India speaks through a proliferation of voices in the fictional writings of British, American, Eurasian and Indian writers over two centuries now. Whether it is "Kim" or "A Passage to India", "Bhavani Junction" or "The Rains Came", "Jungle Tales", "Room at the Top" or "Malgudi Days", or the writings of Pearl Buck or Romesh Dutt. India, as a place, a people and an ethos, becomes one of the major uniting forces. The use of the English language as a medium of creation is the other factor that binds together this diverse corpus of fictional writing: "Fire on the Mountain", "The Painter of Signs", Midnight's Children", "Possession", "The Apprentice", "The Circle of Reason" and "Bye Bye Blackbird".

For purposes of this thesis the broad spectrum of fiction writing in English has been focused to fiction written in the English language by India-born writers or Indo-Anglian writing as it is popularly called. More than a hundred years ago when English was the official language in the country, during the colonial period, and fifty years ago when it was the recognized official second language of the people (the post-independence period), and today when it
enjoys the status of a near native acquisition by a small percentage of the country, it continues to be the single largest choice of bilingual creative writers, specially fiction writers, among the India-born.

Over the years this body of creative writing has not only acquired a distinct identity but has increasingly made its presence felt on the national and international scene, and the fact that literary criticism chose to focus, then and now, on this body of writing, is adequate evidence of its international visibility, and identity. From among the various Commonwealth contributions to the body of "English Literature", the Indo-Anglian effort is perhaps one of the oldest and the most prolific. This body of writing has alternately mimed and kept pace with white Anglo-Saxon writing over several decades. In the 1930s, Mulkray Anand bore strong socialist links with Maxim Gorky and Steinbach. His novels move from realism to naturalism with echoes of Zola and Dickens. A deft story teller, with an eye for life's little and large ironies and with a heightened sense of locale in Malgudi, R.K. Narayan is not dissimilar to the Hardy of Wessex and his sense of Egdon Heath. Raja Rao in "The Serpent and the Rope", tilts decidedly in favour of metaphysics and philosophy, in the tradition of Hegel.
Like Euro-centric writing, this body too has moved through the various stages of Romanticism, Utilitarianism, Realism & Modernism. From Defoe to Dickens, from Thomas Mann to James and Joyce, Indian fiction writing has its counterparts in Mulkraj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Romesh Dutta or Nayantara Sahagal. The Indian fiction writers' susceptibility to the cross-cultural, western influence is by now legion and their assorted efforts to appropriate the English language as a medium of creative expression, legendary. With varying degrees of proficiency and competence, the indigenous, the colonial and the postcolonial aspects of India have been dealt with by these India-born writers.

Simultaneously, mainstream criticism has continued to raise issues about "Voice" in the guise of implied or explicit reservation about the Indian writers. They question their ability to use the English language successfully to convey the indigenous "Other Voices" and cultures or the cross-cultural encounter during the colonial and postcolonial period. "He has to overcome the difficulty of conveying through English the vast range of experiences and observations whose natural vehicle is an Indian Language." Alterately set down as curiosity or atrocity the choice of medium has seldom been ignored.
Norm governed purists have been quick to point out the lacunae in semantic and syntactic usage, along with the inability to transfer idioms and expressions native to the oriental, to the choice of an occidental language. "An insecure grip on English idiom, infelicitous use of English vocabulary". Accused of straddling two cultures and thereby falling between two stools, Indian writing in English continues to collect adverse, uncharitable charges regarding the wisdom of English as the choice of expression. "The basic sentence patterns are altered so frequently that the language appears violated."

In addition to the creation and control of idiomatic nuance as an expression of Indian sensibility the India-born writer in English took on the task of social reformer. Aligning with the major socio-political movements of the country, within the short span of a single decade Mulkraj Anand brought forth "The Untouchable" - 1935, "The Coolie" 1936, "Two leaves and a bud" 1937, "The village" 1939, "Across the Black Waters" - 1940, "The Sword & the Sickle" 1942. Subsequently, critical inquiry has chosen to focus on the vision of history and criticism of society found in their novels. Their writings have been examined as literature of protest, patriotism and pathology.
Thus criticism has been limited to a discussion of themes and concerns: pre and post independence and the struggle for it, large public issues and particular, personal problems; the individual's quest for a personal meaning. The novels of the 50's and the 60's and even the 70's turned the focus inward: the theme of alienation in the context of the east-west cultural encounter. Yet other critics sought to look for philosophical patterns and the meaning of Indian myths in the tapestry of Indo-Anglian writers. Narayan's novels are constructed round a pattern that can be formulated as "Order - dislocation of it, - relocation. In "The Serpent and the Rope", Raja Rao explores the ancient Indian Philosophical treatises on non-dualism or advaitism and the concept of Maya or illusion.

The 1980s, witnessed a further intensification of the private voice in a bid to liberalize and liberate it from the shackles of social responsibility.

At a UGC seminar in 1986 in Pune on the theme of "the Image of India in the Indian Novel", the content or idea component was focused upon to the utter neglect of the form, the craft, the language and the technique, "leading to interpretation of the term 'image' as idea or concepts, rather than as simile and metaphor, as professor Sudhakar Pandey confirmed in his introduction to a book edited by him on the above topic."
From K. R. Shirwadkar to Nissim Ezekiel, all the major voices of Indian criticism concern themselves with the theme or the contents. Ranging from the novel of the 60s to that of the 80s, the most recent critical collection fights shy of taking up issues linguistic, or even attempts to judge the thematics as realized in the choice of syntax or semantics. K. R. Shirwadkar's 'Literature as Ideology', on Raja Rao's 'The Serpent and the Rope' expresses a marxist's dislike and dissatisfaction of Brahminical Chauvinism. Makrand Paranjape, on the other hand highlights the present redundancy of communism as anticipated by Raja Rao in 'Comrade Kirillov' - published in 1976. Issues of civilization and spirituality, raised by Makrand Paranjape are further explored and dwelt upon by R. S. Singh's critic of K. Markandaya's "Possession". (1963) Sliding into the realm of values, Singh too circumvents and avoids issues of modes of expression like the other two.

Kalpana Wandrekar's analysis of Anita Desai's "Bye Bye Black Bird" is based primarily on psychology. More in the area of character delineation and based on the tenets expounded by Erich Fromm. Vasant Shahane perceives Desai's "Fire on the Mountain" as a fictional montage, "A technique of discovery, a mode of projecting the vision". But here too the jelling of the mosaic into a montage is also in terms of thematic patterns of past, present, natural, human,
Vrinda Nabar in her discussion of Desai's "Clear light of the Day" (1980) prefers to stress the temporal element "the fourth dimension" of reality and the "Indian" of the work. Anita Desai's "In custody" is also looked at by V. Kirpal from the "character" and "place" angle rather than exploring linguistic issues of any kind. Arun Joshi's "the Apprentice" (1974) and Shourie Daniels 'A city of children' (1985), share the theme of corruption in public places (in the former) and in academics (in the later). Ezekiel too, surprisingly, if not disappointingly stresses the realities depicted by Daniels, "she (Shourie) is a serious literary artist of a high order, a critic and satirist of Indian life with a devastating sense of humour.....". S. Chindhade's critic of Rama Mehta's "Haveli" and R. Dnyate's Narayan's "Painter of signs" restrict themselves to issues of values, found juxtaposed in the binary opposition of Eastern and western, man and woman etc. While O. P. Mathur raises the issue of metaphor in "Midnight's Children", his concerns are more thematic - the colonial and the post colonial.

While M. R. Anand's "untouchable" (1935) Raja Rao's "Kanthapura" (1938); G. V. Desani's All About Hatterer (1948) and K. Singh's "Train to Pakistan" (1956) are
regarded as milestones in the history of Indian writing in English, it was only in the 1960s that the sensibility of the Indian writer in English crystallized into what may be called a post-independence one, marked by an expression of the private voice. "the fiction of this period" has turned introspective and the individual's quest for a personal meaning in life has become a theme of urgent interest for the Indo-Anglian writer".  

Parallel to the prolific creative output there also exists a body of on going critics' opinion on India-born writers by indigenous critics.

Vinay Kirpal's "The New Indian Novel" - (1980) is a bold and pioneering effort. While her perspective as an editor is ambiguous, the compilation raises pertinent issues regarding the use of English in creative writing, the operations of identity and readership, the placement of these writers in a larger literacy context, "Suddenly since the 1980s, there has been a bursting forth of Indian Novels like myriad flowers on a Laburnum Tree." Kirpal sees Rushdie not only as the father of contemporary Indian fiction in English but a forefather of younger writers. She very rightly and timely points out that "these novels lack staidness, solemnity ...... the sudden realization of the reality of history in which the individual has an important
role to play is reflected in the Indian novel of the 1980s.\textsuperscript{9}

The various essays alternatively view Indian Fiction writing in English from a haze of Marxist, feminist, mythic psycho analytic stand point, but there is a singular lack of practical critical textual scrutiny or even a linguistic inquiry of any of the writings of the authors under consideration.

Makrand Paranjape's brash Marxist indictment of Indian English novels, leaves much to be desired, 'Indian English novelists tend by & large to live inside "The whale".\textsuperscript{10}

Tarun Tejpal in his review of Naipaul's "India - a Million Mutinies now" (Rupa & Co.) talks of Naipaul's way of looking at the home country and the philosophical and thematic change that has come about in his attitude. Ranjita Basu in her interview with B.Mukherjee in the Times of India talks of the shift in focus from rural to urban in the writings of india-born writers of the 70s. and the 80s. "Perhaps the most striking characteristic about recent writing is its rapid Urbanization".\textsuperscript{11} The new generation of writers are city-born and city bred. Where Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and N.R. Anand drew inspiration from the forms and fields of rural india, Amitav Ghosh and Upmanu Chaterjee draw their sustenance from the vast Indian Metropolis.
Makrand Paranjape reviews Manohar Malgaonkar's "Four Graves" (Penguin) discussing the issue of the old and new thematics of the collection, but steers clear of linguistic issues. "Malgaonkar continues to be an Indian Kipling, celebrating a feudal world of romance, chivalry, heroism, guts and grit".

Thus critics have examined the voice of the writer from the metaphysical, humanistic, philosophical, social, or political stance but only few have chosen to adopt a linguistic or sociolinguistic stance. Critical debate so far has chosen to centre around issues of legitimacy, authenticity and artistic feasibility in the use of English to describe, narrate and reflect the modes of thinking, manner of observation of people whose awareness has been conditioned by a language other than English.

A bi-cultural nexus of criticism, occidental and oriental, has confounded the confusion further by extending multiple criticisms and standards, ranging from pious chauvinism to expatriate superiority, lacking vigor or analytical skills. In the contributions of critics like Meenakshi Mukherjee or a C.D. Narasimhaiah or B. Rajan, or Nissim Ezekiel one finds an attempt to strike a balance between the warring factions of charge and counter charge. Special mention must be made of Narasimhaiah's plea for
Indian writing in English as legitimate writing - in "The Swan and the Eagle", or his rebuttal of John Wain's allegations in the area of cross-cultural polemics, where he argues for critical competence and standards - "We shall not relax our standards but deal with our writers precisely as we deal with English and American writers". However, he refrains from offering a pragmatic methodology for examining Indo-Anglian fiction in English.

B. Rajan, has also made a case for English as the appropriate voice of the east-west encounter, suitable for chronicling the quest for identity, "to shut oneself off from the challenge of the 'non-Indians' betrays not a sense of nationality, but an obsession with insularity". Narasimhaiah's and Rajan's sensitivity to the issue of "inwardness of Indianness and outwardness of English". (B. Rajan) ultimately point to the critical issues of the search for a voice that is capable of expressing the personal as well as the socio cultural, socio-linguistic experiences and encounters of multi-lingual, inter-racial, non Anglo-Saxon identities.

With the globalization of English in the world, a time has come when the critical idiom needs to look at not issues of Indianization of English but at globalization of sensibilities. English is now not only an international
language but intra-national too. In the writings of the late 70's and 80's there is not a large disparity between the perceived linguistic norm and the actual language behaviors; it can no longer be said "He writes very well for an Indian". Pejorative connotations of "Babu", "Wog" or "Indian" English are no longer tenable with regard to these writers.

Issues of advisability or feasibility of English as a medium of creativity have increasingly been reduced to non-issues. As B.Kachru observes, "The post-colonial period in India ushered in a phase of control of English from earlier well-accepted standards." This in turn brought about innovations and mutations that were genetically well within the chromosomal code of the language.

Socio-linguistically these innovations can be considered neither "errors" nor peculiarities, but linguistic choices that reflect the cultural pluralism and linguistic heterogeneity encoded in the choices made. Since a language belongs to those who use it, English belongs to the world. With a substantial number of Asian and African writers appropriating the language, white Anglo-Saxon, western users of English need to realize that they are no longer ethically or linguistically homogeneous. Increasingly writers with multiple cultural loyalties lend themselves to
each other and "Sooner or later the loan will be forgiven, and they will become each other". Because the English language is no longer culture-specific, and takes on the colours and codes of multiple cultures, moving towards a strange and arresting clarity of the human condition today, increasingly India-born writers competently encode their cross-cultural encounters in this language, making it more complex and dynamic.

The last decade of the 80s, therefore has witnessed an unprecedented flush of Indian fiction writing in English and in translations into English from the vernaculars, either by the authors themselves or by other writers.

The year 1990 saw the publication of several eminent writers of Indian English Fiction. As the decade of the 80's drew to a close, Bharati Mukherjee (Jasmine), Salman Rushdie (Satanic Verses), Amitav Ghosh (Shadow Lines), Shashi Tharoor (The Great Indian Novel), Upmanyu Chatterjee (English August) and Allan Sealey's (The Trotter Namah and Hero), Kanga (Trying to Grow), M. Vassanji (The Gunny Sack) came into print. Even established writers like R.K. Narayan, Khushwant Singh, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, M. Mulgaonkar appeared to use a more experimental mode. Further evidence of the credibility of English as an appropriate mode of creative expression for Indians can be seen from the
phenomenal spurt in translations into English of the writings of O.V. Vijayan (Malayalam), Vilas Sarang (Marathi), P.C. Tejasvi (Kannada), Sunil Gangopadhyya (Bengali), Ismat Chughtai (Urdu), Satyajit Ray (Bengali).

A simultaneous move can also be seen on the continent in the fictional out-put of Bapsi Sidhwa of Pakistan, James Goonewardenee of Sri Lanka. In addition to writers like Rushdie and Mukherjee, who attracted the notice of the western world, lesser luminaries like H.Khureshi, F. Dhondy, R. Mistry, E.Mistry also made their presence felt in the "fictional" world. As Ranjita Basu says, in one of her reviews on B.Mukherjee "Indian writing in English has undergone a new-change in the 40 years since independence, in attitudes, stances, style and handling of the language". The very subject matter has changed and preoccupations have shifted. This change is far more noticeable in the fiction of the 80's than at any other point in India born writing of fiction so far.

The rationale for inclusion of Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, Dhondy's *Bombay Duck*, and Kanga's *Trying To Grow*, is based on the fact that these writers are unique instances of the cross-cultural experience. In all the four works of fiction that have been singled out for scrutiny, there exists an overriding concern for the self
The writers, vis-à-vis the world, or the context of situations, in which they find themselves, create fictions to ward off the suffocating forces of an "unreal reality." This "unreal reality" springs from the author's attempts to forge an authentic identity from amidst the diaspora of a global existence. Expected to gain from every socio-cultural christening, these writers seek strength from the world of fiction. Their writings reflect disparate perspectives on themselves and their situations. Their voices rise as one chorus amidst the bedlam of noises and images in the background. By recreating a narrator/protagonist in their fictions, the authors linguistically, imaginatively project their perceptions and socio-cultural concerns to come to terms with the pressures and the pace of a global existence. No longer sheltered by the old comforts of race, creed, caste or religion, the new India-born writers seek strategies to give meaning to life and living. If uprooted and turned away from one set of surroundings and forcibly transplanted into ever newer, more alien soil, the dislocation has to be borne, and survival lies in gaining perspective, an objectivity, a stance, or by an act of creation. By transferring a flesh and blood, tangible reality on to a fey medium of sound and script, the writers have created their own reality. Now that they are gods, they need not worry over much about the business of being...
human. The "word" has empowered the second creation "In the beginning was the word, and the word was made flesh".

Reasons for selection of these four texts lie beyond the fact that they are products of a single decade of the 80s. It is significant that all the four works of fiction offer representation of diverse and distinct socio-cultural contexts. Even more importantly each novel addresses itself to the theme of dislocation, and the kind of involvement with this theme as well as the degree of involvement varies across the texts. Their cultural and linguistic affinities are many and multiplied: while Mukherjee and Rushdie are expatriates in the U.S.A. and U.K. respectively, Dhondy and Kanga are expatriates within their own mother countries! On the one hand Rushdie and Dhondy owe their growth to multiple cultural roots, Mukherjee and Kanga are once removed from their roots. The combinations, permutations of their distance and proximity to their immediate and far away contexts of culture are fascinatingly encoded in their works and may be decoded by analyzing the strategies and structures that go to create their fictions.

These writers find themselves in modern Industrial, bureaucratic, consumer societies that entail the importance of communication, specifically linguistic communication.
Caught in a web of cultural pluralism and ethnic conflicts, these writers resort to fictions. Through the constraints and structures of fiction they achieve a "sublimity of freed perspectives". They would like to assert that global man is no longer a 'single separate person', no longer autonomous in the western european sense, and no longer monolingual, his language is permeated with many voices. He is essentially a polyglot and speaks in a chorus of languages, and unless he maims himself artificially to become a monologic user of language, he has got to be multilingual and therefore multicultural.

Born to western-educated families and trained in the European tradition of thought and understanding these writers lay claim to India and Indianness. The cultural and psychological climate of their minds may be western but their roots reach out and draw strength from Indian affiliations, to a considerable extent. During the formative years and through contact with extended families, of which they are a part, these writers have assimilated the ethnic colour of their environments. While English is their first language they do lay claims to a mother tongue which can be any of the 21 vernaculars in the country. They therefore carry the load of a cross-cultural, as well as intra-cultural consciousness, which constitutes layers of their psyche.
These writers, with multiple identities, at best enriched, and at worst schizophrenic, are natives or expatriates or sometimes both. For instance Salman Rushdie, though culture and religion-specific (Mohamedan, Islam), carries the cross of the crescent, while undergoing a continuous crucification. His roots burrow, through the Indian earth, all the way to Arabia and the original orient, whereas his branches draw sustenance from the occident—England and Europe. Kanga and Dhondy though Indian by upbringing and birth, are "foreign" or Persian by culture and in their writings, they draw effortlessly from all three sources to which they are heir. This triple legacy of socio-cultural backgrounds, equips them to create "fictions" that are different and unique.

The linguistic choices that they make are more processes than products that are lasting comments on the human predicament. Their uniqueness lies in their process-oriented approach to fiction and in the linguistic choices and strategies. Therefore it would be worth examining instances of these two outstanding linguistic strategies within the framework of functional or systemic linguistics (Halliday, Austin, Searle). Because these writers no longer see fiction as an imperfect vehicle for sociology or journalism, and because their primary concern is with creation of form which is supreme fiction, they are no
longer insular or parochial in their concerns. In their endeavor to restore the fictionality in fiction, they have ceased to be exotic and are everyday claiming a place under the sun: the mainstream tradition of world literature.

Over the years these writers are being globalized, and they in turn reflect or mirror the global experience, and through their linguistic strivings they outgrow labels like "post-colonial" or "Commonwealth". On the contrary they have managed to remove "colonization".

"But me wonderin how dem gwine stan Colonizin in reverse" 17 or as J. Aggard says, "Muggin' the Queen's English is the story of my life". 18

No longer perceived as victims they now push themselves as participants of the global scene. English is now as much their construct as white Anglo-Saxons'. "For me this word 'Inglish' is far from being an illusion - it is a reality, it is our constraint, we have spoken and we have spoken within an important context!". 19

By drawing on linguistic pluralities, these writers are systematically breaking down Eurocentric structures, in order to create space for their work. No longer viewed as marginal or fringe phenomena, these writers now have the power to use English to their advantage for survival and flexibility.
FOOTNOTES


