A historical survey of the Indian English Novel shows that the configuration of the novel has changed from time to time, reflecting the changes in the age, context and the perception of the writer. The Indian English Novel can be marked into three distinct phases. The first phase comprises novels imitating the romantic novels of Scott. The 1930s mark the second phase, with the novel coming into its own and establishing an independent identity. The third phase unmistakably begins with the 1980s, with the novel blazing a new trail.

It is logical to conjecture that the early novels with their staid themes had hardly any scope for experimentation with technique. A shift in the mood was witnessed in the 1930s, when the nationalist movement was gradually gaining momentum and was reaching a feverish pitch. The three important novelists of the time, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan wrote with a compelling sense of urgency, giving expression to the fiery voice of a colonised nation. Hence they can be considered as the real inaugurators of the form. William Walsh's comments on the three writers in their depiction of themes, characters and use of English as mentioned in the earlier chapter gives a comprehensive picture of the new beginnings in the novel genre.

However even at that time, experiments with technique were limited. As Novy Kapadia comments, "Prior to Rushdie, technical innovations by
Indian novelists in English, were limited, restricted and in the embryonic form. The first experiment with technique can be seen in Raja Rao. In his novel Kanthapura, Raja Rao uses a garrulous grandmother as the narrator. A direct adaptation from the vernacular to English, a technical experiment hitherto untried, gives the narrative a racy rhythm. This synchronization of two diverse languages anticipates similar experimentation in the later novels. R.K.Narayan is another writer who experiments cautiously with narrative technique in his novel The Guide (1958). The constant forward and backward movement replaces the straightforward narrative. He also experiments with the flashback and montage technique used often in cinematography.

Chaman Nahal's Azadi experiments for the first time with the technique of the multiple narrator. A novel on the partition, this technique is used to give the reader a more sweeping and greater grasp of reality, successfully highlighting the inner tension between diverse points of view and raising numerous socio-moral, ethical and eternal human questions, through the multiple-narrator technique. It is this multiple-narrator technique that sets apart Azadi from the other novels on the theme of partition written so far.

For the development of the Indian English Novel, the contribution of G.V. Desani is significant. The novel All about H. Hatterr is full of
Indian-Englishisms seen in hybrid lexical collocations and syntactic variations. Rushdie himself admits to the tremendous influence of Desani on his writing. According to Uma Parameswaran, "It is G.V. Desani who is Rushdie's avowed master as he showed how English could be bent and kneaded until it spoke in an authentically Indian voice."²

Experimentation in technique, hitherto sporadic in the Indian English novel, suddenly explodes with full force with *Midnight's Children*. The trend is sustained, although in a less flamboyant manner, in the works of other novelists of the 80s like Amitav Ghosh's and Upamanyu Chatterjee's. Combining the new with the old, Rushdie's technique heralds the coming of a new genre giving it a truly cosmopolitan identity. This uninhibited experimentation with narrative technique and the flexible use of English language provided the genre of the Indian English Novel a new direction and renewed confidence. William Walsh succinctly analyses Rushdie's intriguingly complex narrative technique:

Combining the elements of magic and fantasy, the grimmest realism, extravagant farce, multimirrored analogy and a potent symbolic structure, Salman Rushdie has captured the astonishing energy of the novel unprecedented in scope, manner and achievement in the hundred and fifty year old tradition of the Indian novel in English.³
The novel of the 80s brings to the fore a new cosmopolitanism in its exploration of the complex nature of human experience. It deals with transnational, transcontinental and transcultural experiences. It projects the human struggle to come to terms with a new cosmopolitan reality. These variegated experiences are too complex and multi-dimensional to be given expression through a linear narrative. As the experiences became more and more complex, the novelists too found it imperative to give expression to their perceptions through new techniques.

Irving H. Buchen also makes similar observations:

The essential pressure for experimentation comes from the novelist’s conviction that the demands of his vision are so new and urgent and the forms available so tired that new forms or hybrid must be created all experiment entails the violation of known orders of sequence, Syntax, punctuation and language. The novelists plumb for new forms only when he is driven up against a wall and nothing else works.4

The new cosmopolitanism inevitably brings the novelists into contact with post-modernism. Hence the new novel is a hybrid, interfacing the age-old Indian techniques from the oral tradition to the latest in post-
modernism. And like other post-modernist writers, the Indian English novelists too violate and confound traditional features. An element of playfulness, not found in the earlier novel is an important feature of the new writing. Myth, fantasy, the super-natural, snatches of songs, and movie scenes are the elements used in the new writing to give expression to the chaotic and complex nature of contemporary experience. The post-modernist novel redrafts the contract between the writer and reader. The authorial intrusions into the narrative are frequent, often violating the time sequence. Alterations in language sequence are numerous, resulting in a variety of possibilities in language usage. The compelling use of myth and fantasy in order to depict experiences that cannot be given expression in realistic terms is another important feature. All these post-modernist traits are significantly present in the new novel of the 80s. The novelists of the 80s combine traditional Indian narrative devices like episodicity, plotlessness and story-within-story with new post-modernist techniques. The characteristics of both traditions are relevant to the understanding of the quality and tone of Indian English fiction.

The oral narrative tradition has been an integral part of Indian literature through the ages. In a country with a strong folk culture and intrinsic religious inclinations, the oral narrative form has inevitably been a dominant mode of expression since times immemorial. Salman Rushdie, in an interview, acknowledges the tremendous influence of the Indian oral narrative tradition on his writing. In the course of the interview he says:
Listening to this man (a famous storyteller in Baroda) reminded me of the shape of the oral narrative. It’s not linear. An oral narrative does not go from the beginning to the middle to the end of the story. It goes in great swoops; it goes in spirals or in loops. It every so often reiterates something that happened earlier to remind you and then takes you off again. Sometimes summarises itself, it frequently digresses off into something that the story teller appears just to have thought of, then it comes back to the main thrust of the narrative...so that’s what Midnight’s Children was, I think every thing about Laurence Sterne, Garcia Marquez and all that comes a long way behind that I felt when writing it.5

This sums up the intricate structure on which Rushdie mounts Midnight’s Children. Combining the oral tradition with post-modernist techniques, Rushdie compels us to take a new perception of the socio-political ethos of the sub-continent.

The narrative technique employed by Saleem, the protagonist of Midnight’s Children is interestingly the same as employed by the traditional clown narrator (the Vidushka) in the ancient performance art of Kuttiyattam. To quote A.Paniker:
The Vidushka can take all kinds of liberties; in fact he is expected to and encouraged to do so. He can indulge in any kind of extravagance provided he can come back to the main thread of the narrative without getting lost in his own elaborations. He can turn his narrative into a string of short stories or take one of these stories and lengthen it for hours or days. Thus the oral narrative can easily achieve the length of a novel if length is a criterion at all.\(^6\)

Midnight's Children is seventy years of Indian history told by a loquacious Saleem to Padma an illiterate worker in the Braganza pickle factory in Bombay. At the outset Saleem himself says, "There are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives even miracles, places, rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane" (MC-4). Thus in the course of the telling of these stories, Saleem takes liberties with historical dates, indulges in all kinds of extravagances, building tale within tale, and circling back from the present to the past. However, in the end, the garrulous Saleem by his sheer ingenuity binds all these stories together. He recounts episode after episode to Padma each in a distinct tone and flavour. Major historical incidents like the Jallianwallah Bagh, the moment of independence heralding a new dawn, the wars with China and Pakistan, the Hazratbal episode and the horrendous emergency
are recapitulated. Personal stories like the curious rising of Khushrovand Bhagwan, the enigmatic Mian Abdullah and old Tai, the shikara man are all told in a unique flavour. At the end, each story and episode is integrated into the main texture of the narrative.

*Shame* too has an episodic structure and an abundance of story within story. In the course of depicting the socio-political history of Pakistan opening with the bizarre story of the Shakil sisters in Nishapur, the narrative meanders to encompass an equally bizarre story of Sufiya, the clairvoyance of Talvar Ulhaq, Naveed Hyder’s unfortunate destiny and finally detours to come back to Quetta from where it all started.

Amitav Ghosh’s novel *The Circle of Reason* too, has all the prominent features of the oral narrative, circular in its structure and episodic in its depiction. The novel starts with Balram Bose and his passion for the book *Life of Pasteur*, in a small village in Bengal. The narrative moves to al-Ghazira, where Zindi dominates the story. In this section of the novel, stories abound, recreating the story of Jeevan bhai, and Nury, their meteoric rise and equally tragic fall. The last section of the novel unfolds in the distant El-Oued in the Sahara. It tells the story of a small Indian community, their hopes and aspirations in a foreign land. The novelist cleverly binds the entire structure of the novel by introducing the leit motif of the narrative, the book *the Life of Pasteur*. 
Similarly Upamanyu Chatterjee’s novel *English, August* has story within story and is also circular in its structure. Madna has characters like Srivastav, Kumar and Govind Sathe, each with their own personal stories. Equally effective are the stories of Baba Ramanna and the Naxalites. Baba Ramanna’s story is a moving example in human perseverance and compassion. The depiction of the Naxalites who have instilled a new confidence into the lives of the innocent tribals create another story in human dedication committed to creating social awareness.

Mysterious figures carrying their own stories abound in these novels as in the traditional oral narrative. Old Tai is one of the many fascinating characters in *Midnight’s Children*, making a fleeting appearance but leaving an indelible mark on the reader’s imagination. An enigmatic shikara man, his life is shrouded in mystery. Replete with a thorough knowledge of the hills and lakes of the picturesque valley of Kashmir, he seems to merge with the surroundings, virtually a Wordsworthian figure and a symbol of changelessness. He is the living antithesis of Oskar-Ilse- Ingrid's belief in the inevitability of change, "a quirky, enduring familiar spirit of the valley, a watery Caliban rather too fond of cheap whisky" (*MC*-10). The aura of timelessness is created through his stories of associations with historically disparate figures. Old Tai claims that he "saw that Isa, that Christ, when he came to Kashmir" (*MC*-11); Emperor Jehangir whose weight he knew to the tola and who he certifies "had bad breath and a good heart"
(MC-12); an officer from Iskander the Great's army burdened with a "nagging wife and an itch in the nose" (MC-12). Even these stories appear credible coming from the mystifying figure of Old Tai. This timeless figure is contemporised when he dies tragically attempting to guard the autonomy of his beloved Kashmir.

Equally mysterious but more central to the narrative are the Shakil sisters in Shame. The story of the sisters Chunni, Munni and Bunny has all the ingredients of a grotesque fairytale. They are kept isolated from the outside world in a rambling decaying mansion by their eccentric father old Mr. Shakil. Completely out of touch with the outside world and having been brought up in the most repressive tradition possible, their eccentric behaviour is a natural outcome. And when the old disgruntled Mr. Shakil dies, they break free with a vengeance for just one night. The wild party thrown by them to celebrate their freedom results at a later date in the birth of a child. This child born under bizarre circumstances is ironically named Omar Khayyam Shakil. The boy is brought up in the highest traditions of 'shamelessness' by his loving mothers in that edifice of shamelessness Nishapur'. Many years later they conceive another child under equally mysterious circumstances, who is named Babur, after the great warrior, the founder of the Mughal dynasty. However Babur grows up to become an extremist and faces a gruesome death engineered by Raza Hyder. As the narrative progresses it appears as if the three old crones are
waiting to avenge the death of their son Babur. Towards the end of the narrative, Omar Khayyam Shakil takes a fleeing Raza Hyder and his wife Biliquis to Nishapur and unwittingly delivers them into his mothers’ death trap Nishapur. In Nishapur the fugitive party is engulfed in a world where time has stood still as in a grotesque fairy tale. The three sisters torment Raza Hyder and his wife Biliquis in their own mysterious way. And with the gory death of Raza Hyder in the dumb waiter, they disappear as mysteriously as they had lived.

An equally mysterious character is Shombu Debnath in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*. A weaver by profession, he is master of the most intricate Jamdani pattern, but his talent remains unutilised due his addiction to drink. His sudden appearances and disappearances create an aura of mystery about him. The most intriguing feature of his story is his mysterious liaison with Parboti debi, the wife of Bhudeb Roy, the self-styled strong man of the village. The details of the relationship between the unprepossessing Shombu Debnath and Parboti debi are deliberately left unspecified. In the end Shombu Debnath leaves Lalpukur with Parboti debi and their child never to return again.

The story of Mast Ram in *The Circle of Reason* is an equally mysterious one. Mast Ram is a character straight out of a grotesque fairy tale. Not only is his appearance grotesque but his very presence seems to
bring misfortune. So strong is his jinx that in the end when he mysteriously disappears, he leaves behind a trail of death and destruction.

Mysterious characters such as old Tai, the three Shakil sisters, Shombu Debnath and Mast Ram help to create the tinge of unreality which is intrinsic to the oral narrative tradition. Paradoxically the tradition simultaneously conveys the sense of concrete reality.

The novel of the 80s attempts to capture the ethos of the sub-continent in all its facets—the historical, the political the social and the psychological. In order to recreate this complex reality the novelists often make use of episodic characters so prominent in the oral narrative tradition. The turbulent political and social history of the sub-continent in the past decades is too complex to be expressed through a linear narrative. Episodic characters help to broaden out the perspectives and add valuable dimensions to the portrayal of history, helping to create an impression of the panorama of life in all its variety.

Mustasim the handsome’s story in *Midnight’s Children* is one of disappointed love. He is the son of the Nawab of Kif, incongruously an ancient kingdom in a modern state. The Nawab’s westernized son with his beetle cut, polo-ponies, playing western songs on his guitar and his disinterest in the girls with silver nose jewellery "who fainted in the heat
of his beauty" (MC-383) was a great source of worry for him. Mustasim however falls hopelessly in love with the mysterious Jamila Singer. His love charm having failed to produce the desired results, a dejected Mustasim enlists in the army. He dies a tragic-comic death during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. Integrated within this story is the humourous election drama in Pakistan.

Through this episode, the novelist comments on prolongation of an absurd old way of life and more importantly on the farce of elections in a so-called modern democratic state.

The stories of Zindi, Jeevan bhai Patel and Nury in The Circle of Reason make interesting reading for themselves, in addition to what they have to contribute to the over-all design of the narrative. Zindi had come to al-Ghazira as a young girl. She was renowned for her beauty and was patronised by no less than the most respected Hajj Fahmy. She ran a house in al-Ghazira mostly for illegal immigrants who had come there under very trying circumstances to make a fortune. Zindi was a treasure house of stories, always ready to relate one to suit the occasion. But with the emergence of the new power structure in al-Ghazira, Zindi is quick to realise that an old way of life was coming to an end. Her attempts to buy the Durban tailoring house from Jeevan bhai proves futile due to an extraordinary turn of events. She foresees danger to the immigrants and when disaster strikes as she had feared, Zindi flees from al-Ghazira in the
company of Alu, Kulfi and the child Boss. After many trials and tribulations including the traumatic rejection by her own family members, she finally comes to El-Oued in the distant Sahara. After a brief but significant stay, she embarks on one final journey with a new hope aptly symbolised by the child Boss.

Nury was named so in al-Ghazira as he was so "painfully cross-eyed... and in addition one of his eyes was always half shut" (CR-246). This grotesque man, by a brilliant strategy had set up a lucrative business of egg selling, hitherto unknown in al-Ghazira. His inter-action with people during the course of his business rounds made him a man literally with an ear to the ground. His association with a local businessman Jeevan bhai inevitably sucks him into the politics of al-Ghazira. In a hilarious turn of events, his solid business crumbles when he is forced to make love to Saneyya, "then a woman of seventy five, famed in all the kingdoms for her astonishing ugliness" (CR-255). A little later in a tragic turn of events he loses his life, when trying to escape from the tear gas shells burst by the guards of the Amir. He stumbles into the path of a camel: "the animal frenzied by the noise and the gas, bit his head clearly off his shoulder" (CR-262).

The many faceted personality of Jeevan bhai Patel is equally absorbing. Expelled from his home in distant Durban in South Africa due
to his marriage to a Bohra Muslim girl, he wanders through Mozambique, Dares salam, Zanzibar, Djibont, Perim, and Aden before he finally arrives in al-Ghazira. His shrewd business acumen takes him to the pinnacles of success. Jeevan bhai's business of dealing with guns brings him into contact with the old Malik, and in the course of time he becomes his unofficial adviser. This involvement in the politics of al-Ghazira is lucrative in terms of business but it also becomes his undoing. After one such political misadventure, he loses all that he had earned and is literally back to the point from he had begun. "All his business and ships, his warehouses and customs and contracts were seized, only his shop in the souq and his office near the harbour were left to him" (CR-262). Life has thus come a full circle for him. He lives an obscure existence for sometime before he once again meddles in the politics of the place. And when the police finally catch him, he hangs himself, preferring death to ignominy.

Through these two characters the novelist brings into focus the dying moments of an old regime and the emerging politics of al-Ghazira.

There are other characters that are used to broaden the reader's perception of history. Mian Abdullah in Midnight's Children comes to focus. The pre-independence days were anxious days and among other things the worst was the threat of partition looming large on the horizon. Mian Abdullah's spirited effort to thwart the designs of the Muslim
Leaguers ultimately costs him his life. His sacrifice haunts the pages of history. A similar effort on the part of one Maulana Massodi is described in *The Circle of Reason*. The post-independence is also replete with tensions of the worst kind. One such moment was the episode of the theft of the Prophets hair from the Hazratbal mosque in Kashmir. Amitav Ghosh dwells in great detail on this episode, tracing its history. The initial shock of the theft had brought the people of Kashmir together, irrespective of religion. Maulana Massodi, a common man, had taken great courage to keep the people united in the face of such an explosive situation. He had persuaded "the first demonstrators to march with blackflags instead of green and thereby drew the various communities together in a collective display of mourning" (CR-226). But the efforts of such men are never recognised, "forgotten and unsung today as any purveyor of sanity inevitably is in the hysteria of our sub-continent" (CR-226). It is another sad commentary on the psyche of the sub-continent.

The story of a young boy related in *The Circle of Reason* brings to focus the militant aspect of the freedom struggle. The boy was a patriot to the core and had chosen to join a secret society, which was fighting for India's freedom. The police arrest him just before he has to undertake a major mission. Picture Singh in *Midnight's Children* is a character familiar in the oral narrative tradition. A snake charmer by profession, he uses ingenious methods to create social and political awareness, just like the
ēharikatha’ man in the oral narrative tradition. Similarly Khalil in *The Shadow Lines* remains an island of sanity in a world gone insane with communal passions. The simple Muslim rickshaw puller continues to show tender affection and care towards the elderly Hindu lawyer who had provided shelter to him in his time of need. As Saifuddin, a Muslim mechanic, comments:

He’s a nice fellow he’s a bit stupid, but he’s got a good heart. That’s what I always say to people- I say, he may be foolish, but he’s got a good heart, otherwise why would he bother to look after the old man, a Hindu too, when he could have easily thrown him out and kept both rooms for his family (SL-209).

A strong human attachment develops between Khalil’s family and Ukil babu, which transcends the barriers of class and creed. It is tragically befitting that they, Muslim and Hindu, should die together on the streets of Dhaka, both victims of a mindless communal mob.

Episodic characters such as Mian Abdullah, Maulana Massodi, Picture Singh and Khalil have a vital role to play in the narrative design. They symbolize the healing human touch, the sense of brotherhood, an effort to bring harmony in a sub-continent made disharmonious through warring passions, chief among them being communal discord.
Myth is an important component of the oral narrative tradition. In a country where mythological stories abound, it becomes a way of life. The use of myth presupposes a common knowledge between the narrator and the audience. In short, it acts as a verbal short hand. The novel of the 80s, in spite of its cosmopolitan sweep, still has its strong moorings in the native tradition. However myth is not merely present to display the author's essential native attachments. Myths, like all allusions, help to enrich the texture of the narrative. They set off associations in the reader's minds, which the author exploits in order to communicate in an emphatic and compact manner. The frequent use of myth in these novels is a clear indication of their moorings in the native tradition. References to Hindu mythology are frequent in Midnight's Children, starting from the writing of Ramayana to figures like Krishna, Vishnu, Bramha, Ravana, Hanuman and Jostling along with them are Samson, Scheherazade, Zulfikar and not to forget the Buddha. Saleem believes that his story to Padma is the same as the Ramayana dictated by Valmiki to Ganesh. Characters are not merely given mythical names but are also assigned the same functions as the mythological characters. Thus Shiva in the novel acts as both the procreator and the destroyer. And Parvati has her role to play as the consort of Shiva. A contemporary problem is used to evoke the myth of Rama and Sita. Other mythologies enter the story, like the myth of Prophet Mohammed having heard voices, in the naming of characters like Eve Lilth Burns, Joseph and Mary; the narrative also evokes the myth of the Buddha. What
is striking is the manner in which myths from different religions are freely used in order to convey the totality of the Indian experience. Amitav Ghosh’s The Circle of Reason has its hero named Nachiketa after a character in mythology. In Upamanyu Chatterjee’s English, August: An Indian Story there are references to Krishna and Arjuna and the myth of the fisher king in the course of the protagonist’s search for identity.

The casual manner in which myths are used gives it a new tone and relevance. Two tones, one serious and other comic can be discerned in the presentation. The tone in the Ravana myth and the reference to Mahayuga are serious while the reference to the voices herd by Prophet Mohammed, Indira’s churning of matter is equated to Saleem’s upset stomach are comic. The combination of these two helps in the demystification of myth. And at the same time the presentation of myths from somany religions all contribute to the creation of a variegated and teeming multicultural world.

The use of episodic characters and myth thus attach the novel of the 80s to the oral narrative tradition. However, since the new novel and the novelists are cosmopolitan in nature, they show the inevitable impact of experimentation in fictional techniques being undertaken in new literatures all over the world. Contemporary Indian novelists thus create a fascinating mix of the old and the new by selectively and judiciously using these techniques which have found place under the canopy of the term ‘post-
modernism'. The new novel blazes a new trail in the manner in which the very old and the very new are fused, giving the Indian English Novel a new dimension.

The techniques of post-modernism are subversive of established literary practices; in other words, they violate and confound traditional features and open out new perceptions and ways of interpretation. Particularly in nations with a colonial past, post-modernism has made available techniques to express the cultural plurality, the inevitable mixing of cultures. As Elleke Boehmer says, "The novel in particular is regarded as polyphonic plurality in its authentic, street muddied, market place form. The literature can be read as endorsing a democratic vision of multi-cultural mixing and self expression." Playfulness is one of the distinguishing features of a post-modernist text. Fantasy, super-natural and myth are presented from a new perspective. The frequent authorial intrusions interrupting the story results in the violation of time sequence. This metafictional mode of intrusions is also aimed at reminding the reader that he is indeed reading fiction, an insistence on the unreliability of the narrative voice. Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh employ the new conventions of magic realism to present, from a startlingly new perspective, a view of the reality of the human condition.
One of the striking features of the technique of the novel of the 80s is the depiction of fantasy from a significantly different angle. Fantasy, unlike fairy tales, is not really about the marvellous but about man in the perilous realm; it is about the human condition. All serious fantasy is deeply rooted in human experience and is relevant to human living. It takes into account areas of experience—imaginative, sub-conscious, visionary—which free the human spirit to range beyond the limits of the empirical primary world reality. In a sense, then, fantasy provides the writer with greater scope to construct his own scheme of morality, his own time structure, and his own political and social order. But at no time does apparent freedom permit the author to escape from contemporary reality. Indeed, the fundamental purpose of serious fantasy is to comment upon the real world and to explore moral, philosophical and other dilemmas posed by it. So the medium of fantasy used in fresh ways leads to an exploration of the inner workings of the personality and the fluctuating relationship between the individual and those around him. It engenders an extraordinarily enhanced perception of the nature of the primary world, which is so often imperfectly grasped until a shock is given to the senses by the introduction of the marvellous. And thus through fantasy, man does indeed enter the perilous realm and may find there both the familiar made strange and the strange made familiar.
Fantasy is used to explore new methods of expression and to expound a deep felt sense of moral purpose. Fantasy is not escapism but a method of approaching and evaluating the real world. In the words of Ann Swinfen: "Fantasies are frequently imbued with a profound moral purpose and when set in a different historical period or more interestingly in a complete other world, display a concern for contemporary problems and offers a critique of contemporary society."8

Fantasy is then used as a tool for social criticism. Writers find it easier to depict a dystopia, as a warning of the undesirable forms which our social and political institutions have taken or may take. Fantasy thus employs structures, motifs and the marvellous elements from its predecessors in myth, fable, legend, folk-tale and romance to drive home these points.

The use of fantasy and its associated structures is one of the techniques used by Rushdie to give expression to as complex a theme as that of Midnight's Children. In one of his interviews, Rushdie says that he patterned his own story telling on "oral narration and deployed fantasy in order to be faithful to the reality of India, where millions believe in the world of the spirits."9 Midnight's Children is the story of a country "which is itself a sort of dream" (MC-137). The opening lines of the novel "I was born in the city of Bombay once upon a time" (MC-3) sounds deceptively
like a fairy tale. However as Ralph J. Crane observes, "This opening is no fairy tale, as with these opening lines Saleem Sinai's fate is tied to the fate of India."\textsuperscript{10} As the infant Saleem Sinai and an infant India go through the grim struggle of growing up amidst a welter of events, the technique of fantasy enables Rushdie to make these unpalatable events less disconcerting. In the assessment of M.L. Pandit, "To be confronted with the truth about ourselves can be shocking but mixed with a judicious dose of fantasy and enlivened by a touch of wit and irony, it can be more palatable."\textsuperscript{11} But fantasy used here does not take the nature of escapism, as reality which is presented at a tangent brings home the truth compelling us to come to terms with these new realities of the sub-continent. The grotesque nature of a new reality finds an appropriate manifestation in the grotesque figure of the protagonist Saleem Sinai. His birth on the stroke of the midnight hour and the various birthmarks on his face resembling the map of India establish him at the outset as a fantasy figure. Miraculous things happen to him as in a fantasy tale. Snake poison helps him to escape from the jaws of death, extraordinary powers allow him to traverse the length and breadth of this vast country. Very truly, this fantasy figure takes recourse to fairy tales when given the task of having to play an important part in guiding the destiny of the new nation. As he himself says, "I buried myself in fairy tales, Hatim Tai, Batman, Superman and Sindbad" (MC-181). This fantasy figure, when drained of an earlier power, acquires another miraculous power, the sense of smell. The Pakistan government exploits
this gift to nose out insurgents in East Pakistan. As the buddha, the journey he undertakes in the Sundarbans along with the three young soldiers is through a grotesque fantasy land. The power of the widow, the perpetrator of the worst kind of humiliation on human dignity, is described in hauntingly fantastic and metaphysical terms:

No colours except green and black the walls are green the sky is black (there is no roof) the stars are green the widow is green but her hair is black as black. The widow sits on a high chair the chair is the seat is black the widow’s hair has a centre parting it is green on the left and on the right black. High as the sky the chair is green the seat is black the widow’s arm is long as death its skin is green the fingernails are long and sharp and black. Between the walls the children green the walls are green the widow’s arm comes snaking down the snake is green the children scream the fingernails are black they scratch the widow’s arm is hunting see the children run and scream the widow’s hand curls round them green and black. Now one by one the children mmff are stifled quiet the widow’s hand is lifting one by one the children green their blood is black unloosed by cutting fingernails it splashes black on walls (of
green) as one by one the curling hand lifts the children high as the sky the sky is black there are no stars the widow laughs her tongue is green but her teeth are black. And children torn in two the widow's hand comes one by one the children scream and laughing widow tearing I am rolling into little balls the balls are green and out into the night the night is black (MC- 249-250)

There is no let-up in this sustained piece of writing. It is all related in one breath that enhances the terror. Thus a scathing criticism of the emergency is brilliantly presented through fantasy.

The gallery of extraordinary characters that fill the novel include a girl from Calcutta who has such a sharp tongue that it can inflict physical injuries on people, the Kerala boy who goes through mirrors, the Vindhyas boy who can grow taller or smaller almost at will, and the girl from Madras who can fly. And as Jean-Pierre Durix aptly observes, "The accumulation of such bizarre characters brings Midnight's Children closer to the oral genres...shows his (Rushdie's) talents as a story teller and deliberately places him in the tradition of non-written literature."
However the central fantasy that Rushdie creates is that of the midnight children’s conference. It is an innovative device to represent the people of a nation who differ in language, thought and sensibility, and an attempt to unite them to fulfill a common dream. The midnight’s children are symbolic of the inherent potential they possess. In the words of Uma Parameswaran, "The children of this numinous hour are endowed with fantastic gifts of space-time travel and levitation, blinding beauty and genius, miracle healing and computer memory, Saleem himself had telepathic powers with which he could know others thoughts and could communicate with those born in the same hour." This aptly sums up the immense potential the people of this country possess. But very soon dissension sets in; each one is preoccupied with protecting his own interests, which in other words is the reality in this country. The midnight’s children’s conference suggests some solutions in a decidedly tragic world, an attempt to overcome the destructive ethnic and linguistic conflicts. This fantasy creation thus has two facets. One facet is a passionate plea to unite for fulfilling a common vision and the other is the reality that holds a mirror to society. Jean-Pierre Durix remarks: "Taken in the context of India’s constant threat of bursting into many different states, this novel maybe a fictional construct that aims at achieving, through the force of imagination what ‘real’ people have failed to do." It gives a glimpse into the vision of the novelist.
The figure of Sufiya in *Shame* is undoubtedly Rushdie's masterpiece of grotesque fantasy. The development of Sufiya into a horrifying figure of mythical dimensions mirrors the traditional beauty to beast transformation so prevalent in the fantasies of world literature. Rushdie’s description of Sufiya as she is gradually suffused with a surrealistic aura reaches heights of lyric intensity in certain passages:

> On all fours, the calluses thick on her palms and soles. The black hair now matted around her face, enclosing it like fur; the pale skin of her mohajir ancestry burned and toughened by the sun, bearing like battle scars the lacerations of bushes, animals, her own itch-scratching nails. Fiery nails and the stink of ordure and death. (SH-254)

This recreation of Sufiya as a fantasy figure is not merely decorative nor is it divorced from reality. Such a figure is perhaps necessary to depict the complex socio-political realities of Pakistan. The mood of the nation as it moves from a suppressed seething resentment to a violent outburst could not have been depicted as graphically in realistic terms.

Fantasy has a dual function in *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*. Firstly, it is an effect Rushdie resorts to show his adherence to the oral
narrative and its ability to delight the readers. But it need not be escapist. Rushdie shows that enjoyment and serious purpose can be combined to give expression to certain compelling realities. In the case of Midnight's Children, these are concerned with the contemporary history of India, a long series of insensitive acts and self-centered people exploiting sectarian rivalry. In Shame too fantasy evokes the tragic history of Pakistan through its bizarre social customs and repressive political realities. Thus Rushdie through his combination of semi-humorous and semi-serious tone reflects more profoundly on the ethos of the sub-continent.

In certain episodes, the novel of the 80s moves from fantasy onto the realms of magic realism. This term has been widely associated with the works of the Latin American novelist Gabriel Marquez and the Czechoslovakian novelist Milan Kundera, the German Gunter Grass, and Salman Rushdie. All these writers, as David Lodge says, "have lived through great historical convulsions and wrenching personal upheavals, which they feel cannot be adequately represented in a course of undisturbed realism."¹⁵ Magic realism is identified by the introduction of marvellous and impossible events in what otherwise purports to be a realistic narrative. Without warning, the narration leaves what western critics call the conventions of verisimilitude to enter a world where everyday limitations can be infringed at will, clock time is replaced by the logic of myths, dreams or folk-tales. In Magic realism there is always a tense connection between
the real and the fantastic. Magic realism, however complex, still has clarity of statement and a tremendous power of description. As such, the impossible events function as metaphors for the extreme paradoxes of modern history.

From a study of some of the incidents represented through Magic realism, it can be noticed that the novelists take recourse to this form to underline certain very important social and political issues in their novels. The novel *Midnight's Children* uses Magic realism as stated to convey the writer's concerns. Jean Pierre Durix's observation on the novels of Marquez that he "links the social and the political reality of his homeland with elements more often found in fairy tales or fantasy" can also be applied to Rushdie. The death of Mian Abdullah, a liberal Muslim and a champion of unity, is shown through Magic realism. This man fighting the Muslim League had a strange trait of humming. The effect of his humming "could fall low enough to give you a tooth ache, and when it rose to its heights, most feverish pitch, it had the ability of inducing erections in anyone in the vicinity" *(MC-47)*. This power perhaps can be attributed to his having been earlier a conjurer. The narrative alternates between the fantastic and realistic modes till the night of his gruesome killing. And as the assassins come and knock on the door the narrative abandons the realistic mode and switches to the fantastic. "Six new moons came into the room, six crescent knives held by men dressed all in black, with covered faces, and as two
men held Nadir Khan, the others moved towards the humming bird." What happens then is best described in the words of the beetle chewers:

The humming bird's hum became higher. Higher and higher, yara, and the assassins eyes became wide as their members made tents under their robes. Then-Allah, then ñ the knives began to sing and Abdullah sang louder, humming high- high like he'd never hummed before. His body was hard and the long carved blades had trouble killing him; one broke on a rib, but the others quickly became stained with red. But now listen- Abdullah's humming rose out of the range of our human ears, and was heard by the dogs of the town (MC-49).

Some six thousand four hundred dogs made their way to the university building: "they went noisily, like an army, and afterwards their trail was littered with bones and dung and bits of hair the killers were so badly damaged that nobody could say who they were" (MC-49-50).

One does not have to strain the imagination to guess the identity of the killers in spite of their covered faces. This gruesome death was soon forgotten, and this story too like many others was swept under the carpet.
However the gory death of Abdullah haunts the pages of history. This death of not just a man but the death of an institution could not have been depicted in any other mode. It is a scathing indictment of narrow parochial forces riding on the waves of communal passions to hack a country into two.

Saleem’s ability to become a radio transmitter and tune to the voices of the other midnight’s children is another example of Magic realism. His transformation to the buddha and his ordeal in the sundarbans along with the three young soldiers is recreated through magic realism. The narrative moves in the realistic mode till the human sniffer dog Saleem joins the three young soldiers. Saleem now devoid of memory, a living vegetable, but still gifted with the sense of smell, is drafted into the army as a sniffer dog to smell out insurgents in the East wing of Pakistan. Given an old shirt to sniff, "the buddha led troops to Sheikh Mujabir’s lair" (MC-426), the most wanted man by the authorities. And as the buddha at a later stage leads the three soldiers into the sundarbans, the narrative moves in the realistic mode for a short time. The narrative mode changes from the moment:

One night Ayooba awoke in the dark to find the translucent figure of a peasant with a bullet hole in his heart. This was the man he had shot before going away.
into the sundarbans. The peasant it appeared had now come to haunt him. A strange colourless liquid flowed out of the hole in his heart on to Ayooba's gun arm. The next morning his arm as a result was paralysed. Each night the forest sent them new punishments. Haunted by their misdeeds, which now appeared to them in the form of visions, they were soon reduced to trembling wrecks. The memories of their childhood kept coming back to them. One night Ayooba saw his mother looking down at him offering him the delicate rice based sweets of her love; but at the moment as he reached out for the ladoos, she scurried away, he saw her climb a giant sundari-tree to sit swinging from a high branch by her tail, a white wraith like monkey with a face of his mother. This vision visited Ayooba night after night. The vision that Farooq Rashid sees is symbolic of the grinding poverty of the peasants of the sub-continent. Shaheed Dar sees a monkey that looked like an ancestor, and his father reminding him of his responsibility. All these experiences led them to a new adulthood. But the punishment was still not complete. Haunted by the voices of families, tormented by ghostly monkeys singing our golden Bengal o, mother, I am poor (MC-437).
After the voices stopped, they were lulled into a false sense of security. It was a process of emptying them of their dreams. Finding themselves in the old temple of Kali, to their delight they find four houris. They indulge in carnal pleasures till one day they discover that they have become transparent. They now realise the trick of the forest, and salvaging a bit of their dreams, they come back to reality. However this ordeal has completely sapped them. On coming back to land they die gruesome deaths. This episode is a savage indictment of unwanted tensions modern governments create leading to expensive wars, and to a senseless loss of human lives.

In the novel Shame there is a constant shifting of modes in the depiction of Sufiya Zenobia. The realistic and the fantastic are clearly marked everytime she makes an appearance. The narrative settles into the Magic realist mode from the moment of her escape from the attic, where she is kept chained and in a state of animated suspension. But no chains were strong enough to hold her back, and one day there was "an empty attic, broken attic, cracked beams. There was a hole in the bricked up-window. It had a head, arms, legs" (MC-239). After this escape, her transformation to the murderous beast is complete. She now spreads terror and panic around the countryside. And when the beast finally comes to Nishapur for Omar Khayyam Shakil, there is a brief pause in the narrative when she is made human again: the door flew open she was on "all four,
naked coated in mud and shit, with twigs sticking to her back and beetles in her hair the beast faded in her, she stood blinking stupidly, unsteady on her feet but then the explosion came" (MC-286). This powerful passage shows the novelist's method of countering the grotesque politics of a grotesque nation.

In the novel The Circle of Reason Amitav Ghosh takes recourse to Magic realism to show the trap that human beings have fallen into. Their lives are seen only in terms of money, everything else has little meaning. The predicament of the protagonist Alu is a direct fall-out of the struggle between the power of money and socialist ideals. The incident of the collapse of the Star is at the outset attributed to the myth of the sheikh of Mawali. The protagonist Alu who lies buried in the debris is miraculously saved by two sewing machines that hold a giant girder from falling on him. More miracles follow, as the narrative abandons the realistic mode and descends into Magic realism. His companions who are looking for him in the debris are shocked to find him alive. And miraculously enough he also engages them in conversation quite oblivious to the fact that death was just a hair's breath away. From a hole in the debris he tells them: "I am thinking about cleanliness and dirt and the infinitely small" (CR-235). He refuses food and water, and when he is finally rescued, it is as if he has emerged out of a deep penance. Enigmatically he tells the people of the Ras: "We shall war on money, where it all begins" (CR-241). Alu's pronouncement is a reflection on the modern malaise of
excessive love of money that seems to have taken such deep roots in the 
human world. It is symbolic representation of the kind of mire human 
beings have engulfed themselves in.

These events are a kind of metaphor for the extreme paradoxes of 
modern history.

Post-modernism has opened the doors to a host of new techniques 
through which the contemporary consciousness can be explored. Literary 
technique has moved away from the conventional, and freely makes use 
of other unconventional methods. Post-modernist writers show a 
willingness to experiment with non-literary techniques. This flexibility is 
seen in the unabashed use of the technique of the cinema. The novel of the 
80's openly uses situations and the method of the Bombay Talkies in a 
direct acknowledgement that it has become an intrinsic part of Indian 
culture. Films today is to Indian culture what folklore was to the past. 
Films today have permeated every aspect of life, and as a result the 
traditional folklore has been displaced from its position in Indian social 
and cultural life. It is not wrong to presume that they have become the 
new myths of the nation. It is a clear indication that mass culture is an 
inevitable part of contemporary reality. Since literature aligns itself so 
closely to reality, it cannot afford to ignore the emergent facts of 
contemporary Indian culture.
The impact of the Bombay Talkie is seen in both situations and techniques. Both these aspects are exploited to the maximum in *Midnight’s Children*. Situation after situation is reminiscent of the Hindi movies. The mixed identity of the hero is a direct result of the switching of babies at birth. Thus a situation arises where the hero is born of parents of one religion and brought up by parents of another. Many Bombay films dwell on this syncretic mixture of religions in their family and social dramas. The leaving of the ransom money in an old fort by Ahmed Sinai and his business companions as instructed by the Ravana gang is a scene straight out of a Hindi movie. The hero losing his memory at a crucial stage due to an accident as it happens to Saleem Sinai after being hit by the silver spittoon is one more striking aspect. Miraculous recovery of memory again by some accident, as it again happens to Saleem when a snake in the Sundarbans bites him, completes the picture. There are other situations in the narrative dealing with secret love, and love expressed indirectly without explicit love scenes. There is a scene where an ex-husband or lover appears after a long gap. In the end as in all Hindi movies, there is a sentimental reunion between the long-lost son and the mother.

Hindi songs are also used by Amitav Ghosh in both *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines* at crucial stages in the novels. In Upamanyu Chatterjee, Hindi movie songs are constantly heard in the background.
Any narrative comes to vibrant life through an interaction of a multitude of factors. Of these the principal components are undoubtedly the quality of the author’s imagination and its linguistic expression. From its inception the problem of exploring indigenous experiences in an alien tongue has troubled the Indian-English novelist. Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* is the first novel to undertake the vital task of expressing an Indian sensibility. As Raja Rao himself says in the foreword to the novel:

One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own...yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up like Sanskrit or Persian was before but not of our emotional make up. We are instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as a part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.17

His contemporary Mulk Raj Anand does not exhibit the same innovativeness; nevertheless the indications of a similar awareness are to
be found in the liberal use of Hindi swear words in his novels. Such attempts unintegrated with the text create an impression of artifice. R.K.Narayan and the middle generation of Indian-English novelists show a scant awareness of the problem. In this scenario one writer stands out for his daring experiments with both the form and language. G.V.Desani’s novel *All about H.Hatter*, although not fully understood nor appreciated during his time, anticipates the lines along which the novel of the 80s could tackle the problem.

One of the significant contributions of the novel of the 80s is to diffuse the myth of English being an alien tongue. As pointed out by Elleke Boehmer, "The post-colonial writer national background no longer considers English an alien tongue. The post-colonial writer is free to modify it according to his requirements."18 In an incisive article on Rushdie’s language, Agnes Scott Langland discerns a subtle political intent in subverting the traditional use of English in the new literatures of the world. She considers the Indianization of Rushdie’s English as "a radical linguistic operation implanting new cultural impulses into a hitherto more narrowly ethnocentric language."19 At this juncture it would be interesting to quote Rushdie’s own views on the subject:

> The (English) language...needs to decolonised, to be remade in other images, if those of us use it from
positions outside Anglo-Saxon are to be more than artistic uncle Toms. It is this endeavour that gives the new literatures of Africa, the Caribbean and India much of their present vitality and excitement. 

In another article Rushdie’s views are presented forcefully. He states:

We can’t simply use the language in the way the British did; it needs remaking for our own purposes. Those of us who use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it. Or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free.

Upholding a similar viewpoint, Elleke Bohemer comments "what began in post colonial writing as the creolization of the English language has become a process of mass literary migration, transplantation and cross-fertilization, a process that is changing the nature of what was once called English Literature at its very heart" Thus the authors themselves view
the Indianization of language as completing the process of liberation from imperialist dominance.

It is only fair to give credit to Rushdie for giving shape to the novel of the 80s in both form and content. The publication of *Midnight's Children* in 1981 shook the very foundations of Indian Writing in English.

Rushdie consciously took on himself the task of making the linguistic medium more flexible and suited to the requirements of the writer of the sub-continent through a process of Indianization. This process functions on several fronts—vocabulary, syntax, and use of colloquism and idiomatic turn of phrase. Almost all Indian writers prior to and contemporary have incorporated Indian words in their texts to a lesser or greater degree. Raja Rao, G.V.Desani, R.K.Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgoankar, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee are among those who have done so.

Mulkraj Anand's English according to Ann Lowry is "spattered with so many Hindustani words that the western reader may feel that he is looking through frosted glass".23 Most of these writers embed the 'native' word in the English text in such a manner as to make the meaning virtually explicit. Peter Young has aptly referred to this process as "cushioning."24 as the reader is cushioned from a shock of being confronted with the full
force of the borrowing. Rushdie frequently adopts a different tactics. His contract with the reader is founded on a less conciliatory method of presenting new words and concepts. For one thing, he rarely signals the presence of the native by the convention of using italics. Readers of Rushdie's novels are confronted with Indian words as though they ought to know them already. And if they do not, then it is up to them to find out. This happens time and again in Midnight's Children and Shame. When the meaning of the entire work is closely related to a south-Asian concept, as it is in Shame, Rushdie may prove more amenable towards the reader. Shame according to the author is the story of an imaginary land which "is not Pakistan, or not quite" (SH-29). In this country a small, beautiful but retarded child Sufiya is the epitome of the helplessness of her Islamic sisters and of the new nation that came into existence due the partition of India in 1947. Sufiya is treated shamelessly by her parents who eventually marry her off to a dissolute doctor called Omar Khayyam Shakil- despite the fact that the concept of sharam is the moral prerogative on which their family life, and indeed the whole nation's life, is based. The author designs to explain the essence of the concept:

Sharam, that's the word, for which this paltry shame' is a wholly inadequate translation. Three letters, shun re mim (written naturally from right to left) plus zabar accents indicating short vowel sounds. A short word
but one containing encyclopaedias of marvel. It was not only shame that his mothers forbade Omar Khayyam to feel, but also embarrassment, discomfiture, decency, modesty, shyness, the sense of having an ordained place in the world, and other dialects of emotion for which English has no counterparts.

(SH-38-39)

This foregrounding of the concept of shame by Rushdie contributes to the illumination of the theme of the novel. Tariq Rehaman believes this to be the explanation why many writers "deliberately use deviant English for stylistic reasons." The intrusive comment by the author that 'shame' is a wholly inadequate translation establishes the point beyond doubt. The most significant factor is that new concepts are introduced into English without a sense of self-consciousness.

There are other linguistic devices employed by Rushdie to create an Indianized hybrid English like the use of 'Babu English', run-on words and Eastern names. The characteristic features of Babu English are that it is stilted, bookish and flowery. It results in creating unfamiliar collocations and syntax, invocational forms of address and colourful terms of abuse. In Rushdie these features are used to create textual variation, and also as a means of delineating characters. Several of Rushdie's female characters
use this form of English. Omar Khayyam Shakil’s three mothers in *Shame* reject the English language saying: "Angrez double dutch...who is to understand the brains of these crazy types?" (SH-36) and Saleem’s ayah Mary in *Midnight’s Children*, referring to Aadam Sinai’s drunken behaviour says, "Baba, I don’t know what got into your daddy now. All day sitting down there cursing curses at the dog" (MC-??). Some of the male characters too use this form of English. Ghani the blind landowner’s caustically remarks about the German returned Dr. Aziz who is called upon to examine his daughter: "you Europe returned chappies forget certain things. Doctor sahib, my daughter is a decent girl...she does not flaunt her body under the noses of strange men she has a terrible, a too dreadful stomach-ache" (SH-23). The collocation 'Europe returned' and the words chappies, doctor sahib and ‘too dreadful’ are all examples of Babu English.

Another typical feature of Babu English is the use of imprecations. Imprecations are used when characters give vent to strong emotions. This feature abounds in Rushdie’s novels. It is interesting to list a few- O glee of female relatives in the face of unconcealable scandal. O crocodile tears and insincere pummeling of breasts (SH-165). O endless sequence of nefarious sons of the great (MC-333). O vile unhelpfulness of lickspittle uncles (MC-394). There are variations in moods like: O talismanic spittoon O beauteous lost receptacle of memories as well as spittle juice (MC-448). Another Rushdiesque linguistic marker which foregrounds Indian English
is the use of run-on-words. This technique involves running together two or more words into one word. Thus such expressions as: Juicygory (MC-77), Justlikethat (MC-17), don’tyouthinkso (SH-24), whatisitsname (MC-138), everywhichthing (MC-236) not only create a pleasing visual effect, but add a racy, colloquial effect that is characteristic of Indian speech. There are also hybrid words, rhyming words like 'mummyji' and ‘writing shiting. In other words, the whole repertoire of English words as it is spoken in India is unfurled to entertain and provide novelty.

The names of characters in Rushdie’s novels provide a clear indication of his attempt to create an Indianized variant of English. The names of most major characters and many minor characters are drawn from Muslim and Hindu sacred myths or from familiar personages or places in the past of India or the east. The majority of the names in Midnight’s Children and Shame carry an aura of a mighty culture. Saleem’s name in Midnight’s Children and a Sufiya’s in Shame carry meaningful associations from the sacred texts. Omar Khayyam Shakil, Babur, Iskander Harappa have rich associations and grandeur. Rushdie’s design is to create a contrast between the rich past and the present sorry state of affairs. Thus the power and the glory of the past are incorporated through language.

In short, Rushdie helps to establish a wider ethnocentric base for the English language by creating a magical and humorous Indian blend of
English. His use of language strengthens the thematic critique he levels at the forces of nationalism in India and Pakistan in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. Rushdie's texts provide magnificent illustrations of the thesis that the novel provides an arena in which language and conflict meet. The total effect of Rushdie's techniques is to mould a vibrant prose whose positive tone makes language a bridge between cultures.

Amitav Ghosh has adopted the current practice of transcribing Hindi words without providing a glossary or even italicizing them- dalmoth and kichri appear without warning to the reader about their exotic character. The text is also interspersed with Arabic words, which gives the text a truly cosmopolitan appearance. It is another matter when the author transliterates Indian expressions into English like 'wet cat'. The British resident is called 'Goat's arse' because "whenever he spoke he made his lips into a circle of such perfection that everyone who saw him held his breath waiting for a black wonderfully rounded goat’s turd to fall out" (CR-249). There is a comic inventiveness in Amitav Ghosh’s use of the language- sometimes bordering on coarseness. When the Malik fired the bazookas "the early morning crowd half dressed and unwashed, underweared and unshat, turned as one man and fled down the road with Nury in the lead" (CR-260). Anthony Burgess best expresses Amitav Ghosh’s excellence when he says, "Technically a lot of us can learn from Mr.Ghosh. It is the intelligence manifested in a brilliant handling of language that most impresses us."
Upamanyu Chatterjee too shows a healthy co-existence of languages in his novels. In English, August: An Indian Story he introduces interesting variations of this trend. Upamanyu Chatterjee makes a clear distinction between the English spoken in urban India and in the smaller towns. Language is used at various levels of social interaction to suit the ethos and the background. The confidence with which he uses the language at various levels thus completes the process of Indianizing English.

Thus this new generation of writers as can be seen are trail-blazers. Their new vision compels us to view all countries as a part of an international unified circuit. While the contents of their work reveal the originality of their insight into contemporary human existence, simultaneously they are bold experimenters in language and form. Their approach has infused a new vitality and altered the momentum of the Indian English Novel. And in a very short span of time these writers have carved a niche for themselves in the New Literatures in English.
NOTES


3. Walsh, 120-121.


14. Durix, 120.


16. Durix, 121.

17. Raja Rao, Foreward to *Kanthapura* (New Delhi, Orient Paperbacks 1971)


