English to be imbued with 
the indigenous flavour of his mother - tongue. For the 
Gandhian set of freedom-fighters in an agrarian setting,
he adopted the mode of a 'grandmother' narrator who can afford to vent her 'Kannadisms'. Moorthy, the hero of the novel, is an idealistic, youngman - plunged in the fight for freedom as an ardent Gandhian - he is a mono­ maniac charged with the patriotic zeal. To express his simplistic sensibility, his one-trackmind, did suit Raja Rao's design of the novel. The Indian sensibility and the English language were amalgamated into a rare artistic 'achieve'. In his very first novel, Raja Rao proved beyond a shadow of doubt that an Indian writer can write creatively in English. The second novel, greater than its predecessor and followers, The Serpent and the Rope, is a testimony to Raja Rao's magnificent linguistic experimentation in fiction in English. This time, he ventured to render the decency, decorum and dignity of Sanskrit into English. The vedic and Upanishadic philo­ sophic thought was splendidly expressed in the typical Raja Rao variety of English, which was fairly different from English and yet not unintelligibly or grotesquely different. This was a refined mode of presentation for expressing the definitely Brahminic and yet unmistakably cosmopolitan sensibility of the hero. The nuances of Kannada and French also were assimilated into this new compound of "Indian English", when the apppellate "Indian" did not attach any stigma, concession, deficiency or vulgarisation to it. The Cat and Shakespeare expresses its mainly metaphysical content quite impressively and so does Comrade Kirillov its
Marxist thought-processes. Raja Rao has so far been our greatest and most successful linguistic and technical experimenter in moulding an Indian variant of the parent English language.

Apart from these three great Indian novelists in English, there have been consistent experiments in the shaping of the medium of artistic expression. G. V. Desani has gone farther than the farthest and his hold experimentation with the English language has earned for him praise from such great critics as Eliot and Forster. His *All about H. Hatterr* presents queer linguistic cliches, idioms, platform speechifications, officialese, 'Babuisms', hypnenated compound words, misplaced slang words, Victorian high sounding and archaic expressions. Such a concocted admixture of Indian English is devised and employed to parody typical Indianisms of style for parodying itself and as a 'protest' against a 'thrust' language. This hold linguistic innovation adequately expresses the confused, crazed, quizzical and Quixotic personality, sensibility and misadventures, of the Eurasian hero of this remarkable novel.

Bhattacharya's shaping of English as a medium of his fictional expression seems to remind us of Mulk Raj Anand's experimentations. He often translates the Bengali idioms and proverbs into English to convey the characteristic conversational modes of his characters. He uses some word-
compounds in his own way to impart an Indian semblance to his Indian characters'. His device of reduplicating a word by changing the sound of an initial syllable is a characteristically Indian mode of speech and this device is used by other Indo-Anglian novelists also. His coining of the diminutives of some nouns is also the novelist's typical way, but this also often descends into bad taste e.g. A father addresses his son as a 'frogling'. He uses the suffix 'ful' to coin an adjectival word, sometimes quite unreasonably when a good enough English adjective is adequately expressive. He changes the grammatical order of words in interrogative sentences which is quite realistic in fairly educated circles in India. His use of irony produces the desired effect and is useful to him in bringing out his social satirical comment.

Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nåhal, like Anand, believe in calling a spade a spade. They do not mince matters and their expression is forceful and direct. They, like Anand, make a liberal use of translating the Punjabi swearwords, phrases, idioms and proverbs into English. Their language is adequate to the artistic purpose of rendering the brutal political realities of wide spread communal massacres, sexual atrocities and monstrous lootings after the Partition of this vast sub-continent. Sasthi Brata and Saros Cowasjee, Dilip Hiro, Murari and a few other younger writers also use English boldly - and
sometimes even crudely in their depiction of sexual pre-marital, extra-marital, anarchic and chaotic urges and aberrations.

Markandaya and Rajan face a different problem of expression. Their long stay in foreign countries has given them a rare 'feel' of the English language. There commendable mastery of this foreign language often turns into a handicap. Their language becomes too meticulous, too lofty, too subtle to be convincing. Their prose becomes stilted and flamboyant and sometimes even unintelligibly prompous and pedantic. They have per force to select such themes and characters as would bear the weight of their over-sophisticated sense. Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* is an illustration in point. Of course, with her *Two Virgins*, she has returned to the Indian scene successfully but we have still to get a novel greater than *Nectar in a Sieve* from her. These expatriate novelists are yet to save themselves from being Anglicised or Americanised, and salvage their Indian sensibility to whatever extent possible.

Malgonkar, perhaps the most readable novelist of the major Indo-Anglian novelists, is known for his professional competence. He is a compelling and powerful story-teller. There is generally a tendency to evaluate Malgonkar's English as influenced by 'Public School English'. His narrative skill misleads even a highly perceptive critic
like Mfnakshi Mukherjee to think that Malgonkar has 'generally bypassed the linguistic and stylistic problems inherent in the Indo-Anglian situation'. In fact, though he does not deliberately experiment with the language like Raja Rao, he does adopt his language and technique to the kind of reality he chooses to portray, viz. the past Indian scene. He is an upholder of traditional, conservative and aristocratic values and experiments—sparingly, only when absolutely necessary. The marginal gap between the linguistic acquisition of an English man—Winton—and that of an Anglo-Indian girl—Miranda, in his *Combat of Shadows*, indicates the two different forms of English which is the mother-tongue of both as also the novelist's awareness of the Indo-Anglian novelist's problem of expression. In short, Malgonkar's selection of themes and social strata of his characters successfully conceal the 'seamy' side of his linguistic and narrative technique.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's problem is still different. She has to adapt her characteristically British and European linguistic resources to the Indian milieu. She has also to Indianise herself to acquire an Indian sensibility. She prefers to write for her Western readers but her canvas is quite wide. Her milieu is the North-Indian society in general and the Delhi society in particular. The East-West encounter is naturally a recurrent theme in her fiction. She is a social satirist and her comic vision is best expressed through her uses of various forms of irony.
Her technique of narration is that of an omniscient observer. Unless she fully identifies herself with her principal Indian characters, she cannot adopt any autobiographical mode of narration or the stream of consciousness technique. This serious lack of an empathetic vision constitutes a serious handicap in her way of attaining a considerable artistic height.

Nayantara Sahgal's style is quite adequate to her milieu – the bureaucratic, ambassadorial and ministerial and top business, trade and industrial circles of Delhi. She has been grappling with the problem of marriage and mal-adjustment, divorce and post-divorce, free emotional and sexual extra-marital relationships and existential struggles.

Anita Desai's language is full of Keatsian sensuousness and onomato-poetically mellifluous and metallic ring. Hers is a style pre-eminently suited to an overstrung, hypersensitive feminine sensibility wrecked by spiritual claustrophobia and phantasmagorical and nightmarish shadows of Death. Her imagery runs riot but in spite of its crushing intensity, it is attuned to the moribund heroines in her novels. The peacock symbol, in *Cry, the Peacock*, accentuates the overstrung and overwhelmingly tragic import. Her employment of poetic symbol imparts a new stylistic dimension to her individualistic and artistic expression.
Both Anita Desai and Arun Joshi can effectively express the subtle nuances of the Indian thought and psyche. The existentialist problems of spiritual isolation, failure of communication, dialogue or harmonious relationship, mental aloneness and torment, physical aloofness, discontent and unfulfilment, inability to come to terms with oneself and the world, tumults within and without, shattered ideals and wrecked inner landscapes and babblings of interior monologues—all these are deftly expressed by these novelists into the modes of stream of consciousness technique. This itself indicates that Anita Desai and Arun Joshi can handle a purely psychological novel with ease and competence.

In conclusion, Indo-Anglian writing has increased in volume and gained in quality after Independence. It is paradoxical that although English has lost its focal role as the language of administration, it has established itself as a medium for literary expression. After Independence, quite a few women novelists have come to the forefront in the field. The element of propaganda, whatever the motive, has receded to the background and dispassionate pursuit of art has grown. Awareness of a Western audience is not altogether absent. Self-consciousness is the original, cardinal sin, the shadows of which have still lingered on. Awareness of the form and technique has considerably increased. With the advent of freedom, the spirit of unshackled nationalism finds expression in
literature which helps the author in projecting his vision of Indian life. They show a growing awareness of Indian national problems and their writing reflects, by and large, a new nation. There is an appreciable change in their attitude to the West.

Indo-Anglian fiction today is well on its way to maturity, though not still fully mature because of lingering shadows of self-consciousness. However, the novelists are ready to meet the challenge to be judged according to international literary standards and fictionwriting is no longer pursued as a pastime but has become a serious vocation.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 In his talk on "Indian Films in the Thirties" (given to the members of the Film Cultural Centre of Poona on 14th November, 1967), K. A. Abbas remarked that since it would have been sedition in pre-Independence days to portray an Englishman as the villain, the Indian film-makers often used a westernised mill-owner as the target of their attack - this pattern was equally valid for the novels as noted by Meenakshi Mukherjee in The Twice Born Fiction, Arnold Heinemann, p. 94.

2 Kanthapura is essentially naive - perhaps, its author purposed it to be so - in spite of its fair measure of technical experimentation.


4 David McCutchion brings out how 'Both R. K. Narayan and Sudhir Ghosh delight in the fantastic for its own sake' and 'how they are carried away by the momentum of their imagination', in Indian Writing in English, Writers Workshop, Calcutta, pp. 34-35.

5 Uma Parameswaran quotes David McCutchion and states that it is not strange that Indian literature in English has been flourishing since Independence, more than ever before. She, however, feels that once English is ousted from schools, Indo-English literature also will bow out - she even sets 'A.D. 2000 as the dirge date'. (A study of Representative Indo-English Novelist Vikas, 1976, Introduction, p. 6). It is difficult for one to agree with her, because her attitude to the problem is uncertain and ambivalent.