CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION: EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL
The novel, a long sustained piece of prose fiction and a genre of imaginative literature, came to India as an art form with the British. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar observes “The ‘novel’ as a literary phenomenon is new to India.” 1 Indo-Anglian novel came into existence long after the novel had become an established genre in other Indian languages. It was only in the later half of the nineteenth century the proper novel resulted because of the western impact.

Meenakshi Mukherji observes “the full development of the Indian novel as a whole........may be divided into three large stages : 1.Historical romance, 2. Social or political realism, 3. Psychological novels showing an introspective concern with the individuals.”

The first phase of fiction of the historical romances starts with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Rajmohan’s Wife (1864), Toru Dutt’s Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden (1878), R.C.Dutt’s The Slave Girl of Agra (1909) and S.K.Ghose’s The Prince of Destiny (1909).

The novel proper begins with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s first published work in English Rajmohan’s Wife in the year 1864. It was a significant start in the mould of romantic novels. Bankim Chandra was a master of the romantic as well as the historical novel. But at the same time he was no stranger to comedy or humour either. His novels The Poison Tree and Krishnakantha’s Will dealt with social problems, a recurrent theme in Indian fiction. It is quite evident that his historical novels were inspired by Scott’s historical romances. His chief pre-occupation is with patriotism, thus making the novel a means of political education. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is rightly considered the father of the novel in India. Krishna
Kripalani is right when he estimates the role played by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee:

“It was Bankim Chandra who established the novel as a major literary form in India. He had his limitations, he too was romantic, effusive and indulged a little too freely in literary flashes and bombast and was no peer of his great contemporaries, Zola and Dickens, much less of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. There have been better novelists in India since then, but they all stand on Bankim’s shoulders.”

Other writers too took the lead and started producing novels in English. Notable among them were Rajalakshmi Devi’s The Hindu Wife (1876), Toru Dutt’s Bianca (1878), Kali Krishna Lahiri’s Roshinara (1881) H. Dutt’s Bijoychandra (1888) and Kshetrapal Chakravarthi’s Sarata and Hingana (1895). K.R. Srinivas Iyengar’s remark that these novels “have for us today no more than an antiquarian or historical interest” may not be acceptable as they played a vital role in quickening the literary renaissance all over the country.

The next important figure on the literary scene was Rabindranath Tagore. He came like a colossus on the Indian literary scene. He exerted a tremendous influence on the minds of the people with the choice of his themes. Tagore started by first imitating Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, till he found his own voice with Choker Bali (1902). To Tagore goes the credit of nurturing the infant genre at its most important stage of growth. He brought a new force into the form as embodied in Gora (1923), The Home and the World (1919), Binodini (1959), The Wreck (1919), Four Chapters (1950) and
Farewell My Friend(1956). A significant fact of the period was that with Tagore, the growth of the Indian English Novel and the novels in regional languages in India developed almost on parallel lines. Tagore's novels helped the Indians to rediscover themselves and also created a new awareness about their culture. Tagore translated some of his Bengali works into English which helped in laying the foundations of the Indian English Novel. His novels are mostly novels of ideas. He adapted the novel genre to depict the inner changes in the lives of characters in relation to time and space. Tagore's influence is all pervading, as can be seen in the novels of his successors Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and a score of others. Sarat Chandra and Premchand carried the novel a little further by extending its range. Their preoccupation is with the downtrodden and the destitute. Their realistic and bold depiction of the misery of the lower classes foreshadows the best fiction of Mulk Raj Anand in English.

The rise of the novel in English in India was not only a literary phenomenon but also a social phenomenon as it was associated with social, political and economic conditions. Right from 1920s to 1940s, the historical romance was associated with the awakening of Indian nationalism and the novelist of the social reform novels shifted his subject to contemporary situation of battles and agitations. They, being inflamed by politics, aimed at improving the lot of desperate hungry millions. The novelist's understanding and love for Mother India made his writing transcend the local and controversial and attain vitality and dignity. The novel proper attained a definite art form around thirties. This second phase in the development of the novel is seen from K.S.Venkata Ramani's Murugan the Tiller (1927) and Kandan the Patriot (1932) to Mulk Raj Anand's passionate progressivism and emotional zeal for Gandhian ideals in Raja Rao's works. They show social and political realism.
The arrival of Gandhi on the national scene in the 1920s galvanised the nation into tremendous activity. Gandhi’s inspiring leadership turned the independence movement from a merely political struggle into an emotional experience. Commenting on the independence movement, Meenakshi Mukherjee says, “It was an emotional as well as an ideological experience spread over a much longer period of time than any other nationalist movement in history.” The coming of Gandhi did not only set the political scene alight but the literary scene also erupted into tremendous activity. Simultaneously, regional literatures too played a prominent part in shaping the sensibility of the Indian English Novel. The arrival of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan, aptly termed ‘the founding fathers’ by William Walsh, on the literary scene gave the Indian English Novel a new vigour and direction. Commenting on their decisive contribution, William Walsh says that the three writers are: “....distinguished not only for their own work but as the inaugurators of the form itself since it was they who defined the area in which the Indian novel in English was to operate, drew the first models of its characters and themes and elaborated its particular logic. Each used his own version of an English freed from the foggy taste of Britain.”

Another significant development with the advent of Gandhi on the political scene was the middle class taking an avid interest in creative writing, which earlier had been the monopoly of the upper classes. Ordinary people suddenly found that their own lives could be made the theme of literature. To quote M.K.Naik on the subject:

“It is no mere coincidence that there came a sudden flowering of Indian fiction in the 1930s-- a period during
which the star of Gandhi attained the meridian on the Indian horizon. Under the leadership of Gandhi, the Indian struggle for freedom, already more than a generation old, became so thoroughly democratised that the freedom consciousness percolated, for the first time, to the very grass roots of Indian society, and revitalized it to the core. It is possible to see a close connection between the growth of nationalist consciousness and the development and rise of the Indian Novel in English. Fiction, of all literary forms, is most vitally concerned with social conditions and values, and at that time, Indian society, galvanized into a new social and political awareness, was bound to seek creative expression and the novel has been an instrument for this purpose.”

The writers were quick to respond to Gandhi's call. However, the handling of the theme depended on the writer's individual perceptions and sensibilities. Novels like K.S.Venkatarāni’s Kandan the Patriot, Raja Rao’s Kanthapura (1938), Mulk Raj Anand’s The Sword and the Sickle (1942), Untouchable (1933) and Coolie (1936) were novels written during the storm and stress of the freedom movement. There were also novels that took up this theme after independence like Khwaja Ahmed Abbas's Inquilab (1955), Manohar Malgoankar’s A Bend in the Ganges (1964), R.K.Narayan’s Waiting for the Mahatma (1955), Nagarajan’s Chronicles of Kedaram (1961), Nayanatara Sahgal’s A Time to be Happy (1952) and Bhabani Bhattacharya’s Shadow from Ladakh (1966). In all these novels Gandhi is depicted as a multidimensional force. He appears directly as a character in some novels or as a driving force represented by an idealised character. The Gandhian theme of 'Back to the Villages' and the
struggle for freedom found eloquent artistic expression in K.S.Venkataramani's Murugan the Tiller (1927) and Kandan the Patriot (1932). These novels created a sensation in the thirties. As K.R.Srinivas Iyengar says, "Kandan gained an importance because it was the very image of the excruciating times we were passing through." Venkataramani himself had introduced Kandan the Patriot as a novel of new India in the making and dedicated it to the unknown volunteers in India's fight for freedom. His other novel Murugan the Tiller spreads the Gandhian message of economic emancipation of the poor. Raja Rao strongly identifies himself with the Gandhian movement, and gives it passionate expression in his novel Kanthapura. Kanthapura covers the movement of Gandhi in the 1920s and ends with the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931. Choosing a garrulous old woman as his story-teller, Raja Rao uses a small village as a symbolic representation to depict the gathering storm on the political horizon. Moorthy, the protagonist is a Gandhian in both thought and principle. The trials and tribulations of the simple villagers participating in the freedom struggle are captured vividly, with the description alternating between the serious and the comic. The flexible pattern of the novel gives the novelist the room to weave together the allied threads of the Gandhian revolution, such as propaganda against evils of drinking, exploitation of coolies, the evils of superstition and other social evils. C.D.Narsimhaiah aptly sums up the focus of Kanthapura when he says, "The entire action (in the novel) comes out as an artist's enactment of Nehru's image and the impact of Gandhi on the Indian scene together with a hundred particulars that illuminated many hidden spots in the life of the country during that period." Inspired by Gandhi, Mulk Raj Anand wrote Untouchable in which he highlights the age-old evil of segregation of an entire group of society based on their profession, a problem against which Gandhi fought all his life. In his other novel Coolie, Anand presents the world of proletarian misery and
wretchedness. Anand's subtle strokes and the intensity with which he projects his protagonist Munoo, have put the young hero on par with some of the heroes of the novels of Charles Dickens. His third novel in the trilogy The Sword and the Sickle introduces Gandhi as a character. The novel deals with the peasant boy Lal Singh being taken from his North Indian Village and a life stifled by suffocating layers of custom and religion, into the ferocity of the great war in Europe and then back to India and a new political awakening. The novel traces the development of Lalu against the background of the developing political situation. Events are represented through the protagonist Lalu's consciousness.

In the novels written on the same theme after Independence, there is a certain amount of distancing. Inquilab by K.A. Abbas is an important novel which falls into this pattern. Gandhi appears in person in this novel. The protagonist Anwar is shaped directly by the forces of history. Events of national importance are presented through the point of view of a young man who grows up and comes to maturity in the third decade of the century, the hub of the freedom movement. Anwar forms the central consciousness of the novel; his development is determined by events of national importance. All the major political incidents between Jallianwala Bagh and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact are brought into focus by involving the protagonist in each crisis. Manohar Malgoankar's A Bend in the Ganges is panoramic in scope and epic in aspiration. It is crowded with events from modern Indian history, beginning with the Civil Disobedience movement of the thirties and ending with the post-partition riots in Punjab. It captures the human drama against the background of a crowded national calendar. R.K. Narayan deals with the Gandhian theme for the first time in Waiting for the Mahatma. The novel introduces Gandhi as a person and not as a symbol. Gandhi's presence in this novel is not remote and does not border on the supernatural. He is rather
presented as a warm human being who touches two young lives and transforms them. There is a marked difference in the handling of the theme in these later novels. A certain amount of detachment creeps into the narrative, as the experience is not immediate. Significantly, in these novels Gandhi is humanised and is not an awe-inspiring figure any more. The point of focus here is more on the human relationships rather than the historical struggle. Commenting on this difference Meenakshi Mukherjee says:

“In these novels written in the Nineteen-fifties which deal with the same theme, a noticeable distance between the author and the events has crept in, although this does not necessarily result in a better artistic realisation of the theme. In Waiting for the Mahatma and Chronicles of Kedaram, the novelists are detached enough from the course of history to treat Gandhi casually as a human being or an idea rather than as an overwhelming symbol, and concentrate on weaving stories of human relationships which only marginally touch upon the struggle.”

After a bitter and prolonged struggle India did get her freedom finally in 1947. However, a pall of gloom encircled the celebration of freedom, as the partition perpetrated on the country took into its full toll. Serious writers now turned their attention to give expression to the partition carnage. Commenting on the subject K.R.Srinivas Iyengar says, “After the advent of freedom, the more serious novelist has shown how the joy of freedom has been neutralized by the tragedy of partition.” Khuswant Singh’s Train to Pakistan (1956), Chaman Nahal’s Azadi, Raj Gill’s The Rape, Bonophul’s Betwixt Dream and Reality and Padmini Sengupta’s
Red Hibiscus (1963) are the novels which try to capture the shock and misery of a people who suddenly found themselves belonging to two countries.

The earliest novel on the theme of partition was Khuswant Singh’s Train to Pakistan. It deals with the eruption of violence between the Sikhs and the Muslims in a small village Mano Majra along the newly established Indo-Pakistan border. The carnage is seen through the eyes of the Sikh and Muslim community, who inspite of having lived peacefully together for several centuries, suddenly turned enemies. Paradoxically, Khushwant Singh has used all his imaginative power to present a truthful picture. The result is that the horrors of partition are exposed in all their stark nakedness. William Walsh comments, “The objectivity, detachment and impartiality makes the horrors it describes...with all their madness and ferocity all the more convincing, all the more devastating. There is no merciful mist shrouding these accurately reported calamities.” The other important partition novel is Chaman Nahal’s Azadi. The novel is built around the family of Lala Kanshi Ram, a grain merchant of Sialkot. Interwoven with it is the story of his son Arun, his aspirations and disappointments. The maturity and the balanced depiction of the carnage of partition gives Azadi a refreshing tone. The novel traces the origin of the trouble and moves to the final outrage in a tone devoid of sentimentalism and melodrama. Another important aspect of this novel is its experimentation with technique. The multiple narrator technique, used here for the first time, is a novel attempt in Indian English fiction.

After independence came a process of reconstruction and rebuilding the nation. With the country striking a positive note in both domestic and international affairs, the period between the fifties and sixties was a
productive period especially for literature. The independence movement as a 
motive force of the Indian English Novel is replaced by a search for newer 
themes, in keeping with the emerging sensibility and concerns of a re-
defined nation. Consequently, many of the novels deal with the East-West 
encounter, which obviously is a result of the unacknowledged colonial 
hangover. The protagonists’ struggle to find a place between two 
cultures, one inherited and the other acquired through education and other 
influences. The theme, however, is not new to the Indian English Novel; as 
early as in 1909, Sarath Kumar Ghose wrote a novel called 
*The Prince of Destiny*(1970) dealing with this inter-cultural theme. The 
theme is brought out through the predicament of the protagonist when he 
has to choose between an English girl and a native Indian princess. During 
the Gandhian era, this conflict was more on the social level. But in the novel 
of the sixties and seventies, the predicament is on a personal level, leading 
to a crisis of identity. This private search often constitutes a quest for a 
satisfactory attitude towards the West, and for a realistic image of the East 
that would at the same time be emotionally valid. To quote Meenakshi 
Mukherjee, “This search has taken varied and complex forms. At its lowest, 
it has often descended into sentimental chauvinism and neurotic rejection, at 
its highest it has attempted at integration of personality, a revaluation of all 
values.”13 The typical Indian philosophical ideal of renunciation is explored 
in many novels as an answer to the search. It is impossible to definitely 
categorise the novels since there is the inevitable overlapping of the themes 
in the novels. Several major novels were published during the period. To 
Joshi’s *The Foreigner* (1967), Kamala Markandeya’s *The Coffer Dams* (1969), Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Chronicles of Kedaram, Too Long in the West, Balachandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1959) and *Storm in Chandigarh* and others.

A small note on the representative novels would illuminate the theme, Attai Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, cast in the autobiographical mould, deals with the heroine’s quest for her personal destiny as a result of the impact of the West on her. The West in this novel appears explicitly in terms of ideas rather than of persons. The resolution to her predicament is achieved through marriage. The conflict between the two cultures of East and West is nowhere so obviously spelled out as in Nayanatara Sahagal’s first novel *A Time to be Happy* (1957). The protagonist Sanad Shivpal’s social background is the cause for his feeling of alienation and rootlessness. His predicament is once again solved when he marries the unsophisticated, non-westernised daughter of a college lecturer. In Balachandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer*, the protagonist Krishnan’s alienation is due to the conflict between the western influence and the native reality. The resolution of Krishnan’s East-West dilemma hinges on his choice between Cynthia and Kamala who are representative symbols of the two cultures. Ultimately he resolves his predicament by embracing the traditional ideals of this country symbolised through Kamala.

The East-West theme moves into a different realm and assumes a depth and meaning not achieved in Indian English fiction with Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and the Rope*. The novel is deeply philosophical in tone and metaphysical in demeanour. The protagonist Ramaswamy’s predicament is resolved when he realises that he needs a guru to sort out the serpent from the rope. The solution, however, is a personal one. Here we see the theme of
renunciation coming into prominence. This theme of renunciation can be best illustrated through R.K.Narayan’s *The Guide*. The novel traces the development of Raju the protagonist; the worldiest of men is transformed in the course of the narrative into a sanyasi. In Bhattacharaya’s *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954), a marked change can be noticed in the tone and tenor of these novels. The sixties’ novel reflects a recognisable change in national sensibility, expression and literary form. As against the novel of the thirties which shows concern with national or social problems, the novel of the sixties has a distinctly private tone. Commenting on the latter, Meenakshi Mukherjee points out that it is "introspective and the individual’s quest for a personal meaning is its main theme."\(^{14}\)

Compared to the 60s there was no great spurt of activity in the 70s as the country experienced an economic decline egged on by the declaration of Emergency and the Indo-Pak War. But still some significant novels were produced. They are Chaman Nahai’s *Azadi* and *The English Queens*, Arun Joshi’s *The Apprentice*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), Rama Mehta’s *Inside the Haveli*, Anita Desai’s *Bye Bye Black Bird* (1977). The East-West conflict, the search for identity and the theme of renunciation continue. It becomes evident that an inevitable overlapping of themes take place in these novels, thus making it difficult to deduce it to one fixed theme. In all these novels one notices that retreat is presented as a possible solution to the dilemmas of human life; this can be seen most prominently in Arun Joshi’s *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*. One comes to the conclusion that the novel of the sixties and the seventies operates within a limited range and affords easy solutions. The reasons for the reduced output in the seventies are not too hard to see. Historically and politically, the nineteen seventies were one of the most turbulent decades in Indian history. The general decline on all fronts, the debilitating wars with Pakistan and
finally the Emergency declared in 1975, put a severe check on national progress. The declaration of the Emergency dealt a deathblow to the Indian sensibility.

Experience of totalitarianism for a short time awoke the casual Indian from his slumber and lethargy. Having come so perilously close to losing his freedom, the Indian realised that from now on he had to play an important role in the making of history. As Viney Kirpal aptly puts it, "The sudden realization of the reality of history in which the individual has an important role to play is reflected in the novel of the 1980s." Thus the attempt by the individual to take an active role in the making of history is the important theme of the novel of the 80s. The quest for identity is now against the background of a larger world; cosmopolitanism is the new reality. The new protagonist belongs everywhere; he is a cultural traveller and has the ability to merge into all cultures, coming to terms with the broadening horizons of modern experience. The novel of the eighties exemplifies this theme. At this stage it would be worthwhile to recapitulate the tremendous contribution of the big three before elaborating on the novel of the eighties. Mulk Raj Anand's explosive style of writing clearly left an indelible mark on the consciousness of a nation perpetrating atrocities on the less fortunate in the name of caste and religion. Starting with *Kanthapura* which dealt with the freedom movement, Raja Rao moves on to show his metaphysical concerns in *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare*. The range of his contribution to the Indian English Novel can be summed up in his own words:

"...Starting from the humanitarian and romantic aspect of man in *Kanthapura* and *The Cow and the Barricades* both deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy
of non-violence, I soon came to the metaphysical novel, *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare* based on the vedantic conception of illusion and reality. My main interest increasingly is in showing the complexity of the human condition, and in showing the symbolic construct of one human expression. All words are hierarchic symbols, almost mathematical in precision, on and of the unknown.”

The contribution of R.K.Narayan to the Indian English novel has been exemplary. Starting with *Swami and Friends*, his first novel published in 1938 to *The Painter of Signs* in 1993 he has captured the Indian imagination for well over seven decades. By his choice of themes and a unique style of presentation, he has carved a niche for himself in the crowded literary scene. His protagonists are all ordinary middle class people and the family constitutes the hub of his preoccupations. Commenting on the thematic concerns of Narayan’s novels, William Walsh says, “The family, indeed, is the immediate context in which the novelist’s sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for the subtlety with which family relationships are treated.” Thus in all his novels *The English Teacher*, *The Bachelor of Arts*, *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *The Painter of Signs*, Narayan explores a variety of relationships within the family. Commenting on the plot of his novels Walsh says, “The novels plot the rise of this intention onto awareness, its recognition is a crisis of consciousness and then its resolution.”

In this way Mulk Raj Anand with his concern for the underdog of the society, Raja Rao with his metaphysical preoccupations and Narayan with his depiction of socio-comic aspects of everyday life of ordinary people, put
together a wide panorama of life. The recapitulation would be incomplete without the mention of G.V. Desani. When his novel *All About H. Hatterr* was published in 1948, it was considered a curious aberration. The irreverence with which the English language was used, the alteration in syntax and the manner in which it was presented made it a peculiar novel since it did not conform to predominant mode of his contemporaries, the big three. It is written in what Anthony Burgess says, “whole language, in which philosophical terms, the colloquialisms of Calcutta and London, Shakespearean archaisms, whinings quack spiels, references to the Hindu pantheon, the jargon of Indian litigation, and irritability seethe together.”

Salman Rushdie acknowledges the tremendous influence of G.V. Desani on his writing. Viney Kirpal commenting on the turbulent political scenario of the nineteen seventies says that “the 1970s were a gestation period for the shaping of the new Indian sensibility.” However the whole body of Indian English novels really do not anticipate the novel of the eighties. The content and the form of the novel of the eighties are unique.

With Indian Independence, the themes of nationalism and partition receding into the background, the younger novelists started displaying an increasing inwardness in their themes. The themes of loneliness, of rootlessness, of restlessness, of the exploration of the psyche and the inner man have been dealt with by Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in the City* (1965) and Arun Joshi’s *The Foreigner* (1968).

The 1980s witnessed efflorescent emergence of new Indian fiction in English heralding a new era of change in its tenor, tone and content. The new crop of writers produced their maiden works and brought new conviction and maturity which was all its own. They are an honest endeavour trying to clean a quintessential pan-humanism through distinct
contexts. Their literature gave way to new inclusiveness. The novel especially became rather flexible and accommodated new compulsions and realities and sensibilities. These novelists “unfettered Indian fiction in English from Pre-Independence complexes, abolished explanatory footnotes and citation marks and strove successfully to forge a new idiom relying on the vocabulary of irreverence by handling English language more freely, creatively, unselfconsciously ‘without being overtaxed by Anglo-Saxon notions of what was proper’ than their preceding counterparts.”

It was Salman Rushdie who changed the concept of Indian writing in English and made indelible imprints on the world literary horizon with his *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and later *Shame* (1983) by depicting Indian reality with a fantastical tinge and transfusing history, myth and autobiography exquisitely. But what set the Thames ablaze was *Satanic Verses* (1988), a novel more burnt than read. In the wake of Rushdie’s literary glasnost, there emerged an impressive array of the second generation of post-colonial writers of the 80s from the corridors of St.Stephen’s College, New Delhi. This assembly of literary artists include Amitav Ghosh, Allan Sealy, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Vijay Singh and others. These new writers have realized that the wounds on the Indian psyche by its country men have become ulcerous and rotten. “With an extensive use of fantasy and fresh language, they have striven to exteriorize the scars of inwardness. They have portrayed modern man who finds himself trapped in multiple pressures and perils and yet chases something inexplicable, inscrutable and inevitable, which does not concede him definite victory over itself and at the same time does not allow him to rest with ease. This has led to a significant change in his quest. The quest may appear personal or topical, yet it has universal connotations, for it stands out as his quest for existence in a universe sans meaning.” The new
protagonist inevitably lacks in heroic status and to an extent his unheroic actions are consequences of the realistic and democratic temper of the readers whose receptivity cannot be risked by the novelist. The new novelists have reacted against old set of values, facile idealism, stereotyped attitudes and hypocritical morality.

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* not only shook the very foundations of the Indian English Novel but also took the literary world by storm. Makarand Paranjape sums up accurately the impact of the novel: “This momentous book really jolted the very foundation of the Indian English Novel. Its energy, self-indulgence, irresponsibility, disorder and cockiness really shocked the daylights out of the said form of the Indian English novel”. Innovation in terms of both theme and technique in *Midnight’s Children* set the tone for the new novel of the eighties. And since then, there has been a steady output of novels, each being accorded critical acclaim. The novel of the eighties recognises the plural nature of society and the importance of national integration. It thus reflects the reality of the mixed Indian tradition. The thrust in the new novel is on synthesis, an awareness of compelling plurality. The scope of these novels is transnational and trans-continental. The East-West conflict projected in the novel of the 60s is now a thing of the past. Now cultures mingle, as is evident when characters of different nationalities interact with ease. As a result the whole world is projected as one big home. The new individual is more cosmopolitan and deregionalised than in the novel of the 60s and 70s. Some of the important novels of 80s are *Midnight’s Children*, *Rich like Us*, *Shame*, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*. These novelists with their choice of themes and techniques share the vision and objectives of other post-colonial writers. These post-colonial writers do exactly what Times International terms as their mission “to bring energy and outsider’s
freshness into the closed and almost airless rooms of English Literature."24 In a lighter vein, the magazine remarks: "For centuries Britons set up their institutions in the wilds and brought their culture to the world: now the world is bringing back the wilds to British institutions."25

The second generation of postcolonial Indo-Anglian novelists of the 1980s speak with a confident, individualistic voice which is no more imitative of the British model of writing in English. Using English with verve, flourish and a degree of confidence, they have liberated Indian English fiction from the colonial yoke and the marginalised position of exotica writing.

"Edward Said has called the Indo-Anglian writing of the 1980s 'The second stage of Post-colonialism.'"26 The decolonised societies, while in the first phase, focussed on the assertion of political sovereignty, turn to the charting of cultural territory which involves "a repossession of history and its politicisation, remapping at the level of art, culture and literature, an awareness of difference -- difference of nation, ethnicity, religion, or gender and the evolving of a language which became the voice of postcolonials and through which those marginalised by colonial discourse can truly speak."27 In fact, differences are crucial to postcolonial writing. Euro-American academics tend to consider all postcolonial writing as part of the Empire Writes Back phenomenon. Western post-colonial theorists speak of post-nationalism in relation to these writers. They foreground the typical 'fractures', 'resistance' and 'subversion' found in the discourse but those important differences of nation, ethnicity, religion and gender. Yet, these text books offer resistance to the hegemony of master narratives originating in the west and are subversive. As Arun Mukherji points out that they also "offer resistance to domination and marginalisation at the national level and are therefore engaged in the creation of their own
space within the national or diasporic context. Membership in the microscopic community comes before membership in the macroscopic global village and one does not detract from the other. In fact denationalising and deracinating a literature are in the ultimate analysis a reduction exercise and rob it of much meaning.  

Therefore, we do not see any commonality of post-colonial discourse but its several differences. In the Indo-Anglian novels of the post-80s, there is the emergence of clear-cut ethnocentric discourse among the religious minorities who feel threatened by the forces of resurgent Hinduism and their hegemonic agenda. The ethnocentric discourse marks the assertion of difference and a separate identity by groups, which were hitherto content to be known by the secular Nehruian tag of “Indian”. With the collapse of the ideal of secularism, the label of “Indian” is being appropriated by the majority Hindu community. In the post-Ayodhya period, the ethno-religious minorities are being challenged to prove their Indian credentials and this has destabilised their earlier undemanding acceptance of an Indian identity. Ethnocentric texts offer resistance to the domestic homogenisation and thus become distinct entities within other post-colonial discourses.

The brigade of highly visible diasporic discourses is led by Salman Rushdie whose works show the classic features of Post-colonial writing—displacement, sense of loss and nostalgia and fragmentation of identity.

Yet another considerable impact made by the Indo-Anglian novelist of the post-80s is the gender-issue. This is not to say that no books on women were written by women before the 80s. In fact the 60s and 70s were dominated by women novelists – Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahgal and Ruth Prawer Jhabwala. But what they created were more properly womanist discourses rather than feminist texts.
It is only in the post–80s that the feminist ideology is center-staged not only in the works of Desai, Deshpande and Sahgal but also in the novels of Githa Hariharan, Namita Gokhale and Nina Sibal. Issues of gender injustice and changing role of women in Indian society are dealt with.

Nilufer E. Barucha opines that “Second generation Indian English Fiction can therefore be quite profitably analysed under four distinct heads—1. Ethno-religious/Minority discourse 2) Diasporic Discourse 3) Feminist Discourse 4) Political/Ideological Discourse. While these diverse heads would provide convenient categories for study, most of them would also be charting cultural territory, repossessing history, hybridising language, offering resistance and provide a voice to the subaltern.” 29

When one retrospects at the decades of 80s and 90s certain major events and incidents flash through one’s mind which refuse to be pinned down or termed into time divisions. And, of course, there are continuities, shifts and disruptions. Nevertheless, where the English writing is concerned it is the Indo-Anglian novel that finds its abundance and domination. May be as a nation we are fond of story telling, we love continuity and fiction allows greater freedom for experimentation and explorations. As one looks into the works of both the 80s and 90s one realises that there are continuities such as engagement with the history, both national and personal, history of lives, of institutions, family sagas, the freedom struggle, gender discrimination, the history of socialization, accounts impelled by the need to place the past in different perspectives and the need to review happenings and roles, to free them from imposed positions and to deconstruct knowledge structures legitimised by the imperial discourse. There is behind this historical impulse also the search for causes in order to find out what went wrong. There is in this a reviewing and a replaying of past events. This
engagement lacks romanticism and is not search for identity in the existential sense of the term, but is, instead, a search for the hidden layers of meaning, for the little narratives which if placed together may yield a new meaning. As the continuities link the works of the 80s with those of the 90s better we categorize the whole bulk of the fiction under the heads—Minority discourse/Ethno-religious discourse, Diasporic discourse, Feminist discourse and Political/Ideological discourse.

The Parsis, among the second generation of Indo-Anglian novelists are the single largest group of Ethno-religious/Minority discourse practitioners. Ambivalence and alienation became exacerbated during the colonial period, when the Parsis were among the first to embrace English language education and became the most westernised Indian community. At the end of the Empire most Parsis felt bereft at the loss of special elite status they have enjoyed during the colonial period. Including those who migrated to the west in the 1950s and 60s, those who stayed in India experienced severe identity confusion. In India they came up against the hegemonic forces of the dominant community of the Hindus. Their struggle to create their own space is recorded in the novels of Rohinton Mistry, Boman Desai, Firdaus Kanga and Dina Mehta. Boman Desai’s The Memory of Elephants (1988) records in detail the story of the Parsis for the posterity. In an allegorical strain as evidenced in the discourse of other contemporary post-colonial writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende and Salman Rushdie, the text deals with the psychological trauma of the Parsis because of the lack of elite status and their socio-cultural life.

Rohinton Mistry’s runner-up for the Booker Prize in 1991 Such a Long Journey is set in Bombay against the backdrop of the Indo-Pak War in 1971 and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation.
The novel tells the story of a Parsi bank official, Gustad Noble and the peculiar way in which the conflict in the Indian sub-continent affects him and his family. Gustad Noble’s dreams and expectations are modest, but circumstances in the then India conspire to deny him these. It is very hard on him that he cannot make things happen in such a way as to fulfil his aspirations. Forces stronger than himself, come in the way of his achieving his ambitions. His elder son does not join the I.I.T. Roshan, his favourite child, suffers from a prolonged illness, Dinshawji, his best friend dies of cancer, and another friend Bilimoria, betrays his trust. Gradually, Gustad Noble modifies his dreams and dilutes his expectations. He is not in control of things. Not turning into a defeatist, he, in a truly oriental way, achieves triumph in a calm manner. It lies in his acceptance of the harsh realities of the India of the 1970s. Towards the end of the novel, the greatest moment comes when he forgives his erring son and hugs him to his bosom in a noble gesture of acceptance of Sobrab’s decision to lead his own life. The decades of the 60s and 70s witnessed the slow erosion of the ideal of the Nehruvian dream of a secular India. The Nehruvian Utopia waned gradually and marked the beginning of sordid power politicking and corruption at the highest levels, nepotism and cynical manoeuring of the electorate. The extreme right-wing political parties like the Shiv-Sena raised the bogey of “The other” – The religious other, the Muslim, the linguistic other, The Tamil speakers and the regional other, those who hailed from the other parts of India. Mistry, like many political analysts, places the blame for this state of affairs at Indira Gandhi’s door—“How much bloodshed, how much rioting she caused. And today, we have that bloody Shiv Sena, wanting to make the rest of us into second class citizens. Don’t forget she started it all by supporting the racist buggers.” (SALJ-39). As a minority community, the Parsis have their fears and anxieties. Dinshawji voices his concern about rising communal forces: “No future for minorities, with all these Shiv Sena
Politics and Marathi language nonsense"(SALJ-55). The language of this denunciation of Mrs.Gandhi politics has indigenized in the tradition of post-colonial discourse. The novel celebrates Parsi idiom and its rhythms. He uses Indian English consistently and naturally conveying its present status as one of the several Indian languages with its own distinctive phonetic and syntactic features—a part of the phenomenon of global 'Englishes'. Salman Rushdie and his host offered this post-colonial mode of resistance, who used the colonizers’ language not to curse with, but to subvert the privileging of colonial discourse and the hegemony of master narratives of the west, thereby most effectively, sabotaging the unequal Prospero-Caliban dichotomy. Firdaus Kanga’s Trying to Grow(1990) also center-stages the Parsi identity and it adds the travails of a growing up of a physically handicapped guy. Dina Mehta’s And Some Take a Lover (1991) engages the problem of a Parsi woman against the backdrop of nationalist period and describes how the Parsis reacted to the conflicting calls of Gandhi’s anti-imperial movements and their old loyalties to the Raj. Roshini, the female protagonist, loses in both the stakes. Her Gandhian Sudhir, rejects her as being too fragile to cope with the demands of hardwork in the Indian villages, where he is headed. She also loses her English friend a girl at her college who marries a fellow-Briton and is then involved with another man. This other man, who was doing, intelligence work is murdered and Roshini’s friend is banished by her husband. In her hurt and bewilderment Roshni takes a lover, a rather abnoxious Parsee man, who is married to one of her other friends. Roshni is then rocked by several guilts – that of forsaking her westernised family and befriending Sudhir, that of not being able to measure upto the idealistic demands made by Sudhir, that of getting involved with an international spy ring and finally that of losing her virginity outside marriage. Roshni is thus torn apart by the demands of a departing empire, an imminent decolonisation and a patriarchal society.
The body of writing which comes from a globally dispersed minority community that has a common ancestral homeland is designated as diasporic. The diasporic is more likely to have a preoccupation with the lost or imaginary homeland. The diasporic writers have maintained strong collective identities. They acknowledge that their homeland has a claim on their loyalty and emotions. With his fragmented discourse of Midnight's Children in 1981, Salman Rushdie led the contingent of Diasporic writers and set afoot in the frontiers of post-colonialism and Post-modernism. Including this work, his subsequent texts also display, the characteristic features of sense of loss, nostalgia and problems of identification with the host country. As Rushdie himself has said in Imaginary Homelands: "It may be that when the Indian writer who writes from outside India has to reflect the world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been lost." So, Saleem Sinai in Midnight's Children deals with incomplete worlds, incomplete becomings and beings. It also presents multitudinous voices and several often conflicting versions of history, thereby subverting the prestige of the master narratives and legitimising the voice of subaltern and the marginals of the history. The primary concern of the text is history. It has been repossessed by the post-colonial heir, who seeks to remove it from the clutches of the totalisation of the colonising order and the equally dominating versions purveyed by the post-colonial regime. History is liberated from both these hegemonies by the device of magical realism which turns fictions into facts and facts into fictions. Through the sinuses of Saleem Sinai the immediate post-colonial history of India and Pakistan is mediated. Myth-making indulged on both sides of the new borders is challenged. The text also subverts through the hybridisation of language, which is nominally that of the erstwhile colonises that has been both hybridised and indigenised till it has become a fit medium of the expression of the travails, traumas and
aspirations of a post-colonial order. Rushdie, not only chutnified history here but also ground the language into a new construct. His other works *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses* (1981) also continued the offerings of fragmented world views and subversions and resistance.

Vikram Seth, yet another high-profile diasporic writer of the 1980s created his magnum opus *A Suitable Boy* in 1993 which, at the thematic level, is about diasporic loss and deals with the repossessing of immediate post-colonial history. At the formal level it differs greatly from Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* for its realistic mode of narration which parallels that of the nineteenth century novels. It is a text with multitudinous tales in the Scheherazadic tradition encompassing within itself several layers—fictional, historical, ideological and socio-cultural. Set in the 1950s, it records the changing, socio-cultural mores, the coming of new wealth, the decreasing influence of the westernised elite, major socio-economic changes wrought by Nehru’s Land Reform policies which moved India from the feudal to the socialist age and above all the changing status of women in post-colonial India. Lata Mehra is a central character around which the narrative revolves. Her love for the Muslim youth, Kabir, is doomed even in a decolonised India, permeated by Nehruvian ideals of secularism. However, so is the nascent attraction between her and the westernised, poetry-writing Amit. It is finally the new, post colonial, middle-class Indian Haresh, with his very Indian tastes and lack of any literary or social pretensions who wins Lata’s hand. He is a small scale enterpreneur but is extremely ambitious – the future belongs to him and Lata links her life to his rather than with Amit’s or Kabir’s. So, with this marriage Lata moves away both from colonial India as symbolised by Amit’s family members, the Chatterjies, and from old feudal India masquerading as new democratic India in the guise of Maan’s family, the Kapoors. She also distances herself from the colonialism –

If Indian men had been sufferers of the trauma of colonial experience women had been the sufferers under the hyper-masculine construct of colonialism and became the doubly colonised. Though they were highly visible during the freedom struggle, there had been no improvement in their actual status in the Indian society. Gandhi’s Rama Rajya was as patriarchal a notion as was colonialism. For Gandhi, his women Satyagrahis were mothers and sisters and their sexuality was always elided. He himself unilaterally embraced celibacy in his thirties and lived in a platonic relationship with his wife Kasturiba. In post-colonial India women continued to be the victims of double standards. At one level they are idealised as mothers and protected as sisters but as wives they are battered. Gender discrimination is rampant even among the educated middle-class where women earn their livelihood. A daughter is considered a curse in the Indian home and the traditional blessing for a pregnant woman or a bride is “May you be the mother of sons”. Some even go to the extent of sex determination tests and resort to the ghastly crime of female foeticide. The marginalisation of women and their continuing subordination and suffering are recorded in the feminist discourses of Shashi Deshpande, Nina Sibal, Githa Hariharan, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapoor, Jaishree Mishra and Anita Desai. In fact the fiction of the 80s and 90s reveals the female protagonists who are quite conscious of their identity and are no longer meek and
submissive. There is a marked difference in their attitude as compared to the heroines of the womanist texts of the earlier decades.

In Shashi Deshpande’s novel *Roots and Shadows* (1983), the female protagonist Indu asserts her individuality and realises her freedom by breaking away from her family out of resentment and marrying for love. Realization dawns upon her that freedom lies in having courage to do what one believes is the right thing to do. There is a greater chance of happiness for women if they learn to conquer their fears and assert themselves. Her second novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1990) is about gender discrimination and the marriage on the verge of break down. Here also the protagonist, Saru, is fully determined to take control over her life by shedding passivity. One will have to share as well as face the events of one’s life. There is no refuse other than one’s self. Realising that she cannot attain happiness either through her husband or father, Saru seeks to attain peace of mind by her own efforts which is to be created within. She confidently faces life fearlessly by balancing her multiple role as a member of the family, as a professional and basically as a human being. Her novel *That Long Silence* (1989) is about the journey of Jaya towards self-actualization. Jaya concludes that a holistic approach towards life is essential to obtain a self-actualized individuality in a world of pre-fixed norms and standardized behaviour. Life has always to be made possible. Long hours of contemplation enable her decide give up the role of a silent and passive woman. Her predicament proves that a balanced fulfilled life is not merely a utopian fancy if she decides to realize her creative energy, to erase her conditioning and frees her from her psychic fears and bondage of centuries—in short self-actualization is possible if a woman decides to Be Herself and to exhibit her free, innate, uninhibited personality in totality. In *The Binding Vine* (1992) Deshpande presents “the talking woman” in the
protagonist Urmi, who, unlike the other muted sufferers in other novels, takes up cudgels against male atrocities and fights on behalf of the rape-victim, Kalpana and encourages her friend Vanaa to assert herself. Urmi's sexuality, her passion is revealed with a measure of unrepentant concern. In A Matter of Time (1996), a story about the callousness of marriage, Shashi Despande grapples with the theme of alienation and presents a man as the protagonist, who without any grave reason, deserts his wife and daughters and brings a lot of despair to them. Sumi, in the manner of a stoic hero, provides emotional and financial security to her daughters. Her novel Small Remedies (2000) is a story of fractured memories of Madhu, a biographer who writes about a Goan Christian family and a Muslim tabla player and presents in one large sweep the plurality, diversity and contradictions of our composite culture against the background of classical music. Savithri Bai, a classical singer, walks out of the family with a Muslim tabla player, for she is a woman of immense courage and does not care for male-dominated societal laws. Leela, a believer in the communist ideology fights against male-dominated political chauvinism. Madhu, the biographer, is deserted by her husband Som, who is a doubting Thomas and always thinks of purity, chastity and intact hymen. Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting (1999) reflects the bleak predicament of Uma the eldest daughter of the family. Uma suffers from parental apathy, gender discrimination, failed marriage and finally leads a desolate life as a perpetual servant in the parental home under the patriarchal web of Mama Papa. Female apathy, male possessiveness and chauvinism lead women protagonists to the edge of destruction. Manju Kapoor's Difficult Daughters (1998) is set at the time of partition. The central character, Virmati, is made a cult figure to fight against taboos, social and joint family restrictions and man-made rules in the traditional society. Woman education and freedom are highlighted. Patriarchy usually denies
women freedom, education, career and love-marriage. Githa Hariharn’s *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1993) when read in the feminist perspective brings out the concept of motherhood which has a limited meaning in a patriarchal discourse and possesses neither economic nor social status and is kept away from the notion of sexuality. By reconceptualising mother-daughter bond, Gita Hariharan, challenges the generalised definition of motherhood. The protagonist, Devi, instead of sinking into a desparing isolation walks towards her mother Sita, to learnt about her womanness and to find a renewed meaning in the female-female bond. Her marital discord, quest for identity and happiness outside marriage are symbolic of collective struggle of women for self-liberation from male dominated restrictions.

Jaishree Misra’s *Ancient Promises* (2000) is the moving story of Janu’s painful journey of self-discovery. It is about a marriage, a divorce and the motherhood. It is about why we love and lose, some times seeking to have little control over our destinies. Forced and loveless arranged marriages end in divorce and force the shackled women into the arms of freedom and love. Even in literate Kerala where matriachal order is stronger, there are a lot of prejudices about what they should be. Women’s life is not the roses all the way.

Salman Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) is a vivid account of love, death and rock’n’roll that is set in India, England and America. The novel presents not only the family saga but also presents feministic theme through the character of Vina. Vina, the legendary of rock music, is the central character that runs the entire action of the novel. Literally self-less, her personality is smashed like a mirror by the fist of her own life. All the things had been pulled out from her life – her name, family, sense of place and home, safety, belonging, being loved, future and
belief. Experiencing sexual exploitation, racial discrimination and parental apathy, she carves a niche for her life in the world of music and money. Vina is foregrounded as a feminist icon in the novel. Sexual promiscuity was adopted as a means of survival to rise in the materialistic world. Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) is a multi-dimensional novel offering different perspectives. Male chauvinism, patriarchal forbidden societal laws, power politics, sexual politics, marginalisation of women, conflict between tradition and modernity and quest for female identity are the thematic layers embedded in the narratorial matrix of the novel. The feminist element throws on the predicament of the protagonist, Ammu, a divorcee, who breaks the love laws by having sex with the untouchable Velutha and take on the big themes—love, madness, Hope and Infinite joy. Love redeems human life.

Political and ideological and dialectical dilemmas are presented by Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Amitabh Ghosh and Shashi Tharoor. Anita Desai, *In Custody*, has focussed on the politics of language and the use and abuse of language to marginalise a minority. Post-colonial India’s manipulations vis a vis the Urdu language and the attempts to link the language with the Muslim minority are dealt with.

Sahgal’s novels are overtly ideological and extremely critical of the political masters of post-colonial India. *Rich Like Us* (1987) deals with the period of emergency in India in the mid-1970s, when Sahgal’s cousin, Indira Gandhi suspended the Indian Constitution and assumed extraordinary powers. During the emergency, the state machinery re-wrote history in the mode of all totalising systems, whether colonial, communist or fascist.

*The Great Indian Novel* (1989) of Shashi Tharoor, by using the framework of the epic Mahabharatha, parallels the goings on in the present Indian
politics. Degradation of human values are presented. The real danger is when nations abandon principles of expediency and embark on the path recommended by political theorists such as Kautilya in Arthasasthra and European Machiaevelli in The Prince.

The Shadow Lines of Amitav Ghosh subverts official versions of history and provides ideological resistance to totalising political discourses. Here, the sordid machinations of politicians continue to divide Hindus and Muslims in post-colonial times and lead to bloodshed and death.

In continuation of the novels of the 1980s there are some more major novels of the 90s which constitute both structural and thematic concerns. Amitav Ghosh’s The Glass Palace (2000) like his non-fiction writing such as In An Antique Land (1992), not only shares historical events but also events such as state power, oppression, human misery, displacement, freedom and national identity. Handcuffed to history the characters’ quest towards the understanding of their world and gaining a new self makes The Glass Palace an absorbing novel. The characters struggle to gain a sense of subjectivity, to come to terms with the complex interconnections between economic, political and cultural developments in the colonial world present in India, Burma and Malaysia. There are significant transformations within them, leading towards changes in their national identity.

Pankaj Misra’s The Romantics (2000) is singularly unromantic and a misnomer for in it all the characters are devoid of passion and romance and they are like orphans clutching at straws and drifting about like soulless ghouls on a cold night. It is about the protagonist Samar’s journey of self discovery into the secluded world of the unfamiliar reflecting the theme of East-west.
Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000), a continuation of the earlier novel *English, August* (1988), is a plangent criticism on the Indian Civil Service, political leaders, corruption, casteism and administration. It reflects the post-colonial disillusionment of both the ruled and the rulers.

Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1994), like *Midnight’s Children*, is a novel with large ambitions composed on a large scale. It is a deeply-felt elegy for pluralism. The Spanish history hovers on the background. It is interwoven with that of India creating a Moorish Spain as the model of multicultural society. The mish-mash of influences, the juxtaposition of the European and the Indian can be said to represent a form of multiculturalism, absorbing the historical and cultural forces of West-European literary culture on colonized societies. It is also a family saga representing hybridity.

Amitav Ghosh in his novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1997) makes a unique experiment by combining various themes and techniques. He amalgamates here Literature, Science, Philosophy, History, Psychology and Sociology resulting in a complex, fascinating and highly imaginative story of quest and discovery that weaves past, present and future into an intricate texture. In a way the novel reflects post-coloniality as it presents the narrative of the story of Malarial research which resembles the colonial expansionism. It also reflects the theme of East-West wherein the rationality of the West is conquered by counter-science of the East through secrecy and silence.

Gita Hariharan’s *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994) employs the oriental narratives of story-telling and teaching to step out of the structures of dominating knowledge. In this novel again it is the oriental tradition of
knowledge systems that proves superiority over the western ones in finding solutions for complex maladies.

Khushwant Singh's The Company of Women (1999) presents sex not only in the form of infantile as well as senile fantasies but also as a redeeming factor in the life of human beings. The protagonist Mohan Kumar's multiple sexual encounters make him a patient of AIDS. Here again the hero turns to the spirituality of the East reciting the Gayathri Manthra and getting solace in death by suicide. The novel is rather propagandist in nature in the tradition of Mulk Raj Anand.

R.K.Jha's The Blue Bedspread (1999) is about a dysfunctional family of poverty. The unnamed family characters, despite undergoing bitter experiences of incest and homosexuality and domestic violence contribute to continuity of family relations under the layers of silence and suffering. It is love that is celebrated as sublime in familial relations.

David Davidar's The House of Blue Mangoes (2002) highlights the age-old ideal of home, family and community that constitute the leitmotif of the novel. Set against the background of a typical Indian village called Chevathar in Kilanad District in the days of British Raj in Madras Presidency in 1899, the novel deals with a Tamil Christian family saga of three generations sweeping through the turbulent Indian history. The novel reflects the saying that it is caste and community which contribute to the continuity of family and its members. It is a Tolstoyan social history saga.

Pico Iyer makes a distinction between the 'two strands of Indian fiction' that emerged in the 1980s as that of 'compassionate realism' as in the novels of Vikram Seth and Rohinton Mistry and that of 'pinwheeling intention' as in the works Rushdie, Tharoor and Sealy.
A novel has long been considered involving one story of the exploits of a hero whose activities, fortunes and adventures provide the main plot. Hence from Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) to Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), the hero forms the axis around which various incidents revolve. Over a period of time, the novel has gone through a number of transformations in which the role of the protagonist has been substituted by a house, a family, a village, a town or even a philosophic idea. The texts of this category are Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables* (1857), Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960).

The novels of both 80s and 90s, adopting Faulkner's method of story-telling and using the techniques of stream of consciousness, make the present novel so rich that the reader becomes a diver who explores the unfathomable depth of the novel and enriches himself in each successive attempt as he goes through the novel. There is a concept of universality that can be felt. Urbashi Barat writes:

"The novel seems like a chain of links forged together seamlessly without beginning or end. Each story seems to echo the others or makes a comment on them, and this adds to the effect of the repetitions and parallels throughout the novel to suggest that history is not sequence but repetition." 31

The Indo-Anglian novelists of the day, by virtue of their upbringing and absorption of English tastes, opinions and morals have remained quintessentially Indian. Instead of being colonised by the English as Mecaulay wanted them to be, they have 'lionised' in English language and used it to define their Indian identity and experience. They have evolved a
distinct Indian English, which Rushdie has termed it "Chutneyfied English" in his novel Midnight's Children. This hybrid linguistic idiom in one way or the other reflects the Indian plurality in all aspects of life.
NOTES

8. Iyengar, 324
10. Mukherjee, 199-200.
11. Iyengar, 319.
13. Mukherjee, 77
17. Walsh, 74.
18. Walsh, 75.
20. Viney Kirpal, p-xx
25. Iyer, 51
27. Kirpal Viney. p. 356
29. Kirpal Viney. p. 357