CHAPTER ONE

EXORDIUM

The use of history in/by recent literature challenges the marking off of any exclusive domains for history and literature. The present self-consciousness is intimately related to changing conceptions of truth and reality. When applied to literature, the term 'truth' had to be qualified by adjectives connoting 'artistic', making literary activity acutely conscious of being outside the pale of THE TRUTH - of being painted and unreal.

Understanding History and Literature

History from the times of Euhemerus in the fourth century BC, has drawn on literature as a source of information. Euhemerus read Homer for information on the people and places described in the epics, as a factual and not imaginary narrative. In the present century historians have used literature to trace a history of ideas. While some historians still view the literary with suspicion, E.P. Thompson was among those who reinforced the intertextuality of history and literature, through an "imaginative understanding" of literature as history. He saw literature as the chief source of cultural history which is different from history being used as a context to understand literature.
In Marxist literary theory rival positions are often, according to Tony Bennet (1990), most clearly distinguished by their conceptions of the relation between literature and history: while for Lukács or Jameson history functions as an interpretative device for deciphering the meaning of literary texts, in the Althusserian tradition, history as a set of real conditions and relations helps to account for the ways in which the real is signified or alluded to in the text (41-2). In their conception of history Marxist scholarship stresses the 'real'—that is, extra-discursive—objectivity of history and literature as mediated expression. It is the perception that history can stand independently of textual representation that is being frequently challenged. The differences traditionally posited between history and literature have been challenged both by the writing of certain texts and from within.

a. History vs. Literature

Research into the boundaries of literature and history shows that history was a branch of literature until the final phase of neoclassicism at the end of the eighteenth century (Lionel Gossman 1990). At the same time positivist theories of history aimed at bringing history as close as possible, epistemologically and methodologically, to the natural sciences (227-30). The spurt of scientific discoveries and inventions and industrialization in the
preceding decades encouraged the positivist perception of truth as empirical and verifiable. The rise of romanticism and the rise of positivism saw the rise of mimesis in literature and the privileging of 'fact' in history. When literature moved into the university certain texts were valued above others, which culminated in what is now called 'the canon'. History, on its part distanced itself from 'literary devices' and concentrated on the chronicling of facts. In the nineteenth century, literature and history began to differentiate spaces of representation, and their institutionalization as academic disciplines in the same century, further emphasized differences between them. Unlike other sciences 'facts' of history are not verifiable, a vulnerability which positivistic history finds hard to overcome. What are claimed to be facts in history are not 'pure' facts but archaeological remains - 'traces' of the past as Derrida(1981) puts it - which indicate some aspect of the past but can never be the past.

b. History : A dynamic process

History functions because the gap between its referent - that is, evidence of the past in texts, documents or artefacts - and this referent's referent - which is the 'past as it really was'- may never be closed. It is this gap that provides the raison d'etre for historical inquiry(Bennet 1990). Historical evidences are signs and
historical narrative is constructed not upon a reality itself but the signifiers of that reality (Gossman 1990). Further complicating history's relationship with the past is the ever present likelihood of new evidence coming to light which may require changes in existing interpretations or may require some interpretations to be discarded. In this way history is subject to change making it more of a process. We can never be sure of knowing exactly what was the case regarding any episode of the past. It contradicts the positivist scientific view of history which Hayden White (1978) calls, "a kind of archetype of the realistic pole of representation" (42).

The unfinished character of history has made it a process and not a structure; change being always imminent history remains dynamic (John Clive 1989). The awareness of the speculative nature of history has focussed attention on the ambiguity of the term history. History may mean the actual past or the record of that past. History refers both to an object of study and also to an account of this object (White 1984). Once the distinction between the past and its narration has been made, scientific models used for historical prediction become untenable.

The application of the principle of dialectical materialism to a twentieth century event - 'the end of history' - shows the limitations of a closed model of
reality. Francis Fukuyama (1989) saw in the capitulation of the USSR under Mikhail Gorbachev "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (4). We now live in a post-historical era. While most find, that within the limited framework of Hegelian dialectics the 'end of history' is a rational deduction, they disagree with the idea of 'closure' and 'completion'. Allan Bloom (1989) draws attention to the need to revive philosophy to meet the challenge of fascism that still lurks as a real danger. Along similar lines Pierre Hassner (1989) calls for vigilance, whether history has ended or not, against fanaticism and cruelty. Gertrude Himmelfarb (1989b) underlines the unknowable future which belies any scientific historicism. Irving Kristol (1989) finds in the triumph of Western liberalism a turning of tables where "the enemy is us, not them"; the problematics of American democracy may nullify their victory in the Cold war. Stephen Sestanovich (1989) concedes that a liberal international order may be less violent but asserts that power whatever new form it takes will not cease to define a hierarchy of those who count and those who do not. "As a result, the strong will (still) do what they can; the weak will (still) do what they must" (35). In line with the assumption that disputes will continue beyond the end of history, Flora Lewis (1990) asserts that pluralism means recognizing the
inevitability of disputes among societies. Focusing on the situation of Europe, she argues for an era of cooperation which is necessitated by the interdependence of the modern world and by the nonviability of any "master-plan", given the numerous unknowns and uncertainties. Saul Friedlander (1990) goes further to direct our attention to change, which is embedded in our historical consciousness, and which along with an awareness of possible alternatives challenges the very possibility of the 'end of history'. All these responses indicate that closed stable models of reality and interpretation have been definitely superseded by actual happenings.

A diagrammatic representation of the structure of historical activity may help to locate disputed sites of historical discourse. The arrows indicate cause and effect relationships and do not represent the sum of all possible relationships.
**Unseen**

1. Past events or the historical field
2. Historical evidence
3. The construction in the historian's mind
4. Historical communication (book, lecture or article)
5. The public mind
6. Historical actions (which become part of historical events and so da capo).

(Michael Stanford 1986: 6)

**Seen**

Reality past or present is no more 'out there' waiting to be described by historians or reflected in literature. Having formally parted ways with literature in the nineteenth century, history distinguished itself from other social sciences or humanities by claiming to be true. Fundamental to this claim was the so called objectivity of 'fact' on which history was built. 'Fact' in its turn is built on historical evidence - texts, documents, artefacts. The third rule for history, according to R. G. Collingwood (1946) is the rule of evidence. Historical narrative must be determined by the evidence available, which brings into the picture the role of human judgement. Evidence not only had to be interpreted by historians, they also had to be fitted into the historian's narrative.
according to their perceived importance. Historical continuities, further, are not 'given': they are willed and constructed (Hans Kellner 1987). The past or for that matter even the present is not 'evidenced' as a whole; the past is accessible only through the fragments it has left behind. "The unity of history lies in the books written by the great historians" (Gossman 1990 247).

The uncertain nature of historical knowledge is not a twentieth century perception. J. Clive (1989) in Not by Fact Alone quotes Dr. Johnson's remark to Boswell in 1775: "We must consider how very little authentic history there is... all the colouring all the philosophy of history is conjecture" (74). In the twentieth century history is not extra discursive, it cannot be divorced from its textuality. Haskell Fain (1970) argues that when one constructs a history, one is working on a tale which has been already told and therefore one's own tale would become a 'twice told tale'.

c. Boundaries blurred

Breaking boundaries is inevitable in the capitalist structure of production and consumption (Stephen Greenblatt 1989). The oscillation between totalization and difference, uniformity and the diversity of names, unitary truth and a proliferation of distinct entities is built into the poetics of everyday behaviour in America. Greenblatt gives the
examples of President Reagan's speeches that use lines from Hollywood productions, and a trip to Yosemite National Park where wilderness is marked by official instructions and signs that attempt to set boundaries. In India, the entry of actors like Amitabh Bachchan, Rajesh Khanna, Raj Babbar and Shatrughan Sinha into national politics, in the last decade has caused a similar blurring in role-play. Greenblatt finds the novel the most compelling example of negotiation and exchange that takes place while breaking boundaries. He cites the instance of Norman Mailer's The Executioner's Song (1979) which was based on the events of the life of a convict named Gary Gilmore. An article on the book prompted another convict named Jack H. Abbott to offer Mailer a first-hand description on the conditions of prison life. Abbott's letters were brought out in a book called In the Belly of the Beast (1981). Greenblatt finds that this transfer of material from one discursive space to another has received inadequate attention. He finds that critical terms for the relationship between a work of art and the historical events to which they refer— allusion, symbolization, allegorization, representation and mimesis— cannot adequately account for what happens in The Executioner's Song and in In the Belly of the Beast.

In the history versus fiction debate literature seems to lose out on the claim to truth which is closely associated with the representation of the real. Greenblatt
proposes a discourse of accommodation. He argues for a replacement of binary confrontation with debate that does not preclude give and take. Historians like Barbara W. Tuchman (1981) claim that a novelist can invent and is not constrained by facts. For Karin J. McHardy (1990) the most important difference is that historians do not have the "freedom to invent". In the context of the non-verifiability of history and the mediated nature of "facts", "history versus fiction" becomes "history as/is fiction". Though Matt F. Oja (1988) lists five criteria to distinguish history and fiction, he admits that "there is no absolute qualitative difference between narrative history and narrative fiction" (112). For Bruce Mazlish (1992) Jonathan D. Spence's *The Question of Hu* (1988) poses a problem of categorization as it cannot be called a historical novel nor can it be a "true piece of historical narrative" (152). Cushing Strout (1992) faces a similar dilemma regarding Simon Schama's *Dead Certainties* (1991).

"metahistorical novel". Christine Brooke-Rose (1992) prefers the term ‘palimpsest histories’ to describe novels that take their roots in historical documents and serve to "stretch our intellectual, spiritual, and imaginative horizons to breaking-point"(137). She delineates five kinds of palimpsest histories, the first of which is the realistic historical novel. The second is the totally imagined story set in a historical period, in which magic unaccountably intervenes as in the works of Barth and Marquez. In the third category is the totally imagined story set in a historical period with so much time-dislocating philosophical, theological and literary allusion that the effect is magical as in the writings of Eco. In the same category, in a different key, partly because the historical period is modern, are the novels of Kundera. Brooke-Rose sees the magic of the fourth category being "motivated through hallucination" as it emerges in the relations between Uncle Sam and Vice-President Nixon in Robert Coover’s The Public Burning (1977) or as seen in the "zany reconstruction" effected by the preponderance of paranoids in Thomas Pynchon’s Gravity’s Rainbow (1973). The last category is palimpsest history of a nation or creed in which magic may or may not be involved but seems almost irrelevant compared to the preposterousness of mankind which is realistically described. Brooke-Rose finds the fifth category more effective and significant which includes
Carlos Fuentes' *Terra Nostra*, Milorad Pavic's *Dictionary of the Khazars* and Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. She moves away from 'historical novel' and sees in palimpsest history "alternative history". Brooke-Rose rejects the term 'magic realism' for the type of fiction she prefers to term 'palimpsest history'. She sees the new phenomenon renewing the "dying art of the novel". Linda Hutcheon approaches literary texts from a wider perspective as her understanding is in terms of historiography, historical methodology and philosophy of history.

**Parameters of this study**

This thesis draws on Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988) for its theoretical framework. It uses Hutcheon's term "historiographic metafiction" to examine the 'use of history' in the contemporary Indian English novel. The term 'use' is not based on the Wittgensteinian 'use' equal to 'meaning' nor the Foucauldian 'use' referring to a text's placement within institutional and power relations. This study is not an exploration of authorial intention of the role of history in some Indian English novels; it is an analysis of the reader's perception of the positioning of history and its impact in specific texts. The study is an attempt to investigate ways in which the four authors - Rushdie, Tharoor, Ghosh and B. Mukherjee - innovate and

These authors spent most of their formative years in India. Though Tharoor was not born in India he went to school and college in India. And most of the adult lives of all four have been spent outside the geographical boundaries of India. Rushdie moved to England in his teens and (significantly) read history at Cambridge. He now leads a life in hiding, hoping to escape the wrath of Muslim clerics for alleged blasphemy in his book *The Satanic Verses*. Tharoor moved to the USA to take a doctorate and presently works for the UN in New York. Ghosh went to do a D. Phil in social anthropology at Oxford and is now in the U.S.A. Mukherjee has been in North America since 1961 and became an American citizen in 1988. What is of interest is that they write from their dual traditions - their Indian origins and their global identities. Their writings show that they have not rejected either but constantly engage in explorations.
Using English has been a matter of intense debate in India. When the British left India in 1947, English was already firmly entrenched. A brief look at the history of English in India will show not only how effectively it marginalized Indian languages but also the political, socio-cultural, religious and ideological associations it came to have.

Political power brought with it the responsibility of government which passed from the hands of the English East India Company into the hands of the Imperial Crown in 1857. Governance brought with it problems of communication and understanding. While the British used English the Indians from different parts of the sub-continent spoke different languages. The English concepts of 'civilized' behaviour and 'polite' society were different from Indian 'samskaram'. Moreover, there did not exist any uniform system of education, law or public administration. Education presented a deeper problem. India was a literate society with a fairly sophisticated literary and cultural tradition in Sanskrit, its ancient language of learning, Persian and in the different bhashas, regional languages.

In 1829, Lord William Bentinck wrote of "the British language, the key to all improvements" and in 1834 he wrote
of India" (Bipan Chandra 1990). Accordingly in 1835 an Education Resolution was passed allotting available educational funds (£ 10,000 annually) by the 1813 Charter Act, to impart to "the Native population knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language" (Percival Spear 1965). In order to make these reforms effective English replaced Persian as the official state language and the medium of the higher courts, and local languages replaced Persian in the lower courts. In addition to this, though Sanskrit Colleges and Madrasas were allowed to continue they ceased to be supported by government patronage. Most importantly, English education became a qualification for a position in what from 1893 was called the Indian Civil Services, one of the three pillars of British administration in India the other two being the army and the police.

Knowledge of and education in the English language thus became a means to secure a comfortable livelihood, especially after the British began the Indianization of the Civil Services and threw open the higher offices to Indians towards the close of the nineteenth century. It was a protest against the dismissal of an Indian, Surendranath Banerjee, from the Civil Services that led to the founding of the Indian Association in 1876. It initiated "an All-India movement" based on "the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini" (R.C. Majumdar et
This was the beginning of organized movement against British rule in India which, after the entry of Gandhi in the second decade of the twentieth century, culminated in the independence of India from foreign rule in 1947.

Initially, when English education was imparted mainly by missionaries the English language was closely associated with the Bible and Christian tenets and mores. Later, with Sir Charles Wood Despatch (1854), education was sought to be properly organized at the primary, secondary and university levels for which the Government of India was responsible and it was expressly stated that education in Government institutions "should be exclusively secular". Between 1857 and 1887, the first university at Calcutta and four others at Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Allahabad were established. English cultural superiority, after the removal of Christianity from educational curricula, was perpetuated by English literature. The persuasive rhetoric of British superiority was not only a moral need but also a practical necessity for the British: its effective deployment would supposedly keep the Indians from agitating for the right to rule themselves through the perpetuation of a low-esteem and notions of inferiority. In the words of Macaulay: "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English
in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (B. Chandra 1990).

The use of English has continued till date for purposes of Government and administration. Not only the language, but also the governing institutions of the English have largely been continued. The Government of India Act 1935 was used as a working model with many of its portions used verbatim in the framing of the Constitution of India. The British legal system adopted in 1861 has also largely been continued to such an extent that India has persisted with laws and codes that have long been abrogated or discarded in Britain.

Though Hindi and other regional languages are used, much of the transaction in law and administration is conducted in English. It is also almost exclusively used to impart scientific, industrial and technological knowledge in higher education. Its entrenchment is being furthered by the entry of the computer, which mainly uses English. Its international impact has facilitated its increasing knowledge base and use in India today. Though merely 3% of the Indian population can use English, in numerical terms this 3% are between sixty and seventy million people—more than UK's population (which is 56 million). Hindi is spoken by 39%, while no other regional language is spoken by more than 10% of the population. Globally, English is the official language in 44 countries as against 27 for French.
and 20 for Spanish. English is an official language for about 1.6 billion people, one-third of the world population. Two-thirds of all scientific papers are published in English and nearly half of all business deals in Europe are conducted in English. In India, the English media gets more business - 57% share of the advertisements - than the Hindi media (20%) or that of the other Indian languages which share 23% (Source: Ketkar 1994).

For many Indians, the predominance of the English language has a coercive force that evokes memories of the colonial subservience of yesteryears. Many share the bitterness of Vishwanath Sachdev (1994) about the monumental lethargy of the Indian state in the phasing out of English. They point to countries like Japan and China as proof of the dispensability of the use of English. They perceive in its firm establishment, the complicity of politicians and the vested interests of the upper classes. Much of the hostility seems to stem from the association of the English language with the ruling British during the imperial reign - the oppressor's language, as also with the relatively small political and social elite which "rules" the country during the postcolonial period.

Most colonies on independence have struggled to redeem themselves of the alien tongue, whether English, French or Spanish. The mastery of an unfamiliar tongue was made harder by
the model being as spoken and used in the 'mother' country, and the reverence for the 'native' speakers.

The dispersal of English to Asian and African countries caused what Braj Kachru (1983) calls the "nativization of English." Kachru is among the first to make a descriptive linguistic study of nativized English in India. He moves away from the view of Indian English as an interference variety (Quirk 1972); as also the view of Indian English as the variety of English grown in India like "an exotic variety to lend charm to a garden" (P. E. Dastoor 1968). Kachru (1983) plots a cline of bilingualism comprising three "measuring points"—zero point, central point and ambilingual point—on which he places varieties of Indian English ranging from the educated variety to Babu English, Butler English, Bearer English and Kitchen English. Three parameters are used to measure variations of Indian English—region, ethnic group and proficiency. He claims that deviation from 'standard' English is not a mistake but can be explained in terms of the cultural and/or linguistic contexts in which a language functions. Variations are found at every level of language use—phonological, lexical, grammatical, syntactic and semantic. At the phonological level the variations depend largely, on the regional language that English exists in contact with. At the lexical level innovations, borrowings and transfers take place. At the grammatical level, Kachru describes certain
characteristics among 'educated' users of English in India: the tendency to use complex noun and verb phrases and long sentences; the positioning of the subject and auxiliary in formation of interrogative constructions, for example "What you would like to eat?"; the use at the phrase level of the 'be + verb + -ing' construction; syntactic and semantic reduplication; intrusive use of articles at some places and their omission at other times. Kachru describes certain semantic features which again point to ways in which the English language has been adapted to the Indian context: semantic restriction of English words; semantic extension of words like "cousin-sister"; archaisms that continue to be used in India; register shifts which involve use of items without register constraints in Indian English; contextual redefinition of lexical items. He offers a sociolinguistic explanation for the "acculturation of English in new (un-English) contexts".

One outcome of Kachru's 'nativization' of the English language was the viewing of 'Indian English' as exotica - the use of words and phrases from Indian languages as they were or in translation or use of actual speech rhythms of Indian speakers to lend the writing 'Indian colour'.

Kachru's optimism is countered by Probal Dasgupta (1993) with the argument that English will always remain an "Auntie" in India - an outsider who is needed and so
politely handled. English is present for a purpose in India, not as a member of the Indian cultural family belonging to any direct line of descent. Dasgupta seems to firmly believe that Indian use of English "will forever remain a tolerated, degenerate variant of the norm in the eyes of the owners" of the English language. "English is not a space. It is a piece of real estate" (203). Dasgupta also points to the concentration of the use of English in the metropolis and among the Indian upper classes. Dasgupta turns to the example of Sanskrit and its function as 'high' language distinct from Prakrit - the language of ordinary discourse in ancient India. English cannot assume the role of the 'high' language in the "new diglossia" that modern India has evolved not only because the language-power equation has shifted and now focuses on the L(low) discourse but also, as Dasgupta sees it, English as H(high) term in the new diglossia lacks the "authentic legitimacy" that Sanskrit had in classical India.

While Kachru may not have distinguished between the spoken and literary use of Indian English, Dasgupta's finality is disturbing in its 'nativist' resistance to English in India and implied endorsement of the purist defence of 'standard', 'proper' British English. Recognizing the vested interests behind the propagation of 'Standard' English need not entail, as it does for Dasgupta, ceasing to resist its imposition. "...English in India signifies
technique and technology and technicality. It is not primarily a human language here" (214). Dasgupta totally rejects the use of English for literature by non-native speakers. Whereas Salman Rushdie’s observation is that English in the present situation is no longer an English language, "[it] now grows from many roots; and those whom it once colonized are carving out large territories within the language for themselves" (quoted in T. Brennan 1989).

Resistance to the imposition of 'standard' English comes not only from non-English writers but also from within. One of the main concerns of Jim Kelman, the Scottish writer who won the Booker prize in 1994, is the recovery of Gaelic. Other than the Scôts and the Irish, writers from Britain’s immigrant communities too have withstood pressures of "standardization". Writers have pushed beyond the constraining limits of standard English; and with each thrust new ground has been broken. Salman Rushdie stands among the first writers of the sub-continent to use English in a bold, unorthodox way.

The enactment of resistance for Ashcroft et al (1989) is characterized by abrogation and appropriation. In their book The Empire Writes Back they elaborate the two concepts. The first is a refusal of the categories of imperial culture, its aesthetics, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage, and assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning inscribed in the words (38). Such an
abrogation would then result in appropriating a language and making it one's own. The independence and individuality with which English is then used in postcolonial society encourages the growth of what they call 'englishes'. "The world language called English is a continuum of 'intersections' in which speaking habits in various communities have intervened to reconstruct the language" (39-40). Ashcroft et al (1989) view linguistic variance as metonymic of the larger issue of cultural difference. In endorsing the liberation of 'englishes' from the 'hegemonizing centrality' of the idea of the 'norm', Ashcroft et al give the colonial experience a place of prominence.

Merely decentralizing capital 'E(nglish)' and distributing it among various small '(e)nglishes' appears to be a diversion from the central issue of mainstream and periphery. Ashcroft et al trace the roots of the problem of the carry over of the English language to the experience colonization. But the use of the term postcolonial tends to overlook the different shades and modes of the colonial experience. The term 'postcolonial' when applied globally, effectively homogenizes a phenomenon whose occurrence does not even share the same temporal frame. It is evident that the colonial hangover persists in the use of the term postcolonial. It privileges the influence of a comparatively short period in Indian history to the
exclusion of others. Historians like Ernst Schulin (1985) question the 'universal historical' view of Ranke and challenge the privileging of the colonized period in the writing of modern histories of these countries. They call for a search for 'historical alternatives' that would free Asian and African histories from "Eurocentric modes of contemplation" (263). In the context of the breaking and rethinking of the postcolonial as an ideological framework it may be time to cross into a 'post-postcolonial' cultural zone.

**English Literatures**

Fiction has been written in English in many different places other than Britain. In order to mark it off from English (as of England's) literature the experience of colonization and imperial power was emphasized as evident from labels like 'Commonwealth literatures'. The political overtones of the term underline the link between England and its erstwhile colonies and dominions. The Queen of England is the permanent head of the Commonwealth replicating the equation of power which existed previously. The use of the term for literatures written in English in Commonwealth countries implicitly complies with norms of 'standard' English and categories of genre and canon. Another way of distinguishing English English literature from others is to emphasize the region as in 'Indian English literature'.
While such categories have a practical use, connotations of their individual terms pose problems. The emphasis on region assumes a preoccupation with cultural content whose uniqueness becomes its rationale and identity. The multicultural diversity within India's geographical boundaries and the plural identities of Indians have defied any attempt to define 'Indian'. The use of the term Indian in this thesis does not presume any essential quality that distinguishes it from other English literatures. Rather it is intended to emphasize the plurality of languages and cultures that become a resource for the writers in this study.

'Third world literature' is another label used to indicate the socio-economic context of postcolonial writers and writings. The Third World is a term used for countries which are socially and economically considered backward or undeveloped. This definition was sought to be altered by Frederic Jameson(1986). Jameson's distinction between First and Third worlds in terms of the binary opposition nationalism versus postmodernism has been rejected by Aijaz Ahmad in In Theory: classes, nations, literatures(1992). In a world where it has become increasingly difficult to place a text within a category how could all texts written in the Third world be "necessarily ... national allegories?" Ken Goodwin(1995) argues how 'national identity' in Australia - a settler colony - is ultimately a self-creation, a supposed
distinctness that is marked by national symbols like the Australian flag or national anthem. Charles Larson's *The Novel in the Third World* (1976) identifies the Third World novel by its synthesis of Western literary form imported in the colonial period and its indigenous forms of cultural practice. So, in the African novel the incorporation of the oral tradition is a distinct marker. According to Larson, causality does not predominate in a Third World novel as it does in the Western novel. Extensive use is made of folklore and mythology and inconsistencies of time are typical as is the use of the supernatural. Larson also finds that the Indian novel moves closer to the novel as "we" think of it in the West (133-4). It is clear that Larson's yardstick is the Western novel. The rise of black writers, native American writers and writers from every immigrant community in Europe and the United States surely burst the geographic locations of Larson's Third World. These writers have sought to write from their places in Western society and global history not mindful of the 'norms' set by dominant discourse. The geographic location of a writer can no longer be the raison d'être for his or her writing.

The inclusion of the works of Rushdie, Tharoor, Ghosh and Mukherjee in Indian literature widens the scope of 'Indian' and contests their categorization as expatriate writers or writers in exile. Born and bred in India, India forms an inseparable part of their psyche. Their exposure to
other cultures has enriched Indian literature by adding another dimension to it. Their positions as being simultaneously insiders and outsiders generate the possibility of fresh perspectives.

**Indian English Novel**

The Western origin of the novel form is much disputed in India. One of the earliest sceptics of a "truly Indian" novel in English, David McCutchion's (1969) ideal is the Western novel. He claims that the Indian novel lacks the central concerns of social relations, psychological motivation, characterization, judgement and a passion for the concrete (86). McCutchion is situated within the tradition of realism. The controversy persists within India; while K.B. Vaid (1965) asserts that the novel is a Western form, M.K. Naik (1984) disagrees. According to Naik (1984) Sanskrit literature in ancient India had a tradition of prose fiction, and Sanskrit criticism differentiates between Akhyayika novels that are built around actual persons and incidents, and Katha novels, whose plot is pure invention. He gives as examples Dandin's *Dasakumaracharita* written around the sixth century, Subandhu's *Vasavadatta*, written either in the late sixth century or early seventh century and Bana Bhatta's *Kadambari* written in the first half of the seventh century. Novels came to be written in the regional languages in India in the nineteenth century. Their origins
have been attributed to the influence of the British novel. According to S.C. Harrex (1977) the rise of the novel was a consequence of a cultural situation in India in which Sanskrit could not be adapted to contemporary reality as a novel in the regional or English language could. He observes a shift of concerns from the religious to the socio-political in the rise of the novel in India.

Literary histories in general agree that the Indian English novel matured with the appearance of the first novels of the 'Trimurti' - R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935), Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938). Since the advent of these three writers there has been a steady flow of writings from both within and outside India. G.V. Desani, Khushwant Singh, Nayantara Sahgal, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Chaman Nahal, Santha Rama Rau, Dina Mehta, Anita Desai, Attia Hossain, Ruth Prawar Jhabhwala, Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Rohinton Mistry, Farrukh Dhondy, Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Allan Sealy, Amit Chaudhari, Bharati Mukherjee, Rukun Advani, Kiran Nagarkar, Vikram Chandra and Mukul Kesavan are some of the writers who have made their mark. The significance of each writer's contribution to Indian English literature is an emerging phenomenon and therefore a 'canon' has yet to be evolved. Inclusion of certain writers has been under dispute. It is a problem faced by anyone
approaching contemporary literature in English. Christel Devadawson (1995) points out the risk of homogenizing different texts by the use of the term 'contemporary'. Though serviceable she finds the label clumsy. Just as there is a danger of homogenization in the use of labels like 'postcolonial', 'contemporary' is too vast a term to mean anything except indicate the time of a book's publication. The four texts examined here were chosen from books published between 1980 and 1993. Many writers live abroad or are second or third generation immigrants of Indian origin. It has raised disputes over the definition of 'Indian' and the inclusion of these writers in the Indian English literary tradition. Indian English is seen as a specimen of deviant English, a derogatory epithet. Thus, in selecting the term 'Indian English novel', the options for the distribution of immediate constituents (ICs) stand as:

![Diagram 1](image1.png)

Fig. 1

The above is different from:

![Diagram 2](image2.png)

Fig. 2

The distribution of ICs in Fig. 2 assumes a distinct linguistic variety, called Indian English. Problematic to both is the assumption of an Indian identity as a distinct marker in the context of the 1990s globalizing tendencies and chaotic relationships between various categories of
knowledge and peoples. Given the pluralistic environment brought about by communications technology, classification of 'Indian' as a national category appears no longer tenable. The focus of the study is on the strategies developed by these writers in order to make a significant contribution to the novel in English.

Just as Rushdie(1983) is aware that "we are translated men", Ghosh(1994) recognizes that literature does not happen nationally any more. B. Mukherjee prefers maximalism that marks the change from the perception of America as melting-pot to America as a salad-bowl. And Tharoor(1990) wishes to "re-examine all received wisdom about India, to question the certitudes ...". In response to attempts to place them within certain literary traditions, these writers seem to echo Rushdie's cry, "For God's Sake, open the universe a little more!"(1983). Makarand Paranjpe(1990) has called MC "one great big, confused bluff", Uma Parameswaran(1988) has called it a landmark in the "literary history of Indian writing in English". Paranjpe calls MC the bombshell that jolted the Indian English novelist out of his complacency "inside the whale". According to Paranjpe, the Indian English novelist lived inside the whale in a quiet state of withdrawal until Rushdie jumped outside the whale in spirited action. But Paranjpe is quick to point out that Desani's All about H. Hatterr(1948) had been the first innovative writing which experimented with form. While the
style and form of MC differed from the preceding novels in English, its preoccupation with history is at the vortex.

**History in the novel**

Just as literature and history 'use' each other's texts so do these writers 'use' their multiple situations. Once again the term 'use' connotes awareness of the influence and workings of power in any discourse. The term 'use' relates to the writer's use of history, as well as to the reader's perception of the use of history in the texts under analysis.

Alastair Fowler (1982) considers the historical novel as an "extreme instance of altered proportions" (122). According to Fowler, Sir Walter Scott's historical novel was achieved by the romantic and historical transformation of the regional novel. The historical novel has altered to such an extent that very few novels written today can be called historical novels. The title of this thesis has preferred the phrase 'the use of history' in order to dissociate the texts that are investigated here from the mimetic tradition of the historical novel.

In order to understand the ways in which history has been woven into the texts included in the study, a review of the role of history in the novel is necessary. It provides a framework for comparison and 'points of departure'. In the
pre-1947 period history was most significantly linked to the ideology of nation. And the 'historical novel' was foremost among the discursive practices that buttressed nationalism from the beginning of the Independence Movement in India. In his book *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian fiction* (1978) G.P. Sarma endorses the view that colonial oppression led to the growth of nationalism. This sense of nationalism was seen in two kinds of novels and stories that eulogized Indian tradition and culture: one was a group of novels that depicted Indian life and traditions, of which Rev. Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta* (1874) was the first; and the second kind was collections of Indian folk tales, mythological tales and legends. These novels and stories sought to give readers an identity as a community and thereby integrate them to fight a common cause. Through history or historical fiction people tried to assert the self of the nation, wanted to achieve unity or self-determination and wanted to rouse the political and historical consciousness of the nation. Sarma claims that Sochee Chunder Dutt's *The Times of Yore* (1885) was the first work of historical fiction in English in India. According to M.A. Jeyaraju (1991), A. S. P. Ayyar is the 'Father of the Indian English historical novel'. The purpose of the historical novelist up to 1947 seemed to be to rouse in his/her contemporaries a sense of nationalism and create an awareness of the political situation and remind them of their duty in such a situation.
In The Twice - Born Fiction: Themes and techniques of the Indian novel in English (1971), Meenakshi Mukherjee traces the 'development' of the Indian novel from its diffident appearance in the 1920s to the early 1960s. Significantly, the first stage in the development of the Indian English novel, according to her, was that of the historical romance. It came into being during the Independence Movement, which was not only a political but also a deeply emotional experience. She finds three ways of classifying novels that are based in the historical experiences of India between 1920 and 1950. Some writers carry a burden of commitment, while others write as observers or chroniclers. Among the former are Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao while the latter includes R.K. Narayan and Manohar Malgonkar. A second way to classify such novels is by distinguishing between the use of the national experience as central theme and its use as setting. The third possible classification is based on the recurrent motifs derived from historical events discernible in such fiction. Mukherjee finds that no major novel has yet emerged on the theme of the nationalist upsurge (63). In this context, any discussion on the theme of nationalism must account for the interplay of the historical with the political.

For India, political independence was accompanied by Partition. The apportioning of the sub-continent on the
basis of religion and the horrors and brutalities that attended the almost simultaneous declarations of Partition and Independence, in a way soured the nationalist ideal. According to Ashis Nandy (1994) 'nationalism' in the pejorative sense of an ideology of hate that feeds on an enemy 'Other' was born when Partition was accepted.

A comparison by Shailendra Dhari Singh (1973), of the historical novels written by the British on the sepoy mutiny of 1857 with those written by the British on the Indian nationalist movement, shows that by the first quarter of the twentieth century questions were being raised among the British on the nationalist imperial project. The 1857 mutiny was a point of national crisis in England as it was for India and its successful quelling was interpreted as a heroic victory of the British over the 'gentoos'. Applying Peter Green's (1962) categorization of historical novels to the bulk of novels written about the 1857 mutiny, S.D. Singh (1973) places novels by British authors favourable to the British quelling of the revolt under Propaganda: these novels supported the Empire and the continuation of British power in India; Education: included novels aimed at familiarizing the readers with the chief British figures involved in the stamping out of the mutiny; Escapism: the largest category which contained novels pandering to the psychological needs of a dominant nation (to sustain the public myth of doing the colonies a favour by 'civilizing'
them). This category provided the sensationalism and exoticism that was commercially well-received. From his reading of the novels, S.D. Singh (1973) distils an outline of a typical plot. Singh demonstrates how the historical novel served as nationalistic propaganda to the dominant colonial power, buttressing the myths of English invincibility and her moral right to dominate a 'barbaric' country. There were exceptions like John Masters' Nighthrunners of Bengal (1951) and Edward Thompson's Night falls on Siva's hill (1929), but they can be explained by their distance from the nineteenth century prevalent notion of nationalism as an absolute endorsement of all the nation's actions.

In his study of the novels by the British dealing with the freedom movement between 1905 and 1935, Singh finds that they are characterized by the uncertainty caused by a guilty conscience and the disillusionment of the time before and after the First World War. Singh finds them less ebullient than the mutiny novels and also finds that they do not wholly support the myths of imperialism. For explanation Singh quotes Allen J. Greenberger (1969): "In the era of Doubt there were virtually no historical novels. The authors of that period were far too concerned with the problems of the present to write about the past. In the post-1935 period historical novels reappear, as literary men look backwards rather than forwards" (185). The difference in the
treatment of historical events marks the changing attitude towards nationalism. Masters's and Thompson's books are part of the rethinking on nationalism. Changed circumstances gave them a chance to alter earlier perceptions.

For Indian writers, the Partition as an historical event has served as a background for personal tragedies. Among such novels are Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the river Ganges* (1964) and Chaman Nahal's *Azaadi* (1975). It is very difficult to draw a line between the historical and political in these novels because the historical is inextricably enmeshed in the political. The freedom movement was as political as it was historical.

Post-1947 fiction has been prominently introspective or has actively examined social themes. Historical events and personalities are dominant concerns in some novels but the overall trend as Meenakshi Mukherjee (1971) shows is towards social and political realism and psychological introspection. History is used to express a particular point of view tending towards an ideology. A.S.P Ayyar laments in the introduction to his novel *Baladitya: A historical romance of Ancient India* that many 'great Indian heroes' have been forgotten "because historical novels have not been written about them". Another set of novelists worked towards dispelling certain "mis-representations". Manohar
Malgonkar’s note to his novel *The Devil's Wind* (1972) on Nana Saheb, who led the 1857 Revolt at Kanpur and was hated by the British, says: "This ambiguous man and his fate have always fascinated me. I discovered that the stories of Nana and the revolt have never been told from the Indian point of view. This, then, is Nana’s story as I believe he might have written it himself. It is fiction, but it takes no liberties with verifiable facts or even with probabilities" (x). There may never be an agreement on what constitutes an "Indian point of view". This is especially shown when the term "Indian" itself eludes definition. Malgonkar’s use of the phrase seems to mean a view which will counter official British accounts. It is simplistic to think that an Indian point of view is necessarily that held or given by an Indian. Another novel that attempts to rehabilitate a national hero maligned by hostile imperialist historians is Gidwani’s *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* (1976).

In a slightly different vein of the "rehabilitation" theme are Kamala Markandeya’s *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977) and Gita Mehta’s *The Raj* (1989). These novels give an insider’s view of royalty during a time of historical transition. They, in a way, seek to correct the popular view that royalty during the time of the Raj was largely corrupt and pleasure-loving, indifferent and insensitive to the plight of the common man and opportunistic in their pro-British stance. These novels break new ground in making public the
'common' issues that link royalty with the commoners. In The Raj their plight is made poignantly tragic: they are bound by tradition and pride to outwardly observe their differences and privileges as royalty and are privately tormented and mocked by the awareness of their actual helplessness as mere puppets carrying out the wishes of the 'British Raj'.

Nostalgia for the days of the Raj created a market for books and films which recreated it in words and images. Writers like Paul Scott and Ruth Prawar Jhabhwala have been successful in fulfilling their readers in this way. The opulence of the colonial days, when every white man was a king in his own right and the strange sights and sounds of India in their novels allowed the British to relive the heyday of their Raj. But it also propagated an image of India that was not correct and unflattering. It gave rise to false expectations the effects of which are felt even today by the tourist industry. The Indian rope trick and the snake charmer are the stereotyped images of the exotic subcontinent. Gita Mehta's Karma Cola(1979) is one of the earliest books to challenge the western perception of India. In her book, she not only ridicules the West but indicts the East for sustaining such images.

This sort of 'rewriting' or 'retelling' of history can be seen to take the first steps towards what is now termed the 'problematization' of the relationships between
historiography and literature and history and reality. Though novels like Dina Mehta's *And some take a lover* (1992) and Saloni Narang's *Khadi and the bullet* (1994) continue in the use of history as a 'postulate', as an unchangeable given, serving as a 'context' for the narration of the private lives of their fictional characters, it is becoming increasingly difficult and naive to accept unquestioningly the so-called 'facts' of historical truth.

**Writing Indian History**

In the case of India a probable reason for the novel's engagement with history, and its attempt to confront its historical Other (the colonizer), is the state of history and historiography in the subcontinent. Before the British, history was written mainly as personal narratives in the courts of kings and rulers. Until the late eighteenth century Indian history was mainly the interest of a few European missionaries. Indology became an activity that aided the understanding of the Orient after parts of India came to be administered by the English. One of the necessities of the venture was the knowledge of Sanskrit in which ancient Indian texts were written. The Vedas, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita and other texts were translated into European languages. But as the English title given to the law book of Manu - *A code of gentoo laws* (1776) - shows, the study of the Oriental was informed by
preconceived notions of the 'heathen' and of 'civilization'. The caste system and Hindu religious rituals were perceived to be 'primitive' by the Europeans who had come from recently industrialized nations, and, whose moral system derived from Christian theology which clearly demarcated what was right and wrong, good and bad. History began to be written by British officials in India which traced the rise of the British in India and mostly justified British 'civilizing presence' in India. They took pride in relating not only the heroic conquest of India but also how the 'raj' ushered in a period of efficient and systematic government, unlike the chaos that prevailed before they arrived on the scene. While the ancient Indian period was denigrated as a period of darkness both moral and intellectual, the medieval period was projected as largely a period of foreign rule. The modern period was highlighted as an age of redemption—a period when the British 'saved' the subcontinent. The derision of the ancient period roused the religious ire of the Hindus, and the emphasis on the foreignness of the Mughals sowed the germs of suspicion between two communities—the Hindu and the Muslim.

Ironically, it was English education that brought about a change in the presentation of Indian history. Indian historians trained in the English school followed the first professional approach to history of Ramsay Muir and P.E. Roberts in England and H.H. Dodwell in India to restore
India to Indian history (Spear 1965). This group included Jadunath Sarkar, Surendranath Sen, Radhakumud Mukherjee and Nilakanta Sastri. There were other attempts to rewrite the history of India in the late nineteenth century, like those of Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar and Kashinath Rajwade. All these attempts were inspired by not only nationalist desire but also a desire to correct the distorted picture of Indian history. Nationalism seemed to be a common motivation for the historian and the historical novelist before 1947.

After 1947, Indian historiography and the use of history in literature were not solely preoccupied with nationalist fervour. The first to trace the development of Indian historiography is S.P. Sen’s Historians and historiography in Modern India (1973), which enumerates the general trends after Independence. The shift in post-1947 historiography includes a conscious orientation of Indian history to Central and West Asia; application of Marxist principles to interpret afresh developments of personalities in Indian history; concerted attempts to show that policies of the medieval rulers and their governments were motivated by political rather than religious considerations; and the intervention of the state in the research and writing of history. Among the earliest historians of the modern times are S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar who initiated work on South Indian history, K.P. Jayaswal who championed the "ultra-nationalist school of Indian history", D.D. Kosambi the
chief exponent of the Marxist school of Indian history, Sir Jadurnath Sarkar who made outstanding contributions to medieval historiography and R.C. Dutt who pioneered work in economic history.

It is generally accepted that Indian historians have followed broadly the historical methodology and philosophy of the West, especially British and European historicism. This has led to the imbibing of nineteenth century positivistic and progressive historical values by a majority of historians. For example, S.P. Sen points to R.C. Majumdar's endorsement of Ranke's belief that the task of history is to judge the past and instruct the present and to show "what actually happened"(xix). For Majumdar 'objectivity' is of prime importance and history should not be present politics. For K.M. Panikkar, if objectivity made history look more like a telephone directory - an enumeration of names unconnected with each other - it was unappealing to the common man who was the ultimate target of history(341).

Nehru too seems to have been concerned with the removal of history from the public sphere when in his message to the Indian History Congress in 1955 he reminds the historians that "we have always to think of large numbers of people and not of the small elect"(347-8). It seems as though with freedom won in 1947, history became the concern of
University departments and of the Government archives, museums and other institutions which funded and maintained research in history.

Georg Lukács (1937) had found the popular character of history — popular in the sense of history being a mass experience like the French Revolution — to be the unifying, ultimate principle of the writing of the historical novel (98). Interestingly, Romesh Chandra Dutt, a historian who wrote historical novels in the late nineteenth century, was greatly influenced by Scott's historical novels. His assessment of the individual in history as a product of his or her times with the stature to direct the outcome of the conflicts of his/her times is similar to Lukács's estimate of Scott's 'world historical' heroes.

Since 1973, the year S.P. Sen's book was published, Indian historiography has undergone another upheaval. Even during the colonial period when Indians were placed low in the power structure, there were margins within the mass of the marginalized. That is, though Indians as a whole remained on the periphery, the elite and the powerful among the Indians held positions of centrality within their own social hierarchies. In the fervour of nationalism, differences were swamped by the emotional opposition to the rule of a foreign power. For example, it is now emerging that the demands of Indian nationalism requiring the burning
of foreign cloth and a switch to khaddar was detrimental to the economic interest of the Muslim traders, and put clothing beyond the means of ordinary citizens because hand-spun cloth was costlier than mass produced mill fabric. But such voices were not heeded by the sweeping demands of nationalism. Ashis Nandy's *The illegitimacy of Nationalism* (1994) through a discussion of three of Tagore's novels — *Gora*, *Ghare Baire* and *Char Adhvay* — shows how alternatives to polarities were and still continue to be lost by overlooking or ignoring subtle nuances of situations and context.

Sumit Sarkar in the Introduction to his book *Modern India* (1983) alleges that inspite of the differences among conventionalist, nationalist, communalist, Cambridge and even Marxist historiography all of them share a common elitist approach. He attempts to explore the possibility of a 'history from below' that shifts the focus away from the activities and ideals of the leaders of Indian nationalism, to probe the lives and reactions of the peasants and similar socially, economically and educationally challenged people. Ranajit Guha's *Subaltern Studies* (1982-) is engaged in a similar enterprise. It must be noted here that it was around this point in Indian historiography that Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) was published.

Ranajit Guha is convinced that one battle that Britain never won was the "battle for the appropriation of the
Indian past"(1989 210). The 'facts' of history are not verifiable. History being cumulative, current acceptable 'facts' remain open to challenge. Rewriting history is a task that every age has been engaged in; it is not an exclusively twentieth century politically charged postcolonial or postmodern phenomenon. Historical discourse has been so closely linked to the discourse of power that "contestual" history or 'revenge' history has been a recurrent happening. The issue has acquired prominence in the twentieth century through the unprecedented frequency by which foregrounding of gender, race and communal identities have taken place.

The perception of literature and history as distinct categories of knowledge has been frequently challenged in this century. The aim of books like Popular Fictions: Essays in Literature and History(1986) edited by Peter Humm, Paul Stigant and Peter Widdowson is to "make Literature without History, and History without Literature, intellectually and educationally unthinkable"(15). Their examination of popular works like Frankenstein and The Beggar's Opera seeks to indicate ways in which literature and history could come together to pull down the methodologies, epistemologies and pedagogies that keep them apart. Popular fictions serve to challenge the traditional segregation of literature and history and function as instances when boundaries between the two disciplines are blurred.
The next chapter discusses the concept of historiographic metafiction as a point of departure. This provides an appropriate framework for locating the four texts within historiography. The third chapter investigates the use of events in time, narration and history in the novels - the use of the narrated past as a functional element of narrative rather than backdrop or setting. Events are in dialogue with narrative discourse and are thus engaged with historicism and the philosophy of history. The fourth chapter postulates subjectivity in any historical narrative and the positioning of the historian vis-a-vis his material. Just as a narrator is embedded in a narrative tradition so is a historian. The relation of the historian to the past may be that of a technologically advanced scholar's to his data, a research student's journey in the search for truth, an octogenarian's memoirs or the apocalyptic individual's galloping vision of doom. The fifth chapter investigates the types of discourse and the use of the English language in the four novels. The novel's use of actual historical events and reports indicate the movements among various types of discourses. Their use of glossary and notes at the end of their novels also point towards the politics of language use. The last chapter summarizes the findings, restates the argument of this thesis and points towards further areas of interdisciplinary research.