INTRODUCTION

Indian English fiction which made a rather diffident appearance in the beginning of the twentieth century, gradually gained momentum and status. Freedom struggle gave a fillip to the Indian English novel and many novelists evinced keen interest in depicting the deepening mood of nationalism, patriotic fervour and reformatory zeal of social reformers. It is a matter of surprise to know that hardly half a dozen novels were written before 1920s and a few more before independence. The close of the Second World War in 1945 brought a harvest of new writers who changed the whole picture of Indian English literatures as it existed before 1947.

Attainment of independence for India on 15th August 1947 marks the end of the nearly two centuries of British rule. No doubt, this was an achievement for the Indian people who had waged a long drawn struggle for freedom against the British Empire. However, India’s independence was accompanied by the Hindu — Muslim holocaust. Thus the pride of achievement was marred by much pain and suffering. Just on the eve of independence India was divided into India and Pakistan causing a great upheaval in the whole continent. It brought, in its wake, one of the bloodiest carnages in the history of India. It is not at all surprising that this bloodiest upheaval in history that claimed innumerable innocent
lives and loss of property produced great impact on the minds of all the people of the sub-continent. Indian writers who choose to express their creative impulse through novels in English were no exception.

In the recent past, a great body of historical and political fiction has emerged on the literary scene. Some of the Post-Independence English novelists concerned themselves with contemporary events of national importance. After the tragedy of the Partition, the democratic India faced another upheaval in the form of imposition of the Emergency in 1975. This event was successfully and painfully projected by more serious novelists in their works. Corruption, inefficiency, poverty, power struggle, using power for vested interests are some of the aspects that find faithful portrayal in their works.

**Partition**

The Partition of India, one of the most traumatic experiences of our recent history, disturbed the Indian psyche and its social fabric as well. Partition has brought such a tremendous change in the lives of the major religious communities of Hindus and Muslims that they, who lived together in reasonable harmony and nurtured dreams of freedom, were to become enemies after the announcement of Partition by Lord Mountbatten on 3rd June 1947, bringing to an abrupt end a long and communally shared history. Sharad Rajimwale speaks about the violence involved by Partition thus: “From the killings, rapes,
kidnappings, looting and banditry, the South Asian populace continues to suffer from psychological wounds etched by Partition. Arguably before the Indian Partition, the twentieth-century had not experienced such a massive and excruciating migration of people”. (Rajimwale, 197)

The biggest price for Independence was paid during the Partition of India in August 1947, when over a million people died, estimates vary from as low as 2,00,000 to two million and nearly eighteen million were uprooted from their homes and hearths and became refugees. The atrocities which accompanied this migration, the largest in human history, were unbelievable. The atrocities against defenceless women and children were particularly shocking. All human values were debased and trampled. There was no difference left between human beings and animals. The anger and frustration of the displaced persons was very palpable and frightening. Urvashi Butalia also observes in this regard that, “Partition was surely more than just a political divide or a division of properties, of assets and liabilities. It was also… a division of hearts”. (Butalia, 7)

Partition was and has remained a decisive event in India’s social and political life, the reasons being its volume and scope with regard to India. Several million people exchanged their homes and countries and more that such a massive transfer of population took place at a very short notice when people were not yet ready for the transfer. These massacres took place everywhere and it accompanied the movement of
the people across the boundary; and it often expedited it. More than 75,000 women were raped and abducted. The families were divided and their homes were destroyed. Crops were left to rot and the villages were abandoned. Nevertheless it is also a fact that if the Partition brought out the brutality, inhumanity and madness of mankind, it also brought to light the acts of kindness, decency, courage and selflessness. There were many acts which were free from racial and religious prejudice.

When elections were held for Provincial Assemblies in 1937, Congress formed ministries in six out of eleven, and a few Muslim League leaders were taken into the Ministry. Jinnah was disappointed but he knew that they could not demand for a separate nation as there was no scope for it in the Hindu dominated India. Still the Muslim League argued that the idea of Partition was not a new idea and that, “On the eve of the Battle of Tarain (AD 1192), the Sultan Mu’izz Al Din had suggested to his adversary, Prithwiraj, to Partition the Subcontinent, leaving the region of Sirhind, Panjub and Multan with him (the Sultan) and retaining the rest for himself”. (Pirzada, xi) Jinnah’s demand for a separate country for Muslims could be his bargaining counter, a tactical move and the objective of Jinnah was to get the best possible safeguards for the Muslims against the dominance of majority Hindus. In the note dated 29 December 1944, Abell, who
was the then Deputy secretary to Viceroy, mentioned that “Menon still believes that Mr.Jinnah himself regards Pakistan as a bargaining counter and would be prepared to cash on it when he had secured the best terms possible at the centre. I told him that I doubted this and was afraid that the slogan was running away with Mr.Jinnah”. (Jinnah, 492) It is worth noting that, during his speech in Cairo on 19 December 1946, Jinnah said, “If a Hindu Empire is achieved, it will mean the end of Islam in India, and even in other Muslim countries”. (The Eastern Times, 22-12-1946, 198) At the London Conference in 1946, Jinnah told Baldev Singh, “You see this matchbox. Even if Pakistan of this size is offered to me I will gladly accept it”. (Inder Singh, 206) On several occasions Jinnah seemed to have repeatedly threatened the British that if Pakistan was not conceded “…the consequence—I cannot describe them—will be catastrophic”. (The Eastern Times, 29-3-1947). In his discussion with Mountabatten in April 1947 Jinnah told him, “I do not care how little you give me as long as you give it to me completely”. (Jinnah, 300) Sense of disappointment, hatred and suspicion seemed to have prompted the League leaders to prefer British India to an Independent Hindu dominated India. When the Second World War started, the Congress ministries in the provinces resigned in protest against the Britisher’s statement that India would be a party to war. As the Muslim League did
not co-operate with the Hindus, the Partition of India and Pakistan was possible after the Independence. Attlee made a statement about the transfer of power in accordance with the wishes of the Indian people and that census figured of 1941 would be taken into account in determining the religion-wise population of a district. The Muslim Majority districts in the Punjab and Bengal were clearly set out in the Appendix to the text of the announcement. In his broadcast, Mountbatten exhorted that, “…if the transfer of power is to be effected in a peaceful and orderly manner, every single one of us must bend all his efforts to the task. This is no time for bickering, much less for the continuation in any shape or form of the disorders and lawlessness of the past few months… May your decisions be wisely guided and may they be carried out in the peaceful and friendly spirit of the Gandhi—Jinnah appeal”. He had nothing significant to say about the Sikhs so he merely tried to console them by saying, “We have given very careful consideration to the position of the Sikhs. This valiant community forms about an eight of the population of the Punjab, but they are so distributed that any Partition of the Province will inevitably divide them. All of us who have the good of the Sikh community at heart are very sorry to think that the Partition of the Punjab, which they themselves desire, cannot be avoided. The Partition experience exposes the strengths and weaknesses of the Indian society.
If its strength is its capacity to come out of even the most traumatic crisis and to rise after every setback, its weakness is to forget experiences soon and not learn lessons from the past.

National experiences usually serve as great reservoirs of literary material for writers which can be demonstrated from the literature of the other countries.

French Revolution, The American Civil War, the Russian Revolution, and the two World Wars provided the basis for great fiction — *A Tale of Two Cities, War and Peace, All Quiet on the Western Front, A Farewell to Arms, From Here to Eternity* and *Doctor Zhivago, The Naked and The Dead.* (Chaddah, 55).

The traumatic event of Partition is one such event of national importance which created such a tremendous impact on the psyche of the people that they continue to be haunted by it even after some decades. Partition was perhaps the darkest period in the history of Modern India. Leonard Mosley gives a brutally frank picture of the Partition riots,

In the nine months between August 1946 and the spring of the following year, between fourteen and sixteen million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to leave their homes
and flee to safety from blood-crazed mobs. In that same period over 6,00,000 of them were killed. But no, not just killed. If they were children, they were picked up by their feet and their heads smashed against the walls. If they were female children, they were raped and then their breasts were chopped off. And if they were pregnant, they were disembowelled. (Mosley, 9)

The horrendous consequences of the Partition moved the creative genius so powerfully that many writers took up this event and explored its various aspects in their works. A number of novels were written on the theme of Partition, the destruction it brought, the plight of the refugees and the breakdown of human values. This unprecedented exhibition inhuman violence was recorded with a strain of despair and disillusionment. Even after 64 years, it has not ceased to be relevant. This unsavory aspect, in a way, overshadowed independence and fired the imagination of the creative writers and as a result, many novels on the theme of Partition emerged on the literary scene. Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar, Chaman Lal Nahal, B. Rajan, Rushdie, Raj Gill, Attia Hussain, Nanak Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Amrita Pritam, Gurucharan Das, Yashpal and Bhisham Sahani are a few notable examples of such writers who dealt with the theme of Partition in their works.
B.Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer (1959)* deals with the East-West encounter, with the Partition background, where the hero accuses the British for the violence at Partition and also for setting the two communities against each other. The deep socio-political and psychological under currents that ultimately lead to the Partition of the country are not focused much. Attia Hussain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961)* presents Muslim point of view of Partition. The novel considers Partition as an enormous event and describes its effects on the lives of the Muslim community in India. The novel also charges the British with the tactics of divide and rule. Laila, an upper class Muslim girl in Lucknow, experiences the effect of the division in her own house when her two cousins, Saleem and Kamal, go to opposite camps, struggle for their faiths and suffer for it. Laila is not a direct participant of any of the two movements, but she cannot remain an impartial observer either. But there is a realization later that the British are not entirely responsible for the violence and that both the communities are also to be blamed equally. Moreover, there is a willingness to acknowledge the goodness and compassion in the other community and thus leaves an impression of maturity and impartiality on the reader.

Bonophul’s *Betwixt Dream and Reality (1961)* depicts, India against the stormy background of Hindu-Muslim riots that preceded
Independence. Raj Gill’s **The Rape (1974)** concentrates on the mass migration of millions of refugees from Pakistan and presents a picture of the aftermath of the Partition. The teenaged Dalipjit is introduced to the horrors of the world during those days of Partition when they came across the border to India. Indian transition is represented by the transformation of Dalipjit into adulthood. H.S. Gill’s **Ashes and Petals (1978)** is set in post-partition India. The novel records a significant facet of Partition—how Hindus and Sikhs on their way to India during Partition, killed their own daughters, grand-daughters and women, when they were attacked by Muslims, just to save their honour. Salman Rushdie’s **Midnight Children (1980)** is full of satirical references to the event of Partition and independence. Rushdie uses parody to represent the events of pre-and post-colonial India such as the Jalianwala Bagh massacre, the Quit India Movement, the Partition of the country and declaration of Emergency in India. Facts have been distorted and fictionalized and mixed with fantasy deliberately.

Bhisham Sahani’s **Tamas (1988)**, winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975, depicts the Partition riots in a small Indian town. Bapsi Sidhwa’s **Ice Candy Man (1988)** is written in the backdrop of the riots in Lahore and it is re-released in 1991 as **Cracking India**. Later this was made into a film, ‘Earth’, by Deepa Mehta. Gurucharan Das’s **A Fine**
Family (1994) has, as the backdrop the pre-independence India at the time of Partition. He narrates the life of Bauji, a ‘Khatri’ lawyer from East Punjab, who represents the pre-independence progressive Indians. Bauji got caught on the wrong side of the Radcliff line and did not believe that the countrymen will turn the joyous occasion of their freedom to one of the most hateful days of communal riots in the modern history.

Mukul Kesavan’s Looking Through Glass (1995) is set in the troubled forties – the era of India’s Partition. The novel showcases that Partition, as an accomplished fact, was something of a blurred achievement. What happened in the Indian subcontinent was horrible and traumatic. Large expulsions took place. There was large scale cleansing. Rohinton Mistry’s A Fine Balance (1995) deals with the story set in 1971. However the Partition plays a dominant role in the narrative. Partition is a recurrent theme for Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu writers. Punjabis dealt with the trauma of the division of the country more than others, may be due to the fact, that Punjab suffered the most due to the Partition. Amrita Pritam’s Pinjar, (1987) translated as “The Skeleton” by Khushwant Singh, is a Punjabi novel which deals with the story of an abducted woman in the period before the Partition and how she brings about a change in the man who rapes her. Yashpal’s Hindi novel, Jhoota Sacha treats the harrowing experiences of the Partition
days. Qurratullain Haider’s *Aag Ka Darya* is outstanding among the Urdu novels on this theme. *Hoshyarpur se Lahore Tak* is a true story based on a train journey from Indian city of Hoshyarpur to Lahore in Pakistan. It is written in Urdu by a Police officer who travels by this train. Abdullah Hussain’s *The Weary Generations*, written in Urdu, tracks the pre history of the Partition through the experiences of the main character, Naeem, a veteran of the First World War, who realizes the futility and meaninglessness of the Partition. Intizar Hussain’s *Basti*, in Urdu, deals with the Partition as memory through the lens of protagonist, Zakir, a historian who seeks to come to terms with this memory in the context of the happenings in 1971 in Pakistan leading up to the formation of Bangladesh. Nasim Hijazi’s *Kaahk aur Khoon* is a historical novel which describes the sacrifices of Muslims of the Sub-continent during the time of Partition in 1947. It is about how when a group of Muslims from different parts of the country were trying to get to Pakistan, they were attacked by some Hindu and Sikh groups, who snatched money, and jewellery of their wives and children. Krishna Baldev Vaid’s *The Broken Mirror (1994)* which is a Hindi novel portrays the psychological and sociological transformation in a West Punjab village in the phase leading up to the Partition. Rahi Masoom Reza’s *Half a Village*, written in Hindi, represents the experience of subaltern Indian Muslims in village, Ganguali, and their distinctive talk on the vacuity of high politics. *Purab-Paschim (East and West) (2000)*
is an epic Bengali saga by Sunil Gangopadhyay. It deals with a particular family that had to migrate from East Pakistan to West Bengal, and their fight against the tide. It stretches from a pre-independence period to early 1980s and reflects the socio-economical changes that this region went through during this long period of time. Saadat Hasan Manto’s *Kingdom’s End and Other Stories (1987)* is a collection of short stories. The majority of stories by this Urdu writer from Punjab revolve around the end of the Raj, Partition and communalism. His stories include *Thanda Gosht, Khol Do, Toba Tek Singh, Is Manjdhar Mein, Mozalle, Babu Gopi Nath* etc. Sampooran Singh Gulzar’s *Ravvi Paar and Other Stories (2000)* was a collection of stories which deals with the Partition of India and Pakistan. Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games (2006)* is not about Partition, but it does contain a long and graphic chapter describing the main character’s mother’s flight as a young Sikh girl from what would become Pakistani Punjab, during which her beloved older sister was abducted. Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Interpreter of Maladies (2000)* which won Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, is a collection of short stories some of which deal with the aftermath of the Partition. Women writers portray the gendered nature of the experience of Partition violence in specific ways as women were not only the objects of but also witness to violence and retained its memory vividly. And so they remember it differently and therefore deplore the core of Partition suffering. Women writers portray not only the
psychological aspect of Partition but also its philosophical dimension. Anitha Kumar in The Night of the Seven Dawns (1979) shows the agony of Partition. Lalita’s separation from her son during Partition is a perpetual torture for her and she never stops yearning for him. She again suffers a severe traumatic shock when she meets her son, Arun during the Indo-Pak war. She learns that being a Lieutenant in Pakistan army, Arun would fight against India during the war, the fact of which—comes as a final blow to Lalita, leaving her in a pool of hopelessness. Mehr Nigar Masroor’s Shadow of Time captures the volcanic passion that was evoked during the Partition and pointedly portrays how the searing quality of lava largely engulfed innocent children and women.

Khushwant Singh

Khushwant Singh is one of the most significant writers in the field of contemporary Indian English novel. He was a writer, political commentator, historian, lawyer, diplomat, critic, journalist, humorist, naturalist and a politician. Singh’s weekly column, “With Malice towards One and All, carried by several Indian newspapers, is among the most widely-read columns in the country. Singh is best known for his trenchant secularism, his humor, and is an abiding lover of poetry. Khushwant Singh was born in 1915 in village, Hadali, in Khushab district Sargodha, Punjab—now in Pakistan.
Singh received his Bachelor’s degree from Government College, Lahore and subsequently qualified as a barrister at King’s College, London. For a while, he worked as a professor of Hindu Law at the Lahore Law College where he trained people to become inspectors, lawyers, and judges. In 1947, Khushwant Singh became the information officer of the Government of India. Though deeply rooted in the soil and in his own culture, he was moulded by the Western education that he received in India and in England. Thus, he was the product of both the East and West, an “Ori-Occidental”. His writings reveal a happy blending of scientific rationalism and liberal humanism. From the first journalistic assignment—a series of articles on the 1965 war for The New York Times—to full time journalism as Editor of The Illustrated Weekly of India was a long step. Apart from this weekly, he has successfully pioneered the growth of at least three major publications in India, namely Yojna, New Delhi, and The Hindustan Times.

Khuswant Singh’s first break through in his career comes when he published his collection of short stories, The Mark of Vishnu (1950) and The Voice of God and Other Stories (1957). Almost all these are based on real experiences or those related by his colleagues and friends. His third collection of short stories entitled, A Bride for the Sahib and Other Stories (1960). Singh came into limelight when his publication
of *Train to Pakistan (1956)* It brought him recognition and wide acclaim. This novel won for him the Grove Press India Fiction Prize for the 1956.

Kushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan (1956)* is based on the theme of Partition. His second novel, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale (1959)*, has a historical backdrop. He treats Indian nationalism in a most detached and critical manner. His third novel, *Delhi (1990)* is a great piece of history-fiction which stayed as bestseller for several months. A significant feature of the novel is the portrayal of a *hijra* as the central character—this is both innovative and relevant. The central character of the novel is Bhagmati, a *hijra*, who represents the city, Delhi. She can be seen as a metaphor for Delhi. *The Company of Women (1999)* is based on the protagonist Mohan Kumar’s varied acrobatic sexual exploits with a number of such women who are as different as possible from one another.

Singh’s *The History of Sikhs (1963)* is a massive work in the field of Sikh history and biography. His full-length portrait of Ranjit Singh vividly brings out the leader, the ruler and the man. His other works — *Ghadar 1915: India’s first armed revolution (1996)*, *The voice of God and other Stories (1957)*, *The Sikhs Today (1959)*, *The Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab (1962)*, *Tragedy of Punjab (1984)*
Sex, Scotch and Scholarship: Selected Writings (1992), Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Khushwant Singh (1993), We Indians (1993) and Women and Men in My Life (1995) — reveal the writer’s mastery in fusing theme and plot.

Singh was deeply saddened by both the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the subsequent riots that victimized his community. His reflections on these events, as well as on the secessionist movement that continued to rage until the mid-90’s, appear in his journalism of the time as well as in two other publications: Punjab Tragedy: Operation Blue Star and After (1984) and My Bleeding Punjab (1992).

He is best known for his translation of Mirza Ruswa’s Umrao Jan Ada which is supposed to be not only the first significant novel in Urdu language but also the first feminist fiction in Indian literature. Later he translated Iqubal’s Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa in 1909 and 1912, Rajender Singh Bedi’s novel, Ek Chadar Maili Si as I Take This Woman in 1996.

From 1980 through 1986, Singh was a member of Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1974 for service to his country and in 1984 he returned the award in protest against the siege of the Golden Temple by the Indian
Army. Undeterred, in 2007 the Indian government awarded Singh an even more prestigious honor, the Padma Vibhushan. To the delight of million of Sikhs, he was honored with “Order of Khalsa”, the highest decorum bestowed upon by the Sikhs community.

**Manohar Malgonkar**

Manohar Malgonkar, one of the prominent Indian English novelists was born in a royal family in 1913, and was an officer in the Maratha Light Infantry. He was a big game hunter, a mine owner, a farmer and also a member of the parliament. He is a prolific and voluminous writer. He is also a historian like Sir Walter Scott and Alexander Dumes. Having begun his literary career in the middle phase of his life, his novels show certain maturity about them. Being a historian, he accurately presents the historical figures, incidents and places in his novels. No other writer has covered as much geographical or historical India as Malgonkar has covered. Whether it is life in the army or on the tea-plantations, the massive violence on the Indian sub-continent, the sepoy mutiny or the princes, Malgonkar is equally at home and always writes as an insider. His entire literary career reveals that his novels are thoroughly Indian both in setting and spirit. About him Rajagopalachari says that “…he is one of the few writers who gained the stamp of unmistakable authenticity or individuality in the art of novel-writing. His own ‘felt-experience’ in the fields of adventure,
civil service, army, politics, love and romantic life helped him catch the
‘colour of life’, especially of the upper class society. In the words of
N.S. Pradhan, “What he is chiefly concerned with is the portrayal of
man’s predicament in a world where values are changing too fast for his
comprehension and adjustment”. (Pradhan, 136)

His novels became popular and brought him name and fame. **Distant Drum (1960)** is a documentation of army life and the
protagonist’s quest for identity and fulfilment. Malgonkar attempts to
present various facets of army life in India during the period of
transition from the last years of the British regime to the beginning years
of Congress rule. On the personal level, it is the story of an army
officer’s growth and maturity in the Indian army. For **Combat of
Shadows (1962)**, the background of the novel is a tea-garden of Assam.
Malgonkar describes relationships between Indians and Anglo-Indians.
The novel deals with man’s quest for self-realization. Surprisingly the
person who is in search of fulfilment is not Henry Wilton, the
protagonist of the novel, but Ruby Miranda, who is the true heroine. It is
a portraiture of the darker aspects of the British people. **The Princes
(1963)**, depicts the life of a prince whose ancient glory is fast fading
because of the merger of the princely states done by the government.
The hero of the novel Abhayraj seeks bliss in the crumbling order of his
kingdom.
Partition of India provides basis for *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), which narrates the ideological conflict between violence and non-violence. The Partition of India into India and Pakistan is depicted as the process of the nationalist struggle for independence in India. The gradual widening of the rift between the Hindus and the Muslims is portrayed well. *The Devil’s Wind* (1972) is the story of Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, in which, Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Bajirao Peshwa II, took a prominent role to temporarily establish Indian rule at Delhi. Nana Saheb’s killing of many hundreds of British in the northern India delineates the conflict that persisted between Hindus and Muslims. It is more history than novel. *Spy in Amber* (1976) and *Bandicoot Run* (1982) are known as thrillers. *Shalimar* (1968) is originally a screenplay by Krishna Shah but is later novelized by Malgonkar as faithfully as he could. *Open Season* (1978) is a film story that is commissioned to Malgonkar by one of his friend-producers for the New York World Fair of 1964-1965. *The Sea Hawk* (1978) is really more of a biography than a novel. *The Garland Keepers* (1986) is a picture of infringement and gross abuse of human rights during the time of Emergency in India. In his *Cactus Country* (1992) Malgonkar had the great opportunity to write a major political novel on the Bangladesh Liberation Movement.
Malgonkar’s best stories are published in *A Toast in Warm Wine* (1974), which contains twenty short stories. *Bombay Beware* (1975) and *Rumble Tumble* (1977) are remarkable for their affectionate ironic comedy and his novels deserve attention for their fundamental seriousness. His play, *Line of Mars*, has attracted quite a good number of readers. *Kanhoji Angrey, the Maratha Admiral: An Account of his life and his battle with the English* (1959) is a contribution to the history of Marathas. He focuses on Kanhoji Angrey, the Lord of Konkan. It deals not only with the achievements of this robust and brilliant Maratha naval commander but also with his relations with Shivaji’s successors Sambhaji, Rajaram and Tarabai. *The Puars of Dewas Senior* (1963) and *Chatrapatis of Kolhapur* (1971) are his other works. They reveal his remarkable grip on the craft of story telling. Malgonkar’s non-fictional writings are *The Men who Killed Gandhi* (1978) and *Cue from the Inner Voices: The Choice Before Big Business* (1980)

As a writer Malgonkar does not suffer from an obsession with the heritage of Indianness, but he is aware of the fact that to gain authenticity it is quite necessary to write from within the Indian ethos and milieu.
Chaman Nahal

Chaman Nahal (1927) is known as a brilliant Indian English second generation novelist. His Gandhi Quartet has epic sweep covering the whole prospect of the Gandhian era in Indian life. Azadi, which happens to be one of the four novels of the Gandhi Quartet gives an intensive picture of the effect of the traumatic experience of the Partition of the country into India and Pakistan.

Nahal produced nine novels. My True Faces (1973) and The Boy and the Mountain (1997) are both chronologically Nahal’s first and last novels respectively. My True Faces (1973) offers a brilliant exposure of Hindu homes dominated by religious dogma and tradition. The novel deals with marital discord between Kamal Kant and Malti Meena leading to their separation and traces the anguish of Kamal’s ‘tormenting self’ caught in conflict with his wife on the one hand and with his sense of ‘Dharma’ on the other. The suffering of the self is originated in the clash of wills representing different backgrounds of tradition and westernization and in the desertion of Kamal by his wife. Into Another Dawn (1977) depicts the emotional involvement involved between Ravi Sharma of Hardware and Irene, wife of Hugh Sanders of Princeton. Ravi a drifter and Irene a neurotic find themselves seeking randomly solutions to their pressing personal problems when they run
into each other. Thereafter they go beyond them to discover in love an anchor to their lives and hope for their future. **The English Queens (1979)** explores how ‘the English bug’, in the form of the Royal charter, has led to an excessive love of English language and, consequently, to an indiscriminate imitation of the English mannerisms resulting in artificiality in thinking and living in the higher echelons of society. The theme also gives scope to the author to make a satiric observation of the contemporary social life in India with a veiled appeal for introspection and correction. **The Crown and the Loincloth (1981)** recreates vividly in fictional terms, the first major phase of Gandhi’s activities during the years 1915-1922. It begins with Gandhi’s homecoming in 1915 and ends with Kusum, the widow of Sunil Kumar the youngest son of Thakur Shanty Nath of Ajitha in the Punjab, joining Gandhi at his Sabarmati ashram to begin her life-long association with the Mahatma. **Sunrise in Fiji (1988)** deals with the Harivansh Batra, the protagonist, a prospering architect and builder, who undertakes a conscious and unambiguous spiritual quest for the meaning and purpose of his life. Having enjoyed all earthly pleasures, he finds himself in doldrums stationed midway in his life. He has to wrestle hard with a sense of negation, without an anchor and rudder to his life. **The Salt of Life (1991)** deals with second Gandhian movement—the epoch-making Dandi March of 1930. **Nahal**
narrates how Kusum, an avowed admirer and a devoted follower of Gandhi, gets married to Raja Vishal Chand, the ruler of a small princely state in the Himalayas, and leaves the Gandhi Ashram and how Vikram, another follower of Gandhi, stays on at the Ashram and joins Gandhi in his famous Dandi March. Eventually, Raja Vishal Chand is killed in a mountain accident and Kusum finally returns to the Gandhi Ashram.

The Triumph of Tricolour (1993) is about the Quit India movement of 1942. Gandhi is the central figure, though it shows the rise of Subhas Chandra Bose. It speaks about the invitation of the British to the Congress to form the government in 1946. It also shows how the violent revolutionaries play a significant role in challenging the British rule.

The Boy and the Mountain (1997) is a short novel and tells the story of Lalit, a poor but sensitive and intelligent school-going peasant boy living in a village in the foothills of the Himalayas. He and his parents are discriminated and humiliated because they are poor and socially inferior. But it only strengthens his resolve to assert their dignity, honour and self-respect. Thus the novel presents a growing schoolboy’s innocent quest in order to get self-respect. Nahal’s another collection of short stories is called The Weird Dance and other Stories (1965). Most of his works stand out in bold prominence.

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Emergency

The Emergency, considered the darkest period in modern Indian history of politics, was the only one occasion which could evoke protests all over India. It was imposed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi on 25th June 1975 and lifted by her on 21st March 1977. The then President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, declared a state of emergency on the advice of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India at that time, under Article 352 of the Constitution of India, effectively bestowing on her the power to rule by decree, suspending elections and civil liberties. It is one of the most controversial times in the history of India after its independence, next only to the traumatic experience of Partition.

National emergency is generally declared at the time of external hostility or armed rebellion. Such an emergency was declared in India in 1962 and later in 1971 due to Indo-China war and Indo-Pakistan war respectively. The President has the right to declare such an emergency on the basis of a written request by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. Such a declaration must be approved by the Parliament within one month. Such an emergency can be imposed for six months and it can be extended by six months by repeated parliamentary approval. In 1975, President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, declared a state of Emergency in India, allowing Mrs. Indira Gandhi to
have supreme and autocratic control with a right to suspend the elections and civil liberties at her will. Certain events that might have prompted her to go for such a decision are allegations of the opposition against the congress party of electoral fraud to win the 1971 elections, agitation of Jayaprakash Narayan in Bihar, defeat of congress in Gujarat, threat of satyagrahas and finally devastating Allahabad High Court verdict declaring her election invalid etc.

Indira Gandhi’s two actions (before the emergency) were approved by the cabinet. One was the arrest of all important leaders of the opposition like Jayaprakash Narayan, Murarji Desai, Raj Narain, Charan Singh, Jivatram Kripalani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, L.K. Advani and other protest leaders under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. (MISA) The second one was the stoppage of many newspapers from publication or circulation etc., followed by a regular code for press censorship. The Parliament with two thirds majority of her party was summoned to amend the Constitution.

The right of detained persons to go to any court was suspended and no reasons were to be given for arrests under MISA. Several journalists, academicians, including 30 MPs, and persons from other fields of life were arrested during the Emergency under MISA. A number of foreign correspondents were expelled and a few
organizations like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Anand Marg were banned. The Emergency was approved by the Parliament on the legal front. The electoral laws were also amended to nullify the court orders regarding Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It also gave Mrs. Gandhi immunity from civil and criminal proceedings in future. The Emergency continued under the support of stern press censorship and further arrests of other leaders and thousands of common people were made. Though belated, a chapter on fundamental duties was added to the Constitution to the detriment of Fundamental Rights. No court was able to accept any obligations to these changes. Protests of various distinguished individuals and organizations were ignored. The judiciary was ‘committed’. The 42nd Amendment, which brought about extensive changes to the spirit of the Constitution of India, is one of the lasting legacies of the Emergency. The bureaucracy became servile signing blank warrants of arrest or writing notes on files according to the dictates of the ‘higher ups’.

At the same time the Emergency had fully seeped into the life of the nation. The Sikh leadership convened meetings in Amritsar, where they resolved to oppose the “fascist tendency of the Congress”. (Grewal, 213) The Sikhs remained virtually alone in their active resistance to the regime, hailed by opposition leaders as “the last bastion of democracy”. (Narayan Kumar, Sieberer, 250) The leader of the protests, Sant
Harcharan Singh Longowal refused to meet the government representatives so long as the Emergency was in effect. In a press interview, he made clear the grounds of the Save Democracy campaign. “The question before us is not whether Indira Gandhi should continue to be prime minister or not. The point is whether democracy in this country is to survive or not. The democratic structure stands on three pillars, namely a strong opposition, independent judiciary and free press. Emergency has destroyed all these essentials”. (Singh, 239)

Sanjay Gandhi, who was the younger son of Indira Gandhi, rose to authority as an extra-constitutional source of power with his own caucus and was feared and highly respected even by many senior politicians. His mother, sometimes nicknamed as the ‘Empress of India’, desires to see him as her dynastic successor. His personal-finance-raising programme of launching Maruti Ltd. a parent company for other subsidiaries supplying clandestinely imported and junk material at high prices. He introduced Four-Point Programme out of which two created a great furore.

The so-called City Beautification Programme caused large-scale bull-dozing of slums etc. Sterilization programme with the laudable objective of population control implemented with unimaginable ruthlessness and barbarity, making the Emergency an object of anger
and hatred. The protestors against the Emergency included University teachers. Certain English newspapers like Indian Express and Statesman, a large number of newspapers, films, etc., of regional languages criticized it. A number of correspondents like Mark Tully of BBC were expelled.

The Emergency has, to its credit, a few positive achievements. It also created a climate of satisfaction among the people in the early days to enable them not to have the travails of strikes and agitations. Because of a downward trend of the prices of essential commodities, the daily lives of people became peaceful and also less expensive. Strict punctuality in offices, trains and buses became the order of the day. Also tax-evasion and smuggling declined. Black marketing also came down due to raids and subsequent arrests. Even Sanjay’s four-point programme inspired people initially. But the Emergency was mostly welcomed for the time being even in a part of the foreign press. Then the atmosphere of the country appeared for a while to be spread by sense of discipline. M.F. Husain, a popular painter celebrated the aspect of Emergency by projecting Mrs. Indira Gandhi in his painting as ‘Goddess Durga’ riding a tiger.

However, the reality of the Emergency was soon unmasked, holding out ominous warnings for the future. Only a few ‘loyalists’ in
the country like the CPI and a majority of the Congress members continued to support it, as did the ‘friendly’ communist powers and a few African countries. The probability is that wide resentment and dissatisfaction of the Indians did not penetrate amply the thick screen of media censorship to sound a bell of alarm in the highest corridors of power. Perhaps the sycophants have spoken what Mrs Indira Gandhi wanted to hear. They also kept her in the dark about the excess of the Emergency and the depth of the feelings of the people aroused by them. Moreover, Mrs. Indira Gandhi might have desired to legitimize her rule through a General Election and silence her critics abroad, after two postponements of the elections, she also released all political prisoners and ordered General Elections. The General Elections were supposed to be held in March 1977, which led to her stunning and ignominious defeat and the rout of the Congress.

The Emergency did not last longer and when it ended, Mr. Murarji Desai was elected the Prime Minister, the first non-congress Prime Minister of India. Kuldip Nair, a renowned lawyer and High Commissioner of India in Britain said that Mrs. Gandhi’s characteristics are courage, treating results as more important than means and thinking herself to be indispensable. One is reminded of Jayaprakash Narayan’s remark on Indira Gandhi, when he said, “Madam, Don’t equate yourself
with this great nation. India is immortal, you are not”. (The Hindustan Times. Jaitley, 1) But she seems to have forgotten the remark precisely.

The Emergency has been transcended by Salman Rushdie’s fun and irony into a sort of divine overview, by Nayantara Sahgal into richness of art, by Raj Gill into a glowing idealism and a deep concern for human welfare, by Mahonar Malgonkar into a patriotic drive towards democracy, by O.V. Vijayan into Love that overpowers the darkness of Sin, by Shashi Tharoor into the all-sustaining ‘Dharma’, by Rohinton Mistry into the vast ambience of Time in which the unfinished return-game of this life may be completed.

The Internal Emergency of the 1970s forms the matter of a number of Indian novels written in English. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight Children (1981)* spans a period of seventy years in India’s modern history. It is a political novel that transcends politics. The narrative runs along with the period of Indian history from the freedom struggle to the Emergency and its end. If one momentous midnight depicted in the novel is the midnight of August 14-15, 1947, the other one is the midnight of June 24-25, 1975 in which President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed the declaration of the state of Internal Emergency at the instance of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. There are references to the excesses committed by Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi during the emergency.
The Torch – Bearer (1983) is a novel on Emergency is written by Raj Gill. The novel portrays many aspects of life during the Emergency period such as mass arrests under MISA including that of Jayaprakash Narayan, claming of Emergency with a weak President in office, slogans like ‘Garibi Hatao’, swooping down on the opponents, youth power organizing rallies, censorship of the press, sterilization etc. Alvika, the Prime Minister in the novel is the successor of the Third Prime Minister like Indira Gandhi herself and like Indira Gandhi, Alvika is also called “the only man in the cabinet”. Thus an attempt is made to capture the essence of the Emergency period.

O.V. Vijayan’s The Saga of Dharmapuri (1985) is a novel about Emergency, precisely the events leading to the Emergency. He portrays the tyranny and resistance to the tyranny. ‘Dharmapuri’ of the novel is an allegorical representation of both India and the world and is really ‘Adharmapuri’. This novel is an allegorical parody of the Emergency. Satirically and in an exaggerated way, Vijayan portrays the sinister and repulsive atmosphere of the Emergency in the novel. The novelist attempts to create a repulsion for evil in a novel way which proves to be very effective.

A mythological fantasization of the Emergency is found in Shashi Tharoor’s The Great Indian Novel (1989). The story of Emergency
presented as a contemporary Mahabharata. The approach to the Emergency is subtly traced from the rise of Priya Duryodhani (Indira Priyadarshini) who gradually consolidates her power and popularity. At a critical moment, she is advised by Shakuni Shankar Ray (a complete picture of Sidhartha Shankar Ray and Sanjay Gandhi) to impose a state of ‘Internal Siege’, (Internal Emergency) in which she can detain all the uprising leaders and also censor the Press. It is when the ‘Internal Siege’ is proclaimed, the real struggle of the Mahabharta starts — the struggle between good and evil, between democracy and dictatorship.

Manohar Malgonkar was inspired by the Internal Emergency of the 1970s to write The Garland Keepers (1991). The novelist in his Author’s Note writes that the background for his novel is not the Emergency of 1975-77 but some fictional one, supposed to be imposed several years ago and that what is pleasured in the novel is a mere coincidence. But his denial is affirmation and is intended to protest him from law. The novel is dedicated to some important personalities who stood against the Emergency. Instead of focusing on all aspects of Emergency, he chooses one or two aspects and weaves a thriller out of the canvass of the Emergency.

Rohinton Mistry’s A Fine Balance (1995) is a winner of the Commonwealth Prize and of the Canadian Gillar’s Award. The novel is
intensely political and its central theme is the Emergency which has been addressed seriously. The novelist puts the Emergency in his fine balance and seeks to weigh it objectively through a variety of weights and counterweights. It is presented as the most horrifying and shameful period in modern Indian history. The roots of Emergency lay in the effort to subvert the law and to retain power through wrong and illegal means. Fundamental rights have been suspended and the opposition leaders are in jail. These are also references to bulldozing of the slums under ‘City Beautification Scheme’, and family planning camps under the guise of free medical check-ups. Describing the tyrannical rule during the Emergency, the novelist, through a character says that ‘anarchy loosed upon the world’ after the poet, W.B.Yeats.

**Nayantara Sahgal**

Nayantara Sahgal’s fiction ranges from factual and emotional autobiography to fictionalized autobiography. In her address to the colloquium at Radcliffe Institute, she had this to say about the close link in her life and writings.

I grew up during the national movement. My parents went to jail repeatedly during our fight for freedom. My father died as a result of his last imprisonment released too late to be cured of the serious illness he had contacted in jail. My uncle became
our first Prime Minister. I was born and brought up within the atmosphere and hopes and ideals of the congress party. Its leaders were familiar to me. Our home was their meeting place and many decisions momentous to India were taken in it. I became a novelist and a political journalist, and all my writing, fiction and non-fiction has been about contemporary India.

(Sahgal, 55)

Born to Ranjit Sitaram Pandit and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, on May 10, 1927 in Allahabad, she was brought up in a political environment. All her childhood was spent in her grand father’s house, Anand Bhavan at Allahabad. Her maternal uncle, Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India while her cousin, Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister who declared Emergency in 70’s. Her parents participated actively in Gandhian Satyagraha and morchas and agitations against the British. She herself confesses in her autobiographical work, 

**Prison and Chocolate Cake** thus:

Our growing up was India’s growing up into political maturity – a different kind of political maturity from any the world had seen before, based on ideology inspired by self-sacrifice, compassion and peace. (Sahgal, 15)

Her family – parents, cousins, uncles and aunts were actively engaged in the country’s struggle for freedom and were at the centre – stage of the Indian Politics –
All around them political and moral ideas were being discussed and formulated and the girls were a part of it. If it was Nehru’s idealism which has influenced her political stance, it is her own father’s gentleness and courage which has influenced her moral stance. (Jain, 12)

Sahgal remembers her childhood at the time of freedom when:

I was conscious of being continually stretched in mind and spirit of being encouraged to be venturesome, of doing the daring rather than the timid thing, of taking risks rather than playing safe, and I was keenly aware of the joy of being myself, like every other person – unique human being.

(Sahgal, 15)

After her schooling at Woodstock, Nayantara along with her sister, went to America for higher studies. She did her B.A. in history from Wellesley College, Massachusetts in 1947. Education in America widened the horizons and continued the lesson in Independence and courage begun at home. The death of her father in 1944, gave a traumatic shock to Nayantara, the full impact of which she realized only on her return to India in October, 1947. Later she was attracted to an ambitious young man working in a British firm. Gautam and Nayantara got married in 1949 and were divorced in 1967. In 1979, she married Mangat Rai. There is a close link between Sahgal’s life and the stuff of
her novels. It is borne out not only by her pre-occupation with politics but also by her constant examination of marital problems of men and women. She herself acknowledges this when she says that there were “…pieces of me going into the men and women I created when I really began to write”. (Sahgal, 15)

The meeting point between the life and the outside world, in Sahgal’s novels is politics or administration. So, scene of action always is either the drawing rooms of a society lady, the bungalow of a minister or ambassador, the posh residence of a Vice-Chancellor, the office of top official, the party thrown by a climbing business man or the neatly trimmed garden of an equally important person. Shayam M.Asnani remarks about the “Selective world of upper class people of power and position in her novels”. (Asnani, 9)

If Mulk Raj Anand’s novels show the personal pre-occupation with the working and the middle classes and their problems, Sahgal’s novels concern themselves with the dialect of the high life in cosmopolitan cities. It is a life marked by a greater degree of sophistication than the life presented in Kamala Markandaya’s novels.

I did not set out to write ‘political fiction’. I have no ideology except a vague sort that feels uncomfortable with title and privilege, with kings, queens and political dynasties. I have no message either, unless it is the non-
message, that Europe is not the centre for the World. Politics and politics fates were inextricably bound. If it has remained a continuing awareness. It is because I live in an unsettled order, one I am trying to change, one where I am witness to the public and domestic misuse of power. And politics was for so long dictated by other people’s view of us that I have found it satisfying to give it Indian expression and interpretation. Yet, thorough use a political backdrop or events – since these happen to be the outer focal points that trigger my imagination, and also because I think we gain or lose significance in our relationship to events, I prefer to think of my fiction as having a sense of history. (Sahgal, 30-36)

Nayantara Sahgal stands as an indispensable link between the old masters like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayanan and Raja Rao and the new writers like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Farooq Dhondy and Shashi Tharoor among others. The older group of novelists endeavoured to adhere to tradition and consciously wrote on various themes pertaining to social change, social justice whereas Sahgal’s characters struggle to break free from the gives of caste and custom. The novels of Sahgal bridge the pre-independence and post-independence phases of the Indian history. Man in relation to his milieu was the subject in the novels of the writers of earlier phase whereas novelists of the later period opened newer vistas, such as man in relation with his political milieu, with other fellow-men and with himself as Sahgal had done.
She has been Vice-President of the People’s Union for Civil Liberaties, a member of Sahitya Akademi’s Advisory Board for English until she resigned during the Emergency: a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for scholars, the National Humanities Center and the Bunting Institute, USA; and has served on the jury of the Commonwealth Writers Prize, as head of Eurasia. In 1990 she was elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1997 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate for Literature by the University of Leeds. Nayantara Sahgal is a novelist and a political commentator who has published nine novels and seven works of non-fiction.

Nayanatara Sahgal’s A Time to be Happy (1957) is a story of the change in the mode of lives of the two categories of upper class Indians that came along with the freedom of the country—the landlord class with its love for the values of the Mughal feudal world, and the Anglicised Indians evolved during the British days caring always for a Western way of life and material propriety. These changes in both classes are observed through the eyes of a hardcore nationalist freedom fighter and earnest disciple of Gandhi. As he himself is the narrator of the story, the story takes political colour. Both Sanad and Kusum experience a new awakening in the new-found political independence.

This Time of Morning (1965) deals with politics in the last days of Nehru’s prime ministership. There is a happy fusion of political and domestic themes. In its political angle, the novelist shows here how the
politicians of pre-independence days have degenerated into power-mongering, career-hunting and intriguing opportunists after independence when personal clashes between so-called leaders are passed off as ideological differences thus turning personal issues into national ones. Her third novel, **Storm in Chandigarh (1969)** deals with the violence, chaos and the uneasy political situation of the late sixties in Punjab. She takes up the problems of Partition of Punjab into Punjab and Haryana on linguistic lines. The novel centres around the theme of forced linguistic bifurcation of the Punjab into two newly formed states—Punjabi speaking Punjab and Hindi speaking Haryana with Chandigarh as the common capital for both states. It also deals with the corridors of power and the problem of visible and invisible violence.

In **The Day in Shadow (1971)**, which Sahgal has called her most “personal” novel, the autobiographical element is uppermost. On the personal plane, the struggle of Simrit trying to establish her identity apart from her husband and family is unacceptable to society, especially to Hindu society. Raj Garg, a Christian convert, comes to Simrit’s aid and provides her the moral support that she needs. The novel is set in New Delhi and close to the seat of power and justice. On the political scenario it depicts the rise of politicians such as Sumer Singh, who are inclined towards super powers for collaboration and not to non-alignment for self-sufficiency.
A Situation in New Delhi (1977) is modeled after the personality of Jawarharlal Nehru and the novel is meaningful only when it is read as the depiction of Post-Nehru scenerio in Delhi. His ideals and aspirations have been forgotten and the students experience a total vacuum in the absence of leadership. The students are restless and peace has no meaning for them. Only violence can attract the attention of those, who matter, and the most brilliant students become Naxalites. It offers an oblique attack on the new brand of politicians and shows how freedom is at peril in free India.

Set in 1975, Rick Like Us (1985) presents the harassment caused to all sections of people during the Emergency. It won the Sinclair Fiction Prize and the Sahitya Akademi Award. She narrates how the political power was misused by the “supreme” during the Emergency. To expose the negative repercussions of a political strategy of the contemporary government, one needs to have real courage—the courage of conviction. The novel offers a searingly frank account of the excesses of Emergency. Plan for Departure (1986) picks up India against the year 1914. it won the Commonwealth Prize (Eurasia). It presents the British in a new dimension of awareness of the fact that they must leave India some day. This awareness itself is an indication of their consciousness that they are aliens and therefore all their associations and relationships are purely temporary. The characters are all birds of
passage in Himapur, and must return to the plains before the monsoon breaks, as the British must leave India some day. The plans that they are constantly making for departure show that all of them are essentially aliens and bring out the ephemeral nature of their mutual association. Sahgal not only recreates the pre-Independence era but also suggests that there is hope only in the synthesis between the East and West as it can only show the right path of enlightenment in the present political wilderness.

Sahgal’s *Mistaken Identity* (1988) is set against India during 1932 to 1938. She depicts India in the twilight years of the British Empire, with search for one’s identity and Hindu Muslim relationship being her major themes. 29 year old Bhushan the son of talukdar of Vijaygarh, is the protagonist. He arrives in Bombay in 1929 from his stay in America for six years. His obsession with Razia, his marriage to another, his experience in the jail and his mother’s departure with her Muslim lover, are the warp and woof of the network of the story. In the backgrounds and major occurrences such as Civil War in Turkey, rise of Mussolini, Dandi Salt March, mass arrests in India, death of hunger strikers in Lahore.

Sahgal’s latest novel *Leeser Breeds* (2003) spans a period of about thirty five years right from the revolutionary agitation in the 30s to
freedom and its aftermath. In a way the novel a continuation of the story of India from the point where *Mistaken Identity* had left it. The novel deals with human relationships across racial, religious and national boundaries. It also concerns itself with the replay of imperialism. The novelist seems to state through the novel that it is a power struggle whether within or outside national boundaries.

**Arun Joshi**

Arun Joshi (1939-1993) occupies a prominent place with his five novels in the field of Indian English literature. He stands beside the diverse Indian English novelists, old and young, such as Kamala Markandaya, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Balachandra Rajan, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and several other younger novelists of the so called ‘Salman Rushdie generation’, who are concerned with the self, the inner man, in a search for the essence of human living. His attention is not only on public issues of the day but also on the inner life of individuals, the deeper levels of their mind and conscience.

As a writer, he was influenced by existentialist writers and Albert Camus in particular. Arun Joshi has firm belief in the concept of “the right way to live”. He reveals, in an interview with Sujatha Mathai, that he was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, J.P.Narayan and the *Bhagavat Gita*. His philosophical leanings are basically towards Hinduism and his ethos is essentially Hindu. (Mathai, 4)
Arun Joshi was born on July 7, 1939 as the youngest child of late (Dr.) A.C. Joshi, former Vice-Chancellor of Punjab and Benaras Hindu Universities and Sumitra Joshi. In 1957, he worked for a brief period in a mental hospital in America where his uncle was a psychiatrist. He passed B.S. in 1959 and M.S. in 1960 from Kansas University and Massachusetts Institute respectively. After returning to India, he joined D.C.M. in Delhi as Chief of Recruitment and Training Department in 1962 and also served in various capacities in both D.C.M. and Sri Ram centre. He set up his own industries to manufacture diesel engines and machine tools. He died of cardiac attack in April, 1993 at the age of fifty four in New Delhi, leaving behind his wife and three children.

Joshi wrote five novels, a collection of ten short stories entitled The Survivour (1975) and a biography entitled, Lala Sri Ram : A Study in Entrepreneurship in Industrial Management (1975) which is more in the nature of domestic eulogy, over span of twenty years. He received Sahitya Akademi Award for his fourth novel The Last Labyrinth in 1982 and World Literature Today (Oklahoma University) hailed him as “one of the very few Indo-English novelists who holds mirror to the subtleties and complexities of contemporary Indian life”. The handful of novels he left behind are remarkable for “...their solidity of substance and seriousness of intent”. (Kumar Ghose, 9)
Arun Joshi became popular with his first novel, *The Foreigner* (1968). It depicts a gnawing sense of estrangement and alienation of an orphan, Sindi, from all meaningful relationships in society, his drifting along rudderless, and his trying to find a solution to his predicament in what he regards as ‘detachment’ and non-involvement, which ironically exacerbates his sense of loneliness and estrangement. The novel also portrays Sindi’s transcending, his inhibiting egotistical preoccupation with detachment, his realizing its true meaning, and getting integrated with society and the world by choosing a meaningful and purposeful course of action.

Joshi’s *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) is concerned with the theme of self and society than the other novels of Joshi. Billy Biswas, who belongs to a well-connected family, is the only child and son of well-to-do parents. His father was a Supreme Court Judge and at one time India’s ambassador to one of the European countries. He had his early education in Dehra Dun in India and England, where he acquires a distinct British accent. Later he goes to America to study anthropology. On returning home to India he finds himself lonely, isolated and alienated in the fashionable and westernized society of Delhi. He feels suffocated in this emotionally dehydrated, phoney society. He abandons the civilized world and disappears following an irresistible urge into the tribal world of the Maikala Hills in interior
Madhya Pradesh, deserting once for all his aged parents, wife and son. Among the tribals he finds the kind of society and human relations he has been longing for. He finds among the tribals a positive attitude to life, well-defined and solid, simple and profound at the same time. He keeps his whereabouts a closely guarded secret. Unfortunately for him, the police force of the state capture him and bring him back to civilization. But he gets killed in an attempt to escape. Thus his strange life comes to an abrupt tragic end.

Arun Joshi’s The Apprentice (1974) narrates the anguish of a middle-aged protagonist, son of an idealistic Gandhian father known for his honesty and integrity, who sacrifices his all including his life in the struggle for freedom. On the otherhand his mother is wordly-wise and places money above everything else. Caught between these two antithetical personalities, Ratan early in his life finds himself in an unresolved dilemma. Though he begins his career as a temporary clerk in a government office, very soon possessed by the career itch, he rises to become an officer, mostly by adopting dubious means and safeguards his career and advancement. At the time of the India-China war of 1962, he clears defective war material for a huge bribe, which results in the death of a very large number of Indian soldiers in the battlefront. Later, he even lets down with little qualms his best friend and benefactor, the Brigadier. Finally, Rattan repents and undertakes a penitential exercise.
Joshi’s **Last Labyrinth (1981)** deals with the protagonist, Som Bhaskar and his relationship with his family members and other in the society. As the only child of aristocratic parents, Som could get gratify every wish of his. He was a millionaire at twenty five, and could afford to be indifferent to the suffering of people. He soon became a prosperous industrialist with an expanding empire. He was ambitious of success and fame, and was fortunate in both. He leads his happy life with his wife Geeta and his two daughters. He enjoyed social status, influence, and a sense of social security that naturally come to one of his position in society. What more would one want in life, one might be inclined to ask. For all of his earthly wants and needs were more than gratified and nothing seemed to be left out for him to seek. However, Som views himself as one who is always caught in a maze, a labyrinth, without knowing the escape route, his doubts remaining unresolved and his questions unanswered.

Joshi’s last novel, **The City and The River (1990)**, unlike the earlier novels which depict only the existentialist predicament of individuals, looks at the socio-political-existentialist crisis of a city. In this novel, Joshi is concerned with the predicament of a whole community of people connected with the “City” and the “River”, and by further extension, with that of a race and of the entire human society
itself. The novel seems most natural if one is tempted to read it exclusively as a political novel or satire. It is a political novel that fuses satire and philosophical discussion. It contains echoes of the Indian Emergency in the 1970s. Throughout the novel, there is a conflict in the city folk to choose between the “allegiance to god” and the “allegiance to man” or in other words between religion and politics. When the grand master, who rules the city, resorts to a region of terror, nature has its own revenge as the river rises to an unprecedented level and washes away - the entire city.

An attempt is made in the following chapters to discuss one novel of each of these writers — Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar and Chaman Nahal — to understand their views on Partition. Two representative novels on Emergency — one of each of Nayantara Sahgal and Arun Joshi — have also been taken for a similar analysis.
WORK CITED


