Chapter 1

Introduction
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Fiction is supposed to be the expression of the most intimate social awareness of the society in which it is born and evolves. It can well be perceived as society ruminating aloud and bringing into focus its very sinews. As a creative process, fiction records the creative evolution of the society itself. Thus the evolution of fiction and the evolution of the consciousness of the societal apparatus are simultaneous and interlocked. Indo-Anglian novel, right since its beginning has had inextricable bonds with the socio-political and cultural milieu wherein it took birth and has been written since.

The national consciousness in India was slowly percolating to the grass-roots. It has been faithfully mirrored in Indo-Anglian fiction. This sense of commitment to national awareness was an important factor and it made the early novelists chisel the genre. The earliest attempts like A Journal of Forty Eight Hours (1835) by K.C. Dutt and Republic of Orissa (1845) by S.C. Dutt, discovered and discussed in Bengali and English respectively by Dr. Pallab Sen Gupta and Prof. Amalendu Basu reveal that they articulate the political message most palpably. Not of political concerns, its blossoming and coming of age is also seen to be the direct outcome of the growing up of the national political movement for freedom.

Literature and authorship in India have, on the whole, been uncertain affairs and this applies specially to Indo-Anglian literature. In those days, the standards of book-production were low; publishers
were interested in publishing school textbooks and examination
guides or sex-sustained books; reviewing was also not done as a
serious activity and the book-buying habit was practically non-
existen.

Creative writing, whether it is in one’s own language or in an
adapted language, it calls for a truly dedicated spirit. Raja Rammohan
Roy, M.G. Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji and Phirozshah Mehta,
Surendranath Banerjee and Bipin Pal, Sankaren Nair and K.R.
Srinivasa Iyengar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale,
Madan Mohan Malaviya, Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Aurobindo and
many other nationalists and patriots wrote and reasoned in English.
They were making Indian history and were also creating a new
literature at the same time.

English has become ours, it is not less ours for
being primarily the Englishman’s or the American’s, and
Indo-Anglian literature too is our literature, the literature
which, with all its limitations, still taught us to be a new
nation and a new people.¹

Raja Rammohan Roy welcomed the new age without rejecting
the deep roots in the old. He understood the value of the new ideas
that had come to India under the British rule. Therefore, he gets a
prominent place in any discussion of Indo-Anglian literature although
he himself was not a literary figure.

Novel in English, as a distinct form of literary art, was new to
India in the period of India renaissance. Story-telling was quite
common in ancient India, but it was in poetic form and sometimes Indian writers took themes and materials from Indian epics to write their novels in the nineteenth century when they became acquainted with the works of English and continental writers.

Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, there took place, developments like founding of Universities, spread of journalism, translation of Bible and other Christian literature into vernacular languages. Consequently, the regional languages developed fast and soon became the media of literary expressions. Simultaneously, more Indians took to writing in English. This is evident from the following statement.

The renaissance in modern Indian literature begins with Raja Rammohan Roy … Rammohan Roy mastered while still young many languages, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and Hindustani besides Bengali.²

Raja Rammohan Roy is known as the first Indian who got mastery on Indian prose writing in English. He started the tradition of Indian leaders writing autobiographies and modern autobiographers like M.K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Suresndranath Banerjee, Rajendra Prasad and M.R. Jayakar.

Generally, the beginning of any literature is faint, and mostly lost in antiquity, but Indo-Anglian literature is fortunate in this respect. Being a product of the British presence in India, and, that too,
long after the invention of printing, it is considerably easy to trace its history in brief from the very beginning.

The Indo-Anglian literature, during its early years, found a very congenial atmosphere to take firm roots and grow. The first creative Indian writer in English is Henry Louis Derozio (1809-1831). He was of a mixed descent, i.e. Portuguese father and Indian mother.

With the founding of Universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and of many schools and colleges in India, English language spread rapidly. More and more Indians began to try their hands at creative writing in English and at least some of them achieved a high degree of excellence and reputation. There were people like Mohanlal, Hasan Ali, P. Rajagopal, Rajanarain, Michael Madhusudhan Dutt, Romesh Chunder Dutt and the contributors of ‘Dutt Family Album’ – Govind Chunder Dutt, Hara Chandra Dutt, Girish Dutt and Omesh Chandra Dutt who contributed substantially to the development of Indian writing in English.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the great Bengali writer, visualized the vast Indian nation as an ocean of humanity where innumerable streams of men and women entered, got merged without losing their identities and created a new unity.

Kashiprasad Ghose was one of the first Indians who published a full-length book of English verse. His was a derivative and imitative poetry; it is a tedium brightened by odd flashes of originality and thus
a bright poetic phrase or line occasionally glistens amidst heaps of the utterly prosaic compositions.

Kashinath Telang (1850-1893) translated the *Bhagvad Gita*. His writings on legal, literary, educational, social, religious and political problems are remarkably simple, lucid and have a flair for cogent reasoning.

M.G. Ranade was a scholar, economist and jury. He wrote in English his classic, *Rise of the Maratha Power*. He believed that the varied races of India could really fuse into one nation.

His one aspiration through life was … that India should be roused from the lethargy of centuries, so that she might become a great and living nation, responsive to truth and justice and self-respect, responsive to all the claims of man’s higher nature, animated by lofty ideals, and undertaking great national tasks.³

Sir Narayan Chandavarkar was a journalist, judge, orator, politician and a staunch follower of Prarthana Samaj. His speeches and writings – whatever their subjects, social reform, education or literature – drew upon his vast reservoir of knowledge and experience.

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917) published *Poverty and un-British Parliament* in 1901. He taught at the Elphinston College and entered the British Parliament in 1892. Twice he presided over the Indian National Congress.
There were intelligent, industrious reformers and teachers also. But the writing did not seem to be done in serious, artistic way by those who followed the line of Raja Rammohan Roy. Parasee, Behramji Malabari (1853-1912), and Kannadiga, Nagesh Vishwanath Pai (1860-1920), both were poets in the later phase of Romantic period in Indian Writing in English. Behramji continued Raja Rammohan Roy’s efforts to reconcile the East and the West, and to correct the abuses of women’s rights. Nagesh Vishwanath Pai showed welcome touches of observation and humour, rare in the age of genteel abstraction and gestures towards the ineffable. What is more important than anything else is that during these days the writers devoted themselves to establishing English as a language in which intellectual life and public debate could be conducted in India, which, in fact, was an immense contribution in itself towards opening the Indian mind to the modern world, something which was necessary in a civilization of so many major and minor indigenous languages and something which was not damaging to national pride since none of these writers wished, in any radical way, to desert and destroy the fabric of fundamental Indian tradition.

Vivekananda effectively carried on his work on subjects like morality, history, theology, metaphysics, politics etc. In the same way, works of Rabindranath Tagore proved him as a greater and a finer mind and a more formidable scholar. Both Tagore and Aurobindo (1872-1950) took Vivekananda-line about the essential spirituality of India and essential materialism of Europe. Both saw the Indian
tradition as the essence of Asia itself, thereby highlighting the richness and variety of India compared with the rest of Asia.

Aurobindo was a thoroughly Westernized Indian who, on his return to India, fell upon the revived Hinduism with an appetite of a convert and there was always an uncritical and lyrical enthusiasm towards Hinduism in his vision and application. The titles of his works published in the journals of Asia between 1914 and 1921 convey spiritual tone – ‘The Life Divine’, ‘The Synthesis of Yoga’, ‘Tenets of the Veda’, ‘The Ideal of Human Unity’, ‘The Human Cycle’, ‘The Future Poetry’ etc. Aurobindo’s works are peculiarly mystical and evasive, showing colossal energy, moral earnestness, and general benevolence, a sense of vastness and continuity of human experience.

Romesh Chunder Dutt, born in 1848, was known for his novels and historical surveys. *The Slave Girl* takes us to the Mughal times, and we have glimpses of some of the characteristics of the seventeenth century life in Agra – i.e. love, intrigue, jealousy etc. The *Lake of Palms*, on the other hand, is a picture of the nineteenth century Bengali life. The historical surveys of Romesh Chunder Dutt are loaded with scholarship and they reveal him as a patriot as well as a hard-headed historian.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s first effort – *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864), a novel was in English. Next year, another novel, *Durgeshnandini* appeared in Bengali. It was translated into English in
1880. Kapalkundala, Vishavriksha (The Poison Tree – A Tale of Hindu Life in Bengal), Krishnakantar Uyil (Krishnakantaka’s Will), Anandmath, Devi Chaudhari and other novels appeared between 1866 and 1886, and several of them came out sooner or later in English versions also. At the same time, Raj Laxmi Devi’s The Hindu Wife was published in 1876. Toru Dutt’s Binoy Chand (1888) and Khetrapal Chakravarti’s Sarata and Hingana (1895) came out after The Hindu Wife. These novels, written in English, have, for us today, no more than an anti-Quaranian or historical value.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the novel, as a distinct form of literature in vernacular languages, was developing into multiple directions.

There was glorification and idealization of the past to produce a kind of nostalgia; there was protest and disgust for the present; there was a wishful longing for the future whose even the bare outlines were beautifully vague. There was plenty of saccharin-sweet sentimentalism, homeopathic soup-like patriotism, and a lot of crime and sex behind a thin veil of Puritanism. Detective novels, and even novels of stream of consciousness, came to be written in Indian languages. Often the endings were contrived, the characters either crying cheese or shedding glycerin tear-drops. In many novels, the jackets outdid the contents. And all the while there were translations from English into vernaculars and from one vernacular into another.⁴
There were also quite a few serious followers of this art form. There was also another trend of re-establishing national self-respect and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was a leader in this area. Later, when the first wave of Western influence was absorbed, writers like Tagore tried to combine the East and the West to establish a new identity by synthesizing the influence of both. Lastly, the writers looked deeper into the society and focused their attention on the common people of India.

Indo-Anglian fiction had a slower start and has had a more limited growth than its vernacular counterparts had. The first novel in the twentieth century, *Murugan the Tiller* (1927), was by K.S. Venkataramani. It is a novel about India in transition, with its vivid pictures of rural life in crisis, characters drawn with sympathy and understanding and a mixture of idealism and realism. The second was *Kandan the Patriot* (1938). It effectively and very convincingly portrays the strong bond between an Indian farmer and his farm.

Still no significant Indian novel in English was written in the nineteenth century and till the first three decades of the twentieth Indo-Anglian novel didn’t really arrive until Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao began to write theirs. Anand, in his novels, focused on the lower rungs of Indian society and its dregs. This can be seen in Anand’s characters like Manoo the waif, Bakha the sweeper and Gangu the indentured labourer. They had always been considered as non-persons even by those Indians who were only half a step above
them in caste and class hierarchy. It was Gandhi who drew Indian people’s attention towards them and significantly contributed to their upliftment.

About Mulk Raj Anand, William Walsh states:

…But however derivative Anand’s thought may have been his feeling was genuine and his own experience of the poor in India and Britain gave him every warrant for it. His fiction is, of course, exclusively concerned with India. He is passionately involved with the villages, the ferocious poverty, the cruelties of caste, the wrongs of women, and with orphans, the untouchables and urban labourers. He writes in an angry reformist way, like a less humorous Dickens and a more emotional Wells of the personal sufferings induced by economic injustices.⁵

The most creative years in the life of Mulk Raj Anand were the thirties and the early forties. These were also the crucial years in the history of India and of the whole world. These years saw the Civil Disobedience Movement and Salt Satyagraha. In India, the Round Table Conference and the award of Ramsay McDonald, the passing of the India Act 1935 by the government of India and introduction of provincial autonomy were some of the major historical, political and social events of the period. Schisms in Congress, expulsion of Subhash Chandra Bose (and his later escape to Germany and Japan) and resignation of Congress ministers in the provinces were some more important events.
In his novels, Mulk Raj Anand took up the problems of untouchability and he showed how foolish, how strange and harmful was the cast system in India. Without being sentimental, he draws characters with deep compassion. He is satisfied to make them live their own lives and even to die or to go to prison or to the madhouse. He is against such outdated social systems as caste, class, bonded labour and imperialistic wars etc. He is against the hereditary privileges and does not believe in assessing a person’s worth on the basis of either his birth or wealth.

R.K. Narayan looks at the Indian panorama as a human comedy, captured and brought to the limelight by him from the environment of a provincial town.

Each novel of Narayan is a cameo, a pattern seen through a kaleidoscope. Waifs and vagabonds, astrologers and monks, Indian Romeos and Juliets, cads and their victims, dedicated satyagrahis and pseudo-Gandhiites, half-hearted dreamers and half-heated artists, financiers and speculators, twisters, adventurers, eccentrics, cranks, cinema stars – all appear in the pages of Narayan’s novels.

H.M. Williams states:

His ten novels and numerous short stories embrace such subjects as childhood, family life (with much gleeful and satirical treatment of the Indian extended-family system), the quest for holiness, bogus or would be sannyasis, marital and amorous tangles, the generation gap, the problem of the modernizing India, the ashrams,
the ‘other woman’ and the eternal triangle, tricksters and gulls.\(^6\)

There are a large number of writers who have tried their hands at Indian English fiction, and one of the best known of such writers is Sudhin N. Ghose (1899-1965). He was a man of encyclopedic knowledge and eclectic interests. With the end of the Second World War and the coming of independence, India entered a new age, leaving behind the old one. In Ghose’s novels, India is shown not so much as entering the new age, the age of five-year plans or of nuclear reactors, but as leaving behind the old India that was full of ghosts superstitions, rituals, miracles etc.

…most of the Indian writers writing in English are in revolt against the traditional Hinduism…they believe that they have got a mission that a novel’s function should be seeing through society…They are more or less writing a social criticism of Hindu society.\(^7\)

India experienced traumatic and widespread religious riots in Punjab and Bengal immediately before and after the independence. It began with the great Calcutta Killing in August 1946. Gandhi brought it under control with his great courage and unbounded compassion for both the Hindus and the Muslims, but even he, with his superhuman abilities, could not restore complete religious harmony. Soon it was clear that the country would be partitioned; and Punjab went up in flames. Partition as a political, religious, cultural, social development provided materials for many sensational stories, but two novels – Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and Chaman Nahal’s
Azadi (1975) – made their unique place in the world of Indian Writing in English through their handling of the theme of partition.

In fiction, it seems, Indian writers in English have found a true vehicle for the expression of their genius and sensibility. The first three years of Independence saw the publication of some important novels. Among them, Bhabani Bhattacharya’s So Many Hungers (1948) and R.K. Narayan’s Mr. Sampath (1949) emerged from a complex, but conspicuously Indian experience.

The 1950s witnessed a steady growth of Indo-Anglian novels when nearly three dozen novels were published. Of these at least half of them deserve more than a passing mention even in such cursory survey. Venu Chitale’s In Transit (1950) is a socio-political novel. It covered the crucial period from 1915 to 1935. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s three novels published during this decade To Whom She Will (1952), The Nature of Passion (1956) and Esmond in India (1958) – are built around the themes of love and marriage with the framework of India’s joint-family system. Jhabvala, a Polish Jew brought up in Germany, educated in England and married to an Indian, reveals a strange love-hate relationship with India in her fictive role as an outsider-insider. The East-West encounter, with its inevitable conflict between traditional Hinduism and Western modernism, is her concern as it is of Santha Rama Rau in her novel, Remember the House (1956). Kamala Markanadaya explored the themes of hunger, poverty and misery. Her Some Inner Fury (1956) deals with violence and
destruction during the 1942 phase of India’s struggle for Independence. Nayantara Sahgal, in *A Time to be Happy* (1957), attempts to capture the upper-class life during the years immediately preceding independence.

The important novels of this decade are by novelists like R.K. Narayan and Bhabani Bhattacharya, and also by Mulk Raj Anand, K.A. Abbas and Khushwant Singh. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) deals with the impact of Gandhi and his philosophy on the lives of ordinary people during India’s freedom struggle and with the subtle contradictions of the Hindu society as revealed both in Gandhi’s own speeches and the actual behavior of the people.

K.A. Abbas’s *Inquilab* (1955) captures the most dramatic incidents during India’s struggle for freedom in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. It also deals with artificial barriers erected by man in the name of caste, class, race, and religion and of anti-human forces of repression and tyranny masquerading as democracy. Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is an intensely human novel, structured around the partition of India. It is an exposition of the basic human relationships which admit of no rancor or hatred in normal times. They are strained to the point of the bloody holocaust under the whipped-up passions of communal and political frenzy. A shadowy character makes a sacrifice to save a whole train-load of Muslim refugees.
In Balachandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1959), we experience glimpses of partition horrors; and in Manohar Malgaonkar’s *Distant Drum* (1960) again, the veil is lifted little over what happened in those fateful days in Delhi and later in Kashmir.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s contribution to Indian Writing in English is no less substantial. His *Discovery of India* (1946) and *Glimpses of World History* (1939) are almost epics in prose. His literary intellect is reflected through his work. *Autobiography* (1936) is the record of his inner life, the story of transformation of an aristocrat into a fierce patriot. Nehru’s language is immaculate. Radhakrishnan’s life was an attempt to narrow the East-West divide. He strove throughout his life to interpret India for the West, a task commenced by Swami Vivekananda. He highlights the need for positive living in his works like *The Idealistic View of Life* (1932). In *Kalki*, his concern is for the deteriorating condition in various spheres of life like religion, family, politics, economic relations and international relations.

Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao shaped the destiny of Indian fiction in English. Anand’s commitment to the cause of the exploited in our society is genuine and total. He seems to put himself into the role of his protagonists and rejects the pro-haves system. His *Untouchable* (1935) is the first authentic Dalit novel in English.

Narayan’s fiction highlights the dilemma of average men and women of India. The world of Malgudi is not different from the world
we are familiar with in our everyday life. The triumph of his fiction is
due to the reader’s own identification with Narayan’s characters.

Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and Upamanyu
Chatterjee have given a new direction to Indian fiction in English.
They are the worthy successors to Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao.
Technical innovativeness and linguistic virtuosity are the quality of
their fiction.

Amitav Ghosh began to write in the late eighties. *The Shadow
Lines* (1988) is a saga of three generations. It involves the East and the
West. The narrative depicts the impacts of history on ordinary lives.
Memory becomes the key determinant in the evolution of the boy’s
consciousness. The cities – Calcutta, London and Dhaka are separated
by imaginary or shadow lines, but each city was the inverted image of
the other. Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason* (1986) is in the picaresque
mode.

Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *English August: An Indian Story* (1988)
is the tale of an Indian bureaucrat. The novel is the outcome of an
intense personal experience of the character. Chatterjee’s *The Last
Burden* (1993) is a domestic novel which portrays middle class life.
The uncouth and stilted style robs the novel of much of its charm.

Vikram Seth’s *The Golden Gate* (1986) deals with
homosexuality, an aspect consciously avoided by earlier writers. His
*Suitable Boy* (1997) is a typical Victorian novel. Marriage is the
subject of this novel and Seth’s treatment of the theme evokes his comparison with Narayan.

The eighties saw the rise of ethnic fiction in Indian fiction. Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga and Boman Desai are Parsee novelists who used English as an instrument of self-discovery. Parsee fiction in English voices the dilemma of the vanishing community.

The contribution of women novelists to Indian fiction in English also cannot be overlooked. Among the post-independence women novelists, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai are the major figures. Nayantara Sahgal’s women characters are blue-blooded. The material needs of these characters are already met, but their emotional aspirations remain unfulfilled. So, it is clear that Nayantara Sahgal’s fiction deals with the lives of upper-class characters. The women in Kamala Markandaya’s fiction are victims of poverty, hunger and exploitation as it is in real India.

Anita Desai deals with the psychological problems of Indian women after their marriage. Marriage, which results in an identity-crisis in an Indian woman’s life, becomes the motif of her early novels like *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices of the City* (1965). Her women characters are rebels fighting against the two-value (self-contradictory) system of India which is essentially Manu-made. The two-value system in India can be seen to be in operation because in Indian culture, on the one hand, women are meditated as goddesses, but on the other, they are considered inferior to males.
Shashi Deshpande emerged as a complement to Anita Desai. Her preoccupations are sociological. She questions in her fiction the inferior status granted to women. Her heroines are rebellious and dynamic who refuse to say ‘Yes’. In her fiction, the clash is between an imaginative individual and a ruthless society. Her fiction is one of the protests against male-chauvinistic society and her commitment to the cause of women is Woolfean.

Salman Rushdie betrays a strong racial memory which shows a predilection for mythicizing history and a search for the ultimate that is beyond the ephemeral events of the political world. Subsumed in and sustained by a strong imagination and articulated in an idiosyncratic language, this mythicizing power renders Salman Rushdie’s *Grimus, Midnight’s Children, Shame* etc. a unique place in Indian fiction in English.

Bhabani Bhattacharya lived in a period in which entire India was fighting for freedom from the British rule. By the time he was young, he was impressed by Mahatma Gandhiji’s personality. It was the only reason that Bhattacharya started with the leadership of the Freedom Movement. Bhattacharya was preoccupied with thoughts of political freedom those days. After Independence in 1947, the country was in difficult problems. Economic freedom was still to be achieved. Bhattacharya's interest in freedom can be attributed to these factors. It was natural for Bhattacharya to be drawn towards the theme of freedom.
Bhabani Bhattacharya, an outstanding Indo-Anglian novelist has earned world-wide distinction and his novels have been translated in twenty-six languages, sixteen of which are European. He had won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1967 for his novel *Shadow from Ladakh*.

All the novels of Bhattacharya present a true picture of India and its teeming millions surging with life and substance. All writing for him has a social as well as political purpose. His outlook is highly constructive and purposeful.

“The interaction between politics and literature is not a case of simple cause and the effect relationship. It is at once specific and organic and in essence variable and dialectical. At the applied level, it is therefore, unjustified to expect in political fiction either the factual accuracy of newspaper journalism or complete objectivity, solidly documented references or extensive expositions of political theory as in a scholarly presentation. The prime concern of aesthetic political criticism is not merely to record facts, as in a chronicle, but to interconnect facts and present them as a sequel of socio-historic forces in relation to a given political process.”

Bhabani Bhattacharya has stated that art is a criticism of life which reviews current values and he conceives the novel as an idiom of compassion. Fiction is designed to have a curative social effect. S.C. Harrex, the Australian writer feels,

“…his own novels conscientiously reflect these views. Their subject matter and themes derive from modern
Indian history and the problems of contemporary Indian society and they embody the programmes of reforms as well as stinging social criticism.”


During his student career in London, Bhabani Bhattacharya translated a good number of Tagore’s stories and sketches with the title The Golden Boat. Bhattacharya said of this book,

…a wisp of fantasy, a dip in history, a philosophic motif, an emotion, a sharp observation – such is the varied range of creativity in the stories.10

The title The Golden Boat connotes gleanings from many fields. After getting the poet’s approval of the English translation, Bhattacharya asked him to suggest a name to the volume. Tagore tentatively suggested ‘Silhouettes’. Dr. Bhattacharya did not feel happy and in fact hesitated. He boldly ventured The Golden Boat. The poet thought over it for a while and approved it immediately. Thus it
is a representative selection of subtle, mystical, thought-provoking and delightful short stories and allegories.

Almost every day we describe and assess the personalities of the people around us. Whether we realize it or not, these daily musings on how and why people behave as they do are similar to what personality psychologists do.

While our informal assessments of personality tend to focus more on individuals, personality psychologists, instead, use conceptions of personality that can apply to everyone. Personality research has led to the development of a number of theories that help explain how and why certain personality traits develop.

Personality is supposed to be a dynamic and organized set of characteristics in a person which uniquely influences his or her cognitions, emotions, motivations, behaviors, etc. in various situations. The word personality originates from the Latin persona, which means mask. In the theatre of the ancient Latin-speaking world, the mask was not used as a plot device to disguise the identity of a character, but instead, was a convention employed to represent or typify that character. Personality also refers to the pattern of thoughts, feelings, social adjustments, and behaviors consistently exhibited over time that strongly influences one's expectations, self-perceptions, values, and attitudes. It also predicts human reactions to other people, problems, and stress. There is still no universal
consensus on the definition of personality in psychology. Gordon Allport (1937) described two major ways to study personality i.e. the nomothetic and the idiographic. Nomothetic Psychology seeks general laws that can be applied to many different people, such as the principle of self-actualization or the trait of extraversion. Idiographic psychology is an attempt to understand the unique aspects of a particular individual.

The study of personality has a broad and varied history in psychology with an abundance of theoretical traditions. The major theories include dispositional (trait) perspective, psychodynamic, humanistic, biological, behaviorist, evolutionary and social learning perspective. However, many researchers and psychologists do not explicitly identify themselves with a certain perspective and instead take an eclectic approach. Research in this area is empirically driven, such as dimensional models, based on multivariate statistics, such as factor analysis, or emphasizes theory development, such as that of the psycho-dynamic theory. There is also a substantial emphasis on the applied field of personality testing. In psychological education and training, the study of the nature of personality and its psychological development is usually reviewed as a prerequisite to courses in abnormal psychology or clinical psychology.
Philosophical Assumptions

Many of the ideas developed by historical and modern personality theorists stem from the basic philosophical assumptions they hold. The study of personality is not a purely empirical discipline, as it brings in elements of art, science, and philosophy to draw general conclusions.

There are various categories of the most fundamental philosophical assumptions. This is the question whether humans have control over their own behavior and understand the motives behind it or if their behavior is causally determined by forces beyond their control. Behavior is categorized as being unconscious, environmental, or biological by various theories.

Personality is thought to be determined largely either by genetics and biology, or by environment and experiences. Contemporary research suggests that most personality traits are based on the joint influence of genetics and environment. One of the forerunners in this arena is C. Robert Cloninger, who pioneered the Temperament and Character Model.

The question of uniqueness and Universality is discussed to the extent of each human's individuality. Uniqueness means similarity in nature i.e. universality. Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers were all advocates of the uniqueness of individuals. Behaviorists and cognitive theorists, in contrast, emphasize the importance of universal principles, such as reinforcement and self-
efficacy. The question active versus reactive explores whether humans primarily act through individual initiative (active) or through outside stimuli. Traditional behavioral theorists typically believed that humans are passively shaped by their environments, whereas humanistic and cognitive theorists believe that humans are more active in their role. Most modern theorists agree that both are important, with aggregate behavior being primarily determined by traits and situational factors being the primary predictor of behavior in the short term.

Personality theories differ with regard to whether humans are integral in the changing of their own personalities. The theories which place a great deal of emphasis on learning are often more optimistic than those do not.

The study of personality is based on the essential insight that all people are similar in some ways, yet different in others. There have been many different definitions of personality proposed. However, many contemporary psychologists agree on the following definition, Personality is that pattern of characteristic thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguishes one person from another and that persists over time and situations.

According to the personality, traits are enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts. Theorists generally assume that a) traits are relatively stable
over time, b) traits differ among individuals, and c) traits influence behavior. They consistently are used in order to help define people as a whole. Traits are relatively constant; they do not usually change. Traits are also bipolar; they vary along a continuum between one extreme and the other (e.g. friendly vs. unfriendly).

The most common models of traits incorporate three to five broad dimensions or factors. All trait theories incorporate at least two dimensions, extraversion and neuroticism.

Gordon Allport delineated different kinds of traits, which he also called dispositions. Central traits are basic to an individual's personality, while secondary traits are more peripheral. Common traits are those recognized within a culture and thus may vary from culture to culture. Cardinal traits are those by which an individual may be strongly recognized. In his book, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, Gordon Allport (1937) established personality psychology as a legitimate intellectual discipline and introduced the first of the modern trait theories.

Raymond Cattell's research propagated a two-tiered personality structure with primary factors and secondary factors. For Cattell, personality itself was defined in terms of behavioral prediction. He defined personality as that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation.

According to John Gittinger's theory the Personality Assessment System uses the Wechsler intelligence tests, which are
well standardized and objective instruments rather than self-report tests. Personality assessment system deals with personality traits, i.e. primitivity and two additional levels, basic and surface. Hans Eysenck believed that extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism were sufficient to describe human personality. Differences between Cattell and Eysenck emerged due to preferences for different forms of factor analysis, with Cattell using oblique, Eysenck orthogonal rotation to analyze the factors that emerged when personality questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis. Eysenck, along with another contemporary in trait psychology named J. P. Guilford (1959), believed that the resultant trait factors obtained from factor analysis should be statistically independent of one another, that is, the factors should be arranged or rotated so that they are uncorrelated or orthogonal to one another.

Lewis Goldberg proposed a five-dimension personality model, which includes openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

**Openness to Experience**: the tendency to be imaginative, independent, and interested in variety vs. practical, conforming, and interested in routine.

**Conscientiousness**: the tendency to be organized, careful, and disciplined vs. disorganized, careless, and impulsive.
**Extraversion:** the tendency to be sociable, fun-loving, and affectionate vs. retiring, sombre, and reserved.

**Agreeableness:** the tendency to be softhearted, trusting, and helpful vs. ruthless, suspicious, and uncooperative.

**Neuroticism:** the tendency to be calm, secure, and self-satisfied vs. anxious, insecure, and self-pity.

The above personality model contains important dimensions of personality. However, some personality researchers argue that this list of major traits is not exhaustive. Some support has been found for two additional factors: excellent or ordinary and evil or decent. However, no definitive conclusions have been established.

Michael Ashton and Kibeom Lee, in 2008, proposed a HEXACO model of personality structure. The HEXACO personality traits or factors are: Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), Extraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), and Openness to Experience (O). The three dimensions - Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience are considered to be basically the same. However, in the HEXACO model, Honesty-Humility, Emotionality and Agreeableness differ from the Neuroticism and Agreeableness factors of the previously discussed model. Ashton and Lee especially emphasize the Honesty-Humility (H) factor as differentiating the HEXACO model from other personality frameworks. Specifically, the H factor is described as
sincere, honest, faithful/loyal, modest/unassuming, fair-minded, versus sly, deceitful, greedy, pretentious, hypocritical, boastful and pompous. The H factor has been linked to criminal, materialistic, power-seeking and unethical tendencies.

Trait models have been criticized as being purely descriptive and offering little explanation of the underlying causes of personality. Eysenck’s theory, however, proposes biological mechanisms as driving traits, and modern behavior genetics researchers have shown a clear genetic substratum to them. Another potential weakness of trait theories is that they may lead some people to accept oversimplified classifications or worse, offer advice based on a superficial analysis of personality. Finally, trait models often underestimate the effect of specific situations on people's behavior.

Traits are considered to be statistical generalizations that do not always correspond to an individual's behavior.

The importance that genetic influences have on personality characteristics can change across a five-year period. Age differences create more variables even within a family.

Environment is also not completely responsible for an outcome in personality. An example from *Psychobiology of Personality* by Marvin Zuckerman is alcoholism: Studies suggest that alcoholism is an inherited disease, but if a subject with a strong biological background of alcoholism in their family tree is never exposed to alcohol, they will not be so inclined regardless of their genome.
Personality type refers to the psychological classification of different types of people. Personality types are distinguished from personality traits, which come in different levels or degrees. For example, according to type theories, there are two types of people, introverts and extroverts. According to trait theories, introversion and extroversion are part of a continuous dimension, with many people in the middle. The idea of psychological types originated in the theoretical work of Carl Jung, specifically in his 1921 book *Psychologische Typen* (Psychological Types) and William Marston.

Building on the writings and observations of Jung during World War II, Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katharine C. Briggs, delineated personality types by constructing the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This model was later used by David Keirsey with a different understanding from Jung, Briggs and Myers.

The model is an older and more theoretical approach to personality, accepting extroversion and introversion as basic psychological orientations in connection with two pairs of psychological functions:

**Perceiving functions:** sensing and intuition (trust in concrete, sensory-oriented facts vs. trust in abstract concepts and imagined possibilities)

**Judging functions:** thinking and feeling (basing decisions primarily on logic vs. considering the effect on people)
Briggs and Myers also added another personality dimension to their type indicator to measure whether a person prefers to use a judging or perceiving function when interacting with the external world. Therefore they included questions designed to indicate whether someone wishes to come to conclusions or to keep options open. This personality typology has some aspects of a trait theory. It explains people's behaviour in terms of opposite fixed characteristics. In these more traditional models, the sensing and intuition preference is considered the most basic, dividing people into intuitive or sensing personality types. Some critics have argued for more or fewer dimensions while others have proposed entirely different theories often assuming different definitions of personality.

Psychoanalytic theories explain human behavior in terms of the interaction of various components of personality. Sigmund Freud was the founder of this school of thought. Freud drew on the physics of his day (thermodynamics) to coin the term psychodynamics. Based on the idea of converting heat into mechanical energy, he proposed psychic energy could be converted into behavior. Freud's theory places central importance on dynamic, unconscious psychological conflicts.

Freud divides human personality into three significant components: the id, ego, and super-ego. The id acts according to the pleasure principle, demanding immediate gratification of its needs of external environment. The ego emerges in order to realistically meet the wishes and demands of the id in accordance with the outside world. Finally, the superego i.e. conscience inculcates moral judgment
and societal rules upon the ego, thus forcing the demands of the id to be met not only realistically but morally. The superego is the last function of the personality to develop, and is the embodiment of parental/social ideals established during childhood. According to Freud, personality is based on the dynamic interactions of these three components.

The channeling and release of sexual and aggressive energies, which ensues from the Eros i.e. sex; instinctual self-preservation, and death; instinctual self-annihilation drives respectively, are major components of his theory. It is important to note that Freud's broad understanding of sexuality included all kinds of pleasurable feelings experienced by the human body.

Freud proposed various psychosexual stages of personality development. He believed adult personality is dependent upon early childhood experiences and largely determined by age five. Fixations that develop during the infantile stage contribute to adult personality and behavior.

One of Sigmund Freud's earlier associates, Alfred Adler, did agree with Freud that early childhood experiences are important to development and believed birth order may influence personality development. Adler believed that the oldest child was the individual who would set high achievement goals in order to gain attention lost when the younger siblings were born. He believed the middle children were competitive and ambitious. He reasoned that this behavior was
motivated by the idea of surpassing the firstborn's achievements. He added, however, that the middle children were often not as concerned about the glory attributed with their behavior. He also believed the youngest would be more dependent and sociable. Adler finished by surmising that an only child loves being the center of attention and matures quickly but in the end fails to become independent.

Heinz Kohut thought similarly to Freud's idea of transference. He used narcissism as a model of how people develop their sense of self. Narcissism is the exaggerated sense of oneself in which one is believed to exist in order to protect one's low self-esteem and sense of worthlessness. Kohut had a significant impact on the field by extending Freud's theory of narcissism and introducing what he called the 'self-object transferences' of mirroring and idealization. In other words, children need to idealize and emotionally "sink into" and identify with the idealized competence of admired figures such as parents or older siblings. They also need to have their self-worth mirrored by these people. These experiences allow them to thereby learn the self-soothing and other skills that are necessary for the development of a healthy sense of self.

Another important figure in the world of personality theory is Karen Horney. She is credited with the development of the real self and the ideal self. She believes all people have these two views of their own self. The real self is how humans act with regard to personality, values, and morals; but the ideal self is a construct,
individuals implement in order to conform to social and personal norms.

Behaviorists explain personality in terms of the effects external stimuli have on behavior. The approaches used to analyze the behavioral aspect of personality are known as behavioral theories or learning-conditioning theories. These approaches were a radical shift away from Freudian philosophy. One of the major tenets of this concentration of personality psychology is a strong emphasis on scientific thinking and experimentation. This school of thought was developed by B. F. Skinner who put forth a model which emphasized the mutual interaction of the person or the organism with its environment. Skinner believed children do bad things because the behavior obtains attention that serves as reinforcement. For example: a child cries because the child's crying in the past has led to attention.

According to this theory, people's behavior is formed by processes such as operant conditioning. Skinner put forward a three-term contingency model, which helped promote analysis of behavior based on the Stimulus - Response - Consequence Model in which the critical question is, under which circumstances or antecedent 'stimuli' does the organism engage in a particular behavior or 'response', which in turn produces a particular 'consequence'?

Richard Herrnstein extended this theory by accounting for attitudes and traits. An attitude develops as the response strength i.e. the tendency to respond in the presence of a group of stimuli become
stable. Rather than describing conditional traits in non-behavioral language, response strength in a given situation accounts for the environmental portion. Herrstein also saw traits as having a large genetic or biological component as do most modern behaviorists.

Ivan Pavlov is another notable influence. He is well known for his classical conditioning experiments involving dogs. These physiological studies led him to discover the foundation of behaviorism as well as classical conditioning.

In cognitive theory, behavior is explained as guided by cognitions (e.g. expectations) about the world, especially those about other people. Cognitive theories are theories of personality that emphasize cognitive processes, such as thinking and judging.

Albert Bandura, a social learning theorist suggested the forces of memory and emotions worked in conjunction with environmental influences. Bandura was known mostly for his Bobo Doll experiment. During these experiments, Bandura recorded a college student kicking and verbally abusing a bobo doll. He then showed this video to a class of kindergarten children who were getting ready to go out to play. When they entered the play room, they saw bobo dolls, and some hammers. The people observing these children at play saw a group of children beating the doll. He called this study and his findings observational learning, or modeling.

Attribution style theory deals with different ways in which people explain events in their lives. This approach builds upon locus
of control, but extends it by stating, we also need to consider whether people attribute to stable causes or variable causes, and to global causes or specific causes.

Achievement style theory focuses upon identification of an individual's Locus of Control tendency, such as by Rotter's evaluations, and was found by Cassandra Bolyard Whyte to provide valuable information for improving academic performance of students. Individuals with internal control tendencies are likely to persist to better academic performance levels, presenting an achievement personality.

Recognition, that the tendency to believe that hard work and persistence often results in attainment of life and academic goals has influenced formal educational and counseling efforts with students of various ages and in various settings since the 1970s research about achievement. Counseling aimed toward encouraging individuals to design ambitious goals and work toward them, with recognition that there are external factors that may impact, often results in the incorporation of a more positive achievement style by students and employees, whatever the setting, to include higher education, workplace, or justice programming.

Walter Michel (1999) has also defended a cognitive approach to personality. His work refers to Cognitive Affective Units, and considers factors such as, encoding of stimuli, affect, goal-setting and
self-regulatory beliefs. The term Cognitive Affective Units shows how his approach considers affect as well as cognition.

Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory (CEST) is another cognitive personality theory. Developed by Seymour Epstein, CEST argues that humans operate by way of two independent information processing systems: experiential system and rational system. The experiential system is fast and emotion-driven. The rational system is slow and logic-driven. These two systems interact to determine our goals, thoughts, and behavior.

Personal construct psychology (PCP) is a theory of personality developed by the American psychologist George Kelly in the 1950s. Kelly's fundamental view of personality was that people are like naive scientists who see the world through a particular lens, based on their uniquely organized systems of construction, which they use to anticipate events. But because people are naive scientists, they sometimes employ systems for construing the world that are distorted by idiosyncratic experiences not applicable to their current social situation. A system of construction which chronically fails to characterize and predict events; and is not appropriately revised to comprehend and predict one's changing social world, is considered to underlie psychopathology or mental illness.

Humanistic psychology emphasizes that people have free will and that this plays an active role in determining how they behave. Humanistic psychology focuses on subjective experiences of persons
as opposed to forced, definitive factors that determine behavior. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers were proponents of this view. Rogers and Maslow were among a group of psychologists that worked together for a decade to produce the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. Robert W. White wrote the book *The Abnormal Personality* that became a standard text on abnormal psychology. He also investigated the human need to strive for positive goals like competence and influence, to counterbalance the emphasis of Freud on the pathological elements of personality development.

Maslow spent much of his time studying what he called self-actualizing persons, those who are fulfilling themselves and doing the best they are capable of doing. Maslow believes that all who are interested in growth move towards self-actualizing i.e. growth, happiness, and satisfaction views. Many of these people demonstrate a trend in dimensions of their personalities. Characteristics of self-actualizers according to Maslow include the four key dimensions

**Awareness** - maintaining constant enjoyment and awe of life. These individuals often experience a peak experience. He defined a peak experience as an intensification of any experience to the degree that there is a loss or transcendence of self. A peak experience is one in which an individual perceives an expansion of his or her self, and detects a unity and meaningfulness in life. Intense concentration on an activity one is involved in, such as running a marathon, may invoke a peak experience.
Reality and problem centered - having a tendency to be concerned with problems in surroundings.

Acceptance/Spontaneity - accepting surroundings and what cannot be changed.

Un-hostile sense of humor/democratic - do not take kindly to joking about others, which can be viewed as offensive. They have friends of all backgrounds and religions and hold very close friendships.

Maslow and Rogers emphasized a view of the person as an active, creative, experiencing human being who lives in the present and subjectively responds to current perceptions, relationships, and encounters. They disagree with the dark, pessimistic outlook of those in the Freudian psychoanalysis ranks, but rather view humanistic theories as positive and optimistic proposals which stress the tendency of the human personality toward growth and self-actualization. This progressing self will remain the center of its constantly changing world; world that will help mould the self but not necessarily confine it. Rather, the self has opportunity for maturation based on its encounters with this world. This understanding attempts to reduce the acceptance of hopeless redundancy. Humanistic therapy typically relies on the client for information of the past and its effect on the present, therefore the client dictates the type of guidance the therapist may initiate. This allows for an individualized approach to therapy. Rogers found patients differ in how they respond to other people. Rogers tried to model a particular approach to therapy - he stressed the
reflective or empathetic response. This response type takes the client's viewpoint and reflects back his or her feeling and the context for it. An example of a reflective response would be, "It seems you are feeling anxious about your upcoming marriage". This response type seeks to clarify the therapist's understanding while also encouraging the client to think more deeply and seek to fully understand the feelings they have expressed.

Biology also plays a very important role in the development of personality. The study of the biological level in personality psychology focuses primarily on identifying the role of genetic determinants and how they mould individual personalities. Some of the earliest thinking about possible biological bases of personality grew out of the case of Phineas Gage. In an 1848 accident, a large iron rod was driven through Gage's head, and his personality apparently changed as a result, although descriptions of these psychological changes are usually exaggerated.

Ever since the Human Genome Project allowed for a much more in depth understanding of genetics, there has been an ongoing controversy involving heritability, personality traits, and environmental vs. genetic influence on personality. The human genome is known to play a role in the development of personality. Previously, genetic personality studies focused on specific genes correlating to specific personality traits. Today's view of the gene-personality relationship focuses primarily on the activation and expression of genes related to personality and forms part of what is
referred to as behavioural genetics. Genes provide numerous options for varying cells to be expressed; however, the environment determines which of these are activated. Many studies have noted this relationship in varying ways in which our bodies can develop, but the interaction between genes and the shaping of our minds and personality is also relevant to this biological relationship. DNA-environment interactions are important in the development of personality because this relationship determines what part of the DNA code is actually made into proteins that will become part of an individual. It has been noted that while different choices are made available by the genome, in the end, the environment is the ultimate determinant of what becomes activated. Small changes in DNA in individuals are what lead to the uniqueness of every person as well as differences in looks, abilities, brain functioning, and all the factors that culminate to develop a cohesive personality.

Cattell and Eysenck have proposed that genetics have a strong influence on personality. A large part of the evidence collected linking genetics and the environment to personality have come from twin studies. This "twin method" compares levels of similarity in personality using genetically identical twins. One of the first of these twin studies measured 800 pairs of twins, studied numerous personality traits, and determined that identical twins are most similar in their general abilities. Personality similarities were found to be less related for self-concepts, goals, and interests.
Charles Darwin is the founder of the theory of the evolution of the species. The evolutionary approach to personality psychology is based on this theory. This theory examines how individual personality differences are based on natural selection. Through natural selection organisms change over time through adaptation and selection. Traits are developed and certain genes come into expression based on an organism's environment and how these traits aid in an organism's survival and reproduction. The theory of evolution has wide ranging implications on personality psychology. Personality viewed through the lens of evolutionary psychology places a great deal of emphasis on specific traits that are most likely to aid in survival and reproduction, such as conscientiousness, sociability, emotional stability, and dominance. The social aspects of personality can be seen through an evolutionary perspective. Specific character traits develop and are selected for because they play an important and complex role in the social hierarchy of organisms. Such characteristics of this social hierarchy include the sharing of important resources, family and mating interactions, and the harm or help organisms can bestow upon one another.

Mate competition within humans is theorized to play a very important role in the development of personality through evolution. Characteristics that are typically selected for through evolution are usually related to fertility and sexuality, as these traits will help ensure the continuation of the species. Some examples of this are traits that females seek in males related to features that will be helpful in a
partner such as dominance, powerful status, and access to resources. Another such trait that can be explained by an evolutionary standpoint is sexual jealousy. Males are in competition to reproduce with the most fertile females and in order to prevent other weaker and less adept males from mating with their potential partners over time males evolved a predisposition to rage, aggression, and jealousy. It has also been speculated that violence and killing is much more common in young males because they need to eliminate their competition in order for successful mating and reproduction to occur. Consequently, the age in which killing occurs the most frequently in males is also the age in which mating is the highest.

One of the reasons in which men pursue romantic relationships can be explained by evolutionary theory. Sexual and romantic relationships increase the likelihood that an individual will be able to pass on his genetic material so men are predisposed to pursuing many women. Women have a different set of priorities because once they are pregnant they cannot reproduce during this time period and when they are rearing children they need to use the time they have available to nurture and protect them. Studies have supported this idea and found that in the area of romantic relationships and sexual behavior men had felt much more regret looking back on the sexual experiences they did not have than did women.

Psychology has traditionally defined personality through its behavioral patterns, and more recently with neuro-scientific studies of the brain. In recent years, some psychologists have turned to the study
of inner experiences for insight into personality as well as individuality. Inner experiences are the thoughts and feelings to an immediate phenomenon. Another term used to define inner experiences is quality. Being able to understand inner experiences assists in understanding how humans behave, act, and respond. Defining personality using inner experiences has been expanding due to the fact that solely relying on behavioral principles to explain one's character may seem incomplete. Behavioral methods allow the subject to be observed by an observer, whereas with inner experiences the subject is its own observer.

While there are many different theories of personality, the first step is to understand exactly what is meant by the term *personality*. The word personality itself stems from the Latin word *persona*, which referred to a theatrical mask worn by performers in order to either project different roles or disguise their identities.

A brief definition would be that personality is made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that make a person unique. In addition to this, personality arises from within the individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life. Personality refers to individuals' characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms.

Although no single definition is acceptable to all personality theorists, we can say that personality is a pattern of relatively
permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person's behaviour. Some of the other fundamental characteristics of personality include consistency, psychological and physiological construct, behaviours and actions, multiple expressions etc. Personality is displayed in more than just behavior. It can also be seen in our thoughts, feelings, close relationships and other social interactions.

There are a number of different theories about how personality develops. Different schools of thought in psychology influence many of these theories. Some of these major perspectives on personality include type theories, trait theories, psycho-dynamic theories, behavioural theories, humanist theories etc.

It may be helpful to compare the concept of personality with other concepts having related meanings. The two concepts that quickly come to mind are temperament and character. In everyday language, these terms are sometimes used more or less interchangeably with ‘personality’. In psychology, however, they have somewhat distinct meanings. Temperament usually refers to those aspects of psychological individuality that are present at birth or at least very early, in child-development, are related to emotional expression, and are presumed to have a biological basis. Character, on the other hand, usually refers to those personal attributes that are relevant to moral conduct, self-mastery, will-power, and integrity.
Objectives of the Present Study:

Writing or fighting in support of the cause of the oppressed and the downtrodden, Bhabani Bhattacharya has immense faith in the nobility of human soul.

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1) To study Bhabani Bhattacharya’s prominent place in Indian English novel
2) To take a brief review of the themes in his novels
3) To study his characters, their manners and personalities as reflected in his novels
4) To explore the validity and universality of his characters

The two themes - hunger for food and hunger for freedom usually go hand in hand in Bhabani Bhattacharya’s fiction, and both are quite exhaustively voiced. The novelist examines the theme of freedom in its various forms just as he did with the theme of hunger. He deals with political, economic and social freedoms, as also with the freedom of the mind. Bhattacharya’s treatment of freedom becomes central theme in some of his novels. He deals with Freedom Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement in his novels. His writing highlights the significant impact of the Indian Independence Movement on the novelists belonging to the pre-independent and post independent India.

His wide range of experience in and around the world and his close association with men, manners and their personalities have enabled him to grasp the innate significance of humanity, and all this
finds expression in the characters of his novels and short stories carved out with a pen that never wavers. The reader lives with the characters of these stories and wonders at the author’s keen observation of the day-to-day incidents of life. Bhattacharya has written with a spicy language which is at once crisp and facile. He has caught the vein of rural speech and the informal behaviour of the people, their rustic world and their small and simple views about the great things that take place around them. He holds the view that Indian writing in English has been a decisive factor in redressing the balance of false presentation by foreign story-tellers who with their limited possibilities of true experience have seen only the surface of our way of life failing to reach deeper into our spirit.

L.N. Gupta writes:

“Pure intellectuals watch the crowds but do not force themselves on them. They visit slums and absorb the misery of their dwellers in their being. They tour the famine-stricken areas. They look into the shrivelled faces and sunken eyes of the sufferers. They share their distress. But they do not use amplifiers to blare their benefaction. They suffer quietly. The process involves cycles of seething tensions. The end product is a major work say, a great novel, in the case of a fiction writer. It is a monument of its times. Such is the case with Bhabani Bhattacharya.”

Bhabani Bhattacharya is of the opinion that unless a writer has keen observation and an eye for nothing the details of general behaviour of folks, he cannot write a social novel. For himself,
Bhattacharya has never missed a single opportunity of observing incidents and happenings around him. Bhattacharya himself answers several questions about his novel and medium of expression.

It is supposed that his novel *Shadow from Ladakh* was not a favourite of reviewers, but that is the one the writer enjoyed most. According to Bhattacharya, the men and women in this story held him obsessed all through the writing.

Bhabani Bhattacharya had not believed in writing for the sake of writing. He seldom planned a story structure. Each story grew in his subconscious mind, as it were. When it had grown enough, he had to give it a physical form. The characters, even when he had decided how they were going to behave, moved by their own volition, often defeating his purpose.

Bhattacharya’s novels are a microcosm of Indian culture and surrounding. His views are balanced. He conveys them through the medium of situation in the shape of statements. His novels centre in the dictum that art must have a social purpose and he depicts the life of man in relation to society, in relation to himself, and in relation to Destiny. He is sympathetic, and there is embitterment in his novels. He novels deal with the theme of hunger, poverty, disease, the sufferings of the poor, tradition and modernity, social evils, tensions and pretensions, changing values of modern civilization, interracial relations, crisis of character and East-West cultural relations and so on.
Most of the Indo-Anglian novelists have written their novels with the prime purpose of bringing out a transformation in the attitudes and perspectives of Indian problems and events. Whether they have succeeded in doing so is not of deep significance, but that they have brought a social awareness is remarkable.

Bhattacharya’s novels *So Many Hungers* and *He Who Rides a Tiger* are predominantly woven round the theme of hunger, while the theme of cultural synthesis is taken up in *Music for Mohini*. His novel *Shadow from Ladakh* has for its essence the integration of simplicity and sophistication. His novel *A Goddess Named Gold* is a variation in theme as it deals with superstition and lust for gold. It is a struggle between man and society. He has a remarkable grip over the story and he does it with telling effect.

All the novels of Bhattacharya are impressed with the rural setting and characters, and *Music for Mohini* is connected with the conflict between the city and rural life and confluence at the end. The principle of simple living and high thinking is highlighted in depiction of the village Gandhigram in *Shadow from Ladakh*. We feel their impulses and our souls are touched with the chords of humanity.

The theme of the conflict between tradition and modernity is another aspect treated by Bhattacharya in *Music for Mohini*. The one novel that deals imaginatively with the theme of freedom by Bhattacharya is *A Goddess Named Gold*. The synthesis of East and
West becomes the subject of Bhattacharya’s *Music for Mohini* and *Shadow from Ladakh*.

Bhabani Bhattacharya’s chief merit lies in his masterly treatment of human emotions. This is true with the characters – Kajoli in *So Many Hungers*, Mohini in *Music for Mohini*, Lekha in *He Who Rides a Tiger*, Meera in *A Goddess Named Gold* and Suruchi in *Shadow from Ladakh*. Equally this impact is seen in all its vehemence in the situation of famine, the hocus-pocus of the Shiva’s coming, the freedom movement and the involvement of Meera and other members of the Cowhouse Five.

Bhattacharya deals with the life and tension of the poor and middle class people. The sweet romantic tale of Sumita and Bhashkar in *Shadow from Ladakh* and the romantic longing of Mohini in diverting the attentions of Jayadev in *Music for Mohini* are drawn with breadth of imagination and pragmatic approach of the ethos of human values. Such subdued tones of the subtle music are not to be found either in Mulk Raj or Khushwant Singh. His themes depict day-to-day life incidents and matters concerning the safety and security of the country. He does not deal with fairy-land figures or strange events or fantastic tales. In these aspects, he achieves supreme excellence. In his limited arena, Bhattacharya is a consummate artist. Bhattacharya appeals to our sense in his highly interesting and pleasing sketches.

The characters presented by Bhattacharya are a cross-section of the rural and urban setting. He has a keen eye for situation and
characters, and he takes up varied aspects and themes. He is not just satisfied with presenting a superficial view of life, but he goes into the depths of the stark realities of life and it is this realism that lends a special significance to the political and the social background of his novels. He is mainly concerned with the history of not one man but with the destiny of the society as a whole and man’s relation to other individuals in the society and the sense of adjustment and reconciliation.

All his novels signify a note of triumph that there is a bright future for man and that man should make efforts at all levels to bring out a change in the pattern and structure of the society for the benefit of the entire humanity itself.

*So many Hungers* was published in 1947, the year of independence. It became a best-seller in various translations.

L.N. Gupta states:

“It was a terrible indictment of the British Raj for all their crimes which aggregated into the disastrous famine of Bengal in 1943. It deals with the period of the Second World War as it affected India. Of all the provinces of India, Bengal was more immediately involved in the way with the constant threat of the imminent danger of Japanese air-blasts. It was shaken to the roots by the two diabolical forces of war and famine which sucked the blood of the have-nots.”

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It was a famine that took toll of two million innocent men, women, and children. The story centers round the Basu family, a peasant family, the girl Kajoli, her mother and her brother. Samarendra Basu thinks of organizing a business concern, Bengal Rice Limited, and the unscrupulous Sir Lakshminath helps the company extend its branches to every corner of the province. It is this man’s genius that has so well spread the vice of corruption, and hoarded food grains. The fountains of human kindness seem to have almost dried away, only vultures rule the human habitats. That is why, this novel is supposed to be a harrowing account of a famine in Bengal, and a passionate indictment of the human culpability involved, particularly of the grasping parasites – mostly upper-class – who exploit the famine to make black-market fortunes. The story is told from the point of view of the starving peasants who migrated to Calcutta when they died in the streets. Readers’ sense of humanity is shocked in scenes such as that which describes a Jackal perched on the thigh of a pregnant woman, tearing at her swollen belly, while her screams slash the air.

*So Many Hungers* is no doubt an impeachment of man’s inhumanity to man, but it is also a dramatic study of a set of human beings caught in a unique and tragic predicament. The story has been effectively told and the tragic pathos of the real mass starvation described in the guise of fiction, makes the reader mourn over the situation deeply. The novel describes a factual and vivid account of the most shocking disasters in history.
Music for Mohini was written after India attained full independence and became a republic. Thus it takes for its background the post-Independence scene in India. It presents the conflicts between the East and West; and a reconciliation is suggested which may be taken as a form of adjustment. So in Music for Mohini, Bhattacharya deals with caste distinctions and poverty. Music for Mohini blows up the citadel of old traditions and superstitions which menace India’s progress. It blends the story of an attractive girl’s marriage with the eternal problems of that caste-ridden land and its divorcement from various kinds of imperial rule.

Music for Mohini is the story of an arranged marriage and the adjustment which the modern city girl, Mohini, has to make to fit into the traditional pattern of life in her husband Jayadev’s Big House; presided over by his aristocratic iron-willed mother. In this novel, Mohini, a young girl of seventeen is married in the traditional manner after observing the auspicious signs and comparing the horoscopes. Mohini goes to her new home. Jayadev, the quiet scholar who lives in his ancestral village, and Mohini, the young city-bred wife, who adapts herself very well to her new environment are the two forces that put the village on the path of progress and modernization. The superstitious old mother of Jayadev realizes her mistake in the end and reconciles herself to the changing times.

The main theme of the novel is the idea of synthesis, a profound union of today with yesterday, whereby the conflict between tradition
and modernity will be resolved. Synthesis is achieved in practice as well as in theory. Finally Mohini and her mother-in-law are agreeably reconciled and Jayadev is transformed, through conjugal and moral stimuli, from an ascetic intellectual into a village reformer.

_He Who Rides a Tiger_ was written in 1954. During this period, India was making sincere attempts at creating a new social order and to come out with a new outlook of life. Here Bhabani Bhattacharya once again reverts to the old theme – the Bengal famine. Particularly in the novel _A Goddess Named Gold_ the folk, are skillfully and artistically blended. It contains superb description of rural folk. His novels have a penetrating and sympathetic analysis of the simple but insurmountable problems of Indian life. His themes generally revolve round poverty, hunger, pestilence, traditionalism, caste, India’s struggle against poverty, industrialization and the resulting controversy of Gandhian panacea versus rapid industrialization.

_He Who Rides a Tiger_ is an attack on both who profited by people’s misery during the famine and those who exploited them as caste tyrants. It is a legend of freedom, a legend to inspire and awaken. Here Bhattacharya discusses on the variation of the theme of hunger. It has a fascinating beginning. The story runs rapidly surging with emotion and agitation. Its sharp and vivid characterization and untainted realism make this novel a very interesting one. It is a grim satire on Hindu orthodoxy. The tempo of life in Calcutta, the complexity of urban vices and urban sophistication, the pressure of
man, movements and mass hysteria, the reign of superstition gives the novel a typical quality of its own.

The novel is based on an ancient saying ‘He who rides a tiger cannot dismount.’ A humble village blacksmith named Kalo takes his revenge on a rigid, caste-ridden society and makes a living for himself and his daughter by faking a miracle that begins as a fraud and ends as a legend and passing himself off as a Brahmin priest. The story ends with a note of triumph for the soul over flesh. Eventually, when the fraud is detected, other low caste people hail him as their brothers and the outraged upholders of caste and custom panic. *He Who Rides a Tiger* is a skilful, entertaining and illuminating fictional glimpse inside the corner of India. Bhattacharya writes of Indians and the social cultural and religious world in which they live with an authority and understanding.

Food is the primary requisite of human dignity; hunger debases and dehumanizes man. Bhattacharya has dealt quite forcefully with the theme of hunger and the concomitant theme of human degradation in his novels *So Many Hungers!* and *He Who Rides a Tiger*.

His fourth novel *A Goddess Names Gold* was written in 1960. It is a masterly satire on those who live by the lure of gold. It tells how high spiritual values like spontaneous kindness are sought to be prostituted for purpose of gold. It is modern fable of rural India and the close-textured fabric of its life on the eve of Independence in 1947. The characters are introduced one by one in a leisurely manner.
and we see among them a pretty girl, a strolling minstrel and a magic talisman.

A Goddess Named Gold is once again a social fable and as such is Bhattacharya’s most formally sophisticated works. The plot of this novel is a variation of fairytale in which the heroine and her fellow villagers believe that her amulet has the magical power to transform copper into gold whenever she performs a true act of kindness. In *He Who Rides a Tiger* the social theme is developed in terms of irony in order to dramatize the iniquities and hypocrisies of the caste system, while in *A Goddess Named Gold* the moral supremacy of communal unity over landlord’s selfishness is proposed as a model for Independent India.

Bhattacharya’s next novel *Shadow from Ladakh* was published in 1966. It has for its background the Indo-China conflict. It tells an extremely gripping story of unsurpassed drama on a broad and revealing canvas. It is about a magical meeting point between Gandhian social ethics and tremendous forces of science and technology. It deals with the India’s conflict with China and her response to the challenge. The theme presents a considerable amount of truth of a politically conscious Indian family. S.C. Harrex rightly remarks:

“The Indo-Chinese border conflict following China’s annexation of Tibet is also a variation on the theme of synthesis. Through the relationships of the main characters, Bhattacharya advocates for present day India
a cultural fusion based on a love-match between Gandhian idealism and a progressive people’s technology.”

It provides an insight into the contrasting contemporary life of India symbolized by Satyajit who regards Indian village life as the ideal life and by the Westernized American trained Bhashkar, the forward-looking Chief Engineer in a steel plant, who feels India’s future lies in industrialization, ends on a weak note of co-existence of these two ideologies.

An American educated Bhashkar Roy, in his need to expand the steel town, knows no use or purpose in Gandhigram. So, he wants to dispose Gandhigram. According to Bhashkar, it is a hindrance to India’s industrialization. He brings every pressure to bear, but to his surprise the community of believers in non-violence stands firm under its great leader Satyajit. The conflict is complicated by Bhashkar’s love for Sumita, the daughter of Satyajit and Suruchi.

Around the central theme, Bhabani Bhattacharya has woven an eminently moving tale of the conflict of modern India. This is not strictly a historical or political novel. The story is woven around two great conflicts, namely the Chinese-Indian over Ladakh, and the conflict between the steel town and Gandhigram.

His last novel, A Dream in Hawaii, published in 1978, depicts the theme of East-West encounter. It deals with the tensions and pretensions of the modern world. Between the long span of life, man
is tossed with materialism and mysticism, myth and reality. He lives
the life of transient and the permanent, and experiences the sense of
disillusionment and the stark realities of life. Bhattacharya deals with
the two sides of life. They are physical desire and spiritual bliss or
salvation. The novel also highlights the two aspects - darkness
referring to the worldly pleasures, and light, enlightenment, referring
to the realization of the ultimate reality.

Bhattacharya has the vision of a welfare society at heart. His
concerns are clear and unambiguous; they are political, economic and
social. In other words, the dignity of man both in national and
international contexts is uppermost in his mind. In this, he follows the
tradition of European social realism.

Although Bhattacharya has a tendency to load his novels with
mechanical sociology, over-simplified philosophies and naively
symbolic relationship, these defects are compensated for by the
sincerity of his compassion and the relevance of his vision.
REFERENCES:


2. Ibid. p. 30.


11. Ibid. p. 89.

12. Ibid. p. 89.