Consciousness is perhaps one of the most equivocal and elusive concepts one can find in the social sciences; not only because of the naivety of the theoretical approaches which assign different meanings and functions to it, but also because it is a concept heavily charged with political connotations widely used in everyday life, with the most diverse significations. As consciousness is a social phenomenon and a work of art is a by-product of artists' consciousness, hence it will be proper to understand the nature of consciousness, as it will make it much easier to understand the individual personality and social place of the author.

Consciousness is a product of nature, a property of matter, not all of it. But, only of highly organised matter - the human brain. But is the human brain self-sufficient for the functioning of consciousness? Can it think by itself independently of the influence of the surrounding world? Now, by itself, brain is incapable of thinking. Consciousness is inseparably bound with man's material environment. So the man's consciousness is a special property of highly organised matter, the brain, to reflect social reality.

Now, thought is not a thing; it cannot be seen or photographed. Thought is image of objects and phenomena in the world; an ideal, not a material image. This is not a simple photograph of it, not a lifeless copy of it, but reality appropriately transformed into
human mind. Marx writes about through:

"The ideal is nothing else but the material world reflected by human mind, and translated into forms of thought."

Reality, acting on man, always passes through a prison of the special laws governing thought, such as analysis and synthesis, generalisation etc. What sets man apart from animals, is his ability to think, i.e. to actually reflect the reality, to influence it, to set for himself certain aims; and not as a result of an instinct. Both men and higher animals possess the intrinsic ability to experience sensation. The ability rests on physiological basis which is common both for men and animals. But man's sensations in contrast to these of animals is always illuminated by reason. Man is capable of abstract thinking i.e. of generalised reflection of reality in concepts expressed in words. Every word denotes a specific object with which it is inseparably associated. This is why man reacts to words, just as to the direct influence of objects themselves.

In as much as the first signals are objects themselves, the words designating them acquire the role of secondary signals. They are signals of signals: the physiological mechanism through which man reacts to the words, to speech, is named the second signal system. This system is an attribute only to a man. The first and second signal systems are organically connected, giving man an allround and profound knowledge of reality. And so the consciousness of man
qualitatively differs from the mental capability of animals. The man's consciousness is result of socio-historical development. Marx points out that formation of human aesthetic sensibility is product of the whole of the world history.

Labour i.e. production of material things, is decisive factor in development of man, in th emergence and development of consciousness. "Labour created man himself". The consciousness of primitive man was organically bound up with Labour, it was, so to way, interwoven with his labour activity. And this is understandable because man first of all learnt that was directly linked with labour, the satisfaction of his wants. It is no accident that portrayal of man's labour occurs so often in primitive art. Thus, in the unity of labour and thought, and on the basis of labour activity, man's consciousness developed and improved.

Language, articulate speech, was of great importance in forming man's consciousness. Language which arose together with man's consciousness on the basis of labour, played a very important role in enabling material production. Marx called language a direct reality of thought; and he did so because thought can exist only in the material shell of words and language. It is not only connected with reality but actively influences the world. It was in this sense that Lenin wrote:

"Man's consciousness not only reflects the world but creates
Thus the concept of matter not only gives an idea of the general properties of the objective world, as much, but is also a primary category of our knowledge. Pointing to man's ability to cognise the world, indicating the source of our knowledge, it also provides us with the basis for solving the major problems of the theory of knowledge.

"Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensation and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensation, while existing independently of them."

The aforementioned discussion make it clear that it is the socio-historical situation that determines the consciousness of man, hence his personality. The apparent existence of culture as complex of meanings and values independent of individual human being leads of reification of the cultural reality. The reification results in a mistaken view that society is merely an external environment to which human beings have to adopt in the same way as animals adopt to the natural environment in order to survive. The man, which has found expression in the writings of behaviouralists and structural-functionists like Skinner and Parsons hold that human personality is formed by successes and failures of the individual in adopting the social environments. What is being ignored is that society does not
consist of external conditions only, but also includes fantasies, dreams and projection of individual in terms of which they interpret it and interact with one another. The fact that human consciousness is simultaneously a reflection and a project, is both receptive and active, is missed by positivists and idealists. As conditions change and unfold, the human subject goes along and develops a new sensibility. Sociologism tactfully assumes that while economic structure and formation changed throughout the history, man's ability to perceive the world has remained uncharged since antiquity. The failure of sociologism is rooted in tendency to abstract conditions from their human circumbience. Conditions outside history, conditions without subject are not only petrified and mystified artifacts but also lack all objectives senses, hence, artistic portrayal demands a wealth of concrete individual traits and their covert correlation.

Life must be represented usually and clearly. These thoughts provide us with the theoretical key to the cognition of the peculiarity of an artistic image, and the peculiarity of creative process itself. In "Materialism and Empiro-Criticism", Lenin, again and again, underlines the meaning of sense of perception in literature. His views on the nature of human knowledge overtakes the artist to be the representative of reality in all the concrete sensual fullness of its colours. Lenin's thesis that "There is more wealth in phenomenon than in the law governing it!" is very much to
the point. "A beautiful formula", he commended on what Hegel said about the depth of life's cognizance being contained in the universe which "comprises in itself the wealth of the particular and single !) !! Tres' bien". In defending the essence of the individual in art, one should proceed from Lenin's thesis that phenomenon has greater wealth than the law governing it. Reducing the phenomenon to essence means leaving all the emotional and spiritual wealth in man, all the fullness of real life outside the artistic image. Reducing the portrayal of reality to its abstract essence impoverishes reality and deprives it of its wealth of colors. So Marxist aesthetics proceeds from the organic fusion of general and individual features in art.

Artist is the sum-total of his works, hence while evaluating the works of art, the critic has, naturally, to look at the development of the personality of artist repeatedly because it is through his personality that contemporary social context is reflected in artistic image. if the sociology of author is not discussed from this point of view, naturally, many important aspects of art may remain unexplained. It is not a new thing that a possible debate exists as to the situation of the author in society. The debate, for determining the position of author in society, that took place in Greek aesthetics, can be mentioned for example. Plato, in his Republic, ranked artist sixth in the hierarchy of citizens, and directed that this artistic activity must be kept under close vigil.
Further more Plato asserted that better it would be to banish the artist after duly garlanding him. Plato believed that artist might be a danger to society since he would emphasise 'appearance' at the expense of more important everlasting 'form'. He considered the poet to be one who executes and feeds' the worthless, of soul and thus, destroys the rational part. Aristotle at once improved upon it and suggested that imitation is a function of a considerable importance since poet describes, not mere appearance, but universalises them. He hold that 'particular' is subject of history while universal is that of art. Universal is possible truth, so literature is superior of history and just at par with philosophy.

The Christians of middle ages held that man, in fact, fulfilled himself only when he was able to impress his own individuality and let the design of God find full expression in him. This view stressed that God's design was perfect and that the functions of the artist was to understand it. In words of St. Thomas:

"Perfection of art does not consist in the artist but in the work which is accomplished.... Art concerns things that are made therefore, it is not requested that artist operate according to the good, but his work is well made."

(This position means to be laying at the basis of Bhai Veer Singh's view of his role as an artist. This view can be clearly seen to be at work in 'Sundri', Bijay Singh', etc. Bhai Veer Singh
presented himself as a copyist and not as an inventor and calls the Guru to help him to unfathom the wisdom of God. Again and again he stresses the difficulty of his task and bears the strain and effort of the duty he 'owes' to God and his reader. Thus reader is invited to enter the world of pre-established truth and not the one that could be praised on account of any creative imagination).

In a feudal society the status of artist was that of the protege of State as erest celare artem - choice of theme, principles of expression and motive of writing were pre-determined. Artist create only under the guidance from principles of classics. Art was a source of pleasure and a few people were entitled to this pleasure, hence, the life of a few people was the centre of artistic creation and masses had no place in the world of letters. In the age of neoclassicism also, the artist was subject to that limitation, which in its place, banished the depth of originality and personality traits of the individual from the field of literature and art.

The rise of the Bourgeoisie in the renaissance period drew the attention of artist towards individualist characteristics and the viewpoint of the artist changed and a more liberal attitude took place in concern with thematic choice. When bourgeoisie was independent or an ascendant social force, it promoted art in aspirations and ideas which were also expressed by the artist. Art made its contribution in the struggle against the old feudal order, against moribund values which the bourgeoisie wanted to abolish.
During the renaissance and in the series of bourgeois revolution in the 17th and 18th centuries, art was spiritual weapon in the hands of bourgeoisie. By means of a change of artistic themes and the introduction of new ones, art helped to debunk a deceptive world and exalted a new one. Bourgeoisie, who wanted to know nature to unite it, who was conscious of being not mere a self of god, but master of the world, provided the foreground for realist art. During the French bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie reduced complete freedom to artist.

The romantics presented the freedom, equality and fraternity in its sublime. But this relative harmony between art and the ideals of bourgeois society could last only as long as the new social relations did not reveal their most vital and profound contradiction, and as the new social class presented it not as the particular class but as the representative of all people. To the extent that dream of an enlightened and rational society was dissipated, the supposedly universal reason which was to be its foundation was revealed as a particular class reason which came in conflict with the rest of society. So, when the bourgeoisie replaced 'freedom' with 'freedom of competition', the artist reached his disillusionment. So the bourgeoisie which has played a revolutionary role in tearing apart the feudal conservatism, resolved the personal worth in exchange value, showed the wicked face of economic individualism; class suppression, exploitation and corruption arise...
from the corpse of feudal morality.

The human relations were transformed into commodity, and the last unit of society - Family - also got into the process of alienation. Capitalist culture replaced all the ancient cultures, hence capital became the fore-condition of all relations; and any other dimension of relations was demolished with brutal and shameless exploitation. This inhuman dimension of bourgeois society left an everlasting impact upon the conscience of artist. Romantics found themselves in market as wage labourers. Romantic artist expressed both an attitude of disenchantment with reality around them and search for roots outside that reality. He rebelled against the present by taking refuse in the past and projecting himself to be the future. He exalted his individuality, the unrestrained freedom of his ego, or his radical isolation. Thus expressing his opposition to the prosaic and banal reality which harassed his existence with capitalism, everything became abstract and impersonal, and the romantic, by unleashing an internal subjective volcano, tried to reclaim everything vital or personal. In both its elitist and popular forms, romanticism expressed an anti-bourgeois attitude. For the first time, artist regarded the capitalist social world hostile to art. The artist attempted to ossify the glory of art but bourgeois production relations ground the creative process. Their defensive attitude gave rise to the realist artist. He lifted the veil of the satanic exploitation, economic
ambition and inhuman character of bourgeoisie, and forward they went to route the capitalist system. But the paradox of this period is that the most of the authors belonged to the Petti-bourgeoisie and aristocratic consciousness, hence, were having their own inner contradictions e.g. Tolstoy rightly criticised the exploitation based social system but could not understand the revolutionary essence of the proletariat.

Moreover, the impassioned thrust for realism sometimes led to the depreciation of authors' own creative role and creative principles of art.

Bourgeois revolution that occurred in Europe, qualitatively changed the situation of harmonious existence of men. The history of mankind first time presented this fact that social welfare is nothing but welfare of a class - a few privileged wealthy men. Maxim Gorky in his essay 'The disintegration of Personality' said:

"In their infancy, guided by the insistence of self preservation, and engaged bare handed in a struggle against nature, of which they stood in fear, awe and admiration, the people created religion, which was their poetry and comprised the sum total of their knowledge of nature's forces, the sum of the experience they had amassed in clashes with hostile elements around them. The victories the people won over nature gave them a sense of stability, a pride in themselves, a
desire to score more victories, and induced them to create the heroic apository of all their self knowledge and demands they presented to themselves. The myth and epochs became fused, since the people endowed the hero of any epic poem with all the power of their collective mentality and either made him challenge the Gods to battle or numbered him among Gods."

"He is asserted and defended his personal rights. He had preforce to limit the collective's creativity, narrow its task and thereby distort them.

"When individualism consolidated itself as the unruling element, with right to oppress others, it created an external God, forced the masses to acknowledge the God like nature of 'g' and developed an unsvering faith in its own creative powers. At the summit of its development, the individual's striving towards absolute literary necessity brought him into sharp conflict with tradition he had himself established and with the image of eternal God he had himself created, and which had hollowed these traditions. In its thirst after power, individualism was obliged to kill its immortal God, which had been its buttress and the justification of its existence. The moment ushered in the rapid downfall of the God, life and solitory 'I,' which was incapable of creativity without the support of some external force and therefore is capable of living, since living and creating are inseparable. All know the part played by the private property in splitting
up the collective and in creating a self sufficient 'I'. In this process, however, we must discuss besides the physical and moral enslavement of man, the decline of the energy of masses, the gradual destruction of the sublime, poetically and spontaneously creative mentality of the collective which enriched the world with so many superb works of art."

Gorky's conclusions about the role of collective and individual in creative activity are very interesting. Every great author chose from the encyclopaedia of collective creativity. The disharmony between individual and collective sharpened in the bourgeois set up. Once the capitalist society become divided by its fundamental contradictions, the human relations develop in its framework, became impersonalised, and took the appearance of relations among things. The artist, a spiritual being, can not then be in harmony with a reality which in itself dehumanized. He, therefore, becomes a rootless, or a revolutionary. But he can no longer sing the praise of bourgeois reality. Capitalism appears to the artist as an hostile world, because in as much as the artist is a creation of the world designed precisely to manifest the human presence in things; capitalism, is an inhuman world, he must create in opposition to it if he wants to save himself and his art.

Life becomes more and more venmous when individual finds himself in opposition to collective. At this point he starts to patch the gap between 'I' and collective; for this he must first
fight the system that has caused this disintegration. In this way man returns to the society in the modern times. So it will be a force to accept the writing self as a different being from the social being, rather, the literature is reflection of collective consciousness.

The sociology of Novel much depends upon the sociology of the individual - the author. The author as an individual, has to have a perspective of his own, of course, conditioned by the social context. Infact, the author is a medium to reflect the social reality, but a living medium with consciousness and creative powers. His perspective has a relative autonomy. How the author views a particular situation and character, depends upon his world-view. So, literature is a reflection of reality through author - but this reflection is creative.

Not so very long ago many critics and theorists saw the writers as nothing more than a jealous registrar and careful relayer of various events and changes taking place in society and its characteristic features. 'He does not discover but only shows' contributing nothing of his own but simply reproducing what he has observed, trying to encompass life as broadly as he can; he is totally objective and at the same time, totally impersonal.

"The importance of relation between art and society will be denied, or at least minimized by those who consider art as a
completely gratuitous of playful activity, those who consider it manifestation of the most radical individuality, and those who regard it as an absolutely autonomous sphere which escapes all conditioning. While art can have intrinsic value, this need not be gratuitous while art can be an expression of most profound individuality, it is a real concrete individuality, not an abstract individuality conceived at the margin of the community; and while art can be an autonomous sphere, this does not deny its conditioning."

The depreciation of the role of artist is to found where realism is regarded as dull and uninspired description of surrounding world and realistic character and images simply of likeness or photographs, where realism becomes impossible to differentiate from the worst of naturalism.

"Every thing the author writes has a meaning as part of his contribution of the common cause and is totally valueless as an expression of his own self."

The formalist and structuralist approach to literature as we know, is an exposition of the principles on which the works of literature are built without reference to the personality of their creator, the time and circumstances in which they came to be written and their context. The specific nature and aesthetic qualities of the work are seen strictly in the context of structural
relationships, changing as literature develops. These critics even be interpreted as reducing the role of the author to the business of choosing and varying the way in which the work is to be conducted.

Those who see the work of art as a naturalistic mirroring of life forget the simple truth that literature, like any other art, is a product of creative process. Structuralists lay too little stress on the role of artist and his personality. A close study of life and continuing search for new, effective ways to create and forge ahead along with artistic failure, doubts and joyful success - all this goes to make up the inspired work of a realist writer, who does not simply fix all that goes on before his mental gaze, but strives to analyse, select and synthesise.

What is demanded of artist is not the photographic likeness, not mechanical accuracy but something other, something greater, broader and more profound. A likeness and accuracy and necessary, instead they are essential, but they are yet simply the raw material from which a work of art will be made. It is required to the author that he does not look upon nature as a photographic lens but a man.

The strength and bite of the perception of an author, who is striving to understand reality, are to be seen in the way he succeeds in grasping and disclosing for the reader the inner workings of life and presenting us with characters and types who shed new light on human behaviour and psychology. The artist's
personality is evident in various aspects of his work and especially in his own views life and the social significance of his artistic generalisation. As Chekhov rightly noted:

"A writer's originality is not only his style but also is his 14 way of thinking, his conviction and so on".

The structuralists seem to make artist a mere midwife of the work —....■■■ ....... of art. His personality is no where expressed in his work and he himself is a mere functionary of the intellectual forces that have found expression in these works of art that bear his name. In this way they see the creative artist as victim of an irrational, element force. The theorists of the neo-criticism, the leaders of existential movement and advocates of metaphysical art, all belittle the significant of creative personality. Heidegger, that expounder of existentialism wrote:

"For the work, the artist is something different, one could ever say that he annihilates himself in the process of creator 15 for the sake of the work of art!"

The object of writer's labour is not man and society, but a depiction of external circumstances, objects physical status and dissociated events, all aimed at giving the impression of an independent reality.

But, the artist is a man of his time, his society of a particular
culture and social class. All great art is particular in its origin but universal in its work. By means of art, man as a particular, historical being universalises himself, but not at the level of an abstract, impersonal and dehumanised universality. Instead he enriches his human universe, conserves and reclaims his concrete being, and resists all dehumanisation. The ultimate aim of the work of art is to widen and to enrich the human territory. The artist realises the supreme value of a work of art, its aesthetic value, to the extent that he is able to give a determinate form to matter in order to objectify a determinate human, emotional and ideological context, as result of which he extends his own reality.

The bourgeois society has driven artist to misery, madness or death. Before the bourgeoisie firmly established its rule, artist created in harmony with society. The artist refused to integrate his work in the abstract, qualified and banal universe of bourgeois society without being fully conscious of his abysmal separation from it, the artist radically opposes it simply by remaining faithful to his creative will.

In a class society, author is subjected to many pressures. The disintegration process which is always in a continuous progress in a bourgeois society affects the author as well as his consciousness because of self-disintegration. In this context, another important point is that in a bourgeois society the literature is, like any other commodity, a merchandise, and has to undergo the process of
production, distribution and consumption. This process limits the freedom of author. So in a bourgeois setup, the author, to free himself from such pressures that limits his creative freedom, sides with the class that struggles for a classless society.

"A writer can avoid the disintegrating impact of bourgeois setup only if he aligns himself with proletariat".

In a bourgeois society, the freedom of creativity depends on the freedom of masses. 'But this fact is to be understood by the author only thorough commitment to the cause of masses and not by alienating himself from the mass stream. So the theory of complete freedom - both from State and masses - is just a farce. One thing that is to be understood in this context is that the individual's freedom is result of the long struggle against the feudal slavery. But the bourgeoisies transformed the freedom of individual in individualism and thus used it for its power. Authors with self-centered world-view criticise collective freedom or social freedom. These authors nourish the pride of pure Art. This thinking is certainly a result of bourgeois individualism. But the question is — can anybody remain unaffected from the social values he is living in? There is no scope of creative freedom outside the society or against the society.

We must not confuse individualism with author's individual personality, which, is according to many authors from capitalist countries, is the fundamental trait of art. They see the essence of
art in artist's self expression and expression of nothing else but himself; the important centre of interest lies not in the real world in which other people live, but in the separate world created by the artist who gives full reign to free play of mind and fantasy. Different theorists try to prove that it is refusing to the invitation of life and retiring into the depth of one's soul to create aimlessly that makes an artist truly original and unique. The contrary is, however, true: over emphasis on purely personal moods and feelings that have lost touch with world is one of the things which destroy creative personality and talent of a writer, the world-view of the writer is to be felt in what he writes. The complete freedom ends in anarchy of thought and leads to nowhere but to an intellectual mess which is evident in the later writings of Amrita Pritam such as Tehrawan Sooraj, Eh Sach Hai, Uninja Din, etc.

The artist assumes the human presence in the things and helps to prevent the reification of humanity. The supreme goal of art, is need and reason for being, thus becomes more imperative than ever, because in a world ruled by quantitative criteria (exchange value), by the alienation of man, art - because it is the creation, expression and objectification of man - is one of the most valuable means by which to reclaim, assert and extend the real richness of humanity.

A true artist is capable of creating a new language where ordinary language fails. The object he creates cannot be an end in
itself, on the contrary it is a means of reaching to people. True art reveals essential aspects of human existence in such a way that they may be shared. An incommunicative art is, therefore, a negation of an important aspect of art.

So by now it is more than clear that economic-Political situation has much to do with the personality and consciousness of author. One more political system that remains to be discussed is dictatorship - military, theocratic, fascist etc. It is a truth that bourgeois democracy is better than dictatorship. Dictatorship wants surrender and can not tolerate disagreement, but intellect and surrender to not move parallel. Intellectual is one who has social sensibility and because of this he expresses the pangs of majority. In this way the author comes forward as people's voice against exploitation and injustice, and hence, today's writer, because of his conscience, becomes a part of the struggle against inhuman system. There can be no balance between inhuman ambition of dictatorship and human conscience of the author. Actually, dictatorship feels itself endangered from independent thinking, so it become dangerous for such thinking. This is the reason that when and where dictatorship was established, the intelligentsia had to be its prey. While prosecuting Gramsci in Italy, Mussolini's agents said:

"The brain that is active for the last twenty years should be made inactive immediately."

But the bourgeois democracy affects the author in its ways, so in
a democracy of class society, the socio-political commitment of the author provides him with an Alternate. In such democracy author can go either way - He may surrender his conscience or may take the responsibility to awaken the masses and to expose the social reality. This all depends upon the ideological commitment of the author.

SOCIIOLOGY OF PUNJABI NOVELIST

The development of capitalism in Asian countries was much complex; so, the author had to face more complex reality. Legacy of philosophy, literature and culture existed in the conscious of Indian author, but it was insufficient for the analysis of new reality. Indian bourgeoisie which had the control over freedom struggle of India, had discarded the bourgeois democratic ideals. It adulterated the freedom struggle with religion, melodramas, and all the haunting ghosts of past culture with a skeleton idea of socialist society. The meaning of Raj and Sawraj was lost in the paradox of ideology. Hence, it becomes essential to analyse the factors that condition the creative process of the individual in the socio-historical situation of this period. The Varna demarcation of people in four groups, which was the basis of feudal division of labour, remained intact in British rule also. Even the British capitalism could not demolish it, or it consciously preserved it for its
imperialist interests. In the new classification, the proletariat had the characteristics of peasantry, whose consciousness was dominated by feudal conviction. So, the Indian proletariat was not so in the strict sense of the term as explained by Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels in the manifesto of the Communist Party.

The last unit of our society - the family - has not broken apart. During the journey from adolescence to adulthood, the Indian experienced many everlasting impacts of the medieval tradition which prevented his declassification in the bourgeois society. The majority of Golden Castes acquires the place of masters, and labourers got the status of Shudara. The goldens spent most of their time on regulation and supervision of labour; and this very class provided the Indian society with artists, reformists, political leaders etc. The labour class placed in the arduous circle of labour and had no free time even to rest. Under the brutal exploitation of imperialist, capitalist and feudal masters, the labour class was banished from the elements of humanity and hence, was pushed away from its creative ability. So, the revolutionary element of this class was devoid of class consciousness.

Most of the artists during freedom struggle were of golden caste-background, who were, though sceptic as to the social freedom of the people, were bound by the godly caste system, so, the art could not align itself with the cause of masses. Though the demolition of artisan-culture and cottage industry by the imperialist masters
had made the author to experience the incoming process of declassification, but this experience could not find any practical expression.

The social consciousness of early Punjabi novelist differentiate him from the progressive writer of fourth and fifth decades of twentieth century, who got inspiraton from world wide struggle against bourgeoisie and consciously linked their writings with this struggle, as against the loyalist approach of the early Punjabi novelist, who got into the puzzled of religious and cultural pharacology. The later authors e.g. Sant Singh Sekhon, were protagonists of socialist establishment and decided to oppose the colonial exploitation and worked for the safeguarding of democratic set up in the face of fascist agression.

This has already been discussed that the early Punjabi novelist, though lived in the modern bourgeois set up, he worked in the frame work of feudal culture, so like any other part of the world, the majority of early Punjabi novelists had been those people who had to propogate some religion. Their writings were an essential part of their duty towards society i.e. religion. The explanation of such society is found in the collective social morality of that society.

The novelists like Bhai veer Singh, S.S. Charan Singh Shaheed etc. belonged to the feudal sensibility. Their social and family background might be of some help to understand their individuality.
Bhai Veer Singh adopted Sikh history as theme of his novels, but he safeguarded the interests of middle class. The heroes of his novels belong to this class and Bhai Veer Singh presents the life of middle class as tradition of Sikh religion. The family background of Bhai Veer Singh provides an answer to this turning. His father was one of the fore-runners of Amritsar Singh Sabha and Chief Khalsa Diwan. From maternal side he was linked with Sikh Clergy. His maternal grandfather, Sant Hazara Singh, was a famous explanationist of Gurbani. Diwan Kaura Mal, a seventh generation ancestor of Bhai Veer Singh, was Diwan of Meen Manna and Zaqaria Khan in 18th Century and was Subedar of Multan for some time. During the Sikh rule, his family could not keep the close links with the royal circle. The descendants of Diwan Kaura Mal retired to their ancestral village Garh Maharaja in district Jhang; and could not maintain the family prosperity for much longer. Veer Singh's grand father Baba Khan Singh came into the service of Sant Ram Dayal of Devi Thakran at Amritsar. Baba Khan Singh was a scholar of Sanskrit and wrote poetry in Brij Bhasha. So, Bhai Veer Singh's consciousness apparently stood at the cross-roads of feudal class and middle class, though he himself belonged to the later. His personality had mixed blend of political importance of Diwan Kaura Mal, Saintly Character of Baba Khan Singh, intellect of Dr. Charan Singh.

All this led him to such writings of religious revivalism which had inner-contradictions of their own. His personality is divided
between rebellion against the wrong and loyalty towards the ruling class, though he could not perceive the 'wrong' properly hence his thrust of rebellion is misguided and ends into a communal narrowness. His rebellious nature is apparent from the British Govt. reports about Bhai Veer Singh.

"Bhai Veer Singh is the Editor of a Gurmukhi paper 'Khalsa Samachar' which is published from Amritsar.... he is rebellious to the inner core of his heart. he is one of those cunning Aroras who control the policy making of Chief Khalsa Diwan.... He can certainly be considered a staunch Sikh who is against the British Empire."

This is the irony of the situation that at the one hand Bhai Veer Singh's works were serving the interests of British Empire, and at the other, the ruling class was sceptive of his loyalties. The situation leads to one very apparent and interesting conclusion that the author is a man of profound social consciousness. The individual consciousness is a part of collective consciousness, which under all circumstances, affects his creativity to some extent. It is this impact of collective consciousness that made the rulers to suspect the loyalty of Bhai Veer Singh as there is not doubt as to his creative genius and honesty; and the creativity could at any time, come in fine tuning with the masses, and hence, could turn the thrust of rebellion against the exploiters. The middle class of Bhai Veer Singh's Period wanted to reach a nominal compromise with the
imperialist rule which demanded only non-interference of State in religious matters of Indian Society. Not only the alien rules but Indian landed aristocracy was as well a party to this compromise with the middle class. The Indian middle class was actually still under the thumb of feudal class and looked towards the latter for its well being. Other writers that fall in this category of middle class are S.S. Charan Singh Shaheed, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid etc. These authors were associated with the middle class which stood at the crossroads of consciousness. The medieval feudal grandeur was still not shattered and the new bourgeois set up had not been fully revealed to them, more over, they were bit sceptive as to the nature of this new system. The simple result was that they let their works to be guided by the feudal sensibility, hence, they looked upon the imperialist rule with feudal viewpoint and could not realise their own self, and naturally, could not find proper alignment. Undoubtedly, they sensed something wrong with the social system. The decay of values and morality, dehumanisation of humanity and naked selfishness disturbed them, but they were not aware of the cause, and hence, strived to find the solution of this social degeneration in religious glorification, which to the best of their mind, was the only solution for uplifting of the masses. The social reformist movements of medieval times, which were actually the religious reformist movements still throbbed in the back of their minds. They were, of course, in search of authentic values which society had once possessed, hence were pro-masses, but their
appreciation was anti-masses, because their apprehension of the situation was not scientific but sentimental. So apparently, this was an age of the confusion of consciousness. But there are not two sayings about the fact that these novelists formed the way for more concrete apprehension of the social relations. One thing that they left for the coming generation to inherit was feeling of anguish, and it was for the new generation of authors then to observe it, analyse it and express it in its concrete form. This anguish clearly finds expression in Char Da Nirbah by Bhai Amar Singh:

"This is an open secret that our society has attained degeneration to the last limit. The major reason of this is disharmony among the members of society which is spreading to every household."

This formed a skeleton of Punjabi Novel, with many dislocated bones, which was to be turned into a living being by the future Punjabi Novelist.

The next phase of this developing consciousness is Nanak Singh who was limited to melodramatic fiction prior to Chitta Lahu. Nanak Singh, who had thought of renouncing the world in the prime of his life, turned to serious writing after he spent some time in jail for joining Guru Ka Bagh Morcha, where he extensively read Munshi Prem Chand's Novels, which in turn shook his conscience and
made him more conscious as to the social reality. He himself wrote:

"My aspiration to know my own self, my wish to be famous and to be an ideal man -- every thing is meaningless so long I don't become a social being, and to be a social being, I should follow the example of Munshi Prem Chand. Like Prem Chand I should work for society by writing novels. Munshi Prem Chand presented a horrifying and wicked picture of society in his novels in a very touchy way, I should do the likewise."

Then onwards, Nanak Singh made it a point to lift the veil of every social evil and injustice that prevailed in our society. Nanak Singh is also bound by his sentimentalism and idealistic saintly attitude that he developed while he was in regular touch with religious preachers. He understood the social system, wanted to change it, but was too much of an idealist as to the mode of changing it. He could not comprehend violence of any kind to change the society. One of his Characters says:

"Are you thinking of reforming those people whose hearts are burnt with selfishness and whose brains are haunted by pride -- and whose blood has turned white? So long the white blood is not shed to the last drop, the coming generation cannot escape the impact of this poisonous blood."  

But Nanak Singh is not ready to accept this proposition. He does not suggest any mode of changing the society. But one thing became
apparent that he still had the hangover of feudalistic morality, Indian tradition of self reformation, religious tolerance, so on and so forth. What makes him so is the non-existence of any ideological commitment. So generally he seeks shelter in 'what should be' than facing 'what is'. This tendency is not new for the authors who had only their sentiments to guide their creative thrust. Inspite of his creative honesty and faithfulness towards the mass reformation, Nanak Singh is anti-history, as he does not present the social reality in its concrete form depicting the inner-dialectics of life, but he presents the reality in an isolated sentimentalist approach with a gold plated vision of future with no historical understanding of social system.

Nanak Singh was a product of social reformist movements, and idealism is the basis of reformism, hence his idealism is understandable. This idealism of his is responsible for the romanticism that creeps in his novels and devoid them of any historical perspective.

Nanak Singh turns the social tragedy into a comic farce - the comedy based on idealist futuristic day dreaming, dodging the socio-historical reality. This evading of social reality prevents the author to comprehend the true pattern of bourgeois society and he is most likely to whither away from the historical vision.

Of course, idealism has an important part in literature, but to
play a health role, idealism must be properly fused with realism. It is a fact that every realistic work of art has either a direct or indirect tinge of idealism, but this idealism should not be a romantic idealism, but should be an idealism of a man optimist of social change while in struggle against inhuman forces. The romantic idealism, like that of Nanak Singh, leads the reader away from understanding the inner-dialectics of life. But one thing is more than certain that intentions of Nanak Singh are very good. He does not present the reality with neutrality or in a disinterested way but he sentimentally suffers as his characters do. In a way Nanak Singh turns into a romantic revolutionary. The problem of Nanak Singh is actually the problem of Indian philosophy which had always been sectarian and devistic. The exploited are a lot punished by god and the exploiter is one who has been put into a privileged place by the same god. The feudal logic has a complete hold upon Nanak Singh.

With the development of the capitalism in twentieth century, the rise of national consciousness was unavoidable. The national bourgeoisie could prosper only if it could come out of the imperialist clutch. This need of historical development gave rise to freedom movements. The illiterate peasantry, though could not understand the historical importance of such movements, but still it longed for freedom because the feeling of being slaves of British Empire injured their ego. The period from 1935-1947 was the period of political, theoretical and cultural development in Punjab. During
this period socialist principles took roots in Punjabi consciousness. Progressive movement engulfed the Punjabi literature as well. The movement of progressive literature had come into light with socialist revolution in USSR and the world wide struggle against the Nazi aggression of Hitler. The Lukhnow Congress of Indian writers held in 1939 which was held on the pattern of International Conference of writers' in Paris in 1936, laid the guidelines of ideologically committed literature. Result of all this was that the Indian author made it a point to oppose imperialism, colonialism and feudalism, to end the religious narrowness and traditionalism, to free the women of patriarchal yoke and to side with labour in its struggle against capitalist injustice and degradation. Punjabi novelist was no isolated human being to remain unaffected from such social environment. It was this socio-historical situation that got expression in Sant Singh Sekhon and post independence novelists.

In the post independence era, the process of bourgeois revolution has started partially. The feudal land relations were affected only to the extent that was beneficial for capitalist class. In this period the bourgeoisie got hold of the national press and started to take over the artistic modes of expression. The crisis of artistic creation has started as the imported culture and paradigms of creation were being introduced in Indian society, thus gave rise to sub culturisation. The powerful walls of exploitation and temptation...
circumferenced the creative freedom. So real tough it became to live to write.

In the period of bourgeois democratic revolution, undoubtedly, it is very arduous to survive, but by alignments with revolutionary forces, they can certainly create great literature. So it is here that Punjabi novelist got in tune with mass consciousness and came out of the creak of social reformism. The fictional paradigms that were established by Bhai Veer Singh, Nanak Singh, Sant Singh Sekhon, etc. though remained unchanged to a large extent, the theoretic horizon and grasp of social reality improved greatly. The age of commitment began. The thought starved and idea-bereft literature lost ground to the ideological commitment. This enduring consciousness that has arisen out of the dehumanisation in bourgeois society first got concrete expression in Surinder Singh Narula who entered the world of Punjabi Novel with Peo Puttar in 1946. A writer entrapped in bourgeois exploitation first described the human degeneration by artistic expression. This expression is a part of the hatred that has exhibited itself deep into the mass consciousness. This kind of hatred is apparent nearly in all novels of Surinder Singh Narula. If the author is committed to welfare of masses, then whatever may be his ideological commitment, the mass consciousness finds expression in his works; and that is the case with Surinder Singh Narula.

The progressive movements of post-independence era had the most deep
rooted effect on Jaswant Singh Kanwal. Along with this, his commitment with Marxist ideology was there to guide his creative thrust but one fact remains that marxist ideology could not find proper expression in his literary exercise. He made Marxism a base for his romantic vision. The superfluous commitment with Marxism creates more problems than it solves. Mostly, it leads the author to economism which generally deoids the literature of its human element, and reality is not presented in its totality but the artistic work is subjected to pre determined frame work, hence, realism turns into hollow economism which spoils the whole purpose of literature. Undoubtedly the economic factor of human life is illuminated but the complex totality of life does not find proper expression.

So, the dominant economic factor of realism makes the realism handicapped. Moreover, Kanwal's Marxist approach keeps changing with the change of policies of communist parties of India, hence, he keeps fluctuating to either left or right. One more undercurrent that tarnishes his world-view in his Jat Chauvinism. In most of his novels the ideal character is Jat, hence his sensibility is natural to be of middle class peasantry. He synonymises the militant character of Punjabi peasantry with revolutionary element and falls into conflict with the basic thesis of Marxism of revolutionary character of proletariate. His consciousness is not universal, but is limited to rural consciousness of Punjabi peasantry, and because
of this, his works get into the paradox of theory and practice. The shortcomings of Kanwal are not his personal but is the result of immature progressivism which engaged itself more and more with propagandist literature than understanding the crux of social development.

Gurdial Singh's entrance in the world of Punjabi fiction is an event to reckon with; his first novel Marhi Da Deewa opened a new chapter in the world of novel. In his novels Gurdial Singh establishes a direct relationship with social reality and presents the tragic situation that arises out of the inner contradiction of socio-cultural reality. He does not romanticise the social reality as was the case with early novelists. Superficially viewed, it seems that Gurdial Singh is associated with no ideology, world-view etc. But, since writer is not a propagandist, hence his ideological commitment and his world-view is to be seen in his perception. Khrapchenko holds:

"A writer's outlook is concerned not only with politics but encompasses the questions as diverse as philosophy, society, history, ethics, aesthetics, the relationship between classes, an awareness of nature, the problem of understanding itself and the life of the individual in society."

Gurdial Singh is a progressive writer of a different kind, because it is not any ideological commitment with progressice
thought like Jaswant Singh Kanwal that makes him so, rather it is the essence of his fiction. His progressive attitude is evident from the way he depicts the social reality, Watt writes:

"If the novel were realistic merely because it saw life from the seamy side, it would only be an inverted romance; but in fact, it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience and not merely those suited to a particular literary perspective: the novel's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it."

Gurdial Singh does not create his novels with any theoretical prejudices. He presents the social reality perceived in a historical perspective, hence all the inner contradictions of the system are elaborated.
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