CHAPTER - II

General Perspectives on Indo-Anglian Fiction
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GENERAL PERSPECTIVES ON INDO-ANGLIAN FICTION

As a distinctive body of writing, it is necessary to trace the beginning of the Indo-Anglian literature. This kind of literature is the product of Indo-English encounter. English came to India as merchants after the Portuguese and Dutch. But after some years, they came to know the political system of India and they began to try to keep the political power in their hands. After that their aim turned to the economy of the country. It was the suitable time for them to dominate India part by part because of the gradual disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

It was after the Battle of Plassey (1757) that the East India Company became the master of Bengal. At that time the help of Pandit or Maulabi was necessary for administration. So, the officials of the Company took up steps for reviving Persian and Sanskrit for the Indians. For this purpose Calcutta Madarasa was established by Hastings in 1781 and another Sanskrit College was also established at Benaras by Jonathan Duncan in 1792. The power of the Company increased in due time and most of the Princely states of India were under the control of the Company. Soon Indians began to join in the service of the Company as clerks, translators and lower officials while the high posts were in the hands of the English. So for the Indians the knowledge of English was necessary for these jobs. At this time English had already been taught in mission schools in the South and after that similar mission schools were established in Bengal and Bombay also. Many of the leading Hindus as well as intellectuals expressed their desire
for English education. Raja Ram Mohon Roy with the help of some English Officials took a very important role in spreading English education in India. In this stream of education, Macaulay's Minute was also another strong wave. Macaulay whole heartedly tried to spread and improve English education in India. Some of the educated Indians started writing in English and this is the birth of the Indo-Anglian literature.

Like other literatures, Indian English literature comprises prose, poetry, drama, fiction, autobiography, short story, etc. In the later part of the nineteenth century novel arrived as a new literary phenomenon in India. The earlier composition of Indian English novels were inspired by the western models specially the eighteenth and nineteenth century British fiction. Before novel appeared in its true form, it was something like tales and it appeared in journals. Kylash Chunder Dutt's *A Journal of 48 hours of the Year 1945* was published in *The Calcutta literary gazette* on 6th June 1935. Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *Republic of Orissa: Annals from the pages of the Twentieth Century* may also be mentioned and it appeared in the "Saturday Evening Hurkaru" on 25th May 1845. It was from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's (1838-94) *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) that novel came in its true form and it was the real beginning of the fiction in India. *Rajmohan's wife* is the first and the only novel of Bankim Chandra to write in English.

Some of the novels published during this period were Ram Krishna Punt's *The Boy of Bengal* (London, Philadelphia 1866); Tarachand Mookerjea's *The Scorpions or Eastern Thoughts* (Allahabad, 1868); Lal Behari Day's *Gowinda Samanta, or The History of a Bengal Raiyat* (London, 1874), revised and enlarged version published under the title, *Bengal Peasant Life* (London, 1908); *Sorrow, an Indian Village Girl* by an anonymous author (Madras, 1876); Ananda Prosad Dutt's *The
Indolence (Calcutta, 1876); Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *The Young Zamindar* (London, 1883); Romesh Chunder Dutt’s (translated work into English): *The Lake of Palms: A Story of Indian Domestic Life* (London, 1902); and *The Slave Girl of Agra, an Indian Historical Romance* (London, 1909) were also translated into English. Sarath Kumar Ghosh’s *Verdict of the Gods* and *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (London, 1909) were also included among the novels of this period.

From Madras Presidency, the novelists like A. Madhaviah and T. Ramakrishna Pillai wrote novels in English. Madhaviah wrote, *Satyananda* (1909), *Mhllai Covindan* (London, 1916), *Clarinda* (Madras, 1915) *Kanda, the Pariah who overcame Caste* (Madras, 1923) and *Lt. Panju—A Modern Indian* (Madras, 1924). *Padmini* (London, 1903), and *A Dive For Death* (London, 1911) were the two novels of T. Ramakrishna Pillai.

During this period, the production of novels was mostly from Bengal and Madras. Novel production was very rare from Bombay and North India. Four novels of Sirdar Jogendra Singh were published during this time. The novels were *Nar Jahan, The Romance of an Indian Queen* (1909); *Nasrin, An Indian Medley* (1911); *Kamla* (1925) and *Kamni (sic)* (1931). These novels were historical as well as social fictions.

It was in the second decade of the twentieth century that a new series of novels began to appear on the scene. K.S. Venkataramani’s *Murugan, The Tiller* (1927), *Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932) were influenced by Gandhian movement. During this period A.S.P. Ayyar’s *Baladitya* (1930) and *Three Men of Destiny* (1939) were also published. Gandhian movement influenced the novels *-Athavar House* (1937), *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961) by Krishnaswamy Nagarajan.
The contribution of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao to Indian English literature is very great. These three writers are known as 'trio' and they wrote in their own characteristic way. Mulk Raj Anand (1905-) was born in Peshawar in a Hindu coppersmith family. In most of his novels, Anand tries to present a realistic picture of the social life. He picks up his characters from the lower classes and the oppressed people of the society and he makes them the protagonists of his novels. *Untouchable* (1935) is the first novel of Anand. In this novel, the protagonist, Bakha is a latrine-cleaner and he suffers from the course of untouchability. Anand presents us the existing caste system of India and suffering of the people in that system. His next two novels *Coochie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) are also about the oppressed people. *'Coochie'* is one of the best social realistic novels of Anand. The protagonist of this novel is Munoo, a boy from the Kangra hills. He becomes a servant, a coolie, a factory worker and a rickshaw puller for livelihood. The scene of *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) is in a tea plantation of Assam where Gangu works as a labourer. Gangu suffers both from the tyranny of capitalism and imperialism. Anand's three novels, *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940/41) and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) make trilogy of Punjabi life. In these three novels Lalu Singh's experience of life is shown. He has courage and will and he fights for his life and honour. *The Big Heart* (1945) is the last novel of Anand before Independence. Novels written after Independence are *Seven Summers* (1951), *The Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953), *The Old Woman and The Cow* (1960), *The Road* (1963), *The Death of a Hero* (1964), *Anand's Morning Face* (1970) won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1972. As a novelist, Anand stands apart from other novelists of the Indian English literature. His portrait of social realism is unsurpassed and his writing style is also quite different from other novelists.
Rashipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan (1906) was born in a Brahmin family in Madras (present day Tamil Nadu). He was brought up by his grandmother and got his first education from her. Narayan was one of the few non-Christians in the Lutheran Mission School. Next he went to C.R.C. High School. It was in the following year that Narayan got admission in the Madras Christian College High School. At this time Narayan's father was transferred to Maharaja's Collegiate High School in Mysore. So, he left the Christian College and studied in the College where one's father was the head. He graduated in 1930 from Maharaja's College. Narayan had his education entirely in South India. He is an Indian by thought and feelings though he writes in English. Narayan's first novel Swami and Friends was published in 1935. In this novel, Narayan presents a delightful account of a schoolboy named Swaminathan. Other novels were also published one after the other. The Bachelor of Arts (1937), The Dark Room (1938) and The English Teacher (1945) were the novels of pre-Independence period. Mr. Sampath (1949), The Guide (1958) which won Sahitya Academy Award in (1960), and The Painter of Signs (1976) were some post-Independence novels. In these novels, Narayan presents the various relationships among the different characters and an image of society. One can see the influence of Gandhian movement also in some of his novels.

Raja Rao, a South Indian novelist, is the youngest of the 'trio'. Unlike Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, he wrote only four novels and a collection of short stories. It was in 1930 that his collection of short stories Gauni was published in France. Beginning with Kanthapura, Raja Rao wrote his three novels - The Serpent and the Rope, The Cat and Shakespeare, and Comrade Kirillov. The story of Kanthapura is set
in a South Indian village. The wave of freedom struggle and Gandhian movement also reached in that village. The remarkable point of this novel is its narrative technique and it is said that Kanthapura is the most poetic novel written by Raja Rao. In his great novel The Serpent and The Rope (1960), the spiritual conflict of Raja Rao can be seen. The two phrases in the title "The Serpent" and "The Rope" are the symbols of 'illusion' and 'reality'. Raja Rao's concept of illusion and reality of this world is expressed in this novel. His third novel, The Cat and Shakespeare (1965), deals with the story of the two clerks, Ramakrishna Pai, the narrator of this story and Govindan Nair who "is a typical South Indian character, intellectual, poor and devoted to philosophical arguments".1 In fact, the story of The Cat and Shakespeare, "looks like a thread bare plot full of metaphysical discussions about truth, woman, life, etc..." 2 The fourth novel Comrade Kirillov (1976) comprises Kirillov's opinions on communism, the British, the War, the Indian freedom struggle, etc.

Thus Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao are known as 'trio' and hold a special position among the Indian English (fiction) writers. They are followed by other novelists who stand apart from their predecessors in technique, form and style.

Muslim novelists like Ahmed Ali, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Humayun Kabir wrote about life in Muslim households. Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi (1940), Ocean of Night (1964); Iqbalunnisa Hussain's Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household (1944); Humayun Kabir's Men and Rivers (1945) are included among the novels of this period. The


Among the novels of this period C.S. Rau's *The Confessions of a Bogus Patriot* (1923), J. Chinnadurai's *Sagirtha* (1929), Ram Narain's *Tigress of the Harem* (1930); II. Kaveribai's *Meenakshi's Memoirs - A Novel of Christian Life in South India* (1937); Shankar Ram's *The Love of Dust* (1938); D.F. Karaka's *Just Hesh* (1941), *There Lag the City* (1942), and *We Never Die* (1944); C.N. Zutshi's *Motherland* (1944); Purushottamdas Tricundas's *Living Mask* (1947) and N.S. Phadke's *Leaves in the August Wind* (1947) and *The Whirlwind* (1950) may be mentioned.

Among the post-Independence novelists Bhabani Bhattacharya is a popular one. Bhabani Bhattacharya's first novel, *So Many Hungers* (1947) is "the story of a largely man-made hunger that took place a toll of two million innocent men and women and children in Calcutta and Bengal. While the hoarders, profiteers and blacketeers plied a thundering trade, authority was apathetic, the wells of human pity seemed to have almost dried up, and only the jackals and the vultures were in vigorous and jubilant action."

His second novel *Music For Mohini* (1952) is the story of a Calcutta born Brahmin girl, Mohini a popular radio artist. She is married to Jayadev, a scholar and a writer who originates from a village, Behula. Bhabani Bhattacharya tries to show the conflict and different ideas among the characters and a picture of the clash between the old and the new, village and city. His third novel *He who Rides a Tiger* (1954), deals with the theme of the Bengal hungers. Other two novels of Bhattacharya are *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960) and *Shadow From Ladakh* (1966). His sixth novel is *A Dream in Hawaii* (1978).

Women novelists also hold a special position in the Indo-Anglian Literature. Raj Lakshmi Debi's *The Hindu Wife* or *The Enchanted Fruit* (1876) and Mrs. Krupabai Satthianadhan's *Kamala, A Story of Hindu Life* (1894) and *Saguna, A Story of Native Christian Life* (1895) are popular early novels by women novelists. Two novels of Mrs. Ghoshal (Swarnakumari Debi) were translated into English as *An Unfinished Song* (1913) and *The Fatal Garland* (1915). She is probably the first woman novelist in Bengali.

It was in the post-Independence period that women novelists began to produce remarkable novels which enrich Indian fiction in English. Among the novelists of this period, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala may be named. *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) is the first novel of Kamala Markandaya. In this novel, the writer writes about fear, hunger and despair which are the companions of the poor peasant. Markandaya's next novel, *Some Inner Fury* (1957) is the story of a love affair between a middle class Indian woman and an Englishman named Richard. But political whirlwind had torn the loves apart and Richard falls a victim to mob fury. In this novel, Markandaya presents more sophisticated characters and a more complex modern society as contrast to *Nectar in a Sieve*. The third novel of Kamala Markandaya is *A Silence of Desire* (1961). In this novel she takes us into the realm of spiritual realities. Conflict of ideas arises between Dandekar, a government servant and his wife Sarojini when she goes to the Swamy for healing a tumour. This novel is perhaps Kamala Markandaya's most ambitious novel. There is continuation of the Swami figure in her fourth novel *Possession* (1963) but the character of the Swami is different in it. In this world, there is the desire to possess and also the
constant fear of losing. The novel is built round a spiritual truth "Possessions." Kamala Markandaya's two remaining novels are *A Handful of Rice* (1966) and *The Coffer Dams* (1969). In *A Handful of Rice*, Ravi, who comes from village, is torn between the old tradition and the new immorality. The character of Ravi is not a literary character but he is a real character, not different from us. Kamala Markandaya presents a sense of universality in this novel. The story of the novel *The Coffer Dams* (1969) is about the construction of a dam across a South Indian river. It is patterned by Clinton and Mackendrick. They are assisted by Indian engineers like Krishnan and local technicians and labourers. "The novel as a whole is a deeply disturbing protest against the onslaught of modern technological ruthlessness against the simplicity and humanity of an earlier order of life".4


the Indian background. Giving an estimate of her novel H.M. Williams writes: "Her novels deftly ring the changes on the same themes, tracing numerous permutations on family conflicts, never offering glib solutions. She maintains a sympathetic but ironical tone, seeing Indian social problems objectively and coolly."5

Among women novelists Nayantara Sahgal (1927-) is regarded as a writer of political novel. Her five novels are: A Time To be Happy (1958), This Time of Morning (1968), Storm in Chandigarh (1969), The Day in Shadow (1971) and A Situation in New Delhi (1977). Unlike Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai’s (1937-) novels are in search of interior mind of the individual. She is not interested in political and social realities. Her novels are Cry, the Peacock (1963), Voices in the City (1965), Bye-bye Blackbird (1971), Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975), Fire On the Mountain (1977), Clear Light of Day (1980).

The rest of the women novelists wrote only one or two novels. Santha Rama Rau’s two novels are Remember the House (1956) and The Adventuress (1970). Minari (1967), Two Sisters (1973), The Inner Door (1976), The Girls from Overseas (1979) are the novels of Nergis Dalal. Historical novels are also produced during this period by women novelists. Vimala Raina’s Ambapali (1962) and Manorama Modak’s Single in the Wheel (1978) may be mentioned. The Little Black Box (1955) is the only novel of Shakuntala Shrinagesh. It is an experiment in psychological fiction. Venu Chitale also wrote In Transit (1950). Zeenuth Futchally also wrote Zohra (1951). Attiah Hosain also published Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961). Besides this, Perin Bharucha also published The Fire Worshippers (1968) dealing with Parsi life.

Among the novels of the nineteen fifties and sixties, Lotika Ghose's *White Dawns of Awakening* (1950), Mrinalini Sarabhai's *This Alone is True* (1952), Bani Ray's *Srilata and Sampa* (1953), Sally Athogia's *Gold in the Dust* (1958), Tapatí Mookerjee's *Murder Needs a Staircase* (1962) and *Six Faces of Eve* (1963); Padmāni Sengupta's *Red Hibiscus* (1962); Muriel Wasi's *Too High For Rivalry* (1967); Hilda Raj's *The House of Ramiah* (1967); Sita Ratnammal's *Beyond the Jungle* (1968) and Meenakshi Puri's *Pay on the First* (1968) may be mentioned. Veena Paintal published *Midnight Woman* (1979) after publishing her *Serenity in Storm* (1966) which is a pot-boiler.

During the nineteen seventies some novels were also published by women novelists. The novels produced during this period are Raji Narasimhan's *The Heart of Standing is you cannot fly* (1973) and *Forever Free* (1979); Bharati Mukherjee's *Tiger's Daughter* (1973) and *Wife* (1976); Veena Nagpal's *Karmayogi* (1974); Shanta Rameswar Rao's *Children of God* (1976); Kamala Das's *Alphabet of Lust* (1976); Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977); Shourí Daniel's *The Salt Doll* (1977); Jyoti Jafa's *Kurjaban* (1978); Uma Vasudeva's *The Song of Anasuya* (1978) and Anita Kumar's *The Night of the Seven Dawns* (1979).


Among novels published during the nineteen seventies may be mentioned B.K. Karanjia's *More of an Indian* (1970); Leslie de Noronha's *The Mango and the Tamarind Tree* (1970); V.K. Gokak's *Varahari: Prophet of India* (1972); Tumeri Murari's *The Marriage* (1972); Reginald and Jamila Massey's *The Immigrants* (1973); Sasthi Brata's *She and He* (1973); Saros Cowasjee's *Goodbye to Elsa* (1975); A. Bhaskar Rao's *The Secret* (1978); S.S. Dhami's *Maluca* (1978); K.M. Trishanku's *Onion Peel* (1973); Bunney Reuben's *You, I and Her* (1973); Raj Gill's *The Rape* (1974), *The Golden Dawn* (1974) and *The Infidel* (1979); D.R. Manekar's *No, My Son, Never* (1974); Nishi Khanolkar's *Dvasuparna* (1976); B.S. Gidwani's *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* (1976); Rohit Handa's *Comrade Sahib* (1977); H.S. Gill's *Ashes and Petals* (1977); Rattan Mann's *Snow with the Storm* (1978) and *Holier Than Thou* (1978) by Sudhakar Bhat; Kasthuri Sreenivasan's *Service with a Smile* (1978); Vikram Kapur's *The Traumatic Bite* (1978); Shiv K.Kumar's *The Bone's Prayer* (1978). Nerendrapal Singh also published *Trapped* (1979). Besides the above novelists, a host of other young novelists are also working on different themes.