INTRODUCTION

Indian Literature began far back with the Vedas and the Upanishads which were written in Sanskrit. It is difficult to assign definite dates to them. Ancient India to its reputation has a large body of drama, much lyric and didactic poetry, and numerous works scientific and philosophical. It is held a place in India similar to that occupied by Latin in Medieval Europe.

Many regional dialects derived from Sanskrit, formed as centres of various literary forms of local colour. The previous literature was written on the Hindu themes and commingled with Indian temperament. With the advent of the foreigners a new spirit of ardent fervor entered in the life and literature of Indians.

When we speak of Indo-Anglian literature we refer to the arrival of the English in 1600 AD. The East India Company was founded to promote their trade. Primarily they established their settlements at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. They gradually extended their activities to all fields such as warfare and administration. Within one hundred and fifty years of its establishment, The East India Company emerged as a powerful political force administering vast territories.

The British advent in India saw the export of wealth from India which turned into an uninterrupted economic drain in the nation. Raja Ram Mohan Roy demanded that money to be utilized for imparting a liberal and enlightened system of instruction through the means of English. In 1815 he set up a society named Arya Samaj, the first social organization in India of a modern type patterned on Europe Models. The social organizations of the time founded institutions for imparting modern education throughout India. Their curriculum imbibed the good points of western education.
During this period, Macaulay played a great role in the advent of English education in India. His ‘Minute on Education’ changed the face of education system in India. It created a class of persons “Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, words and intellect.’

Education served as an instrument in disclosing the secrets of western nationalism and democratic ideas to Indians. Indians learnt the need of integrity in the nation. They got a new spirit in the struggle for national liberation. The new system of education brought a section of the intelligentsia into contact with the ideas and philosophies preached by Milton, Shelley, Byron, Mill, Rousseau, Mazzini and Garibaldi.

In 1833 the Scottish and English Christian Missionaries arrived in India. They taught English besides preaching Christianity. Gradually English became the medium of instruction in educational institutions and reached into official correspondence of the nation. Western education polished the wisdom of Young intellectuals. It helped them to think about the greatness of their age-old culture and simultaneously it tempted them to question the deep rooted orthodox views.

There was another tendency in the intellectual to master the English language. It developed patriotic feelings in them. They started to express their patriotism through their works. They preferred English as a path for their literary exploration. So there generated a new form in the field of Literature and was recognized as Indo Anglian Literature.

The first stage is known as Renaissance. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered to be the first man of Renaissance. K.R.S. Iyengar says,

“Ram Mohan Roy mastered the English language, and wrote and spoke forceful English years before Macaulay wrote his minute.”

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Next to Ram Mohan Roy, Indo-Anglian Literature covered immense variety of writers. In the beginning the writers of 1850-1900, tried out the new found possibilities of feeling, form and expression. They were influenced by the Romantics, and the Victorians (of England). (They projected landscapes, moods, fancies and dreams). The writers of the next generation of 1900 – ’47, were compulsive nationalists. They sought a more radical assurance of their sense of origins and their sense of origins and their sense of destiny.

The writers of the third generation belonged to Post-Independence period in India. The writers of the generation were influenced by the contemporary situations which occurred in the nation of Post Independence and they were also influenced by existentialism, positivism, phenomenology, surrealism and the new Aesthetics.

The modern generation tried to experiment in an effort to achieve modernity. Modern techniques derived from the film industry and are being used. The experimental approach, the quest for originality and newness and its stress on individuality led to the fantastic.

The modern form of the novel appeared in the latter half of the nineteenth century when the western impact on Indian’s cultural front had resulted in the development of formal written prose and fiction. In the 20th century, many novels had been written in English and in the regional languages. Bengal became the centre for Indo-Anglian fiction in the beginning, later novels in English were written in Madras, Bombay and in the southern parts of India.

Bankim Chunder Chatterji is considered to be the first Indo-Anglian novelist. His first work Raj Mohan’s Wife published in 1864. It was followed next year by Durgesh Nandini in Bengali which appeared in English translation in 1890. Later on Kapal Kundala, Vishvarasha, Anandmath, Devi
Chaudharni appeared. Romance was his forte but he was also famous as a writer of comedy and humour, he was also the master of historical novel. In the words of K.R.S. Iyengar:

“In his lifetime Bankim became the literary dictator of fiction in Renaissance Bengal. He was the master of the Romantic as well as Historical Novels.”

After Bankim, Rajlakshmi Devi’s Hindu wife was published in 1876. Toru Dutt wrote Bianka in 1878. Krishna Lahari wrote her novel Roshanara 1881 and other Bengali novelists also wrote other novels. Rabindranath Tagore occupies the next place after Bankim. He built a bridge between the East and the West through his famous works. He wrote eight novels. His works are Namka Dubi (1905) which appeared as The Wreck, Gora (1910), The Home and the Word (1916). His novels are remarkable from every point of view. His claim in Bengali fiction is most pre-dominant. His novels have cultural, political and social atmosphere. He succeeded in presenting before us a microscopic picture of the later nineteenth century culture. Tagore explained the positive ideas in an environment of rationality, progressive philosophy and internationalism.

He brought political awareness in his readers. As a prophet he incarnated the spirit of India. He resembled Bankim in his themes and character sketch. His Binodini is the story of a young widow. Tagore poured his modernistic views against the deep-rooted orthodox customs in the Hindu society. Binodiniiis presented as the eternal famine; she is similar to Rohini, a Bankim’s heroine. There is a broader approach to the actualities of life and forthrightness in its defiance of convention. In his ‘Yoga yogi’ he molded an unforgettable portrait an unforgettable portrait of Kumudini an angel wedded to a satyr; she walks out of her husband’s house and is driven to return to him (husband) after all, hoping for the best.
The next novelist with the similar artistic characteristics of Bankim and Tagore is Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (1876 – 1938). Srikantha, Girhadha, Pather Dabi, Bipradas, and Seshprasna are his famous works. He identified himself with the down and outs. The sweat and the tears of the lower middle and the have-not classes are common portrayals in his novels. K.R.S. Iynegar says:

“Of Sarat Chandra it could be said that he was the complete novelist who used his art simultaneously as a camera, as a surgeon’s knife and also as a Chalice of hope.”

K.R.S. Iyengar gave equal place to Sarat Chandra along with Bankim and Tagore and called them ‘Triune glory’. There were some other outstanding novelists – Tarasankar Bandhyopadhyaya, Bibhuti Bhushan Bandhyopadhyaya, Manik Bandhyopadhyaya, Naini Bhaumik, Gajendrakumar Mitra, Manoj Basu, who served in the field and made their literary pursuits both in English and Bengali. In this way the Bengali intellectuals played a significant role in Indo-Anglian fiction and stood in the first row of Indo-Anglian fiction. Prof. K.R.S. Iyengar says:

“The vicissitudes of the Bengali Novel foreshadow more or less the vicissitudes of the Novel in India. The western breeze blows, sometimes directly, and sometimes – and more significantly – indirectly, its velocity chastened in the ample spaces of Bengal.”

Indian English novel has followed the footsteps of the Bengali Novel. There are considerable changes and developments in its gradual process of growth from its beginning till today. Its development can be traced from imitative to realistic and sociological to psychological stage.

The two world wars influenced the Indian English novel significantly; they turned it from the idealistic to the realistic. The novelists made deliberate
efforts to depict the distress of downtrodden classes, portraying India as she really was. They wrote in this period with the matter primarily concerned with the contemporary social milieu. There was another important impact of Gandhian ethos on it. The ordeal of the freedom-struggle, East-West relationship, the communal problem and the plight of the untouchables and the poor were the different important themes that can be seen in the novels produced during the war period.

The famous ‘trio’ – Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand played a key role in the growth of Indian English Novel. The world recognized contemporaries worked on different themes by putting in unmatched individual efforts. Mulk Raj Anand is a champion of downtrodden people. He portrays the problems of the lower classes of society. He is the humanist as well as the realist. Outcaste peasants, sepoys, common people and their sufferings are various main aspects in his novels. Untouchable, Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud are his famous works. He is sensitive to the existence of social evils in the society. He creates an awareness of the dehumanizing social evils in the readers and activated them for the removal of the evils. He believes in man but not in institution.

His protagonists belong to the class of the suffering. His novels reveal the deep study of psychology and emotions of common human beings. He gives less importance to religion but he stimulates consciousness. He presents different strata of human experience in his fiction. Coolie and Untouchable have acquired a great fame to Anand. In Coolie, the protagonist Munoo, an orphan boy from the Kangra Hills, sets out in search of livelihood. He works as a labourer at different places where he is exposed to the hard realities. The sufferings of the hero, Munoo through life and death indirectly universalizes the social evils like class conflict and communal riots etc.
In Untouchable, the protagonist Bakha gets the full impact of caste cruelty on his adolescent mind. Strategical character sketch, comprehension and narration prove Anand as a naturalistic novelist. Prof. K.R.S. Iyengar says about Mulk Raj Anand thus:

“As a writer, Anand is often undistinguished, and seems to be too much in hurry; but the vitality of his creations, the variegated richness of his total comprehension, and the purposive energy of his narrative carries all before them. It is also worthy of mention that Anand is a ‘committed’ writer.”

R.K. Narayan is a celebrated novelist from South India. He is a humorist and a good story teller with an eye for the ludicrous aspects of life. His character sketch has a touch of realism. He deals in trivial things, day-to-day occurrences and little themes. He is an eminent novelist with a sound narrative technique.

*Swami And His Friends, Bachelor of Arts, The Dark Room, The English Teacher, The Financial Expert, Waiting for the Mahatma, The Guide, and My Dateless Diary* are his famous works. His first novel *Swami and His Friends* is a curious mixture of sentiment and in Bachelor of Arts Narayan shows the hurdles caused to lovers by rigid caste system and absurd beliefs in horoscopes. *Dark Room* is a novel, that depicts a study of domestic incompatibility. *Waiting for the Mahatma* is a novel, which keeps Mahatma Gandhi in the background and makes his presence felt. The remaining novels take the readers into an exotic world of half-hearted dreamers, artists, financiers, speculators, eccentrics, film stars and Sanyasis.

R.K. Narayan is a detached observer of life. There is no moral preaching in his novels. A mixture of comedy and seriousness can be found in his works. In words of K.R.S. Iyengar:
“At his best (as in ‘The English Teacher’), he can present smiles and tears together, smiling through the tears in things and glimpsing the rainbow magnificence of life.”

The third man in the ‘trio’ is Raja Rao. Raja Rao is a consummate literary artist. He has been influenced greatly by Mahatma Gandhi. His works reveal the impact of both the Western and the Eastern cultures on him. He lived for some time in France. The pulls and pushes of the past traditions are visible in his literary works.

*Kantapura* (938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), are his famous works. *The Serpent and the Rope* is his finest evocation. It is written in the autobiographical mode. It explains the spiritual journey of a South Indian Brahmin, Rama Swami, and the principal protagonist. The novel recounts the life of a person brought up in the traditional Brahminical milieu.

There is a gradual evolution of maturity in his narration from simplicity to metaphysical speculations. We find intellectual and artistic growth in his later works.

Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandeya, Nayanatara Shegal, Balachaura Rajan, Khushwant Singh, Arun Joshi and Anita Desai come under the generation of Post Independence writers.

Bhabani Bhattacharya is the successor to Bankim, Tagore and Sarat for the Bengali themes. But he deviates from their Romanticism to realism. As in *Anand* we find outcastes, peasants, and sufferings of common people in his novels. The main themes in his novels are hunger, freedom struggle and nationalism. He describes vividly the sufferings of the poor, an impeachment of man’s inhuman behavior towards fellow human beings. *So Many Hungers,*
Music for Mohini, He Who Rides a Tiger, A Goddess Named Gold and Shadow from Ladakh, a Dream in Hawaii are his popular novels. Bengal famine and Freedom Struggle become the common themes in all his novels. He touches every common and delicate point behind poverty and shows the facts and causes of poverty. He also mentions the remedies through analysis. Freedom struggle, Gandhian principles move side by side in his novels.

Bhattacharya nowhere supports orthodox customs in Indian Culture. As a scholar and modernist he protests against the evils in society. He honours the glorious past but he welcomes the western thought for the progress of the nation.

His first novel, So Many Hungers (1947) unfolds the story of a largely man-made hunger that took a toll of two million innocent men, women and children in Bengal. Bhattacharya paints the naked horror of famine. In his second novel Music for Mohini, Bhattacharya tells the story of a Calcutta born Brahmin girl, Mohini, a popular radio artiste, who is married to Jaydev, a scholar and a writer with his roots in his village Behula. The novel takes us into the depths of the heart of an Indian woman who feels and suffers a lot to adapt to her husband’s house. It reveals Bhattacharya’s study of a woman’s psychology.

His third novel He Who Rides a Tiger is the story of an individual who takes retaliation upon society which acts ruthlessly against him. Bhattacharya’s fourth novel, A Goddess Named Gold a story of struggle between a group of women, called Cow House Five and Seth Samsundarji who is greedy, selfish and cunning and, works for money and power. The group fights against the Seth for the sake of the village.

The fifth novel of Bhattacharya, Shadow from Ladakh has been woven with the theme of the tragic period of 1962, in India which was facing a near
possible war from Ladakh, China. The core of the novel deals with the ultimate triumph of the condition principles.

The sixth novel of Bhattacharya, *A Dream in Hawaii* deals with the tensions and pretensions of the modern world and presents an interesting account of East West encounter with special emphasis on the popularity of Eastern Culture in America and other countries of the West.

The very next novelist after Bhabani Bhattacharya is Mr. Manohar Malgonkar. He has published four novels. His first novel *Distant Drums* is an attempt to present life of army during the transitional period between the last part of the British Regime and the early years of Congress rule. *Combat of Shadows* published in 1962, is based on the love affairs of Henry Winton Ruby and Jean. Malgonkar chose Assam tea gardens and many conflicting forces like Tea Pythons, Love, Passion and Sportmanship. *A Bend In The Ganges* published in 1964 gives an account of the sequential events starting with the ceremonial burning of foreign cloth and ends with the burning of the Indian cities due to the clash between Hindus and Muslims.

Kushwant Singh is another novelist with the themes of Quit India Movement, Indo-Pakistan relations and Sikh Family system. His *Train to Pakistan* projects with the pitiless precision, a picture of bestial horrors enacted on the Indo-Pakistan border region during the terror haunted days of August, 1947. ‘I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale’ concentrates on the inner tensions and external movements of a well-to-do Sikh family in Punjab during the period of Quit India Movement.

Arun Joshi and Balachandra Rajan are the other outstanding writers with the modern themes. Arun Joshi’s primary concern in his novels is the predicament of modern man. His protagonists travel in futile efforts. His novel *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) has got him the ‘Sahitya Akademi Award’.
Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Santa Rama Rao, Miss Attia Hussain and Ruth Prawar Jhabvala are the galaxy of prominent women writers besides men writers in Indo-Anglian literature. They have written on Indian themes and proved themselves as eminent as the English women writers like Jane Austen, George Eliot, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf.

Kamala Markandeya is the most outstanding Indo-Anglian novelist and has about six novels to her credit. Her ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ is the most widely read and has been for many years on the list of compulsory reading in departments of Asian studies. She follows a unique narrative technique and structures in her novels which exhibit her artistic skill and poetic brilliance.

Ruth Prawar Jhabvala is a unique and a very lively writer. This foreign bred and Indian wed woman writer brings a different kind of discipline and an outlook to bear on the contemporary situation in urban India. Mrs. Jhabvala, with an unbiased mind and a distinct sensibility, presents unique situations to her readers in her ‘To Whom She Will’ (1955) ‘The Nature Of Passion’ (1960), ‘Get Ready For Battle’ (1962), and ‘A Backward Place’ (1965).

Her fiction delights in clashes between traditional codes of conduct, and modern aspirations. She brings a different kind of discipline and outlook to bear on the contemporary situation in urban India.

Anita Desai occupies a distinguished place among the Indo-Anglian writers. She has followed the stream of consciousness technique and has enriched it by introducing Indian awareness and attitude into this modern technique. Her novels, Cry The Peacock (1963), Voices In The City (1965), are revelations of the inner climate, grappling with thoughts, emotions and
feelings. She has explored the inner as well as the outer climate and dispersed the narration in the flow of several sensibilities. Prof. K.R.S. Iyengar says:

“Her forte is the exploration of sensibility – the particular kind of modern Indian sensibility that is ill at ease among the barbarians and the philistines, the anarchists and the moralists.”

Sashi Despande is one novelist who is raising like a star among the women novelists of India. Her women characters are educated, self-conscious, and sensitive. Their revolt against the rigid social and family setup comes out of necessity. Deshpande has subtly and accurately described the silence which has been thrust on Indian women for centuries in her novels *The Dark Holds No Terror*, *That Long Silence* and *A Matter of Time*.

Nayanatara Sehgal’s works seem to have political involvement and advocate the social customs and traditions of India. Her novel *This Time of Morning* contains the details of the power politics that are going on within the corridors of the parliament and the drawing rooms of the powerful politicians. Her storm in Chandigarh deals with the problems of partition in Punjab. Her women are liberal and crave to establish their individuality.

The field of Indo-Anglian fiction is a rich soil where several resourceful women writers are likely to flourish with competence and confidence.

Indian English novel began with a variety of historical fiction in the novels of Bankim. Then, the downtrodden and outclassed people became the subject matter of the Indian novel. In the next stage the struggle for independence became one unifying force in the two decades preceding the actual achievement of political freedom. In the further stage (1950-1960) the shift of interest from the public to private; from the society to the individual can be observed. Their main intention is ‘Man’ but not society.
The Theme of the East-West Encounter in the tradition of Indo-Anglian fiction:

India had a long period of association with the European races of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English. They had left lasting effects on Indian life and society. As a result of the impact of the new civilization old order of life in India broke up. The Western influence helped in widening the horizons of the Indian mind and giving it a universal direction. The British brought India under one rule, supplied it with an administrative system, laid railways, constructed bridges, canals and roads and established a country-wide postal system.

The introduction of English as the official language and medium of instruction gave the Indians access to English literature and Western concepts and ideas like equality of all before law and freedom of speech. Expansion of the means of communication brought people together and the village gradually lost its insular quality. Irrigation lessened the dependence of men on nature. The damage caused by natural calamities like famine and flood had lesser effects, as with improved communication facilities, relief could be offered from other places.

The greatest change in Indian society, that of opening the Indian mind to the enlightened thought of the nineteenth century Europe and thereby starting the East-West dialogue, was made possible through the introduction of the English system of education. Under the new policy education was made available to all irrespective of caste and religion. This along with the legal system, helped to level down the differences among people. Earlier, caste rules did not permit education to the low-born along with the higher castes. The new policy envisaged a class of Indians thorough Westernized, except in colour, spreading Western thought and knowledge in India. But contrary to the expectations of the policy makers the newly educated class tried to revalue and enrich their understanding of the native tradition and culture in the light of the new learning.
The study of English language and the treasures it contained enabled Indians to compare their own culture and civilization with those of the other nations and thereby attempt a review and translation of values. The flow of the ideas of Humanism, Liberalism and Individualism and an awareness of the cultural histories of other nations made them look at the existing order of things in a fresh perspective. The contact with the rationalistic west kindled a spirit of equality. The western educated people started to think in a modern way. They denied the old practices. They started to question the validity of age old practices. They began to fight for social reformation and abolition of cruel practices like Sati and child marriage.

The pattern of Indian economy underwent a revolutionary change, as there was a severe competition from the industrially and technologically developed West. Handicrafts and cottage industries suffered a decline and the artisan left his village in search of livelihood. This uprooting upset his values and ways of life. Caste, community and village no longer offered any real support to the individual in the new circumstances. The migration of individuals from place to place caused the disintegration of the joint family. Education was available to all. It sent men in search of better employment opportunities from the village to the town, adding its share to the splitting up of the joint family.

Family ties, traditional loyalties and relationships weakened with the disintegration of the joint family system. Attitude to social institutions like marriage and observance of festivals also underwent a change. The concept of love came to occupy the minds of the westernized Indians and marriage came to be considered an individual affair and no more a concern of the family, endowed with a certain religious sanctity. Personal fulfillment vied with family welfare and gained the upper hand. Divorce came to India along with the British legal system. Indians who were not deeply rooted in tradition lost their moorings by being exposed to the new culture.
There was an imitation of the west in habits like dress, food and social behavior. Caste based dining came to be considered a vestige of backwardness. Belief in stars and astrology lessened and people tended to be more pragmatic, laying greater store by individual initiative than by predestination. These changes naturally made India something different from what it was before the arrival of the British. The way the Indian society reacted to and absorbed the forces of change speaks of its inherent strength and resilience. Another reason for the dichotomy between India and Britain is that the English as a race did not mix with the natives like the Moguls before. They remained aloof as an expatriate community. Improved means of communication and facilities like furlough helped them to maintain their segregationist attitude. As a result, not much of sympathy developed in most of them towards the natives.

Their nineteenth century form of colonization, which aimed at the exploitation of the colony and involved no responsibility for its development, also accounts for the situation. They showed racial superiority and a lack of faith in the natives. The average Englishman’s estimate of the Indians was so low that anything like an understanding on the personal level was almost impossible. The benefits of science and technology turned Indians towards Western civilization and there was an increasing mechanization and industrialization in the country.

Man came to depend less and less on nature, and science helped him to control it and make it subserve his ends. These winds of change and forces of transformation naturally find their expression in literature produced in a particular period and reflect not only the progress and development of the society but also its degeneration and decay, even like the English novel which had its growth in the eighteenth century.

The east-west political encounter in India affected the personal, social and cultural life of Indians to a degree unknown before. In Indo-Anglian
novel, as well as in novels in the vernacular, it figures as one of the major themes. It gets particularly highlighted in Indo-Anglian novel by virtue of the use of English to represent the Indian sensibility. The Indo-Anglian novel passed through different phases of development during the course of a hundred years, before it reached the stage of artistic perfection in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

The early novels belong to the latter half of the nineteenth century and are mostly historical in content. To the second phase belong works, which deal with the social and political realism of contemporary India. Critics like K.R.S.Iyengar, Meenakshi Mukherjee, C.P.Verghese, S.C.Harrex and others are of opinion that the genuine Indo-Anglian novel, with an artistic self-image, has its beginnings in the 1930 s, when the Big three, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao started their careers.

It is of interest to note that the East-West theme figures preeminently in the Indo-Anglian novel in all the three stages of its evolution. In the course of the century the theme gained in depth of the scope, and evolved from the depiction of the physical and social aspects to the treatment of psychological and spiritual dimensions. The early novels dealt with history in a romantic way, glorifying the past and boosting up the morale of the nation in the face of a political invasion which threatened to involve a cultural conquest. The framework of history was useful for this purpose.

The first historical romances that awakened the national conscience were traditions of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Bengali novels. His novels helped to mobilize public opinion against the alien rule. Though the East-West conflict does not directly figure in these novels, and though the themes are drawn from remote history, the real intention of the novelist was to bring about the resurgence of the national spirit and uphold the native culture and tradition against the Western attack.
During this time some novelists attempted to fictionalize the enlightened concepts of the west as beneficial to the caste ridden, tradition-bound society of the vast Indian subcontinent. And the novels showed a degree of awareness that had been experienced by the responsive members of society in relation to a social evil. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Durgesh Nandini, Anandamath, Devi Chaudhuranid* helped to mobilize public opinion against the alien rule. *The Prince of Destiny* (1909) by Sarat Kumar Ghosh is one of the earliest novels to have westerners as characters. Bharat, a young Indian Prince, comes under the influence of the west through his education in England. He receives the benefits of the enlightened views of the West and its culture. He fails in love with Nora an English girl. His contact with Nora and the liberal-minded Lord Melnor widens his outlook on life. Thus the novel shows in the personality of the hero, the blend of the better of the two cultures.

K.K.Sinha’s *The Star of Sikri* (1893) treats the theme of arranged marriages fictionally, and laments the denial of freedom to girls in choosing their life-partners. The novel shows the revolt of a girl against her family and custom to an unprecedented degree. His act of revolt against tradition can be attributed to the wind of individualism that blew from the West. *Ratna Bai* (1895) by Shevante Bai Nikambe portrays the social prejudice against the education of women, as well as the benefits of education to them. Ramesh Chandra Dutt’s *The Lake of Palm* (1902) (translated into English from Bengali) while portraying the social life of contemporary Bengal, goes a step further in social reform as it ends with the re-marriage of the young widow Sudha.

*Thillai Govindan* (1912) by A.Madhavaiah deals with the theme of social reform. The English system of education opened before the eyes of the youth a treasure of knowledge. As a result of this exposure to a new culture and its practices through study the views of youth regarding religion and ritual and tradition under went a tremendous change. Govindan expresses a desire to see his bride before marriage and later wishes to educate his wife. This comes
as a shock to the others who are orthodox. Govindan is a reformist and wishes that his widowed sister should be re-married well.

Traits of westernization like growing a crop of hair, or sprouting a moustache or not shaving the head of the widowed sister, or in an open cart, or making her wear shoes or use the umbrella are considered cheap western imitations in the public view. Anyone who indulges in all these practices or some of them is treated as one lacking in social decorum. The novel is significant in so far as it projects the individual in clash with blind and meaningless traditions which keep women, half of the land’s population, without education and individuality. Apart from its place in literature for a convincing portrayal of the social scene, the novel is also a valuable document to the students of social history. Raj Laxmi Devi’s *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Toru Dutt’s *Bianca* (1878) Kali Krishna Lahiri’s *Roshanare* (1881), H.Dutt’s *Bijoy Chand* (1888) etc., are some of the other novels which belong the early period and which are now of little more than an antiquarian interest.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, East-West encounter became the major pre-occupations of the Indo-Anglian novelists. Over this period spreads the career of Rabindranath Tagore as a novelist. Those were the days of the Indian Renaissance- the days of conflict between traditional ways of life and the new – a meeting of the East and the West. Tagore’s novel *Binodini* (1902) treats the theme of the plight of widows. He highlights the problems of widows in this novel and leaves them unanswered. He allows his characters to reveal themselves psychologically rather than supply ready-made solutions to their problems. In *Gora* (1923) Tagore fictionalizes the fusion of the East and the West in the personality of Gora apart from projecting the spirit of nationalism in all its grandeur, which is in its turn a reaction of the East towards the West.
V.V. Chintamani’s *Vedantam* (1928) describes the results of a clash between cultures. The novel portrays the dichotomy between tradition and modernity in a South Indian Brahmin family. *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) by K.S. Venkataramani deals with the theme of education and racial differences apart from its main theme of the attachment of the ryots to his land. One can see the social and political realities of the time in the country.

The East-West encounter, which is one of the major concerns of the early Indo-Anglian novelists, remains so in the later period also as,

“The impact of the west created certain cultural problems and crisis in values in all parts of India though not at all levels of society, and as such is a theme of all India significance”.  

In the novels written during the past fifty years, the East and the West no longer figure as mere individuals, belonging to different worlds; the subtle and continuing ramifications of the clash between two value systems and ways of life engage the attention of novelists. This is how one finds, in the recent Indo-Anglian novel, a trend in the direction of depicting problems of psychological disturbance and psychic malaise, in which the individual is torn between conflicting codes of conduct and goals of life.

Thus the encounter now takes the form of,

“cultural shocks and contrasts, Hindu metaphysics and western pragmatism, racial tension and colonial conflict, European and Indian expatriates, the ambiguity of identity, the Anglo-Indian dilemma, the readjustment problems of the England-returned, the quest for inter-cultural understanding, different concepts of freedom and happiness, the effects of western values on Indian relations and codes”.  

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The Indo-Anglian novel became more realistic and less romantic during the 1930’s, and in the hands of a writer like Mulk Raj Anand, it became a portrayal of the Indian society, its oppressed and down-trodden waifs. His early novels, which are his best, expose inequities suffered by the lower castes and classes in society, who are the victims of socio-economic forces like the caste system and the imperialistic capitalism. Anand’s *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)* deals with the exploitation of the natives in the tea plantation areas of Assam. In each plantation area of a few hundred acres, there used to be a white man subjugating the Indians, including the intellectual Bengalis. In its nature and extent the exploitation in these plantations is an example of man’s agonizing inhumanity to man. Craft Cooke the manager, and Reggie Hunt, his overseer stand for the white exploiters.

The coolies are lured to work in the Tea Estate on false promises and Gangu is one of them. He joins the plantation with his daughter Leila and wife Sajani, only to lose the latter in an epidemic of cholera. The coolies there are the overworked, underpaid victims of graft, usury and extortion, ruthlessly exploited by Indian foremen and the assistant manager Reggie Hunt. Their dwellings are primitive and the surroundings insanitary. The cruel treatment meted out to the workers leads to a peaceful demonstration by the labourers, which is branded as a rebellion against the British Management.

Reggie Hunt combines in himself the qualities of physical and material exploitation of the old Sahib (of the Skeffington Coffee Estate in *Kantapura*) and the alcoholic, womanizing habits of the New Sahib. He is one of the most unsympathetic and sadistic characters in Anand. His bullying brutality is symptomatic of his deep-seated fear of India and Indians and his failure in dealing with them. He is obsessed with a sense of power which he can wield as a Whiteman over the natives. Gangu meets with death at the hands of Hunt, in his attempt to prevent him from raping his daughter Leila. The physical, material and moral exploitation of the life of the natives reaches its climax.
when Reggi gets acquitted of the charge of murder by the English jury. Anand’s novel was banned by the British Government which must have felt that the book preached sedition. The Indo-Anglian novel has been fashioned, for the first time, as an instrument of social reform by Anand.

The novels dealing with the fortunes of princely states in India under the British depict yet another interesting aspect of East-West theme. The British policy of maintaining the princely states was the direct result of the mutiny in 1857, which revealed to them the necessity of governing through princes. Anand’s *Private life of an Indian Prince* (1953), Malgonkar’s *The Prince* and Jhabvala’s *Heat and Dust* (1975) present the life pattern of princes and the power and influence exercised by the British over them.

Malgonkar’s *The Prince* and Anand’s *Private life of an Indian Prince* (1953), portray their protagonists as men full of the peculiar frailties and prejudices of the princely class. Both Maharaja Hiroji (The Princes) and Ashok Kumar are ignorant of the actual occurrences outside their purview and entertain false pride in their divine origin and birth-right as princes. They are victims of women and drink, which they consider their prerogative. The Maharajas spend their time, energy and money in pleasing their British superiors by arranging tiger hunts and duck shoots whenever a viceroy or a resident asks for them.

Balachandra Rajan’s first novel *The Dark Dancer* (1959) is studied by many critics as highlighting the East-West encounter in the character of its hero Krishnan, but here it is studied as a document that depicts the freedom struggle and the personal life of the hero. Krishnan, a young Brahmin, returns home from England after two years of stay at Cambridge. These two years are crucial in his life as he imbibes Western Culture and its values during the period. The exposure of Krishnan to the distinctly different cultures of the East and the West creates in him a sense of doubt, a feeling of being neither here nor
there. He involves himself in the Non-violent civil disobedience movement in an effort to achieve rapport with the teeming millions of India. His hectic trial to belong to his tradition makes him agree to an arranged marriage with Kamala. However, his two attempts fall because they are external and cannot eliminate the anguish that is within him. His participation in the non-violent procession results in a show of violence, thus destroying the aim of Krishnan as well as the concept of non-violence itself.

His distance from his native ways of life is seen in his amorous dalliance with Cynthia, his colleague at Cambridge who comes on a visit to India. His wife Kamala immerses herself in social work to forget her unhappiness. Exactly as this distance between him and his love Cynthia he craves for Kamala’s company, who is lost in rehabilitation work in the riot torn town of Santhipur, during the partition feuds. She gets killed by the knife of a Hindu fanatic while trying to save a Muslim prostitute. The death of Kamala brings a sense of realization in Krishna, who learns to synthesize the conflicting codes of life. Thus the freedom struggle and partition play an important part in shaping the personal life of Krishnan, the hero.

Manohar Malgonkar’s Combat of Shadows (1962) is another novel which throws into sharp focus the problem of inter-racial tensions. It portrays footlessness of the Anglo-Indians (Eurasians), and the degeneration of the white man in India. The background is (once again) a tea plantation area in Assam and the novel covers a period of roughly two years in the adventure-filled life of Henry Winton. He is the manager of Silent Hill Tea Estate. The story moves around Henry Winton, his wife Jean, the Anglo-Indians Ruby Miranda and Eddie Trevor, apart from the European Director of the Tea Estate, Sudden.
Winton represents the *Undeveloped Heart* of the Englishman, who fails to come to terms with the Indians and the Anglo-Indians. He is arrogant, class-conscious, colour conscious, and lacks compassion. His dealings with the native labourers in the estate make him an enemy to Jugal Kishore, the labour leader who later becomes a prominent political figure, a minister. Cockburn, the manager of another Tea Plantation in the same Tea Estate is a study in contrast to Mr. Winton. He is unconventional, compassionate, outspoken, and passionately devoted to the welfare of his workers. He maintains healthy and normal relationships with the natives on the personal and official levels and also advises Winton to have some fun with the workers. His life pattern is outside the accepted code of Sahibs and the limited isolated white community at Chinnur considers him “gone to seed”.

The novel also reveals the precariousness pervading the Anglo-Indian Community. Ruby Miranda makes, in vain of course, hectic efforts to belong to the white community. She and her mother entertain fond hopes to be admitted and absorbed into the Whiteman’s domain through marriage. Ruby places herself in the hands of Winton, disregarding the warnings of her lover Eddie Trevor, only as a step towards achieving her aim. But there are layers that separate her from Winton, who finds dissonance in her pronunciation. She is only a game for him and cannot be a life partner, which is revealed to her after his return from home leave with his namely married wife Jean.

Henry Winton is also guilty of the immoral side because he fails in his code as a hunger by leaving his Shikari Kistulal to his fate before the rogue elephant, which kills him. Winton has an instinctive dislike for Eddie Trevor, which takes the shape of hatred later as he comes to know that he is the lover of Jean, his wife. He contrives a plan to get rid of Eddie, without giving rise to any suspicion, by handing over to him his 416 rifle and faulty Cartridges for killing the rogue-elephant. The cartridge fails and Eddie is trampled upon by Tista –the Tusker. Thus Winton represents racial arrogance, dishonesty in
personal relationships and lack of compunction, to take an evil course of action for achieving his ends.

One of the early works of Anand *Coolie* (1936) highlights the discriminatory class system and shows how it reduces the self-respecting proletarian to a state of frustration and doom. In *Coolie* (1936) and *Untouchable* (1935) Anand expresses concern for the socio-economic crises. These novels excel in realism, accuracy of characterization and down-to-earth plots. In *Coolie* (1936) Anand searches for universally meaningful values. According to Anand himself,

“The problem of machine exploitation, victimhood, and unfulfilled potentiality are tackled in defense of innocence”.

In *Coolie* (1936) the subject of Anand is the Indian society, the invidious class system of the haves and have-nots which is the direct result of the British Rule and the forces released by it.

The narrative is restricted to a period of little more than one year in the life of Munoo the protagonist. It is divided into five chapters which can be equated to the five acts of a tragedy. We come across Munoo aged fourteen, an orphan whose parents are ruined by the system of usury and ruthlessness of land lords. Thus his sin is not original, but the inflection of the society. He is a lad full of hope and enthusiasm in his rural setting at Bilaspur. He leaves his native village in search of a means of livelihood and reaches Sham Nagar.

He works as a domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram, where he is exploited and maltreated by the Babu and his termagant wife. Unable to withstand the ill-treatment he escapes from the Babu’s house and lands himself in the feudal city of Daulatpur. There he works for a short period in a pickle factory. But the decline in the fortunes of his benefactor Prabha
Dayal drives him to the cosmopolitan city of Bombay. He feels “Completely insignificant and small” in the great city. The cotton mills where he secures work as a labourer are an ‘inferno’. Munoo, who earlier admired machines on hearing a gramophone played, now feels their sinister influence in the cotton district.

The labourers including women and children are made to work for eleven hours a day, with no adequate facilities or wages. Sir Reginald white, President of the company and the English foreman are the exploiters. The machine is the demon of the industrial age and man becomes its slave. The machine imported from the West which is used as symbol of emancipation, that can eradicate untouchability in untouchable is described here as casting a shadow of Death. Munoo reaches Simla, escaping from the tyranny and exploitation of the materialistic civilization of Bombay.

In the works of Anand, as in the novels of Kamala Markandeya and Bhabani Bhattacharya, the village represents the East, whereas the towns and cities stand for the West. Unable to find employment Munoo joins once again as a domestic servant in the house of a Eurasian lady, Mrs. Mainwaring. She not only extracts work from him but also exploits him morally in trying to seduce him. Munoo becomes a rickshaw-puller in the famous hill station and dies of consumption soon after. His death is really due to class system that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Simla is again a typical symbol of the empire as it is the favorite summer resort of the English. Munoo’s death through the wasting disease shows that it is a heaven fit for the British and the rich alone, and not for the poor people like Munoo, for whom it is a place of slavery. One can add finally that the rickshaw which is a symbol of human enslavement is an invention of the white man. Munoo, who is sensitive, innocent, earnest, ambitious and endowed with native intelligence is reduced to dust because the society in
which he lives does not allow these five qualities to flower and exploits them for its own benefit.

Another major theme that attracted the attention of the novelists after 1930 is the change from tradition to modernity. The change affects individuals as well as social institutions like the joint family and marriage. Their system of education, especially education for women, and the exposure of the individual to external forces, and cultures, the impact of the Western materialistic civilization, and the consequent shift in values and codes of life are the different aspects of this theme. Bhabani Bhattacharya’s *Music for Mohini* (1952), Santa Rama Raw’s *Remember the House* (1958), Ananda’s *The Old Man and the Cow* (1960), and Attia Hussain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) are some of the novels that portray this theme prominently.

In the afore said novels the *House* stands for the values of the old world order, the traditional codes of loyalty, hospitality, respect for age, and maintenance of the Dharmas of the house holder whereas individuals are shown to rebel against them, though the rebellion is short-lived in most of the cases. The exposure of the individual to the external world and a desire to assert individualism are at the root of the revolt. But in almost all cases, there is an adjustment between the old and the new, a state of compromise, showing the direction towards modernity.

Mohini in *Music for Mohini*, the talented daughter of a Calcutta professor, educated, emancipated and an accomplished singer is given in marriage to Jaydev, a great scholar of Behula village. Mohini’s upbringing in the city and her modern attitude come into clash with the extreme orthodoxy of her mother-in-law; Jaydev’s mother is not only orthodox but also superstitious and demanding. She expects Mohini to give her a grand-child as she firmly believes that the arrival of a child in the house would avert the misfortune that may befall her son, according to astrologers.
On the other hand, she does not appreciate the collaboration of Mohini with Jaydev in his efforts to uplift the village through social service. Mohini, who first resents the domination of her mother-in-law, learns to appreciate her heart and it’s longing to have a grand-child, agrees to perform a ritual to please the old lady. The ritual includes offering Mohini’s heart’s blood, as an appeasement to the gods to bless her with fertility. Jaydev comes in time to check Mohini from participating in the ritual. It is also known soon that Mohini is with child, which pleases the old lady. Mohini thus learns to face the music of change from modernity to tradition, even as the old mother of Jaydev tries to appreciate the constructive work done by the younger members of her family in making Behula a model village.

*Remember the House* is the story of Baba (Indira) Goray, the heroine, who has had her schooling in England. She is bored with her life in India, the typical life of the Westernized rich, snobbish families of Bombay. She is poised between the East and the West, while leaning towards the West. She makes friends with Alix, the American girl, who stands for the western values of individualism, lust for life, thirst for experience, greed for enjoyment and the glory of ambition. The novel portrays the inner conflict of Baba in the matter of her marriage with Hari Joshi, whom her parents fix as her future husband.

At one time she seems to rebel against the wishes of her elders, but finally after she has two rather mild experiences, one with Mr. Nicholas and the other with Krishnan, tradition asserts its hold on Baba and she offers to marry Hari. Her Indian experience at her grand-mother’s place at Jalnabad, cherished in her memory, and her wonderfully secure and exciting childhood play a crucial role in making her take this decision, as she unconsciously learns in her childhood that personal fulfillment is not to be pursued at the cost of causing displeasure to elders in the family.
Revolt in marriage is the central theme in Attia Hussain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. It portrays the slow death of the old feudal order in society and the old world habits and attitudes giving place to new. The novel deals with the life of Laila, the heroine, over a period of 20 years, in the course of which she grows to adulthood, the narrative gains in intensity. The clash here is between love and loyalty to family, in which love gains the upper hand, as Laila marries Ameer against the wishes of her family.

Her search for fulfillment in life and her determination to work out her destiny can be attributed to her western education. There is no overt East-west encounter here but the clash is in the shape of ideas and attitudes that shape individual fortunes. Laila and some of her cousins and friends typify the yearning of the younger generation for social and political emancipation. The novel also shows how under the new forces in modern India the joint family gradually disintegrates.

Mulk Raj Anand’s *The Old Woman and the Cow* fictionalizes the theme of change from a new angle. This is the one novel of Anand where a woman is the leading character. Here the novelist makes use of the myth of Sita, the devout, suffering wife of Rama of the Ramayana and reverses it, to suit the changed times from infinite submission to revolt. Gouri, the cow-like girl, is given in marriage to Panchi. As the wife her duties are to cook, sweat and toil and submit to the anger or passion of Panchi, according to his moods.

Panchi, mislead by his aunt Kasoli, blames the mis-management of his house-hold affairs on the ill-luck brought by Gouri and throws her out of home. She reaches her mother’s house where money weighs more than family ties and she is sold in marriage to a city-banker much against her will. In the city she meets her savior in Dr. Mahindra, a philanthropist, who takes care of her. In the meanwhile Panchi rues his anger and seeks the help of his mother-in-law to regain the confidence of Gouri. But once she is with him his jealousy and ego
reassert their strength and he abuses the small signs of modern womanhood in Gouri like the sweet-smelling soap and the lowered dupatta for the behavior of a whore. He is like Rama; the puranic hero who rejects his devout wife Sita because she happened to stay in another man’s house for a long period.

But, Gouri, the modern Sita, revolts against this male chauvinism and leaves the husband’s house on her own when she finds no place there. She decides to work in Dr. Mahindra’s hospital and gives birth to Panchi’s child there. This reversal of the Myth of Sita in Indo-Anglian novel speaks of a change in the attitude of the writer from tradition towards modernity. Being a liberal humanist, Mulk Raj Anand has no sentimental attachments to the worn out ways of tradition, and his novels herald a new, progressive society, free from inequity and inequality.

The most recent trend in Indo-Anglian fiction is the depiction of the existential predicament of modern man. The focus in these novels is more on the delineation of the inner workings and introspective anguish of the individual than on society. The novels of Anita Desai and Arun Joshi come under this category. The protagonists in these novels are sensitive, intelligent, educated and westernized individuals. They are different from average run of Indians in so far as they are pre-occupied with a quest for selfhood and fulfillment in life. They lay greater emphasis on materialistic goals in life like careerism and personal satisfaction, preferment in jobs even at the cost of loyalty, friendship and family ties.

They make a critical reappraisal of traditional ways and values in the context of western rationalism, individualism and pragmatism. They are invariably less sentimental in their personal relationships either inside the family or outside it. Many a time their quest for fulfillment amounts to self-centeredness resulting in the disintegration of family ties. For these people
Lacking the support of these traditional institutions, everyman or every woman has to carve a niche for himself or herself in the fast moving society and shape his or her own destiny which becomes sometimes impossible. The individuals show a leaning towards the West and its modernity. Their training and family backgrounds also play their part in creating a dilemma in their lives, a dilemma which creates an inner conflict. Anita Desai’s *Cry The Peacock* (1963), *Voices In The City* (1957), *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975), *Fire On The Mountain* (1977) And Arun Joshi’s *The Foreigners* (1968), *The Strange Case Of Billy Biswas* (1971) and *The Apprentice* (1974) are studied here from this point of view.

Maya (*Cry The Peacock*) is the motherless daughter of a westernized aristocratic father, who pampers her, neglecting his son Arjun. She grows up amid wealth in a sentimental atmosphere, appreciating the beautiful sunsets and indulging in drinks and recitation of sonorous Urdu couplets. From this sheltered atmosphere, she moves after marriage into the dull drab routine life of her duty-minded husband, Gautama. Maya grows up to be a lonely person in spite of her father’s affection, as she loses her mother quite early in life.

On the other hand, she has an extraordinary capacity to remember the terrific and agonizing events of her life like the prediction of the sex-obsessed priest in a temple in her childhood and her father’s ill-treatment of her brother Arjun. In the same way, the prediction which foretells the death of either Maya or her husband in the fourth year of their marriage looms large in her mind. She remains lonely even after her marriage, as Gautama, with his balanced views on life, is incapable of sharing her fears and apprehensions.
Maya, in the course of the novel, becomes hyper-sensitive and eventually reaches a degree of madness. Her reactions to the rustle of the leaves and the smell of flowers and the sight of the full moon and stars show this tendency in her. In the opinion of Gautama her over-reactions to external facts and situations are the stagnant dregs of sentimentalism available only to the decadent. Gautama and his family are practical people with a commitment to social work and Maya finds no sympathy for her moods either in Gautama or in her in-laws. Haunted by the fatal predictions, Maya pushes Gautama to death from the terrace of their house on a full moon day and she sinks into insanity. Her over-involvement and excessive introspection lead to the death of Gautama and her own untold agony.

The novels dealing with experience of foreign returned and expatriate Indians treat the East-West theme in terms of clash and conflict between cultures. The exposure of individuals to two distinctly different and mutually conflicting value systems and ways of life creates psychic problems, which are reflected in their emotional life and general attitude. The individuals feel thrown out of gear, as it were, and experience an acute need for adaptation and readjustment. An erosion of long-sustained values and habits takes place under the changed circumstances when new ideas and values are grafted. This is the anatomy of the crisis of identity and the loss of a sense of belonging to a single cultural ethos that the individual faces. (It is only in a few works like Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and the Rope* and *Comrade Kirillov* that the trans-cultural experiences of the protagonists fail in shaking their Indianness in its core, as is reflected in the habits, attitudes and values of the protagonists.

The East-West encounter has not only occupied a prominent place in fiction from the very beginnings to date, but provides a solid and stable background to the study of the Indo-Anglian literature in general. The Indo-Anglian novel had its beginnings in the latter half of the 19th century, when the Indian world-view was being gradually reshaped through its contact with
western culture. The Indian sensibility which, shaken from a state of stupor, awoke to the pressures and challenges of the modern times and saw a bright vista of possibilities in a world which hitherto seemed an illusion.

New values and concepts like freedom, individualism, pragmatism and rationalism were in the air. The fruits of industrial and technological progress in the west made life carefree and comfortable, upheld the wisdom of the practical approach to life as opposed to the other worldly approach of India. The English system of education contributed its share to this process of churning, which, in due course, yielded the nectar of cultural and literary cross-fertilization, the ‘poison’ of political subjection notwithstanding.

A study of the East-west encounter in the Indo-Anglian novel over a period of roughly hundred years shows us the viability and depth of theme and perennial fascination it exercises on the writer.

“The reason for this East-west obsession is inherent in the historic situation of the Indo-Anglian writer himself. The educated Indian has for several decades been shaped by the immigrant influences of the west as well as the native culture of the land and is tradition”.12

The first crop of Indian novels in English which are historical romances, portray the East-West theme in terms of glorification of the past history of India so as to awaken the dormant national spirit among the Indians and prepare them for opposing the alien rule. The novels with a rationalistic outlook, which sought to correct the Indian attitude towards certain out-dated and inhuman customs like suttee, child marriage, etc., were the next to emerge.
The early novels reflect the aspirations of the educated Indians to mould
the society around them in the light of their understanding and appreciation of
certain western ideas and practices. Education of women and eradication of
restrictions like caste and creed and inhuman customs like suttee are patterned
on the Victorian model shown in major number of novels. This emphasis is
less on the narrative technique and characterization and more on the telling of
the story.

The evolution of the East-west theme enters the third stage in those
novels which portray the impact of the west on Indian life from a sociological
point of view. These novels focus on the breakdown of social institutions like
the joint family, the feudal structure and the princely order, and the conflict
between orthodoxy and modernity, the tenacity of family codes of loyalty and
duty, the ideal of self-denial as opposed to self-expression, the generation gap,
arranged marriages and romantic love, feminine emancipation etc., all of which
emerge out of a confusion of cultural contexts. The novels of Narayan, Raja
Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandeya and other describe in
varied ways and from different points of view, the clash of two cultures and
two worldviews and delineate the contours of a changing society.

In the works of Anita Desai and Arun Joshi, which have appeared after
the 1960’s the theme acquires yet another dimension, and progresses from the
sociological to the psychological. The exposure to mutually opposed value
systems and their incompatibility in life situations create a dilemma in modern
man, who feels an inner void and erosion of moral integrity. This throws the
sensitive individual into a mood of introspective despair and existential
torment.

The next period in Indian history is the period of the national struggle
for independence and the Indo-Anglian novel did reflect the tremors and
stirrings of the national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.
The uneasy co-existence of the two value systems of East and West in the Indian society, the conflict between orthodoxy and modernism, generation gap, changes in the social institutions, emancipation of women and the princely order are some of the other themes that engaged the attention of the Indo-Anglian novelists in the later period. In the novels written during the 1960s there is a search of synthesis, a fusion of traditional values and modern ways.

A third phase develops in Indo-Anglian novel with the works of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, and Raja Rao. These three writers represent three distinct approaches to fiction, which vary from one another substantially. Mulk Raj Anand blazes a new path of reform, as his novels expose the evils of cast, superstition and exploitation of the poor by the rich, and plead for the amelioration of the down-trodden. His is the creed of proletarian progressivism, which welcomes the pragmatic, rationalistic ways of the west as the remedy for the social evils in India.

R.K.Narayan’s novels project another facet of the East-West theme. They are essentially tradition-oriented in nature. His view of human aspirations and achievements is also old worldly as it seems to depend on the doctrines of pre-destination. His use of various myths in his novels speaks of his belief in the appropriateness of the classical tradition to the present times. His novels affirm the validity of the Indian classical tradition even in the changing social context. The life one witnesses in them is still based on the old world order, where joint family, though gradually disintegrating, is the norm and arranged marriages are the rule.

Western influences and practices make inroads into this conventional set up in the shape of symbols of modern materialistic culture and Westernized individuals and disturb the placidity of the place for the time being. But such is the genius of Malgudi that these influences are either absorbed in course of time into the main stream of life as it happens in the case of symbols Western
culture, or thrown out of it as is the lot of Westernized individuals. Later
tradition reestablishes its hold on the society and normalcy is restored, and
quiet flows life like the Saryu. Narayan’s rootedness in tradition gets reiterated
through the importance he gives in his novels to the concepts of Maya, Lila,
Karma, Dharma, Moksha and the four ashrams, the ideal of a guru and through
the capital use of various well-established Indian myths.

Raja Rao’s novels bear ample testimony to the unique cultural synthesis
present in his personality. ‘Kantapura’ and ‘The Cat and Shakespeare’ confirm
his views that the cultural and political domination of one race over the other is
detrimental to the latter. The decadent Indian society during the British rule of
India, portrayed in these two novels, Justifies this point. On the other hand,
‘Comrade Kirillov’ and The Serpent And The Rope’ study the clash between
the cultures of the East and the West which are presented by the heros
Ramaswamy and Padmanabha Iyer and their respective European wives, and
each one of them is a deeply rooted in, and jealous defender of the tradition to
which he or she belongs. ‘Kantapura’ is a unique narrative experiment in
Gandhian Politics. It is a study of Indian society under the British Rule.

R. K. Narayan’s novels study the repercussions of the East-West
encounter on Indian society, which is the stronghold of tradition. They draw
the graph of the gradual change that came about in society over a period of half
a century. The society one comes across in his novels is representative of
many a middle class town in India, which, though not situated on teh main line
of western influence, still received the impact in subtle and imperceptible ways.

Raja Rao deals in his four novels with the ramifications of the coming
together of the east and the west on the cultural level. His novels try to portray
inter-racial alliance. He is also interested in presenting in fictional terms the
comparative and contrastive studies of different philosophical systems, as a
result of which the abiding verities of Indian mystical heritage come
powerfully alive. The locales of his novels include India, England and France and this lends a richness and width to his narrative art.

Marakadeya’s novels, on the other hand, treat the East-West theme from the individual’s point of view. Her characters are not highly individualized, keenly sensitive intellectuals like most of Raja Rao’s but average Indians and westerners who form the warp and woof of the fictional fabric. These are people who are burned with the routine, every day problems and we cannot realize that their troubles stem from the confused and confusing reality of East-west encounter in Indian life. It is the tribulations of such individuals, who suffer an identity crisis and try to work out their destiny alone and in an atmosphere of alienation, that constitute the concern of Kamala Markandeyya.

The novels of Kamala Markandaya portray the clash between the ways of life of the East and west from a sociological angle. The results of the uneasy juxtaposition of the two ways of life are shown to be detrimental to both sides. Marakadaya tries to establish that the historical and political domination of the west is not conductive to the progress and well-being of India. In most of her novels, the East-west encounter leads to a crisis of identity and quest for selfhood; the protagonists lose hold on life by being confronted by two sets of values and practices.

Markandaya’s themes may be stated as the predicament of the Indian farmer faced with western industrialization, the racial tension during the pre-independence days, the conflict between tradition and modernity, the cultural domination of west over the spirit and soul of India, the vulnerability of the Indian and European expatriate situation and the deracination of Indians through British political policy and training. All these are treated from the sociological and psychological points of view. The modern Indian is caught between the proverbial two worlds, one dead and the other struggling to be born; he has let go old world ways and the new values are yet to evolve.
The colonial conflict, racial prejudices change from tradition to modernity, the disintegration of the joint family under the new forces, the concepts of personal fulfillment and happiness as opposed to family welfare, the national struggle for independence, the changes in the princely India through the British political policy, the psychological and psychic malaise that afflict the modern Indian, the commercialization of Indian spiritualism in the west and the hypocrisy under the guise of spirituality in India, the vulnerability of the Indian European expatriate situation, etc. constitute the East-west gamut.

The novels of other writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Balachandra Rajan, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and G. V. Desani are studied more for illustrating a trend than depth, and discussion shows how the East-west encounter forms one of the continuing concerns of the Indo-Anglian novelist. One can well surmise that in the years ahead the theme will acquire further and finer shades and nuances and continue to stand by the Indian creative writer as a potential source for unraveling the multi layered complexity of the Indian situation.

Bhabani Bhattacharya is one of the novelists of Indo-Anglian fiction who has shown the East-West encounter in his works. He spent a part of his early days in India, studied in London and obtained Ph.D. Degree from the University of London and later settled abroad. Thus he is one of the few Indian writers who have a close acquaintance with the life in the East and the West. The West appears in his novels some times as a character, sometimes as an attitude or a set of values. He wrote his novels during the twilight of the freedom struggle. In the years following Independence, a number of novels have appeared where the conflict between the two cultures is on the personal level, whose theme may be called an individual’s search for identity in a changing India.
Bhattacharya has shown an unbolting interest in the interaction of the two sets of values that exist side by side. He is more seriously and consistently involved with the East-West theme. He does not compromise to render his vision into a public language.

His education in London proved very significant in his career as a writer. Bhattacharya was influenced by the ideals of democracy as preached by British statesmen. He is made aware of his Indianness as well as of the difference in the two systems of values. The inter-cultural nature of his being has become the theme of profound interest. The confrontation of these two kinds of values has become one of the major concerns in his novels (‘Music for Mohini’, ‘Shadow from Ladakh’, ‘A Dream in Hawai’).

The proximity of the two opposing cultures is bound to give rise to a clash of two values. The encounter and the resultant clash find a natural reflection in his novels. There are some characters representing aspects of the Western Culture, and reacting differently to their encounter with the Indian culture. The conflict between the two modes of being appears on different levels i.e., the individual level, the group level, the political level, the cultural level, and on industrial and agrarian levels. Bhattacharya advocates a compromise between two ways of life.

Bhattacharya’s second novel, *Music for Mohini (1952)* portrays the opposite characteristics of the Indian heritage and Western culture. He describes the consequences of post-Independence in India. The novel is a combination of opposite cultures of the city Calcutta and the village Behula in Bengal. It is a mixture of two cultures a friction of the East and the West.

Bhattacharya focuses light on the social evils which became common and deep rooted in Indian society. All those social evils are decried and attacked by Bhattacharya. He boldly rejects the practices of Sati, polygamy,
child marriage, and marriages of minor girls. The girls have no right to go to school. The girls are married under age.

The novelist shows how western educated people start to think in modern way. The educated ones deny accepting the old practices. They start to question the validity of age old practices. Bhattacharya exposes how the new attitudes of people on social institutions like marriage undergo a change. The concept of love has come to occupy the minds of the westernized as an individual affair and no more a concern of the family endowed with a certain religious sanctity. Personal fulfillment is seen with family welfare and gains the upper hand.

Bhattacharya tries to reflect the contemporary situations of India under British rule. He wants to expose the worst feature of the British rule in India which was its economic exploitation in the interest of British capitalists and financiers and its worst result was the extreme impoverishment of the Indian people. The policies of the British, on the one hand, disrupted the traditional economy of India and, on the other, failed to develop a modern economic structure. The Indian economy, therefore, remained neither traditional nor modern, and thus, India lost the advantages of both. The consequent result could not be anything except complete impoverishment of its people.

Bhattacharya satirizes the many weaknesses and meaningless customs in the Hindu religion. People easily believe the strangers and cheats. The novelist also points out the orthodoxy with which people forget even the basic principles of humanity and compassion in the Hindu religion. The orthodox people forget mercy sympathy and helping the people. People invest many amounts of money to get redeemed from god for their committed sins. Even a well educated magistrate follows the rituals blindly without any reason and thinking. There is another example for their blind faith.
Bhattacharya’s fight is not with an individual, but with the system. He criticizes defects not only in the Indian traditions and culture but also the Indian life style. He focuses light over a curious contradiction of the times. While men die of hunger, wealth grows; and while kindliness dries up, religion is more in demand. He thinks it is only the outward form of religion, the shell of ritual, empty within. The deceivers like Kalo utilize the weaknesses in the society. The temple becomes popular and Kalo becomes a rich man with all comforts. The novelist points out that people fear about their committed sins so they spend money and participate in the rituals mechanically with less interest and dedication to god. Bhattacharya shows how men of wealth with no time or heart for prayer and penance give willingly for ritual, the easier way for them to gain merit.

Bhattacharya points out the blindness of the man who fails to discover the divinity in the world. He reveals the ignorance of the man who always gives priority to the worship of idols, stone images and to follow the meaningless rituals and fails to know true Hinduism which always says that the only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Man ignores the gist of worship- to be pure and to do well to others. He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary.

Bhattacharya reminds the true religion which tells us that we must be pure and help anyone who comes to us, as much as lies in our power. And this is good Karma. By the power of this the heart becomes pure and then Shiva who is residing in every one will become manifest. But men of ignorance forget the real spirit of the religion and become blind, selfish, orthodox and cruel. The delicate corners in them are dried up by their ignorance and they become orthodox. Bhattacharya expresses his desire if that people come out from the dark chambers of their hearts differences among people disappear.
Bhattacharya is moved very much by their condition and he wishes to bring their problems into light. Like Mulk Raj Anand in his ‘Untouchable’ he focuses light on the problems of the lower caste people who have always been treated ill. His hero Bhakha is hurt by the treatment of the upper caste people. Anand succeeded in bringing light on the problems of an untouchable. Here in the novel ‘He who rides a Tiger’ Bhattacharya turns the hero Kalo into a rebel. He understands the society which does not support him to live in it. So in frustration and rage he decides to retaliate on it. He desires to prove many rituals followed by the Hindu's to be meaningless and useless with them.

Bhattacharya focuses on several other social maladies like the institution of prostitution which does not appear outside from the society of ancient traditions. He also focuses on the men who cheat people under the guise of Brahmins by wearing saffron loin cloth, smearing the body with ashes and marking a red-paste trident of Shiva on their forehead to make a living by begging in the streets. Some men can hoodwink even the rich people to accept them as yogis with great spiritual power. The hollowness of Indian people’s belief in the scriptural customs and rites is also revealed. There is description of the excommunication of the untouchables. The novelist ridicules the superiority of the Brahmins and the Hindu law that do not permit divorce. The novel reveals the author’s modern western views along with his hopeful vision of a democratic India.

Bhattacharya believes in the intrinsic merit of each individual quite apart from his caste and profession. He always propagates universal brotherhood through his novels. There is much importance to human relations in his novels. He opposes the caste system. He writes mostly of Indian villages where life is strictly compartmentalized, where a man is labeled from birth. His hero, Kalo of He Who Rides a Tiger invariably rebels against the social mechanism.
Bhattacharya is a rational humanist, in western tradition, believing in progress and in the equality of all men. He protests against an established social order which labels men as superior and inferior by virtue of the accident of their birth.

He protests against the tyranny of caste. Bhattacharya opines that caste system has become a deep rooted evil in the Indian society, beyond the chance to be eradicated. It is shown in his *He Who Ride a Tiger.* When Chandra Lekha, daughter of Kalo, a blacksmith goes to school, she meets with criticism from the high caste people.

Sometimes Bhattacharya seems to simplify the conflict between tradition and modernity by creating clearly distinguishable sets of characters, withholding his sympathy from some, while deluging others with compassion. His characters fall neatly into three types, the sufferers, the oppressors and the good men. Usually the protagonist is the sufferer-in-chief. All money-lenders, priests, and landlords i.e., people with a vested interest in resisting change or progress come under the second category. Evil appears under different shapes of Seths, speculators and tradesmen. The good men appear in an assortment of social workers, leaders, and idealistic doctors, who advocate the benefits of the machine and the need for progress and equality.

**The Theme of Feminine Sensibility in the tradition of Indo-Anglian fiction:**

The women writers were primarily concerned in their novels with the psychological crises in the lives of Indian women who are subjected to physical and psychological torture in a male dominated society. The novelists have exploited their skills in projecting convincingly the agonized mind of the persecuted women. Their portrayal of women characters in the novels invariably bears authenticity to their feminist approach, outlook and perspective. Their keen observation of the life of Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner mind are evidenced by their vivid and
panoramic portrayal of their novels on the existential predicament and travails of the subdued women in a male dominated society governed by rigid traditions and restrictions.

These writers being women dive deep into the inner mind of the repressed women by virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight and bring to light their issues, which are the outcome of Indian women’s psychological and emotional imbalances. They gave a new direction in the writing of fiction in English. Their novels distinctively assume feminist significance for focusing on the inner mind of Indian women in the feminist perspective.

The first Indian woman novelist who made pioneering efforts in writing novels of profound psychological significance was Toru Dutt. Although she is pre-eminently renowned as a poet for the versification of a substantial number of poetical works, yet she is recognized as a novelist for her fictional work. Her works *Bianca* or *The Young Spanish Maiden* is a self projection of her own agony and anguish of life. Toru’s typical attitude, feelings and sentiments, which are characteristically Indian in all respects, manifest in the character of her heroines. The portrayal of the women characters leads us to infer that Toru remained invariably an Indian woman in her temper, temperament and outlook.

Another novelist who has projected Feminine sensibility through women characters in her novels, in Krupabai Sathianathan. Her novels *Kamal: A story of Hindu Life (1894)* and *Suguna: A Story of Native Christian Life (1895)* reflects on her sentimental reaction resulting from the impact of conversion of her family to Christianity. These novels are self-revelatory of her inner life of sorrows and anguish. *Suguna* is the portrayal of her earlier life, whereas *Kamala* is the story of her later life written in her bedridden circumstances.
Shevanthi Bai Nikambe is another woman novelist who is not less renowned than her predecessors Toru Dutt and Krupabai. As a champion of Feminine sensibility, she combated injustice and ill-treatment meted out to simple, sober, unsophisticated housewives. She focused particularly on the tragedy of unsuccessful marital life and of widowhood. She advocated the freedom, liberty and emancipation of women in order to extricate them from obsequious servitude and inhuman torture to which they were subjected by their husbands, mothers-in-law and others. Her novel Ratnabai is a novel with a feminine sensibility. It portrays the agony of a girl named Ratnabai who is persecuted by the relatives of her father-in-law for going to school for higher education. This novel espouses and voices the need for emancipation and education of Indian women and hence its reformist objective is foregrounded in the novel.

Another woman novelist was Sorabji a feminist and a social reformer. As an advocate by profession she championed the causes of Indian woman and exposed in her stories the deep mental agony of the married and unmarried women. Love and Life Behind the Purdah (1901) Sun Babies (1904) and Between the Lights (1908) are the stories that focus realistically on the inner mind of the suppressed women living behind the purdah. The first one is a collection of ten stories each seeking to evoke pity and sympathy for the socially and sexually tortured women who dare not raise their voice for deliverance from persecution. These stories are an attempt at exploration into the deeper chamber of the mind that reacts passively and timidly to various forms of oppression.

Sorabji depicts the tragedy of the child marriage, child widowhood and sterility in marital life. Greater Love is a story that describes the psychological torture inflicted on a kind-hearted hostess. A Living Sacrifice is a story that delineates how Dwarki lays herself on the funeral pyre of her brother-in-law
and sacrifices her life with a view to saving her twin sister Tani. Sorabji describes the plight of co-widows in joint families.

Swarna Kumari Ghosal is another novelist who is famous for her works *The Fatal Garland (1910)* and *An unfinished Son (1913)*. Her works are historical romances that deal with the theme of love rather than the tragic life of fettered women. Madan Ghosal is concerned with the psychological suffering of Indian women behind Purdha. She seems to have fallen back upon the traditional Victorian device of exploiting the theme of love and romance.

The modern novelists like Iqbalunnisa Hussain, Anita Desai, Rama Mehta Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy etc. exploited the theme of psychological suffering and traumatic experiences of Indian women.

Iqbalunnisa Hussain has brought to lime light the tragic life of Indian women in her fiction *Purdah and Polygamy, Life in an Indian Muslim House (1944)*. The novel unveils the silken curtain of Purdah and unmask the agonized mind of house-wives living like engaged birds in the orthodox Muslim families. She has panoramically portrayed the evils and abuses of customs and traditions that had enslaved the married women and rendered them practically helpless and voiceless. She upholds the reaction of women who endure physical and psychological suffering simply by virtue of their womanliness.

Anita Desai is widely recognized as the pioneer of psychological novel in modern Indian English literature. The most conspicuous feature of her art is the portrayal of characters. She penetrates psychologically deep into the inner workings of women and externalizes their passive reaction. *Cry, the Peacock, Voices in the city, Where Shall We Go This Summer, Fire on the Mountain* are the popular works of Anita Desai. *Cry, the Peacock* is the story of an Indian woman, Maya who undergoes considerable traumatic experiences obsessed by
forebodings and mental tension. In this novel Anita explores the turbulent emotional world of the neurotic protagonist Maya who is constantly haunted by a presentiment of her husband’s death on account of her belief in astrological prediction.

In her second novel *Voices in the City* she psychoanalyses the inner mind of three characters Nirod Roy and his sisters Anhisha and Amala. These characters feel utterly frustrated like Maya of the novel “Cry the Peacock”, they profess a mysterious longing to return home in Kalipong and enjoy the solitude and serenity of jungles but they are forced to live in Calcutta which is a city of despair and death for them. Monisha, who is married against her will into a joint family of rich middle class, is haunted like Maya by her morbid musings about death. She morbidly deplores the futility of marital life. In order to release herself from the life of captivity she resorts to committing suicide.

In the novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, Anita portrays the tragic intensity of her women characters with a Feminine Sensibility. The novel depicts the tragic life of Sita who leads a life of isolation and loneliness in her husband’s house. Her unmitigated suffering drives her to a state of madness and desperation. Desai portrays her women characters as sentimental and introspective.

The next novel *Fire on the Mountain* explores the inner emotional world of Nanda Kaul and Raka. Anita Desai draws a picture of the tragedy of Nanda leading a segregated life like recluse in a lonely hill hut. She prefers to lead a solitary life in a decaying house. In this novel Desai penetrates into the hidden depth of the minds of her characters who are obsessed by nostalgic reminiscences of their past life and events. Thus Anita Desai heralded a new era of psychological exploration of the inner mind in her novels.
The other novelist is Rama Mehta. Her novel *Inside the Haveli* presents a vivid picture of the traditional life of the women in a Haveli. The novel seems to be thematically a compromise between tradition and modernity. A modern sophisticated girl of a modernized city of Bombay is brought into a tradition bound family in the form of matrimonial negotiation. She lives as a daughter-in-law in a family that circumscribes all her thoughts and activities and imposes on her all traditional restrictions. In defiance of these impositions she grapples to introduce the modern concept of values with a view to protecting and promoting the interests of the new women of India. The conflict between tradition and modernity imparts the dignity of a feminist novel to *Inside the Haveli*. The novel seeks to delineate the various possibilities of synthesizing two different antithetical concepts of tradition and modernity and amalgamating these heterogeneous ideologies.

The other novelist Shashi Deshpande too reveals with a feminine sensibility the revolutionary sentiment of an unusual women character Sarita. The girl revolts against the age-old traditions of orthodoxy and conservatism in order to assert her independence and identity. Her novels tend to suggest a conflict between tradition and modernity. Her other work *The Binding Vine* is a novel of feminine sensibility. It presents woman as a spineless wooden creature subjected to male dominance. In the novel *The Long Silence* Shashi voices her feeling in favour of emancipation of women from the grip of conventional male control. In all her novels she concentrates on the portrayal of the pathetic and heart-rending condition of Indian women in the male dominated society.

*The Binding Vine* gives an insight into the psychological suffering of Urmi and Mira, the women characters of the novel. It shows how an Indian woman loses her identity after her marriage and birth of children. She is recognized either as a wife of some body or mother of some one. After reading the doleful verses written by Mira, Urmi realizes the tragic intensity of Mira’s
suffering in which she herself feels pity for Mira forgetting her own suffering. Her personal diary is the mirror of her suffering and tortured life. The novel convinces the readers as to how a woman suffering in life can realize the plight of another woman by virtue of her womanly instinct and sensibility but man cannot realize because of his spirit of masculinity and his traditional ego or gender superiority. Mira’s poems reveal this male dominance over women.

The novel also exposes the anguish of other women, characters like Kalpana, a girl who is sexually tortured. The novel further exposes the traditional Indian concept that emphasizes the marriage of girls for the safety of their life and chastity. We get the picture of the mental agony of Kalpana who is raped by Sulu’s husband, Prabhakar. Sulu, after knowing how her husband molested Kalpana, became agonized and committed suicide in a state of mental tension. Likewise Urmi, Mira, Kalpana and Sulu are all victims of male dominance. Shashi Deshpande has drawn out the women characters of this novel from women’s point of view and has imparted feminist significance to this novel. She projects her women characters as educated, independent, rebellious and modern in outlook.

Another revolutionary woman novelist is Kamala Das who projects in her poetry and novels her own inner mind without inhibition and hesitation. She revolts against the male dominated Indian society and reveals her feelings in a confessional mood. Her novels Alphabet of Lust (1980) and A Doll for the Child Prostitute (1977) are the ironic expression of the various physical and psychological harassment meted out to married women. Her My Story (1976) is also an autobiographical novel in which she reveals her reaction in support of women and against male as a study of the inner mind of an Indian woman.

Manshi the heroine in the Alphabet of Lust (1980) is a replica of Kamala Das. Manshi voices the sentiments and feeling of the author. The heroine of this novel is the unhappy frustrated wife of Amol Mitra, a government official.
who looks old enough to be her father. He remains engaged all the time in the
official work being indifferent to his young wife. Consequently her marital life
is disrupted and she is compelled to search for an identity.

Kamala Das’s next novel *A Doll for the Child-Prostitute* (1977) deals
with the theme of psychological torture inflicted on women. The novel adopts
the theme of search for liberation and identity. Mira secretly marries her
student client in order to assert her liberty and identity as a woman but her
marital joy and happiness dissolves into sorrow and despair as she is betrayed
by her husband. This tragedy compels her to fall back on her past profession as
a prostitute. The same quest for identity is also revealed through the character
of Rukmini, a child prostitute. Her mother, instead of giving her a doll to play
with, sells her to Lakshmibai the keeper of a brothel. She is forced into the
profession of prostitution.

In these two novels Kamala Das vividly delineates the helplessness of
Indian women and indifference of society to their plight. None bothers to
ameliorate their situation. Her novels are a poignant ironic criticism of the
social status of Indian women. By her portrayal of Women’s predicament,
Kamala Das has given a new direction and dimension to Indian novels in
English.

Geeta Hariharan is a novelist who uses her novel as a vehicle to her
protest against male dominance over women. In her book *The Thousand Faces
of Night* she denounces the subservience of Indian women and advocates their
emancipation from the bondage of male domination. She depicts the tragedy of
women, who in their inner mind react to this kind of subjection and
persecution. Devi is the central woman character in the novel *The Thousand
Faces of Night*. This novel presents a vivid picture of patriarchal dominance in
social life. It also strikes a note of feminine sensibility in the theme of
Woman’s psychology.
Arundhati Roy, the Booker Prize winner, in her book *The God of Small Things*, likes to evaluate the abnormal psychology of men and women in the typical Indian society. She focuses on the traumatic experiences of Ammu who is terribly shocked and upset due to her foolish marriage with a Bengali young man. She develops contempt for her drunkard husband and falls in love with another man Velutha. Her frustration in marital life provokes her terrible psychological reaction, which manifests in her mental reflection and rumination. A study of her novels can convince the readers as to how novels can convince the readers as to how they assume feminist significance by reason of her concentration on the portrayal of women characters.

Another woman novelist who projects a new vision of Indian women in her fictions is Manju Kapur. In her novel *Difficult Daughters*, she portrays her women characters as women of new modern outlook. The protagonist of this novel is Virmati who is a traditional woman but her cousin is a westernized lady. Unlike others she is inspired by Swami Dayananda’s concept of women’s education.

Manju Kapur denounces the persistence of the traditional idea that marriage is essential for women. She therefore, depicts deliberately the characters of two girls of two different attitudes. They are Virmati and Shakuntala. The former is of traditional outlook whereas the latter is of modern outlook. Shakuntala is an MSC in Chemistry working at Lahore. She is intelligent, independent, sophisticated and above all rebellious in her attitude. She deprecates the concept of marriage as the summon bonus of life and reacts to this traditional idea. She advises Virmati to live like a free bird. The novel reveals Manju Kapur’s rebellious attitude against the servitude of women. She uses this woman character as her own mouth organ and advocates freedom and education for Indian women and their participation in national reconstruction.
Besides the women writers there are male writers who concerned in their novels with the portrayal of women characters in the novels invariably bears authenticity to their feminine sensibility, outlook and perspective. Their keen observation of the life of Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner mind are evidenced by their vivid and panoramic portrayal of their novels on the existential predicament and travails of the subdued women in a male dominated society governed by rigid traditions and restrictions.

These writers along with the women writers dive deep into the inner mind of the repressed women by virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight and bring to light their issues. Their novels distinctively assume feminist significance for focusing on the inner mind of Indian women in the feminist perspective.

The first Indian novelist who made pioneering efforts in writing novels of profound psychological significance was Bankim Chundra Chatarjee. In his works *Raj Mohan’s Wife, Durgesh Nandini* and *Devi Chaudharni*, his portrayal of the women characters leads us to infer that Bankim remained invariably an Indian novelist in his temper, temperament and outlook.

Another novelist who has projected feminine sensibility through women characters in his novels is Tagore. He is a great novelist although he is famous more as a poet than a novelist. His vision and feminine sensibility are expressed through his novels. His novels describe the problem of women and widows. His novel focuses light on problems of women. Except marriage there was no opening for young girls. They were only domestic workers. For example, the three daughters of Paresh Babu and his adopted daughter Sucharita only act and work for the fulfillment of their marriages. The novel is a true picture of the social conditions of women and widows in the urban middle class. Gora is a psychological novel because it gives us an inner picture of the minds of the female characters.
The problem of widowhood has been presented by Tagore through the personality of Harimohini in the novel. Harimohini’s family of in-law’s was a large one and Harimohini had to cook food for a very large family and in this family she had no fixed place to sleep and she would sleep with anyone who could find a place for her. She had been totally neglected in the large house of her husband. She begot a daughter and a son. Unfortunately after some time her husband and son died. Later on her daughter also died and then Harimohini called the family Pandit who advised her to give up all her rights and spend her remaining life in Vrindaban. Then she went to Banaras and there she spent some time. Thus Tagore has presented the miserable lot of Harimohini in this novel. Tagore has presented the Problem of Widowhood through the portrayal of Harimohini. He has also given the solution to the problem.

R. K. Narayan is one the most outstanding novelists in India. He represents the period of great upheaval in political and social life. His fiction presents realities of women. His fiction presents women characters within the Indian socio-cultural milieu. He also highlights identity. His fiction portrays the women of urban middle class. He generates a unique change in his fiction in presenting the women in the Indian society. Though his women are rooted in traditional customs and norms, they are able to move out of their confinement in search of identity. He presents the social degradation of woman in the middle class society of India and also the emergence of new woman who is intelligent with her innate potentialities in the society.

The depiction of woman characters in his novels has been one of the good consistent concerns of R. K. Narayan. His novels from Swami and Friends (1935) to Grandmother’s Tale (1992) present a variety of women characters. In Narayan’s first two novels, women are portrayed as traditional and they follow the customs and rituals. The third novel The Dark Room (1938) portrays the condition of women in changing circumstances of modern India. Savitri, the protagonist reveals the condition of a wife in the traditional
Hindu family. Narayan feels that Indian woman has been relegated to a second place in the Indian patriarchal society. Savitri is a portrayal of typical Indian woman; her utterances echo the revolutionary voice of the rising womanhood.

In *The Guide* (1958) Rosie is the most complex woman character. She is a modern woman. Though she comes from the family of devadasis, she possesses a high university degree. Her innate ambition of becoming a classical dancer is realized with the help of Raju. He exploits her art and cheats her by forging her signatures for money. After Raju’s conviction to a jail-term she herself arranges the stage performances. After the breakup of her wife-husband relationship she is living far away from her husband Marco. She succeeds in attaining an independent identity without the help of Raju and Marco.

In *The Painter of Signs* (1976) Daisy is a new woman. She is of rebellious nature going against the social customs and orthodoxies against the wishes of her parents. She is educated, talented and highly ambitious. She has accepted social work and decides to live independently without anybody’s support. Raman, a young painter of signboards lives in Ellaman Street in Malgudi. He belongs to a traditionally superior caste. He loves Daisy and wants to marry her but she is keen on pursuing her social commitment and Raman gets back to his sign board painting.

In *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983) Rita is the major woman character. She is an example of synthesis in her personality of modernity and traditionally characteristic loyalty and sincerity of a wife to her husband. She possesses the skill of performing the acrobatic feat which requires masculine strength and stamina. She is devoted to the welfare of her husband who is the captain and owner of the “Grand Malgudi Circus”. The news of unexpected and sudden death of her husband saddens and depresses her to the extent the she is not able
to survive. Her association with her husband is so deep that she cannot survive without him. So, she commits suicide.

Narayan’s women characters discover their identity in the Indian middle class society. They possess the toughness, adventurousness and courage to manage their affairs by themselves. They are against the legacy of orthodoxy and conservatism. Narayan in his novels defines the concept of new women. His women are against the orthodox roles and dominate over their male counterparts. They are ambitious and aspire to carve out an independent economic entity according to their talent.

Bhattacharya is in favour of social and economic justice to women. The female for him is not the weaker sex. According to Bhattacharya, the initial form of life is female. He has projected his Indian sensibility and attitude through his women characters in his novels. He combatted injustice and ill-treatment meted out to simple sober, unsophisticated housewives. He focussed on the tragedy of unsuccessful maiden, marital life and of widowhood.

He advocated the freedom, liberty and emancipation of women in order to extricate them from obsequious servitude and inhuman torture to which they were subjected by male sex, and their own i.e., mothers in-law. His novels voice the need of emancipation of Indian women. His reformist objective is foregrounded in his novels. As a highly scholar he champions the causes of Indian women and exposes the deep mental agony of the married (Mohini) and unmarried (Sudha) women in his works.

His works sought to evoke pity and sympathy for the socially and sexually tortured women who dare not raise their vice for deliverance from persecution. Bhattacharya attempts to explore into the deeper chamber of the mind that reacts passively; and timidly to various forms of oppression.
Bhattacharya depicts the Indian women living in an orthodox and conservative family feel inhibited to raise their voice against the society due to their inferiority and the rigid code of conduct imposed on them.

Bhattacharya depicts the image of the new women waiting for emancipation and liberation in a fast changing world in his works. He mentions the Hindu Community in India is being governed rigidly by its traditions. As India has been a tradition bound nation, if women are also shackled by numerous social and religious customs and conventions that render them incarcerated behind curtains. In view of their miseries, Bhattacharya fictionalizes women’s cause with a view to ameliorating their position and releasing them from the state of traditional servitude. He portrays the evils and abuses of customs and traditions that had enslaved the married women and rendered them practically helpless and voiceless. He upholds the reaction of women and shows how women endure physical and psychological suffering simply by virtue of their womanliness.

Bhattacharya opines that there was no difference between men and women during ancestral times. Even women worked equally on intellectual grounds. He says that the ancestral woman was not a household drudge, a decorative being but an intellectual. She strode beside in a tireless quest for knowledge. Gargi and Maitreye were some role models from ancient Indian culture. He feels wonder about the ancestral women like Maitreyi and Gargi who used to work like their husbands on the intellectual part. He wishes that modern women should prove their talents as in the way of ancestral women intellectuals.

Bhattacharya champions the causes of Indian women and exposes in his works the deep mental agony of married and unmarried women. His “Music for Mohini” is the story that focuses realistically on the inner mind of suppressed women. The novel is seeking to evoke pity and sympathy for the
socially and sexually tortured women who dare not raise their voice for deliverance from persecution. His novels attempt at exploration into the deeper chamber of the mind that reacts passively and timidly to various forms of oppression. He depicts the defects of the Hindu marriage system which depends on asters and horoscopes and leads to utter failure in Indian society. He too depicts the tragedy of child marriage, early widowhood and sterility in marital life of women.

On the other hand his novels are preoccupied with the theme of the East-West encounter. Bhattacharya panoramically portrays the evils and abuses of customs and traditions that had enslaved the married and unmarried women and rendered them practically voiceless. He upholds the reaction of women and shows how Indian women physical psychological suffering simply by virtue of their womanliness. The most conspicuous feature of his art is portrayal of characters. He penetrates psychologically deep into the inner working of women and externalizes their passive reaction.

Bhattacharya seeks to draw reader’s attention to the silent reaction of the oppressed women in the orthodox Indian society that denies them the right to live with freedom. He describes the plight of unmarried women in the orthodox Hindu society. There is a focus on the miseries of the unmarried women who become victims of dowry, caste system and horoscopes. When a girl crosses thirteen years there will be so many restrictions on her behavior, dress and everything. She is prohibited for studies and goes outside. Even she is restricted to laugh at freely.

Bhattacharya shows in his works how the women in India are trapped more and more in the web of myth and lose their sense of self and will and how they are praised as goddesses and are robbed of their glory even though they are still seated on a high pedestal. He satirizes man’s obsession which is to pull them down to earth by having the women sing their praises and do their will
only when the women please them and satisfy their ego- needs, they call them the goddesses of household, Griha Lakshmi, the moment when women defy male idiosyncrasies, they are called devils.

It is seen in the novels of Bhattacharya how men take upon themselves the responsibilities of protecting and feeding the women who are consequently destitute and completely dependent. The women are shown how they are not allowed to move outside the household without male company since it is taken for granted that they are incapable of defending themselves. Bhattacharya reveals how women become frail and weak creatures that if any man other than their husbands touch them or cast a lustful glance towards them, they are defiled and dishonored. Hence, their only path to an honourable existence is to give the men unflinching loyalty, submit to their care and deny their own self and will.

Bhattacharya points out the dual culture in the country where women have been mythically placed upon a high pinnacle while at the same time pulled down to dust in reality. It cannot be found anywhere in the world where she may be labeled either saint or sinner. He wishes to show her as self respected and self conscious and she can fight for her rights and she also knows how to protect herself.

Bhabani Bhattacharya exposes the poor condition of women who live in rural areas of India. They are totally ignored and do not get any special attention. They are usually paid less for the same job compared with men. They do manual labour at home and outside. Marriages are decided by elders and imposed on women. Men dominate the process of decision making at home and outside. In food, medical care and general treatment, women are discriminated. This has largely contributed the decreasing women population in India. Bhattacharya protests against child marriage, dowry and enforced
widowhood. Bhattacharya is in favour of women’s involvement in the public activities of the village.

Bhattacharya highlights the views of Mahatma Gandhi who always stressed to ensure status of equality for women in society. He emphasizes the involvement of women in the village building activities. He included upliftment of women as one of the items of constructive programme. Rural development means improving the living standard of the low income population in rural areas and making the process of their development self-sustaining. The Gandhian strategies for the welfare of rural women have got three major dimensions viz., social, political and economic. These factors are interrelated. Hence total development means signifying the economic progress and reforming the social elements and awakening the political consciousness of the people.

Bhattacharya reflects Gandhi’s belief in the fundamental equality of man and woman in the sense that both possess immortal souls and same intellectual and spiritual potential. He is of the opinion that female weakness is only superficial: if women will draw upon their inner reserves of strength, no obstacle can block their progress. Bhattacharya also exposes the expectations of Gandhi- all around development in a woman and he wants them to grow physically, mentally, spiritually and morally.

Bhattacharya presents the memories of Quit India movement and active participation of women in national movement. Even after getting Independence women recollect sweet memories of their participation in the freedom struggle. Bhattacharya focuses light on the views of Gandhi who thinks that women have a crucial role to play in developing a strong unit of Shanti Sena (Army of Peace) thereby helping to resolve the rural conflicts by applying various forms of Satyagrahis (Explorers of Truth) through his ashrams. Gandhi’s opinion is _All women can be of use in the work of Shanti Sena. If it were a question of raising an armed force, they would of course be
useless, for their hearts are compassionate and they would have nothing to do with organized and merciless murder. But in the Shanti Sena they can be more than men.

Bhattacharya thinks that orthodoxy is the main hurdle in the Hindu society which resists literacy for women. Literacy of the Indian women is neglected due to age old traditions. The Hindus have avoided sending their girls to the institutes. They feel that it is ordained in religious books that the women are to be kept under restrictions. They are supposed to remain at home to perform household duties. The choice of schooling, therefore, remains very limited. Like many scholars and reformers, Bhattacharya also supports equal right to the Hindu women.

Bhabani Bhattacharya considers the modern women in India down trodden. He suggests that they have to exercise effort to alter their present condition. He desires to make them understand through proper education and training that the subordination might have been prudent in the past and the tension relieving in the present. He thinks it is no longer necessary for the Indian women to submit to it. He hopes they must reflect upon what they desire and develop enough strength to achieve their goals of life. He wishes they must purge out old orthodox traditions and adapt to modern world. He opines that they have to take initiative in achieving their economic independence and the free exercise of their will power. He tells that they have to show their excellence in every diverse field.

Bhattacharya points the current situation of his time; there is large number of women who are living the life of drudgery and toil mostly because of lack of initiative on their part and due to their ignorance. He has identified that this country is facing the gigantic task of emancipation and empowerment of women.
He denies the general opinion that the men are more independent, ambitious or achievement-oriented than women or that women are more nurturing, sociable or suggested than men are. He opines that male and female are much more similar to one another than they are different, and they share the same fundamental needs, emotions and abilities. He finds out that unless customs, traditions, rituals and values and attitudes which view and treat women as inferior beings and less desirable than men are discarded and changed, the status and position of the Indian women are not going to improve. This change can be brought about through education. Education must prepare women for becoming all that they can be without any discrimination or prejudice.

Bhattacharya has identified Indian society as a very stratified one. There are many castes and classes and religions. The women belonging to upper and lower castes, rich and poor classes in Hindu society have their own specific problems and suffer from all those limitations. In his works he has paid special attention to the problems of women of all classes.

Bhattacharya has focused light on the problems of Dalit women, for all those women who are either put in the category of Harijans or schedule castes. These women suffer from many types of social disadvantages. Many of these indignities have now been sought to be abolished by the legal measures. Bhattacharya says that one of the important reasons for this state of affairs is the woeful neglect of women’s education. Their ignorance is the major threat to their existence. Bhattacharya brings light on various factors in relation to their problems.

Bhattacharya points out that education of the lower castes in India has been very much neglected. Because of poverty and untouchability the girls of lower castes have been denied being sent to schools. They are supposed to
remain as servants at home or at houses of the upper caste people. They are restricted from sitting and studying along with higher caste students. Their rightful position is a servant maid at houses of higher caste people. It is therefore not surprising that very few girls of Dalit or Harijan castes are joined in educational institutes.

Bhattacharya reveals that the girls of the lower castes are not inferiors at all comparative with that of higher castes on intellectual grounds. He shows that even girls of lower castes do well and they keep pace with that of higher caste or even surpass them, in the earliest schools studies most of which are concerned with concrete wholes. They learn by heart with ease, take delight in neatness and in the embellishment of their exercises.

Bhattacharya stresses the wish of Gandhi who wanted woman to contribute to communal unity. He said that Indian women should give up the habit of differentiating between high and low and between caste and caste. They should move with all women on a basis of equality. In particular, Gandhi advised Indian women to mix freely with one another. If the women of various communities have been on terms of friendship and, if they are in close touch with the Dalit sisters much integration will be developed.

Bhattacharya explores the Indian life, scenes and culture along with externalization of the interior region of Indian women’s mind. He is concerned in his novels with the psychological crises in the lives of Indian women who are subjected to physical and psychological torture in a male dominated society. He exploits his skill in projecting convincingly the agonized mind of the persecuted women. His portrayal of women characters in the novels invariably bears authenticity to his feminine sensibility, outlook and perspective.
His keen observation of life Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner mind is evidenced his vivid panoramic portrayal of their plight. He focuses in his novels on the existential predicament and travails of the subdued women in a male dominated society governed by rigid traditions and restrictions.

His novels distinctively assume feminist significance for focusing on the inner mind of Indian women in the feminist perspective. He makes pioneering efforts in writing novels of profound psychological significance. Bhattacharya’s typical attitude, sentiment and observation which are characteristically Indian in all respects, manifest in the characters of his heroines. Example can be cited of Kajoli’s commitment to sacrifice her life and virginity for the sake of her family in “So many hungers”.

BHATTACHARYA’s LIFE AND WORKS:

Bhabani Bhattacharya, a man of versatile genius and achievements, is one of the prominent novelists of Indian English. He was born in a Bengali Brahmin family, in Bhagalpur, Bihar, on 10th November, 1906. His father Promothnath Bhattacharya was a Judge by profession. He received his early education at various places as his father was holding a transferable post in the judicial service in British India and had to move from place to place as a result of his transfer and posting to different stations. At an early age of twelve, he began to compose poems. He wrote his first article in a Bengali magazine—‘Mouchak! ‘.

He did B.A.(Hons.) from Patna college, Patna, in 1927 and left for London for higher education. He studied History and Literature at King’s college, London. He obtained Honours and Doctorate degrees in History from the University of London. His education in London proved very significant in his career as a writer. It is in England that Bhattacharya met Tagore and sought
his permission to translate his stories into English which appeared under the title “The Golden Boat” (1930).

During his college days Bhabani was attracted and influenced by the works of Tagore and John Steinbeck, W.B.Yeats and Romain Rolland. Bhabani himself submitted the idea:

“I think by real intellectual awakening when I was a freshman at the university, for the first time, I discovered Tagore….. Also, about the time, I began to delve deeper in English literature….. The names must be obvious; one that is not obvious was Edward Fitzgerald. His translation of Omar Khayyam continued to stir my adolescent fancy and retained its power even after I had graduated. I should add that W.B.Yeats was another great favorite. My horizons started to widen in my senior year in college. I discovered the plays of Ibsen and Bernard shaw and novels of Romain Rolland, Knut Hamsun and several other continental”

After a distinguished academic career in London University, he returned to India. In 1935 Bhattacharya married Salila Mukherji. She was not merely a mate; she was entire fate. She had chosen to use her talents to collaborate with Bhabani in the creation of his fictional worlds. She touched each idea with a glow. Bhabani and Salila were blessed with a son and two daughters.

He held several distinguished positions in America and in India. He was appointed as press attaché to the embassy of India, Washington, D.C. in 1949. In 1950 he became assistant editor, Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay. In 1961 he was appointed consultant, ministry of education New Delhi. In 1969 he joined East-West centre, Honolulu as a senior specialist. In 1970 he was
appointed visiting professor, University of Hawaii. In September 1973 he joined the University of Washington, Seattle as Walker__ Ames professor.

Bhattacharya travelled extensively, and attended in various International seminars at different universities and shared his views and opinions with wise men all over the world. In 1959 he attended Harvard International seminar at Cambridge, Massachusetts, as delegate. In 1960 he visited Tokyo. In 1962 he lectured in New Zealand and Australia as a guest of the Government concerned. In 1963 he lectured in West Germany as a guest of the Government.

Bhabani was, indeed, not only a prolific writer but a versatile one. In his profound literary career he has produced six novels besides many short stories and translations. This significant literary output shows an extraordinary energy in him.

His famous works are:
1 *The Golden Boat* (Translations from Tagore, 1932)
2 *Indian Cavalcades* (1944)
3 *So Many Hungers* (Novel, 1947)
4 *Music for Mohini* (Novel, 1952)
5 *He Who Rides a Tiger* (Novel, 1954)
6 *A Goddess Named Gold* (Novel, 1960)
7 *A Shadow from Ladakh* (Novel, 1966)
8 *Gandhi the Writer* (1967)
9 *Steel Hawk And Other Stories* (1968)
10 *A Dream in Hawaii* (Novel, 1973)

Bhabani proved himself to be one of the greatest novelists in Indian writing in English. He spoke for millions; and in an age of very great men he was recognized as one most outstanding of them all. Certainly he excelled all of them in his restless, almost fierce energy. His energy was, indeed, boundless. His works have been translated into almost all the important Indian,
European and non-European languages. He was honoured with “Sahitya Akademi Award”, the coveted Indian award for his *Shadow from Ladakh* in 1967.

Bhattacharya had a very high conception of the aims of novel, and in this respect disagrees with the conception of ‘art for art’s sake’. He was interested in the problem of social change. He said that the creative writer’s final business is to reveal the truth. He understood the contemporary problems. He acquired knowledge from his observation of the common folks. He believed that a writer must observe the society to produce social novels. He said that if a writer fails to observe society with a keen eye certainly he will face failure in his professional career. To him reality is the soul of art. According to him,

“The creative writer’s final business is to reveal the truth”\(^\text{14}\)

He expected a novelist to give descriptions that are true to life. For him Realism meant for the perception of the essential truth of a situation or a period. In his novels, Bhattacharya explored the social and political realities of his time. The object of novel, according to him, is to activate man’s mind from ignorance to establish a perfect communion between man and society. The novelist should aim at achieving unity of the individual with the society. Novel reveals truth of social relatedness. He believes that novel has an ennobling message for the reader and emancipates man’s mind heart from fantasy which militates against truth and sympathy and aims at creating a perfect harmony between man and reality. The novelist should reveal the real world. He trusted that the field of writing is spontaneous and that a work comes from subconscious mind of the artist. He expressed it on one occasion:
"Each story grew in my subconscious mind as it were. When it had grown enough, I had to give it physical form. The characters, even when I had decided how they were going to behave moved by their own volition, often defeating my purpose."\textsuperscript{15}

He stressed the need of freedom to an artist in his choice of subject and even language. He mirrored the contemporary society and worked for a better world. He was against vulgarity in the field. He believed that a writer has a responsibility to serve society and he does not believe in ‘art for art’s sake’ and he says that there is purpose with art, according to him,

“Art is not necessarily for art’s sake. Purposeless art and literature which is much in vogue does not appear to me sound judgment”.\textsuperscript{16}

He was a novelist with a purpose in his novels he set out to attack some specific abuses in the existing system of things, orthodox, absurd beliefs. He adopted the role of a champion of the weak, the outcast and oppressed. Humanism was the key note of his works. He is regarded as one of the greatest social reformers of his time. In his novels, he took on the role of the crusader. His aim was to wring the conscience of society by playing upon its feelings and presenting scenes of wretchedness and misery that could be shown as the result of social indifference and callousness. As a crusader for the oppressed sections of Indian society Bhattacharya attacked on domination of tradesmen, deep rooted caste systems and orthodoxy. It can be seen mainly in \textit{So many hungers, Music for Mohini, He who rides a Tiger} and \textit{The Goddess named gold}. He earned the gratitude of posterity for awakening the social conscience.

He has mainly written in English and translated Tagore’s creations into English. Bhattacharya is a novelist par excellence and all his novels and short stories are permeated with a rich fund of creative imagination. Earlier in his
boyhood he was attracted to the literature of his mother tongue, Bengali. He read the famous works of Bengali Romantic writers, like Madhusudan Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore. He was successor to the Indian Renaissance which found expression in three different movements—religious, literary and national that influenced him deeply. The religious movement was introduced by Ram Mohan Roy who did his best to establish spiritual values, lost in the mire of old traditions. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, pioneer of the literary movement, liberated literature from stagnation and the lifeless and empty vaunt of rhetoric.

Madhusudan Dutt and Dinabandhu Mitra were other stalwarts of literary Renaissance in Bengal. The former renovated Bengali poetry by imparting to it fresh vigour and ease, flexibility and spontaneity. Mitra wrote his plays on homely themes and in homely speech. Another famous Bengali novelist Rabindranath Tagore, the celebrated novelist aimed at bridging the gap between the East and the West. The national movement gave Indians a voice to assert their personality. These three currents of Indian Renaissance influenced Bhattacharya’s personality and found superb expression in his creations.

He also read the popular works of Western writers like Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen, Walt Whitman and John Steinbeck etc. Bhattacharya himself said thus:

“The influences on my thinking in those days came entirely from the writers in my mother tongue… It was a period of Romanticism in Bengali fiction. The age of naturalism, not to speak of realism, had not dawned yet. A foreign influence, strangely was Shakespeare… The bookshelves at home contained a set of Shakespeare’s collected works. My father, a judge, had no time for literature. But in his younger days, he had loved
Shakespeare. With my poor knowledge of the English language, I managed somehow to go through all those big volumes. I do not know how much of Shakespeare I understood and how much I absorbed.”

The influence of Tagore on Bhattacharya was the greatest. He was attracted to Tagore from his school days when his career as a writer began. Bhattacharya is a follower of Tagore. He deals with those themes concerning social welfare and philosophy which are dear to Tagore. He expressed his gratitude towards this universal poet as…

“Tagore appealed to me from my school days and my writer’s career also began from those days. It was, therefore, quite unlikely that I would miss the impact of Gurudev’s all-pervading personality”.

The next important influence on him is John Steinbeck and his novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* which is seen on *So many Hungers, He who rides a tiger*. Besides the above literary influences; he has the other influences on him such as Gandhi and Marx etc. It is to be necessarily discussed that he is significantly influenced by Gandhi and his principles. Gandhi’s ideals of truth and non-violence, his love for the people living in the countryside left deep impact on Bhattacharya. Dr. G.Ray says as:

“The themes and characters of almost all the novels of Dr. Bhattacharya reveal Gandhi’s influence. In the treatment of the tragedies of the freedom struggle, and the evils of poverty, corruption, ignorance, superstition, exploitation and greed, Bhattacharya’s approach is Gandhian.”
His characters, like Devesh in *So Many Hungers*, Jaydev in *Music for Mohini*, Satyajit in *Shadow from Ladakh* etc are modeled upon Gandhi. He was also influenced by the ideals of Marxism. His novels reveal his Marxist leaning and liberal humanitarian outlook on the problems of life. Dorothy Blair Shimer says as:

“A strong undercurrent of the early Marxist respect for liberal humanitarianism and the effects of economic pressures on history run through all Bhattacharya’s novels”\(^{20}\)

Humanism forms the core of his imagination and thinking, as his vision is drawn from the East and the West. His novels fundamentally interrogate injustice in any system. His fiction is a study of the anarchy in the system as they are not mere tales of human woe, but inquiring studies of imperfections and injustices in the system.

War, hunger, and freedom are the major recurring themes of Bhattacharya. The two world wars shook the world with unemployment, hunger and disease. Every part of the world was influenced by the evils. Then there was social unrest. During the post war period, there was great famine in Bengal. Bhattacharya witnessed the impact of famine in his novels. He presented a real picture of the contemporary national and international scene. He analyzed the famine as manmade. He described realistically the plight of the victims migrating to Calcutta, the fate of the Indian farmer crushed under the wheels of poverty. He also dealt with the painful effect of the famine on the lives of individuals.

He was interested in the problem of social change. He had a sensitive understanding of the problems of contemporary Indian society. The conflict between orthodoxy and modernity was emphatically treated in his works. He focused light on several absurd beliefs and practices in Indian society and
pleaded for a change. He attacked social evils like casteism, untouchability, widow remarriage, prevention of child marriages. He believed that political freedom without social freedom has no meaning, and expressed it in an interview.

“Our political freedom is worth little without social freedom”

Bhattacharya depicts the image of the new women waiting for emancipation and liberation in a fast changing world in his works. He mentions the Hindu community in India as being governed rigidly by its traditions. As India has been a tradition bound nation, if women are also shackled by numerous social and religious customs and conventions that render them incarcerated behind curtains. In view of their miseries, Bhattacharya fictionalizes women’s cause with a view to ameliorating their position and releasing them from the state of traditional servitude. He portrays the evils and abuses of customs and traditions that had enslaved married women that rendered them practically helpless and voiceless. He upholds the reaction of women and shows how women endure physical and psychological suffering simply by virtue of their womanliness.

Bhattacharya has identified that Indian society as a very stratified one. There are many castes and classes and religions. The women belonging to upper and lower castes, rich and poor classes in Hindu society have their own specific problems and suffer from all those limitations. In his works he has paid special attention to the problems of women of all classes.

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concerned with concrete wholes. They learn by heart with ease, take delight in neatness and in the embellishment of their exercises.

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His keen observation of life Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner mind is evidenced his vivid panoramic portrayal of their plight. He focuses in his novels on the existential predicament and travails of the subdued women in a male dominated society governed by rigid traditions and restrictions. He reached deep into inner mind of the repressed women by virtue of his feminine sensibility and psychological insight and brings to light issues which are the outcome of Indian women’s psychological and emotional imbalances.

Bhattacharya’s works reveal that his style is not only indisputable personal and distinctive, but often rises to high literary achievement. The success of a novel, or indeed of any other form of literature, is a success of any other form of literature, is a success of the language used, the success of the manipulation and exploitation of the resources of style, because it is through style that the plot and character and the point of view come alive and impinge on the consciousness of the reader.

It is the writer’s creative use of language that unfolds its hidden nuances and invests familiar words with usual freshness and force. A great writer adds to the store of language as much as he draws from it. The word acquires much
power and plentitude when the writer performs a unique creative function when he restores to the word its pristine purity and power and almost lends it the ring of the Divine. In his hands the English language acquires a distinctive and unmistakable Indianness in style, idiom and syntax.

His style is richly Indian. He draws his similes from Sanskrit literature, and mostly from vernacular speech and folk-lore. Even the sentence patterns are molded on the basis of the regional language so that they are far from idiomatic English expressions. His style carries an exotic flavor to the Western reader. Being an Indian to the core and adopting English as his medium of expression, he contributes not a little to the English style. His style has an ambitious motto behind it. He wishes to capture the grandeur and sublimity. There is little occurrence of word juggling in his style. While expressing the inexpressible truth, Bhattacharya employs such a style which seems to partake of the intricate nature of the thought.

Quite a few of the Indian novelists have tried to impart Indianness to their English style by translating the idioms and phrases and introducing the speech patterns of the vernacular. But Bhattacharya is by far the best example for this expression of the Indian sensibility in English, because in his hands the English language and vernacular idiom achieve a happy and harmonious marriage. What he does is not merely to introduce translations from the vernacular; the English language is creatively molded and renewed so that it effortlessly absorbs the raciness and vigour of the vernacular. The success of the experiment lies in the fact that the reader is hardly conscious of this process of stylistic manipulation.

He feels convinced that the Indianness is not an extra tagged on to the style but an organic element of the very texture and structure. But, then, Bhattacharya handles the Indianness with a sense of proportion. While So Many Hungers, He who rides aTiger and Goddess Named Gold abound in
examples of this type, in *Music for Mohini, Shadow from Ladakh* and *A dream in Hawaii* the examples are not many. For, in most of the short stories, Bhattacharya has created the typical Indian rural scene and so the vernacular turns of phrase and idiom have a proper place.

One finds that Bhattacharya introduces the Indian element not as fetish or filigree work; there is inevitability about these phrases and proverbs, idioms and similes. They illumine a situation or animate a character in a remarkable way and with striking oppositeness. This is how Bhattacharya adds a new dimension to the English language as only a writer of genius can. Almost all the characters including the narrator in the short stories and novels have their roots in the Indian soil: Some are illiterate Kalo in *He who rides a Tiger*, some educated but without any influence of the West like Jaydev in *Music for Mohini*. So it is natural that Bhattacharya’s characters should generally spice their speech with Indian similes, proverbs and idioms.

The history of modern novel is an exciting story of the onslaught on traditional categories like ‘plot’, and many novelists, some of whom have significant achievement to their credit, have freely experimented with ‘plot’ and demonstrated that a novel can be successful and adequate even when there is an apparent disregard for ‘plot’. The discarding of the conventional ‘plot’ does not; however create a vacuum and the modern novelist substitutes it by a framework which grows, as it were, on its own. This breaking and creating anew is necessary because the modern writer has often to communicate an experience which is complex and body forth the form and pressure of the modern situation.

Bhattacharya’s novels reveal that he is in the line of the great modern novelists who have this urge for experimentation. His novels are ‘open’ in their structure and there is no temporal or spatial limitation. While thus being palpably modern, Indian puranas and folk-lore for his story telling technique,
he refers that Yagnyavalka and Mytreyi in “Music for Mohini”. Any criticism of Bhattacharya’s technique or style should, in fairness to him, take into account his attitude to novel writing contained in his works.

In his novels, *So many hungers, Music for Mohini, He who rides a tiger, Goddess named gold, Shadow from Ladakh* and *A dream in Hawaii*. Bhattacharya presents India on the material and psychological planes. In *Music for Mohini* and *A Dream in Hawaii* he is concerned with India on the psychological and spiritual planes—mind being the connecting link between matter and spirit. The drama of the surface and the ethos of the race, the social problems, the religious superstitions and the political upheavals—these are his concern in his novels and short stories. The verities of the deeper levels of the Indian psyche and the glory of the Indian spiritual tradition engage his attention in his novels. Thus Bhattacharya succeeds in probing India on all the three levels—material, psychological and spiritual.

Each of his works brings out a profound truth and the narration is done in the typical Indian way of storytelling. His works apart from giving a taste of Indian stories and story-telling have a definite purpose and are deliberately woven in to perfect shape. Clarifications and comments on the profound philosophical disquisitions are found in his works. A complete picture of the Indian marriage is given when Mohini is married in the novel *Music for Mohini*. His narrative technique may not reveal the charm of a well-pruned and artificially laid garden but they certainly possess the awesome splendor of a forest, cultivation lands and Sheppard’s farm with their beauty that is natural, wholesome and bewildering.

There is consummiate art in the apparent artlessness, supreme coherence in the seeming incoherence, connected design in the sprawling structure, much sense hidden in the glib loquacity, so much impersonal in the personal musing of Bhattacharya. It is not as though he pours down his knowledge on the reader
or exhausts him by his interminable expansiveness. Side tracking is there but it is deliberate. The thread is resumed and the link supplied at some later point and only then is the reader able to see the purpose and unity of the narrative. Bhattacharya as it were takes almost every branch of knowledge into his province. Music, Medicine, Astrology, Commerce, History, Philosophy and Religion both Indian and western, all form the stock house of his images. It is perhaps not an evidence of depth in every subject—which is humanly impossible—but it certainly is a proof of his versatility.

As a writer he makes wise use of all that he stumbles upon. Every reference is thus related to the context in which it occurs and is convincing enough as the character’s own utterance. An impression may, however, be created that the omniscient author is peeping in and interposing his comments or observations. The themes that they seek to embody and fictionalize the quintessence of the Indian spiritual tradition—that the narrative pattern and characterization had to be so devised as to sustain them. The ‘complexity’ in Bhattacharya is thus integral to the technique, which again is necessitated by the theme. It also imparts a scholarly touch and an encyclopedic stretch to the works.

Bhattacharya portrays the individual as victim of the greedy society. He also portrays the greedy individual with a cartoonist touch against the stable traditional attitude of society. With his satirical or ironic attitude to life, Bhattacharya laughs and makes the readers laugh at the odd behavior of the foolishly-selfish man. He dramatizes the comic behavior of the individual at different stages of life—childhood, youth, householder, and the varied other angles of life—which form the constituent themes of the enveloping theme of odd-life, in his novels. He deals with the comic oddity of the upturned inhabitant in the native Indian setting.
The Bengal society in the novels of Bhattacharya is almost stable and traditional. Bhattacharya shows that Bengal life as a fundamentally conservative Hindu society. Changing under the impact of the West, industrialization, and modern ideas, conservative India is seen with humour and some satire, as a mixture of traditional holiness, with the comfort-living sterility of bourgeoisie. Modern India is seen as an inevitable, but on the whole, inescapable phenomena, compounded of extreme political activism, permissive sexual morals, and the breakdown of the traditional extended family system. The secret of Bhattacharya’s art is his ability to keep these views in a perfect balance. His novels deal almost all classes of Bengal life. With his sympathetic understanding Bhattacharya portrays the life in Bengal in terms of the relationships between the individual and other members of the family and society. His society is an observing participant but never a stern judge of the individual. The society accommodates all kinds of activity.

His society comprises children, youth, householders, lecturers, politicians, businessmen, landlords, money lenders. These individuals are very important in the context of the novels. They are true to life. The members of the family are bound by mutual affection in terms of relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, grandmothers and grandchildren, brothers and sisters etc. Family life is one of the major themes in his novels. Against the traditional nature of the Bengal society the changing attitudes and aspirations of individuals, under the impact of the modern civilization are ironically and humorously portrayed in terms of the behavior of representatives.

Giving a cross-section of the entire human society, with a realist and humanist ability, Bhattacharya presents characters of the normal stream of life along with absurd characters like revolutionists, prisoners, freedom fighters, social reformers, and educationists etc. He affords a thorough insight into the
intricate psychology of the individuals and society in its varied complications, shades and colours. Every character is a measure of all things.

The aspiration of the protagonists is spiritual refinement and they work out their salvation with diligence. In his novels the action of the protagonists is conditioned by their aspiration to be prominent in the society. Bhattacharya often portrays ideal individuals as a contrast whose just action is in perfect harmony with their pure aspiration. The aspirations of the characters, in general, are determined by the socio-economic and spiritual conditions of the society in which they live. There is less disparity between aspiration and action of the protagonists. They set their goals very high and plan perfectly and succeed to reach their goals. Devesh, Rahoul, Jaydev, B10 and Satyajit etc, are such examples.

Humour is natural for a comic writer, but it is only when a profound writer like Bhattacharya uses it that the effect is immensely heightened. Its value is in the relative context. Humour is exploited to the utmost extent when it is juxtaposed with serious thought. Bhattacharya knows too much of humanity and life to ignore the above fact. Sometimes he directly attacks though very often he gently teases and teaches with his satire. His satire is not much hard but gives gentle pleasure and pain.

Humour and satire are no less interesting in his writings. One would expect a writer like Bhattacharya who is realistically inclined to be indifferent to these aspects. But his flashes of humour reveal that he has an eye for the ridiculous in life as well and can turn to creative use his critical observation of the life around him. Bhattacharya chooses the ironic and seriocomic individuals from the middle class society and exposes their oddities, laughs and makes the readers laugh. His humour arises from the disparity between man’s greediness and his ability, Seth (Goddess named gold) is one of such examples.
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